

HBCU K-12 Partnerships



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Introduction

For too long, our education system has failed to provide Black students across the country with the resources and opportunities needed for academic and professional success. Not only did these gaps widen during the pandemic, but there is a risk of them becoming much worse.

The Opportunity

HBCUs have established and long maintained a strong foundation for excellence for Black college students. We imagine a future where HBCUs play a similarly transformative role for Black K-12 students and their communities, helping foster the next generation of Black talent that will fuel business, society and government.¹

What Will We Do?

Over the next 5 years, our goal is to help build excellent and enduring partnerships between HBCUs, local school districts, charter leaders and networks, and other partners. We seek to find and support institutions that are interested and committed to building partnerships and help refine and accelerate those who are already doing excellent work.

Meaningful Ways to Work Together

We know we are not starting from ground zero. HBCUs across the country have been engaged in strong and aligned K-12 and community-based partnerships that have laid the foundation and early learning for this work. The table below defines our strategic priorities and demonstrates some, not all, ways that HBCUs, the K-12 education community, and other partners and key stakeholders have and will continue to come together to realize our collective vision.

¹ [Imparting Wisdom: HBCU Lessons for K-12 Education](#)



TABLE 1: Spectrum of Engagement—What are some ways that we can approach this work?

Strategy	Description	Examples (not exhaustive)
Community Engagement & Advocacy	Learn, engage and deepen the awareness and understanding of the state of education for Black children and the unique leadership role HBCUs can play in improving K-12 education. Advocate for policies and practices at the local, state and federal levels that enable and galvanize improvements in K-12 education.	- HBCUs have a long history of leadership, community engagement and advocacy addressing the economic and social needs of Black communities including public education. Lift Every Voice and Lead Toolkit: A Community Leader's Advocacy Resource for K-12 Education (UNCF)
HBCU K-12 Partnerships & Best Practices	Strengthen students' racial identity and HBCU awareness and create college-ready pipelines through unique partnership opportunities (e.g., school design/model, tutoring/mentorship programs, admission fairs, etc.).	Imparting Wisdom: HBCU Lessons for K-12 Education (Full Report, One-Page Summary) (UNCF)
Diversify Charter School Authorizers	Diversifying charter authorizers will foster the creation of more schools and educational opportunities that align with the unique and specific needs of Black children and communities.	States that currently allow HBCUs to serve as charter authorizers: Florida, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma and South Carolina
Teacher, Leader & Talent Pipelines	Strengthen Black teacher, leader and talent pipelines through improved preparation, training, development, support, recruitment, hiring and retention.	UNCF's K-12 Education Fellowship is a leadership and talent development initiative for HBCU students and alumni aimed at building a robust pipeline of high-achieving members of the Black community engaged in education reform in America.
High-Quality K-12 School Expansion	Expand the development of new, innovative, culturally affirming and high-quality K-12 schools.	The Black community and HBCUs have a long history of founding and operating schools serving Black children. Starting in the late 1700s with African Free Schools, normal, model, first public schools in the 1800s and lab and charter schools in the 1900s through today. There are a number of HBCUs that currently operate and/or are in partnerships with K-12 charter and other public schools from which we can learn, innovate, invest and expand.
Other Innovative Strategies and Partnerships	The categories and examples listed here are not meant to be fully exhaustive. Through our collective work, we hope to identify, pilot and support other innovative strategies that can serve as proof points and ways that HBCUs and K-12 can work together to improve outcomes for students.	