

IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG MEN OF COLOR

Wednesday, April 26th, 2017, 6:00 – 9:00 PM
Etter-Harbin Alumni Center – The University of Texas at Austin

When new leadership takes power at the federal level, one can reliably expect some shift in the public discourse, policy, and influence coming from the U.S. Department of Education. But a tremendous degree of uncertainty now surrounds federal education policy, with potentially significant implications at the state and district levels as well. Those concerned about the educational well-being of boys and young men of color must chart a clear path forward in ways that both heed and transcend this uncertainty.

This session will feature two panels of national and local experts focused on education policy and practice as they relate to boys and young men of color. The objective of these joint discussions is two-fold: to explore the real-time solutions and supportive actions various stakeholders are advancing to promote equitable educational opportunities and to uncover some inconvenient truths about what real change requires, with an eye toward what practitioners, advocates, and funders should be doing now.

Co-sponsored by Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color (COSEBOC) and Executives' Alliance for Boys and Men of Color



@COSEBOC
#COSEBOC11

@EXECSALLIANCE
#BMOCNOW

6:00pm

DINNER AND OPENING REMARKS

Greg Hodge – *Owner and Principal Consultant, Khepera Consulting*

Tonya Allen – *President and CEO, The Skillman Foundation*

Earl Maxwell – *Chief Executive Officer, St. David's Foundation*

Paul Cruz, Ph.D. – *Superintendent, Austin Independent School District*

Ron Walker – *Executive Director, Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color*

OPENING MUSICAL PERFORMERS

Gus Garcia Young Men's Leadership Academy Choir

OPENING PRESENTATION

Artist Tyson, Not Your Average Artist

6:30pm

RESIST, RE-IMAGINE, AND RECOMMIT: A DIALOGUE ON EDUCATION POLICY

MODERATOR:

David Johns – *former Director, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans*

PANELISTS:

Jitu Brown – *National Director, Journey for Justice Alliance*

Shavar Jeffries – *President, Democrats for Education Reform*

Anurima Bhargava – *former Chief, Educational Opportunities Section, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice*

7:30pm

SPOTLIGHT AUSTIN: LOCAL INNOVATIONS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

MODERATOR:

Victor Sáenz, Ph.D. – *Associate Professor, The University of Texas at Austin*

PANELISTS:

Ty Davidson – *Principal, Travis High School*

Dionte McClendon – *Coordinator, Life Anew: Restorative Justice, Akins High School*

Jeff Travillion – *Commissioner Precinct One, Travis County, Texas*

Susan Dawson – *President and Executive Director, E³ Alliance (for Education Equals Economics)*

8:30pm

CLOSING REMARKS & DESSERT RECEPTION

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SPEAKER BIOS



Artist Tyson

Artist Tyson is a 13-year-old young man who has quite a few accomplishments under his belt. If he looks a little familiar to you, it might be because you saw him on television with the artcantexas.com campaign this past summer, or recently in a commercial for the Boys and Girls Club of America. Or maybe you heard his keynote speech at the SXSWedu Conference & Festival last month, his presentation alongside Austin ISD Superintendent Dr. Paul Cruz during the State of the District Address, or his lecture as part of local PBS station KLRU-TV's 2016 Blackademics series. One thing is for sure. Wherever you have seen him, you will never forget him.

RESIST, RE-IMAGINE, AND RECOMMIT: A DIALOGUE ON EDUCATION POLICY

David Johns @MrDavidJohns

David J. Johns is the former Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans. During his tenure, David worked tirelessly across federal agencies and with partners and communities nationwide to produce a more effective continuum of education programs for African American students.

Prior to leading the Initiative, Johns was a senior education policy advisor to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) under the leadership of Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa. Before working for the Senate HELP committee under Chairman Harkin, Johns served under the leadership of the late Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-Mass. Johns also was a Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Fellow in the office of Congressman Charles Rangel, D-N.Y.

Jitu Brown @brothajitu

Jitu Brown is the national director for the Journey for Justice Alliance, a network of 30 grassroots, community based organizations in 25 cities organizing for community driven school improvement. He was formerly the education organizer for the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization (KOCO) where he served for over 22 years bringing community voices to the table on school issues. He helped develop the Mid-South Education Association—a grassroots advocacy group comprised of administrators, parents, teachers, young people and local school council (LSC) members to meet the needs of schools in the area. The Association was the first group to certify parents as LSC facilitators, a model now being replicated across the city of Chicago.

