

Unapologetic Leadership:

2025 Real Data, Real Action, and Real Results

Keith Curry, Ed.D., President, Compton College
Chair, National Panel on Black Learner Excellence



Social Media – Keith Curry, Ed.D

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**KEITH
CURRY**

President/CEO
Compton College



**TAMMEIL
GILKERSON**

Chancellor
Peralta Community College District



**PAMELA
LUSTER**

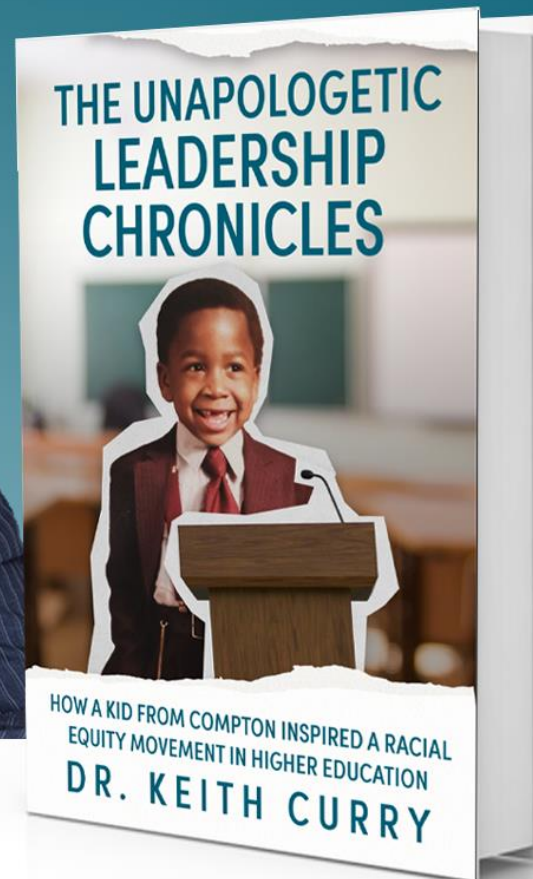
President Emeritus
San Diego Mesa College

Keith Curry, Ed.D.

- **From Ball Boy to Compton Community College District CEO**
- President/CEO of Compton College and Compton Community College District
- Education:
 - Doctor of Education – Educational Leadership from the University of California, Irvine
 - **The Deaccreditation of Compton Community College: An Interpretation through the Kubler–Ross Grief Construct**
 - Bachelor of Arts – American Studies – University of California, Santa Cruz

A NEW RELEASE FROM DR. KEITH CURRY!

COMING SOON



Release coming April 2025
iamkeithcurry.org

Compton College

- Education: “The Keith Curry Love Story”
 - Born and raised in Compton, California
 - Relationship with Compton College dates to the fall of 1999
 - “Every Student is a Success Story”
 - June 7
 - Compton College achieved Initial Accreditation (**June 7, 2017**)
 - Compton College held its first commencement ceremony (**June 7, 2018**)
 - Compton College completed the transition with El Camino College (**June 7, 2019, at 11:59 p.m.**)



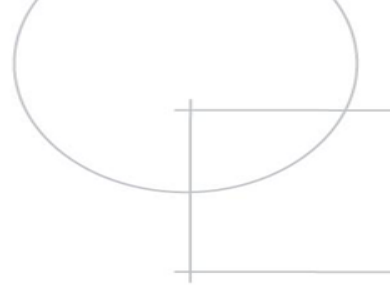
Kendrick Lamar

Compton College Commencement Special Guest – June 7, 2024

"I wanted to come out here just to tell y'all how much I appreciate y'all. I'm proud of the city of Compton, I'm proud of Compton College, most importantly, I'm proud of the graduates out here."

"When I walk out in these cities, in these countries, I can be proud and say, 'This is where I'm from.'"

Unapologetic

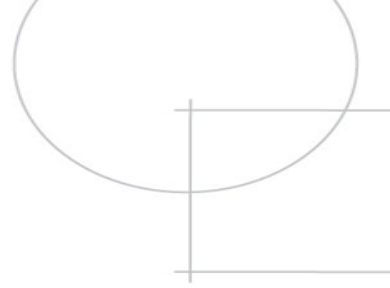


Unapologetic is defined as:

"not acknowledging or expressing regret."

We are unapologetic about our work toward student success because our position and decisions will impact students and their families for generations.

Strategic Leadership



“Strategic leadership happens when a leader shares a vision and/or goal with their team and inspires them to work together to reach them.

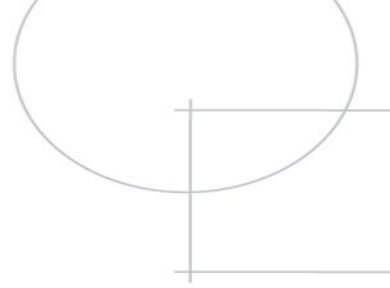
A strategic leader often acts as the motivating force for an organization, letting individuals know their role in achieving the vision.

This leadership style helps others have direction at all times.”

Source: [What is Strategic Leadership? And What Does It Look Like?](#)

Intentional

As defined in Webster's Dictionary:
intentional means
“done by intent or design.”



Budgets Are A Statement of Values

If you are truly addressing Racial Equity and Supporting Student Success, it will be reflected in your Institutional Budget and through your Institutional Budget Allocations.

