

The background of the slide is a photograph of a diverse group of people. In the center, a young Black woman is wearing a black graduation cap and gown, laughing heartily with her mouth wide open. To her left, an older Black woman is smiling warmly. To her right, a man in a suit and tie is also smiling. In the foreground, another young Black woman is looking down and smiling. The overall mood is one of joy and celebration.

Invest in Educators: Mobilizing Parents as Advocates for Black Teachers

Dr. Meredith Anderson, *Director of K-12 Research & Ashlyn Thomas, *Research & Engagement Manager**
UNCF K-12 Advocacy

- 1. UNCF Overview**
- 2. Reshaping the Narrative**
- 3. Advocacy Tips**
- 4. Tools You Can Use**
- 5. Questions**



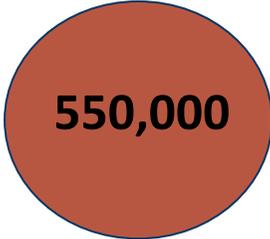
UNCF's Mission

UNCF is one of the nation's largest and most effective supporters of higher education and serves as a leading advocate for college-bound students.

We believe a college education plays a **vital role** in fortifying the pipeline of leaders and professionals who contribute to the advancement of our society.

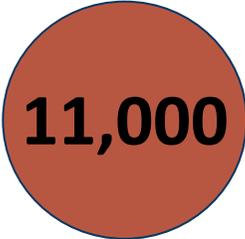
Through our efforts, **UNCF has helped generations of students to get to and through college.**

UNCF is Lighting the Way from Promise to Prosperity.



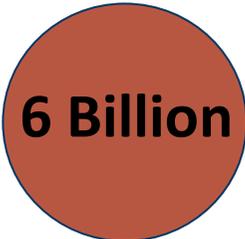
550,000

UNCF has helped over **550,000+ students** earn degrees.



11,000

UNCF awards **more than 11,000 scholarships** each year worth about **\$62 million**



6 Billion

Since its founding in 1944, UNCF has raised more than **\$6 billion** to support students' access to higher education, provide scholarships and strengthen historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs)



UNCF.org/MemberInstitutions

UNCF provides 37 historically Black colleges and universities with a range of support that enables them to keep their academic programs strong and their tuitions affordable.



Community Engagement

- Partner with local offices and Member Institutions to execute events supporting and amplifying issues in Black Education
- College access work to increase college readiness and exposure to HBCUs

Messaging & Research

- Share African-American perspectives on PK-16 with influencers, grassroots leaders, parents, alumni and students
- Amplify African-American voices/contributors for improving & supporting educational excellence

Human Capital

- Expand UNCF K-12 Education Fellows program
- Build pipelines between public schools (traditional districts and charters) to member HBCUs

HBCU- K-12 Partnerships

- Develop meaningful partnerships and interventions between the K-12 community and HBCU leaders
- Convene leaders to develop high quality HBCU-K-12 school models ([UNCF.org/HBCUK12](https://www.uncf.org/HBCUK12))

The K-12 Messaging and Research work centers Black voices in education and provides college readiness tools for communities

WHAT WE'VE DONE

- Produced/co-authored over **20** publications and college readiness tools
- Collected primary data from students, grassroots leaders, families, and education leaders in at least **8** different research studies
- Twitter chats, op-eds, blog posts, media interviews, virtual events

THE IMPACT

- Research cited in media outlets like *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, *Politico*, *Black Enterprise*, *Brookings*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Associated Press*
- Invited to inform policymakers, mayors, and leaders on strategies based on research
- Distributed research to over **50,000** individuals since 2020
- Presented at over **35** conferences, webinars, summits, etc. to promote & disseminate research since 2020

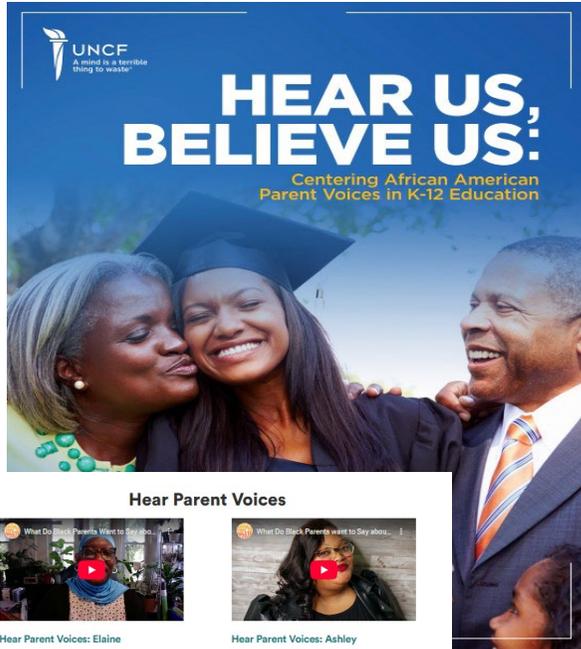
CURRENT RESEARCH



Learn more about our latest report at UNCF.org/k12advocacy

Reshaping the Narrative on Parent Advocacy

Study Overview and Microsite



Hear Parent Voices

Hear Parent Voices: Elaine
Elaine Wells shares how Black educators have enabled her children and grandchildren to thrive in the classroom.

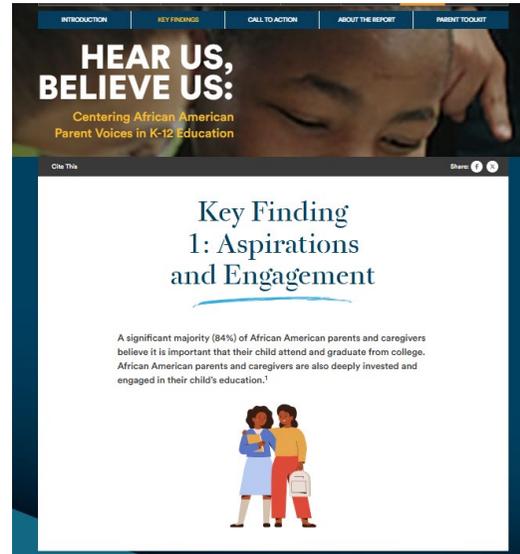
Hear Parent Voices: Ashley
Ashley Thomas discusses the difference that representation can make for children throughout their educational journey.

