



**THE TIMBUKTU
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Bennetta Slaughter
CEO, Applied Scholastics International
11755 Riverview Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138

Dear Mrs. Bennetta Slaughter:

No doubt, one of the most pressing issues confronting educators is that of non-optimum educational outcomes, regardless of one's dedication, hard work, and intention to convey knowledge to one's students. The direct relevance of the quality of the education of the youth to the economic and cultural flourishing of a society has long been recognized.

From my vantage point as a university professor, I can clearly see serious problems consisting of low academic achievements, dropouts, and their attendant ills, particularly in the long term. For example, the science and technology-driven growth of the current knowledge economy portends significant losses for individuals and for cities that do not compete favorably in the educational arena. My research work and actual practice over the last 20 years have shown that these educational problems *can* be remedied where they exist...and even *avoided*. In particular, many of these problems arise, for middle and high school students, from missing key basics in their earlier education. The hierarchical structure of knowledge exacerbates the injurious impact of those serious gaps as the grade level rises.

Against these circumstances, several colleagues and I have dedicated ourselves to helping students become high-level academic achievers at the pre-college and college levels, through the Timbuktu Academy at Southern University and A&M College in Baton Rouge (SUBR). Our work at the Academy is supported by extensive research showing that any student can actually learn *anything at a competitive level*, irrespective of ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, or the education levels of the parents! This research also establishes, as per the law of human performance, the necessity for *standard-based curriculum*, *standard-based teaching*, and *standard based learning*. This last one is partly mediated through homework assignments and a

sustained parental support to ensure adequate time on learning tasks. While the Academy, through a scientific and research-based approach to teaching, mentoring, and learning (TML), has established a fail-safe approach to education, it has reached only 200 pre-college and 100 college students per year for the last 15 years. Consequently, we work with schools or look for other research-based and effective programs to recommend to schools with the aim of reaching many more students. The **Applied Scholastics Achievement Program (ASAP)** is one such program I had the good fortune to see for the first time in 2005 and to observe for the last two years.

The Honorable Mayer Melvin Kip Holden invited ASAP, in 2005, to assist in turning around one of our most academically distressed schools. My involvement with the same school dictated that I examine very closely the research foundation, practices and prior results of ASAP in order to optimize its contributions to the total school transformation effort. Having studied its simple but powerful breakthrough techniques and having seen the results for myself, I can state that I wholeheartedly support ASAP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diola Bagayoko', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Diola Bagayoko, Ph. D.
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