

# INFORM INSPIRE EMPOWER



**SYMPOSIUM 2006:  
THE SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING OF BAEO**

Educating Our Children: The Power of Youth Voice,  
Parental Choice and Quality Options  
March 16-18, 2006  
Philadelphia Marriott Downtown  
Philadelphia, PA

SYMPOSIUM '06  
**baeo**  
Black Alliance for Educational Options  
6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

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# Welcome

BAEO Family:

We are grateful to the more than 900 participants who joined us in Philadelphia, PA. Our theme this year, *Educating Our Children: The Power of Youth Voice, Parental Choice and Quality Options*, reflected the heart of BAEO's vision and mission: to actively support parental choice to empower families and increase quality educational options for Black children.

Featured speakers included former NBA All-Star Kevin Johnson, Pennsylvania State Senator Anthony Williams and Pennsylvania State Representative Dwight Evans. As one participant described Symposium 2006, it was an "excellent, energetic Symposium... so many choices [and] always something to do." Participants had a hard time choosing between concurrent sessions, featured authors, getting a complimentary massage, or stopping by the Cyber Café.

Our key objectives to inform, inspire and empower our guests were accomplished many times over. We wish to thank this year's participants, sponsors, and especially the volunteers who helped to make Symposium 2006 a wonderful event.

Mark your calendars for Symposium 2007 in Philadelphia on March 22-24.

In the struggle,



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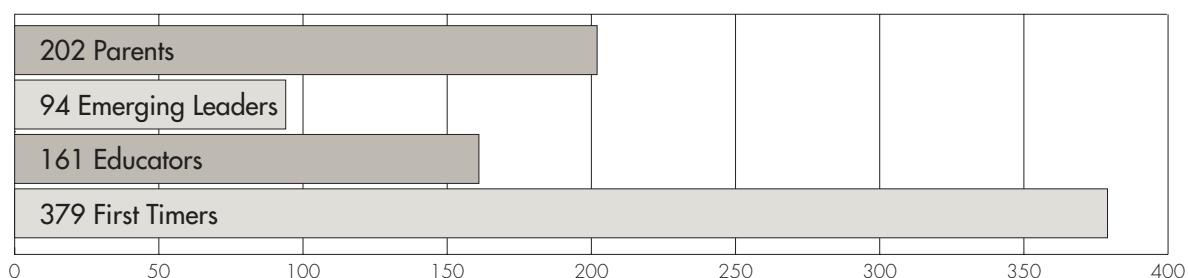


# Measures of Success

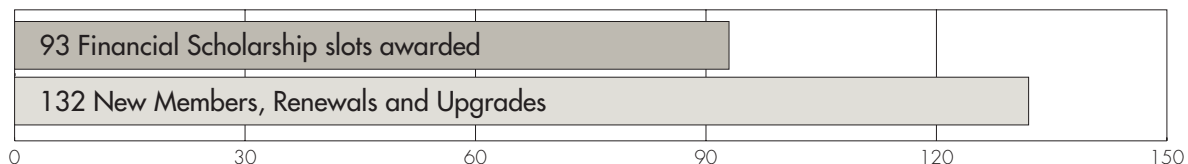
## Achievements

Symposium 2006 was a huge success! With an overall satisfaction rating of 85% very good to excellent and over 900 registered participants, the Symposium personified the dedication of members and the validity of the theme *Educating Our Children: The Power of Youth Voice, Parental Choice and Quality Options*.

### Participant Profile



### Membership and Chapter Development Impact



### Special Features Better than Ever

At Symposium 2006, participants enjoyed a host of special features, downtime activities intended to rejuvenate the mind, body, and spirit. Some of these special features included BAEO favorites, such as morning aerobics and complimentary massages. In addition to staying healthy, participants were able to stay “connected” by visiting the Cyber Café.

This year’s Cultural Bookstore featured a variety of African American books, ranging from African American history to children’s litrue. The BAEO Boutique was also very popular, as participants could purchase their BAEO gear to show off their parental choice pride. Special to this year’s boutique was the BAEO wristband, which boldly stated “POWER. VOICE. CHOICE.”

New to the special features this year was the Reverend Eddie Edwards Prayer & Reflection Room. The prayer and reflection room provided a quiet and peaceful space for participants to reflect, renew and rejuvenate their spirit.

Symposium 2006 Special Features provided an array of activities for participants to enjoy. There was a little something for everyone.

“UTILIZE VOICE OF THE YOUTH...



# Youth at the Forefront and Behind the Scenes

In response to the demands of youth, the Symposium took extra measures to engage emerging leaders ages 15-21 as volunteers, presenters and coordinators of Symposium 2006. The impact of youth voice transformed the concurrent sessions, brought spoken word to the general sessions, and created a safe space for youth to voice their needs and interests.