Hear Parent Voices: Sharn
Sharnna Boone-Ruffin encourages her children to aim for the stars as future engineers.

Hear Parent Voices: Ismael
Ismael Jimenez shares his experience as a parent and educator.

Hear Parent Voices: DaSean Jones
DaSean Jones uses his journey through higher education to uplift others and advocate for other parents.

Hear Parent Voices: Isis Spann
Parent and educator Isis Spann is active in her children's schooling to ensure they get the education they deserve.



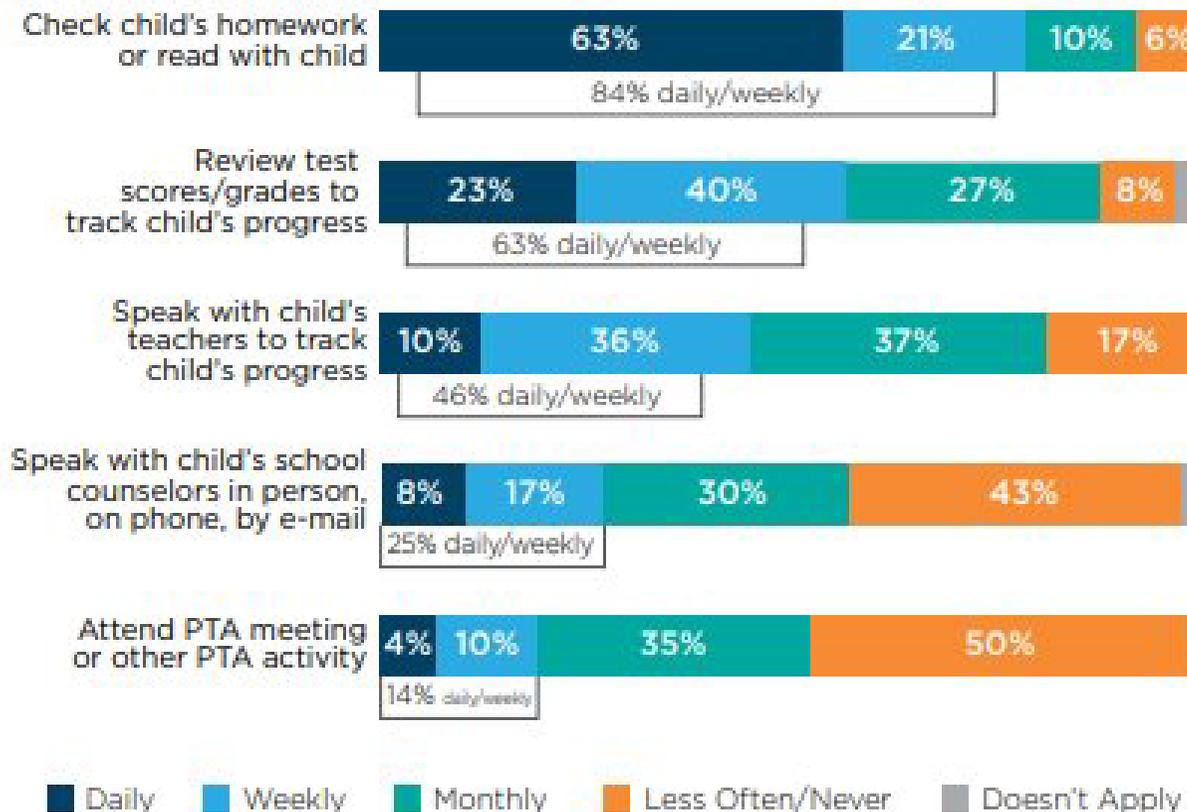
- This report illuminates the perspectives of African American parents and caregivers on key issues in education
- National sample of 500 low-to-moderate income African American parents and caregivers of school-aged children
- In addition, a separate subset of 1,200 parents were surveyed in the following 6 cities for some city level discussions in the report:
 - Chicago, Indianapolis, Atlanta, Houston, Memphis and New Orleans
- Focus groups with Black parents
- Methods: Descriptive statistics, Logistic regression modeling

**View report microsite:
UNCF.org/ParentVoices**



Black Parent Engagement in Education is High

FIGURE 2: African American Parent and Caregiver Engagement in Children's Education



