

(10) Churches and Communities Pulling Together

July 19, 2006

Need

Based on national assessments of Black and White 4th, 8th, and 11th graders, we have projected that it could take between 65 and 780 years to close racial achievement gaps in math and science if effects of reforms in the future are similar to effects of reforms in the past. *The painfully tragic implication is that it could take twice longer to close math and science achievement gaps than the number of years Blacks have been in this country¹.*

Response

Our Community Empowerment Plan to Accelerate the Achievement of African American Students

A Citywide Initiative for Neighborhoods where Most African American Students Live:

East Liberty
Garfield
Hazelwood
Hill District
Homewood
North Side
South Side
West End

Requirement

...chance has never satisfied the hope of a suffering people. It is only through hard work, persistence, and self reliance by which the oppressed have ever realized the light of their own freedom (Marcus Garvey).

¹ Several of my closest and dearest friends have indicated that these projections seem so preposterous and incredulous that they weaken our case for solution. I'd be please to share with anyone interested the formulas we used in deriving these projections. You can do the math, and then you can see for yourself. Contact me—Jerome Taylor—at jtaylor@cffe.org.

Churches and Communities Pulling Together

July 18, 2006

Table of Contents

Brief History of Local Community Empowerment Initiatives for Accelerating the Academic Achievement of African American Students

Review of ‘Why’ Churches, Organizations, and Parents Should Be Involved in Accelerating the Academic Achievement of African American Students K-12

Review of ‘What’ Churches, Organizations, and Parents Can Do to Accelerate the Academic Achievement of African American Students K-12

Organization Design for Implementing *Churches and Communities Pulling Together* to Accelerate the Academic Achievement of African American Students K-12

Choice Plan for Registering Churches and Organizations in *Churches and Communities Pulling Together*—Our Plan for Community Empowerment to Accelerate the academic Achievement of African American Students K-12

THE PAGES OF THIS INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT will detail our community empowerment plan for accelerating the academic achievement of African American students by equipping churches, organizations, parents, and neighborhoods with strategies that ignite and support students’ commitment to learning with excellence, schools’ commitment to teaching with excellence, and administrators’ commitment to leading with excellence.

See footnote 1 on how to access more details on our complete reform package of which *Churches and Communities Pulling Together* is one part¹.



¹ These strategies of community empowerment, derived from broad consultation over a period of more than three years, are described fully in *Pennsylvania CAN*—our model of educational reform designed to accelerate rates of math and science achievement in African American students K-12. You may find out more about how this model relates to Churches and Communities Pulling Together by contacting Jerome Taylor, Center for Family Excellence, 409 Dinwiddie, Pittsburgh, PA 15219, 412-232-0322, Extension 21, or by email jtaylor@cffe.org.

Brief History of Local Community Empowerment Initiatives for Accelerating the Academic Achievement of African American Students:

Seven Milestones and Still Counting ...

July 15, 2006

- ❑ **Hill District Cultural Policy Council:** A collaborative of ministers, social service providers, and community activists committed to individual and communal transformation by promoting high levels of Values for Life: *Love and Respect, Interpersonal Skills, Learning Orientation, Self-Confidence, Self-Persistence, Self-Esteem, and Self-Reliance*. Encouraged and supported the successful adaptation and implementation of Values for Life in a predominately Black elementary school.
- ❑ **Hill District Education Council:** A consortium of politicians, principals, parents, ministers, residents, and community activists who met monthly over a period of three years to identify strategies for promoting academic excellence in African American Students K-12.
- ❑ **Churches and Communities Pulling Together:** A consortium of churches, organizations, parents, principals, teachers, librarians, residents, and community activists who identified what churches, organizations, and parents can do promote academic excellence in neighborhoods where African American students are concentrated: East Liberty, Hazelwood, Hill District, Homewood, North Side, South Side, and West End.
- ❑ **East End Equity Coalition:** A consortium of parents and organizations that proposed an alternative plan for accelerating reading, math, and science achievement of African American students attending schools located in East Liberty and Homewood.
- ❑ **Math and Science Acceleration Team:** A committee of more than 20 locally and nationally recognized administrators, teachers, and scholars who developed *Pennsylvania CAN* which is designed to accelerate the academic achievement of African American students K-12.
- ❑ **Partnership with Pennsylvania Department of Education:** Invited by Pennsylvania Secretary of Education Gerald Zahorchak to provide ideas and programs that promote equity in school districts and accelerate the achievement of African American students K-12.
- ❑ **Scheduled Contact with Chairman of the Pennsylvania Black Legislative Caucus Thaddeus Kirkland:** Will request funding to support space rental, office equipment, initial hires, and technical assistance required (a) to launch *Pennsylvania CAN*—our model for accelerating rates of math and science achievement in school districts with high concentrations of African American students K-12—and (b) to establish procedures for indexing and monitoring quality of educational equity within these districts.



