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ABSTRACT

This book comprises papers on effectively educating black children. The foreword is by U.S. Representative Augustus F. Hawkins; the introduction is by Ernest L. Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Section I, "School Policy: Formation and Implementation," includes the following papers: (1) "Revisiting School-Community Responsibilities in the Administration of Education" (Francis A. J. Ianni); (2) "High Standards and Great Expectations: The Foundations for Student Achievement" (Bill Honig); (3) "Administrative and Organizational Arrangements and Considerations" (Eugene E. Eubanks and Daniel U. Levine); and (4) "Educating Black Children: An Equity-Based Model" (Charles D. Moody, Sr.). Section II, "Teaching and Learning in the Classroom," includes the following papers: "It Ain't No Consolation" (Alvin F. Poussaint); (2) "Teachers: Potent Forces in the Learning Lives of Black Children" (Charlotte Kendrick Brooks); and (3) "Cooperative Learning and the Education of Black Students" (Robert E. Slavin). Section III, "The Home-School Partnership," contains the following papers: (1) Parent Participation and the Achievement of Disadvantaged Students (Carol Ascher and Erwin Flaxman); (2) "Black Family Stress and School Achievement" (James P. Comer); (3) "Growing Up Literate: Learning from Inner-City Families" (Danny Taylor and Catherine Dorsey-Gaines); and (4) "Working with Families from Diverse Backgrounds" (Patricia A. Edwards). Section IV provides keynote presentations from the National Conferences on Educating Black Children by the following speakers: (1) Mary Hatwood Futrell; (2) Marion Wright Edelman; and (3) Alease Gant. A list of references is provided for each paper. An annotated bibliography on the education of the black child, prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, is included. (BJV)

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EDUCATING BLACK CHILDREN America's Challenge

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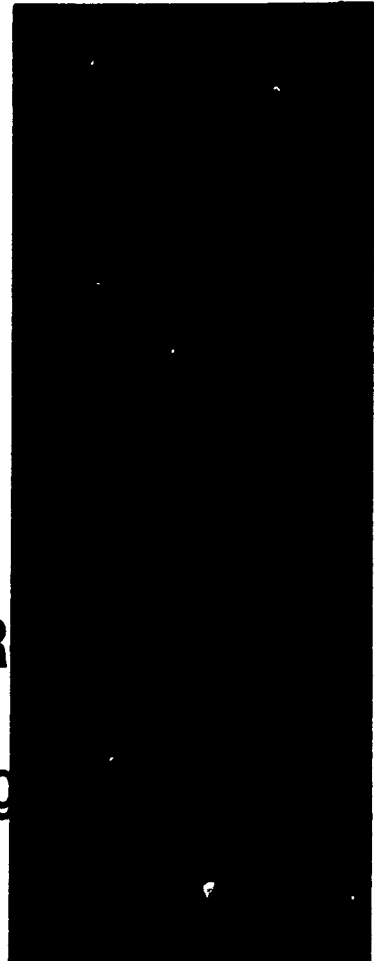
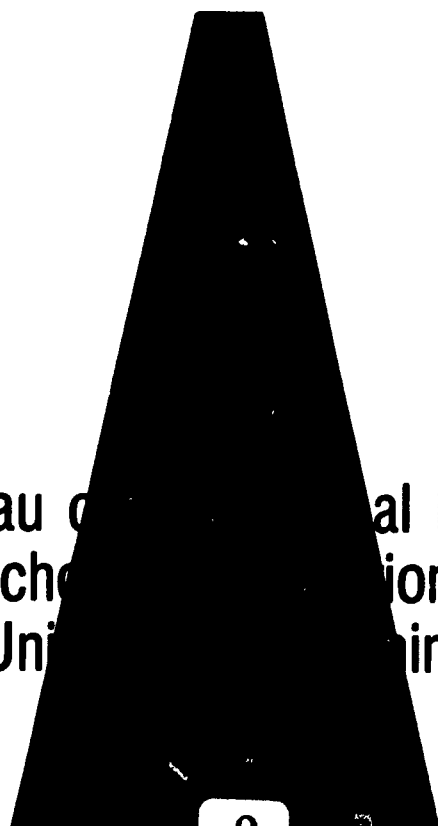
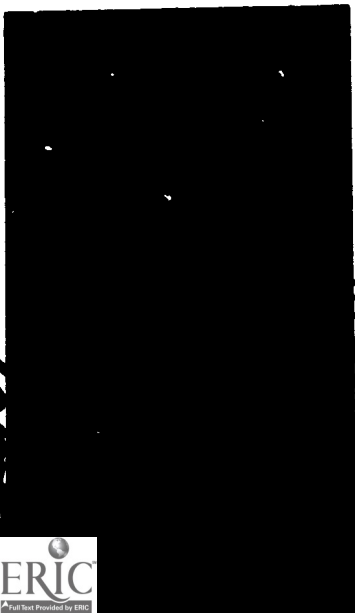
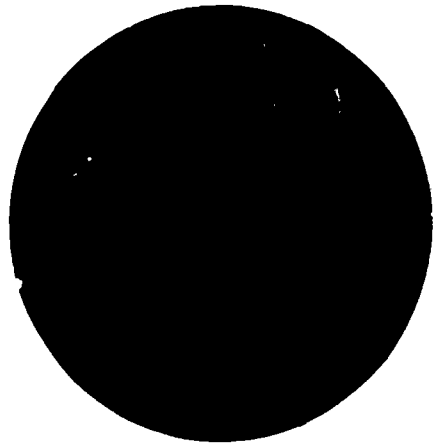
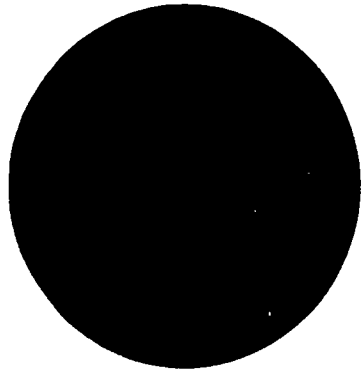
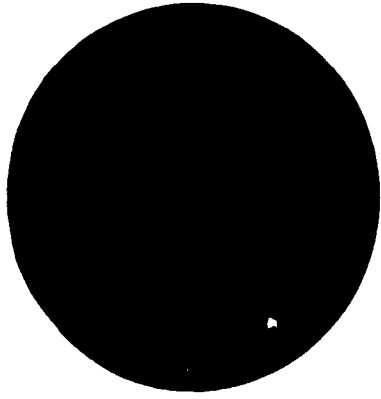
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Educating Black Children: America's Challenge

