

Teachers And Teaching For The New Millennium: The Role Of HBCUs

By

Jacqueline Jordan Irvine, Ph.D.

Visiting Scholar in Urban Education

Howard University

And

Leslie T. Fenwick, Ph.D.

Dean

School of Education

Howard University

U. S. Department of Education

June 9, 2009

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to present a framework for a discussion of the role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) that focuses on teachers and teaching for the new millennium. The paper asserts that HBCUs can potentially make a significant difference in solving one of the most intractable problems in K-12 education: How to recruit, retain, and develop teachers for high-need schools.

There are four major sections of the paper. The overview posits that HBCUs are uniquely qualified to address the challenge of high-need schools given their collective histories, institutional missions, and significant matriculation rates of African American students. The second part, staffing high needs schools, presents empirical evidence supporting the following major point: With appropriate resources, HBCUs have the potential to produce significant numbers of African American teachers who are more likely than their White counterparts to work in high-need schools, particularly urban, low-income schools that enroll students of color. Of equal significance is the finding that these African American teachers are more likely than White teachers to stay in these schools. Section three discusses the research that examines how African American teachers contribute to the academic success of their African American students. The findings note that African American teachers not only choose to work in hard-to-staff schools that enroll African American students, but the cultural knowledge of their students, families, and communities can translate into positive school experiences. The final segment of the paper contains recommendations and concluding remarks.

The recommendations discussed in the paper are directed to policy makers and educators and are arranged in a continuum of teacher development that includes recruitment, preparation, induction/retention, continuing professional development, and national certification.