African American Summit
A Deliberation on Education, Healthcare, and the Economy

BACKGROUND REPORT

- Summit participants urged to read this report before the event.
- Summit details: September 21, 2012, Marriott Pyramid, Albuquerque, NM

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FOREWORD

Purpose of the Report
This report will inform the African American Summit: A Deliberation on Health, Education, and the Economy. Participants are urged to review this report prior to attending the event. It is the hope of the organizers that this report also provides valuable resources to policymakers, educators, and advocates – informing future policies and practices affecting New Mexico’s growing African American population.

The New Mexico Office of African American Affairs is convening the summit, which will take place September 21, 2012 in Albuquerque, NM.

Office of African American Affairs
The New Mexico Office of African American Affairs (OAAA) recognizes the need for targeted intervention strategies that address and produce sustained results not only for African Americans, but all New Mexicans. With a purpose of developing and implementing strategies targeted to the specific disparity needs of families, the organization’s strategic plan is designed to give a greater voice and sustainability to the well-being of the African American community. Under original House Bill 909, the agency is mandated to increase awareness and understanding about multi-dimensional issues that contribute to disparities and successes relevant to African Americans in our state. The OAAA strives to develop an action-oriented agenda for disseminating key messages that aid in the decrease and prevention of disparities. It also strengthens collaborative networks that sustain on-going initiatives in the following focus areas:

- Advocacy and Policy
- Education Advancement
- Health
- Economic Empowerment
- Community Development

The New Mexico State Office of African American Affairs was enacted by the 44th New Mexico State Legislature in 1999 under House Bill 909 and established by Executive Order under the administration of Governor Gary Johnson and continues to serve under the present administration of Governor Susana Martinez.

New Mexico First
New Mexico First co-authored this report and will facilitate the upcoming summit using its unique deliberative model.

The public policy organization engages people in important issues facing their state or community. Established in 1986, New Mexico First offers unique town halls and forums that bring together people from all walks of life to develop their best ideas for policymakers and the public. The nonprofit also produces nonpartisan public policy reports on critical issues facing the state. These reports – on topics like water, education, healthcare, the economy, and energy – are available at www.nmfirst.org.

The state’s two U.S. Senators – Jeff Bingaman and Tom Udall – serve as New Mexico First’s honorary co-chairs. The organization was co-founded in 1986 by Senators Jeff Bingaman and Pete Domenici (retired).
UNM Center for Education Policy Research

The Center for Education Policy Research compiled the data charts and maps that appear throughout this report.

The public policy organization is housed at the University of New Mexico College of Education. It strives for excellence in education through data-informed policy change. The center’s mission is to:

- Research education policy topics of interest in New Mexico;
- Communicate knowledge about education policy to diverse audiences;
- Collaborate with policy makers and other researchers on systemic policy change; and
- Educate researchers and policy makers about the value of data-driven policymaking.
INTRODUCTION

Historical Context

People often think of New Mexico as a “tri-cultural state,” comprised of Hispanics, Caucasians, and Native Americans. While these groups do comprise the majority of the state’s population, African Americans remain an important part of the state’s cultural mix and a key aspect of its history.¹

While historians differ about when the first people of African descent came to this region, it is clear that Africans were here in the early 16th Century as explorers, guides, and slaves of “New Spain” (now Mexico).² When Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1828, slavery was outlawed. Freed slaves settled throughout the area now known as the American Southwest. In additional, African American pioneers were part of the western migration from the east coast and American south.³

After the American Civil War, the U.S. government dispatched to New Mexico eight companies of “Buffalo Soldiers” (the nickname given to African American army regiments).⁴ These soldiers helped stabilize the frontier. They performed garrison chores, patrolled the frontier, built roads, escorted mail parties, strung hundreds of miles of telegraph lines, and handled a variety of civil and military tasks.⁵ Today, the Buffalo Soldiers Society of New Mexico educates people about the historical contributions of African Americans in uniform.⁶

Reminiscent of the early days of the Buffalo Soldiers, the largest wave of African American migration to New Mexico came after 1970 due to the Army and Air Force.⁷ Many modern African American servicemen and servicewomen, and their families, have chosen to settle in New Mexico after completing their military service.

Modern Population

The percentage of African Americans in New Mexico is between 2% to 3% of the total population (compared with about 12% of the population, nationally). In 2010, the state’s African American population was estimated at 42,500.

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¹ Appreciation to Alfred Dennis Mathewson, UNM, for reviewing the Historical Context section.
² (New Mexico Office of African American Affairs 2006)
³ (New Mexico Office of African American Affairs 2006)
⁴ (New Mexico Office of the State Historian n.d.)
⁵ (Texas State Historical Association n.d.)
⁶ (City of Albuquerque n.d.)
⁷ (New Mexico Office of African American Affairs 2006)
Previous Reform Work

Organizers of the upcoming African American Summit believe it is important to decide on the most important next steps in strengthening the education, health, and economic status of African Americans in New Mexico. However, this event will not be the first time New Mexicans have addressed these issues – and it certainly will not be the last.

Summit organizers hope to honor and build on previous work, including:

- Multiple reports compiled by the Accelerating African American Achievement Task Group (referenced throughout this report)
- The African American Achievement Gap Solutions Summit, held October 2009 (referenced in the education section of this report)
- The Blueprint for Improving the Academic Performance of African American Public Schools Students (referenced in the education section and reprinted in the appendix of this report)

Dr. Patricia Dunn worked with the Office of African American Affairs on all three reports. “There are plenty of education models for states with high numbers of African American students. But there are few models for states like ours. If we can figure it out, we could make a difference in being the model for other states with a low African American population.”

Data

The Center for Education Policy Research collected the data presented in the charts and maps in this report. The full data set of more than 100 charts is available online at:


Disparity issues are not isolated African American problems. They represent the greatest challenges facing our state. We hope this report and the upcoming summit will unite people of all races to discover ways we can collectively grow the healthy economy, educational network, and health system New Mexico needs in order to thrive.

--Yvette Kaufman Bell

The Center for Education Policy Research also offered some cross-cutting recommendations for future consideration.

