



EQUITY NOW!

VOLUME I, NO. 3 (OCTOBER 2017)

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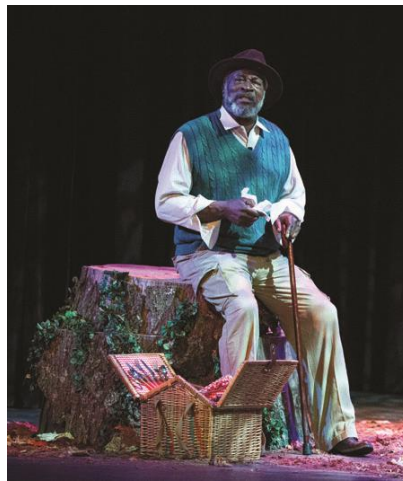
PO Box 762

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THANK YOU!

Thank you for supporting our first-ever fundraiser. Noted actor **John Amos**, seen in *Roots*, *Coming to America*, *Let's Do it Again* and in the iconic television series *Good Times*, delivered a timely performance and message in the one-man play "*Halley's Comet*" on **Saturday October 7**. We appreciate our friends who were able to attend and those who made a financial contribution.

Special thanks to Principal Lynn Irby of South Orange Middle School for her support and Ms. Jazmine Wright, South Orange Middle School teacher and Martin Luther King Club advisor, for the MLK Club hosting us.



We also want to thank Black Parents Workshop Trustee Tracy Jarmon Woods and parent volunteer Michelle Stevenson King for their hard work in coordinating the event. A very special thank you to Columbia High School alumni and spoken word artists Shelly Strothers and Felisha George for lending their incredible talents to the event.

DISTRICT FAILS BLACK STUDENTS...AGAIN

At the Monday October 16 Board of Education meeting data was released related to the stipulations of the Resolution Agreement the district signed with the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) in October 2014. OCR required the South Orange-Maplewood School District to address practices that were identified as discriminatory against African-American students and possible violations of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

OCR required the district to submit reports annually for a three-year period: August 14, 2015, August 15, 2016 and August 15, 2017. The report released on October 26, 2017 was the first such report the district has released publicly, and we believe the only report the district has submitted to OCR.



The data revealed that the district has failed to address the racial disparities that OCR identified and has made insignificant headway in closing the racial achievement gap over the last three years. **You can retrieve the full data set via the Black Parents Workshop Facebook page or the Board of Education website.** The data shows that Black students continue to be restricted to lower-level courses and are missing from advanced-level and Advanced Placement (AP) courses. The district continues to operate a de facto segregated high school within the classes of Columbia High School, and throughout the K-5 elementary schools. The Black Parents Workshop continues to demand the end of academic tracking and the ‘leveling’ system that has blocked Black students’ access to the rigorous courses necessary for them to be college and career ready. We are now consulting with our legal counsel and outside counsel to determine what legal steps we need to take to dismantle the current academic structure in the school district.

The table below reflects the outcome of academic tracking and leveling, as Black students are disproportionately in 2-year colleges or not in college at all sixteen months after graduating from Columbia High School. This is data from the New Jersey Department of Education School Performance Report for Columbia High School.

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates

This table presents the enrollment rates of this school's high school graduates into a 2 year or 4 year institution 16-months after high school graduation for the school and state and by ethnic/racial subgroup and special population.

	Percent Enrolled	Percent in 2 Years	Percent in 4 Years
Statewide	76.8%	33.9%	66.1%
Schoolwide	85.9%	26.0%	74.0%
White	90.6%	5.5%	94.5%
African American	83.5%	43.3%	56.7%
Hispanic	S	S	S
American Indian	S	S	S
Asian	S	S	S
Native Hawaiian	S	S	S
Two or More Races	S	S	S
Students with Disability	66.7%	58.3%	41.7%
English Language Learners	S	S	S
Economically Disadvantaged Students	78.6%	56.8%	43.2%

UPCOMING TEST DATES

SAT Dates (www.collegeboard.org)

November 4, 2017 (Deadline: October 5, 2017)

December 2, 2017 (Deadline: November 2, 2017)

March 10, 2018** (Deadline: February 9, 2018)

May 5, 2018 (Deadline: April 6, 2018)

June 2, 2018 (Deadline: May 3, 2018)

**Regular SAT only

ACT Dates (www.act.org)

December 9, 2017 (Deadline: November 3, 2017)

February 10, 2018** (Deadline: January 12, 2018)

April 14, 2018 (Deadline: March 9, 2018)

June 9, 2018 (Deadline: May 4, 2018)

**No test centers in New York for this date

If your child is a student-athlete, be aware of the athletics recruiting process.

It's a wonderful thing when your child can secure an athletic scholarship to a college or university. They are a significant vehicle to reduce some or all of the costs of a college education. They are available to high school student-athletes whose talents are compatible with the demands of NCAA Division I and Division II athletic programs. Division III colleges and Ivy League schools do not offer athletic scholarships. If your child is eligible, visit the websites of the institutions they are interested in attending or have sent them letters of interest, and find out what the athletic standards are to receive an athletic scholarship. **Make certain that you always make the academic compatibility of the college with your child's educational goals the priority.** Get the advice of his or her coach BUT make sure the college is one that your child will feel comfortable attending. On recruitment trips, be an active listener and be prepared to ask coaches about the team's philosophy on academic support, and the graduation rate of athletes. What is most important is their receiving a college degree.

Make the Guidance Department work for you.

Your child should not be left to figure their academic plan on their own. **You must make the guidance department in your school work for your child.** They are there to provide advice, help make certain academic requirements are fulfilled, and intervene when students encounter difficulty in the classroom.

