



Do Black Minds Matter In Indiana?

**A Report on
African American Educational Success
in State Public Universities**

**Gary Commission on the Social Status of Black Males
Education Subcommittee Report
September 5, 2018**



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Do Black Minds Matter in Indiana?: A Report on African American Student Success in State Public Higher Education

In its 2016 Annual Report, *Reaching Higher: Delivering Value*, the Indiana Commission on Higher Education (ICHE) observed:

“Now, more than ever, higher education has become the dividing line between those with greater economic independence and a higher quality of life and those with fewer opportunities and limited options. Likewise, the State of Indiana benefits when more Hoosiers have the education and skills needed in the 21st century economy. The question then is not whether Hoosiers need higher education, but rather how does Indiana deliver greater value and a fuller return on investment for students and the state. *Reaching Higher, Delivering Value* is based on the belief that success is a shared responsibility, and everyone has a part to play.”

The report documents the challenges facing the state’s students in the areas of completion, competency, and career success, and notes that “Indiana’s policy agenda has been built on a commitment to using compelling data to increase transparency, inform practice and drive

change for the benefit of all Hoosiers.”

The report maintains that overall completion rates have improved in the state, but at the same time acknowledges and illustrates the existence of disparities across racial lines: “College completion rates in Indiana have shown signs of improvement in recent years across all student demographic groups, but significant achievement gaps remain between student populations by both income-level and race/ethnicity across the state’s two- and four-year campuses.”¹ Data presented in the report indicate that at the state’s two and four year institutions of higher education, the educational progress of Black students lags far behind that of their peers of all races.

“Indiana is committed to closing these unacceptable disparities in college completion that create inequities in the economic well-being and opportunities afforded to all Hoosiers.”

Reaching Higher:
Delivering Value

¹Indiana Commission on Higher Education (ICHE). (2016). *Reaching Higher: Delivering Value*, 10.

The Commission issued a public commitment to eliminating these completion gaps by 2025, and called upon the state's public colleges and universities to strategically respond to these disparities using data and by highlighting and adopting effective practices.

The Commission's most recent report suggests again that Indiana's public institutions are making improvements in performance for all students: "Indiana is embracing its college completion challenge at all levels. Growing efforts by Indiana colleges and policymakers to expand student success initiatives, including tuition discounts, proactive advising strategies, and state financial aid credit completion requirements, have contributed to an uptick in on-time completion."²

The report goes on to also suggest progress in addressing the disparities that adversely affect low income students and students of color. "The latest data shows progress. The achievement gap for black and Hispanic

students is at least half closed at a majority of Indiana public campuses, yet Indiana is currently on track to only close the gap by two-thirds by 2025. The ongoing development of comprehensive supports for traditionally at-risk students will continue to be paramount to addressing barriers to degree completion."³

The report determines achievement gaps using a ratio

The Commission for Higher Education is committed to providing a clearer and more comprehensive picture of college completion in order to inform and advance Indiana's collective efforts to boost education attainment.

ICHE 2017 College Completion Report

measure, and assesses institutional performance using a combination of weighted measures at the campus, institutional type, and sector levels to compute institutional

effectiveness at meeting the 2025 goal.⁴ The report provides a set of institutional profiles to illustrate how individual

²Indiana Commission on Higher Education (ICHE). (2017). College Completion Report 2017, 2.

³ College Completion Report 2017, 2.

⁴ College Completion Report 2017, 28-30.

campuses have responded to the Commission's call to address the effect of educational inequities on the state's economically and racially diverse populations.

Our study responds to this call by examining the specific educational disparities that affect Indiana's African American students. While this report acknowledges there are other means of measuring equity gaps in students success such as the yearly ICHE report, which examines such indicators as pre-college success, college going rates, early college success, and on-time graduation rates, this report takes the examination a step further by using the Education Trust's standard completion gap measures and disaggregating Black and Hispanic populations, which are conflated in the ICHE study, in addition to exploring climate as it relates to faculty diversity at the collegiate level. This approach provides an examination of Black Student success to extend earlier research that considers the conditions specific to African American students that help or hinder academic

⁵Andrew H. Nichols and Denzel Evans-Bell. (2017). A Look at Black Student Success: Identifying Top- and

achievement. "Certainly, the Black undergraduate experience isn't monolithic," explain Andrew Nichols and Denzel Evans-Bell. "But many Black students encounter a unique combination of financial, academic, and social challenges that can make the path to degree completion rugged." They cite significant financial challenges, from increasing costs to debt accumulation, as well as educational disparities at the K-12 level leading to a lack of preparation for postsecondary education.

They also note that "on-campus racism is still an issue students have to deal with—and chilly or hostile campus racial climates have been found to have negative effects on Black student outcomes."⁵ Like the ICHE study, Nichols and Evans-Bell examine the institutional forces that shape and define the African American student success through a comparative examination of graduation rates and achievement gaps, and offer specific strategies for facilitating Black student success by examining High and Low performing colleges and universities at the national level.

Bottom-Performing Institutions. The Education Trust. Washington, D.C.

