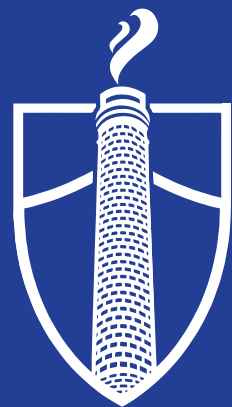

HARAMBEE

LET'S ALL PULL TOGETHER



**CENTER FOR
EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITY**
ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



**“Education must not
simply teach work—
it must teach life.”**

-William Edward Burghardt DuBois
(February 23, 1868 – August 27, 1963)



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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.



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 Opportunity: 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.

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.



SPOTLIGHT

Center for Educational Opportunity at Albany State University

Kathaleena Monds, who holds a doctorate in instructional technology, is the founding director of the Center for Educational Opportunity, where Joy Jones serves as outreach and program coordinator. In the interview that follows, Monds and Jones share the educational-opportunity challenges they see fragile communities face.

The center focuses on how equity issues are impacting education. What areas of research are currently top of mind?

Monds: A big area of interest for us is the absence of African American male teachers in the classroom. We also consider the concept of proximity to opportunity, especially in rural America. For example, transportation can be a major barrier to opportunity. Another topic is parents' engagement in their kids' education. We have a role in generating research findings and need to spread those findings to families that can advocate for change. Finally, given the rise of Black homeschoolers, we are focused on exploring the compelling reasons they choose to homeschool. There is a dearth of research on this growing educational trend.

Jones: We look at the educational ecosystem – from social determinants of health to the families' living conditions, including housing, employment, food security, public safety and the geography of opportunity. So many of the issues that spurred the Brown v. Board of Education in 1954 persist today. Discrimination is legislated and codified so thoroughly that it is nearly impossible for fragile families to escape poverty and access opportunity. There's a chasm, not just a gap, especially when you consider that more than one in 10 U.S. children come of age in persistently poor families.

How is the center thinking about inviting students of color into the teaching profession?

Monds: We partner with researchers on understanding ways to increase the number of

male African American teachers and we're trying to expose students to the profession. Post-Brown v. Board of Education, the unintended consequence of integration was that many people of color lost jobs in education. The issues are bigger than just entering the door – there's also the role of school boards and superintendents, the doorkeepers who do the hiring and firing. Another issue is that even teachers of color who want to improve the lives of fragile communities are often voiceless because making change creates the risk of job loss. As we think of tackling education opportunity, it must be from all these angles.

How do some of the cultural elements in a classroom impact educational opportunity?

Jones: Foremost, I would say curriculums are seldom culturally nuanced. Youth often don't see themselves in the lessons, and the testing instruments that measure their aptitudes are culturally biased. Many schools are described by whether or not the student body receives free lunch and negative assumptions are made about students who simply can't afford their lunch – they tend to be assigned to low learning-ability groups and seldom have access to advanced study and gifted education. People think that poor and genius don't go together, but if you live in a resource-poor environment, you learn to be resourceful in ways that tap into your genius. All of society's institutions must improve in order for education to improve.

Monds: Labels have these long-standing impacts. Until we can tackle the cultural issues, it will be hard to separate teachers' perceptions of Black, Brown and poor kids in the classroom from the labels. We are working with a teacher-leader who works to promote racial equity among her peers. Strategies to ensure culturally relevant training practices are implemented and the teaching of critical race theory to teachers is paramount. We need teachers who will tap into the unique gifts of all children and who will be compassionate toward all children, not just the ones who look like them.

In my 93-year old mother's words, 2020 was "a doozie." The COVID-19 pandemic illuminated the glaring disparities in education that formed the initial rationale for instituting the Albany State University Center for Educational Opportunity: advancing educational research in order to strengthen and empower fragile communities from the bottom up. The country now knows just how fragile the communities are in which marginalized families live.

We funded new scholars whom you will read about in these pages, hired a post doc faculty member, held a virtual summer internship program for emerging scholars, lent our voice to international and national education conferences and continued to cultivate relationships with internal and external partners.

In 2021, we anticipate bringing to fruition the Institute for the Study of African American Homeschooling. We will also team with scholars in Belize to study homeschooling in that country. To address the underrepresentation of Black male teachers, we are collaborating with partners to launch a grow-your-own teacher initiative targeting high-achieving Black males for careers in education.

In order to be most effective in this latest endeavor, we have undertaken an educational opportunity landscape study compiling statistics on our immediate 27-county service area. What we learn we know will be beneficial for rural districts throughout the United States.

Finally, on a personal note, in the 2019 Annual Report, I shared a historic archive from my alma mater's 1981 centennial alumna publication, Spelman Messenger, titled Spelman-Pioneer in Educational Opportunity. As I write this letter, on my desk is the Spelman Messenger's Fall 2020 Educator's Issue, in which I—along with two other Spelman women, whose education research our Center is funding—am featured. The article reads, "No history of women's education in America would be complete without the story of Spelman."

