2011 State of Black Boston
E X E C U T I V E   S U M M A R Y

STATE OF
BlackBoston

Urban League of
Eastern Massachusetts

NAACP
Boston Chapter

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United Way

State of Black Boston, 2011
Executive Summary

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The State of Black Boston is, we believe, a unique effort to honestly assess both the progress, and the lack of progress, that Black Bostonians have experienced in recent years. Without question, the tone of race relations in Boston, and a good many of the substantive indicators, are far better than they were just a few years ago. But other indicators show that many racial inequities have not closed, and some are moving in the wrong direction. The creators of the report believe that its production is itself evidence that Boston is serious about reclaiming the position it once had as a world leader in diversity and inclusion. The creators intend that the report's findings and recommendations will stimulate significant progress in coming months and years.

The State of Black Boston is a timely collaborative effort convened by the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts, Boston Branch of the NAACP and William Monroe Trotter Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston. This report, an inaugural endeavor, combines the power of academic research with the reach and vision of two of Boston's leading civil rights organizations. The State of Black Boston is not a comprehensive study of Boston's Black community nor an inventory of current initiatives and services. The State of Black Boston is a problem-solving exercise and call to action. The report features a focus on both "good news and good work to be done" in and beyond Boston's Black communities. The "good news" includes:

• Social progress and increased amity between racial and ethnic groups

• Educational gains

• Significant increase in the number of Black owned businesses and associated sales

• Inclusive city governance led by Mayor Thomas Menino

• Increasing numbers of notable and influential Black leaders in elected office and a range of professional fields

This "good news" is worthy of acknowledgement and celebration. There is a great deal for people living and working in Boston to be proud of as we look at the progress and developments in the city since the National Urban League last met here in 1976.

While the State of Black Boston takes note of such progress, it also names the "good work" needed to address a number of persistent challenges such as

• Infant mortality

• Impoverishment

• Disproportionate imprisonment

• Small number of Black-led institutions

No individual person or organization can claim sole responsibility for the "good news" noted in the State of Black Boston. The significant progress made to date grows out of the hard work and persistent effort of a large, diverse combination of stakeholders. Similarly, the good work ahead requires community-wide input and effort. Concerned individuals, businesses, educational institutions, elected officials and non-profit organizations will all play an important role in shaping Boston's response to the challenges outlined in this report.

The State of Black Boston report is designed to serve as a catalyst for dialogue and action. This report invites all residents to build on previous success and make continued progress towards a still better Boston.

Structure of the
State of Black Boston Report

The State of Black Boston report focuses on nine key areas:

With the exception of the Demographic and Community Profile, each of the research chapters speaks to a distinct set of opportunities and challenges in Boston's Black community with a proposed set of recommendations. Timelines of significant developments and charts with historical data help provide context for current trends in each content area. The report also features summaries of half a dozen community forums co-sponsored by The Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts, Boston NAACP, and Trotter Institute.

Additionally, the report includes observations, recommendations and feedback from the Community Advisory Committee, (CAC) a network of Boston residents convened by the Urban League to provide community voice to the State of Black Boston report and inaugural conference scheduled for Monday July 25, 2011. In several cases, recommendations from the CAC overlap with the recommendations generated by the State of Black Boston research team. This alignment bodes well for potential future action across sectors. The State of Black Boston is a forum that invites input from a diverse range of community stakeholders including academics, residents, elected officials, service providers, foundations and business leaders. The engagement of this varied network of contributors makes the State of Black Boston an innovative, ambitious and timely endeavor.

Following is a summary of key findings of core State of Black Boston Research chapters. This summary also includes associated recommendations from the Community Advisory Committee.

Key Findings from the State of Black Boston Demographic & Community Profile

Chapter written by James Jennings, PhD
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The State of Black Boston Demographic & Community Profile provides an overview of select social, demographic, and economic characteristics and trends associated with Boston's Black population. It presents a snapshot of population characteristics associated with Blacks residing in Boston. The racial categories used in the demographic profile include Black, Latino/a, White, and Asian persons. It should be emphasized, however, that these broad racial categories can include a range of ethnicity and ancestry. There may be differences among ethnic and ancestry groups within the broad racial categories. The racial categories only include persons (except for Latino/as) who chose the "one race alone" (versus two or more races) category. In the case of the Black, White, and Asian population very low percentages of individuals from these groups classified themselves as other than "one race alone."

In addition to profiling Black individuals and families, and households, the author utilizes GIS software to highlight the concept of a Black community as a unit of analysis. This means that information and data is presented for the urban space which has been associated with the Black community in Boston. The geographic boundaries include census tracts with relatively high proportion (50.0 percent or greater) of Black residents in 2009 within the Roxbury, South Dorchester, and Mattapan neighborhoods as defined by zip codes 02119, 02121, 02124, and 02126.

Key Findings:

Consistent Population Trends in Concentrated Geographic spaces

The geographic size of the Black community has shrunk and become more spatially concentrated. However, the size of the Black population in Boston has not changed considerably since 2000 when nearly one fourth (23.6%) of all persons were Black.

Blacks remain considerably 'younger' than Whites in Boston; almost one third (31.1%) of all Blacks living in Boston are 17 years or under according to the snapshot provided by the 2006-2008 American Community Survey (ACS). Latinos in Boston also represent a community with a significant percentage of young people (30.6%).

Growing Diversity in the Black Community
Approximately 29.7% of all Blacks in Boston are foreign-born. In terms of abso-

lute numbers, Blacks who are foreign-born (42,731 persons) are comparable to the number of Latino/as who are foreign-born persons (44,721).

Multi-generational Families and Female Headed Households
Black respondents who are 30 years and over, and who reported grandparent responsibilities, or living with grandchildren, comprised 43.5% of all Black households. This figure represents a considerably higher proportion of multi-generational households than other groups in the study.

One third (33.6%) of all Black families in Boston are married-couple families, a proportion similar to Latinos (34.6%), but lower than White families (69.8%), and Asian families (70.6%).

Female householder families with no spouse present comprise the majority of family types among Blacks (55.4%) and Latinos (52.7%) compared to 22.2% for White families, and 21.1% of all Asian families.

Education Patterns in Black Boston
Almost two thirds of all Blacks (61.3%) and Latinos (63.6%) who are over 3 years of age and enrolled in school are attending elementary school (grades 1-8) or high school (grades 9-12).

More than one fifth (21.5%) of all Blacks over 25 years of age reported not having a high school diploma; the figure for Latino/as is 37.0%, and for Asians it is 26.9%. Only 11.9% of all Blacks in this age category, and 9.7% of all Latinos, have a bachelor's degree.

Poverty rates among diverse groups
More than one fifth (22.5%) of all Black families, and 25.2% of all Black persons were reported as impoverished; this compares to 7.1% for White families, and 13.8% for White persons. Latino families showed a poverty rate of 30.9%, and 30.0% for all Latino persons, while Asian families were reported at 22.5% impoverished, with a rate of 27.8% for all Asian persons.

High proportions of Black and Latino children attending all levels of Boston Public Schools are impoverished, and depend on food stamps for food.

Labor and economic characteristics
While more than half (51.8%) of all White persons 16 years and over work in "Management, professional, and related occupations," the figure for Blacks is 26.9% (and even lower for Latinos at 22.2%); the figure for Asians is 46.9%.

Almost one third of all Blacks (32.1%) work in "Service occupations."

Blacks who are 16 years and over have a large presence (40.1%) in the "Educational services, and health care and social assistance"

industry sector. This is a greater proportion than any other group (Whites at 27.5%; Latinos at 24.6%; and Asians at 29.1%).

