Submitted on behalf of the African American Education Collaborative:

Black Voice Foundation
Boys and Girls Club of San Bernardino
BLU Educational Foundation
Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement (COPE)
Inland Empire Concerned African American Churches (IECAAC)
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) of San Bernardino
Youth Action Project (YAP)
Young Visionaries Leadership Academy
Young Women’s Empowerment Foundation
Westside Action Group (WAG)
We are grateful for the courage and transparency of students, parents, and staff in order to deepen our understanding.

The San Bernardino City Unified School District and the African American Education Collaborative would like to thank everyone who shared their insights during the task force study effort. For expert and candid contributions that shaped the focus of the study from the beginning, we express sincere gratitude to the members of the African American Education Collaborative, whose names are listed on the front cover. For diligence in the work to ensure that we listened to students. We thank those who served on our focus group findings review team and the partnership in the extensive classroom observations and interviews. In addition, we would like to thank the educational leaders, teachers, staff, and students for your participation. We acknowledge and extend our deepest appreciation to the many district staff who committed their time, talents, knowledge, and passion to collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data and contribute to the shared understanding of the complexities of African American student achievement. We are grateful for the courage and transparency of students, parents, and staff in order to deepen our understanding through this process.

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Acknowledgments

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Special Thanks

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INTRODUCTION

A COLLECTIVE IMPACT STRATEGY

One of the greatest challenges facing public education is improving outcomes for African American students. The literature documenting the under-achievement of African American students has both illustrated the prevalence of school failure among African American students, as well as identified the causes of school failure among African American students. The Center for Law and Social Policy (2014) identified the causes of school failure among African American students (Center for Law and Social Policy, 2014): inadequate identification, analysis, and response to causal, correlation, and/or compounding factors; insufficient study and responsiveness to input from parents, students, and community members; insufficient professional development and collaboration time for leaders and teachers to observe, identify, and replicate effective classroom pedagogy; and over-reliance on strategies to “fix” students, resulting in quick-fix intervention programs that are often short-lived, poorly resourced, and fail to build internal capacity and long-term sustainability.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE TASK FORCE FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Children spend the majority of their day inside of a classroom. The remainder of their day is spent at home and in their communities. Therefore, a collaborative effort between parents, educators, higher education leaders, and businesses is critical to large-scale success of African American youth. The success of African American youth depends solely on our ability as a community of concerned adults to engage in meaningful, regular, collaborative dialogue, planning, and actions that place African American students at the center of our efforts. As African American students serve as both beneficiaries and partners in improved outcomes. The Task Force’s efforts are anchored and guided by the following principles:

a) A Presumption of Positive Intent

In other words, we engage with each other with an unwavering belief and trust in each other’s deep commitment to the success of African American students.

b) We are responsible and accountable for creating the conditions necessary for all African American students to achieve at high levels.

In order to achieve accelerated, sustained outcomes for African American students, and improved practices for the adults who serve them; a collective approach which leverages broad-based support and coordination from school leaders and teachers, parents, business leaders, higher education leaders, and community-based organizations is required. As such, community leaders, parents, students, and staff in the San Bernardino community have collaborated in the creation of a task force to design a “Collective Impact Strategy” focused on accelerating African American student achievement throughout the San Bernardino City Unified School District.


"I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bones, fiber and liquid—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible; understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads of ectoplasms, I am an invisible indeed, everything and of their imagination—only my surroundings, glass. When they of hard, distorting as though I have been you see sometimes in the bodiless heads refuse to see me. like simply because people spook like those who I am a man of substance, of flesh and bones, fiber and liquid—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible; understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads of ectoplasms, I am an invisible indeed, everything and of their imagination—only my surroundings, glass. When they of hard, distorting as though I have been you see sometimes in the bodiless heads refuse to see me. like simply because people spook like those who I am a man of substance, of flesh and bones, fiber and liquid—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible; understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads of ectoplasms, I am an invisible indeed, everything and of their imagination—only my surroundings, glass. When they of hard, distorting as though I have been you see sometimes in the bodiless heads refuse to see me. like simply because people spook like those who
BACKGROUND

San Bernardino City Unified School District's focus on African American student achievement through a collective impact study serves as a model for other school districts across the state seeking to improve academic outcomes for the many under-performing African American students.