As education continues to evolve, I am evermore determined that the Center I founded just two short years ago will be an integral part of that story.

Sincerely,



Kathaleena Edward Monds, Ph.D.
Founding Executive Director

Spelman-Trained Educators Stand on the Foundation of Service Leadership

COMPILED BY RENITA MATHIS

As the nation's oldest and most renowned historically Black college for women, Spelman College's fundamental foundation is to educate women and develop educators. From elementary to higher education, Spelman has cultivated education leaders who serve the world. In the introduction of the College's 100th anniversary book, *Spelman: a centennial celebration 1881-1981*, Beverly Guy-Sheftall references a journalist's "assertion" made during the College's 50th anniversary: "No history of women's education in America would be complete without the story of Spelman."

Make no mistake, Spelman is a liberal arts authority on educating and preparing women to become educators. On these pages are some astounding Spelman women who make it their job to educate the minds of others. Subsequent pages feature more of the College's top alumnae throughout the education spectrum.

Of course, we could not feature the thousands of superstar alumnae in the profession, so we want to provide an opportunity for them to be featured on the website. If you are an alumna who makes a living in the education of others – from policymaking to preschool education – let us know who you are. To add your name, visit www.spelman.edu/womenineducation.



Kathaleena Edward Monds, Ph.D., C'86, is professor of management information systems and founding director of the Albany State University Center for Educational Opportunity. The center's mission is to advance educational research in fragile communities from the bottom up. A Detroit native and lifetime member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., Monds is recognized for her contributions to teaching and leadership. She holds a Ph.D. in instructional technology and a master's in computer science from Wayne State University; a master's in economics and entrepreneurship for educators from the University of Delaware; and a bachelor's in computer science from Spelman.

She is a first-generation college graduate and mother of Halima Kathaleena Monds, C'2020; Akintunde G. Monds and Cazembe S. Monds, both from the Morehouse Class of 2019; and 14-year-old son Malik R. Monds. She is married to, John H. Monds, Morehouse Class of '87.



Valerie Camille Jones, Ed.D., C'2000, was recently honored with the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, which is America's highest honor in math and science for teachers. In fall 2015, she also was recognized by Congressman John Lewis at the 114th Congress 1st Session.

She earned her bachelor's degree in mathematics from Spelman and continued her studies by earning master's and doctoral degrees in mathematics education from Georgia State University and Columbia University, respectively. Jones is nationally board-certified



Source: Spelman Messenger

Center for Educational Opportunity Founder Completes Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education Policy Fellowship Program

Founding Director Dr. Kathaleena Edward Monds completed the nine-month Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP) in 2020.



Fellows commit nine months to an intensive professional development experience concentrated on three program strands: public policy, leadership, and professional networking. They attend monthly colloquium to deepen their knowledge of education policy, while remaining in their full-time positions and use their work environment as the context for examining important leadership and policy issues in the State of Georgia.

The Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP) is a national professional development program sponsored by the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) that provides potential leaders with the knowledge and networks to advance the core issues of education policy.

Dr. Monds was selected by the 20-member 2019-2020 cohort to provide the graduation address held on September 16, 2020.

The Georgia Public Partnership for Excellence in Education publishes the **Top 10 Issues to Watch** report, an annual publication that puts a spotlight on important education policy issues.

STEM/STEAM 2020 Cohort



Dr. Monds served on the 2020 Georgia STEM/STEAM Leadership Cohort comprised of approximately 45 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. The success of such initiatives are characterized by project- and problem-based learning; integration of STEM/STEAM activities; strong business, college, and community partnerships; and student engagement in investigative research to real-world problems.

In 2020, Dr. Monds served as a panelist at national and international education conferences as listed.

100 Black Men and EdChoice Education Town Hall



100 Black Men and EdChoice held a town hall, “Adapting to the... Students & Parents.” CEO of Brightbeam and moderator, Chris Stewart, led panelists Curtis Valentine, Deputy Director of the Progressive Policy Institute’s Reinventing America’s Schools Project; Sekou Biddle, Vice President for Advocacy, United Negro College Fund; Dr. Kathaleena Monds, Founding Director, Albany State University Center for Educational Opportunity and Dr. Tremayne Clardy, Chief of Schools at Madison Wisconsin Metropolitan School District in a discussion of families’ differing experiences through these turbulent times and how the K–12 system can address and support the needs of Black students and families.

EdChoice Legislator Training Hub



K-12 education in America looks radically different from it did a year ago—and many families didn’t get a say. What does that mean right now? What does it mean for the future of education? Dr. Monds’ presentation, “Homeschooling Parents: A Class of Their Own,” is part of a library of legislative resources designed to help policymakers better understand the school choice movement and make informed decisions about education at the state level. Monds is also an EdChoice fellow.