Accelerating Black Academic Achievement: *Why Should Churches Be Involved?*

Taken from Pennsylvania CAN (2006):
A Proposal to Close Racial Achievement Gaps in Math and Science
Jerome Taylor, PhD, Principal Investigator

July 3, 2006

IF FIVE SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL CHALLENGES identified here are considered and addressed broadly, fervently, and consistently by the church community, and if this witness of compassion, understanding, and action rallies Black children, families and neighborhoods to new standards of academic excellence, then churches and communities pulling together will have contributed dramatically to the closing of unconscionably large racial achievement gaps in reading, writing, math, and science. We believe these five spiritual and cultural challenges must be embraced first by the church in order to trigger communal awakening and commitment to academic engagement and excellence. *Answering these five spiritual and cultural challenges will help to build the village to raise the child:*

1. Answering the Moral Challenge.

Achievement inequities are an expression of social injustice—a recurring theme in old and new testament texts. Biblically, social injustice is a moral issue. In light of projections indicating that it could take between 65 and 780 years to close achievement gaps in math and science

if effects of future reforms are similar to effects of prior reforms (Taylor, in preparation), a sense of social injustice would demand temporally efficient remedies. *Who should speak to the immorality of racial achievement inequities if not the church?*

Our Rights and Interests

In July of 1848, Frederick Douglass stated what history now affirms as true: *If we are careless and unconcerned about our own rights and interests, it is not within the power of all the earth combined to raise us from our present...condition (The Northstar).*

2. Answering the Liberatory Challenge. We have found that about 50 percent of mothers living in four public housing communities believed that Blacks are mentally defective intellectually, morally, and emotionally. Moreover, about 33 percent of Black church members believe this way (Taylor & Obiechina, in press; Taylor, Obiechina, & Harrison, 1998). Even among Black children born to economic privilege, there is the feeling and belief that being ‘smart’ is more of a ‘White’ than ‘Black’ prerogative (Ogbu, 2003). Identifying with these racist claims maligns the Genesis claim—made in the image and likeness of God. This would appear to be a theological matter of foundational significance. *Who should press the case for liberating Black students from racist and classist stereotypes that undermine their academic engagement and achievement if not the church?*

3. Answering the Stewardship Challenge. Humankind is challenged in Genesis 1: 26 and 29 to seek and exercise responsible stewardship which entails a range of disciplines (Taylor, 2005):

a. **Physics and Mathematics** (Genesis 3a: *Let there be light*). Every introductory book in physics has a chapter on light. Einstein’s theory of relativity is based on fundamental

properties of light, and advanced mathematics is used to express properties and functions of light.

- b. **Oceanography, Geology, Geography, and Cartography** (Genesis 1:6: *Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters*).
- c. **Horticulture, Herbatology, and Silviculture** (Genesis 1:11: *Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb...and the fruit tree*).
- d. **Astronomy, Celestial Mechanics, and Theoretical Physics including String Theory** (Genesis 1:14-15: *Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night, and let them be signs and seasons, and for days and years, and let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on earth*).
- e. **Ichthyology, Aquaculture, and Ornithology.** (Genesis 1:20: *Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let the birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens*).
- f. **Zoology, Entomology, Herpetology, Agriculture, Veterinary Science, and Animal Husbandry** (Genesis 1:24: *Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth*).
- g. **Theology, Ethics, Aesthetics, Anthropology, History, Psychology, Biology, Physiology, Biochemistry, Genetics, Anatomy, and Neuroscience** (Genesis 1:28: *Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness*).
- h. **Sociology, Communications, and Family Science** (Genesis 2:18: *It is not good man should be alone. I will make him a helper comparable to him*).

How can our children have responsible stewardship as instructed without confident mastery over the primary disciplines of reading, math, and science? *Who will encourage and challenge our students to responsible and competent stewardship if not the church?*

- 4. Answering the Ontological Challenge. Jesus himself was literate and numerate: He was bilingual—able to speak Hebrew and Aramaic—and there is some evidence that he was bidialectal—able to speak the language of the streets and the language of the courts. He was good with numbers—a carpenter who could build a house or throw a bridge which required intuitive concepts of algebra, trigonometry, and physics. So in teaching, preaching, and specialized ministries, why shouldn't Black students be challenged to be literate and numerate? *Who will challenge our students to be like Jesus in every way if not the church?*
- 5. Answering the Cultural Challenge. The church alone is positioned to teach biblically- and culturally-derived virtues that undergird academic engagement and achievement. Theologian Samuel K. Roberts (1999) has identified four virtues that historically and presently equip African Americans with interpretive and decisional skills necessary for triumphant living in oppressive environments: **Prudence**—cultivating and championing the discipline of mind that challenges and overturns racist conceptions about Blacks; **Justice**—questing for a society where *the rights, duties, and protection of every citizen [are] guaranteed*; **Fortitude**—believing that an *enlightened and cultivated mind [can] alter circumstances and the realities around them*; and **Temperance**—a disciplined process of deliberation that includes ordering options and choosing wisely. *Who should teach cultural values that promote survival and victory if not the church?*

Yes, our church wishes to be part of Churches and Communities Pulling Together to promote academic excellence in African American students K-12.

Name of Church _____
Pastor's Last Name _____ First _____ Tele _____ email _____
Street Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
Name of Person Assigned to Coordinate _____ email _____

**Accelerating Black Academic Achievement:
Why Should Organizations Be Involved?**

Taken from Pennsylvania CAN (2006):
A Proposal to Close Racial Achievement Gaps in Math and Science
Jerome Taylor and the Math and Science Acceleration Team
July 6, 2006

BLACK STUDENT UNDERACHIEVEMENT IS COSTLY—to students themselves, the communities where they live, and to the nation as a whole. At a snail’s pace some of these costs to students themselves and to their community and nation have abated over time; but at an alarming pace, many if not most of these costs have escalated over time. Without radical correction, Black students and their communities may reach a point where social costs so outweigh cultural revenues that prospects of recovery and transformation slip slowly beneath tomorrow’s horizon of hope. Imagine if you would what happens if the following costs associated with academic underachievement continue with minimal reduction or accelerated speed:

1. Cost to Students. Nationally, 49% of Black students fail to complete high school. Among Black 18 year olds, only about 1 in 10 is college ready. These patterns carry negative implications for the general well-being of Black students since lower educational attainment is associated with poorer socio-economic status, greater emotional and physical stress and illness, and higher risks of teen pregnancy, welfare participation, child abuse and neglect, gang involvement, and drug and alcohol abuse.