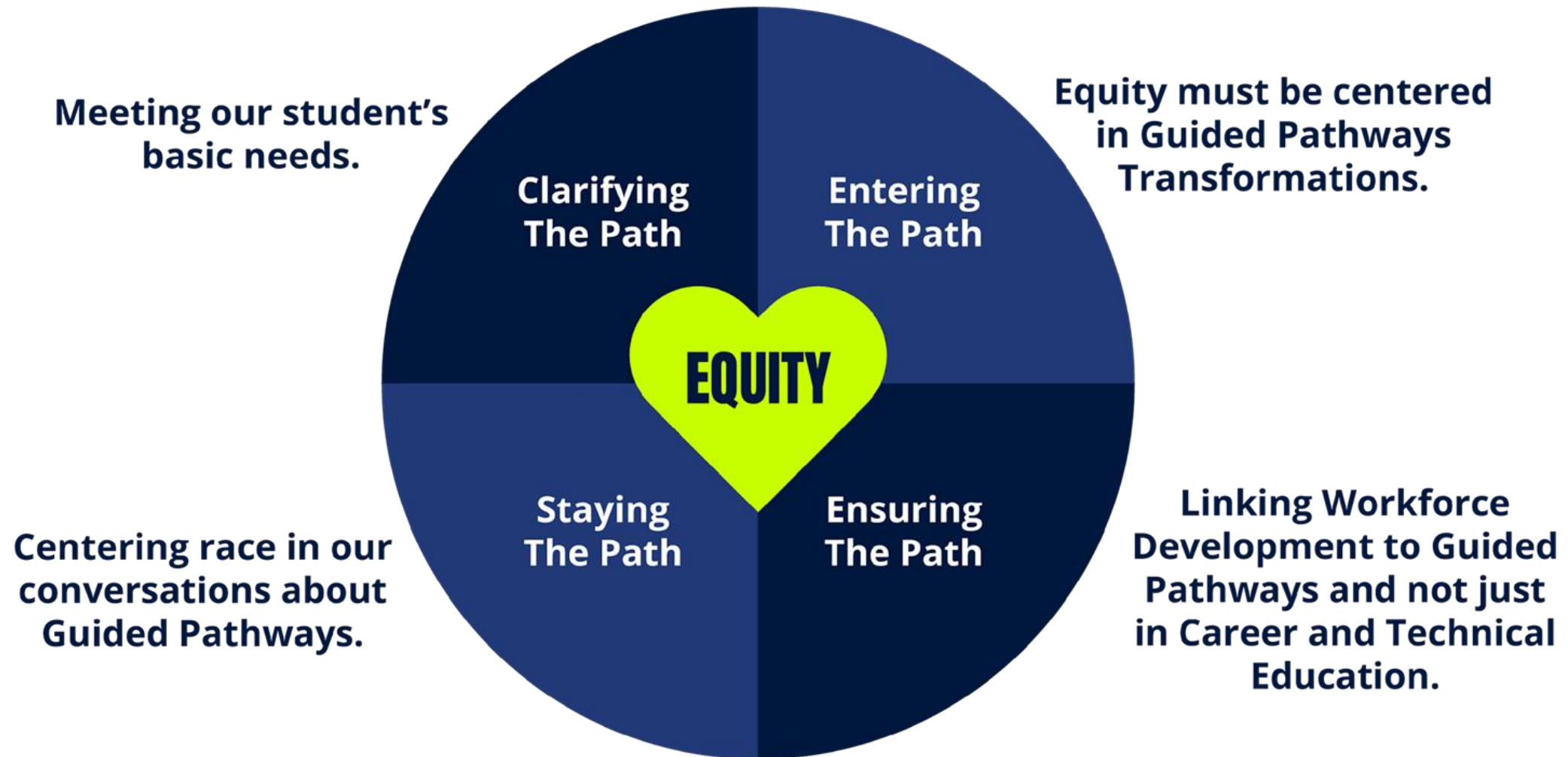
Racial Equity

“The process of eliminating racial disparities and improving outcomes for everyone.”

“It is the **intentional and continual practice of changing policies, practices, systems, and structures** by prioritizing measurable change in the lives of people of color.”

Source: **Race Forward**

Racial Equity at the Heart of Guided Pathways



An abstract geometric design in the top-left corner of the slide. It features a large white circle, a vertical white line, and a horizontal white line intersecting at the center of the circle. Below this intersection, there is a smaller white grid consisting of two vertical lines and two horizontal lines forming a rectangle.

History and Timeline of LEVEL UP

TIMELINE: THE HISTORY OF LEVEL UP

January – April 2022 50-State Policy Research Scan & 6-State Institutional Interviews

HCM conducted 50-state research analysis and held targeted stakeholder interviews within 6 key states consisting of 14 community college leaders and SHEEOs.

September 2022 Expert Advisory Committee

Chaired by Dr. Keith Curry, the Expert Advisory Committee met three times to provide HCM with recommendations for a case-building report based on HCM's data analysis.

March 2023 Public Release of LEVEL UP Report & National Call to Action

HCM and Achieving the Dream held stakeholder and media calls to release the LEVEL UP report and signed Call to Action statement **supported publicly by 26 national leaders** in the higher ed, policy and business communities.

January 2022

Lumina Foundation Investment

Lumina Foundation's investment of \$467,000 was in support of quantitative and qualitative research and analysis, creation of Executive Advisory Committee and National Panel, and media and communications support for reports and national call to action.

April 2022

A National Imperative: Addressing Black Student Enrollment

HCM Releases data analysis from research into national trends around declining Black student enrollment and outcomes in higher ed from the last two decades.

January 2023

National Advisory Panel

Building off the work of the Executive Advisory Committee and the LEVEL UP report, Dr. Curry led National Advisory Panel of bipartisan leaders, who framed a signed Call to Action around the economic and moral imperative to support Black learner excellence and success.

TIMELINE: THE HISTORY OF LEVEL UP

October 2023 SUNY Higher Education Summit

Black Learner Summit of SUNY institutional leaders in New York, including Chancellor John B. King, Jr., discussing their commitment to advancing Black learner excellence. In the aftermath of the summit, SUNY launched the Black Leadership Institute, which recognizes and prepares talented faculty and staff for campus leadership roles.

January 2024 Policy Playbook Release

It's Time to Get Real: A Policy Playbook to Demand Black Learner Excellence is released with high-level recommendations to advance Black learner excellence for higher ed institutions, state and federal policymakers, and community and business leaders.

March 2024 Los Angeles Dinner

Convening of leaders in conjunction with the A2MEND annual conference, the nation's largest postsecondary conference focusing on African American male student success.

May 2024 Atlanta BLE Reconvening

The second Black Learner Excellence (BLE) Summit aimed at building upon prior shared commitments for Black learners in the Metro Atlanta area with specifics strategies, data and initiatives tied to the LEVEL UP & Get REAL Policy playbook.

July 2023

First Atlanta Black Learner Summit

The first Black Learner Excellence (BLE) Summit convened to engage in the process of co-creating shared commitments for Black learners in the Metro Atlanta Area to enroll and persist in postsecondary education.

November 2023

Policy Dinner – Washington, D.C.

A federally-focused dinner to gain insights on the national landscape to inform the LEVEL UP and Get REAL Policy Playbook.

February 2024

D.C. Legislative Briefing

LEVEL UP leaders joined three Black learners from California, Florida, and Maryland on Capitol Hill to discuss this work with Congressman Owens and Congressional staff, which was held in conjunction with the ACCT meeting.

April 2024

Chicago Dinner & Black Learner Summit

Chicago Black Learner Excellence (BLE) Summit co-hosted with Chancellor Juan Salgado of City Colleges of Chicago.