ExcellEd Ed Palooza



At ExcellEd Ed Palooza Dr. Monds presented “Serving All Students: Increasing Teacher Diversity in Your State”. She was joined by Dr. Tequilla Brownie, Executive Vice President, Strategy, Policy & Community Coalitions, The New Teacher Program (TNTP); Kira Tookes, Director of Advocacy for the Association of American Educators Foundation; and Colin Sharkey, National Director, National Employee Freedom Week Coalition. Panelists shared strategies how to develop, certify, hire and retain diverse educators.



Chantal & Tommy Bagwell Foundation, Inc. Make Charitable Gift

The Chantal and Tommy Bagwell Foundation Inc. presented the Albany State University (ASU) Center for Educational Opportunity with a gift on September 22, 2020, in the amount of \$280,000. The gift is designated to support Albany State University's Center for Educational Opportunity programming.

"We are deeply grateful for the Bagwell Foundation's generosity, as it helps to ensure our sustainability; and I can think of no better investment of this gift than in education research," said Founding Director Dr. Kathaleena Edward Monds.

The Center also seeks ways to support students and faculty through programatic and research activities. Seeks to further research K-12 provide support for students and researchers.

OUR STAFF



Dr. Kathaleena Edward Monds
Founding Director



Dr. Britany Gatewood
Post Doctoral Researcher



Joy S. Jones, MPA,
Outreach & Program Coordinator

2020-2021 GRANT RECIPIENTS

With the ongoing and generous support from the Thurgood Marshall College Fund Center for Advancing Opportunity, Albany State University Center for Educational Opportunity provides funding for scholars whose work presents opportunities for research and discussion in K-12 education. Each of the projects center the humanity of children and families and the inquiry reflects a deep respect for the well-being, values, and dignity of the individuals they aim to serve. Simply put, they care.



Dr. Nathaniel Bryan, Assistant Professor, Miami College of Education, Health and Society; Miami, OH

[Educational Opportunity] What are the Reading Achievement and Repeated Disciplinary Outcomes of Black Boys in Third-Grade Who Experience Exclusionary Discipline Practices During Playtime?



Dr. Cheryl Fields-Smith, Brilliant Scholars Educational & Academic Consulting, LLC; Athens, GA

[Educational Opportunity] Perspectives of Black Rural Homeschooling



Dr. Kimberly Gaiters-White, Dean, Evelyn Reid Syphax School of Education at Virginia Union University; Richmond, VA

[Educational Opportunity] Beyond the Tests: Making Teaching an Attainable Career for Teachers of Color



Dr. Sheila Gregory, Clark Atlanta University; Atlanta, GA

[Educational Model] Identifying Strategies from Education-Related Activities to Provide Improved Academic Access for LGBTQIAP Students of Color



Dr. Leah Hollis, Morgan State University; Baltimore, MD

[Educational Opportunity] Educating Through a Disaster: A Mixed Methods Inquiry



Dr. Andrea Lewis, Spelman College; Atlanta, GA

[Educational Access] Identity, Agency and Culturally Responsive Practices of Black Girls Attending Predominantly White Elementary Schools



Dr. Megan Lyons, North Carolina Central University; Durham, NC

[Educational Opportunity] The Use of Social Emotional Learning to Empower Families in Fragile Communities



Dr. Felicia Mayfield, Clark Atlanta University; Atlanta, GA

[Educational Innovation] Males of Color in the School of Education at Clark Atlanta
Males of Color in the School of Education at Clark Atlanta University and the Pipeline of High School Students of the Same Throughout Metro Atlanta



Dr. Nicole Taylor, Spelman College; Atlanta, GA

[Educational Innovation] Supporting Family Involvement and Increasing Family Engagement in Literacy: Addressing the Needs of Diverse Families in an Elementary Urban School Setting



Mrs. Lisa Puga, Doctoral Student Fellow, Rutgers University; Camden, NJ

[Educational Access] Understanding African American Homeschooling as Educational Liberation



Dr. Cheron Hunter Davis, Associate Professor, Florida A&M University; Tallahassee, FL

[Educational Access] But COVID-19 Wasn't on the Calendar: HBCU Preservice Teachers' Reflective Practices During an Online Literacy Tutoring Program



Dr. Shelly Jones, Professor, Mathematics Education Central Connecticut State University, Benjamin Banneker Association; New Britain, CT

[Educational Innovation] Characterizing Culturally-Relevant Mathematics Teaching In-and-Out of School



Ms. Marilyn Rhames, Doctoral Student Fellow, University of Arkansas Department of Education Reform; Fayetteville, AK

[Educational Opportunity] Identifying the Role that Religion and Religiosity Play in Influencing Student Academic Outcomes



Ms. Phylcia Thompson, Doctoral Student Fellow, Georgia State University; Atlanta, GA

[Educational Access] Understanding the Trends of Education Policy Regarding Rural and Minority Students in the State of Georgia Over the Past 20 Years.

