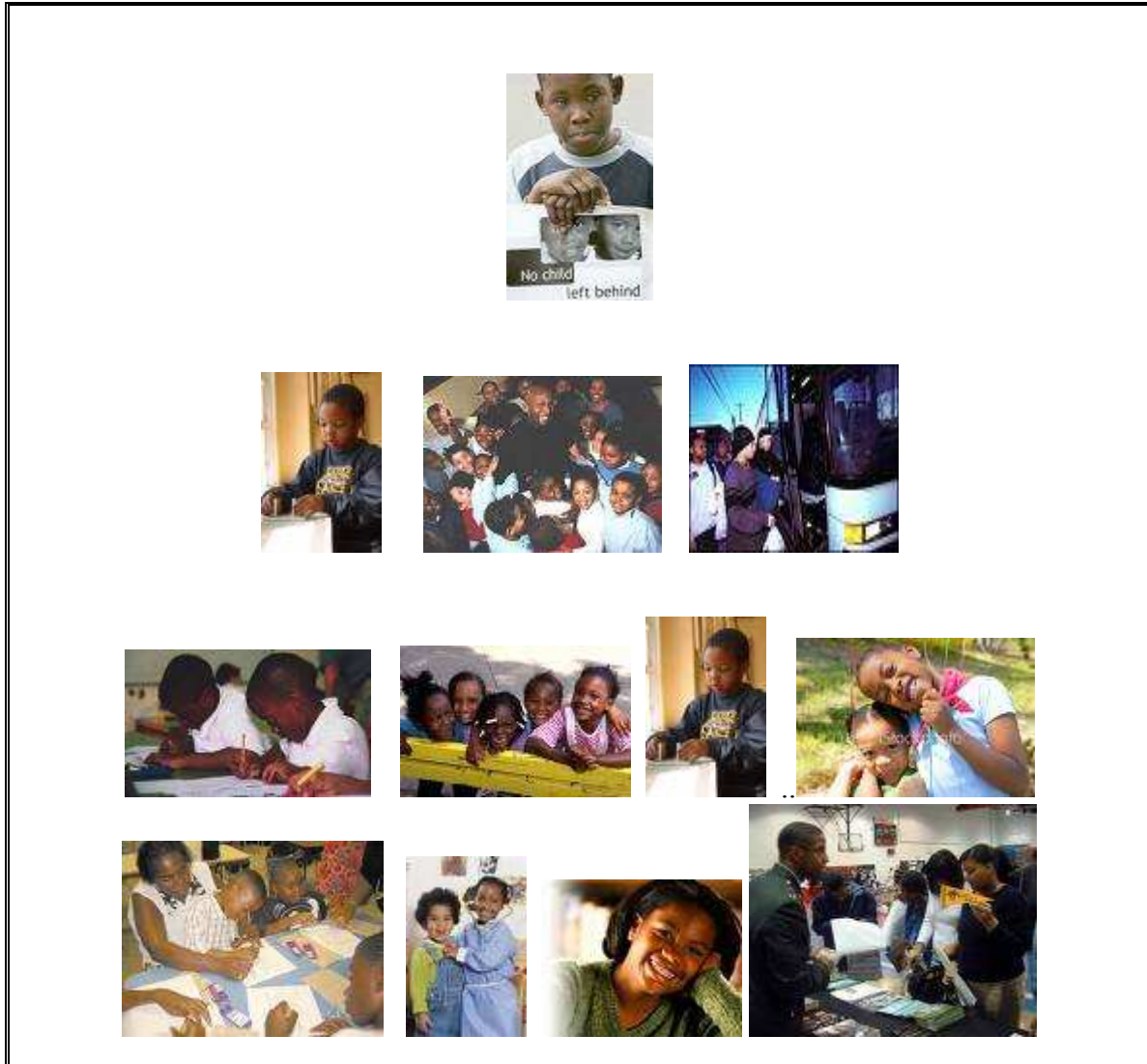


The State of Black Students' Education

In the Sacramento City Unified School District Final Report 2007



Prepared by the Sacramento Area Black Caucus
September 8, 2007

The State of Black Students' Education

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The State of Black Students' Education

Executive Summary

The Sacramento Area Black Caucus (SABC) is an educational, cultural, economic, and political organization.

The SABC calls for an immediate halt to the generally low quality of education our children receive and their resulting under preparation. This condition limits the range of options they have in preparing themselves for productive futures. The crisis, as we view it, is the result of the interplay of several historical factors including educators who devalue the importance-if not the need – for a quality education for Black people. Sadly, many African descendants are themselves implicated in perpetuating these negative, destructive, attitudes and practices against African-Descended youth. We view this condition as the Civil Rights crisis of the first half of the 21st century.

In Sacramento County there were 367,882 children between the ages of 0-17 in 2005. Approximately, 14.3% or 52,607 children between the ages of 0-17 were Black. Within the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) approximately 20.5% were Black, compared to 7.1% in the El Dorado County School District. The Black graduation rate in the Sacramento City Unified School District is 38.2% as reported by The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University in 2005. Our children are failing horribly in the public school system.

In the Sacramento City Unified School District the African descended student academic performance index was near the bottom, just below students with disabilities. The crisis of Black education has created two fundamental impacts on our youth and community. They are: 1) education to the prison pipeline, and 2) employment in low wage service jobs. Pettit and Western reported that on the average young black men have 6 to 8 times higher incarceration rates than whites. And the levels of imprisonment for young high school dropouts are 2 to 4 times higher than for those who have completed high school. The likelihood of going to prison is extremely high for young male high school dropouts of African descent. The U.S. Census estimates that high school dropouts will earn \$270,000 less than high school graduates over their working lives.