- Commit to gathering essential data and using it to improve the outcomes of all African Americans in our state. Some of the most important indicators may be currently unavailable.
- Develop an ongoing method or index to understand where African Americans are doing well and where there is a need for increased focus.
- Organize data-driven town halls with African Americans in counties where there is the greatest educational, economic, or health needs in order to develop local strategies.

The issue of data came up several times during the interviews for this report. Commented Dr. Ernest Dunn, who served on education committees of the Office of African American Affairs, “Data collecting is not easy in this state. In some areas – because African American numbers are lower than other races – we are considered insignificant. So data on us sometimes isn’t even gathered, or it isn’t up-to-date.”
**OAAA Strategic Plan**

The upcoming summit will influence the Office of African American Affairs’ strategic plan. Relevant objectives from that plan are included throughout this report, focusing on three key areas: 8

- Economic empowerment
- Educational attainment
- Health

These topics are critical to the future of all New Mexicans. Yvette Kaufman Bell of the Office of African American Affairs, interviewed for this report, discussed the need for collaboration.

“Disparity issues are not isolated African American problems. They represent the greatest challenges facing our state. We hope this report and the upcoming summit will unite people of all races to discover ways we can collectively grow the healthy economy, educational network, and health system New Mexico needs in order to thrive.” 9

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8 (New Mexico Office of African American Affairs 2013-2015)
9 (Bell 2012)
LEADER PROFILE: Rev. Charles Becknell, Jr., Ph.D.

Dr. Charles Becknell, Jr. leads a rich life – juggling responsibilities as a professor, pastor, husband, father, and mentor. How does he manage it all? In a word: integration. 10

This father of three teaches full-time in the University of New Mexico Africana Studies program, also teaches at Central New Mexico Community College, and is associate pastor at Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church in Rio Rancho. In addition, he mentors and advises both church members and college students.

“I’m pursuing an integrated framework that brings together my family life, university life, and church life,” said Becknell when interviewed for this report. “For example, many students I mentor at church become students at UNM, so my opportunity to support them and their families continues.”

CHURCH YOUTH PROGRAM

The church operates a youth academic outreach program with a focus on accountability. It requires students to bring their report cards home and to church. That practice lets church leaders catch any problems early and work with the students, their families, and – in some cases – the schools to find solutions. “We can be a liaison between families and schools,” explained Becknell. “We advocate on behalf of our young people, creating a coordinated effort in their academic lives.”

In addition to creating a solid support system, Becknell said that the program creates an extra layer of accountability for the youth. “Not everyone is a stellar student, but our kids know we are paying attention. They know they must apply themselves.”

The effort pays off. “All our kids graduate,” said Becknell. “We don’t have any dropouts. Many go on to college.”

UNIVERSITY LIFE

In his day job, Becknell teaches a wide range of courses, including African American history, religion, culture, education, and black masculinity. He is also an academic advisor for undergraduate and graduate students.

On the college campus, Becknell supports both local students as well as African Americans who come to UNM from other places. “It can be a bit of culture shock for African Americans who move here,” commented Becknell. “I try to give them a sense of familiarity and help them tie into resources in the community – one being the church. I also try to connect them with activities on campus. We want their social experience to be positive.”

In New Mexico, about a third of African American students who start a four-year degree graduate. Some leave school; others move away. Becknell said that students need experiences (both in the curriculum, school faculty, and socially) that reinforce their culture.

He also said it is important for students to maintain a moral compass as well as a cultural compass. “A moral compass might get challenged by ambition, wealth-seeking, or status. A cultural compass might get challenged when students don’t know how to safeguard their identity in an environment that does little to reinforce that identity.”

One way to address these challenges, says Becknell, is for parents to remain involved. “They should communicate, motivate, inspire, uplift, support, and set high but realistic expectations. Kids will face challenges. We all have to remain supportive.”

10 (Becknell 2012)
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

There are many linkages between education and the next section, economic empowerment. A strong education is a key to achieving professional and financial success. In this section of the report, education includes early childhood and pre-school, K-12, and college.

**Early Childhood Development**

A strong education relies on a strong beginning. Children who grow up in active, stimulating environments and take part in quality early learning programs are more prepared for kindergarten, both academically and socially. There is limited data available on how many African American children are enrolled in quality early childhood programs. In the counties where data is available, the vast majority of African American children are not enrolled in pre-school. *(See following map.)*

**WHY FOCUS ON EARLY CHILDHOOD?**

A tremendous amount of brain development occurs during a child’s first five years of life. Early childhood research points to five key ideas: 12

1. **Brains are built over time, from the bottom up.** Enriching and educational experiences in early years build a foundation for all of the learning that will follow. In the first years of life, about 700 new neural connectors are formed each second – and then are slowly reduced in the years that follow.

2. **The interaction between genes and experiences shape the developing brain.** A major part of that development is the give and take between children and adults through babbling and later talking, facial expressions, and gestures. When this natural “serve and return” type of communication does not occur, young brains do not develop as expected.

3. **The brain’s ability to change and develop decreases with age.** The brain is most flexible – and thus able to accommodate a wider range of abilities – in the early years. For example, a baby’s brain is already losing the ability to recognize some sounds from different languages after the first year of life.

4. **Emotional and social abilities are intertwined with cognitive ones.** This connection means that a young child who is emotionally nurtured is more likely to learn well. Similarly, a child who has positive social experiences is more likely to be smart and emotionally stable.

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11 (New Mexico First 2011)

12 (National Symposium on Early Childhood Science and Policy n.d.)
In New Mexico, much work has taken place in recent years to elevate awareness about early childhood development.