8-Week Virtual Undergraduate Research Bootcamp Offered

As the COVID-19 global health crisis loomed, the Albany State University Center for Educational Opportunity offered a fully-remote eight-week research bootcamp from June 1–July 23, 2020. Interns engaged in research activities focused on K-12 educational opportunities in fragile communities and the economics of education.

“An essential part of our mission is to help build and diversify the research pipeline through coaching and mentoring,” said Dr. Kathaleena Edward Monds, Founding Director, Albany State University Center for Educational Opportunity.

Four interns were chosen and each completed a research study: Alanna Beasley, “Understanding the Educational Opportunities and Challenges of Families Living in Public Housing,” Spelman College (Economics); Jamilah Hawkins, “Challenges and Opportunities Among African-American Homeschoolers: A Review of the Literature,” Albany State University (Education); Kayla Kirkland-Johnson, “The Over Criminalization of Black Girls in K-12 Education,” Spelman College (Education) and Jasmine Prier, “An Analysis of Dougherty County and Muscogee County, Georgia School Districts’ Technology Expenditures,” Albany State University (Computer Science).



Alanna Beasley



Jamilah Hawkins



Kayla Kirkland-Johnson



Jasmine Prier

Interns worked closely with faculty research mentors and attended professional learning sessions on research methods and writing. They also presented research findings at undergraduate symposia. Jamilah Hawkins, an education major at Albany State University took first place in the 2020 Albany State University Center for Undergraduate Research Symposium for her study, “The Decision to Homeschool During Covid-19.”

The program culminated in a “bring your parents to work” virtual celebration where cheers and tears flowed.

Evidence shows that undergraduate research experiences enhance students’ confidence, inquiry and analysis, while also improving their graduate school and career prospects.

Undergraduate Research Bootcamp Presenters



Dr. Lisa Cook, Professor of Economics and International Relations at Michigan State University and a member of the American Economic Association’s Executive Committee, Cook was recently named to the Biden-Harris transition team.



Dr. Erica DeCuir, Assistant Professor, Albany State University College of Education is also Director of the ASU Summer Learning Academy and is a former Georgia Governor’s Teaching Fellow.



Dr. Albert Cheng, Assistant Professor, Department of Education Reform in the College of Education and Health Professions at the University of Arkansas teaches courses in education policy and philosophy.



Dr. Benjamin Scafidi, Professor of Economics and Director, Education Economics Center at Kennesaw University is also a Friedman fellow with EdChoice and the Georgia Public Policy Foundation. His research has focused on education and urban policy.



Dr. Louise Wrensford, Executive Director, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, Albany State University

Interns Selected for ASU Center for Undergraduate Research Cohort

Jamilah Hawkins and Jasmine Prier – both student interns with the Albany State University Center for Educational Opportunity – were selected to participate in the ASU Center for Undergraduate Research (CUR) Fall 2020 – Spring 2021 Undergraduate Research Cohort

Post Doc Dr. Britany Gatewood Joins Team

Dr. Britany Gatewood joined the CEO team in the role of Post Doctoral Research Faculty. She was brought on to strengthen and support the Center for Educational Opportunity's research initiatives.

Her research interests are social inequality, criminology, social movements, and scholar activism. Her current research projects include the educational attainment of children of incarcerated parents and racial disparities in disciplinary rates.



Recently, Dr. Gatewood has published the white paper, "Children of Incarcerated Parents: Pathways to Resilience and Success" and several op-eds on children of incarcerated parents. She has also been a guest speaker at various institutions, including the University of Minnesota and Howard University, where she has focused on racial and gender inequality within the criminal justice system.

Dr. Gatewood received a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and a Masters of Arts in Liberal Arts at the University of Detroit Mercy. She earned a Ph.D. in Sociology from the Department of Sociology and Criminology at Howard University with a concentration in social inequality and criminology and a Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies in 2020.

OUTREACH AND EVENTS

The ASU Center for Educational Opportunity strives to engage faculty and students at HBCUs in research activities and promotes educational seminars, workshops, training and recruiting activities that support faculty and students at HBCUs in the utilization of research methods; thus, leading to a sustained research pipeline.