This report integrates and expands the ICHE and Nichols and Evans-Bell studies by examining institutional graduation, enrollment, and achievement gap data for African American students alongside Black instructional staff percentages in Indiana from 2004-2016, to illustrate historical trends and patterns that reflect Black student success and achievement in state public universities. Using data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), we examine 6 year graduation rates, enrollment patterns, recruitment and appointment data for black instructional staff, and achievement gap data for Black students enrolled in Indiana Public sector 4 Year and above universities between 2004 and 2016. Based on these data we establish Black Student Success profiles that illustrate how public state universities compare nationally to High Performing institutions, and include in their entirety the Education Trust studies that our research extends to illustrate best practices for facilitating

and enhancing Black student success (Appendix B)..

These data are used to establish Black Student Success Profiles for assessing institutional performance at Indiana's 15⁶ public four year and above institutions: the research is presented to compare state efforts against recognized best practices for securing African American student success. Combined, the qualitative data and qualitative research point to the importance of assessing the importance of climate and intentionality in addressing the serious challenges faced by Black students in Indiana's state public universities.

We consider these measures at both the state and institutional level, initially examining intentional state policies and practices that define the climate for Black student success, then examining historical data trends and patterns that provide quantitative profiles of institutional effectiveness at the state and campus level. To further elaborate on those trends and patterns, we examine briefly the cultural and

⁶ Several of the IPEDS data sets for Vincennes University are incomplete, and as such represent presented in this report for descriptive purposes only.

Additionally, data on Black Instructional staff are missing from data reported by the institutions, resulting in gaps in the graphics representations presented in this report.

educational contexts, values, and attitudes that have informed state and campus efforts to serve Black students.

We conclude our report with an analysis and evaluation of Indiana's commitment to educational equity for its Black citizens, and offer recommendations and suggestions on the role that legislators, educators, and citizens can play in fulfilling the state's commitment to delivering value to all of its students and insuring that in reaching higher, Indiana's public state institutions make a conscious and concerted effort to show through outcomes and objective performance measures, that Black minds matter.

I. Profiling Black Student Success: Defining Measures and Outcomes for Assessing Institutional Performance

A comparison of data at national, state, and institutional levels reveals how overall graduation rates conceal educational disparities in Indiana public higher education. Viewing the data at the national level (Figure 1), graduation rates for Black and White students remain relatively stable over time, with modest

increases for both cohorts. The same is true for the total student population, which had also improved over time until experiencing a decline in 2015.

Comparing national and state graduation rates and trends, the data show all Indiana cohorts having graduation rates lower than national averages, and while graduation rates remain relatively stable for all groups, Black students have noticeably lower graduation rates that are also less stable over time (Figure 2). When examined at the state institutional level, the data begin to reveal institutional differences and disparities, with cumulative averages ranging from 16.76 at Purdue North Central, to 74.07 at Indiana University-Bloomington.

Only three institutions, Ball State University, Purdue University's Main Campus, and Indiana University-Bloomington, exceed the national cohort graduation average: yet the regional campuses of both Purdue and Indiana show significantly lower graduation rates for all students than on their main and core campuses. (Figure 3). Indiana and Purdue Regional campuses occupy the seven lowest ranks in overall graduate

rates in the state, and when graduation data are compared across racial cohorts, it becomes apparent that the effect of these institutional differences and disparities is significantly greater for Black students.

White student graduation rates range from 17.5 at Purdue North Central to 75.23 at Indiana University Bloomington, and while the Regional campuses illustrate the same variability as the state cohort, the data show graduation rates for Whites students at all institutions improving over time, with yearly state averages increasing from 33.14 to 42.4 from 2004 to 2016 (Figure 4). The combined state average for White students across all institutions and years, 37.24, places Indiana's White students slightly below the national average for Black students (38.15), and within ten percentage points of both the total student cohort (46.76) and their White peers at the national level (48.07).

In comparison, the data reveal that Indiana's Black students have seen little to no improvement in graduation rates during the same period, with yearly state averages increasing only from 22.71 in 2004 to 24.93 in 2016, and a

combined average of 22.95 across all institutions and years. Graduation rate improvements across time vary across institutions: Purdue University's Main campus shows an increase across time of 13% points, from 54% in 2004 to 67% in 2016; Indiana University Bloomington show smaller improvements, from 54% in 2004 to 60% in 2016. Graduation rates improved modestly for Black students on Purdue's regional campuses, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indiana University Southeast, Indiana University South Bend, Ball State University, and Southern Indiana University (Figure 5).

These improvements were largely offset by declining graduation rates at several institutions: graduation rates for Black students at Indiana University Purdue University Fort Wayne went from 15% in 2004 to 5% in 2016; Indiana University Northwest saw a decline from 12% in 2004 to 6% in 2016; and Indiana University East, Indiana University Kokomo, and Indiana State also experienced declines during the time period. Although institutions with high graduation rates witnessed modest gains, few of the state's public

universities saw sustained and continuous improvements for Black students, and most display graduation rate trends and patterns that appear inconsistent and erratic.

The clearest measure of Black student success, as indicated by the Education Trust studies cited above, are completion gaps, and it is in this area that Indiana's state public institutions show overall poor performance. Comparisons of Black and White student graduation rates across the state (Figures 9-19) indicate that improvements in overall graduation rates for Indiana's students do not necessarily translate into comparable improvements for Black students. Overall, the data reveal serious disparities between Black students and their White counterparts.

