IMPARTING WISDOM: HBCU LESSONS FOR K-12 EDUCATION

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UNCF Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute

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HBCU LESSONS FOR K-12 EDUCATION

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Executive Summary

Imparting Wisdom: HBCU Lessons for K-12 Education, details historically black colleges and universities' (HBCUs) longstanding efforts to provide quality educational experiences for their students and how their success may be translated in K-12 schools. For decades, public education has implemented reforms specifically targeting students of color, but the sector continues to face challenges in improving academic outcomes. However, HBCUs are often overlooked as sources of effective methods for producing high-achieving black students, although their existence is based on this very premise. HBCUs have been engines for ingenuity, academic excellence and social justice for decades, and the strategies and practices they implement can inform educational practices and systems. As such, *Imparting Wisdom* uplifts research-based HBCU best practices, practical recommendations and insights from HBCU leaders, with the goal of promoting mutually beneficial alliances between the K-12 and higher education communities.

The outlined lessons in the report rest on the following best practices that HBCUs employ: (1) cultivating nurturing support systems, (2) leveraging African American culture and identity and (3) setting high expectations. Each best practice also details corresponding lessons for the K-12 space.

> **"HBCUs have been engines for ingenuity, academic excellence and social justice for decades, and the strategies and practices they implement can inform educational practices and systems."**

HBCU Best Practices	K-12 Lessons
Best Practice 1: Cultivating Nurturing Support Systems describes how HBCUs promote a high level of student and faculty interaction, employ diverse faculty and implement strategies like intrusive advising to build caring relationships among students.	• Districts and schools should invest in quality advising and support systems to prohibit students from falling through the cracks. • K-12 school districts and charter management organizations (CMOs)—especially those with high proportions of minority students—should make intentional efforts to recruit more teachers and leaders of color who reflect the student body.
Best Practice 2: Leveraging African American Culture and Identity describes how HBCUs (1) make intentional efforts to promote student engagement based on culture by incorporating African American cultural elements into campus practices and the curriculum; (2) help students develop a strong sense of identity; and (3) use African American culture to facilitate student success.	• K-12 schools should be intentional about infusing culturally relevant pedagogy into their instructional practice. • Like HBCUs, more K-12 schools should provide students with the autonomy to establish affinity groups that affirm their race and culture.
Best Practice 3: Setting High Expectations highlights the role that HBCUs play in offering meaningful mentorship to students and promoting graduate school enrollment.	• Maintain high expectations for all students by working to dismantle the "belief gap" in schools. • Ignite excitement about going to college by creating an intentional college-going culture in schools.

The recommendations and lessons culminate into a call to action for (1) HBCUs and K-12 schools to develop strong mutually beneficial partnerships and pipelines; and (2) school districts, CMOs and college access programs to work in collaboration with HBCUs to develop a cadre of minority teachers and administrators who can serve diverse student populations more effectively through a cultural lens. We hope this report creates an impetus for both the K-12 and HBCU communities to engage in meaningful collaborative efforts that will benefit all students along the P-20 pipeline. As UNCF celebrates its 75th anniversary of creating better futures for students and supporting HBCUs, we challenge readers to join the movement to create equitable educational opportunities for all students, but also to share successful tools and lessons that can inform K-12 practices and policies.

Introduction

"…what lessons have HBCUs learned in educating large numbers of African American students that can inform the work of K-12 schools that enroll similar populations?"

Historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have spent much of their existence doing the yeoman's work of higher education by educating large proportions of low-income, first-generation, academically underprepared—and primarily black—students. Despite being amongst the most resource-constrained college campuses, research shows that HBCUs actually retain and graduate low-income, academically underprepared students at higher rates than expected, even when controlling for these factors.[1] Unfortunately, HBCUs are not often deemed a source of best practices by those not affiliated with them, yet, their outcomes are clear: despite enrolling approximately 10% of all African American students attending four-year institutions, they produce 17% of all who earned bachelor's degrees and 24% of African Americans with bachelor's degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields.[2] Furthermore, African American HBCU graduates report having stronger social relationships and greater resolve about their purpose than their counterparts who attend predominantly white institutions (PWIs).[3] According to UNCF's landmark study, *HBCUs Make America Strong: The Positive Economic Impact of Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, these institutions also generated 134,090 jobs for their local and regional economies in 2014.[4] Based on the aforementioned facts, what lessons have HBCUs learned in educating large numbers of African American students that can inform the work of K-12 schools that enroll similar populations?