The Sacramento Area Black Caucus conducted a review of the literature, focusing on major studies over the past five years; interviews from a panel of professional Black educators and parents; a focus group composed of Black youth; and a community forum where testimony was solicited and presented orally, and in written form, both during and after the forum. All the above sources were used to derive the data upon which this report is based. The report focused on the status of the Sacramento City Unified School District. It should be noted that fifty-seven percent (57%) of the Panel members interviewed (Black professional educators and parents) gave the District a failing grade of "F", while 28.6 % the Panel members gave the District a below average grade of "D". The adult Panel members interviewed did not give the school district a grade above a "D". The youth focus group was more modest in grading the school district a "D" and above.

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The Sacramento Area Black Caucus makes the following recommendations to address the crisis of education among Black people.

Family Involvement

- The Black community will establish a parallel school board at a target site within the Sacramento City Unified School District for the African-descended community's collective involvement in education by September 2008.
- Parents of African descent at the target site will be charged to sign a pledge of involvement in their children's education by October 2008.

School Board Charges

- The SABC will call on the School Board to inform all teachers, principals, and staff that all Black students will receive, as documented by student, parent, and community evaluations, nothing less than respect and the highest levels of expectations by the end of June, 2009.
- The SABC will call on the School Board to implement a teacher institute with a specific focus on students of African descent to be in effect by the summer of 2008.
- Title I funds will be targeted, assigned and allocated to each African descended student in the District, by 2008.

Student Responsibility

- The SABC will expect Black students who are not performing satisfactorily according to school standards to sign a pledge of commitment to improve academically and to identify the means by which they will use to meet this commitment.

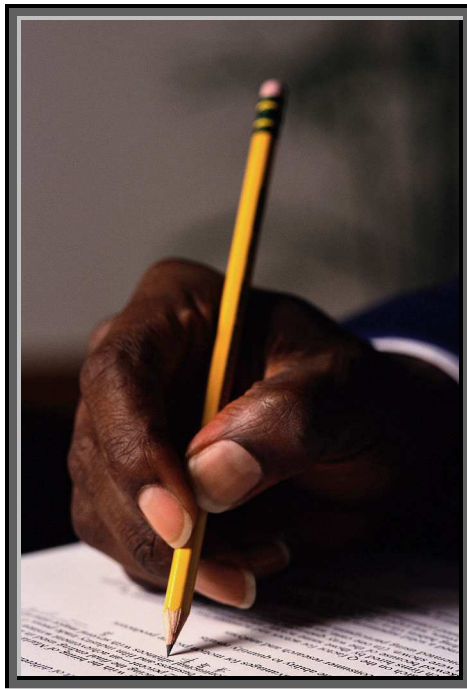
The Black community has long recognized the central importance of education. It is the reason we have fought so hard for educational opportunity throughout this nation's history. Now is the time to turn the situation from crisis to opportunity.

The State of Black Students' Education

Purpose of Report

This report is the SABC's call to action. We believe that this crisis must be seriously addressed: To not do so risk continuing to assign children to public education systems that are preparing them for a form of 21st century slavery. They are being bound by: the shackles of poor reading and writing skills; an absence of analytical and critical thinking abilities; limited verbal skills, and under-developed social and cultural skills. These deficiencies guarantee a life of poverty by preparing our children for low wage, low skilled, dead-end jobs, or worse, and a life of crime

This report details the problem, its consequences and reasonable approaches towards solutions. Also, the report focuses on the Sacramento City Unified School District. It should be viewed as the beginning of a dialogue, not a concluding statement.



“I have truly come to the conclusion that schools cannot be successful alone. The challenges that Black kids, specifically Black kids in poverty, bring with them to the school need a holistic approach in order to ensure greater success rate.” An African - descended Parent

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OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT

- ▶ **Change educational policy**
- ▶ **Community accountability**
- ▶ **To educate the African descendent community on the crisis of Black education**



The State of Black Students' Education

What is the Sacramento Area Black Caucus?

Since 1972, The Sacramento Area Black Caucus (SABC) has been at the forefront of advocacy in the community, helping to secure and protect the civil and human rights of our people.

The purpose of the SABC is the development and maintenance of an educational, cultural, economic, and politically effective organization of individuals that can bring greater awareness of unity and effectiveness to our community struggles.

SABC has continued to support and build Black community institutions and take positions on the important issues of our day.

Cultural programs celebrating Black History Month, Kwanzaa, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X have been essential to our growth as a culturally strong people.

Whether it is ensuring that our children have the best educational opportunities, or that our neighborhoods have appropriate recreational facilities, the Sacramento Area Black Caucus has demonstrated its commitment to this community.

What we believe:

- We believe that African descended peoples have a right to live dignified lives.
- We believe that African people must aggressively pursue our rights.
- We believe that organizations created by people of African descent are instruments to be used to accomplish our goals.
- We believe that because the United States is a racist, sexist, and classist nation, it is necessary for Black people to organize in order to protect and advance our interests.
- We believe that as African descendants, we must support those organizations on the frontline of the struggle for dignity and our eventual liberation.