While these disparities are often explained as consequences of regional or demographic conditions, the Education Trust studies suggest otherwise. These studies indicate that these disparities are more likely the result of a lack of strategic intentionality in promoting Black student success, and a failure to acknowledge and implement measurable best practices, policies, and

procedures. As such, we believe that the state must look beyond its own borders to determine and develop more effective ways of insuring the success of its Black Students

On its surface, the data suggest the presence of serious educational disparities that have a disproportionate effect on the academic success of Black students, but understanding the full impact of these inequities requires a looking beyond graduation rates to other key measures for determining an institution's effectiveness in serving Black students.

Research on Black student success indicates that the key measures of an educational institution's success are graduation rates, completion gaps, enrollments, and climate. Nichols and Evans-Bell's 2017 study of Black Student success uses these and other measures to determine top and bottom performing institutions. Their analysis of high and low performing institutions focused on the relationship between enrollment, graduation rates and completion gaps as indicators of a commitment to serving Black Students. Completion gaps of 5% or less define the performance

benchmark for top institutions, while lower ranked institutions had gaps of 20% or greater.

Among Top Performers they name George Mason University with an 8.3% enrollment, a 65.9% Black graduation rate, and a -.04 achievement gap; University of California Riverside with a 7.9% enrollment, 74.3% Black graduation rate, and -4.7 achievement gap; Francis Marion University, with 49% enrollment, 41.7% Black graduation rate, and -2.3 achievement gap; and Middle Tennessee State University, with an 18.3% enrollment, a 46.1% Black graduation rate, and a 0.1 achievement gap.

Among their list of low performers they include the University of Kansas, with a 4% enrollment, a Black graduation rate of 45.3%, and an achievement gap of 15.7; University of Illinois at Chicago, with a 10.6% enrollment, a 43.4% Black graduation rate, and an 18.6 achievement gap; Delta State University with a 37% enrollment, a 25.4% Black

graduation rate, and a 10.3 achievement gap; and Eastern Michigan University, with 31.8% enrollment, 20.4 Black graduation rate, and a -24.7 achievement gap.⁷

None of Indiana's public institutions are listed among the 18 institutions designated Top Performers in the study, while two—Purdue University-Calumet and the University of Southern Indiana are designated Bottom Performers. In a 2016 study by Nichols et al, Purdue Calumet, Purdue's main campus, and Ball State University were also included in a list of institutions that have improved graduation rates for all students, but also have shown increasing completion gaps and declining graduation rates for Black students.⁸

While three of the state's institutions were listed as low performers, no Indiana college or university was recognized in the 2016 study as effectively serving black students through improved graduation

⁷ Nichols and Evans-Bell, 4. Despite positive achievement gap data, EMU's Black Student graduation rates at 20.4% rank it as a low performer, indicating white student graduation rates which are even lower than Black students rates.

⁸ Andrew Howard Nichols, Kimberlee Eberle-Sudré, and Meredith Welch, (2016). "Rising Tide II: Do Black Students Benefit as Grad Rates Increase? The Education Trust, Washington, DC.

rates and decreasing completion gaps. Institutions with historically high graduation rates for Black students, such as Purdue University (56.6), Indiana University -Bloomington (53.6), and Ball State University (45.5), also showed low enrollment percentages for Black students (3.1, 4.0, and 6.2 respectively), as well as significant completion gaps (14.6, 21.6, 13.4 respectively).

Conversely, institutions with low completion gaps such as Purdue Northwest (3.1) and IU East (8.6) also

Gaps at Purdue University have doubled over the last 10 years. Graduation rates for white students grew by 6.4 points to 72.2 percent, yet graduation rates for black students fell by 5.0 points to 52.5 percent. As a result, the gap more than doubled to 19.7 points.

Rising Tide II

showed low enrollment percentages (5.3 and 4 respectively) and poor graduation rates (14 and 14.1 respectively).

The institution with the highest percentage of Black students

enrolled, Indiana University Northwest, showed low graduation rates (10.7) and

high completion gaps (17.5). These data not only suggest why Indiana's state institutions are absent from the list of institutions effectively addressing African American student success, but also illustrate the difficulty of designating top and bottom performers within the state.

The data also help to contextualize and clarify the Indiana Commission on Higher Education's observations regarding overall progress in the face of persistent achievement gaps. Nichols, Eberlé-Sudré, and Welch explain: "Our findings suggest that we need to pay closer attention to colleges and universities that post increases in graduation rates. That is, we shouldn't accept wholesale that increases in overall graduation rates lead to gains for all student populations."⁹ They note that while many institutions registered improvements for all students, for most these improvements did little to alleviate the significant completion gaps that remained between black students and their white peers.

The completion gap data for Indiana's state public institutions reveal

⁹ Nichols, Eberle-Sudré, and Welch, 7.

several patterns and trends: with few exceptions, completion gaps range from significant to severe on all campuses across time; White student graduation rates show consistent improvement over time, while Black student graduation rates are erratic and unstable; and only three state institutions show graduation rates for African American students at or above the national average. (Figures 6). As noted earlier, all three of these institutions also have low enrollment percentages and high completion gaps for the Black students on their campuses.