The education disparities that exist between African American children and other children is well-documented. HBCUs have a documented history of success with many of the same students who often leave the nation's secondary schools ill-equipped to maximize their college experience.[5] In fact, 2019 scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show that African American students have the lowest average scores on the math and reading assessments among all racial groups (except for fourth grade reading where they share the lowest score with American Indian/Alaska Native students).[6] And,

while graduation rates have been on the rise for all public high school students, disparities still exist. The 2016-2017 national public high school adjusted cohort graduation rate was 89% for white students but 78% for black students. Black graduates were also less likely to meet ACT college readiness benchmarks than any other student group.[7] However, opportunity gaps often perpetuate these systematic disparities—African American students are more likely than any other student group to be enrolled in schools with inexperienced and less-qualified teachers, have less access to rigorous courses and are more likely to receive harsher exclusionary discipline infractions than white students.[8]

To address these persistent gaps, this report identifies HBCU best practices that can be conveyed into succinct strategies for implementation at K-12 schools and provides parallel examples and recommendations of where the strategy is currently working or could work in the K-12 context. These HBCU "best practices" can serve as effective models for K-12 schools, districts and CMOs in improving the educational outcomes of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. We identify three broad principles or categories of practices from HBCUs: (1) cultivating nurturing support systems, (2) leveraging African American culture and identity and (3) setting high expectations. Cultivating nurturing support systems describes how HBCUs build caring relationships among students, faculty and staff while providing students with the necessary guidance for academic achievement. Leveraging African American culture and identity demonstrates how HBCUs increase student engagement and self-pride by creating a motivating environment infused with positive representations of African American success. Finally, setting high expectations highlights the role that HBCUs play in driving high levels of student performance, offering meaningful mentorship to students and promoting their pursuit of continuous education.

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Benedict College cultivates nurturing support systems by using its service-learning modules and programs to deepen student-faculty interactions. The Freshman Seminar Course includes a service-learning module where faculty accompany students to various sites in the community. President of Benedict College, Dr. Roslyn Artis explains that, *"Benedict College believes strongly in the power of service learning to enhance knowledge transfer through real-world, practical application. Faculty-led service-learning experiences bring the classroom to the community and stimulate deeper connections between students and faculty."* Faculty also support students in various programs such as the Minority Male Initiative which provides mentorship and support to male scholars at Benedict.

HBCU Best Practices

Best Practice 1: Cultivating Nurturing Support Systems

Promoting high levels of student and faculty interaction. Decades of research demonstrate the positive influence of meaningful faculty and student interactions. Several studies have shown that HBCU faculty engage with their students at high levels in the classroom, outside of the classroom, on research projects and in extracurricular campus activities.[9] A 2015 Gallup Poll revealed that black HBCU graduates were over two times more likely to agree that they had a professor who cared about them as a person than black graduates who attended non-HBCUs. Black HBCU graduates were also more likely than non-HBCU graduates to feel as if they had at least one professor who made them feel excited about learning.[10] If students connect with at least one faculty member in a deep manner, it helps them connect to the campus and they are more likely to be retained and graduate. A comprehensive literature review on student success further supports this notion, indicating that African American, Latino and Native American students develop a stronger sense of community and feel valued when they build quality relationships with faculty and staff in and out of the classroom.[11] HBCUs do this extremely well, and elementary and secondary schools can adopt this model where the cultural expectation of all faculty and staff is to far exceed their normal duties to connect with students in non-traditional ways—outside of the classroom and with their families—to encourage their success and demonstrate that an adult authority figure deeply cares about them and their futures. The Gallup study demonstrates that this approach can have lifelong impacts on the students who receive them.[12]

At HBCUs, this campus ethos pays off tremendously with students who often come from backgrounds where they feel most educators do not care about their success.[13] This cultural element may also stem from the racial congruence between faculty and students at HBCUs that far exceeds faculty representation at other institutions. At HBCUs, approximately 56% of instructional staff are black compared to 6% for all public and private not-for-profit institutions.[14] Studies have shown that racial congruence between students and faculty has a positive influence on student learning outcomes.[15] Similarly, on the K-12 level, a large body

of research substantiates the positive influence of teacher and leader representation on outcomes (graduation rates, achievement, discipline, college enrollments) for students of color.[16]