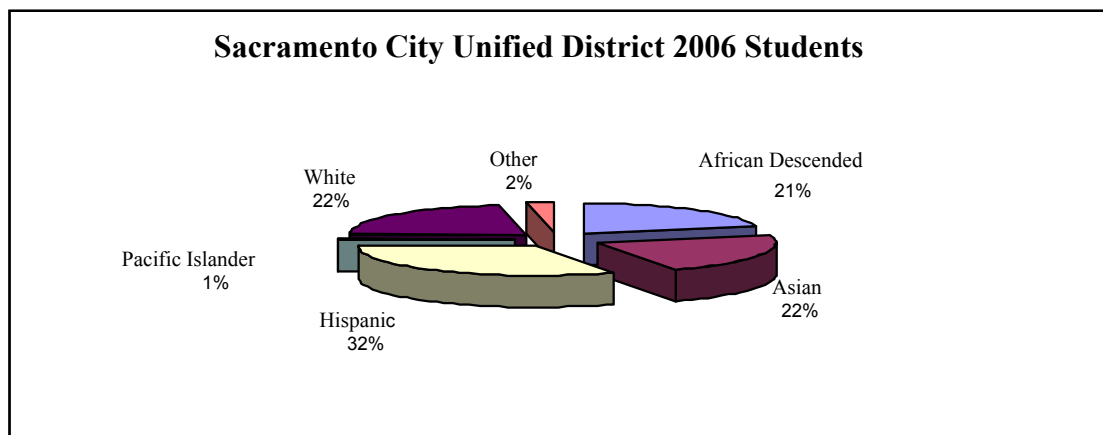
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Crisis of African -Descended Education

All children are entitled, by virtue of universal human dignity, to a quality education in the United States of America. For generations it has been acknowledged that a good education offers a better quality of life. As W.E.B. Du Bois observed, education is - “a thirst which has been too persistent and durable to be mere curiosity or whim – gave birth to the public-free school system in the South”. The Black community has long recognized the central importance of education. That’s why African descendants have fought so hard for educational opportunity throughout this nation’s history.

Obtaining a quality education today is far more critical to the survival of African descended people than at any time in our history in this country. For decades, U.S. corporations have outsourced millions of U.S. jobs in search of lower wages and less regulation. The relocation of these jobs has resulted in entire urban communities losing virtually their entire economic bases. Manufacturing and industrial jobs have been replaced with ineffective social policies; limited job training opportunities, and welfare and a criminal justice system overpopulated with Americans of African descent. Significant numbers of Blacks currently live under the most difficult circumstances - reflective of the Great Depression of the 1930s. While the civil rights battle of the 20th Century was the legal recognition of equal access and accommodations, it is clear that the emerging civil rights battle of the 21st Century will center on ensuring that Black children and youth receive a quality education.

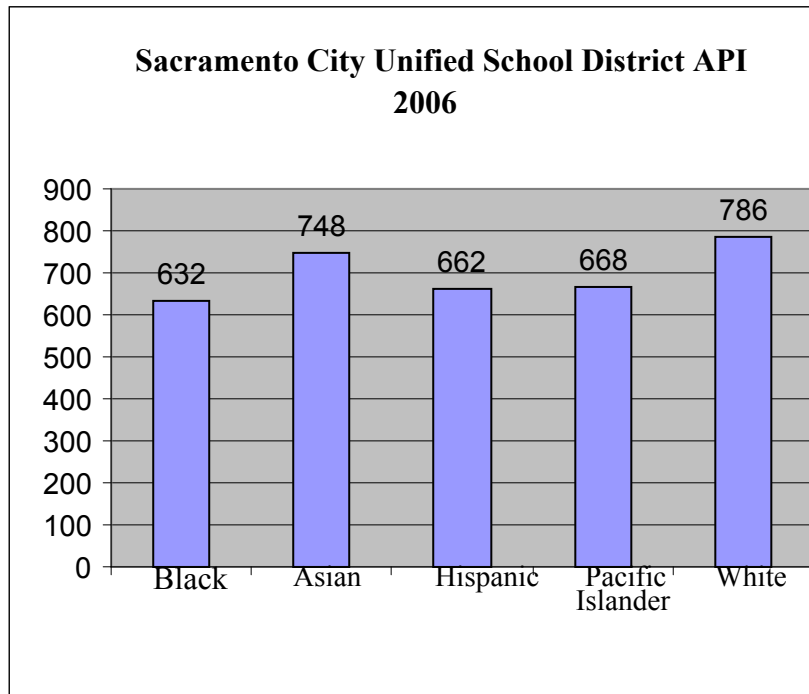
Demographic data for Sacramento County 2005 confirm that Sacramento City has the largest percentage of Black children in the area. Of the 367,882 children in the county between the ages of 0-17, approximately, 14.3% or 52,607 are African descended. Within the Sacramento City Unified School District approximately 20.5% are African descended compare to the El Dorado County School District of 7.1%.



(Source: Sacramento City Unified School District, The Connection, Nov 15, 2006)

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In 2005, The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University reports that the graduation rate for Blacks in Sacramento City USD is 38.2% and their academic performance index was the lowest of all groups, just below students with disabilities. It clear that our children are failing horribly within this public school system.



(Source: California Department of Education, Dataquest/APIBase2006)

With recent state changes in high school graduation requirements, students are required to successfully pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). Only 38% of Black students successfully passed the math portion of the exit exam, compared to 70% of Whites. Forty-nine percent (49%) successfully passed the English/Language portion of the exam, compared to 74% for Whites and 50% of Latinos. Approximately 36% of Black students in the Sacramento City USD are significantly below proficient in English/Language Arts.

"I don't like school. It's boring and there is nothing interesting for me to get excited about school"- young Black student

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The Sacramento Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) made the following statement in its 2005 report, Academic Achievement of African-American students in Sacramento County:

“In the Sacramento City Unified School District the disparity is even more pronounced, where an African-American student is almost three times less likely to be enrolled in college prep curriculum than their white counterpart. In Sacramento City, only a mere 13 percent of African-American high school graduates have completed the A-G courses, compared to 32 percent of white students for the 2003-2004 school year.”

