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Only 47 percent of black males graduated from high school in 2008, according to the Schott foundation, an agency that tracks public school performance. A discussion follows on how the percentages can be changed for the better.

Keywords

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Transcript
Substantial Graduation Gap for Black Males
BRIAN WILLIAMS, anchor:
We turn now to a big story in education. Think of all the American presidents in your lifetime who've said
their goal is a quality education for every American. Well, tonight there's new evidence this country is
falling far short, dangerously short in just the number of Americans graduating from high school. The one
number that jumps off the page is this one: only 47 percent of this nation's black males graduated from
high school in the '07-'08 year. Again, that's just one number. It's a crisis big enough to trigger real fears
of two separate American
societies: those with an education and those without. Our report tonight from our education correspondent
Rehema Ellis.
REHEMA ELLIS reporting:
More than half the nation's black male students will not graduate from high school, according to a report
by the Schott Foundation, a nonpartisan agency that tracks public school performance. Among the worst
performing public school districts with large black male populations, New York City and Philadelphia
graduated only 28 percent of black male students in 2008. In Broward County, Florida, the number was 39
percent; Chicago, 44 percent; and Nashville, Tennessee, 47 percent. Far below 78 percent, the nationwide
graduation rate for all public school students, and 98 percent for private school students. The study's
author argues it's not a matter of race, but resources.
Mr. JOHN JACKSON (Schott Foundation): When you look at the data and you look at the number of
white males who are in poorly resourced districts like Detroit, you will find that the graduation rate for
white males is only 19 percent.
ELLIS: But the study emphasizes black males are less likely to have access to early education, highly
effective teachers, and resources like tutors and well-stocked libraries. In Harlem, Geoffrey Canada has
spent his career raising money to run his public charter school like a private school.
Mr. GEOFFREY CANADA (Harlem Children's Zone): We can't afford, as a nation, to remove a whole
group of folks from being taxpayers and actually put them as expenses for the taxpayers to have to pay for.

ELLIS: Success is happening in Chicago at Urban Prep Academy. The entire senior class in this all-black male public charter school graduated, and all are college bound.

Mr. TIM KING (Urban Prep Academy President and CEO): What we do at the school is we have an extended school day, we have an extended school year. We set high expectations, we give the students an opportunity and a pathway, a road map to meet those expectations.

ELLIS: And nationwide, governors in 48 states have agreed it is time to raise the common core standards for children at every grade level to make sure they're on track for graduation and beyond. Brian:

WILLIAMS: Kind of a national embarrassment. Ton of reasons why this has happened. But if you're watching this at home tonight, you're probably thinking, `How can we possibly fix this?'

ELLIS: The Obama administration has a plan, a contest they call Race to the Top, $4 billion they want to award to those states that do certain things: link teacher pay to student performance, increase the number of charter schools, shut down failing schools, and actually adopt those core standards. They also say, you've got to get student discipline under control, and parents have to get involved. A student's report card should never be a surprise to a parent who's paying attention, not just at the end of the year, but at the beginning right now.

WILLIAMS: Goes all the way to each individual home. Rehema Ellis, who have--covers education for us, thank you, as always.