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Foreword

There is increasing evidence that some schools and school districts are performing significantly above the norm in teaching black children. These children are learning and testing at high levels. Their schools, led by dedicated, determined principals and teachers, have exceedingly tough standards for student achievement, expect students to meet these standards, and correspondingly expect *all* students to succeed academically.

An obvious question, then, is why some schools are well able to teach black children, but other schools fail at this important task. The answer is not an easy one, but some advocates of the growing Effective Schools movement say that schools which effectively teach black children have a series of common factors which emphasize:

- the principal as a strong instructional leader;
- high expectations for student academic achievement and performance;
- consistent evaluation and assessment of student progress;
- a stated, articulated school mission;
- a stable school environment where teaching and learning are enhanced by such stability.

Although these factors (or correlates, as they are sometimes called) are based on a body of research examining school effectiveness, many schools and school districts that adopt the Effective Schools concepts add other factors which answer their unique school need.

Not all schools that effectively teach black children utilize Effective Schools methods, of course. Whatever the case, however, there is ample proof that we already know more than we need to know in order to help black students achieve in school.

An added ingredient in the successful teaching of black children and their successful learning is the sharing of this success with others. With this purpose in mind, a considerably large group of national organizations met early in 1986 and formed the National Conference on Educating Black Children (NCEBC), which sponsored two national conferences at Hunt Valley, Maryland, one in September 1986, the other in May 1987. The culmination of those two conferences was a succinct publication called "A Blueprint for Action." This Blueprint describes in very plain English many immediate, implementable activities to improve teaching and learning for black students. The activities to be implemented are aimed at those who

can carry out such activities, and who also have the greatest impact on the classroom—school administrators, teachers, parents, students, boards of education (policymakers), and the community.

An equally important conference culmination was the decision by NCEBC to publish a monograph on issues pertinent to the successful education of black children. NCEBC invited some of the nation's most distinguished educational thinkers to participate in this endeavor. This monograph serves to remind us that immense creative thought is being generated on the matter of educating black children. Further, substantial resources and energy are effectuating change and improvement in the education of black children.

There is a reciprocal relationship between Blueprint II, formulated by NCEBC participants, and the invited papers of this monograph. These works complement and supplement each other. The educational thinkers affect policies and practices formulated for black children/youth, while practitioners who work with and are concerned about black young people affect the educational thinkers. Often practitioners have been critical of theoretical policies and plans—or the lack of them—formulated to improve the quality of education provided black youth. Several of the articles in the monograph are statements from respected, reflective authors whose views have hitherto been omitted from the current "educational reform movement." They deserve to be heard.

The task of successfully educating black children, addressed in part by the Blueprint for Action and the conference monograph, is ongoing. It is one which the NCEBC will continue to monitor and share with the nation. It is to this end that the monograph provides its greatest function and purpose.