Moreover, high levels of student and faculty interaction may also stem from smaller class sizes at HBCUs. In some instances, research has shown that students on the K-12 level, particularly those in elementary grades, benefit from smaller classes.[17] Some students also uphold this view. In UNCF's report, *A Seat at the Table: African American Youth's Perceptions of K-12 Education*, African American youth ranked more engaging teachers and one-on-one attention or smaller classes as the two most important ways to improve their high schools.[18]

Employing "intrusive advising." Called *proactive* advising by some, this strategy is deeply rooted in an academic advising approach where faculty and staff help students clarify and coalesce their academic goals.[19] Intrusive advising is action-oriented and geared toward motivating students to seek help when needed and be proactively intentional about their success.[20] HBCU faculty and staff are encouraged to employ these strategies that may occasionally appear to be "butting into" the lives of students. One example of this in action is instead of a faculty member ignoring a student skipping class and never questioning them, an intrusive professor may call the student or actually go to their residence hall to seek answers as to why the student has repeatedly missed class.

The belief that intrusive advising may improve college experiences and academic outcomes has also been explored in research. A study conducted with several four-year universities found that minority students appreciate informal and formal support from their advisers because it shows care and commitment to their academic success.[21] One study participant noted that his adviser would approach him on campus and inform him about scholarships and other resources, also imploring him to relay the information to other African American students. On one campus, professors were required to communicate students' grades to their advisers and having that additional layer of accountability

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HBCU SPOTLIGHT
Dillard University
New Orleans, LA

Dillard University embodies the spirit of intrusive advising through their pre-law program. Pre-law students begin as freshmen who are enrolled in a freshman year experience group with the pre-law adviser. As part of the class, they are required to have individual meetings with advisers. The continued advising and mentoring then exists throughout the four years of the student's experience. As the students begin their senior year, they participate in a law school admissions workshop with law school admissions advisers from around the country. The pre-law adviser then assists them during their senior year in selecting law schools, and in some cases, reaching out to law schools to advocate on behalf of students. The school suggests that "careful, consistent advising built on personalized attention" sets their program apart. *"Dillard students have described my approach to pre-law advising as 'life coaching.' While I am certainly not a life coach, my style is more intrusive than the average pre-law adviser. I help students work through any area that stands between them and law school. Sometimes the issue is academic, but other times it is social, financial or emotional. I have found that responding to the whole student is the most effective way to advise. Investing in advising relationships with students can reap significant benefits later."*—Adria Kimbrough, pre-law adviser, Dillard University

encouraged students to maximize their efforts. Additional empirical and anecdotal evidence abounds about HBCU faculty stopping students on campus to implore them to take charge of their academic lives.

As for advising in the K-12 space, teachers can employ intrusive advising methods in their efforts and should encourage all students, not just the high-achieving ones, to achieve at higher levels. In fact, research within the culturally responsive pedagogy framework underscores the role of black teachers as "warm demanders" who have a firm, but reasonable approach to teaching with an emphasis on care and high expectations.[22] Teacher expectations have been shown to impact student performance as teachers play a critical role in helping students see their own promise and motivating them to fulfill their potential.[23] Many small independent schools market this type of advising as part of their competitive advantage, giving them the ability to directly engage with students who often slip through the cracks.

In the following section, we outline two lessons from HBCUs that may be applicable to the K-12 context in cultivating nurturing support systems. We recognize that some of the following lessons cannot be translated into every school setting due to resource constraints. However, applying the fundamental elements of teacher guidance, mentorship and proactive progress monitoring may improve student outcomes.

Best Practice 1:

CULTIVATING NUTURING SUPPORT SYSTEMS
LESSONS FOR THE K-12 SECTOR

Districts and schools should invest in quality advising and support systems to prohibit students from falling through the cracks. School counselors are often undervalued in schools. The national student-to-counselor ratio is 464-to-1; however, the American School Counselor Association recommends a 250-to-1 ratio.[24] Low-income students of color often need access to school counselors yet are often less likely to have access to them. Additionally, support staff such as social workers and school psychologists are critically important in schools, but they are often not prioritized as well. HBCUs employ "advisers" from all areas of the university—whether they are faculty, staff or, in some cases, peers—to promote the "ethic of care" known across higher education as effective in cultivating a campus culture that helps to retain students.[25] All schools—especially those that serve large populations of low-income minority students—should make significant investments into advising personnel and cultivating a campus ecosystem where student success is everyone's responsibility.

