



SCHOOLS, PRISONS & CONCENTRATED POVERTY

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES, GENERATING SOLUTIONS

This symposium will examine the root causes of the current circumstances of racial segregation, intergenerational poverty, and punitive practices in homes, schools, and communities that have generated a “school to prison pipeline” for many youth and young adults in Baltimore City. The symposium also aims to identify and explore strategies to provide youth with the services, relationships, and social supports needed to thrive in society. Finally, this event will break down silos by gathering people from various fields, occupations, community organizations, government agencies, and institutions to share knowledge and develop meaningful relationships to foster stability, academic success, and long-term well-being for youth and communities. Panelists will include formerly incarcerated individuals, elected officials, practitioners, grassroots activists, researchers, and policymakers.

I. Welcome & Introduction

Brandon Scott – Baltimore City Council President

Dr. Norma Day-Vines – Associate Dean, JHU School of Education

Dr. Richard Lofton Jr. - Associative Director, JHU Urban Health Institute; Assistant Professor, JHU School of Education

II. Panel: The Relationship Between Schools, Incarceration and Social Services

Moderator: Dwight Watkins – Watkins is a native Baltimorean, activist, and editor-at-large for *Salon*. He is a renowned New York Times bestselling author of literary works including *We Speak for Ourselves: A Word from Forgotten Black America*. Committed to addressing the conditions under which young people in the city struggle, he currently serves as a college lecturer at the University of Baltimore and founder of the BMORE Writers Project.

Jasper Palmer – Jasper is a native Baltimorean and former student of the Frederick Douglass High School who earned his GED while in the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Centre. At only 20 years old, Jasper has faced many challenges which have shaped him into the man he is today. He currently works for Comcast Cable and is enrolled in a local community college. Jasper is a soon-to-be father and is excited about the new journey and lessons he will share with his child.



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Tina Hike-Hubbard - Chief Communications and Community Engagement Officer for Baltimore City Public Schools; leads outreach in support of parent and community involvement in school and district initiatives. She formerly chaired the mayor's taskforce on homeless issues in Baltimore and served as co-chair for the community investment workgroup of the Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers.

Jeffrey M. Robinson - Founding principal of the Baltimore Talent Development High School (BTD), he is currently principal of the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center.

Tisha Edwards – Former CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools and chief of staff in the mayor's office of the city of Baltimore, she stands as founding principal of Visionary Solutions, LLC, and currently serves as director of the Baltimore Office of Children and Family Success.

Rebecca Jones-Gaston - is an advocate for community engagement with more than 20 years of experiences in social work, advocacy, and public administration. Currently, she serves as Executive Director of the Social Services Administration at the Maryland Department of Human Services, where she is responsible for planning and implementing strategies, policies, and procedures that ensure children and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and neglect.

III. Panel: Education, Incarceration, and Wellness

Moderator: Senator Jill P. Carter – Senator Carter, a champion for the disenfranchised and marginalized in our society, represents Maryland's 41st legislative district of Baltimore City in the Maryland State Senate. Former Delegate Carter, often referred to as “the legacy,” embodies the spirit of her freedom fighter father, the late civil rights activist, leader, and visionary, Walter P. Carter. She was the third African-American female attorney elected to serve in the Maryland General Assembly as delegate for Baltimore City District 41.



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Dr. Randi Walters - Director, Baltimore City Department of Social Services. Dr. Walters is a results-driven executive with 25 years of progressive leadership in the field of health and human services. Previously, he was senior advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Administration at the U. S. Department of Human Services

Richard Rowe - Resident consultant for the Black Mental Health Alliance for Education and Consultation, Inc. (BMHA). For the past 25 years, Mr. Rowe has operated and managed direct services programs for African American men and male youth and has provided training to hundreds of volunteers, parents, educators, community leaders, and organizations.

Odis Johnson Jr., PhD – Previous Chair of African American Studies at University of Maryland, professor in the departments of sociology and education, and associate director of the Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity, and Equity at Washington University in St. Louis. Johnson also is a faculty scholar at the Institute of Public Health and affiliated faculty at the Brown School of Social Work, both at Washington University.

Melvin Wilson - Organizer and co-director of Turnaround Tuesday, BUILD (Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development). Turnaround Tuesday's mission is to lead in creating job opportunities in Baltimore and to prepare returning and unemployed citizens to reenter the workforce.

Nicole Hanson – Executive Director of Out4Justice, a returning citizen and member-led organization with the mission to engage, educate, and empower individuals with criminal records in Maryland to create structural change through legislation, policy reform, and advocacy.

IV. Networking Lunch

Introduction of Keynote Speaker:

Darnell Ingram - Director, Baltimore City Office of Civil Rights and Wage Enforcement



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Keynote Address

Damien Sojoyner – Assistant Professor of anthropology at the University of California, Irvine, and author of *First Strike: Educational Enclosures in Black Los Angeles*. Sojoyner is an “urban anthropologist with a diasporic framework” who analyzes black masculinity, education policy, and schools as a form of “enclosure” for students of color in order to problematize the “school-to-prison pipeline.”

V. Panel: Restoring Schools and Healing Communities

Moderator: Robert Balfanz, PhD - Research professor at the Center for the Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University School of Education, where he is the director of the Everyone Graduates Center. He has published widely on topics such as secondary school reform, high school dropout, early warning systems, and chronic absenteeism. He was the first recipient of the Alliance for Excellent Education’s “Everyone’s a Graduate Award” and the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grade Reform’s “Joan Lipsitz Lifetime Achievement” award.

Karen Webber -Director of the Education and Youth Development program at Open Society Institute-Baltimore. Previously, Webber was the executive director of the Office of Student Support and Safety at Baltimore City Schools, where she worked both on policies and practices that contributed to the dramatic decrease in school suspension and expulsion rates. She is a former teacher and principal in Baltimore City Public Schools.

Dr. Rhonda Richetta - Principal at City Springs Elementary/Middle School. Richetta incorporates the use of restorative practices in her school and sat on the School to Prison Pipeline and Restorative Practices Commission.

Andres Gonzalez – Co-founder of the Holistic Life Foundation, who has led efforts in Baltimore and the nation to embed mindfulness practices into the school day, thereby drastically reducing students’ chronic stress and suspensions in participating schools. HLF is a nonprofit organization committed to nurturing the wellness of children and adults in underserved communities



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Akil Hamm – Baltimore Public City School Police Chief who supervises the safety and security needs of 85,306 students, 12,000 employees, 140 sworn police officers, and 190 facilities over a 10-mile radius. These include pre-K, elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as special education centers and alternative schools. He is noted for reducing school-based arrests by 81% over a five-year period using asset-based and restorative practices approaches.

VI. Closing Remarks

John Milton Wesley - Public Information Officer, Baltimore City Office of Civil Rights

Dr. Christopher Morphew - Dean, JHU School of Education