



INDIANA BLACK ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Planning for Black Academic Excellence:
Closing The Academic Achievement/Opportunity Gap



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The vision of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is to ensure a society in which all individuals have equal rights without discrimination based on race. The NAACP national, state and local branches work in conjunction to promote its mission to secure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights in order to eliminate race-based discrimination and ensure the health and well-being of all persons.

This document illuminates educational inequities and seeks to remove racial barriers and prejudice, inform the community about racial discrimination, and advocate for the elimination of racial prejudice by proposing to eliminate the academic achievement gap. This working document upholds the organization's basic tenets to help support changes in educational practices in Indiana with a focus on Black Academic Excellence.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Barbara Bolling-Williams, J.D. President, NAACP Indiana State Education Conference
Debra Vance, Chairperson, NAACP Indiana State Conference Education Committee
Chrystal Ratcliffe, President, NAACP Greater Indianapolis Branch
Garry Holland, Chairperson, NAACP Greater Indianapolis Education Committee

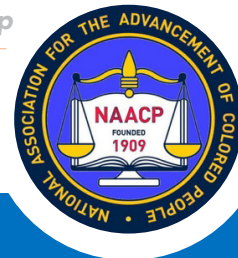
COMMUNITY TEAM MEMBERS AND REVIEWERS

Dr. Gwendolyn J. Kelley, Lead Editor
Carole Craig, Co-Editor
Dr. Teresa Baker
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Cynthia Evans
Dr. Cassandra D. Gray
Kelly Hershey
Dr. Ivan Douglas Hicks
Annette Johnson
Nichole Kelley
Dr. Gwendolyn Lavert
LaQuita Maxey
Heather McKinney
Patricia Payne
Jillian Jay Watts



DOCUMENT DESIGN

Adrienne Byfield



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Sample Indiana State Plan for Black Academic Excellence: Closing the Academic Achievement/Opportunity Gap has been prepared by concerned citizens throughout the state who voice an urgent need for producing drastic improvement in academic achievement for Indiana's Black students. The ultimate goal seeks to eliminate all disproportionalities resulting in inequities and negative outcomes for our Black students by the year 2023. When this goal becomes a statewide priority, yearly benchmarks can be set to measure the progress made to achieve all of the goals outlined within the plan. This plan comes after a review of best practice models for how those charged with creating policies can move forward, and additionally, includes the input of local practitioners who have demonstrated success in working with Black students. Also included is an analysis for how to eliminate the predictability of the racial disparities that have kept unacceptable numbers of Black students consistently performing at the bottom of all measures of academic performance.

Conversely, our state cannot be content with celebrating the achievement success of Black students who are deemed proficient. Nor should we be surprised that these high performing students were capable of somehow overcoming the odds that block success for the majority of our Black students. This success is what we should all expect for all students. What happens from Grade 3, when 74% of Black children pass the state's IRead Reading Proficiency Assessments, to when after seven or more additional years of education within our systems, the 10th Grade data reveals that only 24.7% of Black children pass the ISTEP+ English/Language Arts Proficiency assessment (IDOE, 2019)? We believe there are factors that predict this drastic drop, and there are additional factors that work to produce excellence.

This plan, with its definition and foundational principles for what Black Academic Excellence looks like in pre-school through high school, provides a blueprint that educators, legislators, and government officials can use to frame new perspectives and provide more consistent actions to correct the unsatisfactory outcomes that change throughout the state. Using fifteen recommended strategies to close the achievement/opportunity gap can help guide state, districts, schools, and classroom changes to address racial inequities and begin to meet the needs of Black students. Key factors addressed within the report include the following:

4 KEY STEPS FOR CREATING A CLIMATE IN INDIANA FOR BLACK ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

01
STEP

Implement the Indiana Consolidated State Plan for ESSA (2017) with an urgent and deliberate focus on equity for Black students as listed by 2023

02
STEP

Establish regular meetings of the ongoing IDOE Cultural Competency and Ethnic Studies Advisory Committees with the Indiana Secretary of Education and the Governor's Diversity Officer and Cabinet

03
STEP

Evaluate the current IDOE online data displays for improved accountability that will intentionally assess and monitor disaggregated data displays, making the data more accessible, user-friendly and transparent for parents and community members

04
STEP

Hire a legislated IDOE Educational Equity Officer who becomes responsible for implementation of all educational equity and disproportionality related issues, policies and legislative enactments for the state of Indiana

15 STRATEGIES TO CLOSE THE ACHIEVEMENT/OPPORTUNITY GAP



Establish Closing the Academic/ Opportunity Gap as a Strategic Target for the Governor and IDOE



Address the Needs of the Whole Child in Preparation for Learning and the Creation of Resilience



