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# **We CAN and Justice Works**

**are designed to close and reverse racial and socioeconomic gaps in academic achievement**

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Presentation to Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Governor Tom Wolf and Secretary of Education Pedro Rivera

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## We CAN and Justice Works

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## Exhibit 1. K-5 STEM Applications:

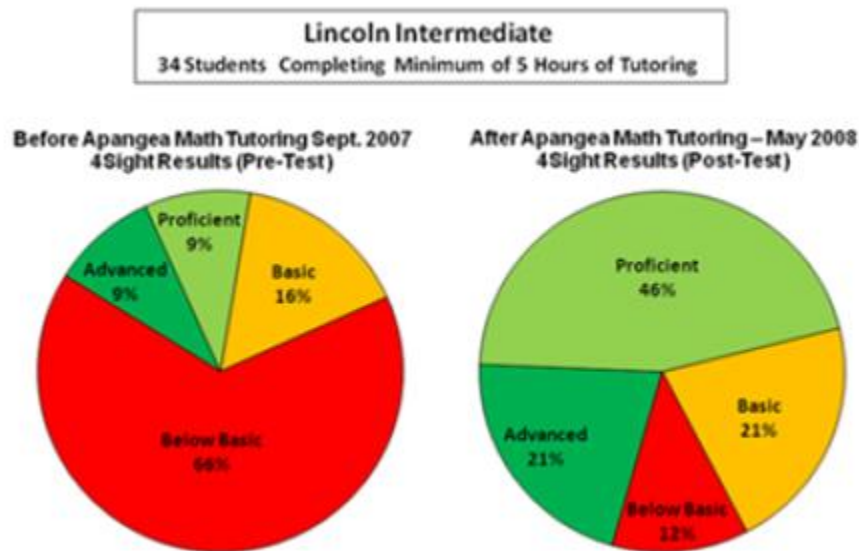
Linked to accelerated performance in math and engineering robotics

*Funding provided by the Buhl Foundation, Apangea Learning, Neighborhood Partners Program, 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, and Pittsburgh Public School District*

### First Application 2008

Our primary focus here was on accelerating the closure of racial achievement gaps in math—the gateway to career opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and math. Toward this end we recommended a cognitive tutor online math curriculum (Apangea Learning) and an engineering and robotics curriculum (Carnegie Mellon University) which were implemented under the leadership of Dr. Regina Holley, principal at Lincoln Technology Intermediate School in Homewood—one of our demonstration sites. For the earliest 2007 to 2008 evaluation, the following results were reported at Pittsburgh’s Lincoln Intermediate School where more than 90 percent of its students poor and 95 percent black.

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It is clear from these figures that within a period of one year that (a) the percent below basic decreased by basic 54 points, (b) the percent basic decreased by 5 points, (c) the percent proficient increased by 37 points, and (d) the percent advanced increased by 12 points. By any standard, these gains are quite remarkable—the overall percent proficient in math increasing from 18 to 67 percent in one year.

Implementation of our engineering robotics program received special notice in the local newspaper:

**Lincoln Technology Students  
at Hampton University**

***The New Pittsburgh Courier* 5/22/08**

*Given the impression these seventh- eighth- and ninth-graders made on the students and faculty at Hampton's Robotics Lab, recognition shouldn't be far behind. The eight Lincoln students not only built and programmed robots—starting with a box of parts and a manual—but did so while politely refusing all assistance from their college supervisors. Not only did the group complete the assignment—which staff said incoming freshmen are not expected to finish—one of them found and corrected an error in the assembly manual that, if not corrected, would have made building working robots impossible.*

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**Subsequent Applications: 2012-2013**

Enhancements	Grades	Term	Year	Results
<b><i>TTMath (Apangea)</i></b>				
Hill House	6-8th	5 months	2012	Math proficiency <b>increased by 45 percent.</b>
Schenley Heights	6-8th	5 months	2012	Math proficiency <b>increased by 33 percent.</b>
Wesley Center	6-8th	5 months	2012	Math proficiency <b>increased by 30 percent.</b>
UPrep ZONE	6-8th	3 months	2013	Math proficiency <b>increased by 30 percent.</b> <i>A student in this program was 1 of 6 chosen nationally for his energetic investment and progress in this program.</i>
<b><i>Engineering Robotics</i></b>				
Hill House		5 months	2012	Knowledge of engineering robotics principals and procedures <b>increase 29% from pre-to-post intervention.</b>
Schenley Heights		5 months	2012	Knowledge of engineering robotics principals and procedures <b>increase 62% from pre-to-post intervention.</b>
Wesley Center		5 months	2012	Knowledge of engineering robotics principals and procedures <b>increase 57% from pre-to-post intervention.</b>

## Exhibit 2. Pre-K to K Values for Life Center-Based Initiatives:

Closed or reversed developmental delays on five of six subscales on a nationally standardized test

*Development and implementation funding provided by the Buhl Foundation, U.S. Office of Child Development, Pennsylvania Black Legislative Caucus, and Pennsylvania State Department of Welfare.*

FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS, we have provided early childhood and Head Start services or training to poor, minority, and majority children whose adolescent or adult parents or parent surrogates were on welfare, in drug or alcohol recovery programs, at risk of child abuse or neglect, in treatment or rehabilitation programs for the mentally or cognitively challenged, or employed part-time or fulltime in low-paying and occasionally middle-income jobs. It is on this population in Allegheny, Greene, and Washington Counties that our Values for Life Early Childhood and Head Start Initiatives were designed, evaluated, and refined. This initiative is structured around seven values parents, grandparents, clergy, and teachers consider important to the future well-being of children and youth: High levels of (1) Love & Respect, (2) Interpersonal Skills, (3) Learning Orientation, (4) Self-Confidence, (5) Self-Persistence, (6) Self-Esteem, and (7) Self-Reliance. By implementing these values in ways that promote cultural and spiritual integration, we find also that our Values for Life Early Childhood Initiatives enhance prospects of early and subsequent school success by:

- *Accelerating Cognitive Skills*—emergent literacy achievement that includes recognition of letters, knowledge that letters relate to sounds, and simple number concepts;
- *Increasing Basic Motivation*—cognitive regulatory process and curiosity, excitement about learning, and confidence in one's ability to learn; and
- *Improving Socioemotional Skills*—the capacity to understand others' feelings and viewpoints, cooperation with teachers and peers, self-regulation and control, and ability to resolve conflicts constructively.

