



California Association of African American  
Superintendents and Administrators

# CAAASA Conference Experience

March 2024



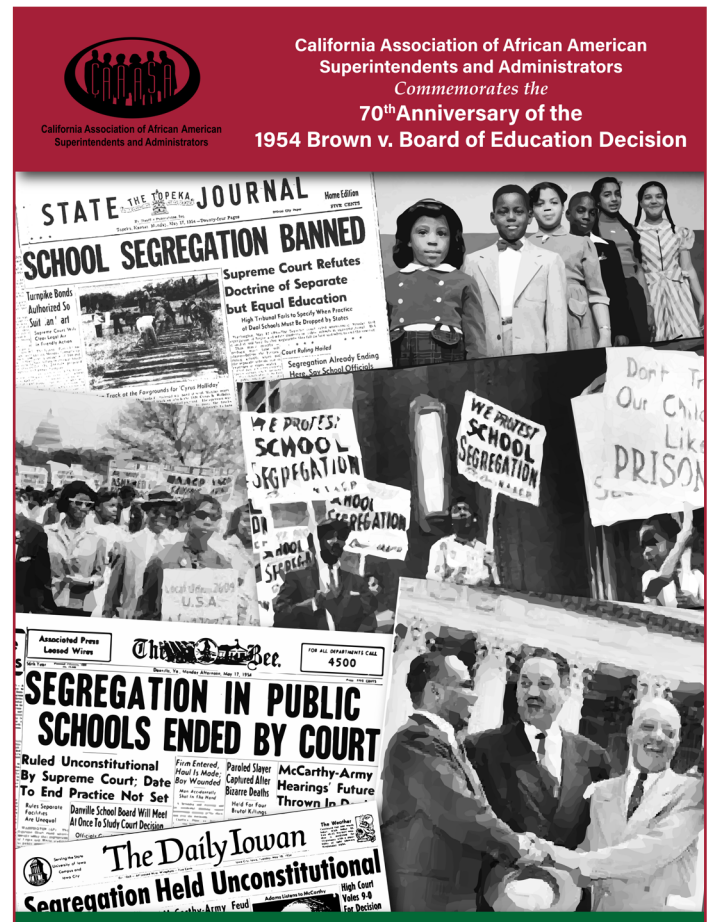
## CAAASA Hosts Largest PD Summit To-Date

By Vicki C. Phillips

The 2024 CAAASA Professional Development Summit was a huge success. The event, held at the Town and Country Resort in San Diego, included attendees representing 107 school districts and 12 County Offices of Education from throughout California.

"This was our largest professional development summit to-date," said Dwight Bonds, CAAASA's Executive Director. "We are extremely pleased by the number and content of the presentations and the number of attendees – nearly 1,100 in person and 300, virtually."

The summit opened with greetings by Dr. Michele Bowers, CAAASA President and representatives from the San Diego County Office of Education and the Moreno Valley Unified School District, co-hosts of the conference. Additionally, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tony Thurmond brought greetings and said, "Hope is still alive. At a time when there may be challenges, I still have hope for all of our students." At a time when there may be challenges, I still have hope for all of our students." He went on to discuss State resources available to support student achievement.





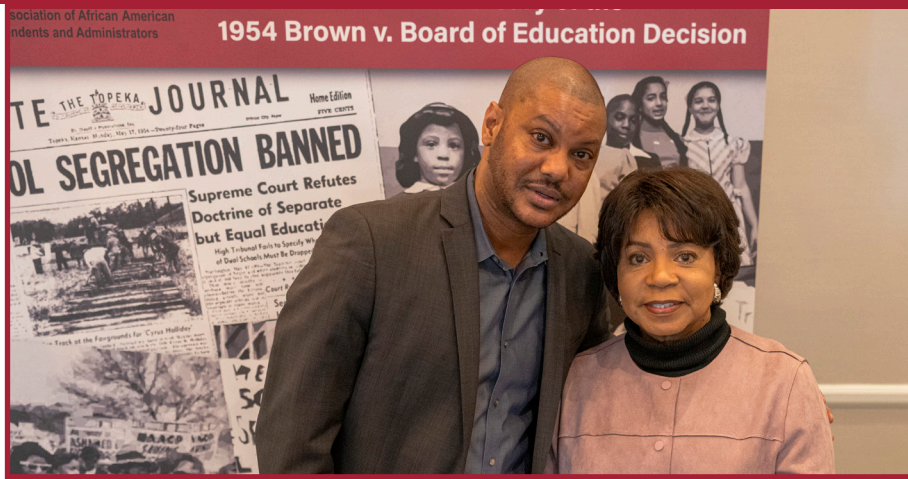
This year's theme, "The Promise of Brown v. Board of Education: 70 Years Later," featured more than 100 workshops and, six plenary sessions: "Exploring the Potential of AI in Education," "Achieving Equity: Breaking Barriers to Student Success," "Highly Effective Teachers, Schools and Strategies for the Success of Students of Color," "Where Do We Go From Here," and the Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond Research Institute.

