

HOW ARE THE CHILDREN?



**CENTER FOR
EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITY**
ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL REPORT 2018 – 2019





**CENTER FOR
EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITY**
ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY

“You can’t build a chimney from the top.”

-Dr. Joseph Winthrop Holley

The Center for Educational Opportunity logo and philosophy reflects the historical background of Albany State University founded by Joseph Winthrop Holley whose autobiography is titled “You Can’t Build a Chimney from the Top.”

In 1957, fires at Albany State College destroyed the Hazard Training School and damaged Caroline Hall. Today the Caroline Hall chimney is still standing at the university and is a sign of pride for students, faculty and alumni. The chimney and smoke represent the perseverance and discovery of learning. These are balanced by a serif logotype reflecting the Center’s mission and expertise.

The Center serves Albany State University in its mission to elevate historically underserved populations by addressing the many challenges that face African Americans and other students of color, adult learners, first generation students, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and others from underserved populations, and forms strong partnerships with K-12, government agencies, and community outreach organizations to increase access and success rates.

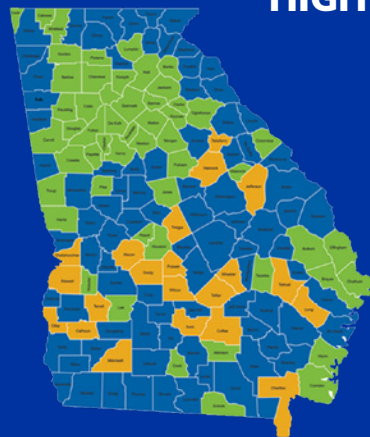
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BARRIERS TO ECONOMIC GROWTH

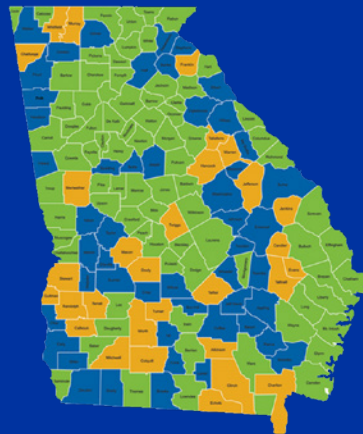
ADULTS WITHOUT A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA



Less Than 20% ■
 20–25% ■
 Greater Than 25% ■

U.S. 13.3 %
Georgia 14.6%
Atlanta 10.8%
Hub 14.1%
Rural 19.0%
STATE RANK - 41

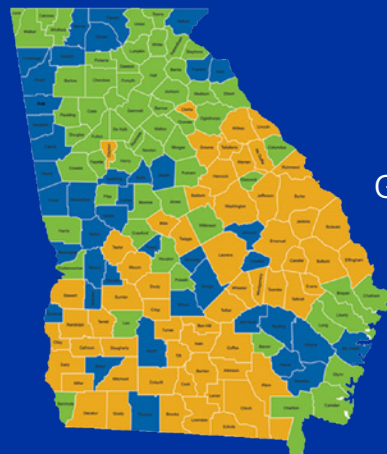
ADULTS NOT WORKING - AGES 25-64



Less Than 35% ■
 35–45% ■
 Greater Than 45% ■

U.S. 28.2 %
Georgia 30.8%
Atlanta 26.1%
Hub 32.9%
Rural 35.7%
STATE RANK - 40

POVERTY RATES



Less Than 20% ■
 20–25% ■
 Greater Than 25% ■

U.S. 15.5 %
Georgia 18.4%
Atlanta 15.4%
Hub 21.1%
Rural 20.7%
STATE RANK - 40

Source: The Economics of Education,
 Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education 2015

CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY AT ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY

MISSION

We exist to advance educational research in order to strengthen and empower fragile communities, from the bottom-up.

VISION

Communities formerly considered as fragile will demonstrate strong measurable indicators of societal well-being; they will become highly competitive with domestic and foreign competition; and will have a skilled well-educated workforce. Improved access to education exists; barriers have been reduced; family autonomy and educational choice is present. While Albany State University is located in the state of Georgia, the Center aims to establish new, and sustain existing partnerships with local, state, and national research organizations throughout the U.S. and abroad.

CORE VALUES

Inquiry – We are researchers who aim to find, discover, and uncover educational models, innovations, and opportunities that provide access to high-quality education for families living in fragile communities.

Integrity – We support research findings that are true, fact-based, and honest. Research discoveries and outcomes should be driven by legitimate research methods and designs.

Innovation – We embrace ‘creative destruction’; that is, we recognize the important role that innovation plays in education and the need to remain vigilant in keeping up-to-date with trends in education.

Integration – We value integration across disciplines, across cultures, across socio-economic lines, across sectors, and across educational choices. We believe that a better-educated community will result in a better-prepared workforce, and a better society.

Impact – Research that is action-oriented and impact-based allows us to study and observe outcomes that serve as solutions to educational challenges with shared data findings. In doing so, the deployment of solutions is strategic and timely.

Rural Schools Often Underserved, Under Resourced

“Schools in underserved, under resourced communities—which are often racially and spatially insulated from opportunities—struggle to meet the needs of students from low-income neighborhoods....While many scholars, myself included, have researched that one’s zip code in urban areas should not determine students’ access to opportunity, the same is true for students in rural areas.”

Source: Sheneka M. Williams (2017). African American Education in Rural Communities in the Deep South: Making the Impossible Possible. American Enterprise Institute.

WE STRIVE TO:

Engage – faculty and students at the nation’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities in research activities to better understand the characteristics of high-quality education for families living in fragile communities that lead to improved educational opportunities.

Promote – educational seminars, workshops, training and recruiting activities that support faculty and students at HBCUs in the utilization of research methods; thus, leading to sustained research pipeline.

Deploy – bottom-up approaches to educational inquiry via engagement of stakeholders (i.e. communities, students, parents, teachers, administrators, organizations, and education partners) in research that is action- and impact-oriented; thus, leading to long-term societal change.

Investigate barriers – internal and external—faced by communities that seek access to high-quality education for their families; thus, leading to policy signals to local, regional, state, and national organizations.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

There is an educational crisis in the United States. Children in fragile communities are being left behind. Every child is not succeeding and we must commit ourselves to do everything in our power to intervene and ensure that all Americans have access to a high-quality education.



The Center for Educational Opportunity at Albany State University was conceived to help build the capacity of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, the largest pipeline of black educators and producers of researchers worldwide, to provide research that helps to move people living in fragile communities from promise to prosperity, recognizing that “educational attainment for fragile families may be the single most important factor in helping young people find good jobs, acquire the resources to start businesses and contribute to rising prosperity in their families and neighborhoods.” (The State of Opportunity in America: Understanding Barriers & Identifying Solutions 2019).

Since April 13, 2018, through generous funding from the Center for Advancing Opportunity (CAO), we have established our headquarters on the campus of Albany State University, awarded grants to promising researchers and sought to form strategic partnerships that will help us to accomplish our work, and have aimed to understand the history of education in America.