Provide Equitable Funding for Academic Success and Adequate Support Personnel in Schools



Acknowledge the Impact of the COVID-19 Disparities on the Health and Well-Being of Students and Families



Eliminate the Digital Divide Which Limits Access to Learning



Mandate Full Day KG and Offer Full Day Pre-K



Provide Appropriate Professional Development for IDOE Staff, Districts, Schools and Pre-Service and Practicing Teachers to Create Culturally Responsive Learning Environments



Empower Teachers to Cultivate Academic Success



Engage Parents, Students and Community Voices



Place Highly Effective Teachers with High Needs Students



Hire Underrepresented Teachers of Color



Eliminate the Use of High Stakes Testing as the Sole Measure for School Accountability



Prioritize District and School Policies that Address Equity



Create Equitable Communities through Collaboration



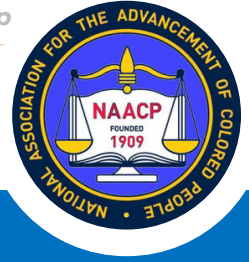
Support District and School Cultural Competency Planning for Academic Success

A final section of this plan addresses the components that must be considered in creating an effective Cultural Competency Plan. Combining those components with the four Key Steps and the 15 Strategies included in this document will create a foundation for improvement. This report concludes in its Appendix with data sets that address the urgency of why the state must begin an aggressive plan to help correct the outcomes for Black student achievement in Indiana. Additionally, it also includes legislation that has already been enacted in Indiana to address the creation of positive school environments for Black student success. While other factors such as poverty, systemic racism, and institutional practices that perpetuate racial inequities still need to be considered, this proposed plan and the existing legislative bills provide a platform for creating more optimistic outcomes as we move forward. This report provides a viable option for educational leaders and government officials to consider and implement.

Sincerely,

Barbara Bolling-Williams

President, NAACP Indiana State Conference

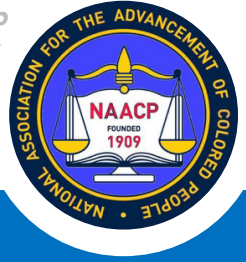


BLACK ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE: FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Black Academic Excellence is a perpetual state where all Black students are valued, and seen as capable and worthy to be afforded the opportunity, access, and ability to achieve at or above the expected academic grade level proficiency in all subject areas, as specified by the State of Indiana for being college and career ready, in preparation for working successfully in a global world economy.

BLACK ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE WILL BE PRESENT WHEN ALL BLACK CHILDREN IN THE STATE OF INDIANA (P-12):

1. Are provided significant opportunity and access to a fair and equitably funded high-quality education as defined by The Education Trust (2019).
2. Have parents/families who are provided easily accessible, user-friendly data, and other relevant information about their student's performance within a welcoming learning environment.
3. Are held to high expectations while receiving highly engaged culturally-responsive instruction and rigorous coursework.
4. Have grade-level appropriate expectations for instruction that include practical problem- solving and critical thinking strategies to help parents/families support their children's learning.
5. Are independent learners, readers and thinkers equipped with language and math literacy skills, interwoven with problem solving and critical thinking opportunities.
6. Have been provided with the highest quality educators who have built caring relationships in a positive, safe, and orderly school environment, free of excessive and overly harsh punitive disciplinary practices.
7. Produce standardized test results in the same statistical range as the highest performing ethnic group, without lowering the results for the highest performing group.
8. Realize double digit increases in test results over the next six years, in an effort to reach the goals as designated in ESSA for the year 2023 (Grade 10) and 2026 (Grades 3-8).
9. Are proud and knowledgeable of the Black history, heritage and culture which has contributed to the foundation and fabric of American society.
10. Are confident in their self-identity, gifts and talents which will ultimately contribute to their personal success, quality of life, and ability to thrive in society.
11. Possess the attributes, skills, and abilities to be competitive in the job market and assume leadership roles in the community.
12. Become proud advocates for the rights of Black people, as they assume the courageous responsibility for promoting racial justice.



CONCLUSION

Our state stands at a critical fork in the road where we must look at the appallingly, stark data reported by the Indiana Department of Education on the academic achievement for far too many Black students. When presented with the right combination of leadership, teaching proficiency, engaging grade-level instruction by teachers and community partnerships who expect our students to succeed, we will motivate our students to become life-long learners and productive citizens who are equipped for the future in a global society. This report addresses concerns about disproportionality while also providing actionable and alterable strategies that can bring lasting transformation to produce Black Academic Excellence. It is our expectation that by 2023 state officials will embrace and implement the four Key Steps and the 15 Strategies identified in this plan to successfully close the Indiana academic/opportunity gap for Black students.

INDIANA 2021 ILEARN STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA

