


# The African American Parent & Educator Advisory Committee

## ***Setting Our Children Up for Success!***


**Kennon Mitchell, Ph.D.**  
**September 19, 2019**



2

### Objectives Tonight

- ▶ Discuss national and statewide trends related to educational outcomes and wellness for African American students.
- ▶ Learn causal factors related to the achievement of African American students.
- ▶ Learn strategies to effectively partner with schools and school districts to improve individual and overall outcomes for African American students
- ▶ Learn success strategies related to African American student achievement to include strategies to grow resiliency, mindfulness, and confidence among African American students.



3

## Here's What We Face



4

## Here's What We Face

The greatest challenge facing public education is closing excellence and opportunity gaps for African American students.

In summary of performance trends for African American students; school systems across the nation report the following data:

- ▶ Significant and sustained racial achievement gaps across key performance measures
- ▶ Disproportionately higher school exclusionary practices
- ▶ Disproportionately low enrollment in rigorous coursework





**What are the causes for these  
disparities in achievement & Why  
do they persist?**



6

**Why Do These Gaps Persist?**

1. Inadequate identification, analysis, and response to causal factors (*racial bias, teacher efficacy, teacher expectations, instructional practice, etc.*)
2. Failure to examine solutions from the points of view of *Teachers, Students, Parents, and Community Members.*
3. Insufficient Professional Learning and collaboration time for leaders and teachers to replicate effective school and classroom practices.



7

### **Why Do These Gaps Persist? (Cont.)**

4. Over-reliance on strategies to 'fix' students, resulting in quick-fix intervention programs that are often short-lived, poorly resourced, and fail to build internal capacity and long-term sustainability.
5. Misalignment between the organization's espoused core values and beliefs, and the organization's practices and systems.
6. Inadequate systems and supports that provide early and systemic intervention to address academic and behavioral underperformance.



8

### **What Should Schools Do?**



9

## (1) Re-frame the Discussion About African American Student Achievement

*“There can be no question but that the achievement of Black students is, in general, far below their potential.*

*This gap, however should not be thought of as the gap between Black and White students. It should be thought of as the gap between the current performance of Black students and levels of excellence”*

Dr. Asa Hilliard



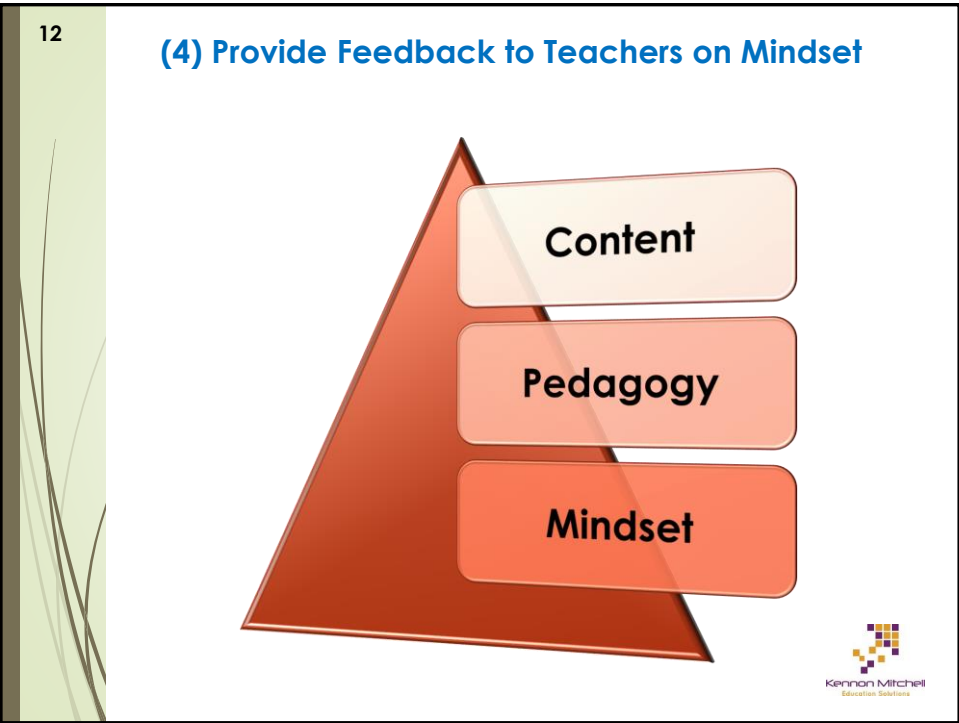
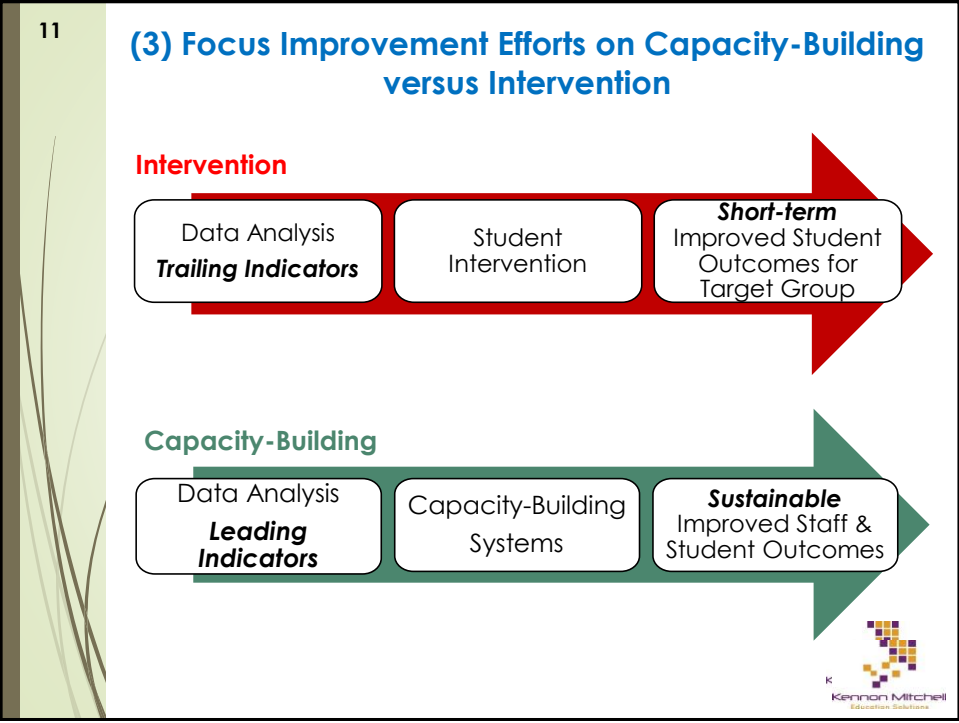
10