Sixty-five years after the historic Brown vs. Board decision, schools remain separate and unequal. Disparities in educational attainment, and all that flows from that, pose a real threat to our nation’s security. We have learned in the ensuing years that education reform must include choice; and options for homeschooling, charter schools and public schools cannot be limited by race, income or geography.

Our aim is to build a repository of action-based research from the narratives of those living in, working with, and researching barriers to high-quality education for those living in fragile communities.

Thank you for being a partner.

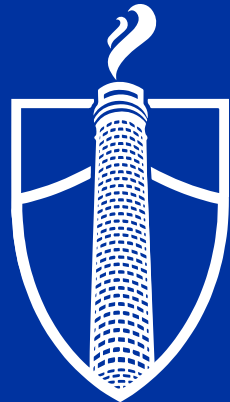
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathaleena Edward Monds'.

Kathaleena Edward Monds, Ph.D.
Founding Executive Director



Representatives from the Thurgood Marshall College Fund’s Center for Advancing Opportunity and the Charles Koch Foundation present Albany State University a \$3 million check to establish the Center for Educational Opportunity. Left to right: John Hardin, Charles Koch Foundation director of University Relations; ASU student Chiagoziem “Sylvester” Agu; Marion Fedrick, ASU interim president; Dr. Kathaleena Edward Monds, ASU professor; Gerard Robinson, executive director of the Center for Advancing Opportunity; Sen. Freddie Powell Sims; and Andre Armour, ASU Student Government Association president. Photo credit: Reginald Christian



Steven A. Minter: Spelman-Pioneer in Educational Opportunity

(Editor's Note: The following are excerpts from the speech of Steven A. Minter, former Under Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education as he spoke in Sisters Chapel during the centennial convocation held in September.)

"It is truly an honor to be here today, surrounded by the fine Atlanta University Center and speaking to you in this historic, inspirational Sisters Chapel. The foundation of this Chapel, much like the foundation of this center, was built on the dreams of great women and men, dedicated to our heritage and to the ideals of freedom and excellence.

As I stand here today, I can almost hear the words of Spelman's former President, Florence Read as she told of her dream for Spelman: "Quality education will be the criterion, with a loyal scorn for second best."

As I stand here today, I can almost hear the words of Dr. Benjamin Mays as he said, "The tragedy does not lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach. It is not a disgrace not to reach the stars, but it is a disgrace to have no stars to reach for."

As I stand here today, I can almost hear the words of Marian Wright Edelman as she spoke about Spelman, "We will continue to produce women leaders who will bring a special dimension to their professions, their community, and to the nation."

These are the words which have assisted one of this nation's greatest natural resources—black womanhood—in providing educational, political, and spiritual leadership for this country.

This is the legacy. As Spelman enters its second century, as we enter the 21st century together, I feel it is important to think about this heritage as we project into the future. . . .

Being in the midst of this Chapel, and the Atlanta University Center, one feels a sense of respect for the past and a similar excitement about the opportunities of the future. For this center has truly been a pioneer, a leader in educational opportunity and excellence. The institutions of the center held open the doors of opportunity to black Americans when others were closed. Since the signing of the first "Agreement of affiliation" in 1929, the center has served as a model for all American institutions of higher education. It has shown this nation that through cooperation, students could share in the combined resources of great places of learning.

As our country—indeed the world—enters an era of scarcities and diminishing resources, one can only be awed by the great foresight of the founders.

Spelman has added a unique dimension to the Center. This college has been dedicated to the Center's goal of excellence while serving as a model in the full development of individual potential. Spelman has provided generations of black women with the special opportunity of developing a sense of pride and promise, an inquisitive mind, and most importantly, a deep love of learning.

As I have studied about Spelman in preparation for my visit here, certain thoughts emerged from the pages of my reading: "Destined to stand above the crowd," "Our school is built upon this rock—the rock of standards of excellence, honor, and respect." "I saw words like determination, preparation, and learning interspersed with the words of joy, peace, and fulfillment.

It was clear from my reading, and now in the face of those I see before me today that Spelman graduates are entering the future with minds prepared to learn and hearts filled with promise. . . .

And so as this academic year begins, let us examine what futurists have predicted is ahead and what these predictions will mean to this audience who will undoubtedly provide stewardship in the voyage.

Alvin Toffler, in his book *Future Shock*, spoke about what we can expect, "We are creating a new society. Not a changed society, not an extended, larger-than-life version of our present society. But a new society." . . .

Those who study the future of the work place have made interesting observations about the demand for an improved quality of life. They predict that there will be an increase in opportunities for flexitime, job sharing, part-time, and compressed work week schedules. Futurists predict that by the year 2009, most Americans will work an average of 20 to 25 hours per week rather than the standard 40 hours. Workers will demand high quality, affordable day care centers.

Now that I have drawn a picture of the opportunities

which are ahead, let us take a candid look at some of the obstacles and responsibilities which we will face together.

I feel that we are at a pivotal point in the struggle for ensuring equal access and opportunity for all Americans. If the 1950's was the decade of awakening, the 60's a decade of legislation, the 70's a decade of litigation, we hope that the 80's will become a decade of implementation. We will struggle to implement long-delayed and difficult changes. And in my long career in public welfare, as well as my work as the under secretary of education, I have learned the great lessons and limitations of progress.

As black women, you may have felt, and will continue to feel, the vestiges of both racism and sexism—double discrimination. . . . For these women have come up against the 'ole boy network, covert racism and sexism and have begun to question exactly *what* lies at the end of the rainbow.

I feel that we can, by working together, overcome these obstacles. Certainly, obstacles have never deterred black Americans before. From the days of bondage in this nation to the present, days which I might add often fall to surface in the pages of the history books in our schools, black women have been essential pillars in the flight for freedom. These days ahead which futurists have labeled "dangerous", will provide a substantial but surmountable challenge for us.

However, solutions to these obstacles will come only with the sustained efforts by a coalition of interests—government, the private sector, parents, schools, and most importantly—you.

. . . . As this school year begins, it is clear that you have responsibility to prepare yourself for the future. Study the future and take advantage of the special opportunities at Spelman to prepare for the work place of the 21st century. I think we can all agree that there will be no use for horse and buggy training in a space age economy.

Take time to dream, work as hard as you can toward the realization of that dream—then work harder. Prepare yourself to take risks. For those who are afraid to risk, and to fall down, never truly reach great heights.

By taking risks, you will never stop learning. The slogan of the U.S. Department of Education is "Learning never ends."

. . . . As Spelman approaches its next 100 years of excellence, you must contribute not only with your generous support but with your time and continued interest in the hopes and aspirations of generations of black women who will come after you. The next century will bring scarcity and you will have delicate choices to make. However, the very survival of this institution will depend, in large part, upon your commitment. . . . There is a great deal of power in this sanctuary today. As we have all seen, and will continue to see in our lifetime, power must be directed toward positive change. As we enter the future, on dangerous, uncharted waters, we must direct our power toward building a world-wide society based on the positive values of all human life. . . .



Minter's Assistant: "Liberal Arts Education Liberates Minds"

In late November, the College presented Ms. Sandra T. Gray, former Special Assistant to the former U.S. Under Secretary of Education, Steven A. Minter.