### Exhibit 3. K-5 Values for Life In-School Application: Pittsburgh Miller Elementary:

Linked to high reading and math performance on two nationally standardized tests

***Development and implementation funded by R.K. Mellon Foundation, Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus, and Pittsburgh School District***

*Relationship between Teacher Ratings of 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders' Behavioral Expression of Seven Values and Students' Performance Six Months Later on Standardized Measures of Math (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) and Reading (Stanford 9)*

Values	ITBS: Math	SAT 9: Reading
<i>Love &amp; Respect</i>	2.5	7.0
<i>Interpersonal Skills</i>	3.5	28.0
<i>Learning Orientation</i>	2.5	>6.0
<i>Self-Confidence</i>	2.5	7.0
<i>Self-Persistence</i>	8.0	2.5
<i>Self-Esteem</i>	5.3	7.0
<i>Self-Reliance</i>	8.0	2.5

In the first row and column of this table, the number 2.5 indicates that students rated above the median on love and respect were two and one-half times more likely six months later to score at or above the national average in math than students rated below the median. The second number 7.0 means that students rated above the median on love and respect were seven times more likely to score at or above the national average in reading than students rated below the median on love and respect. In general, students rated as above the median on the values were a minimum of two and one-half times more likely to score at or above average on math and reading achievement than students rated below the median on the values. Students rated as above the median on self-esteem were five to seven times more likely to score above average on math and reading than students rated below the median on self-esteem. ***In comparison with the years just preceding this intervention, class attendance was up and tardiness down along with the number of disciplinary actions including suspensions. A complementary version of this model was named by a previous governor the best violence prevention program in the Commonwealth of PA.***

## Exhibit 4. G6-12 Values for Life In-School Application: Pittsburgh's Northside Urban Charter School:

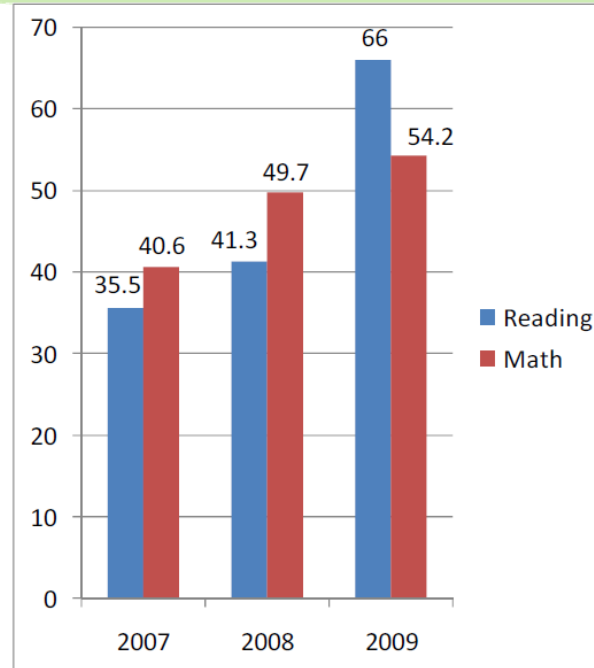
Linked to accelerated growth in reading and math achievement on the PSSA

*Pittsburgh School District provided funding for the development of curriculum materials used in this application introduced and monitored by Pittsburgh's Center for Family Excellence, Inc.*

### EX 10: (A) NUPCS %Prof/Adv on PSSA for Grades 6-12

The Axiological (A) component of **We CAN** is a whole-school reform that promotes seven values highly associated with academic engagement, achievement success, and personal and social competence and resiliency:

1. Love and Respect
2. Interpersonal Skills
3. Learning Orientation
4. Self-Confidence
5. Self-Persistence
6. Self-Esteem and
7. Self-Reliance



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Our Values for Life curriculum was introduced in 2007. From 2007 to 2009, reading and math increased by 85.9% and 33.5% respectively. We note as well that *in the year 2009 more than 95% of the graduates of this charter school (more than 90% black) were accepted into community college, four-year college, or specialized career training programs—to our knowledge the highest continuation rate in the Pittsburgh Public School District.*

## Exhibit 5. G6-12 Values for Life After-School Application: Pittsburgh's Millions UPREP

Linked to improvements in the behavioral expression of values targeted for intervention

*Part of a funding package made available by Neighborhood Partnership Program, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, BNY Mellon, McAuley Ministries, and Hill House Association*

For the value LEARNING ORIENTATION: ...*savvy, creative, inventive; asks questions, wants to know*

- Over a period of 4 weeks, three teachers implemented the protocol for Learning Orientation. For these three teachers quality of implementation estimated by the field training staff was relatively high, 100 percent falling within the moderate-to-high fidelity range.
- At the end of a four week period of implementation, ***80 percent of the 41 enrollees showed measurable increases in Learning Orientation*** as estimated from teacher ratings (teachers' pre-ratings were not available to them at the time post-ratings were made).

For the value SELF-CONFIDENCE: ...*explores, probes, investigates; attentive, enthusiastic*

- Over a period of 2 weeks, three teachers implemented the protocol for Self-Confidence. For these three teachers quality of implementation estimated from the field training staff was remarkably high, 100 percent falling within the high fidelity range.
- At the end of a two week period of implementation, ***75 percent of the 18 enrollees showed measurable increases in Self-Confidence*** as estimated from teacher ratings (teachers' pre-ratings were not available to them at the time post-ratings were made).



## Exhibit 6. G6-12 Values for Life Counseling and Mentoring Model

Linked to improvements in educational, personal, social, and familial outcomes

### *Development and application funding made available by Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus and Allegheny County Department of Human Services*

**Background.** This client (9011432) is a 15 year old female student whose family is active with OCYF. The client has ongoing problems with her custodial father at home and with disruptive outburst of violence in school.

**Assessment.** Prior to intervention (3/1/04), the family outreach worker assessed the behavioral expression of each of seven Values for Life outcomes using the VAL-OBS Inventory. On this measure, Self-Esteem sustained the lowest score, and the student and the family outreach worker agreed to make this value their focus for intervention which was implemented over 16 sessions. To evaluate pre-to-post intervention changes, the VAL-OBS Inventory was re-administered during Session 16 along with the custodial father's rating of his own negative emotions— $\omega$ -AGG Inventory for aggression,  $\omega$ -ANX for anxiety, and  $\omega$ -DEP Inventory for depression (6/21/04).

