



California Association of African American
Superintendents and Administrators

CAAASA *Round-Up Experience*

September 2023



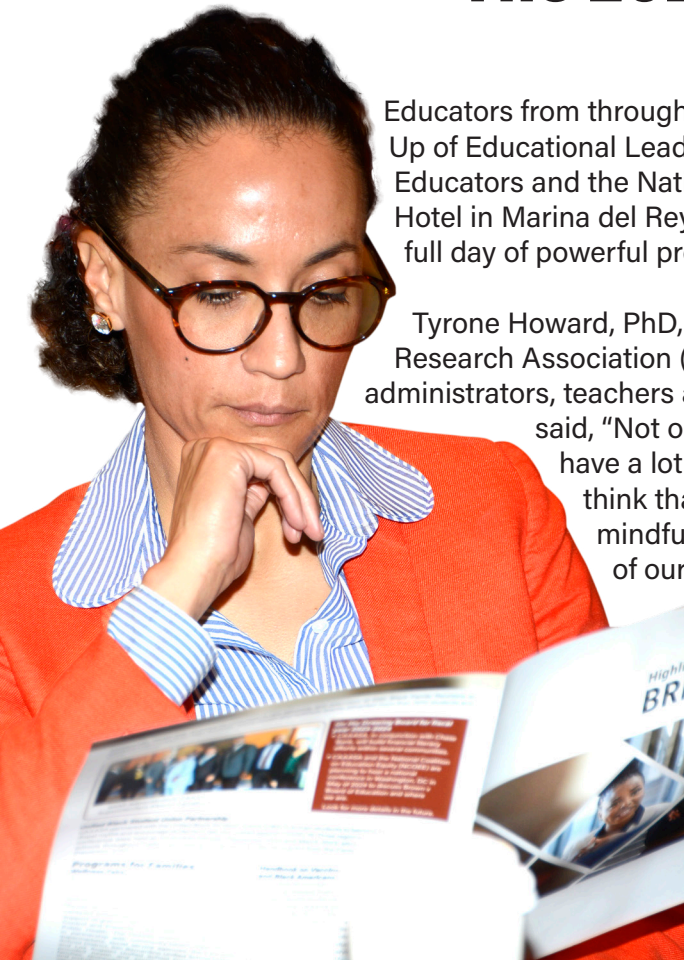
The 2023 Round-Up was a Success

By Vicki C. Phillips

Educators from throughout California were on hand September 9 for the Annual Round-Up of Educational Leaders hosted by CAAASA, the Los Angeles Alliance of Black School Educators and the National Coalition on Educational Equity (NCOEE) at the Marriott Hotel in Marina del Rey. The event featured a reception on Friday, September 8 and a full day of powerful presentations on Saturday.

Tyrone Howard, PhD, UCLA Professor and President of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), fired up the audience of 200 superintendents, administrators, teachers and education stakeholders at the top of the morning, when he said, "Not only are students under attack, but YOU are under attack also. We have a lot of school boards that have been hijacked by people" who don't think that Black children matter. He continued by saying we must be mindful of the forces at play when we are working in the best interest of our students and must be intentional in our efforts. "When Black children win, we all win."

Dr. Carl Cohn, an educator for more than 50 years, in K-12 and college systems, and the founding Executive Director of California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, was presented a Lifetime Achievement Award by CAAASA. His work, especially placing a focus on the impact of early childhood literacy, has served as an inspiration to a generation of educators.



Educator and Assemblymember Mia Bonta, shared that education was stabilizing force in her life. An Afro Latina, she said that with education, and a host of strong Black women around her, she gained the confidence to push forward. Additionally, she said, “we have to fight within a system that was not built for our success. Our schools are at the center of our society and Black children are at the center.” She continued by saying that educators are going to have to forge new pathways to address critical issues.

In the session, “What Does It Mean to Put Black Students at the Heart of Equity Work,” Dr. Kimberly Hendricks-Brown, Principal on Assignment with the Fresno Unified School District, said Black children are often the lowest performing students within the district. She encouraged the attendees to continue their work and added, “If WE don’t intervene, there is nothing that will happen for those students. Black students are worth the extra effort.”

Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, said “We have to use every door to go through to help our kids become successful. We’re going to close gaps and disparities, but we want to make sure that we all do well. In addressing ethnic studies, he said, “When we give our kids ethnic studies, all kids do better.” He also emphasized the need to make sure every kid can read by third grade and that we work to obtain paid internships for high school-aged kids to prevent them from having to drop out to help their families.

