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## Professor Leads Drive 'To Save' Black Children

by Omari Kenyatta, J.D.

Howard University Professor Faustine Jones-Wilson is fired up.

"It's time for us to stop passing the buck. What can each of us do to facilitate learning?"

She's referring to the education of black children, indicating that too many are underachievers. "Our children are falling between the cracks. They're not being properly educated for the 21st century," charges the educator, who is black.

In what she calls a "self-help effort to save our children," Dr. Jones-Wilson leads a national initiative spearheaded by Rep. Augustus Hawkins, D-Calif., chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor, to get more people involved in the process of educating black children, who gene-

Lovely H. Billups, director of field services for educational issues with the American Federation of Teachers, points out that the blueprint will be presented this summer at the AFT's national QuEST (Quality Educational Standards in Teaching) Conference, where thousands of teachers, administrators and educational researchers are expected to gather. "I don't think this is an initiative that will die . . . It has a solid research foundation and knowledge base," she maintains.

The NCEBC initiative is being carried out by what Jones-Wilson calls a predominantly black "loose-knit coalition of education advocates."

This band of education advocates, all volunteers, including Jones-Wilson, is trying to get all segments of society involved in a coordinated pressed concern over the underachievement of black children.

A few months later, last September, the first conference was held, and a blueprint for action was drafted. A refined plan was presented at the second National Conference on Educating Black Children in May

One of researcher Ron Edmond's assumptions on which the plan is based was that "all students ought to graduate from high school prepared to go to college. I don't care whether they go to college or not, but they ought to have the choice . . . "

Jones-Wilson basically agrees, and goes one step further, citing the United Negro College Fund's motto: "A mind is a terrible thing to waste."

## **Koch Joins Walk to Protest Street Prostitution**

Commissioner Bob Koch joins members of the Piedmont Neighbor-Association in a walk along Union Avenue to protest the continuing problem of street prostitution in the area on Wednesday, July 29. The march began at Northeast Union and Holman at 6:30 p.m.

"Street prostitution is a crime that deserves our attention," says Koch,



Photo by Richard J. Brown

Howard University Professor Faustine Jones-Wilson, editor of The Journal of Negro Education, is in the forefront of a national initiative

rally lag behind their white counterparts in reading and math skills.

The professor of education, along with retired Los Angeles school district administrator Owen Knox, co-chairs the National Conference on Educating Black Children (NCEBC), launched in 1986, which recently developed a "blueprint for action" to ensure that black children achieve to their

Stressing that a "comprehensive strategy" is needed, Jones-Wilson explains in an interview, "We must get this blueprint into classrooms, homes and school-board rooms so that a massive all-encompassing program is implemented."

The blueprint offers a set of recommendations, or "action-oriented mandates," specifically designed for students, teachers, administrators, parents and policymakers, as well as communities.

Recommendations range from encouraging students to develop and maintain a positive attitude about learning to urging policemakers to investigate and replace institutionalized policies and practices that may be obsolete. Tips are given on how to follow through on "action items."

The blueprint has its roots in the "effective-schools" research of late Harvard University educator Ron Edmonds, who identified five characteristics that make up an effective school environment.

He found that strong administrative leadership, an orderly and safe climate for learning, high expectations for students, instructional routines and operational procedures geared toward learning, and continuous monitoring all contribute to an effective school environment.

One of the blueprint's architects, Dr. Kenneth Tollett, distinguished professor of higher education at Howard, says the NCEBC initiative is based on "a very ambitious blueprint for action that I think can be accomplished because of the quality of people spearheading it, such as Congressman Hawkins, Faustine Jones and Althea Simmons (director of the Washington, D.C., bureau of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People)."

Some 300 educators, social scientists, policymakers, parents, community and civil-rights leaders met near Baltimore in late May to move a national education agenda from blueprint stage to action during the second National Conference on Educating Black Children.

