

Parental Choice: The Struggle Continues.

2004
SYMPOSIUM
REPORT

INFORM **INSPIRE**
EMPOWER



Black Alliance for Educational Options

INFORM



LEADERSHIP MESSAGE, HOWARD FULLER, DEBORAH MCGRIFF, LAWRENCE PATRICK III

Prior to the start of the Civil Rights Movement, there were actually folks out there who believed Black people were less than 100 percent of a human being.

During that time, those same people who reinforced that despicable notion were the ones telling us where we could - and could not - eat, use the rest room, drink water and sit inside a movie theater.

Try telling that to a young Black man or woman in 2004.

The days of living in such a deadly frame of mind are gone - replaced by a new day where Black people enjoy the benefits of controlling their lives and their future. Better careers, better living conditions and more self-respect are just a few of the benefits of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. And as a result of the Brown vs. Board decision more than 50 years ago, we are able to enjoy more educational freedom.

But all that didn't just "happen."

Many of our brothers and sisters fought and many died so you and I can live in a country free from persecution. They fought hard to win back the control over their lives and the lives of their children - which is exactly what we must do if we are going to achieve the same liberation and control over our children's education.

School Choice is vital and BAEO is sending the message loud and clear that we want the right to decide what schools our children attend. We want to take control of our children's future and give them a chance at living as a contributing member of society. And we will succeed.

But we have to stay encouraged. We have to stay focused. We have to stay dedicated. And to do this, we must stand firm and stand together. Among other things, that is what Symposium is all about. It's a show of the commitment and strength upon which we are building our message that School Choice is necessary.

But while we continue to be shining example of where the School Choice movement is going and encouraged by the progress that has been made, there is still much to overcome."

And we are here to stay. We are here to fight.

SCHOOL TOURS, THURSDAY, MARCH 4

Several groups of Symposium attendees were shuttled around Milwaukee for visits to eight of the city's innovative charter schools. The schools visited were:

New Hope Institute of Science and Technology, Believer's in Christian Academy, Early View Academy, Darrell Lynn Hines College Preparatory Academy, Milwaukee Urban League Academy of Business and Economics, Marva Collins Preparatory School of WI, Central City Cyber Schools and Agape Center of Academic Excellence.

Those who toured Central City Cyber School were able to observe a learning environment where each of the schools 305 students are assigned laptop computers and teachers use state-of-the-art tools, like a touch-sensitive marker board networked with a computer.

At the Agape Center, visitors observed the benefits of a high level of interaction and attention between teachers and the schools' 327 students. The Agape school also showcased a unique amenity for students in the way of a relaxation room, decked out with futons, mattresses and other comfortable furniture in low light.

The school tours generated countless discussion throughout the weekend on the innovation in place at Milwaukee charter schools.



The school tours allowed Symposium participants to interact with students from Central City Cyber School.



Students at the Agape Center for Academic Excellence perform for BAEO visitors.



Central City Cyber School students are each assigned laptop computers.

Other sessions included:

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND: WHAT'S NEXT?

SUSTAINING QUALITY SCHOOLS



Acting mayor Marvin Pratt welcome's BAEO to Milwaukee



Symposium activities generated plenty of discussion among the participants



National Board Member Omar Wasow

BAILEY & SULLIVAN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE: LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES TO TAKE HOME, THURSDAY, MARCH 4

Over 150 parents, teachers and school leaders attended the Bailey & Sullivan Leadership Institute. The pre-Symposium training seminar featured the leadership topics Lead by Example, Social Entrepreneurship, and Coalition Building. Featured presenters were Jackie Cissell, Howard Fuller, Deborah McGriff, June Perry and Jonathan Williams.

McGriff opened the training by discussing the ten traits of leading by example, adopted from *Investment Business Daily*. They included:

1. How you think is everything. Be positive thinking of success, not failure.
2. Decide upon your true dreams and goals.
3. Take action. Goals are nothing without action.
4. Never stop learning.
5. Be persistent and work hard.
6. Learn to analyze details.
7. Focus your time and money.
8. Don't be afraid to innovate and be different.
9. Deal and communicate with people effectively
Learn how to understand and motivate others.
10. Be honest and dependable. Take responsibility.



Vice Chair of the National Board Jaqueline Cissell

Following McGriff, Perry defined social entrepreneurship and Williams described his efforts to launch and sustain The Accelerated Schools Charter School in Los Angeles. Perry shared that many non-profit organizations pursue social entrepreneurship strategies as a way to ensure sustainability, but sometimes start projects for the wrong reasons out of financial weakness or desperation. To avoid damaging the organization, Perry suggested that organizational leaders determine first if the anticipated financial reward is worth the risk. This requires doing your homework and identifying start-up capital or investors who believe in you and the organization's work.

To conclude the institute, Cissell and Fuller followed McGriff with a truth-telling overview of the steps needed to build effective coalitions to further the school choice movement. In response to participant questions, Cissell and Fuller shared their insights on how to counter opponents and deal with situations where members of the coalition seek to promote their own agenda rather than the agenda of the coalition. To counter opponents, they advised, "It depends on the enemy and timing. You have to determine if a response is necessary."

