

The College Bound Program:  
Building Human Capacity in Underserved Youth

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my nieces and nephew (Pali, Paisley, and Westley Payne III). I also dedicate it to every adult who has ever mentored. Youth are the backbone and future of our society, and I encourage them to achieve all that they can dream.

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## ABSTRACT

### The College Bound Program: Building Human Capacity in Underserved Youth

Rustin Mahon Lewis

This study examines the role of the college access intervention program College Bound as a means of building human capacity in underserved youth. The need to prepare underserved youth to remain competitive in a global economy gained momentum as a consequence of diminished national high school graduation rates and ineffective education public policies. This study maintains that underserved students who take part in the College Bound program are re-socialized to develop the critical skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to attain higher education and employment opportunities. The methodological approach gave voice to the study participants. The 21 students were either current or former College Bound program participants. The students participated in a series of focus groups and standardized, open-ended, one-on-one interviews. Analysis of the data revealed that a collaborative approach is necessary to assist youth in developing the skills and behaviors needed to succeed. Indeed, the College Bound program, the community, family, and school systems collectively contribute to student success in college preparation, college graduation, and in the workforce.

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## Introduction

A better-educated society is among the greatest issues affecting the United States of America in today's global economy. The USA faces enormous educational challenges in a global economy. Many white and blue collar jobs are being outsourced to foreign countries. The ever-growing need for U.S. citizens to compete academically with citizens of other countries is paramount. U.S. educators claim to have the world's finest system of higher education. However, Lingenfelter (2006) states that "research indicators over the last 10 years support that many nations in Europe and Asia have surpassed the U.S. in educational attainment for individuals under 35 years of age." Lingenfelter also discovered that workers in India and China far exceed the United States' college educated totals.

Educational attainment affects individuals' choices, opportunities, and decisions throughout their lifetime. Persons with higher levels of educational attainment are more likely to be employed. "At all levels of educational attainment, the labor force participation rate of young men who were not enrolled in school was higher than that of their female counterparts. Among young adults (particularly women), the least likely to participate in the labor force were those without a high school diploma" (Mosisa and Hipple 2006, 40). In today's economy, the workforce disproportionately employs people with education and training beyond a high school diploma. Careers that require a

postsecondary degree offer wages well above the median in our economy. These educational requirements reflect a need for highly skilled workers who can perform complex, ever-changing tasks (Executive Office 2009).

Research data show that the challenges of societal conditions and limited socio-economic opportunities heavily impact a student's ability to pursue higher education. Moreover, financially disadvantaged students of any race will still encounter economic barriers to higher education even if they earn automatic admission to the state's colleges and universities (Bell 2004).

Due to societal conditions, underserved students do not have the same opportunities to prepare and plan for college as middle class and privileged youth. Oftentimes, underserved students are taught from a different curriculum and with lower degrees of academic rigor (Silver 2000). Far too many schools are not adequately preparing their students. Students are lacking the skills and mindset needed to be successful learners beyond high school (Jenkins 2003). A recent New York Times article notes that the poor, and the middle class, have not increased their economic mobility in the last 30 years (Eckholm 2008). The article details a Brookings Institution report that also warns that because the gap in the attainment of higher education is widening, between rich and poor and whites and minorities, the poor will experience even more of an economic downturn. Ron Haskins, a former Republican official, welfare expert, and author of the report's education section added that mobility will, indeed, be lower in the future. Isaacs, Sawhill, and Haskins (2008) concluded that "regardless of parental income, adult children are more likely to surpass their parents' income in absolute terms

if they have a college degree and more likely to reach the top quintile if they have a college degree.”

To help them achieve their educational goals, many underserved students participate in college access enrichment and mentoring programs. These programs help students to develop their academic and social skills. Goldner and Mayseless (2008) discovered that “mentoring programs for youth have become increasingly popular interventions and are generally effective in promoting proteges' wellbeing and functioning.” These findings highlight the importance of creating opportunities where youth have a mentoring experience that balances their social growth with the academic development. “The correlation between socialization and education is a crucial theoretical as well as a practical problem” (Kuszhanova and Ivanenkov 1998).

To gain a more in-depth understanding of how academic and social skills help to construct human capacity in underserved youth, the research addressed the following question: How do theories of socialization inform capacity building strategies for underserved youth participating in the District of Columbia’s College Bound program? This study critically examined the role of the college access intervention program, College Bound, Incorporated, as a means of building human capacity in underserved youth. Underserved youth include those whose academic development in the public and public charter schools of the District of Columbia is generally poor due to a combination of factors including poor school environments, remedial curricula, and the students’ socioeconomic backgrounds. These factors adversely affect the academic and personal socialization of students. Based on a systematic and careful analysis, this study argues

that underserved students who, as a result of their participation in the College Bound program, are re-socialized to develop the critical skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to succeed in college and the workforce.

Locally and nationally, college access programs are structured in various ways. Whether the programs are school-based, out-of-school, one-on-one, instructor-led, or other structural variations, these programs seek to re-socialize their participants to view college as an attainable goal. This study used College Bound program participants as a baseline population to identify common themes in the students' life ambitions, career interests, and academic goals. This study critically examined the life-altering impact of College Bound program participants as they perceive and construct these experiences. Because the College Bound Program receives public funding and most of the students come from public and public charter schools, the public policy and administrative implications of the program are essential to address. Consequently, results from the study will inform educators, college access professionals, and key public policymakers, at the local and national levels, as to how strategies of socialization impact human capacity development among participants.

As reflected in the research question, the primary objective of this research was to understand the dynamics of the intervention that contribute to students' academic and social development. Many underprivileged inner-city youth are on a destructive societal conveyor belt. They are born into low-income communities, enroll in inadequate inner-city public schools, and then join the workforce in low-wage jobs or become unemployed, thus contributing to the cycle of poverty. As a result, they too often represent a burden on society. This is reflected in the increasing public outlays for law



enforcement, juvenile justice facilities, and the eventual social and public costs of poorly trained and economically marginalized citizens. The public policy and program management challenge is to develop and implement a strategically effective program capable of building the human capacity of the participants in ways that can be carefully assessed. The intervention that the College Bound program offers students is a means of changing destructive social and educational patterns, thus removing the students from the poverty cycle and making them public-policy assets rather than liabilities. Through the program's efforts, the students are re-socialized, guided toward college, and thereby better prepared to enter the workforce and become lifelong contributors to society.

College Bound was selected as a host agency for this research project because the program serves a cross section of underserved youth who represent various public and public charter schools throughout the national capital area. This study has broader implications for scholars, as the research herein is intended to offer insight into how college access intervention programs can build the kind of human capacity that contributes both to local economies and the economy as a whole.

There is a reemergence of interest in pursuing postsecondary degrees within the United States. This is because citizens recognize the need to develop new skills that are applicable to today's workforce. This trend is creating new career opportunities from which college-educated and skilled individuals may choose. Therefore, these programs are potential contributors not only to more successful educational outcomes in our society, but also to more effective public policy.

### *Statement of the Problem*

The quality of a high school curriculum and supplemental preparation are the best predictors of whether a student develops his or her skills to be successful in college and in the workforce. Despite their aspirations, often students are not prepared for college. Research shows a trend that some students from at-risk communities are not prepared upon completion of high school to become social and economic contributors to society. Upon completing high school, most students are confronted with these life choices: to pursue an education (vocational, technical, or college degree), join the military, or join the workforce. By and large these students make the choice that will maximize the possibility of their future success. Unfortunately, youth often do not make the choice themselves. The choices are made for them by factors of exposure and financial capability.

“While 31% of U.S. students currently fail to finish high school, 42% of District of Columbia Public School (DCPS) pupils drop out. Among DCPS graduates who reach the University of the District of Columbia, 85% need remedial education” (Murdock 2003). On average in 2003, “the District’s public and public charter school students generally rated lower on basic reading and math skills compared to students in other urban areas. District students had lower average NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) reading scores than students in eight of the nine other cities tested, and they scored lower in math than their counterparts in all nine cities” (Comey, Rubin, and Tatian 2004). This is a travesty because in 2006 D.C. spent just over \$14,400 for every child in public school—well above the national average and more than any of the 50 states (National Center for Education Statistics 2007).

The central research question of this study—How do theories of socialization inform capacity building strategies for underserved youth participating in the District of Columbia’s College Bound Program?—arises from DCPS’ students being a part of a societal system that minimally prepares them for life beyond high school. Many students, especially from urban neighborhoods, lack the skills and ambition to pursue and achieve a college education. The College Bound program re-socializes its participants to view college as an achievable and compulsory goal. College Bound plays the role of a change agent that trains students to develop their skills and aptitude. “Primary socialization theory as formulated by Oetting [1998] and his associates emphasizes the transmission of societal norms during childhood and adolescence within society's three major socializing agencies: family, school, and small, intimate peer groups. The norms thus transmitted may be prosocial or deviant, with prosocial norms more likely to be transmitted through strong bonds to healthy families or schools” (Nurco and Lerner 1999). In several instances, College Bound students and alumni have spoken publicly of the focus and motivation that the program provides for them.

The focus group and interview questions include the following:

1. What are your educational goals?
2. When was the first time that you talked about going to college?
3. Did College Bound have an effect on your decision to apply to college?

The central research question moves beyond studies of college affordability and seeks to capture the common perspectives and themes from students who are participating or have participated in the College Bound program. The research

participants' extensive history with the program gave them the added advantage of reflecting upon important program components that have aided them in their preparation for college and the workforce. Results of this study will have significant implications for the following groups:

1. college access practitioners—as they seek to infuse new components into their delivery systems to increase college and workforce preparedness
2. scholars—as they continue to research socialization patterns that promote college and workforce preparedness
3. the College Bound staff and board of directors—as they codify the program in preparation for a national pilot replication initiative
4. public policymakers—as they consider policy and resource allocation strategies that build on the success of College Bound

This study sought to identify the common thematic patterns among participants and to explore how their experiences have prepared them for their college and career choices.

#### *Purpose of the Study*

This research explores how College Bound prepares its students for college and the workforce by contributing to their academic and social development. The approach was analytical, professional, and programmatic. It also identified key service components that build students' skills and shape their attitudes as they complete high school and transition into college. As an exploratory study, the information gained from this research offered insight on how re-socializing students toward the goal of attending college makes a college degree an achievable and viable option for success in life. For the purposes of

this study, participants were defined as either current College Bound students or alumni. [The term “current students” is used to refer to students who were in the College Bound program at the time the research was conducted.]

### *Definitions and Key Terms and Concepts*

Several key terms and concepts used in this study require definition. Some of the terms are either unique to the College Bound program or the college access community. Others are used in a unique way in this study.

#### **Education**

*Public charter school*—“A publicly funded school that, in accordance with an enabling state statute, has been granted a charter exempting it from selected state or local rules and regulations” (National Center Educational Statistics 2009).

#### **Scholarly**

*GEAR UP* (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs)—A discretionary grant program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education (U.S. Department of Education 2008).

*Human capacity*—“An individual's ability to perform tasks which are necessary to survive and prosper. More specifically—the constellation of skills, attitudes, and behaviors individuals exhibit in the multiple roles they play as community member, family member, learner, worker, consumer, and citizen” (Levinger 1996).

*Re-socialization*—“The relearning of cultural norms and sanctions, on their return to a social system, by those who voluntarily or involuntarily left that system (such as

prisoners re-entering society or expatriates returning from abroad) so that they can again be fully accepted within that system" (Marshall 1998).

*TRIO*—Federal educational opportunity outreach programs designed to motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. TRIO includes six outreach and support programs targeted to serve and assist low-income, first-generation college students, and students with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to post-baccalaureate programs. TRIO also includes a training program for directors and staff of TRIO projects and a dissemination partnership program to encourage the replication or adaptation of successful practices of TRIO projects at organizations without TRIO grants (U.S. Department of Education 2008).

#### *The District of Columbia as the Research Setting*

Washington, D.C. was selected as the site for this study for three reasons. First, it has a large number of underserved youth. Secondly, it has one of the more conspicuous college access programs. Finally, it is the seat of the federal government.

Washington, D.C. is unlike any other city in the United States. Known as D.C. (District of Columbia) or the District, it was established in 1790 as the nation's capital. The city has a dual identity. It is often characterized as the world's most powerful city, with its unique blend of wealth and political influence. It is home to the White House, the Capitol, and other national landmarks, national monuments, and museums. However, in the shadows of the memorials and monuments are the residents, many of whom live below the poverty line and suffer the scourges of poor housing, education, unemployment, and crime. As listed on the U.S. Census Bureau's website in the U.S.

Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey, 24.2 percent of Washington, DC residents lived below the poverty level.

The District of Columbia was previously called the Federal City or Washington City. It is easily confused with the state of Washington, located in the Pacific Northwest. To avoid this confusion, the capital city is often called D.C., and the state is referred to as Washington State. An elected mayor and city council members preside over the city's operations. The city council is comprised of five at-large members, in addition to one member for each of the eight wards (see appendix A).

An exclusive feature of the District is its form of government. Unlike the 50 states, the District has neither a governor nor voting representation in Congress. The U.S. Constitution, article 1, section 8, clause 17, allows Congress to

exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings. In 1961, District residents gained the right to vote in a presidential election. (The United States Constitution 2004)

In 1968, District residents were permitted to elect a board of education, and in 1970 they were allowed to elect a non-voting delegate to the House of Representatives.

Congress' authority goes well beyond voting rights. The Constitution sanctions Congress to intervene on all issues that affect the District of Columbia. Recent court

cases have underscored Congresses' control of the District, especially in matters of fiscal accountability and budgeting, land usage, and gun control.

#### District of Columbia School System

DCPS served nearly 58,000 students during the 2006-2007 academic year. D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty's administration has changed the landscape of the school system by taking control and by reducing the power of the elected DC State Board of Education. On April 19, 2007, the Council of the District of Columbia approved the District of Columbia Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007. This legislation empowered Mayor Fenty to take control and responsibility for the management of DCPS. In 2007, Mayor Fenty appointed Michelle Rhee as the first chancellor of DCPS. Rhee is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school system, which currently includes over 55,000 students and 11,500 employees. Mayor Fenty also reorganized the State Education Office and renamed it the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). As listed on their website, OSSE is responsible for the following programs and services:

- Early Care And Education Administration (ECEA)
- Education Licensure Commission (ELC)
- Educator Licensing and Accreditations
- Elementary and Secondary Education, Title I
- GEAR UP
- Higher education financial services
- Nutrition services
- Policy, research & analysis



- Public charter school financing & support

According to the website City-data.com, in the 2002-2003 academic year, DCPS consisted of 168 schools and learning centers, with more than 101 elementary schools, 11 middle schools, 9 junior high schools, 20 senior high schools, 6 education centers, and 20 special schools. The schools are comprised of a diverse student body with more than 1100 ethnic groups represented. The ethnic classifications of the students were estimated at 84.4% Black, 9.4% Hispanic, 4.6% White, and 1.6% Asian American.

Mayor Fenty's policies, DCPS's reorganization, and Chancellor Rhee's leadership increased funding and awareness to support a college-going culture among D.C. youth. A good education is particularly essential in the D.C. area. "In 2000, employees with a [bachelor of arts] or higher held 54% of District jobs compared with only 28% nationally. . . . The unemployment rates of District residents vary starkly by education. . . . District residents without a high school degree had a three-year (2003-2005) average unemployment rate of 17%, compared with 3% with those with a [bachelor of arts] of higher" (Ross and Derenzis 2006, 13). The educational system in D.C. lacks the resources necessary to fully and effectively educate today's youth.

As with most major metropolitan areas in the United States, the challenges facing DCPS and D.C. public charter school students and their families are well documented. The lack of resources, such as textbooks, quality school facilities, and a competent support structure (e.g. counseling and academic advising), disproportionately affect lower-income areas such as Anacostia and parts of Northeast and Southeast D.C.

In D.C., "only 9% of incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders complete college on time. The remainder—the more than 90% who leave the high school system, never start college, or

fail to finish their degree—will face a future of diminished opportunities and low wage jobs” (Kernan-Schloss and Potapchuk 2006). According to Binbaum (2009), “The D.C. graduation rate fell to 48.8%, down 8.8 percentage points from the previous year. The figure did not include public charter schools.”

*College Access Program Models in Washington, D.C.*

In response to the continuing and serious challenges facing D.C. students who either plan to go to college and/or show college potential, programs have emerged. Several D.C. college-access programs were created to serve D.C. public and/or public charter school students who have fiscal budgets of at least \$1 million. According to their website, D.C.’s College Success Foundation was launched in 2007 with a considerable financial investment from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The D.C. College Success Foundation primarily focuses on the needs of more than 2,000 low-income students in Wards 7 and 8. Selected students were to receive scholarship awards and additional support for 10 years. Other local programs with a similar mission include Hoop Dreams Scholarship Fund and the D.C. College Access Program (DC-CAP). Since its inception, Hoop Dreams Scholarship Fund has awarded more than 700 academic college scholarships and scholarship renewals totaling \$2 million, and DC-CAP continues to work in partnership with DCPS to provide counseling, financial assistance, scholarships, parent education, and college application assistance (DC-CAP 2008).