2. Cost to Communities
 - (a) *Economic:* Lower educational attainment directly affects level of entrepreneurial investment and development of quality and diversified housing stock and commercial operations.
 - (b) *Crime:* Lower educational attainment is associated with higher rates of crime which induce fear in neighborhoods and higher rates of incarceration which remove potentially productive workers from the labor market.
 - (c) *Family:* Lower educational attainment and corresponding lower occupational attainment place additional stress on families which may affect the quality and stability of family formation.
 - (d) *Political:* Persons with lower educational attainment tend to vote less and involve themselves less frequently and broadly in political organizations and social activism.

3. Cost to the Nation
 - (a) *Economic:* A high school dropout earns about \$260,000 less over a lifetime than a high school graduate and pays about \$60,000 less in taxes, and annual losses exceed \$50 billion in federal and state income taxes for all 23,000,000 U.S. high school dropouts ages 18-67.
 - (b) *Social:* A one-year increase in average years of schooling for dropouts would reduce murder and assault by almost 30%, motor vehicle theft by 20%, arson by 13%, and burglary and larceny by about 6%. Increasing the high school completion rate by just 1 percent for all men would decrease assault by almost 30%, motor vehicle theft by 20%, arson by 13%, and burglary and larceny by about 6%. Increasing the high school completion rate by just 1 percent for all men ages 20-60 would save the U.S. up to \$1.4 billion per year in reduced costs from crime.
 - (c) *Health:* High school dropouts have a life expectancy that is 9.2 years less than those who complete high school.

**Yes, our organization wishes to be part of Churches and Communities Pulling Together
to promote academic excellence in African American students K-12.**

Name of Organization _____
Director’s Last Name _____ First _____ Tele _____ email _____
Street Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
Name of Person Assigned to Coordinate _____

Collaborating Partners: *You are not alone...*

THE CENTER FOR FAMILY EXCELLENCE and its predecessor organization Institute for the Black Family bring more than 30 years of experience in working with distressed families in more than 80 municipalities of Allegheny County and also in Greene and Washington Counties. We have specialized in preventing child abuse and neglect, reducing the risk of child abuse and neglect in families referred to child protective services, safely reuniting parents with children who have been removed legally from their homes, and training agencies within and outside the Commonwealth in interventions we have developed over the years. The Center has one of the highest family preservation rates in the nation. Its director Jerome Taylor has received the highest honor awarded by the international Association of Black Psychologists for our various Values for Life initiatives. Professionals from as far away as Japan and the Czech Republic have come to see how we do what we do. Within recent months we were visited by the national President of Family Preservation and by an agency director from Seattle. We bring our more than 30-year history of understanding and transforming families at risk to the table of educational reform—a notable distinctive within the field of educational reforms. Finally we note that the Center for Family Excellence has been recognized as one of the best managed nonprofits in the region (Alfred W. Wishart Jr. Award).

The Cultural Policy Council, an affiliate of the Center for Family Excellence, was designed to change policies and routines of institutions that influence quality of life in the African American community—schools, churches, libraries, businesses, and human service agencies. Our work is not complete, but the council has been successful in helping us attract funding to demonstrate the efficacy of Values for Life in accelerating academic engagement and achievement in an all-black elementary school (*Educational Health Initiative*). We were recently funded to demonstrate how Values for Life initiatives can be used to prevent teen delinquency and violence in a community with the highest homicide rate in the City of Pittsburgh (*Social Health Initiative*). Here we will use one of our Values for Life models that has been recognized as the best violence prevention initiative in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Finally, the Council has supported the Center's efforts to use Values for Life applications to reduce risks of dysphoric symptoms—depression, anxiety, stress, and aggression (*Behavioral Health Initiative*).

The Hill District's Education Council, the East End's Chapter of Churches and Communities Pulling Together, and more recently the East End Equity Coalition have played key roles in the development of this initiative. Over a total period of three years, we have received ideas from ministers, teachers, principals, parents, interested residents, agency heads, and community activists that are directly reflected in our plan of action to close racial achievement gaps. The centrality of their contributions can not and must not be underestimated or minimized. Their efforts have been vital in the past and will continue to be vital in the future as we move forward to create a city-wide organization that will embrace the concerns of local communities while multiplying our political effectiveness in getting the job done—rescuing our children from the perils of academic underachievement and all that goes with it: poorer socioeconomic status, greater emotional and physical stress and illness, and higher risks of teen pregnancy, welfare participation, child abuse and neglect, gang involvement, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Scholars from the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University have been critical partners in our development plan to accelerate rates of math and science achievement in African American students K-12. Additionally, we have recruited an advisory team of 20+ local and national researchers, administrators, and teachers with demonstrated expertise in educational reform. They are available to help us address racial achievement gaps in math and science which continue to be the mournful shame our city, state, and nation.