K-12 school districts and CMOs—especially those with high proportions of minority students—should make intentional efforts to recruit teachers who reflect the student body. Schools and districts should be intentional in their recruitment efforts to ensure they have an adequate representation of black teachers by reaching out to diverse networks and colleges, including HBCUs. States should also invest in service scholarships and loan forgiveness programs (such as Tennessee's Minority Teaching Fellows Program or Florida's Fund for Minority Teachers) that provide financial assistance for teachers of color to subsidize teacher preparation costs.[26] Additionally, teachers should be supported through ongoing mentorship and meaningful professional development.

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Best Practice 2: Leveraging African American Culture and Identity

The HBCU campus experience and African American cultural elements are so interwoven that one cannot be separated from the other. This element of the campus environment is not merely a byproduct of the historical mission of these institutions but is the result of a longstanding intentional effort by leaders, faculty and staff. The implementation of this cultural element is facilitated through three tactics: promoting student engagement based on culture, developing a strong sense of identity in students and taking advantage of the compositional diversity on campus (concentrated African American presence) to facilitate student success.

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Promoting student engagement based on culture. Research shows that the fundamental HBCU practice of incorporating African American cultural elements into campus practices and the curriculum to promote learning and connect students to the institution is impactful.[27] In *Building Better Narratives in Black Education*, we highlight a powerful example of this working at the K-12 level—Urban Prep Academies in Chicago, IL.[28] Each of the three all-African American male high schools within the academy network have sent 100% of their graduates to college for 10 consecutive years. Despite 85% of their students coming from low-income households, the commitment and mission "to reverse abysmal graduation and college completion rates among boys in urban centers" has been powerful enough to counter the prevailing negative narrative about urban youth and instill in them a strong desire to succeed academically and matriculate in college.[29] When this mission is coupled with a strong and caring faculty and a curriculum rooted in the African American male experience, you have a campus ethos that promotes success based on African American culture.

This strategy can also manifest itself through the development of a strong institutional culture where there are clear expectations around what it means for students to live their lives as a member of the larger African American community. One powerful example of an HBCU doing this is Morehouse College, where all freshmen participate in a ceremony to indoctrinate them into what it means to be a "Morehouse Man." Additionally, through coursework, campus activities and mentorship, Morehouse helps develop men with "disciplined minds who will live lives of leadership and service." Spelman College uses a similar approach by focusing on enriching the whole student through its core curriculum, diverse student life and emphasis on creating positive social change.[30] Students are not only required to take courses on the African diaspora, but also on women's studies and health and wellness through an African American lens.[31]

Developing a strong sense of identity. HBCUs have been noted for cultivating higher levels of racial self-consciousness in their students—students that are, on average, almost 80% African American.[32]   HBCU alums

also exhibit a proclivity toward civic-mindedness, especially toward the African American community, as they demonstrate higher levels of charitable giving, political participation and religious participation than African American college graduates who do not attend HBCUs.[33]

Schools in the K-12 sector also promote identity development through school culture. For instance, Stanton Elementary School in Washington, DC, sets an atmosphere of high expectations for students rooted in student voice and positive identity development. The Creative School, housed within Stanton, is a student-led initiative designed to promote wellness, creativity and positive narratives, primarily for young males of color. Students are often called "scholars," "queens" or "kings" to instill a positive sense of self. Scholars are also encouraged to express themselves through a student-led podcast, photography, poetry, Harambee, yoga and other creative activities. Through storytelling and community support, students help shift the narrative about students of color.

Using African American Culture to Facilitate Student Success. Research from UNCF's Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute demonstrates that one of the primary reasons students chose to attend an HBCU is because of a desire to find a sense of belonging in what they perceive as a welcoming environment.[34] This is particularly salient in the current racial climate across the country. African American students who choose to attend HBCUs are often, but not always, motivated by the following interests: (1) to be in environments with people who look like them; (2) to be in what they perceive as non-racist environments; and (3) to explore their cultural roots.[35] This approach will not work across all K-12 schools, but instances where a particular cultural element can be leveraged for the benefit of student performance could prove to be beneficial. Many charter schools employ this element; for instance, all-boys or all-girls schools or those that primarily enroll students from one race. While some might consider these schools as self-segregating, parents often choose such schools to positively affirm their child's race and culture. For example, Wake Young Women's Leadership Academy is a single-gender magnet school in Raleigh, NC that offers students a rigorous curriculum, leadership development and community service focused on advocacy and opportunities for girls in grades 6-13. This early college high school offers an advanced curricula and students complete 95% of the graduation requirements by 11th grade. This school is also an example of HBCU-K-12 partnership as 11th- and 12th-grade students meet at St. Augustine's University's campus and have the opportunity to earn credits toward a bachelor's degree.

