



# Parent Advocate Leaders (PALs)

## BAEO'S MISSION

To increase access to high quality education options for Black children by actively supporting transformational education reform initiatives and parental choice policies that empower low-income and working-class Black families.



Black Alliance for Educational Options

# Why BAEO?

(Black Alliance for Educational Options)

- Track record of success in attaining educational improvement throughout the nation
- Hold all schools and all education stakeholders accountable
- Inform parents, community, legislators, policy makers, media and others about their options in education
- Focus on the needs of low income and working class families in creating and expanding quality educational options
- Open approach to all quality educational choices – student needs always come first
- Partner and major resource in the black community
- Effective presence at legislative and policy making bodies advocating for low income, working class families
- BAEO is the voice for parents and other stakeholders who otherwise are not heard or have a presence at the table



# Ground Rules

Listen actively -- respect others when they are talking.

- Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing ("I" instead of "they," "we," and "you").
- Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions, but refrain from personal attacks -- focus on ideas.
- Participate to the fullest of your ability -- community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
- Instead of invalidating somebody else's story with your own spin on their experience, share your own story and experience.
- The goal is not to agree -- it is about hearing and exploring divergent perspectives.
- Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses -- they can be as disrespectful as words.

*Additional Ground Rules:*

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# Parent Advocate Leaders (PALs)

## Parent Involvement VS Parent Engagement

**Purpose** of Parent Advocate Leaders (PALs): Help parents to become empowered by having a clear understanding of the current education reform environment. The PAL leadership program will expand the parenting network among other parents in the community to provide mutual support in skills development and child-focused parental actions. By doing this; we hope to increase parental involvement and influence in policy and decisions around policy to create more quality options for parents.

**Process** for PAL training is an intensive 6-week process that includes participation designed to build skills, advocacy tools, organizing, mobilizing and learning how to facilitate a democratic environment. The end of the program is complete with a graduation and community event.

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# How to Tell Your Personal Story

It is important to learn how to share your personal story in 2-3 minutes because if you can't share it quickly, you won't share it very often. You will sometimes find yourself in a situation where you can spend more than 3 minutes, but it is very easy to expand upon the story after you have it down to its key points.

1. Your Background (1-2 minutes)
  - What is your child(ren)'s name

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- What was the experience like?

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If your child(ren) never attended public school, but started private in Pre-K, share why you wanted this option versus a public school option?

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2. Transition Experience (Less Than 30 seconds)  
How did you hear about the scholarship program?

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How did you feel when you heard it and what actions did you take?

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3. What is life for your child(ren) like today? How are things different today than before? (1 minute)

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*Remember the Keeps and Don'ts:*

- Keep it **Personal**
- Keep it current
- Keep it to the point
- Don't lie or embellish
- Don't knock the public school system.
- Don't talk bad about all teachers
- Don't use words like **All** and **EVERY**

*Write Your Story:*

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# Connecting the Dots





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