Parents, churches, and organizations will not be alone in this battle we must win in behalf of our children who are depending on us—now!



Now is the accepted time, not tomorrow, not some more convenient season. It is today that our best work can be done and not some future day or future year. It is today that we fit ourselves for the greater usefulness of tomorrow. Today is the seed time, now are the hours of work, and tomorrow comes the harvest... W.E.B. Dubois

**Accelerating Black Academic Achievement:
*Why Should Parents Be Involved?***

Taken from Pennsylvania CAN (2006):
A Proposal to Close Racial Achievement Gaps in Math and Science
Jerome Taylor and the Math and Science Acceleration Team
July 3, 2006

IN PITTSBURGH, BLACK STUDENTS ARE LOSING GROUND relative to White students. Based on a recently released report by Pittsburgh Superintendent Roosevelt (*Excellence for All*), achievement patterns were summarized for the period 2000 to 2005 and projected for the period 2005 to 2014. From these patterns based on the PSSA, three trends stand out:

- Rates of achievement growth in reading and math were greater for White relative to Black students during recent *and* projected periods;
- Racial achievement gaps in reading and math *increased* from beginning to end of recent *and* projected periods; and
- Without radical correction, most schools with high concentrations of Black students will be in educational ‘lock-down’ by the year 2014—abandoned, reconstituted, or taken over.

Black student underachievement is costly—to students themselves and to the communities where they live. We must rescue our children from the perils of academic underachievement and all that goes with it: poorer economic and occupational status, greater emotional and physical stress and illness, and higher risks of teen pregnancy, welfare participation, gang involvement, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Thankfully, parents can make a difference:

- Based on a recent survey of 41 studies, parent involvement was associated with all indicators of student motivation and achievement outcomes.
- Findings of earlier and recent studies suggest that parents may be more important than teachers in stimulating student motivation and improving academic outcomes.
- Among African American parents in particular, parent involvement is associated with higher levels of student self-esteem, student motivation, and academic achievement.
- Parental noninvolvement is correlated with problem behaviors in the classroom and with lower levels of academic achievement.
- When African American parents provide effective discipline and active involvement in teaching and literacy promotion, racial gaps in achievement close by 25 to 60 percent.

To close racial achievement gaps in reading, math, writing, and science, parents must be involved—now!

Parents supported by churches and organizations will play a key role in our plan to rescue, reclaim, and transform our children and community.

Yes, as a parent, grandparent, guardian or concerned citizen, I want to be part of

Churches and Communities Pulling Together to promote academic excellence in African American students K-12.

Last Name _____ First Name _____ Number of Children in School _____
Name of church or organization you'll be working with _____
Your Telephone Numbers _____ email address _____
Street Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Our Collaborating Partners:

Parents are not alone in this battle to accelerate academic achievement

THE CENTER FOR FAMILY EXCELLENCE and its predecessor organization Institute for the Black Family bring more than 30 years of experience in working with distressed families in more than 80 municipalities of Allegheny County and also in Greene and Washington Counties. We have specialized in preventing child abuse and neglect, reducing the risk of child abuse and neglect in families referred to child protective services, safely reuniting parents with children who have been removed legally from their homes, and training agencies within and outside the Commonwealth in interventions we have developed over the years. The Center has one of the highest family preservation rates in the nation. Its director Jerome Taylor has received the highest honor awarded by the international Association of Black Psychologists for our various Values for Life initiatives. Professionals from as far away as Japan and the Czech Republic have come to see how we do what we do. Recently, we were visited by the President of Family Preservation and an agency director from Seattle, Washington. We bring our more than 30-year history of understanding and transforming families at risk to the table of educational reform—a notable distinctive within the field of educational reforms. Finally we note that the Center for Family Excellence has been recognized as one of the best managed nonprofits in the region (Alfred W. Wishart Jr. Award).

The Cultural Policy Council, an affiliate of the Center for Family Excellence, was designed to change policies and routines of institutions that influence quality of life in the African American community—schools, churches, libraries, businesses, and human service agencies. Our work is not complete, but the council has been successful in helping us attract funding to demonstrate the efficacy of Values for Life in accelerating academic engagement and achievement in an all-black elementary school (*Educational Health Initiative*). We were recently funded to demonstrate how Values for Life initiatives can be used to prevent teen delinquency and violence in a community with the highest homicide rate in the City of Pittsburgh (*Social Health Initiative*). Here we will use one of our Values for Life models that has been recognized as the best violence prevention initiatives in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Finally, the Council has supported the Center's efforts to use Values for Life applications to reduce risks of dysphoric symptoms—depression, anxiety, stress, and aggression (*Behavioral Health Initiative*).

The Hill District's Education Council, the East End's Chapter of Churches and Communities Pulling Together, and more recently the East End Equity Coalition have played key roles in the development of this initiative. Over a total period of three years, we have received ideas from ministers, teachers, principals, parents, interested residents, agency heads, and community activists that are directly reflected in our plan of action to close racial achievement gaps. The centrality of their contributions can not and must not be underestimated or minimized. Their efforts have been vital in the past and will continue to be vital in the future as we move forward to create a city-wide organization that will embrace the concerns of local communities while multiplying our political effectiveness in getting the job done—rescuing our children from the perils of academic underachievement and all that goes with it: poorer socioeconomic status, greater emotional and physical stress and illness, and higher risks of teen pregnancy, welfare participation, child abuse and neglect, gang involvement, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Scholars from the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University have been critical partners in our development plan to accelerate rates of math and science achievement in African American students K-12. Additionally, we have recruited an advisory team of 20+ local and national researchers, administrators, and teachers with demonstrated expertise in educational reform. They are available to help us address racial achievement gaps in math and science which continue to be the mournful and intolerable shame of our nation and city.