In like manner, the Ronald Harmon Brown College Preparatory All-Male High School is Washington, DC's only all-male public school. Driven by the pillars of "character, scholarship and service," the new school provides young black and Latino males a college preparatory curriculum, leadership and character development and community service. The school aims to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline by focusing on the whole child and restorative justice practices. Moreover, the school is made up primarily of educators and leaders of color to coalesce with student demographics. Selectively setting up schools based on these criteria and allowing

> "Selectively setting up schools based on these criteria and allowing parents and students to choose these schools on their own can be powerful for families that do not often get to make these choices for themselves."

HBCU SPOTLIGHT
Bennett College
Greensboro, NC

Middle College High at Bennett is one of two all-female high schools in the state of North Carolina. Established in 2003, the school serves female high school students who are at-risk of dropping out of high school. The public school offers dual enrollment where students take college courses and earn transferable college credit as they earn their high school diploma. Classes are located on the Bennett College campus and students have the opportunity to take courses with college students. The school offers small class sizes and has a key focus on leadership development. Students also are provided free transportation via public school buses. Middle College High at Bennett has seen much success. The school received an "A" performance grade in 2018-19 school year and consistently has a graduation rate at or near 100%.

"We are committed to building the next generation of transformational leaders at Bennett. Driven by academic rigor, service and integrity, the Middle College High not only prepares young women to excel academically but to give back to their communities. We are proud of our young scholars and will continue to support their educational aspirations."
—C. Annette Wilson, Ed.D.
Dean of Professional Studies/Interim Chair
Curriculum & Instruction

parents and students to choose these schools on their own can be powerful for families that do not often get to make these choices for themselves.

All schools should strive to create inclusive and welcoming environments for students to learn. The following two lessons are applicable to various school types and levels; however, it is important to note that charter schools may have more flexibility than traditional schools in designing culturally relevant curricula and creating an inclusive environment due to their independent structure and autonomous design.

Best Practice 2:

LEVERAGING AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE AND IDENTITY
LESSONS FOR THE K-12 SECTOR

- **K-12 schools should be intentional about infusing culturally relevant pedagogy into their instructional practice**. Many African American students are taught by teachers of other races who may be unfamiliar or ill-informed about the African American experience. Equipping teachers with the knowledge and tools to connect the curriculum to students' lives can foster a more uplifting academic environment. School systems can also partner with HBCUs to gain expertise in this subject area, as these institutions have a deep history of affirming students' race and culture.

- **Like HBCUs, more K-12 schools should provide students with the autonomy to establish affinity groups that affirm their race and culture.** Affinity groups allow students to engage in a variety of interests and build relationships with others who share the same passions. HBCUs have such clubs, which are centered around topics like social justice, cultures throughout the African diaspora, religion, geographic origin and professional pursuits. Overall, affinity groups offer inclusive spaces where students can further develop aspects of their identity.

Best Practice 3: Setting High Expectations

Students often perform up to the expectations that teachers and faculty set for them. Setting high, but reasonable expectations can drive higher levels of student performance. Two ways that HBCUs strive to set high expectations for students are by promoting graduate enrollment and mentoring students to reach their desired goals. Evidence shows that HBCU graduates were more likely to have a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their goals.[36] Mentorship by even one professor can make a tremendous impact in the lives of students, such as demonstrating that a campus authority figure believes in them and wants them to succeed.

