

Institute for the Study of the African American Child (ISAAC)

Progress Report and Plans

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Design of ISAAC

We have arrived at a design of ISAAC that will enable us to function administratively **completely online**. This means that we will not have to pay for office space, utilities and furniture for housing the staff or space to meet with clients. All we will need is space for a secretary and the use of conference rooms for meetings. This is a huge breakthrough. This will reduce the cost of getting the various components up and running. It means that we can operate within the existing facilities in the Education Building.

All of our client services will be delivered online as well. We will establish fees for subscriptions that will provide an income stream to ISAAC. Once we establish our client base, we will create a sliding fee system so that lower income clients can access the services. We will also seek funding to subsidize those who are unable to pay. This will be a second step.

We will seek foundation support to establish the Educational Aide Society so that we will have a quality product to offer. We will also need funds for a marketing campaign which will enable us to reach our clientele. However, we will be able to provide a 3-5 year projection of when we can operate independently from the subscription base. Offering our services online will enable us to deliver services to educators, families and children nationally which is a central feature of our vision. The vision of ISAAC is not limited to starting a charter school or providing tutoring to a small group of students. We seek to design a delivery system that will serve children throughout the country and set into motion sweeping change for children.

We will seek foundation support to build our clientele for the Conferences/Training component. Registrations will be charged for our conferences which will be self-sustaining once we locate and build our constituency. We will seek foundation support to launch the Public Policy Component of ISAAC. The first initiative will be to create Best Resource Allocation Practices (BRAP) which is described below. Once the BRAP are formulated by ISAAC Senior Fellows, then strategies will be devised to make them the law of the land.

Our approach to grant writing is to create a Case Statement. The Case Statement will be a comprehensive proposal that will be delivered to the funder who is capable of funding ISAAC in its totality. There will also be 4 separate proposals that can be lifted from the Case Statement that can be delivered to a funder who is interested in providing funding for one particular component. Once the proposals are completed, then I will make appointments with funders and begin submitting them according to their guidelines. Having the generic proposals completed will make it a simple

matter to massage the content into the format of each funder. This will increase the speed with which we can make multiple submissions. My goal is to begin submitting proposals by September 2010.

Direct Services to Children and Families

Educational Aide Society

The Mission of the Educational Aide Society will be realized by creating a subscription service through which clients can access the following services: tutoring, network of culturally appropriate social and mental health referrals; cultural enrichment clearinghouse; electronic grapevine; education advocates; and athletic advisors. These services are divided into Community Services and Clinical Services on the Mission chart. These two categories are being merged into the category of Director Services to Children and Families (Educational Aide Society) in the proposal seeking funding.

The monthly subscription fee will be \$39.99 a month which is comparable to other organizations such as ISAAC. For this fee, the clients will be entitled to get advice from an Education Advocate or an Athletic Advisor on an as needed basis. They would also be able to access the various lists associated with the clearinghouse and the mental health referrals. In addition, they would be able to access the Electronic Grapevine.

Each client would pay \$480 annually. If we were able to secure 1,000 subscribers, the yield would be \$480,000 annually. If we were able to secure 2,000 subscribers, the yield would be \$960,000 annually.

We will be seeking subscribers nationally. It is conceivable that over time we could get that many subscribers. We would need to get foundation support initially, so that we could market the service and set up our infrastructure. We will post an online newsletter that subscribers can access. The newsletter would contain information pertinent to issues affecting the journey of African American children through school and issues related to achievement in athletics. In this way, the subscribers would have access to information that would be valuable to them, even if they don't access the counseling services. In fact, our intent in creating the newsletter would be to supply them with useful information that adds value to their subscription, even if they don't access the counseling.

The beauty of this plan is that everything that is offered would be offered online. There would be no need for maintaining an office with space for accommodating clients. A key device will be the computer and the web cam. Clients for tutoring and counseling would have the option of telephone consultation or they can see and be seen by the counselor and the tutor through the web cam. The web cams can be obtained at an affordable price (\$19-\$99). Many laptops are now equipped with built-in web cams. The laptop I purchased two years ago came with a web cam. So, moving forward, buying web cams on the part of clients will become less of an expense.

Tutoring

We are planning to offer tutorial services to children from the 3rd grade through 12th grade after school until midnight. Families will purchase subscription packages for tutoring. Children will access the tutoring through a link on our web site which will provide white boards on which to work with the tutors. **Kudos to Stephanie Crider and Dr. Rhodonna Koger for their hard work in assisting me in working out the details of this program.**

There is a need for high quality, individualized tutoring for African American children. ISAAC will network with sponsors and other community organizations to increase the availability of sliding-fee-scale tutoring in the community at large. Through ISAAC, we will also link students in need of remedial assistance with certified and effective tutors who will provide on-line individualized support.