Workshops, highlighting Black student achievement initiatives in Mt. Diablo Unified School District, Los Angeles Unified and San Diego County Office of Education were featured concurrently. In all of the sessions, the need to be intentional in our efforts came through loudly and clearly.

Dr. Lamont Francies, Community and Family Engagement Coordinator with the Mt. Diablo USD shared the success of several of their programs. He indicated that if educators are going to hold an Afro-centric event, they should take pride in that and not make it Eurocentric. Additionally, in working with students and families, he stressed the need to take every opportunity possible to reach student. Emails won’t do it most of the time, he said. Telephone calls and visits, if necessary, work better. “A good shepherd smells like sheep,” he said.

Some of the vendors



Some of the presenters



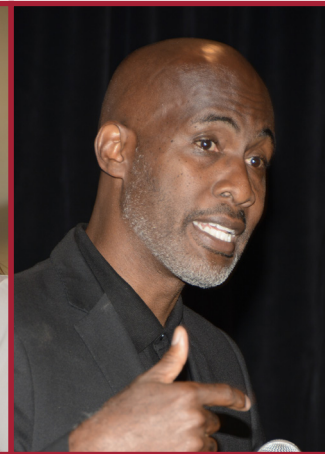
Assemblymember
Mia Bonta (D-Oakland)



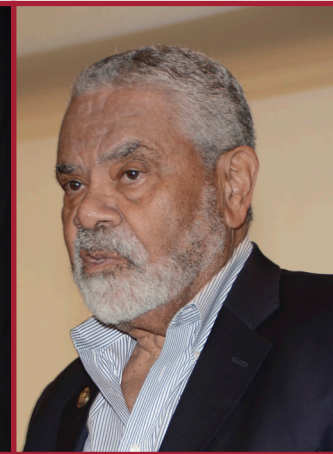
State Superintendent
Tony Thurmond



Sujie Shin
Deputy Executive Director
CCEE



Dr. Tyrone Howard
UCLA Professor



Dr. Carl Cohn
Professor Emeritus,
Claremont Grad. Univ.

Kimberly Mitchell-Dismukes, Regional Administrative Coordinator, Black student Achievement, LAUSD, a panelist addressing models for early childhood success, talked about the importance of language in a child's development. She said often a child's home language is different than the language spoken in the classroom, but that does not mean that the home language does not have value. To become successful in school, however, the student needs to become proficient in academic language; the language of the classroom.

Dr. Edward Bush, President, Consumnes River College and Vice Chair of The Campaign for College Opportunity, set the tone in the closing session on college access and financial resources, by saying "We are Not going to 'problematize' Black students. We are going to repair and reconstitute Black students."

Michael McCormick, Superintendent of Val Verde USD, informed the audience that more than one half billion dollars in financial aid was left on the table because of the failure of students to apply. We must do a better job of informing students about financial resources in order to increase college access, he said.

Among other highlights of the Round-Up, was the participation of students in the United Black Student Unions of California, who led the opening ceremonies.

To become a member and access our professional development library and full list of videos, go to www.caaasa.org



David Adams, Urban Assembly and
Dr. Martha Eugenia Dominguez-Brinkley, First5California



Dr. Travis Brandy and Dr. Robert Whitman, LAUSD, BSAP

The Reception



The Board Retreat



Seated (l to r) Dr. Sonjhia Lowery, Educational Consultant; Dr. Maya Woods-Cadiz, Superintendent, AIMS K-12 College Prep Charter District; Dr. Kimberly Hendricks-Brown, Principal on Special Assignment, Fresno USD, CAAASA's Secretary; Dr. Michele Bowers, Retired Superintendent, President of CAAASA; Dr. Judy White, Retired County Superintendent; Dr. Renee Hill, Superintendent, Riverside School District. **Standing, (l to r)** Dr. Mark Marshall, Superintendent, Los Banos USD, CAAASA's Treasurer; Dr. Gordon Anderson, Superintendent, Duarte USD, CAAASA Membership Chair; Dr. Ben Drati, Superintendent, Bellflower USD; Dwight Bonds, CAAASA Executive Director; Dr. Frank Wells, Superintendent, Albany School District; Dr. Adam Clark, Superintendent, Mt. Diablo USD, CAAASA's President-Elect