HBCU students pursue graduate degrees at higher rates than African American students who attend non-HBCUs, which is why between 2013 and 2017, seven of the top 10 institutions where black science and engineering Ph.D.s earned their bachelor's degrees were HBCUs.[37] According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, Howard University and Xavier University of Louisiana had the highest numbers of African American applicants to medical school in 2018-19 among both PWIs and HBCUs.[38]

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The theory here in promoting graduate school enrollment is that, presented with a higher goal to pursue, students will work harder in their academic pursuits. The corollary are high schools and programs that strongly encourage college enrollment. Uncommon Schools, a successful urban charter school network, names each classroom after a college. This seemingly small detail inculcates within students and teachers a college-going culture with the goal of postsecondary preparation and achievement. Another example is found in an initiative within the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) network of charter schools called KIPP Through College, which tags each entering class of students with the year they should enter college. This model prompts students to face their future daily, reminding them that their college and adult expectations for life are predicated on their present performance. The program also provides counselors to support students in the college choice and application process. Upon graduation, counselors also help students navigate the social, financial and academic aspects of college and career.

Setting high expectations for all students should be customary in schools; unfortunately, this is not the case. The following lessons provide tangible strategies that will help schools not only increase teachers' expectations for students, but also develop a culture that fosters college and career readiness. HBCUs can not only impart wisdom in this area, but become partners with schools, districts and charter networks in this work.

HBCU SPOTLIGHT
Wilberforce University, Wilberforce, OH

Wilberforce University in Ohio offers a variety of graduate programs to encourage graduate student enrollment. One such program, the Master of Arts in rehabilitation counseling, provides a cultural competency component which trains students to be culturally sensitive and equipped to serve historically underserved and marginalized populations in rural and urban communities. The university was the recipient of a $2.49 million HBCU Master's Degree Program Grant to support this program.

"The history and legacy of Wilberforce University emerges from the self-determination and audacity of people of African descent who imagined a world which situated them as the subjects of their existence. Today, we continue that legacy by declaring kindness, excellence and innovation as core values and our goal of becoming a premier liberal arts institution with an entrepreneurial intention. We are resolute in assuring that our graduates are well-educated and trained to assume their place at the nation's top graduate and professional schools and develop as the next generation of the African American thought-leaders, intellectuals, clinicians and scholars." —Dr. Elfred Pinkard, president, Wilberforce University

Best Practice 3:
SETTING HIGH EXPECTATIONS LESSONS FOR THE K-12 SECTOR

- **Maintain high expectations for all students by working to dismantle the "belief gap" in schools.** The "belief" gap refers to what students can actually achieve in schools versus what others (e.g., teachers, principals, school counselors) believe they can achieve. Students of color are more likely to face this stifling gap. In fact, recent research has shown evidence of systemic bias in teacher expectations for black students. Non-black teachers were found to have lower expectations of black students than black teachers.[39] Implicit bias and cultural competency training in schools can help teachers realize hidden biases that may foster low expectations for certain types of students. Such trainings allow educators to critically examine biases in discipline, instruction and student interaction as well as learn about strategies to treat all students fairly. Through a large, multi-year grant, Xavier University of Louisiana, a private HBCU, has partnered with local schools to offer cultural competency training to teachers and staff that can address such issues. The National Education Association also offers tools for educators through their Diversity Toolkit.[40]

- **Ignite excitement about going to college.** Schools should develop an atmosphere that supports college and career readiness. One way to do this is by creating information sessions on various aspects of the college application process like essay writing or financial aid. Schools should also invest in college resource centers within the counseling office that houses valuable tools on college and career readiness, college fairs and tours. It is also important to celebrate student success. Former First Lady Michelle Obama created an annual "College Signing Day" to promote excitement and engagement around higher education that has been gaining momentum the past few years. Schools can participate in such events to celebrate students admitted to college by using the tools provided by former First Lady Michelle Obama's "Reach Higher" initiative.[41]

Conclusion and Call to Action

Interestingly, the strategies outlined in this report are commonly seen in high-performing K-12 schools. Each of these strategies can be adapted to different contexts to maximize success as long as continuous assessment is utilized to determine what is and is not working. HBCUs have a culture of innovation—another lesson for the K-12 community—and testing possible solutions to eliminate the country's persistent educational disparities does not indicate failure, but a willingness to go above and beyond for students. As such, we urge the HBCU and K-12 communities to implement practical, yet innovative, strategies that will improve the trajectory of students along the P-20 pipeline. In addition to the examples listed throughout the report, the following action items encompass tangible strategies to help foster greater collaboration and partnerships between the K-12 and HBCU communities.

