

# The work of Brown v. Board continues: Transforming Beliefs, Systems, & Practices for Black Students



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On Saturday September 6, 2025, CAAASA, in partnership with the National Coalition on Education Equity (NCEE) and the California Alliance of Black School Educators (CABSE), hosted our Annual Statewide Round-Up of educational leaders in Berkeley, CA. The CAAASA Round-Up brings with it a sense of nostalgia, as the first Round-Up began in the backyard of Executive Director, Dwight Bonds' home. Discussing educational policy over homemade barbeque with a small group of dedicated leaders is now a formal statewide retreat. This year's conference, titled "Brown v. Board: The Work Continues...Supporting the African American Learner: Transforming Beliefs, Systems and Practices for Black Students," emphasized the ongoing work required to translate the legal victory of Brown into tangible, positive outcomes for African American students. The conference opened with CAAASA President, Dr. Adam Clark, introducing the host city's Superintendent, Enikia Ford Morthel of Berkeley Unified who grounded us in the reminder of how our positional power grants us the responsibility to empower someone else. Immediately putting this reminder into motion, CAAASA Round-Up attendees then witnessed the powerful moment of Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, swearing in William McGee as the Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Building Educational Success Together Branch of the California Department of Education.

Following this shared moment in the history of black educators, Dr. Pedro Noguera charged our conversation on the black teacher pipeline with the inclusion of community colleges and described the urgent need to support them as vital players in the black teacher pipeline conversation. He challenged a traditional narrative by asserting that "we are asking the wrong question. Instead of asking are they (students) ready for college, we need to ask are the colleges ready for them," urging educators and policymakers alike to shift their focus.



# From Preschool to Policy Level

Taking a critical look farther into the educational trajectory of black students, Dr. Travis Bristol examined the black teacher pipeline from the very beginning of a child's educational journey, emphasizing that the systematic issues begin with the suspension of black students at an alarming rate, beginning in preschool. He stated, "we are systematically cutting off the supply of black teachers because we are disproportionately suspending them as students before they can even become teachers". To address the site level root of this injustice the room sat with his question, "how do we build the capacity of teachers to not suspend so you can authentically engage in a black teacher recruitment campaign?" That issue of capacity building in teachers and staff who are doing a disservice to black students, leads to the additional mental, emotional, and work load for many black teachers who do have the heart, skill, and genuine passion to connect with black students.

To this point, Dr. Jacquelyn Ollison delivered a powerful message on the vital role educators play in creating safe spaces for students while addressing the often-overlooked issue of compassion fatigue that teachers experience. She poignantly defined compassion fatigue as the emotional drain resulting from the empathy and care teachers invest in students, emphasizing that if educators are not well, they cannot provide the supportive environment necessary for student well-being. Dr. Ollison's insights highlight the critical connection between teacher wellness and student success, underscoring that understanding and addressing these challenges is key to improving black teacher retention and fostering a nurturing educational landscape where both teachers and students can thrive.

Strategically fortifying the black teacher pipeline is integral to the success of school systems because we know the evidence shows that black teachers are not just good for black students, but for all students based on student outcomes. Dr. Tyrone Howard emphasized this profound impact of Black teachers on the educational landscape, sharing multiple strategies to ensure a pipeline is developed. He urged a focused, complete conversation on anti-blackness, calling for an honest assessment of the challenges faced by Black educators and their students. Highlighting the importance of this issue, Dr. Howard stated, "the stakes are too high to get this wrong," as it relates to the educational experiences of black students.

These stakes were elevated by State Superintendent Tony Thurmond's address of the data which shows black student graduation rates are up, but the overall incremental progress must urgently be addressed. A true ally at the policy level, Thurmond noted multiple scholarships for male teachers of color in the classroom, an increase in funding of residency programs, and acceleration of National Board Certification funding.

The complete trajectory of the black teacher pipeline, from preschool to policy level was at the helm of the Round-Up, resulting in tangible strategies to systemically employ and retain our educators of color in California.





## Tony Thurmond swears in William McGee



In a significant milestone, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond officially swore in William McGee as the Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Building Educational Success Together Branch of the California Department of Education. McGee, a former principal and Director at the Office of African American Student Achievement in West Contra Costa County, brings a wealth of experience and a staunch commitment to fostering liberatory educational environments.

## CAAASA Exclusive

**If you could not join us in Berkeley, don't miss out on the highlight video below!**

**For members exclusive access to Round-Up sessions and CAAASA's library of resources, click here to join CAAASA today!**

[WWW.CAAASA.ORG](http://WWW.CAAASA.ORG)



## Board Retreat



African American Superintendents both past and present met as CAAASA Board Members to discuss CAAASA's vision and strategize on how black educator recruitment and retention can be systemically bolstered throughout the state.

## CAAASA's Leadership Academy



Retention of African American educators was at the heart of the Round-Up and CAAASA is taking action. The CAAASA Leadership Academy, taking place virtually, is designed for Aspiring Superintendents and Aspiring Administrators to prepare for their next career step with guidance from renowned, seasoned educators Mr. Michael Watkins, Dr. Patricia Brent-Sanco, Dr. Chris Downing, Dr. Judy White, and Dr. Michele Bowers.

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# Round-Up Co-Hosts and Supporters

Our co-hosts and partners are the foundation that made our Round-Up possible and we are forever thankful for their genuine commitment and active support in partnering with us to help make equitable education a lived reality.

**CAAASA (California Association of African American Superintendents and Administrators)**

**CABSE (California Association of Black School Educators)**

**NCOEE (National Coalition on Education Equity)**

**ACSA (Association of California School Administrators)**

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