As an initial demonstration project, ISAAC will recruit a cohort of tutors, who will be available from 4:00 pm to 12:00 am. The tutors will be able to work from their own homes or other site of their choice, and can be located anywhere in the country. They will be vetted by the Institute, be knowledgeable in their subject areas, and undergo some basic training. We will first recruit math, science, and writing specialists, subjects where there is the greatest need, and the service will be available to students from 3rd through 12th grades.

Access to the service will be available initially on a subscription basis. A second step will be to provide it on a sliding fee scale. Subscribers will be assigned an identification number and password, giving them access to the service. A true innovation of this service is that it will be available to students via Skype, the software that enables people to make free video and voice calls, send instant messages, and share files with other Skype users over the internet.

Students will have to have internet access, as well as a computer with a web cam. The tutors will have to have Skype access as well. Tutoring now becomes a real-time experience between expert and student. The process is interactive, and students can be in the safety and security of their own home, a public library, or community site that offers computer access. Tutors can address direct questions, help students work through difficult concepts, and look directly at the students' work. Whether the need is to address a particular homework assignment, or to master a difficult concept, students will have a cohort of content specialists available to them to help work through the problem.

The service will be available to anyone, by subscription. Subscription packages will be offered in 5 hour increments. We will create rules wherein discounts are given for the purchase of larger subscription increments. There will be rules for cancellation of subscriptions. All who access the tutoring service will be required to subscribe to the Educational Aide Society. We will credit the Educational Aide Society monthly subscription fee toward tutoring so that those who only want tutoring don't feel that they are making an outlay of money for services they do not need. However, if the tutoring is not accessed, then the subscription fee will accrue to ISAAC. Our interviews with others who run tutoring services reveal that when subscriptions are purchased by libraries and other

organizations, there is a low utilization of the services. We feel that when the individual family purchases the subscriptions, there will be more utilization of the service. When a library buys the service, there is a question about whether the families know that it is available and know how to access the service. When a family buys the subscription, they will make it their business to figure out how to get the value from their purchase. However, if clients purchase the services and neglect to use them, ISAAC will still receive the monthly subscription income.

Initially, subscribers will be targeted who can afford the fee, but for low-income families, the service will be made available at a reduced rate, or for free, once funding is obtained. For many middle and upper class families, computers and internet access are as much a part of the home as a television and a telephone, and for this group, a simple Skype connection will give them immediate access to ISAAC's tutors. Once funding is secured, ISAAC will make available web cams to low-income subscribers, enabling them to have access to this service as well.

Full subscription fees will help support tutors, as well as subsidize low-income subscribers, and help underwrite ISAAC overhead. As part of our demonstration project, we are seeking private support to help secure web cams that can be given away as part of the reduced fee to low-income subscribers.

An important component of ISAAC's tutoring service will be ongoing assessment of both usage of the service, as well as the effectiveness of our services. Our goal will be to ensure that all students using this service demonstrate improvement in the academic area(s) where they face challenges.

Attached to this report in the Appendix is a word document on which are recorded the notes we have made regarding issues related to details involved in setting up the tutoring program. We are planning issues related to insurance for liability, child protective services, criminal background checks for staff, and costs for services.

Conferences/Training Component

Conferences

There are 3 conferences that were planned for 2010 and 2011:

1. [Public Policy Lecture Series](#), May 8, 2010 at Wayne State University
Honorary Chair: Dr. V.P. Franklin
2. [Round Table on African American Education](#), July 17, 2010 at Wayne State University
Honorary Co-Chairs: Dr. V.P. Franklin and Dr. Edmund Gordon
3. [Round Table on African American Education](#), November 3, 2010 at the annual meeting of the **National Black Child Development Institute in Anaheim, California**. For the first time, NBCDI will hold their annual meeting in conjunction with the annual meeting of the **National Association for the Education of Young Children**.