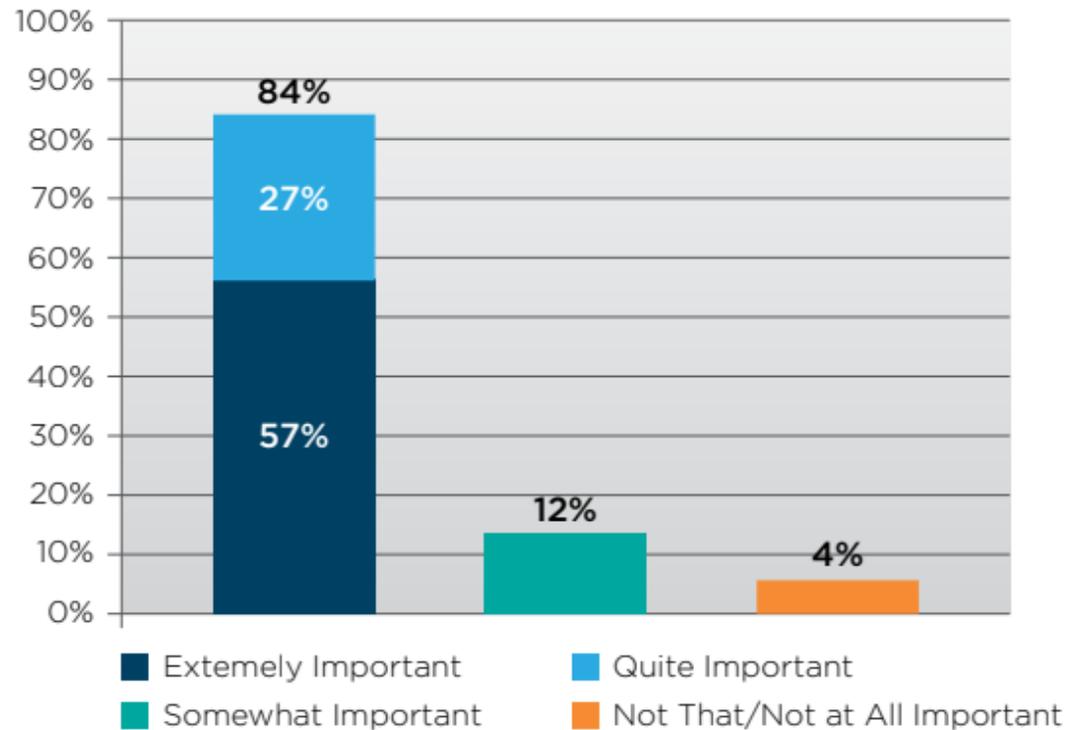
- **84%** check their child's homework or read to child daily/weekly
- **83%** speak to their child's teachers on a monthly to daily basis.
- **51%** of Black parents and caregivers said that their school does a very good job at making them **feel respected** at school however this increased by **9 percentage points** for Black parents whose children attends school with more Black teachers.

Parents/caregivers, do you feel respected or like your voices are heard in your school or district?

a. Yes

b. No

FIGURE 1: Percentage of Black Parents/Caregivers Who Believe It Is Important for Their Children to Attend College



- In schools with predominately Black teachers, **71%** of Black parents indicated that college was **extremely** important compared to **53%** for parents whose children attend schools with few or no Black teachers.
- The probability that a Black parent views college as important for their child was **higher** if their children attended schools where many or most teachers were Black compared to schools with fewer Black teachers.

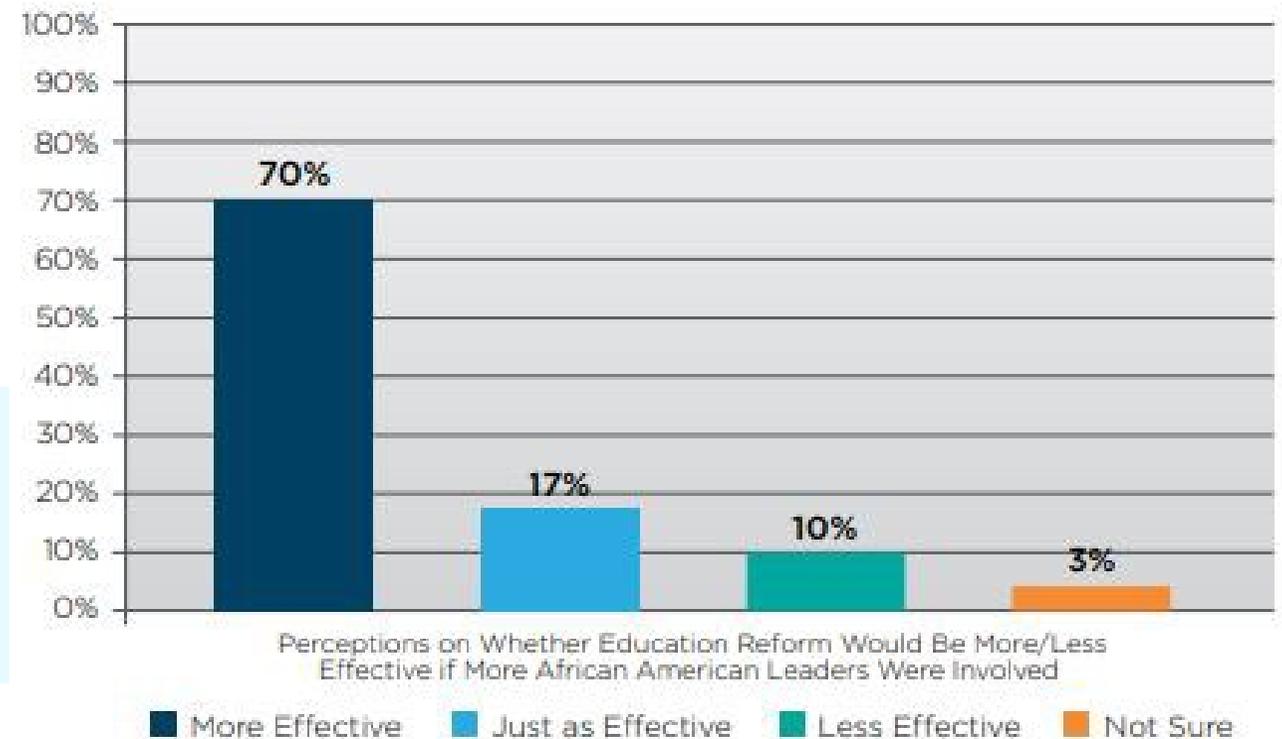
Black Leaders' Involvement in Education



"Black leaders not only amplify issues of inequities, help to dismantle systemic racism, but they also serve as role models for Black students."

"as a parent I absolutely got my son signed up with the 100 Black Men mentorship, and, of course, that helped guide him."