The Youth Symposium Planning Committee acted as our first level of input and leadership by youth. Representing chapters and youth organizations, the Youth SPC met for the first time in January 2006 to learn more about the Symposium, and to brainstorm ways that BAEO can better engage youth and young adults. Thanks to their leadership, the following activities took place to engage youth and model for all participants the value of intergenerational leadership:

- Hosted a leadership session for youth entitled Youth and BAEO: Taking it to the Next Level
- Elected two youth leaders, Addison Small-Bradley and Glenda Clark to the BAEO Board of Directors
- Offered concurrent sessions on the transition from high school to college
- Recruited youth and young adults to be presenters and to introduce keynote speakers

The presence of youth and young adults throughout the weekend sparked even more interest from youth participants who wanted to learn how they can be a part of planning the Symposium. We look forward to keeping youth at the forefront and behind the scenes of making the Symposium a better event, and BAEO a stronger organization.

If you are interested in joining the Youth SPC, contact Nicole Johnson at 202.429.2236 or [nicole@baeo.org](mailto:nicole@baeo.org).



PUTTING THE CHILD IN POWER™

# Welcome Breakfast: Kevin Johnson sets the Tone

*By Lakiya Emerson*

Symposium 2006 kicked off with a keynote address by former NBA All Star Kevin Johnson who told the crowd that he was angry about the conditions facing education and why they should be too.

"There's a national crisis and we're not talking about it to the degree that we should. That's making me increasingly more angry," said Johnson, founder and CEO of St. Hope Public Schools in Sacramento, CA. During his address, Johnson weaved a series of stories about how poor responses to failures in education have raised his personal ire.

Johnson talked about how slaves risked their lives to teach each other how to read. He said African Americans were forbidden to assemble with each other unless in a church or out in the field. Late at night, once their master's lights had gone out, families would gather in large holes that had been dug in the ground and were called "pit schools."

"Look at the sacrifices and commitment our people were willing to make to get a great education. Are we doing our part today?"

Johnson, who is a former player for the Phoenix Suns, made a habit of visiting neighborhoods of cities while traveling with his team. He quickly noticed that the same problems of poor schools were prevalent in Black neighborhoods across the country. A seed of anger was planted. He decided to find out what politicians were doing in response to the growing problem.

In a visit to Senator Ted Kennedy in Boston, Johnson learned the beginning of an important lesson: "What people stand for is much larger than their profession." As a democrat, Johnson believed Kennedy would be informed about different educational opportunities for disadvantaged children. He asked Kennedy what he thought about charter schools. Kennedy responded that he didn't know and would have to get back to Johnson.

"That actually hurt me.... He knew public schools weren't working and yet, I don't think he was trying to do things differently because he didn't know anything about charter schools. I walked away a little bit disillusioned, but I was young then and not quite angry," Johnson said.

One year later, while in Washington, DC, Johnson decided to seek out another political perspective. He visited the Justice Clarence Thomas. Johnson presented the same question to Thomas that he had directed to Kennedy and was surprised by the response.

Johnson recalled this statement by Thomas, "If I was a single parent and I lived in a neighborhood where my child was not getting the highest quality education, I would support or believe in anything that would help me do that,"

This meeting with Thomas moved Johnson to consider the value of crossing boundaries to find allies for changing education. "The people I thought represented the best interest of the people I care about didn't and the people that I thought didn't get it, got it better than others," said Johnson. "If we're really going to have the impact in this movement that we want, we're going to have to embrace a lot of people that we wouldn't normally hook up with."

Motivation and mobilization of the community are critical to changing education and Johnson discussed how motivation and mobilization affected the fight to save the ailing Sacramento High School. For Johnson, it was motivation and mobilization that made it possible for him to counter union efforts to stop the transformation of Sacramento High School.

In 2001, only 20 percent of ninth graders at Sacramento High School were reading at grade level, and the school was set to be taken over by the state education agency. In an effort to save the school, Johnson went to the superintendent and

"GET OUT THE NEWS THAT



asked for the opportunity to take over the high school adding it to his existing elementary and middle charter school programs founded by St. Hope. The superintendent approved, and Johnson met with 100 teachers at the school to gage their feelings about the take-over. At first, they were enthusiastic about the idea, but a week later, after the teachers spoke to the union, the same 100 teachers opposed the takeover.

Over the course of the summer a court battle ensued with the union spending \$700,000 to prevent St. Hope from taking over the school. A media storm followed and the community, including city government, church leaders, parents, and law firms rallied behind St. Hope. Eventually, the union lost, and Sacramento High School was converted to a charter school managed by St. Hope.

"If we can walk away from here today with some common threads about what is important, we have to figure out ways to empower and engage the people we want to serve," said Johnson. He encouraged attendees to help low-income parents to ask the right questions of their children's schools.

"Can you imagine ten or twelve black folks coming to the school all asking the same questions? **Nightline** is going to show up. You don't have to make an announcement that black people want a good education. Just do it. Ask the tough questions. Hold the school accountable."



BAEO IS HERE AND EMPOWERING"



**BAILEY AND  
SULLIVAN  
LEADERSHIP  
INSTITUTE**

# Learning What it Takes to Lead

This year's BSLI pre-session included sessions on grassroots organizing, leadership coaching, and non-profit fundraising. We were honored to have Darlene Callands-Curry, a parent organizer with Philadelphia BAEO as our luncheon keynote.

Here's a glimpse of the day's highlights and learning moments...









# Howard Fuller Presents a Call to Action

The Symposium weekend finished as it started with the words of a national leader who is working against the odds and the critique of naysayers. This year's closing dinner featured a keynote address by Dr. Howard Fuller, performances by the Spruce Hill Children's Choir, a memorial tribute to John Walton, and a celebration of youth.

We hope you enjoy this brief excerpt from Dr. Fuller's keynote address.

Excerpt from Fuller Speech:

We must ask ourselves:

- Are we preparing our kids to be able to compete with the most competitive kids in this country and throughout the world?
- Are we fighting to create good schools when in fact we need great schools?
- Are we preparing our kids to live in the 21st century or are we preparing them to create the 21st century?
- Are you preparing our kids to engage in the practice of freedom?

We must embrace technology, our children's music, their rhythm, their history, their culture. We have to do it in a way that prepares them to compete on an international stage.

One of the big discussions today in the world of elementary and secondary education is accountability. Accountability does matter. But, for me it is not about NCLB and AYP and all of the

other testing measures. I understand and agree that schools ought to be accountable for results their authorizing bodies, districts, the state, etc. And the results that matter are student achievement. We must do what has to be done to make sure the children in your care succeed academically.

I said that we should be accountable to various authorities, but in truth for Black people there are more important individuals to whom we are accountable. Who are they?

- Nat Turner and Denmark Vesey
- Harriett Tubman and Sojourner Truth
- Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Malcolm X and Marcus Garvey
- Monroe Trotter and Ida B. Wells
- Mary McLeod Bethune and Benjamin Mays
- WEB DuBois and Booker T. Washington
- Our forefathers and foremothers who endured the master's whip
- The four students who sat down at the lunch counter
- The families of your students
- The students

You owe it to our history to help our children find a way out of the despair that is descending upon their lives. We support parental choice as a necessary element to any effort to truly transform the educational reality of our children. But, we must be clear to ourselves and everyone else—choice has a value in and of itself, but at the end of the day most of us believe that by providing choices- we can create



**“DON'T JUST TAKE A CHANCE ON YOUR CHILD'S**



quality choices. It is incumbent on us to fight for both. We cannot sit idly by and support schools anywhere no matter who runs them that do not provide quality education for our children. If we use choice as one mechanism to take control of our children's education, then we must be better than what others have done for them. It is immoral for us to treat them in ways that are no different than the places we have been complaining about for years.

We must not support places that do not have the proper learning tools, have people teaching our children who do not know what they are doing, folks who are in it trying to make a quick buck. This is wrong and we must have the courage to say so.

WE ALSO MUST NOT EQUIVOCATE WHEN IT COMES TO NOT SUPPORTING various parental choice schemes that do not promote the interest of the people that we organized ourselves to support. We must continue to raise the question- how will these plans impact the power arrangements of the existing order of things? If low-income and working class black families are just an after thought we must say no.

We must work with all of our allies, but it must be done in a way that shows mutual respect. We are deeply appreciative of the support we have gotten from funders, but we must always stand on our principles no matter what.

So, we must use this conference to rededicate ourselves to the battles that lie ahead.

The results we seek will not materialize overnight. This is not a sprint to the goal line; it will be a test of perseverance and commitment. Our faith tells us that the race goes not the swift but to those who endureth until the end. The endurance we need will be difficult to muster, but the commitment to do so must never be in question- for there is no mission more important than saving our children.

We talk about how we love our children. The greatest love we can show them is to continue fighting for their education.

At the same time, we must also place demands on our children. We must demand and expect from them respect and hard work. We must not make any excuses and we cannot allow them to make any either. I mentioned the practice of freedom. We must insist that they understand the meaning of freedom. Amun Hotep wrote "Freedom is not a place; rather it is a continuation of struggle."

Freedom should not be viewed as a goal rather it must be seen as a launching pad from which to reach our goals. Without purpose, freedom hardly matters. Freedom does not make us free. Freedom only gives us license to pursue our goals. Freedom is being shackled to identity, purpose and direction, and being in constant pursuit.

We must insist that they be in constant pursuit of learning. But, we must provide the environment, the direction, the support, and the love to aid them in their pursuit....



EDUCATION...CHOICE IS THE ANSWER, NO QUESTION."

# Quality Educational Options School Tours

On Thursday, March 16th, 100 Symposium participants set out to visit a school of their choice. This year, nine schools were selected to host the Quality Educational Options School Tours. Each school had an interesting story, boasting community revitalization, a university-district partnership, African-centered curriculum, and more.

Once participants returned from the school visits, they were welcomed back with a box lunch and the school tours debrief session. In the session, administrators, teachers and students hailing from the schools featured on the tours engaged in discussions with participants. The session filled with eager participants that were ready to share their experience and ready to ask questions on how to create quality educational options in their schools back home. One of the most enjoyed aspects of the school tour debrief session was the chance to learn about the other schools that were featured on the tour.

As one participant stated, "The debrief session reopened my eyes and provided the value of each school. I enjoyed learning about the diversity, methods of learning and good leadership represented by all the schools."

Here we present a brief profile of each of the schools featured at Symposium 2006.

## **Barratt-Edison Middle School**

In the Fall of 2001, after the state take over of several low performing Philadelphia schools, Barratt Middle became one of many schools managed by Edison Schools, Inc. Along with this partnership, came a new vision and focus for Barratt Middle. Barratt Middle-Edison Partnership School's vision is a World Class Education for every child.

Since 2001, Barratt Middle-Edison Partnership School has continued to defy the odds. With a diverse population of students ranging from

89% African American, 10% Asian and 1% other, Barratt test scores continue to rise. With success such as this, it is no surprise that principal Roy McKinney, Jr. has received accolades from Edison Schools, Inc, the state of Pennsylvania and the school District of Philadelphia as an effective administrator.

## **Cornerstone Philadelphia Christian School**

In response to the 1980 Philadelphia teachers strike and subsequent distress in Philadelphia schools, attorney James Sweet and

evangelist Tony Campolo began investing themselves in the lives of children in Southwest Philadelphia. By 1988 Cornerstone Christian Academy was born with 40 children, kindergarten to third grade. Located in the heart of southwest Philadelphia, Cornerstone has since grown to over 200 kindergarten to eighth grade students, 15 teachers and an annual budget of over \$1 million. Cornerstone is a co-educational, independent Christian school offering a full academic program for its students.



"EXCELLENT, ENERGETIC SYMPOSIUM... SO MANY



### Central High School

As stated by the Philadelphia Inquirer, "In an ideal world, all students would get the kind of education available at Central, both demanding and diverse." Chartered in 1836, Central is America's 2nd oldest public high school. Central graduates have excelled in almost every field - famous actors, scientists, doctors, writers, painters, politicians, athletes, Pulitzer and Nobel Prize winners among them. Central High School is a coeducational college preparatory school in the School District of Philadelphia. Over 98% of Central alumni graduate from a 4-year college or university. Central students reside in every area of Philadelphia and represent the widest variety of racial, ethnic, geographic and economic groups.

### Lotus Academy

Lotus Academy is nestled in Germantown, a historical neighborhood of Philadelphia. With an Afro-centered focus, the Lotus Academy program builds its programs by laying a strong foundation for the proper academic, moral, social and cultural

development of its students. The Lotus Academy teaches all of the universally mandated academic subjects, but places a special emphasis in the areas of language arts, mathematics, science and computer science. The foundation of our innovative curriculum rests on its emphasis on thinking, communicating, and problem solving. The foundation is enhanced with the comprehensive language subjects French and Kiswahili as well as the 8th grade Rites of Passage program.

### Martin Luther King, Jr. High School

The traditions of this school began with groundbreaking ceremonies in 1969. Originally conceived as Northwest High School, the name was changed to honor the great, then recently slain, civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Martin Luther King High School's mission is to emulate the principles of Dr. King, while providing all students with the opportunity to prepare themselves to be productive adults through academics, and activities that connect young people to future careers and their community.

Today, King High School is one of six schools, being managed by Foundations, Inc. With a total of 1,600 students enrolled, King High school continues to make history by the scholastic achievement of their students.

### New Media Technology High School

In 2003, National BAEO received a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to create 15 new small high schools in partnership with EdVisions Cooperative and The Big Picture Company. New Media Technology Charter School features an innovative approach to learning that challenges students to work with their teachers, parents, mentors and peers to create projects that meet state standards. Students choose to major in Digital Photography/Videography, Website Design and Development, Presentation Software, or Video Game Design. New Media currently has a 1:16 teacher to student ratio, and a 1:1 student to computer ratio.



CHOICES [AND] ALWAYS SOMETHING TO DO™

**Sadie Tanner Mossell  
Alexander University of  
Pennsylvania Partnership  
School**

In June 1998, the University of Pennsylvania, School District of Philadelphia and Philadelphia Federation of Teachers announced an unprecedented commitment to public education: the creation of an exemplary PreK-8 neighborhood public school. The Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander University of Pennsylvania Partnership School was developed with the participation of parents, teachers, university faculty, community members, and neighborhood groups. The small class size is optimal for teaching and learning with a student-to-teacher ratio of 17:1 in Kindergarten and 23:1 in grades 1-8. The student body reflects the rich diversity of the school's neighborhood. Representing more than 19 countries and speaking many languages, Penn Alexander students thrive as they learn to appreciate world cultures.

**Spruce Hill Christian School**

Spruce Hill Christian School was founded in 1978. Involved with a neighborhood church and a growing Christian community, they chose to live with their families in a struggling urban neighborhood to be salt and light. They soon recognized the need for a quality Christian educational alternative for their own children and other children in their racially integrated neighborhood. Now in its 28th year, Spruce Hill Christian School is bearing healthy fruit. Spruce Hill Christian School has approximately 180 students from kindergarten through eighth grade who come from most regions of the city and some nearby suburbs.

**West Oak Lane Charter  
School**

In 1997, the West Oak Lane community requested educational options for its children. The following year, the Ogontz Avenue Revitalization Corporation (OARC) responded by establishing the West Oak Lane Charter School. West Oak Lane Charter School offers an ambitious research and standards-based curriculum. It was the founders' belief that when students are given the opportunity, they rise to high academic and behavioral performance levels. With this expectation, West Oak Lane Charter School ensures each student's educational progress while laying the foundation for life success. Today, West Oak Lane Charter School's roster includes over 700 students attending grades K-8.







# A Day in the Life of Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander School

*By Lakiya Emerson*

West Philadelphia was in crisis in the early 1990s. Growing crime drove businesses and middle class families to fly from the area; and as it became more depressed, West Philadelphia's ails came to override the academic opportunities afforded by its proximity to the University of Pennsylvania. The public schools were failing. Unlike some urban universities in the face of such adversity, the university did not build walls around its campus. The tragic 1992 murder of a graduate student drove the institution's decision to do the exact opposite. They met with community members to address one of the neighborhood's greatest needs—an excellent school.

Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander School rose out of this commitment. Alexander, which opened in 2001, is a k-8 public school, serving 490 students in a building like none other. It is also called the Alexander Penn School to reflect the its partnership with the university. Six BAEO attendees had the honor of walking this unique school's halls. As they entered the school they were greeted by music from a group of students practicing Canon in D.

According to Ann Kreidle, the school planning coordinator, the university and community members set out to develop the ideal urban school—one with adequate funding, an excellent academic program, strong leadership and entrenchment in the community. "The surrounding areas of Philadelphia get a lot more money because of the way the system is set up, so, we wanted to show that money makes a difference," said Kreidle.

The university currently donates \$1,000 per pupil. This money, in addition to public dollars and other grant monies, allows the school to have a student-teacher ratio of 17:1 for kindergarten and 23:1 for grades 1-8 as well as six computers in each classroom, and after school programs.

The school has a rigorous liberal arts program that includes the usual math, science, social science and literacy, but also includes arts, music, and foreign languages. The curriculum is research-based and comes from Penn's own Graduate School of Education. Along with this research-based curriculum, the school uses the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment and the Terra Nova Assessment to track students' performance gains throughout the year. Last year, Alexander's first graduating 8th grade class exceeded state and local districts in reading and math test scores. Fifty-seven percent of fifth graders performed at or above grade level in reading, and 74 percent passed math assessments, which was a 20 percent increase. And 65 percent of third graders passed the reading assessments, while 84 percent passed math tests.

In one fourth grade class, BAEO Symposium attendees watched students prepare for state tests that were two weeks away. While teaching students to properly fill in the answers on standardized tests, teacher Sharon Williams also directed her class to think of different methods for solving math problems. She used this approach because Alexander teachers do not teach to the test. They are more interested in producing students that can think and question as opposed to just filling in blanks. The teachers are assisted in this process by the University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education, which offers instructional training and other types of professional development to Alexander teachers.

The community is a large part of the classroom experience. Parents assist teachers; Penn state professors guest teach classes; projects highlight the 19 cultures represented within the school; and after hours are just as busy as the school day, with community activities filling the gym and common areas. In one second grade class, a University of Pennsylvania professor was doing a chemistry

“THE SENSE OF URGENCY AND AN UNDER



“I HAVE LEARNED IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONNECT WITH OUR ADVERSARIES IF NOTHING [ELSE] BUT TO BE VISIBLE. MYTHS ARE KILLED WHEN THE TRUTH SHOWS UP. AS WARRIORS IN BAEÖ, WE SHOULD BE ON THE FRONT LINE OF ISSUES IN OUR RESPECTIVE AREAS... TACKLE [ISSUES] ONE AT A TIME IS WHAT I HAVE LEARNED TO DO”

experiment for his daughter and her classmates. In another class, a parent assisted the teacher in getting the students ready for recess. The school hallways were lined with student renditions of Kente cloth and various writings about their thoughts and after school, the gym is full of men playing pick-up basketball, women taking Pilates, and groups of people working on arts and crafts. The building fosters this community feel.

“When the Alexander Penn program was developed everyone agreed that a building should be designed to match,” Kreidle said. They built a facility that is completely opposite from the hundred-year-old buildings that house many of Philadelphia’s schools. Large open spaces were set up to capture the community feel of open schools. However, the designers decided to go with more traditional style classrooms to help keep the students focused. One of the school interiors most unique attributes is the natural sunlight that invades every corner of the school interior. It streams from the large windows that line the school entrance and classrooms.

Despite the goal of building the ideal school, Sadie Alexander has not been free from criticism. University of Pennsylvania and community members both

agreed that a neighborhood school would be best for the community—one that was not magnet, nor lottery. Instead, district lines were drawn. However, these lines, which in some places are drawn in the middle of streets, angered many community members who felt the university was building an elite school for their faculty’s children. Indeed, 20 percent of the Sadie Alexander student population is the child of a Penn State faculty member. However, the West Philadelphia community is still largely low-income, making the majority of Sadie Alexander’s students a member of these disadvantaged families. To diffuse this anger, the university also works with surrounding public schools to strengthen academic programs and provide teacher development opportunities among other resources.

Sadie Alexander has become a prime example of how urban schools should work. The National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities gave the school a “gold standard” for the research based curriculum that drives its classes. But accolades are not as important as the students that have benefited from the work. This year, 75 percent of Sadie Alexander’s graduating 8th graders were accepted into the high school of their choice.



STANDING OF HOW TO EMPOWER PARENTS”





# A College Education for Every Child

By Lakiya Emerson

"A college degree for today's students gets them what a high school diploma got their parents," said Yakima Rhinehart, program director of the South Carolina College Summit during a session titled *A College Education for Every Child*. Yet, she said, each year 200,000 students can go to college but don't. Students from the lowest income quartile who make A's on standardized tests are going to school at the same rate as students from the highest income quartile who make D's.

According to Rhinehart, this debunks the argument that poor children are not prepared to go. She says the reason for the shortfall is that these children are not guided through the transition between high school and college. More significantly, children in poor urban areas are boxed in by their environment.

College Summit focuses on students with 2.0 to 3.0 GPA. Rhinehart said that these are the students who still manage to show up and pass in addition to helping out at home by washing clothes, baby sitting, or working 20 or 30 hours a week. When these students go to college, they are influential to their peers, she said, because the kids with 3.0 or above are generally expected to succeed. If someone with a GPA of between 2.0 and 3.0 is able to get into a college other students feel motivated to try.

College Summit brings students to college campuses to attend a series of workshops to teach them about the transition to college. This includes writing essays, filling out applications, applying for financial aid, and learning to self-advocate. College Summit gives children the one-on-one counseling that they don't receive in their schools. "We expect poor kids to do things for themselves. Rich kids have counselors to walk them through the college application process," Rhinehart said.

Rhinehart stressed the need to find the right college to fit your needs. To give an example, she had the audience give one of their shoes. Once they left a shoe, she had everyone pick a different shoe from their own. She then had them put on these shoes. Of course they didn't fit. "We tend to try to give the cookie cutter approach to college," she said. "But, one size does not fit all."

"Because we are in an environment where things that don't work don't stay, if you want to make change, you have to start with systemic change. You have to institutionalize solutions. You have to make a three-five year commitment to systemize the solutions the same way the problems are systemized," she said.

**"SELF IMPROVEMENT IS  
[THE] KEY TO IMPROVING  
THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION  
FOR OUR CHILDREN!"**



# Highly Qualified Teachers

By Lakiya Emerson

The *Highly Qualified Teachers* session brought several speakers together to discuss methods for selecting the best educators to fulfill student needs and mesh with school culture. Speakers included Leena Poss and Katheryn Reed of Edison Schools, a private school management company, Leslie Talbot of K12 Connect Inc, a private company providing technology solutions for human resources and data management, and Tracy Elizabeth Clay of Teach For America, a non-profit organization that recruits recent graduates to teach in urban schools for two years.

Poss and Reed highlighted Edison School's four key components of recruitment: identifying projected openings early, building an adequate candidate pool, starting early, and giving teachers feedback.

Poss stressed the importance of providing teachers consistent observation and clear feedback. Coupled with open lines of communication, this approach helps identify teachers who are not performing well or are frustrated in their positions and eventually who will be staying or leaving. Edison uses intent to return surveys and staff roster reviews to identify teachers who are planning to return and in what capacity they would like to return. Would they like the same grade level, a different grade level, or a new classroom? Are they interested in leadership positions?

While surveying staff, obtaining early budget approval will quickly determine how many teachers a school will be able to afford each year. Issuing contracts to teachers early can keep staff happy, while helping to determine vacancies. Once staffing needs have been determined, a candidate pool can be built.

In building a candidate pool, schools can use organizations like Teach for America, local colleges and universities, online websites, advertisements, job fairs, open houses, and alumni referrals. Schools should develop marketing materials that speak to their audience. The materials should express what is expected of candidates and of teachers hired. Once candidates have been identified, phone interviews are great for screening to determine if they are worth pursuing. Edison's own interviewing process includes a face-to-face interview, oral response, a writing sample, and guest teaching. They use open-ended questions to determine past behavior. When candidates have been selected, it is important to consistently communicate with them so they know what is happening and so that you won't lose them to another school.

Leslie Talbot of K12 Connect described four key practices for finding good candidates. She said leaders should market their schools, collect data at each stage of the hiring process, support their staff



“NETWORK, LEADERSHIP AND

“THE SYMPOSIUM PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY...(1) TO LEARN INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHARTER SCHOOL AND VOUCHER PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO PARENTS; [AND] (2) AS A FIRST TIME PARTICIPANT, TO OBSERVE THE FUNCTIONS AND PURPOSE OF BAEO.”

and provide effective means for staff development. In marketing a school, leaders should develop a school profile that includes information about the school's location, its governance (whether it's traditional or through private entities), highlight external partnerships, enrollment data, student demographics, staff statistics, staff development practices, and opportunities for leadership.

Talbot stressed that the more information collected from the beginning of contact, the better schools will be able to support a teacher, develop their skills and retain them. She said it's important to develop a clear and consistent job description and to keep track of which recruitment efforts yield the best candidates. You should ask yourself the following:

- How long did the hiring process take? Why?
- What was the yield?
- What are the reasons for attrition?
- Why do people leave and where do they go after they leave? Are there certain people types who consistently leave?
- Who are the emerging leaders?

Effective communication of school goals and mission to all leaders and staff is essential to ensuring that everyone is working together to fulfill student needs. Establish a transparent accountability system. Provide ongoing support with instructional aides, downtime for planning, and a strategic plan for the school that

matches the missions and vision. Staff development should also be aligned to staff evaluation tools.

Clay, from Teach from America (TFA), discussed hiring nontraditional candidates and finding the right type of people for your school. Nontraditional candidates are those who do not have a BA in primary or secondary education but who do have a BA in any other subject along with alternative certification. These are recent graduates and mid-career changers. TFA, whose mission is to end education disparities, recruits recent graduates who commit to two years of teaching. TFA recruits aggressively at 500 colleges across the U.S., using a headhunting model. The organization studied the profiles of the most successful teachers and highlighted seven competencies that reflect the exact type of teachers they want in their program. Clay suggests that schools use this same approach to avoid casting too wide a net.

Most alternative recruits are driven by mission. Clay stressed developing a mission based approach to marketing your school and recruiting teachers because they will subsequently overlook the small pay and the location of your school. A clear career path should be articulated for these teachers with ongoing support during training.

For more information on alternative certification programs in your area, visit [www.teachnow.org](http://www.teachnow.org).



MOBILIZE THE COMMUNITY”

# Generation Education: Using Multimedia to Change Education

By Danielle Wright

With an overflowing room, the session, *Generation Education: Using Multimedia to Change Education* was a hot topic at Symposium 2006. Presenters, Tony Simmons Co-director of the High School for Performing Arts (HSRA) and Matthew Johnson, President of Strive Media provided an engaging and thought provoking session on how to transform education through multimedia.

To open the session, students from HSRA shared a recording of their music and a live radio broadcast, which is hosted, written and produced by students every Sunday. The show, entitled, "Fo' Show" highlights local musicians in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. In addition to listening to students work, participants were engaged in learning how students are being exposed to the business side of the music/entertainment industry. Devon Johnson is one of those students. Devon has been creating "beats" since he was 8 years old. Now, he not only creates the "beats" he sells them. Devon explained to participants how he has developed contracts and collects royalties from beats that he has sold.

Similar to HSRA students, the young people of Strive Media are making a difference and gaining skills. As Strive's President, Matthew Johnson stated, "we're trying to give our students skills, we want to make them marketable." Participants learned just what that "marketability" is as Ebony Hayes, Editor and Chief of Strive's magazine shared her experience. Ebony shared, "I feel like a real journalist because I get to travel. I'm starting College in the fall, and I feel privileged, how many other 17 year olds will be able to say they were Editor and Chief of a magazine?"

Most importantly, participants learned that there is a formula to get kids excited about school and a way to teach state standards without compromising creativity or fun—engage them in something they want to learn. Isaac Ewell, the session moderator summed it up best by saying, "it's amazing to see what students can do when they're tapped into their passion."

“THIS WAS MY FIRST TIME ATTENDING A  
BAEO SYMPOSIUM. I WAS VERY IMPRESSED  
WITH THE ORGANIZATION OF THE  
CONFERENCE, THE WIDE VARIETY OF  
WORKSHOPS AND THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF  
THE CONFERENCE.”



# President & CEO Luncheon

By Danielle Wright

"We got something worth getting excited about, it's a great day for fighting for the educational freedom of our children," declared Dr. Vernard Gant, a member of BAEO's board. Dr. Gant welcomed participants by leading a powerful prayer filled with the hope of continued blessings and strength for the organization. Following Dr. Gant's prayer, Leon Tucker, Director of Communications for national BAEO introduced Lawrence Patrick, III, BAEO's President & CEO.

Continuing in the tradition of the President and CEO luncheon, Lawrence invited national staffer, Monique Miller to the stage and thanked her, along with her colleague, Shree Medlock for the work they have done with Project Clarion. Monique, Director of Project Clarion also expressed her sincere gratitude to many people, specifically those in the Philadelphia, Detroit, and Milwaukee Chapters of BAEO.

Additionally, Isaac Ewell, Director of BAEO-Gates Small High Schools Project gave acknowledgment to four of the BAEO-Gates schools. Each school received an oversized check, which represented the grant they were awarded through BAEO and the Gates Foundation. The grant, awarded over a 3-year period, is given to assist in the school's planning and implementation process.

The highlight of the luncheon was when individual awards were given out. These awards were given to people who over the past year have made specific contributions to the choice movement.

The first award given was *The Vision* award. *The Vision* award was given to the "Milwaukee Dream Team", as coined by Lawrence. The "Dream Team" consisted of George and Susan Mitchell, Tim Sheehy and BAEO's own, Dr. Howard Fuller. This team unselfishly and strongly carried out the campaign to lift the enrollment cap in Wisconsin—a feat that has produced big waves of hope for parental choice supporters throughout the country.

The next award, the *MVP* was given to educator, Camilla Green. Camilla, a gifted teacher, facilitator and writer was selected as the 2006 MVP for her work in continuing to push for quality educational options for young people. Similar to Camilla's work, Reverend John McVicker was given the *Unsung Hero* award for his contributions in helping to "lift the cap" in Wisconsin.

As the luncheon came to a close, BAEO President & CEO, Lawrence Patrick, III reminded Symposium participants to continue the fight. He challenged the audience,

"Don't lose the sense of urgency.... If we walked into a Kindergarten classroom today, 1/2 of those students, in that class will not graduate. We have to change that; we have to be the warriors, we have to be willing to fight. Don't lose the sense of urgency we're in a crisis, but the good news is we know we are and we're doing something about it."