While the entrepreneurship rate (self-employed workers) among all groups is comparable, 16.5% of all Black workers are "Government workers" compared to 12.0% for Whites, 7.7% for Latinos, and 7.2% for Asians.

Black Businesses and Assets
There are approximately 2,200 businesses located in the Black community as defined by zip codes 02119, 02121, 02124, and 02126.

The Black community infused an estimated $2 billion into the city's economy in the form of retail and non-retail expenditures in 2009. It contributed $58.7 million in property taxes to the city of Boston, and $138.9 million to utility companies.

Total financial assets for the Black community were estimated at $17.3 billion in 2009. This amount was in the form of a range of financial instruments, such as savings and checking accounts, stocks and bonds, mutual funds, home equity, retirement and pensions, cash-value life insurance policies, and other.

Key Findings from the State of Black Boston Health Chapter

Chapter written by
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It is tempting to point to a lack of access to health care as the cause of health disparities. However, widespread health disparities exist in Boston despite the availability of top-rated health care resources. Boston is home to 12 world-renowned teaching hospitals and 26 comprehensive health centers – many within Black communities. Massachusetts leads the nation in the number of active physicians per capita, with 5.7 physicians per 1,000 residents (The Kaiser Family Foundation, 2011) . Ninety-seven percent of Boston residents have health insurance, and all hospitals and health centers offer "free care" for almost all services to low-income uninsured patients. Yet, as is seen nationally, the life expectancy for Black Boston residents is significantly shorter than for White residents.

Black residents of Boston face health inequities in almost all health conditions. The traditional strategies once used to improve health status focused on providing health care and encouraging individuals to change behavior. Strides have been made in ensuring that all residents have access to quality health care. Health care providers have stressed the importance of adopting a healthier lifestyle; patients are advised to eat healthier, eliminate smoking, drink less alcohol, and exercise more. These measures are important and have helped to improve the health status of Black residents. Despite these gains, enormous health inequities between Black and White residents persist.

Inequities in the health status among Black residents have been attributed to differences in socioeconomic status, because the impact of social conditions such as income, education, and employment on health status has been well established. When researchers control for socioeconomic status, however, Black residents have worse outcomes than White residents at all levels. For example, the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) for infants of Boston Black mothers with at least some college education is worse than the IMR for infants of Boston White mothers with a high school education. Increasingly, it is clear that racism is a primary factor in perpetuating health inequities (Williams, 1999).

Because there are many mechanisms that perpetuate the link between race and health, city health officials, community leaders, medical professionals, and foundation officers need to ensure that every program is measured by how it contrib-

utes to reducing racial inequities in health. As we work across our education, transportation, employment, housing, and health care systems, we need to remain vigilant to advancing those policies and protocols that are good for creating the conditions that promote health. While it is important to provide a range of health services to Black individuals, health inequities will not be eliminated until the root cause – racism – is acknowledged and addressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Addressing health inequities will encompass strategies at various levels ranging from civic engagement to "health in all policies" approach. Boston has a diverse Black community comprised of African Americans, Haitians, Cape Verdeans, Nigerians, Jamaicans, and Black people from other African and Caribbean countries. Any of the policies and programs developed needs to take into consideration the diversity in the Black community in Boston. Following are the recommendations that will help address the health inequity in Boston:

1. Prioritize a "Health in All Policies" approach at the city level. City agencies should adopt health impact assessments into their planning processes.

2. Ensure representation from the Black community in planning and developing initiatives, campaigns, and programs that address racial-ethnic inequities; and support resident coalitions/organizations that are working for racial and social justice.

3. Ensure that residents have access to quality medical care and social services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

4. Review, analyze, and address the impact of institutional racism on health and health care access.

5. Increase awareness of the effects of racism on health.

6. Ensure that data on race and ethnicity are collected in a way that can be used to monitor health and health-related outcomes.

7. Advocate for local, state, and national health-related surveillance systems and agencies that collect health data to include ethnicity and language within the Black, Latino, and Asian categories.

8. Make cultural competency a requirement for all health care facilities that receive local, state, and /or federal funding and serve a diverse racial-ethnic population.

9. Advocate for making cultural competency training a part of the medical school curriculum for all medical schools in Boston.

10. Improve neighborhood physical and built environments, such as access to safe parks and playgrounds, sidewalks, bike paths, and affordable and accessible healthy food options.

11. Identify opportunities for collaboration among health organizations, agencies, businesses, institutes, universities, and colleges to develop policies that can reduce or eliminate racial-ethnic inequities for Boston's Black population.

12. Consider the diverse cultures of Blacks in Boston in developing and implementing health education programs.

CAC Health Recommendations

What can you do to help yourself?

- Think about health in a holistic manner. Health is "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. (World Health Organization)"

- Know your health status: Be up to date on blood pressure checks, cholesterol and diabetes screenings, and HIV status.

- Know your emotional well-being.

- Encourage family members to go to their doctor or healthcare provider.

- Participate in community events or coalitions that promote health.

- Attend health fairs or other events geared toward improving health.

- Help the children in your life by reading to them or assisting with homework.

- Learn about what is happening in your community and how it affects your health.

- Understand that you are NOT the label given to you by others.

- Read about the Health Care Reform!

- Love yourself!

What can you do to help your community?

- Demand quality education in local public schools.

- Start a community group or coalition to raise awareness about a particular health condition.

- Petition elected officials to improve sidewalks, lighting, and recreational areas in your neighborhood.

-Work with the local police department, elected officials, and community groups to provide safe spaces in your community.

- Support local farmers' markets and require adequate grocery stores with healthy, affordable foods in your community.

- Volunteer with nearby youth groups.

- Share your knowledge and skills.

- Advocate against the increasing number of fast food restaurants and/or liquor stores in the community.

- Name the STIGMA that your communities hold because of fear, cultural understandings, or lack of education – HIV, mental health, sexuality, substance use ….

What can your community do to help you?

- Initiate programs for youth in racially and ethnically diverse communities to create and maintain a better pipeline into health professions.

- Enforce federal and state laws that require, not only Language Access policies and procedures in health care settings, but also other Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards. The CLAS Standards were issued in 2001 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health to provide guidance on how to improve service delivery to clients who may not have sufficient access to care based on race, ethnicity, linguistic capacity or cultural background.

- Mandate medical and public health schools to require all students to graduate with at least one course on Cultural Competency.

- Promote anti-racism work as an integral component in establishing health equity.

- Build the capacity of faith institutions to educate and provide health services to local communities.

- Endorse community-driven approaches as effective methods to address health disparities and develop effective and sustainable policies, programs, and/or interventions.

- Acknowledge the impact Institutionalized racism, Personally-mediated racism, and Internalized racism (authored by Camara Phyllis Jones, MD, MPH, PhD) has on the health and wellbeing of the nation.

- Jargon is a gatekeeper! Implement health literacy approaches that are welcoming, universal, linguistically-friendly, and lack jargon

- Implement social media campaigns that educate all stakeholders on racism and how social determinants affect health.

- Utilize the Empowerment Model in all health promotion, prevention and care services.

- Provide funding to advance the development and implementation of the following best practices in addressing health disparities:

> • Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR): "Collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings. CBPR begins with a research topic of importance to the community with the aim of combining knowledge and action for social change to improve community health and eliminate health disparities." W.K. Kellogg Community Scholar's Program (2001)

> • Community Health Workers (CHWs): "A Community Health Worker is a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables the CHW to serve as a liaison/link/intermediary between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery. A CHW also builds individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of activities such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support and advocacy." Community Health Worker SPIG of American Public Health Association

> • Community Health Centers

Health Chapter

Key Findings from the State of Black Boston Housing and Economic Development Chapter

Chapter written by Alix Cantave, PhD
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The Housing & Economic Development chapter features two major sections. The first section focuses on: a) Boston's representation in the top Black-owned businesses in the United States; b) a brief description of Black-owned businesses in Boston; and c) selected business activities in the Black community. The second part of this chapter concentrates on the selected housing and home financing characteristics for Blacks and for the Black community, including: a) property values in the Black community; b) Blacks living in Boston Housing Authority (BHA) units; and c) home-purchasing and refinancing loans. The chapter concludes with recommendations on how to increase employment and promote businesses and wealth creation in the Black community and among Blacks in Boston.