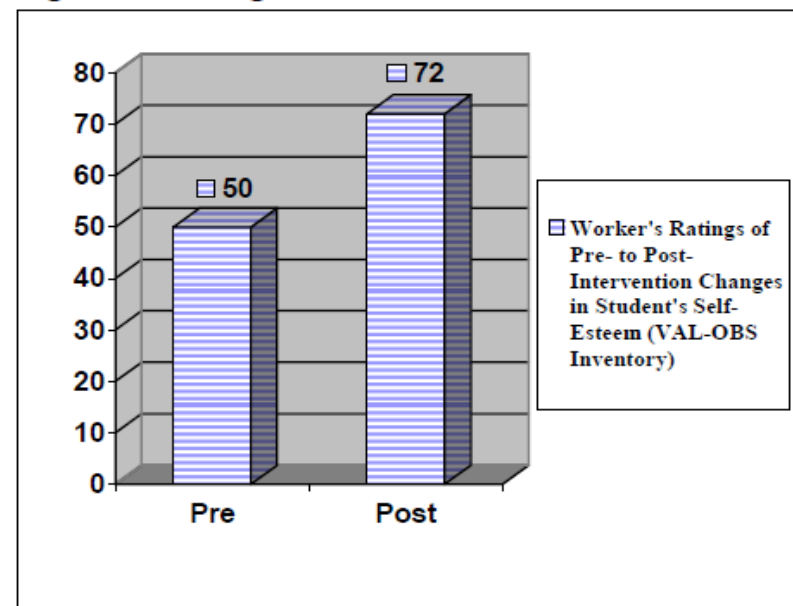
**Process.** We record session-by-session frequencies of four methods common to all Values for Life interventions: (a) *Valuation*, which introduces cultural proverbs, biographies, and icons to deepen the client's engagement with the targeted value; (b) *Exemplification*, which utilizes cultural proverbs, biographies, and icons to reward value-consistent behaviors and to correct value-inconsistent behavior; (c) *Routines*, which entail counseling behaviors that directly increase the medial and behavioral expression of the targeted value; and (d) *Networking*, which involves sharing with client and worker patterns of pre- to post-intervention value change in relation to quality of implementation, *i.e.*, magnitude of value change in relation to the extent valuation, exemplification, and routines have been implemented with fidelity.

**Outcomes.** Based on worker ratings, there was appreciable increase in the student's self-esteem from pre-to post-intervention (Figure 1) and consistent reductions in the father's ratings of his own negative emotions (Table 1). At three-week follow-up, no violent outbursts at schools had been reported. Indeed, her level of progress led to the court's dropping several charges connected with former outbursts in school. At home tensions had quieted appreciably.

D.B., C.B., L.T.

**Follow-Up.** 10/15/08: Client completed her G.E.D. and is now gainfully employed, living independently, and attending community college.

**Figure 1: Changes in Client's Self-Esteem**



**Table 1: Changes in Father's Negative Emotions**

Custodial Father's Ratings of His Own Negative Emotions During Daughter's Intervention Cycle	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention
Aggression ( $\omega$ -AGG Inventory)	50	24
Anxiety ( $\omega$ -ANG Inventory)	52	46
Depression ( $\omega$ -DEP Inventory)	48	44

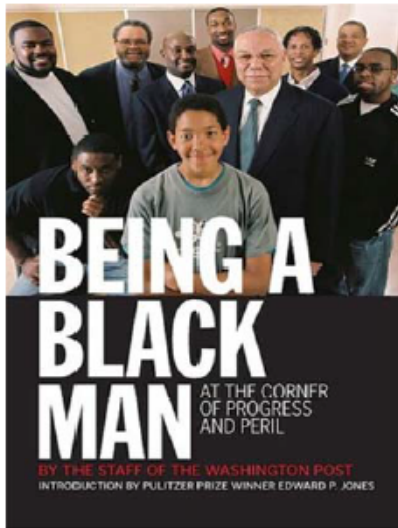
After pre-intervention assessments were completed, they were placed under lock and key by the worker's supervisor. Therefore, at the time of post-intervention assessments, neither worker nor consumer had recorded or physical access to pre-intervention ratings.

## Exhibit 7. G6-12 Foundational Literacy Initiative

Promotes transformation in the lives of young black males

*Development and application funding made available by Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus and Allegheny County Department of Human Services*

IN 2004, WE BEGAN TO IMPLEMENT A FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY INTERVENTION with high-risk African American males between 14 and 18 years of age. The purpose of this initiative was to help these males see and interpret events through spiritual, cultural, and axiological frameworks. Early on we discovered videos provided a powerful way of bringing about foundational literacy—receiving and interpreting



events in ways that literally and figuratively promote life over death. In one early application, they reviewed and critiqued the DVD version of *Choices* which is about a young black drug dealer who was arrested, convicted, sentenced, imprisoned, and years later paroled. Upon his release, old friends who continued to sell drugs began to flock around him. Encouraged to apply this *axiological framework* to the life of the principal character in *Choices*, these young men quickly identified disintegrative expressions of Self-Persistence (e.g., gives up), Self-Reliance (e.g., easily influenced), and Learning Orientation (e.g., hates reading) as pivotal values underlying decisions made. The discussion then turned to implications of identified values for their lives. How could positive expressions of these values enhance the quality of their lives? If they moved toward integrative expressions of Self-Persistence (e.g., hanging in there), Self-Reliance (e.g., thinking for oneself), and Learning Orientation (e.g., furthering one's education), what difference would this make for themselves? Their families? Their neighborhood? Their community? Throughout, the attention of participants was actively engaged—discipline was not a problem among these young men who by practically any standard would be considered high risk. To complete this training cycle, we would ask two additional questions with follow-up queries that go to matters of (a) causation, (b) implication, and (c)

remedy: Did the main character's choices bring a sense of hope (vs. despair) for himself, his family and his community; broaden his sense of connection (vs. disconnection) to the wider community and society; and improve his prospects for liberation (vs. conformity) in face of life's trials and social adversities—(*RTS 2 for spirituality*)? From pre-to-post-intervention assessments, we have usually found (1) increases in spiritual and cultural integration; (b) decreases in depression, anxiety, perceived stress, and hostility; and (c) decreases in violent and criminal behaviors.