For coalition members who promote their own agenda to the detriment of the coalition, Fuller shared "You can't control everything...so pick your battles. Sometimes just let them know that you know they are going behind your back. Try to be honest

and lay out your issues. Sometimes people have personal problems. They are cowards. But you have to learn what not to say in their presence for the next time."

BAEO first announced the Bailey & Sullivan Leadership Institute (BSLI) during our Chapter Leaders meeting in September 2003. The BSLI was created in honor of Deidre Lynne Bailey and Lisa

Yvette Sullivan. In the late '80s, Lisa and Deirdre were part of a team of New Haven teenagers and young adults who registered African-Americans to vote and organized young volunteers for political campaigns, resulting in the election of New Haven's first black mayor, John Daniels. Deirdre was a high school student at the time and Lisa was a graduate student at Yale. Deirdre and Lisa committed themselves to supporting and mentoring emerging leaders.

The recommendations and enthusiasm of Symposium participants confirmed the need for BAEO to design a comprehensive leadership model. This spring, BAEO will complete the final phase of research and development for the BSLI and roll out the full program in 2005.

FIRST TIMERS LUNCHEON, THURSDAY, MARCH 4

Those who attended the Symposium for the first time were formally welcomed to the event with a luncheon in the hotel's Empire Ballroom. There, BAEO leaders presented newcomers as well as some of the organization's veterans with information outlining the mission and the various educational options that empower Black families.

After presentations given by Board Chair Dr. Howard Fuller, President & CEO Lawrence Patrick III, and Karlana Glenn, BAEO's Director of Membership & Chapter Development, audience members were given the chance to ask questions. Questions included BAEO's plans for the upcoming year, special projects and communications efforts.



National Board Member Virginia Walden-Ford

THE FOLLOWING IS AN ABBREVIATED VERSION OF DR. HOWARD FULLER'S KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Dr. Fuller dedicated his remarks to the memory of Deidre Lynne Bailey and Lisa Yvette Sullivan, quoting the hip-hop group Arrested Development to describe their legacy:

"And I will fight to my dying day and even after that my ghost resides with pride." Lisa and Deirdre fought to their dying day and there is no doubt that their ghosts, their spirits resides within us with pride."

I know many of you have come to this conference with your own trials and tribulations. Many of you have issues in your own life. And I know that those of you who have taken a courageous stand for parental choice have been called names, some of you have lost friends, lost sleep, lost folks who you thought loved you.

All because you believe as I do that low-income Black parents and, indeed, low-income Latino parents, low-income white parents, low-income Native American parents, low-income Asian parents ought to have the right, the capacity, the power to send their children to the schools that they feel will work best for them.

So, I feel for you today, but I am inspired by your courage. My heart and soul is swelling up with pride because it feels good to know that our organization and our movement is growing in spite of all of the opposition, all of the lies, distortions and half-truths about our organization and individuals in our movement. We are growing because our cause is righteous, because on the issue of parental choice we are on the right side of history.

We must be clear to ourselves and everyone else—Choice may have a value in and of itself, but at the end of the day most of us believed that by providing choices- we would create 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.

We talk about how we love our children. The greatest love we can show them is to commit to their futures. All of us adults—we are the only hope for so many of our children; we are the ones who must defend those who can not yet defend themselves.

Please don't misunderstand. Our children are not helpless. Each of them is brimming with incredible promise. It is because of that promise they hold that we must truly deliver on our promise- the BAE0 promise- to our children, for our future.



Dr. Fuller delivers his keynote speech.



Dr. Fuller's mother, Juanita Smith, listens to her son speak.

Lyrics from "Pride"

by Arrested Development

"I tread these waters and
make waves. Yes I do!
Always triumphant never fail
We have come too far to
turn back now
Freedom is our right and
we demand that
Because I exist, I resist
Because I am alive, I strive"

Other sessions included:

OPENING SESSION WITH PARENTS IN CHARGE

**COMMUNICATING YOUR
CHAPTER'S SUCCESS STORIES**



Local charter school students perform.



Symposium '04 was full of special moments.

PRESIDENT & CEO AWARDS LUNCHEON, FRIDAY, MARCH 5

President and CEO Lawrence Patrick presented awards of appreciation to a number of BAEO members who have exhibited an unwavering commitment to the advancement of our mission and the School Choice movement.

Those presented with awards included:

Virginia Walden-Ford, who was presented with The Vision Award, Tracie Craft presented with The Unsung Hero Award and Dr. Deborah McGriff, who was presented with The MVP Award.

Also featured at the Awards Luncheon was the keynote speech by US Department of Education Secretary, Rod Paige who proclaimed, "Our work is just beginning."

Paige went on to explain to the hundreds who jammed into the hotel's Crystal Ballroom, "We must overcome traditions that continue to overlook, segregate, and cast aside African American, Hispanic, special-needs, and low-income children.

"There is a great divide in American education, an achievement gap that is an emerging educational apartheid," the Secretary added. "We need your continued commitment and leadership to close the gap, and to elevate all students to a world-class education."