September 2024

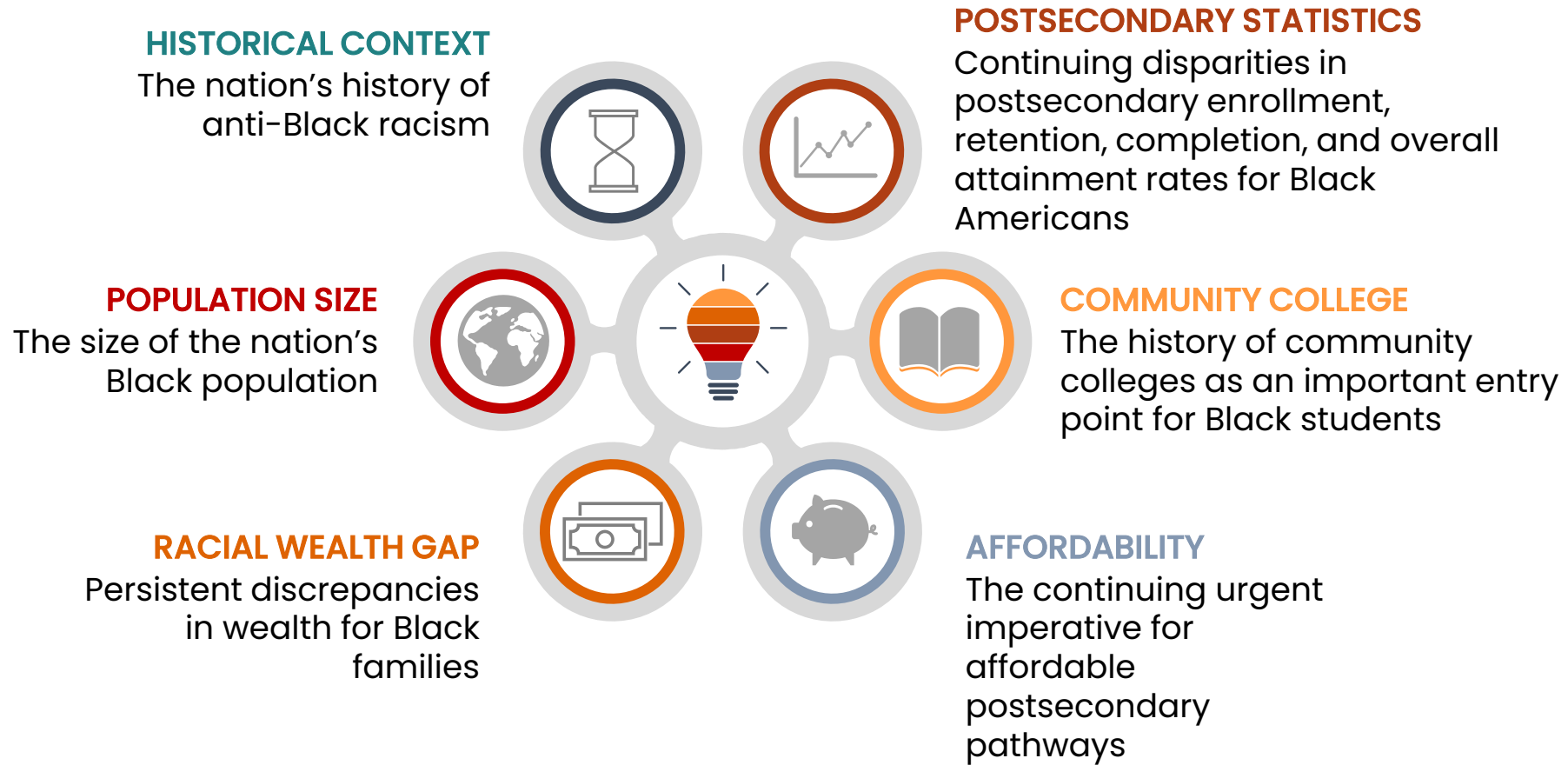
National Level Up Webinar & Digital Playbook Launch

Webinar featuring Dr. Keith Curry and an expert panel discussing actionable strategies for improving Black Enrollment and Retention in higher education. Included the unveiling of the new, interactive digital policy playbook.

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Why Community Colleges

WE ELEVATE THE GLARING AND DISPROPORTIONATE* DECLINE IN BLACK COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT ENROLLMENTS AS THE FOCUS OF THIS WORK FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS, INCLUDING:



*It is important to note the troubling trends for other races and ethnicities that must be addressed as well, particularly for American Indian or Alaska Native students.



Trends in Black* Undergraduate Enrollment

*Defined by IPEDS

SINCE 2011, BLACK ENROLLMENTS HAVE DECLINED DISPROPORTIONATELY IN THE PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGE SECTOR

PEAK ENROLLMENT 2010–2011

Enrollments at all institutions peaked for all races and ethnicities in 2010 and for Black students in 2011.

ENROLLMENT DECLINE AT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Since then, there has been a disproportionate decline in the public community college sector, particularly for Black students. A 35% decline between 2011–2022.

STEADY ENROLLMENT AT 4-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

Enrollments for Black students in have also declined at four-year public and private institutions since 2011, but not as steeply.

See details on next slide...

BETWEEN 2011–22, BLACK ENROLLMENTS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES DECLINED BY MORE THAN 400,000 STUDENTS

In the public community college sector, enrollments of Black students peaked in 2011 at 1,124,868

By 2019:

The enrollment level had dropped to 839,635, approximating 2006–07 levels.

That is:

- A 25% decline
- A loss of 285,233 students

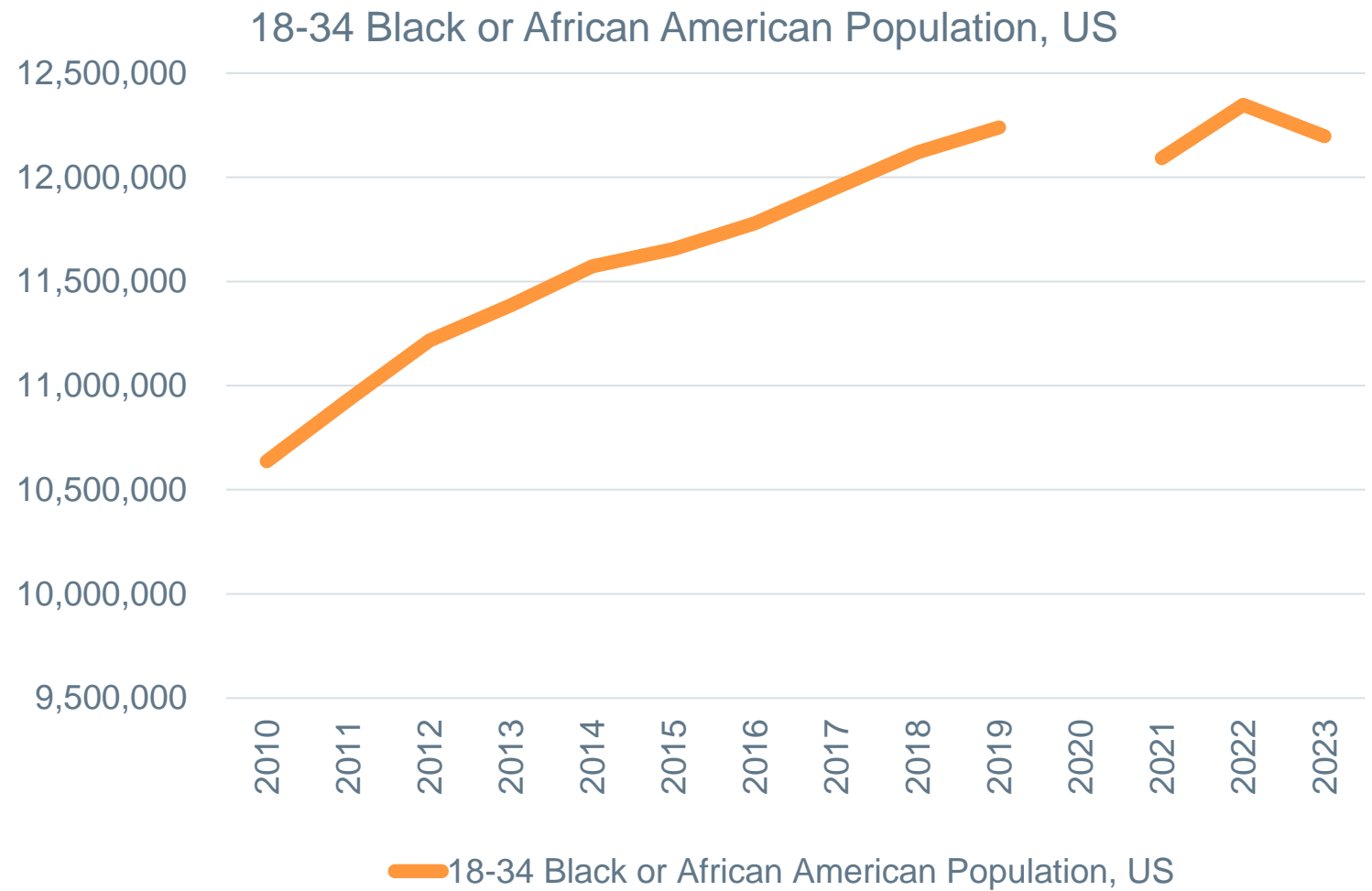
By 2022:

The enrollment level had dropped to 732,264, similar to enrollments in 1999–2000.