Washington, D.C. is also served by College Summit, which offers the following:

- an online application management tool called CSNet
- teacher training to fill the role that college-experienced parents play for their children in middle-class communities

- the “Navigator” curriculum for high school seniors
- an “Educator’s Navigator” manual for teachers
- intensive 4-day college application and transition workshops
- a peer leader and alumni development program
- youth facilitators
- an ever-expanding network of school district and college/university partners

(Venture Philanthropy Partners 2003-2009)

### *College Bound Incorporated*

Because poverty, violence, and troubled home environments affect youth on a daily basis, they are truly at risk of failure in school. Many of the youth have a substantial need for intervention programs and services that can help them prepare for college and the workforce. In a recent study entitled, *Double the Numbers*, conducted by the Gates Foundation, College Bound was identified as one of five college-access programs serving the District.

College Bound was established in 1991 as a private nonprofit organization to support a stressed DCPS by helping to prepare eighth through twelfth grade underserved, low-income public school students in the D.C. metropolitan area. Specifically, they are given support to achieve their goal of going to college. In many cases, students enroll in the program in the eighth grade and remain until graduation from high school. College Bound receives considerable support from numerous sources including the Freddie Mac Foundation, the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Wesley Family Foundation.

College Bound fulfills a vital role throughout the D.C. metropolitan area. The mission of the program is to prepare public/public charter school students in the metropolitan D.C. area to enter college, earn a degree, and achieve their personal and professional goals. The students, volunteers, families, and staff are committed to creating a network of support for students. The primary objectives of College Bound are to (1) increase student in-class academic performance, (2) improve student performance on standardized tests, and (3) increase student interest in, preparation for, and access to colleges/universities. College Bound teaches students that an individual's ability to read, write, and solve problems proficiently is essential to functioning well in school, on the job, and in society. Through the various program components, students are exposed to the possibilities of attending college, guided in the direction of higher education, and motivated through incentives.

DCPS has struggled to provide students with the academic skills to be competitive, but the focus on basic classroom instruction has left little or no time for attention to college preparatory activities. Many students in underserved urban settings have the desire to attend college, but lack the guidance, attention, and exposure necessary to fulfill their potential.

College Bound offers students a structured environment to set goals and strengthen their academic skills, while preparing them for the next stage of their lives. For the last 10 years, at least 95% of College Bound's seniors have graduated from high school and gained acceptance into college. College Bound recognizes the need for a college education in today's society and works to increase the number of students making

the transition to higher education (Ward 2008). Table 1 illustrates how the College Bound program components have potential short- and long-term effects on students.

College Bound is a nonprofit 501(c) 3 organization. Its programmatic initiatives are supported by funds from individuals, foundations, corporations, and government agencies. Individual gifts constitute 15% of the organization's revenue streams, and foundations account for 60%. The organization's 2008 budget was nearly a million dollars. Direct programmatic expenses constitute 85% of the program's overall expenses, which also includes \$73,000 in annual scholarship awards. There is a direct correlation between the capacity of the program and the financial resources available to operate the program.

College Bound is not a national initiative, nor is it affiliated with any other programs with similar names or missions. Though there are other programs named College Bound, this program can be distinguished by its specific mission to support D.C. area youth. Most commonly, College Bound is confused with Upward Bound. Though the programs address similar needs, Upward Bound is a federal program, whereas College Bound is private nonprofit community-based organization. In addition, College Bound takes a holistic approach to preparing underserved youth for college by offering mentoring and tutoring sessions, college tours, SAT/ACT preparatory classes, and a host of financial aid, writing, and literacy workshops. These program components develop students' basic social, academic, and cognitive skills. The program begins in September and concludes in May, with specialized financial literacy workshops in the summer (see figure 1).

**Table 1. College Bound program components**

<b>Program Components</b>	<b>Elements of Change</b>	<b>Short-term Change</b>	<b>Long-term Change</b>
College Tours	Exposure	_____●	_____●
Mentors/partners	Guidance	_____●	_____●
Taste of College Night College Fair	Exposure	_____●	
Career Fair	Exposure	_____●	_____●
Senior Retreat	Guidance	_____●	
Alumni Night	Peer Support	_____●	
Financial Literacy Workshops	Guidance	_____●	_____●
Scholarship	Incentive	_____●	_____●

Program participants are recruited through their peers, word of mouth, principal and guidance counselor referrals, and public campaigns. The students who participated in the program were eighth through twelfth graders. Though there were several students who enrolled because a parent or caregiver mandated that they do so, program staff strongly discouraged those students from joining. During orientation, staff members affirmed the organization’s policy and strongly discouraged prospective student

participants who were not willing to commit to the program and were not joining voluntarily.

In May 2008, 38 D.C. public and public charter school seniors completed the College Bound program. Students served by the program participate because they have an interest in going to college someday. All students are provided with counseling and guidance regarding college preparation, college expectations, and the impact of academic success on their social and economic viability.

College Bound students come from various home environments, including single-parent families and grandparent-led households, and have diverse socio-economic backgrounds. The motivation for College Bound students' participation is equally as diverse. Their sense of self-fulfillment and self-esteem coupled with their desire to learn and achieve often motivate them. Their sense of pride is apparent during academic mentoring sessions when students report to the group on positive and uplifting events in their lives. For example, a student may share that his or her grade on a recent Algebra test improved from a "D" to a "B." Another student may report receiving an acceptance letter from the college of his or her choice. Such a supportive environment gives students confidence and a sense of self-pride.

Due to limited resources, College Bound only keeps track of approximately 20% of its seniors as they enter college. Though the program has not conducted extensive longitudinal research on its current or former participants, College Bound created a nurturing environment that became the basis for keeping the students connected to the organization. College Bound's board of directors is actively seeking financial support to develop a college support initiative to track its current and former students.



**Figure 1. Program year cycle and program components**



The College Bound program only admits 30-35 youth per site location. These limitations allow the staff to offer students the personalized attention they need. Also, the number of participants admitted into the program is determined by the program's ability to recruit and match a college-educated mentor with a student. In 2001, College Bound underwent an internal audit and began a 5-year strategic planning process. As a result of the audit and planning process, best practices and opportunities for development were identified. The board and CEO implemented new management systems, expanded programming, stabilized the financial portfolio, and established new program policies to increase viability.

The 2001-2006 Strategic Plan refined the organization's programs to focus on the following four strategic areas: (1) Academic Mentoring Program; (2) SAT/ACT Prep Program; (3) Scholarships, and (4) Enrichment/College Preparation Services. The strategic plan established clear benchmarks for serving students. For example, the Academic Mentoring Program, a programmatic initiative of the College Bound organization, serves at least 100 students a year with a one-to-one match of mentors to students. During the weekly sessions, students and their mentors work on subject-specific assignments. The weekly sessions are held in cafeterias and meeting halls. These venues are donated through contractual partnerships with local churches, government entities, schools, and community centers. The 2007-2010 Strategic Plan proposed to expand the services of College Bound into Ward 8 and Prince Georges County in Maryland by the fall of 2008. Currently, there are five community locations throughout the D.C. area that are located in Wards 5, 6, and 7 (see Appendix A). Each site serves nearly thirty-five

youth. The program's growth and development is fueled by Mayor Fenty's commitment to improving educational opportunities for D.C. students.

According to College Bound's 2004-2005 independent evaluation profile report, 23% of the students who enrolled in the program were high school seniors, 30.8% of the students were juniors, 19.5% of the students were sophomores, 20.2% of the students were freshman, and 6.5% of the students were eighth graders. The demographic profile of students revealed that the majority of students (87.9%) were African-American, and Hispanic youth accounted for 11.2%. Asian, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and other races represented the minority at frequencies of 0.9% each. Females accounted for 63% of the organization's student population (Anthony 2005). Approximately 40% of College Bound students attended a public charter school; 18% of the students were from suburban Prince Georges County Maryland, and 5% were from Northern Virginia. College Bound's leader projected that by September 2009 the program would have more than double the participants.

The SAT/ACT prep classes provide cost-free instruction to underserved D.C. public and public charter school students. The 8-week SAT/ACT prep classes serve 60 students three times a year in a classroom setting. The Scholarship Program offers \$6,000 (over a four-year period) to selected students who complete the Academic Mentoring Program portion and enroll in college. The Scholarship Program has been a critical component of the organization since its inception, and the board of directors made policy changes to increase the number of high school juniors and seniors eligible to apply. A \$1,000 alumni civic award is available on a competitive basis for selected alumni who complete College Bound and are currently enrolled in college.

These policy changes also improved the overall fiscal management of the program, thus establishing a 30% to 70% allocation distribution of scholarship dollars for eligible junior and senior high school students. Enrichment/college prep services offer a range of activities and events, which include the annual fall and spring college tour, career fair, and college fair. These events were designed to expose students to college campuses, career choices, and college educated professionals.

The next section introduces literature on topics that frame the discussion for the study. These readings lay the groundwork for further research. Therefore, the review of the literature examines work of an academic, professional, and analytical nature. This approach was chosen to offer the reader varying perspectives on college access and preparation processes, educational attainment globally and in the USA, and the relationship of poverty, income, and educational attainment. This body of knowledge was chosen to equip the reader with a multi-perspective view of the literature. The literature review examines reports, academic and professional journals, and studies conducted within the last 10 years. The wealth of information available regarding education, college access, re-socialization and human capacity seem unlimited. This literature review focused on the socio-economic conditions that affect youth as they are socialized and develop their human capacity.

Washington, D.C. was selected for the study because it is one of the most expensive and politically powerful cities in the country, yet DCPS students are performing well below the national average. The literature review begins by offering a framework for the importance of college access and a college degree in the global marketplace.

## Review of the Literature

An essential component of this study is the critical review of selected literature. The selection of the literature includes (1) theoretical and conceptual literature with the potential to illuminate key concepts and theories of socialization, human capacity development, and public policy dynamics; (2) policy literature describing the laws and administrative rule makers associated with the development and management of the College Bound program; and (3) studies of comparable interventions and the benefits on college preparation.

The literature review reveals sobering disparities in college preparation and access based on family income, parental education attainment, quality of schooling, and social status in the community. Four examples follow: (1) There is a disparity in academic guidance and college preparation for youth in underserved neighborhoods; (2) Most studies and reports on college access tend to focus on the gaps between household income and costs of attending college, but not on college preparedness; (3) Underserved communities are deficient in providing adequate enrichment opportunities for youth; and (4) There is a lack of mentors and role models for youth in underserved communities.

### *Global Economy and Higher Education*

The opportunities afforded to the baby boomer generation are no longer available today. The USA has moved from an industrial society to a technologically global network. Technology has placed greater demands upon the education system to prepare all students for leadership and success in the global economy.

A study produced by the Callan and Finney (2003, 3) found that “throughout the world, the pressure to develop human talent by raising educational levels extends to higher education—that is, to education and training beyond high school. The most successful nations in developing human talent through the postsecondary levels will have enormous competitive advantages over those that do not.”

The United States lags behind most other developed countries when it comes to education. Hertz (2006) notes that America’s leadership in post-secondary education is modest compared to other countries such as France, Germany, and Denmark. Reindl (2007) compares the numbers of degrees awarded in America with international competitors. The international community is surpassing the United States in educating its citizens. “Although the United States ranks among the top five [countries] in the proportion of young people who attend college, it ranks 16<sup>th</sup> in the proportion who actually finish” (4). Citing data from a number of sources, this report identifies seven nations that lead the USA in degree attainment: Belgium, Canada, Ireland, Japan, Norway, South Korea, and Sweden. The Economic Report of the President and the Council of Economic Advisers (2006) shows that youth in a number of advanced countries score higher in their math and science than U.S. students, and that this country needs to prepare its youth for jobs that will be available in the future.

## *Education in the United States*

Educational attainment is a key forecaster of economic success and mobility. America's higher education system has a long history of addressing questions of social mobility. Centuries ago the U.S. government hailed education for its ability to be a gateway between prosperity and failure. Public policies, programs, and revenue streams were created to manage the value of education. The programs that emerged included (1) the GI Bill, Dartmouth's role in educating Native Americans; and (2) the Land Grant Act of 1862, which established colleges "in order to promote the liberal and practical education of industrial classes" (Eddy 1958). Since then, the federal government's role in educational issues was fairly negligible until 1954, when *Brown vs. Board of Education*, was decided.

The United States Supreme Court announced its decision that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" (Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483; 1954). Following that decision, the federal government's involvement in educational issues remained relatively minor until the mid-60s, when the Lyndon Johnson administration established the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA). ESEA was passed to offer federal assistance to poor schools, communities, and children, whereas Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 provided financial assistance in the form of grants, loans, and work-study for students attending U.S. postsecondary educational institutions. These laws became the backbone for TRIO programs (Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Services). Low-income, first-generation college students and disabled students

progress from middle school to post-baccalaureate programs because of the support that the Federal TRIO programs provide (U.S. Department of Education 2008).

College preparedness is a seriously important goal for all high school students for postsecondary education is quickly becoming a minimum standard for all American workers in the 21st century. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2006), “The percentage of high school completers who enroll in college in the fall immediately after high school reflects the accessibility of and the value placed on college education. The immediate college (2- or 4-year) enrollment rate for all high school completers ages 16–24 increased between 1972 and 1997 from 49 to 67%. Then, the enrollment rate declined to 62% by 2001, before rising again to 67% in 2004.” A Carnegie Foundation report found that “non-monetary individual benefits of higher education include the tendency for postsecondary students to become more open-minded, more cultured, more rational, more consistent, and less authoritarian; these benefits are also passed along to succeeding generations” (Porter 2002, 2).

#### *Student Aspirations and Curriculum Support*

A high school diploma is the minimum qualification for many jobs in our society. An employee without a high school diploma is largely relegated to menial jobs. This is a dramatic concern for educators and policy advocates as high school drop-out rates across the country continue to increase. For more than 50 years, American have focused on the needs of underserved youth, their aspirations, and preparation for the future. The 1983 publication *A Nation at Risk* emphasized the country’s need to address poor academic performance among children. Despite gallant efforts, the level of academic achievement for too many students remains largely unaffected, especially in poor communities and

communities of color. The report suggested that educational policies attempt to improve education by developing demanding and measurable standards to test academic performance. The goal of the educational reform was to raise the bar of educational attainment so that U.S. citizens will be academically prepared and competitive in the job market. Webster and Bishaw (2006) affirmed that “a high school diploma alone is no longer enough: Earning a family-supporting wage means having a postsecondary education.” Students’ aspirations for attending college are greatly influenced by the encouragement and support received from significant people in their lives.

In recent years, studies have focused their attention on issues that contribute to undesirable behaviors and their impact on academic achievement. The Education Commission of the States (2006) supports the notion that underserved at-risk youth and their families have compounded needs that cannot be attended to with stand-alone initiatives. It is also understood that students need more than instructional services to be successful in school. Hossler (2008) suggests that there has been a significant increase in non-school-based programs that provide information, support, and encouragement for low-income and first-generation youth to pursue postsecondary education. Community-based programs have the capacity to provide support for at-risk youth beyond traditional school hours. Others who have researched this population support the Education Commission of the States’ findings. “Graduation rates for at-risk students are particularly dire. While 78% of white students graduated from high school in the class of 2002, only 56% of African-American and 52% of Hispanic students did” (Greene and Winters 2005).



In spite of their socio-economic status, there is a need to help all students develop the aspirations and skills needed to be successful in postsecondary settings. Students from white middle- or upper-income families enroll in postsecondary programs and complete college at a higher rate than underserved students, defined as low-income, underrepresented minority students or students who are the first generation to attend college in their families. This discrepancy is attributed to the fact that upper-income students began developing their academic skills in middle school (Valentine, Clark, Hackmann, and Petzko 2002). The National Center for Education Statistics (2000, 47) reported that “high school graduates from low-income families enter 4-year institutions at lower rates than their higher income peers. While financial barriers to college attendance exist for many low-income students, another reason for their lower enrollment rate is that they are less qualified academically.” Students’ aspirations for attending college are greatly affected by the amount of encouragement and support received from significant people in their lives.

College planning motivates students and encourages them to work harder while enrolled in high school. Underserved students overall do not prepare for college while in high school. Consequently, they enroll at a much lower rate. The Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis (CHEPA) identified factors that influence college preparation and enrollment: academic, college, and career counseling; co-curriculum activities; incorporation of students’ cultures; family and community engagement; peer support; mentoring; timing of interventions; and funding priorities (Tierney, Colyar, and Corwin 2003).

The U.S Department of Education (2002) found that by eighth grade, many students begin to express interest in attending a postsecondary institution. Gullatt and Jan (2002) cite the importance of middle schools' building partnerships with community-based organizations and postsecondary institutions to intervene on behalf of the underserved student. Community-based collaborations maximize limited resources and allow students to receive specialized attention. The U.S. Department of Education (2005) offers the following 10 principles of practice as key components of developing an effective program:

1. setting high standards for program staff and students
2. providing personalized attention to each student
3. providing adult role models
4. facilitating peer support
5. integrating the program with the school
6. providing strategically timed interventions
7. starting early and making long-term investments in students
8. providing students with a bridge between school and society
9. providing scholarship assistance
10. designing evaluations that contribute to the overall results of the interventions

Hafner, Ingels, Schneider, and Stevenson (1990) reported that eighth graders in this country have high academic and career aspirations. Research data show that Black male and Hispanic female students display diminishing aspirations for college between grades eight and ten (Kao and Tienda 1998).

A U.S. Department of Education report (1998) states that “the postsecondary planning process is a combination of behaviors and actions taken throughout P–16 that enables a student to (1) successfully transition from high school to postsecondary education and (2) successfully complete desired postsecondary training.” A student’s social network (family, peers, mentors, teachers, faculty, and staff) influence their perceptions and attitudes about postsecondary education (Tierney, Colyar, and Corwin 2003).