GEOGRAPHIC LANDSCAPE

The Inland Empire Counties of San Bernardino and Riverside combined serve the second largest population of African American students in the state of California. Individually, San Bernardino County ranks second and Riverside County ranks fourth according to enrollment data from the California Department of Education (CDE 2014). The migration of African Americans to the Inland Empire Region between 1980 and 1990, was due in part to the growing number of failing schools, coupled with rise in gang violence and rising cost of housing in the inner cities of Los Angeles, Compton, Watts, and other neighboring communities.

In search of affordable housing, greater public safety, and quality schools, African American migration during this period placed San Bernardino County as the highest in the nation for counties with more than 50,000 African American residents. A majority of the growth was in an area identified by a local researcher as the Ebony Triangle (Newhawk 1996). Historically, between 30% and 35% of all African Americans in San Bernardino County lived in the Ebony Triangle. This geographic area is bounded one mile around the I-10 on the South, the I-215 on the East, and the I-15 on the West. This concentration of African American families in San Bernardino, Muscoy, Rialto, and North Fontana was primarily a residual effect of residential segregation. Over the past fifteen years, a greater number of African American families have migrated to the Victor Valley and the West-end of San Bernardino County. This pattern of mobility has resulted in a higher concentration of low-income families in the Central Valley between Muscoy and Highland, communities served by the San Bernardino City Unified School District. San Bernardino City Unified School District’s focus on African American student achievement through a collective impact study serves as a model for other school districts across the state seeking to improve academic outcomes for the many under-performing African American students.

Targeted Instructional Improvement Policy

In response to the persistently low achievement of African American students, community advocacy groups such as the Inland Empire Black Community Coalition led by A. Majadi, the Westside Action Group Education Committee (Walter Hawkins), Tehuti Educational Services (Dr. Lawson Bush, Dr. Ed Bush, Dr. Tonya Bush, Jensen Bush, and Dr. Kenneth Mitchell), and BLU Educational Foundation (Dina Walker) spearheaded a district-wide initiative to close the achievement gap for African American students. This group of influential leaders, galvanized broad based support from the community to advocate for the passage of Board Policy 6012.1 in 2005 which established the Targeted Instructional Improvement Policy (TIPP), one of few policies in the region charged with supporting the academic needs of African American students throughout the district.

Nearly 10 years after the adoption of the Targeted Instructional Improvement Policy (TIPP), the need for targeted interventions to increase academic achievement among African American students and other historically under-served sub-groups of students persists as evidence by the current realities of how African American students fare in the San Bernardino City Unified School district:

- Only 67% of African American students graduate from high school in four years
- School suspension rates are upwards of 57% for African American males, three times greater than other subgroups of students
- Less than 11% complete their courses required for UC/CSU college entrance
- Upwards of 63% of African American students experience chronic school absenteeism at evidenced 15 or more days absent in a school year

A quality education is perhaps the greatest predictor of future economic stability of African American families and communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>California Public School Enrollment African American Top 10 Counties</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>AY 2013-14</th>
<th>PERCENT TOP 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Total:</td>
<td>384,291</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>126,333</td>
<td>33.39</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>San Bernardino</td>
<td>37,286</td>
<td>9.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sacramento</td>
<td>31,197</td>
<td>8.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside</td>
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<td>7.24</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alameda</td>
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<td>7.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>26,402</td>
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<td>Contra Costa</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Joaquin</td>
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<td>3.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresno</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solano</td>
<td>10,434</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In November 2013, the task force was convened through a community led coalition, the African American Education Collaborative, seeking greater accountability for the district’s Targeted Instructional Improvement Policy (TIPP). This report highlights the collective efforts of community stakeholders and educational leaders in San Bernardino City Unified School District to address the underachievement of African American students.

A Focus on Under-served Students: A Statewide and Local Priority

Policymakers across the state have placed greater emphasis on the achievement gap of historically under-served students. At the state level, the Select Committee on the Status of Boys and men of color report published in 2011 noted that “African American youth face unique challenges and have worse outcomes on critical indicators of quality of life including health, education, and employment.” The Local Control Formula Funding (LCFF) is intended to improve educational outcomes for traditionally under-served groups by providing more funding to schools serving high concentrations of low-income, English Learner, and foster care sub-groups of students. The new funding formula provides schools with the flexibility to implement innovative and targeted strategies that aid in closing the achievement/opportunity gap for the students of color in the district. The local realities of under-achievement among sub-groups of students in San Bernardino City Unified School District, coupled with the redirection and flexibility of school funding to raise achievement, creates a unique opportunity for the District to accelerate performance among all students and ensure that they are on a path to college and career success.