That is:

- A 35% decline from 2011
- A loss of 392,604 students

DECLINES IN BLACK STUDENT ENROLLMENTS ARE NOT A FUNCTION OF CHANGES IN THE COLLEGE-AGE POPULATION



The Black 18-34 year old population has steadily grown, from 10.6 million in 2010 to 12.2 million in 2023.

Source: Authors' analysis of ACS Data (Table S0201). Note: 2020 data not reported due to COVID-19 pandemic.

STUDENTS ARE NOT CHOOSING TO ENROLL, INSTEAD, IN OTHER SECTORS

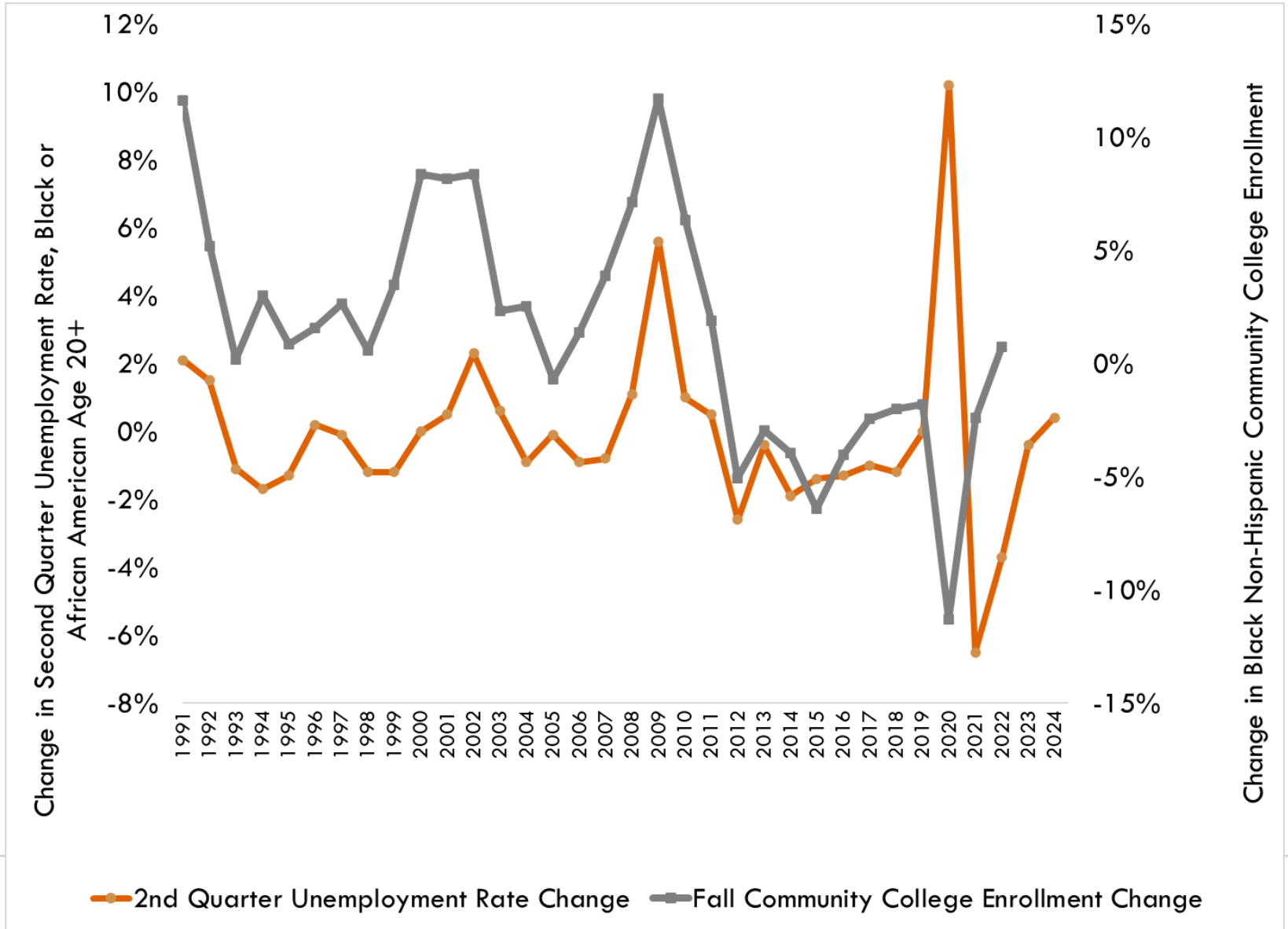
The enrollment decline for Black students is most pronounced in the public community college sector. Students do not appear to be moving to for-profits or public 4-years proportionate to the decrease in the community college sector.

The majority appear to be leaving the postsecondary system.

	Public primarily associate and certificate	Public primarily bachelor's and graduate	Nonprofit four-year	For profit and other	Grand Total
Change 2011-2022	-392,604	-44,065	-45,212	-196,055	-677,936

Source: Authors' Analysis of IPEDS Data. Note: Institution control and category is based on most recent control and share of degrees over the entire time period. Both are held constant over this time period to focus on student trends rather than institutional mission changes.

SOME OF THE CHANGE CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO SHIFTS IN THE ECONOMY, AS BLACK COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENROLLMENT DECLINES AS BLACK EMPLOYMENT INCREASES