## (2) Re-Design Our Approach to Improvement Design

*“Understanding the sources [Root Cause] of variation in outcomes, and responding effectively to them, lies at the heart of quality improvement”*

Anthony S. Bryk, L. M. (2017). *Learning to Improve: How America's Schools Can Get Better at Getting Better*. President and Fellows of Harvard Center for Education Policy Studies.





13

## What Should Parents Do?



### (1) Teach Children About the Dynamics and Impact of Racism on Self-Concept



*"It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder."*

W.E.B. Dubois, Ph.D.; [Souls of Black Folk](#) (1903)



15

### (2) Grow Resilience & A Growth Mindset within African American Children

- Dependability
- Manners
- Respect for elders & women
- Integrity
- Personal Best Drive
- Time Management
- Precision & Accuracy
- Persistence
- Initiative
- Resourcefulness
- Leadership
- Career Development
- Attitude
- Family pride
- Giving Back
- Confidence
- Assertiveness
- Work Ethic
- Needs vs. Wants
- Personal & Collective Responsibility
- Self-Efficacy
- Task Completion
- Ethics
- Goal-setting




16

### (3) Replicate Successful Behaviors

#### Characteristics of High Achieving African American Students

- Development of a strong belief in self
- Supportive adults (teachers, counselors, and coaches)
- A network of achieving peers
- Extracurricular activities and after-school, summer, and special programs
- Personal characteristics (motivation, multicultural appreciation, perseverance, and inner will)
- Resilience to overcome urban problems and adversity
- Family support
- Strong Study Habits
- Vision & Plan





**(4) Build an Appreciation for History & Biography**

14

*“Those who have no record of  
what their forebears have  
accomplished lose the inspiration  
which comes from the teaching  
of biography and history”*

Carter G. Woodson



18

***What Should Schools &  
Parents Do Together?***



19

## (1) Establish A Culture of Collective Responsibility

1. We presume positive intent in one another. In other words, we engage with each other with an unwavering belief and trust in each other's deep commitment to the success of all students.
2. We are responsible and accountable for creating the conditions necessary for African American students to achieve at high levels.
3. We believe that barriers to large-scale success for African American students are rooted in ineffective, non-existent, and/or poorly aligned systems, and are not rooted in the people operating those systems.



20

## (2) Implement Focus Groups

*Parent & Student* voice has become increasingly important in improving instructional practice, school climate, and student outcomes.

While the use of traditional data provides insight into performance trends, sole use of these data provides limited information about the social organization and climate of schools.

Eliciting the perspectives of parents & students provides powerful insight about the climate of the school and its impact on the school experiences of African American students and their parents.



21

### (3) Improve Performance Management Systems

#### *Conduct Frequent Data Analysis, Interpretation, & Action-Planning*

- **L**evels: *What is your current performance?*
- **T**rends: *Are the results improving, staying the same, or getting worse?*
- **C**omparisons: *How does your performance compare...School-wide, District, Other Student Groups?*
- **I**ntegration: *What are other data sets impacted by these data?*



## **Thank You!**



*Because you love me  
I have much achieved,*

*Had you despised me  
then I must have failed,*

*But since I knew you trusted  
and believed,*

*I could not disappoint you  
and so prevailed*

**Paul Lawrence Dunbar (1915)**



22

## Our Mission



Our mission is to build the capacity of school communities to develop and lead schools of excellence that are characterized by high quality adult learning systems and classroom practices; engaged families and communities; and exceptional outcomes for all students.

We will accomplish this mission by providing high quality; transformative; and practical solutions to complex problems in school communities, thru Professional Development, Executive Coaching, and Technical Assistance.

## Our Services



### **Professional Development & Technical Assistance:**

- Full District/School improvement strategies including professional learning systems design; strategic plan development; and instructional supervision and performance management systems design.
- Improving outcomes for African American students, including family/community engagement; strategic plan development; and improvement of instructional and support systems.

### **Executive Coaching** (Cabinet, mid-manager, and principal level)

**Keynote Addresses/Workshops** on a wide variety of educational topics targeting district/school leaders, teachers, and related stakeholders; and parents and community-based groups.



## **Contact Information**

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25