The Task Force has incorporated insights learned from the Strive Initiative in Cincinnati—a highly successful citywide education initiative that utilized a collective impact model (Kania & Kramer, 2011). The Task Force for African American Student Achievement engaged the education community in deep analysis of the schooling experiences of African American students in the San Bernardino City Unified School District. At the conclusion of the study, the Task Force findings and recommendations will be utilized for goal setting, strategy development, program design, and performance management aligned with the Targeted Instructional Improvement Policy.

This report highlights the study methodology, key findings, and recommendations and strategies to raise African American student achievement throughout the district. The report starts with an examination of academic performance data to understand trends and patterns among African American students. Secondly, the report highlights instructional practices through observations of African American students in the classroom and school campus and from the perspectives of administrators, teachers, school staff, and students. Additionally, the experiences and perceptions about parent involvement in homes, schools, and classrooms and as how they are engaged in the school community is highlighted in the report. Finally, the report will conclude with recommendations and strategies that are informed by the effective practices researched and observed as well as those gathered through direct feedback from educators, students, and parents.

Task Force Composition: The task force consisted of a diverse stakeholder group of nearly 100 individuals that include community organizations, district cabinet members, principals, teachers, counselors, parents, and students. Each task force member agreed to work in one of three study teams to analyze data and trends, assess challenges, vet promising strategies, and help to shape the final recommendations.

Study Team Structure: The Task Force was segmented into three study teams. Members self-selected into the study team of their choice. Each study team was made up of 30 to 40 stakeholders per team and included at least two study team leads. Team leads were responsible for coordination of group activities which included data review and analysis, development of tools and instruments for collection of qualitative data, coordination of focus groups, interviews, and survey collection. Team leads also provided input into the final report.
STUDY TEAM A

STUDY OF STUDENT ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

GUIDING STUDY QUESTION:
What are the current academic and non-academic data trends among African American students in the district?

The purpose of Study Team A was to analyze student performance outcomes in key academic and non-academic indicators. After analysis of multiple data sets, the following performance indicators were prioritized for deeper analysis:

- Reading and Math proficiency levels at 3rd, 6th, and 9th grade;
- Algebra pass rates at 8th and 9th grade;
- A-G course completion rates;
- California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) pass rates;
- Graduation rates;
- Suspension incidents;
- Absenteeism rates.

METHODOLOGY

Study Team A was represented by school principals, directors, teachers, community members and parents. The study team was provided with student academic data over a three-year period based on a review of District and school level reports for elementary, middle, or high school levels. The SBUSD Assessment, Accountability, and Educational Technology prepared a series of disaggregated data reports. The team met during general task force meetings and two additional meetings to classify information, analyze, draw conclusions, and generate questions for additional analysis. This process helped to prioritize data sets for review and dialogue during the general task force meetings. The analysis supported the task force in setting academic and non-academic measurements for improvement.

ACADEMIC/NON ACADEMIC OUTCOMES AT A GLANCE

The following provides a look at academic performance data and non-academic data (suspension/attendance) reviewed over a three year period by school level and gender:

Elementary School

**Third Grade, English Language Arts**
The three year average in proficiency shows that approximately 28% of African American girls and 20% of African American boys were proficient in reading. Third grade reading can be used as a predictor of performance on other educational outcome measures. The low proficiency rates among subgroups and district wide suggest a need for emphasis on early literacy.

**Third Grade, Math**
The three year average in math proficiency shows that approximately 43% of African American females and 42% of African American males were proficient in math.

**Six Grade, Math**
The three year average in math proficiency shows that approximately 34% of African American females and 29% of African American males were proficient in math.
STUDY TEAM A

Middle School

Eighth Grade Algebra One Proficiency
The three year average in math proficiency shows that approximately 31% of African American females were proficient in Algebra 1.

Middle School Suspension by Incident Rate
The three year average suspension rates by incident among African American females was 28% and 57% among males.
Student suspension and incident rates for males are significantly larger (approximately 3x-4x times larger) than corresponding female rates no matter what race/ethnicity.

High School

Ninth Grade Algebra I
Over the past three years, grade 9 African American females have only slightly increased in Algebra I proficiency while African American male proficiency rates have remained flat. This is a similar trend to that of Hispanic students.