## Exhibit 8. G1-8 Normative Enhancements

Mobilizes community to accelerate closure of reading and math achievement gaps

*Developed over a period of 10 years in low-income, mixed-income, and middle-income neighborhood communities with enablement from the R.K. Mellon Foundation, Poise Foundation, and Pittsburgh Foundation*

Normative here refers to the mobilization of community support of strategies that promote student engagement and achievement excellence.

July of 2007 was the inaugural year for RAMP—Raising Achievement in Monroeville and Pitcairn—which utilizes normative strategies which were designed in collaboration with pastors, parishioners, principals, teachers, librarians, politicians, and community residents and activists. An integrated Methodist church has been the focal point of this initiative, bringing the superintendent, teachers, parents, businesses, the mayor, and state representatives to the table to brainstorm of what can be done to accelerate the closure of racial achievement gaps in Monroeville and Pitcairn.

They have launched initiatives that recognize students who are achieving or have achieved educational excellence, put in place after-school tutoring programs for students, organized large community events and forums that draw wide community participation, and obtained coverage of these activities in their local media.

**Under the leadership of Epryl King, who has shared concepts and findings associated with this initiative at Harvard University, RAMP has received four local, regional, and state awards that acknowledge the successfulness of this effort.**

**During Y01 of RAMP rates of gain in PSSA proficiencies for black students exceeded rates of gain for white students in grades 3-5 (6.3 for black and 4.5 for white students in reading; 9.9**

**for black and 5.8 for white students in math) and in grades 6-8 (5.3 for black and 1.9 for white students in reading; 2.9 for black and 1.5 for white students in math). These differential gains in black relative to white proficiencies has accelerated the closure of racial achievement gaps.**

Prior to the inaugural year for RAMP, we acknowledge the considerable value of several Pittsburgh church and community initiatives that informed normative strategies recommended for RAMP:

- Posters with pictures and names of achievers and gainers were distributed in local businesses and libraries and on billboards located at prominent intersections in the community. One school took on the project of producing t-shirts and buttons in support of this initiative.
- Grace Presbyterian, Wesley Center AME, Bethel AME, and Sixth Mount Zion Baptist have adopted schools where they offer tutoring and mentoring services to accelerate rates of math, science, and reading achievement.
- More than 200 public housing students with their parents, grandparents, teachers, and principal showed up at a special Sunday morning worship service at Bethel AME Methodist Church to recognize students who had read 25 books or more.
- At Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church, teachers and principals whose students had accelerated scores in reading and math were recognized during morning worship and following service in a fellowship hour where school personnel were welcomed and thanked personally by congregants. Outstanding academic achievement or achievement gains were also recognized in individual students:

## Justice Works—G1-12 In-School Application

Linked to closures and reversals of achievement gaps

**Exhibit 9: Type of achievement gaps**

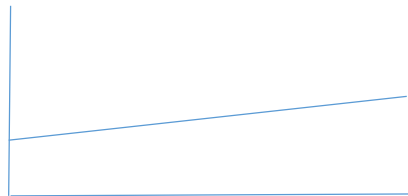
**Exhibit 10: Benefits of gap closures and reversals**

**Exhibit 11: Methods for closing and reversing achievement gaps**

**Exhibit 12: Examples of gap closing and reversing schools**

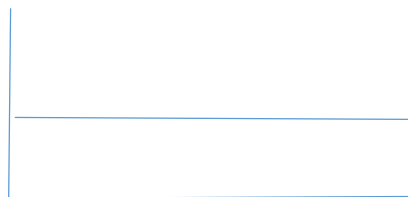
## Exhibit 9: Type of Achievement Gaps

### 1. Justice Maligned



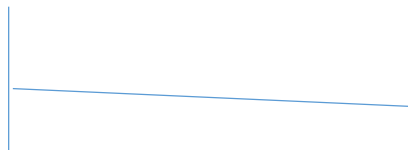
*Achievement Gap over Time*

### 2. Justice Neutralized

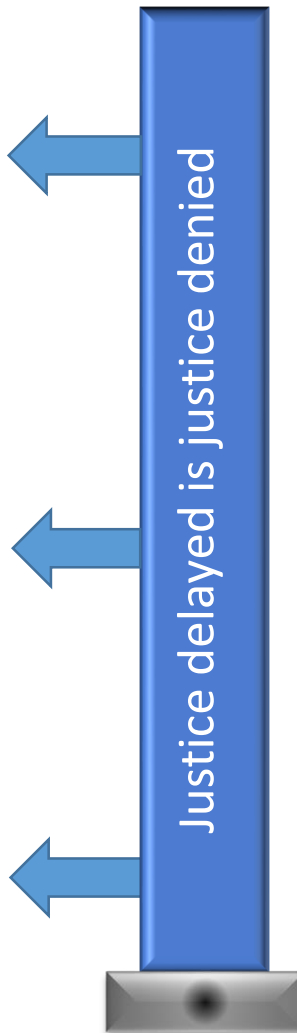


*Achievement Gap over Time*

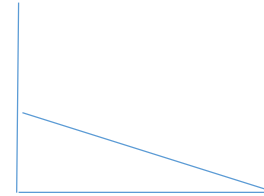
### 3. Justice Abided



*Achievement Gap over Time*

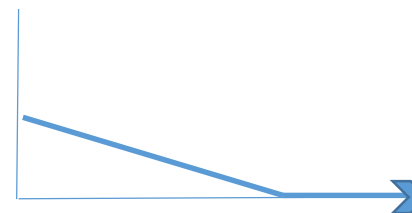


### 4. Justice Achieved

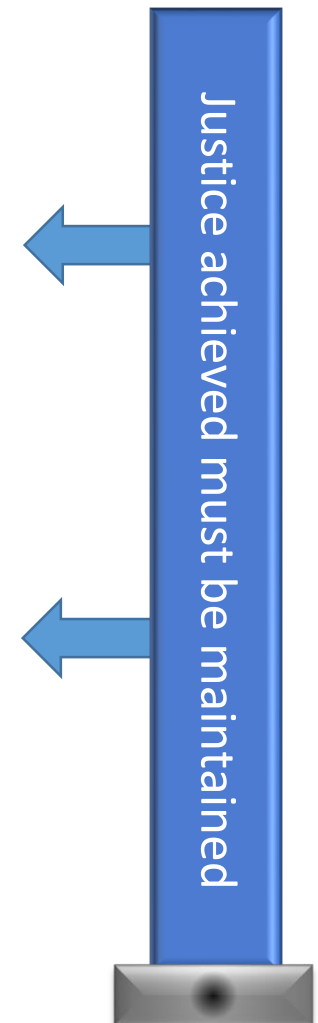


*Achievement Gap over Time*

### 5. Justice Normalized: Achieved and Maintained



*Achievement Gap over Time*





## Exhibit 10: Benefits of Gap Closures and Reversals

Table 1 summarizes projected benefits of educational justice and costs of educational injustice. This summarization was inspired by Keith Chambers' (2010) book *Pull—Marketing Secrets the Top 100 Fortune Use*, [www.pullbizbook.com](http://www.pullbizbook.com).