Businesses in the Black Community

• In 1972, four years before the National Urban League's last visit to Boston, the number of Black-owned businesses in Boston was 717. By 2002, that number increased by nearly 400 percent to 3,544. The number of Black-owned businesses with paid employees during that same period increased from 158 to 382, or almost 150%.

• Top industries in the Black community are health care and social services (95 establishments), accommodation and food services (74 establishments), and construction (12 establishments).

• About 9 percent of businesses in Boston in 2006 were located in the four census tracts that are identified as the Black community, where 21 percent of the city's population lives.

• A person working in the Black community earned, on average, $10,000 less than other employees in the city.

Property Value & Rental Patterns in the Black Community

• Median house and condominium value in the Black community is approximately 12 percent to 23 percent less than that in the entire city of Boston.

• The median asking price for a house unit in Mattapan in 2009 was $154,967, the lowest in the city, where the median asking price was $456,837.

• Percentage of income dedicated to housing expenses is an important indicator of financial stability and/or vulnerability. More than 60 percent of Black renter households paid more than 30 percent of their income for housing in 2005-2007.

Home Purchase and Refinancing Loans for Owner-Occupied Homes

• Blacks with the same income as Whites were denied home purchasing loans at nearly twice the rate of their White counter parts.

• From 1990 to 2008, Black and Latino borrowers were denied home purchase loans at rate significantly greater than Whites.

• Black home purchase borrowers represented 10.2 percent of all loans and 23.7 percent of all high cost loans.

• Black homeowners received 8.7 percent of all refinancing loans and 25.5 percent of the high-cost refinancing home loans.

• Roxbury and Mattapan had the highest percentage of high-cost loans in Boston, 12.7 percent and 12.5 percent respectively.

• Mattapan had the highest percentage of high-cost homeowner refinancing loans at 10.6 percent.

• More than 30 percent of Back borrowers who applied for a home mortgage in 2008 were denied.

• Nearly half of Black homeowners (46.2 percent) who applied for a home financing loan were denied.

Conclusion/Recommendations

As noted above, the number of Black-owned business in Boston has grown significantly since the Urban League's last visit. The Black community faces a number of challenges in the areas of business development and access to home mortgage and refinancing loans. Remediating these deficiencies requires persistent action, coordination, and collaboration among a variety of stakeholders including government, civic leaders, religious leaders, philanthropies, and community-based organizations. Some of the steps that may be considered include:

• Engage the large-scale employers in the Black community so that they can build relationships with residents, increase visibility and get involved in local initiatives and activities.

• Require businesses in the Black community and Black-owned businesses that have public contracts to create more jobs for local residents.

• Develop strategies with Main Streets programs in the Black community to recruit quality businesses to neighborhood commercial districts.

• Develop a marketing plan in collaboration with Main Streets, neighborhood trade associations, the Chamber of Commerce, and the city government to promote commercial districts and businesses in the Black community.

• Create a workable program to provide technical assistance to small businesses in the Black community so that they can grow and hire more residents.

• Conduct additional research to understand why a significant percentage of Blacks and Latinos are denied home mortgage and refinancing loans.

State of Black Boston
Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
Housing & Economic
Development Recommendations

While the Housing and Economic Development chapter does not contain references to green economy, the CAC would like to note that a just and inclusive green economy is vital for a healthy and sustainable Black Boston. Green Jobs are being developed in all sectors of the economy, including Green Chemistry, Recycling, Urban Agriculture, Organic and Locally Sourced Restaurants, Anaerobic Digestion (of waste matter for energy production), Brownfield Restoration, Solar Installation, Water Purification and Management. All of these industries provide enormous opportunities and for minority owned businesses and for the workforce.

• The Green Jobs sector is growing and it is critical that Black Boston participate in this opportunity for economic, workforce and business development.

• Boston's weatherization program, Renew Boston, provides many "green jobs." Steps must be taken to ensure that local residents are hired for these jobs and adequately trained for professional success and career advancement.

• Weatherization work in the commercial sector is particularly lucrative and it's critical that training is provided for businesses and workforce in this industry. These jobs are often union-controlled and frequently people are hired from not outside of Boston, but also out of Massachusetts. One of the most important things to bring jobs to Black Boston would be to enforce local hiring processes, which currently receive insufficient oversight.

• Another area that needs to be given attention is HUD Section 3 - when work is done for the Housing Authority, Section 3 requires that job opportunities first be offered to those living in public housing. Contractors frequently ignore this regulation due to a lack of oversight and enforcement.

The following is a summary of material submitted by the City of Boston's Department of Neighborhood Development as relevant to issues raised in the Housing and Economic Development chapter.

In the period 2001 to 2011, the city's Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) assisted 1624 homebuyers to purchase their first home. Of these, 45 percent were Black, 22 percent White and 33 percent other race/ethnicity, or did not report.

In the period 2006 to 2011, DND helped 2498 homeowners whe were at risk of foreclosure. Of these, 1423 or 57 percent were Black, and, of those, 689 successfully avoided foreclosure, 428 are still working to prevent foreclosure, while 61 were forclosed. The other 245 received counseling but did not enter the program.

In the period 2001 to 2011, DND helped 3334 homeowners make repairs. Of these, 43 percent were Black homeowners who made $33 million in home repairs, $25 million of which came from DND.

In the past 10 years, DND has invested $105.3 million in the four predominantly Black zipcodes. Combined with $402 million in other public funds, this leveraged housing and economic development projects with a total development cost of $1.06 billion. This included 99 housing development or preservation projects with a total of 2784 units, and 296 economic development projects.

Key Findings from the State of Black Boston Criminal Justice Chapter

Chapter written by Andrea Leverentz, PhD
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Crime disproportionately affects the Black community in Boston. This is the case in many areas across the nation. There are clear disparities at each stage, from offending patterns to incarceration to prisoner reentry.

The reasons for these disparities are multifaceted and include structural inequality that leads to higher rates of offending within disadvantaged Black communities and also discrimination and bias within the criminal justice system. Given racial patterns of economic inequality, segregated Black communities often have greater concentrations of the community disadvantages that are related to violent crime than do White communities. In addition, these types of concentrated disadvantages inhibit a community's ability to control crime. Incarceration patterns, long-term consequences of incarceration, and stereotypes of offenders all exacerbate social inequalities. In this sense, issues of crime and justice are closely related to the other chapters in the State of Black Boston report, and many of the strategies to address these issues overlap with strategies to address others.

• The Black community is overrepresented at each level of the criminal justice system, including state juvenile commitments, state prisons, and community corrections. The level of disproportionality, however, tends to be lower in Boston than in Massachusetts as a whole.

• The vast majority of those committed to correctional facilities are released without supervision (i.e., parole). Many of these inmates have limited education and work histories and have high rates of substance abuse and mental illness. In addition, they face additional barriers to employment and housing as a result of their criminal histories.

• While the number of commitments to the Suffolk County House of Corrections has been fairly steady in recent years, the number of commitments to the Massachusetts Department of Correction increased by 47 percent between 2001 and 2008.