Expected Impact on Public School Reform Efforts If African-American Leaders/Organizations Are More Involved



- Inadequate Teacher and Leader Diversity

11% of public-school principals are Black compared to 78% for white principals.

7% of public-school teachers are Black compared to 79% for white teachers.

But decades of research show that, **Black teachers and leaders have a profound, positive influence** on students' academic outcomes.

Exposure to **at least one Black teacher** in grades 3-5 had a meaningful effect on students' long-run outcomes such as educational attainment and enrollment in college.

- Need for resources. Nearly **50%** of parents in our study could not name resources or organizations to support their child

Surveyed teachers across several cities and asked, ***“what would you describe as the most significant barrier to minority students' access to college?”***

Parental Involvement

“Unfortunately, I think it is a mindset inherited from the parents or their community! I think if we (Parents, Guardians and Educators) eliminate excuses and set our differentiated expectations properly and high for each students they will thrive to meet those expectations”

Home Support

“The greatest barrier is their home environment and support. They receive so much support in school about this but if at home they are not being supported because of various reasons it is very difficult for them.”

Student Aspirations

“I do not feel there is a significant barrier to minority student's access to college except their own confidence and want to attend college.”

Let's Get to Work: Advocacy Strategies



Nearly **90%** of parents said it would be very helpful to have resources that would help them in advocacy efforts



93% would like more opportunities to be involved in their child's education and more input into education laws



“Parents do not want to be passive bystanders in the learning process for their children. They don't want education being “done to them”, but with them.”



“

...when I came into the school system, I knew right away that I had to be an advocate.

**—African American parent,
focus group participant**

**“If they don't give you a seat at the
table, bring a folding chair.”
Shirley Chisholm**



Grassroots organized engagement



School/district/city level engagement

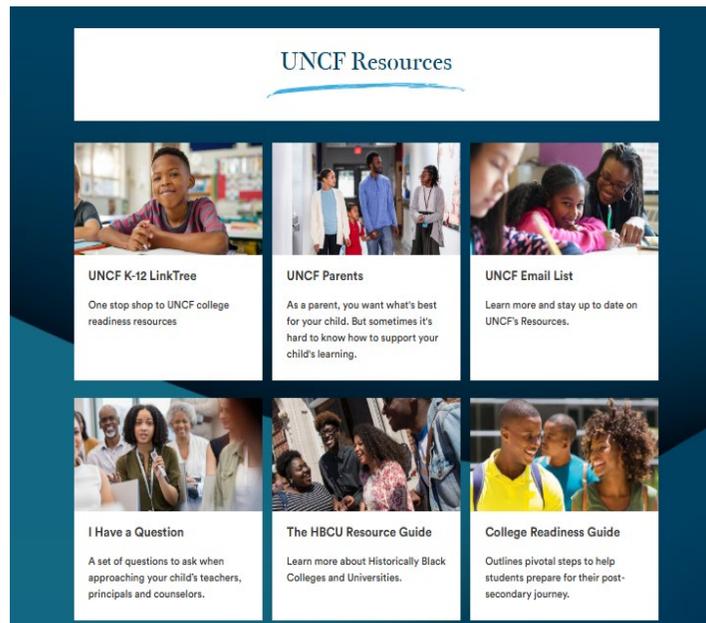


National level engagement



“

“...when parents are at the table, it is a game changer.”- Ashley Thomas, Parent Advocate



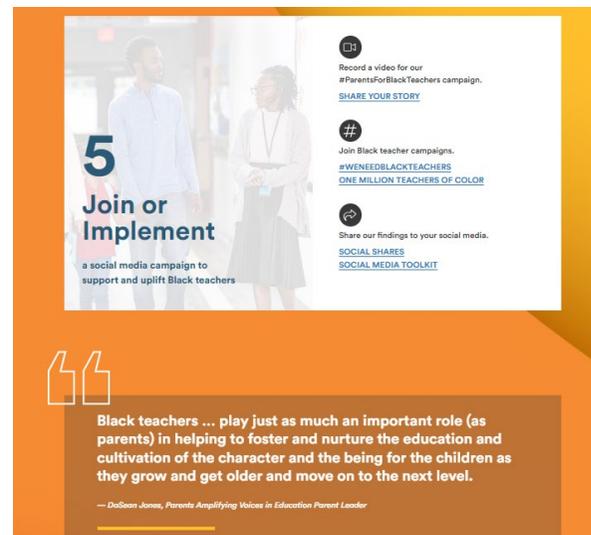
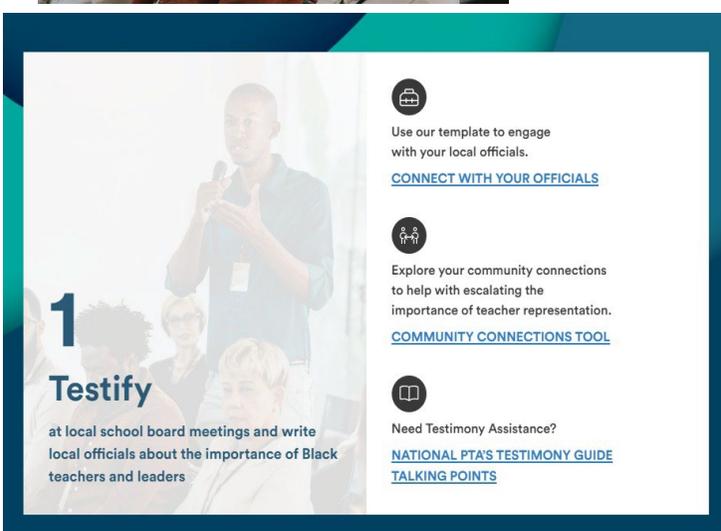
- An extension of the *Hear Us Believe Us* Parent Report, we mobilize parents to **invest in Black teachers** beneficial for *all* students and communities.