Four Year Cohort Graduation Rate
The three year average of African American students who entered 9th grade and graduated within four years is 67% for females and 60% for males. African American students are among the highest sub-groups of students at-risk for high school drop-out as early as 9th grade.

California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) Proficiency
The three year average proficiency rate in English Language Arts among African American female is 39% and 30% for males. The proficiency and in math 34% among females and 29% among males.
*CAHSEE is a requirement for graduation in California.
High School A-G Course Completion
This data gives an estimate of high school grade 9-12 students’ on-track for meeting A-G course completion, the minimum courses required for entrance into the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) systems. The data shows the percentage of enrolled students at the end of each school year who met the minimum targets for UC-CSU/A-G course completion. African American males fall well below the state and district averages.

*An informal review of schedules at 12th grade indicates that many students are not taking qualifying mathematics, science and foreign language courses.

School Attendance
The data chart shows the percentage of students with 15 or more absences over a three year period. African Americans consistently experience higher rates of school absence. *Note: 2013 rates cover only half the school year through January 2014.

Key Findings
- Persistently low proficiency rates in English Language Arts among African American males, in particular suggest a need for emphasis on early learning literacy development. Some studies suggest a focus on literary text that connect larger ideals, cultural uplift, economic advancement, resistance to oppression, and intellectual development as central elements in literacy development of African American males. An understanding of the roles reading and writing played for African-American males historically may serve as a productive starting point for conceptualizing teaching practices, selecting texts, and structuring instructional contexts to support literacy development of males. 10
- Math skills such as patterns, measurements, and advanced number sense become more important over time. There is an even greater need to support early math skills development at home and in school.
- Math proficiency declines at sixth grade for African American students, a critical indicator of Algebra readiness. A further decline in proficiency among African American students in Algebra during 8th and 9th grade suggest the need for early math development and a particular focus on intervention between 5th and 7th grade, during pivotal transition years for students.
- To support students with a weak math foundation, one study suggests a two-year development of males.10
- Instructional practices, for the most, are affirming to female students. Males require different learning styles and a connection to other male teachers with whom they can identify.

Focus Group Respondent

Early mathematics knowledge and skills are important indicators for later math achievement and for success in other academic content areas.
The teams identified how much African American students actively engaged in the classroom, and what strategies were used to aid their engagement.

METHODOLOGY

Study Team B participants included school principals, district directors, teachers, community members and parents. These participants were divided into 6 teams with 3-4 members who visited 2-3 school sites. These teams conducted classroom observations and interviews with key informants to determine trends in instructional approaches that seek to engage African American students as well as the individual perspectives of school staff and students.

Additionally, administrators were asked about their relationships with African American parents and the challenges and opportunities African American students face on their campuses, and to describe how African American students interact with other students. Certified and non-classified staff members were asked about the relationship with African American parents at their school and the challenges/opportunities they felt African American students faced on their campus.

KEY FINDINGS

The data from classroom observations and interviews with key informants was reviewed by principal contributors and study team leads to identify themes and patterns that emerged. The results are presented as a lens to understand strategies that aided the engagement of African American students in the classroom and the perspectives and experiences of key informants with African American students in their school setting.

Best Practices Observed

During classroom observations, students were observed to be highly engaged when there were a wide variety of instructional techniques and methods utilized by teachers. Effective teacher practices include:

- Use of heterogeneous groups and pairs to complete tasks, activities, and assignments.
- Teachers provided corrections and acknowledgments using Positive Behavior Support language with students and used technology to engage students in learning to increase the relevancy of the material.
- Frequent opportunities were established for students to successfully demonstrate knowledge, receive praise, have fun during the lessons, and be challenged and use their imaginations while learning. Use of a variety of visual prompts and charts to provide a reference for students.
- Teachers used a variety of visual prompts and charts to provide a reference for students.

Student Engagement Observed

Student engagement takes into consideration conditions in the classroom that motivate and help them experience success. In order for this to take place, students must understand the criteria for success and be provided immediate and constructive feedback. Additionally, the skills they need to be successful must be modeled and the need to be able to see success as valuable.
During classroom observations, students were observed to be highly engaged when the following was evident:

- Students were on task and actively engaged in the lesson (asking/answering questions, discussing the lesson and working in groups).
- Students were engaged in rigorous learning that required them to think critically, reason, synthesize, make judgments and solve problems.
- Opportunities were established for students to successfully demonstrate knowledge, to receive rewards and praise, to have fun during lessons and to be challenged and use their imaginations while learning.
- Structure, rules and discipline
- Enrichment activities (field trips, talent shows, sports)
- Male academies and mentoring
- Working in collaborative groups
- Group counseling