• Boston, Suffolk County, and Massachusetts have taken steps to help returning prisoners cope with the challenges they face. County and state correctional facilities provide educational and vocational programming, substance abuse treatment, reentry planning, and other services to inmates. Massachusetts recently changed its criminal record laws, and both city and state agencies have changed their hiring practices to increase the legitimate opportunities available to those with a criminal record while preserving attention to public safety.

Recommendations

• Trauma services should be expanded so these programs can reach a greater proportion of crime victims. Direct victims of crime, community members, and classmates of victims all may benefit from such services. In addition, these programs should develop strategies to be culturally responsive to better reach those who initially may be resistant.

• Policies such as "delaying criminal background questions in the hiring process, limiting the sealing times for criminal records, and other changes in recent CORI reforms are important steps to help reduce discrimination against those with a criminal record. These policies should be expanded, along with employer education and restricting the use of the use of criminal background information to where it is relevant to specific jobs.

• Additional policies, such as "certificates of rehabilitation" and case management programs can also serve to publicly recognize efforts at change by former offenders and prisoners and help ease employer concerns. Having a reliable third party "vouch" for and provide an additional layer of supervision and support to a returning prisoner can help employers feel more secure in taking a chance in hiring someone with a criminal record.

• Criminal justice agencies in the state, including the Department of Correction, Suffolk County House of Corrections, the Office of Probation, and the Massachusetts Parole Board, are cognizant of issues related the reentry of prisoners and services necessary for probationers, parolees, and former prisoners to live successfully in the community. These efforts should be continued and expanded where possible. The use of community corrections alternatives allows offenders to maintain (or improve) family ties, to work, and to pursue education, while receiving supervision. These approaches should be used instead of incarceration when it is feasible from a public safety perspective.

• In addition to correctional agencies, nonprofit agencies also provide reentry services to returning prisoners. These programs provide a valuable bridge for these individuals, and can provide assistance with some of the most significant barriers to successful reentry, such as securing safe and affordable housing, finding stable employment, and continuing drug treatment. Providing funding, both for service delivery and evaluation of these programs, is important to fostering successful reentry.

State of Black Boston
Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
Criminal Justice recommendations:

Before	Middle	After
Preventative	**Create Work Force Development Model:** Prisons function as rehabilitation and workforce development centers- building 21st century skills & competencies for detainees who will re-enter communities and work force	Erase Recidivism
Community Directed	*Department of Correction (DOC) Directed* **Program Development** *with programs informed by* "**Re-entry plans**" *for inmates. Program development that includes a focus on skill development (professional/ academic/social) will have the greatest likelihood of diminishing recidivism.*	*Community Directed*

CAC Criminal Justice Recommendations (continued)

When a person is convicted of a crime and sentenced to time in prison, they are paying a debt to society. The Department of Correction (DOC) manages the period of incarceration, but it is important to remember that the debt is owed and paid to society vs. the DOC. Once someone has paid their debt – society should play a role in helping them successfully re-enter their local community and society at large. People being released from prison need to learn how to re-integrate into their families, communities and the workforce. Similarly, communities need to learn more about the impact of incarceration and the supports needed to help people prepare for and sustain successful lives after release from prison.

The Department of Correction's mission includes a focus on public-safety and successful re-entry. CAC recommendations in this area are aligned with the mission and vision statement of the DOC, which read:

MA Department of Correction Mission & Vision Statement

"The Massachusetts Department of Correction's mission is to promote public safety by managing offenders while providing care and appropriate programming in preparation for successful reentry into the community.
Manage - Care - Program – Prepare"

MA Department of Correction Vision Statement
The Massachusetts Department of Correction's vision is to effect
positive behavioral change in order to eliminate violence, victimization and recidivism.

The CAC believes that the role of the Department of Correction is to return men and women to the community as productive, reliable human beings with access to the required resources and community supports.

What can you do to help yourself and your community?

Many community residents aren't aware of the levels of changes that occur in a person after a significant period of incarceration. After 5 years or more in prison, many inmates have built a behavior code that prohibits the expression of fear and several other emotions necessary for healthy interactions in a family/community. The average person being released from a state prison has adopted a lifestyle that is radically different from their life prior to incarceration.

Therefore family and communities need training in the following areas:

 1) Proven preventative strategies to help young people steer clear of illegal activity and trouble with the legal system. Families, churches, and community based organizations have found ways to "turn the ship around" and intervene with young people headed down a negative path. We need these stories of success and associated techniques to be widely distributed through media, community networks, religious institutions and service agencies.

2) "Warning signs" or indicators of gang involvement or illegal activity. In many cases, family and community members don't know about the structures and pressures facing youth and adults who were formerly incarcerated. Knowledge of these pressures and awareness of indicators of distress can help loved ones know when to offer support and needed resources.

3) After-care and support services for youth and adults released from prison. Sometimes people aren't aware of the resources and services that can help formerly incarcerated people and their families. Distribution of such critical information to community residents in a pro-active way can help families be ready to support released inmates when needed.

• Many community residents don't know how people are diagnosed and evaluated in prison. For example, we don't know the "criteria" for release beyond the passing of time. When advocating for an incarcerated person preparing for release, family and community members should ask for more information about anticipated length of stay in minimum security or pre-release facility.

• Community should ask local prisons about their performance plan. Residents should know how the institutions measure success and evaluate progress.

What can your community do to help you?

(CAC Systems & Agency Recommendations)

• Expand the focus of existing control mechanisms in the prison system. Include structures, incentives and consequences that teach and promote long-term self-management for detainees. Currently, prison disciplinary reports focus largely on immediate behavior modification by punishing inmates for rule infractions.

• Train corrections officers to identify opportunities to teach inmates the principles and tools of self-management.

• Develop system-wide "re-entry" plans. We get a report card in K-12 educational settings. Similarly, the criminal justice system needs a "report card" for released inmates. That report card or "re-entry plan" should be shared with whomever a released inmate is released to as well as prison system staff and officials. To be most useful and transformative, the report card should feature a holistic approach to skill development i.e. diet & exercise, planned programming, evaluations/assessment criteria and outcome reports. The reports should include physical goals/resources, developmental goals/resources, as well as workforce & financial goals/resources. These re-entry plans should also articulate specific, customized recommendations for family and community actions and supports.

• Currently there is very little productive activity available for men and women in prison. Idle time during incarceration fosters negative behaviors and recidivism. The CAC recommends utilization of a **workforce development model** in prisons wherever applicable and appropriate. While their will be some inmates who are not ready for or interested in this sort of training and development, the majority will be eligible for a program explicitly focused on successful re-reentry that begins at the start of a prison-term vs. toward the end. The high numbers of people who are serving time in prison mandate some form of job training that not only reduces recidivism but also strengthens the local and regional work force.

• Include employment/training objectives in the release plans signed by inmates and prison officials.

• Intake evaluation, ongoing assessments and pre-release assessment should all feature consistent evaluation and recommendations in the following key areas:

> Education (including notation of literacy levels, aptitudes/interests, and prior experiences with/perception of formal education)
> Health (including notation of any visible or hidden disabilities)
> Emotional well being (including notation of family/community supports)
> Aptitude to work (assessment of attitude, experience and aspirations)

• Utilize the learning from intake assessment to place willing inmates into either education or job training no more than 30 days after intake.

• Utilize case worker network and community based organizations to share stories of successful re-entry. Get the word out about people coming back into their communities and rebuilding their lives with support and relevant skills training.

Key Findings from the State of Black Boston Higher Education Chapter

Chapter written by
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A college degree is more important today, than ever before. Indeed higher education is critical not only to the individual but also to the economic and social health of a society.

As the nation grows more racially and ethnically diverse, it is critical no group is left behind in the push to increase degree completion. The gap in educational attainment rates between Whites and Blacks or Latinos, however, is widening (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education [NCPPHE], 2008). A nation, a state, or even a city that does not work to eradicate racial disparities in educational experiences and degree attainment will forego the social and economic benefits that an educated workforce can bring.

