

# COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Policy and  
Engagement  
Strategies for  
*Modus Operandi*





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First African Baptist Church was organized in 1773 under the leadership of Reverend George Leile. In May of 1775 he was ordained as the pastor and December of 1777 the church was officially constituted as a body of organized believers. Under the leadership of the third Pastor Reverend Andrew C. Marshall, the congregation obtained the property where the present sanctuary stands. Marshall also organized the first black Sunday school in North America and changed the name of the church from “First Colored Baptist” to “First African Baptist”. The sanctuary was completed in 1859 under the direction of the 4th Pastor Reverend William J. Campbell. First African Baptist Church has been a place of leadership and service since its inception. Reverend Emmanuel King Love, 6th Pastor, led the movement to establish Savannah State University, formerly known as Georgia State Industrial College for Colored Youth. Rev. Love also played a big role in the establishment of Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA; Paine College in Augusta, GA.

The church served as the largest gathering place for blacks and whites to meet during the time of segregation. In Savannah, GA, some blacks were not allowed to march with their graduating class. Instead, they had separate ceremonies which were held at First African Baptist Church.

The civil rights museum in Savannah, GA is named in honor of former pastor, Rev. Dr. Ralph Mark Gilbert, for his courageous work during the Civil Rights movement in the South.” First African Baptist is a registered landmark in the National Registry of Landmarks and Places.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*“How can one create an education policy of hope? What role does a culture of hope play in the fight for better education? Black Americans have lived through slavery, sharecropping during Reconstruction, Jim Crow laws, the Civil Rights Movement, and the election of the nation’s first African-American president. Through it all, the black church has consistently been the respected anchor of the community. While far from perfect, the church has historically served as the mouthpiece for the needs of black people, as well as their beacon of hope”*  
(Education Week, March 6, 2013).

The role of the black church is an important asset within the African American community, particularly given implications for establishing social stability and economic mobility for children and families alike. Since the inception of the black church, there has been indisputable support for formalized education and its capacity for enhancing social and economic outcomes. The acquisition of education offers the legitimate, society-approved credentials for generating access and opportunity necessary to be competitive in schools and colleges and universities as well as for the work force and beyond. With current domestic and global challenges facing the broader American society, the black church recognizes the need for having qualified African Americans to foster a competitive edge among and between their peer groups thereby collectively improving overall societal conditions.

Notwithstanding, many believe the black church today is extinct or irrelevant when addressing matters external to the spiritual realm and biblically-focused arenas for African Americans. There appears to be the absence of an acute understanding among the public sphere about the position of the black church for a philosophical vision and mission statement about education. There also appears to be an absence of an acute understanding among the public sphere about the plan to address the education of African American children and their matriculation through primary, secondary, and higher education levels. Perceived absence or even lack of a position and/or plan for African Americans with regards to education situates the black church to an unfavorable place of oblivion. The imperative of the black church regarding African Americans and education remains the same today as it did hundreds of years ago. The position and the plan of the black church (re)affirm the need for instituting the acquisition of formalized education as complimentary and not contradictory to religious life.

Through the National Black Church Initiative’s Comprehensive Educational Framework, the black church acknowledges with the changing environment in methodological approaches, resources, and technology come the need to embrace innovative and culturally-relevant education and research-focused models. Particularly, for the next 50 years, such demands require an inclusive approach to ensure the African American community implements a plan to surpass performance expectations. The plan will offer standards for public and higher education purported by the church to ensure school age children and aspiring young adults have access to the quality education and opportunities. The National Black Church Initiative’s Comprehensive Educational Framework is an expansion of the documented work already began through this initiative. Thus, using policy and engagement-centered measures as informed by the included documented work, the National Black Church Initiative strategically will implement diverse efforts in the National Black Church Initiative’s Comprehensive Education Framework to address and (re)dress issues affecting African American with regards to education at primary, secondary, and higher education levels.



Reverend Anthony Evans

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By: Janie Boschma and Ronald Brownstein Feb 29, 2016  
*THEATLANTIC.COM*

# **PRIMARY EDUCATION:** *The Foundational Standard for Educational Excellence*

The National Black Church Initiative has engaged in various programmatic activities prioritizing the importance of primary education for preparing children appropriately to be competitive in schools. Some of those activities include collaborative efforts with Florida State University and the establishment of the Childhood Advocacy and Development Institute. Through these activities, the National Black Church Initiative is identifying best practices for establishing the foundational standards of the children and families in the congregations served.

## **CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: FROM BIRTH TO THREE YEARS**



Addressing the issues of childhood development and educational needs of African American children from the ages of 0 to 3 remains a critical necessity to ensure their overall health. The National Black Church Initiative understands the importance of incorporating the new science around brain development from the ages of 0 to 3 as well as the supporting breakthrough education models (i.e. 16 gestures by 16 months, first words, dealing systematic with any communication development abnormalities). The National Black Church Initiative believes that early intervention is the key to success of all children, especially given the fact that African American children are systematically assessed 5 ½ years later compared to their White counterparts. African American children are not provided with the appropriate interventions necessary to modify or enhance any learning deficiencies. Not only is this fact unacceptable, but this level of inattentiveness serves as threat to national security particularly since our nation will not be filled with strong competent children capable of leading important issues within society.

Following below are some key findings from the National Center for Education Statistics (2013) in regards to childhood literacy that must be considered. The table provides insights into those activities for which are important toward enhancing literacy development (i.e. being read to, storytelling, teaching of letters/words/numbers, library visits). The data is as follows:

*Percentage of prekindergarten children ages 3-5 who participated in home literacy activities with a family member, by type and frequency of activity, and selected child and family characteristics: 2007 and 2012 (1)*

Characteristic		Read to by a family member 3 or more times in past week		Told a story by family member		Taught letters, words, or numbers		Visited a library at least once a month	
		2007	2012	2007	2012	2007	2012	2007	2012
		78.3	85.7	43.0	53.7	57.7	76.6	41.0	54.4
<b>Age</b>									
3	(2007 Total: 3755) (2012 Total: 3674)	84	82	80	82	87	97	36	38
4	(2007 Total: 3738) (2012 Total: 3508)	83	84	76	85	86	98	35	43
5	(2007 Total: 1193) (2012 Total: 1062)	83	80	86	81	89	98	39	49
<b>Sex</b>									
M	(2007 Total: 4364) (2012 Total: 4251)	81	82	77	82	86	97	34	41
F	(2007 Total: 4322) (2012 Total: 3993)	86	84	81	85	88	98	38	42
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>									
White		91	90	85	87	88	98	41	44
Black		78	77	61	80	81	99	25	41
Hispanic		68	71	75	78	86	97	27	34
Asian/Pacific Islander		87	77	73	85	92	98	48	55
Other		86	87	95	84	90	99	43	46
<b>Mother's Highest Education<sup>2</sup></b>									
Less Than High School		808	1291	56	73	66	75	20	26
High School/GED		2048	1614	74	75	74	83	29	28
Vocational/Technical Or Some College		1838	1663	84	85	75	83	28	40
Associate Degree		821	678	90	85	84	84	45	43
Bachelor's Degree/Some Graduate School		1990	1870	95	92	86	90	43	49
Graduate/Professional Degree		1053	680	95	95	90	89	54	64
<b>Poverty Status<sup>2</sup></b>									
Poor		71	74	69	82	86	96	28	39
Near-poor		81	81	76	81	81	98	34	38
Non-poor		89	89	84	85	90	98	40	44

1. Percent of children participating in activity with family member.

2. Excludes children living in households with no mother or female guardian present.

3. Poor children are those whose family incomes were below the Census Bureau's poverty threshold in the year prior to data collection; near-poor children are those whose family incomes ranged from the poverty threshold to 199 percent of the poverty threshold; and non-poor children are those whose family incomes were at or above 200 percent of the poverty threshold. The poverty threshold is a dollar amount that varies depending on a family's size and composition and is updated annually to account for inflation. In 2011, for example, the poverty threshold for a family of four with two children was \$22,811. Survey respondents are asked to select the range within which their income falls, rather than giving the exact amount of their income; therefore, the measure of poverty status is an approximation.

NOTE: While National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES) administrations prior to 2012 were administered via telephone with an interviewer, NHES:2012 used self-administered paper-and-pencil questionnaires that were mailed to respondents. Measurable differences in estimates between 2012 and prior years could reflect actual changes in the population, or the changes could be due to the mode change from telephone to mail. Totals include other racial/ethnic groups not separately shown. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

The table on page 6, shows that African American parents are not engaging in literacy building activities at the same level as their counterparts. Reading to their children and visiting the library are not being pursued by African American parents in at competitive levels. Engaging with the mothers of African American children would contribute to their overall educational trajectory. What remains the same is how the lack of participation in these critical literacy building activities influences both the short-term and long-term development of the children.

Notwithstanding, one of the more baffling issues in regards to this phenomenon is there is adequate research that allows us to assess these development challenges as early as 9 to 18 months of life. Yet today, because of the structure

of our educational system in the areas of early childhood development, we are missing 80% of those children who need early intervention as early as nine months. The National Black Church Initiative is responsive of these challenges as demonstrated through its collaboration with Florida State University (FSU) who has developed ground-breaking research on early childhood education. Using the new brain science and the groundbreaking research around child development as produced by FSU, the National Black Church Initiative is implementing these innovative educational models through the structured venues of the Sunday Church School structure. The Sunday Church School is the teaching arm of the Black Church which allows the appropriate knowledge and information to be disseminated to the congregants.

# **EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT MODEL:**

## *A Collaborative Effort between Florida State University and the National Black Church Initiative*

**T**he National Black Church Initiative is a coalition of 34,000 African American and Latino churches working to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare, technology, education, housing, and the environment. The National Black Church Initiative is currently working with Florida State University on a multi-year autism grant to comprehensively address childhood developmental issues of literacy and communication. The implications of this work will influence how families respond to young children and their educational and social needs. The depth and breadth of this collaborative work engages both church and community for the sake of our children.