- In 2005, the state launched New Mexico PreK, a voluntary program funded by the state of New Mexico. Its goal is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to attend a quality early childhood education program before going to kindergarten.\(^\text{13}\)

- In 2011, the New Mexico legislature passed the Early Care and Education Act, an effort championed by the New Mexico Early Childhood Development Partnership and other organizations. The act established a framework for coordination among a wide array of existing efforts including home visitation, early intervention, childcare, head start, early childhood special education, family support, and pre-kindergarten.\(^\text{14}\)

- Community meetings held after the act’s passage produced recommendations for linking in local efforts. They called for community support for families, involvement of local businesses and law enforcement in early childhood issues, recruitment and retention of more early childhood educators, and improved collaboration among existing programs.\(^\text{15}\)

### K-12 Education

The New Mexico public school system serves about 8,700 African American students, with the highest numbers in Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Clovis, Hobbs, Las Cruces, and Alamogordo. In the last decade, the African American achievement gap in New Mexico has varied slightly year to year, but it remains a cause for concern.\(^\text{16}\) For example, only 39% of African American third graders read proficiently last year, compared with 71% of Caucasians. Similar disparities exist in math, and the gaps continue through high school. (See charts.)

In addition to basic proficiency, some people worry whether African American students are being encouraged to take the more challenging courses that could help them build strong careers. “Not enough of our students are enrolled in AP or higher math classes,” said retired professor Ernest Dunn. “We need to help our students see that being smart is cool!”

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\(^{13}\) (New Mexico Pre-K n.d.)

\(^{14}\) (New Mexico First 2012)

\(^{15}\) (National Center for Educational Statistics 1992-2011)

\(^{16}\) (New Mexico Public Education Department 2010)
ACHIEVEMENT GAP SUMMIT
The 2009 African American Achievement Gap Summit, attended by over 100 people, developed potential strategies for improving academic performance. Some of the suggestions included: 17

- More Black history and culture into school curricula, so the content at school is culturally relevant to African American students
- Strong role models for African American students
- Higher student teacher ratios
- Adequate support for parent enrichment, preschool, kindergarten, and teacher professional development
- Collection of meaningful indicators on academic performance
- Database of community and parent resources

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION
New Mexico’s high school graduation rate is among the weakest in the nation. The most recent year for which national data is available is 2008, and New Mexico ranked 45th with 67% of students graduating. 18 State-level data is available through last year and – as the following graph shows – African American students are over 10% less likely to finish high school than their Caucasian peers (and slightly more likely than Hispanics and Native Americans).

Resiliency Factors
So, what actions might improve test scores and graduation rates? Research points to many activities: 19, 20, 21

- Active parents
- High expectations by caring adults
- Effective, culturally competent teachers
- Nutritious food at home and school
- Adequate healthcare
- Absence of truancy
- Access to after-school, church, sports, music, or other extra-curricular activities

TRUANCY AND SCHOOL ACTIVITIES
The following charts provide context on truancy and extra-curricular activities. Data on these factors is unavailable by race; these charts represent New Mexico students in general. Many of the “red” counties are also counties with low graduation rates.

17 (New Mexico First 2009)
18 (National Center for Educational Statistics 1992-2011)
19 (Appleseed n.d.)
20 (New Mexico First 2010)
21 (UNM Center for Education Policy Research 2012)
**Higher Education**

In the declining economy, some people wonder whether higher education pays off as much as it used to. In reality, college pays off even more. In 2002, Americans with four-year degrees earned an average of 75% more than those with only high school diplomas. In 2011, the pay-off is 84%.

### LIFETIME EARNINGS BY EDUCATION LEVEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>Average Lifetime Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>$973,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>$1.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college/no degree</td>
<td>$1.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s degree</td>
<td>$1.7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>$2.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>$2.7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral degree</td>
<td>$3.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional degree</td>
<td>$3.6 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Degrees are not the only factor. Occupation also drives earnings. For example “STEM” fields (those driven by science, technology, engineering, and math) often pay more than teachers – regardless of degree. Similarly, an engineer without a college degree...
degree but a vocational certificate can earn more than some degree professionals.24

**COLLEGE GRADUATION IN NEW MEXICO**

Given the earnings data above, it is obvious why many African American advocates champion higher education. About a third of the African American students who start a Bachelor’s degree in New Mexico complete it within six years.

Festus Addo-Yobo directs Black Programs at New Mexico State University. His job is to help recruit and ultimately graduate African American students. About 600 African American students attend NMSU, and roughly half of them are members of Addo-Yobo’s program. It provides social and academic support to students such as tutoring, connection with peers, and study skills. “Students do better within ‘cohort systems’ that let them spend time with other African Americans, gain self-esteem, and enjoy a good academic life,” said Addo-Yobo when interviewed for this report.25

The program makes a difference. Of the students who become members of NMSU’s Black Programs, about 67% graduate (compared with 33% of African American college students statewide).

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**Strategic Plan Objectives**

The Office of African American Affairs has three objectives in its strategic plan on educational attainment:

- **Objective 3**: Positively affect African American student success in New Mexico’s P-20 education system.

- **Objective 4**: Increase awareness of available scholarships, financial assistance, higher education options, internships, and career development opportunities available to African Americans.

- **Objective 5**: Assist with the establishment of mentorship programs for pre-school, school age, high school, and college students.

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24 (Georgetown University 2011)
25 (Addo-Yobo September)
**LEADER PROFILE: Wilma Brooks**

Hobbs school teacher Wilma Brooks has spent 48 years in the classroom. She had not planned to teach that long, and even retired from the local junior high in 1997. But a year off was all she could stand. Brooks rejoined the profession as a teacher at Murphy Alternative Learning Center, which provides intensive support for students who might not otherwise graduate. She has been there ever since.

The alternative school is linked to Hobbs High. If teachers in the high school observe that a student needs extra help, they refer the youth to the alternative school. One of the school’s focus areas is “credit recovery,” a key strategy for improving graduation rates. Often the needed credits are electives, and Brooks teaches several: career planning, human development, teen parenting, family living, and hospitality (a career training course for students interested in that industry).

Brooks and her colleagues also provide after-school tutoring. “One of our major issues is literacy,” said Brooks. “In the days leading up the state testing, lots of students come to us for reading help and other tutoring.”