Boston: An Educational Paradox

Like other cities across the nation, Boston is increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. In fact, Blacks and Latinos currently comprise 41% of the city's population. Further, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council predicts more than a third of the entire Boston metropolitan region (including suburbs) will be Black, Latino, or Asian by 2030. The city of Boston, however, represents an educational paradox. Recently named the "smartest city" in the nation (The Daily Beast, 2010), Boston is home to nearly 40 colleges and universities. Moreover, more than 44% of its residents aged 25 and over hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

At the same time, remnants of the city's segregated past remain, as Boston continues to face racial disparities across educational outcomes. Blacks in Boston tend to outperform Blacks in the state of Massachusetts, as a whole, on nearly every measure; yet they do less well when compared to Whites and Asian Americans. If gaps between racial and ethnic groups in educational attainment and earnings were erased, total annual personal income in the state would increase by approximately $10 billion.

With 44.7% of its adults aged 25 and over holding a baccalaureate degree or higher, the city of Boston surpasses the rest of the state (38%) and the U.S. (27.9%) in educational attainment (U.S. Census, 2009). The percentage of Blacks in Boston with at least a B.A. degree, however, is significantly lower (18.5%) than that of Whites (57.8%) (U.S. Census, 2009) (See figure 2). More specifically, Whites outpace Blacks and Latinos in both baccalaureate and graduate degree attain-

ment. While 33.3% of Whites hold a bachelor's degree, only 12.2% and 11.3% of Blacks and Latinos respectively have the same degree. The differences in graduate school are even more striking as nearly one-quarter of Whites over 25 have a graduate or professional degree. Only 6.3% of Blacks and 5.3% of Latinos hold a graduate or professional degree. Educational attainment of Blacks in Boston therefore must increase for Blacks to be competitive in a knowledge economy and society.

College Participation

Over the past two decades, enrollment in American higher education institutions has grown for traditional college-aged students (18-24 years) of all racial/ethnic groups. While enrollment for Blacks has increased from 22% in 1988 to 34% in 2008, progress over the past 10 years (1998-2008) has slowed. Moreover, college enrollment for traditional college-aged Blacks nationally still lags behind Asian Americans (63%) and Whites (45%).

Similarly Blacks and Latinos in the city of Boston are underrepresented in college. While Blacks make-up 23.3% of the traditional college-age population (18-24 years olds) in Boston, only 15.4% of Blacks are enrolled in college. Similarly, Latinos make-up 16.3% of the Boston population but only 11.8% of those enrolled in college. In contrast, Whites are overrepresented in college, representing 57.5% of the city population and 63.8% of the college population.

Envisioning the Future: Implications for Policy and Practice

At a time when the entire nation is increasingly diverse and at the same time increasingly reliant on an educated workforce, the state of Massachusetts and more specifically the city of Boston can ill afford to maintain racial and ethnic inequalities in higher education. It is not surprising then, that Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, in partnership with community groups and funders, hopes to increase the graduation and educational attainment rates for all citizens. The city, however, will see little movement in this area if the racial inequities that plague Boston are not resolved. Indeed, this is an economic and moral imperative.

To be successful, it will take thoughtful, comprehensive, and unrelenting effort. While public policy plays a role in producing and alleviating racial inequality, community members are also called to action. The educational inequalities presented in this chapter will persist if not directly and holistically addressed. Policymakers, philanthropic organizations, and members of Boston's Black community, therefore, have individual and collective roles to play in increasing levels of college participation and educational attainment. The following recommendations are just a few ways to advance college access and equity.

Preparation

First, students must be better prepared for enrolling and succeeding in college. While much of the blame for low college participation and high developmental

education rates is often placed on secondary education (or the students themselves), colleges and universities must share the responsibility. Colleges, for example, often raise admissions requirements for first-year students without considering what high schools expect from their graduates. Colleges and universities in the city of Boston and state of Massachusetts should therefore work with high schools to ensure that admissions requirements are clear and well-aligned with high school graduation requirements.

Further, taking remedial or developmental education courses should not be a barrier to completing a college degree. Rather, higher education institutions should review their policies and practices related to remediation. In particular, colleges and universities should review assessment tests for reliability and validity so that students are properly placed into remedial courses (or in "college level" courses). Perhaps more important though, is placement in remedial or developmental education courses should not be dependent on a single test. Rather multiple measures (including high school grades) should be used to determine course placement.

If placement exams are used, both two- and four-year higher education institutions should provide high schools with the placement exams used to determine students' college readiness. These tests should be administered to students in the 9th, 10th,or 11th grade. Students who show a need for academic support should be provided with necessary interventions to further develop their academic skills in high school.

Moreover, colleges and universities should review remedial courses to ensure that students who take them are successful in the courses and subsequently graduate. Such a review might include making sure that the best faculty are teaching students in developmental education courses, reviewing specific teaching strategies and learning techniques used in the classroom, as well as the inclusion of a curriculum that extends beyond basic skills to encompass, for example, critical thinking and time management. Similarly, the state should also increase its investment in colleges and universities that demonstrate success with students who enter college in need of academic support. In this way increased funding could be used as an incentive for student success and may promote innovation in instruction and delivery and ultimately improve educational outcomes.

Participation

Findings also reveal that Blacks in Boston are more likely to enroll in public two- and four-year colleges, yet these institutions have lower graduation rates than private four-year institutions. While it is important to pressure private four-year colleges to widen access for Black and Latino students, it is public colleges that have a particular obligation to provide "Massachusetts citizens with the opportunity to participate in academic and educational programs for their personal betterment and growth" (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, 2010). These opportunities, however, should not be limited to some populations, while excluding others. Therefore, all institutions of higher education should review their admissions

policies and their campus climate to ensure access and success of people of color.

Affordability

Additionally, the increasing cost of college attendance limits access for many Blacks, especially those who are low-income. While student costs at public higher education in Boston and the state of Massachusetts is significantly lower than private institutions, tuition and fees at public four-year colleges and universities have increased over 100% and by 77% at two-year colleges, since 2000, according to the Boston Globe (Campbell, 2010). At more than $11,000, the University of Massachusetts (UMass) system's average tuition and fees exceeds the national average of other public colleges and universities by 36.5%. At UMass Boston, the city's only public university, tuition and fees are $10,611, still well over the national average. To help curb college costs, the state must do its part by adequately funding public higher education institutions to keep tuition and fees low. At the same time, the Black community should partner with colleges and universities to increase institutional aid for students in financial need. Black Greek organizations or the NAACP of Boston, for example, should work with institutions to develop and/or support scholarships and grants for students through four years of college. Students then may be able to work less, earn more degree credits, and ultimately reduce their time to degree.

Organizations should also partner with institutions to locate and provide financial support to individuals who were in good academic standing at their institutions but left college due to financial reasons. Regaining students who may be just a few credits short of a degree could have a significant impact on boosting graduation rates and improving the lives of individuals.

State of Black Boston Community Advisory Committee Higher Education Recommendations

What can you do to help yourself?

• Secondary students should begin researching colleges by ninth grade

• College students should not work more than fifteen hours a week while in college

• Families should not regard a college student as a critical/principle income source

• College students should understand and access student support services available at higher education institutions upon arrival

• College students should understand the credits attached to all college courses and develop a road map to achieve their goals

• Students should apply for financial aid/scholarships from local community organizations as well as from other federal and state programs

What can you do to help your community?

• Successfully complete high school and go to college

• Teach others the process that is learned to get into college and obtain financial aid and scholarships

• Teach others the things that you did to successfully complete college

What can your community do to help you?