FSU has created some groundbreaking, evidence-based early childhood developmental models ([www.firstwordproject.com](http://www.firstwordproject.com)) which addresses key issues influencing the learning processes of young children. Being able to identify the types of words that children need to be exposed at particular phases and stages in their growth contributes to cognitive development. More specifically, additional efforts are taking place to learn more about the 30-million word gap in a brand new initiative called 16 Gestures by 16 Months. This initiative will have dramatic impact on how childcare specialists and our Sunday church school teachers instruct African American children. In effect, this could be the difference of giving our kids the best head start both in words and in gestures even before they enter daycare. This would be a great win for the church to be at the beginning of this process. Additionally, since there are a number of reports citing illiteracy or communication deficiencies as two major reasons for undeveloped or delayed cognitive or academic capacity, the purpose of these new childhood development tools will serve to detect any and all developmental issues concerning African American children before they enter the school system. This,

too, will be a great win for the church since the advantages serve to inform children and their parents about how to approach and shape their educational goals.

For the first time, our children involved with the National Black Church Initiative will receive all of the academic assistance they need to be successful prior to their formal education process. Our children will be set up for success rather than for failure given our proactive stance with regards to the research and evidence surrounding childhood development. In short, we can properly and dramatically address those developmental issues at the earliest possible stage. This level of proactivity allows these issues to be addressed prior to them becoming a major problem leading to juvenile delinquency or imprisonment.

Thus, the mission of the National Black Church Initiative is to provide critical wellness information to all of its members, congregants, churches, and the public. Our methodology employed in programmatic initiatives utilizes faith-based and evidence-based health science to address or (re)dress stubborn economic and social issues affecting our diverse membership. The National Black Church Initiative partners with major organizations and officials whose main mission is to reduce racial disparities in the variety of areas cited above.





## ***NBCI-Child Advocacy and Development Institute (CADI)***

The National Black Church Initiative has created the Child Advocacy and Development Institute (CADI) as a way to respond to the emerging research on childhood and educational development. Through its present 34,000 churches, NBCI-CADI will expand to engulf the entirety of the black churches as part of its mission. This will help them to identify every child in its congregation, from ages 0 to 3, and to ensure that all of the children are evaluated for communication, educational disability, and autism by 12 months.

NBCI-CADI is putting into place an early warning system to provide mothers and fathers with the proper understanding of the importance of early intervention. This is one of the most radical educational moves the black church has ever implemented in its existence.

Because of the groundbreaking educational research around the science of the brain and the new assessment tools by Florida State Universities, the National Black Church Initiative identified the need to develop a continuity of services within the faith-based community. This innovative approach allows any special needs of the children among the 34,000 congregants to have their learning needs addressed and/or services expanded to accommodate any of the complexities that might be involved with learning differences.



# **2015-2020 Strategic Plan:** *National Black Church Initiative-Child Advocacy and Development Institute (NBCI-CADI)*

## **Overview of NBCI-CADI**

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On June 2015, the National Black Church Initiative established the Child Advocacy and Development Institute (NBCI-CADI) to serve as an advocacy organization in an effort to promote educational pathways to success for African American children from the cradle to college (0-21 years of age). NBCI-CADI promotes culturally responsive scholarship, policies, and community engagement as key levers for moving African American education forward. Key issues that will be addressed include, but are not limited to: early childhood development, autism, K-20 educational reform, and childhood obesity. The Child Advocacy and Development headquarters will be located in Jackson, MS.

NBCI-CADI is an extension of NBCI, which represents 34,000 black churches and 15 denominations across the nation. During the last century, black churches have served as leaders in the advancement and promotion of education for African American children, providing some of the first schools post slavery for black children (Anderson, 1988) and standing as advocates and spokespersons for equal educational opportunities during the Civil Rights movement. NBCI-CADI seeks to extend this tradition and serve as a modern day answer to the call of educational excellence for African American children, thus helping black churches reclaim their position of being at the forefront of setting the national agenda regarding the education of African American children in America.

## **Mission for NBCI-CADI**

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The mission of NBCI-CADI mission is to promote educational excellence for black children from the cradle to college, through awareness, advocacy, and action at the federal, state, and local levels.

## **Vision Statement for NBCI-CADI**

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Educational Excellence for All.

## **The Need for NBCI-CADI**

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The need for NBCI-CADI is significant, given the longstanding history of inequality that has plagued black children and has led to an opportunity gap (Darling Hammond, 2009; Milner, 2012). Black children are more likely to be concentrated in schools without resources (Kozol, 2005), face extensive levels of poverty (Milner, 2013), become victims of the school-to-prison pipeline (Alexander, 2012), and are overrepresented in special education (Noguera, 2008).

NBCI-CADI serves as an advocate by providing research, action-oriented initiatives, partnering with foundations and other child advocacy institutions, institutions of higher education, and by working with local churches to make ensure black children have the resources and support structures necessary to help them reach success.

# Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for NBCI-CADI

There are several goals supporting the mission and vision of NBCI-CADI. At the core of our goals and objectives is our mission for black churches to serve as leaders in the promotion of educational advocacy, awareness, and action on behalf of black children.

## GOAL 1: ADVOCACY

**Foster effective use of black intellectual scholarship in the promotion of increased educational pathways to success for black children and in support of increased educational policies, practices, and support for black children at the federal, state, and local levels.**

### — OBJECTIVE 1A —

Compiling the works of leading black scholars to examine both challenges and opportunities for success for black children in primary, secondary, and higher education settings. These written reports will lead to recommendations and frameworks that will be used to support advocacy work at the federal, state, and local levels.

- **STRATEGY 1A: CHILD DEVELOPMENT REPORT (0-3 YEARS OLD):** NBCI-CADI recognizes that there are factors that affect children during their formative years. This project will focus on research created by 10 black child development scholars across the nation that address a wide variety of issues facing black children from ages 0-3 years. This report will serve as a guide for black parents and will address topics such as: autism, word recognition/early literacy, fine motor skills, and persona-social-psychological development. Research will be gathered primarily through secondary data analysis.
- **STRATEGY 1A1: EDUCATION REPORT (K-20):** The education report will serve as a framework for educational excellence for black children. This project will highlight research by 20 black scholars across the U.S. whose scholarship examines challenges black children face during their schooling experience. This research will also emphasize the role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the next fifty years. Some key topics that may be included within the framework are: environmental factors that affect black child education; needed knowledge and skills; approaching education from a value-driven standpoint; and addressing the current crisis with black male education. Research will be gathered primarily through secondary data analysis, as well as interviews/focus groups with HBCU college presidents, religious leaders, and athletic directors.
- **STRATEGY 1A2: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY:** The two annotated bibliographies produced by NBCI-CADI are designed to identify key scholars whose work focuses on both educational challenges and opportunities for black children with regards to autism and related childhood development issues.



## GOAL 2: ACTION

**Support black children and parents by activating/improving the relationship between the black church and families and providing resources to help parents cope with childhood challenges.**

### — OBJECTIVE 2A —

Creating and disseminating materials that promotes culturally relevant, effective parenting strategies for black parents.

- **STRATEGY 2A1: *HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY RAISE A BLACK CHILD HANDBOOK***: This handbook will be given to black parents at the birth of their child and will provide culturally relevant information that highlights the psychological, social, spiritual, environmental, educational, and cultural aspects necessary to ensure black children grow up healthy, happy, and successful. This handbook will be based on evidence-based practices and recommendations of leading black educational scholars across the nation.
- **STRATEGY 2A2: *WEBSITES WITH RESOURCES FOR PARENTS, SCHOOLS, AND PRACTITIONERS REGARDING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATING BLACK CHILDREN***. These websites will serve as parent-friendly sites that will convert the Child Development Report, Education Report, and other educational materials into action-oriented, evidence based practices to help support the overall education of black children.
- **STRATEGY 2A3: *CHILDHOOD CHALLENGES***: NBCI-CADI will identify childhood challenges that specifically impact black children's educational outcome and provide evidence-based practices and recommendations to help create educational pathways toward success.

### — OBJECTIVE 2B —

Utilizing 34,000 black churches to respond to local needs of black families.

- **STRATEGY 2B1: *GARNERING THE EXPERTISE OF LOCAL COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS AND CHILD CARE SPECIALISTS WITHIN BLACK CHURCHES TO SERVE AS LIAISONS IN SUPPORT FOR BLACK FAMILIES***. NBCI-CADI will use its network of 34,000 black churches to identify key child care specialists within the church to support its on-the-ground mission of reaching black families and supporting the educational advancement of black children.



## GOAL 3: AWARENESS

Increase black community knowledge and awareness of both challenges and opportunities that shape the educational advancement of black children.

### — OBJECTIVE 3A —

Providing families with knowledge of latest research regarding childhood illnesses that disproportionately affect black children, by partnering with various state, national, and local organizations.

- **STRATEGY 3A1: UTILIZE PARTNERSHIP WITH A UNIVERSITY IN SUPPORT OF KNOWLEDGE AND GROUND-BREAKING RESEARCH REGARDING AUTISM AND ITS IMPACT ON BLACK CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE:** NBCI-CADI will serve as a leader in research on autism and black children through its partnership with Florida State University. NBCI-CADI will also link black parents with major therapists and testing centers that provide culturally relevant treatment and practices to support families with children who are autistic.
- **STRATEGY 3A2: DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS WITH VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS REGARDING CHILDHOOD OBESITY:** NBCI-CADI will partner with major foundations and local organizations in the fight against childhood obesity. In addition, NBCI-CADI will provide families with the latest research and strategies to promote healthy lifestyles for children.
- **STRATEGY 3A3: CONTINUE WORK WITH NBCI-BABY FUND TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF NEGLECTED AND ABUSED CHILDREN:** NBCI-Baby Fund will be absorbed into the new initiative and will continue the fight to reduce the number of abused and neglected children throughout the U.S.