Parents, churches, and organizations will not be alone in this battle we must win in behalf of our children who are depending on us—now!



Now is the accepted time, not tomorrow, not some more convenient season. It is today that our best work can be done and not some future day or future year. It is today that we fit ourselves for the greater usefulness of tomorrow. Today is the seed time, now are the hours of work, and tomorrow comes the harvest... W.E.B. Dubois

**Accelerating Black Achievement:
What Can Churches and Organizations Do?**
Encouragement Plan
July, 6, 2006



Dear Coordinator for Encouragement:

PRE (At the start of each grade period): Please place an “X” beside each action your church or organization *realistically* plans to take this during this grading period to accelerate the reading and math achievement of enrolled students.

POST (Within two weeks following conclusion of each grade period): Please circle each “X” that has actually been completed during this grading period.

Coordinator’s Last _____ First _____ Church or Organization _____ PRE Date _____ POST Date _____

1. ___ A parade of achievers—students who are most improved and students who have attained proficiency in math, science, or reading—gets the word out that educational excellence is communally valued and celebrated.
2. ___ A community organized and supported book reading goal for students—75 percent or more of children in the neighborhood will read 25 books or more during the year—communicates the community's commitment to literacy enhancement.
3. ___ Names and pictures of reading, math, and science achievers posted in libraries and other public venues carry the message that churches and community organizations care about the future of its children.
4. ___ Students sporting t-shirts or buttons carrying the label Math (Science, Reading) Achiever Just Like... (picture of a cultural hero or heroine whose life exemplifies noteworthy literary or scientific achievement). This procedure anchors and motivates achievement interest through intended linkages with acknowledged friends and cultural predecessors.
5. ___ Flyers parents sign and post on their refrigerator door to indicate their support of proficiency standards in math, science, and reading. On this flyer is list of church and community resources available to help them achieve these standards. For parents signing on, they are asked if they would agree to posting their names on a honor role of parents supporting proficiency standards. This honor role is posted in the library and in other public places made available by participating churches and human service agencies—the aim being to communicate broad family support of math, science, and reading proficiencies.
6. ___ Carry-A-Book Initiative (CABI)—40 percent or more of church members and organization staffs will agree to carry a book wherever they go to communicate to children that reading is valued by their neighbors.
7. ___ Community and church bulletin boards, billboards, and flyers featuring pictures and biographies of East Liberty ‘alumni’ whose lives reflect distinguished achievement establishes a sense of connection with a tradition of excellence in places where children and families live.
8. ___ An annual spaghetti dinner recognizing principals and teachers whose students are most improved not only rewards and incentivizes instructional excellence but also creates and affirms a communal culture which honors and expects educational excellence.
9. ___ Church or organization recognition of students who are high achievers and improved achievers. On the Sunday following the release of grades, children are asked to deposit their report cards in the offering plate as an expression of their spiritual service—being the best that they can be. Thus the church and community communicate that student achievement is expected and legitimate.
10. ___ Church or organization makes available display places for posting writing, math, science, or research projects of students who introduce these items to parents and other adults at pre-specified times.
11. ___ Church or organization provides special recognition of parents, guardians, or caregivers who participate in our Parent Resource Management Plan.



Accelerating Black Achievement: What Can Churches and Organizations Do?

School Adoptions Plan

July, 6, 2006



Dear Coordinator for School Adoptions:

PRE (At the start of each academic year): Please place an “X” beside each action your church or organization *realistically* plans to participate in to accelerate the reading, math, and science achievement of district students.

POST (Within two weeks following the conclusion of each academic year): Please circle each “X” that your church or organization has actually participated in during this academic year.

1. ___ Explain the urgency of educational challenges to area church conferences, individual pastors, congregation members, and executive directors of human service agencies in the community.
2. ___ Provide a vision of what the designated area could become if its children achieved proficiency levels in math, science, and reading.
3. ___ Solicit ideas on what churches and agencies can do to accelerate the rate of math, science, and reading achievement in the designated area.
4. ___ Obtain agreements to participate in our adopt-a-school initiative.
5. ___ Provide training to participating churches and agencies in proven pedagogical methods that accelerate math, science, and reading achievement.
6. ___ Recommend curriculum materials to use in conjunction with pedagogical methods.
7. ___ Provide instruction on how to establish lesson plans that adjust pedagogical methods and curriculum materials to the developmental age and competency level of students.
8. ___ Review forms and procedures for monitoring quality of implementation and measuring outcomes in math, science, and reading.
9. ___ Establish a timetable for monitoring implementation and measuring outcomes.
10. ___ Implement timetable for each participating church and agency.
11. ___ Provide feedback on process and outcome data to each participating church and agency.
12. ___ Help participating partners modify their instructional plans—the aim being to enhance the quality of implementation and corresponding outcomes in math, science, and reading.