 •Advocate for one guidance counselor for every one hundred students for college and career guidance

• Increase investment in remedial and academic support services for students in two year and four year schools

• Unify the governance structure for P-12 and higher education into a P-16 or P-20 structure

• Align high school curricula with college entrance requirements

• Understand tracking mechanisms that keep students from attending higher education

• Use community events to educate families on successfully navigating and transcending tracking mechanisms in secondary schools

• Use community events to educate students on the two and four year college credit system, the requirements to graduate, and the amount of time that it will take

• Develop scholarship foundations in Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan for individual and corporate donations

Key Findings from the State of Black Boston Civic Engagement Chapter

Chapter written by
Howard Manly
Executive Editor, Bay State Banner

• The election and re-election of Governor Deval Patrick are a particularly strong sign of racial progress in Massachusetts. They follow the election and re-election of Edward W. Brooke III to the United States Senate in 1966 and 1972. In all of American history, no other state has elected and re-elected a Black person to either job.

• These historic electoral landmarks invite comparison with periods when Black Boston was one of the nation's foremost centers of Black culture and achievement, from the founding of the African Meeting House on Beacon Hill 205 years ago, to numerous abolitionist activities, to the organization of the famous 54th Regiment of Black soldiers to fight in the Civil War, to the growth of Boston as a center of Black artistic and professional accomplishment in the early- to mid-20th century.

• Patrick has tapped a large number of Black appointees for his administration, and elevated Roderick Ireland to become the state's first Black chief justice of the Supreme Judicial Court.

• Despite the achievements of Patrick and Brooke -- and of Massachusetts voters in electing them -- not all electoral progress has been so rapid. Ayanna Pressley's election in 2009 gave the Boston City Council its first woman of color ever. And the state House of Representatives did not swear in its first Asian American members until January of this year (2011). And voters have never sent a Black person to Congress from Massachusetts.

• Two Black longtime elected officials, a state senator and Boston city councilor, were convicted on corruption charges in 2010.

• Efforts to rally greater electoral participation by Black voters received a boost with the candidacies of Patrick, and of Barack Obama for president in 2008. But there are still serious gaps. In January, 2010, in the special election for the U.S. Senate seat vacated by the death of Senator Edward Kennedy, residents of the two predominantly Black wards in Boston voted overwhelmingly -- more than 90 percent -- for the Democrat, Attorney General Martha Coakley, but the turnout was low -- 34.9 percent in Ward 12 and 32.6 percent in Ward 14, compared with a statewide turnout of 53 percent. The Republican, state Senator Scott Brown, won easily.

Recommendations

• Reinstate civics instruction in public education in Massachusetts

• Getting Black Bostonians to register, and then to vote, is still a high priority for both city and statewide elections.

• Organizations such as the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts and the Boston branch of the NAACP must rededicate their outreach efforts, broaden their racial and ethnic bases, harness modern social media, and clarify their missions to address today's complicated social, political, economic and health issues.

• The redrawing of Massachusetts Congressional district lines now underway in the state Legislature will involve significant change, as new Census numbers mean the state will lose one of its 10 seats. Some proposals envision a Boston-based district with a voting age population that is 56 percent people of color. Such proposals could be used as a rallying point to engage Black Boston.

State of Black Boston
Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
Civic Engagement Recommendations

What Can You Do to Help Yourself?

• Educate yourself about the civic engagement landscape. I.e. how do programs work? What services and resources are available for you and your neighbors?

• Register to vote and cast your vote in all elections including your local district.

• Learn about the community based organizations in your neighborhood. Get engaged and volunteer.

• Identify and build relationships with your local elected officials. Take advantage of their office hours and town hall forums.

• Hold people accountable/ responsible at all levels of civic engagement i.e. long standing civil rights organizations such as NAACP and the Urban League as well as religious institutions, political organizations, law enforcement, educational institutions, Public Works, etc.

• Learn to view issues through multiple perspectives. Be willing to use a different lens in order to "think outside of the box" and move beyond persistent, unmoving conflicts in and beyond the Black community.

What Can You Do To Help Your Community?

• Advocate for group's impacted by structural inequalities even if you are not a member of that group.

• Get to know your neighbor.

• Start a Community Group i.e., "Crime Watch", "Clean Streets"

• Set a small, manageable goal re: improved community relations and then build toward transformative change. Start small to move toward your larger goal.

What Can Your Community Do To Help You?

• Effective community policing with a policy of rotating officers through neighborhood assignments in 3-5 year cycles.

• Hire local residents for community development projects and initiatives.

Key Findings from the State of Black Boston Arts and Culture Chapter

Chapter written by Barbara Lewis, PhD
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In Boston, the arts community is rich in talent, persistence and innovation. At the same time, the arts community is disorganized, not yet consolidated for major impact; but with effort and thought that can change. This is an opportune time for the city and its various communities to focus on creativity, the arts, culture and performance, since Boston is evolving demographically, and leaving behind, however slowly, the perception that it is a "white-bread" place wary of outsiders, a city on a hill that wavers in its promise to offer opportunity and equality to the many. Sometimes, it is an open and welcoming city.

Tourism is the third biggest engine in the city's economy, and tourism depends on numbers. At the same time that more and more domestic tourists are coming to Boston to visit its places of history and culture as overseas travel becomes increasingly prohibitive, international travelers are also flocking to Boston, and the city is also a major draw for international conference goers. Boston attracts a constantly renewable global clientele interested in its colleges and universities, and the make-up of foreign students is shifting as well, with more and more students originating from outside Europe. As noted by Richard Florida, the cities that are the most open to diversity are the ones that will fare the best on the terrain of the future.

Since the Black community serves as the paradigm for how groups considered as other are treated, stories, narratives, and dramas that emerge from within the Black community, can speak to a wide range of peoples, all of whom have the desire to be included in a new, revitalized American agenda. As such, a focus on creating new narratives that portray the Black community from an empathetic perspective is critical.

Recommendations

• Support Black youth in Boston who are interested in the arts and consider creating a summer performance festival, which would be annual or bi-annual but would become a magnet for the Northeast. It could also have international resonance and appeal to the many communities that have made Boston and the region their home.

• Insure that the arts are not eliminated from the public schools, despite the current economic hardships. Consider using technology as a way to enhance arts instruction and not only provide students with artistic training but also capitalize on the technology skills that many youth already possess.

• Assert a greater sense of presence relative to major cultural institutions in Boston, such as the MFA, American Repertory Theater in Cambridge and Boston Center for the Arts, at the same time that the community gets behind its own cultural organizations such as ACT Roxbury and Project HipHop.

• Create a council to participate with other groups interested in revitalizing Upham's Corner. With culture and history as focus, the council would help establish a strategy for revitalizing other inner-city neighborhoods.

• Continue and expand the work of the Boston Black Theatre Collective and InterAct Boston, with one related project being the development of a play reading group. The Boston Black Theatre Collective could also take on an arts research agenda. More specific to InterAct Boston, encourage an annual series of public dialogues that will seek to unite the city across its various populations. Come together around a music project for youth. It could start with research. One beginning point could be to compare and consider the changing message in rap lyrics from 1985 to 1995 and from 2000 to 2010.

• Profile the black cultural consumer. What art forms does he or she enjoy? Identify the black culture and performance audience and figure out how to build its base and power.

• Create a cultural steering committee that will take on the task of outlining a black cultural agenda in five-year segments, forecasting forward until 2025. Part of that agenda could include the creation of a Diaspora Arts conference, which would examine and study the political significance of art from an educational perspective.

• Consider organizing a volunteer program that promotes cultural literacy in youth through mentoring events that expose a younger generation to art works that they would not necessarily discover on their own.

