



ADVOCATE

APRIL 2011

Tucson Unified School District

UPDATE ON TUSD AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

Congratulations Essay Contest Winners:

AASD continues supporting students, parents, and teachers, both in and out of the classroom. We are especially proud of our growth made toward our goals: 1) increase & strengthen student advocacy, 2) increase parent and community involvement, 3) attract and retain students in rigorous courses, 4) reducing suspensions, and 5) reduce failures.

We have made much progress. We've increased direct and indirect ancillary services to students by 21% from 2010 to 2011. Suspensions in schools we've added to our responsibilities for 2011 have dropped by 31% from the 2010 school year. We believe the increased support and reduced suspensions will ultimately improve student achievement. Our Male Leadership Academy meets bi-weekly on Saturdays focusing on leadership development. For the first three quarters, students enrolled have not been suspended out of school; some students were suspended 2 or more times last school year. In addition, we continue to provide math tutoring on Saturdays for all TUSD students.

We've increased our academic support at the elementary level by providing direct support in reading using *Achieve 3000*; a web-based, individualized reading support program. To date 36% of students using *Achieve 3000* are logging on outside of school

hours. Students are either staying after school for tutoring or spending time reading at home. AASD staff directly supported students in completing 1,140 hours on reading and writing from September 2010 to January 2011. During this time students completed 6,915 critical thinking questions and demonstrated gains on the critical thinking components of Arizona's Academic Standards. As a department we will continue this reading support next school year. Parent workshops for schools using *Achieve 3000* will be offered this summer.

Our focus on rigorous course offerings has proven worthwhile. This year we implemented an idea at Sahuaro HS, which resulted in increasing the number of African American students participating in Advanced Placement courses. To date, all students have succeeded. We hope to work with other schools to implement the model used at Sahuaro.

Curriculum: this year we partnered with other departments to provide cultural and diversity training for approximately 350 certified teachers, psychologists, administrators, and social workers. Supporting TUSD educators can directly impact thousands of TUSD students. We also provided direct

curriculum support to more than 12 middle and high schools this year.

Our community partnerships include working with churches, organizations, and business groups. During the fall of 2010 community members provided over 300 volunteer hours supporting students. We are also thankful for the two National Society of Black Engineer Chapters established at Mansfield and Doolen (first middle school clubs in the United States).

The listed accomplishments are a small snapshot of the work our team provides daily. Our primary focus is supporting students academically. However, in this newsletter you will find the importance we place on exposing our students to their culture. In the words of Maya Angelou, "Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave. I rise I rise I rise." AASD will continue to help all youth rise so they may continue their learning past high school and college.

Jimmy Hart, Director

FIRST SEMESTER SUSPENSIONS DOWN FROM 09-10 YR

TUSD AASD continues their efforts in addressing the disproportionate suspension rates of African American Students. District-wide, suspensions for African American students during the first semester of this year are down 20% from first semester of last school year. We believe there is a direct correlation between AASD supporting these schools and reduced suspensions. Director

Jimmy Hart shared, "We have increased our partnerships at the middle school level by providing direct support to 7 additional schools, 1 to 5 days a week which has proven to add value." AASD also increased support at the high school level. Last year 1.5 per-

sons provided support to 6 high schools. However, this year 4 people provided direct support to 9 high schools. The chart below shows the reduced suspensions by grade level.

Grade Level	2010 S1	2011 S1	Diff	Diff %
Elementary	39	38	-1	-2.6%
Middle	151	117	-34	-22.5%
High School	149	116	-33	-22.1%
TOTAL	339	271	-68	-20%

SATURDAY MATH TUTORING HELPS STUDENTS PREPARE FOR AIMS

AASD's Saturday Math Tutoring Program continues weekend math support. Moving the program to Naylor proved to be a wise move due to the overall increased student participation. Saturday Math was not always about catching up on work, but also included

fun activities. College students provided laser technology demonstrations, and engineers from IBM and Raytheon provided math and electronic experiments to show students how math connects to careers in science, technology, engineering, and math.

Tutoring will continue through May 14th at Naylor from 10 – 12 Noon. Below are the remaining dates:

April 9, 16, 30

May 7, 14



U of A engineering student, Jerrod Young works with a group of elementary students.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

In past news letters we have highlighted HBCU's. However, in this issue we felt it important to inform the community about an opportunity to attend Harvard University. Harvard University announced from now on undergraduate students from low-income families will

pay no tuition. In making the announcement, Harvard's president Lawrence H. Summers said, "When only ten percent of the students in elite higher education come from families in the lower half of the income distribution, we are not doing enough. We are not doing enough in bringing elite higher education to the lower half of the income distri-

bution." As a result, honor students whose family earns less than \$60,000 a year can attend Harvard for free... no tuition and no student loans. Visit www.admissions.college.harvard.edu or call (617) 495-1581. If you would like our office to assist you with understanding the Harvard requirements we are willing to do so. Call us at 225-6247.