Relationships with parents were described as:

- Strong, effective and respectful
- Parents appreciated home visits
- Parents who were contacted about discipline were usually upset when they came to school

Effective support needed by teachers was described as:

- Relationship building/effective outreach and communication with parents
- Parent education programs to support academic achievement
- Equity & diversity training to understand the culture of African American students
- Collaborate with other teachers on effective instructional and engagement strategies
- Learning how to respond to disruption by redirecting behaviors rather than being confrontational

Challenges/Opportunities were described as:

- Need to improve relationships and communication between teachers and students
- Impact of environment, particularly incidents of violence in neighborhood
- Teacher attitudes and expectations of students
- Academic gaps, students don’t often ask for help
- Structure, rules and discipline

Students described their ideal teacher as:

- Patient and caring, one who took the time to get to know and believe in them
- Able to explain the information and is enthusiastic about teaching
- Provided incentives/rewards and made learning fun
- Race and gender doesn’t really matter
- Goes to any length to help you be successful

Students described how they learn best as:

- Working in groups and having projects
- Learning how to take notes to remember important information
- Having a teacher who really believes in them
- When the teacher uses visual, PowerPoint, technology and hands on activities

Students described their greatest challenges faced at school as:

- Not understanding what the teacher is teaching
- Getting referrals and suspensions
- Making sacrifices during lunch time to get extra help
- Distractions in the classroom, when the teacher has to stop teaching because students are acting out

What students say about their preparedness for college:

In focus groups of 23 African American students from two high schools, they shared the following responses regarding their preparedness for college:

- Some students expressed that they were working to catch up on credits in which they were deficient.
- The majority of students did not have a four year plan, many were unaware of A-G course requirements and felt that counselors could do more to support them, particularly when student are transitioning to college.
- Some students felt that some school counselors play “favorites” and show bias towards International Baccalaureate (IB) students, in particular.
- Some students were trying to challenge themselves by taking harder classes but needed more support and guidance from school counselors.

Students want to challenge themselves by taking harder classes but they need more support and guidance from school counselors.

Students attend Black College Fair.
STUDY OF PARENT ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES

GUIDING STUDY QUESTION:
What are the experiences of parents and caregivers of African American students on the challenges and opportunities for engagement in their children’s education?

STUDY TEAM C acts were aimed at building understanding of the experiences of parent and caregivers of African American children. The team committed to listening to parents as a central aspect of the work. The findings, therefore draw on information collected from focus groups and parent surveys.

Study Team C – Study of Parent/Community Engagement Practices
Study Team C collected anecdotal/qualitative data through surveys and focus group sessions to discover their perceptions about parent involvement in homes, the classroom, and school community. Study Team C was comprised of community leaders, parents, district, directors, and teachers, who worked in teams to develop survey questions, develop a plan to disseminate, collect, and input survey responses and analyze responses. The study team convened parent focus groups and distributed parent surveys over a 4-week period collecting 652 survey responses and convening 47 parents in focus groups at 2 high-school sites. The following schools agreed to participate: Elementary Schools: Barton, Bing Wong, Bonnie Oehl, Del Rosa, Emmerton, Inghram, Little Mountain, North Verdeman; Middle Schools: Chavez, Curtis, Del Vallejo, King; High Schools: Cajon and San Bernardino High School.

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS
The team conducted 5 parent focus group sessions with 47 parents/caregivers of children in varying grades levels. Parents were invited to share their perspective on parent involvement and engagement using these questions:

a. What do parents do that demonstrate involvement in their children’s education?

b. What challenges do you believe African American parents/caregivers face in being involved in their children’s education?

c. Describe a time when you experienced strong parent/teacher partnerships. What made that partnership possible?

All focus groups were convened solely with parents of African American students. This environment created a climate for open and honest dialogue. While there are limits to generalized nature of the focus group questions, the responses provide powerful and authentic insights into parents’ experiences and their engagement at home and in the school community as a contributor to student success. Parents expressed a range of views and what they do to demonstrate their involvement and how they support their children’s education:

Parents instill a value for education. They believed that their role was to instill a value for education in their children by supporting their children at home and school. Parents felt that they instilled a value for education by encouraging them, providing structure at home, and being an advocate for their children. They believed that having courage to advocate on their child’s behalf to ensure their academic success, demonstrated to their children that education is important. They also believed by setting high expectations for their children, such as doing well on assignments, monitoring homework, having self-discipline, setting goals for the future are among the many ways in which they instill a value for education. They also believed that when they are actively involved in academic activities they show their children they care about their education.