**Table 1. Educational Justice and Injustice: Benefit and Cost Hierarchies for Principals and Teachers**

Benefits of Educational Justice	Costs of Educational Injustice
8. Teacher and Principal Satisfaction and Fulfillment	8. Teacher and Principal Dissatisfaction and Frustration
7. National Well-Being	7. National Despair
6. Communal Well-Being	6. Communal Despair
5. Communal Wealth	5. Communal Poverty
4. Family Formation and Function	4. Attenuated Families
3. Access to Opportunities in the Job Market	3. Impaired Competitiveness in the Job Market
2. Career and Job Readiness	2. Impaired Career and Job Readiness
1. Close and Reverse Racial Achievement Gaps	1. Failure to Close and Reverse Racial Achievement Gaps

### *Benefits of Educational Justice*

Think of Table 1 as a step-ladder of hierarchies which begins at the bottom rung 1. Here the district voluntarily chooses or organized neighborhood pressure insists on the district's selection of reforms that close and reverse racial achievement gaps. Such a selection is associated with rung 2, career and job readiness of students exposed to justice-achieving reforms such as the one we've proposed. At rung 3, we expect that career and job readiness will be associated with greater access to opportunities in the job market. Productive involvement in the job market we project will be associated with a higher readiness to form two-parent households at rung 4 or to enhance level of functioning in whatever family form, the presence of such families being associated with greater communal wealth (the capacity to purchase homes or to start new businesses in the community)—rung 5. Greater communal wealth is projected to boost communal well-being across three domains (rung 6): behavioral (*e.g.*, reductions in depression, anxiety, hostility), social (*e.g.*, reductions in juvenile delinquency, teen pregnancies, violent crimes), and physical (*e.g.*, reductions in acute and chronic illnesses). Together, outcomes associated with rungs 2 through 6 are expected to promote national well being (rung 7) and exemplify values embedded in the founding documents of this country (*e.g.*, all men are created equal). With successful participation in justice-achieving reforms, then, teachers and principals are expected for all reasons identified under rungs 2-7 to report satisfaction with their profession and a sense of pride, efficacy, and fulfillment in contributing to the constructive development of their students, their local communities, and the national interest (rung 8)—outcomes which have attracted many teachers to the profession. These schools where justice *lives* animate the highest ideals of our social democracy. As such, these justice attainment mesosystems are worthy of examination and emulation by public and private sectors within and outside the domain of education—medical care, public safety, employment settings, and so on. Can justice achieving schools illuminate pathways to justice attainment in general?<sup>3</sup>

## Exhibit 11: Methods for Closing and Reversing Achievement Gaps

The term educational justice will refer to the closure and reversal of racial, socioeconomic, and gender achievement gaps. Our plan directed toward this end consists of four JAMS (Justice Attainment and Maintenance Strategies **J1-J4**):

- ❖ **J1: *Normalize Excellence.*** Dame-Dame Schools are predominately black low-income public schools that have nearly closed or actually reversed racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps. Their methods of educational justice attainment are used to inform policies and practices in predominately black low-income schools where racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps are far removed from our standard of justice. These 107 largely unrecognized and unheralded Dame-Dame Schools, unlike virtually all nationally identified ‘best practice’ or ‘proven’ models, have been there and done that—either having nearly eradicated or actually reversed racial, socioeconomic, and black male achievement gaps.
- ❖ **J2: *Safeguard Excellence.*** *We CAN* consists of three complementary interventions directed toward equipping students and teachers and empowering community with methods, perspectives, and skills that maintain academic engagement and achievement excellence even when district policies or practices threaten to undermine the march toward justice. In Biloxi, Mississippi, for example, the district has voted recently to close predominately black (>90 percent) low-income (>90 percent) Nichols Elementary School where more than 90 percent of its students are proficient in reading and math. Moreover, this school has been identified by the Mississippi Department of Education as one of the best in the state and one of its teachers recently received recognition as Teacher of the Year. *We CAN* brings a complement of interventions designed to cut the risks of such miscarriages in justice.
- ❖ **J3: *Heal Wounding.*** In predominately black low-income schools, many if not most students bring cultural wounding that undermines academic engagement and achievement excellence. We have published studies which examined how cultural wounding—identifying with racial stereotypes about blacks—is associated with cardiovascular disease and diabetes mellitus along with a range of behavioral health symptoms—depression, anxiety, and hostility—and social challenges such as black-on-black crimes. In two studies of particular relevance: (a) we found that adults with cultural wounding reported less educational attainment, lower annual income, and poorer occupational outcome and (b) Howard University investigators found that middle-schoolers with cultural wounding tended to have lower verbal IQs. To heal these sources of wounding, we offer cultural infusion and pedagogical strategies that trigger self- and group-affirmation processes which potentiate academic engagement and achievement excellence.
- ❖ **J4: *Minimize Wounding.*** We propose a three-part certification intervention for principals and instructional leaders directed toward the recognition and correction of racial stereotypes. This strategy is premised on recent research that indicates (a) a minimum of 80% of whites and nearly 50% of blacks unselfconsciously hold pro-white and anti-black attitudes—even among respondents who identify themselves as bias free or social activists; (b) students’ perception of racial prejudice diminishes their academic interest and performance; and (c) teachers’ unselfconscious but not conscious ethnic stereotypes are linked with lower minority but not majority student achievement.