IMPORTANT DATES

APRIL:
2, 9 AIMS Math Prep at Naylor
5-6 HS AIIMS Math
11-15 AIMS 3-8th grade
21—25 Spring Break

MAY:
6 Scholarship Banquet Fundraiser
23 25th Annual African American Student Recognition & Scholarship Program, University of

Arizona
MAY:
25 Last day of school and Graduation

JUNE:
 Achieve 3000 training

JULY:
 High School mentoring program and workshops begin

AUGUST:
15 First day of school

SEPTEMBER:
14—16 Parent teacher conferences

NOVEMBER:
 Parent University

DECEMBER:
 School choice applications for following school year

www.tusd1.org/aastudies

**1st Annual African American Student Scholarship Banquet
 May 6, 2011**

**25th Annual African American Student Recognition and Scholarship Program
 May 23, 2011**

STAFF DEVELOPMENT & CURRICULUM RESOURCE SUPPORT

AASD continues work with schools and teachers to embed a multicultural approach to curriculum. An example of this work is the “For Love of Liberty” project” which received an NAACP Image Award in March of this year. Approximately 10 Teachers in TUSD are the first in the US to take advantage of the curriculum. To date, our curriculum and staff development coordi-

nator, Shawna Rodriguez and others have partnered with student equity and language acquisition to provide culturally proficient advocacy workshops; a topic developed by AASD. We believe the workshops will have a positive impact on teachers and diverse student relations. Each school we’ve worked with dialogued using self-reflective strategies covering the

intercultural proficiency continuum, mental models, ladder of inference, and some aspects of funds of knowledge. It is important that we as educators value and tap into the background experiences of our students. All of our children bring valuable experiences to school that can increase our overall knowledge.

MALE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY PROVES VALUABLE

Our Male Leadership Academy, a pilot program supporting male students, met bi-weekly on Saturdays during the school year. Students participated in leadership development seminars, small group discussions, interacted with community members at events such as the “Kings of Cooking” family gathering, and other activities. As part

of their leadership development, all students were provided a book titled, “Success for Teens.” Success for Teens is a leadership development curriculum aimed at helping teens succeed in life. The books and related curriculum were provided by the SUCCESS Foundation. The foundation provides youth with per-

sonal-development resources needed to help them reach their potential. Topics discussed included *Attitude is Everything*, *Use the Moment*, and *Little Things Matter*. Student participants had no suspensions the first 3 quarters.



Front cover of Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu’s book, “Motivating and Preparing Black Youth for Success”

ANNUAL HARAMBEE CONCERT PROVIDES CULTURAL

The sounds of the djembe and dundun drums, as well as percussion instruments, greeted over 800 students and teachers from several TUSD elementary schools for *Harambee*, an African American Studies Department cultural celebration, held March 11th at Tucson High. Students were taken on a 90-minute journey that began with African dance, drumming and storytelling and ended with a sizzling high-energy hip

hop routine. In between, students learned about inventors, innovators and scientists, saw a jazz routine, were mesmerized by steel drums, heard Negro Spirituals performed in classical fashion, kept rhythm with a kalimba, stomped their feet with a STEP dance, listened to a song full of rhythm and blues and learned new information about Martin Luther King, Jr.

Students gave this year's Harambee a thumbs-up while boarding their buses with smiles, singing and new dance moves. Several students wanted a guarantee that they could come back next year!

HARAMBEE is Swahili for "Let us pull together."



Annual Harambee Concert

NATIONAL SOCIETY OF BLACK ENGINEERS—JR. CHAPTERS

Tucson - National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) started two junior chapters this year at Doolen and Mansfeld. Jade Martin, Raytheon engineer and coordinator of the NSBE Jr. chapters partnered with AASD to start the first chapter at Mansfeld in the fall and

later forming the Doolen club. Club members meet bi-weekly with engineers to discuss math and science as it relates to careers in science, technology, engineering and math. Students have learned about aerodynamics, and other topics through hands-on activi-


ties. During a club meeting, David Roberts, the only engineering student on the U of A football team, talked to students about the connection between academics and athletics. NSBE will send one student to the regional conference.



