

Outreach Needs & Suggestions for Smaller, Mid-Size Urban Cities and Towns

The following are some suggestions regarding the educational, employment, small business issues facing Blacks in smaller, medium size towns in North of Boston region. Aware of the changing demographics, the achievement Gap, the school to prison pipeline, I believe we are in need of outreach positions for an estimated 80,000 people of African descent living in the North of Boston region. I have been bringing similar community outreach ideas since the 1984-85 in a North of Boston school district, 1995 in Black immigrant churches, and 2001 in the African American church and civic organizations in the greater Boston area.

- Community driven” Cross/ regional, Cross/Cultural after school/weekend centers. By engaging in “Community driven” programs, “at risk” “underachieving” children and youth would observe and experience structured learning occurring and initiated in their own environments by stakeholders in their communities whom they can look up to. Such internal learning atmosphere would motivate learning and have positive impacts in the schools as well. In other words, officials and teachers will have less behavioral, social and emotional issues with students if grassroots educational programs are initiated and supported.
- 5 Professionals whose full time job is to take care, oversee the wellbeing of people from underserved groups;
- 5 Staff to read, pay attention and communicate research and newspaper articles, local civic, educational, and cultural events that could help the Black community since we are less engaged and less visible in mid-size multicultural/multi ethnic cities and towns;
- 5 Staff to research and write grants to supplement local government’s funding.
- 10 Outreach workers /liaisons-3 in Boston, 3 for Metro North regions, 3 for South shores, 1 in Springfield/ Worcester area;
- Training for clergy and faith leaders, both Catholic and Protestant to help in reaching out and meet the earthly needs of their congregations;
- Regional offices like the New Bostonians and Family Engagement Departments for the schools;
- Partnerships with schools, cultural entities, libraries and local government to create a learning environment in the community by initiating educational programs, workshops, seminars where pens, papers, print, PowerPoint and other technological devices will be used in whatever language(s) such training (s) will be held;
- Parent liaisons who can culturally and linguistically communicate and relate to the Black community- That can be done from Title I and Title III fundings, Chapter 70 money could be used as well. Some districts hire parent liaisons for their schools. Others seem to be keeping at “arms’ length” parents and professionals from the schools’ demographics and ethnic communities.
- The role of ethnic radios, TVs, and internet would need to be assessed as well as. There is a need to evaluate how some ethnic media foster education, civic participation as well as engagement in neighborhood, community, regional, and nationwide affairs. In other words, how the media, stakeholders, gatekeepers and visible leadership are helping the Black community think globally and act locally. It will be less costly at the long run, if these ideas could be heard and implemented

By Nekita Lamour- Fall 2014