• Connect with art ministries at various neighborhood churches and offer a series of historical and cultural tours to significant monuments and resources in the city. Investigate and adapt for practice the theories and work of the Brazilian Agosto Boal, who emphasized the activist aspect of performance in legislative theatre, which was performed in schools, churches, and community organizations to stimulate community voice and address issues of concern in the neighborhoods.

• At the Trotter an effort will be made to collect and organize arts research focused on the Black community in Boston in order to identify need and monitor progress as well as build arts infrastructure in the city so that the creative arts can promote self-knowledge, regeneration, and cohesion in the Black Diaspora community.

• Sponsor an annual or bi-annual conference on multicultural theatre that could be hosted by a consortium of participating colleges and universities, some of

which have recently updated their facilities in Boston. Emerson College has six theatres in downtown Boston and so could be a major player; so could Suffolk, which has recently updated the Modern Theatre that has the advantage of being a small and intimate house.

• Consider what would be a worthwhile artistic, cultural, or theatrical achievement for which to offer an annual award in recognition of the individual or group that has significantly advanced Black culture and performance in Boston.

Community Advisory Committee
Arts & Culture Recommendations

What can you do to help yourself?

-Tell your story. Keep a journal. Join community cable TV and radio to produce your own programming – then go viral with it.

-Be an informed cultural consumer. Call, write or e-mail reporters and editors to encourage them to cover the arts.

-Write letters, e-mail, or make a call when you see, read or hear stereotypes or omissions in arts coverage.

-Support the arts in your community. But tickets to performances. Attend exhibits. And buy art – if you can.

-Give young people an appreciation for the arts. Take them to museums, plays and concerts.

What can you do to help your community?

-Contact elected officials and encourage them to budget for arts and culture in the community and in the public schools.

-Lobby public officials to prioritize the development of potential cultural districts such as historic Dudley Square, the home of Hibernian Hall which features ongoing arts performances and exhibits.

What can your community do to help you?

-Make good on the promise to revitalize underserved communities such as the historic Dudley Square which lack the infrastructure of restaurants, parking and security that attract patrons of the arts and make arts and culture sustainable.

State of Black Boston - K-12 Education

Few subjects produce as much passionate advocacy as the Boston public schools. Superintendent Carol Johnson probably receives more unsolicited advice than any other public figure in Boston – except possibly Red Sox manager Terry Francona. The robust debate is itself healthy -- an indicator of both support and concern about many issues. One is the achievement gap between black and white students.

In State of Black Boston research chapter, Dr. Charlene Brantley, herself an educator, looks at this issue from several perspectives. She notes that black students in Massachusetts, like white students, consistently outscore their counterparts elsewhere in the country on standardized tests. And in a data-heavy analysis she also points out examples of significant progress, such as the narrowing of the black-white gap among more advanced Boston high schoolers, that are "worth applauding."

But she points as well to some aspects of the gap that have stubbornly refused to narrow appreciably, including some "disappointing" MCAS test results and "dismal" graduation and dropout rates. She also calls for greater remediation, which would require more funding, and greater collaboration among many parties, including the schools, parents and community organizations.

Appended to Dr. Brantley's study is the School Department's "Plan to Close the Achievement Gap," a detailed description of the problem as seen by the department, and the strategies, including a variety of collaborations, that are already in place or planned.

The State of Black Boston is an independent report, but includes this response from the Boston Public Schools for two reasons.

First is that public education is of paramount importance. There is wide agreement that, if all of the Black students in Boston could suddenly receive the highest possible education, many of the other problems in this report would gradually fall away, or decline markedly.

The other reason for including the BPS response is simple equity. The chapter on Housing and Economic Development, for instance, involves the actions and policies of dozens of government agencies and private interests. The report on K-12 education in Boston necessarily focuses on one agency alone; reporting its view is only fair.

Key Findings from the State of Black Boston K-12 Education Chapter

Chapter written by
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- In the tests most commonly used to compare states' educational achievement

- the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

- Black students in Massachusetts (as well as White students) regularly score at or near the top nationally on all four tests -- reading, writing, mathematics, and science -- in both fourth and eighth grades.

- Gaps in achievement between Black and White students are large and stubborn; there is no trend of steadily closing those gaps at the national or state level. In Massachusetts, the percentage of White students scoring at the higher levels ("proficient" or "advanced") was in several of the tests more than double the percentage of Black students achieving those scores on the NAEP tests.

- The state's MCAS tests show a troubling lack of progress among Black students toward Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) benchmarks as required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

- MCAS also shows, however, that in higher grades rapidly increasing numbers of Black students are achieving at higher levels. From 2005 to 2009, the proportion of Black students reaching proficient or advanced scores on MCAS tests jumped from 27 percent to 56 percent in English language arts, and from 24 percent to 51 percent in math.

- Boston has specific problems. For instance, 76 percent of students in the capital are designated as low-income, compared with 33 percent statewide.

- Current graduation and dropout rates for Black students in Boston are dismal. Progress has been slow, and gaps between Black and White students have narrowed only slightly.

Recommendations from the
State of Black Boston K-12 Education Chapter

- More research is essential, particularly to focus on the strategies and techniques in relatively high-achieving schools. Points of emphasis should include professional development, and parental and community involvement. Research should include examination of other districts and other states.

- It is critical that there is consistent, effective collaboration among the key players—Boston schools, the teachers union, and Black Boston. Enhancing these partnerships can help address and respond to parents' needs and concerns. The possible approaches include ongoing workshops, forums, and websites for parents. These informative resources should be designed to help identify and provide different supports for general education students, students with special needs, and students with emotional, physical, social, or academic difficulties who are not excelling in school.

- There is a clear need for after-school programs or Saturday schoolsto provide supplementary support for Blacj students preparing for MCAS tests.

- Learning outside the classroom, including field trips and career-centered activities, should be augmented.

- Community agencies, and corporations, should take a more active role in promoting strong public education.

- Parent-teacher partnerships foster an enhanced sense of advocacy for students' strong work habits, attitudes, and, consequently, learning and achievement. These critical partnerships are necessary to help parents to understand and reinforce the expectations of the school system, schools, classrooms, and teachers. Such collaboration is a resource for parents, keeping them connected to what their children are expected to learn. This simple action step is essential and effective in K-12. The relationship is a delicate balance in which each side has to respect the role of the other, a balance well worth the effort because the partnership presents a support system for students. This partnership is a true home-school connection.

Excerpts From the Boston Public Schools;
Plan to Close the Achievement Gap

- "All students, regardless of race, income, ethnicity, language, disability, family background or circumstances deserve high quality educational experiences."

- In 2007, the Boston School Committee formally declared achievement gaps "unacceptable" and created policies to eliminate them.

- "While we have made progress in many areas, much remains to be done, and we are more committed than ever to this work."

- Strategies include a tracking system to support student retention and a successful program to get previous drop-outs to re-enroll (several hundred so far).

- Some gaps have closed significantly: the Black-White gap in MCAS English language arts proficiency dropped from 35 points in 1998 to 5 points in 2010.

- Summer and vacation programs have been expanded.

-- The school district has organized its work around four core strategies:
    1 Strengthening teaching and school leadership
    2 Replicating success and turning around low performing schools
    3 Deepening partnerships with parents, students and the community
    4 Redesigning district services for effectiveness, efficiency and equity

- One goal: "recruit, hire, train and retain a diverse cadre of educators and support staff."

- "The achievement gap has a long history and complex causes. Closing it will require deliberate, focused, and purposeful actions. No challenge is more urgent and no obligation greater than securing equity and access to excellent educational opportunities for every student. Closing the achievement gap is a continuous process and demands vigilant attention, as well as openness to exploring new research and proven practices."

State of Black Boston Community Advisory Committee K-12 Education Recommendations

What can you do to help yourself?

