

**DIALOGUE**

**TEACHER EDUCATION IN TODAY'S BLACK UNIVERSITY**

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Part I

Background Overview:  
Status of the Field

Historically, teacher education programs were central to the mission and goals of public and private Negro colleges and universities. In the public land grant colleges, founded under the provisions of the second Morrill Act in 1890, the centrality of these programs was shared with offerings in agriculture, the mechanic arts, and home economics. In the private institutions, teacher education programs shared institutional emphasis with preparation for the ministry, medicine, pharmacy, and law. All were

respected fields. These foci were deemed essential for the survival, growth, and status-improvement through forward movement of the race, at least through the 1950's. Service to the Black community was emphasized in these preparation programs, along with individual professional development and the need to contribute intellectually to one's profession. Black teachers and the other professionals were educated to serve their people within the racially segregated system of the U.S.

In the African American community there was great respect for those race members who were teacher educators, and or the teachers they in turn produced for service in elementary and secondary

schools. Legal segregation indicated to most African Americans that they needed to be educated to succeed in life, and adults sought the best possible schooling for their young. African American teachers and principals were both instruments for attaining these goals and role models of the results of such goal attainment. Teacher education programs and professors occupied high-status positions on Black college campuses. Many very talented, highly-motivated, enthusiastic African Americans, particularly females, chose teaching as a profession because of its honor and stability, their service commitment, and the fact that the mainstream occupational structure was generally closed to them

because of their race. Through the 1960's most of the Black teachers in the U.S. had received their first professional degrees from a Black college or university. Where laws and public policies permitted them to do so, these institutions also enrolled students other than U.S. African Americans in their teacher education programs.

The Brown decisions of 1954 and 1955 laid the groundwork for massive educational and societal change by declaring that the concept of "separate but equal" as discriminatory, and that laws maintaining separate educational structures for Blacks were illegal. Unfortunately, since the Supreme Court has no enforcement powers to back up its mandates, it was not until the Civil Rights laws of the mid-1960's were passed by the Congress that the "walls of segregation" began to topple and Black access increased to schools, public accommodations, neighborhoods, and occupations from which they had been barred. To prepare for the emerging post-industrial world, the Black colleges/universities

expanded their degree offerings in such areas as Communications, Business, Allied Health, Engineering, Public Administration, and so on. Increased access to new and different employment possibilities, most of them more lucrative financially than teaching, and offering some upward-mobility options, meant that many young African Americans, who might have been teachers or other school personnel, chose different majors and prepared for other fields or work. This shift resulted in declining enrollment in departments, schools, or colleges of Education (DSCEs) on Black campuses.

At the same time, by the mid-to late 1970's respect for the profession of teaching and for teacher educators declined on many Black college/university campuses. Obviously a significant number of Black academicians and administrators had adopted a view that prevailed mainstream academia, i.e., "those who can do something else; those who cannot teach." This was quite a

change from the historic perspective of respect and appreciation.

Confronted with declining enrollments in teacher education programs and the increasing number of Black students deciding to attend predominantly White institutions, teacher educators on Black campuses sought to rebuild respect for themselves and their programs initiating significant program revision and development and instituting new and different student recruitment efforts. Some of these changes would have occurred through established, ongoing evaluations of programs and people, but were pursued with more vigor because of campus and societal changes.

*To Be Continued*

**High School Student Winners!**



Mark Smalls, center, Manager, Ethnic Marketing, Pepsi-Cola Company, congratulates the four winners of the third annual Pepsi Youth Awards Contest. From left, they are Cheyenne Batista, community service winner, representing Port Richmond High School; Robyn Richards, oratory winner, representing St. Vincent's Academy; Nabate S. Isles, music winner, representing Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music and Performing Arts, and Arlene Davis, leadership winner, representing East Orange High School. Conducted by Pepsi and Essence Magazine, the Pepsi Youth Awards Contest, held at the Harlem School of the Arts, recognizes the achievements of talented high school students between the ages of 14 and 17. Each winner received a \$1,000 U.S. Savings Bond, a commemorative plaque and tickets to the Eighth Essence Awards in New York.

**newsworthy trends**

**Crime And Violence, Pregnancy, Drug And Alcohol Abuse: Leading Concerns Among Young Teens**

(NAPS)—Crime and violence is the top public policy concern among today's young teenagers, followed by pregnancy issues and drug/alcohol abuse. This ranking of concerns is based on more than 13,000 letters written by seventh- and eighth-graders to their U.S. representatives through the seventh annual RespecTeen Speak for Yourself social studies curriculum.

This is the second consecutive year the topic of crime and violence has led the list of teenage concerns. Just three years ago, it was only the seventh most frequently mentioned issue by students. Among other notable developments this year, family structure became a priority issue for young teens, ranking ninth on the list. This marks the first time that family has been mentioned as a leading area of concern. Some issues discussed under this topic include communication, divorce and runaways. Reflecting another significant change, AIDS did not make the top 10 list of teenage issues in 1995, but ranked 15th. AIDS was the number one concern of students in 1990 and, until now, the topic had consistently ranked among the top 10.

"Clearly, the views of the nation's young people are shifting and they are very concerned about the growing crime rate and violence around them," noted Barbara Glass, author of the RespecTeen Speak for Yourself curriculum. "Their rising interest in family structures also indicates a growing awareness of social and family issues. This may be due, in part, to recent changes in our political landscape."

The top 10 issues and the number of letters students wrote about each issue are:

- 1) Crime/Violence 2,338
- 2) Pregnancy Issues 1,850
- 3) Drug/Alcohol Abuse 1,540
- 4) Gun Control 1,181
- 5) Environment 1,074
- 6) Education 752
- 7) Domestic Policy 741
- 8) Homelessness 402
- 9) Family Structure 394
- 10) Child Abuse 361



democracy hands-on and become empowered to take action."

The RespecTeen Speak for Yourself curriculum was distributed to social studies teachers nationwide last fall. The curriculum encourages young people to examine the issues affecting their lives, teaches them how they can play a role in government decision-making and helps them work towards change in social issues.

The RespecTeen National Youth Forum is part of Lutheran Brotherhood's larger philanthropic initiative in support of youth. Lutheran Brotherhood is a fraternal benefit society, based in Minneapolis, with more than one million members nationwide. It offers a broad range of financial products and services to Lutherans in addition to philanthropic activity in support of Lutherans, institutions and communities.

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