When comparisons are drawn between main and regional campuses, the data also reveal patterns and trends that illustrate income as racial disparities as noted in the 2016 ICHE report. Both Indiana University and Purdue University have main and regional campuses, and at both institutions, graduation rates for both White and Black students on the regional campuses are significantly lower than on the core campuses. At both institutions, the core campuses are highly selective, have large traditional student populations, and attract high achieving students from both within and beyond the state. The regional

campuses largely serve non-traditional, low income, and historically underserved students. Graduation rates at the regional campuses, as well as other measures of student success.

The data illustrate that the remaining public institutions examined in this study—Ball State University, Indiana State University, the University of Southern Indiana, and Vincennes University—exhibit patterns and trends similar to those of the Indiana and Purdue Universities in regard to African American student success. As a group, (with the exception of Vincennes University for which the IPEDS data on African American graduation rates is incomplete), these institutions have tended historically to have higher graduation rates for African American students, as well as white students, than the Indiana and Purdue regional campuses.

These institutions, like the Indiana and Purdue core campuses, are more exclusive, have small enrollment percentages of African American students, and also have significant completion gaps. They thus illustrate another pattern revealed by the data: a

relationship between high graduation rates and low enrollment at several state institutions, as well as an inverse relationship between the two variables on several other campuses. These trends and patterns support the findings of studies on Performance Based funding in Indiana, exhibiting a tendency toward more selectivity and less diversity, and also confirm research that illustrates how graduation rates alone can mask serious educational disparities and institutional deficiencies.

Data on enrollment and instructional staff percentages offer additional measures for assessing institutional performance and establishing best practices for serving African American students. Historical trends show that Black student enrollment in Indiana's public institutions has remained static for over a decade, with recent declines in institutions with larger enrollment percentages (Figure 7).

Five institutions maintained the same enrollment percentage from 2004 to 2016: Purdue Main Campus (3%), IU East (4%), IU Bloomington (4%), Southern Indiana (4%), and IUPUI (9%).

Seven institutions saw increased enrollments in 2016 ranging from 1 to 6 points above the 2004 cohort: Indiana State had the largest increase (6%), followed by Vincennes (4%), IU Southeast (3%), and IU South Bend, Ball State, Purdue North Central, and IU Kokomo (each at 1%).

Enrollments declined slightly at IUPU Fort Wayne (1%, down from 5% in 2004 to 5% in 2016) and Purdue Calumet (4%, down from 15% in 2004 to 11% in 2016). Indiana University Northwest saw significant declines in the past five years, dropping 9 percentage points between 2011 and 2016, and the same percentage overall between 2004 (23%) and 2016 (14%). The overall percentage of Black student enrollment in the state has remained relatively unchanged, rising slightly from 7.13% in 2004 to 7.33% in 2016, with an overall average of 7.73 for all institutions over all years.

Black faculty and instructional staff percentages at Indiana state public institutions, while more stable than student enrollments, nonetheless illustrate similar patterns of weak or inconsistent performance. Overall

percentages have increased only slightly between 2004 to 2016, moving from 2.99% to 3.81%, with an overall historical state average of 3%. Institutional averages ranged from 1.67% at University of Southern Indiana, to 7.9% at Indiana University Northwest, and all but two institutions showing overall increases. Compared to their high performing peer institutions, several institutions showed comparable or better performance than institutions with similar enrollment percentages.

It is important to note that, while overall numbers of black faculty and staff have increased at several institutions, the percentage of black instructional staff compared to the overall number of instructional staff have remained relatively unchanged, with few exceptions. Indiana University Bloomington, for example, notes in its 2016-2017 annual report, that between 2005 and 2015, the number of tenure

and tenure track faculty increased from 52 to 56, an 8% increase.¹⁰ These increases, which are relatively small, become even smaller when considered in terms of the percentage of Black faculty compared to the total number of white and non white instructional staff.

The percentages of Black faculty, staff, and students at a university are important indicators of educational equity and inclusion, and provide a basis for determining the type of climate created on campus as well as an institution's effectiveness in the areas of recruitment and retention. Much of the research on African American student success suggests that the issue of climate is central to effectively promoting Black student success,¹¹ so it is important that these data be considered apart from the overall population of non-white faculty, staff, and students. Doing so helps to illustrate inconsistencies between an institution's overall

¹⁰ *Indiana University Annual Report 2016-2017. Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs*, 8.

¹¹ Shaun R. Harper and Sylvia Hurtado, "Nine themes in campus racial climates and implications for institutional transformation," in S. R. Harper, & L. D. Patton (Eds.), *Responding to the Realities of Race on Campus. New Directions for Student*

Services, Number 120 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008, pp. 7–24); Samuel D. Museus, Andrew H. Nichols, and Amber Lambert, "Racial differences in the effects of campus racial climate on degree completion: A structural model," *The Review of Higher Education* 32, no. 1 (2008): 107–134.

commitment to diversity and its effectiveness at ensuring the success and persistence of Black faculty, staff, and students.

