

## 2012: Demand Excellence in Education

The best quality education is one of the most important issues that will determine ones future life, prosperity and destiny. But for Black American parents and students, this is the single most important issue that will affect not only our overall quality of life, but also will determine how we will achieve to the fullest extent actual freedom, justice, equality and empowerment. Excellence in education should not be just a matter for national political debate and dialogue; it should be the cause for urgent grassroots social action, protest and demand.

The truth is we are not making enough noise and clamor about what is happening to the majority of Black youth in the public schools systems across America. Why are 45 million Black Americans so silent about the failures of the primary and secondary school systems when it comes to the education of our children? The high school dropout rate for Black students continues to be double that of White students. This statistic has become so common that in many school districts it no longer serves as the subject or predicate for policy change at the school board level. Yet we know well the direct correlation

### EDUCATION SERVICES

Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.



between low academic achievement and persistent high school dropouts as well as the direct correlation between disproportionate high unemployment and incarceration.

Income inequality is directly related to educational inequality! Poverty persists disproportionately in the Black American community because of the absence of economic empowerment that would be fulfilled if we would educate

hands to the extent to which we demand and achieve the best education in the world without apology or excuse.

A recent study completed by Stanford University's Sean Reardon established that income inequality also predetermines how well a student will do in school. In other words, students from "rich" families potentially do better in school than students from "poor" and working class families. For the first time the study revealed, "The achievement gap between children from high and low income families is far higher than the achievement gap between black and white students."

But it should not be shocking that the academic achievement gaps are determine both by race

the Black Alliance of Educational Options (BAEO). The mission of BAEO is to increase access to high-quality educational options for Black children by actively supporting parental choices policies and programs that empower low-

the Board of Directors of Stand for Children Leadership Center and the Education Equality Project, two groups that work on education reform.

Legend emphasized, "Half of my fellow students dropped out

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The future is in our own hands to the extent to which we demand and achieve the best education in the world without apology or excuse

ourselves more fervently and urgently with excellence in every subject matter and discipline of study. The future is in our own

and economic class status. The question is what can we do about these systemic inequalities? This is why I have joined the ranks of

income and working-class Black families.

From Mississippi to Kentucky to Virginia, New Jersey, Missouri, and New York as well as in Alabama and other states, there is a growing national movement of Black parents and advocates for school reform.

We salute the involvement and leadership of some the outstanding performing artists and young emerging leaders in the African American community who have taken a public stand on the crucial education issue. Especially we note the renowned leadership of John Legend. He is a member of

before graduation, I was one of the lucky ones — I finished high school and went on to college ...With a different situation different teachers, maybe I would've been one of those 53 percent of young black men who do not graduate from high school. One of the 53 percent doing the low wage jobs, unemployment and prison."

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. is Senior Advisor for the Black Alliance for Educational Options (BAEO) and President of Education Online Services Corporation and the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN).



## Letters to the Editor

### Lariviere Firing Unjustified

Dear Editor;  
Oregon is silencing one of the exceptional voices in this state that has worked hard for inclusion. President Lariviere has contin-

ued dialogues with diverse audiences to find more ways to include and maintain diversity on the U of O Campus both with students and faculty. He recognized the importance of including these communi-

ties in all of his work and conversations about education, leadership, business and the future of our state. Education can be one of those things that divides us or brings us together and we are

all better off because President Lariviere has chosen the latter.

Faye Burch  
Portland Oregon

## Week on the Web

Tributes to Rob Ingram Whose Sudden Death Has Left Colleagues, Friends and Family Stunned .....  
*NW News*

Occupy Protests: Shop Mom-and-Pop on Black Friday .....  
*US News*



United Way: Making a Difference in the Name of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. ....  
*NW News*

Video Collective Celebrates 20 Years of Documenting Progressive Community .....  
*NW News*

Sisters Settle Suit Forcing Government to Issue Them Social Security Cards .....  
*US News*

Rob Ingram: In His Own Words .....  
*Opinion*



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