Congressman Augustus F. Hawkins, Chairman
House Committee on Education and Labor

Introduction

By the year 2000, one of every five pupils in the nation's public schools will be nonwhite. The education system will include more children who are poor and will be more culturally and linguistically diverse than ever before. Our schools will be challenged anew to make good on the nation's commitment to provide quality education for all of its children regardless of their economic and ethnic backgrounds.

This book considers the education of the black child, focusing especially on those who often have been bypassed and prejudicially neglected by our education system. Black students account for about 15 percent of the public school population today and will account for approximately 19 percent of all precollege students at the end of the century. Unless we deepen our commitment to these young Americans, the gap between the haves and have-nots in education will widen and the promise of excellence in American education will remain sadly unfulfilled.

One of the most important insights provided by the essays in this volume is the urgent reminder that the school is a *connected* institution and that poor performance in school may, in fact, have roots in events that precede schooling or even birth itself. For example, although black students come from all economic sectors of our society, those who encounter educational difficulty most frequently come from families that are poor and nutritionally deprived.

A major report by the Physicians' Task Force on Hunger in America revealed that the child with inadequate nutrition during the prenatal period and critical early years of brain growth risks "cognitive deficits" that restrict learning later on. In a recent Louisiana study, poor children who had received food supplements during the first year of life and whose mothers had received nutritional support during pregnancy were compared with children who had been nutritionally denied. Those in the first group showed higher IQ, longer attention span, and better grades in school. The obvious conclusion is that all mothers and young children must have good nutrition if good schooling is our goal.

Several contributors also remind us of yet another kind of enrichment that should be cultivated outside the schools. Francis A. J. Ianni speaks of the "alterable curriculum of the home," that includes such conditions as supervised homework, controlled television watching, and a "facilitating environment" that surrounds a child with "the objects, ideas, values, and other cultural symbols" that stimulate curiosity and encourage learning. At a time when the "traditional

family" has taken a dramatic turn, when more and more children have only one parent living with them in the home, schools increasingly will be called upon to provide *prekindergarten* programs. This future was dramatically predicted by the nation's governors when, in a recent report, they urged states to provide quality early education for at-risk four-year-olds and, "where possible," for *three-year-olds* as well!

Alvin F. Poussaint's powerfully insightful contribution reminds us of the need to focus on language in the education of black children, especially in the early years. Language, we are reminded, is not just a subject to be taught. It is the means by which all other subjects are pursued. Through language we learn to think clearly and to share knowledge and experience with each other. Through writing and critical thinking skills we acquire the power to play a more significant role in our own education quite apart from what may be available in the classroom.

That kind of empowerment is essential, Poussaint writes, if blacks are to avoid "continued servitude" at the low end of economic achievement. He cites one expert who estimates that the inevitable loss of productivity absorbed by companies that have to hire large numbers of workers who cannot read, write, or count costs American business \$25 billion a year.

What is clear is that for all children—and especially those who may be nutritionally or educationally deprived—we need to organize a new schooling unit that might be called *The Basic School*, to include kindergarten through grade three. In such a school, grade levels would be blurred. It is foolish for teachers to fret over whether to "fail" a student in grades one or two. After all, children develop at different rates and whether a student is in the "first" grade or "second" grade is inconsequential. An early experience of failure, on the other hand, may dampen hope and start children on a tragic spiral downward.

The Basic School would have one fundamental goal: to empower students in the use of symbols and to assure that every child reads with understanding, writes with clarity, and speaks and listens effectively. From the first, children would be speaking, talking about words, listening to stories, building a vocabulary, writing, reading, becoming linguistically empowered.

The early introduction of these basic learning skills should be accompanied by reinforcement in the home that, unfortunately, is unavailable to many children now. Today, at least 7 percent come home to an empty house or apartment. As this "latch key" problem grows, schools will, of necessity, operate on a longer day and

offer after-hours programs such as special studies in science, computers, music, or athletics.

The danger is that affluent families will find their own services—summer camps, private lessons, and youth clubs, for example—while poor children will be allowed to drift. In 1982, 53 percent of upper- and middle-income families had their preschool children in special programs. Only 29 percent of at-risk three- and four-year-olds were so enrolled. If this gap is to be narrowed, new enrichment programs—which might be called *Extended School*—should be optionally available to serve *all* students, not just the privileged few.

I am also intrigued by the suggestion that youth-operated networks might be developed to provide peer counselling and other opportunities for young people to discuss the pressures and problems they encounter both in and out of school. Student service programs, something we have urged high schools to adopt as a new "Carnegie unit," might well reinforce the notion that students can be teachers, too.

Thus, the essays in this book address the most urgent question for the nation as we move toward the year 2000. Simply put: Will America continue to believe in education for all its children, or will it sort out schooling between the winners and the losers—and, in so doing, become a separated and more divided nation? The contributors to this volume clearly believe, as do I, that we have no choice. Our commitment must be to serve *all* children.

