

“In today’s global economy, a high-quality education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity—it is a prerequisite to success.”

—President Barack Obama



THE WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON
EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE
FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS

Summits on EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS

Education Summits: Supporting Excellence From Birth Through College Completion

As a nation we have long held fast to the belief that education paves the pathway to the American Dream—to the opportunities and experiences that help Americans attain good jobs that provide the means to succeed, care for a family and fully participate in a community. In the African American community in particular, high-quality education and developmental opportunities have helped us create jobs and new industries, and overcome income and social gaps, as well as other critical challenges.

Students at any age, from birth through adulthood, deserve opportunities that enable them to be successful at school and prepare for careers they desire, and that will support them and their families.

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans (Initiative) is working with individuals and organizations throughout the country to highlight and share effective national and local programs, policies, and practices that support the development and success of African American students. Summits featuring this work, described in this document, take place at postsecondary institutions and with community-based organizations throughout the country.

Contact us:



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To register, and for summit agendas or additional information, visit www.ed.gov/AfAmEducation/.

“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”

—Frederick Douglass



Key Components of Excellence

Equity

Equity in education is vital because equality of opportunity is a core American value. Young people in this country—regardless of wealth, home language, zip code, gender, sexual preference, race or disability—must have the chance to learn and achieve. Education must provide a path to a thriving middle class for all who are willing to work hard. Yet, today, far too many students, especially in underserved communities, lack robust access to the core elements of a quality education. That includes high-quality preschool, strong teachers and school leaders, rigorous course offerings, high standards, robust enrichment both in and outside of school, safe environments, the support of caring adults, and affordable higher education.

Did you know that at a time when STEM knowledge is essential for 21st-century jobs:

- A recent study of the computer science Advanced Placement exam found that, in 11 states, no African-American students took the exam and that, in eight states, no Hispanic students took it.

The Obama administration aims to improve outcomes for underserved students through its major education initiatives by supporting states in their efforts to ensure quality teaching in every classroom and school leaders in every school building; raise standards for all students; build systems to improve instruction; and significantly improve chronically low-performing schools. These aims underlie foundational programs, such as those funded through *Title I* and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*, as well as competitive funding programs developed by this administration, including Race to the Top, Promise Neighborhoods, and Investing in Innovation. *ESEA* flexibility has improved on past policies under the *No Child Left Behind Act* by giving states flexibility to more accurately target the schools most in need of improvement through truly meaningful interventions. Additionally, the president's Ladders of Opportunity and Promise Zones initiatives aim to make rapid, positive changes in communities of concentrated poverty. Visit the following websites to learn more about these funding sources.

Title I: www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/index.html

Race to the Top: www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html

Promise Neighborhoods: www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/index.html

Investing in Innovation: www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/index.html

ESEA Flexibility: www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/index.html

Quality Early Learning

Learning begins at birth and the preparation for learning starts well before birth. High-quality early education and development gives every student a chance to succeed in school and life. We know this from research and experience and, still, too many African American children, especially from families with low incomes, are not enrolled in such programs. Missed early learning and development opportunities result in more time and money spent later trying to catch up.

READING BELOW GRADE LEVEL



53% percent of African American fourth-graders and **44%** percent of African American eighth-graders read below grade level.

Did you know:

- Much of the achievement gap we see between different groups of children develops well before they enter kindergarten. And it is more difficult to close than it is to prevent.
- 74 percent of students who cannot read well by the end of third grade do not do well in later grades and often drop out before earning a high school diploma.

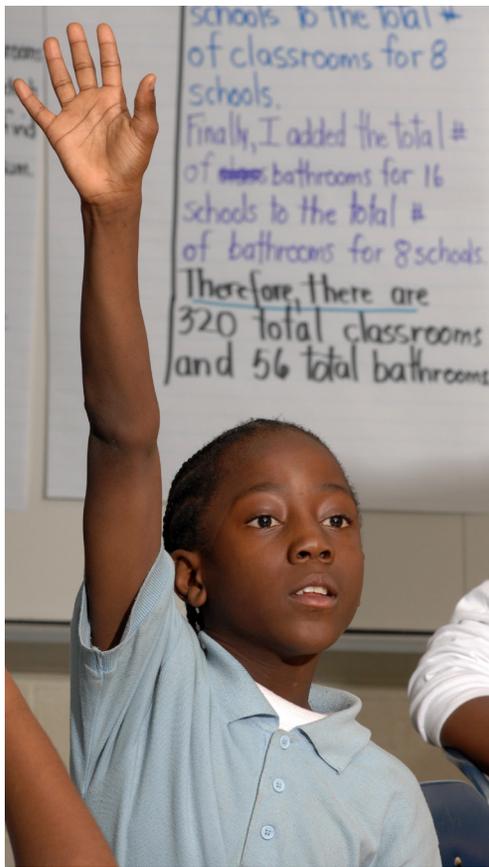
*FROM BIRTH UNTIL AGE 5
A CHILD'S BRAIN DEVELOPS
MORE THAN AT ANY
OTHER PERIOD IN LIFE.*



President Barack Obama, recognizing the importance of early childhood education, has developed a plan to make sure every child has access to high-quality education. Learn about it at www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/02/14/high-quality-early-education-all-children/.