Ironically, focusing on institutional commitments to “diversity” often obscures the degree to which Black students are not effectively served by universities recognized for their diversity efforts. For example, several state universities that have been recognized nationally for their accomplishments in terms of diversity have simultaneously been confronted with allegations of racial discrimination. “Despite higher education’s reputation as a bastion of political correctness, Indiana universities are defending a host of lawsuits brought by black employees who say they were denied opportunities because of their race,” writes Stephanie Wang. “Universities have refuted the claims. They tout diversity awards, initiatives and inclusiveness. But some experts say the suits raise a question that continues to

plague the top echelons of academia: Do universities really know how to embrace diversity?”¹²

In addition to legal challenges, hostile campus and community climates have also undermined the professional and educational success of Black faculty and students. Indiana University’s Bloomington and Indianapolis campuses received the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award from Insight Into Diversity magazine, yet numerous instances of racial harassment and intimidation on these and other campuses raise questions about the extent to which institutional diversity effort have served Black faculty and students.

In 2017, an Indiana Public Media report documented student concerns about racism on the IU campus,¹³ and a 2017 article in the New York Times documented hate crimes and racial harassment at Indian University.¹⁴ Problems related to the University’s

¹² Stephanie Wang. “Why Indiana, Purdue, Ball State universities are facing lawsuits alleging racial bias.” Retrieved from <https://www.indystar.com/story/news/education/2017/09/18/how-diverse-...-ed-lawsuits-allege-racial-discrimination-indiana-colleges/519442001/>

¹³ Becca Costello, “IU Students Express Concerns of Racism on Campus.” Indiana Public Media, November 17, 2015.

¹⁴ Anna North, “‘Let’s Become Great Again,’ the Flyers Said. The New York Times, February 16, 2017.

racial climate are not new: 2009 study of fraternity life at Indiana University described the institution in these terms:

Indiana University, founded in 1820, has a history of access for White students only and inequality for African Americans. This history contributes, even today, to the campus climate for African Americans. With an African American student population of 5% (Indiana University, 2008) and a history of racism and ostracism, the climate at this university allows for an in-depth analysis embedded in conflict and inequality.¹⁵

Campus climate concerns related to racial inclusion have also been documented on the university's regional campuses. In July of 2016, the Washington Post published an essay by an African American Indiana University Purdue University Fort Wayne student who experienced a racial hostility and

marginalization on campus.¹⁶ In addition to overt acts of exclusion on several Indiana state university campuses, a lack of intentionality in the areas of recruitment and retention of diverse faculty also contributes to a climate that may hinder Black Student success.

A recent study by Halualani & Associates offers insights into the tensions between diversity and inclusion on Indiana University's campuses. The study noted that, while Indiana University has numerous programs and events in place that celebrate and affirm diversity, in the critical areas of recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, staff, and students, "there is still room for improvement."¹⁷ Although the study did not look specifically at diversity efforts aimed at Black faculty, staff, and students, its conclusions as indicated by the data presented in this report, indicate the need for more strategic and intentional recruitment efforts focused

¹⁵ Eddie R. Cole, Cameron J. Harris, Rubin Pusha II, and Nadrea Reeves. "An overview of two incidents involving African American Fraternities at Indiana University. *Journal of the Indiana University Student Personnel Association*, 2009 Edition, 9-19.

¹⁶ Valerie Straus, "'Racism is a Real Thing.' A 46 year old black student's plea to be treated like a

human being." *The Washington Post*, July 8, 2016.

¹⁷ Michael Reschke, "Assessment praises IU's efforts on diversity, but calls for more." *IU Bloomington Newsroom*. Retrieved from <http://archive.news.indiana.edu/releases/iub/iu-in-the-news/dnb-03-01-2016.shtml>

on creating a critical mass of Black faculty, staff, and students.

Although percentages of Black faculty and students are one indication of a positive climate, there are important qualitative dimensions that must also be considered. Indiana University's Northwest campus, located in Gary Indiana, offers an instructive example of how numbers alone cannot determine Black student success. Although the campus has the highest percentages of black faculty and staff of the institutions examined in this report, graduation rates and completion gaps are both indicative of poor performance in facilitating success for Black students. Some evidence indicates that campus culture, coupled with a lack of strategic intentionality in addressing the needs of Black faculty, staff, and students, may be contributing factors in the campus' poor performance.

For example, a 2011 Campus Diversity Survey at Indiana University Northwest documented evidence of

negative and insulting comments, discrimination, isolation, offensive language, not being taken seriously, favoritism, and discouragement in pursuit of career goals based on race.¹⁸ An independent study conducted by an Indiana University Northwest Master's degree student and EEOC office employee reflected similar concerns, with one respondent offering the following: "At IUN we are not respected as people."¹⁹ Ironically, Indiana University Northwest is listed as 11th in the region by U.S. News and World Report in its 2018 Campus Diversity rankings.²⁰ As noted in the Halualani and Associates study, however, the campus lacks a clearly defined strategic plan for addressing diversity and inclusion in general, and this study suggests that the same limitations hold true for Black faculty, staff, and students in particular.

In addition to the lack of strategic initiatives at the university level, Black student success in Indiana is also hampered by legislative policies and

¹⁸ Indiana University Northwest Campus Climate Survey, 2011.

¹⁹ Jennifer Potter, "Supporting the Success of Women and People of Color in Academia: Recruitment and Retention Diversity Efforts of an

Urban Midwest University." Powerpoint Presentation.