Table 1: Percentage of SCUSD Students Completing UC/CSU Courses

Year	Blacks	Whites	Latino	Asian
2004-05	21.8%	43.9%	20.0%	48.1%
2005-06	39.9%	56.8%	38.6%	65.5%

Source: California Department of Education, Dataquest/Dist Grad

When one compares the number of UC/CSU eligible students in Sacramento County, Black students continue to significantly lag behind White students. In meeting entrance requirements, 22.8% of Black high school students compared to 36.3% for whites are prepared to enter one of California's public four year institutions upon graduation from high school. Fifty years ago these percentages might have been respectable. Twenty percent of the jobs required a college degree. Today, manual labor jobs are few and far between, representing about 20% of the jobs in the market place. Sixty percent of the jobs being created require post high school education. Clearly given the lack of academic attainment by students of African descent, prospects for their economic security and quality of life are in question, along with the ability of Blacks to maintain stable and secure family structures. Without a rich and relevant educational system that recognizes and begins to address the inequities in how it educates Black students, the future of an entire Black community is in question.

The State of Black Students' Education

The IMPACT ON OUR COMMUNITY

We are tracking one group of kids from kindergarten to prison, and we are tracking one group of kids from kindergarten to college."- Lani Guinier

The crisis in education, as it relates to educating our youth has created a number of negative consequences both internally and externally to the Black community, but two stand out. They represent the most fundamental and significant impacts. They are-- the educational policies that push our students out and hasten their entry into the juvenile, and eventually, the criminal justice system where prison is the end of the road; and the increasing numbers of African-Descendants employed in low wage service jobs. More than 40 percent of African-Descended workers work in the lowest paid occupations — janitorial, food preparation, non-professional health care, unskilled day labor, hotel, manufacturing and transportation. There are few career ladders that come with these types of job. In most cases, these types of jobs lack health care benefits, job security and most importantly, a living wage.

The School to Prison Pipeline: Over two million people are incarcerated in the United States. In California, Blacks represent only 7 percent of the population, but represents 32% of the state's prison population.¹ Pettit and Western report that the likelihood of a young African-Descended male dropout going to prison is extremely high. On average, young men of African descent have 6 to 8 times the incarceration rates of whites. Levels of imprisonment for a young, high school dropout is 2 to 4 times higher than for those who have completed high school.

Table 2: Percentage in Prison at ages 20 to 34 nationally

		All	Less than H.S.	H.S./GED	All Non-College	Some College
Whites	1979	0.4	1.0	0.4	0.6	0.1
	1999	1.0	2.9	1.7	1.9	0.2
Blacks	1979	3.2	5.7	2.7	4.0	1.5
	1999	8.5	21.0	9.4	12.7	1.7

Source: Pettit and Western, *Inequality in Lifetime Risks of Improvement*, pg 15.

“As young people increasing flunked to repeat grade 9, they are much less likely to persist to graduate high school Young black males who do not graduate from high school are far more likely to end up in prison. Ninth Grade is the major indicator as to the success and failure of young black youth.” as reported by Haney, Abrams, Gruia, Madaus and Wheelock report entitled, **The Grade 9 Value in the Education Pipeline** (2003).

¹ http://www.gibbsmagazine.com/blacks_in_prisons.htm, States and Black Incarceration in America

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2. Low Wage Jobs:

The U.S. Census estimates that a high school dropout will earn \$270,000 less than a high school graduate over their working lives.² As noted in Table 2, Blacks with less than a high school diploma have a national median income of \$10,916, while Blacks with some college have a national median income of \$30,649.

Table 3: Median Earnings in 1999 by Educational Attainment for People over 18 years

		All	Less than H.S.	H.S./GED	All Non-College	Some College
Whites	1999	\$25,204.00	\$12,736.00	\$21,363.00	\$21,712.00	\$34,732.50
Blacks	1999	\$20,916.00	\$10,951.00	\$17,883.00	\$21,600.00	\$30,649.50

Source: US Census Bureau, Oct 2002

Sacramento County's major industry and largest employer is Government. Yet, Blacks are disproportionately represented in and relegated to low wage service, sales and transportation sector jobs. Fifty-five percent are renters and 23.6 percent are living below the federal poverty line.³ There may be those who will argue that this isn't by design, but the result is the same. The lack of adequate, employment, housing, transportation and education dooms significant numbers of African-Descended to lives of desperation, dislocation and family disintegration.

Table 4: Occupation of African descendents in Sacramento County 2000 for 16 years and over

	Male	Female	Total
Management, business and financial	11.90%	7.89%	9.73%
Professional and related occupation	18.90%	17.10%	17.93%
Service	12.73%	25.49%	19.63%
Sales and office	28.99%	44.21%	37.21%
Construction & extraction	6.75%	0.00%	3.10%
Installation, maintenance & repair	2.40%	0.80%	1.54%
Production	6.55%	0.00%	3.01%
Transportation	11.78%	4.51%	7.85%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2001 Supplementary Survey
Summary Table

² The Civil Rights Projects of Harvard University, Confronting the Graduation Rate Crisis in California, March, 2005

³ A report from The California Legislative Black Caucus, The State of Black California, 2007

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The Sacramento City Unified School District plays a significant role in the lives of our youth, either by their active engagement or by their passive inattention. We believe that the institution at best is dysfunctional and at worst broken and as a result, has failed to provide students of African descent with the tools necessary to earn a living wage; to contribute fully and positively to their community and to participate as contributing members to the broader society.