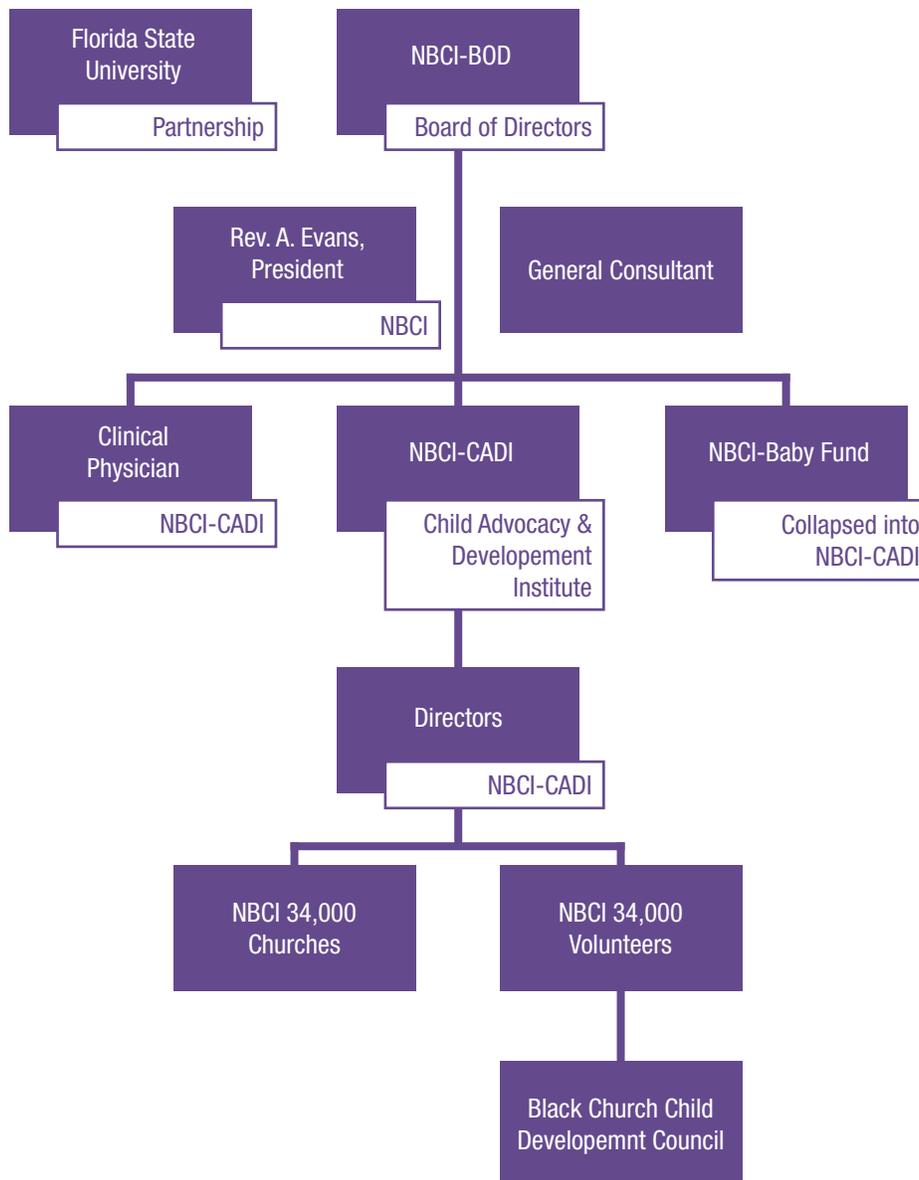
### — OBJECTIVE 3B —

Establishing a National Forum surrounding educational issues

- **STRATEGY 3B1: ADDRESSING EDUCATIONAL CONCERNS:** NBCI-CADI will host a national forum of leading black scholars on education, in an attempt to address educational concerns regarding black children. NBCI will also partner with other national and local organizations and foundations in support of this effort and their success in school and college.

# Organizational Structure of NBCI-CADI

National Black Church Initiative - Child Advocacy and Development Institute (NBCI-CADI)

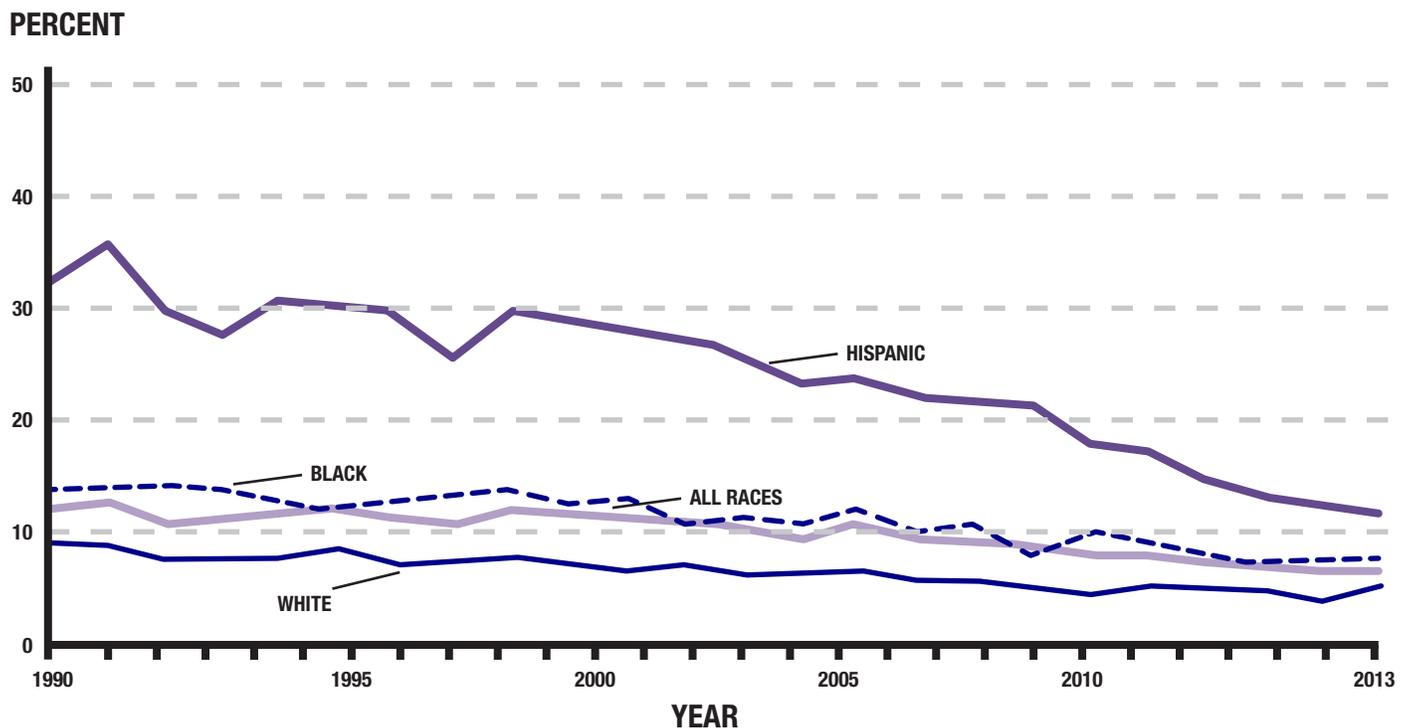


The organizational structure for NBCI-CADI involves a board of directors and partnership with FSU to inform much of the advocacy and policy work. A consultant and physician will be used to offer additional expertise. General administrative and operations of NBCI-CADI will be carried out by co-directors. The churches and volunteers who comprise NBCI will serve as important human and social resources in addressing the many issues affecting the stakeholders served by this Institute.

# **SECONDARY EDUCATION:**

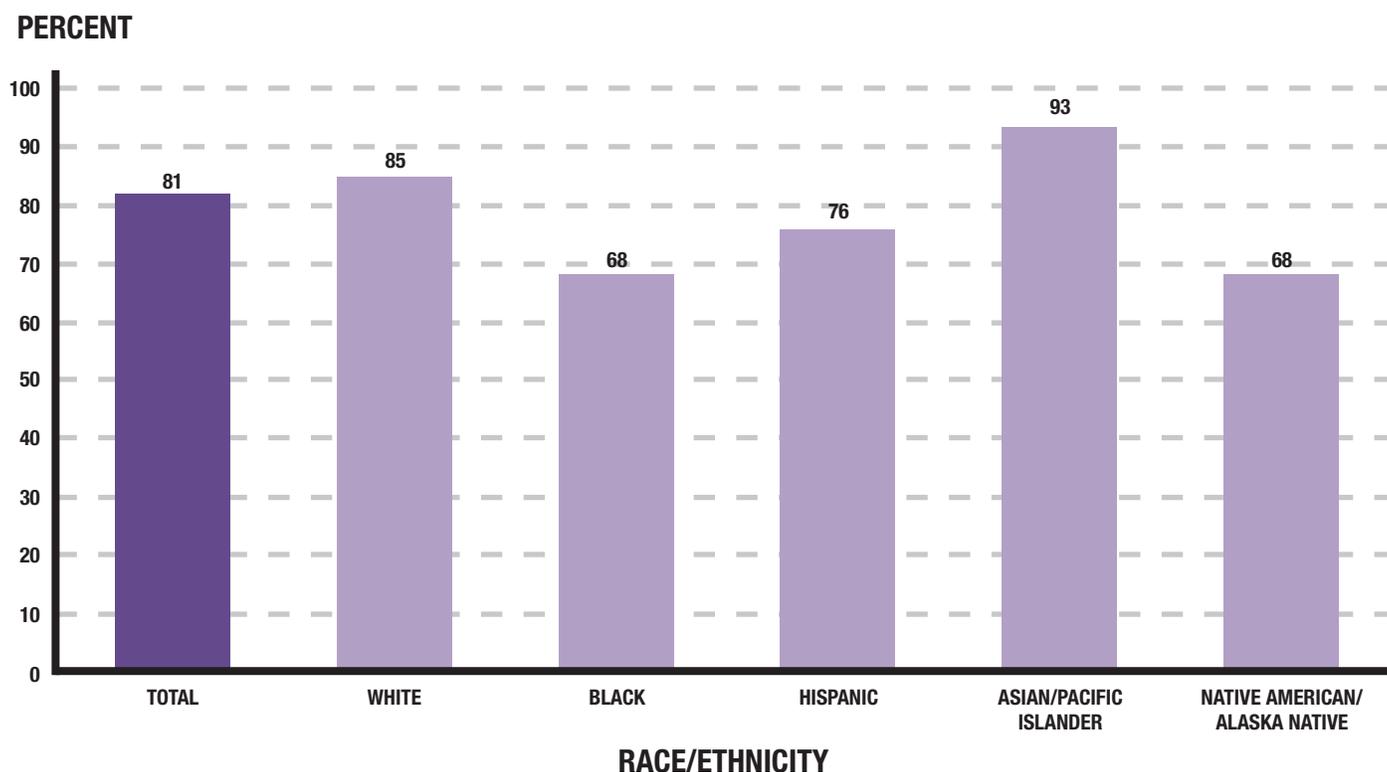
## *The Connecting Link for Educational Excellence*