Ms. Gray told the Spelman students that schools must return to the basics—a liberal arts education where all the elements are important. "Liberal arts education liberates the mind," she said adding that education majors must be in the mainstream. She urged the continuation of black college support. "Black colleges are the cornerstones of our black progress in America."

With a distinguished career in education, Ms. Gray served in previous years as Special Assistant to the Secretary at the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; Executive Assistant to the Commissioner of the U.S. Office of Education. Her experience in the field of education has been wide and varied, and include teaching and administration in the public schools of Arkansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Maryland. At the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Ms. Gray served in the capacities of professor, director and supervisor of several programs in education.



Platform guests during the September Centennial Convocation featuring the Honorable Steven Minter, the former undersecretary of the U.S. Department of Education were distinguished indeed. Seated left to right are Dr. Charles Meredith, chancellor of Atlanta University Center, Morris Brown President Dr. Robert Threatt, Morehouse President Dr. Hugh Gloster, Spelman President Dr. Donald M. Stewart, Mr. Minter, Morehouse President Emeritus Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, currently president of the Atlanta Board of Education; Barbara Whitaker (C'52), assistant superintendent for student/community services of the Atlanta public schools.

"The function of education is to teach one to think intensely and to think critically...Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

RESEARCH PILLARS

We believe our efforts will help move families from promise to prosperity through the social mobility that education provides.

The Center for Educational Opportunity examines the barriers to educational access and attainment for fragile families. We seek out the best practices that will impact the way educators, policymakers and community stakeholders provide educational opportunity and choice. Our academic research has real-world relevance. We endeavor for the Center for Educational Opportunity to become a premier resource for education reform solutions and believe our efforts have the power to help transform lives.

Four pillars of inquiry identify themes where we believe Historically Black Colleges and Universities are uniquely qualified to provide evidence-based research and greater understanding that informs and influences policy. Our aim is to attract and encourage collaborative, bottom-up research with and among the nation's HBCUs in order to achieve the greatest societal impact through changes in policy.

Educational Opportunities: to research both pedagogy and policy approaches that can be used to increase opportunities to education.

Educational Models: to investigate unique educational models that bring about the greatest educational impact.

Educational Access: to understand the importance of outcomes-driven education that meets the needs of the ever-changing student and community populations.

Educational Innovation: to research and study the barriers to success and how the use of innovative approaches can develop principled educators and prepared students.





GEORGIA ON MY MIND

According to the Georgia School Board Association, Georgia has approximately “1.7M K-12 students, 180 school districts, three school districts with only one school, and 73 school districts that have only one school for each level of grades.” (GSBA, 2019).

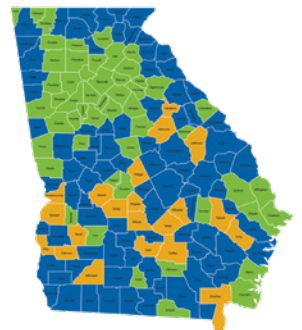
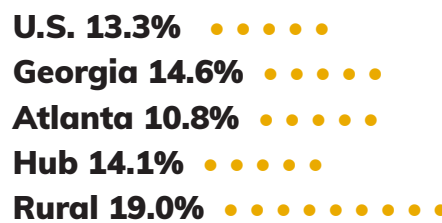
Among the challenges seen in rural Georgia are transportation, poverty, and teacher retention. The numbers of teachers leaving the profession remains a challenge — “50 percent of teachers leave the profession in the first five years.” (GSBA, 2019).

Research conducted by the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (GPEE) highlights additional gaps in education that exist in rural Georgia, including:

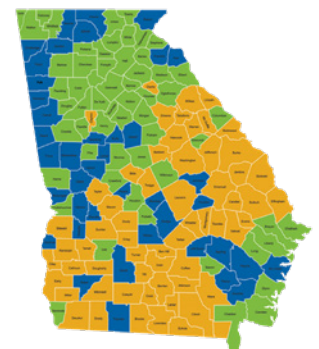
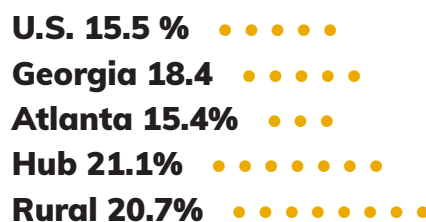


Eight of the 19 counties with less than 1,000 students enrolled are located in the Center for Educational Opportunity at Albany State University’s service area, along with 12 of the 51 school districts with five or fewer students per square mile

The State of Georgia RANKS #41
IN ADULTS WITHOUT A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA



The State of Georgia RANKS #40
IN RATE OF POVERTY



Source: The Economics of Education, Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education 2015



SCHOOL CHOICE IN THE UNITED STATES 2019

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Parental Choice and Satisfaction

In 2016, a higher percentage of students who lived in cities (53 percent) than of those who lived in suburbs (37 percent), towns (36 percent), and rural areas (32 percent) had parents who reported that public school choice was available.

School Enrollment Over Time

The percentage of students enrolled in assigned public schools in 2016 (69 percent) was lower than the percentage in 1999 (74 percent), while the percentage of students who were enrolled in chosen public schools (19 percent) and the percentage of homeschooled students (3 percent) were both higher in 2016 than the corresponding percentages in 1999 (14 and 2 percent, respectively). The percentage of students enrolled in private schools in 2016 (9 percent) was not measurably different from the percentage in 1999.

Public Schools and Enrollment

In fall 2016, a higher percentage of public charter school students than of traditional public school students were Black (26 vs. 15 percent) and Hispanic (33 vs. 26 percent), while a higher percentage of traditional public school students than of public charter school students were White (49 vs. 32 percent) and Asian/Pacific Islander (6 vs. 4 percent).

Source: EdChoice 2019 Schooling In America: Public Opinion on K–12 Education, Busing, Technology, and School Choice



Private Schools and Enrollment

In fall 2015, some 5.8 million students (10.2 percent of all elementary and secondary students) were enrolled in private elementary and secondary schools. Thirty-six percent of private school students were enrolled in Catholic schools, 13 percent were enrolled in conservative Christian schools, 10 percent were enrolled in affiliated religious schools, 16 percent were enrolled in unaffiliated religious schools, and 24 percent were enrolled in nonsectarian schools.

Household Characteristics of Students in Public and Private Schools

In 2016, the percentage of students in grades 1 through 12 living in poor households was higher for chosen public school students (19 percent) and assigned public school students (18 percent) than for private school students (8 percent).

Homeschooling

In 2016, the percentage of students who were homeschooled was higher for those living in households with three or more children (4.7 percent) than for those who were the only child in the household (2.7 percent) and for those living in households with two children (2.3 percent).

School Crime and Safety for Public and Private School Students

In 2017, a higher percentage of public school students ages 12–18 than of private school students in the same age group reported knowing of a gang presence at school (9 vs. 2 percent), seeing hate-related graffiti school (25 vs. 6 percent), and being called hate-related words at school (7 vs. 4 percent) during the school year.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics 2019

THE CONDITION OF EDUCATION AT A GLANCE

Research suggests that living in poverty during early childhood is associated with lower-than-average academic performance that begins in kindergarten and extends through high school, leading to lower-than-average rates of school completion.

