



State of Connecticut

African-American Affairs Commission

State Capitol

210 Capitol Avenue – Room 509

Hartford, CT 06106

860-240-8555

Achievement Gap Taskforce Meeting

AGENDA

Monday, January 9, 2012

10:00 AM in Room 1A of the LOB

Good morning, members of the Achievement Gap Taskforce. My name is Glenn Cassis the Executive Director of the African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC) a non-partisan state agency whose mission is to improve and promote economic, education, health and political well-being of the state's African-American community.

Since my time is limited I want to be brief and later submit written testimony. There is no one solution for solving this state's Academic Achievement Gap but from my combined forty years in education, state government and public service, I urge the Taskforce to seriously consider adopting a model that has existed in Connecticut for nearly 25 years. This is the TRiO model. TRiO is a federal program out of the Department of Education that has been one national model that has enabled hundred of thousands first generation, economically disadvantaged, and minority students gain access and later successful completion of post-secondary education. The model incorporates

- Parental involvement
- Academic support and counseling
- Year round classes (after school, Saturday and Summer enrichment)

Our Mission

To improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well-being of the African-American community in the State of Connecticut

- Exposure to college campuses
- Mentoring
- SAT Prep
- STEM enrichment
- Financial aid advising
- College selection advising and many other components that help secure success.

The focus is college graduation. Formal UpWard Bound programs exist on less than a dozen college campuses in Connecticut. There are almost 10 similar programs through the Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education, ConnCap programs and more than 45 other similar programs around the state that the AAAC has worked with for the past three years with funding support from the Lumina Foundation for Education. These programs follow rigorous evaluation protocols and have extensive supportive data and numerous anecdotal stories about people moving up the ladder and becoming major contributors to the State.

The biggest hurdles that these programs have are funding and coordination. This model needs to grow and it can. Leaders of these programs need to be invited to this discussion and be heard. They have been in the trenches with students, their families, teachers, counselors and educators. They with your support can help us eliminate the academic achievement gap.

Thank you,

Glenn A. Cassis
African-American Affairs Commission