The National Black Church Initiative has demonstrated the importance of secondary education for maintaining the connecting link of what is learned by children in primary education to ensure overall competitiveness in school and society. This is important because of the current drop-out rates for African Americans that are disproportionately higher than Caucasian students although lower than Hispanic students. Following below is a table to depict these findings from the National Center for Education Statistics (2015):



According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2015), “each year from 1990 to 2013, the status dropout rate was lower for Whites than for Blacks, and the rates for both Whites and Blacks were lower than the rate for Hispanics. During this period, the rate for Whites declined from 9 to 5 percent; the rate for Blacks declined from 13 to 7 percent; and the rate for Hispanics declined from 32 to 12 percent. As a result, the gap between Whites and Hispanics narrowed from 23 percentage points in 1990 to 7 percentage points in 2013. Most of the gap was narrowed between 2000 and 2013, during which the White-Hispanic gap declined from 21 percent to 7 percent. The rates for both Whites and Blacks declined from 1990 to 2013, but the gap between the rates in 1990 did not measurably differ from the gap between the rates in 2013. However, the White-Black gap of 2 percentage points in 2013 (when rates were 5 and 7 percent, respectively) was smaller than the White-Black gap of 6 percentage points in 2000 (when rates were 7 and 13 percent, respectively).”

Additionally, the National Center for Education Statistics (2015), as based upon the school year 2011-2012, shows some interesting data regarding the graduation rates by race. The table indicates the following:



The table indicates African American students with the lowest percentage of high school students who graduate within 4 years of first starting 9th grade. Given this finding, those African American students who did not finish within those four years are less likely to finish.

Considering the implications of the drop-out rates and graduation rates, the National Black Church Initiative has engaged in different measures to address such dismal findings and projections. Included but not limited to are collaborative efforts with the Los Angeles Unified School District and the focus on Breaking the Cycle of Ignorance, Poverty, and Crime and the National Academy Foundation as well as positional statements about Common Core Standards and the implications for educational excellence for African Americans. Through publicized measures in highlighted press releases, letters of acknowledgement, and positional statements, the National Black Church Initiative shows the importance of utilizing multifaceted approaches to connect links for educational excellence needs of the children and families in the congregations served.

## **PRESS RELEASE:**

# *The National Black Church Initiative Announces New Education Initiative*

Former L.A. Public Schools Superintendent, Vice Admiral  
David L. Brewer III Spearheads NBCI Education Initiative

*“The United States of America is a nation at a critical crossroads between either continued greatness or the beginnings of a dramatic decline. When I agreed to serve our country as an officer in the U.S. Navy, I took an oath “that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.” During over 35 years of service in the Navy, it was apparent that the United States of America has the greatest military in the history of the world and will not be defeated by a foreign military power in the foreseeable future. However, it was also apparent that the greatest threats to America’s freedom, national security, economy and form of democracy are the domestic enemies of ignorance, poverty and crime affecting millions of our schoolchildren and their families”*  
(David Brewer, March 16, 2011).

Washington DC – The National Black Church Initiative, a faith-based coalition of 34,000 churches comprised of 15 denominations and 15.7 million African Americans, is proud to announce the rollout of our NBCI Education Initiative in collaboration with Vice Admiral David L. Brewer III on March 16, 2011 at 10:00 am at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Washington, D.C (5101 14th St. NW, Washington, DC).

NBCI has a long and distinguished history of implementing education programs within the African-American community and 20 years of experience as a faith-based leader. Vice Admiral Brewer is the former Superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified School District and a distinguished retired Naval Officer. NBCI is proud to present Vice Admiral Brewer’s comprehensive education model: *Breaking the Cycle of Ignorance, Poverty and Crime - A Marshall Plan for the Public Education of Disadvantaged Youth*.

The United States of America is a nation at a critical crossroads between either continued greatness or the beginnings of a dramatic decline. It is apparent that the greatest threats to

America’s freedom, national security, economy and form of democracy are the domestic enemies of ignorance, poverty and crime, affecting millions of our schoolchildren and their families. The statistics paint an alarming picture - in many urban and poor rural school districts:

- Dropout rates top 50%
- An average of only 57% of our best and brightest students finish college after six years
- U.S. college graduation rates have declined to 12th internationally
- U.S. 15 year olds rank 17th of 29 countries in science
- The U.S. has 25% of the world’s inmates, despite comprising only 5% of the total world population
- Our youth are becoming more obese, with healthcare costs for diabetes expected to skyrocket from \$174 billion today to over \$300 billion in 20 years, with the concomitant loss in individual productivity and decrease in life expectancy.

Black and Brown children are disproportionately represented in these disturbing statistics, many of whom are being educated in



school districts where as many as 90% of the schoolchildren are living at or below the poverty level. We must break this vicious cycle if we are to remain a great nation.

Therefore, NBCI recognizes the need for a new approach, acknowledging the adverse impact of poverty and disadvantaged social circumstances on academic achievement among large segments of our schoolchildren populations. Educators cannot effectively educate many of the disadvantaged youth of this nation without significant public and private community support and a fundamental paradigm shift to a holistic birth to career systemic approach to education. While various reform efforts, such as decentralized control, charter schools, weighted student formulas, vouchers, increased teacher accountability, etc., are worthy of note, none of these in isolation will break the cycle of ignorance, poverty and crime for disadvantaged families without this community-based, systemic approach.

Rev. Anthony Evans, President of NBCI says, “NBCI is immensely proud to present a comprehensive educational approach which addresses the social and academic factors affecting dropout rates among African Americans. We believe that Vice Admiral Brewer’s approach addresses the stubborn obstacles undermining African-American achievement. We believe this is the magic bullet.”

Admiral Brewer advocates a proven community-based, holistic, full-day, 50 week Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K), starting at two years old to post-secondary college graduation or degreed career technical training model, and a comprehensive prisoner education program. Holistic entails a whole family approach, wherein we also account for all of the adverse socio-economic factors impacting student achievement and family structure. In addition to rigorous, full year academic and enrichment programs, the community must become an integral part of the solution and provide the families with centralized social services, healthcare, parent leadership, education and job training, enhanced community center services, travel, full summer programs, and comprehensive prisoner education and training programs.

The foundation for this model is the 17 year, community-based Tangelo Park Program (TPP) in Orlando Florida, the Sunshine

Lady Foundation’s prisoner education program at Sing Sing and San Quentin, and other well researched and proven programs. These programs have produced some impressive results.

- 100 percent HS graduation (currently); 98% since inception
- Approximately 75% four-year college acceptance rate
- 70% of entering first graders read at or above the 1st grade level
- 77% college graduation rate for a predominantly low income, African-American student population. This percentage is higher than the national average of 57% and higher than ALL ethnic groups’ national averages which are currently 42% for African Americans, 67% for Asian Americans, 48% for Hispanics and 60% for Whites.
- Approximately 52% reduction in neighborhood crime.
- Housing values have doubled
- Prisoner education - 196 men have graduated with a bachelor’s or associate’s degree. Of these, 41 have been released from prison with zero returning.

This important work involving Vice Admiral David L. Brewer can be found in these media files at the following: <http://www.naltblackchurch.com/education/breaking-media.html>.

## ABOUT NBCI

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) is a coalition of 34,000 African-American and Latino churches working to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare, technology, education, housing, and the environment. NBCI’s mission is to provide critical wellness information to all of its members, congregants, churches and the public. The National Black Church Initiative’s methodology is utilizing faith and sound health science. The National Black Church Initiative’s purpose is to partner with major organizations and officials whose main mission is to reduce racial disparities in the variety of areas cited above. NBCI offers faith-based, out-of-the-box and cutting edge solutions to stubborn economic and social issues. NBCI’s programs are governed by credible statistical analysis, science based strategies and techniques, and methods that work. Visit our website at [www.naltblackchurch.com](http://www.naltblackchurch.com).

# **LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

## *National Academy Foundation*

NBCI joins The National Academy Foundation in educating Black High School students across the United States.

*The National Black Church Initiative is excited to inform you of a new partnership between the National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) and the National Academy Foundation (NAF). The objective of this partnership is to improve opportunities for our young people, especially our young African-American black males. We are trying to prevent drop out among our boys by providing them with a more exciting and engaging educational opportunity that NAF offers.*

Dear Pastor:

I'm excited to inform you of a new partnership between the National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) and the National Academy Foundation (NAF). The objective of this partnership is to improve opportunities for our young people, especially our young African-American black males. We are trying to prevent drop out among our boys by providing them with a more exciting and engaging educational opportunity that NAF offers.

The great thing about this partnership is that it doesn't require a new program, we are simply seeking to expand an existing program in the Prince George's School County system. We virtually don't need the church to do anything but stand with NBCI as we attempt to persuade county school officials simply to expand the NAF program.

The National Academy Foundation (NAF) is a leader in the movement to prepare young people for college and career success. For 30 years, NAF has refined a proven educational model which includes industry-focused curricula, work-based learning experiences, and business partner expertise from our five themes: Finance, Hospitality & Tourism, Information Technology, Engineering, and Health Sciences. Employees of more than 2,500 companies volunteer in classrooms, act as mentors, engage NAF students in paid internships and serve on local Advisory Boards.

Founded in 1982 by Sanford I. Weill, Chairman Emeritus of Citigroup Inc., NAF fosters partnerships between the business and education communities to provide opportunities to underserved students. Weill's original intent was to connect young people to entry-level jobs in New York City's growing financial sector. His program did much more than that. His vision led to a national movement of preparing students for successful careers.

We are planning a luncheon by the end of the month so that you will be able to ask any educational officials about the intricacies of the program. Send a representative from the church. This program will be working with the Prince George's school system.

