

## **Advancing urban educational policy: Insights from research on Dunbar High School**

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### **ABSTRACT**

For a period of 85 years, the M Street/Dunbar High School was an academically elite, all-black public high school in Washington, D.C. As far back as 1899, its students came in first in citywide tests given in both black and white schools. Over this 85-year span, approximately 80 percent of M Street/Dunbar's graduates went on to college, even though most Americans, white or black, did not attend college at all. Faculty and students were mutually respectful to one another and disruptions in the classroom were not tolerated. Yet, in this era of best practices, this public high school has received virtually no attention in the literature or in policy considerations for inner-city education. The Dunbar High School, of today, with its new building and athletic facilities is just another ghetto school with abysmal standards and low test score results despite the District of Columbia's record of having some of the country's highest levels of money spent per pupil. The purpose of this study is to explore the history of a high school that was successful in teaching black children from low-income families and to determine if the learning model employed there could be successful in a modern inner-city public education environment.

Keywords: segregation, principals, faculty, students, family

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## INTRODUCTION

In November 1870, the Preparatory High School for Colored Youth was established in Washington, D.C. in the basement of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church on 15<sup>th</sup> Street between I and K Streets, N.W. First supported by means of private philanthropic funds, it became a tax-supported institution within a few years and became the first black public high school in the United States. It actually preceded the establishment of the public high schools for whites in the District of Columbia (Moore, 1999).

The school was moved from the basement of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church to the Thaddeus Stevens School for one year, 1871 to 1872. The Charles Sumner School at 17th and M Streets, N.W., became its home from 1872 to 1877. It then was moved to the Myrtilla Minor School on the corner of 17th and Church Streets, N.W. It remained there until 1891, when it was moved to M Street between First Street and New Jersey Avenue, N.W., and became known as the M Street High School (Hundley, 1965, p.17; Lee, 1997, p. 24; Wormley, 1932, p. 137). A new building was constructed at 1<sup>st</sup> and O Streets, N.W., and christened in honor of the black poet, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, on January 15, 1917 (Terrell, July 1917, pp. 252-253; Hundley, p.145).

The M Street/Dunbar High School was an academically elite, all-black public high school in Washington, D.C., from 1870 to 1955. As far back as 1899, its students came in first in citywide tests given in *both* black and white schools. Over this 85-year span, most of M Street/Dunbar's graduates went on to college, even though most Americans, white or black, did not attend college at all. In their careers, as in their academic work, M Street/Dunbar graduates excelled. The first black general (Benjamin O. Davis, Sr.), the first black federal judge (William H. Hastie), the first black Cabinet member (Robert C. Weaver), the discoverer of blood plasma (Charles Drew), and the first black Senator since Reconstruction (Edward W. Brooke), were all M Street/Dunbar graduates. During World War II, M Street/Dunbar graduates in the Army included "nearly a score of majors, nine colonels and lieutenant colonels, and one brigadier general," and a substantial percentage of the total number of high-ranking black officers at that time (Hundley, p. 145).

The M Street/Dunbar High School prepared graduating students for the challenges of college education and for the workforce. The literature on creating high-performing high schools identifies a particular set of components that are remarkably consistent for effecting high school transformation. Among both educators and educational researchers, a new consensus, similar to what M Street/Dunbar provided in the past, is emerging today. This consensus implies that effective school improvement requires:

- A high set of expectations and a rigorous curriculum,
- A repertoire of instructional strategies that engage students in real-world applications,
- An environment that fosters academic and personal relationships between staff and students,
- A vested leadership, and
- A professional community of partnership that focuses on improving teaching and learning for every child (National High Alliance, March 2005).

If nothing else, history shows what can be achieved, even in the face of adversity. Today, black people are achieving less in an era of greater material abundance and greater social opportunities. Yet, a subculture of poverty has become institutionalized through welfare

assistance and government dependency. Can the education model of the “old Dunbar” be replicated in these modern times? Does one really need a quality education or professional job skills and qualifications to succeed given the values of a black poverty subculture?

What about faculty? M Street/Dunbar teachers were highly qualified in a segregated society because there were limited employment opportunities for black professionals. Could the level of faculty quality that existed in those times be required in contemporary high schools when there are other opportunities for well-educated blacks?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The American educational system of public schools has been under scrutiny for decades. In 2013, only 38 percent of American 12<sup>th</sup> grade students scored at or above proficient in reading and 26 percent in mathematics. Between 2009 and 2013, there was no change (National Center for Educational Statistics, *Condition of Education*, 2015).

In 2008, the National Education Association (NEA) expressed the view that: “America’s high schools are in crisis. Far too many of our high schools are responsive not to 21st century realities but to the demands of an earlier time, when the foremost aim of education was to sort thousands of students into tracks and prepare them for employment in an industrialized economy” (NEA Education Policy and Practice Department, 2008). Actually, by 1983, it was becoming clear that America was taking a wrong new path on public education. The racially charged environment of the 1960s was in full swing and unforeseen consequences from new legislation and court orders were becoming evident.

At any rate, it appears that the combined efforts of federal, state, and school authorities in recent years have resulted in a steady increase in high school educational performance. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the percentage of public high school students of all suasions, who graduate on time with a regular diploma, increased from 79 percent in 2010/2011 to 82.3 percent in 2013/2014, the highest level since states adopted a new uniform way of calculating graduation rates five years ago (National Center for Educational Statistics, *U.S. High School Graduation Rate*, 2015). See Table 1 (Appendix).

*Breaking Ranks II*, a seminal text endorsed National Education Association, offers a series of recommendations for recasting high schools (Sizer, 2004). Its first set of recommendations and tools focuses on the development of a professional learning community, wherein leadership throughout the institution changes its work on what will successfully support every student in their high school experience. The second set of recommendations and tools focuses on the need to provide every student with meaningful adult relationships that can best support every student. Finally, the third set of recommendations and tools focuses on the development of personalized learning, where students see their learning as meaningful and relevant, as well as rigorous and challenging. This ensures the success of the student both within and beyond high school. Together, these recommendations and activities ultimately lead to the success of every student, not just those typically served well by the traditional comprehensive high school.

No scholarly study of the M Street/Dunbar High School story is yet available. Nearly the entire literature on the subject consists of one slim volume, *The Dunbar Story*, printed privately at her own expense by Mary Gibson Hundley, a retired Dunbar teacher. It tells the story of Dunbar from 1870 to 1955 (Hundley, p. 57). Journalist and author Alison Stewart, whose parents were both Dunbar graduates, has written a book *First Class: The Legacy of Dunbar*,

*America's First Black Public High School* (Stewart, 2015). It tells the story of the school's rise, fall, and path toward resurgence as it opened a new, state-of-the-art campus in the fall of 2013. Thomas Sowell published an article "Black Excellence: The Case of Dunbar High School," which reviewed the history and achievement of the high school. He explored the implications for educational planning and the impact of integration policies (Sowell, "Black Excellence").

In 1954, when the Supreme Court struck down school segregation (Kelly, 1987), Dunbar was an academic school, drawing the brightest black youngsters from throughout the city and sending about 80 per cent of them on to college. After that decision, it became a neighborhood high school, drawing its students from some of the poorest neighborhoods in the city with difficult problems of discipline, absenteeism and low academic achievement that beset schools in inner-city slums throughout the country. In an attempt to address this situation, a \$20.6 million building for Dunbar Senior High School opened in April 1977 at New Jersey Avenue and N Street N.W. to replace the turreted red-brick building built in 1916. Initially, there were 889 students and 56 teachers for grades 9 through 12. Since desegregation, it has been a neighborhood school with a student body that is nearly 100 percent black (Kiernan, February 1975).

The *historical* approach to the 1977 building's new design signified a rejection of the 1916 building's past and a focus on contemporary and future needs. It revealed a strong disconnect between past accomplishments of the old Dunbar and the academically unproductive state of the institution in the 1960s and 1970s. Instead of the values and culture of middle-class America, it embraced the social phenomena in economics and sociology under which poverty-stricken individuals exhibit a tendency to remain poor throughout their lifespan and, in many cases, across generations (Lewis, 1966). In this culture, higher education and higher level professional, managerial, and technology careers are not priorities. The young black adult, especially the male, is forced to base his self-esteem on a stereotyped picture of sexual impulsiveness, irresponsibility, verbal bombast, posturing, and compensatory achievement in entertainment and athletics (Morris, 2007).

The spirit and the wishes of the anti-Dunbar faction were championed by the D.C. Board of Education, which wanted no further reminders of what they thought the old school stood for in the life of black Washingtonians. The board led the fight to have the old building demolished. A good many of its members were young black professionals, politicians, and grass-roots community leaders. Some of them came out of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and were educated in other parts of the country (or in other high schools in Washington). They had no feelings for what others called Dunbar's illustrious past. The new school building did not have adequate playing fields and there was no space for construction of a sports stadium apart from the site on which the old 1916 building stood (Anderson, March 1978, p. 93).

Without the efforts of Mary Hundley, Dr. W. Montague Cobb, and Senator Edward Brooke, the order to knock down the old Dunbar building would have been swiftly issued, signed, and delivered (Anderson). Many Dunbar alumni, preservationists, and local historians countered the demolition arguments proposing that keeping the historic Dunbar High School building would benefit students. Preservation of the building would provide students with a physical reminder of the rich history of their school, an example how slaves valued education as an integral part of freedom and black academic excellence in spite of *de jure* segregation throughout America. The protracted arguments and debates about saving the building were unyielding on both sides, but the pro-Dunbar proponents never had a chance of saving the old 1916 building. It was demolished in July 1977.

A new philosophy had taken root and some blacks were demonstrating their ability to survive and even flourish in an economically depressed racist environment. However, people living in an area predicated upon a culture of poverty have very little sense of history. They are a marginal people who know only their own troubles, their own local conditions, their own neighborhood, or their own way of life. Usually, they have neither the knowledge, the vision, nor the ideology to see the similarities between their problems and those of others like themselves elsewhere in the world. They are not class conscious, but they are very sensitive to status distinctions (Lewis, 1998).