For three centuries, education has been at the heart of our national achievements. But the agenda is unfinished. Urgent new priorities have emerged and more, not less, education is required.

The aim of education in our democracy is not only to prepare the young for work, but to equip them to live with dignity and purpose; not only to generate new knowledge, but to channel knowledge to humane ends; not merely to learn about our civic institutions, but to shape a citizenry that can weigh decisions wisely and promote the public good.

If minority students continue to leave school and college at the current rate, a shockingly large proportion of our youth will find it difficult, if not impossible, to realize their full potential. If America fails these students, the need for informed participants in our complex society will go unfulfilled.

Ernest L. Boyer
President
The Carnegie Foundation
for the Advancement
of Teaching

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Section I:

School Policy: Formation and Implementation

Many factors influence school policy—community priorities, pupil achievement, and local resources are but a few. Administrators are not only charged with the task of helping to shape school policy, they must also ensure that the determined policy is carried out in an effective and equitable manner. The authors in this section address policy and administrative responsibility in a variety of ways. Ianni discusses the respective roles and responsibilities of the school and the community in establishing educational policy for black children. Focusing on the adolescent, Ianni stresses the importance of multi-institutional responsibilities for improving the achievement of black children and of the need for significant adults as social models and mentors through which black youth may gain a sense of social competence and personal identity.

Honig emphasizes the need to establish high standards and expectations for all students. In his discussion, he outlines related issues and problems, offers strategies, and provides examples of programs that have worked in California. Eubanks and Levine establish a strong case for improved resources for schools in poverty areas. They offer a number of concrete suggestions to administrators for improving organizational arrangements, testing, school structure, and staffing. Finally, Moody outlines an equity-based model for examining options and interventions that might help improve education. He concludes this section by using his model to evaluate a number of well-known programs.

Revisiting School-Community Responsibilities in the Administration of Education

Francis A. J. Ianni, *Teachers College, Columbia University*

Few issues have dominated the education of black children and confounded educational administrators for so long and with such confusion as the question of the respective roles and responsibilities of the school and the community. The comparative data from each of the many communities I have studied clearly indicate a *synergistic* rather than an independent pattern of relationships among institutional contexts having impact on the lives of adolescents. How the various social contexts of a community are integrated in terms of continuity and congruence emerges as the most important determinant of how adolescence will be experienced and with what results.

There is a good deal of information available on both environmental and developmental aspects of adolescent behavior in specific contexts such as the school, the family, and the criminal justice system. Very little information is available on the social organization of behaviors across these contexts and how they are internalized by adolescents. We have some interesting examples that show that social learning is largely externally and contextually organized; what may be valued in one institutional context (school), may well not be in another (peer group). Different rules and roles emerge from different domains and different institutions. Reflectively differentiating between them during adolescence is a slow process that requires an understanding of societal and personal relations.

Unfortunately, particularly in those communities where the family and the school are in opposition, where the workplace proclaims its inability to hire youngsters who were neither motivated

by their families nor made literate by the schools, and where the criminal justice systems see each of these institutions as antagonistic, the adolescent is left to rationalize these competing, and sometimes conflicting, ideologies for himself or herself. Conflict and confusion must occur when various social institutions (the home, school, workplace, etc.) present different standards of adulthood. Recent attempts to establish a nationwide minimum age of 21 for legal use of alcohol, for example, would mean that, in some states, a youth could not drink for a period of three years after being considered old enough to vote or, if a male, to be drafted into the armed services. It would also mean that he or she could not drink until five years after being able to marry in some states and seven years after he or she could be tried as an adult for felonies which carry the death penalty. While we are raising the age of legal attainment of adulthood for some activities, we are lowering it for others. Despite all we know about individual differences in maturation and development, we continue to think of and treat adolescents as members of an age-grade.

It is critically important to provide some comprehensive, holistic means of examining how the variety of social contexts of a community interact to produce the experience of the black adolescent. Current social models, such as "peer culture" approaches, have obscured the conjunctive effects of the pattern of relationships among institutions. They have also underestimated the role or roles of adults as important and valued sources of help in the adolescent's search for a congruent structure within which to develop an identity.

An example here is the continued concern over the involvement of black youth in delinquent and criminal behavior. Schools as well as peers have been seen as contributing to youth crime, particularly in black inner-city urban settings. The sociological literature, for example, continues to implicate school failure experiences as alienating the youngsters from conventional achievement goals and leading them toward delinquency, particularly when lower-class cultural orientation derogates academic goals. Yet, in this same literature and in popular opinion as well, it is the school—much less frequently the family or the peer group—that is inevitably seen as the locus for re-education whenever such problems as alcohol or drug abuse or delinquency escalate to a national concern.