In a survey of Georgia School district leaders conducted by the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, 70% of responding district leaders indicated that poverty is the most significant out-of-school issue that limits student learning.

Overall in Georgia, 45% of all residents live in a child care desert. 61% of rural residents live in areas without enough licensed providers. A low-income family spends nearly 40% of their budget on these services.

70% of district leaders indicate that poverty is the most significant out-of-school issue that limits student learning

Source: Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education Top Ten Issues to Watch in 2019

Children’s Access to and Use of the Internet

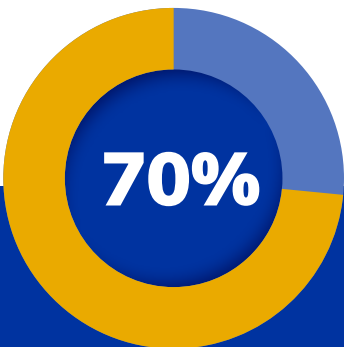
The percentage of children ages 3 to 18 using the Internet from home was generally higher for children in higher income families. In 2017, about 73 percent of children with family incomes of \$100,000 or more and 70 percent of children with family incomes of \$75,000 to \$99,999 used the Internet from home, compared with 49 percent of children with family incomes of \$10,000 to \$19,999 and 45 percent of children with family incomes of less than \$10,000.

Racial/Ethnic Concentration in Public Schools

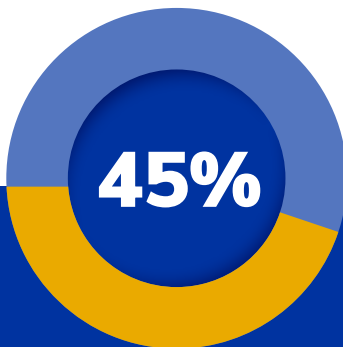
In fall 2015, approximately 30 percent of public school students attended schools in which minority students comprised at least 75 percent of total enrollment. Over half of Hispanic, Black, and Pacific Islander students attended such schools.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics 2019

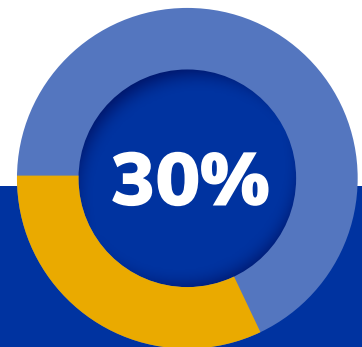
LEARNING AFFECTED BY POVERTY



LIMITED ACCESS TO CHILDCARE



MAJORITY ETHNIC SCHOOLS



CHARACTERISTICS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

In 2015–16, about 80 percent of public school teachers were White, 9 percent were Hispanic, 7 percent were Black, 2 percent were Asian, and 1 percent were of Two or more races; additionally, those who were American Indian/Alaska Native and those who were Pacific Islander each made up less than 1 percent of public school teachers. The percentages of public school teachers who were White and Black were lower in 2015–16 than in 1999–2000, when 84 percent were White and 8 percent were Black.¹ In contrast, the percentage who were Hispanic was higher in 2015–16 than in 1999–2000, when 6 percent were Hispanic.

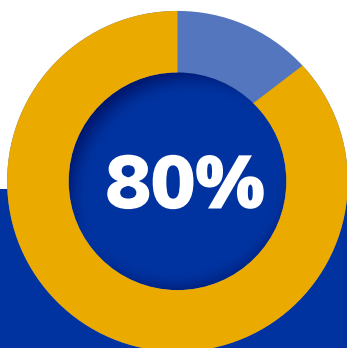
About 77 percent of public school teachers were female and 23 percent were male in 2015–16, with a lower percentage of male teachers at the elementary school level (11 percent) than at the secondary school level (36 percent). Overall, the percentage of public school teachers who were male was 2 percentage points lower in 2015–16 than in 1999–2000. At the elementary school level, the percentage of male teachers was 1 percentage point lower in 2015–16 than in 1999–2000. By comparison, at the secondary school level, the percentage of male teachers was 5 percentage points lower in 2015–16 than in 1999–2000.

In 2015–16, about 10 percent of public school teachers had less than 3 years of teaching experience, 28 percent had 3 to 9 years of

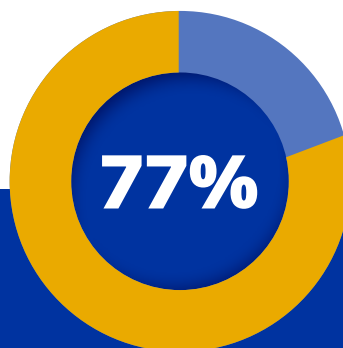
experience, 39 percent had 10 to 20 years of experience, and 22 percent had more than 20 years of experience. Lower percentages of teachers in 2015–16 than in 1999–2000 had less than 3 years of experience (10 vs. 11 percent) and over 20 years of experience (22 vs. 32 percent). However, the percentage who had 10 to 20 years of experience was higher in 2015–16 than in 1999–2000 (39 vs. 29 percent). There was no measurable difference between 1999–2000 and 2015–16 in the percentage of teachers with 3 to 9 years of experience.

In 2015–16, the average base salary (in current 2015–16 dollars) for full-time public school teachers was lower for elementary school teachers (\$54,020) than for secondary school teachers (\$56,180). Female teachers had a lower average base salary than male teachers (\$54,560 vs. \$56,920). Average salaries were higher for Asian (\$61,350), Pacific Islander (\$59,900), and Hispanic teachers (\$56,240) than for White teachers (\$55,120), teachers of Two or more races (\$52,750), and Black teachers (\$52,420), and were lowest for American Indian/Alaska Native teachers (\$48,600). In addition, average salaries were higher for Asian than for Hispanic teachers and were higher for White teachers than for Black teachers and teachers of Two or more races.

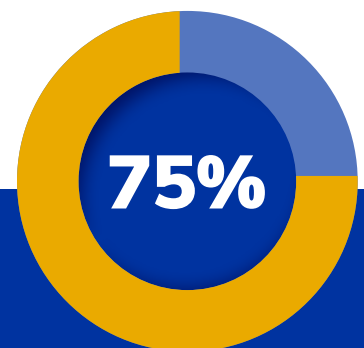
PERCENTAGE OF WHITE PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS



PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS



PS STUDENTS ARE HISPANIC, BLACK AND PACIFIC ISLANDER



TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING LITERACY



In 2018, the average overall Technology and Engineering Literacy (TEL) score for 8th-grade students was 152 points on a scale ranging from 0 to 300. The average overall TEL score for 8th-grade students in 2018 was higher than in 2014 (150), when the TEL assessment was first administered. Student achievement on the 2018 TEL assessment varied by student and school characteristics. For example, female students scored higher on average than male students (155 vs. 150). The average TEL scores for Asian students (169), White students (163), and students of Two or more races (157) were higher than the average scores for students who were Hispanic (139), American Indian/Alaska Native (133), and Black (132).³ English language learners (ELL) had lower average scores (106) than non-ELL students (155). In addition, students identified as having a disability (SD) had lower average scores (118) than students not identified as SD (157).⁴ The average TEL score was highest for students whose parents' highest level of education was graduating from college (163). The average TEL score was lowest for students who did not have a parent who completed high school and for students whose parents' highest level of education was high school completion (the score was 138 for both groups). The average TEL score was higher for students attending suburban schools (156) than for students.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics 2019



Unequal Access to Social Capital Impacts Disadvantaged Schools

“School partnerships are important sources of school social capital. Schools may have unequal access to social capital due to the pattern of relationships in the school-partner network. Using data on school resource needs, sociometric measures, and a set of multilevel logit models, the results of a study of 211 New York City public high schools and 1,098 partner organizations from 1999 to 2005 suggest that high schools have unequal access to partner resources. Already well-endowed schools, in terms of having many experienced teachers or being embedded in dense networks, are most likely to partner. Disadvantaged schools, in terms of having many low socioeconomic status students or being in high-competition network positions, are least likely to partner. So, some policies promoting school partnerships may unintentionally reinforce existing structural inequalities among schools.”