Sincerely,  
Rev. Anthony Evans

# ***NBCI STATEMENT ON THE COMMON CORE CURRICULUM***

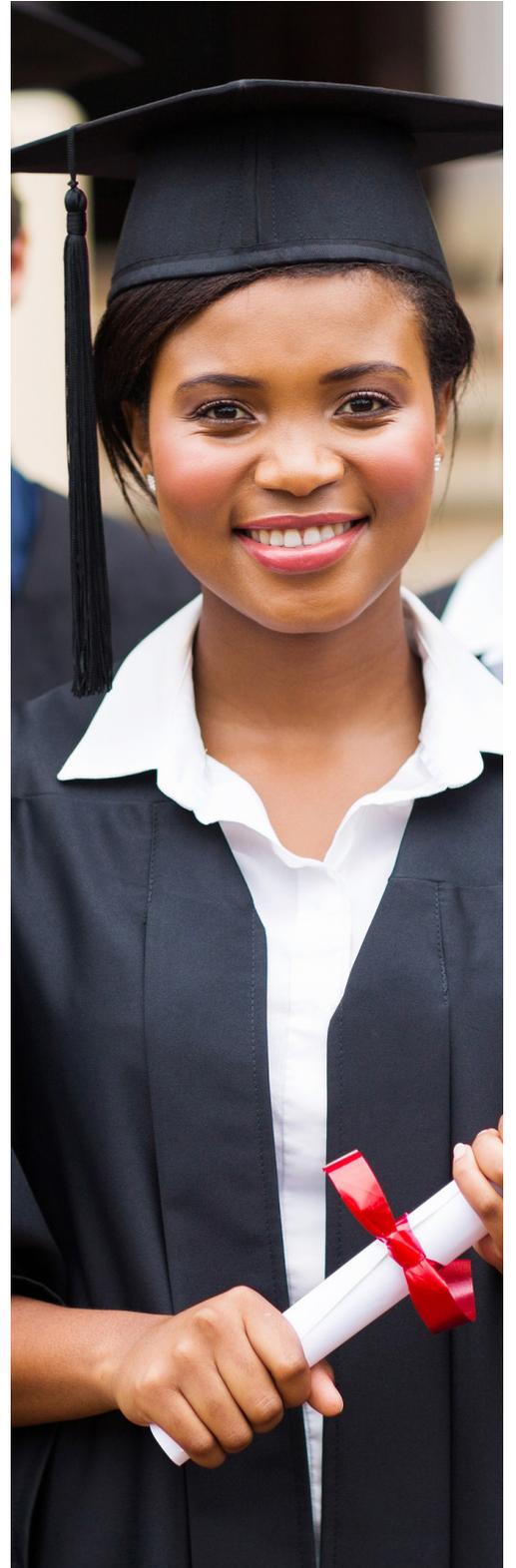
The African American church has established over 150 colleges throughout its history and education has been core to its public and corporate religious values. Education is considered as a panacea to the viability of this country, the vehicle toward uplifting our community, and the impetus for sustaining the church. Because education is so valuable, the National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) searches for ways to bridge the achievement gap to ensure that our children no longer trail behind their peers on state and national achievement assessments. Our children deserve to be positioned for success and not for failure.

States, districts, and schools have implemented various approaches to close the achievement gap. No major successes have occurred although the current educational environment touts Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as a seeming absolute model for the preparation of all American children as means to establish global competitiveness. NBCI is neither fully supportive nor opposed to the principles of CCSS, but remains fundamentally committed to identifying solutions for improving the educational trajectory and outcomes of African Americans.

Thus, NBCI will create a commission on standards to establish the standard of academic expectation from early childhood to graduate education. NBCI will also appoint an education czar to serve as the chief advocate for educational policies and practices for the black church and community.

*Every Student Succeeds Act*, unlike this legislation's progenitor, *No Child Left Behind*, eliminates access to federal enforcement tools that would hold states accountable for their actions in preparing students in general and minority students in particular. The absence of standardized accountability denies poor and minority students from access to quality education and standards that would allow them to be college and career ready as well as be competitive on a global level. The black church agrees with the former Education Secretary Margaret Spellings in her statements, "She worried that in removing the consequences for failing to meet a federal educational standard, the law would take the pressure off states and districts to perform, especially for poor and minority students" (*New York Times*, December 10, 2015). There are no incentives or mandates for states to attain equality and provide equity for public school students. School district and/or state accountability are removed from any responsibility or liability according to federal legislations.

—Reverend Anthony Evans, 2016



## VIEWPOINTS

### Ten (10) Commonly Shared Viewpoints of Common Core Standards in the African American Community:

- Common Core Standards will only be considered and/or accepted as legitimate if there is a major educational outreach initiative to all major stakeholders.
- Common Core Standards do not enjoy wide-spread acceptance in the African American community.
- Common Core Standards are being used as a political wedge in the general population.
- Common Core Standards do not have a functioning network of African American stakeholders who can provide the necessary support and engagement.
- Common Core Standards are greeted with suspicion within the African American church community.
- Common Core Standards among African American school-age parents are not aware of their objectives in relationship to their children.
- Common Core Standards among African American secondary educators generates ambiguity given the number of programs they consistently must implement.
- Common Core Standards among African American school board members are viewed with racial insensitivity knowing there is not structure their objectives.
- Common Core Standards among African American politicians who have not fully endorsed them becomes the newest political wave without any real commitment to its success.
- Common Core Standards will fail if there is not an adequate structure in the African American community to support the respective goals and objectives.

## APPROACHES

### Five (5) Strategic Approaches in Response to the Ten (10) Commonly Shared Views about Common Core Standards within the African American Community

- Educate African American parents on the value of Common Core Standards.
- Create a network of 1,000 key African American in every major city to support the value of Common Core Standards.
- Engage African American state and federal black Caucuses and other state legislators and lawmakers in on the value of Common Core to the African American Community.
- Collaborate with key national figures (i.e. civic organizations, fraternities and sororities, community arenas) to inform African Americans about the impact of Common Core Standards.
- Lobby and advocate policy-centered organizations.

# **HIGHER EDUCATION:**

## *The Credentialing Agent for Educational Excellence*

The National Black Church Initiative acknowledges how degree completion from institutions of higher education provides the appropriate credentials for improving the overall social conditions and economic competitiveness in society. Colleges and universities offer the formalized knowledge and skills necessary to do so and the informal experiences offered within those contexts combine for holistic preparedness. Issues of teacher quality, STEM disciplines, technology integration, college and career readiness, and related areas are important topics of discussion. Additionally, the role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities and their unique contributions to this process cannot be underestimated. According to the U.S. Department of Education, HBCUs have played an historical role in enhancing equal educational opportunity for all students with the following key accomplishment:

- More than 80 percent of all black Americans who received degrees in medicine and dentistry were trained at the two traditionally black institutions of medicine and dentistry--Howard University and Meharry Medical College. (Today, these institutions still account for 19.7 percent of degrees awarded in medicine and dentistry to black students.)
- HBCUs have provided undergraduate training for three fourths of all black persons holding a doctorate degree; three fourths of all black officers in the armed forces; and four fifths of all black federal judges.
- HBCUs are leading institutions in awarding baccalaureate degrees to black students in the life sciences, physical sciences mathematics, and engineering.
- HBCUs continue to rank high in terms of the proportion of graduates who pursue and complete graduate and professional training.
- Fifty percent of black faculty in traditionally white research universities received their bachelor's degrees at an HBCU.

The role of HBCUs cannot be denied for the advancement and contributions of African Americans within the broader society. While many of the HBCUs were initially birthed from the church, HBCUs continue to remain an intricate part of the higher education system within our country.

Hence, the National Black Church Initiative, as part of its core responsibility, has been asked by the 15 major denominations to develop with a comprehensive strategy to address the role of higher education in preparing African Americans for changing the economic and social conditions of the African American community and ultimately the American society. The response is included as part of the NBCI-CADI (i.e. Goal 1: Strategy 1A1) as well as the comprehensive report to the 15 major denominations. Understanding the status and implications of postsecondary education for African Americans provides important information to generate a plan for the next fifty years. With this important charge, the National Black Church Initiative purports a position statement regarding various viewpoints of consideration used to inform the Comprehensive Education Framework.

# ***POSITION STATEMENT***

## ***NBCI Statement on Higher Education as a Credentialing Agent for Economic and Social Change***

**T**he Black Church remains the singular, yet consistent, venue within the African American community where their voice serves as legitimate power and authority. The Black Church assumes an inordinate capacity to be a source for transforming education and facilitate meaningful experiences for those pursuing education in K-12 and colleges and universities. Education is often touted as being the civil rights issue of our time, and with the legitimate power and authority held by the church, we have a responsibility to do whatever is necessary to ensure our children receive the high-quality education they deserve.

The Black Church must collectively engage with educational researchers, policy makers, and related associations as well as parents and community leaders to identify the necessary resources (i.e. human, material, economic, social) to change the short-term and long-term implications of education for our children. These implications span the pipeline of education from primary to secondary to higher education. No level is exempt in this educational pipeline

to generate a population of African Americans who are more readily able to achieve higher outcomes related to economic mobility and social stability. Such collaborations must be comprehensive and inclusive in order to reach the audience that needs to be met in an appropriate manner.