Parents and caregivers are the first teacher a child has. To learn about what quality early learning looks like and where to find it, consider the following resources:

- National Black Child Development Institute at www.nbcdi.org
Report: *Being Black Is Not A Risk Factor* at www.nbcdi.org/sites/default/files/resource-files/Being%20Black%20Is%20Not%20a%20Risk%20Factor_0.pdf
- National Association for the Education of Young Children at www.naeyc.org
- Head Start at www.acf.hhs.gov/
- National Head Start Association at www.nhsa.org
- National Institute for Early Education Research at www.nieer.org
- Report : *Equity and Excellence: African-American Children's Access to Quality Preschool* at [nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/Equity and Excellence African-American Children's Access to Quality Preschool_0](http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/Equity%20and%20Excellence%20African-American%20Children's%20Access%20to%20Quality%20Preschool_0)



K-12 Reforms

Today, the United States has one of the highest high school dropout rates in the world. We have been seeing breakthroughs in closing gaps in graduation rates between students of color and their white counterparts, but recognize we have a long way to go. Among students who do complete high school and go on to college, nearly half require remedial courses, and nearly half never graduate. Yet in today's world, a college degree or advanced certificate increasingly represents the entry ticket to rewarding careers. Likewise, our graduates will compete against the smartest young people from across the globe. To meet that challenge, President Obama set two ambitious goals: One, that by 2020 the United States would once again lead the world in college completion; and, two, that every student would receive at least one year of college or specialized training after high school.

The key initiative in this K-12 reform effort has been the Race to the Top program, which has provided more than \$4 billion to support and spotlight some of the most promising ideas to improve education. These include comprehensive reform strategies based on college- and career-ready academic standards and assessments, increased use of data, having great teachers and principals in every school, and an intense focus on turning around the lowest-performing schools.

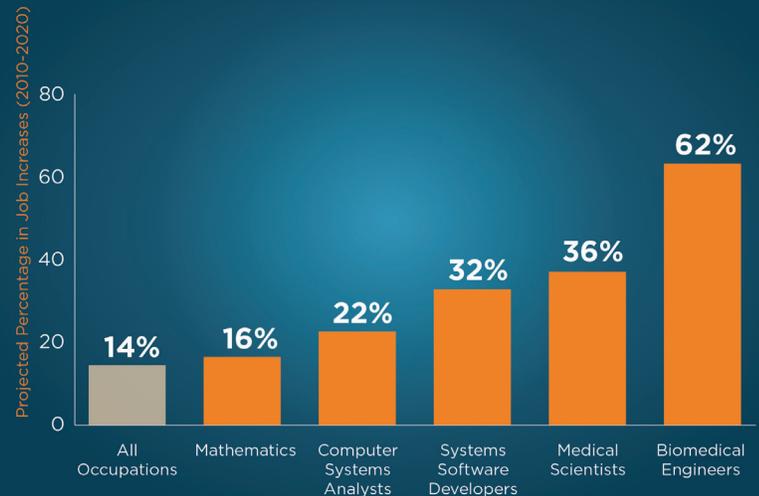
Building on this momentum, President Obama has proposed to deepen reforms through investments in strategic areas where states and school districts face key implementation challenges. He has also proposed to continue substantial investments in critical formula grant programs that support state and local reform efforts. It is important to strengthen these investments. The following represent these investments:

- Early learning: America's middle class promise begins early: www.ed.gov/early-learning
- K-12 reforms: www.ed.gov/k-12reforms
- High school redesign and career readiness: www.ed.gov/highschool
- Supporting effective teaching and strengthening school leadership: www.ed.gov/teachers-leaders
- Transforming teaching and leading: www.ed.gov/teaching
- School safety: www.ed.gov/school-safety
- Turning around the lowest-performing schools: www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html
- College and Career Ready Standards: www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/frequently-asked-questions/ **and** all4ed.org/issues/common-core-state-standards
- White House Job Resource site: www.whitehouse.gov/economy/jobs/youthjobs
- Department of Labor Summer Youth Jobs site: webapps.dol.gov/summerjobs
- Job Corps: www.jobcorps.gov/home.aspx
- Equity and Opportunity: www.ed.gov/equity

Did you know:

- In 2009, in STEM fields, blacks received only 7 percent of bachelor's degrees, 4 percent of master's degrees and 2 percent of doctorates.
- In 2011, 6 percent of STEM workers were black, increasing from 2 percent in 1970.
- In 2011, women with a science or engineering bachelor's degree who were employed full-time, year-round in STEM occupations earned \$16,300 more per year than women who had a bachelor's degree in science or engineering but were not employed in STEM occupations.