• Be a life long learner. Be willing to engage in continued learning and development regardless of your age, background or cultural context.

• Be an advocate and promote positive change within the community.

• Attend, support and volunteer at education focused events and organizations.

What can you do to help your community?

• Volunteer at your local schools and community centers.

• Get to know your neighbors and their children.

• Establish our own schools.

• Increase the amount of material you read.

• Decrease the amount of time you watch television.

• Document our public school's history including bussing and its effects on education today.

• Learn and share good news about the black community across America.

• Support efforts to develop and maintain affordable housing, so that students are less transient with fewer barriers to academic success.

• Be a pro-active consumer of information and news.

• Advocate for parent and student input in the data collection-feedback process for principal and teacher evaluation across the district.

What can your community do to help you?

• Acknowledge the diversity (class, education, ethnicity, religious, political affiliations) present within the "Black" Community (Caribbean, Africans, Black Latinos etc).

• Organize a forum focusing on a new vision redefining the purpose of education.

• Advocate for competency based- instruction, assessment and promotion policies within the school system.

• Advocate for autonomous parent elected or appointed decision-making consul that is representative of Boston Public Schools enrollment data (socioeconomic, culture etc.) to advocate on behalf of families within the district.

• Publish, improve upon and expand student performance data currently collected.

• Create a literacy campaign.

• Advocate for the consistent use of research based- programs and practices as we redefine the purpose of school.

• Advocate for expansion of community based-programs that teach safe and effective use of technology, cultural competency, character values, civic engagement, and social-emotion development.

• Keep schools open in the evening for community use.

• Keep libraries open in the evening for community use.

• Organize; mobilize the youth voice at every school and community site.

• Expand Boston Public School's "Parent Universities" .

• Advocate for school leadership to have decision making autonomy and account-ability systems with family input (school schedule and calendar, staffing, curriculum and assessment, governance and policies and budget).

• Create a campaign healing self hate and community conflict caused by internalized oppressions of all kinds including racism, sexism etc.

• Provide free walk-in mental and physical health clinics accessible to student and families within school

• Expand early childhood services.

Key Findings from the
State of Black Boston Media Chapter

Chapter written by Howard Manly
Executive Editor, Bay State Banner

Since 1965, the Bay State Banner has been an important voice in the African-American community in Boston and throughout Massachusetts. But as the newspaper industry struggles through its transition to the Digital Age, it is of critical importance that community-minded businessmen, government officials, nonprofit institutions, and community groups collaborate to insure the survival of the weekly newspaper through advertising, sponsorships, event partnerships, and, where appropriate, ownership investments.

The recent abrupt change in WILD 1090 AM's format from African-American news, culture and music to Chinese news, culture and music is yet another reminder of the lack of control Boston's African-American community has in the city of Boston. As it is now, 106 Touch FM, as well as several other low-power radio stations aimed at immigrant Blacks from African and Caribbean countries, are the only presence on Boston radio. Given the prohibitive cost of buying a powerful FM or AM frequency, it is in the short-term interests of the community as a whole for radio operators, in collaboration with community-minded businessmen, government officials, nonprofit institutions, and community groups, to insure those stations' survival by lobbying the Federal Communications Commission to grant more low-power licenses throughout the city and state.

If minority ownership of media in Boston is not attainable, it is incumbent upon community-minded businessmen, government officials, nonprofit institutions, and community groups to seek an ownership stake in existing mainstream media. As these institutions are offered for sale–or seeking investors to help raise operating capital–the time appears to be right to buy a piece of media property – at bargain prices. A case in point is the Boston Globe. In 1993, the New York Times Co. purchased the Globe for an estimated $1.1 billion. The daily newspaper is now valued at a reported $200 million, and the publicly-traded company is obliged to consider any purchase offer.

Regardless of minority ownership, community-minded businessmen, government officials, nonprofit institutions, and community groups must maintain a watchful eye on content across all media platforms. Issues of fairness, inappropriateness, and in some cases, actual factual errors, are still prevalent in the Digital Age. It is an imperative on the community and individual level to respond to any gross inaccuracies or offensive language. Even honest mistakes need correcting to insure accuracy for future historians. Holding mainstream and ethnic media accountable to community standards should also be a part of that historical record.

The single most important action is at least sustaining newspaper readership at current levels. Newspapers continue to have the greatest capacity to gather news, except for wire services. And the best service covering the United States, the Associated Press, is a cooperative of newspapers. The newspaper reading could be done online or via Facebook. It doesn't matter. As long as there is demand, some media will try to meet it, however the news is distributed. Reading newspapers is also a duty of an informed citizenry.

State of Black Boston
Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
Media Recommendations

Whether Blacks capitalize on the knowledge and skills of the Diaspora or are continually led, ignored and\or exploited, will depend largely on the collective strength of and commitment to communications literacy; as well as understanding of the impact of media on Black Boston's economy and lifestyle.

- Use teaching and mentorship opportunities to make children aware of the changing professional landscape and global economy.

- Use teaching and mentorship opportunities to help Black children understand and appreciate the sacrifices and contributions made to create the educational and professional opportunities they have access to today.

- Use teaching and mentorship opportunities to help today's youth, the future of tomorrow get actively involved in skills improvement through academia and digital training.

- Promote opportunities for young people to train for careers in media.

- Bring forward your expertise as an authority within their field, industry & culture through education, training and self development to write opinion articles and expand articles to chapter documents and books.

- Those wanting to work in emerging markets must reinvent themselves to become digitally literate to prepare to be competitive within their vocation and college choices.

- Master digital literacy to participate in and develop the kind of information production & distribution venues that determine the future of the Black community.
- Form a community media committee that monitors media and provide media literacy training.

What can Professionals & Groups do to help the community?

- Facilitate broad distribution of academic research & journals that inform the

community about technology integration and the long-term impact of social media.

- Mentor and apprentice youth, students and new professionals into traditional and emerging media industries.

- Create public awareness campaigns using web-based tools to educate and organize community residents to hold corporations accountable to investing a percentage of citizen's spending dollars back into the communities with a focus on training, scholarships and hiring consumers/community residents.

- Communicate and collaborate toward sharing expertise, knowledge and resources with each other.

- Use the web's social networking and media production mediums to build cultural bridges for ongoing dialogue between Black communities locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

- Organize to create a high voltage radio station and other media outlets to meet constituent needs.

- Create a web intranet for which acts as a virtual office space, allowing direct connectivity regardless of community or country to collaborate on media campaigns. This intranet should be both a center for sharing ideas and resources as well as a forum for Black media professionals to learn, network, heal and collaborate.

- Dialogue locally and abroad to share research, evaluate and identify effective strategies, showcase best practices and obtain better information on what works and why.

- Create\keep an updated list of Blacks in media coupled with an online media venue for networks, webcasts and other kinds of discussions and showcases in Boston, the US and around the world.

- Develop a web and/or cell phone app that encourages civic engagement in the Black community outside of service or product consumption.

Systems & Agency Recommendations:

- Agencies must make sure constituents are at the table when important policy decisions are being made.

- Form partnerships with professional media groups to extend civic efforts.

- Providing on-line networking opportunities, panels, workshops and conferences to develop community ideas.

- Make a significant impact by interpreting client base needs as a market segment

- Create systems that take findings to the community in developmental campaigns organized into actionable information displayed with links to deliver equitable results to residents.

- Agencies must create succession programs that allow new and experienced professionals to provide help and eventually take the helm when necessary.

- Work on relationship development between people of the Black Diaspora to build multi-ethnic, multi-national, local to global communities of interest, culture and place toward long-term, sustainable, intergenerational economic security.

- Create\support micro lending and financing programs that support Black media

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