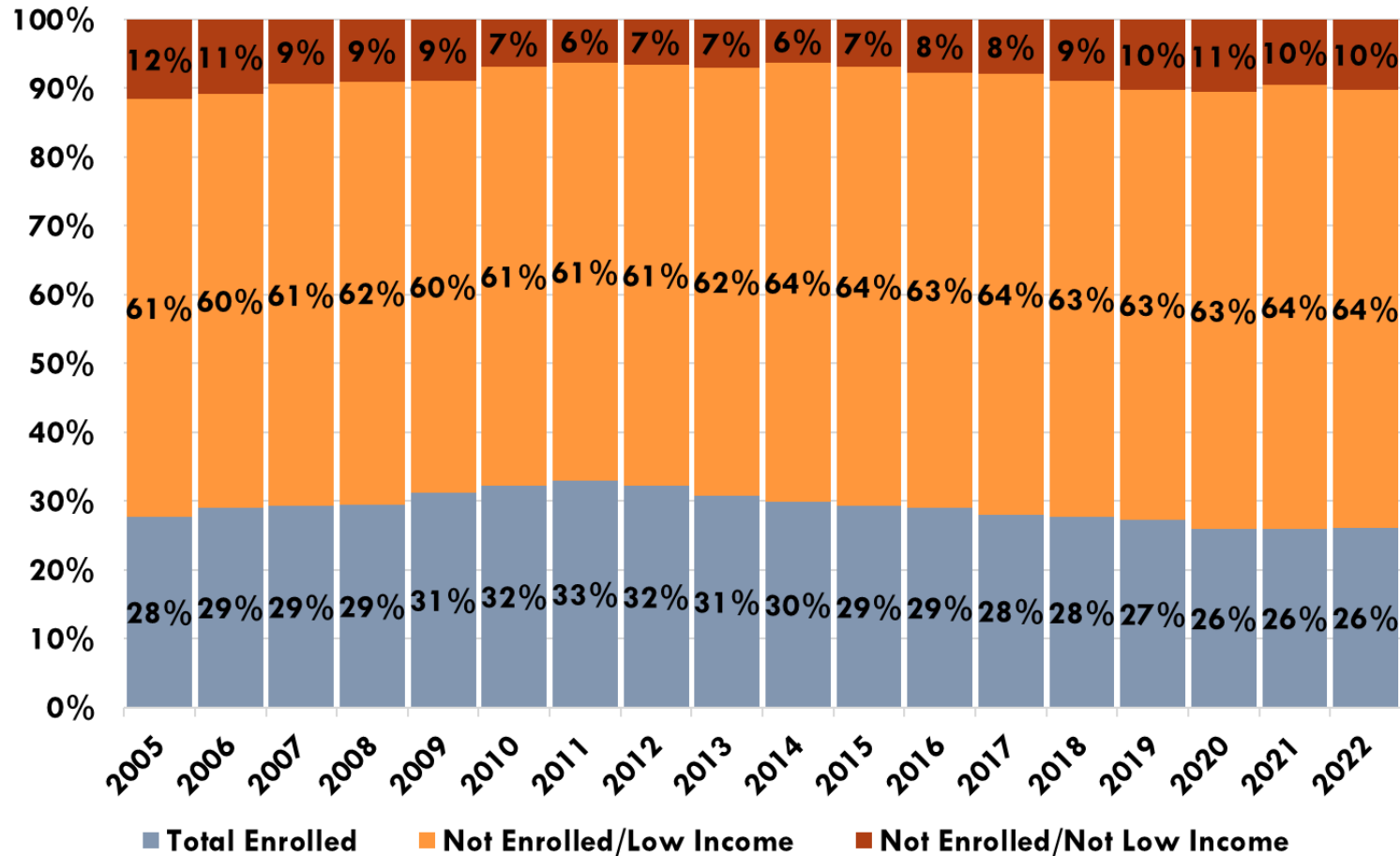


Short and medium-term trends in Black community college enrollment track closely with the economy. When unemployment rises, so does community college enrollment. When it drops, the reverse tends to happen. COVID was an unusual exception.

Source: Authors' analysis of enrollment data, BLS Series LNU0400024Q

BUT EMPLOYMENT DOES NOT ALWAYS MEAN A GOOD JOB. NEARLY TWO-THIRDS OF BLACK YOUNG ADULTS WITHOUT A DEGREE ARE EARNING LOW-WAGES AND NOT ENROLLED

Percent of Black or African American 18-34 Year Olds Without a Degree Who Were Enrolled in College *or* Had at Least \$45,000 in Personal Income (Constant 2023 Dollars)



In 2022 only 10% of Black 18-34 year olds without a degree had at least \$45,000 in personal income.

Some of the decline in enrollments is probably due to better employment opportunities for those without a degree.

But the proportion of Black young adults who are not well-paid, and not enrolled in college, **remains above pre-recession levels.**

Source: Authors' Analysis of ACS Data

THE PIPELINE OF BLACK FIRST-TIME DEGREE SEEKERS HAS DECLINED DRAMATICALLY

Percent Change in Enrollment Since 2011 By Enrollment Category, Black Students and All Students, Public Community Colleges						
	Continuing degree-seeking		First-time degree-seeking		Nondegree seeking	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
2022 Black	-43%	-39%	-42%	-42%	3%	14%
2022 All	-37%	-34%	-25%	-24%	16%	22%

Source: Authors' Analysis of IPEDS Data. Note: "Community colleges" include mixed mission public institutions that awarded more associate than bachelor's degrees over this period. Institution type is held constant across time.

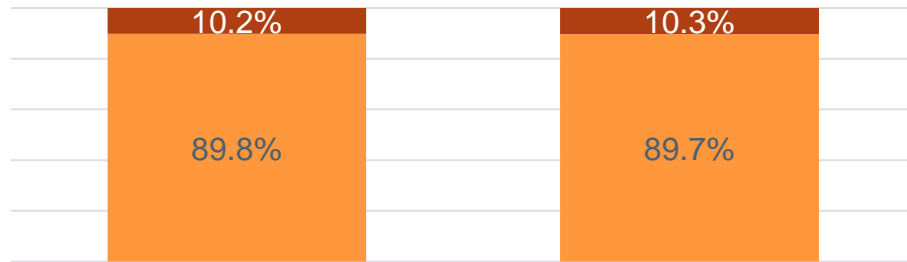
PRELIMINARY 2023 DATA HAD MIXED MESSAGES: NEW STUDENT TRENDS ESPECIALLY CONCERNING

Percent Change in Enrollment from Previous Fall, National Student Clearinghouse			
	Undergraduate total, All Institutions	Public 2-Year	Freshman, All Institutions
2023 Black	+2.1%	+3.7%	-4.2%
2023 All	+2.1%	+4.4%	-6.3%

Source: National Student Clearinghouse "First Look" report series: <https://nscresearchcenter.org/stay-informed/>. Note the 2-Year public category in this report excludes community and dual mission colleges that award bachelor's degrees. Freshman data by race do not include sector detail in this report.

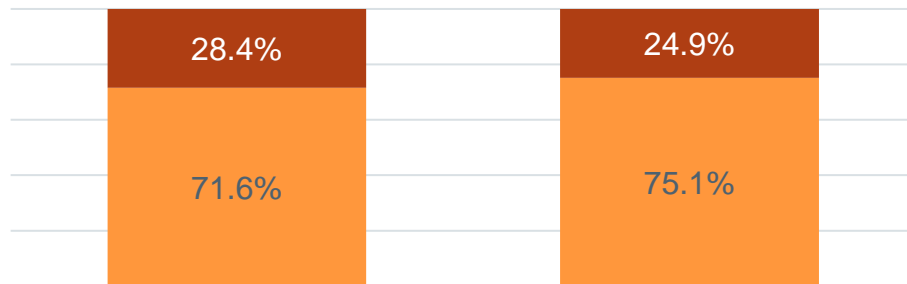
BLACK STUDENTS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE PROGRAMS

2012



- Primarily associate-degree college with baccalaureates
- Colleges with associate degrees and certificates