Source: Bridwell-Mitchell, E. N. (2017). Them that's got: How tie formation in partnership networks gives high schools differential access to social capital. *American Educational Research Journal*, 54(6), 1221–1255.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

By most accounts, Albany, Georgia is considered a fragile community

—one that contains “high proportions of residents who face daily economic struggles and possess limited opportunities for social mobility” (Gallup, 2019, p. 3). It reflects many dualities; it’s both city and country, an economic hub yet economically depressed, and a beacon for higher education with the state’s highest unemployment rate. (Pirani, 2018).

According to the latest U.S. Census (2018), the city includes about 75,000 residents who are approximately 73 percent African-American, 23 percent White, 2 percent Hispanic, and 2 percent multiracial. The estimated median household income is \$31,843; the median household income in Georgia is \$52,977. Almost 33 percent of Albany residents live in poverty. The area’s poverty contributes to a minimal production of “locally grown” teachers.

As a teacher educator, I believe the best way to improve K-12 education in fragile communities is to diversify the African American pipeline. This includes recruiting among community-based organizations with a deep commitment to fragile communities, removing bureaucratic hurdles that limit the number of prospective teachers of color, and experiential learning from business, community, and educational leaders outside of the classroom. My desire to diversify the teacher pipeline is my inspiration to conduct research on K-12 education, particularly for fragile communities of color.

The Center for Educational Opportunity is an essential partner in my research efforts because it embraces innovative models for improving K-12 education beyond traditional public schooling. My work demonstrates how community-based and nonprofit entities can work outside of the school system, while in partnership with it, to improve learning outcomes for our most vulnerable student populations —Black boys.

Fragile communities have human resources that can be operationalized to support schoolchildren and meet their needs. Schools and school systems must link more closely with their community partners to expand educational opportunities and diversify the teacher pipeline. The Center supports community-based solutions for improving K-12 education, which aligns with my own research efforts.



**“If you surround yourself with people who lift you up, then you will never fall.”
- Erica DeCuir**

ERICA RECOMMENDS: *The Mis-Education of the Negro* by Carter G. Woodson

Dr. Erica DeCuir is an associate professor of Teacher Education at Albany State University. Her research centers on culturally-responsive teaching, K-12 teacher preparation, and the professional development of college and university faculty. She is the founding director of the Summer Learning Academy, a STEM-based summer enrichment program that promotes culturally-responsive practices for teaching STEM to culturally and linguistically diverse learners. She is a Chancellor’s Learning Scholar (2018-2019), the Albany State Teacher of the Year (2018-2019) Governor’s Teaching Fellow (2016-2017), College of Education’s Teacher of the Year (2017), and Curriculum Internationalization Faculty Fellow (2016).

As a teacher in a barrier island community in rural southern New Jersey,

—my students faced many of the same obstacles as those in the more frequently discussed urban communities. But they had additional challenges. Geographic isolation. Lack of access to some resources. Dependency on one industry – tourism – for an economic base. It is the stories of my students and others with whom I have worked in my 43-year career in education, that makes me passionate about advocating for students in fragile communities, particularly those in rural communities.

John Donne says, “...no man is an island...every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main...” These words have always resonated me when I think about students who are isolated by geography, by gender identification, by race, by ethnicity, by poverty. This is why I wanted to conduct this study.

The Center of Educational Opportunity partnered with Tall Poppy, Inc. to gather lessons on teaching in fragile communities from 12 of the nation’s current and former Teachers of the Year. Their work covering a range of topics, is compiled in a white paper soon to be released.

Katherine Bassett is an education innovator and advocate. Throughout her career, she has advocated for students to receive the highest-quality of education regardless of their zip code or family circumstances. She is the CEO of Tall Poppy, LLC and the former President and CEO of the National Network of State Teachers of the Year.

Tall Poppy, LLC was honored to coordinate work on behalf of Albany State University Center for Educational Opportunity (CEO) in producing a white paper featuring twelve outstanding teacher-leaders who contributed their thinking, stories, and passion in making a difference in the lives of students who live in fragile communities daily.



**“Embrace discomfort. When you are comfortable, you don’t grow.”
- Katherine Bassett**



Katherine Bassett served as Director of Policy and Partnerships for the Center for Educator Effectiveness at Pearson, and Director of Educator Relations at Educational Testing Service. She has facilitated the work of a consortium to develop the Teacher Leader Model Standards and served on the committee that revised the InTASC standards and defined learning progressions for those standards. She co-facilitated the development of the Model Code of Educator Ethics and has led the development of the Teacher Leadership Initiative competencies and Capstone project for the National Education Association (NEA), National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), and CTQ. Katherine spent 26 years in the classroom as a middle school librarian and served as New Jersey’s 2000 State Teacher of the Year.

TEACHER-LEADERS



ANNA E. BALDWIN, ED.D.

**Culturally Relevant
Education in Tribal Settings**

2014 Montana
Teacher of the Year

Flathead Reservation,
Montana



ABDUL B. WRIGHT

**Educational Equity and
Social Justice**

Instructional Coach and
Data Team Leader

2016 Minnesota
Teacher of the Year

Minneapolis, MN



CASEY BETHEL

**Supporting Teacher
Leadership in Fragile
Communities**

K-12 Science/STEM
Coordinator

2017 Georgia
Teacher of the Year

Douglasville, GA



ERICA DeCUIR

**Diversifying the Teacher
Pipeline**

Associate Professor,
Teacher Education
Albany State University

Founding Director, Summer
Learning Academy

Albany, GA



SARAH BELLEW-WELCH

**Birth to Five Literacy:
Community Outreach
and Advocacy**

Director of Instructional
Services and Policy

2015 Georgia Teacher
of the Year Finalist

Blue Ridge, GA



KAREEM NEAL

**Restorative Justice and
Community Building**

Special Education Teacher

2019 Arizona
Teacher of the Year

Phoenix, AZ



KELISA WING

Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Professional Development Specialist
2017 Department of Defense Education Activity State Teacher of the Year
Arlington, VA



KELLY ELDER

Educating Students On the Rural Fringe

Social Studies Teacher
2017 Montana Teacher of the Year
Helena, MT



LEE ANN STEPHENS

Promoting Racial Equity Among Teacher Leaders

Race Equity and Instructional Coach
2006 Minnesota Teacher of the Year
St. Louis Park, MN