JOIN US ON ZOOM
JULY 8, 2020 AT 7PM EST
 Reclaiming Humanity in Trauma-Informed Classrooms and Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline
#ASACREDSpace
REGISTER HERE:
<https://asacredspace.eventbrite.com>

Kelese Wing
 2017 Department of Defense Education Activity Teacher of the Year

Kimbrell Worthy
 2009 Washington, DC Teacher of the Year

JOIN US TUESDAY
AUGUST 18, 2020 AT 7PM EST
 for a discussion on Promoting Racial Equity Among Teacher Leaders and Educational Equity and Social Justice
#ASacredSpace
REGISTER HERE:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sacred-space-2-tickets-114334433368>

Dr. Lee Ann Stephens
 2006 Minnesota Teacher of the Year

Mr. Abdul Wright
 2016 Minnesota Teacher of the Year



“A Sacred Space” Teacher-Leader Webinars Engages Practitioners and Advocates

Nearly 100 teachers from across the US tuned in to webinars hosted by Albany State University Center for Educational Opportunity and Tall Poppy, Inc. on July 8, 2020 and August 18, 2020. The webinars brought to life narratives in the white paper, “A Sacred Space: 12 Expert Teachers Share Stories of Resilience, Success and Leadership,” commissioned by the Center, and featured teacher-leaders in facilitated conversations on issues of racial equity, social justice, trauma-informed teaching and dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline. The discussions centered on teachers in their roles as advocates for equity and social justice in school settings.

Framing and Maintaining a Research Agenda

The Center hosted “Framing and Maintaining A Research Agenda,” a full-day interactive virtual workshop with Dr. Fred Bonner, II, Executive Director of the Prairie View A&M University Minority Achievement, Creativity and High-Ability Center (MACH III) and Dr. Stella Smith, associate director for MACH III on September 24, 2020. Attendees included faculty from Alabama State University, Albany State University, Bethune Cookman University, Georgia Military College, Morehouse College, North Carolina Central University, Savannah State University and University of Missouri-Columbia. The workshop was funded by the Thurgood Marshall College Fund Center for Advancing Opportunity.



Coming Full Circle: From Jim Crow to Journalism

Trailblazing journalist, Wanda Smalls Lloyd, joined the ASU Center for Educational Opportunity and Dr. Connie Williams’ “African Americans in the Media” class on November 2, 2020 to discuss her memoir, “Coming Full Circle: From Jim Crow to Journalism (NewSouth Books).” Smalls Lloyd grew up privileged and educated in the segregated culture of the American South before and during the twentieth-century civil rights movement. Despite laws that restricted her housing, education, voting rights, and virtually every other aspect of life, she became one of the nation’s highest-ranking newspaper journalists, rising to become an editor at the Washington Post and a senior editor at USA Today, before returning South as the executive editor of the Montgomery Advertiser. Along the way, she was an advocate and an example for how diversity helped newsrooms become reflections of accuracy for their audience. Following the classroom session Lloyd and Monds appeared on Dialogue, a public affairs talk show on WALB-TV with anchor/host Karla Heath Sands.

ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS

COMING FULL CIRCLE: FROM JIM CROW TO JOURNALISM
a book discussion with
WANDA SMALLS LLOYD

Wanda Smalls Lloyd's *Coming Full Circle: From Jim Crow to Journalism*—with a foreword by best-selling author Steve McViey—tells the story of an African American woman who grew up privileged and educated in the restricted culture of the American South in the 1930s-1940s, her pathless (shaped by integrated social, community, and educational systems, religious and home training, a strong cultural foundation, and early teacher leadership opportunities). Despite Jim Crow laws that affected where she lived, how she was educated, and what civil rights she would be denied, Lloyd grew up to realize her childhood dream of working as a professional journalist, which included editing, writing, and news coverage around the country. *Coming Full Circle* is a self-reflective exploration of the author's life journey. She now teaches journalism to a new generation.

A Parent's Reflection on Virtual Learning

By: Melanie Colclough

We are constantly readjusting to the effects this pandemic continues to have on just about every aspect of our lives. I imagine its reverberations will impact everyone for many years to come. For us, virtual learning is by far the most challenging aspect. Since no one really knows the true implications of this pandemic, we decided to do what was necessary to keep the kids home for virtual learning for the entire school year.



We knew this was going to be a huge adjustment, especially having 4 school-aged children and 2 toddlers. In March, when the schools first went virtual, we, like everyone else, scrambled to “make it work” at home. Despite everyone’s best efforts, there were many variables we couldn’t (or didn’t) foresee. On the first day, our internet crashed. We didn’t think about the fact that everyone in the county with kids would be logging in, or how our “regular” internet plan would perform under the weight of four Chromebooks, daddy’s laptop, and our 2-year old’s tablet pulling bandwidth all at once. Expanding our bandwidth was a game changer but that’s just one of the hurdles we faced with our new virtual home school environment.



Money vs Health - Like most Americans, we rely on two incomes to make our household work. Unfortunately, my job did not offer the option to work from home. Thankfully, my husband had just started a business, so he had the flexibility to stay home during the day and work at night. This means less money he can earn, but it’s an option we have that is a huge blessing that many families aren’t afforded. Millions of families have to leave the kids home without supervision, or send them back to school even though they don’t think it’s a safe option. We get up each day, get the kids ready and logged on, I go to work and the hubby supervises the virtual learning in between trying to conduct his own business. At 5 pm, I rush home—finish dinner and kiss the hubs as he rushes off to work. I feed, kiss and put the kids to bed. It is an exhausting option, but we are so thankful that we can do it.