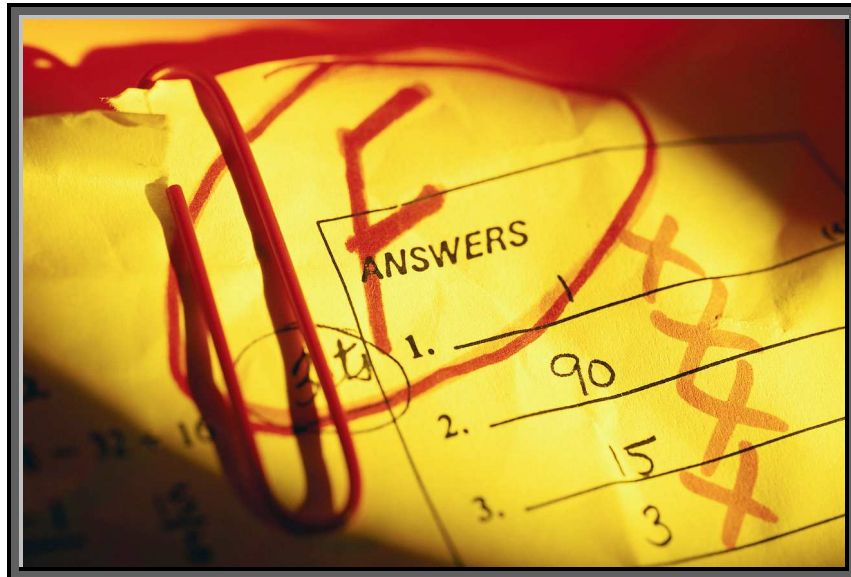
"We need more mentors to look up too. We need someone to help us, to motivate us and to guide us on for education." – Young Black male student

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METHODOLOGY

The Sacramento Area Black Caucus conducted a review of the literature, focusing on major studies over the past five years; interviews from a panel of professional Black educators and parents; a focus group composed of black youth, and hosted a community forum to derive the data on which this report is based.

Though the data included a much broader field, we have narrowed our consideration in this report. Here we reflect only on the Sacramento City Unified School District.



“We are witnessing first-hand young men and women living without hope of a future, without any options because they lack a basic education. Because the District failed them-they can’t read, write, speak effectively or even add basic figures without a calculator” – A Parent

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COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

The following questions were asked of the African-Descended community. They are:

1) If you were asked to give a letter grade (A - F) to the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) or other district: identify district: in its ability to successfully engage and teach students of African descent in K-12, low performing schools, what would that letter grade be? Would the grade be different for different levels, e.g. elementary, middle, or high schools? Please explain your reasons for assigning each of the grades.

Table 5: Percentage of SCUSD Grading

	Grades					Non-
	F	D	C	B	A	response
Panel	57.14%	28.57%				14.29%
Youth		40.00%	40.00%	20.00%		

Fifty-seven percent of the Panel member interviewed (Black professional educators and parents) gave the District a failing grade of “F”, while 28.6% of the Panel members gave the District a below average grade of “D”. The adult Panel members interviewed did not give the school district a grade above a “D”; whereas the youth focus group was more modest in grading the school district a “D” and above.

The following reasons were given for the Sacramento City Unified School District’s poor grades. They are:

- Schools are promoting a self-fulfilling prophecy by having low expectations for our children.
- Too many teachers view teaching as a job rather than as a profession.
- Schools focus on test scores, rather than on students.
- The District’s failure to focus on Black students is due to institutional racism and a lack of concern for those students and their parents.
- The District fails to address the disproportionate suspensions, expulsion and drop out rates among Black students.
- The District has no viable recruitment and retention plan for students of African descendants.
- Schools view too many of our Black males as behavioral problems, when in fact they are bored.
- Schools need more staff and teachers.

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2) Most of us know the critical indicators that can act as barriers to a student's academic success: parental educational level; family income; per-pupil spending; and the list goes on. Assuming none of these barriers change, what do you believe can be done (through policy, pedagogy, approach, or curriculum, and others) to increase academic success rates among African descended students in SCUSD (or others)?

- Change the teacher's belief system from low expectations to high expectations.
- Recruit more teachers of African descent.
- More parent involvement.
- Promote teamwork among Black students.
- Title I funds should be assigned to each eligible child of African descent.
- Teacher, administrators, and staff must respect students and parents of African descent.
- Teachers and administrators must be better trained at the college level.
- The curriculum must be overhauled.
- Class size needs to be reduced.
- The District should develop and implement more quality early childhood education programs.
- Eliminate all bias-based tests.
- Implement a statewide property taxes system to fund schools equally.
- Students need more mentors.
- School curriculum must be child centered, appealing to students through a number of academics and traditional sports approaches but also through dance, art, music, theatre, etc.
- Incorporate interesting things to engage students in the process of learning.
- Increase instructional time.

"There is a leadership void in public education. Strong and intelligent leadership is needed to demand that schools implement a culture of "high expectation". Where this has been done, students have achieved." – Parent Educator

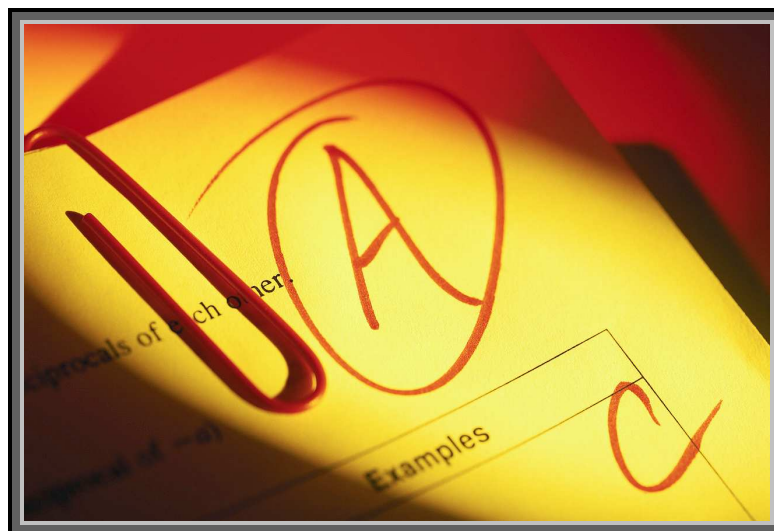
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3) From your vantage point, is there a set of criteria a parent or any one else can employ to determine if a high poverty school is on the right or wrong track in insuring that its students are being prepared academically? How would you suggest we hold the District accountable for student outcomes? Please be specific in your recommendations.

- Parents are actively involved in attending schools meetings, events or activities.
- Lower suspension rate.
- Higher than average attendance rate.
- Majority students achieving at or above grade level.
- Children of African descent receiving Title I funding.
- Specific efforts geared to the needs of Black students.
- Parents and community members reviewing test scores.
- Parents organize at their school site – and not tolerating poor performing teachers and principals
- Public announcements of performances and other school-related activities in which students of African descendant are participating.

Youth responded somewhat differently to the question posed:

- Allow more time for Black students to learn.
- Allow students to evaluate their school.
- Allow students to conduct teacher and principal evaluation at all schools.
- Students want non-college bound classes – financial literacy courses, career-technical education courses, etc.



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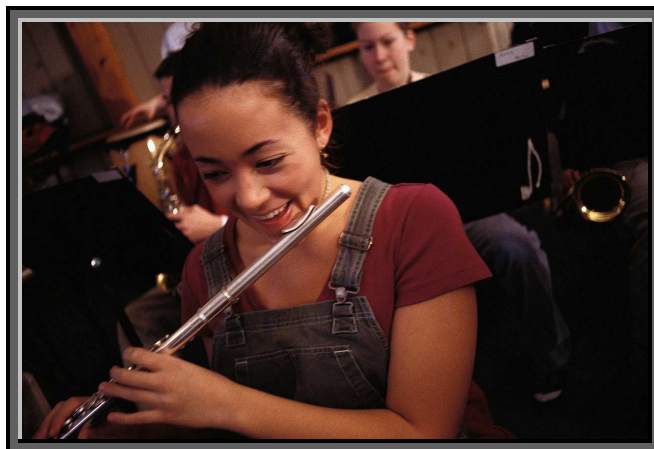
4) Do you have any other specific recommendations that, if implemented, would ensure that our children, especially those in low performing schools, successfully achieve a high level of academic and social attainment within SCUSD (or other district)?

The adult responders had the following recommendations:

- Work with programs like Kevin Brown's at St. Paul Baptist Church, that have demonstrated proven track record working effectively with parents of African descent
- Increase the number of after school programs
- Develop and design a Teacher Institute with a specific focus on students of African descent
- Implement the Connecticut Amistad Academy system.
- Engage parents when their children are entering the school system and seek their written commitment to be involved.

The youth responders had the following recommendations:

- Schools should develop more incentives and positive reinforcement for academic success – i.e. gift cards.
- Teachers are the adults and should leave any of their own personal problems at home.
- Teachers and principals need more training in anger management
- Teachers need more instruction regarding the socio-economic challenges facing many of their students
- Active measures need to be taken to end discrimination within the school system



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COMMUNITY-WIDE FORUM RESPONSE

On Thursday, June 14, 2007, The Sacramento Area Black Caucus, in partnership with the Sacramento Chapter of the NAACP and Council member Lauren Hammond, hosted a community-wide community forum at the Oak Park Community Center to allow the broader community to share its thoughts, concerns and possible solutions to the crisis in education for African American students in Sacramento. It was their opportunity to be heard. More than 100 parents, students, community leaders, elected officials, teachers and community members attended this forum. Over the three-hours, dozens of concerned residents shared their concerns. The following is a compilation of their comments and their solutions to the problems they've identified.

Parent/Community Engagement

- Develop and implement successful strategies for positive engagement
- Implement parent training programs that teaches them how to work effectively and advocate for their children
- Implement programs that increase the on-campus visibility, on a regular basis, of parents and other positive adults, such as a "retired mentor militia"
- Increase partnerships with community non-profit programs successfully working with African American students.
- Parents need to come to the schools, they will visit their kids once they're in jail, but they won't go to the schools beforehand, not even to be sure they're actually going to school

Student Engagement

- Increase tutoring, including peer-to-peer services, for students
- Develop and implement strategies for early identification of those students at-risk of dropping out or of failing to successfully pass the exit exam.
- Means must be found to assist high-achieving Black students.

Teacher Engagement

- Implement additional and targeted professional and training to assist teacher teaching in schools with a high percentage of students of African-descent.
- Include more cultural competency immersion courses for teachers.
- Increase recruitment activities and aggressively hire African American teachers
- Early targeting of African American students to encourage them to enter the teaching profession.
- The students who are in most need of assistance, Black students, should get it.