The school, of course, is not singly responsible for the failure of socialization in childhood and so cannot hope to remediate such problems by itself. This realization, which supports my insistence on an inter-institutional context for adolescent development, clearly indicates that it is in the relationships among the socializing institutions—the family, the peer group, the school, and the criminal justice system—that most of the professionals and many of the delinquents

feel the community should implement both preventive and remedial programs.

Of particular interest are the two most common perspectives toward delinquent behavior we found in our research. A widespread theory of delinquency among juvenile justice specialists is that of the "delinquent subculture," which holds that adolescent socialization is determined by the opportunity structures for either legitimate or illegitimate behavior found in different types of communities. If the community is organized against crime, then youth can utilize available legitimate means to achieve important life goals; if it is organized for crime, with pressures and opportunities to engage in illegal means of attainment, then youth either cannot utilize legitimate means or must be effectively socialized to seek them out.

Another perspective on juvenile delinquency sees socialization of individual adolescents as the *sine qua non* of what leads to delinquent and criminal behavior in any community, and so sees no need for any "sub-culture" to exist. In this approach, the basic assumption is that inadequate or ineffective socialization leaves the individual free to become involved in delinquent behavior. Parents and professionals who accept this viewpoint believe that adolescent delinquent behavior develops when the bond to society is diminished or destroyed. The elements of this bond are the internalized attitudes of attachment, belief, commitment, and involvement that are fostered by the essential units of community social control—the family, the school, and the law. Proponents of this theory rely on epigenetic or stage theory when they propose a sequential process in which the individual finds attachment in relation to the family, with the school fostering commitment to a pattern of educational and occupational goals and the development of belief in the rules of society.

Thus, this emphasis on socialization in both causal theory and remediation programs relates youthful crime and deviance quite directly to the major socialization agencies of the family, the school, and the peer group. Still at issue, however, is the relative importance of each in the development of delinquent patterns in youth. It is of major importance that school administrators and the black community work together to devise answers to a number of confounding questions: How can the family, the peer group, the school, and the criminal justice system set and enforce norms that inhibit juvenile delinquency? How can communities organize to help the adolescent to differentiate among conflicting norms in the social contexts? Do school, juvenile justice, and mental health programs serve different kinds of adolescents differently in this regard? When an adolescent gets into trouble with the law, how does this change his or her relationship to the school, the peer group, and the family?

One of the most challenging issues concerning the socialization of black (as well as other) youngsters concerns their obvious and compelling search for some social and psychological structure, some "roadmap" to help guide their movement from child to adult status. In the past, adolescence was seen as a bridge from childhood to adulthood, and so a part of the life cycle in society. But from the 1960s on, particularly as a result of sociologist James Coleman's book *The Adolescent Society* (1961), we began to hear about a unique "sub-culture," a distinct and discreet adolescent social system. More than simply an age-grade in the ongoing life cycle of society, this adolescent sub- or counter-culture had its own psychological, social, cultural and even economic unity, capable of resisting or countering the adult society's demands for integration into the general community. Adolescents, individually and collectively, were described as isolated from the world of adult work, frequently antagonistic, and resistant to adult teachings and demands. Neither parents nor teachers acted as models of adulthood to youth; adolescents found their ego-ideals, we were told, in the images presented in films, books, and on television.

In my research I have also found that adolescents do turn from parental to peer models for day-to-day social learning and that adolescent peer groups serve as reference groups in which adolescents observe and evaluate their social behavior and attitudes. Our data also indicate clearly that by middle adolescence (and especially late adolescence, when youth are thinking about their own future adult roles), young people turn to adults who function within some valued social context for information, validation, and endorsement. Frequently, we find, such adults are professionals—teachers, counselors, coaches, social agency or youth workers, for example—in some school or community setting in which the adolescent is developing a sense of social competence. They also seem to turn much more to their parents than we have been led to believe. The adolescent's feelings about such adults often becomes idealized to the point of hero or heroine worship. Within the youth networks associated with the organizational setting, such adults can and do have important influence in shaping the future lives of the youth. Yet we also find that most adults, both parents and professionals, have become discouraged, almost cynical, about how and to what ends youth can be socialized.

What I see as important here is not just the role of the individual adult, but how the adult community can help adolescents in their search for a congruent psychic structure of new ideals and values, socially pro-active rules for behavior, and life goals within which to achieve the reorganization of the self that is the essence of becom-

ing an adult. There is considerable evidence that the development of identity in adolescence is not sufficiently or even primarily explained by peer relationships. Rather, the adolescent search for identity is a transactional process with parents and other adults, whereby the adolescent hopes to help shape the effective environment for this transformation of the self. As part of this search, the adolescent looks to significant adults as social models and mentors through which to structure a unified view of the requirements for social competence and to consolidate his or her identity.