Following his speech Secretary Paige was presented with a collage symbolizing the countless children and their families BAEO is working to empower with educational options.



BAEO National Board Member Mashea Ashton speaks to Symposium participants.



Teaching instructor Harriet Ball goes over proven strategies to reach underachieving students during her "Musical Ball Points" session.

MUSICAL BALL POINTS, SATURDAY MARCH 6

Intense. High-energy. Invigorating.

Just three of the many terms used to describe the *Musical Ball Points* session presented by teaching instructor Harriet Ball.

One after another, Symposium participants piled into the session to experience the multi-sensory teaching strategies proven to reach and teach underachieving students.



Charter school students also participated in Symposium activities.



Audience members listen during the "Ball Points" session.

SPEECH BY US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SECRETARY ROD PAIGE

The following is an abbreviated version of Secretary Paige's keynote address

Choice is one important, profound tool for improving American education, to make it more inclusive, fair, and just.

We must continue to present choice as a credible and successful possibility for educational reform because we know it works. There is considerable evidence that opportunity scholarships can make a positive difference. Competition changed the educational environment here in Milwaukee, as you know. We must make that evidence part of the national debate, and help policy-makers, parents, and teachers to obtain a clear, credible, and fair picture of choice.

Like you, I understand the frustration when things don't go as fast as we hope. The pace of educational reform remains slow now, after the formal end of segregation and the hope of Brown v. Board of Education 50 years ago. Many people remain indifferent and unmoved by the growing disparities in American education. The problems are still there to see: lack of educational achievement, the denial of educational opportunities, and the economic consequences that follow.

We must directly address the reasons for economic, political, and cultural alienation. We must heal division, not accept it. We must grow together as a nation, not grow separately. And we must become inclusive for all people, not just because it is the basis of our constitution, but because it is the right thing to do.

The best way to do all that—the single best way—is to make our schools more successful and equitable. It is to give our schools the resources they need, to demand that they educate all of our children, to place qualified teachers in every classroom, and to allow parents more educational options.

We will join together to call for reform, to overcome the special interests, customary traditions, and personal perks that sacrifice our children to mediocrity. We will fight for a quality education for all American children. This country was founded on democracy and choice. It is appropriate to give it to parents and their children.



US Department of Education Secretary Rod Paige



Dinner at the Milwaukee Public Museum Art Gallery.



Symposium '04 hosted a number of special performances.



Symposium participants share a laugh.

Other sessions included:

PARENT POWER: NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

**BAMBI MEETS GODZILLA:
FUNDRAISING BASICS FOR THE GRASSROOTS**



Learning ...



Thinking ...



Sharing across generations.

MOTIVATING ACROSS GENERATIONS: A CALL FOR SHARED LEADERSHIP AND OPEN DIALOGUE, FRIDAY MARCH 5

During the session Motivating Across Generations, Jeanette Mitchell of Cardinal Stritch University presented generational points of view for individuals born between 1901-2003. Leaving room for disagreement and questioning, the following generational types were discussed by the intergenerational mix of participants.

1. The Civic Generation (1901-1931)
 - a. Believe poverty has shifted from old to young
 - b. Have a heritage of sacrifice for the greater good
 - c. Think a better world is coming for their great grandchildren and grandchildren
2. The Silents (1932-1944)
 - a. Uncomfortable with their good fortune
 - b. Fear society will lose its gifts of compassion, sympathy and fairness
 - c. Seek ways to serve others and to use their expertise and wealth
3. The Boomers (1945-1963)
 - a. Seek perfectionism personally and in society
 - b. Mobilize around principles, not self-interest
 - c. Retool social institutions from grassroots up
4. The Generation Xers (1964-1981)
 - a. Face a luckless social cycle – AIDS, economic downturns, slashed social benefits, lack of social safety net
 - b. Feel a strong sense of alienation
 - c. Have experienced the most ethnically diverse communities
5. The Millennials (1982-2003)
 - a. Promote collective action
 - b. Great protector for children – seek to restore “safety net” for children
 - c. Strong ties to community institutions and public service

Mitchell engaged presenters Omar Wasow, Nicole Johnson, Thomas Mitchell and session participants in small group intergenerational conversations of the values, challenges and opportunities interconnecting one generation to the next. The values of family, faith, and respect were shared across generation, and were described as important starting points, to combat the challenges generations face when attempting to build relationships and communicate with each other.

Participants and presenters affirmed the need for shared leadership, on-going dialogue, listening and teaching, and motivation. These strategies were brainstormed as ways to bridge the cultural and political generational divides that exists in our communities.

POLITICS OF CHOICE



Newark, NJ City Council Member, Cory Booker, is also a BAEO National Board Member.

ELECTED OFFICIALS ROUNDTABLE



Elected officials address the audience.

CLERGY ROUNDTABLE



BAEO National Board Member Rev. Eddie Edwards addresses a session audience.

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B A E O M I S S I O N

The Black Alliance for Educational Options is a national, member organization whose mission is to actively support parental choice to empower families and increase educational options for Black children.



Black Alliance for Educational Options

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