HBCUs and K-12 schools—especially those with similar populations—should develop strong mutually beneficial partnerships and pipelines. HBCUs could partner with middle schools and high schools to create opportunities for students to learn more about their campuses. The creation of HBCU K-12 student ambassadors who provide outreach to local schools would be a key component of this partnership. These ambassadors may serve as role models, especially for African American students, as they benefit from seeing college students who look like them and can share their experiences and challenges in college. Schools and districts could also offer college fairs with an intentional outreach to HBCUs.

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Additionally, HBCUs like LeMoyne-Owen College, Tougaloo College and Howard University have public middle and high schools on their campuses which can foster collaboration and greater exposure to college life for students. Hollis F. Price Middle College High School, a partnership with Shelby County Schools, LeMoyne-Owen College and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is the first early college high school located on an HBCU campus. Students enrolled in the public school earn a high school diploma and complete LeMoyne-Owen's general core curriculum in four years. Tougaloo College's Michelle Obama Early College, established in 2018, follows a similar model. Not only are these programs an enriching experience for students, but it also saves families thousands of dollars in tuition money. This is especially important as UNCF's research in *A Seat at the Table: African American Youth's Perceptions of K-12 Education* showed that African American youth's top reported barrier to college enrollment or completion was the high cost of postsecondary education. They also lacked information about the college application and Federal Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) processes. In fact, a recent Department of Education report indicated that 57% of 9th-grade students overestimated the costs of tuition and fees by more than 25%.[42] HBCUs can also play a role in bridging this information asymmetry by offering financial aid workshops during their outreach to K-12 schools.

HBCU SPOTLIGHT
Philander Smith College
Little Rock, AR

Philander Smith College builds strong partnerships with its local community to increase the presence of Arkansas students on campus. While Philander Smith enrolls students from across the country, an assessment of enrollment trends revealed a dearth of students from the local community. To that end, under the leadership of Dr. Roderick Smothers, president of Philander Smith, the school launched the annual African American High School Honors Ceremony to celebrate African American honors students in local area high schools and provide scholarships. Additionally, a local foundation assisted the college in providing scholarships to local students who had the potential and desire to succeed in college but struggled academically. These students are required to participate in a robust bridge program and the newly launched Student Transition and Retention Services (S.T.A.R.) Program where they receive life coaching, tutoring and support. Moreover, current college students also provide outreach to local high schools. These efforts have assisted in increasing enrollment but also in building enduring partnerships and recruitment pipelines from the community.

"At Philander, we are committed to being student-centered and mission-focused. We strive to provide academic rigor, coupled with a loving and caring environment for all students. Through these programs, we have maintained a culture of high expectations, inclusivity and support that will positively influence students' lives for the better."
—Dr. Roderick Smothers, president, Philander Smith College

Moreover, several HBCUs, such as Philander Smith College, Prairie View A&M University and Xavier University of Louisiana, have invested in innovative advising through summer bridge programs that prepare students for the academic rigors of college life and the often complex social transition. These programs can connect students to campus resources, support services and provide quality advising. Bridge programs are particularly important for underserved, first-generation college students who often lack these important resources and information about college.

Similar to HBCU bridge programs, high schools should invest in middle-to-high school transition programs for incoming 9th-grade students.[43] Districts and community organizations have created such programs that help reduce summer learning loss and prepare students for the transition to high school. These programs can range from a few days to multiple weeks and can include college visits with student mentors and tutors, study and organizational skill-building, social and emotional development and high-quality instruction. In some places, college students provide mentorship and tutoring to students in the bridge program. HBCUs can partner with schools to provide tours and mentorship for students in these programs. Onboarding students to the high school culture, performance expectations and the idea that students are preparing themselves for college, can be central messages that could promote greater levels of student success. Districts in states like California, Maryland and Oregon have seen better academic outcomes for students enrolled in these programs and increased interests in higher education than students not enrolled.[44]

Overall, K-12 schools can benefit from these types of partnerships because it promotes a college-going culture and offers students exposure to and information about opportunities at HBCUs. In like manner, these collaborations provide HBCUs with a pipeline of potential enrollees. Student ambassador programs also offer current HBCU students enriching opportunities for community service.