Such a socially constructive approach to peer group formation and affiliation during adolescence could have important outcomes. One would be its effect on how parents, professionals, and adolescents themselves deal with the dramatic and often tragic social problems associated with this period of life, particularly (with the significant exception of teenage suicide) among black youth. There is some disagreement about the extent to which adolescent social problems are mediated through group membership or are the result of individual pathologies. A number of studies have found that the attitudes and behaviors of an adolescent's friends in relation to sexual, drug, and delinquent activity are strong determinants of the adolescent's actual behavior both in terms of providing a normative framework and access to substances or settings. Other studies have found that while conformity is characteristic of adolescence, other factors such as the need for acceptance, the fear of rejection, and the desire to escape loneliness are as important as the need to comply. Once again, this artificial distinction between individual and social forces in the development of adolescent problem behavior is an unnecessary and often confounding barrier to determining how we should work with youths. The development of an adolescent's identity and value system is a dynamic interplay between modeling parents and other significant adults, sensitivity to peer influences, and the individual's own struggle for independence.

Parental values and behavior in relation to education in particular can have life-long effects on adolescents. There are some important indications in our research and elsewhere that the "alterable curriculum of the home" (supervised homework, controlled television viewing, etc.) is twice as predictive of academic learning as is family socioeconomic status. Parental behaviors at home, as well as school efforts to promote home learning both affect student achievement. We find that two types of parents influence achievement: well-educated parents who are expected to help their children and parents who are helped to help their children through school support activities. Clearly, where schooling is concerned, parents have not lost their influence on their children.

There are, however, clear and disturbing social indicators that the "traditional" American family, the model upon which our school-home relationship has been based, is disappearing. Today, only 17 percent of our families have the traditional structure of a father, mother, and children all living together. Typically, the traditional family used to be the one-income family where one parent (usually the mother) remained at home to care for and socialize the children. As recently as 1970, well over one-half of all American families were one-income; current estimates are that by 1990 only one-third of all American families will have only one wage earner. Of the remaining two-thirds, about one-half will be two-income families with both parents working (these accounted for 26 percent of all families in 1970) and the other half will be single-parent families (22 percent of all families in 1970), the vast majority of which will have only the mother present. And "present" in these instances will not mean for the full day, since 70 percent of all single parents in such households today are employed full-time. That proportion is expected to rise. Such single-parent families headed by single women now comprise over half of all black households.

The projected picture for divorce rates is just as bleak. While we are all familiar with the escalating divorce rate, we are not as familiar with the fact that remarriages after divorce are declining—down about 17 percent over the past decade. What this means is that about 27 percent of all children in the United States will be living with a lone parent; of these 27 percent only about two or three percent will be living with their father, while 24 percent may be living with their mother. Finally, close to 35 percent of children may expect to live with a stepparent during a part of their childhood.

Whatever these social statistics say about the future of American society and the family, they are a clear indication that many of our ideas about who will socialize children into adult roles must be reexamined. There are clear indications in our research that many adolescents are already seeking adult referents other than their parents, despite the fact that the debate over the relative influence of adults and age mates is almost exclusively cast in terms of parents versus peers. Such adults serve as role models, but also perform a more distinct function of ushering adolescents into special worlds, e.g., the worlds of computers, the martial arts, or theater. In these functionally developed "peer groups," the actions, the learning, even the conversational language of the adolescents seem to become shared experiences in which the whole group participates. Inevitably, there seems to be some valorized, often even idealized, adult who possesses the functionally valued information that the adolescents want and need to operate effectively and efficiently in that domain.

The role of adult mediators will become increasingly important as the socialization of children becomes more difficult to sustain with the decline of fully functioning families. New socialization roles will thus become necessary to create new environments for adolescent socialization. These roles will involve a variety of adults, such as older citizens who adopt parental and grandparental roles (for youngsters who have not had this experience); professionals as well will play new and more sensitive roles. There are many opportunities for adult/adolescent interaction within communities—in the school, in social agencies, in extra-curricular activities, in institutional settings, or in natural, neighborhood settings. Schools and other youth-oriented institutions need practical advice as to how they can better function as facilitating environments for black youngsters and how they can work in concert with other significant adults and other social domains in the community.

What we are really proposing here amounts to a new theory of educational productivity, with two sets of factors—student aptitude factors and environmental factors—whose optimization increases affective, behavioral, and cognitive learning. Environmental factors include the home, the classroom social group, and the peer group outside the school. These factors are somewhat more susceptible to directed alteration and clearly hold the best hope for increasing educational productivity. Even more pertinent is the evidence that the adolescent peer group has considerable influence on attitudes, behaviors, academic expectations, and achievement. Despite concerns about the negative effects of peer groups, the influence of such groups outside the school is moderate when compared to the positive effects of the in-school and in-class climates perceived by students. The psychosocial morale and climate of the classroom, for example, is a strong predictor of behavioral, affective, and cognitive development. Positive school and classroom peer group relationships can produce group cohesiveness, satisfaction with schooling, goal direction, and positive self-image. They can and should be put to use both in keeping youngsters in school and in maintaining relationships between dropouts and education programs.