²⁰ US News and World Report. Campus Ethnic Diversity Regional Universities Midwest. Retrieved from <https://www.usnews.com>. 2018

political agendas that may exacerbate racial and economic inequities and inequality. The state's focus on educational "choice" initiatives along with its reliance on Performance Based funding have effectively increased educational disparities, largely due to a failure include or consider performance measures that support efforts aimed at inclusion or diversity.

While the use of Performance Based Funding is relatively recent, it is based on a history of legislative policies and practices that have had a deleterious effect on Black student achievement and success. An examination of that history suggests the need for significant changes at the legislative level are needed to reverse the negative patterns and trends that have undermined Black student success in Indiana for well over a decade.

II. Indiana's Commitment to Educational Equity: Rhetoric or Reality?

The Indiana Commission on Higher Education's professed commitment to educational excellence and equity stand in stark contrast to its performance when evaluated at a national level. For example, in its most recent list of the best and worst states for education, U.S. News and World Report ranked the state at 46 out of 50.²¹ In regard to African American student success, the fifteen public institutions examined in this study fall far below national norms in the areas of graduation and enrollment. Additionally, achievement gaps between Indiana's white and black students tend to be higher than those at the national level.

These problems are likely rooted in legislative policies and educational practices that have existed in the state for more than half a century. Both past and current legislative decisions and initiatives have increased economic and racial segregation and inequity in Indiana's secondary and post secondary educational sectors. The state's current Performance Based Funding strategy

²¹ Educational Advisory Board. "The best states—and the worst ones—for higher ed in 2018." Retrieved from <https://www.eab.com/daily->

[briefing/2018/03/06/the-best-states-and-the-worst-ones-for-higher-ed-in-2018?](https://www.eab.com/daily-briefing/2018/03/06/the-best-states-and-the-worst-ones-for-higher-ed-in-2018?elq_cid=2063499&x_id=003C000001ueMn9IAE&WT.mc_...)
elq_cid=2063499&x_id= 003C000001ue
Mn9IAE&WT .mc_... 1/3

focuses primarily on “on time” graduation data, and does not hold institutions accountable for the existence and persistence of educational inequities.

Those inequities, according to Carleton Waterhouse, professor of law and dean’s fellow at the Indiana University McKinney School of Law, are obscured by debates related to educational quality and “school choice” that do not address or consider social and cultural realities.”Charter schools, theme schools, magnet schools are

“If the General Assembly had not exempted the suburban school corporations in enacting the Uni-Gov law, the State of Indiana would not have been found guilty of (intentional) segregation.”

Emma Lou Thornbrough

The Indianapolis Story: School Segregation and Desegregation in a Northern City

neither the problem nor the solution to America’s long-running educational challenges,” he explains. “However, if you study the history of education in Indianapolis and across America, you will find that debates about these educational approaches have dominated education conversations for the past five decades — probably because they are more comfortable to talk about than the real issue: racism-white supremacy.”²² Waterhouse’s comments are supported by a history at both the secondary and post secondary level, of policies and practices that have been detrimental to the success of Black students in Indiana’s system of public education.

Policy decisions that have been in place for half a century have exacerbated racial divisions and educational inequities. As Shaina Cavazos explains: “The racial segregation and declining enrollment that plagues Indianapolis Public Schools today can be traced back to the decision made 46 years ago to merge Indianapolis with its surrounding

²² Carleton Waterhouse (2018). Racism-white supremacy and the education crisis.

http://www.indianapolisrecorder.com/opinion/article_19330a54-eed8-11e6-b5d7-4b3d851f4414.html

suburbs.”²³ Indiana’s “Unigov” decision, implemented by the state’s General Assembly, was deemed discriminatory by the courts, and also left behind a legacy of educational inequality. While the decision may have contributed to the growth of the city of Indianapolis, that growth came at the expense of the state’s less fortunate students and resulted in economic and educational segregation and inequality.

Those conditions have been exacerbated by other state educational policies, including Indiana’s Voucher system. Chris Ford, Stephenie Johnson, and Lisette Partelow, in their examination of the history of Voucher programs, point specifically to the disparate effects of Indiana’s efforts. “Indiana’s voucher program provides a case study for how voucher programs may benefit one group of students over another,” they explain.²⁴ The program reportedly benefits middle class whites more than lower income students, with

Black student participation declining since the program’s inception.

Indiana’s economic and educational disparities are magnified further by the state’s reliance on Performance Based funding for public education. Nicholas Hillman’s assessment of research on Performance Based Funding specifically notes the ineffectiveness of this strategy in the state:

Across this body of research, the weight of evidence suggests states using performance based funding do not out perform other states—results are more often than not statistically significant. The most instructive findings come from case studies of Indiana, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Washington, all of which based their policies on the seven principles identified by advocates. In Indiana, universities have become more selective and less diverse while also not

²³ Shaina Cavazos. (2016). “Racial bias and the crumbling of a city.” The Educational and Racial Repercussions of Indianapolis’s Unigov Decision - The Atlantic
<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/08/indianapolis-school-districts/496145/>

²⁴ Chris Ford, Stephenie Johnson, and Lisette Partelow (2017). The Racist Origins of Private School

Vouchers. Center for American Progress/.
<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2017/07/12/435629/racist-origins-private-school-vouchers/>.

improving degree production.²⁵

Other observers also claim that Performance Based Funding in Indiana has exacerbated economic and educational inequities, and the political agenda that supports this strategy been particularly detrimental to the states economically disadvantaged students. Shaina Cavazos and Scott Elliott cite the elimination of programs developed to support the financial challenges faced by high-poverty districts, and initiatives aimed at providing educational opportunities and support for poor children.