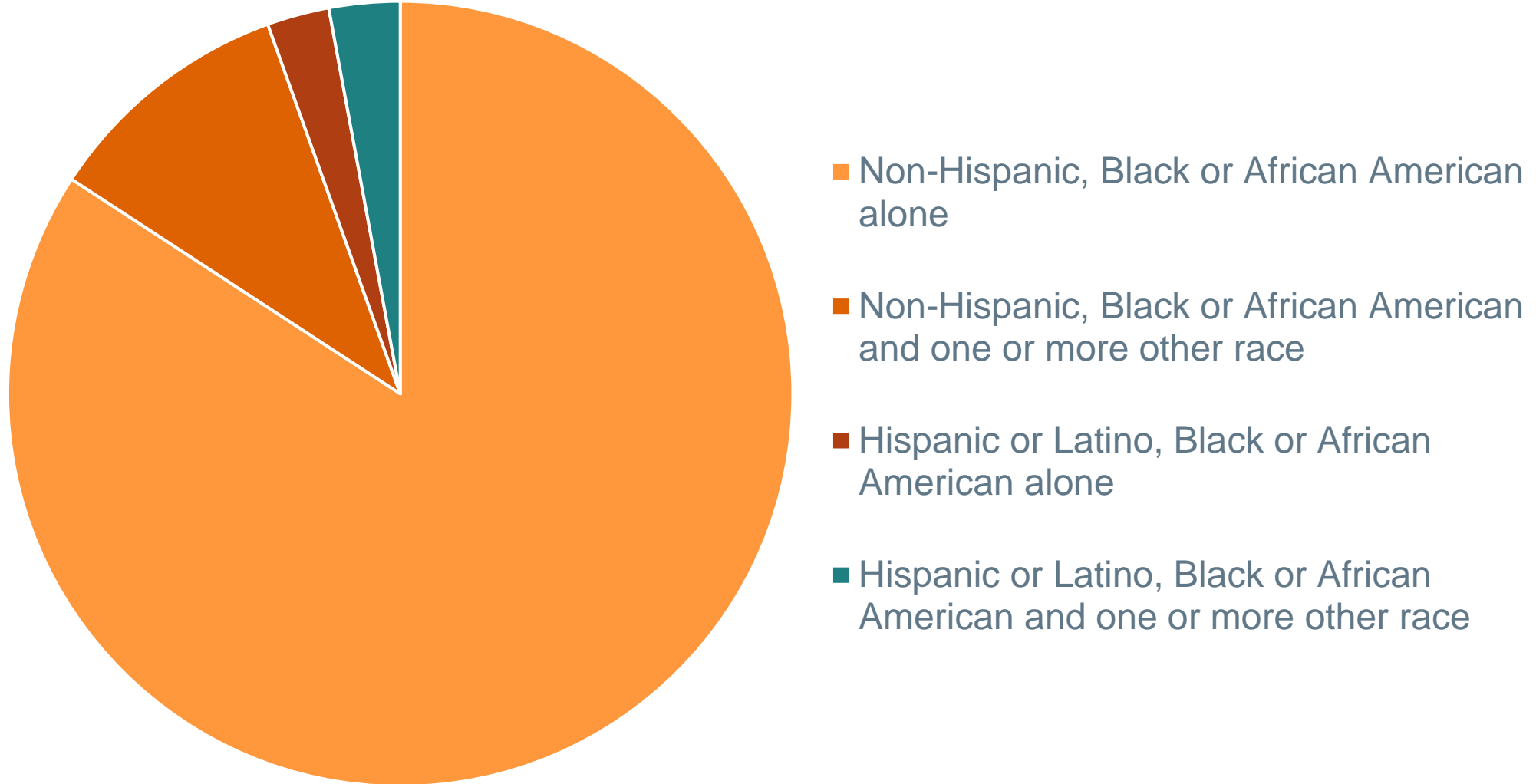
2022



Community College Enrollment 2022 and 2012 by Presence of Bachelor's Degree Programs

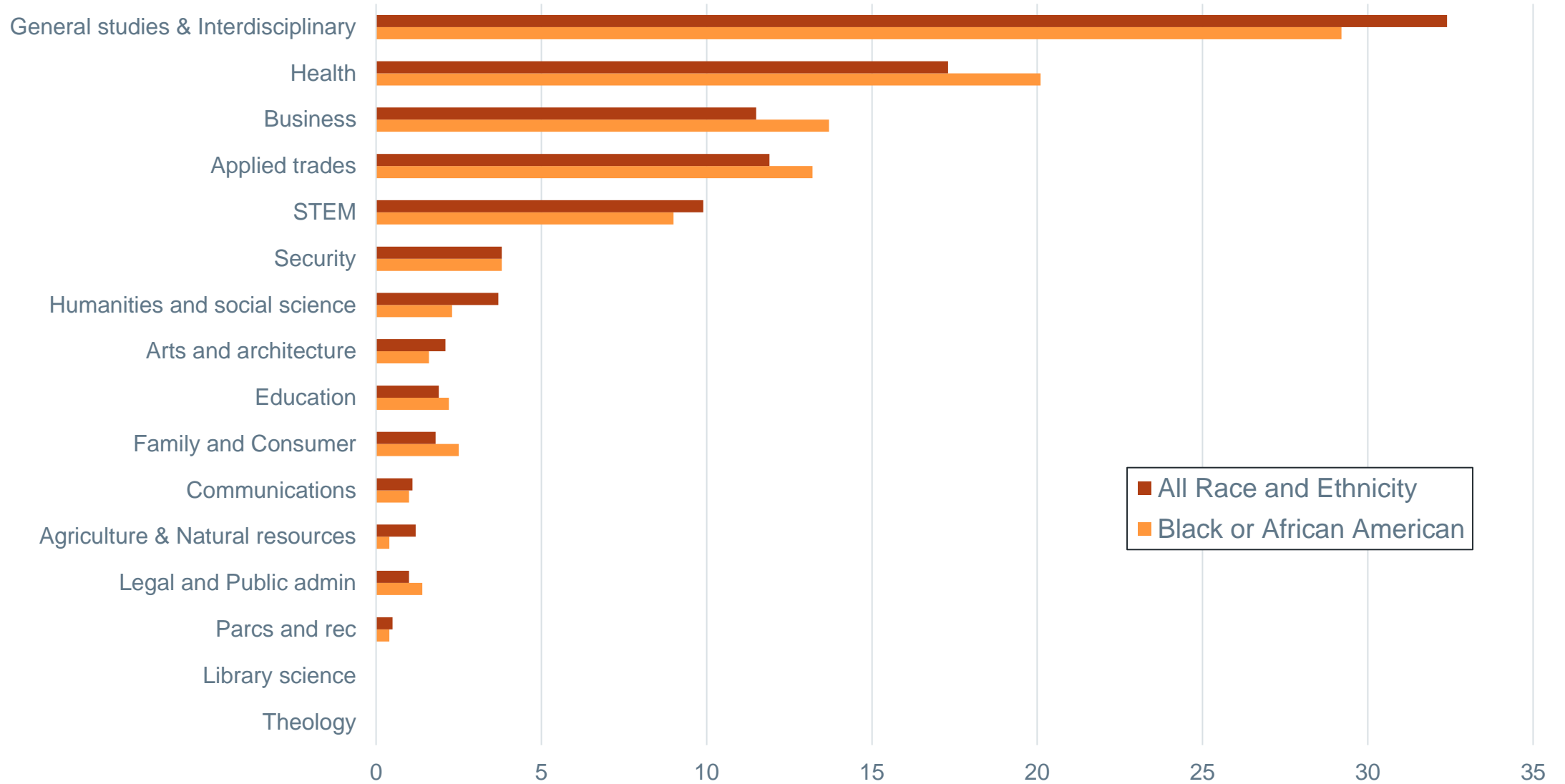
	Primarily associate-degree colleges with baccalaureates	Colleges with associate degrees and certificates
	Enrollment	Enrollment
2012 Black	110,594	964,179
2012 All	771,879	6,781,632
2022 Black	181,890	547,726
2022 All	1,696,580	4,283,697

BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLIC COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATES IN THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2017-2022



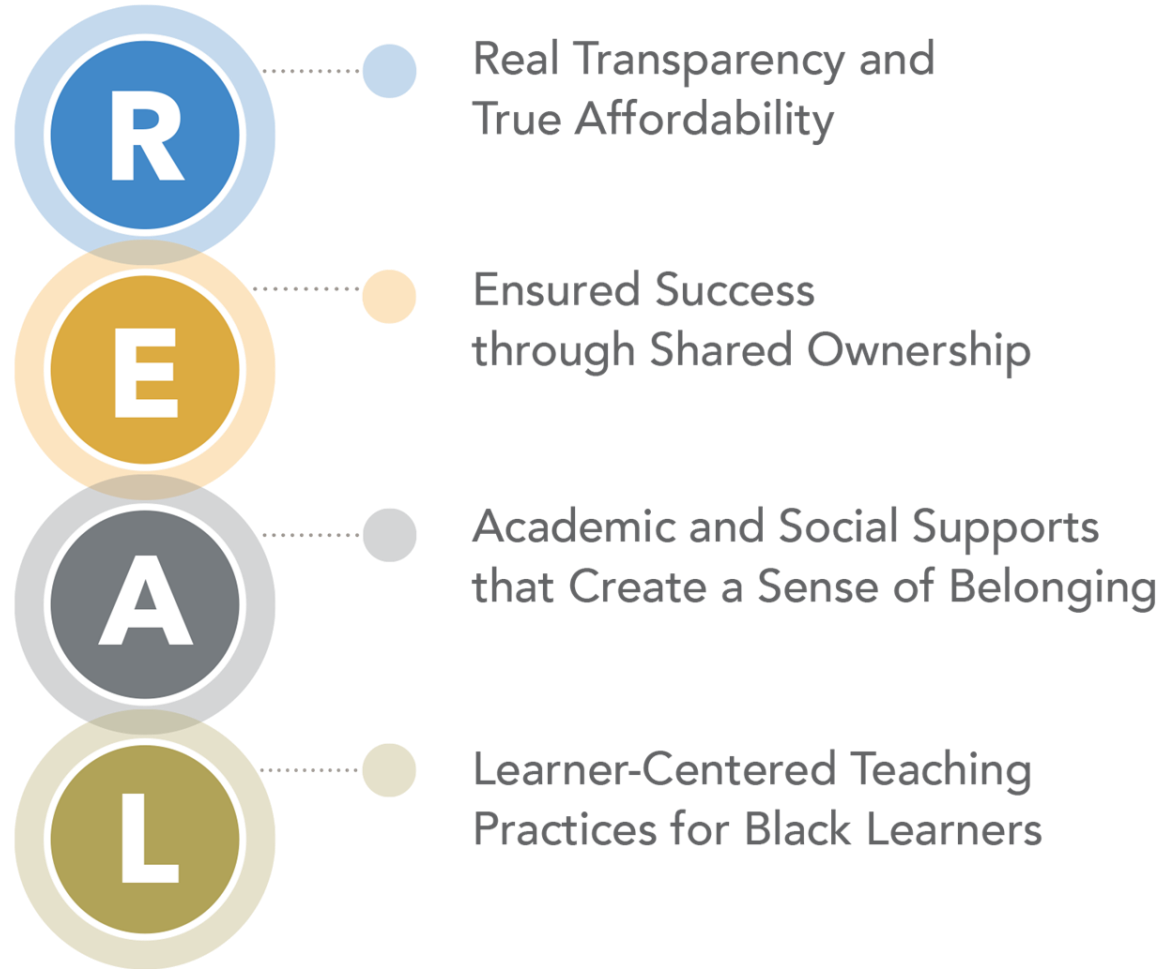
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Race and Ethnicity Detail for Black Public College Undergraduates, 2017-22

BROAD DISCIPLINE PERCENTAGE CREDENTIALS IN 2022



Source: Analysis of IPEDS data for completions of undergraduate credentials (associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and certificates below baccalaureate).

In Order to LEVEL UP, We Have to Get REAL



In Order to LEVEL UP, We Have to Get REAL

Real Transparency and True Affordability

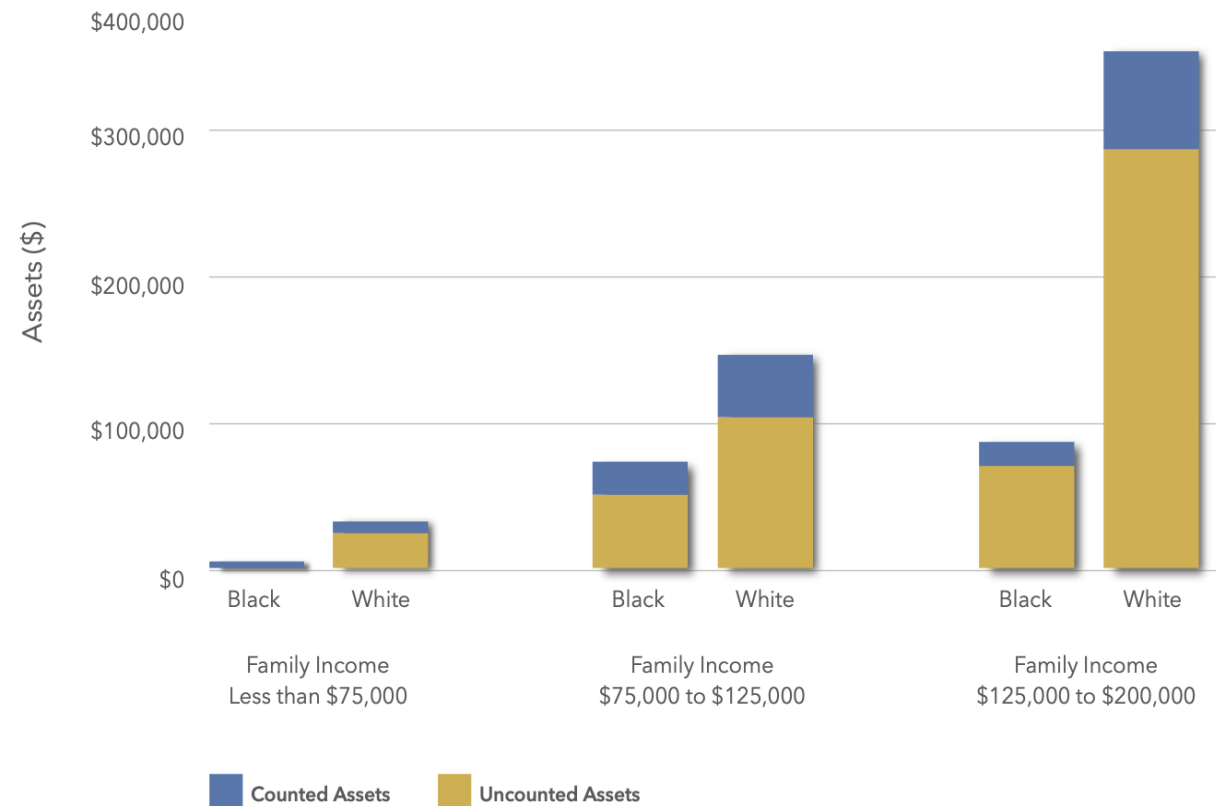
The vast majority — 80% — of Black Americans believe that college is unaffordable.