- This toolkit and microsite highlights the importance of parents and guardians as valued and transformative partners in the education system. ***Your voice matters!***

- **Tell Us Your Story** uplifting Black Teachers

- **Contact your Representatives** to advocate for more investment in Black teachers

- **Build stronger community connections** with faith-based organizations, school districts, and HBCUs, producing the highest number of Black teachers



1. Make it personal.

2. Provide facts/evidence.

3. Discuss the implications of inaction.

4. Be concise.

Send a Letter to Your Local Officials



1. Enter your address and zip code to view a list of your local officials.
2. Select the official you want to contact (Mayor, City Council Officers, City Administrators)
3. Use the template below and submit your completed letter.

Contact My:

1 Details 2 Messages 3 Confirm

"The lack of proper pedestrian infrastructure, signage, and traffic control measures in [Wards 7 and 8] is a clear inequity compared to other parts of the city. I ask, where is the investment in improving pedestrian safety for the people who live in these areas? If our city leaders are serious about equity, it must start with addressing these concerns." -Ward 7 PLE Board member Stephanie Griffith-Richardson @SGriffR



In-Person Testimony



Virtual testimony



Written testimony

Tell Us Your Story

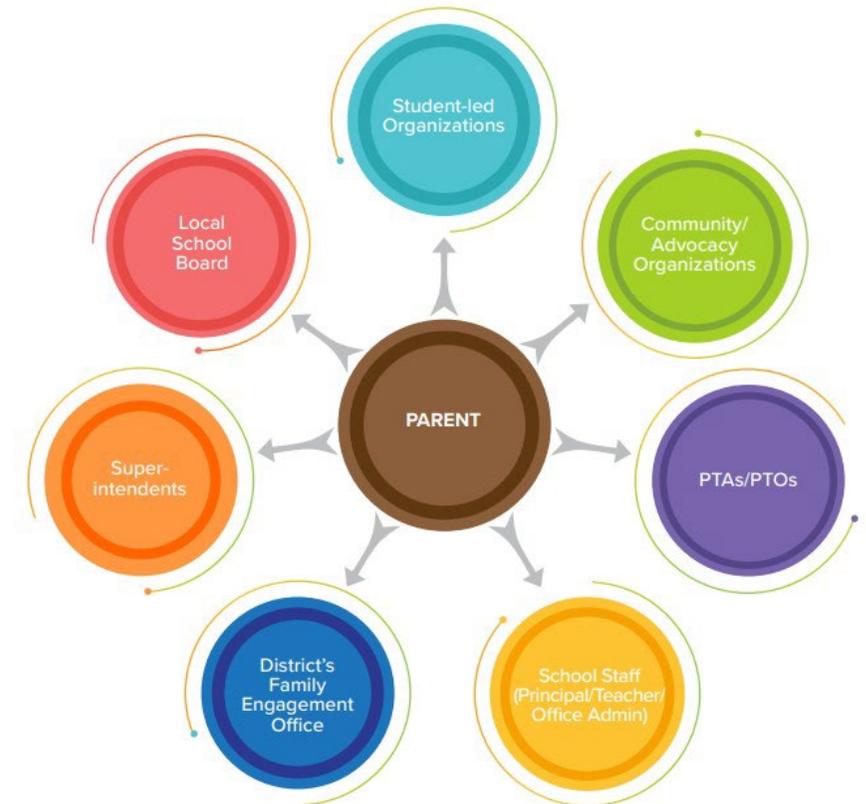
We want to hear from you! Has a Black teacher impacted your life in a positive way? Tell us! How should we recruit and retain more Black teachers? Let us know! Have a promising program that is working to support and recruit Black teachers? Uplift it! We want to hear from Black parents. Your voice is important! Scan the QR code to record a brief video.

Note: Videos may be used to further teacher recruitment and retention initiatives as well as be featured on UNCF.org or its social media channels.



- **PTO/PTA-** more than just fundraising, opportunities to advocate for policy changes, escalate concerns for schools related to your child and/or community.
- Connect with **Family Community Engagement office** to escalate concerns. Some districts, like New York City Public Schools have Parent Advisory Council that works with the district. Black parent voices are needed in school/district spaces.
- Work with **student groups and your own child**. Listen to students; sometimes they feel their voice is not valued in schools.
- Work with **teachers**. Are there concerns that warrant attention?
- Keep documentation of concerns.

Explore Community Connections



Resources



Center for Black Educator
Development



Education Trust



Learning Heroes



Memphis Lift



National Council on Teacher
Quality teacher Diversity
Dashboard



National PTA



Parents Amplifying Voices in
Education (PAVE)



National Parents Union



Oakland Reach



One Million Teachers of Color
Campaign

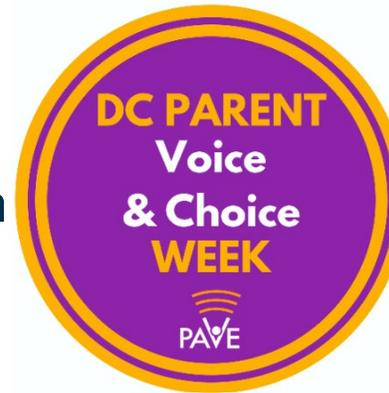


The New Teacher Project's
National K-12 Teacher and
Student Demographic
Dashboard

Join (or create) a coalition of parent advocates

“It is very important for organizations to exist that are pouring into families, pouring into community members and empowering them.” (Ashley Thomas—Black Indianapolis Parent Advocate)

- There is power in numbers.
- Seek out parent advocacy groups in local community
- Examples: Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE), Oakland Reach, Memphis Lift, Urban League
- DC Early Childhood Pay Equity – organized parents to protest/testify for early childhood pay for teachers
- Tips when joining coalitions: should have clear goals, actions, solution-oriented, key deadlines



DCPVCW
2025
by the
numbers!