Successful educational programs in cities such as Baltimore, Chicago, and Los Angeles that bring the blueprint to life were highlighted at the con-

The participants, many of whom represent national civil-rights, education, fraternal, professional and social-service organizations, were urged to take the blueprint for action back to their local communities and organizations for introduction and implementation.

Although there's "no grand plan for implementation," there's evidence that individuals are spreading the word of the plan through various networks, says Jones-Wilson, who is editor of The Journal of Negro Education, a Howard University publication on education issues affecting blacks.

LaMar Haynes of the National Education Association says that several NEA officials have been and still are involved in the planning, development and implementation of the initiative. "As a follow-up to our efforts with the NCEBC, the NEA will be sharing the blueprint with attendees at its annual Women and Minority Conference, which precedes the NEA annual meeting."

to educate black children. Says the educator, "Our children are Photo by Marvin T. Jones falling between the cracks."

Jones-Wilson notes that regional NCEBC groups are beginning to emerge now that the blueprint for action plan has been disseminated. "If we can get this blueprint implemented in major cities in the country

where black students are concentrated, then we can begin to remedy, on a large scale, their underachievement," she says. "If we can get 50 percent or more of parents, teachers, principals, etc.,

to carry out these action items, it will have some effect." Asked why she believes this ambitious initiative is going to work, Jones-Wilson responds, "Black people are greatly concerned that we are losing our children. Historically, education has been the major means of our inclusion into society and our upward mobility.'

The professor recently introduced the blueprint for action to students, parents and teachers at Eliot Junior High School in the nation's capital. This is a school that is trying to get more parental involvement in the

cher Helpers (PATH), supported by a federal grant. "We have to involve the home more," says Eliot principal Dr. Rosella Bardley. "We have to take the initiative to train young parents to they can

education process. Last year, it launched a program called Parents As Tea-

recognize their value to the schools." What Bardley finds particularly beneficial in the blueprint for action is the specific guidelines for both students and parents, as well as for teachers

and administrators, to follow. When discussing the future of black children, the bespectacled Prof. Jones-Wilson becomes emotionally charged. She points to the evergrowing competition for jobs, emphasizing that manual-labor jobs are vanishing. "With the structure of society changing, how will our young people be equipped to participate fully in the present and emerging structure, which is technological and high-level service?

"How are these black boys and girls going to be fully included in the international society developing now for the next century? That's going to

"If you can't think critically about the events in your world, about the people who are in charge, then you can't participate fully in a democratic social order," she emphasizes.

"A race is not judged on its W.E.B. DuBoises, or its Mary McLeod Bethunes, or its Martin Luther Kings. It's judged on the contributions of the majority of its people on a day-to-day basis. And that's why we want to educate these black children so they can contribute on a day-to-day basis, and so that new leaders can emerge from their ranks."

The professor is committed to the cause and is trying to fire up others as well. "We're trying to get enough black people dedicated to continuing efforts to ensure that black youths learn.

"It's not enough for me to just stand in my classroom at Howard University . . . I must be involved in this practical effort to get what we know implemented in schools and communities," she stresses.

"We as professors are not merely Ivory Tower types confined to teaching and theoretical research. We are expected to apply what we know to the resolution of human problems. A major human problem now is the education of black children . . .

Jones-Wilson became involved in the effort when she was contacted by Rep. Hawkins in March 1986, she says, noting that the congressman ex-

"because of the amount of street violence, drug abuse and loitering that it causes in our neighborhoods."

Earlier this year, Koch sought a legal opinion on whether the city could enact a law allowing for the seizure of vehicles owned by persons arrested for soliciting prostitutes. The opinion stated that the law could best be enacted by the state of Oregon.

Rep. John Minnis then introduced the bill in the last session, but the legislature failed to act on the matter before the close of session.

Koch praised Piedmont neighborhood leaders for helping to "try and solve problems" occuring within their boundaries.



Portland will host the Northwest Regional Convention of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, the oldest Black women's organization in the nation. State District 18 Representative, Margaret Carter, will be guest speaker Wednesday, July 29, 1987. See story on Page 6.