

National Black Church Initiative

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The Goldman Sachs Foundation
85 Broad Street, 22nd floor
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Dear Sir or Madam:

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI), a coalition of 34,000 churches around the United States committed to improving education and health and a subsidiary of the District of Columbia Black Church Initiative (DCBCI), has created an exciting program to tackle the issue of the dropout rates in inner city minority youth grades K-12 and college students. In 2004 NBCI spent the year recruiting and listening to key stakeholders in the education field to help them implement this progressive, national initiative with the goal of drastically cutting into the dropout rate among young African American males by 50 percent within the next ten years. NBCI's Education Mentoring Initiative kicked off in 2005 and has been running ever since. Now we are hoping to focus our efforts on five major cities in America: Indianapolis (30.5 percent graduation rate), Detroit (37.5 percent graduation rate), Baltimore (41.5 percent graduation rate), Cleveland (34.4 percent graduation rate), and Milwaukee (41 percent graduation rate). We are also including Chicago (52.2 percent graduation rate) because of the problem of violence in the schools there and the direct correlation between dropout rates and violent crimes. The numbers listed here on graduation rates are from the latest study on dropout rates by America's Promise Alliance.

We have integrated this initiative within the present workable best model structure that deals with these issues. This initiative is not a standalone project. We know that this program would not succeed without being fully integrated with affinity and key stakeholders. We have been working with the America's Promise Alliance and Susan Taylor, the former Editor of Essence Magazine, to help them in their goal to lower dropout rates across the country and increase the aspirations of every student. Over the past year APA's Dropout Prevention Campaign has met with much success in garnering attention for the dropout crisis in America and we are proud to be a part of that success. We are also currently working with them to move into the next stage of their dropout campaign, Grad Nation. This program is designed to turn awareness into sustained, results-driven action. We are now being assessed to be one of APA's model programs.

Here are the characteristics of NBCI's Education Mentoring Initiative that we have already begun to implement over the past five years:

- The recruitment of up to 250,000 education volunteers from the Black Church over the next ten years with that ability to check their backgrounds before they become any sort of mentor to kids to guard against the issues of abuse. Seventy percent of our mentors have college degrees and all are put through a rigorous, six week orientation program.
- Training students to follow the three "I Am Ready to Learn" practices: arrive at school, eat breakfast and do your homework.
- After school support programs that are connected to organizations that administer best practice education models, like *Scholar Centric's* Success Highways and the Houghton-Mifflin reading program.
- A mentorship monitoring program that is tracking high school and collegiate individuals from entrance to graduation. This takes over 40,000 key volunteers around the country who have agreed to attach that individual to their families. Each of the identified cities will have around 6,500 volunteers.
- Wrap around social service strategies that support the individual and his/her family through the educational process and help to deliver on their hopes and aspirations.
- Spiritual and counseling support for students and their families.
- Church-based scholarship and financial assistance by connecting all faith based scholarship programs in our 34,000 churches.
- Work with historically black colleges to devise early warning systems to identify young African American males who are having a problem adjusting and meeting the educational goal for college. This is especially focused on those who want to pursue financial services as a career.
- Building a college going culture throughout NBCI in order to promote education after high school and help parents and students prepare for and access college.

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) is a coalition of 34,000 African-American and Latino member churches which works to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare and education. NBCI is a faith-based health and education organization dedicated to providing critical stopgap educational initiatives and cutting the dropout rate of minority students. NBCI was founded in 1994 and has worked with many national organization and served on many key education and health committees. NBCI recognizes the importance of education in resolving the multiple disparities seen between different races in the United States. NBCI is a certified after school partner with each of the six identified school systems cited above.

Because of the sheer size of NBCI it is able take on large projects that other organizations cannot. This is thanks to the fact that NBCI has a strongly established network and a large pool of skilled volunteers within it congregational ranks that can connect the school to the support of the community. NBCI has five faith commands that cover the entire country. Atlanta represents the Southeast, New York represents the Northeast, Chicago represents the Midwest, Dallas represents the Southwest and Oakland represents the West. Aside from the immense undertaking we have already described above we have accomplished much with our large network. Here are five of our greatest educational accomplishments:

- Persuaded over 25,000 of our churches to prioritize education for all children in grades K-12 in our congregations. Churches utilize their resources to help students in any way they can so that they can complete their education.

- Organized over 2,200 school fairs with the purpose of providing collegiate information to high school students within our communities.
- Organized over 600 trips to historically black colleges for sophomores and juniors across the country in order to promote a culture that promotes college attendance.
- Organized our individual church's scholarship program into a central network of support. Congregations located in the Northeast can now assist students who attend school in the West or Southwest.
- Identified and matched over 27,000 educational volunteer personnel who provide educational tutoring to students who need it in specific academic areas.

Our current budget projections for 2010 will be \$1, 250,000. This will cover all of our current programming from health to financial literacy. We are seeking a grant of \$1,000,000 for EMI to help in capacity building efforts, moving toward an entirely computer organized volunteer base, major program growth and minor personnel growth of this ten year education initiative, which goal is to raise 250,000 volunteers.

We have attached multiple forms of documentation on our work involving education and hope to hear from you soon on this matter.

Sincerely,

Rev. Anthony Evans
President

National Black Church Initiative

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April 5, 2005

Resolution: This resolution states that each Faith Command will make education and the protection of our school-aged children a priority over the next ten years in our faith communities. The church agrees to restructure its faith community around promoting educational achievement among its school-aged congregants and those who are a part of the adjoining communities.

Resolution was considered by the board and passed.

Date Passed: April 11, 2005

Deborah Bagley
Board Chair, NBCI

Jesse Coley
Board Secretary, NBCI

The below churches represent a small portion of the 25,000 small churches which are committed to this resolution that prioritizes education. Tremendous gains have been made to date, but there is much more work that can be done.