KIMBERLY WORTHY

Reclaiming Humanity in Trauma-Informed Classrooms

Urban Educator, Education Consultant
2009 Washington, D.C. Teacher of the Year
Washington, DC



LAURIE CALVERT

How to Build a Professional Learning Network – English Language Arts Teacher

U.S. Department of Education Teacher Liaison, National Network of State Teachers of the Year
Mayodan, NC



MONICA WASHINGTON

Effective Strategies to Impact Policies & Practices for School Change

Instructional Coach and Manager of Inclusive and Responsible Educational Practices
2014 Texas Teacher of the Year
Texarkana, TX

EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

The Harvard Debate Council Diversity Project

Bottom-Up Program and Center for Educational Opportunity Give Students a Sense of Place and Purpose

Brandon Fleming's journey to becoming assistant debate coach at Harvard University and founder and CEO of the Harvard Debate Council Diversity Project in Atlanta was one fraught with struggle, disruptive behavior as a high school student, disdain for education, and an attempt at suicide that ironically saved his life.

"As a child, I experienced domestic abuse, violence and drugs, and it all manifested in disruptive and destructive tendencies," said Fleming. "I did not connect with education back then. The only reason I stayed in high school was to play basketball. When I went to college on a basketball scholarship, I could not have been happier."

Fleming's joy was short-lived. He sustained a career-ending knee injury and dropped out of college to take a job working 10 hours a day on a factory assembly line. He tumbled into depression and despair. One evening, Fleming went home and tried to kill himself with an overdose of pills. After waking up in the hospital, he made a promise to God and himself to change his life.

Fleming kept that promise and not only transformed his own life, but changed the lives of dozens and dozens of young people, which attracted the attention of the Center for Educational Opportunity at Albany State University.

Fleming first re-enrolled in college and made the debate team after being struck by what he saw in the movie, "The Great Debaters." Fleming's self-awareness began changing through the discipline, rigor, and passion required to debate. He believed it could help other children with struggles similar to those he experienced as a child, and began coaching five underserved children in a rundown garage on Saturday mornings. The number quickly grew to more than 50 children and he watched with sheer delight as their cumulative GPA rose from 1.2 to 3.5.

Fleming was recruited to join the Harvard debate faculty and the institution later approved his proposal to establish the Harvard Debate Council Diversity Project – an unprecedented pipeline program for

Harvard and other prestigious colleges.

Center for Educational Opportunity Founder Dr. Kathaleena Edward Monds cites the innovation of debate as exposing students to different ways to utilize skills beyond reading writing and arithmetic – critical-thinking skills development through debate.

"The Harvard Diversity Project takes youth from communities least expected to achieve and empowers them with confidence and self-determination," she said.

In 2017, a team Fleming coached competed against teams composed of 1,500 youth from around the world at the annual Harvard Debate Council Summer Institute. Fleming's students, the first all-black team to ever compete at Harvard, won in 2017. They returned to the competition in 2018 and also won.

Drawn by how the project's mission of extending greater educational equity to underserved communities dovetails with the Center for Educational Opportunity's mission, focus on education innovation, and aim to remove barriers like financial support. Dr. Monds led the Center's decision to pay the tuition for a student in the project to participate in Harvard's summer residency.

"Dr. Monds and CEO played a direct role in my student having the opportunity to travel to Harvard this past summer and participate in the university's debate residency," said Fleming. "That exposure helped to change a life. That same student is now enrolled as a freshman at Harvard and is a member of the class of 2023."



**"Dr. Monds and CEO played a direct role in my student having the opportunity to travel to Harvard and participate in the university's debate residency...That same student is now enrolled at Harvard."
- Brandon Fleming**

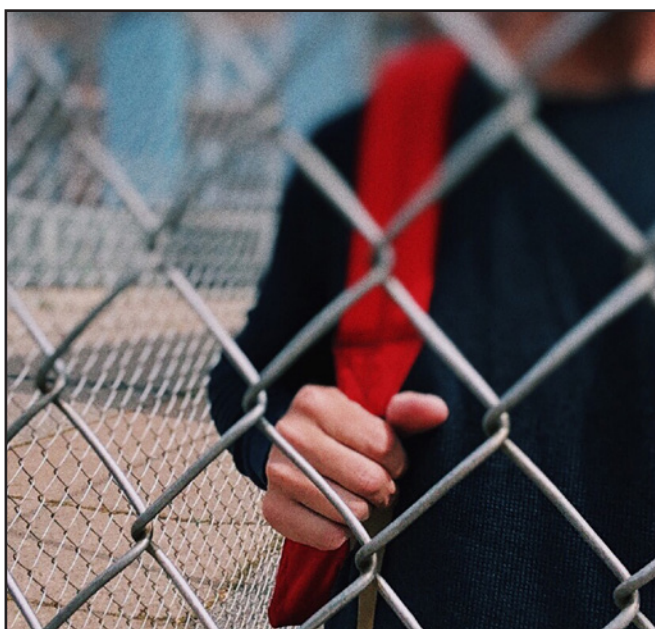
EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

Targeted Spiritual Coping Practices for Mothers Approaching Re-Entry

Mass incarceration is an epidemic plaguing communities of color across the country. Many citizens are left without effective tools to manage the trauma they have experienced. The adversity that the offender faces directly affects the trajectory of their lives, negatively impacts their communities, and costs the state hundreds of thousands of dollars each year.

Cristha Edwards, a graduate student researcher at Emory University Candler School of Theology, is seeking to create an effective educational model that teaches self-efficacy and empowerment through spiritual coping strategies in order to create sustainable change. Her research with 40 incarcerated women, who are parents of K-12 youth, at Georgia's Lee Arrendale State Prison is done in an effort to reduce recidivism.

After teaching a Christian-based master life course in her chaplaincy intern program using prayer practices, scripture and breathing techniques, participants reported feeling better equipped to handle their day-to-day life.



Edwards believes these strategies can help the women and their families for a lifetime.

“Many of the women are parents who didn’t know how to be effective inside or outside of prison,” said Edwards. “The goal is to identify effective behavioral mechanisms so that when they return home, they are better able to manage their children and life overall.” The educational model will include communication strategies for the parent to the child.



**“People are better able to heal when they better understand their context.”
- Cristha Edwards**

Her three-phase research includes a survey that gauges participants’ discipline, hopelessness, aggression and interpersonal issues. These four subjects have been found in previous research studies to be the most prevalent issues plaguing individuals during incarceration. Data analysis resulting in a policy paper and curriculum design will follow.

Edwards found that prior data and research findings lacked nuance of prison lifestyle and the tools that were being used in the chaplaincy settings ultimately reminded the women of the freedom they didn’t have.

“People are better able to heal when they better understand their context,” she explained.

Edwards looks forward to having the curriculum integrated within the school’s chaplaincy program and throughout the Georgia Department of Corrections.