In 2010, Dunbar student enrollment had fallen from a high of over 1,700 in the 1940s to only 750. The student body was still 99 percent black, but only 29 percent of students met the District of Columbia's grade level standards for reading, and only 23 percent met the standard for math. On August 19, 2013, D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray, an alumnus from Paul Laurence Dunbar High School, assembled with Washingtonians and alumni to celebrate a new \$122-million-dollar building that ostensibly draws upon the school's pre-1960s history to inspire current students. The idea was to create an edifice that would honor the past, the present, and the future (Dunbar High School Alumni Federation, Spring 2011, p. 7).

The new Dunbar, with 280,000 square feet of space, is located at 101 N Street, N.W., in the Truxton Circle neighborhood and boasts a soaring and light-filled atrium, a new pool and gym, a 600-person auditorium, and four academies featuring classrooms and labs. The design maximizes learning spaces while embracing technology (Austermuhle, August 2013). However, more than to showcase modernity, the new building is inspired by the school's history. The M Street/Dunbar High School graduated a generation of black leaders, lawyers, and artists, and their names are inscribed on 118 plaques throughout the school. Another 130 plaques are blank, hinting that any future graduates of the school could see their name featured on them as well (Austermuhle). The school's interior features an atrium-like armory that is the "heart of the school," connecting the academic wing, sports fields, gym, pool, auditorium, and cafeteria seating areas. It does not have a rifle range.

The school also features a small museum commemorating its rich history and the accomplishments of its many graduates, which included Nannie Helen Burroughs, Mary Church Terrell, Carter G. Woodson, D.C. Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton, and D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray. During the ribbon-cutting, alumni from as far back as the class of 1925 marveled at the new building while remembering their time at Dunbar. District officials hope that the building's transformation will usher in a new era in academic achievement. The new building can accommodate 1,100 students, more than double the 500 that have attended the school in recent years (Austermuhle).

It is a painful irony that the original Dunbar High School building, which opened in 1916, accommodated a school with a record of high academic achievements for generations of black students. In spite of the inadequacies of the building, *de jure* segregation, and the inadequacies of the financial support that the school received, it was an outstanding academic success. By contrast, today's Dunbar High School with its new building and athletic facilities is just another ghetto school with poor value standards and low test score results despite the District of Columbia's record of having some of the country's highest levels of money spent per pupil (Jeffrey, May 2014).

The two attempts to transform Dunbar High School from one of the city's worst-performing high schools to an institution that once again would be known for academic excellence have been an appalling failure so far. The 1977 school essentially rejected the history

and spirit of M Street/Dunbar, while the 2013 school seeks to recapture it. When education was the chief means of ameliorating problems of race and class, M Street/Dunbar travelled with black people through the long journey and rigors of making the adjustment from slavery to freedom and through the travails of dealing with segregation as blacks attempted to assimilate into the American mainstream society. A Dunbar education was an important part of the recurring salient thematic element still needed in the fight for liberty.

Sociologically, culture is the attitudes, behavior, beliefs, customs, habits, language, and values that are characteristic of a group, society, or organization in a particular place and time. The accumulated knowledge of culture is passed to the next generation through socialization and education. American life, in this respect, has coarsened in the past several decades, but the nature of the beast is still in question. Gertrude Himmelfarb (1999) sees it as a struggle between competing elites, in which liberals originated a counterculture that conservatives failed to hold back. Patrick Moynihan (Winter 1993, pp. 17-30), has given us the phrase “defining deviancy down,” to describe a process in which we change the meaning of morality to fit what we are doing anyway. One may add a third voice to the mix, however, that of the late historian Arnold Toynbee (1946), who would find our recent history no mystery at all: We are witnessing the proletarianization of a dominant minority that now is setting the value standard for the larger society.

Recognizing the existence of an underclass or a subculture of poverty, politicians have become dependent on the votes of those who work for government directly or indirectly. This includes those who receive welfare, social activists, and a cadre of academics and intellectuals who thought the expansion of welfare was a success. Government supports a vast network of social service workers, including urban educators, for whom social pathology is a job opportunity (Siegal, 1997). The key factors are social and cultural issues that, intertwined with politics, undermine educational decisions. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed: The current set of social, political, and cultural phenomena mitigate against replicating the high performance environment that existed at M Street/Dunbar High School prior to 1960.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

Historical research techniques were used to review data from the past and draw conclusions that impact on the present or future. Comparative analysis was used to compare changes in political and governmental activities over several governmental administrative periods. Qualitative observational methods were employed to use open-ended observation schemes in which the full range of individuals' responses to an environment could be recorded. As part of the overall qualitative research effort, a survey research instrument was developed and posted on SurveyMonkey® from June 2012 to November 2015 to investigate M Street/Dunbar High School alumni who graduated in 1959 or earlier. The purpose was to obtain data and information pertaining to the history, educational programs, and activities conducted at the high school. There were 45 questions. The more salient ones were open-ended so that the recipients could answer them in their own words. Of the 441 principals contacted via web link, emails and telephone calls, 60 recipients, or 13.6 percent, responded to the questionnaire. The responses were then downloaded for review and analysis in conjunction with other research techniques.

The respondents were born between 1919 and 1939. All of them were students who attended either M Street High School or Paul Lawrence Dunbar High School before 1960. Fifty-

five percent of the survey respondents are male and 45 percent female. Their ages ranged from the upper seventies to the nineties. Some 94.7 percent were born in the 1930s.

The place of birth for 78 percent of the respondents was Washington, DC. Five percent were born in Baltimore, Maryland. Other places of birth (two percent each) included:

Newport News, Virginia  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
New York, New York  
Little Rock, Arkansas  
Muskogee, Oklahoma  
Wake Forest, North Carolina  
Atlanta, Georgia  
Cumberland, Maryland  
Altoona, Pennsylvania

On the basis of age, experience, academic degree, and familiarity with M Street/Dunbar High School, the overwhelming majority of the surveyed participants were mature, highly educated, and knowledgeable of the school and its history.

## DATA OVERVIEW

M Street High School was erected on M Street, N.W., near the intersection of New York and New Jersey Avenues. The 1904-1905 Report of the Board of Education of D.C. indicates the site of the building cost \$24,592.50. The building itself cost \$74,454.88 and the fixtures cost \$9,862.44. The total expenditure for the new school was \$109,909.82 (Terrell, pp. 252-253; Hundley, p. 145).

The new Dunbar High School building at 1<sup>st</sup> and O Streets, N.W., which replaced the M Street building, was dedicated January 15, 1917. It was a magnificent brick, sandstone-trimmed building of Elizabethan architecture with a frontage of 401 feet. The architectural style of the building contained elements of Roman and Greek architecture styles with symmetrical lines and the motif was mixed with Flemish decorative work, such as strap work, and Late-Gothic mullioned and transomed windows. It was christened in honor of the black poet, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, and represented an outlay of more than a half a million dollars. The ground cost the government \$60,000, and the building and equipment \$550,000. There was a faculty of 48 teachers, many of them graduates from the leading colleges and universities in the country. There were 1,252 students, 545 boys and 707 girls (Terrell, p. 258).

### Racial Background

Given the general predominance of mulattoes among the "free persons of color" and their descendants, it seems probable that the light-skinned mulatto stereotype was applicable to the early M Street and Dunbar students and teachers. This group continued for many years to be over-represented among the schools' students and teachers, but they did not necessarily constitute a majority. A study of old yearbook photographs at Dunbar High School shows the great bulk of the students to have been very much the color of most American blacks. Any bias in the photography of that period, before black was beautiful, would be toward printing the pictures lighter than in life (Sowell, Spring 1976, p. 47).

The survey respondents could check more than one characteristic under “race or ethnic background.” Eleven percent checked “Black/African American” and “White/Caucasian,” or these two categories and “Native American.” This results in a skewed profile of the students at M Street/Dunbar High School showing 11 percent white, 92 percent black, eight percent Native American, and two percent Asian American. There is no evidence of white students attending M Street/Dunbar High School prior to 1954.

In analyzing this situation, two terms appear to warrant consideration, “mulatto” and “mixed race.” A mulatto is defined as the first-generation offspring of a black person and a white person. A mixed race person is one who relates to or has characteristics of people of different ethnic origins. Characterizing those who checked the black and white categories as “mulatto” and those who checked these two categories plus Native American as “mixed race,” allows for an adjusted classification which provides for zero white students, 77 percent black students, four percent Native American students, 11 percent mulatto students, four percent Native American students, and two percent Asian American. See Table 2 (Appendix).

### Admission

Dunbar students' average intelligence quotient (IQ) was substantially higher than those of other blacks and, usually, above the national average as well. Even the Dunbar dropouts scored higher than the average of other blacks. However, Dunbar students were *not* selected on the basis of IQ tests. Admission to Dunbar was a matter of individual self-selection and no admissions test was required. Nonetheless, one did not merely happen to enroll there. The school's reputation and standards were well known to parents and middle-school children throughout the black community. Indeed, some black youngsters from nearby Maryland and Virginia were known to give false District of Columbia addresses in order to attend (Sowell, Spring 1976, p. 34). Others, from more distant states in the South, were sent by their parents to live with relatives or friends so they could attend the Dunbar High School in Washington.

The M Street/Dunbar High School fiercely resisted recurrent pressures upon it to become vocational, commercial, or "general." It taught Latin throughout the period of 1870 to 1955 and, in some early years, Greek as well. The school was never "relevant" to the passing fads. It instilled individual and racial pride in its students and in the D.C. black community. From its beginning, it functioned, as its name implied, as a college preparatory school for the "Talented Tenth" (Janzen, 1993, pp. 18-19).

In determining why students chose to attend the M Street/Dunbar High School, the survey indicated 62 percent of the respondents chose to attend because of the school's academic reputation in preparing pupils for college, 11 percent said they were influenced by friends or peers, and 22 percent essentially were obligated by family tradition. Only five percent said the school had been recommended by their junior high school teachers or counselors.