Thus, one school-community alternative is to literally *negotiate* peer group formation in the school. This could lead to the creation of a youth-operated support network, a kind of youth-to-youth network, which would provide a forum for peer-mediated counseling, role models, and any assistance necessary for young persons to express or share the pressures and problems with which they must contend. It is critical that such a program not be designed by adults for use by children; rather, the responsibility for the design and operation must be jointly worked out with adolescents (creating new

What seems necessary, however, is for parents and professionals to at least understand how the adolescent transition to adulthood is molded by different institutional contexts; how adolescents internalize the rules and conventions of these contexts individually and collectively; and how and why adolescents cope or fail to cope with contradictions. In the administration of educational programs for black youth—indeed, for all youth—we can and *must* go forward with the work of developing just such pro-active social and individual programs of positive development.

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High Standards and Great Expectations: The Foundations for Student Achievement

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Throughout history, the United States has been the land of opportunity—for the poor, the oppressed, for anyone who dreamed of creating a better future. Education is critical in translating this dream into a reality; however, for black students, lowered expectations have too often prevented them from reaching their academic potential. Academic and career success depends on our ability to engage *all* students in a challenging curriculum that prepares them for the workplace or for higher education. In California, as well as in other states, educational reform efforts are needed in order to give every student the strong academic foundation he or she needs to compete in today's complex society.

THE DREAM

During the 1960s, the civil rights movement successfully created a greater awareness of the need for black students to participate fully at all levels of our educational system. The educational community began to design and implement programs to help black students achieve their educational goals and much progress was made. On the other hand, several disturbing trends indicate that we must do much more to prepare black students for higher education and career success now.

First, the proportion of black high school graduates going on to college dropped by 11 percent between 1975 and 1981, according to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. In addition, the proportion of black students enrolled in graduate school has dropped over the past five years from more than 6 percent to 4.2 percent. The college enrollment discrepancy between black and white students can be attributed to lowered expectations for blacks,

and a tendency to enroll black students in a less challenging curriculum. Black high school students are underrepresented in academic programs and overrepresented in vocational education programs. In addition, black students are less likely to be in programs for the gifted and talented.

There is a direct correlation between kindergarten through grade twelve academic preparation and a student's ability to enroll and succeed in post-secondary education. If we want to increase the number of black students who enter college and succeed there, we must focus our efforts on providing strong academic preparation for *all* students.

There are two schools of thought on how to provide quality education for black students. Very simply, the question is this: Do we expect as much from black students as we do from whites (e.g., requiring successful completion of a strong academic curriculum); or do we lower our expectations, as well as our standards by allowing black students to enroll in simple, basic courses that promise easy acquisition of a high school diploma? In other words, do we direct black students into special programs that separate them from the mainstream student population, or do we encourage and support them in mastering a strong core curriculum—uniting them with other students who have high aspirations?

The curious thing about this choice is that more whites than blacks advocate special treatment for black students. When I discuss with black parents what they want most for their children, they overwhelmingly support high standards, tough courses, and more homework. They want their children to work hard. Black parents realize that the ability to compete, both in school and in the job market, is their children's greatest chance for achieving lifelong success. If black students are diverted from the traditional academic curriculum, their ability to compete is seriously jeopardized.

Of course, some children do need special help in school. The key to providing this type of help is to identify students who are having academic problems and provide assistance *before* continuing failure demoralizes them.

Unfortunately, some people argue that it is unfair to expect black students to do the more difficult work required by a rigorous academic curriculum. This argument is presented without evidence; in fact, scores in reading, writing, vocabulary, math, science, and civics on the National Center for Education test show that, among high school sophomores who do not go on to college, those who eventually dropped out scored better as a group than those who earned their diplomas. In other words, smart students enrolled in a general track program become bored, become pregnant, or obtain

a job before they finish high school. In a recent national poll, 66 percent of black children said that school was too easy for them. This wasting of human potential must stop—we have to challenge students to achieve while providing them the support they need to succeed.

Another argument used to defend a less rigorous education is that traditional education is elitist—that it is not relevant to black culture and values. This argument promotes division rather than unity because it further separates blacks from the mainstream society where they will eventually have to compete for jobs. Education should open up new vistas for students, not foreclose them. Education that separates rather than unites keeps the majority of blacks class-bound and destined to remain educationally and professionally disadvantaged.

