



11, No. 8

September 19, 2009

[Homepage](#)

[The Opinion Poll](#)

[About The Tribune](#)

[News](#)

[Editorials](#)

[Business](#)

[Community Focus](#)

[Sports](#)

[Arts and Lifestyle](#)

[Health/Wellness](#)

[Religion](#)

[Site registration](#)

[Tribune Blogs](#)

[AutoNetwork](#)

[Events Calendar](#)

[Classifieds](#)

[Advertising](#)

[Other Services](#)

[The Post Foundation](#)

[The Charlotte Post](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Editorials

Partnering to assist black males to succeed

*Published Wednesday, September 16, 2009
by DeWarren K. Langley*

In this historic time, the progress our nation has made in electing an African-American as president should not lull anyone into thinking that our journey is done, or even that the steepest and rockiest mountains of our journey are behind us.

We must act now. There is no time to waste. Lives are at stake.

Research has shown that the achievement gap impacting African-American males is caused primarily by inequitable access to early childhood education. As young black males progress, the situation is exacerbated by an inequitable distribution of skilled and experienced teachers, a lack of cultural competence exhibited throughout school systems and a lack of engagement by the community at large.

The Durham Association of Educators and Durham Public Schools are developing a proposal for a national grant to improve academic success for black males in selected schools. The DAE and DPS invited parents, students, teachers and community members to discuss this important topic at a Kitchen Table Conversation last Tuesday at W.G. Pearson Magnet Elementary School.

About a year ago, DPS held a Kitchen Table Conversation with the same stakeholders, at the same location, discussing the same topic. Last year's gathering resulted in visible progress. No action plan was developed, no action steps were taken, the resources required were not identified and secured, no short-term or long-term results were established, and the individuals who attended were not kept engaged in the process, informed of progress or told how to help in providing assistance.

As a community, we should be disappointed and frustrated with the lack of action. When are we going to move beyond discussing the problem to actually doing the work required to solve it? To be clear, closing the achievement gap will require more than implementing a particular program or two. It will require commitment, political will, deliberate actions and the alignment of efforts across the city of Durham.

Following the
Triangle Tribune





Durham Public Schools has talent and resources to offer; however, creating a culture of academic excellence for black males is going to take unprecedented collaboration between all stakeholders in Durham.

Access to a high quality education is the right of every student and the responsibility of parents, students, teachers and the community. Durham Public Schools must hire and retain quality teachers, develop rigorous and culturally responsive curriculum and instruction, and provide a safe and supportive learning environment. Teachers in our classrooms must motivate children to learn, work hard, focus and think critically. The best teachers should be teaching at the poorest performing schools. It is also imperative that teachers establish and maintain relationships with parents.

To that end, parents must avail themselves to the resources and opportunities the schools provide to support their children. They must take lead and serve as an active and reliable partner in their child's education experience. Parents, with the help of the community, must provide all African-American males - birth to five - with high quality and academically focused early education to prepare them for success in school. Early childhood education starts at home, and parents should be mindful of the images, language and behaviors their children are exposed. They are responsible for helping their child develop the basic social, emotional and intellectual skills needed at an early age.

It is a parental duty to instill in children a sense of personal responsibility and provide accountability when they do not perform or behave well. It is the parents' role to teach their children how to make good decisions - evaluating the situation at hand, identifying the desired outcome and taking steps that will lead to achievement. Parents are responsible for teaching their children the fundamental values on which to build their lives - self-worth, self respect, respect for others, the importance of education, time management, conflict resolution, and the development of personal goals. By providing a strong core foundation and supportive environment, parents give their children confidence to succeed.

If we fail to develop our most precious resource - the talent and imagination of every young person - we can have little hope for our future prosperity.

Yes, together, we can create a culture of academic excellence for African-American male students!

DeWarren K. Langley is a native of Durham and currently a second year law student at N.C. Central School of Law. He is also chairman of the board of directors for Partners for Youth, which provide mentoring, academic enrichment and summer employment to economically disadvantaged youth in targeted public schools in Durham. He can be reached at politicallyactive@gmail.com.

Copyright © 2009 Triangle Tribune

[| Homepage](#) | [The Opinion Poll](#) | [About The Tribune](#) | [News](#) | [Editorials](#) | [Business](#) | [Community Focus](#) | [Sports Arts and Lifestyle](#) | [Health/Wellness](#) | [Religion](#) | [Site registration](#) | [Tribune Blogs](#) | [AutoNetwork](#) | [Events Calendar](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Advertising](#)
[Other Services](#) | [The Post Foundation](#) | [The Charlotte Post](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Empowered by
Accrisoft Freedom 