Planning for college begins as early as the seventh grade. One college preparation guide, titled *The ACT Policy Report: College Readiness Begins in Middle School*, recommends the following:

1. considering postsecondary education
2. deciding to attend college
3. selecting high school courses to prepare for postsecondary training
4. maintaining good grades in high school courses
5. obtaining information about colleges and academic programs
6. obtaining information about financial aid opportunities
7. preparing for and taking college admissions tests
8. exploring college major and career interests
9. visiting college campuses
10. completing college admission applications
11. applying for financial aid and scholarships
12. selecting (possible) college(s) to attend (Wimberly and Noeth 2005, 2)

Wimberly and Noeth add that “to ensure that students have ample time to consider and explore their postsecondary education and career options, college readiness activities should begin in the middle school and be reinforced throughout the high school years” (2005). Further, Camblin (2003) advocates for instilling the expectation of college readiness in students as early as the middle grades to ensure that they begin to develop college and career aspirations and create an appropriate academic plan.

Student aspirations are reinforced by involved parents and caring mentors. Both parents and mentors perform a fundamental role in motivating the student. The importance of having a mentor and engaged family members cannot be undervalued. Rhodes (2002) cautions that youth are better left alone than paired with a mentor who cannot commit time to developing the relationship.

Rumberger and Brenner (2000) examined fifth graders who participated in a California mentoring program. The results of the study demonstrated that mentoring had minimal effects on student performance and moderate impact on developing college going skills. Lacrose (2009) contends that “academic mentoring is more attractive for some students than others depending on their personality, help-seeking attitudes, academic dispositions, perceived support from friends, and support available during the transition to college.” Mentors complement the efforts of caring individuals from the community, family, school, and church. The chairman emeritus of the 100 Black Men of America adds that the environment from which young people come affects their attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs (Dortch 2000). During his national evaluation of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Langhout (2004) found that youth who characterized their mentor relationships as providing moderate support, structure, and activity derived the largest

benefit from the relationships, including improvements in social, psychological, and academic outcomes. Many students have aspirations to achieve higher education; they merely lack the guidance, advice, encouragement, and support to achieve their academic goals.

*College Preparatory and Access Programs: TRIO and GEAR UP*

College preparatory and access programs provide critical support, guidance, and encouragement for underserved students in the areas of academic and social support, college planning, and, in some cases, scholarship. Swail and Roth (2000) argue that only a small proportion of the students benefit from college access and preparation programs. Therefore, additional efforts should be directed toward expanding access to them through school-based, comprehensive efforts. For many students, college transition programs are viewed as a game of chance where only the fortunate have access.

According to a 2001 College Board study, there are “1,091 outreach programs operating in all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and Micronesia. Of these, one-third are federal TRIO programs, while an additional 9% are GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) programs.” Limited research is available that tracks targeted programs and local community programs for underserved students. “Intervention programs use various techniques to prepare students for college. However, most programs commonly stress academic and social preparation for college” (Tierney and Venegas 2004, 2). There is definitely a need for more research on the effectiveness of college preparation programs. Much of the data that is available has been derived from TRIO programs and similar nationally recognized programs such as *I Have a Dream*, *MESA* (Mathematics,

Engineering, Science Achievement), and *AVID* (Advancement via Individual Determination), with little attention to the wide scope of other programs (Perna 2002). According to Gandara (2001), “Little is known about the long-term effects of pre-college outreach programs, since most programs do not offer systemic interventions and most administrators do not collect longitudinal data.”

The need to create a better-educated society took center stage during President Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty and “Great Society” initiatives, which established the legislation for the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 that authorized the establishment of the TRIO programs. The TRIO programs were established to provide educational opportunity for youth, regardless of their race or ethnic background. The first of the TRIO programs, Upward Bound, emerged to provide fundamental support to high school students in their preparation for college entrance. The following year Talent Search was established. This outreach program was created as part of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide academic, career, and financial counseling to its participants. Talent Search was followed in 1968 by the launch of Student Support Services, which was originally known as Special Services for Disadvantaged Students. This initiative was authorized by the Higher Education Amendments and was the third program of the educational opportunity programs series.

‘TRIO’ was coined in the Higher Education Act of 1965, Title IV, Part A, Subpart 2 to describe Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Services. The TRIO programs were established to help low-income students overcome barriers to higher education “Many college access programs offer financial aid assistance programs that help students overcome financial barriers to higher education; TRIO programs help

students overcome class, social and cultural barriers to higher education” (Council for Opportunity in Education 2001). Talent Search, one of the TRIO programs, was designed to increase the number of youth from disadvantaged backgrounds who complete high school and enroll in a postsecondary institution. The program provides “academic, career, and financial counseling to its participants and encourages them to graduate from high school and continue on to the postsecondary school of their choice” (U.S. Department of Education 2005). Talent Search also encourages high school dropouts to re-enter school. Services provided by the program are listed below:

1. academic, financial, career, or personal counseling including advice on entry or re-entry to secondary or postsecondary programs
2. career exploration and aptitude assessment
3. tutorial services
4. information on postsecondary education
5. exposure to college campuses
6. information on student financial assistance
7. assistance in completing college admissions and financial aid applications
8. assistance in preparing for college entrance exams
9. mentoring programs
10. special activities for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders
11. workshops for the families of participants (U.S. Department of Education 2005)

The most widely recognized college access program, Upward Bound, serves high school students from low-income families. Students are eligible for Upward Bound if neither of their parents graduated from college and if they are from low-income families. The purpose of Upward Bound is to “increase the rates at which participants enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education” (U.S. Department of Education 2005).

All Upward Bound projects provide instruction in math, laboratory science, composition, literature, and foreign language. Projects also include the following:

1. instruction in reading, writing, study skills, and other subjects necessary for success in education beyond high school
2. academic, financial, or personal counseling
3. exposure to academic programs and cultural events
4. tutorial services
5. mentoring programs
6. information on postsecondary education opportunities
7. assistance in completing college entrance and financial aid applications
8. assistance in preparing for college entrance exams
9. work-study positions to expose participants to careers requiring a postsecondary degree” (U.S. Department of Education 2005)

Laws’ (1999) analysis of several studies revealed that Upward Bound has positively influenced student academic performance. However, investigation conducted by Mathematica Policy Research (2004) found that “participation in Upward Bound had



no effect on enrollment at postsecondary institutions or postsecondary credits earned by students overall; it may have increased enrollment in four-year colleges by about six (6) percentage points but the evidence is not statistically conclusive.”

Faulcon (1994) conducted an analysis of the Upward Bound program that studied key indicators such as high school attendance, high school graduation, college enrollment, and academic preparation. The report found that Upward Bound participants complete high school and enroll in college at a higher rate than nonparticipants. Williams-Molock (1999) references the students experience in Upward Bound as an overall contributor to the increase in their grade point averages and an increase in college aspirations, and another study argues that Upward Bound students perceive their participation as a positive influence on their motivation to pursue higher education (Zulli 2000). Olszewski-Kubilius and Grant (1998) found that as a result of participating in Talent Search, students succeeded in advanced classes, earned more awards and honors, and had higher educational aspirations.

The third TRIO program, Student Support Services (SSS), develops students academically, assists them with college requirements, and motivates them to successfully complete college. The program is designed to increase college retention and graduation rates and to help them progress through college.

Services provided by the program include the following:

1. instruction in basic study skills
2. tutorial services
3. academic, financial, or personal counseling

4. assistance in securing admission and financial aid for enrollment in four-year institutions
5. assistance in securing admission and financial aid for enrollment in graduate and professional programs
6. information about career options
7. mentoring
8. special services for students with limited English proficiency
9. direct financial assistance (grant aid) to current SSS participants who are receiving Federal Pell Grants (U.S. Department of Education 2005)

The U.S. Department of Education (2006) notes that “37% of TRIO students are Whites; 35% are African-Americans; 19% are Hispanics; 4% are Native Americans; 4% are Asian-Americans, and 1% are listed as "Other," including multiracial students” (Council for Opportunity in Education 2005). Established over 40 years ago, TRIO programs continue to positively affect youth from unprivileged families.

Under the Clinton Administration, the U.S. Department of Education established GEAR UP to connect institutions of higher education with high-poverty middle schools. GEAR UP utilizes schools and community partnerships to hasten the academic achievements of cohort students through their high school graduation. “GEAR UP partnerships supplement (not supplant) existing reform efforts, offer services that promote academic preparation and the understanding of necessary costs to attend college, provide professional

development, and continuously build capacity so that projects can be sustained beyond the term of the grant” (U.S. Department of Education 2005).

For decades the TRIO programs have been central to the federal government’s method of putting an end to cyclical poverty. Nearly 832,000 students from grades six through college participated in Upward Bound and Talent Search in 2002. That same year, GEAR UP had nearly 1.2 million students (Stedman 2002).

### *Poverty, Income, and Education*

This section examines the relationship between poverty, income, and education in Washington, D.C. College preparatory and access programs are a means to higher education and reducing poverty. Washington, D.C. has the highest child poverty rate in the country: 32 % (U.S. Census Bureau 2005). Educational achievement affects individual earnings and reduces poverty.

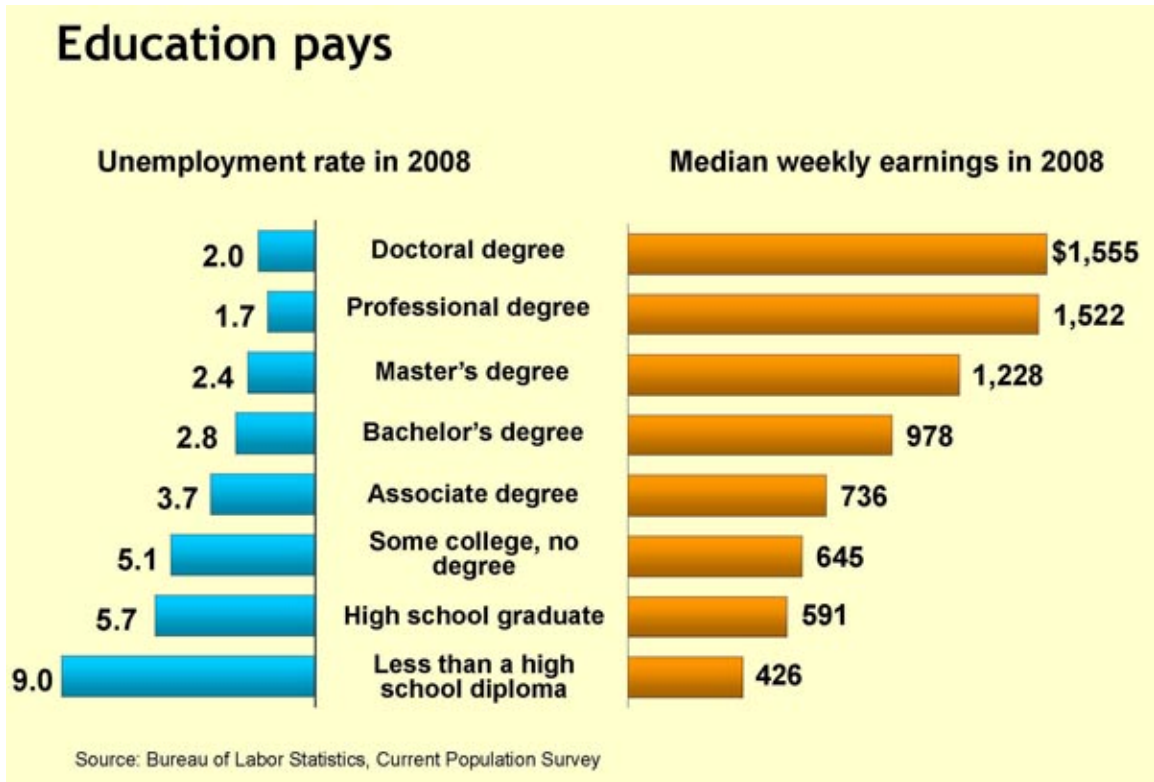
This is particularly important in the nation’s capital where the Current Population Survey (CPS) reports that overall poverty in the District has increased. The 2005 estimated poverty rate was 19.8% of all residents, 98,069 persons. Child poverty remained high with 36% of all children and 42% of all African-American children living below the federal poverty level in 2005 (Cigna, Comey, Guernsey, and Tatian 2006). Washington is a wealthy city, but its wealth is distributed unevenly. Although “per capita income is 44% higher than the national average, one in six city residents lives in poverty and one in four children lives in extreme poverty (family income less than half the federal poverty level). A startling 45.3% of the students attending Washington’s public schools live in poverty” (White 2001).

There is a direct correlation between one's income and the need for educational attainment in our society. "A quality education has always been regarded as one the best means to improve social and economic prospects for disadvantaged segments of the society" (Lewis and Patram 1998). A degree is decidedly valued by American society. Educational achievement is a key determinant of social and economic class in America.

A U.S. Census Bureau study (2002) reveals that workers with a professional degree are projected to earn a median of \$4.4 million over their life span, whereas those who possess a bachelor's degree are projected to earn \$2.1 million, and high school graduates are projected to earn only \$1.2 million (Stone 2005). Figure 2 shows median weekly earning and unemployment rates for eight levels of educational in 2008.

"The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data show that workers who possess a bachelor's or graduate degree have higher earnings and lower unemployment than workers who have less education. It is projected that between 2002 and 2012, more than 14 million job openings will be filled by workers who have a bachelor's or graduate degree and who are entering an occupation for the first time" (Lacey and Crosby 2004). Employers use diplomas and degrees to screen job applicants. Salaries are generally correlated to educational attainment. Not investing in the education of underserved youth leads to their experiencing diminished employment and career opportunities. It was revealed that the single most important factor in determining level of income is level of education. "The education and training that most Americans require to fully participate in our economy and society are not simply education credentials but the specific knowledge and skill levels that the credential implies. Public policy should recognize these changes

by assuring that almost all Americans have access to at least two years of education and training beyond high school” (Callan and Finney 2003, 2).



**Figure 2: Unemployment rates and median weekly earnings by educational attainment level**

Income gaps often correspond to racial divisions and disparities in a community. According to a report from the D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute, residents of D.C.’s high-poverty neighborhoods suffer high rates of social problems such as violent crime, teen parenthood, low education achievement, and child abuse and neglect (Rolland 2006). The Planning a City for Social Equity white paper shows that half of Ward 8’s children are living in poverty. Ward 8 has a 38% overall poverty rate, the highest of any ward (McKoy, Rubin, and Walter 2003). According to Census 2000 data, more than “60% of

the population in poverty lives outside [D.C.'s] Wards 7 and 8; however, half of the children living in D.C's Ward 8 are living in poverty" (District of Columbia Literacy Education and Resource Network n.d.). The Census 2000 poverty rate for the Washington area suburbs was 5.8%. "African-Americans had the largest numeric and percentage increase [of poverty in D. C.] among all racial categories. More than one quarter of the African-American population is now in poverty, representing 77% of all District residents in poverty" (Rubin 2002). Underserved youth are more likely to have difficulty in school and to have lower earning potential as adults. Williams (2004) maintains that "low-income individuals are less likely to pursue higher education; their average lifetime earning potential is less than that of students from middle- and upper-income families. Moreover, one of the most important determinants of an individual's propensity to pursue a university education is whether he or she has a parent with a university degree."

## Methodology

The qualitative research method used in this study is an exploratory case study. This quasi-experimental case study is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed (Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg 1991). This methodological approach gave voice to College Bound students and alumni.. Stake (1995) states, “Exploratory cases are sometimes considered as a prelude to social research.” The case study approach offered tangible and contextual evidence due to an in-depth exploration of the research participants. A practitioner seeking to delve deeper into that activities and perceptions of the program participants carried out this action research. The rigidity of other research techniques makes this approach the most appropriate. A quantitative approach could underestimate or neglect the immeasurable factors, which were most important to this study. The exploratory case study was ideal for this research because it was guided by evidence captured by College Bound students and alumni. Their outlook and opinions offered insight about the thought processes and attitudes of students and about how participation in programs such as College Bound can modify the way in which they view their educational destiny.

After reviewing the body of existing literature and developing the research question, the researcher established data collection procedures. This study focused on key evidence of the College Bound program as an intervention to re-socialize underserved youth. The data collection process included conducting ten one-on-one interviews, two focus groups, and a document review. These methods represent appropriate data collection techniques for a qualitative case study approach. A key objective of the study was to examine the growth and evolution of College Bound's strategy to re-socialize youth and to expose them to college. The identification and critical examination of key documentary materials associated with the program combined with the narrative reflections of program participants and alumni offer broad perspective and insight.

According to Stake (1995), case research method helps the researcher to explore “in depth a program, event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. The case(s) are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time” (15). The data collection approach included:

1. conducting focus group interviews with current and former College Bound students regarding their experiences in the program
2. conducting a document review of each student's application to develop a profile of the student
3. conducting a document review of each student's scholarship application (if applicable)
4. conducting an inventory of the services students received while participating in the program (e.g. college trips, senior retreat)



5. conducting a document review of the organization's evaluations to identify key program components
6. reviewing current student applications
7. conducting a document review of the Alumni Data Sheet (appendix B)

This case study was an appropriate method of inquiry because the researcher needed an in-depth analysis about a particular phenomenon in its natural context. For this research project, a case study approach was chosen to provide an in-depth analysis of the students' experiences while enrolled in the program from 2003-2009. The focus group sessions were conducted with both current and former program participants. Of the ten program alumni, six participated in the study. Of the ten current high school students invited, only five participated.