Strong communication between parents, teachers, and administrators help parents feel like a partner in their child’s education.

Many parents shared their appreciation for teachers and principals who communicated with them regularly and responded to them in a timely manner. When teachers or school staff responded back through phone calls, emails, or text messages, parents felt as if the school is authentically concerned about their child’s academic success. They also appreciated when teachers or school staff communicated with them about positive things that happened and not just negative.

When parents are informed they can support their children better at home and at school. When parents were more informed about school activities and priorities, they were better equipped to support their children. For example, when parents understand the importance of school attendance, they are able to ensure that their children are in school on time. Incentive programs and rewards are among the ways schools and parents can partner to reinforce good practices. Additionally, when administrators invited them to provide input, parents felt more included in the school community. Serving on advisory committees and school site council helped them to be more informed to support important school decisions. Parents also shared the following challenges they believe parents faced in supporting their children’s education:

- Parents do not feel like they have adequate resources to support their children. Some of those resources include things like transportation to school, housing, child care, and Internet access among other things.
- When parents are not visible at the school on a regular basis, parents believed that school staff feel like they are not concerned or engaged.
- Parents expressed feeling about not being able to get responses without expressing frustration which alienates them from the school staff.
- Parents express their own hurdles in navigating the school system when trying to access information. This was expressed as particularly challenging for grandparents and relatives who are the student’s primary caregiver.

Parents shared the following ways in which schools could better engage them:
Parents need opportunities to be made aware of their rights and critical information, such as early notification about their child’s academic progress so that they can adequately support their children. Schools can create a more welcoming environment by not making assumptions about parents based on their physical appearance or their tone/communication style. Parents believe that positive communication and conflict resolution will restore relationships among parents and school staff. Schools could provide parents of students with behavior problems an opportunity to work with school staff on a solution to resolve problems or correct behavior.

**KEY FINDINGS**

The team developed a survey tool focused on three core areas: a) Welcoming Environment; b) Knowledge and Tools to Support Children; and c) Graduation and College Readiness. A total of 652 survey responses were collected. Of the respondents:

- 86% were identified as parents and 10% as relative caregivers.
- Highest percentages of respondents had children in the 2nd, 8th, and 11th grades.
- The majority of respondents had some level of college (30%), high school (22%) and Bachelor’s Degree (13%).

The following provides a synopsis of survey responses in each focus area:

**Student Climate/Welcoming Environment**

- 92% of respondents said their children like school.
- 86.5% feel supported by the staff at their child’s school.
- 90.8% feel welcomed at their schools.

**Knowledge and Tools to Support Children**

- 28.9% of respondents did not know what their children need to be proficient in math and over 40% had not reviewed their child’s math performance with a teacher.
- 82.5% reported that their children received help with homework. The top three sources for homework help were Home (64.1%), School with peers or teachers (37.2) and CAPS or After-School Programs (25.9%).

*Note multiple responses could be selected.

**High School Graduation and College Readiness**

- 91% of parents polled said they wanted their children to attend college.
- 48% of respondents were not familiar with A-G college courses.
- 56% of respondents did not know that high school graduation and A-G requirements were different.
- 65% of respondents did not have an educational plan for their students to attend a college or university and 12% of those with a plan had never revised the plan.

**FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE**

**TEACHERS**

“Whenever we go on home visits it gives us a sense of community.”

“African American students need books they can relate to such as the Sharon Flake, Payton Sky, Bluford series.”

“There has not been a paradigm shift in the punitive process in our approaches to manage discipline with African American and minority students.”

**ADMINISTRATORS**

“There were programs that were effective but because of funding we weren’t able to continue them.”

“We need to continue to create an atmosphere that encourages parents/administrators/teachers and the community to dialogue.”

**SCHOOL STAFF**

“We need good relationships with parents and we need to listen to them.”

“Parents need to get more involved and students would probably have better behavior at school.”

**STUDENTS**

“My teacher sees things in me.”

“My teacher kept pushing me even when I didn’t accept the help at first.”

“My teacher encourages and supports me so I don’t fail.”