### Student Neighborhoods

Because it was not a neighborhood school during the 1870-1955 period, no one was automatically assigned to M Street/Dunbar. Students lived in different neighborhoods throughout the Washington-Georgetown area and the surrounding counties, and daily traveled anywhere from a few blocks to several miles to attend class. Respondents lived throughout the city in all of the major neighborhoods except the Penn Quarter/Chinatown locality.



As indicated in Table 3 (Appendix), most of the respondents had a long daily commute to and from school. Fifty-eight percent travelled more than three miles one-way to school each day.

Most survey respondents, 32 percent, lived in the LeDroit Park area. Seventeen percent lived in each of three other neighborhoods: Capitol Hill, U Street, and Anacostia/Southwest. See Table 4 (Appendix).

### Parental Employment

The local stereotype of the M Street/Dunbar High School was that it was a school attended by the children of doctors and lawyers. This was probably the case, but, in a study of class records for the period 1938-1955, the percentage of Dunbar students whose parents' occupations could be identified as "professional" never exceeded six per cent for any of the years studied (Sowell, Spring 1976, p. 39). Only about half of the parental occupations were identifiable and categorized, so this should be regarded as a high of about 12 per cent of the occupations known and classified. This was exceptionally large for a black school. Former Dunbar principal Charles S. Lofton referred to the middle-class stereotype as "an old wives' tale." He said: "If we took only the children of doctors and lawyers," he asked, "how could we have had 1,400 black students at one time?" (Sowell, Spring 1976, p. 40).

The alumni survey is enlightening. Responding to the question of what jobs or occupations were held by their parents, the respondents indicated a fairly large number of avocations for their fathers and mothers. A large majority were in the lower socioeconomic strata with government worker (clerk, messenger, etc.) ranking high on both sides; 28 percent for fathers and 26 percent for mothers. The next high percentage for fathers was laborer at 11 percent. However, one-third, 33 percent, of the mothers were listed as "Housewife/home maker." See Table 5 (Appendix).

Few families of the survey respondents would be considered middle class or higher. As indicated in Table 6 (Appendix), the respondents' family household income when they attended the M Street/Dunbar High School was clustered between \$1,001 and \$30,000. For comparison, in the 1940s, the mean income in the United States was \$1,299 and the median, \$2,200 (U.S. Census Bureau).

Black families in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century exhibited the typical values characteristic of the middle class even when they did not have the financial means to obtain this lifestyle. Typical values associated with a black middle class lifestyle included a tendency to plan ahead that foresaw retirement, a desire to be in control of their future, respect for and abidance of the law, and a desire for a good education for themselves and their children. The way to move forward in socio-economic status was through a good education and hard work. The values consistent with this life style included a desire to protect their families from various hardships such as health issues, financial difficulties, and crime (Myrdal, 1944, p. 134).

### Educational Attainment

On their way to M Street/Dunbar High School, survey respondents indicate that they basically came through the segregated District of Columbia Public School system. Ninety-two percent attended elementary school in Washington, DC, six percent in Baltimore, Maryland, and

two percent in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. Ninety-eight percent attended middle school/junior high school in Washington and two percent in Mechanicsburg.

As far back as 1899, M Street/Dunbar students came in first in citywide tests given in *both* black and white schools. Over an 85-year span, most of school's graduates went on to college, even though most Americans, white or black, did not. Most M Street/Dunbar graduates could afford only to attend the low-cost local colleges, either federally supported Howard University or almost tuition-free Miner Teachers College. However, those M Street/Dunbar graduates who attended Harvard, Amherst, Oberlin, and other prestigious institutions, usually on scholarships, ran up an impressive record of academic honors. For example, it is known that Amherst admitted 34 Dunbar graduates between 1892 and 1954. Of these, 74 percent graduated and more than one fourth of these graduates were Phi Beta Kappas (Sowell, Spring 1976, p. 27). Amherst thought so highly of Dunbar graduates that it accepted any student recommended by the school without his having to take an entrance examination (Lichello, 1968, p. 13).

None of the respondents attended the Preparatory High School for Colored Youth, which was the foundation of the Dunbar. Four percent of them attended M Street High School and 96 percent attended Paul Lawrence Dunbar High School. Only 13 percent did not graduate and all of them left in their senior year. The survey respondents graduated from Dunbar High School between 1937 and 1957, with the 1955 class being the largest group at 38 percent. See Table 7 (Appendix).

The M Street/Dunbar High School was known to have a top college preparatory program. Seventy-two percent of the survey respondents felt that the academic and related programs that prepared them for entry into college, the military, and/or the workforce were excellent or above average. Another 28 percent gave a rating of average or below. See Table 8 (Appendix).

Of those graduating, 98 percent of the survey respondents attended college. Most of them, 74 percent, attended undergraduate school in Washington, DC, and 26 percent attended out-of-state schools. See Table 9 (Appendix).

Of those respondents attending undergraduate school, 81 percent went on to graduate school. Thirty-six percent attended graduate school in the District of Columbia and 64 percent attended out-of-state graduate schools. Two percent studied abroad in Brussels, Belgium, and two percent completed an on-line degree from an Australian-based education institution. See Table 10 (Appendix).

Nineteen percent of the respondents did not earn a college degree. A bachelor degree was earned by 26 percent, a master's by 41 percent, a professional degree by nine percent, and a doctorate degree by six percent. In rating their overall education at the M Street/Dunbar High School, 93.1 percent of the survey respondents were satisfied or very satisfied (see Table 11 (Appendix)).

### Student Ability Levels

Over 90 percent of the survey respondents rated the academic ability of their fellow M Street/Dunbar students to be outstanding or above average. Eight percent of the students were rated average or below by their peers. See Table 12 (Appendix).

Almost by definition, the intelligence quotient (IQ) is a culturally, socially, and ideologically rooted concept. It is intended to predict success (i.e., to predict outcomes that are valued as success by most people) in a large social group carrying its own set of values. Specifically, one's IQ has been found to be the single best predictor of the decision to obtain

postsecondary education, and econometric analyses have shown that each additional IQ point may lead to a decision by a student to stay in school a little longer (Kronick and Hargis, 1990).

Still, the argument has often been made that IQs have little relationship to performance as far as black people are concerned. Nonetheless, there is already considerable literature indicating that IQ tests and similar tests are equally accurate predictors of black and white academic performance. Dunbar provided a somewhat different kind of test of this hypothesis because it is based on a black group with outstanding performances in both academic and career terms. Were Dunbar IQs significantly different from the national average IQ of 85 for black Americans? Table 13 (Appendix) answers that question (Sowell, Spring 1976, pp. 33-34).

### Curriculum and Class Setting

The M Street/Dunbar High School had a rigorous academic curriculum based on the New England concept of a classical education. First-year students were required to take English, history, algebra, Latin, and physics or chemistry. English and Latin were the only required subjects for third- and fourth-year students. Most students took a typical academic load, including two years of Greek, three of French, four of Latin, two of English and geometry, trigonometry and higher algebra. There were other options, as well, including courses in German, Spanish, and political economy (Hutchinson, 1981, pp. 57-58).

M Street/Dunbar was a college preparatory school. However, as its students developed interests pertaining to manual arts and business, programs were spun off to establish two other high schools, Armstrong Technical High School and Cardoza High School. Courses available to the M Street/Dunbar students and the percentage of participation by the survey respondents are listed in Table 14 (Appendix).

### Strengths and Weaknesses of the M Street/Dunbar High School Academic Program

The survey respondents indicated that the M Street/Dunbar High School academic program had its share of problems and weaknesses. Segregation was considered a problem by 18 percent of the respondents and 21 percent felt there was a lack of resources and support for students. However, 61 percent felt there were no weaknesses except for the impatience of teachers for some students who did not prepare for class or do their homework. Still, the city had a segregated school system and the funds to maintain supplies, books, and materials in black schools were limited. Specific weaknesses cited were overcrowded classes, run-down physical facilities, lack of money, and the distance to school that students needed to travel for attendance. Moreover, some venues did not welcome black students and these affected opportunities to expand knowledge outside the black community. Class sizes, for example, are shown in Table 15 (Appendix).

The survey respondents believe the strengths of the M Street/Dunbar High School academic program were its faculty and principals (44 percent), its students (32 percent), and its curriculum (24 percent). They thought the teachers and principals were very well qualified and were dedicated to their students. Some of the faculty held doctoral degrees and they cared about student achievement. They also felt that students were focused on academics and were held to high standards by their teachers.

### Parental Involvement

The Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) was not the major means of parental involvement in the M Street/Dunbar High School setting. Parental involvement was particularly important in black schools, for the black culture was not a permissive culture. If black kids misbehave, it is because their parents do not know or do not care. M Street/Dunbar students' parents did not tolerate any philosophy allowing black youths to "do their own thing." Where black parents have become involved in a school, they have sometimes urged a stricter discipline than the school was prepared to impose. Moreover, parental involvement did not mean taking "community control" through either an ideological dogma or a public relations ploy. Where a community has a high rate of residential turnover, "community control" can mean the unchallenged dominance of a handful of activists who are not accountable to any lasting constituency. At M Street/Dunbar, it was important to have the widespread involvement of individual parents and the support of the church (Hutchinson, pp. 57-58).

Some 74 percent of the respondents found the Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) to be average to above average. Twenty-one percent found it to be outstanding. See Table 16 (Appendix).

#### Student Participation in Sports and Extracurricular Activities

In the 1940s, a large variety of clubs reflected the broad scope of the school programs: Banking, Biology, Chemistry, Commercial, Contemporary Literature, Current Topics, Debating, Dramatics, News Reel, Girl Reserves, Golf, Home Nursing, Foreign Languages, Library, Music, Negro History, Red Cross, Race Relations, Social Service, Stamp Collection, Short Story, and Travel Clubs. A faculty committee annually audited the finances of all activities and committees. Many clubs had accounts in the school bank, with a bonded teacher as treasurer, and students of bookkeeping as bank clerks. Athletics included baseball, football, basketball, track, tennis, and swimming for boys; basketball and swimming for girls. Varsity and intramural events were held for several sports. Dunbar graduates became outstanding athletes in many American colleges and participated in national and international competitions (Hutchinson, pp. 51-52). There was also a rifle team in which both boys and girls participated. A rifle range was located in the basement and team members could practice there.