EDUCATIONAL MODELS

Randal Seriguchi - Urban Ed Academy

Urban Ed Academy seeks to in-migrate 100 black male teacher-fellows into Bayview Hunter's Point, San Francisco, CA by December 2020. The initiative, Man The Bay, secures teacher job placements for program fellows while also providing them workforce housing during a four-year service commitment. The Center for Educational Opportunity has funded research that will inform the Man the Bay teacher preparation program and its intent to provide supports to male teachers of color working with minority youth populations in fragile communities in the San Francisco Bay area. Additionally, this research will influence the broader field of teacher preparation and practice at the elementary school level through recommendations on how to appropriately and intentionally support the development of male teachers of color.

Programs which target the recruitment and development of teachers of color must value teacher candidates' lived experiences. These experiences provide teachers of color with unique positions for working with students of color in the likelihood that they may have and do experience similar institutional and societal injustices and opportunity challenges (Kohli, 2009).

Teachers who are culturally matched with their students tend to have higher expectations and serve as positive role models in their students' development. These teachers provide students with opportunities to engage with rigorous curriculum through a variety of instructional methods.

Additionally, teachers who are culturally matched with their students recognize the academic and social scaffolds necessary to support their students' success. Currently, teachers of color account for 7% of the total teaching population across the K-12 educational landscape; students of color account for 15% of school populations (NCES, 2017).

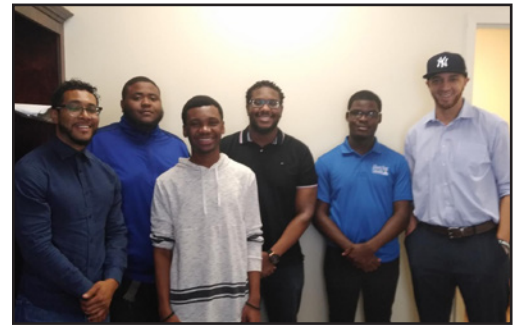
Historical and current trends show the majority of teachers in today's classroom are White female teachers from middle class backgrounds (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2016). As the population of students of color continues to rise, the cultural mismatch between teachers and students will continue to grow.

These mismatches can hinder the formation of strong relationships with students and sometimes contribute to teachers' lowered expectations of students of color. Cultural mismatches can also disrupt the meaningful implementation of innovative instructional practices, exacerbating the disconnect of the community sharing in the learning process of students. Consequently, the impact of cultural mismatch in today's classrooms impact Black male students the most (Gershenson et al., 2016).



“Teachers of color must be provided with preparation programs that value their intersecting social identities, experiences and voice.”
- Randal Seriguchi

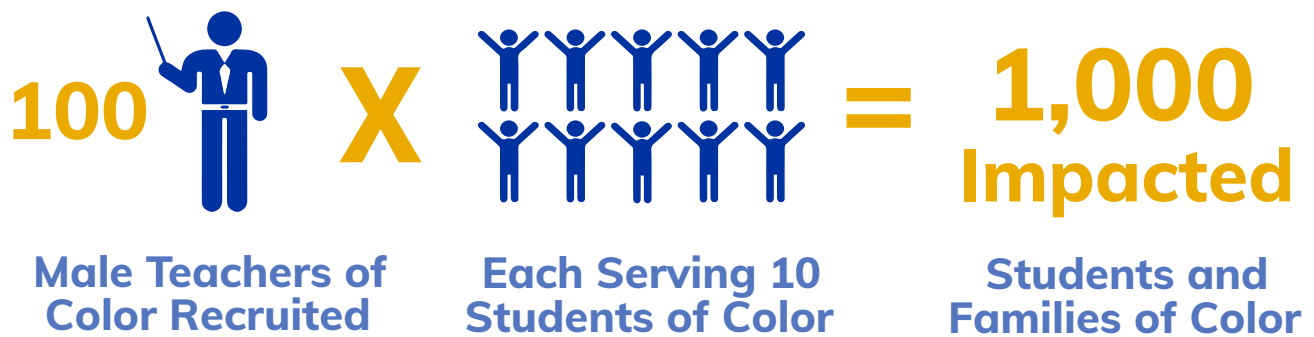
In fragile communities, particularly those that serve historically underserved populations, teacher turnover has previously been described in research as a “revolving door.” Teachers list a variety of reasons for leaving: lack of student discipline, students being significantly underprepared academically, lack of leadership support, lack of autonomy, and cultural mismatch from the community. Schools in fragile communities can lose as many as half of their teaching staff in 5 years (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo (2009).



Many teachers leave the schools in fragile communities for more affluent and less diverse schools. This is a significant point: teachers don’t leave the profession—they leave the schools where they teach (Achinstein, Ogawa & Sexton, 2010; Ingersoll, 2000; Ingersoll & May, 2012). This revolving door effect serves as a disruption in students’ academic trajectory and students’ perception of caring and trusting adults.


Race or cultural match alone will not eliminate educational achievement gaps for students of color without proper preparation, however. These teachers must not be hired to serve predominantly as disciplinarians in schools or props for the shortcomings of the educational system, particularly in ‘reforming’ schools with increasing populations of students of color.

Teachers of color must be provided with preparation programs that value their intersecting social identities, experiences, and voice. Pathways to teaching for candidates of color must embrace a deepened sense of community, purpose, and intention to support their technical development as a teacher, supplemented by aspects of teaching that work towards meeting students’ academic, social, and emotional needs (Toldson, 2011). By leveraging the cultural strengths of teachers of color and reimagining how we prepare them to teach, the power of culturally reflective and restorative sta ng can be more fully realized to further benefit our students.



Research informs us of the impact male teachers of color can have at the elementary level:

 **29% increase** in college interest and applications for boys of color

 **39% decrease** in school dropout rates for boys of color

EDUCATION POLICY FELLOW

Phylicia M. Thompson

My upbringing in a fragile community and attending K-12 schools with students that were affected by the often overlooked connection between education and community misfortune has inspired me to develop research interest in K-12 education in fragile communities. Fortunately, I had parents who valued education and recognized my ability to overcome the challenges of being a minority student.

The Center for Educational Opportunity provided sponsorship by granting the opportunity for me to participate in the Institute for Educational Leadership's Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP). EPFP is designed to offer education leaders with a unique professional development experience that prepares them to strategically contribute to and promote equitable education policy.

The knowledge, expanded network, and experience I will gain as an EPFP Fellow will better equip me to conduct essential research alongside The Center for Educational Opportunity and assist in implementing the best practices and models uncovered through our collaborative research efforts.



SPONSORSHIPS

Dr. Fred Bonner II, Ed.D.

Dr. Bonner is editor of the peer-reviewed journal, *The Journal of Minority Achievement Creativity and Leadership (JMACL)*, published by Penn State University, which examines achievement among gifted and high-achieving minority populations across the P-20 continuum.

The Center for Educational Opportunity provided financial support for Fred A. Bonner II, Ed.D., a professor at Prairie View A&M University in the Whitlowe R. Green College of Education. Dr. Bonner is a Professor and Endowed Chair Chief Scientist/ Executive Director in the Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling.

His work in partnership with the Center for Educational Opportunity is in the area of Historically Black College and University faculty development as it relates to establishing a research agenda.