THE STRATEGIES

Our mission is clear, but that alone does not solve the problems that exist. As educators, we must take a decisive step forward—one that captures attention, provides leadership, and galvanizes action toward our goal. For this reason, Representative Augustus Hawkins and the many national cosponsoring agencies deserve our appreciation for convening the National Conference on Educating Black Children. The "Blueprint for Action" from this conference is a vital step toward stimulating federal, state, and local governments; community groups; schools; and parents nationwide to join together in meeting the challenge of high standards.

In our educational efforts, we must define where we are going and achieve a professional consensus about our destination. In California, for example, our educational reform efforts have embraced all students by emphasizing a strong academic curriculum that encourages every student to reach his or her potential. A 1985 report on improving the academic preparation of blacks for university-level study, prepared by Dr. Winston Doby from UCLA for the University of California Council of Black Administrators, reinforces and establishes the need for this approach.

In addition, all children develop cognitive processes that either help or hinder their abilities to make good decisions. Consequently, our schools must integrate the teaching of reasoning and critical thinking into content instruction. By doing so, we will allow our students to gain a better understanding of their world and to develop the ability to make informed decisions about their futures.

Of course, it is not enough to say that we want improvement—we must set targets and monitor, evaluate, and adjust educational programs to meet these targets. By using school performance data

and sharing information about successful programs, educators can create or adapt innovative programs to their needs.

Toward this end, the California Department of Education is developing a handbook for educators that discusses various instructional strategies that can be used locally. This handbook will help districts evaluate their resources and design effective long-range programs.

Legislation that promotes local flexibility and increases students' educational opportunities also helps districts plan effective programs. For example, California Senate Bill 65 (*Torres, 1985*) is designed to improve the schools' holding power and dropout recovery. The bill provides legislative direction and funding for districts having students with special needs. The legislation increases the schools' flexibility to use categorical aid for programs such as school improvement, compensatory education, gifted and talented, and special education. It also increases the school districts' flexibility to use apportionment funds for programs such as independent study, continuing education, and adult education. Waiving regulations for using such funds encourages districts to develop comprehensive programs for high-risk youth. Funding is also made available from the model programs repository for schools to implement exemplary programs. In addition, the bill created a new outreach consultant position for schools with programs to help high-risk youth.

Further legislative direction and funding for districts having students with special needs is provided by Assembly Bill 65, (*Greene, 1977*). This bill allows for improvement of kindergarten through grade 12 programs by involving school staff, parents, secondary students, and school-site council members in participating districts to improve elementary and secondary education. Developing programs such as career guidance and off-campus study enables schools to be more responsive to student needs. In addition, Assembly Bill 65 includes funding for staff development and teacher resource centers.

Assembly Bill 777 (*Greene, 1981*) allows schools to coordinate resources from eleven funding sources, including career guidance, special education, and school improvement monies so that they have more flexibility in using special funds.

CALIFORNIA PROGRAMS THAT WORK

In California, various programs have helped to improve black students' academic success. The California Department of Education is involved in developing many of these programs, most of which can be replicated nationwide.

The Sequoia Union High School District's *Computer and Electronics Academies* have been largely responsible for reducing the dropout rate for low-achieving students. Academy students must complete a strong academic curriculum while gaining specialized knowledge and marketable skills. Although the program was designed to encourage students to complete high school and to prepare them for jobs, a significant number of Academy graduates are going on to post-secondary education.

The *Oakland Scholars/Achievement Mentor Program*, in the Oakland Unified School District, identifies high school juniors and seniors who demonstrate outstanding potential. Mentors from business fields offer encouragement and information about higher education to the students and to the parents. Business-education partnership programs such as these have been successful throughout California.

At Willard Junior High School in the Berkeley Unified School District, students who need additional help in reading participate in a supplementary class supported by compensatory education funds. These students remain in the regular classroom, and also receive help in the supplementary class where they work on the reading materials *before* the materials are assigned in the regular class. In this way the students are prepared to read the assignment, whether it be a novel, play, or poetry, when the regular class begins studying the work. In addition, once the work is assigned in the regular class the students receive no further help in the supplementary class. This preteaching program is effective because it reinforces the regular program rather than providing extra work that does not relate to the core curriculum. In addition to *enabling* students to do the regular work, it *empowers* them by helping them before they have had a chance to fail. As a result, students feel that they have succeeded on their own in their regular class.

Another successful program began in 1978 when the California Department of Education organized the *University and College Opportunities (UCO) Program* to develop college preparatory programs for students underrepresented in higher education institutions. This comprehensive program provides support in areas such as curriculum, instruction, and counseling. It also encourages parental involvement and is affiliated with business and community agencies. UCO hosts seminars and conferences that develop student awareness of educational issues. These events provide opportunities to develop student leadership, motivation, and practical skills such as preparing students for university entrance and postsecondary academic success. Many black students live in an environment that lacks college-educated role models, exposure to cultural experiences,