Coordinator's Last _____ First _____
Name of Church or Organization _____
PRE Date _____ POST Date _____



Accelerating Black Achievement: What Can Churches and Organizations Do?

Parent Involvement Plan

July, 6, 2006



Dear Coordinator for Parent Involvement:

PRE (At the start of each academic year): Please place an “X” beside each action your church or organization *realistically* plans to participate in to accelerate the reading, math, and science achievement of district students.

POST (Within two weeks following the conclusion of each academic year): Please circle each “X” that your church or organization has actually participated in during this academic year.

1. ___ With individual parents, introduce and discuss reasons why parents should care about promoting high academic achievement in their children (see document *Why Should Parents be Involved?*) Provide ample time—about 20 minutes—to go over this document and to receive and discuss parent’s reactions and questions and to probe their interest in becoming involved. If parent is interested in signing on, the form should be signed and returned to coordinator who will supply a second copy of this document to post on his or her refrigerator door.
2. ___ With one or more groups of parents, introduce and discuss reasons why parents should care about promoting high academic achievement in their children (see document *Why Should Parents be Involved?*). Provide ample time—about 30 minutes—to go over this document and to receive and discuss parent’s reactions and questions and to probe their interest in becoming involved. For parents interested in signing on, the form should be signed and returned to coordinator who will supply a second copy of this document to post on their refrigerator doors.
3. ___ Introduce our parent involvement initiative (see *Parent Resource Management Plan*). Be sure to stress here that parents are *not* expected to do all of the activities in the plan during a particular grading period—only those items they feel reasonably certain they can complete during a particular grading period. Review the plan one section at a time, soliciting reactions, questions, and comments following introduction of each section (it will take about 20 minutes to review the entire plan).
4. ___ For parents electing to participate, have parents check-off those items they feel reasonably certain they can implement during the upcoming grading period. After they complete the form, have parents fill out a duplicate copy which is handed in to the Coordinator with the other copy being pasted on their refrigerator doors.
5. ___ Ask parents to identify other parent friends that might be interested in participating in our Parent Resource Management plan. Ask if they would be willing to bring them to the next meeting; or if they choose, to provide names and telephone numbers so Coordinator can contact them.
6. ___ Schedule monthly meetings to share progress and hang-ups and to provide group encouragement and social support around these activities that accelerate academic achievement in their children. Groups members may choose to break down into teams of 2 or 3 members who weekly call one another to encourage one another.

Coordinator’s Last _____ First _____
Name of Church or Organization _____
PRE Date _____ POST Date _____

Accelerating Black Achievement:
What Can Parents Do?
Parent Resource Management Plan
July, 6, 2006



Dear Parents:

PRE (Before start of each grade period): Please place an “X” beside each action you *realistically* plan to take this grading period to improve your child’s reading and math.

POST (Within two weeks following conclusion of each grade period): Please circle each “X” that has actually been completed during this grading period.

HOME RESOURCES

- ___ 1. Set daily time for doing homework.
- ___ 2. Identify place of relative quiet to complete homework.
- ___ 3. **Daily** ask about homework.
- ___ 4. **Daily** check to see homework is completed.
- ___ 5. **Daily** check completed homework.
- ___ 6. **Weekly** have child teach you a lesson unit from each of two different classes (e.g., math, science).
- ___ 7. **Weekly** ask child what he or she needs to improve his or her skills in math, science, and reading.

SCHOOL RESOURCES

- ___ 8. Ask teacher how a child’s gifts are determined, nurtured, and shared in this school.
- ___ 9. Ask teacher how parents can help identify and nurture gifts in their children.
- ___ 10. Ask whether special gifts in music or the arts are used to support student achievements in reading, math, and science.
- ___ 11. Ask how parents can use music and the arts to increase children’s understanding of math and commitment to reading.
- ___ 12. Ask what you can do at home to support principal and teacher expectations of high academic achievement.
- ___ 13. Ask principal from time to time how things are going in professional development workshops to enhance teacher accountability.
- ___ 14. Request to see and review the Individual Intervention Plan for your child.
- ___ 15. Get to know the regular teacher and volunteer assistants or student teachers assigned to work with your child.
- ___ 16. Ask about your child’s eligibility for after-school or Saturday programs.
- ___ 17. Ask your child what he or she did in computer lab today.
- ___ 18. Express your personal appreciation to the principal and teachers exceeding AYP requirements in math, science, and reading.
- ___ 19. Ask about standards for scholars program. Ask what your child must do to be considered if he or she is not already in the program.
- ___ 20. Support with your presence community efforts to recognize the work this school has done with your children.
- ___ 21. **Daily** encourage your child to put forth his or her best effort in school.
- ___ 22. **Daily** express your confidence and expectation that your child will do well in science, math, and reading.
- ___ 23. Stop past to introduce yourself to staff especially assigned to work with parents.

Accelerating Black Achievement

DISTRICT RESOURCES (e.g., Parent Education Resource Center)

- ___ 24. Get a copy of curriculum standards for reading, math, and science appropriate for you child's grade level. Post these standards on your refrigerator door.
- ___ 25. Once per month, check off those reading, math, and science skills your child has mastered (use standards posted on your refrigerator door). You may need to get your child and teacher's input on this.
- ___ 26. Get copy of resource materials that will help prepare your child for the current and next school years.
- ___ 27. Make sure your child has access to these resource materials throughout the school year and during the summer months.
- ___ 28. Become familiar with what's in the 'No Child Left Behind Toolkit'.
- ___ 29. Explore opportunities for being a role model for your child by furthering your education through Carlow Hill or Community College of Allegheny County.
- ___ 30. Check out schedule for stress management and other personal development classes.