## Exhibit 12: Examples of Gap Closing and Reversing Schools

### Examples at Large

#### *Funded by the Neighborhood Partnership Program*

Dame-Dame Principal	Visitation Date <sup>1</sup>	Name	Enrollment	City	% Black	% Poor	Percent Reading Proficient <sup>2</sup>			Percent Math Proficient		
							2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
<b>Mr. Marshall Scott III</b>	January 28-29 2009	Alcott Elementary (PreK-5)	488	Houston	78	97.5	74.3*	85.7*	90.1*	84.7*	90.4*	87.5*
<b>Ms. Alpher Garrett-Jones</b>	February 25-26 2009	Charles Rice Elementary (PreK-5)	476	Dallas	97.2	95.5	90.8	86.5	92.1	89.5	89.6	85.9
<b>Dr. Loretta BrownLawrence</b>	March 25-26 2009	Leland Elementary (PreK-3)	256	Chicago	99.6	97	73	91	70	83	86	81

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to funding by the Neighborhood Partners Program, the Center for Family Excellence will be inviting each identified principal to Pittsburgh for two-day visits. **Would you consider putting these dates in your calendar now?** Starting at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday of the first day, each Dame-Dame principal will give a public lecture on how their schools have managed to nearly close or actually reverse racial achievement gaps. Following Q&A, a closed meeting with community stakeholders will be held. On Friday of the second day, each Dame-Dame principal will be interviewed by research faculty and students affiliated with the Educational Justice Project (8:15-10:15), will meet with state and local policy makers along with deans or directors of teacher and administrator training schools or centers (10:30-12:00 noon), and will participate in sessions convened by central administrators with Hill District principals and instructional leaders (1:00-3:00).

<sup>2</sup> As with the *overwhelming* majority of Dame-Dame Schools we've identified previously, only one of these three gap-closing or reversing schools has been awarded the Blue Ribbon for school excellence by the United States Department of Education.

## Examples in Pittsburgh

*Funded by Neighborhood Partnership Program, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, and BNY Mellon with collaboration of the Pittsburgh School District*

Pittsburgh Hill District Principals with Time Limited Exposed to Dame-Dame Principals						
Discipline	% Proficient and Advanced		Percent Increase in Proficiency	Estimated Equity Ratio		Percent Increase in Equity
	2008-2009	2010-2011		2008-2009	2010-2011	
<i>Math</i>						
Miller	37.8	51.3	35.71	47	63	34.04
Vann	42.0	64.7	54.05	54	79	46.30
Weil	41.2	59.4	37.50	52	64	23.08
<i>Reading</i>						
Miller	29.2	39.0	33.56	38	48	26.30
Vann	37.6	41.4	10.11	48	52	8.33
Weil	38.0	39.4	3.40	49	48	None

We provide proficiencies for the year before exposure (2008-2009) and at the end of two-years of exposure to Dame-Dame principals (2010-2011). We also provide an estimate of equity. Equity refers to the percentage of black over white student proficiency, the latter based on the overall white proficiency for the state. If the gap closes altogether, i.e., blacks performed at the same level of whites, Equity would be 100%. If blacks performed half as well, Equity would be 50%. An increase in Equity is therefore a movement toward gap closure. With caveats to be noted shortly, it would appear that:

- We have exceeded the initial target of 5% increase in proficiencies originally stipulated as goal; the percent proficient in reading and math range from 10 to 54.05 percent, with the exception of Weil;
- We have exceeded the initial target of 4% reduction in the racial achievement gap; we have moved toward equity (reduction of gaps) by 8.3 to 46.30 percent, with the exception of Weil.

The caveats are several. First, the school organization of Miller and Vann shifted from K-8 in 2008-2009 to K-5 in 2009-2010 which may have attenuated the performance of Weil while accentuating the performance of Miller and Vann. In our view, an undetermined amount of this organization shift is likely to explain some of the results reported in Table 1. We have, however, shown in another report that gains associated

# Justice Works—G1-12 After-School Application

Linked to closures and reversals of achievement gaps

## STREAM'N TOWARD JUSTICE

After-School Initiative for  
Eliminating Educational Opportunity Gaps  
Center for Family Excellence, Inc.  
Pittsburgh, PA

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## STREAM'N toward Justice<sup>1</sup>

### *Accelerated Development of Skills Required for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Jobs and Careers*

*Jerome Taylor, Ph.D*

*C. Dianne Colbert, Ed.D*

September 13, 2014

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### Core Curriculum

Subject	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Reading	LDR	LDR	LDR	LDR	<i>Planning, Administrative, and Professional Development Time</i>
Mathematics	TTDM	TTDM	TTDM	TTDM	
Arts & Culture	VFL-B	VFL-B	VFL-A <sup>6</sup>	VFL-A	
Science & Engineering	STEM	STEM	STEM	STEM	

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An after-school initiative designed to accelerate the development of social, emotional, analytic, and executive competencies along with foundational skills in Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts, and Math—all required for 21<sup>st</sup> Century jobs and careers which will entail accelerated closure of racial, socioeconomic, and gender achievement gaps. *STREAM'N toward Justice* is the after-school complement of our in-school reform *Justice Works*.

### Evaluation Plan

LDR=Lexia Digital Reading; TTDM=ThinkThrough Digital Math (Apangea); VFL-B=Values for Life basic application; VFL-A=Values for Life arts application; and STEM=same program described under We CAN. For each Subject, there will be an interim pre-to-post outcome measure along with a check-list of how well the planned intervention has been implemented. The extent to which these outcome and fidelity measures are associated with accelerated growth in math, reading, and science will be examined. )

### **Lexia Digital Reading**

Using an artificial intelligence platform, this program follows analogous procedures identified for digital math in areas of reading—phonemic awareness, vocabulary, grammar and meaning, fluency, and comprehension all based on common core standards. Published studies show that gains in reading proficiency in low-income students exposed to this program were greater than gains reported for middle-income students, just the pattern of findings required to close reading achievement gaps—our primary reason for choosing this program. This digital reading program we are adding to address challenges in reading proficiency in most urban school settings.