The alumni survey indicates that the M Street/Dunbar High School male and female students were well-rounded. A full range of sports activities was available to students and 65 percent of the survey respondents participated at the varsity level. Baseball and football were most popular among boys with participation rates of 12 percent each, followed by basketball and track and field at eight percent each, and golf at seven percent. Basketball, field hockey, and swimming were the major sports for girls. See Table 17 (Appendix).

There also was a full range of clubs and extracurricular activities for M Street/Dunbar High School students. Only nine percent of the survey respondents did not participate in some form or other of these activities. Most popular among them was the Mixed Glee Club, the Foreign Languages Club, and the Music Club at nine percent each and the Red Cross Club at eight percent. See Table 18 (Appendix).

#### Cadet Corps Drill Teams

If any single activity epitomized the discipline and high standards of the schools and the black community in Washington, it was the high school Cadet Corps Drill Teams. The Cadet Corps, a precursor of the Junior ROTC, was comprised of male high school students. The purpose of the corps was to teach discipline and leadership. Like most of America at that time, the Cadet Corps was segregated. In 1882, two companies of High School Cadets were organized for white high schools and the first competitive drill for white students was held in 1888. The first colored high school cadets were organized in 1888 at M Street High by Christian Fleetwood. It was largely through the efforts of Mr. Fleetwood that the Colored High School Cadet Corps was established in the Preparatory High School for Colored Youth six years after its founding in the white schools (Schneller, 2005, p. 71). There also was a cadet corps for girls in the 1920s and 1940s that was closely aligned with the Physical Education Department (Hundley, p. 57).

Forty percent of the survey respondents participated in the Washington High School Cadet Corps Drill Teams program while at the M Street/Dunbar High School. Sixty percent did not. Twenty percent of the participants considered the Dunbar ROTC program to be outstanding. It was indicated by 48 percent of the respondents that the ROTC program developed leadership skills, discipline, and citizenship. Another 18 percent said it instilled self-discipline and responsibility. Thirteen percent regretted not being able to participate due to the distance travelled to and from school and the requirement to arrive before the start of classes.

### Student Employment

The M Street/Dunbar student's primary "job" was to go to school, study hard, and stay out of trouble. Many students, however, had part-time jobs to help their families make ends meet. Fifty-one percent of the survey respondents had a job while they were attending high school. Forty-five percent of them worked 16-20 hours a week and three percent worked 21 or more hours per week. See Table 19 (Appendix).

### Discipline

M Street/Dunbar was allowed to use corporal punishment to discipline students, and the parents supported this. Many of the male students, especially, remember the large paddle in the administrative offices at Dunbar. When a principal in a black school is given the authority to administer corporal punishment at the insistence of the parents, there is clearly more here than meets the eye. The important question was not whether corporal punishment was good or bad, any more than the important question about Dunbar students really needing Latin. The point is that certain human relations are essential to the educational process. When these conditions are met, then education can go forward regardless of methods, educational philosophy, or physical plant (Sowell, Spring 1976, pp. 51-52).

The types of punishment employed were the principal's bench, study hall after school, corporal punishment, chastisement, penalties, and parental involvement. In rating the effectiveness of the several forms of punishment in maintaining discipline, the respondents found the principal's bench and involving the student's parents to be the most effective. They rated each of these forms of punishment to be 94.1 percent very effective or effective; being kept in study hall after school was next at 85.7 percent. See Table 20 (Appendix).

There was no dress code for M Street/Dunbar High School students, but dressing for school attendance was not taken lightly. Among the respondents, 51 percent classified their

dress for school as casual and 44 percent as respectable; there is little different between the two. Most of the girls wore skirts and blouses or dresses with socks and shoes, such as loafers and oxfords. They were neat and appropriate. The boys wore pants, shirts and sweaters, sometimes coats and ties or ROTC uniforms. Their shoes were loafers or oxfords. No jeans, t-shirts, tennis shoes, or sneakers were worn to school.

### Segregation and Racism

The social order prevailing during the “glory days” of the old M Street/Dunbar High School was one of Jim Crow segregation. Some 35 percent of the survey respondents felt that racism and color impacted the success of the school’s efforts to function in the mainstream American society. However, they felt that as graduates of the M Street/Dunbar High School, they were well prepared to function in the American society as a whole and to take advantage of any activities and opportunities that became available to them. While racism and colorism were significant disadvantages for the black community, there were some special benefits for those confined to the black community. As a result of racism, for example, M Street/Dunbar was blessed with the best educated teachers in the DC public school system. One was expected to be part of the Negro community and education prepared the student to be become a respected and contributing member of that community. Helping fellow classmates and friends was part of the M Street/Dunbar High training because of the goal of racial uplift.

Thirty percent of the survey respondents felt that faculty had an impact on the success of the school’s efforts to prepare students to function in the mainstream American society and the black community. For 12.5 percent, it was important that black teachers stressed the importance of education and excellence as a means of improving the status of the Negro. Another 20 percent felt the students were generally well prepared in spite of a lack of resources because teachers stressed the development of self-confidence, self-discipline, and perseverance as valued traits. Graduates were fortunate to have teachers at the M Street/Dunbar High School who were the cream of the crop because job opportunities for them in the larger society were limited or nonexistent. A special benefit was that the faculty that taught in the segregated schools also lived in the segregated communities.

Social class or economic status was not perceived to be a major factor for students at the M Street/Dunbar High School. Fifty-three percent of the survey respondents said that social class or economic status did not affect their education at the M Street/Dunbar High School or that of their fellow students. Elitism did exist, but education and intellectual ability were the more important factors. Those who were not from a privileged background, always felt that the faculty motivated them to succeed in spite of their economic means. Another 16 percent, however, felt that socioeconomic status did affect them, but seven percent said they were not aware of any problem in that respect.

Comments from 21 percent of the respondents were more explicit. Students whose families had more money and higher positions in the community were afforded greater opportunities because their families could provide them those opportunities. There were students of lower socioeconomic status who did feel disadvantaged because they were exposed to a wide range of lifestyles among their classmates. However, M Street/Dunbar High School provided social and cultural activities and opportunities that were free or low cost so that everyone could participate and benefit.

### Faculty and Staff

The M Street High School and Dunbar faculties, many of them graduates from the leading colleges and universities in the country, were arguably superior to the white public school faculties, whose teachers typically were graduates of normal schools and teacher's colleges. With the school's emphasis on the classics, the M Street High School and its successor Dunbar High School were viewed as the equivalent of the public Boston Latin School or other exclusive prep schools (Lee, p. 25).

The Public Latin School was both the first public school and oldest existing school in the United States. It was a bastion for educating the sons of the Boston, resulting in the school claiming many prominent Bostonians as alumni. Its curriculum followed that of the 18th century Latin-school movement which holds the classics to be the basis of an educated mind. Four years of Latin was mandatory for all pupils who entered the school in 7th grade, three years for those who entered in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Graduate and historian Rayford W. Logan may well have been aware of Boston Latin's influence when he declared the M Street High School to be "one of the best high schools in the nation, colored or white, public or private" (Logan, 1980, p. 503).

The survey respondents have very positive impressions of the M Street/Dunbar faculty as a group. Ratings in knowledge of their respective subjects, preparation for class, and communications in class were 95+ percent in the range of above average to outstanding. The lowest ranked categories were effective use of outside speakers in the classroom, which was rated 84.2 percent for average or above, and the opportunity to interact socially with the faculty, which was rated 77.5 percent for average or above. See Table 21 (Appendix).

The principal for 90 percent of the survey respondents when they attended the M Street/Dunbar High School was Charles S. Lofton. Five percent had Dr. Harold A. Haynes as their principal and another five percent had Walter L. Smith. The school principal supervised, in addition to faculty, the assistant principal(s), a secretary/clerical staff, the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) instructor, and the janitorial staff. The survey respondents, as students, apparently had positive experiences across the board with the M Street/Dunbar High School principals and their administrative staff. See Table 22 (Appendix).

The M Street/Dunbar High School faculty, overall, was highly praised by all survey respondents. The respondents had a high regard for the M Street/Dunbar High School faculty as a group, but there were 83.8 percent who had specific reasons to remember individual teachers. Some 37.8 percent remembered faculty members for their general knowledge, teaching ability and subject matter expertise. Teachers made certain that students understood the subject matter and related the subject concepts to the real world. Many took every opportunity to make classes a teachable moment and build student self-confidence. Faculty was believed by 5.4 percent of the respondents to have put a great deal of preparation and effort into their work. Several teachers were named because they were admired for individual reasons:

Lillian S. Brown	15.8%
Frank Perkins	13.2%
Madison W. Tignor	5.3%
Mary G. Hundley	5.3%
Bertha McNeil	5.3%
Dorothy D. Lucas	5.3%

Members of the faculty were perceived by 5.4 percent of the respondents to be strong people who served as mentors and role models. In fact, 5.4 percent said they were inspired by their teachers and 8.1 percent indicated faculty helped prepare them for life experiences after they completed high school. Students were respected by the faculty, but teachers also insisted that all their pupils behave as ladies and gentlemen. At Dunbar, the teachers called everybody by a prefix and their last name, Mr. Jones or Miss Jones. Students referred to teachers by their last name and the appropriate prefix, Dr., Mr./Mrs./Miss (Nesmith, 2004).

Neither faculty nor staff were tolerant of tardiness, absenteeism, misbehavior, profanity, or disruptions in M Street/Dunbar High School classes (Nesmith), but 10.8 percent of survey respondents felt their teachers were kind and interested in the students.

### Physical Facilities

With the growth of the community and the decay of 40 years, the Dunbar plant was seldom adequate to meet current needs. Even as a new school, it had no stadium. On the other hand, Central High School, which was built the same year for white students as Dunbar had been for black students, had a beautiful stadium at 13th and Clifton Streets, N.W. Eventually, a stadium was built that provided for both athletic events and military drill activities for the Cadet Corps. As Dunbar waited through 10 years of protests and lobbying, the school's athletic events and drill competitions were held in the city's baseball park, Griffith Stadium (Hundley, p. 66).