The focus groups were small enough to give every student and alumnus an opportunity to express an opinion, yet large enough to provide diversity in opinions. Each session was one hour. Yin (1994) states, "The case study method allows an investigation to maintain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events."

Through this methodological approach, data on the views, ideas, and concerns of the students were analyzed. Thus, this approach gave the students a voice to help the audience understand how intervention practices help to build human capacity. This methodology shaped the Moderators' Discussion Guide for current students (see appendix C). The Moderator's Discussion Guide for alumni consists of a series of similar questions (see appendix D). For both focus groups, the researcher sought to understand how the program aided students on their academic and professional journeys. This case study was buttressed by data supporting the conclusion that students who go to college

have access to better opportunities in life. The study's unit of analysis is the College Bound program.

Using focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and document reviews as research techniques offered triangulation of the study's results. A notetaker took notes during the focus group sessions. A video recording was proposed; however, the researcher became concerned about the altering affects that videotaping could have on the outcome of this research. The moderator's presence and skills ensured the authenticity of the data collection process. The moderator was selected because of her ability to effectively communicate with the population being studied and her familiarity with interviewing techniques.

#### *Participants*

The following criteria were used in selecting model study participants:

1. Students had to complete the College Bound program by May 2009.
2. Students had to have plans for attending college by the fall of 2009 or be enrolled in college.
3. Students must have been at least 16 years of age or older.
4. Students must have been enrolled in the College Bound program for at least 3 years or have completed it.
5. Students reside in the metropolitan D.C. area.
6. Students must be on track to receive a high school diploma from a D.C. public or public charter school by May 2009, or possess a high school diploma.

7. Students must have a signed consent form on file.
8. Students must have an approved application on file with the organization.

Students who met these criteria were invited to participate in this study using a purposeful random sample selection approach. Students who did not fulfill these requirements were not included in the study. “Establishing selection rules that are strictly followed during sample selection increases the external validity of the study” (Yin 1984). College Bound had 108 youth participating in the program when the study was conducted. Two students were selected from College Bound’s Gonzaga High School site to participate in the one-on-one interviews. Likewise, two students were selected to participate from the Beacon House site, and only one student was available to participate from the Chavez site. Current College Bound students were provided with general information about this research project as a part of their weekly announcements. Some students volunteered, and some were identified by their site coordinators for participation in this study. The site coordinators assistance with recruiting the participants contributed to the students’ comfort level with the study and the moderator. Because the current students were under the age of 18, the consent forms were explained to their guardians as well as the students.

The researcher contacted alumni randomly. First the researcher drafted an email to all former College Bound students who had email addresses on file, and then an announcement was sent through the College Bound Facebook page and listserv. The

researcher scheduled a date for the respondents to participate in the focus group session. Alumni were also encouraged to contact other alumni to encourage them to participate in the study.

The focus group participants enrolled in College Bound were selected on a first-come, first-chosen basis. These participants were given the restriction that he or she could not participate in both the one-on-one interviews and the focus groups. The students chosen for this study represented graduates from the classes of 2003 through 2007. This timeframe represents a wide array of opinions and experiences. This wide range in ages among the study participants imparted variation and corroboration in the data collected. Students received assurances that their responses were held in confidence, and that they would not be mentioned by name in the analysis and conclusion. The researcher also assured the participants that their responses would not affect their personal or professional references.

This study used a focus group interview format. This approach was selected because the focus group interviews offered an in-depth perspective from a broad number of current and former participants. By using a focus group approach, a topic can be explored through the exchange of group interaction and discussion. The focus group interview format allowed for two 60-minute focus group sessions. During the focus group sessions, the students spoke openly and freely about the program.

The Moderator's Discussion Guides (current student and alumni) provided direction and enabled the moderator to inquire about specific research topics during the focus group and interview sessions. The guides are divided into four sections: (1) background information; (2) structure of the College Bound program (3) personal goals

and objectives, and (4) key programmatic assessment. The first section of the guide explores background information of the students. The students were asked questions about their background, their involvement in College Bound, improving the program, and their career and educational goals.

(Note: College Bound uses the term “partner” in place of what is commonly referred to as a mentor. Mentor will be used herein, except in quoted material, tables, and text copied verbatim from College Bound documents.)

In the second section, eight questions inquire about the structure and services of the College Bound program. This section explores the human capacity building activities of the program. By probing the students about their decision to attend college, the role of College Bound staff, and their relationships with their mentors, the research gives a voice to the participants. In section three, the researcher captured information on the students’ personal goals and objectives. For example, question 15 in section three, asked about career goals. Question 6 in section two asked how the program impacted their decision to attend college. In the final section, participants were invited to assess the program’s services and make recommendations for improvement.

The participants spoke candidly about their academic journey and their positive and negative experiences in the program. This dialogue offered insight into the students’ academic, personal, and professional goals. To ensure that the information gathered was accurate, consistent, and complete, the moderator facilitated both focus groups. This approach allowed for consistency in how the questions were asked. In preparation for the focus groups, the moderator

1. guided the students using the Moderator's Discussion Guide
2. instructed students to wear comfortable clothing to establish a relaxed environment
3. familiarized herself with the questions, goals, and protocol prior to the interviews
4. scripted the questions, which allowed for the researcher to anticipate his/her biases when asking questions
5. introduced and guided the discussion
6. refrained from editorializing or making judgmental comments
7. probed for clarification of student responses
8. worked with the notetaker to record responses factually
9. listened actively and carefully

#### *Description of Setting*

The focus groups were conducted in a conference room located in the Perry School Community Center, which was operated and leased by College Bound. The room was generally used to host volunteer training sessions and SAT/ACT preparatory classes. The room was 1,200 square feet and consisted of several conference style chairs and tables. The room was equipped with a water dispenser and microwave, which was available for the participants. Chairs were arranged in a circle to allow the moderator to face all of the students and watch for their nonverbal communication. During the focus group sessions, only the students, the moderator, and the notetaker were present.

The Perry School Community Center, located at 128 M Street, NW, Suite 220, Washington, D.C., is in a largely underprivileged community surrounded by the Sursum

Corda Housing development on the east, Holy Redeemer Catholic School on the west, New York Avenue to the north, and Terrell Middle school to the south. The facility is easily accessible by public transportation, with four rail stations (New York Avenue, Union Station, Mount Vernon, and Judiciary Square) and many bus stops nearby. To incentivize participation, the researcher offered the participants \$10 gift cards. Also, light snacks were made available for participants upon their arrival. The one-on-one interviews with the current students took place at their respective College Bound community-based sites (see appendix A).

### *Focus Group Approach*

The researcher created an MP3 audio file of the focus group interview sessions. Patton (1990) suggests that “the focus interview may provide quality controls in that false or extreme views may come from it. Another limitation with focus group interviews is that one cannot be sure that each group discusses identical issues equally.” Taking notes during a focus group interview helps to signify key points. “Researchers who employ this method are encouraged to use inter-rater reliability as a means to enhance the trustworthiness of the data” (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Data from the field notes and transcription were later organized by topic to create a codebook.

To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, only initials of the participants were recorded, and all materials were maintained at the house of the researcher. Other than the researcher, only the moderator and notetaker had access to the collected information. The data will be destroyed 3 years. The names of the study participants will not be included on any materials.

### *Focus Group Session Questions*

The moderator used the following questions to guide the focus groups for the current students and the alumni.

1. What school do you attend?
2. What are your educational goals?
3. In this group's opinion, how has the College Bound program helped you?
4. Describe efforts taken to encourage you to apply for college.
5. What else could be done to encourage you to attend college?
6. Is there anything else you would like to add or that you think would be helpful for us to know?

A cover letter and consent form instructed potential participants and their guardians to contact the researcher by email or fax if they did not wish to participate in the study (see appendix E).

A letter containing information about the study was emailed to the participants approximately one week before the focus group session. The letter included the following:

1. the intent of the interview
2. the location of the interview
3. the length of the interview
4. a statement about confidentiality
5. a description of the data collection procedures

The five points listed above ensured that volunteer study participants had a clear understanding of the purpose, scope, and expectations of this study.



The researcher prepared the students for the interview by asking them to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Students of the age of consent were asked to sign and submit a consent form that advised them of the purpose of this study.
2. Students were advised verbally and in writing that their responses would not have any bearing on their relationship with the College Bound program or its staff and board.
3. Students were asked a series of questions and asked to respond to the questions with limitless truth, honesty, and candor.
4. Students were asked approximately ten semi-structured questions within one 45-minute session.
5. Students were instructed to wear comfortable clothing.
6. Students were advised to eat before arriving at the interview, although snacks were made available.

#### *Focus Group Recording Procedures*

The researcher audio recorded the focus group interview sessions. Notetaking is suggested as a way to emphasize certain points. “Recordings have the advantage of capturing data more faithfully than hurriedly written notes might, and can make it easier for the researcher to focus on the interview” (Hoepfl 1997).

#### *One-on-One Interview Approach*

To minimize group think, which often occurs during focus group interviews, the researcher conducted one-on-one interviews. The researcher employed interviews to add qualitative depth to the study. The study consisted of formal one-on-one interview

sessions with five College Bound seniors and five alumni. Students were asked open-ended questions to explore the dynamics of the College Bound program. The questions were outlined in the Moderator's Discussion Guide. This approach encouraged conversation and participation and ensured that all study participants had a voice. Any student who declined comment was not referenced in the case study research. The notetaker recorded participant responses onsite for transcription at a later time. The interviews were a basis for contrast and comparison among the varying experiences of current participants and alumni. The researcher investigated how the student's participation in College Bound prepared them for college and the workforce. The interviewees articulated their perceptions and experiences about being program participants. Their insight offered a framework for understanding their experiences.

The researcher sought to examine the differences in responses among the students in a more intimate environment. The researcher made the assumption that students who are less vocal would not have a presence in the study. Therefore, the one-on-one interviews allowed for less vocal students to share their thoughts and ideas. The interview section is structured as follows: (1) background information; (2) structure of the College Bound program, (3) personal goals and objectives, and (4) key programmatic assessment. The first section extracted background information of the students. Current students were asked questions to capture demographic information such as the ward in which they lived, and if anyone else in the family attended college. This section explores the program as an intervention. The researcher inquired about the impact of the program on the participants' decision to attend college and the role of the mentor. Section three captures information on the students' personal goals and objectives. For example, a question asked

in this section was, “What are your career goals? and How has the program impacted your decision to attend college?” In the final section, participants were invited to assess the program’s services, and make recommendations for improvement.

#### *One-on-One Group Setting*

The researcher and moderator met with each study participant at their College Bound sites (i.e. Gonzaga, Chavez, and Beacon House). Arrangements were made for the moderator to interview the students in a private room near the meeting hall where the weekly College Bound sessions are held.

#### *Document Review*

The researcher extracted key facts from program documentation that included student applications, attendance records, scholarship applications (if applicable), and the Alumni Data Sheet (see appendix B). The student applications provided the researcher with pertinent geographic and demographic information, which allowed the researcher to develop a profile of the study participants. Attendance records furnished the researcher with data to determine the frequency of the participants’ involvement in the program. This was important data because students could not accurately or fairly offer insight if they had not taken part in the program with any regularity. Alumni were asked to complete a data form that captured their current residence, college, year of expected graduation, and place of employment (see appendix B).

#### *Data Analysis/Interpretation Procedures*

The data analysis and interpretation procedures were conducted to establish the credibility of the study. The data collected from interviews and focus group sessions were transcribed for data analysis within 2 weeks of collection. Patton (1990) notes that

“qualitative researchers tend to use inductive analysis of data, meaning that the critical themes emerge out of the data.” Once the interviews were completed, the researcher was able to identify the key issues and topics that emerged from the conversations. The interviews also humanized the research and added accountability. After compiling the data; the researcher constructed a case record. “An analysis begins with identification of the themes emerging from the raw data, which is a process sometimes referred to as open coding” (Strauss and Corbin 1990). The case record data was coded and classified. The researcher looked for consistent themes and ideas from the focus group and interview questions. A codebook was designed to assist the researcher in the analysis of data. The codebook also helped to organize the data. Once the codebook was created the researcher grouped the responses in the following categories:

- demographics
- academic
- college
- enrichment activities
- financial aid
- partners (mentors)
- social support
- career plans
- miscellaneous
- suggested improvements

Themes in the codebook were manually identified in both individual interviews (IIs) and focus groups (FGs). The researcher subdivided the raw data into subcategories such as state of residence. The descriptors for example were MD, VA, and DC. The researcher used a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to determine the frequency of the responses.

The researcher examined student enrollment applications, scholarship applications, and essays (if applicable), and the Alumni Data Sheet. Analysis of these documents helped to create a profile of the students individually and collectively. The responses to the update and application forms were allocated among the aforementioned categories. The procedures included the following:

1. conducting an inventory of the services (e.g. college trips and the senior retreat) students experienced while participating in the program
2. conducting document review of the organization's evaluations to identify key program components
3. conducting document review to gain an understanding of the students' academic development while enrolled in the program
4. reviewing each Alumni Update Form to assess the students' social development

#### *Strategies for Triangulating Study Findings*

Triangulating findings is critically important for this study. The study triangulated three interrelated methods within the case study framework: focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and a critical review of selected program documents. To ensure authenticity,

the study cross-referenced information captured from the focus group sessions, interviews, and program documents. Triangulation allowed the researcher to increase the credibility and validity of the research.

#### *Controlling for Bias*

To safeguard against biases and ensure credibility, the researcher openly acknowledged his bias and expectations. To assuage this bias, the focus group sessions and one-on-one interviews were conducted by the moderator. The moderator was a graduate student who expressed an interest in working with the researcher on this study. The notetaker had prior experience taking notation and volunteered to assist with this study.

#### *Delimitations and Limitations*

There are several foreseeable limitations. One limitation of this study is related to the generalizability of the research findings. Since qualitative data is described in words, it is not often generalizable. In addition, stratified purposeful sampling procedures decrease the generalizability of the research findings. The findings of this study were concluded from self-selecting, African-American youth who attended high school in the metro D.C. area. Therefore, caution should be taken when interpreting the findings of this study because they may only apply to African- American high school students who reside in urban areas and have some interest in attending college. Another limitation of this study is that its findings cannot be generalized or held true for every underserved public or public charter school student across the country. Elementary, middle, and high school institutions engage and develop students within an eight-hour school day for approximately nine months. However, there are extenuating factors that affect social

development and academic matriculation. Factors such as cultural, social, and class differences must be taken into account.

The next limitation is that only College Bound participants were used for this study. There is no control group to evaluate the extent to which the program was the catalyst of change. Also, the design of the questions did not allow for a pre- or post-comparison of how College Bound had changed its participants.

The fourth limitation is that one could not determine from the available history of College Bound families the difference between a relative's attendance and their graduation from an institution. This data would have proven to be beneficial because many youth view their family members as role models. When a close family member completes college, completing college seems more like an attainable goal for the younger person. The fifth limitation of this study is that College Bound recruits students who have a desire, passion, or at least some intent of going to college, versus those who are ambivalent. A sixth limitation involved the researcher's ability to conduct the focus group interviews with alumni while they were back home in Washington, D.C. The researcher may have had a higher participation rate among alumni had the research been conducted during the Christmas holiday break. There also seems to be a vast difference in responses between the current students and alumni. This may be due to a cohort effect or due to program changes. The final limitation is that parents, other family members, and guardians were not included in the study, though their input would have been valuable.

Although a more exhaustive study could be conducted, the investigator assumed that the research referred to herein was of a sufficient scope to satisfy the exploratory purposes of this study. There exists a need for further longitudinal research beyond this

line of inquiry; however, the intended objectives of the study have been achieved. The information presented in this study is useful in encouraging added debate and serving as an informative tool for educators, policy makers, and community leaders.

#### *Anticipated Ethical Issues*

The researcher anticipated that his dual role as chief executive officer of the College Bound program and researcher could potentially result in the suppression of data, low response rates, groupthink, and/or incomplete or inaccurate responses. A grave concern was that study participants might feel that unfavorable responses could hinder their being selected to receive a \$6,000 scholarship. The scholarship program required that its awardees meet the following criteria: (1) be enrolled in the College Bound program for at least 2 consecutive years, (2) volunteer in the community, and (3) demonstrate academic promise. The scholarship recipients' were assured that their participation in this study neither affected their scholarship award nor the disbursement of their payments. A group of community members, donors, and volunteers comprised the scholarship selection committee. This committee had no knowledge of the study participants' responses.

There was also a concern that that some students may have been anxious about meeting with the chief executive officer of the program, especially if they were not model students or if they anticipated needing references from the program in the future. Because these were legitimate concerns, an external moderator and notetaker were used to alleviate some of the students' anxieties.



### *Significance of the Study*

Access to and preparation for college are critical components in preparing underserved youth for the future. After 40 years of government intervention in our education system, our youth remain unprepared to compete academically in a global environment. Across the country, high school drop rates continue to increase and college enrollment rates decrease. Family crises and social and economic factors have dispirited many underserved youth from pursuing higher education. Nevertheless, many have persisted and achieved education beyond a high school diploma. Stereotyped as a lost generation, many of the program's participants have beaten the odds with the guidance offered by the College Bound program.