LIBRARY BOOK RESOURCES

- ___ 31. Make sure your child *and* you have a library card.
- ___ 32. Arrange for librarian to introduce you and your child to methods for accessing online resources to help your child in reading, math, and science.
- ___ 33. Arrange for librarian to demonstrate how your child can use chat room to get assistance on his or her homework assignments.
- ___ 34. Arrange for librarian to introduce you and your child to the types of reference books available.
- ___ 35. Arrange for librarian to introduce you and you're your child to age-appropriate reading, math, and science books.
- ___ 36. Get into routine of having your child check out at least 1 book per month in one of three areas—math, reading, and science.
- ___ 37. Get into routine of having your child check out at least one book per month on the life of a cultural or spiritual hero or heroine.

LIBRARY INTERNET RESOURCES

- ___ 38. Featuring Black mathematicians
- ___ 39. Featuring Black physicists
- ___ 40. Featuring Black engineers
- ___ 41. Featuring Black computer scientists
- ___ 42. Featuring Black astronomers
- ___ 43. Featuring Black scientific discoveries
- ___ 44. Featuring ancient Black civilizations



Last Name _____	First _____	Tele _____	email _____
Street Address _____		City _____	Zip _____
Name of organization or church receiving this form _____			

***Churches and Communities Pulling Together
will make a difference!***

Accelerating Black Achievement: *What Can Churches and Organizations Do?*

Advocacy Plan

July, 6, 2006



Dear Coordinator for Advocacy:

PRE (At the start of each academic year): Please place an “X” beside each action your church or organization *realistically* plans to participate in to accelerate the reading, math, and science achievement of district students.

POST (Within two weeks following the conclusion of each academic year): Please circle each “X” that your church or organization has actually participated in during this academic year.

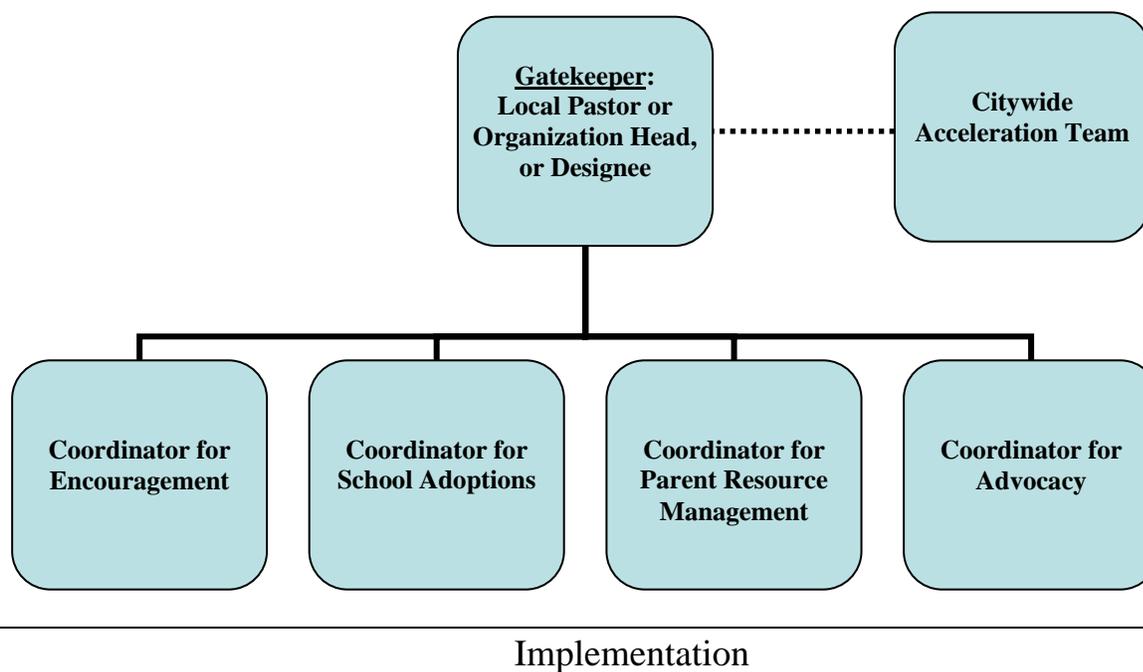
1. ___ Participate in planning our annual city-wide public forum which reviews (a) the available evidence on gap closures; (b) CCPT’s progress in implementing our Parent Resource Management Plan, Encouragement Plan, and School Adoptions Plan and (c) CCPT’s plan of action for the upcoming year.
2. ___ Stand together in calling for a new genre of educational reforms and evaluation strategies that include consideration of the *Pennsylvania CAN* reform that accelerates rates of academic achievement.
3. ___ Support attempts to fix urban education by studying successful public and parochial schools that have closed these gaps.
4. ___ Step forward as guarantor of excellence whoever is in charge, whatever curriculum is utilized, and whatever pedagogical method is implemented.
5. ___ Insist that the district evaluate the extent to which the rate of average gain for Black students *exceed* the rate of average gain for White students.
6. ___ Insist that the district reports the extent to which the gain in proportion of Black students achieving minimum proficiency *exceeds* the gain in proportion of White students achieving minimum proficiency.
7. ___ Insist that the district reports the extent to which the gain in proportion of Black students achieving advanced proficiency *exceeds* the gain in proportion of White students achieving advanced proficiency.
8. ___ Insist that the district estimate the number of years it might it take to close racial achievement gaps based on progress over the past academic year and the last 5 academic years.
9. ___ Insist that the district report the data in items 5-8 not only by race but also by gender and class.
10. ___ Support the effort of students to do their very best on achievement tests.
11. ___ Encourage the school district’s use of noncognitive tests that may be more predictive of academic, and social, and emotional competencies that may underlie performance on achievement tests.