When asked what changes would make a difference for students in trouble, Brooks offered a few ideas. “For one thing, I wish parents would be more involved, and get their struggling kids into tutoring earlier. I also wish more students participated in sports, choir, or other activities. I’ve noticed that the kids who drop out have rarely been involved in extra-curriculars. If they had been, maybe they would have stayed in school.” (Brooks noted that a high teen pregnancy rate also contributes to the region’s graduation challenges.)

Role models are another solution, said Brooks. She recalled one 10th grader who was mentored by a local judge. “The judge did activities with the young man all year, took him to cultural events like the Southwest Symphony, and helped him get his first job.” After one year with the alternative school and the mentor, the student returned to the main high school campus. He came back to the alternative school for tutoring when needed, and he graduated from Hobbs High on time.

Brooks teaches students of all races, but she pays attention to African American students. She said that, of the 426 students who graduated from Hobbs High last year, 26 were African American. “That’s about the average for the last few years,” Brooks noted. “I can remember when the number of African American graduates was nearly double that, but in recent years, more and more students are dropping out.”

However, Brooks remains hopeful. “Some students just need a bit of direction or help catching up,” said Brooks. “I’ll never forget my first class of alternative school seniors. They were just behind, but they weren’t bad kids. That’s what people have to remember. They aren’t bad kids.”

This year Brooks received the Educator of the Year Award for her lifetime of service to young people. The honor is awarded annual by the Buffalo Soldiers Society of New Mexico.
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Economics matters to all New Mexicans. All communities want to offer well-paying jobs, effective career training, opportunities to grow small businesses, and prospects for home ownership. Some African Americans in New Mexico are challenged in these areas. African Americans in our state are more likely to live in poverty than people in most other races, and they are the least likely to own their own business. (See charts this section.)

Employment

Employment is a key measure of economic stability for American families. Overall, New Mexico’s unemployment rate (6.6%) is less than the national one (8.3%). Employment rates are broken down by race, African Americans have higher rates of unemployment than Caucasians, both nationally and in New Mexico. The national Economic Policy Institute researched African American employment and called for increased job creation (public and private sector). The institute also recommended more job training and job placement services for African Americans. It noted that placement services are an often overlooked, but essential element; training alone is not enough to ensure people find a good job – especially if it is their first job or they are returning to the workplace after a long absence.

WORK SKILLS TRAINING

Regardless of race, people looking for a job need a combination of “hard” skills (technical or industry-specific abilities that apply to specific jobs) and “soft” skills (transferable capabilities like work ethic or communication). Hard skills obviously vary by profession, but most working men and women today need the following essential soft skills:

- Communication (writing, listening, speaking)
- Teamwork
- Time management
- Problem-solving
- Organization
- Ability to learn new things
- Computer
- Creativity

26 (U.S. Department of Labor 2012)
27 (Economic Policy Institute 2011)
28 (Goodwin n.d.)
**Individual Actions**

A range of national efforts champion economic empowerment, including the “Circle of Wealth,” a Black Enterprise initiative. The initiative encourages African Americans to take the following "Declaration of Financial Empowerment:"  

I, from this day forward, declare my vigilant and life-long commitment to financial empowerment. I pledge the following:

1. To save and invest 10 to 15% of my after-tax income
2. To be a proactive and informed investor
3. To be a disciplined and knowledgeable consumer
4. To measure my personal wealth by net worth not income
5. To engage in sound budget, credit, and tax management practices
6. To teach business and financial principles to my children
7. To use a portion of my personal wealth to strengthen my community
8. To support the creation and growth of profitable, black-owned enterprises
9. To ensure my wealth is passed onto others
10. To maximize my earning power through a commitment to career development, technological literacy and professional excellence

**Support for Entrepreneurs**

The strategies above address individual actions. Other national efforts focus on economic empowerment of African American entrepreneurs, aiming to grow the number of Black-owned businesses. According to Toya Powell of the U.S. Black Chamber, African American business people nationally face at least three challenges:  

- Access to capital
- Need for training in how to be an effective entrepreneur
- Support in navigating government contracting

Regarding access to capital, Powell noted that all businesses need funds to get started or grow. “Historically, some African Americans have found it challenging to obtain funds from traditional banking institutions,” said Powell. “Many of our businesses have received start-up money through community development financial institutions, grants, or Small Business Administration approved lenders.”

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29 (Black Enterprise 2007)

30 (Powell 2012)
Powell noted that the housing crisis is another factor. “African Americans are disproportionately affected by the housing crisis and are more likely to be ‘under water’ with their mortgages.” As a result, their ability to borrow for entrepreneurial purposes is affected. She noted that credit counseling to help people improve credit practices and ratings can be helpful.

The other item on the U.S. Black Chamber’s priority list, contracting support, was partly driven by a recent drop in U.S. government contracts to black- and Hispanic-owned small businesses. Nationally, contracts to the black-owned firms last year dropped 8% (or $7.12 billion).\textsuperscript{31} To help address the issue, the U.S. Black Chamber offers training and support to member businesses interested in applying for government contracts.

**Urban and Rural Communities**

Economic challenges differ in rural communities, and this holds true for people in all races. Some rural and semi-rural counties in New Mexico, such as San Juan, McKinley, and Rio Arriba, offer high-paying jobs – and many African Americans in those communities benefit. Ironically, however, two of the three counties that offer the highest wages for African Americans are also counties with the highest levels of poverty for African Americans. The reason for this apparent contradiction would require further examination.

\textsuperscript{31} (Bloomberg Government 2012)
OAAA Strategic Plan Objectives

The Office of African American Affairs has two objectives in its strategic plan on economic empowerment:

- **Objective 11:** Work with financial institutions and economic empowerment organizations to increase visibility and access to available business start-up and operational funds, and professional development opportunities.

- **Objective 12:** Collaborate with organizations such as NM Workforce Solutions and various Chambers of Commerce training programs to provide job training and skill development opportunities for African Americans.
LEADER PROFILE: Sandra Taylor-Sawyer, Ed.D.

Some people teach about what they know best. Some people actually do what they know best. And some people do both. Meet Sandra Taylor-Sawyer. ³²

As director of the Small Business Development Center in Clovis, Taylor-Sawyer helps people start or grow their own businesses. Her SBDC supports about 250 small clients a year in Curry, Roosevelt, and DeBaca counties. After more than a decade of helping others start companies, she launched her own thriving side business.