The Black Church, as comprised of faith leaders, has to mobilize and utilize collectively appropriate resources to ensure all children are provided with equal and equitable opportunity. Faith leaders have the advantages of a pulpit that can be used

positively for raising or elevating the level of insightfulness about best practices in education. Having the appropriate best practices in education only serve to enhance our ability to foster change in education policy and parenting practices. There remains an imperative need to encourage our congressional officials to engage the education debate with critical and conscientious facts about providing highly qualified classroom teachers. The likelihood of receiving a highly qualified teacher does not need to be based upon whether or not one lives in the right community as determined by the zip code. The likelihood of receiving a highly qualified teacher is based upon the rights

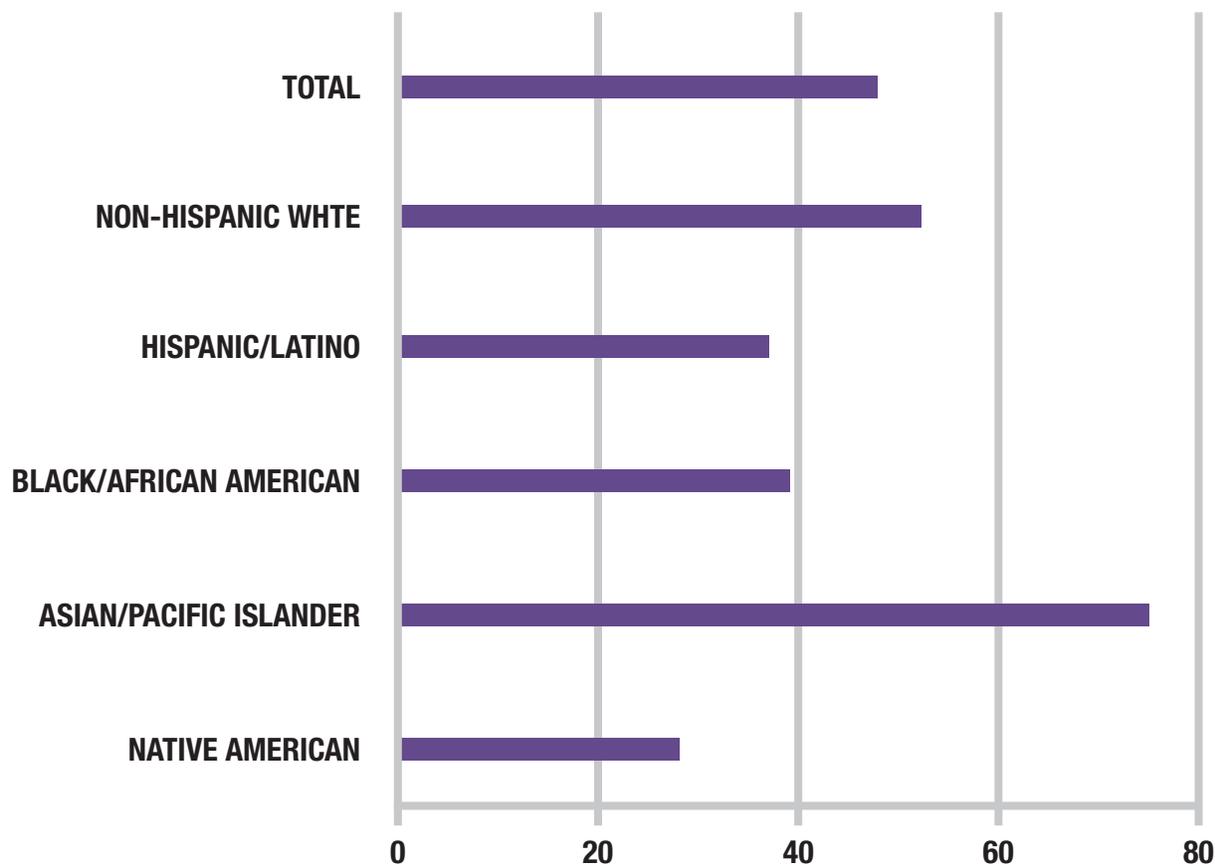
and privileges afforded to all American children by virtue of their citizenship.



According to the Black Church's Role in School Reform from The Roots on October 28, 2012, "overcoming obstacles that impede progress and maintain the status quo is not an easy task. But for our children, we urge leaders to keep the faith and fight the good fight. We invite faith leaders across the country to participate in this movement by advocating for legislation that implements the

essential changes... We must come together and stand tall for the children in our communities. Students in failing schools need change now -- it's too important to wait." The seriousness of the need to have faith leaders involved in this effort cannot be underestimated. More faith leaders must be involved in a deliberate and strategic manner. This approach is not haphazard as it requires a level of commitment for which does not allow a lackadaisical response. The need to involve the diversity of religious leaders becomes important in this effort to address the diversity of children and families comprising the congregations.

# Average Four-Year Graduation Percentage Rate



The above table shows that while African American students exceed the graduation rates of American Indian (28%) and Hispanic students (37%), African Americans (39%) still remain below the average four-year graduation percentage rate of all students. Asian and Pacific Islander students (75%) and Non-Hispanic or White students (52%) have the higher rates of enrollment into college.

According to *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (2015), “New data on graduation rates from the U.S. Department of Education shows that at the nation’s largest universities that participate in the National Collegiate Athletic Association’s Division I, the Black student graduation rate (for all students, not just athletes) in 2015 is 46 percent. The graduation rate is defined as all students entering a particular institution who graduate from that same institution with six years. For Whites, the graduation rate is 21 points higher at 67 percent. This roughly 20-percentage-point racial gap in college graduation rates has persisted for a quarter century. When we break the figures down by gender, we see that Black men have a college graduation rate of 40 percent, whereas the rate for Black women is 49 percent. Since 2009, there has been a slight reduction in the gender gap in Black student graduation rates from 12 percentage points to nine percentage points.” This data is particularly important when considering how the development of a diverse work force can only be accomplished with a diverse student population on the campuses of colleges and universities.

Particularly at HBCUs, from the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (2013) we find data to indicate lower graduation rates compared to the 55.5% average six-year degree completion rates.

Note: The graduation rate is defined as all enrolled students who earn a degree within six years at the same institution. When possible, rates are averaged for the past four years to avoid single-year statistical anomalies.

## GRADUATION RATES OF BLACK STUDENTS AT A SAMPLE OF HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

RANKED BY THE HIGHEST GRADUATION RATE

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Graduation Rate, 2014</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Graduation Rate, 2014</b>
Spelman College	69	Fayetteville Univ.	34
Howard Univ.	65	Florida A&M Univ.	34
Hampton Univ.	59	Prairie View A&M	34
Morehouse College	55	Tennessee State Univ.	33
Fisk Univ.	52	Univ. of Md. E. Shore	33
Fort Valley State Univ.	48	Voorhees College	33
Xavier Univ.	47	Savannah State Univ.	32
Dillard Univ.	45	Lane College	32
Tuskegee Univ.	45	Florida Memorial Univ.	31
Bennett College	44	Morgan State Univ.	30
Philander Smith College	44	Southern Univ.	28
Virginia State Univ.	44	Grambling State Univ.	28
Winston-Salem State	44	Langston Univ.	28
Jackson State Univ.	43	Harris-Stowe State Univ.	28
Bethune-Cookman	42	Stillman College	28
Clafin Univ.	42	Benedict College	27
Albany State Univ.	42	Shaw Univ.	27
Clark Atlanta Univ.	41	Alabama State Univ.	26
Johnson C. Smith Univ.	41	Cheyney Univ.	25
North Carolina Central	41	Rust College	25
Alabama A&M Univ.	41	Univ. of Arkansas - Pine Bluff	25
North Carolina A&T State Univ.	41	Paine College	25
Virginia Union Univ.	40	Mississippi Valley State Univ.	24
Elizabeth City State Univ.	39	Central State Univ.	24
Lincoln Univ. (Penn)	38	Miles College	22
Bowie State Univ.	37	Kentucky State Univ.	19
Oakwood Univ.	37	St. Augustine's College	18
South Carolina State Univ.	36	LeMoyne-Owen College	18
Delaware State Univ.	36	Lincoln Univ. (Missouri)	17
Livingstone College	36	Coppin State Univ.	15
Norfolk Univ.	36	Univ. of District of Columbia	15
Alcorn State Univ.	34	Texas Southern Univ.	12

While the graduation rates appear to be lower among the HBCUs compared to the nation, University of Pennsylvania Professor, Marybeth Gasman, in the Huffington Post (September 7, 2011) indicates the following perspectives for which must remain the forefront of discussion:

- Most HBCUs are in Southern states. All but four of the Southern states have graduation rates below the national average. In addition to a number of other factors, many students in Southern states lack access to high-quality public schools. Regional context matters.
- The majority of HBCU students are low-income, first-generation, and Pell-Grant-eligible. Research tells us that these students are less likely to graduate. If one looks at predominantly white institutions (PWIs) with student bodies that are similar to the various HBCUs, one finds similar graduation rates.
- The majority of HBCUs enroll students with lower SAT scores, and although I'm no fan of these tests, they are the only proxy we have for academic preparation besides high school grades. If institutions increase their selectivity and only accept students who are superbly prepared for college, graduation rates increase. How about comparing HBCU graduation rates with those institutions enrolling similarly prepared students?
- HBCUs are underfunded and have been severely underfunded since their creation after the Civil War. With some exceptions, those colleges and universities with rich endowments have the highest graduation rates. These institutions can afford to provide all the programs and services needed to ensure the retention of students. How would HBCUs fare with equal funding?



- The African-American college graduation rate nationwide is 41 percent. At HBCUs the rate drops to 37 percent. This statistic leads critics to claim that HBCUs must not be contributing significantly to the education of black students, or, worse yet, that they're harming them. Again, graduation rates at all institutions should be higher, but one must consider the individual characteristics of HBCU students. Some researchers have found that HBCUs graduate students at the same rate as PWIs and in fact add value to students who are low-income and underprepared.
- HBCUs are constantly compared with Ivy League institutions when it comes to graduation rates -- a comparison that would make most of the nation's colleges and universities look pretty bad. Few institutions have the resources of Harvard or Princeton. What are the underlying reasons for these comparisons?

Instead of singling out HBCUs as a whole when discussing graduation rates, the media, scholars and op-ed writers should tackle the underlying issues that have long led to inequity in higher education -- issues such as unequal funding and lack of adequate K-12 preparation. And, when discussions are had, they should compare HBCUs to like institutions with similar student populations. It's important to be critical of institutions when they are not graduating students, but it's also important to be fair in those criticisms."