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STUDENT RESEARCH FELLOWS



MADISYN CARTER
Psychology
2020-21 Intern



JA'NAE GIPSON
Marketing
2019-20 Intern



JAMILAH HAWKINS
**Middle Grades
Education**
2019-20 Intern



KESHUN LAWSON
Marketing
2018-19 Intern



JASMINE PRIER
Computer Science,
2020-21 Intern



TAMERA CLARK
Information Systems
2018-19 Intern

OUR TEAM



KATHALEENA EDWARD MONDS, PHD
FOUNDING DIRECTOR

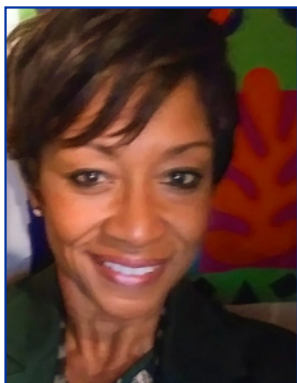
Kathaleena Edward Monds, Ph.D. is Professor of Management Information Systems and Founding Director of the Center for Educational Opportunity (CEO) at Albany State University. She served as Co-Director of the Center for Economic Education in order to improve economic and entrepreneurship education to underserved communities. Dr. Monds is a graduate of the Georgia Academy of Economic Development, Region 10; a graduate of two nationally-recognized programs - Babson College's Symposium for Entrepreneurship Educators (SEE) and Oklahoma State University's Experiential Entrepreneurship Program. She is a Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education Policy

Fellow and a member of the STEM/STEAM Leadership Cohort, a team of educators, researchers, and education leaders who are involved in statewide activities to better understand the vision for STEM and STEAM culture established within schools throughout Georgia.. Dr. Monds holds a Ph.D. in Instructional Technology from Wayne State University, a M.A. in Economics and Entrepreneurship for Educators from University of Delaware, a M.S. in Computer Science from Wayne State University, and a B.S. in Computer Science from Spelman College.



LATRICE NICOLE CRUEL, MBA
ADMINISTRATIVE/DATA COORDINATOR

Latrice Cruel serves as the Center for Educational Opportunity Research Administrator/Data Coordinator. Cruel earned an Associates Degree in Business Administration from Bainbridge College and a Bachelor's degree in Accounting from Albany State University. She attained a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) with a concentration in Accounting from Keller Graduate School of Management.



JOY S. JONES, MPA
OUTREACH AND PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Joy S. Jones serves as the Center for Educational Opportunity Outreach and Program Coordinator. Jones was named a National Urban Fellow, a nationally competitive fellowship program designed to address the underrepresentation of women and minorities in leadership positions in government, philanthropy and nonprofit organizations. Jones graduated magna cum laude with a double major in philosophy and political science with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Pittsburgh and earned a Master of Public Administration (MPA) from Baruch College School of Public Affairs.

PARENTS' EXPERIENCES & SCHOOL CHOICE

Parents who have enrolled their children in private schools expressed the highest level of satisfaction (79%) among the four school types—public district, charter, private, and home. Satisfaction with homeschooling decreased by 10 percentage points since last year.

Parents' top reasons for choosing their public district school are that it was assigned to them (22%) and it is close to their home or work (19%). Parents were most likely to say the top reason they chose a private school is because of its academic reputation (17%) or safe environment (13%).

Public charter school parents' top reasons include academic reputation (12%), proximity to their home or work (11%), safe environment (11%), and individual/one-on-one attention (11%). Home schooling parents' top reason is a safe environment (22%).

Parents' schooling preferences do not line up with their real-world experiences. Four out of five students attend a public district school, but less than a third of current school parents would prefer it. Only half of public school teachers would prefer to send their own kids to public district schools.

Source: EdChoice Institute of Education Sciences National Center for Education Statistics



PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Decuir, Erica, "The Summer Learning Academy: Leveraging Teacher Preparation at a Historically Black College/University (HBCU) to Support Kindergarten Readiness for Young Black Males Living in Fragile Communities" Presented at the Georgia Educational Research Association Conference, Macon, Georgia

Gipson, Janae', "Property Tax Assessments for School Support: Tactics Used to Market to Citizens". Presented at the Center for Undergraduate Research Conference, November 1, 2019, Albany, Georgia

Hawkins, Jamilah, "Demographics of Teachers in Southwest Georgia," Presented at the Center for Undergraduate Research Conference, November 1, 2019, Albany, Georgia

Monds. Kathaleena Edward "Dumbing us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling by John Taylor Gatto, Book Review in The Journal of School Choice: International Research and Reform, Vol. 13, Issue 3.

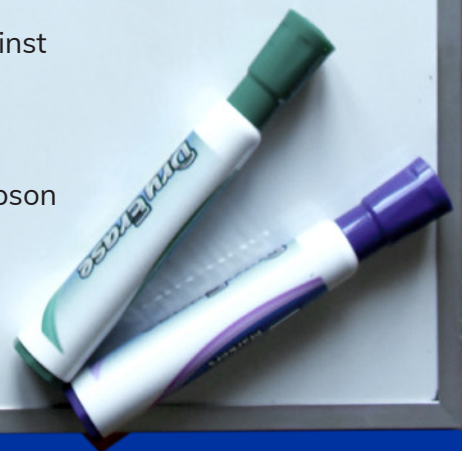
The Summer Learning Academy: Leveraging Teacher Preparation at a Historically Black College/University to Support Kindergarten Readiness for Young Black Males Living in Fragile Communities by Erica Decuir

Opinion Editorials

Back To School: Families Choose Educational Opportunities by Kathaleena E. Monds and Ja'nae Gipson

September: "Pay to Play: Lower-income Families Fight Against Comparative Advantages in Sports Dues by Ja'nae Gipson

The Spooky Facts and Myths about Education by Ja'nae Gipson



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New Schools Venture Fund
National Home Education Research Institute
National Society of High School Scholars
Open Stax
Parent Leadership Organization
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Tall Poppy, Inc.
Teachers Who Pray
The Association of Private Enterprise Education
The PhD Project
Thurgood Marshall Center for Advancing Opportunity
The Conversation
United Negro College Fund
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Urban Institute
U.S. Department of State
Veritas Management Group
Women's Institute for Science Equality and Race (WISER)
Women's Institute for Science, Equality and Race
YouScience, LLC
Youth Entrepreneurs

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HOW TO SUBMIT A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Are you ready to conduct research that is not measured by the number of articles published, but by the number of lives changed? If so, the Center for Educational Opportunity invites you to submit a research proposal that aligns with one of our educational research pillars:

Educational Opportunities: to research both pedagogy and policy approaches that can be used to increase opportunities to education.

Educational Models: to investigate unique educational models that bring about the greatest educational impact.

Educational Access: to understand the importance of outcomes-driven education that meets the needs of the ever-changing student and community populations.

Educational Innovation: to research and study the barriers to success and how the use of innovative approaches can develop principled educators and prepared students.

Proposals must be submitted electronically using the electronic submission participant portal.

[CLICK TO SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL](#)



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How Are the Children?

The traditional greeting of the Maasai people in Africa asks after the well-being of the children.

The meaning behind the response, “All the children are well,” highlights the importance of efforts that improve children’s well-being.



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