Starting a small business is challenging, but it really helps to have the skills and support of an SBDC to help get the company off the ground, said Taylor-Sawyer. The SBDC in Clovis opened in 1989, is housed at Clovis Community College, and it is one of about 2,000 nationwide. They are funded by federal and state dollars. Taylor-Sawyer’s office provides direct assistance, resources, and seminars to budding entrepreneurs.

About 7% of Taylor-Sawyer’s clients are African American (which roughly aligns to their percentage of the overall population in the region). She said African Americans face unique challenges when starting their own businesses. “Many African Americans really don’t have the mind-set of a business-owner. We’ve been taught to go to school, get an education, and get a good job to take care of our families. We haven’t been taught to start our own businesses. It is less a part of our tradition.”

She observed that, of those who seek SBDC services who are not African American, most of them bring family experience in entrepreneurship. Either their parents or someone in their family has owned a business.

Taylor-Sawyer’s own small business, which she operates in partnership with her husband, is called LegalShield. She is an independent associate in the national company. LegalShield offers a portfolio of legal and identity theft services protecting families, small businesses, and commercial drivers.

In addition to her busy professional life, Taylor-Sawyer has a very active civic life. Elected in March to the Clovis City Commission, she is first African American woman to hold the post. She also serves on the boards of Plains Regional Medical Center, Presbyterian Healthcare Services, the Office of African American Affairs, and the Clovis Chamber of Commerce (of which she is President-Elect). She and her husband, Donald T. Sawyer, Jr., are active members of Faith Christian Family Church.

Her faith is a key element of her life, even driving her personal mission statement: “I am a daughter of God, a sister of Jesus, who loves to bless others by making a significant, positive difference in their lives.”

Taylor-Sawyer and her husband have five grown children, seven grandchildren and “no animals!” How does she manage it all? “It is a balance. I have to plan for fun time, husband time, work time – it can be done. I have a desire to help people, and that drives everything else.”

³² (Taylor-Sawyer 2012)
LEADER PROFILE: Josef Powdrell

Josef Powdrell and his family owns the Albuquerque business, Mr. Powdrell's Barbeque. With two restaurants and about 100 employees annually, Powdrell takes pride in bringing his family's work ethic to his business. Powdrell's Barbeque was honored in 2011 by New Mexico Business Weekly as one of ten longstanding family dynasties that have impacted the state's business community.

The first restaurant was opened by Powdrell’s parents 50 years ago. “They built the business on the principles of respect and honesty. They believed that if you offered a good, honest product at a fair price – and if you were genuine about quality service – your business would thrive.”

Holding to those principles has enabled Powdrell to run a successful business. However, he still faces challenges. “Business puts the same demands on everyone,” said Powdrell. “You must have a good product, practice, and procedure. But even the best business plans go nowhere without finances to get started.”

Powdrell thinks the biggest barrier for African American businesses is access to capital. He explained that it can be difficult to receive loans from conventional banks. Business owners do not just need money at start-up, Powdrell explained. They have recapitalize periodically. New equipment purchases, building updates, or other expenses cause challenges for even the most well established businesses.

“Even with our longevity and good product, it can be hard for us to receive loans. The last time we successfully borrowed money conventionally was in the 1980s,” explained Powdrell.

One solution to this challenge, the restaurant owner noted, is to create ways to invest within your culture. “A lot of cultural groups have capital within themselves. I believe African Americans should try to see ourselves as a collective business entity. Even in a state as small as New Mexico, we can make a difference if we invest in ourselves.” He added, “There is joy in financing businesses. We want to encourage entrepreneurship. But we won’t get those kinds of joys until we reinvest. What precedes reinvestment is establishing yourself as part of a collective entity.”

To this end, Powdrell established the African American Business Council in 1986. The organization operated until about 2000, when the cause was picked up by the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Mexico. Powdrell laughed that the goals had been around for a long time. Before his council, there was the Albuquerque Black Economic League. And prior to that, in 1890 there was the Colored Republican Club of New Mexico. “Its mission would fit today – to ensure participation in commerce, employment, housing, and education.”

Being a role model to other entrepreneurs is another good activity, Powdrell noted. “Success breeds success. People won’t take the risk of entrepreneurship without support from each other.”

Other factors that contributed to Powdrell’s success are education and the willingness to learn from life’s many experiences. He served a tour in Vietnam, and also earned undergraduate and graduate degrees. The veteran concluded, talking about the KWANZAA ceremony, which emphasizes principles of unity, self-determination, collective work, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. “The one thing I want people to know that we have to create a collective effort. People in our history have tried to divide us. We must overcome that, overcome our own skepticism in ourselves about working together well. We as African Americans must grow our confidence in the resources within ourselves.”
HEALTH

As a group, African Americans face a range of health challenges that affect quality of life and how long they live. The average American life expectancy is 78 years, compared with 73 years for African Americans. Leading causes of death among African Americans include:

- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Stroke
- Unintentional injuries
- Diabetes
- Homicide
- Kidney disease
- Respiratory disease
- HIV/AIDS

New Mexico Health Data

In New Mexico, and in the U.S., African Americans are more likely than the overall population to experience obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes. (See charts, this section.)

Some of these problems can be prevented, or their severity reduced, through personal actions:

- Eating healthy foods
- Being physically active
- Taking diabetes medicine as prescribed
- Testing blood glucose levels
- Community education and support programs

Type 2 diabetes, sometimes called an “epidemic among African Americans,” can often be delayed or prevented through healthy behaviors. Medical screening can diagnose “pre-diabetes,” enabling health professionals and patients to develop prevention strategies.

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33 (Center for Disease Control and Prevention n.d.)
34 (Center for Disease Control and Prevention 2007)
35 (National Diabetes Education Program 2011)
Smoking

In New Mexico, African Americans are somewhat more likely to smoke than people in other racial groups (unlike nationally, where the percentages are about even).