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“SYMPOSIUM WAS GREAT! IT CERTAINLY  
NETTED US THE RESULTS WE WERE AFTER.  
UPON OUR RETURN A SIGNIFICANT  
COMMUNITY LEADER-WHO ATTENDED  
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ALL YOUR BRILLIANCE.”

— Sondra Samuels



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**FIRST-TIMER'S ORIENTATION**

—	BA0605	First-Timer's Orientation – Howard Fuller, Lawrence Patrick III, Deborah McGriff
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**GENERAL SESSIONS**

—	BA0606	Welcome Breakfast: Youth Voice, Parental Choice and Quality Options – Deborah McGriff / Address: Dwight Evans / Keynote: Kevin Johnson
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—	BA0607	President & CEO Luncheon – Lawrence Patrick, III
—	BA0608	Conversation with Board Chair and President & CEO – H. Fuller, L. Patrick, III
—	BA0610	Board Chair Dinner - Educating Our Children: The Struggle Continues – Howard Fuller

**CONCURRENT SESSIONS – Friday, Mar. 17 – 10:30-11:45am**

—	BA0611	Say It with Pride! How to Launch Effective Local Media Campaigns – Kim Turner / Alexis Moore, John Henderson
—	BA0612	Real Voices for Real Solutions: Successful Strategies for Closing the Achievement Gap – Gerard Robinson / Jay Rosener, Robert Hall, Thomas Greene, James Victory
—	BA0613	Homeschooling 101
—	BA0614	Leveling the Playing Field: Options for Financial Access to a Quality Education – Thomas Stewart / Felice Greene, Khari Brown
—	BA0615	Highly Qualified Teachers – Allen Penn / Tracy Elizabeth Clay, Leslie Talbot, Katherine Reed
—	BA0616	Generation Education – Multimedia to Change Education – Nmuta Jones / Tony Simmons, Matthew Johnson

Qty	CD #	Session Title/Speaker(s)
CONCURRENT SESSIONS – Friday, Mar. 17 – 2:00-3:30pm		
—	BA0618	Leveling the Playing Field: Options for Financial Access to a College Education – Renee Gadson / George Greenidge, Donald Hense
—	BA0619	Faith-based Leadership in the Parental Choice Movement – Cheryl Brown / William Bryant, Sr., Reginald Jackson, John McVicker
—	BA0620	Youth and BAEO: Taking it to the Next Level – Andrea Foggy-Paxton, Glenda Clark
—	BA0621	Bridging the Party Divide: Efforts for Democratic Support for Parental Choice – Leon Tucker / Kevin Chavous, Dwight Evans, Dixie Allen
—	BA0622	Building Alliances for Local Campaigns – Gerard Robinson / Isabel Santa, Derrell Bradford, Anna Marcucio, Deborah Greiveldinger

CONCURRENT SESSIONS – Sat. Mar. 18 – 9:30-10:45am		
—	BA0623	No Child Left Behind: Getting Parents the Information They Need – Monique Miller / Tabitha Meadors Temple, William Douthit, Ylonda Dickerson
—	BA0624	Mastering Subject Matter 10x10 – K. Miata Fuller / Bob Pavlik, Denise Pitchford

Qty	CD #	Session Title/Speaker(s)
—	BA0625	School Designs that Work – Alicia Wright / Tracey McDaniel, Ina Walker, Hugh Clark
—	BA0626	A College Education for Every Child – Addison Small-Bradley / YaKima Rhinehart
—	BA0627	Politics of Choice – Dewayne Andrews / Rebeca Nieves Huffman, Anthony Williams, Jason Fields
—	BA0628	Parent Empowerment Session: Discovering What Makes Your Child Tick – Darlene Callands-Curry / Shree Medlock
CONCURRENT SESSIONS – Sat. Mar. 18 – 9:30-10:45am		
—	BA0629	Lessons from the Field: BAEO-Gates Small High Schools Project / Isaac Ewell / Camilla Green, Nmuta Jones, Toshav Storrs, Tony Simmons
—	BA0630	Parent Empowerment Session: Discovering Your Child's Learning Style – Darlene Callands-Curry / Shree Medlock

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# Special Messages from Symposium Participants

“TO DATE, I AM STILL CHARGED  
SPIRITUALLY WITH THE INFORMATION  
AND INTERACTIONS FROM THE  
SYMPOSIUM. YOU CAN’T COME AWAY  
THE SAME, AND I THINK YOU GUYS  
DESIGNED IT THAT WAY....

“I REALLY WANT TO SAY THANK YOU  
FOR NOT GETTING TIRED. FOR NOW, I  
WILL NEVER GET TIRED BECAUSE I HAVE  
WATCHED AND LEARNED FROM YOU  
GUYS... MUCH LOVE, MORE PRAYER.”

— *Daria Stone*

“THANK YOU FOR INVESTING TIME,  
ENERGY AND HEART INTO THE BAEO  
SYMPOSIUM. YOUR EFFORTS ARE NOT IN  
VAIN AND I’M SURE MANY DELEGATES,  
LIKE ME, ARE REFRESHED YEARLY BY THE  
SYMPOSIUM.”

— *Yvonne Jones*

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