The following graph illustrates the lowered likelihood of affording college by disproportionately more Black families.

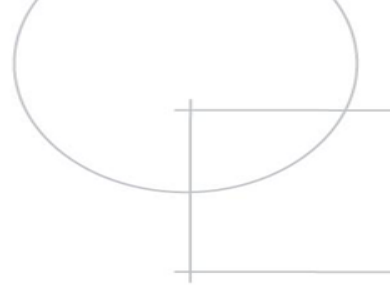
HOW TO LEVEL UP

- Focus on increasing need-based aid.
- Create a bottom-line cost students will pay based on a realistic assessment of what they can reasonably afford.

Figure 1: Median Assets for Families with Children Approaching College Age, by Family Income, Race, and Asset Category



In Order to LEVEL UP, We Have to Get REAL



Ensured Success through Shared Ownership

- Black students are disproportionately enrolled in under-resourced institutions.
- Recent research has found that Black students attend institutions that spend \$2,000 per student less than average on instruction and student services.

HOW TO LEVEL UP

- We must create mechanisms for the support and shared accountability for the success of Black learners- at each level-federal, state, system, and institutional.
 - Be willing to hold leaders accountable where data trends show consistent shortcomings regarding Black learner success.
-

In Order to LEVEL UP, We Have to Get REAL

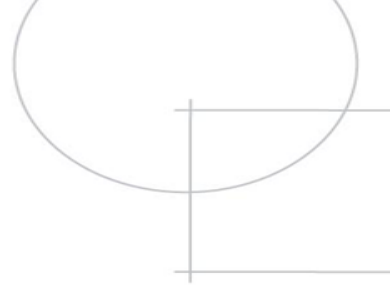
Academic and Social Supports that Create a Sense of Belonging

- Too few colleges intentionally commit to creating a sense of belonging for the varied experiences of Black learners.
- Embracing the “cultural wealth in communities that have historically been seen as less than genius and in those who may not have had a formal education.”

HOW TO LEVEL UP

- Proactively assess the challenges Black learners face inside and outside of the classroom by developing support and connecting to community resources to provide.
 - Intrusive advising support to remain on pathways to high-wage/high-demand jobs
 - Address mental health and childcare needs and prioritize support for housing, transportation, technology, and food insecurity in an environment that fosters a sense of belonging and respect.
-

In Order to LEVEL UP, We Have to Get REAL



Learner-Centered Teaching Practices for Black Learners

- Centuries of lowered expectations and a lack of cultural appreciation of Black students' experiences must all be acknowledged and addressed.
- There is evidence on the effectiveness of increased racial diversity of faculty for all students, and Black students in particular.

HOW TO LEVEL UP

- Center students' lived experiences, perspectives, strengths, and needs as grounding for learning and teaching practices.
 - A visual representation of someone can be extremely motivating; this affirmation of identity also supports their success.
 - Who is teaching, what is being taught, and how it is taught all matter.
-



THE WORK CONTINUES.
JOIN US.

Alliance for Black
Learner Excellence

+LEVEL UP
Commitment to Black
Learners

State Commitments
and Support



Leveraging Explicit Value
for Every Black Learner,
Unapologetically.

Scan me!



An actionable, interactive playbook for:

- ✓ Institutional Leaders
- ✓ State Policymakers
- ✓ Federal Policymakers
- ✓ Community & Business Leaders

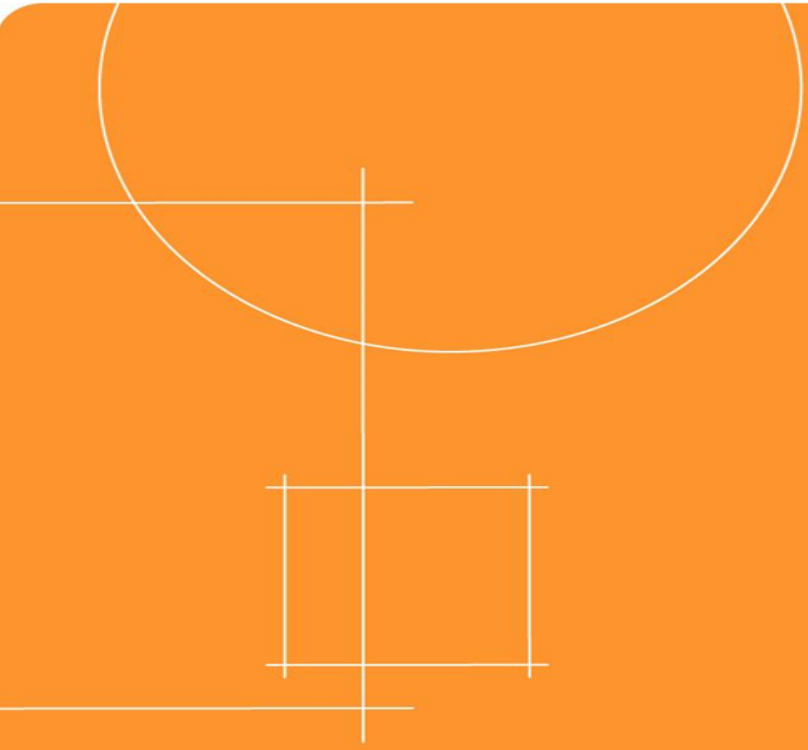
The Playbook includes actionable policy and practice recommendations with exemplary spotlights so that these leaders can get REAL with advancing Black learner excellence.

- R** Real transparency & true affordability.
- E** Ensured success through shared ownership.
- A** Academic & social support.
- L** Learner-centered teaching practices.

SPEAK UP and LEVEL UP NOW

- Visit the website for more information about LEVEL UP
- Join others taking action to support Black learner success





Resources for Unapologetic Leadership

Unapologetic Leadership in Action

Unapologetic Leadership Thought It's Time to Get Real: A Playbook to Demand Black Learner Excellence

by Dr. Keith Curry | Feb 8, 2024 | Thoughts

Unapologetic Leadership Thoughts: The Rise of the Unapologetic Leader

by Dr. Keith Curry | Mar 20, 2024 | Thoughts

Unapologetic Leadership Thought: Last Time I Checc'd (A Reflection on Black Student Success Week)

by Dr. Keith Curry | May 22, 2024 | Thoughts

Unapologetic Leadership Thought: Don't Kill My Vibe

by Dr. Keith Curry | Jun 8, 2024 | Thoughts

Unapologetic Leadership Thoughts

- Previous thoughts addressed:
 - Black Learner Excellence
 - Educational Leadership
 - Student Basic Needs





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Questions?

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