One of the concerns expressed by advocates is the marketing of cigarettes to African American youth, particularly menthol cigarettes (which researchers believe are the most addictive).

With funding from the New Mexico Department of Health, the African American Health Network directed a marketing and media literacy project, educating teens about the dangers of smoking, especially menthol cigarettes.

HIV/AIDS

Nationally, African Americans are more affected by HIV than any other racial or ethnic group. African Americans made up 14% of the U.S. population in 2009 but accounted for 44% of all new HIV infections. Men are at great risk, accounting for 70% of new HIV infections among African Americans.

36 (Center for Disease Control 2012)
37 (Wallace 2012)
38 (Science Daily 2009)

39 (Center for Disease Control and Prevention 2012)
African American women in New Mexico are less likely than Caucasian women to receive prenatal care during pregnancy. Of particular risk are teen or low-income mothers.

The infant mortality rate among African American women – in New Mexico and nationally – is alarming. African American babies are more than twice as likely to die in their first year of life than the population as a whole. Infants born in Uruguay, Botswana, Panama, or several other counties have a better survival rate than African American babies.

Causes of death include low birth weights, birth defects, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), or health complications for the mother. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends educating communities, providers, pregnant women, and family members on factors that effect infant mortality such as:

- Smoking
- Substance abuse
- Poor nutrition
- Lack of prenatal care
- Medical problems
- Chronic illness
- SIDS

According to the National Center for Health Statistics (2007), African American babies are more likely to die in their first year of life than the population as a whole. Infants born in Uruguay, Botswana, Panama, or several other counties have a better survival rate than African American babies.

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- Smoking
- Substance abuse
- Poor nutrition
- Lack of prenatal care
- Medical problems
- Chronic illness
- SIDS

Research shows that babies who slept on their stomachs or sides were at a higher risk for SIDS.
**Healthcare Coverage**

About 15% of African Americans in New Mexico lack health insurance. Native Americans and Hispanics are far more likely to be uninsured in this state. These figures will presumably shift in the coming years, with the roll-out of federal healthcare reform.

**OAAA Strategic Plan Objectives**

The Office of the African American Affairs has two objectives in its strategic plan on health.

**Objective 6:** Improve the quality of health for the African American community in the state of New Mexico

**Objective 7:** Work with institutions of higher learning to develop a strategy to increase the number of African American Students in health related academic fields of study
**LEADER PROFILE: Joby Wallace**

Joby Wallace, president of the African American Health Network, is proud of what people can accomplish when they work together. Her organization unites people behind health projects, and they see results.

The African American Health Network was established in 1990. Its mission is to ensure optimal physical, mental, and spiritual health for African Americans in New Mexico through sustainable and collaborative action.

A voluntary network, the organization’s members gather once a month and work on specific health projects, such as tobacco prevention, obesity education, or diabetes awareness. With members from Albuquerque, Clovis, and Hobbs, the African American Health Network works hard to meet the needs of communities throughout the state, not just Albuquerque.

For example, one of their recent projects focused on preventing African American teens from becoming smokers. “People in our group organized a marketing activity to teach youth about tobacco and how tobacco companies are targeting them. People learned about media literacy, how specific advertising can reach specific groups, and the addictiveness of menthol cigarettes.”

Other projects conducted by the organization include:

- A series of community meetings in Clovis, Hobbs, and Alamogordo to determine which health issues were of greatest importance in each area
- A women’s health conference with keynote speaker Joycelyn Elders, former U.S. Surgeon General
- A “creative kitchens” project to work with seniors on nutrition

The organization has received funding the Con Alma Foundation, the New Mexico Department of Health, and other sources.

In addition to organizing projects, Wallace speaks out on health issues directly. “I really believe in people being treated equally,” she said. “I will speak up when I see disparities. Infant mortality among African Americans is one example. The infant mortality rate of African Americans is higher than any other race. Our babies die. They die. We need to understand why that happens and stop it.”

Students staying in school is another of Wallace’s priorities. “About 6% of our students get expelled. We are only 3% of the population but 6% are getting expelled. Why does that happen? How can we change it?”

Professionally, Wallace is also a private consultant and a licensed therapist who provides counseling services to charter schools and a private consultant. She has two grown sons and is a member of God’s House Church. She is a lifelong New Mexican.
# APPENDIX