Curriculum Relevance

- Increase more "performing arts" programs (music, dance, theatre, multi-media)
- Address curriculum content relevance from the perspective of the students
- Bring back ethnic studies courses

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- Re-evaluate the use or over-use of alternative and home study programs to ensure that at-risk students are not being 'dumped' into these programs without a plan for successfully receiving a GED or a high school graduation certificate.
- Increase the number of counselors to lower the counselor-to-student ratios
- Guidance counselors are a desperate need at the high school level.
- The district needs to go to History Black Colleges/Universities to recruit Black teachers. That's where they are.
- The problem is not just a school problem; it's a social problem and a community problem, as well. The schools are not going to solve anything working on the problem in isolation. School boards, city councils, public service agencies, parents, Black organizations all need to be involved in a comprehensive approach, addressed in a coordinated fashion by the community's whole infrastructure.



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RECOMMENDATION FOR CHANGE

The Sacramento Area Black Caucus has reviewed the survey respondents, focus group participants; conducted a literature search; and co-hosted a community forum. We have divided our recommendations into three areas. – Parent and Community Engagement, School Board and District Changes, and Student Responsibilities: Our recommendations are as follows:

Family and Community Engagement

1. The community and parents establish a parallel African-Descended school board in order to collectively engage with the District(s) in the educational process, by September 2008 (See appendix A). The primary purpose of this Board is for our community to take the initiative and engage the school district(s) regarding the deep and systemic deficiencies in the public education of our children.
2. Parents develop and sign an annual contract outlining specific responsibilities and pledging to be actively involved through activities such as school site councils, teacher-parent conferences and other voluntary activities, by January 2009.
3. African descended parents, in conjunction with the school district, create a Parent Education Clinic by October 2008. The purpose of the Clinic is to assist parents with the necessary skills to actively participate and advocate and engage the district regarding relevant; rules and regulations and District actions relative to educational issues; and to develop an individual student plan so that a parent can assist their child(ren) prepare for college. (e.g. CA GEAR UP Family Initiatives Project).
4. The community, through utilization of Community Based Organizations, will take responsibility for educating its constituency regarding the empowerment of Title I legislation and school policy mandates. Parents and students will learn necessary skills to become their own best advocates within all Sacramento County school systems, particularly Sacramento Unified School District.

School Board Changes

1. The School Board enforces existing policies based on the importance and need for high expectations and mutual respect among students teachers, staff and administrators alike. When those policies are ignored, the School Board will follow the appropriate guidelines to change the offending behavior. (It should be noted that both parents and youth consider this recommendation one of the highest priorities for the school district.)

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2. Implement a teacher institute with specific focus on cultural competency relative to African descended students. One model of note is the Yale-New Haven Teacher Institute that is a partnership between Yale University and the New Haven public school district.
3. The District secure a third-party to investigate concerns raised by parents to determine whether systemic and institutional discrimination exists within the District, especially as it relates to the disproportionate number of African-Descended students assigned to special education and alternative school programs and as it relates to the disproportion of suspensions and expulsions among our students.
4. Aggressively recruit more Black teachers, mentors and tutors for students. (In the SCUSD African-Descended students account for approximately 14.4% of the student populations, while teachers of African descent represent only 6.3% of the teaching staff.
5. Link and assign Title I funds to targeted eligible Black students, starting September 2008. Utilize Title I funds to educate on the provisions of the law.
6. The District outreach to partners to provide student self-esteem (Hype 7 keys to motivating students of color by Darrell "Coach D" Andrews).
7. District use standards aligned assessment data from multiple sources to evaluate teachers' practices, to identify teachers who need instructional improvement, and to identify students and develop plans for intervention.

Student Responsibility

1. Institute a student contract pledging to commit to improve academically; to live up to certain values; to complete homework assignments and to be on time to school.
2. Implement a team approach to learning and study. (Group learning has demonstrated that this approach helps students overcome a number of barriers to learning the subject matter.
3. Increase the number opportunities for students to "intern" with community-based organizations and to earn service-credits for these activities.
4. Allow students to engage in assessing their school's performance by using an action research process. Responses submittal would be reviewed by a third party and would be available for public review and comment.

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Appendix A PARALLEL BLACK SCHOOL BOARD

Primary Purpose

The primary purpose of the Parallel Black School Board is for us as African-descended people to take the initiative with respect to the deep and broad-reaching deficiencies in the public education of our children. This begins with educating for overall independence defined by acquiring the skills and knowledge to become ones own best advocate.

Scope

The parallel school board will address public education for Black children throughout the Sacramento area. Its jurisdiction will include every school district in the region and every county board of education. Our intention, however, is to begin by developing our practice and honing our skills by an initial focus on one school district, the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD), and one school, Rosa Parks Middle School.

Mission

Our mission is to serve Black children. A great deal of our effort will be targeted through school districts because our children are primarily enrolled in schools run through or by school districts. Our principal emphasis is not the school districts themselves, but the education school districts provide for our children. We assess the quality of education afforded our children by the results.

Measurement

We are not ambiguous about what we mean by results. First of all, and most broadly, we identify a high quality educational environment as one in which our children delight and within which they flourish. For us specific indicators mark such a learning environment:

1. High rates of daily attendance
2. Low rates of absenteeism, suspension, and expulsion
3. High rates of persistence at every level
4. High rates of high school attendance and graduation
5. High grade point averages and standardized test scores
6. High rates of extracurricular participation
7. High levels of cooperative education participation
8. Consistently high quality curricula
9. High levels of exposure to the humanities and fine arts, broadly understood, and

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- specifically incorporating extensive exposure to music and visual arts
10. Technical educational curriculum that will fulfill admission requirements to institutions of postsecondary education and provide students with entry-level employment skills
 11. A decrease in the counselor to student ratio allowing for increased contacts and accessibility for students, especially at-risk students seeking support
 12. Increased access to school-site health counseling
 13. Highly trained credentialed teaching staff
 14. Increased offering of AP courses (at the high school level)
 15. Early identification of students at-risk of dropping out and structured programs that ensure their persistence
 16. Increased self-reliance and self-advocacy of students and parents alike

Modus Operandi

To achieve that goal the school board will: (1) monitor school districts, beginning with the SCUSD and the Rosa Park Middle School in each of the indicators; (2) publish an annual report with respect to the district's performance on each indicator; (3) present the report to the school board annually; and (4) make the report available to the public. Our first report will cover the 2008-2009 school year.