“I like it when the teacher relates the lessons to real life and makes it interesting.”
The study presents recommendations and strategies as a starting point for addressing African American student achievement in San Bernardino City Unified School District. The following recommendations conclude the study and offer the education community strategies for goal setting, strategy development, program design, and performance management:

**Improve proficiency in math and English Language Arts among 3rd grade students.**

- Strengthen early language development by focusing on instructional practices aimed at increasing listening and speaking, phonological awareness and standard grammar instruction. Students also benefit from exposure to literature in a variety of genres that connect to larger ideas and cultural experiences from which they can self-identify. Finally, sustaining parent involvement at various stages of literacy development helps to reinforce learning in school and home.
- Strengthen math knowledge and skills through instructional support for interactive classroom activities using patterns, measurements, and more-advanced number sense to build math knowledge early. Create opportunities for parents to support math development at home by providing them with tools and strategies to reinforce classroom instruction.

**Increase the percentage of African American Students who are on track and complete UC/CSU courses by 12th grade.**

- Increase African American student enrollment in college preparatory programs such as AVID and ensure greater access to UC/CSU courses through regular engagement with counselors or case manager.
- Promote a culture of evidence by using assessments and monitoring reports that determine whether students are on track academically for college and strengthen early warning systems for students who are struggling or deficient in particular courses for timely remediation.
- Help students build college-going networks by linking students to college-educated mentors, encouraging students to form academically oriented peer groups, and allowing students to explore a variety of careers. These activities can build a college-going identity and support students’ aspirations.
- Engage and assist students and families in planning and preparing for college entrance by ensuring timely completion

**Recommendations**

- Engage and assist students and families
- Help students build college-going identity and success
- Promote a culture of evidence by using assessments and monitoring reports
- Increase African American student enrollment in college preparatory programs
- Provide case management support for families and students experiencing high absenteeism to assess needs and areas of support
- Implement positive behavior supports to minimize absenteeism related to out of school suspensions
- Develop school site and district wide attendance goals. Engage communities through community-based incentive programs like discounts at local events, restaurants, etc. for students who exhibit good attendance.

**Address chronic absenteeism among African American students by improving school attendance.**

- Communicate with students and parents about how attendance impacts student achievement. Celebrate and reward good attendance with certificates for good and improving attendance and calling out prizes for students and families.
- Provide case management support for families and students experiencing high absenteeism to assess needs and areas of support.
- Develop school site and district wide attendance goals. Engage communities through community-based incentive programs like discounts at local events, restaurants, etc. for students who exhibit good attendance.

**Strengthen engagement among parents/caregivers of African American students.**

- Support ongoing cultural competence among school community to foster a welcoming environment for families.
- Create learning opportunities for parents in various subjects such as strategies to support student learning in school and home, building positive family/school partnerships, among others.
- Support family/school communication by strengthening systems for timely communication using text message, email, phone calls, and classroom visits.
- Engage community partners to create parent portals at local churches, community centers, etc. to increase parent accessibility to school related resources and information.

**Reduce suspensions through effective implementation of positive behavior support systems.**

- Strengthen student engagement strategies during classroom instruction. Increase staff support to effectively utilize Response to Intervention and other positive behavior system to address and correct behavior. Strengthen parent involvement in positive behavior support efforts by creating vehicles for them to be informed of their parental rights and opportunities for joint planning, communication, and monitoring associate with child behavior.
- Create mentoring opportunities for African American students to build positive self-identity and promote pro-social behavior.

**Investing in Student Achievement**

The San Bernardino City Unified School District should consider making investments to strengthen achievement among African American Students and other sub-groups of students:

- Hire additional program support and case management staff to provide district-wide support to African American students.
- Invest in partnerships with community-based entities for provision of wrap-around support such as mentoring, academic, and cultural enrichment, and college/career readiness.
- Invest in incentive/reward programs to encourage and motivate students and families.
- Invest in parent training and opportunities for family/community center learning activities.
- Invest in technology, communication and outreach systems that support student and parent engagement.
- Invest in efforts to sustain a collective impact strategy by convening implementation teams with educators, parents, and community members to support ongoing planning and evaluation.
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Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement (COPE) is a 501c3 faith-based organization, established in 2000 by a core group of pastors, with a mission to train and develop the capacity of religious and lay leaders in congregations and across the Inland Empire to protect and revitalize the communities in which they live, work, and worship. COPE achieves its leveraging the collective goodwill of congregates to address critical issues relating to poverty, education, and health.