## APPENDIX A: Educational Programs Underway

At the request of the Office of African American Affairs, New Mexico First conducted an online survey to collect information on existing community programs. Completed by 81 New Mexicans, the survey produced the following list. *(Note: The program information is reprinted as provided by survey respondents. Any omissions or inaccuracies reflect the knowledge of the people who kindly took the time to complete the survey.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Brief Description or Objectives</th>
<th>Sponsoring Organization(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abraham Lincoln Mitchell Scholarship</td>
<td>Financial Assistance to College Students in legal and health fields</td>
<td>Albuquerque Branch NAACP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Chamber</td>
<td>However it has limited to no resources to support economic empowerment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Help build economic wealth and empowerment in the African American Community</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>African American Health Alliance</td>
<td>Help eliminate health disparities for African Americans in New Mexico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Health Network</td>
<td>Addressing health disparities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American New Mexico Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>A.A. business promoting, educating, recruiting, empowering, networking businesses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishop W C Green Health &amp; Fitness</td>
<td>Health screenings among faith-based community</td>
<td>Church of God In Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Graduate and Professional Student Association (BGPSA)</td>
<td>Delivers academic support to graduate and undergraduate students</td>
<td>University of New Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Student Unions</td>
<td>To meet and support the educational needs of African American and others through mentorship, educational advancement and scholarship, cultural understanding and awareness in a diverse and multi-ethnic society.</td>
<td>Albuquerque Public Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Student Unions at Albuquerque Public High schools</td>
<td>Afterschool mentoring (education, social skills, communication skills, etc). Done by volunteers, sponsors, and teachers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Name</td>
<td>Brief Description or Objectives</td>
<td>Sponsoring Organization(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breast Cancer Support Group</td>
<td>Critical care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast Cancer Support Group</td>
<td>Critical care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COGIC Health Initiative</td>
<td>To help African Americans take better care of themselves.</td>
<td>COGIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling, Recreation, Education and Work-readiness - CREW</td>
<td>A nationally recognized, enhanced OST tutorial program serving students PreK to 6.</td>
<td>Horizon Academy West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of Equity and Inclusion&quot; Men of Color Alliance&quot;</td>
<td>Works with men of color to improve the graduation rate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dream Makers Program</td>
<td>Dream Makers is a program that introduces middle and high school students from urban and rural communities to career paths associated with the health sciences. Students and health professionals from the UNM Health Sciences Center and the community, stimulate the students' interest in science and math while increasing their knowledge of medicine and health through presentations and hands on activities.</td>
<td>UNM Health Sciences Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development Office</td>
<td>Provide economic assistance and development opportunities, to those seeking information.</td>
<td>Village of Los Lunas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Research, Evaluation and Design Inc. (eREAD, Inc.)</td>
<td>Community/parent educational support program. Also GED and on line SAT/ACT Prep.</td>
<td>County, state and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Centro Family Health</td>
<td>Indigent low-income health care.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Young Leaders</td>
<td>Help young women make good life choices and encourage self esteem</td>
<td>Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENLACE</td>
<td>ENLACE was originally focused on Latino students and families but now includes a multicultural constituency. In the eastern part of the state African American families and students are included. More has to be done to extend this program to the African American community.</td>
<td>ENLACE Statewide Collaborative at UNM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Name</td>
<td>Brief Description or Objectives</td>
<td>Sponsoring Organization(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Excel After School Learning Center</strong></td>
<td>After school free tutoring program for kids K-12th grades. Complete homework assignments, and then assist kids with improving in math and reading.</td>
<td>City of Albuquerque and other organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excel After School Program</strong></td>
<td>Teach technology techniques; increase reading skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Born Initiative</strong></td>
<td>Early Childhood Development focused on first five years of life.</td>
<td>St. Joseph Community Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Choice Medical services</strong></td>
<td>Provision of health cares services.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Golden Girls</strong></td>
<td>Exercise, fitness and diet.</td>
<td>Isshin-Ryu Karate Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gordon Bernell Charter School</strong></td>
<td>Works with at-risk and incarcerated individuals.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HMTECH</strong></td>
<td>Summer STEM program.</td>
<td>Sandia National Laboratories</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HS Math/Science Saturday academy</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Isshin Ryu Club Inc.</strong></td>
<td>Isshin Ryu provide educational training in the area of awareness and physical fitness training.</td>
<td>Isshin Ryu Club Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kindergarten 3 Plus</strong></td>
<td>Improve reading to grade level.</td>
<td>NM Public Education Dept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Martin Luther King</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grant Chapel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Math and Science Program @ UNM</strong></td>
<td>Teaching youth math and science skills</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NESBE/Black Engineers</strong></td>
<td>Deborah Johns</td>
<td>UNM Black Engineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Hooks Before Books (See UMAR Boxing Program)</strong></td>
<td>Ed./Tutorial/Sports program in Baltimore, MD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NSBE</strong></td>
<td>Math, education based program</td>
<td>AAPAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Placitas Community Library</strong></td>
<td>Provides and promotes open and equal access to resources and services in order to meet the informational, educational and cultural needs of a diverse community in a welcoming, convenient and responsive manner.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Name</td>
<td>Brief Description or Objectives</td>
<td>Sponsoring Organization(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project S.A.V.E.D.</td>
<td>HIV &amp; Aids Awareness, testing, access, community engagement and empowerment</td>
<td>CDC and Meharry Medical College (Project Saved NM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Allies New Mexico (PANM)</td>
<td>The Public Allies New Mexico Initiative addresses 3 focus areas of Economic, Education, and Healthy Equity.</td>
<td>Public Allies New Mexico takes pride in partnerships. Some include New Mexico College Access Network, Somos Un Pueblo Unido, and ACE Leadership Academy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph J Bunche Academy</td>
<td>Afrocentric Technology School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAIL</td>
<td>Institute for Community Wellness/Athletics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salute to Youth</td>
<td>Scholarship program for high school juniors and seniors. Both males and females are eligible to participate. The objective of the program is provide workshops of College Admission, Scholarship/Financial Aid, Public Speaking, Time Management and Etiquette training.</td>
<td>This program has been hosted by Iota Xi Omega Chapter for 35 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sickle Cell</td>
<td>Make AA aware of how to deal with the sickness.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Temporary Employment Program</td>
<td>Give high school and above summer jobs</td>
<td>All Federal Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAI</td>
<td>Promote STEM areas for our youth.</td>
<td>TAI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New Mexico Youth Alliance</td>
<td>The New Mexico Youth Alliance is a statewide youth advisory council comprised of youth representatives, up to one from each legislative district. The Alliance was established in 2003 by the Youth Council Act, which enables lawmakers and administrators to create and refine youth policies with the benefit and feedback from youth statewide. It is a tool for ensuring that youth have meaningful voice in the state’s political process.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring and college prep</td>
<td>Provide instruction, implementation and guidance to students.</td>
<td>New Covenant Worship Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United South Broadway</td>
<td>Assist community with home purchases.</td>
<td>United South Broadway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Background Report: NM Office of African American Affairs Summit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Brief Description or Objectives</th>
<th>Sponsoring Organization(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upward Bound</td>
<td>Support with first generation college students and to support transition into college.</td>
<td>Held at the University of New Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zenith Youth Leadership Academy</td>
<td>Zenith Youth Leadership Academy provides an environment where adolescents can identify their strengths through mutual exploration and experience that will give them tools to overcome life’s challenges. The youth member gains in self-understanding, leading to self-acceptance.</td>
<td>United Way of Eastern New Mexico</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION
The New Mexico Achievement Gap Solutions Summit for African American students was convened October 26, 2009. The goal of the summit was to create policy and community action recommendations to close the achievement gap and increase the graduation rates of public school students. After the event, a transition team was established to organize the recommendations into a blueprint.