Each evaluation of the library revealed a shortage of books. A lending service was available from the D.C. Public Library where the Dewey Decimal System, a proprietary system of library classification developed by Melvil Dewey in 1876 while working as a librarian at Amherst College, was used. The system classified books using numbers from 000-999, dividing nonfiction books into 10 broad categories. By the time of his death, this system was being used in over 96 percent of all American libraries.

There were 4,500 bound volumes in the Dunbar Library, together with magazines, pamphlets, clippings, and pictures in 1944. In 1945, a contribution of \$900 was made after a successful project was sponsored by the Student Government Association. As an assignment aimed at vocational guidance, a staff of 10 students assisted the school librarian. Books were available for home study and fiction could be borrowed for one week (Hundley, p. 67).

Another example of the neglect of black community needs was the swimming pool. Requests for repairs had been repeatedly denied and it was closed in 1954. The pool was needed for both school and community use, as the immediate neighborhood was underprivileged and far removed from the river. The pool remained closed until 1963, when efforts by several religious groups and the personal interest of United States Attorney General, Robert F. Kennedy, were finally successful in reopening it (Hundley, p. 68).

Still, the adequacy of the M Street/Dunbar High School building was rated good to excellent by 85.4 percent of the survey respondents and the classrooms were rated good to excellent by 85.5 percent. Among the physical and support facilities in general, only two had higher ratings of excellent than of good. The auditorium was rated excellent by 41.5 percent and the armory rated excellent by 47.5 percent. Most of the other physical and support facilities for the school(s) rated highest in the category of good. See Table 23 (Appendix).

### Thoughts on Replication of M Street/Dunbar High School Model



From the time the Preparatory High School for Colored Youth was established by a group headed by William Syphax, a freedman and civil rights activist, black parents sent their children to school with a respect for learning and a readiness to work. Consequently, the M Street/Dunbar High School, run by a 100 percent black staff and faculty and populated by a 100 percent black student body, was a high-performing educational institution. When asked if they thought the educational and cultural atmosphere of the pre-1960 M Street/Dunbar High School model could be replicated in the environment of today, 51 percent of the respondents said no, 22 percent said yes, and 27 percent were ambivalent.

The reasons survey respondents gave to indicate why they thought replication of the M Street/Dunbar High School education model could or could not occur, were culture, students, and teachers. Culturally, 49 percent of the respondents indicated it would be difficult, if not impossible, to replicate the high performance environment of M Street and Dunbar because the factor of segregation was the major hindrance for the black community. Education during the “old Dunbar” period was seen as the way to get ahead and compete with white people in the larger society. The middle class values of God, country, and family were critical to black aspirations. During the period of 1920 to 1955, black neighborhoods were socio-economically diverse and children were likely to see adults in a variety of positive roles. There was a strong sense of community where parents trusted and supported teachers as true professionals and leaders. Today, the dominant value system of black culture is primarily one of entitlement and the feeling that one is *owed* a good life.

Twenty-nine percent of respondents felt that black students nowadays are less prepared academically in the elementary and middle schools due to various sociological reasons; i.e., more single parent families, less discipline, more incarceration of black males, and low expectations. Furthermore, the students do not have family support for education, lack self-discipline and a desire to learn, and have too many nonacademic distractions. It was also felt by 22 percent that many of our current teachers are not as well-educated and dedicated as faculty was during the respondents’ time at M Street/Dunbar. Highly educated black professionals currently have economic options beyond that of teaching, while, for earlier M Street/Dunbar faculty with doctorates, master’s, and professional degrees, there were rare opportunities for other work in their fields of expertise.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

A new-found freedom from slavery inspired the formation of M Street/Dunbar High School and the black community’s appreciation for education. Segregation dominated the value system of mainstream American society and contributed mightily to the hindrance of black racial progress. Religion and family were the underpinnings of the black community. This combination of historical circumstances that created Dunbar High School can never be recreated. Some of the essential circumstances *should not* be recreated; for example, the racial barriers, which led a scholar, like Carter G. Woodson, to teach at Dunbar High School, when he should have been conducting graduate seminars at a major university. Such historical experiences contain important lessons for the present.

There is a proposal to improve the current-day Dunbar High School by converting it to an autonomous and selective school. This has generated widespread debate among teachers, students, alumni and community members. The push for change, which a small group of alumni and parents quietly developed over several months, would give the school more freedom to make

decisions about whom it hires, how it spends its money, and how it designs its academic offerings. It would transform a neighborhood school that is legally obligated to take all comers into an application-only institution that could choose its students. Such an arrangement would give Dunbar the ability to reject the neediest neighborhood children (Brown, January 2014).

Still the group feels this is an idea that could jump-start a transformation of Dunbar from one of the city's worst-performing schools to an institution that once again would be known for academic excellence. Critics of the proposal, however, say it would be built on the rejection of students who come to class with profound challenges that need to be addressed; i.e., poor reading ability, deficient math skills, and difficult home lives (Brown). It is not easy to turn around any low-performing school, particularly a high school, when students come to the school years below grade level in reading, writing, mathematics, and many other subjects. Frequently, they also bring with them dangerous behavioral patterns which were not tolerated in the past.

The two most selective public high schools in the District of Columbia are the School Without Walls (Walls) and Benjamin Banneker Academic High School. Both get far more applicants than they admit. Banneker's student body is 85 percent black and 60 percent low-income. Walls, in contrast, is 45 black and 17 percent low-income. Last year Walls, in Foggy Bottom, received over 1,000 applications for a class of 130 to 150. Banneker received about 700 applications last year and, like Walls, ended up with a class of 150. Those figures, standing alone, would indicate that there is room in Washington for another selective school (Wexler, February 2014).

Banneker takes all applicants who meet the school's qualifications, which are based on grade point average (GPA), test scores, teacher recommendations, and an interview (Wexler). However, Walls requires that any student interested in applying must follow an entrance procedure. Students must have a 3.0 GPA in their core subject classes, receive a proficient or advance score on a standardized test (SSAT, DCCAS, Stanford, any State-mandated test, PSAT/SAT, or any other approved standardized test). If a student meets all the requirements above, they are invited to take a standardized, proprietary test that includes multiple choice math (algebra and geometry), multiple choice reading comprehension, and a writing prompt. The test is not timed and students have as long as they need to complete it. If a student passes the test, he or she is invited, along with their parent(s) or guardian, for a panel interview at the school. The panel consists of faculty, staff, and students (School Without Walls).

While it would appear there are enough "qualified" students to fill up Dunbar, which has a capacity of 1,100, as well as the existing selective schools, the applicant pool may not be as large as it appears. One may assume that many students apply to both Banneker and Walls, along with another application-only school, McKinley Tech, which is almost as selective as Banneker. Dunbar would, in all probability, end up offering admission to students who, rather than being truly gifted or advanced, are the ones who show up for school, do the work, do not cause discipline problems, and are not classified as special education or English language learners (Wexler).

There is the possibility of giving the Dunbar group much of what it is asking for, just not the right to be selective in admissions (Brown). The old Dunbar was not a "selective" school in the sense in which we normally use that term. There were no tests to take to be admitted. Undoubtedly, there was *self-selection* in the sense that only students who were serious about college preparation went to Dunbar. Those who were not serious, had to find other places where they could while away their time without having to meet high academic standards (Sowell, 2001, p. 81). The Dunbar group is also seeking more autonomy for the school in hiring and spending

decisions. In this respect, one is reminded that the M Street High and Dunbar High faculty and principals were noted for high qualifications and educational backgrounds and, accordingly, they were paid good salaries (Sowell, 2001, pp. 81-85).

One can argue that parents may be more educated and more sophisticated today than they were in the past. However, it is not clear that their political activism or community involvement in schools and education has been a net benefit in the black community. At the very least, history shows that their involvement beyond the concerns of their individual children has never been essential. Today, education is politics and, politically, failure becomes a reason to demand more money, smaller classes, and more trendy courses and programs, ranging from "black English" to bilingualism and "self-esteem" (Sowell, 2001, p. 91).

The old M Street/Dunbar did not seek "grass-roots" teachers who could "relate" to "disadvantaged" students, even though a substantial part of its students were the children of maids, messengers, and clerks. They sought the best teachers and M Street/Dunbar faculty included many "overqualified" people, in today's parlance. Almost all of its principals during its 85-year ascendancy held degrees from the leading colleges and universities in the country instead of teacher's college degrees or education degrees from other institutions. They had been trained in hard intellectual fields and had been held to rigid standards. Their discipline was reflected in the atmosphere and standards of M Street and Dunbar High Schools (Sowell, Spring 1976, pp. 54-55). While Dunbar promoted racial pride, it was pride in the achievements of outstanding black persons as measured by universal standards, not special "black" achievements or special "black" standards (Sowell, Spring 1976, p. 48).

## CONCLUSION

It would be difficult to reproduce the high performance environment of M Street/Dunbar High School where academic excellence was expected by the community, the family, the school, and the students. The past cannot be recaptured and there is much in the past that we do not want to recapture. When education was the chief means of ameliorating problems of race and class, M Street/Dunbar travelled with black people through the long journey and rigors of making the adjustment from slavery to freedom. Through the travails of dealing with segregation as blacks attempted to assimilate into the American mainstream society, the school had an open admissions policy. Children from all neighborhoods were granted entry without questions concerning the families' socio-economic level. An M Street/Dunbar education was an important part of the recurring salient thematic element we still need in our fight for freedom.

M Street/Dunbar strove unceasingly to prepare its pupils for acceptance at non-segregated northern and mid-western universities. However, there were many racially motivated attempts to convert it to a manual arts program by whites, including public school officials. Percy M. Hughes, the white director of high schools, recommended an increase in manual training, particularly for M Street students, who needed to learn the "dignity of labor." They would be "better educated men and women and therefore better fitted to win out in life's battle if properly trained in the use of tools as well as books" (Report of Board of Education, 1902-1903, pp. 196-197). Future scholars also may well find that this past racism is strongly associated with the reason that M Street/ Dunbar has been ignored in the literature and educational policy research.