(5) We will develop means, independent of the school districts, to help our children delight and flourish in their educational lives. In order to assess the overall efforts at educating Black children throughout the district, we will: (6) annually and systematically compare the results achieved by Black children we serve with those served solely by the district. We will conduct such comparisons *selectively*, at our discretion, including but not limited to the following patterns: by school sites, grade levels, subject matter, and by various district-wide performances. (7) On the basis of school performance, alternative performance, and comparison performance, we will establish and maintain an ongoing catalogue of best practices. (8) Additionally, we will educate African-descended parents and students on legislative mandates and school policies that directly impact their success through self-advocacy and self-reliance.

Parallel Board Composition, Structure, and Responsibilities

The Parallel Black School Board itself will consist of African-descended persons who attend the parallel school board meetings. The members of the parallel board will select an executive committee of 13 who will carry out the work of the parallel board, including monitoring learning environment indicators; liaison with school boards and districts; development and implementation of alternative initiatives; conducting comparisons; presentation, publication, and presentation of the annual report; development, maintenance, and dissemination of the catalogue of best practices.

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Appendix B



V Village
V Volunteer
P Program

“It Takes a Village to Raise a Child”

VVP is a voluntary “pilot” effort, for retirees, parents and community members, to help reduce the number of African American students, and other youth, who are consistently sent to the Principal’s Office, due to disciplinary issues and/or problems in the classroom.

VVP will serve as a “Kinship Enrichment” model, to promote academic values, character and school attendance. VVP will assist and support school efforts for at-risk youth. Youth will be instructed/advised of acceptable and expected behavior and/or conduct during the school day. Additionally, they will have opportunities to discuss and “role-play,” acceptable behaviors and positive responses to adults in authority, in an open, encouraging, non-judgmental and safe place. Youth will learn the value of self-respect and advocacy skills.

By modeling-expected-behavior, Village Volunteers will provide firm, yet nurturing constructive advising and feedback to youth. Village Volunteers will be expected to “stand-in-the-gap,” during the school day, as “surrogate mentors” for Parents, Guardians and Care Providers who are unable and/or unavailable to come to the school.

Village Volunteers will be expected to participate in a 2-3 hour training session. Basic interpersonal communication skills, mentorship and scripts for role-playing appropriate responses and positive behaviors will be discussed.

Village Volunteers must agree to adhere to high ethics, best practices and exercise self-discipline, while providing valuable guidance, advising and mentoring to youth.

For more information or to sign-up as a Village Volunteer, please contact:

*Cloteal Thrower Herron, Principal Consultant, TEAL Group
(916) 364-0778 or Email: ctealgroup@aol.com*

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Appendix C

RESOURCES

The following is a partial list of resources and contacts shared at the community forum (Please visit the websites for descriptions of the various programs):

- A California GEAR-UP Project: Family Initiative Project: website: www.castategearup.org Local contact: Marsh King, (916) 551-1758 or e-mail: marsha.king@ucop.edu.
- MESL/Honors Academy-Jean A. Crowder, Director/Coordinator
- (916) 484-4183 or e-mail: crowderje@yahoo.com or visit: www.meslhonorsacademy.org.
- Sacramento NAACP's Education Committee: Reggie Fair: e-mail: ReggieFair@aol.com or visit: www.sacnaacp.org
- Birthing Project's [Academy of Dreams](http://www.academyofdreams.com): RoLanda Wilkins at
- (916) 558-4809 or academyofdreams@birthingproject.com or earthmamahealing@yahoo.com Visit: www.birthingproject.com
- Alpha Phi Alpha's project: Travis Parker, (916) 691-7636 or e-mail: coachparker@frontiernet.net
- Ne-Tasha Barton-The Projects: (916) 286-4750 or e-mail: netashstar@aol.com
- Cloteal Herron's The T.E.A.L. Group: Train Educate Advocate Link (organizing retirees for action) e-mail: ctealgroup@aol.com or visit: www.tealgroup.org
- Sacramento 100 Black Men's Mentoring Project: visit: www.sac100.com or e-mail: sac100blkmen@sbcglobal.net
- Othello Johnson's youth project: I-MAP Integrated Media Project. (916) 529-8594 or e-mail: orunmila26@hotmail.com
- Melinda Watts' project entitled: Project Sunday(Sisters United Nurturing Dreams Among Young Women) e-mail: mrswatts27@yahoo.com
- Coalition to Save Public Education: Linda Roberts e-mail: lroberts@earthlink.net
- Charles Thomas- (Charter School) California Aerospace Academy. E-mail: williethomas@grant.k12.ca.us

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- Crandal Rankins Asset Based Leadership for youth/young-people E-mail: rfamily939@aol.com
- Dr. Loraine Brown's SEMA Institute for Transformative Education (Educational Seminars for Individuals teaching or parenting K-12th grade students of African Ancestry). E-mail: lorainebrwn@yahoo.com
- The Sacramento Area Black Caucus' Education Committee: Carl Pinkston, Chair, e-mail: cpinkston.VPF383@atlarge.net (916) 453-1014.



Sacramento Area Black Caucus does not endorse organization or individual resources listed. For informational purposes only.

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