



Linda Bardere, APR, Director  
Communications/  
Community Relations  
Phone: (909) 381-1250

# News Release

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## **NEW TASK FORCE FOCUSES ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS IN SAN BERNARDINO CITY SCHOOLS**

A new task force made up of parents, educators, and community leaders has begun focusing on ways to boost the academic success of the San Bernardino City Unified's nearly 8,000 African-American students.

Among the first goals of the Task Force for African American Student Achievement is surveying parents about the District's parent and community engagement practices. The task force, headed by the Rev. Samuel Casey of Communities Organized for Prophetic Engagement (COPE), hopes to establish more community engagement opportunities that will help parents and guardians work with the District as it strives to increase the number of African-American high school graduates who are ready to succeed in college and careers.

Formed late last year, the task force represents a spectrum of grassroots community organizations, among them the Westside Action Group, Young Visionaries, BLU Educational Foundation, the San Bernardino chapter of the NAACP, Boys and Girls Club of San Bernardino, Youth Action Project, Inland Empire Concerned African American Churches, and the Black Voice Foundation. The task force's mission is to ensure that the District's Targeted Instructional Improvement Plan, known as TIIP, is implemented for the benefit of African-American students.

"We have a responsibility to hold the District accountable but also to work alongside the District," Casey said. "Effective collaboration is essential to real change."

This summer, the Task Force for African American Student Achievement will host a Parent Learning Institute to educate mothers, fathers, and guardians, so they can become better advocates for children. The institute will also focus on empowering parents and caregivers to participate in the decision-making process at the school, District, and community level.

Task force members will have a booth at the April 5 Day of King Celebration at **Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School**, located at 1250 Medical Center Drive in San Bernardino. The parent survey will be available during the event.

Superintendent Dr. **Dale Marsden**, who has long supported authentic parent engagement, welcomes the task force's help.

“We have already begun a productive dialogue that I believe will be beneficial to the task force, the District, and, most importantly, our students,” Marsden said. “Educating students and ensuring their future success is the work of our entire community.”

For more information about the work of the new task force, please call COPE at (909) 915-1716.

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