The opening plenary, "The Promise of Brown v. Board: 70 Years Later," featured a presentation by Cheryl Brown Henderson, Founder/President of the Brown Foundation for Educational Equity and daughter of Oliver Brown, one of the plaintiffs in the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas case.

"Education is the foundation of our Democracy," she said. "And, I think that at some point in time, our nation will get its priorities straight and start elevating the profession of teaching, because without teachers, there would be chaos."

Her impactful presentation engaged the audience and served to correct much of what she called "disinformation" about the case. Despite popular opinion, she said, her father was NOT the only plaintiff. Brown v. Board of Education is not about Oliver and Linda Brown (her sister), but the hundreds of plaintiffs including 13 parents, representing five cases, which were combined by the NAACP into one case.

"The NAACP chose public schools as the battleground, but society was actually the target" Brown V. Board placed the issue of race relations on the national agenda," she said



**AI Bonds and Cheryl Brown Henderson**



**(l to r) Dr. Adam Clark, Dr. Ken Wesson, Dr. Carol Lee, Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, Dr. Travis Bristol, Dwight Bonds, Dr. Michele Bowers**



**Dr. Theresa Price**



**Dr. Paul Gothold**

## CAAASA in the News:







*(l to r) Shandelyn Williams, Dr. Linda Darling Hammond, Dr. Michele Bowers, Dr. Carol Lee*



*Dr. Adam Clark and Attorney Adrienne Konigar Macklin*

On a national level, she said the Brown v. Board case was 105 years in the making. The first case about school desegregation, *Roberts v. City of Boston*, was filed in 1849 and featured an African American lead attorney and his white co-counsel.

In discussing the history of Kansas and school desegregation, she indicated that at least 14 cases had been filed in Kansas and three in Topeka, prior to Brown. In terms of education in Topeka, Black students went to secondary school with whites even during the time of Brown, but the elementary schools were segregated. Black students were getting an excellent education and Black teachers held more advanced degrees than their white counterparts, she stated.

"Brown v. Board was never about sitting next to white children. It was about having access to those resources that seem to be following," a certain group of folks, she said. The 1954 case was successful in overturning laws on the books in 21 states and the District of Columbia; overturning *Plessey v. Ferguson* (Separate but Equal); dismantling legal forms of racial segregation; defining the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection clause and influencing foreign policy by helping to counter the global propaganda (about how Blacks were treated in the United States). The case helped shape national and international policies and struggles.

Unfortunately, the case resulted in the loss of more than 38,000 jobs for Black teachers across the south, primarily because some people could not tolerate the idea that Reconstruction might work. Additionally, some of the other unanticipated consequences of the 1954 decision include: white flight; redrawing of school attendance boundaries; magnet schools, bussing, the Bakke case and more.

The part of the Supreme Court decision she likes the best is the quote: "Education is a right that must be awarded to all on an equal basis." Supreme Court decisions are just the beginning of



*Dr. Judy White and Dr. Martinrex Kedziora*



*Alberto Carvalho*





***Dwight Bonds, Al Bonds, Dr. Joaquin Noguera,  
Dr. Pedro Noguera***



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a conversation," she said. We can never rest and must continue to do the work.

Various aspects of the impact of the Brown decision have been researched by twelve education researchers from around the country, who were commissioned to tackle key issues. Some of their findings were highlighted at the conference and more will be featured at the upcoming conference in May. Their findings will serve as the basis of a five-year national effort by CAAASA to address educational equity for African American students and other students of color.

This year's pre-conference activities included a parent empowerment conference and youth summit, attended by more than 500 students from school districts throughout California. A post-conference event, hosted by Unity Professional Women's Network,

featured activities for women leaders/members of CAAASA.

In addition to 3 evening receptions, the summit honored educators for outstanding work, paid video tribute to outgoing CAAASA President, Dr. Michele Bowers and installed the new President, Dr. Adam Clark, Superintendent, Mt. Diablo Unified School District. A special tribute was paid to Dr. Frank Wells, Superintendent of the Albany School District, and member of CAAASA's Board, who passed away unexpectedly on March 11.

***Future CAAASA events include:***

***The first CAAASA/NCOEE National Conference of researchers, national leaders, educators, and community leaders, on the theme: "Meeting the Promise of Brown v. Board: 70 Years Later," May 22-24, Washington DC; and CAAASA's Round-Up of Educational Leaders and Stakeholders, Saturday, September 7, 2024, Berkeley, CA.***

***CAAASA wishes to thank all of its sponsors for helping to make the 2024 Annual Professional Development Summit a tremendous success.***

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