### **Think-Through Digital Math**

Using an artificial intelligence platform, this program diagnoses where students are, introduces lessons designed to take students to the next level of proficiency, monitors student progress in mastering the next level, diagnoses errors made and prescribes lessons directed toward correcting these errors, and makes available a live tutor to diagnose uncorrected errors and walk students through methods leading to successful mastery. In our most recent application in an after-school program at Pittsburgh's Iliones-UPrep, we found a 30 percent gain in math proficiency among participating students. *A male participant in this program received a national award plus a check of \$1,500 which acknowledged his level of enthusiastic and effective engagement with this program.*

### **. Values for Life: Basic Program**

Studies indicate that interventions promoting the behavioral expression of values identified in footnote 5 improves student engagement, accelerates proficiency gains in reading and math, decreases the level of tardiness and absenteeism, reduces the number of disciplinary conferences and suspensions, and promotes

students' sense of safety in the school. Students at or above average on one or more of the seven values were more than 2 to 8 times more likely to score at or above average on nationally standardized tests of reading and math. Adapted by Dr. Sekai Turner, this program was identified by former governor Tom Ridge as the best violence prevention program in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In the after-school program at Millions-UPrep where Learning Orientation and Self-Confidence were implemented, we found improvement in the behavioral expression of these values in 75-80% of students following 10 days to 4 weeks of implementation. A four-stage pedagogical strategy featured in this intervention is designed to move students toward advanced proficiency levels in all disciplines. Preliminary evidence indicates that this intervention also diminishes identification with racial stereotypes internalized by students and teachers alike. Our research links the expression of these stereotypes with one or more of nine types of racial discrimination that undermine teacher expectations and student performance.

### **Values for Life: Arts Application**

Guided opportunities are provided to help students (a) apply the seven values to artistic products—historical and contemporary literature, music, and dance; (b) stimulate self-directed production of artistic products reflecting these values; (c) assist students in staging self-directed expressions of the values; and (d) showcase their productions in local venues such as churches or community centers where students also serve as docents. Our expectation is that these artistic expressions of the values will (a) deepen their significance to students as well as consolidate and strengthen student engagement and accelerated learning which we have identified under Item 5 and (b) stimulate students' creative, presentational, teamwork, and leadership skills in a manner consistent with neighborhood, district, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century expectations.

## **STEM**

We have used one of the nation's best STEM applications which was developed at Carnegie Mellon University. This program introduces concepts of physics, engineering, computer programming, and mathematics. It is a hands-on application which requires integration of all STEM methodologies. Students learn how to build robots, how to write programming language that controls their activities, how to conduct experiments to test concepts drawn from physics and mathematics, generate and analyze charts and figures resulting from their experiments, and how to prepare written and oral reports which they share with the instructor and one another. In general we attempt to promote a spirit of inquisitiveness, discovery, and innovation as well as enhance STEM proficiencies.



## What others are saying about We CAN

- **The Late Asa Hilliard III**, Fuller E. Callaway Professor of Urban Studies and Professor of Educational Policy Studies, Georgia State University; author of more than 250 articles and books

*I have been in the game for a long time, and rarely expect to be impressed with the typical rhetoric and weak practices that pass for 'school reform'. To say that your... materials are impressive to me is an understatement. The We CAN approach sets the expectations, standards and goals at the highest levels. Conceptually, theoretically, and philosophically, the project has deep and valid roots...The reported results command attention and accolades. Congratulations on moving beyond the tired rhetoric!*

- **David C. Berliner**, Former President of American Educational Research Association, the most prominent international professional organization in education; Regents' Professor, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Mary Lou Fulton College of Education, Arizona State University

*Your proposal is terrific. It hits all the issues and I can only wish you well...*

- **Margaret Beale Spencer**, Board of Overseers Professor of Education and Psychology, Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania; Fellow in four divisions of the American Psychological Association; trustee of the Foundation for Child Development

*This is a wonderful accomplishment!*

- **James A. Middleton**, Director, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, Mary Lou Fulton College of Education, Arizona State University

*Congratulations on this milestone.*

- **Rodney K. Hopson**, Hillman Distinguished Professor of Education at Duquesne University

*Brilliant...At a time when such excitement about closing and reducing the achievement gap in our nation's schools , we need more of these type of efforts focused on success and excellence of Black students rather than the continued focus on deficits....*

- **William Cross**, Professor of Psychology, City University of New York, pioneer and renowned scholar in cultural identity theory

*This is a masterful piece of work...comprehensive yet realistic and practical. Your work has always had a ring of excellence....*

- **Molefi Kete Asante**, Professor and former Chair, Department of African American Studies, Temple University, where he created the first PhD program in African American Studies

*Your racial achievement work is excellent. It should become a standard for the state.*

- **Karl Mack**, Executive Director, National Society of Black Engineers, 23,000+ members

*The National Society for Black Engineers is willing to work with you in this crisis facing all of us*

## What others are saying about Justice Works

### Roll Call of Supporters for Justice Works:

### Eliminating Racial, Socioeconomic, and Gender Achievement Gaps

June 25, 2014

Name	Comments
<b>Jake Wheatley, Jr.</b> , 9 <sup>th</sup> Legislative District, House of Representatives, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. He serves on the Appropriations, Health and Human Services Education and Transportation and is the Majority Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Education, Vice Chair for the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus, Vice Chair on the Democratic Policy Committee, and Deputy Majority Whip for the House Democratic Caucus.	<i>While reviewing the theory, expectations, strategies, specifications and processes of the Justice Works initiative, I wholeheartedly agree that a holistic approach in our most vulnerable communities must occur. This initiative will work to close opportunity gaps for minority children, uncover new ways of potential growth for our children, and identify health and wellness practices that best target behaviors. The Justice Attainment and Maintenance Strategy (JAMS), as outlined, provides a detailed description towards achieving 'educational justice.' The studies referenced within the Justice Works document also provide insight into how a holistic approach must be made to achieve academic engagement and excellence inside our lower income, predominantly black schools. While I am pleased to learn more about these issues through this Justice Works document; I truly believe we must act, take this opportunity to collaborate, and work towards a holistic approach for our most vulnerable children.</i>
<b>R. Daniel Lavelle</b> , Councilman, City of Pittsburgh-District 6; Chair, Public Safety	<i>As the City Councilperson to District 6, I am reaching out to you to express my support of the Justice Works Initiative for Hill District schools. It is my belief that the program will develop education reform that will deliver education justice to the children of the Hill District, in the process helping to eliminate racial, socio-economic and gender achievement gaps.</i>
<b>James B. Steward, PhD</b> , Chair of the Equity Advisory Panel of the Pittsburgh Public Schools; former Chair of Black Studies, University of Notre Dame; Professor Emeritus and former Vice Provost at Penn State; Past President, Association for the Study of African American Life and History; Former President, National Council for Black Studies	<i>The term "Justice Works" is an easily understood construct for introducing the "Justice Attainment and Maintenance Strategies" presented in your submission. The Soundness of the model ...is evidenced by the fact that it is based on the scrutiny of schools that have been successful in significantly reducing or eliminating racial achievement gaps. Your submission appropriately addresses the issue of how to scale-up such efforts such that such success stories are not simply isolated case studies. The "Justice Works Virtual Learning Network"...is an exciting idea that can mobilize contemporary digital</i>