Shavar Jeffries @shavarjeffries

Shavar Jeffries serves as President of Democrats for Education Reform (DFER). Jeffries began this role in September 2015, and brings a personal commitment to ensuring that a child's zip code does not define their destiny. From his efforts fighting for fair funding practices to get schools the resources they deserve to his service leading the New Jersey Attorney General's Juvenile Justice and Civil Rights Departments, he has been a vocal advocate for social justice.

Shavar also serves as a partner at the law firm Lowenstein Sandler, where he has been a fierce advocate for families seeking fair practices in funding education and ensuring that the laws governing education systems help students, rather than trapping them in failing schools.

Anurima Bhargava @anurima

Anurima Bhargava served for several years as the Chief of the Educational Opportunities Section of the Civil Rights Division at the U.S. Department of Justice. Since leaving the Justice Department in February 2016, Bhargava has served as a Fellow at the Institute of Politics at Harvard University and is currently a Fellow at the Carr Center for Human Rights at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She is also part of the inaugural class of Leadership in Government Fellows at the Open Society Foundations.

Previously, Bhargava served as director of the education practice at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, worked at the New York City Department of Education, and clerked for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, a Truman National Security Fellow, and has both chaired and served on numerous boards and task forces.

SPOTLIGHT AUSTIN: LOCAL INNOVATIONS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Victor Sáenz, Ph.D. @VictorSaenzPhD

Victor B. Sáenz, Ph.D. is an associate professor in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Texas at Austin and a Fellow in the A.M. Aikin Regents Chair in Junior & Community College Education Leadership. His current research agenda seeks to advance research-informed best practices and policy solutions that improve educational outcomes for underserved students in postsecondary education, with a special emphasis on young men of color. In 2010 Dr. Sáenz founded an award-winning initiative called Project MALES (Mentoring to Achieve Latino Educational Success), a multi-pronged effort based at UT-Austin that is focused on advancing success strategies for male students of color across the education pipeline. In 2013 the project launched a statewide initiative called the Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color. Supported by grants from the Greater Texas Foundation, TG, and the Kresge Foundation, this statewide collaborative focuses on improving educational outcomes for male students of color across the state of Texas.

Ty Davidson

Ty J. Davidson was born in Brownsville, TX to Mr. and Mrs. Jerrold R. Davidson. He is married to Monica V. Davidson and the father of two sons, Gage and Cade Davidson. After graduating with a BA from the University of Texas and a Masters in Education from Texas State University, Davidson served at all levels of public education over the course of twenty years. Currently, he is the principal at William B. Travis Early College High School (Travis ECHS), which is an Austin-based Title I school that serves inner city youth as a My Brother's Keeper campus. Travis ECHS has graduated over 93% of its students and has earned 9 Academic Distinctions from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) over the last two year, which placed the campus in the top 8% of all high schools in the state of Texas.

Dionte McClendon @Mr_InCLEVERible

Known for his outgoing personality and passion for service, Dionte McClendon is unforgettable. Originally from Houston, TX, Dionte is a recent graduate from Huston-Tillotson University where he earned his degree in communications with a concentration in community development. Dionte made an impactful imprint on HT's campus through his organizational involvement locally, serving on the UNCF's National Pre-Alumni Council as well as hosting many campus events during his matriculation. Currently, Dionte works for the City of Austin as a youth services coordinator, providing opportunities of engagement for high school students. He also works at Life Anew Restorative Justice as a Restorative Counselor at W. Charles Akins High School in South Austin. Dionte believes that young men of color have valuable voices and within their stories there are solutions to the plight of our communities and nation.

Jeff Travillion @jefftravillion

Commissioner Jeff Travillion is the elected official representing the residents of Precinct One in Travis County, Texas. He received his Bachelor's degree from Jackson State University, where he was selected as an Alfred P. Sloan Fellow allowing him to study at Carnegie-Mellon University and Harvard University. Commissioner Jeff Travillion then moved to Austin where he attended University of Texas at Austin LBJ School of Public Affairs graduating with his Master's in Public Administration. Commissioner Travillion has been a leader in social and economic justice, education, labor, youth development, affordability, the environment, and overall quality of life issues.

Susan Dawson

Susan Dawson is a Texas entrepreneur, business and civic leader. She founded and leads the E³ Alliance (for Education Equals Economics), a regional collaborative to increase economic outcomes by aligning our education systems to fulfill the potential of every student. E³ Alliance has been recognized across the country for its ground-breaking work in systemic change for education. Dawson has led multiple technology firms and served as Chair of the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce. In 2011 the Austin Business Journal named her one of "Austin's 30 Most Influential" leaders who have shaped Austin's economy and culture in the last 30 years. Dawson has a BS cum laude from Princeton University and an MBA with Highest Honors from The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business.