



For Immediate Release

May 16, 2024

**Announcing the Launch of the Pan-African Immersive Storytelling Academy:
A Groundbreaking Pan-African Educational Initiative of the Pasadena Unified School District**

Pasadena, CA – The Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) is thrilled to announce the launch of the Pan-African Immersive Storytelling Academy, a pioneering educational initiative designed to provide a comprehensive Pan-African curriculum tailored specifically for Black students. On Thursday, May 9, 2024, the Black Student and Family Task Force (“the Task Force”) formally presented its recommendations to the Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education. The recommendations presented were accepted by the Board unanimously. This significant milestone is the culmination of a year's worth of collaboration between the African American Parent Council (AAPC), Task Force Members and Partners, Equation 2 Success, and PUSD, which convened last Fall and involved extensive engagement in meetings, town halls, and consultations with community educational partners.

“Through data analysis and dialogue, the Black Student and Family Task Force has given us a framework to radically reimagine schooling for Black students and families. We know that an intentionally curated space that centers Black student success is long overdue in PUSD, and once successful, will be a place to draw best practices from and replicate.” - **John Lynch, African American Parent Council Chair**

The academy is dedicated to integrating immersive storytelling techniques into core subjects such as mathematics, science, language arts, history, and social studies. “PUSD’s Black Student and Family Task Force is the framework and foundation for the Pan African Immersive Storytelling Academy, which celebrates African cultures and histories and gives our students culturally relevant tools. It strengthens our students' sense of belonging and creates pathways for Black students to succeed. I am grateful for the work of the Task Force and look forward to collaborating with our teachers, parents, caregivers, and community.” - **Elizabeth Blanco, Superintendent, PUSD.**

Additionally, specialized modules will focus on immersive storytelling, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and emerging technologies. "I am thrilled about the potential of the Pan African Immersive Storytelling Academy to revolutionize education for all students in the Pasadena Unified School District. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Kimi Wilson, CEO of Equation 2 Success, for embracing Resolution 2566 and using it as the guiding framework for developing the academy." - **Michelle Richardson Bailey, BOE**

At the Pan-African Immersive Storytelling Academy, students will embark on a journey of hands-on learning experiences, collaborative projects, and experiential activities. The goal is to nurture critical thinking, creativity, and digital literacy skills while celebrating the rich diversity of Pan-African cultures and histories. "I eagerly look forward to collaborating with the Pasadena community to develop this groundbreaking Pan African Immersive Storytelling Academy that will unlock new pathways to academic excellence by igniting students' passion for storytelling rooted in their cultural heritage." - **KiMi Wilson, CEO of Equation 2 Success**. Furthermore, Pan-African Immersive Storytelling Academy will offer professional development opportunities for educators, empowering them to effectively leverage immersive technologies in their teaching practices.

We are poised to launch with an incubation period for the 2024-2025 school year preceding the official opening of the first 6th-grade cohort for the 2025-2026 school year. During this incubation phase, we will embark on several key initiatives to lay the foundation for a successful launch. "The Pan-African Immersive Storytelling Academy will be a powerful and valuable way to engage students, staff, families, and the community in unprecedented ways. I am honored to be part of this endeavor and look forward to positively impacting our students' academic journey." - **Kimberly Kenne, Board of Education President**.

We're excited to embark on this transformative educational endeavor and look forward to welcoming students, parents, educators, and collaborators to join us on this inspiring journey.

"Black students and families have a long and complicated history in Pasadena and within the School District. It is our hope that the Pan African Immersive Storytelling Academy is a demonstrative commitment to re-framing, re-imagining, and re-engaging with our community to better serve the needs of Black students in the District. I am also personally invested in the continued refinement of our collaboration, engagement and expansion of this collective body and its ongoing and sustainable support for the Academy." - **Patrice McKenzie, Board of Education**

Contact:

Contact us at taskforce@equation2success.com for media inquiries or further information about the Pan-African Immersive Storytelling Academy.