Black neighborhoods are no longer socio-economically diverse and children are not likely to see adults in a variety of positive roles. Today, the dominant value system of black

culture is one of low expectations dominated by more single parent families, less discipline, and more incarceration of black males. Consequently, black students are less prepared academically in the elementary and middle schools for entrance into high school. Entering students do not have family support for education, lack self-discipline, and have little desire to learn. Finally, teachers are not as well qualified and committed as the past M Street/Dunbar faculty and good teachers have economic alternatives to teaching. To match that academic environment, a minimum requirement for teaching in a comparable education institution today would be a master's degree in the field a faculty member is teaching, with preference given to a doctorate or A.B.D. (all but dissertation).

The subculture of poverty is becoming institutionalized through expanded welfare assistance and government dependency. The new entitlement beneficiaries do not work and, instead, receive Food Stamps, welfare checks, Section 8 vouchers, and Medicaid. In this age of neo-slavery, the old M Street/Dunbar is passé. The interaction of current social, political, and cultural phenomena observed in the empirical evidence of the research data cannot be replicated with different participants with the same results. Therefore, subsequent observations of the empirical evidence of the research data agree with predictions derived from the hypothesis. The academic achievements of the M Street/Dunbar education model, between 1870 and 1955, cannot be replicated in the current DC public high school environment. Given that this is strongly supported by the data; the hypothesis is valid.

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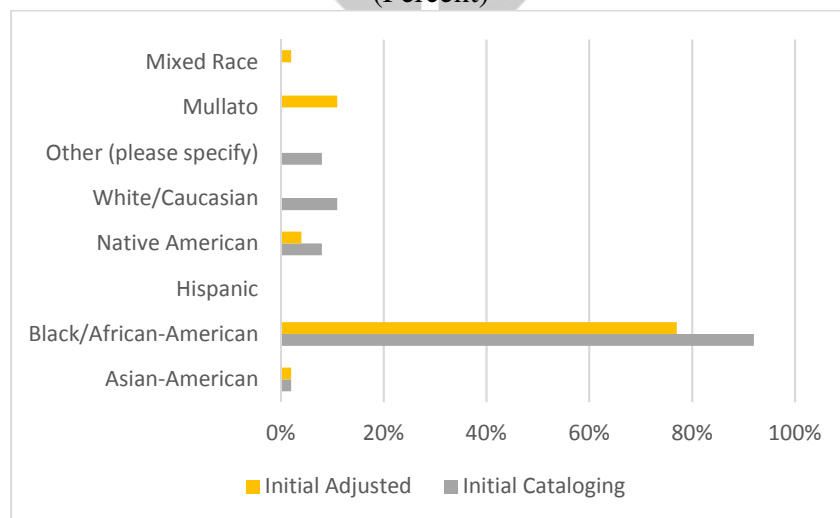
**APPENDIX**

Table 1  
Overall Graduation Rates  
(Percent)

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	3-yr Change 2010-11 to 2013-14
American Indian/Alaska Native	65	67	69.7	69.6	4.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	87	88	88.7	89.4	2.4
Hispanic	71	73	75.2	76.3	5.3
Black	67	69	70.7	72.5	5.5
White	84	86	86.6	87.2	3.2
Low Income	70	72	73.3	74.6	4.6
English Learners	57	59	61.1	62.6	5.6
Students with Disabilities	59	61	61.9	63.1	4.1
Total	79	80	81.4	82.3	3.3

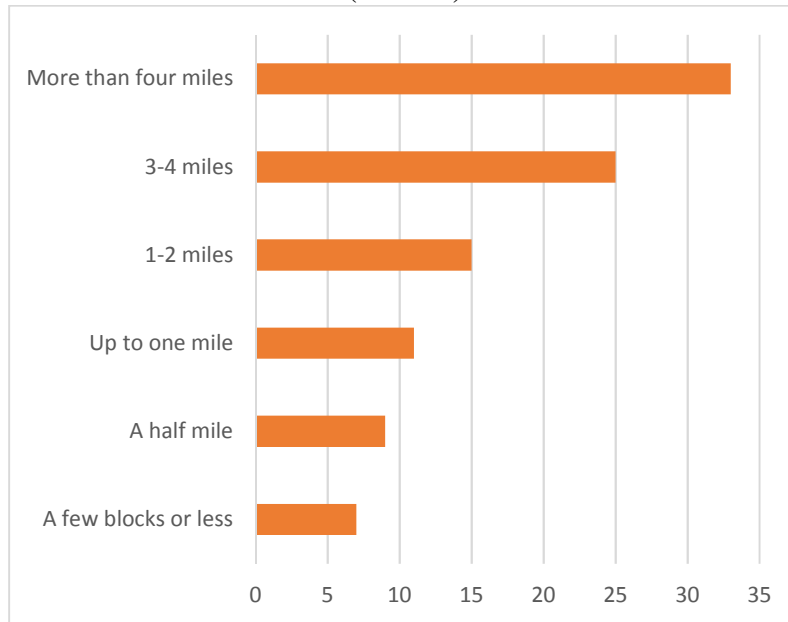
Source: National Center for Education Statistics

Table 2  
Race or Ethnic Background  
(Percent)



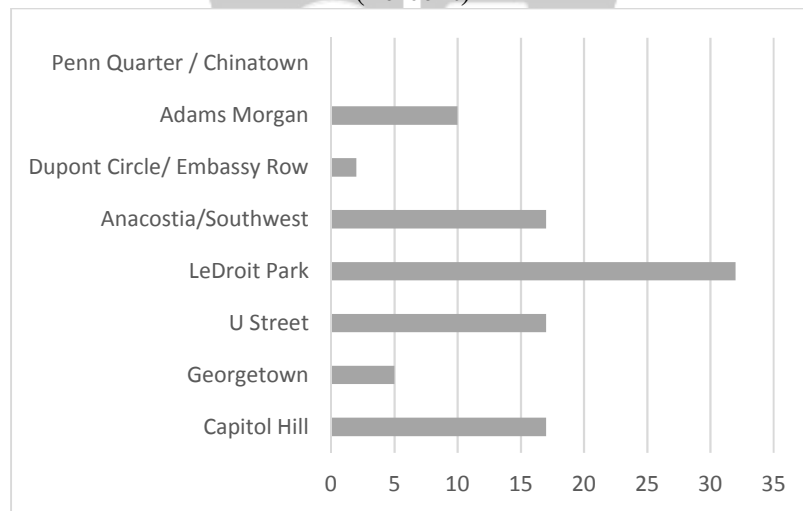
Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

**Table 3**  
**Daily Commute to School**  
**(Percent)**



Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

**Table 4**  
**Neighborhoods**  
**(Percent)**



Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

**Table 5**  
**Jobs or Occupations Held by Parents**

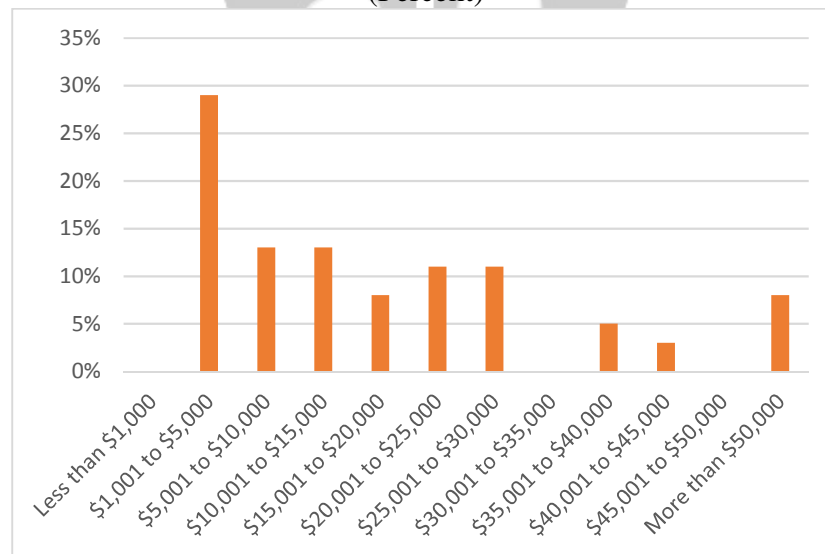
Father		Mother	
Occupation	Percent	Occupation	Percent
Post Office	6	Government worker	26
Self-employed	2	Dietitian	2



Government worker	28	Housewife/home maker	33
Chef/Cook	2	Nurse	2
Physician	6	Secretary	2
Dentist	2	Beauty Salon owner	2
Chiropractor/steam engineer	2	Real estate broker	2
Bootblack	2	Housewife/maid	2
Asst. Superintendent, DCPS	2	Domestic	6
Taxi company owner	2	Beautician	2
Vendor (blind)	2	Deceased	4
Security guard, taxicab driver/handy man	2	Seamstress	2
Laborer	11	Computer technician	2
Truck driver	4	Teacher	2
Taxi driver	8	Elevator operator	2
Teacher	6	Public school employee	2
U.S. Army	2	Charwoman	4
Deceased	2	Worked in bakery	2
Fireman	2	Maintenance worker	2
Stationary engineer (Steam/AC)	2		
Road and grounds supervisor	2		
Painter	2		
Construction work and pick-up jobs	2		

