



## NAACP's Indiana Black Academic Excellence Plan Outlines Needed Strategies for Student Success

***"Success is what we should expect for all students."***

**INDIANAPOLIS** — April 21, 2022 — The Indiana State Conference of the NAACP, in partnership with NAACP branches across the state, today released the NAACP's ***Indiana Black Academic Excellence Plan***, a comprehensive guide for state and local leaders to substantially improve K-12 academic results for Indiana's Black students. It was developed and designed by members of the NAACP Education Committee and other concerned community members.

The full plan and an executive summary are available at [www.indynaacp.org/academic-excellence](http://www.indynaacp.org/academic-excellence). The plan's unveiling will be broadcast live at 10 a.m. EDT at [www.facebook.com/IndyNAACP](https://www.facebook.com/IndyNAACP). A recording will be available there today after the announcement concludes.

The plan defines and establishes principles for what Black Academic Excellence looks like in preschool through high school. It provides a blueprint for educators, legislators and government officials to frame new perspectives and provide more consistent actions to correct unsatisfactory educational outcomes throughout the state.

"Our state cannot be content with celebrating the achievement success of Black students who are deemed proficient," said **Barbara Bolling-Williams**, president of the Indiana State Conference of the NAACP. "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."

The plan includes four key steps for creating a climate in Indiana for black academic excellence, including:

- 1) implementing and fully funding the Indiana Department of Education's approved state plan under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, with a focus on inequities and cultural competency;
- 2) resuming regular meetings of IDOE advisory committees on cultural competency and ethnic studies with the Education Secretary and the Governor's Diversity Officers and Cabinet;
- 3) improving accountability through more accessible, user-friendly and transparent data on the IDOE website; and
- 4) hiring an Educational Equity Officer within IDOE to oversee goals to achieve black academic excellence, racial equity and cultural competency.

- 5) The plan also identifies [15 strategies](#) to close the achievement/opportunity gap. By following the recommended strategies, state officials, school districts, individual schools and classroom teachers can address racial inequities and begin to meet the needs of Black students.

Indiana leaders already are praising the NAACP Indiana Black Academic Excellence Plan. Among them:

**State Rep. Gregory Porter, D-Indianapolis, Ranking Minority Member, House Ways and Means Committee:** "This plan advances decades-long perennial conversations on the achievement/opportunity gaps of our Black students in our educational system. This report reinforces and brings to the forefront the experiments which have failed educationally and socioeconomically."

**State Rep. Vernon G. Smith, Ed.D., Ranking Minority Member, House Education Committee, and Professor of Education and coordinator of the Educational Leadership Program, IU-Northwest:** "For decades Indiana has known that a deliberate and intentional plan aimed at Black academic excellence to improve the academic achievement of Indiana's Black students and close the achievement gap was needed and long overdue. This plan developed by concerned citizens across this state is focused, extremely practical, doable, and substantive, and constructed to produce meaningful positive results. This plan gives those concerned a sense of hope. The State and its leaders should embrace this plan and provide the financial and human resources to not only initiate the plan, but to institutionalize the plan."

**Mark A. Russell, Director of Advocacy & Family Services, Indianapolis Urban League:** "The Indianapolis Urban League (IUL) is proud to partner with NAACP State Conference and the Greater Indianapolis Branch and to endorse their comprehensive and well-researched Indiana Black Academic Excellence Model Plan. The Plan seeks to remediate high rates of disproportionate and unacceptable failure for Black students on standardized assessments and the resulting opportunity gaps for more than 70% of Black Indiana students who manifest skills deficiencies in English Language Arts in 10<sup>th</sup> Grade ISTEP+ Assessments. We applaud the NAACP for this rigorous Plan and urge the governor, state lawmakers, Black leaders and parents, and the state to examine and adopt the recommendations in this Plan."

**Shawnta S. Barnes, Indiana Educator, Writer, Consultant and CEO of Blazing Brilliance:** "Black excellence in Indiana should not be a surprise-obtained goal of a few Black students but the norm for Black Indiana students across this state."

**Background:** Working with state and national experts, the Indiana State Conference of the NAACP identified Foundational Principles, Key Steps and Action Strategies to guide how government leaders and officials, the educational community, parents, community members and students can ensure substantial improved academic excellence for Indiana's Black students.

Both before and after COVID, Black students' overall performance on statewide assessments has been markedly lower than scores of White, Asian and Hispanic youth. The *Indiana Black Academic Excellence Plan* illuminates educational inequities and seeks to remove racial barriers and prejudice that prevent excellence in the classroom. It informs the community about racial discrimination and seeks to eliminate the academic achievement gap.

**About the NAACP:**

*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.*