Program participants' varying perspectives guided this study, which increased its relevance to the needs of underprivileged youth. The participants provided valuable insight that contributed to recent baseline information about human capacity development for the purpose of improving high school completion rates, college enrollment rates, and employment rates. This research was unique and important because it investigated the role of College Bound as a means of building human capacity in underserved youth. The research results provided an understanding of the context in which youth integrate college preparation into their life choices and to the factors that influence them along their high school, college, and career paths. The study also offers data that can influence the decisions of policymakers as they assess resource allocation priorities, college access practitioners as they seek to develop new components into their delivery systems to increase college enrollment and scholars as they continue to research re-socialization patterns that promote college and workforce preparedness.

College Bound's board of directors may choose to use this research to make policy changes to the program's design and implementation. The researcher recognized that it would be difficult to identify any one best practice, because most programs reflect the students' communities. This study will qualitatively articulate the program's contributions to the lives of students who have been served and supported by the program.

In a broader context, this study will contribute to scholars as they research re-socialization and educational patterns that promote workforce development. A college degree has proven to be critical to ending the cycle of poverty. These research findings could lead to an increase in college acceptance rates, a decrease in high school drop-out rates, a better-educated workforce, and a break in the cycle of poverty. Scholars and practitioners will be encouraged to replicate this study to add to the existing literature on human building capacity.

#### *Role of the Researcher*

The researcher chose this topic because of his passion and interest in creating opportunities for youth that will ensure that they are academically capable of competing in the global economy. The researcher was formerly employed with several nationally recognized youth-mentoring organizations prior to his employment with College Bound (see curriculum vitae in appendix G). Throughout the researcher's career, he has passionately advocated for programs and policies that enhance education and career opportunities and that expose youth to mentors.

The researcher served as the executive director of College Bound at the time of this study. During his decade of leadership, he was amazed by the metamorphosis that

occurred during the students' involvement in the program. The students demonstrated a high level of tenacity and determination to develop the skills needed to attain a high school diploma and eventually a college degree. He was equally amazed by the tenacity of the students who wanted to benefit from the program's services. Through this study, the researcher hopes to contribute to the existing body of literature on college access, mentoring, and college preparation programs.

Research outcomes informed College Bound's board of directors and chief executive director of the effectiveness of services. The research data also offers insight that will guide board and staff discussions about systemic programmatic effectiveness and support.

#### *Summary*

Despite over 40 years of federal government intervention, many of our underprivileged youth are still academically unprepared to successfully complete high school. For those who do complete high school, many are unsuccessful beyond their freshman year in college. Academic and policy explanations for this pandemic are far and wide. However, one of the reasons for this continuing challenge should not be that this country and its citizens undervalue the importance of preparing our youth for their futures. As scholars, educators, politicians, community leaders, clergymen, and voters, U.S. citizens know that the job market of the future will demand an educated workforce. Although policy debates about the quality of education take center stage on the national, state, and local levels, the needs of youth, particularly in the nation's poorest communities, cannot be ignored.

This exploratory case study is an in-depth analysis of the College Bound program and its program participants. The purpose of this research was to learn how the program benefitted its participants, how participants' experiences prepared them for their college and career experiences, and to identify common thematic experiences that re-socialized the participants. The participants of this study were high school students who were in the College Bound program or College Bound alumni. The focus groups and one-on-one interviews explored the perceptions and experiences of the program participants. This was supported by a review of program documents such as application forms and activity logs. There was a moderator present to facilitate the focus group sessions and a recorder to take copious notes. The interviews were held at the Perry School Community Center. Once the data was collected, the researcher used an open coding process to analyze the findings. To ensure authenticity, this study corroborated data by probing the responses of both the current students and the alumni.

## Data Analysis

This chapter presents the data analysis of the research study, with the purpose of examining the role of the college access intervention program College Bound as a means of building human capacity in underserved youth. This study was guided by the following three questions:

1. What are your educational goals?
2. When was the first time that you talked about going to college?
3. Did College Bound have an effect on your decision to apply to college?

The presentation of the research study results is a detailed description of an analysis of the data obtained from current and former students who participated in a series of focus groups and one-on-one interviews. This multi-pronged approach used an open-ended semi-structured interview guide to give voice to the study participants. The participants were purposefully and randomly selected with the help of the College Bound staff.

Participants were recruited from four of five College Bound community based sites:

Gonzaga High School, Sherwood Recreation Center, Cesar Chavez Public Charter School and Beacon House. Students at the fifth site, the Covenant House, were not eligible to

participate in this study because they had not been in the College Bound program for the requisite number of years.

Both of the Moderator's Discussion Guides (current student and alumni) were developed using a modified version of McDaniel's focus group questions. To analyze the data, the researcher focused the study on four key areas: (1) background information, (2) structure of the College Bound program, (3) personal goals and objectives, and (4) key programmatic areas.

This study asserts that the at-risk youth who participate in the College Bound program do not view college as a realistic option. However, due to the efforts of the College Bound program and staff, students are encouraged to view a college education as an attainable goal. To set the stage for this chapter, there is a detailed description of the program's components and services, in addition to a geographic, demographic, and educational-attainment profile of the students served by College Bound.

In this chapter, participants' responses are organized to highlight the themes that emerged. A few of the topics of focus include family engagement, guidance counselor/school support, and mentor support. The researcher presents quotes from the focus groups and one-on-one interviews to give voice to the participants.

#### *Focus Group and Interview Results*

To provide the reader with an in-depth understanding of the effect that College Bound has on its participants, the researcher used a narrative approach. The narrative approach used quotes from the interviewees to tell a story. The primary sources of raw data for this study were focus group interviews with current and former College Bound students, one-on-one interviews, and program documents. After compiling the data, the

researcher constructed a case record. To analyze the data, a codebook was created from the responses of the students. The researcher categorized the responses by the following themes: (a) demographics of the study participants, (b) the level of academic and college preparation (c) students' expectations of college, (d) alumni's experience of transitioning into college, (e) participation in College Bound enrichment activities, (f) financial aid and career plans, (h) social support and environment, and (i) the identification of potential sources of motivation. There are eight main tables separated by categories and themes each followed by a list of quotes from both the alumni and the current students. Only responses that were mentioned by at least three participants were included. The student quotes contain the identifying letters of the participants so that they can be traced to the original notes for context.

Themes in the codebook were documented as individual interviews (II) and focus groups (FG). The data compiled in the tables below are followed by a sampling of actual student responses that support the data. Only the presence of emerging themes was noted, not the number of times each participant's remarks were reflective of theme. Data for the current students (CS) and alumni (AL) were entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for frequency calculations. Total frequencies were calculated for each of the four subgroups (CS II, CS FG, AL II, AL FG) along with the corresponding percentages. The main purpose of the codebook was for theme analysis. The students provided the demographic data through their interviews and update forms.

Finally, frequencies for all participants were calculated as well as the total percentage of participants that identified them. Through the review of the alumni and

current student update forms, the researcher collected data on race/ethnicity, ward, gender, and marital status.

*Demographics of the Study Participants*

Table 2 offers data regarding population, race, poverty, and average family income in D.C. The students who participated in the study lived in Wards 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7. Two students lived in Maryland, and one resided in Virginia. The majority of the current students represented Ward 5. The average family income in Ward 5 was \$54,479. Most of the alumni who participated in the study lived in Ward 7, where the average family income in 1999 was \$45,039.

**Table 2. Wards in D.C.**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>Ward 2</b>	<b>Ward 4</b>	<b>Ward 5</b>	<b>Ward 6</b>	<b>Ward 7</b>	<b>Ward 8</b>
Population (2000)	68,827	75,001	71,604	68,087	70,539	70,915
Black, Non-Hispanic (2002)	61	71	88	63	97	91
Poverty Rate (2000)	19	12	20	21	25	36
Average Family Income (1999)	\$139,891	\$81,500	\$54,479	\$67,454	\$45,039	\$35,228

Source: Data from NeighborhoodInfo DC: The Urban Institute and Washington DC, Local Initiatives Support Corporation 2008



Analysis of the demographic data demonstrates that 83% of the current students indicated that they had a parent who attended college, compared to 56% of alumni. Of the current students, 67% had siblings who attended college, compared to 22% of alumni. Fifty-six percent of alumni reported having a grandparent, cousin, or distant relative who attended college, compared to 33% of the current students. The data suggests that the College Bound program is driving the students toward college. Data also supports the position that the parents of College Bound students, who are educated themselves, see a value in the program for their children.

The study also captured the experiences of one student who resided in Virginia and two who resided in Maryland. This is noteworthy because the experiences and perspectives of the study participants are often predisposed by their neighborhoods. This also speaks to the value that families place upon the College Bound services. College Bound only has sites in the D.C. Consequently, family members are encouraging their children to travel into the District once a week for 9 months, after 6 p.m. to participate in the program. This may raise a question for further research concerning the services that are available to these students in Maryland and Virginia.

College Bound is achieving its goal of preparing youth for college. Sixty-seven percent of alumni reported enrolling in college after completing College Bound.

**Table 3. Demographics**

Descriptors		Current Students				Alumni				All	
		II	FG	Total		II	FG	Total		Freq	%
				Freq	%			Freq	%		
General	Number of participants	6	6	12	100%	4	5	9	100%	21	100
	Male	n/a	5	5	42%	n/a	2	2	22%	7	33%
	Female	n/a	1	1	8%	n/a	3	3	33%	4	19%
	Age (average)	n/a	17	17	-	n/a	21.2	21.2	-	19	-
Area of Residence	Ward 2	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	11%	1	5%
	Ward 4	1	1	2	17%	1		1	11%	3	14%
	Ward 5	4	0	4	33%	1	1	2	22%	6	29%
	Ward 6	-	2	2	17%	-	-	-	-	2	10%
	Ward 7	-	1	1	8%	2	1	3	33%	4	19%
	Live in VA	-	1	1	8%	-	-	-	-	1	5%
	Live in MD	1	1	2	17%	-	-	-	-	2	10%
	Enrollment/ Employment	Currently in high school	6	6	12	100%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12
Currently in undergraduate program	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	3	4	44%	4	19%	
Have enrolled in a college	-	-	-	-	1	5	6	67%	6	29%	
College Family History	1 <sup>st</sup> generation college student		1	1	8%		1	1	11%	2	10%
	Parent(s) attended college	6	4	10	83%	3	2	5	56%	15	71%
	Sibling(s) attended college	5	3	8	67%	1	1	2	22%	10	48%
	Extended family attended college (grandparents, cousins, aunts)	2	2	4	33%	4	1	5	56%	9	43%

**Table 4. Supporting statements for table 3**

Alumni	"Still want to finish my degree (only have a year left). Kind of on a "get money" thing right now."
Current Students	"What do you mean just like attended and didn't graduate? My mother, my sister, my brother, my father."
	"My mother but she didn't graduate. My cousins and stuff, but nobody like real close."

*Academics and College Preparation*

The second section of the study explores participants’ academic and college preparation. This section was critical to the overall study. The data in Table 5 show that the majority of the current students (92%) discussed college in their junior high years. This is in accordance with College Bound’s efforts to reach youth as early as the eighth grade. Up to 75% of current students reported talking about college with a parent compared to 44% of alumni. Current students also reported that 92% of them received assistance from College Bound, which helped them to narrow their college choices and/or choose the right school for them. Comparatively, 22% of alumni gave College Bound credit for their decision. The majority of alumni (67%) stated that College Bound affected their decision to apply to college, compared to 33% of current students. The researcher was particularly interested in identifying motives that influenced the participants’ decision to apply for and consequentially attend college.

**Table 5. Academics and College Preparation**

Descriptors		Current Students				Alumni				All Participants	
		II	FG	Total		II	FG	Total		Freq	%
				Freq	%			Freq	%		
Academics	Received extra academic support/help with school subjects	4	1	5	42%	2	1	3	33%	8	38%
	Received help with homework/way to get homework done	4	-	4	33%	2	2	4	44%	8	38%
	Received help with SAT prep	2	2	4	33%	2	3	5	56%	9	43%
	CB helped improve my grades	3	-	3	25%	-	1	1	11%	4	19%
Talking About College	First talked about college during junior high school	5	6	11	92%	2	2	4	44%	15	71%
	First talked about college with parent	5	4	9	75%	1	3	4	44%	13	62%
	First talked about college with family member	1	1	2	17%	1	1	2	22%	4	19%
Deciding to Go to College	CB affected decision to apply to college	4	-	4	33%	3	3	6	67%	10	48%
	CB did not affect decision to apply to college	-	2	2	17%	1	-	1	11%	3	14%
	CB somewhat affected my decision to apply to college/it helped	2	1	3	25%	-	-	-	-	3	14%
	CB enforced my desire to go to college	3	-	3	25%	3	-	3	33%	6	29%
	Already knew I wanted to go to college before CB	3	1	4	33%	2	2	4	44%	8	38%

Descriptors	Current Students				Alumni				All Participants	
	II	FG	Total		II	FG	Total		Freq	%
			Freq	%			Freq	%		
CB helped narrow down my college choices/choose the right one for me	5	6	11	92%	1	1	2	22%	13	62%
CB showed me what to expect from college/exposure to campus life, academics, etc	1	1	1	8%	3	1	4	44%	5	24%
CB helped with the process of getting into college (apps, deadlines)/ preparing to go to college	3	2	5	42%	3	1	4	44%	9	43%
CB motivated me to go to college (see benefits, opportunities)	4	1	5	42%	2		2	22%	7	33%
Received info about different colleges (demographic, tuition, campus life)	6	4	10	83%	2	2	4	44%	14	67%

**Table 6. Supporting statements for table 5**

Alumni	DA: "I didn't really decide about what I wanted to do until my senior year in high school and that came from the tours and talking with my partner."
	EA: "[CB showed me] what you could expect in college. The partners were not that far removed, so they knew what you were going to come up against and what to expect and how to be prepared."
	MH: "[My partners] were very smart. They helped me in just about every subject that I had."
	AE: "I was always interested in going to college, so CB didn't really change any of my beliefs about it."
	MT: "[CB] pretty much enforced [my decision to apply to college]....If you are in CB you knew you want to go to college."
	AE: "It's never been an option. I was always gonna go to college."
	MH: "I felt more at ease...when I went to college the first day because of the program."
	AE: "The program only just added fuel to the fire by making sure that I sat and completed my applications on the Mondays that I went, making sure that I got everything done so...I could just get everything organized."
Current Students	B2: "[CB] just like strengthens your math and reading as well."
	B3: "[CB] has been helpful; my grades have gotten better."
	SP: "My grades are actually getting better. I can see an improvement in my grades."

	B2 "Yes. [CB] actually had a big decision."
	WG: "I think [CB] helped [in my decision to apply to college]. Like even though I already had my mind made up to go to college, it helped encourage me to go."
	B2: "It just, like, basically made me want to go even more."
	B1: "I always thought I was going to go to college."
	DS: "[My] mentor helped me narrow down to the type of campus and program would work best for me."
	B2: "[CB] basically opened my eyes to like new things. I mean it's one thing to, like, apply to college and then, like, go ahead and look at brochures and everything, but when you actually get to visit it."
	BS: "[CB helped] me get into the colleges that I want to go to."
	CJ: "At first I was like college is just like high school, but now it's like, ok, I have to go to college because if I want to be something, like, it's one more step I have to take before I wanna be what I wanna be."
	B2: "I think so far [CB] has been doing a good job motivating me and making me want to go to college."
	CJ: "I learned; basically, I learned everything about the colleges about what type of school it is."

*Current Students' Expectations of College*

The current students (CS) were asked about their expectations of college. As displayed in Table 7, 67% placed a high value on making friends, meeting a lot of people, and networking. This is imperative to getting youth to apply to college because peers play a vital role in motivating one another. If students expect to make friends and encounter a friendly, supportive environment, they will be open to going to college. Forty-two percent of current students also spoke of their expectations of taking challenging courses and learning a lot. This speaks to the importance of college and university faculty offering challenging classes. It is also critical that the students are given information about campus-based mentoring and tutoring services. The most glaring data in this section reveal that only 33% of the students expect their first year to be challenging. This can have devastating effects on student retention and completion rates. Students who have low expectations of their first year can be discouraged by the workload and the high expectations of college.

**Table 7. Current students' expectations of college**

Descriptors		Current Students			
		II	FG	Total	
				Freq	%
Academic	Expect the first year to be challenging	3	1	4	33%
	Expect to take challenging courses/learn a lot	4	1	5	42%
	Expect to graduate from college	2	1	3	25%
Social	Expect there to be an adjustment period socially	2	2	4	33%
	Expect to make friends/meet a lot of people/network	5	3	8	67%



**Table 8. Supporting statements for table 7**

Current Students	CJ: "I want to come out knowing as much as possible in my career."
	CS: "I don't know what to expect from college to tell the truth."
	FS: "I don't have any problems talking to people, so I think that I will have a good social experience."
	CJ: "I would expect to have fun a lot of fun, but at the same time, I need to know when to stop having fun."
	B1: "I don't know how I'm [going to], like, survive college my first year...without my mother."
	CS: "I am not sure how I am going to be socially."
	WG: "Socially, I plan to meet a lot of people and do a lot of networking."

*Alumni's Transition to College*

Table 9 explores alumni (AL) transition from high school to college. Fifty-six percent of respondents reported doing OK or well during their freshmen year. When asked about transitioning from high school to college and about their social life, 44% were transitioning smoothly. Many college and universities offer campus support services for students who are transitioning into college life. This was particularly important for College Bound alumni who were first-generation college students and/or didn't have support from home. College and university admission staff often worked closely with College Bound staff to create a pipeline from high school to college. The data also

revealed that the alumni place a greater emphasis on networking and developing their social life.

Table 9. Alumni's transition to college

Descriptor		Alumni			
		II	FS	Total	
				Freq	%
Academic	Transition was not difficult/didn't have a problem	3	1	4	44%
	Transition was difficult/had problems	-	3	3	33%
	First semester was academically challenging/did not do as well as desired	1	2	3	33%
	I did OK/well academically my first year	3	2	5	56%
Social	Had difficulty balancing academics and social life	-	4	4	44%
	Did not have difficulty transitioning socially/had fun	4	-	4	44%
	Met lots of people in college	1	2	3	33%

**Table 10. Supporting statements for table 9**

Alumni	MT: "I don't think my transition was hard because...I had a lot of flexibility."
	CA: "I needed my mentor and mom to keep me focused because it was a big transition."
	BA: "My first year I messed up academically...biggest reality check ever....I knew that I had to get it together and do half and half academics and social, not too much social, get a nice balance."
	MH: "First semester academically was a little challenging too, but I got my act together."
	MT: "Socially, I'm a social butterfly so that was never a problem."
	MT: "I joined an organization in my second semester...my freshman year."

*Enrichment Activities*

Table 11 shows that 76% of all respondents participated in College Bound's college tours. However, the data suggest that the Annual Taste of College Night College Fair was the favorite activity of the respondents. This program offered opportunities for ninth through twelfth graders to participate in one of two college tours offered annually. College tours exposed participants to college life and enabled them to see themselves as college students. Several institutions were part of the tour, including large, urban, single-gender, historically black colleges and two-year and four-year institutions. The Annual Taste of College Night College Fair invites the program's mentors to represent their alma maters.

The data reveal that 67% of alumni felt that the enrichment activities were helpful in giving them additional exposure and support, compared to 42% of the current students. The alumni seemed to value the enrichment activities more than the current students. This is revealing as the current students had most recently participated in the enrichment activities. A counter perspective is that the alumni have more life experiences and were therefore able to employ their experiences in the program to real life.

Table 11. Enrichment activities

Descriptors		Current Students				Alumni				All	
		II	FG	Total		II	FG	Total		Freq	%
				Freq	%			Freq	%		
Participation	Enrichment activities were helpful/liked all of them in general	4	1	5	42%	4	2	6	67%	11	52%
	Attended career night	5	-	5	42%	3	-	3	33%	8	38%
	Attended college tours	6	4	10	83%	3	3	6	67%	16	76%
	Attended financial aid workshops	1	-	1	8%	3	-	3	33%	4	19%
	Attended senior retreat	3	2	5	42%	1	-	1	11%	6	29%
	Attended taste of college night	5	1	6	50%	3	-	3	33%	9	43%
	Participated in most activities	-	2	2	17%	2	-	2	22%	4	19%
	Participated in all activities	2	-	2	17%	1	1	2	22%	4	19%

Favorites and Not Favorites	Favorite: college tours	2	-	2	17%	1	-	1	11%	3	14%
	Favorite: senior retreat	1	2	3	25%	-	-	-	-	3	14%
	Favorite: Taste of College Night (college fair)	4	-	4	33%	1	-	1	11%	5	24%
	Favorite: don't know/no answer	-	4	4	33%	-	-	-	-	4	19%
	Not favorite: don't know/none	6	2	8	67%	4	-	4	44%	12	57%

Table 12. Supporting statements for table 11

Alumni	DA: "All of those programs have contributed to where I am today."
	MH: "[My favorite was] career night when...we got a chance to talk to people who have already established themselves...and [who] gave us information about different...careers...even some that...I'm looking towards... getting into."
	MT: "My favorite I would have to say... the college tour because we went to different cities and to go sit in the classroom...it just put me like in the feel of college."
	MH: "I really didn't have a not so favorite....All of them really were cool."
Current Students	CJ - "The College tours. I liked the college tours because when I first started looking at colleges, I really didn't know what type of college I wanted to go to. So by going to college tours it, like, narrowed down what college I want to go to and why I want to go to that college."

	WG: "The senior retreat because it's just seniors so the people that were there to help us were basically only focusing on us and helping us prepare for college so it was, like, not very hard to talk to them to get assistance since there were no other age groups there."
	SP - "Taste of college. Because there's a lot of colleges that I saw that I'm interested in now. And colleges that I never heard of that I'm getting interested in to."
	WG: "I think all of them pretty much benefited me in ways; it's just the difference between those that only benefited me and those that benefited me and were interesting."

### *Scholarship and Career Plans*

According to the program's literature, College Bound has offered several \$6,000 scholarships annually since 1993. However the data analysis in Table 13 reveals that only 25% of the current students applied. Contrarily, 100% of the alumni reported applying for the scholarship. Of the respondents, 58% of the current students indicated receiving scholarship assistance, compared to only 22% of alumni. This information is corroborated by the 67% of current students who responded that they did not apply for a College Bound scholarship.

Table 13. Scholarship and career plans

Descriptors		Current Students				Alumni				All Participants	
		II	FG	Total		II	FG	Total		Freq	%
				Freq	%			Freq	%		
Financial Aid	Applied for CB scholarship	2	1	3	25%	4	5	9	100%	12	57%
	Did not apply for CB scholarship	4	4	8	67%	-	-	-	-	8	38%
	Plan to apply for CB scholarship in the future	4	1	5	42%	-	-	-	-	5	24%
	Received information about/help with scholarships in general	3	4	7	58%	2	-	2	22%	9	43%
Career Plans	Keep changing career plans/don't know/broad interests	5	-	5	42%	2	2	4	44%	9	43%
	Business/PR	2	-	2	17%	2	2	4	44%	6	29%
	Doctor/health professional/Social worker	-	2	2	17%	-	2	2	22%	4	19%
	Other career interests	-	4	4	33%	2	1	3	33%	7	33%
	Need a college degree to achieve goals	3	4	7	58%	2	1	3	33%	10	48%
	Do not need a college degree to achieve goals	2	2	4	33%	2	4	6	67%	10	48%
	College degree is a safety net/undecided	3	-	3	25%	1	1	2	22%	5	24%

Table 14. Supporting statements for table 13

Alumni	CA: "I am able to work and go to school in order to attain more in terms of money and status I guess I need a degree. I could get a job easily without a degree."
	BA: "It depends on what you wanna do. There are a lot of people that have businesses that do not have a degree"
	AE: "You need a college degree to do anything, so of course I need a college degree to achieve my goal."
	MH: "As long as you, like, work hard and, you know, keep your eye on the prize and, you know, network and everything, I mean you can...you can do just about anything that you want...with a college degree or not."
	DR: "Not really, but honestly, in this competitive society... I think it would help, but I don't need [a degree] per se."
Current Students	B2: "When I think of college, like, I think it will basically get me places where I want to be in life. So...I mean I don't want to live like in the projects or something like that, so it's like if I go to college I can make a better life for myself."
	AS: "In case what I want to do doesn't work out, I have something to fall back on."

Both the current students (42%) and alumni (44%) responded that their career plans were still changing. This suggests that the students either have broad interests or are not ready to choose a career field. The statistics underscore the fact that people change



their majors throughout their college career. The students appear to be at odds as to whether or not a college degree is needed to achieve their goals. A current student spoke of the importance of earning a college degree in terms of having a fair chance to succeed. Contrarily, another student said that a college degree is not absolutely necessary because, for example, “Clinton Portis [who plays for] the Washington Redskins...didn’t go to college, but he’s in his eighth year of playing in the NFL, and Bill Gates was a college drop-out, and he has the biggest computer software network in the world. . . . If they can do that, I can do that.”

### *Social Support and Environment*

Table 15 explores the environment that the College Bound program created, its social support systems, the role of the mentors, parents, and school counselors. The majority of the current students (58%) and the alumni (67%) reported that their mentor influenced and molded them. According to a study participant, College Bound “is a place that I can come get my homework done and focus; whereas, at home I got a lot of distractions.” On the other hand, only 19% of all respondents felt that College Bound provided a positive atmosphere.

This table also illustrates that 67% of alumni confirmed that they are still keeping in touch with their College Bound mentors. Likewise, 56% of alumni said that their mentor did more than what the program required and encouraged self-development outside of the program. This emphasizes the vital role that the mentors play in the life of the program participants. Some of the alumni (67%) and current students (58%) stated that “the mentor influenced me or molded me.” The mentor’s activities with the students serve as a change agent that help the students acquire skills, knowledge, and talents that

prepare them for college and life. Those who had multiple mentors were dissatisfied with turnover. Many of the mentors left the program to pursue graduate degrees.

Contrary to the misperceptions of school-system critics, the data reveal that school guidance counselors perform an active role in encouraging their students to go to college. One student reported that his high school counselor “did encourage us to apply for college, but I don't think that she really pushed us.” Up to 62% of the participants responded that their high school counselor encouraged them to go to college.

Table 15. Social support and environment

Descriptors		Current Students				Alumni				All	
		II	FG	Total		II	FG	Total		Participants	
				Freq	%			Freq	%	Freq	%
Environment	CB as a way to get away from distractions/helped focus	1	1	2	17%	2	1	3	33%	5	24%
	CB provided positive atmosphere/right environment	1	-	1	8%	3	-	3	33%	4	19%
	CB provided the support/structure I needed to push me to apply to college	1	1	2	17%	3	-	3	33%	5	24%
	Changed from not caring about school/doing the bare minimum to caring/working hard	2	2	4	33%	1	1	2	22%	6	29%
Social Support	Benefited from talking to someone who already went through college/current college students	1	1	2	17%	3	1	4	44%	6	29%
	Felt I had someone there to help/talk to outside of the family	2	-	2	17%	1	-	1	11%	3	14%

Descriptors	Current Students				Alumni				All		
	II	FG	Total		II	FG	Total		Freq	%	
			Freq	%			Freq	%			
Received support/help from CB staff/site coordinator	5	-	5	42%	1	-	1	11%	6	29%	
Enjoyed meeting other CB students/additional positive influence	-	1	1	8%	3	1	4	44%	5	24%	
Partners	Partner influenced me/helped mold me	3	4	7	58%	1	5	6	67%	13	62%
	Had a good overall experience with partner/s	1	1	2	17%	3	-	3	33%	5	24%
	I have had more than one partner	1	4	5	42%	3	1	4	44%	9	43%
	Had mixed experiences with partner/inconsistent	-	3	3	25%	2	-	2	22%	5	24%
	Did not like partner/felt intimidated or pushed too hard	-	2	2	17%	1	-	1	11%	3	14%
	My partner pushed me	2	2	4	33%	2	1	3	33%	7	33%
	Partner encouraged/inspired/motivated me	3	-	3	25%	2	2	4	44%	7	33%
	Partner became close/still keep in touch	-	-	-	-	2	4	6	67%	6	29%
	Partner did more than what the program required/encouraged self-development outside of the program	2	-	2	17%	2	3	5	56%	7	33%
	Had a long relationship with partner	1	1	2	17%	1	3	4	44%	6	29%
Counsel	2	1	3	25%	-	2	2	22%	5	24%	

Descriptors	Current Students				Alumni				All Participants	
	II	FG	Total		II	FG	Total		Freq	%
			Freq	%			Freq	%		
Counselor did not encourage me to go to college	-	1	1	8%	1	2	3	33%	4	19%
Counselor encouraged me to go to college	5	2	7	58%	3	3	6	67%	13	62%
Counselor has mandatory activities/part of classroom	1	2	3	25%	1	-	1	11%	4	19%
Counselor is very involved in the college application process/ provided social support	2	1	3	25%	2	1	3	33%	6	29%
Had little/no contact with counselor/not very involved	2	1	3	25%	1	1	2	22%	5	24%

Table 16. Supporting statements for table 15

Alumni	AE: "Just seeing everyone around me that was really focused on learning motivated me to just make sure that I did what I needed to do academically."
	MT: "It kind of put me in a positive atmosphere even though my school was still the same way, but it just surrounded me with people, you know, who wanted to go to college."
	MH: "[My partner] really encouraged me and pushed me to get stuff done on time which was very important."
	MT: "Even though I had people in my family that went to college,...when I was in the CB setting, I had more people there to support me, people around that had degrees, so it was like making me want to push and strive and be more motivated to, umm, go to college and stuff."

	<p>BA: "I was difficult to deal with, and was not focused. Once I got into CB, I didn't want to go, and it seemed like it took so much out of my time – and it really didn't. Now I wish that CB would have let us meet more during the week; it would have kept me more focused and on track."</p>
	<p>AE: "[CB] taught me a lot about myself."</p>
	<p>AE: "It was more than just an academic program; it was a life changing experience."</p>
	<p>CA: "[My partner] really got to know me and got to know the things that I wanted to do, and helped to mold my decision about the things that I wanted to do, what college I wanted to go to."</p>
	<p>BA. "I had been with my partner for years, and we are still in contact, and she helped mold my experience. She was a Hampton graduate, and her stories about how she made it through inspired me to go gung ho and fulfill my dreams."</p>
	<p>DA: "[My partner] almost became part of the family."</p>
	<p>EA: "[My partner] played a key role for my going to college, because I would not have gone. I was out of control, and it was her dedication that got me across that bridge."</p>
	<p>MH: "It was always a great experience going...meeting up with my partner."</p>
	<p>EA: "My partner was the number one reason for me to go to college."</p>
	<p>MT: "I don't know—like she made me feel small sometimes. I was intimidated by her knowledge."</p>

	AE: "[My partner] helped me out a lot...she was very proactive in making sure that all my essays and applications were turned in on time."
	MH: "[My partner] is really cool...We've grown, you know, up...in the 2 years that I have known him, well 5, 6 years now, but he's helped me out a lot....I still keep in touch with everybody from CB."
	AA: "My guidance counselor didn't really have an impact."
	EA: "I went to Duke Ellington. They didn't have counselors. We had alumni that came and told us where we were going to go—never really that push for college. It was really like, 'this is your art; perfect your art for the long run.' CB filled that void."
	MT: "[My high school counselor] did encourage us to apply for college, but I don't think that she really pushed us."
Current Students	SP: "[CB] is a place that I can come get my homework done and focus, whereas at home I got a lot of distractions."
	BS: "[CB] helped me focus more on taking tests and not fooling around."
	B3: "I can say [CB] really influenced me."
	AS: "[CB] gave me a lot of structure and helped me realize what I should prioritize."
	BA: "My partner basically said, 'What are you going to do? It's your decision now.' And I felt like I can't have anyone give up on me, and I am going to have to do what I have to do and get focused."
	B1: "I was lazy and I didn't do too good, and now I'm, like, regretting it....I didn't listen to my partner, now that's what I get....Now I'm starting to listen because I don't want to stay back."

	<p>AS: "I used to give in to a lot of people, and didn't like going to school anymore. But then I grew up and started ignoring people and doing the work."</p>
	<p>B1: "When I started CB, I wasn't, like, really into school...then, like, when I started coming to College Bound and stuff... I had somebody other than my mother or somebody that was in my family to talk to about stuff."</p>
	<p>CS: "I was stubborn my first 2 years of high school. I just wanted to do the least work possible and just get by, but people said that I would be miserable if I kept doing that. Then I actually started caring."</p>
	<p>DS: "[CB] helps you learn a lot about yourself and how you can work with other people."</p>
	<p>FS: "It was helpful hearing what other people had to say, just made a lot of sense to further my education and make the best of myself."</p>
	<p>CJ: "Just coming here knowing I can do my homework and there is somebody there to help me prepare for when it's time for me to take my SATs."</p>
	<p>CJ: "Mr. Ward [the site coordinator] and my mentor, they give me that push like don't ever give up, and no matter how much I try or how hard it is, just if I ever need help just come to one of them."</p>
	<p>B3: "Mr. Ward [the site coordinator]... pushed me as well as my partner to make my grades become higher and to strive toward... the honor roll."</p>
	<p>CJ: "[My partner] encourages me to be a better person."</p>
	<p>BS: "I got a good [partner] that helps me with college preparation and academic work."</p>

	<p>FS: "I have not had a partner this year (never showed up), but in the past, I really didn't have a great partner, but I guess I would say that one of them really did help me study for my SAT, so in a way that helped."</p>
	<p>WG: "My mentors encourage me and also like push me to do my best rather than just doing average."</p>



### *Sources of Motivation*

Further, Table 17 illustrates that internal and external factors affect motivation. The data link families as a central motivating factor in students' decision to attend college. The influence that the both nuclear and extended family members have cannot be undervalued. A respondent stated, "It was mainly because of [my mom] too, umm, she definitely wanted me to go to college; it was no if, ands, or buts about it." Twenty four percent of respondents credited their family for motivating them to attend college. Motivation is a decisive factor required to drive youth toward college. However, only 8% of current student respondents and 33% of alumni respondents felt that potential earning changed their thoughts and attitudes about completing high school, applying for college, and going to college. Some of these responses may be skewed because the students have not attended college. Early family encouragement stimulates students to form educational plans by eighth grade. This is a critical time when students chose to obtain a college preparatory high school curriculum. Family support and early educational plans are among the strongest predictors of students developing and maintaining college aspirations, sustaining motivation, and academic achievements, and actually enrolling in college (Tierney and Auerbach 2004).

Table 17. Sources of motivation

Descriptors		Current Students				Alumni				All Participants	
		II	FG	Total		II	FG	Total			
				Freq	%			Freq	%	Freq	%
Internal and External Factors	Parents pushed me to graduate from high school	1	-	1	8%	-	-	-	-	1	5%
	Family motivated me to go to college	2	-	2	17%	2	1	3	33%	5	24%
	Wanted to be the first in the family to get a college degree/graduate	2	1	3	25%	1	-	1	11%	4	19%
	Ideas of financial gain changed thoughts/attitude about completing high school/applying for/going to college	1	-	1	8%	1	2	3	33%	4	19%
	Knowing what happens when you don't go to school/ what it means not to have an education motivated me to go to college	-	-	-	-	1	2	3	33%	3	14%
	There was no info/experience that changed thoughts/ attitudes about completing high school, applying for/going to college	-	1	1	8%	3	-	3	33%	4	19%

Table 18. Supporting statements for table 17

Alumni	<p>AE: "When I was about 7, I wanted to be a lawyer because I always thought they made a lot of money, and I wanted to do that too."</p>
	<p>BA: "All of my friends...did not make it to college...and they were struggling. They were following other people, and I felt like, let me not be a follower, let me do what I'm supposed to do and not follow that route."</p>
	<p>CA: "[I] had family members that had babies in high school and couldn't go to college. And then my cousin that kept pushing me to go to college became an engineer and made \$100,000, and that made me think: either sit at home and have kids before I'm ready or...do what I want, when I want, and do what I please, have a job and career."</p>
	<p>DA: "[CB] has done a lot for a lot of my friends, my family."</p>
	<p>CA: "Cousin has always been very influential to me and has always talked about college and how hard it is and that I need to go and that it would give you a better job. So ever since I remember, I have always wanted to go college."</p>
	<p>AE: "I have seen what happens when you don't go to school and when you don't do what you're supposed to.... I know what it means not to have an education..., and I don't want [that]."</p>
	<p>MT: "I just want, you know, to get the degree because no one in my family has obtained a degree yet."</p>
	<p>MH: "It was mainly because of [my mom] too. She definitely wanted me to go to college, it was no if, ands, or buts about it."</p>

Current Students	SP: "I'm trying to follow in [my sister's] footsteps."
	AS:" I used to give in to a lot of people and didn't like going to school anymore."
	B1: "I read [motivational quotes] everyday.... Those things, like, really help.... And we have people I never even heard of [and there quotes] be banging, and I be like, dang I wanna go to college, but it don't even be about college. All that stuff."

*Suggested Improvements*

This section puts forth recommendations from the study participants. Over 50% of the current students and alumni responded that College Bound did everything possible to encourage them to go to college. This implies that College Bound’s role is not solely liable for their development, but 67% of the current students and 67% of alumni considered the program to have been an overall positive experience. Nevertheless the students offered several ideas that would expand the impact of the program. Some of the recommendations, as identified in the supporting statements section of Table 19, included increasing the number of college tours, creating more opportunities for interaction, and hosting College Bound more than once a week. These recommendations from the study participants highlight the maturity and level of seriousness that these students possess when it comes to their future.

Table 19. Suggested improvements

Descriptors		Current Students				Alumni				All	
		II	FG	Total		II	FG	Total		Freq	%
				Freq	%			Freq	%		
Suggested Improvements	Have CB meet more often than just once a week	1	-	1	8%	1	1	2	22%	3	14%
	Need more social time to meet with other CB students/other sites	-	-	-	-	1	2	3	33%	3	14%
	Need to improve partner screening/pairing process	-	2	2	17%	1	-	1	11%	3	14%
	Need to change workbooks/academic folders/not make mandatory	1	-	1	8%	-	3	3	33%	4	19%
	No improvement necessary/overall did everything possible to encourage me to go to college	4	3	7	58%	3	2	5	56%	12	57%
Overall Assessment	CB overall positive experience	5	3	8	67%	3	3	6	67%	14	67%
	CB helps prepare for college and classes/more than just a college prep program	1	1	2	17%	2	-	2	22%	4	19%

Table 20. Supporting statements for table 19

Alumni	MH: "[CB] does offer a lot of opportunities for students who have the mindset of going to college and who are...serious about it."
	EA: "Would have liked to have had the relationships with the students from the other sites, b/c at the end of the year all of the sites are segmented. [Good to build] on relationships within the program."
	BA: "Should meet more during the week (the other programs together), collaborate, get to know each other.... Now it seems like with the activities, they do see each other more."
	BA: "It was mandatory that we did those workbooks. I understand the concept of why—the concept of practice, but at the same time, I have homework."
	CA: "It came down to [this]: Do I want to do well in school, or do I want this book in CB that has no grade or [doesn't go in the] transcript."
	MT: "I wish that we could...socialize more with the kids."
	AE: "One issue that I had...was the inconstancy I had with my partners....Just if when doing the screening process...make sure that partner...can definitely dedicate the 4 years to the program or to the student.... It just helps to be consistent."

Current Students	WG: "So far [CB]'s been very beneficial."
	B2: "Not only does [CB] prepare you for college, but it...also helps you do better in other classes."
	WG: "I think CB would be even more effective and beneficial if they have it like 2 days a week, more than just 1. But, yea, that might be asking a lot for volunteers who also work daily."
	CS: "I think there should be a program where you could choose your mentor, because I got some bad mentors."
	WG: "More college tours are needed."
	WG: "Maybe the academic folders...can, like, be improved or, like, more up to date."

### *Summary*

The major findings of the data analysis illustrate outcomes related to the goal of the College Bound program. From the 21 students who participated in the research, study several key findings emerged. These findings can be recapitulated as follows: Program participants reflect a wide range of socio-economic communities throughout the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. The program is not focused on first-generation college students. Many of the study participants had parents and grandparents who attended college. Though the program plays a key role in exposing youth to college and influencing their choices about college, it is not the only influence impacting the students' decision-making process.

The program offers several enrichment activities which include a senior retreat, the Taste of College Night College Fair, career night, and a spring and fall college tour. The data show that the college tour is resoundingly the most attended and popular activity. The enrichment activities are designed to supplement the after-school meetings, thus offering program participants avenues of additional exposure. The majority of current program participants felt that they needed a college degree to achieve their goals.

Another reverberating discovery was on the subject of the importance of the mentors. Throughout the study all participants weighed in heavily about the value of their mentor. Alumni spoke of their continuing relationship with their mentor. Many of the students gave credit to their high school guidance counselors for their role in encouraging them to attend college. This was informative because often guidance counselors are not credited for their role in coaching youth and exposing them to college.



## Findings, Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusion

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the findings, implications, recommendations, and conclusions of this study. This project explored the argument that the College Bound program serves as an intervention that exposes youth to view college as a possibility. The results of this study indicate that the current students were highly likely to attend college and that the youth served by College Bound viewed the program as a vehicle to help prepare them for college.

### *Findings*

College Bound recruits eighth through twelfth graders who are enrolled in D.C. metropolitan area public or public charter schools. According to evaluation reports and their website, at least 95% of the College Bound participants attend college ([www.collegebound.org](http://www.collegebound.org)). Because many of these students were self-selecting, it can be assumed that many of them would have gone to college without College Bound's intervention. While the students may have the drive to attend college, they look to College Bound to push, motivate, and guide them. These study participants were encouraged to go to college by their families, and viewed College Bound as means to achieve this goal.

If College Bound changed its student recruitment strategy, the college acceptance rates may decrease. A new student recruitment strategy would potentially target youth from families whose members have never completed high school or attended college. This approach could suggest the possibility of less support at home. As a result, programming would require supplemental support services, both in terms of curricula and family engagement. This recruitment strategy would require that mentors receive additional training and enter the program with lower expectations of success. In other words, the program literature reports that at least 95% of its students receive college acceptance. The outcome measures may need to be revised to reflect the revised recruitment strategy. Modifications to the program would intensify labor and program management costs.

The findings confirm that the mentoring relationship is the most critical aspect of the program. Additionally, the value that mentors bring to the program is a key variable. The program describes mentors as college educated professionals who commit to meeting with their students on a weekly basis for at least 2 hours. Although mentors are only required to meet with their students for 2 hours per week, they frequently meet with their students beyond the scheduled weekly meetings. The extended time helps the mentor and student develop a rapport that builds trust between them. As a result, the students view their mentors as role models, friends, and quite often refer to them as brothers and sisters. The study reveals that the mentor-student relationship is a critical facet to student success and students' personal investment in the program. Students who did not have consistent mentors seemed to be less engaged with the program. The mentors are also widely

embraced by the students' parents, family members, and teachers. It is also evident from the data that the site coordinators play a significant role in motivating the students; however, there is too little data available in this study to draw a strong conclusion.

The trends in the data hold that the study participants acquired exposure to the concepts and importance of college from their family members, school counselors, and the College Bound program. Therefore, the College Bound program is one of several agents of socialization and does not re-socialize its participants. The program, the community, and the school seem to work in concert to socialize the students. The students who participated in this study expressed an interest in going to college before participating in College Bound. However, College Bound's mentors and enrichment activities exposed its participants to the various college and career options available to them. It is possible that other variables play an important role in student development, and those variables may overlap with or supersede the constructs the research explored.

Another major finding is that the college tours played a vital role in exposing and ultimately inspiring youth to attend college. The college tours provided the students with a platform for gaining both academic and social exposure, which contributed to their competency. The tours also helped the youth to envision themselves on a college campus. The tours target institutions that offer College Bound students a variety of experiences. Students visited large, small, rural, and urban colleges, as well as historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). In the spring of 2009, the program arranged for the students to visit several colleges and universities in the South Atlantic region of the

country, including Emory University, Georgia Institute of Technology, Bauder College, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the Atlanta University Center (Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and Spelman College). The combination of enrichment activities, academic support, family-member encouragement, quality schooling, and financial support helps students to view college as an attainable goal. Over time, the pursuit of higher education becomes a part of the students' worldview.

### *Implications*

This study highlights the many outstanding youth of the District of Columbia that are often overlooked by the general public. Youth who reside in urban areas are often negatively stereotyped, but these students demonstrate exceptional promise. Therefore, this study has implications that are two-fold. First, practitioners must not stereotype youth because they come from an urban area or a specific community. This is also true of the persons who decide to become mentors. Second, study participants were very open about their positive and sometimes negative feelings about how adults perceive them. There is an assumption that this population, because of their race, ethnicity, residence, and socioeconomic status, are expected to be underachievers or dysfunctional with no knowledge or ambition.

Another significant implication is that this study crystallizes the importance of the services that College Bound offers. College Bound's services are important for both students who intend to go to college and for those who are less exposed. College Bound creates a nurturing environment that enables students to break away from external

influences and focus on their college-going aspirations. Future researchers should explore college-access programs as a re-socialization agent for first generation college students, within specific income boundaries. This will focus future research on an acutely at-risk population and allow for a different perspective than the research conducted in this study.

### *Recommendations*

As a result of this study's findings, a set of recommendations were developed to shift the approach of the organization. An effort to build human capacity rests on the talents, skills, and abilities of the individual. The College Bound board of directors and staff should consider the following recommendations:

1. Re-assess College Bound's program participant recruitment strategy. The program should redirect its recruitment efforts toward high-poverty communities.
2. Develop workshops, seminars, and training that build human capacity by enhancing students' soft skills and career preparation.
3. Conduct additional research on this topic to include
  - a) an increased sample size with a non-self-selecting population
  - b) more ethnic groups and geographic regions.
4. Allocate more money and time to mentor recruiting, training, and retention strategies.
5. Conduct a focus group session with mentors to enable the researcher to compile best practices and lessons learned.

6. Secure multi-year funding to improve long-term program planning and outcome evaluation.
7. Work with federal, state, and local governments to develop and adopt effective public policies that encourage nonprofits to collaborate.

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, this study should act as a catalyst for additional research in the field of college preparation for underserved youth. Further research is needed to help support and refine scholarly research on how college access programs intervene in the development of youth to build human capacity. Furthermore, researchers interested in the subject should investigate the effects of family involvement in framing a student's attitude and perception about education and employment. Within each family there are anecdotal degrees of positive and negative influences. We cannot continue to ignore the many factors that affect underserved youth such as poorly functioning schools and dysfunctional family lives.

Educational and public policies must be designed to develop and fund programs to equip youth with the skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to transition into college and the workforce. College graduates who return to their non-affluent neighborhoods often improve their communities. These graduates desire to give back to their neighborhoods through community and economic development efforts. Program managers must develop and implement programs that are capable of assessing and measuring human capacity. College Bound is a contributing factor to changing

destructive social and educational patterns, thus taking students off of the societal conveyor belt and making them public policy assets, rather than liabilities. This will manifest itself by creating a more productive workforce and will lead to a reduction in the unemployment rate and a reduction in crime.

Indeed, high school graduation rates have plummeted throughout the country, but these research participants were changing the paradigm. Policymakers and educators can no longer offer their conjecture about the potential for achievement of urban, African American youth and their households. This study has shown that college-access programs are still critical to the preparation of youth and that the community (families, the school system, and neighborhood organizations) are working to ensure bright futures for its youth as well.

The researcher hopes that the findings from this analysis will illicit interest among scholars, educators, politicians, community leaders, clergymen, and voters to continue to investigate and understand how this program, and others like it, affect youth and what can be done to foster the human capacity of youth in their environment. The findings from this study will inform D.C. educators and will support their efforts to ensure that funding and public policies reflect the needs of the youth living in urban neighborhoods. One size fits all is not an effective formula for allocating government dollars. The disadvantages and disparities of Washington, D.C. youth are far and wide, yet their potential and ambition cannot be dismissed. For each youth who is failed by the educational public

policies in this country, there is a cost to U.S. citizens through higher unemployment rates, lower production rates, poor housing, and increased crime rates.

These findings equip the researcher with the knowledge to craft youth programs and policies that support mentoring. The success of the College Bound program is largely predicated upon the commitment of the mentors. The researcher, through this study, looks forward to encouraging public administrators to understand the various components (i.e. recruitment, training, and placement) that make for successful mentoring programming. Public administrators must understand the variations in the student population. The researcher recognizes that College Bound students are ambitious within their own rights; therefore, the likelihood of their success is more likely.

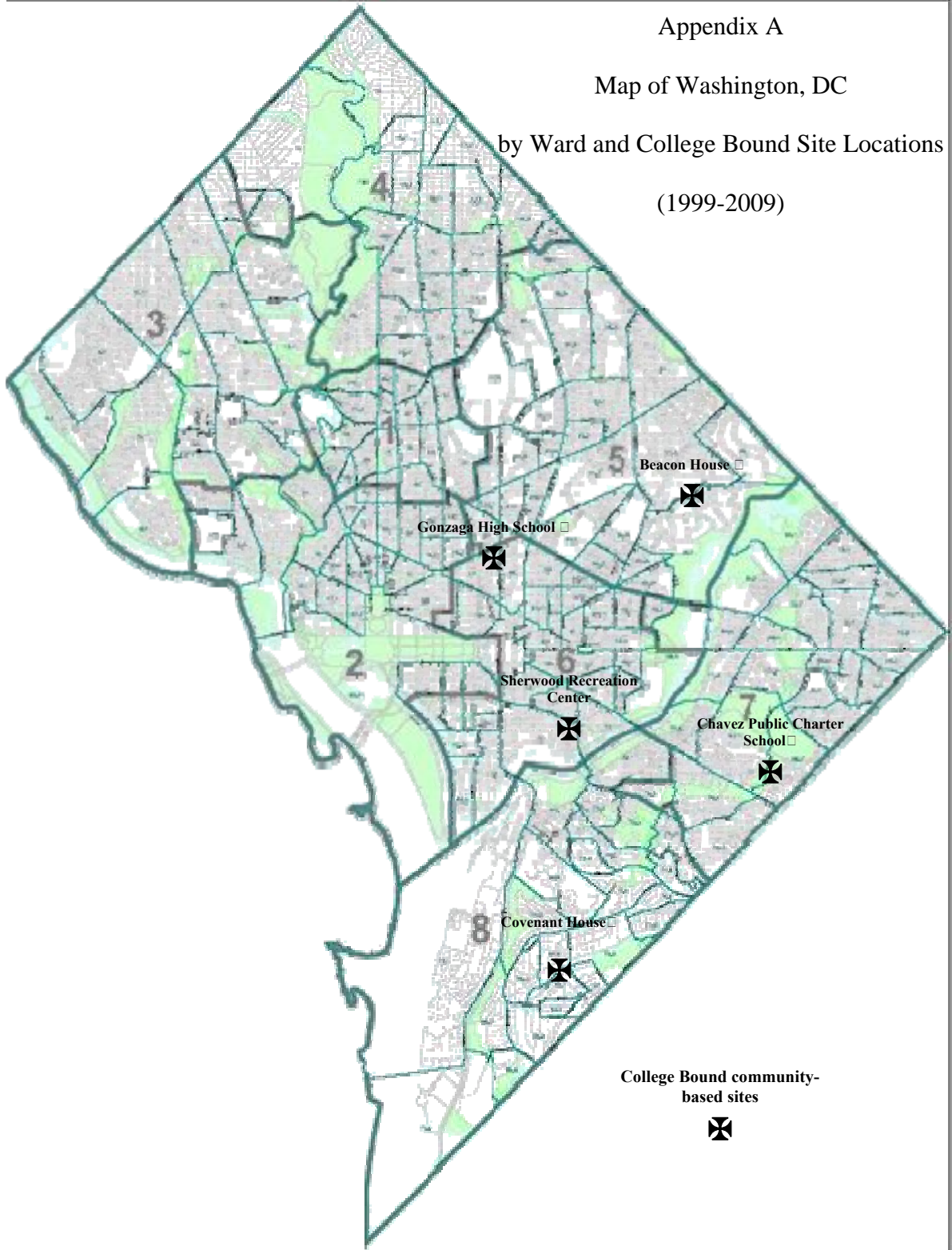


Appendix A

Map of Washington, DC

by Ward and College Bound Site Locations

(1999-2009)



Appendix B

Alumni Data Sheet

Please complete the following data sheet. This information will help the Researcher to collect basic data about you, and your college attainment and employment status.