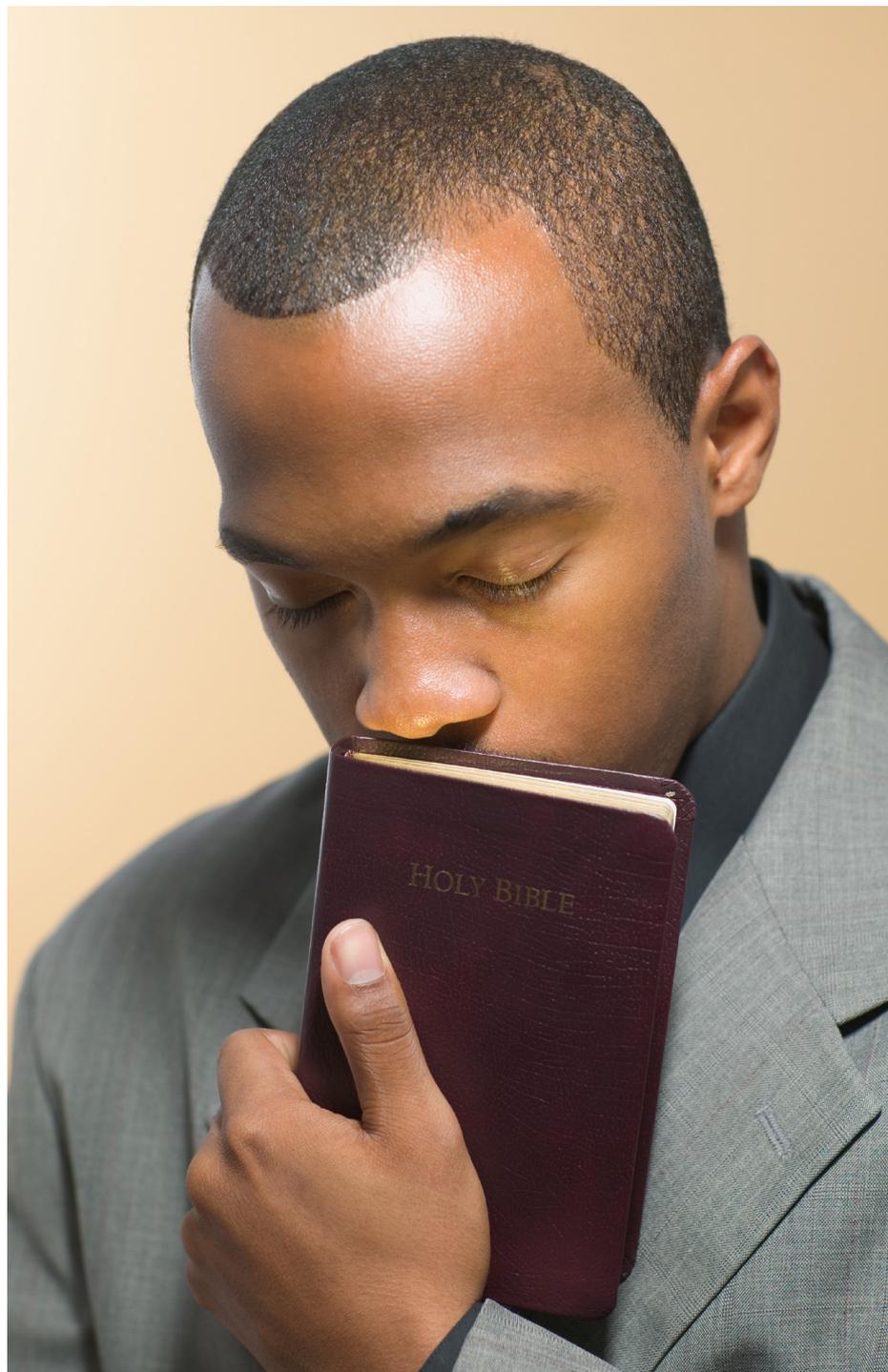
Thus, the Education Comprehensive Framework to be put forth by the National Black Church Initiative will be considerate of these viewpoints as it seeks to be inclusive and reflective of multifaceted dimensions.

# ***Implications of the Comprehensive Educational Framework by The National Black Church Initiative***

**D**uring the last century, black churches have served as leaders in the advancement and promotion of education for African American children, providing some of the first schools post slavery for black children (Anderson, 1988) and standing as advocates and spokespersons for equal educational opportunities during the Civil Rights movement.

Consequently, the National Black Church Initiative reaffirms its position and place for the legitimate role education assumes for African Americans within the religious traditions. The National Black Church Initiative considers these roles to be interconnected and interwoven as part of the overall mission of faith. The accountability and responsibility for which the National Black Church Initiative assumes for this quest is important and requires a comprehensive approach to be able to examine the issues appropriately.

In effect, there remains a need to generate a Comprehensive Educational Framework from the National Black Church Initiative. Such policy and engagement-focused framework will be inclusive of primary, secondary, and higher education approaches for improving overall economic and social conditions for African Americans as well as build upon the documented work already begun through the Initiative. The implication of this comprehensive work will be important for addressing the needs for African American children and their respective families through the lens of the Black Church. Having the Black Church uniquely developing and implementing an initiative reflective and representative of innovative, research-based will be critical toward charting an important course for future, African American generations.



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## APPENDIX

# THE CONCENTRATION OF POVERTY IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS

*An exclusive analysis uncovers that students of color in the largest 100 cities in the United States are much more likely to attend schools where most of their peers are poor or low-income.*

JANIE BOSCHMA AND RONALD BROWNSTEIN FEB 29, 2016  
[THEATLANTIC.COM](http://THEATLANTIC.COM)

In almost all major American cities, most African American and Hispanic students attend public schools where a majority of their classmates qualify as poor or low-income, a new analysis of federal data shows.

This systemic economic and racial isolation looms as a huge obstacle for efforts to make a quality education available to all American students. Researchers have found that the single-most powerful predictor of racial gaps in educational achievement is the extent to which students attend schools surrounded by other low-income students.

Underscoring the breadth of the challenge, the economic segregation of minority students persists across virtually all types of cities, from fast-growing Sunbelt places like Austin, Denver, Dallas, and Charlotte to struggling Rust Belt communities like Detroit, Cleveland, and Milwaukee, to the nation's largest metropolitan centers, including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston. But cities, educators, and researchers are also exploring new ways to abate the negative impact of concentrated poverty on black and brown students.

In about half of the largest 100 cities, most African American and Latino students attend schools where at least 75 percent of all students qualify as poor or low-income under federal guidelines. These stark results emerge from an analysis of data from the National Equity Atlas. The Atlas is a joint project of PolicyLink and the University of Southern California's Program for Environmental and Regional Equity, or PERE. Following federal guidelines, the National Equity Atlas defines low-income students as those eligible for the federal free- and reduced-lunch program. That includes students with incomes up to \$44,863 for a family of four, or 185 percent of the federal poverty line. (Students from families with incomes up to the 130 percent of the poverty line, or \$31,525 for a family of four, are

eligible for free lunch; the remainder can obtain reduced price lunches.)

The overwhelming isolation of students of color in schools with mostly low-income classmates threatens to undermine efforts both to improve educational outcomes and to provide a pipeline of skilled workers for the economy at a time when such students comprise a majority of the nation's public school enrollment. Educational reformers are quick to underscore that in individual schools around the country dedicated teachers and principals have produced impressive results even for students submerged in communities of pervasive poverty. But, overall, concentrated poverty is tightly correlated with gaps in educational achievement.

"It's the measure of segregation that is most strongly correlated to the racial achievement gap," said Sean F. Reardon, a professor at Stanford University's graduate school of education and one of the nation's leading experts on residential and educational segregation. "The difference in the rate at which black, Hispanic, and white students go to school with poor classmates is the best predictor of the racial-achievement gap."

The latest figures from the National Center for Educational Statistics show that nationwide about three-fourths of both African American and Hispanic young people (compared to about one-third of white students) attend schools where most of their classmates qualify as low income. The analysis expands on that national portrait to examine the extent of economic isolation at the city level. That assessment points to one overwhelming conclusion: economic isolation and the concentration of poverty among students of color afflicts not only a few struggling cities, but virtually all cities—including many that have seen the most robust growth in jobs, incomes and population since the Great Recession.

“The difference in the rate at which black, Hispanic, and white students go to school with poor classmates is the best predictor of the racial-achievement gap.”

The economic segregation facing African American and Hispanic students represents the convergence of many trends, including the stubbornly high rates of childhood poverty since the Great Recession; persistent patterns of housing segregation in many major cities; the increasing economic polarization in many metropolitan areas that has resulted in more residents living either in affluent or poor neighborhoods, and fewer residing in middle-income communities; and the general retreat from efforts to promote racial or economic integration in the schools. Together these factors have left most African American and Hispanic students marooned in schools where economic struggle is the rule and financial stability—and all the social and educational benefits that flow from that—is very much the exception. “Kids who spend more than half of their childhood in poverty have a high-school graduation rate of 68 percent,” said Abigail Langston, a senior associate at PolicyLink, and a public fellow at the American Council of Learned Societies. “You see how these things compound over time. There is a link between housing policy, economic and racial segregation, you see what those do to schools and to people who grow up in those neighborhoods. There is a vicious feedback loop.”

The issue, Reardon said, isn’t “that sitting next to a poor kid makes you do less well in school.” Rather, he said, “it’s that school poverty turns out to be a good proxy for the quality of a school. They are in poorer communities, they have less local resources, they have fewer parents with college degrees, they have fewer two parent families where there are parents who can come spend time volunteering in the school, they have a harder time attracting the best teachers. So for a lot of reasons schools serving poor kids tend to have fewer resources, both economic and social capital resources.”

The cumulative effect of these disadvantages has proven overwhelming almost everywhere. Reardon and his colleagues have studied test scores for students in all of the nation’s roughly 12,000 school districts. And while they have not finished sorting all of the data, the preliminary results underscore how difficult it is for schools alone to overcome the interlocking challenges created by the economic segregation of low-income students.

“We can look at every poor district in the United States and see if there are any that are doing reasonably well, where kids are performing at least at the national average,” Reardon says. “And the answer is virtually none. You can find isolated schools that are doing...better than you would predict. But the weight of socioeconomic disadvantage—or, on the other side of the scale, of advantage—is really quite big. We don’t have much

evidence of places that have been systematically successful when they serve very large populations of low-income students. It’s a big lift.”

Those daunting findings reinforce the gravity of the economic isolation for students of color that the data reveal. Among the key findings:

Kids of color represent a majority of the student body in 83 of the 100 largest cities. In all but three of those 83 cities (Honolulu, and Chula Vista and Fremont, in California), at least half of them attend a school where a majority of their peers are poor or low-income. In 58 of those cities, at least three-fourths of non-white students attend majority low-income schools.