Critics of performance based funding for Indiana's schools, they observe, argue that it serves to reinforce economic disparities in the state by rewarding financially stable schools and punishing those in poorer communities.

They pointed to its effect on the richest and poorest communities. Of the 25 school districts with the highest family income, all of them got more per-student state aid over

the two-year budget. But of the 25 with the lowest family income just 12 of them got more money for 2016 and 2017 across the board — in overall state aid and per student aid. The rest got less in one or both areas.²⁶

These concerns are supported by statistical data that illustrate how educational gains in the state have largely benefitted its White student population, and have been either negligible or nonexistent for Black students.

Faced with by legislative policies and practices that have a disproportionately negative effect on economically disadvantaged communities, the state's African American students will continue to fall behind their White peers in the areas of completion, competency, and career success. These conditions are not inevitable however. The Performance Based funding strategy used by the state does not prioritize traditionally underserved students, nor provide

²⁵ Nicholas Hillman. "Why Performance Based College Funding Doesn't Work" College Completion Series: Part Four MAY 25, 2016. <https://tcf.org/content/report/why-performance-based-college-funding-doesnt-work/>

²⁶Shaina Cavazos, Scott Elliott. "The basics of school funding in Indiana: Difficulty defining fairness"- JANUARY 4, 2015. <https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/in/2015/01/04/the-basics-of-school-funding-difficulty-defining-fairness/>

funding incentives for improvement in this area.

The state could easily adopt an Equity based Performance Funding Strategy to better address the needs of its African American students, as well as other traditionally underserved populations. “An equity focused Performance Funding policy would not only expose campuses that have poor outcomes, like large equity gaps between the graduation rates of various racial and ethnic or income groups, but provide some understanding of why, through quality and student experience oriented indicators.”²⁷

Integrating these indicators into the state’s Performance Based Funding model can help to address educational inequities in Indiana by rewarding institutional effectiveness in terms of measures applicable to specific populations instead of looking only at graduation rates for overall student cohort. Understanding those factors that lead to educational inequities for the African American student cohort requires

an examination of relationships between several measures, including but not limited to graduation rates, since these alone can “mask different outcomes for different groups of students. Nowhere do we see this more clearly than for black students.”²⁸

The Black Student Success Profiles presented in this report (Figures 20-49) provide a starting point for these efforts by offering snapshots of the combined data sets (enrollment, completion, graduation, instructional staff) that can be used to determine high and low performing institutions. These comparisons confirm the importance of achievement gaps in determining measurable Black student success, and offer that state’s institutions of public education models for continuous and sustained improvement. They also help illustrate the severity of the challenges facing Black students across the state, and offer aspirational standards for the state to consider as it attempts to address strategically the impact of completion gaps on the success of

²⁷ Jones, T. (2014). Performance Funding at MSIs: Considerations and Possible Measures for Public Minority-Serving Institutions. Atlanta, GA: Southern Education Foundation.

²⁸ Andrew Howard Nichols, Kimberlee Eberle-Sudré, and Meredith Welch, (2016). “Rising Tide II: Do Black Students Benefit as Grad Rates Increase? The Education Trust, Washington, DC.

Indiana's Black students.

III. Conclusions and Recommendations

Two recent articles on student success and educational attainment in the state of Indiana point to the ongoing contradictions and challenges that characterize the state's commitment to its Black students and citizens. In its most recent annual report, Indiana Commission for Higher Education noted that more "minority" students are graduating from the state's public colleges and universities, noting "a 4.5 percent increase from the prior year and a 12.6 percent gain over five years."²⁹ A report on educational equity issued by the Commission noted, however, that "several areas of concern remain, especially for African American students both as they start college and the length of time it takes to finish."³⁰

Taken together, the two reports suggest that the long term trends and patterns that have characterized Black student achievement in the state remain largely unchanged. Despite gains for all students, Black students continue to lag behind their

white peers and other students of color. While legislators and administrators point to demographic changes and other external factors to account for these deficiencies, the research on Black student success presented in this report, along with the evidence of historical trends and patterns indicative of sustained educational disparities, suggest the need for a more strategic and intentional approach to insuring Black student success.

In contrast to the Indiana Commission for Higher Education's belief that the state's existing educational efforts and legislative policies can significantly reduce completion gaps by 2025, our study suggests that long term and sustained disparities between graduation rates for white students and black students in the state indicate that the system of public education in Indiana is delivering value selectively, and while claiming to be reaching higher for all, continues to embrace policies and practices that limit many of its Black citizens to the lower levels of education achievement and economic opportunity.

²⁹ Meredith Colias-Pete. "More Minority Indiana College Students are graduating on time, report says." *Chicago Post Tribune*, July 19, 2018.