Please print.

Name (Last, First, MI): \_\_\_\_\_

Maiden Name: \_\_\_\_\_

City/zip:

\_\_\_\_\_

What ward do you live in?

What is your married status? A. Married B. Unmarried

What is your gender? A. Male B. Female

High School Attended:

\_\_\_\_\_ Year of High

School Graduation (month/year): \_\_\_\_\_

Date completed College Bound (month/year): \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following best describes your present educational status?

A. Currently enrolled full time

B. Currently enrolled part time

C. Not in school at this time

Name of college/university: \_\_\_\_\_

Your highest degree: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of college graduation: \_\_\_\_\_ Expected graduation (month/year):

\_\_\_\_\_

Field of study/major: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you employed in the field in which you were educated?

- A. Yes.
- B. No, I am employed in a similar field.
- C. No, I am employed in a completely different field.
- D. No, I am unemployed.

Regardless of the financial benefits, has your college education improved the quality of your life?

- A. Definitely yes
- B. Probably yes
- C. Uncertain
- D. Probably no
- E. Definitely no

How would you rank the preparation you received at College Bound for more advanced education?

A. Excellent	D Fair
B. Good	E. Poor
C. Average	

Are you the first in your family to attend college? If not, who was?

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Appendix C  
Moderator's Discussion Guide  
Current Students

**Introduction/Ground Rules**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'll be moderating our discussions today. I expect that we will be here for about 2 hours, and we'll be discussing the College Bound program. The researcher and College Bound staff have invited you here today to offer feedback on the College Bound program. The researcher hopes to get your honest opinions, and he will use those opinions to identify areas of the program that are working well or that could be improved.

Just to let you know, I am working as a volunteer and have no affiliation with College Bound. Therefore you should feel comfortable expressing your thoughts and feelings.

Has anyone here ever been in a focus group before?

For those of you who haven't, I would like to talk a little bit about how these groups work.

- The idea behind focus groups is to gather your opinions, so it is important that everyone contribute to the discussion. I don't expect that you will all agree with each other. We want to hear everyone's opinions on these issues. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions that I will be asking. In our discussion, you don't

always have to address your comments to me, but please feel free to respond to something that another participant has said.

- We have a notetaker here in the room (introduce the person) so that I don't have to take notes during this session. So we can get good notes, I would like to ask you to speak as loudly as possible. It is difficult to take notes if a lot of people are speaking at once, so if you could avoid side conversations with your neighbors, it would be appreciated.
- When I am writing my report, you will remain completely anonymous. Because some of you may know each other from outside this group, I also ask that we respect each other's opinions and not take opinions expressed in this room back to other students, families, or the College Bound staff and mentors. Everyone should feel comfortable in sharing their opinions openly and honestly.
- Just a couple more items:  
Rest rooms are located in the middle of the hallway. I ask is that you come back as soon as possible, so we don't miss your valuable opinions.

**Icebreaker question:**

Now I would like each of you to introduce yourself to the rest of the group using your **first name only**. Also, tell us your age and how long you have been a College Bound student.

## **Discussion Guide**

As you know, College Bound seeks to prepare D.C. area youth for college. As you prepare to graduate from high school, we are interested in your opinions on the College Bound program. First, I would like to gain some background information.

- 1) When was the first time that you talked about college? With whom?
- 2) When did you decide that you wanted to go to college?
- 3) Has anyone else in your family attended College? If so, who?
- 4) What ward do you live in?
- 5) What high school do you attend?

The second area that I would like your feedback in concerns the focus and structure of the College Bound Program.

*Moderator's Note: Be sure to focus on the program and not the site coordinator, "partner," or particular staff members.*

- 1) What was the College Bound experience like for you?
- 2) Did College Bound have an [effect](#) on your decision to apply to college? Why or why not?
- 3) What type of information did you learn about college from the program?

- 4) How has your “partner” influenced you?
- 5) Did you participate in any of the program’s enrichment activities [e.g. college tours, Taste of College Night (held in December), career night (held in March), the Senior Retreat, Alumni Night, or any of the financial literacy workshops]?

Which was your favorite and why?

Which was your least favorite and why?

If you didn’t participate, why not?

- 6) Did you apply for a College Bound scholarship?  
If you didn’t, explain.

**The next area I would like your feedback in concerns your personal goals and objectives.**

- 1) Did your high school guidance counselor encourage you to apply for college?  
If so, how?
- 2) Was there any information/experience that changed your thoughts/attitudes about completing high school or applying for or going to college?
- 3) How did the College Bound program influence you academically?



4) What are your expectations of college?

Academically?

Socially?

5) What are your career goals?

Why?

6) Do you need a college degree to achieve your goals?

**We are interested in feedback on areas of the program that are working well or that could be improved.**

1) What could the program do to guide you toward applying for college?

2) Is there anything else you would like to add or you think would be helpful for us to know?

### **After the Focus Group**

Thank you for participating in our discussion today. Your responses will be summarized.

The results will be analyzed and prepared for a final report.

Appendix D  
Moderator's Discussion Guide  
Alumni

**Introduction/Ground Rules**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'll be moderating our discussions today. I expect that we will be here for about 2 hours, and we'll be discussing the College Bound program. The researcher and College Bound staff have invited you here today to offer feedback on the College Bound program. The researcher hopes to get your honest opinions, and he will use those opinions to identify areas of the program that are working well or that could be improved.

Just to let you know, I am working as a volunteer and have no affiliation with College Bound. Therefore you should feel comfortable expressing your thoughts and feelings.

Has anyone here ever been in a focus group before?

For those of you who haven't, I would like to talk a little bit about how these groups work.

- The idea behind focus groups is to gather your opinions, so it is important that everyone contribute to the discussion. I don't expect that you will all agree with each other. We want to hear everyone's opinions on these issues. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions that I will be asking. In our discussion, you don't

always have to address your comments to me, but please feel free to respond to something that another participant has said.

- We have a notetaker here in the room (introduce the person) so that I don't have to take notes during this session. So we can get good notes, I would like to ask you to speak as loudly as possible. It is difficult to take notes if a lot of people are speaking at once, so if you could avoid side conversations with your neighbors, it would be appreciated.
- When I am writing my report, you will remain completely anonymous. Because some of you may know each other from outside this group, I also ask that we respect each other's opinions and not take opinions expressed in this room back to other students, families, or the College Bound staff and "partners." Everyone should feel comfortable in sharing their opinions openly and honestly.
- Just a couple more items:  
Rest rooms are located in the middle of the hallway. I ask is that you come back as soon as possible, so we don't miss your valuable opinions.

**Ice breaker question:**

Now I would like each of you to introduce yourself to the rest of the group using your **first name only**. Also, could you tell us your age, and identify the year in which you completed College Bound.

**Discussion Guide**

As you know, College Bound seeks to prepare D.C. area youth for college. As you prepare to graduate from high school, we are interested in your opinions on the College Bound program. First, I would like to gain some background information.

- 1) When was the first time that you talked about college? With whom?
- 2) When did you decide that you wanted to go to college?
- 3) Has anyone else in your family attended College?  
If so, who?
- 4) What ward do you live in?

**The second area that I would like your feedback in concerns the focus and structure of the College Bound Program.**

*Moderator's Note: Be sure to focus on the program and not the site coordinator, "partner," or particular staff members.*

- 1) What was the experience like for you?
- 2) Did College Bound have an effect on your decision to go to college?  
How?
- 3) What type of information did you learn about college from the program?
- 4) How did your "partner" influence you?
- 5) Did you participate in any of the program's enrichment activities [i.e. College tours, Taste of College Night (held in December), career night (held in March), the Senior Retreat, Alumni Night, or any of the financial literacy workshops?]  
What was your favorite and why?  
What was your least favorite and why?  
If you didn't participate, why not?
- 6) Did you apply for a College Bound scholarship?  
If you didn't, explain.

**The next area in which I would like your feedback in concerns your personal goals and objectives.**

- 1) Did your high school guidance counselor guide you toward college?  
If so, how?
- 2) Was there any information/experience that changed your thoughts/attitudes about completing high school, applying for, or going to college?
- 3) How did the College Bound program influence you academically?
- 4) Tell me about your college transition and experiences  
Academically  
Socially
- 5) What are your career goals?  
Why?
- 6) Do you need a college degree to achieve your goals?

**We are interested in feedback on areas of the program that are working well or that could be improved.**

- 1) Thinking back to when you were in the program, what else could the program have done to guide you toward applying for college?
- 2) Is there anything else you would like to add that would be helpful for us to know?

### **After the Focus Group**

Thank you for participating in our discussion today. Your responses will be summarized.

The results will be analyzed and prepared for a final report.

## Appendix E

### Cover Letter to Participants and Informed Consent Form

Dear College Bound Students and Alumni:

I am especially proud of your accomplishments. You have persevered and worked hard, and you deserve the very best. Because you have participated in the College Bound program, I am writing to request your participation in a study that I am conducting. Through this study, I will explore your views, experiences and perceptions about the College Bound program. You have been selected to participate in this study because you meet the following requirements:

1. You have participated in College Bound for 3 to 5 years
2. You are enrolled or planning to enroll in college
3. You are 16 years of age or older
4. You will have a high school diploma by May or have a diploma.

The results of this study will help the program to fine-tune its programmatic objectives, and ultimately better serve students currently enrolled in the program. Your open and honest opinions will NOT have any negative effects on your relationship with the program nor its staff. Also, the results of this report will not include any identifying information such as name address.

Should you agree to participate in this study, I will ask that you come to the College Bound office, located at 128 M Street, NW, Suite 200, at your designated time. The



interview will not exceed 1 hour. For your participation, you will receive a gift certificate.

To confirm or decline your participation, I ask that you return the enclosed **Consent Form in the prepaid envelop, by fax to (202) xxx-xxxx** or send an email to my attention verifying your willingness to participate in the study.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) xxx-xxxx or x@collegebound.org.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Rustin Lewis

**Responsible Investigator:** Rustin Lewis

**Title of Protocol:** The College Bound Program: Building Human Capacity in Underserved Youth

The purpose of this study is to explore, from the students' perspective, how participation in the College Bound program has been of benefit in encouraging and preparing participants' skills, attitudes, and behaviors for college and for the workforce. This study

also seeks to identify any suggestions that you/your child might have to improve and strengthen the program.

**Permission**

I \_\_\_\_\_(your name) agree to participate in this research project. I understand that this research instrument does not contain any identifying information about participants. Thus, absolute confidentiality is maintained. I understand that the information obtained from this study will be kept confidential by the researcher. The resultant information, which includes the audiotape, will be secured in locked files until they are destroyed at the conclusion of the project.

I understand that I may anticipate minimal psychological risks and some personal inconvenience, regarding my time, while participating. I understand that I can withdraw and discontinue participation in this session at anytime without jeopardizing my relationship with the College Bound program.

I also understand that the information that I provide, as well as my name or any other identifying information will remain anonymous and not appear in any reports produced by this study. If you would like any further information about this study please contact Rustin Lewis, researcher at 202-xxx-xxxx or Dr. Lenneal Henderson at 410-xxx-xxxx.

---

Printed Name of Study Participant

---

Study Participant's Signature

**Informed Consent**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby consent to be audio taped during my participation in the focus group, facilitated by a moderator. The purpose is to explore the perceptions and experiences of the program participants for College Bound, Inc. I understand that a copy of the audio tape may be shared with Researcher Rustin Lewis. The recordings will be retained by Rustin Lewis to support research for his dissertation on College Bound and human capacity building.

---

Signature

Date

---

Witness

Date

*Please use the enclosed return envelope or fax this form to (202) xxx-xxxx.*

## Appendix F

### Curriculum Vitae

#### **Rustin M. Lewis**

President with over 20 years of experience with nonprofit youth mentoring and education-based programs, including 10 years of directing a community based organization (College Bound, Incorporated).

#### **Skills Summary:**

- Over 20 years of experience working with non-profit, youth-oriented organizations, including serving in positions such as CEO, Executive Director, National Manager of Programs and Youth Leader
- Ten years of experience directing non-profit organizations, including developing primary goals, operating plans and policies, fundraising, and strategic planning
- Experienced at establishing both short-term and long-range objectives for organizations
- Experienced at managing operational and programmatic budgets
- Skilled at managing a program, development, and general operating staff, including hiring/firing, oversight of payroll, staff evaluations and training
- Experienced at working with a 20-member board of directors consisting of local and nationally recognized professionals
- Seasoned at recruiting, mobilizing and training volunteers
- Adept at raising financial support from corporations, foundations, individuals and governmental agencies
- Highly skilled at serving as the “face” of an organization with regards to public relations and marketing
- Extensive program administration experience, including oversight of the organization’s programs, college tours, and special events
- Skilled at developing and maintaining relationships with donors, and local, state and national agencies

## **Education:**

**Doctorate of Public Administration**, University of Baltimore (Baltimore, Maryland)

December 2009

**Master of Public Administration** (Public Policy), Clark Atlanta University (Atlanta, Georgia), 1996

**Bachelor of Arts, Sociology**, Clark Atlanta University (Atlanta, Georgia), 1992

## **Training:**

- **Nonprofit Executive Leadership Certificate Program**, Georgetown University (Washington, D.C.), 2002
- **Volunteer Initiative Program**, United Way Nonprofit Board Training, 1998
- **Grant Writing Certificate Program**, Emory University (Atlanta, Georgia), 1996
- **Effective Fundraising Resources**, Foundation Center, 1996

## **Professional Experience:**

**National CARES Mentoring Movement, Inc. (Atlanta, Georgia)**

**National President** (2009-present)

A national nonprofit that recruits caring Black adults to become mentors.

- Engage 55 affiliates across the country that recruit mentors
- Manage the organization's budget
- Manage a staff of six

- Organized national conference
- Established a capacity building grants initiative to support affiliate development
- Develop a 5-year strategic plan

**College Bound, Inc.** (Washington, D.C.)

**Chief Executive Officer**

1999-2009

A nonprofit that provides mentoring, tutoring, and scholarship opportunities for underprivileged youth

- Increased organizational budget
- Secured organization's first multi-year federal grant in the amount of \$500,000
- Develop primary goals, operating plans, and policies, and established both short-term and long-range objectives for the organization
- Manage annual operating and program budgets
- Expanded the visibility and presence of the organization by increasing the number of community-based sites from two to six
- Doubled the number of students served by the program
- Directed and organized academic mentoring, financial literacy, SAT preparation and scholarship programs to achieve the organization's mission
- Mobilize over 150 adults annually to serve as mentors for program participants
- Manage 11 person staff
- Developed College Bound's Financial Literacy and Senior Retreat components
- Established the *Juliette Tyler Lewis Scholarship* for College Bound Alumni
- Established free SAT/ACT preparation classes for underprivileged youth
- Developed the organization's first marketing campaign which included public relations, producing a recruitment video, and created print, television, and radio advertisements

**100 Black Men of America, Inc.** (Atlanta, GA)

19 97- 1999

**Manager of National Programs**

A national non-profit organization that encourages African-American men to mentor youth

- Performed the overall administration and service delivery of over 14 community programs in areas such as mentoring, male reproductive health, prostate cancer prevention, and college preparation
- Managed the program's grants, reporting requirements and budgets up to \$250K
- Supervised a 9-member staff
- Co-authored *Mentoring the 100 Way* and *Collegiate 100* curriculums
- Organized the National Education and Prostate Cancer Summit as a component of the National conference with 250 participants
- Supported the Manager of Membership Services by establishing and maintaining relations with chapter Presidents nationally and internationally
- Assisted in the production of the “100’s” national campaign video and other public relation initiatives
- Developed and maintained relationships with local, state and national agencies

**Other Employment:**

**Adjunct Instructor**, University of the District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.), 2002-2003

**Research Associate**, Morehouse Research Institute (Atlanta, GA), 1993-1997

**Loaned Executive**, the United Way of Metro Atlanta (Atlanta, GA), 1992-1993

**Outreach Specialist**, Butler Street YMCA (Atlanta, GA), 1991-1992

**Governor’s Intern**, Cobb County Boys Club (Mableton, GA), 1990-1991

**Summer Youth Supervisor**, Gary Neighborhood Services (Gary, IN), 1988-1990

### **Professional Affiliations:**

- National Board Member, Young Nonprofit Professionals Network, 2007- 2008
- Member, 100 Black Men of Washington, D.C. (Washington, D.C.), 2006-present
- Vice Chairman/Member, D.C. Educational Licensure Commission (Washington, D.C.), 2002-2006
- Member: Hillcrest Civic Association Education Committee (Washington, D.C.), 2004-2005
- Member: American Society of Association Executives, 2000-2004
- Board Member: Perry School Community Center, 1999-2001
- Member: American Society of Public Administrators, 1997-1999
- Member: Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

### **Presentations and Publications:**

- Published 8 papers covering the topics of education, crime, and socio-economic inequality (in the *CHALLENGE*, *Daedalus* and *Data Line* publications)
- Lectured at 6 conferences and workshops addressing mentoring and educational equality



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