Vernon Mickle, Raytheon engineer teaches aerodynamics at Mansfeld

AASD SERVICES PROVIDED THIS YEAR

During the fall semester we implemented our electronic Student Accountability Form for Effectiveness (SAFE). Below is a snapshot of direct student support services provided by our department. The number in the lower right hand corner is total contacts for the first semester.

	Attendance	EXED / IEP / 504	Restorative Pract. Diversity Trng	Special Project	Empower GRP	Graduation Review	Academic Support	Gate / Honors College / AP PREP	Behavior Support Referral /	Scholarships	Home Visit	Parent contact	Mentoring	Office/Paperwork	Tutoring	Admin / Faculty Conference	Classroom Support	Total Services Student Received
1	439	97	65	423	331	433	786	437	963	74	249	3532	361	694	772	5432	15088	

ACADEMIC SUCCESS IN THE CLASSROOM

Congratulations to middle and high school students who earned a 4.0 GPA for the first 3 quarters of this year. We look forward to seeing you at our 25th Annual Student Recognition Program. Graduating seniors maintaining a cumulative 4.0 or better GPA will receive special recognition. Details of the recognition program will be mailed home to honorees. Additional information about the program is on page 6.

AFRICAN AMERICAN READ-IN CHAIN



TUSD AASD Academic Specialist, Elaine Buckner reads to middle school students.

Students and teachers in TUSD

schools took part in the 22nd annual African American Read-In during the month of February to celebrate Black History Month. The Read-In, sponsored by the Black Caucus of the National Teachers of English, promotes literacy by encouraging public readings of the works of African American authors in classrooms and libraries throughout the nation, the West Indies and in sev-



eral African countries. Volunteers from a wide range of Tucson's educational and business communities, as well as TUSD employees, read to students throughout the District. Cynthia Johnson, an engineer and member of the National Association of Black Engineers, volunteered to read at Mansfeld Middle School and commented that, "The students really participated by asking questions so it was an interactive and fun experience."

SCHOLARSHIPS

\$ www.tusd1.org/aastudies (Scholarship provided by TUSD African American Studies Department)

www.naacp.com/scholarship (NAACP Scholarship)

\$ www.uncf.org (United Negro College Fund)

\$ www.blackstudents.com (List of scholarship in alphabetical order)

\$ www.coca-colascholars.com (Coca-Cola Scholarship: \$10,000 - \$20,000)

\$ www.nationalmerit.org/nasp.php (National Achievement Scholarship for African American students)

\$ www.admissions.college.harvard.edu (Free Tuition to Harvard)

\$ www.hsf.net (Hispanic Scholarship Fund)

\$ www.assurance.arizona.edu (Provides scholarship money over 4 years to attend an Arizona University)

\$ www.gmsp.org (Gates Millennium Scholarship - for next years seniors)

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STUDENT ADVOCACY:

The African American Studies Department is committed to providing timely advocacy support for your child when needed or requested. If you have a concern or believe your child is not receiving equitable and fair treatment, please give us a call. We do not have a staff person in each school. However, if there is a need we will make adjustments to support you in meetings with the school and advocating on behalf of your child.

ADVOCATE:

Verb: to speak or write in favor of; support or urge by argument; recommend publicly: *He advocated higher salaries for teachers.*

Dictionary.com



**" R E M E M B E R I N G O U R P A S T ; C R E A T I N G
O U R F U T U R E "**

ANNUAL RECOGNITION PROGRAM SET FOR MAY 23RD

This year we will host the 25th Annual African American Student Recognition & Scholarship Program on Monday, **May 23, 2011 @ the University of Arizona – Student Union, 6:00 – 8:00 P.M.**

Every year the African American Studies Department brings together families and community members to celebrate the accomplishments of outstanding African American students in grades 6 – 12. Students earn their invitation to this special recognition program by meeting one or more of the following criteria:

1. Maintaining a 3.25 GPA (or higher) during the 1st three quarters of this school year.
2. Maintaining perfect attendance

that reflects absences for school business only, and a 2.5 GPA for 3 quarters.

3. Good Citizenship/Humanitarian practices as defined by each school with at least a 2.5 GPA through 3 quarters (one male and one female student per school).

4. Fine Arts accomplishment with at least a 2.5 GPA through 3 quarters (one male and one female student per school).

5. Athletic accomplishment with at least a 2.5 GPA through 3 quarters (one male and one female student per school). We look forward to celebrating you child during our 25th recognition program.

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

We will also award scholarships. Seniors please see your counselor for an application or visit: www.tusd1.org/aastudies

“Hard work has it’s Rewards”



Students earning a 4.0 through the first 3 quarters of last school year received authentic Kente Cloth shawls from Ghana at last years recognition program.