Don't accept silence as an answer!

Too often parents accept silence or an unsatisfactory response from teachers or a school administrator when making an inquiry concerning their child. Make sure you get answers to your questions, and request that responses to your inquiries are put in writing. You are a parent and taxpayer. **Demand answers.** Employees of the school district are public employees, paid by our tax dollars, and legally obligated to serve the public.

Please know we are here to help. If you encounter an issue with your child and you believe it is based on racial bias, please contact us via our website – www.blackparentsworkshop.org – or send us an e-mail @ blackparentsworkshop@gmail.com. **We are here to be partners in your child's success.**

BLACK PARENTS WORKSHOP 'ACCESS & EQUITY' CANDIDATES FORUM



DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS

The Black Parents Workshop will sponsor an 'Access and Equity' Candidates Forum on **Thursday October 26** at **7 pm** at the **Maplewood Memorial Library, 51 Baker Street**. Our partner sponsor is the **MapSO Freedom School**. This forum will be unique in that candidates will be questioned by a panel of four student leaders, representing student organizations at Columbia High School. Questions are also being solicited from students at Columbia High School this week and students will be able to submit their questions via e-mail to the Black Parents Workshop until Wednesday. **This forum is meant to be a debate.** The focus of this forum is on racial disparities and other social justice related issues in the school district. Only students will be allowed to submit questions and we will verify that submitted questions have come from students. The forum is being held in conjunction with the **Week of Action** of the **National Dignity in Schools Campaign**, of which the Black Parents Workshop is a member.



Acting Maplewood Police Chief Jimmy DeVaul has agreed to a series of discussions between Black youth and the local police force that the MapSO Freedom School and the Black Parents Workshop is coordinating. In addition, the chief has made a commitment to professional development training for officers to improve police-community relations. We are currently identifying several experts with deep experience in this area to recommend to the chief. This is just a first step in restoring confidence among Black youth, and the overall community, in the police in the aftermath of the July 5, 2016 incident.

COMING EVENTS

November School Board Election

This November the School Board election – **Tuesday November 7, 2016** - will present us with the opportunity to elect three candidates to the Board of Education. Our goal is to support and help facilitate the election of three progressive candidates who support the tenets of access and equity, and specifically the removal of structural barriers that historically have denied Black children a fair and equal educational experience in the South Orange-Maplewood School District. **We will publish a special edition of Equity Now! that will focus on the issues at stake in the November election.**



Our mission is to serve Black children, and by doing so, uplift all children.

Contact Us

SOMA Black Parents Workshop

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We encourage you to make certain your friends and children of age are registered to vote. You can download a voter registration form from the bottom of the Civic Engagement page on our website. If you have a child who is out-of-state attending college, please make sure they complete an absentee ballot. Every vote is going to be necessary in November to achieve our goal of changing the direction of the school Board.

DONATE

Your contributions help us grow and do more for our youth. Contributions are tax-deductible through our fiscal conduit, Sidewalk University. Checks should be made payable to **Black Parents Workshop** and in the memo line write Sidewalk University. Checks can be mailed to: Black Parents Workshop, P.O. Box 762, Maplewood New Jersey, 07040. Contributions can also be made online through PayPal on our website.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are planning a number of events this year that require volunteer support. Please consider lending us your time as we work to support Black children in our community. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please send us a note @ **blackparentsworkshop@gmail.com**.

GROW THE BLACK PARENT COMMUNITY

Tell your friends and neighbors to sign up to receive information from the Black Parents Workshop. Have them send us their contact info @ **blackparentsworkshop@gmail.com**.

HOW WE OPERATE

The Black Parents Workshop is a not-for-profit organization that is incorporated in the state of New Jersey. We are currently using Sidewalk University as our fiscal conduit. This allows contributions to the Workshop to be tax-exempt. Until we receive our IRS 501(c)3 certification, we can still accept contributions that will be treated as tax-exempt.

To date we have operated as a strictly volunteer-driven organization. Our short-term (12-18 month) plan is to secure funding to support a paid staff to manage the day-to-day business of the organization.

We are not a membership organization but we operate as an advocacy organization that raises concerns unique to Black parents. From time to time, we will hold general information sessions to inform parents of developments in the school district. We are guided by a Board of Trustees that sets policy for the Black Parents Workshop. We also collaborate with other organizations and have a special relationship with the **MapSO Freedom School**, and we also work to support Black student organizations in the district.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

There are many ways you can help the Black Parents Workshop serve as a powerful advocate for Black children in the South Orange-Maplewood School District and our two communities. The first way is by encouraging other parents to become a part of our network by submitting their contact information. They can do so by submitting their information through our website or you can submit it. The second way is by reporting to us any incidents in which you believe your child or a child that you know has been subjected to discriminatory treatment (e.g. discipline, assignment to a class below her or his capabilities, grading, bullying by a teacher or staff member, or denial of resources as a special education student) in school. You can find a Parent Incident Report form on our website at the bottom of the Access and Equity page. Fill out the form and describe the incident, and return the form to us.

Third, we would like to have at least four Black parents attend every meeting of the Board of Education. They are held monthly at the Board headquarters in Maplewood. We would like to form a Watch Committee on which members will rotate to attend Board meetings. You would attend to observe and take notes. Send us an email if you would like to be on the Watch Committee. Fourth, inform us when a Black student in the district has had a significant accomplishment. We want to celebrate our young people and publicize their success. Look at the *Speak Out* section of our website and you will see how we highlight our children. Finally, share with us your ideas to make the South Orange-Maplewood School District better. The only bad idea is the one that is not shared.

Where there is no struggle, there is no progress – Frederick Douglass