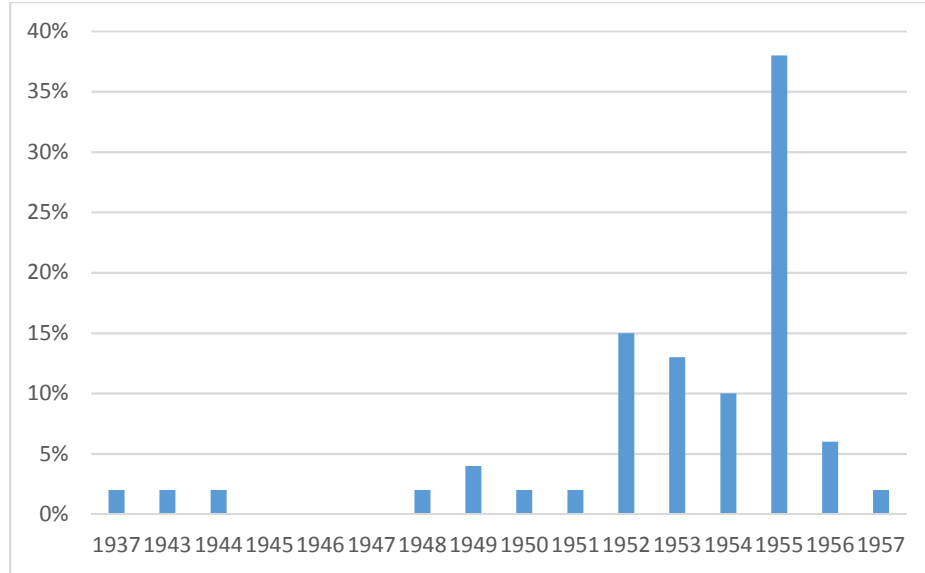
Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

Table 6  
Family Household Income  
(Percent)



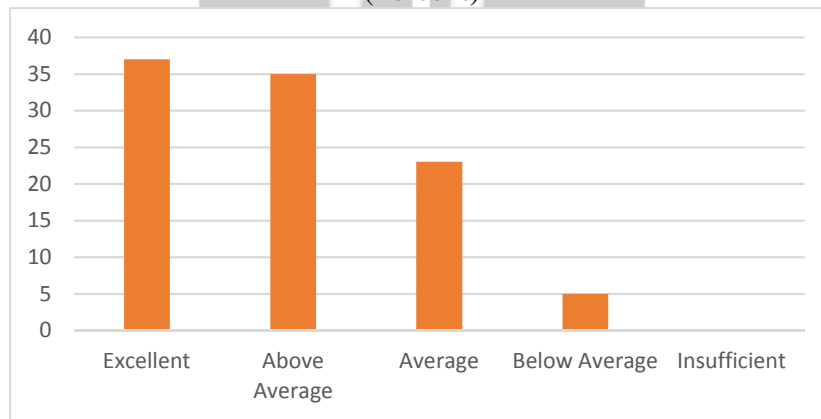
Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

Table 7  
Year of Graduation  
(Percent)



Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

**Table 8**  
Preparation for Entry into College, the Military or the Workforce  
(Percent)



Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

**Table 9**  
Undergraduate Colleges/Universities Attended

College/University	Percent
Howard University, Washington, DC	49
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University, Greensboro, NC	2
D.C. Teachers College, Washington, DC	4
Miner Teachers College, Washington, DC	8
Washington State University, Pullman, WA	6
Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA	2
Allegheny College, Meadville, PA	6
Columbia College, Columbia University, New York, NY	2
Morgan State University, Baltimore, MD	2
North Carolina College, Chapel Hill, NC	2

California State University, Los Angeles, CA	2
Harvard University, Cambridge, MA	2
Springfield College, Springfield, MA	2
Immaculata and Catholic University, Washington, DC	2
University of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA	2
American University, Washington, DC	4
Howard university/DCTC, Washington, DC	2
Delaware State University, Dover, DE	2
University of the District of Columbia, Washington, DC	2

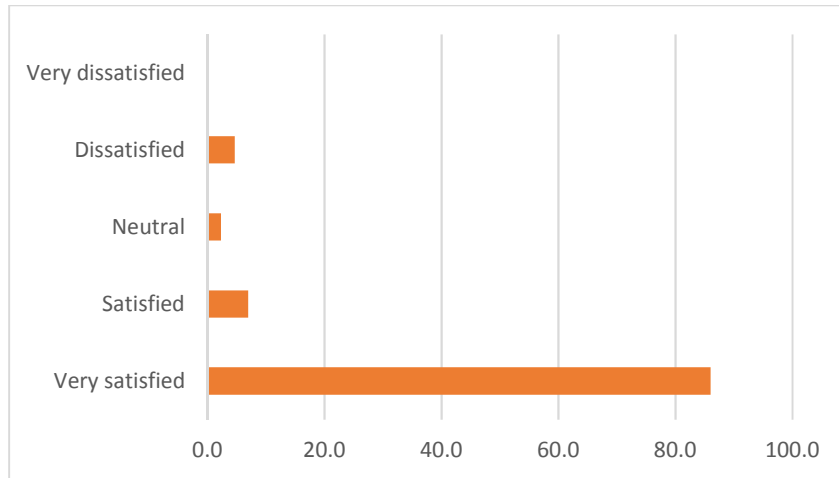
Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

Table 10  
Graduate Colleges/Universities Attended

College/University	Percent
Catholic University, Law School, Washington, DC	2
Bowie State University, Bowie, MD	2
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA	2
George Washington University, Washington, DC	12
Air Force Institute of Technology, Dayton, OH	7
Frostburg State University, Frostburg, MD	2
Howard University, Washington, DC	5
American University, Washington, DC	5
University of Brussels, Brussels, Belgium	2
Howard U., GWU, University Massachusetts, Amherst, MA	2
Miner Teachers College, Washington, DC	2
Howard U. and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, VA	2
Monash University (online), Australia	2
Columbia University, New York, NY	2
Harvard University, Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, MA	2
Decatur and Macon County Hospital of Medical Technology, Decatur, GA	2
Georgetown University, Washington, DC	2
San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA	2
Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA	2
Lincoln University, Lincoln, PA	2
American College, Bryn Mawr, PA	5
American University, Washington College of Law, Washington, DC	2
Howard U. Nova Southeastern, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	2
Howard U., Catholic U. American U., DC	2
University of the District of Columbia, Washington, DC	2
Did not attend graduate school	19

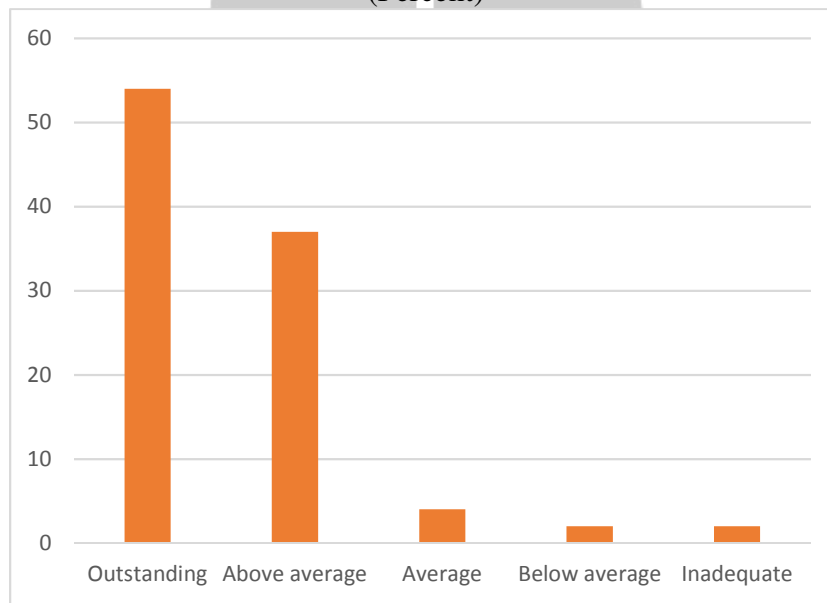
Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

Table 11  
Satisfaction with Overall Education  
(Percent)



Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

Table 12  
Academic Ability of M Street/Dunbar Students  
(Percent)



Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

Table 13  
Mean I.Q. of Dunbar Students

Class of	Students	All Graduates Only	Non-Graduates Only
1938	105.5	111.6	97.1
1939	111.2	114.0	101.9
1940	108.5	111.1	100.9
1941	109.3	111.7	101.7
1942	105.2	107.8	101.4
1943	101.3	102.6	98.5
1944	106.0	109.8	97.5

1945	98.8	101.6	93.5
1946	102.1	105.7	102.1
1947	102.0	108.4	94.9
1948	105.3	106.5	98.2
1949	106.1	106.1	104.0
1950	110.9	111.3	99.4
1951	102.7	103.4	98.1
1952	103.1	104.7	94.3
1953	101.3	102.7	93.5
1954	101.7	102.6	98.8
1955	99.6	100.8	96.4

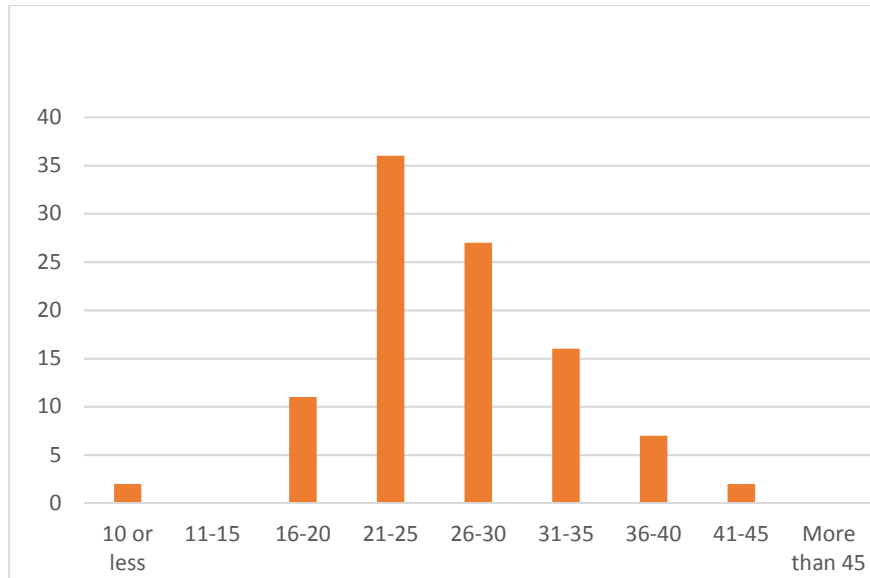
Source: Thomas Sowell, "Black Excellence--the Case of Dunbar High School," *The Public Interest*.