Coordinator’s Last _____ First _____
Name of Church or Organization _____
PRE Date _____ POST Date _____



Churches and Communities Pulling Together: Organization Design for Community Empowerment to Accelerate the Academic Achievement of African America Students K-12

July 15, 2006



Planning Assumptions

WE ASSUME THAT OUR PLAN TO HELP SAVE OUR CHILDREN FROM FUTURE PERIL must be implemented with or without funding. Even if we should receive funding, there still will remain elements of our plan that will require a corps of dedicated volunteers committed to the work of accelerating the academic achievement in our children. Moreover, where funding is available, we believe that a portion of it should come from community resources. Churches may elect to provide an annual contribution from their domestic missions budget. Or organizations may be open to sponsoring an annual fund raising event to help support this initiative. These internal revenue sources would be added to contributions from public or private sources interested in supporting this initiative. The important point here is that we must not become overly dependent on external resources to launch and maintain this initiative. The future of our children may rest on our success in generating internal as well as external support. Here, history is the best instructor.

Filling Roles

Gatekeepers: The local pastor or organization head or designee representing churches and organizations in the seven communities where the majority of African American students are concentrated in Pittsburgh—Hill District, East Liberty, Homewood, Hazelwood, North Side, South Side, and West End. Gatekeepers or their designees are best positioned to know the skills and talents of persons affiliated with their churches or organizations. They are therefore best positioned to identify persons bringing skill sets appropriate to each area of coordination. Please identify the local pastor ___ or organizational head ___ or designee ___ completing this form:

Name _____ and Ph #s _____

- Encouragement Coordinator:* A volunteer with basic skills in organizing events and mobilizing the interest and support of others in the successful planning and implementation of these events. If you have someone in mind for this position that also has compassion for our children, please list:

Name _____ and Ph #s _____

School Adoptions Coordinator: A volunteer with formal or informal instructional experience that is also good in presenting in public and persuading others. If you have someone in mind for this position that also has compassion for our children, please list:

Name _____ and Ph #s _____

Coordinator for Parent Involvement: A volunteer with deep respect and empathy for parents and the daily stresses they face and with a record of successfully engaging and supporting parents. If you have someone in mind that also has compassion for our children for this position, please list:

Name _____ and Ph #s _____

Coordinator for Advocacy: A volunteer with a disposition to speak out, to point out injustices and to take on such issues with courageous boldness. If you have someone in mind for this position that also has compassion for our children, please list:

Name _____ and Ph #s _____

Citywide Acceleration Team: Persons with training experience or technological skills or bookkeeping training or administrative background or teaching experience or passionate commitment to educational challenges our children face. If you have someone in mind for this position that also has compassion for our children, please list:

Name _____ and Ph #s _____

Finalizing Registration

Please complete the Choice Plan on the next page to complete your church or organization's formal registration as a partner in Churches and Communities Pulling Together. *It is important to review our Choice Plan because there are additional options for participation not covered under Organization Design.*

A member of our team will be contacting you shortly to go over this introductory package and to address any remaining questions you might have.

Thank you for your time and for your love of our children. In behalf of their future and the future of our community, we truly look forward to working with you!



Not to be completed by church or organization

Date of Transmission: M___ D___ Y_____

Date of Interview: M___ D___ Y_____

Name of Interviewer: Last _____ First _____

Churches and Communities Pulling Together:

Choice Plan

July 18, 2006



Please check off your church's or organization's level of planned involvement over the next 12 months. We recognize that this is a judgment call, but check off each item you feel reasonably assured your church or organization will be able to implement over the next 12 months__ or is presently implementing__.

- Establish and nurture a parent academic support group whose aim is to accelerate rates of academic achievement in reading, math, science, and writing.
- Establish and nurture parent, peer, and school recognition activities that stimulate and reinforce high levels of academic engagement and achievement.
- Establish and nurture in-school__, after-school__, week-end__, or summer programs__ to accelerate students' achievement in reading__, math__, science__, or writing__.
- Provide volunteer to assist in acceleration activities identified in the above items 1__, 2__, or 3__.
- Provide volunteers to assist in location of materials and methods supportive of academic acceleration.
- Provide volunteer to help monitor the school district's success in implementing initiatives intended to accelerate students' achievement in reading, math, science, and writing.
- Provide volunteer to help organize an annual city-wide summit on students' progress in reading, math, science, and writing__ or to help locate and review materials that would accelerate achievement__.
- Annually, __ allocate some portion of your budget or __conduct a fundraiser to support identified activities that will *accelerate* rates of academic achievement in African American students K-12.

Name of church or organization _____
Pastor__ Head__ Designee __: _____
Address _____
Ph #'s _____ Email Address _____
Today's Date: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____