The team chose to focus on the eleven local education agencies (LEAs) that have at least 100 African American students enrolled.

- Alamogordo
- Albuquerque
- Carlsbad
- Clovis
- Farmington
- Hobbs
- Las Cruces
- Los Lunas
- Rio Rancho
- Roswell
- Santa Fe

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES
The Educational Policies and Practices Work Group will identify, review, and analyze the impact of policies and practices established by the state and in the eleven target districts on the performance of African American students. When appropriate, recommendations may be made which reinforce, modify, or create policies and practices that foster high level academic achievement. These data will provide baselines for evaluating academic success and will be available to other work groups, schools, students, families, and communities. In addition, booklets that provide information and resources for students, parents, schools, and the community will be provided. All of these activities will make use of state and national data and best practices for African American public school students.

Data to Collect

African American Students

1. Performance statewide
2. Performance in the eleven targeted LEAs
3. ACT and SAT scores statewide
4. Public school indicators:
   5. Attendance rates
   6. Dropout rates
   7. Disciplinary incidents
   8. Grade retentions
   9. Special education referrals
10. Gates referrals
11. Exceptional child referrals
12. Post secondary entries
13. Military entries
14. Student transfers
15. Student mobility
16. Socio-economic status

Teachers

1. Protocols for teachers
2. Teacher performance with African American Students in the eleven targeted LEAs
3. Teacher mobility
4. Teacher attendance
5. Teacher attrition
6. Teacher preparedness
**Guidance Counselors**

1. Logged contacts with African American Students in the eleven targeted LEAs
2. Logged contacts focused on career awareness or development

**Administrators**

1. Superintendent performance with African American Students in the eleven targeted LEAs
2. Principal performance with African American Students in the eleven targeted LEAs
3. Assistant Principal(s) performance with African American Students in the eleven targeted LEAs

**Policies to be Reviewed and Assessed**

**Students**

1. State requirements for graduation
2. Graduation requirements for the eleven targeted LEAs
3. Model policies and practices that have positive effects on the performance of African American students, especially in states with low African American populations

**Teachers and Administrators**

1. State Education Agency (SEA) & LEA policies regarding teacher effectiveness (i.e., evaluation protocols)
2. SEA & LEA policies regarding principal effectiveness (i.e., evaluation protocols)
3. SEA & LEA policies regarding guidance counselor effectiveness (i.e., evaluation protocols)
4. SEA & LEA policies regarding curricula selection (e.g., text books, library, instructional media)

**Community**

1. SEA & LEA policies regarding collaboration with and involvement of the African American community
2. SEA & LEA policies regarding provision of tutors and after-school activities to enhance the performance of African American students
3. Engagement of African American parents

**Materials to be Produced**

Group members will produce the following:

1. Accelerating African American Student Achievement in New Mexico Public School Grades 9-12 (revise)
2. Accelerating African American Student Achievement in New Mexico Public School Grades 6–8 (create)
3. Accelerating African American Student Achievement in New Mexico Public Schools Grades K-5 (create)
4. Accelerating African American Student Achievement Pre-natal to Pre-K (create)

**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING**

The Educational Programming Work Group will identify programs in the eleven focal (LEAs) that are meant to support African American students and analyze the influence these programs have on the academic success of African American students. Reviewing these programs for patterns and gaps, the group will ascertain which of these programs are state-mandated, how these mandates are enforced, and what accountability systems are in place. The group will also research programs outside of New Mexico schools and communities that have positively influenced the performance of African American students and consider these programs for their applicability in New Mexico. The group will make recommendations regarding the implementation of school and community programs.
that could positively impact the academic performance of African American students, and work collaboratively with administrators, teachers, parents, and the community.

Central Questions to be Explored

1. What are the existing programs available within the eleven LEAs?
2. Which of these programs are state-mandated?
3. How are these state-mandated programs enforced?
4. What accountability systems are in place?
5. What programs outside of New Mexico may be applicable?
6. How best to implement such programs into the schools and communities?

CAREER AWARENESS AND WORKFORCE PREPARATION

The Career Awareness and Workforce Preparation Work Group will explore the current integration of career awareness and workforce preparation in school curricula, identify the gaps, and recommend solutions. The group will also examine the impact of career, technical, and workforce education programs on the performance of African American students in the eleven targeted LEAs. A central concern of this group is the extent to which workforce quality habits are integral to the culture of public schools.

Materials to be Produced and Activities

Members of the group will produce the following products and engage in the following activities:

1. After determining the status of the NM Career Guidance and Development Best Practices, a NM Public Education Department guide for implementing a comprehensive career guidance program for students, create a roll-out and implementation plan for African American students in the eleven targeted LEAs.
2. Identify data collected from and about business employers.
3. Recommend the NM Public Education Department and NM Higher Education Department create an advisory board that integrates input from the business and industry community into curriculum development and classroom instruction.
4. Gain a commitment by business and industry employers to devote time and resources to programming and provide experiential learning experiences.
5. Cultivate partnerships with NM Public Education Department Career Technical & Workforce Education Bureau and the eleven targeted LEAs to improve career awareness and workforce preparation for African American students.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Village is an integrated whole, comprised of all community entities that have a vested interest and common purpose to impact and empower African Americans. The organizing purpose of the Village is to persuade its people to meet at the intersection of all community interests. The Community Involvement Work Group will be the liaison, from the Transition Team to the eleven targeted LEA communities. The goal of the group is to disseminate accurate data and use approaches that enhance high academic performance. Active community involvement is critical to raising the performance and graduation rates of African American public school students.

Volunteers have been identified and have agreed to create and manage a website to disseminate information and stimulate community participation.

Materials to be Produced and Activities
Members of the group will produce the following products and engage in the following activities:

1. Create and manage a website to disseminate information regarding school and community programs, multimedia materials, mentors, tutors, academic clubs, etc. to the statewide African American community with special emphasis on the eleven targeted LEAs.

2. Encourage communities to form partnerships with schools.

3. Recommend the implementation of school and community programs that may have a positive impact on the academic performance of African American students.
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