13
Meetings with
Policymakers

44
Parent Leaders
in Attendance

13
Parent
Meeting Chairs

24
Parent
Question Askers

Parent-Teacher Planning Tool

Parents are the experts on their children and teachers are the experts of classroom learning. Share what you know and ask questions to co-create a simple plan.

Use this tool to get ready for parent-teacher conferences. You can also use it to follow up with teachers afterwards and make sure you have the information you need about your child's progress.

Enter your notes then choose Print or Email Plan at the bottom of the page.

Help the Teacher Connect with Your Child

Share with your child's teacher:

Ask about Grade-Level Progress

Example questions for the teacher:

Team up on a Plan

Example prompts and questions for the teacher:

NOTES

Go **BEYOND** Grades

DID YOU KNOW?

Almost 9 in 10 parents think their kids are at or above grade level*.

Yet, only half of students started the school year on grade level**.

*B-Flation: How "Good Grades" Can Sideline Parents, Gallup 2023

**School Pulse Panel 2022-2023, Institute of Education Sciences (IES)

Learning Heroes' Tools

- Teacher engagement tools
- Readiness guide/games to see if child is on track
- College readiness resources

Learn more at:
BeALearningHero.org

Readiness Roadmap

From math and reading to life skills, here's a guide on what's expected in each grade so you can team up with your child's teacher and support learning at home.

National PTA Advocacy Toolkit

Preparing Testimony

Preparing testimony is similar to writing a paper. There is a specific format to follow that includes opening remarks, a body and conclusion. Credible evidence is required, and personal opinions must be eliminated unless specifically asked about.

This guide provides a basic explanation about how to prepare testimony. Because different situations, states, and legislative committees will have differing needs in testimony, the format outlined in this piece can be used as a starting point. If you have questions on specific testimony being prepared, you may contact the Government Affairs staff at govaffairs@pta.org.

Opening Remarks

- Include your name, title and organization.
- Always thank the committee for the opportunity to speak.
- Clearly state the topic you will be discussing.
- Provide a brief overview of your PTA and why they have a stake in this particular issue.
- Include a one-two sentence thesis statement on what your position is and why.

Note: The thesis statement should be your professional recommendation based on PTA's Public Policy Agenda, resolutions, and/or position statements. Remember, you are representing PTA when giving these remarks, so you should always ensure that your testimony adheres to PTA's policies.

Body

- There is no set limit on length, unless stated otherwise.
- Cover the topic thoroughly and accurately.
- The committee will typically provide you with guidelines ahead of time on what the subject is and what they want you to address.
- Typically, testimony lasts between 5-15 minutes before questions.

- Be sure to provide evidence for your claims. DO NOT simply state your opinion.
 - These hearings are to determine the course of law. It is important that the committee and public hear factual accounts of what the legislation would impact.
 - Providing evidence gives credibility to your testimony and garners respect for you as a PTA leader.
- Be sure to connect PTA positions and public policy recommendations to the evidence. This allows legislators to clearly see why PTA advocates for the policy position they have taken.

Conclusion

- Briefly recount what you have covered.
- Restate your position and provide a recommendation for action.
- Finish by thanking the committee again.

Questions From the Committee

After your testimony, you will likely have a question and answer session from the committee. Keep the following guidelines in mind when answering questions:

- Do your homework ahead of time. The committee may ask you questions that fall outside the testimony you just gave. Make sure you are prepared to answer questions that pertain to the entire scope of the committee's hearing.
- Keep answers brief but thorough and stay on topic.
- Stick to the facts. Avoid offering an opinion unless directly asked by a committee member to provide one.

National PTA Advocacy Toolkit

Conducting Meetings with a Decisionmaker

Being an effective child advocate requires building strong relationships with decisionmakers and their staff. Decisionmakers exist at all levels of government and school administration and can be elected or appointed to their roles. At the federal and state level, a decisionmaker can be a legislator or their staff, or a state or federal education agency staff member. At the local level, decisionmakers can be school administrators or leaders such as school board members, superintendents, principals or teachers.

It is important to take every opportunity to reach out to build and maintain your relationship with decisionmakers. Meeting with a decisionmaker and letting them know what policies are important to you, your school and your community is an important step in building a positive, productive relationship.

You should note that decisionmakers at all levels will likely assign staff to participate in meetings, as staff are usually the team members directly involved in developing and/or implementing the policy or policies important to you. Most congressional meetings are taken by one of their staff members, who then relay pertinent information onto the members of Congress. Use the following tips to help you schedule and meet with decisionmakers.

When you call to schedule a meeting with a decisionmaker there are a few things to know.

At the federal level, you can call your member of Congress' Washington, DC office or their district office. If you are calling the district office, you should ask the scheduler to set up the meeting with the member of Congress while they are in the district. If you are calling the Washington, DC office to set up a meeting on Capitol Hill, you can either ask for the scheduler (if you are requesting a meeting with the member of Congress), or you can ask to be transferred to the Legislative Aide handling the issue you wish to discuss if you'd like to meet with them instead. Try to request a meeting between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.

The process at the state level is like the federal level in that state representatives will likely have an office and some staff at the state capital and a local office. Check out your state legislature's website for the contact information of your state representatives. If your legislature is in session, you should ask to meet with the member or their staff member. If your state legislature is not in session, you may be able to meet directly with the member at their local office or in the members' offices.

Before Your Visit

Scheduling

You can schedule individual or group visits with decisionmakers. You can meet with your members of Congress either in their Washington, DC office or their district office (i.e., the decisionmaker's office in your state). Most decisionmakers want to meet with people who live in the area they represent—at the federal level, this means most elected officials will not meet with constituents from other states or districts, so it's a good policy to only schedule meetings with your own member of Congress. To find your federal representatives' contact information, please visit the PTA Take Action Center at PTA.org/TakesAction.