Data is available for African American students in 97 large cities. In 83 of those 97 cities (or 85.6 percent), the majority of African American students attends schools where most of their classmates qualify as poor or low income. In 54 of those cities, at least 80 percent of black students attend schools where most of their classmates qualify as poor or low-income.

The cities where the very highest shares of African American students attend mostly low-income schools testify to the breadth of the problem. They include communities from all corners of the country, and range from weathered Rust Belt communities (like Detroit and Newark) to Sunbelt high-fliers (like Dallas, Houston, and Nashville). In order, the cities where the most black students attend majority low-income schools include: Detroit; San Bernardino, Calif.; Newark; Milwaukee; Birmingham, Ala.; Hialeah, Fla.; Boston; Chicago; Philadelphia; New York; Memphis, Tenn.; Baton Rouge, La.; Dallas; North Las Vegas; Stockton, Calif.; Wichita, Kan.; New Orleans; Tulsa, Okla.; Houston; and Miami.

Only in 14 of the 97 cities with available data do less than half of black students attend majority low-income schools. The cities with the very lowest share of blacks in high-poverty schools include San Jose, Reno, and Colorado Springs. But most of those 14 have relatively small black student populations. In 11 of those cities, black students represent 11 percent of the student population or less, with the exceptions only of Raleigh, and Virginia Beach and Chesapeake, Virginia.

Among Hispanic students, the picture is noticeably similar. Data is available for them in 96 cities; in 85 (or 88.5 percent), a majority of Hispanic students attend schools with mostly low-income classmates. In 53, at least 80 percent of Hispanic

students attend majority low-income schools. The cities where the most Hispanic kids attend schools of concentrated poverty also span the spectrum. In order, they include: Detroit; Newark; San Bernardino, Calif.; Philadelphia; Milwaukee; Boston; Dallas; Irving, Texas; Chicago; Oakland, Calif.; Hialeah, Fla.; North Las Vegas, Nev.; Los Angeles; Santa Ana, Calif.; Nashville and Memphis, Tenn.; New York; Baton Rouge, La.; Anaheim, Calif.; and Wichita, Kan.

Only in 11 of the 96 cities with available data do fewer than half of Hispanic students attend schools where most of their classmates qualify as poor. Those 11 also have relatively small Latino student populations. Only four of those cities—Colorado Springs; Plano, Texas; Chandler, Arizona; and Henderson, Nevada—have schools where Latinos represent more than 20 percent of their student body. Even in those four, Latino students represent less than a third of students.

In just four cities do most white students attend schools where at least three-fourths of their classmates qualify as low-income.

In fully 82 of the 96 cities with data for both African American and Hispanic students, at least half of both groups attend majority low-income schools. In 65 of those 96 cities, at least 70 percent of both black and Hispanic students attend majority low-income schools. In Chicago, 96 percent of both black and Latino students attend majority-poverty schools. In New York City, 96 percent of black and 95 percent of Latino students attend majority low-income schools. And in Los Angeles, 85 percent of black and 96 percent of Latino students attend schools where a majority of their peers are poor.

The experience for white students, who now represent a minority of the public school student body nationwide, remains very different. Figures are available for whites in 95 cities. Only in 35 of them (or almost 37 percent) do most white students attend schools where a majority of their classmates qualify as poor. At least 80 percent of whites attend majority low-income schools in just six cities (compared to 54 cities for African Americans and 55 for Hispanics). The cities where such large level of whites experience concentrated poverty are all places confronting long-term economic decline: Detroit; Newark; Hialeah, Fla.; San Bernardino, and Stockton, Calif.; and Jersey City. That stands in clear contrast to the economic isolation confronting minority students even in many thriving cities.

Even more strikingly, in 49 cities, or over half the total where data is available, fewer than 30 percent of white students attend majority low-income schools. In just 11 cities do so few African American students attend majority low-income schools; for Hispanics, the number is just seven cities.

The trends in the patterns of schools experiencing the deepest economic isolation—institutions where at least 75 percent of students qualify as poor or low-income—further underscore the stark racial divergence in these findings. In just four cities do most white students attend schools where at least three-fourths of their classmates qualify as low-income. But most black students attend schools confronting that level of concentrated poverty in fully 51 cities; for Hispanics the number is 54.

These high levels of concentrated poverty in schools persist—and have increased overall—even in cities where there has been tremendous growth since the recession. Many advocates for low-income communities say economic isolation in the schools represents one of the most complex and consequential barriers to equalizing opportunity. “It seems to be the thing that everybody points to as the biggest challenge,” said Sarah Treuhft, PolicyLink’s director of equitable growth initiatives. “It’s the hardest nut to crack because these issues are so deeply entrenched [due to] the housing issues that have created segregated communities. Bussing is a challenging solution. People like to attend their neighborhood schools; and there is so much pushback on integration. There are deep structural issues that can’t be tackled one at a time.”

Likewise, Reardon said it’s unrealistic to expect to bridge these disparities solely through changes in the schools themselves. “We don’t have much evidence that we can make major improvements in educational equality solely through school policy alone,” he said. “Educational policy has to be part of the picture. But we need more than that. We need to think about residential integration...we need to think about school integration, which gets easier when you have more residential integration, we need to think about increasing economic parity between blacks and whites.” In some cities, urban leaders are trying new strategies to confront these trends. They say that for a city’s economic growth to continue, they need to craft policy that ensures their own young people are equipped to compete for the jobs the city is creating.

Dallas is one city focusing more on these dynamics. “North Texas is on fire in terms of job growth, it’s just been disproportionately shared in terms of who got the jobs,” said Todd Williams, the executive director of Commit! Partnership, a nonprofit working to improve college and career readiness levels in Dallas County, Texas. “Part of our issue is that we need to improve the overall quality of our schools.”

In Dallas, one of the country’s fastest-growing cities, almost 80 percent of students attend a high-poverty school, according to the data. It ranks fifth among the largest 100 cities by share of students attending high-poverty schools, behind only Hialeah, Florida; San Bernardino, California; Newark; and Chicago. The levels of poverty deepen in comparisons by race. More than 83 percent of Dallas’s black students and 88 percent of its Latino students attend high-poverty schools.

Tackling that level of concentrated poverty is what Mayor Mike Rawlings has called the “most important challenges Dallas faces as a city.” For Williams, who is also Rawlings’s education policy adviser, Dallas’s future economy depends entirely on whether the city will be able to adequately educate and prepare all of its students for the workforce. “We have something like a 5-6 percent college readiness rate for our African American and Hispanic children, and they represent 80 percent of our enrollment,” said Williams. “If we don’t figure this out over the next 12 years, we’re going to be graduating a lot of students who aren’t ready for post-secondary education. In a 2025 economy, that’s absolutely suicidal.”

Texas Governor Greg Abbott has set a goal for 60 percent of adults statewide to have some post-secondary training by 2030. In Dallas, that challenge is formidable: 34 percent of adults in Dallas County now have post-secondary training, according to Williams’ Commit! Partnership. Yet only 14 percent of recent graduates were prepared for college, according to the Texas Education Agency’s standards for ACT and SAT scores for reading and math. Only a little over one-fourth of the county’s graduates complete a postsecondary program within six years.

The city is already feeling the economic consequences, says Williams, as companies relocate to other cities in north Texas that can provide a more skilled workforce. “We’re going to continue to go backwards in our goal to have 60 percent of adults with postsecondary degrees if we don’t make a very concerted effort,” he said. To that end, Dallas ISD has launched a bonus program to incentivize its best teachers to teach at struggling schools. It is now focused on expanding funding and access to pre-kindergarten programs, says Williams, as well as implementing a “controlled choice” model of socioeconomic integration across the district.

Controlled-choice integration is a strategy at various stages of implementation in many cities that has so far demonstrated positive academic outcomes and cost savings. Strategies on how exactly to implement it vary, but ultimately parents rank their top picks in a lottery system, and the district reserves half of each school’s seats to low-income and half to higher-income students. Socioeconomic integration is a legal alternative to racial reintegration—ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 2007 in the case of *Parents Involved v. Seattle*—that largely produces the same effect. It is also more popular option among parents than citywide busing because they want their children to attend nearby schools, said Brad Lander, a member of the New York City Council. To encourage experimentation with the controlled-choice model, the White House has included a \$120 million grant program in this year’s budget for school districts interested in integrating their schools by socioeconomic status.

The controlled choice option is one valuable tool if it’s employed with other strategies to uphold school quality, said Sonja Brookins Santelises, the vice president of K-12 policy at

Education Trust, a non-profit group that advocates for low-income students. That system can work when districts improve the quality of all schools, so none are “bad options,” and when resources within each individual school—like advanced placement classes—are available to all students, she says. Parents also need to have access to racial achievement gaps to track progress, especially as schools integrate. “In some of the districts where I’ve been, with highly sought-after charters and schools, when I asked achievement data to be broken down by race and gender, there were huge gaps even though the overall [data were positive],” she said.

New York is still in the early planning stages in implementing controlled choice in a handful of districts, though it’s a model Lander says he’d like to eventually see expand throughout the city. In the meantime, he and fellow councilmember Ritchie Torres introduced legislation that now requires the city’s department of education to provide annual reports on school diversity. “What you measure is what you’re paying attention to and we weren’t paying attention year over year to school segregation,” Lander said. “This requires that every year we look and see how we’re doing, are we doing better or worse than last year, what are we doing about it? Over time it will also be the place to go to see whether our strategies are working or not.”

*This article is part of our Next America: Communities project, which is supported by grants from Emerson Collective and Ford Foundation.*



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*The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) is a coalition of 34,000 African-American and Latino churches working to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare, technology, education, housing, and the environment. NBCI's mission is to provide critical wellness information to all of its members, congregants, churches and the public. The National Black Church Initiative's methodology is utilizing faith and sound health science. The National Black Church Initiative's purpose is to partner with major organizations and officials whose main mission is to reduce racial disparities in the variety of areas cited above. NBCI offers faith-based, out-of-the-box and cutting edge solutions to stubborn economic and social issues. NBCI's programs are governed by credible statistical analysis, science based strategies and techniques, and methods that work. Visit our website at [www.naltblackchurch.com](http://www.naltblackchurch.com).*