*communications technology to deliver professional development and other relevant information to all stakeholders. Success in ramping up a national effort to confront the perplexing problem of achievement gaps requires that all stakeholders clearly understand both the complexity of the problem and the details of proposed amelioration strategies. I believe that the “Stool of Justice” visual simplifies the process of communicating with diverse audiences effectively by depicting each intervention component as a leg of the stool supporting the Justice Works framework, i.e., ‘Normalizing Excellence,’ ‘Safeguarding Excellence,’ ‘Healing Wounds’, and ‘Minimizing Wounds.’*

**Marilyn Barnett Waters, PhD,**  
Education Chair, Pittsburgh Unit NAACP;  
former teacher and principal in the Pittsburgh  
School District

*As a former teacher, elementary and high school principal, I am convinced the kind of piece-meal approaches we are utilizing now and have used in the past to educate students will continue to be the dominant models used in our public schools unless we are open to formulating and applying new structures that are holistic and especially prescriptive to the real needs of all of today’s students. No doubt, the cognitive approaches to curricular subjects, at least in the real sciences, have been less of an issue in terms of developing appropriate academic materials for students. However, our struggle continues to be the delivery of appropriate materials in the social and related sciences, the strategies used to relate to all students, the quality of the educators in our schools, resource inequities, and whether or not we hold high expectations for particularly students of color. Your model, when appropriately applied, has great possibilities of closing the kind of opportunity gap we find in many of our schools. And, if we close this opportunity gap, I believe as you do, that we will ultimately be able to close the racial academic achievement gap.*

**Esther Bush**  
President and CEO  
Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh

*I am pleased to provide this letter in support of the Justice Works Initiative. The Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh wholeheartedly supports the Hill District Education Council’s (HDEC) work for educational justice, especially as it relates to the strategy to align curricula, instruction and assessment with Common Core Standards. This strategy resonates with the Urban League’s national focus to help increase equity in education through the education and engagement of parents about the Common Core State Standards; what they are and what they mean for students. It is vitally important that parents have an increased understanding so they are truly empowered and are partners in their children’s education and success. As you know, providing parents with the proper tools and resources ensures their children’s successful transition and their ability to receive the full benefits of these high quality academic standards. The Urban League agrees with HDEC’s holistic approach to addressing this pressing issue of educational injustice. As a vanguard champion for educational equality, the Urban League*

*understands the urgency to eliminate inequality and barriers for African Americans. We look forward to working with HDEC to close the achievement gaps that exist for our children.*

**Marcia M. Sturdivant, PhD,** President and CEO, NEED—Unlocking the Power of Education, helping youth reach their highest potential

*I read with enthusiasm your proposal to address academic disparity. Finally, we have an empirical, culturally and strength-based strategy that will undoubtedly produce the expected results, i.e., progress beyond just parity, toward educational excellence! I was most impressed with your premise that this is a social justice issue. I fully support both your assertion and your support. You are commended for this brilliant work and the progress made thus far. Our children have the right to expect excellence in themselves and the systems designed to nurture them. Thank you for standing tall for our children.*

**Lenall Thomas, PhD, MSW,** Vice President at Large, The Pennsylvania Baptist State Congress of Christian Education

*...the work of preparing minority students for postsecondary education in Pittsburgh must begin early in high school and be reinforced at each grade level. The Church has been a longtime advocate of strength-based intervention strategies. African American students will not be favorably disposed to graduate from high school, and certainly not be able to achieve their post-secondary career goals without these strategies. Subsequently, for thousands of students and their families, their opportunity for equal access is compromised; their quality of life is diminished; and collectively, the region including the church suffers. The Church in general and the Pennsylvania Baptist State Congress of Christian Education in particular, has had a significant impact on the families in our church community by assisting students to reach beyond the perceived expectations set for them by others and attain higher education. As Vice President at Large of this great body, I pledge to stand with you...and fully support your efforts.*

**Judith Caplan,** Caplan Consulting: Training, Coaching, Consulting; Facilitator, Hill District AfterZone

*It is my pleasure to provide a letter of support for your Justice Works initiative. For too long our schools have failed to meet the emotional and educational needs of many African-American youngsters. It is time to try something else. The work you have done coupled with strong community support holds promise for better preparing Hill District youth for learning and life.*

**Aaron R. Gibson,** Executive Director, Thelma Lovette YMCA, Hill District

*I am honored to provide this letter in support of the Justice Works Initiative. The Thelma Lovette YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh supports the Hill District Educational Council's (HDEC) work for educational justice, because it conforms to one of our core pillars—social responsibility. To foster social connectedness, strengthen support networks, and encourage investment in our community, the Y activates resources and engages people*

*from diverse populations for individual and collective action. Furthermore, the Thelma Lovette Y will continue to convene and collaborate in help develop local, state, national and global solutions that address key issues facing the Hill District community. The Justice Works Initiative will help decrease social isolation and connect our communities. The YMCA fully understands the need to connect families to help empower those who are feeble, lack strong representation, and more importantly support for community organizations like the HDEC. We look forward to working with them in their new endeavors to bridge the gap in our African American Community.*

**Joyce Broadus,** Manager  
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh—  
Hill District

*I would like to lend my support to the Justice Works initiative to develop education reform that delivers ‘educational justice’ to our children—the elimination of racial, socio-economic, and gender achievement gaps.*

## Initial List of Hill District Pastors Supporting Justice Works

**Rev. Dr. Vincent Campbell**

Ebenezer Baptist Church  
2001 Wylie Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

**Rev. Brian J. Edmonds**

Macedonia Church of Pittsburgh  
2225 Bedford Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

**Rev. Glenn Grayson**

Wesley Center AME Zion Church  
2701 Centre Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

**Rev. Victor Grigsby, JR.**

Central Baptist Church  
2200 Wylie Avenue  
Pittsburgh PA 15219

**Rev. Adam Kinsel, Jr.**

Zion Hill Baptist Church  
2043 Webster Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219