At the state level, you can meet with your legislators in district or in their office at the state capitol. To schedule a visit, you should consult your state legislature's website to find contact information for your members' offices.



- ## National PTA Resources
- Tips and tools related to interfacing with decisionmakers- principals, superintendents, council, etc.
 - How to interface with media
 - How to run a PTA
 - Student Success Guides

Learn more at: PTA.org



Nothing About Us Without Us



BECOME AN NPU AFFILIATE

Get regional and national resources from NPU that can support your work and support you in providing for your community.



SUBSCRIBE TO OUR MAILING LIST

Learn more about what we do to help strengthen, elevate, and support your education advocacy work



BECOME A PARTNER ORGANIZATION

Learn more about building pockets of parent power across the nation and supporting our work



CONTRIBUTE TO NPU

With your help and support, we can ensure all families have a voice.



INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Join our parent movement today!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Stay informed and connected. Join our local and virtual events.

Resources Available

- How to Connect with School Administrators and Elected Officials
- How to Form Partnerships and Allies
- How to Write Advocacy Letters
- How to Organize a Social Media Campaign
- Trainings



Learn more at: NationalParentsUnion.org

Tools You Can Use

I HAVE A QUESTION...

What Parents and Caregivers
Can Ask and Do to Help
Children Thrive at School

A PARENT CHECKLIST



What's Next?

What do I do if my child is not getting educated according to the known high standards for his or her grade level and in view of his or her future?

- ✓ Keep asking questions of the teacher, principal, other parents and education experts, including questions about your school choices.
- ✓ Find other parents who have the same concerns and work together toward improving the conditions.
- ✓ Talk to the counselor, school advisory group, PTA, parent liaison or other school or program staff. They may share your concerns or be able to help you.
- ✓ Bring your concerns to the school district office, chancellor or superintendent.
- ✓ Attend public meetings and school board meetings, and tell your story.
- ✓ Consult the resources provided at the end of this guide.

Key Questions to Ask at Your Child's School

Quality: Is my child getting a great education? How can we work together if my child falls behind?

Ready for Success: Will my child be prepared to succeed in whatever comes next? How will you measure my child's progress and ability in various subjects?

Safety and Health: Is my child safe and cared for at school? What programs are in place to ensure that the school is a safe, nurturing and positive environment?

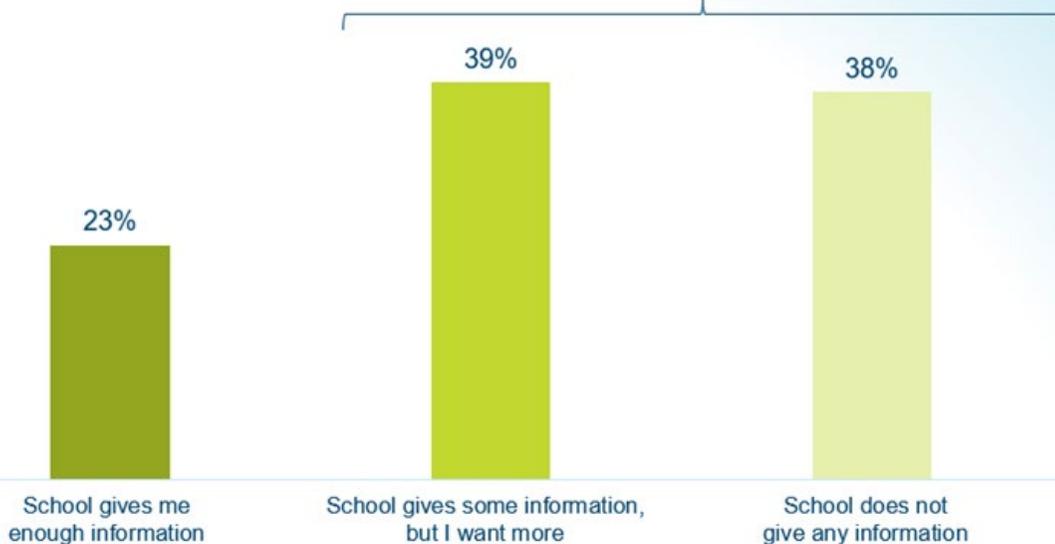
Great Teachers: Is my child engaged and learning every day? What kind of professional development is available to teachers?

Equity and Fairness: Does my child, and every child at my child's school or program, have the opportunity to succeed and be treated fairly? Does the school offer all students access to the classes they need to prepare them for success?

Learn more at: [UNCF.org/ParentChecklist](https://www.uncf.org/ParentChecklist)

How much information, if any, does your school give you about HBCUs?

77% want more information



Source: UNCF and Hart Research National Survey of 800 African American high school students, 2022

“They actually dissuaded us from going to HBCUs because they just felt like it couldn’t do anything for us.”