PROJECTED PERCENTAGE INCREASES IN STEM JOBS: 2010-2020



Source: The Bureau of Labor Statistics, www.bls.gov/emp/ep_table_102.htm

STEM

The United States has become a global leader, in large part, through the genius and hard work of its scientists, engineers and innovators. Yet, today, that position is threatened as comparatively few American students pursue expertise in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)—and by an inadequate pipeline of teachers skilled in those subjects. President Obama has articulated a clear priority for STEM education: Within a decade, he says, American students must "move from the middle to the top of the pack in science and math."

Specifically, he has called on the nation to develop, recruit and retain 100,000 excellent STEM teachers over the next 10 years. He also has asked colleges and universities to graduate an additional 1 million students with STEM majors. These improvements in STEM education will happen only if Hispanics, African Americans, and other underrepresented groups in the STEM fields—including women, people with disabilities, and first-generation Americans—participate and succeed.

Some useful STEM education resources:

- STEM programs at ED: www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/green-strides/stem.html
- Committee on STEM Education (CoSTEM): www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ostp/nstc/committees/costem
- "Educate to Innovate" Campaign for Excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education: www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/president-obama-expands-educate-innovate-campaign-excellence-science-technology-eng
- Federal STEM Education 5-year Strategic Plan: www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/stem_stratplan_2013.pdf

College and Career Readiness

President Obama has set two ambitious goals: That all adult Americans pursue at least one year of higher education or career training, and that America regain its role as the world leader in college completion. The president's plan to reinvent high schools and strengthen federal Career and Technology Education programs will support these goals.

For more information about the president's 2020 higher education goal for the nation, visit www.whitehouse.gov/reach-higher/.

Become an Educator

Teaching matters. Education is a big part of who we are as a nation. Having a great teacher and school leader makes a big difference in how well students perform in school and in life.

Did you know:

- While 16 percent of students in the U.S. identify as African American, only 7 percent of teachers identify as African American.
- Less than 2 percent of the nation's educators are African American men.

Visit Teach.org to find pathways into teaching, and www.ed.gov/teaching to find scholarships and other sources of support.

Become a Mentor

Chances are you can think of at least one caring adult—a mentor, teacher, neighbor, coach—who played a positive role in shaping your future. YOU too can make the difference in the life of a child or young adult by providing a positive and constant source of support.

Join the White House Initiative in our effort to recruit 10,000 mentors to support educational excellence for African American children throughout the country by visiting www.ed.gov/AfAmEducation/.

Learn More About the Initiative

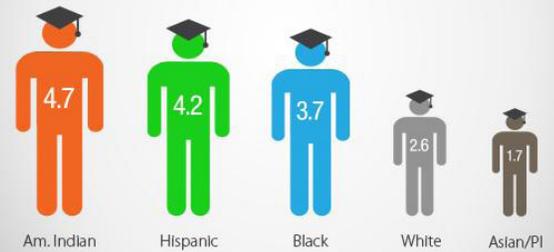
To learn more about the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans and our efforts to support students, schools, and communities, visit www.ed.gov/AfAmEducation, follow us on Twitter @AfAmEducation and on Instagram @OfficialAfAmED, or like our Facebook page, OfficialAfAmEd.

Help spread the word: Do you know of a person, program, or policy supporting learning and development opportunities that represent educational excellence for African American students, schools, or communities? Share the news with us so we can let others know. Email information to AfAmEducation@ed.gov with "Good News" in the subject line.



The gap between minority and white students is shrinking

Graduation Rate Growth Over the Past Two Years (%)



Source: National Center for Education Statistics

EVERYONE can support a college completion culture in the African American community in three ways.

1. **Talk to children and youths about the fact that they CAN go to and graduate from college.**

The children you know must believe they are smart enough to graduate from college. Engage them in discussions about life on campus and the benefits of higher education. Ask parents and guardians if they believe the children in their lives can go to college. If they say no, hold the belief for them until you help them understand all children are capable of meeting high expectations.

2. **Take students to visit colleges and universities.**

Chances are there is an institution of higher education in your community or city. Plan a trip to campus—walk around, talk to students, eat on campus, and help young people imagine learning and growing in college.

3. **Support students.**

Cost should not prevent African American students from achieving their dreams of attaining a high-quality education. Make sure students know about the college preparation and financial aid resources available at StudentAid.gov.

YOU have the ability to make a real difference in the world. YOU can stand in the gap and support African American educational excellence. Will YOU get engaged?