Table 14  
Courses Studied by Students at M Street/Dunbar High School

Course	Percent	Course	Percent	Course	Percent
English	93	Typewriting	50	Orchestra	0
Formal Grammar	59	Shorthand	4	Minor Music	9
Dramatics	2	General Business	9	Biology	72
Journalism	9	Ancient History	28	Chemistry	59
Creative Writing	9	Medieval History	9	Physics	24
Elementary Algebra	52	Modern European History	11	Aviation	2
Plane Geometry	72	American History	78	Health Education	43
Solid Geometry	20	Negro History	20	Electricity	2
Intermediate Algebra	50	International Relations	7	Mechanics	2
Trigonometry	20	Civics	37	Major Drawing	2
French	33	Economics	9	Minor Drawing	4
Pre-Induction French	0	Sociology	20	Mechanical drawing	9
German	17	Latin American History	0	Military Science	30
Pre-Induction German	2	Music Appreciation	33	Other (please specify)	
Spanish	22	Choral Music	17	Driver Education	4
Pre-induction Spanish	0	Piano	0	Gym for health	2
Latin	65	Music Theory	7		

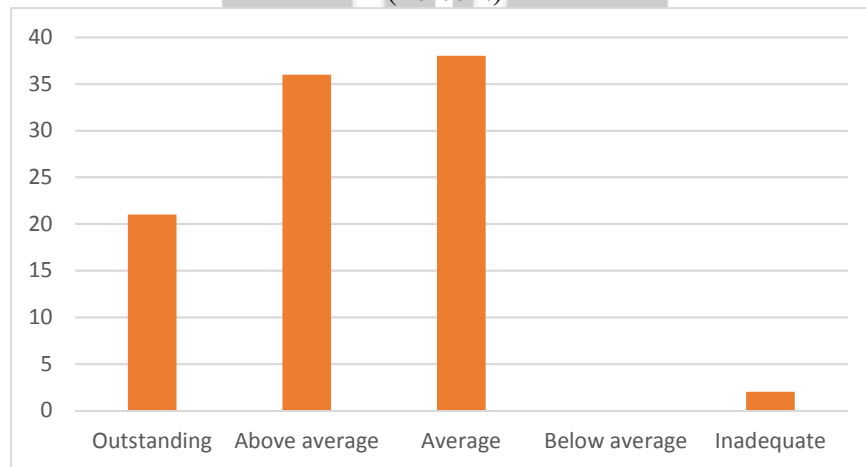
Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

Table 15  
Class Sizes  
(Percent)



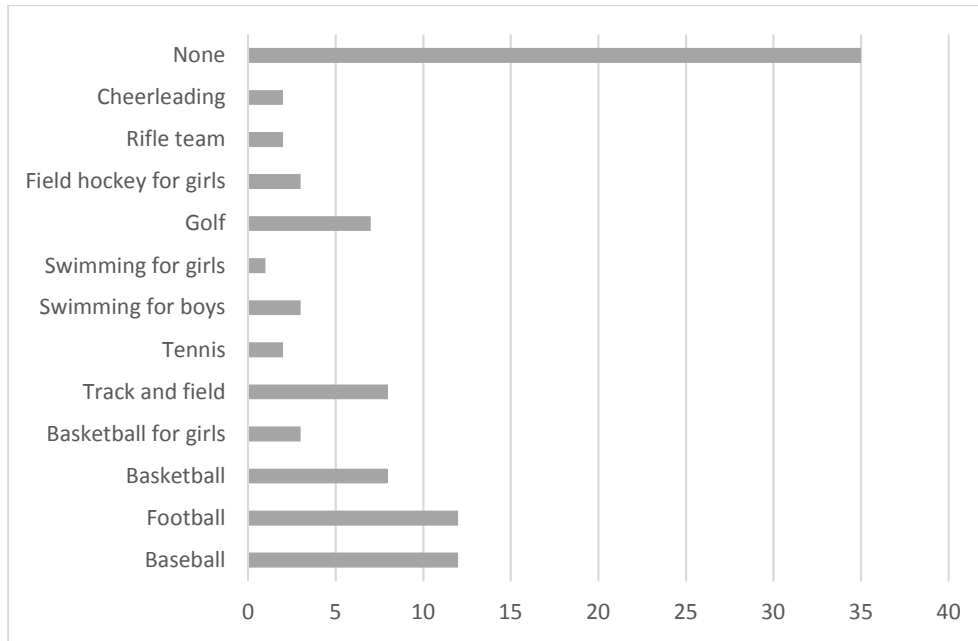
Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

**Table 16**  
 Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) Effectiveness  
 (Percent)



Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

**Table 17**  
 Participation in Varsity Sports  
 Percent



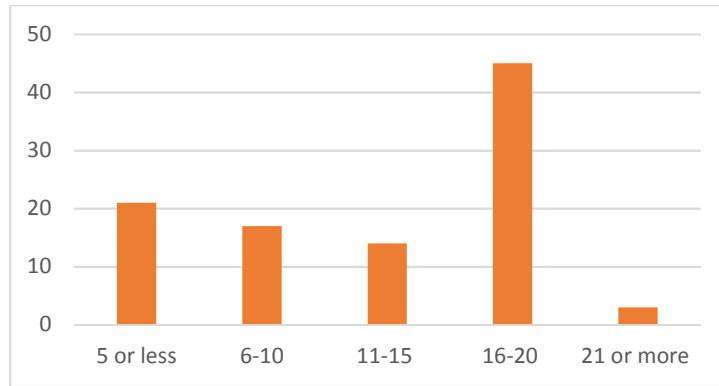
Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

Table 18  
Clubs or Extracurricular Activities for Students at M Street/Dunbar High School

Activity	Percent	Activity	Percent	Activity	Percent
Emerson Club/Fleur-de-Lis Club	5	News Reel Club	4	Other (specify)	
The Rex Club	8	Girl Reserves	0	Cheerleading Squad	1
Boys Glee Club	0	Golf Club	5	Honor Society	3
Girls Glee Club	1	Home Nursing Club	1	Year Book	3
Mixed Glee Club	9	Debating Club	3	German Club	0
Biology Club	1	Library Club	1	French Club	1
Chemistry Club	1	Music Club	9	Latin Club	1
Commercial Club	0	Negro History Club	3	Dance Club	1
Contemporary Literature Club	0	Red Cross Club	8	Girl Scouts	1
Current Topics Club	3	Race Relations Club	0	Hockey Club	1
Foreign Languages Club	9	Intramural Sports	5	Boosters Club	1
Savings Bank/War Bond Drive	3	None	9	Liber Anni	1
Dramatics Club	5			Quill and Scroll	1

Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

Table 19  
Job Hours Worked Per Week  
(Percent)



Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

Table 20  
Types of Discipline Employed at M Street/Dunbar High School  
(Percent)

	Very Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Very Effective	Ineffective	Total
Principal's bench	52.9	41.2	5.9	0.0	0.0	100.0
Study hall after school	40.0	45.7	14.3	0.0	0.0	100.0
Corporal punishment	13.0	34.8	21.7	21.7	8.7	100.0
Chastisement	25.0	35.7	25.0	10.7	3.6	100.0
Penalties	10.7	60.7	17.9	10.7	0.0	100.0
Parental involvement	58.8	35.3	5.9	0.0	0.0	100.0

Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

Table 21  
Rating of M Street/Dunbar Faculty  
(Percent)

	Out-standing	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Inadequate	Total
Exposure to a variety of points of view	65	27.5	7.5	0	0	100
Preparation of your teachers for class	73.8	19	4.8	2.4	0	100
The faculty's knowledge of their respective subjects	80.9	14.3	4.8	0	0	100
Ability to communicate clearly in class	64.3	30.9	4.8	0	0	100
Accessibility of the faculty outside the classroom	30	40	27.5	2.5	0	100
Opportunity to interact socially with the faculty	17.5	27.5	32.5	20	2.5	100
Assistance by the faculty in gaining college/university entrance and/or employment assistance	55	22.5	15	5	2.5	100
Effective use of outside speakers in the classroom	18.4	39.5	26.3	10.5	5.3	100
The quality of academic advising	57.5	27.5	10	2.5	2.5	100



The quality of career advising	35	30	27.5	5	2.5	100
The fairness of grading systems used	48.9	31.7	14.6	2.4	2.4	100

Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

Table 22  
Rating of M Street/Dunbar Principals and Administrative Staff  
(Percent)

	Out-standing	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Inadequate	Total
Principal	90.2	4.9	4.9	0	0	100
Assistant principal(s)	76.3	18.4	5.3	0	0	100
Secretary/clerical staff	57.1	25.8	17.1	0	0	100
ROTC instructor	50	33.4	13.3	3.33	0	100
Janitorial staff	37.1	51.5	11.4	0	0	100

Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey

Table 23  
Rating of M Street/Dunbar Physical and Support Facilities  
(Percent)

	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Inadequate	Do Not Know	Total
School building	29.3	56.1	12.2	2.4	0	0	100
Classrooms	24.4	61	14.6	0	0	0	100
Laboratories	27.5	42.5	17.5	5	0	7.5	100
Lunchroom/cafeteria	12.8	48.7	28.2	7.7	0	2.6	100
Auditorium	41.5	39	14.6	4.9	0	0	100
Nurse's Office	19.5	41.5	19.5	0	0	19.5	100
Armory	47.5	30	12.5	7.5	0	2.5	100
Library facilities	32.5	45	10	7.5	0	5	100
Gymnasiums	17.1	43.9	26.8	9.8	2.4	0	100
Printing plant	5.9	26.5	8.8	0	0	58.8	100
Rifle range	17.1	25.8	17.1	0	0	40	100
School stadium	29	42.1	15.8	10.5	0	2.6	100
Swimming pool	30	25	20	15	2.5	7.5	100

Source: M Street/Dunbar High School Alumni Survey