Musical Platforms - One of the most exhausting aspects of the virtual learning environment is combing through the expectations, goals, assignments, and communication platforms for multiple teachers. We realize most people don’t have four young children in school at a time, but it’s our reality. The school and teachers have done a great job of trying to simplify, but it takes a great deal of patience, deep breathing and prayer to coordinate the assignments of two 4th graders, a 2nd grader and a first grader....while keeping two toddlers occupied and sort of quiet.

There are some silver linings to all this. Being with the kids every day has uncovered some deficiencies in their learning. We found some dramatic issues in the way each one of our kids learned and/or received information. Slowing down our lives long enough to “see” their learning environments was key to these discoveries. Now, we have adequately addressed them and know what to look out for in the future and have seen marked improvement in each of them.

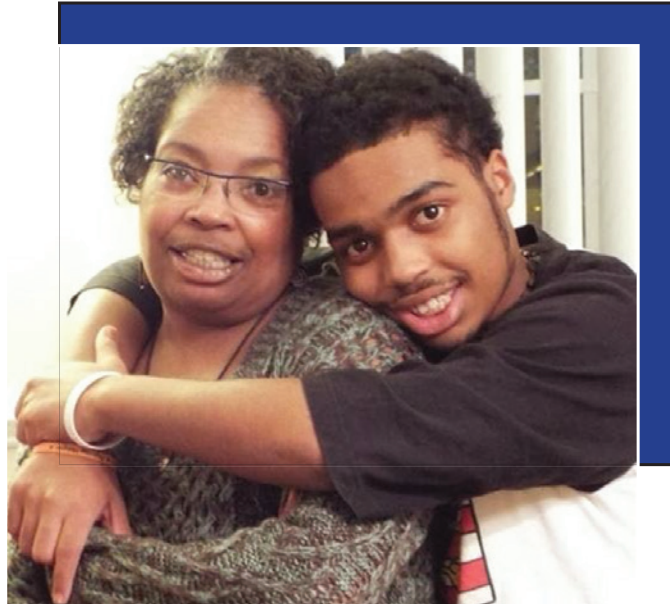
No matter what, kids are so resilient. Our children miss their friends and the social aspect of school, for sure. Nevertheless, with high expectations from their parents, they are thriving through a seemingly impossible situation.

Melanie Colclough serves as the executive director of the Sumter County Cultural Center/Patriot Hall in Sumter, SC. She and her husband, David are the adoptive parents to six wonderful children, guardians ad litem, adoption advocates, and ministers in their church where they serve on its leadership team together. On Christmas Day, December 25, 2020, [the Colcloughs were featured on NBC's Today with Hoda and Jenna.](#)

My Son Succeeded in A KIPP Philadelphia Charter School

By: Toya Algarin

I am a proud parent of a student who is an alum of KIPP Philadelphia Charter School. I am a proponent of KIPP Charters because I know that they positively impact the lives of many, as they have impacted my own. I am a single mother of three children and had witnessed my eldest children being pushed through the school system, which resulted in them lacking the basics. My youngest son, Romao, was going through those same schools and started to show the same detriments. That is when I used my agency to find a quality school, which led me to KIPP.



When Romao first attended KIPP Charter School in the 6th grade, he was at a 3rd grade reading level. In just one year, he began to flourish and perform at grade level. In fact he was ranked 18 out of 127 children. Romao loved KIPP.

When it was time to attend a high school, there was no doubt in my mind where he would go. While his grades were good he wouldn't have gotten into the neighborhood magnet school, a school where less than approximately 15% of Black children attend in a 99% Black neighborhood.

Fortunately a black male educator, Aaron Bass convinced me that Romao would succeed under his expertise at KIPP DuBois Collegiate Academy (KDCA). Plus I knew the staff at the school would treat my child as if he were their own and that the staff, parents and students would work together. Although it took two hours each way via public transportation for him to arrive at school each day, I made the choice to have my son attend KDCA. I had never experienced a partnership like the pact I made with the staff of KIPP. As a school leader Mr. Bass fortified my vision for my son's education.

On September 6, 2013, Romao was hit by a car on the very first day of his sophomore year in high school. He suffered a traumatic brain injury and laid in a coma for two weeks. At the hospital, upon his release, KIPP staff was there to work with doctors, therapists and psychologists to ensure that my son was on the road to recovery. For months, during this dark time, my KIPP family was by my side. The accident took a toll on Romao — and me. KIPP's special education team stepped in and provided the additional services for him to be successful at KDCA. As a result of the entire KIPP team, Romao improved beyond the

expectations of many experts.

He did attend college briefly after graduating from high school, but due to his debilitating health issues, it was best for him to return home to continue with his medical team.