School districts, CMOs and college access programs should work in collaboration with HBCUs to develop a cadre of minority teachers and administrators who can serve diverse student populations more effectively through a cultural lens. Despite the demonstrated positive influence that black teachers have on all students, only 7% of teachers, and 10% of principals in U.S. public schools are black.[45] Creating a sustainable pipeline of teachers will take a concerted effort among many stakeholders. The multi-state, Call Me Mister (Mentors Instructing Students Towards Effective Role Models) program seeks to support and increase the presence of educators of color in low-performing elementary schools. Since 2000, the program has contributed to developing a strong cadre of minority male teachers and leaders. Claflin University, an HBCU in Orangeburg, SC, established a Call Me Mister program in partnership with Clemson University and provides tuition through loan forgiveness, academic support, book assistance, job placement and a cohort model to provide social and cultural support to select elementary education or early childhood education majors. Similarly, Howard University partnered with The School Superintendent Association (AASA) to create the AASA/Howard University Urban Superintendents Academy to help increase the presence of superintendents of color across the nation. These programs, and others like them, can serve as models to assist in diversifying the education workforce to further reflect student demographics.

> "Moreover, several HBCUs, such as Philander Smith College, Prairie View A&M University and Xavier University of Louisiana, have invested in innovative advising through summer bridge programs that prepare students for the academic rigors of college life and the often complex social transition."

HBCU SPOTLIGHT
Xavier University of Louisiana
New Orleans, LA

In 2016, Xavier University of Louisiana, in partnership with New Schools for New Orleans and several local charter networks, established the Norman C. Francis Teacher Residency (NCFTR) program. The innovative program provides students with master's-level coursework through Xavier's Division of Education and Counseling, apprentice teaching under a mentor teacher, quality coaching and professional development, mentorship and in-class experience to equip residents for a career in the classroom. Currently, residents are placed in several charter schools across New Orleans and commit to teach for four years in a NCFTR-partner school. This groundbreaking four-year program may serve as a model to other HBCUs that want to partner with local schools to increase the number of diverse educators in the classroom. *"NCFTR's pipeline is one that will help increase the diversity of teachers in New Orleans by recruiting and selecting residents who are knowledgeable in their content, eager to develop in teaching and learning and are culturally aware. The program's success stems from high-quality residents and the important lessons they learn through the residency model—in-class experience, coursework, institutes, professional development and networking opportunities. It is also beneficial that residents are taught by people of color who have walked in their shoes and can provide and share practical and real-life experiences."*—Kenya Kennedy Campbell, program director, NCFTR

K-12 schools, networks and college access programs should work to increase the number of HBCU alumni in their organizations which may in turn also boost overall awareness of the success of HBCUs. The presence of HBCU alumni staff and teachers help to affirm the importance of HBCUs to all students and staff. These alumni can speak from their personal experiences and offer students and staff greater exposure to different types of colleges than ones that are traditionally promoted within schools and programs. Often, organizations and schools may lack general knowledge of HBCUs. Subsequently, students lack valuable information about their college options, and programs fail to promote a diversity of colleges. KIPP is working to increase knowledge about HBCUs after their survey of 3,000 KIPP alumni found that former students attending HBCUs experienced higher levels of belonging and better mental health than non-HBCU alumni. Similar to other research, HBCUs students were also more likely to report having a mentor and engagement with an academic adviser. As a result of the findings, KIPP Through College is making an effort to learn more about HBCUs and even implement strategies from these institutions in their K-12 schools.

We believe the "wisdom" garnered from the HBCU community in helping large proportions of low-income African American students succeed in college will continue to be instructive for the K-12 sector, and we encourage more intentional partnerships between

> "Often, organizations and schools may lack general knowledge of HBCUs. Subsequently, students lack valuable information about their college options, and programs fail to promote a diversity of colleges."

HBCUs and K-12 schools that can radically change the educational landscape for the better.

Our belief at UNCF is that for the nation to accelerate educational achievement for all students and eliminate racial performance gaps, we need to disrupt the current educational landscape and create an equity-focused, multi-faceted education ecosystem that builds on intentional partnerships like we've outlined in this report. A scaffolded and fully integrated educational system that leverages multiple sectors—including public schools, charters, HBCUs, community colleges, non-HBCUs, and other education delivery systems—will help schools to deliver on the promise of a high-quality education that prepares students for the 21st Century. As UNCF celebrates over 75 years of service, we will work with a coalition of the willing and able, the trusted and committed, and the grassroots and grasstops to bring about this vision for the sake of our students, parents, communities and the nation because we continue to believe that "A mind is a terrible thing to waste, but a wonderful thing to invest in."®

> "...we encourage more intentional partnerships between HBCUs and K-12 schools that can radically change the educational landscape for the better."

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