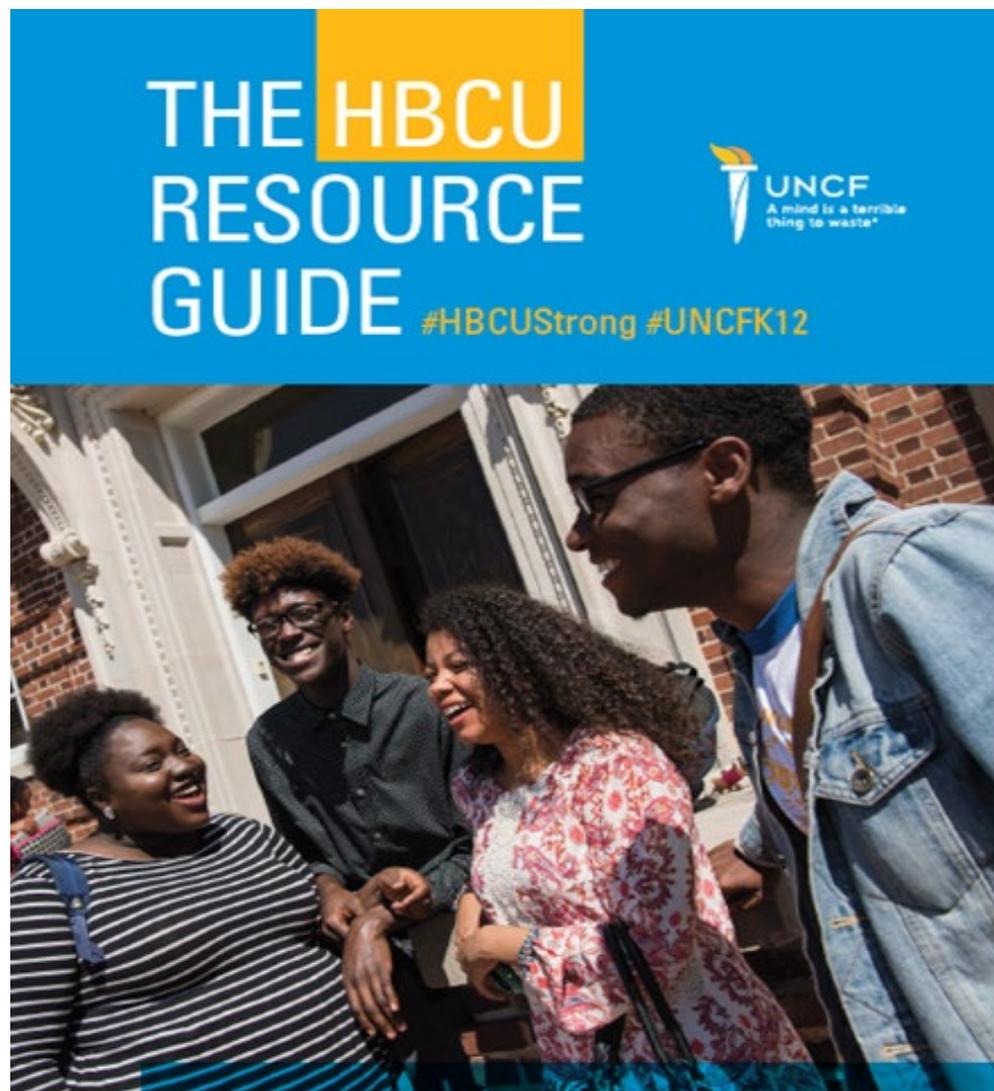
“...they [school counselors] don’t know what an HBCU is.”

School Counseling Office

- Often hear that school counselors and districts do not share complete college options available to students, like HBCUs.
- Some counselors dissuade Black students from higher education pathways.
- Work with school counseling office to share HBCU resources. Learn about their priorities.



Scan for resources to share with school counselors



**The HBCU Resource Guide
provides information on
scholarships, college
planning databases and
key facts about HBCUs**

Scan to access the guide



Join the UNCF Community Webinar Series to learn how you can graduate from college with little or no debt and

Dethrone the **Loan.**



When: Second Tuesday of each month (September – April)

Time: 6pm ET

Where: Zoom

Sign up: [UNCF.org/CollegeWebinars](https://www.uncf.org/CollegeWebinars)

Resource	Website
UNCF HBCU Resource Guide	Uncf.org/HBCUResourceGuide
UNCF College Readiness Checklist	UNCF.org/CollegeChecklist
UNCF College Application and Readiness Resources	Uncf.org/collegetoolkit
UNCF Parent Resources & Research	Uncf.org/parents
UNCF Scholarships	Opportunities.uncf.org
UNCF HBCU College and Career Readiness Tours- “Empower Me Tour”	Uncf.org/EMT
UNCF K-12 Advocacy	Uncf.org/k12advocacy
UNCF Monthly Community Webinars	Uncf.org/collegewebinars
UNCF Parent and Student Email Sign-Up	UNCF.org/Updates
UNCF’s K-12 Linktree College Readiness Resource	linktr.ee/uncfk12

Scan for resources



GET INVOLVED STAY INVOLVED

Sign up to receive timely updates, crucial information, and opportunities to support K-12 education and college readiness

 **SAVE THE DATE** Be the first to know about events, webinars, and initiatives.

 **CONNECT & ENGAGE** Join a network of like-minded advocates. Together, we make a difference.



Visit [UNCF.org/updates](https://www.uncf.org/updates)



Scan the QR Code to stay up to date on UNCF!



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Ashlyn Thomas – Ashlyn.Thomas@unconf.org

K-12 Partnerships – K12@unconf.org

- [UNCF.org/K12advocacy](https://unconf.org/K12advocacy)
- [UNCF.org/ParentVoices](https://unconf.org/ParentVoices)
 - [UNCF.org/Parents](https://unconf.org/Parents)
- [UNCF.org/Parent_toolkit](https://unconf.org/Parent_toolkit)

Questions?

Tell Us Your Story

We want to hear from you! Has a Black teacher impacted your life in a positive way? Tell us! How should we recruit and retain more Black teachers? Let us know! Have a promising program that is working to support and recruit Black teachers? Uplift it! We want to hear from Black parents. Your voice is important! Scan the QR code to record a brief video.

Note: Videos may be used to further teacher recruitment and retention initiatives as well as be featured on UNCF.org or its social media channels.

 Record Video

We want to hear from you!

- Has a Black teacher impacted your life in a positive way? **Tell us!**
- How should we recruit and retain more Black teachers? **Let us know!**
- Have a promising program that is working to support and recruit Black teachers and leaders? **Uplift it!**

[Unconf.org/parent_toolkit](https://unconf.org/parent_toolkit)