My son's story is just one example of a success within the KIPP Schools. Because of my experience, I have remained part of the KIPP network, where I currently serve on the Board of Trustees and continue to advocate for families to become involved and exercise their right to choose what is best for their children. Parent agency is a must; and seizing that agency will alleviate hopelessness and allow children to succeed in an unjust world.

Toya Algarin is a native of Philadelphia. She is a proud mother of three and a fierce advocate for high-quality education in the City of Philadelphia. She currently serves on the Board of Trustees of KIPP Philadelphia Public Schools.



KIPP PHILADELPHIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
COLLEGE-FOCUSED. PHILLY-MINDED.

REACHING OUR AUDIENCE

The Center launched *Educational Opportunity Today*, a bi-weekly newsletter in March 2020. The newsletter contains original content and curated articles from popular education sites on topical issues germane to trending educational issues.

Earned media included original articles in SHRM Viewpoints, the Society for Human Resources Management and Citizen Ed, an online platform of the Brightbeam Network.

[Lessons Learned from Telecommuting](#)
by Dr. Kathaleena Edward Monds

[Black Children Continue to Be Pushed Out of American Schools During Pandemic](#) by Dr. Kathaleena Edward Monds and Dr. Howard Henderson

[School Boards are Saying F the Police](#)
by Joy S. Jones Email Campaign Archive



2020 Newsletter Archives

March 1

[ASU Center for Educational Opportunity Hosts Thurgood Marshall College Fund Center for Advancing Opportunity](#)

[Thurgood Marshall College Fund Teacher Quality & Retention Program Offers Fellowship](#)

[CEO Founding Director Kathaleena Edward Monds Named Among Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education Education Policy Fellows](#)

[White Paper Shares Teacher-Leader Stories from Fragile Communities](#)

[Faculty Researcher Profile — Dr. Erica DeCuir](#)

[Business Marketing Student Wins ASU Undergraduate Research Award](#)

[Register Now for Free Research Workshop](#)

March 20

[A Nation of Homeschoolers: Families Show Promise in Educating Their Kids at Home During COVID 19 Upheavals](#)

March 27

[Center for Educational Opportunity at Albany State University Supports Research to Build Black Male Teacher Capacity](#)

[How HBCUs Are Lobbying to Stop Spread of the Coronavirus](#)

[No Place He'd Rather Be: Georgia Educator Committed to Creating Advantages for "Disadvantaged" Students](#)

[Grants Available for 'Bottom Up' Action-Based Research on Barriers to K-12 Education in Fragile Communities](#)

[Sponsorship Profile — Phylicia Thompson](#)

[Looking for Online Resources for Kids Who Are Now Learning at Home? Check Out These 11 Sites for Parents](#)

[Learning in the Time of COVID-19](#)

[Georgia Honors First Black Library Director](#)

[Are You Interested in a Post-Doctoral Career Opportunity?](#)

April 3

[During Covid 19 Crisis School Closures Affect Everyone](#)

April 10

[National Home Education Research Institute Examines Barriers to Homeschooling In Fragile Communities](#)

[Promoting Racial Equity Among Teacher-Leaders](#)

[CEO Founding Director Featured in EdChoice Chats](#)

[Urban Ed Academy Seeks Passionate Men of Color — Employment and Housing Guaranteed](#)

[COVID-19 Resources for Educators](#)

[Albany State University Celebrates Founders Day April 3](#)

[HBCU Researchers Invited to Submit K-12 Education Research Proposals](#)

[First Black Superintendent of Flint Michigan Schools Dies of Coronavirus](#)

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[Morehouse College Professor Pilots Life Success Readiness Curriculum for High-Risk Populations](#)

[Thurgood Marshall College Fund Public Policy Priorities](#)

[Developing A Professional Learning Network](#)

[A Shortlist for Schools and Parents on How to Survive COVID 19](#)

[Why Rural Matters: A Look at Rural Education in America](#)

[Kwanzaa Principle of Self Determination at the Heart of Center for Educational "Bottom Up" Approach to K-12 Education Research](#)

[Center for Educational Opportunity Seeks Post Doctorate Research Fellow to Join Team](#)

[Remembering Pat Harvey, Former St. Paul Schools Superintendent](#)

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[Researcher Evaluates Teach for America Retention Strategies in Fragile Communities](#)

[Thurgood Marshall College Fund Seeks Talent for Internship Opportunities](#)

[Reclaiming Humanity in Trauma-Informed Classrooms](#)

[Atlanta Thrive Leads Parent Advocacy Efforts During Pandemic, Pens Open Letter](#)

[From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in American Schools](#)

[Urban Ed Academy Seeks Men to Teach: Employment and Housing Guaranteed](#)

[Celebrating the Legacy of Parental Choice Advocate Representative Annette Polly Williams](#)