³⁰ Meredith Colias-Pete. "Minority College Students in Indiana face more hurdles to graduation, state report says." *Chicago Post Tribune*, August 9, 2018.

Our analysis, we believe, offers a comprehensive, compelling, and transparent examination of Indiana's educational policies and agendas where the state's African American citizens are concerned. These trends and patterns paint a picture of declining participation by, and inclusion of, African Americans in Indiana's state educational system, and reveal troubling racial disparities and contradictions at several of the state's public universities.

The continued existence of these inequities indicates a pressing need for legislative and educational leaders in Indiana to determine ways to address and remedy the challenges faced by Black students and educators. We recommend that the state's efforts be guided by established research, and be attentive to institutional best practices for promoting Black student success. We offer, in closing, the following recommendations to assist policy makers and educational practitioners in their efforts to deliver on Indiana's promise of educational opportunity for all students.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1). The Education Committee of the Gary Commission on the Social Statuses of Black

Males should work with the The City of Gary, in collaboration with the Gary School Corporation, Indiana University Northwest, and Ivy Tech, to convene a College Success Coalition as suggested by the Indiana Commission on Higher Education that directly addresses the issue of African American Student success.

2). The Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males, in cooperation with the Indiana Commission on Higher Education, should convene additional Public Forums across the state to examine and assess the conditions affecting African American student success in Indiana at all state institutions, and additionally investigate the conditions the recruitment, retention, and promotion of African American staff and faculty at the state's institutions of higher education.

3). The Indiana Legislative Black Caucus should conduct a comprehensive study of the impact of Performance Based Funding on African American Student success in the state's colleges and universities. The Commission should advocate for an Equity focused Performance Based funding model that prioritizes traditionally underserved students and ties significant

"'All deliberate speed' has turned out to be only a soft euphemism for delay. . . . there is no longer the slightest excuse, reason, or justification for further post-ponement of the time when every public school system in the United States will be a unitary one, receiving and teaching students without discrimination on the basis of their race or color."

**- Justice Hugo Black
in *Alexander v. Holmes County Board of Education*, 1969.**

experienced by Black citizens across the state have created conditions comparable to those that motivated Charles Hamilton Houston and Thurgood Marshall to establish the legal strategy that resulted in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case. While the current climate in the state and the nation may not be responsive to such an effort, it may help bring to light the serious problems of access and inclusion that currently confront Indiana's Black citizens.

amounts of funding to improvements in minimizing completion gaps while at the same time improving enrollments, graduation rates, and recruitment and retention of African American instructional staff and faculty.

4). The NAACP and Urban League of Northwest Indiana should work with the organizations and entities listed above to initiate a Class Action lawsuit on behalf of Black faculty, staff, and students in Indiana's public universities. The quantitative data presented in this study, along with the qualitative reports of inequitable treatment and discrimination

Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males

THE Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males (ICSSBM) was formally established through bipartisan effort, by Public Law 143-1993 to study and recommend remedies to address the critical social problems facing the Black male population in Indiana. To that end, House Resolution 31 was introduced during the 1992 session of the Indiana General Assembly to establish an interim study committee to study the social distress of Black males in Indiana. As a result, an interim committee was appointed and from their study, Engrossed Senate Bill 190 and House Bill 1065 were formally introduced and passed by the Indiana General Assembly, thus establishing Public Law 143-1993. This legislation required the state to create ICSSBM.

The Commission is charged to make a systematic study of the legislative findings under IC 12-13-12-1, and to convene partnerships and serve as a collaborator in assisting Black males in Indiana. The Commission submits an annual report to the Governor, the Indiana General Assembly, and the concerned citizens of Indiana who are committed to improving the social factors that adversely affect Black males. The Commission may study other topics suggested by the legislative council or as directed by the chairperson of the commission. The commission shall receive suggestions or comments pertinent to the issues that the commission studies from members of the general assembly, governmental agencies, public and private organizations, and private citizens. The systematic study is required to be submitted in report form on an annual basis to the governor and

legislative council.

The Gary Commission on the Social Status of Black Males

The Gary Commission on the Social Status of Black Males (GCSSBM) is charged with studying the social conditions of the City of Gary Indiana's Black male population, developing strategies to remedy or assist in remedying serious adversities, and making recommendations to improve the educational, social, economic, employment and other circumstances for Gary. The Commission serves policymakers and public interest groups, as well as the media, community organizations and members of the general public.

Education and Awareness Subcommittee

The GCSSBM Education and Awareness Subcommittee is charged with the a systematic study of the educational climate and conditions affecting African American students, and the educational conditions and challenges of the city's Black male population,. develop strategies to remedy or assist in remedying serious adversities, and make recommendations to improve the educational, circumstances for Gary's students and educators.

Committee Membership

Mr. Stephen Marcus. Commission Chair
Mr. Bennie Muhammad. Executive Director
Dr. Mark McPhail, Commissioner
Mr. James Wallace, Commissioner

Community Advisors

Ms. Terra Cooks. Community Educator & Artist
Mr. Gregory Henry, Gary City Liaison
Dr. Angela Johnson, Wells. Educational
Consultant
Dr. Charles Hobson, Educational Consultant