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[White Paper Shares Teacher-Leader Narratives from Fragile Communities](#)

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[Welcome Summer Interns](#)

[Open Letter to Joe Biden: The Votes of Black and Brown Charter School Parents Matter](#)

[Creation of Rosenwald Schools a "Righteous Action" in Advancing Black Education in America](#)

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[Researcher Targets Spiritual Coping Practices for Mothers Facing Re-Entry](#)

[Restorative Justice in Schools Helps to Mend Communities](#)

[Thurgood Marshall College Fund Receives \\$1M Amazon Gift](#)

[Flunk the Police: School Boards Vote to Nix Police Department School Safety Contracts in Wake of George Floyd Murder](#)

[Leveraging Social Emotional Learning to Support Families in the Time of COVID-19](#)

[Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program](#)

July 2 - [Reclaiming Humanity in Trauma-Informed Classrooms and Dismantling the School to Prison Pipeline - Teacher Leaders Speak](#)

July 10 - [Rethinking Teacher Recruitment, Webinar Draws Education Advocates, Are the Good Times Really Rolling in New Orleans Schools?, Microschooling and more](#)

July 27 - [ASU Center for Educational Opportunity Hosts Teacher-Leader Discussion on Promoting Racial Equity & Social Justice in the Classroom August 18th Tune In](#)

July 31 - [Center for Educational Opportunity Hosts Discussion on Promoting Racial Equity in the Classroom, The Rise of Black Homeschooling and more](#)

August 7 - [Albany State University Center for Educational Opportunity Announces Request for Proposals](#)

August 14 - [#BlackResearchMatters: ASU CEO Announces Request for Proposals, Join Conversation on Promoting Racial Equity in Schools, Creating A Research Legacy](#)

August 17 - [ASU Center for Educational Opportunity Hosts Teacher-Leader Discussion on Promoting Racial Equity & Social Justice in the Classroom August 18th TOMORROW](#)

August 28 - [Effective Strategies for School Change, In Data We Trust, Teacher Labor: Shortages, Pay, Diversity and more](#)

September 11 - [Education Beyond the Classroom, Community-Based Organizations Can Aid Teacher Recruitment, Virtual Suspensions Mask School Discipline Crisis](#)

October 2 - [Georgia L4GA Grant Fuels Teacher-Leader's Advocacy, Founding Director Completes Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education Fellowship Program](#)

November 6 - [Nation's Report Card Makes the Case for Expanding Schooling Options](#)

November 12 - [A Sacred Space 3: Realizing the Gifts of All Students](#)

November 20 - [The Importance of Asking Hard Questions About What Kids Learn in School, Harvard Debate Co](#)

December 4 - [Reimagining K-12 Education to Address the Needs of Black Students & Parents, Tests Should Elevate Communities. Not Lower Expectations and more](#)

December 18 - [Happy Holidays and thanks for persevering to provide educational opportunities for the nation's children. -ASU Center for Educational Opportunity](#)

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EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS

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Virginia Commonwealth University
Virginia State University
Virginia Union University
West Virginia University
Winston-Salem State University

Chimney

In 1957, fires at Albany State College, a African-American teachers' college at the time, 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 the students, faculty, and alumni.

The chimney and smoke represent perseverance and discovery of learning. These are balanced by a serif logotype reflecting the center's mission and expertise.

Shield

It is known that in the ancient history, classic shield conveys or represents the symbol of protection.

ACADEMIC PARTNERS

African Union Mission to the United States
AltSchool
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Association of American Educators
Association of Private Enterprise Education
Better Outcomes for Our Kids (BOOK)
Black Doctoral Network
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Center for Reinventing Public Education
Center for Study of Occupational Regulation
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National Home Education Research Institute

National Society of High School Scholars
Open Stax
Parent Leadership Organization
Reason Foundation
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Southern Education Foundation
Southwest Georgia Community Action Council
Stand Together
Students for Liberty
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
Urban Ed Academy
Urban Institute
U.S. Department of State
Veritas Management Group
Women's Institute for Science Equality & Race (WISER)
YouScience, LLC
Youth Entrepreneurs

"We cannot play ostrich. Democracy just cannot flourish amid fear. Liberty cannot bloom amid hate. Justice cannot take root amid rage. America must get to work. In the chill climate in which we live, we must go against the prevailing wind. We must dissent from the indifference. We must dissent from the apathy. We must dissent from the fear, the hatred and the mistrust. We must dissent from a nation that has buried its head in the sand, waiting in vain for the needs of its poor, its elderly, and its sick to disappear and just blow away. We must dissent from a government that has left its young without jobs, education or hope. We must dissent from the poverty of vision and the absence of moral leadership. We must dissent because America can do better, because America has no choice but to do better."

— **Justice Thurgood Marshall,**
Supreme Court Justice of the United States



**CENTER FOR
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ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY



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