4. [Conference on Research Directions](#), May 2-4, 2011 at the Hilton Oceanfront Resort on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

Training

Blue Cross Blue Shield Proposal

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBS). An invited proposal was submitted in October 2009 for sponsorship of the 2010 Round Table on African American Education and the 2010 Public Policy Lecture Series to be held in Detroit. Bill Toples, Director of Community Responsibility (BCBS) invited us to include in the proposal a dinner meeting with superintendents in Michigan. My challenge was to conceptualize a structure for building on the dinner for superintendents that will be held in March. I have consulted with ISAAC Senior Fellows and have come up with the concept of creating a Consortium – ISAAC Schools Consortium -- which interested school districts will join. The dinner with the superintendents will be the first step. At that dinner they will be asked to enroll their Assistant Superintendents for Curriculum and Instruction as a cohort group with whom I will work on a quarterly basis. From this group will flow an annual Principal's Symposium. From this group will flow an annual Teacher's Symposium. The next step will be the creation of an online Teacher Certification Program in Teaching the African American Child. I will engage ISAAC Senior Fellows in designing and teaching the courses online which will enable us to reach a broader audience throughout the nation. Those who take the courses will pay fees which will contribute toward an income stream for ISAAC. **Kudos to Dr. Hakim Rasheed, Dr. Martha Abbott-Shim, Ann Terrell and Dr. James C. Young for refinement of this concept.**

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBS) was not able to provide seed money for the ISAAC Schools Consortium. However, a more detailed proposal has been written and we are moving forward toward its establishment. The first step was a mailing to 747 Superintendents of Schools within a 2-3 hour driving radius to the Wayne State University campus. The school districts are distributed over Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. Based upon their response to sending their teachers to the Round Table, they will be invited to a meeting planned for October to present the concept of the Consortium.

All of these efforts, in addition to the Round Tables and Public Policy Lecture Series will be directed toward getting the principles of Culturally Appropriate Pedagogy out of my book, *Learning While Black* and into the classroom where we can achieve change for children.

Public Policy Component (FIGHT)

Best Resource Allocation Practices (BRAP)

We have had presentations at 3 of the Round Tables on African American Education that have coalesced our thinking on how to proceed in implementing the Public Policy component of ISAAC that we call FIGHT. The thinking of several ISAAC Senior Fellows (Dr. V.P. Franklin, Dr. James C. Young, Attorney Godfrey Dillard and Attorney Brenda Priestly Jackson) has led to the Inaugural Public Policy Lecture Series that was held on May 8, 2010. We were delighted to have Founding Sponsor Dr. V.P. Franklin serve as honorary chair.

At the ISAAC at NBCDI Round Table in Atlanta, we formulated the following plan. We intend to seek foundation funding to have a series of Think Tanks in which we will delineate **Best Resource Allocation Practices (BRAP)** which will serve as principles for evaluating the manner in which funding is distributed by state and local school districts by race and socioeconomic level. Once formulated, ISAAC will select test cases to challenge school districts who do not adhere to principles of fair distribution of funding. We will seek to obtain a Supreme Court decision that could be as meaningful as the Brown decision in 1954. There have been some successes along these lines such as the decision in Mississippi (that took 25 years) to close the allocation gap that benefitted Jackson State University and other historically African American colleges and universities in that state.

A companion effort that complements BRAP is the creation of **Best Resource Utilization Practices (BRUP)**. There is a need to establish best practices for the utilization of resources by school districts. These criteria would address questionable tendencies for school districts to provide the best school facilities and programs to stem “white flight” and “middle-class” flight within a school district rather than distributing resources equitably on the basis of the needs of all children. Also assessed would be the extent to which the congruence of funding patterns and achievement outcomes reflects an understanding by decision makers of the learning styles and existential situation of African American children. Report cards will be issued to school districts that evaluate the manner in which resources are allocated to children of all social classes, even within ethnic group.

Research Component

Conference on Research Directions (CORD)

ISAAC held the Inaugural Conference on Research Directions at the Hilton Oceanfront Resort on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. This exemplary conference was achieved with no foundation funding. Everyone committed to attending the entire conference. Everyone paid their own way, thereby absorbing the cost of the conference. All presenters who met the criteria were inducted as ISAAC Fellows. Four persons, Dr. A. Wade Boykin, Dr. Gloria Boutte, Dr. Susi Long and Dr. Diane Stephens were inducted as ISAAC Senior Fellows. There were 31 presenters, 2 keynote speeches, 25 panelists on 15 panels and 6 poster presentations. A direct mailing targeted 7,124 K-12 schools in Michigan and South Carolina. One purpose of the conference was to bridge the gap between research and practice. Our intent is to involve school district personnel in the dialogue with researchers about solutions to the achievement gap that affects African American children. **Presenters and Participants will constitute the Research Arm of ISAAC.** A meeting was held at the conference to create committees to:

1. Plan the 2011 conference and publicize.
2. Establish an online community for networking and information sharing.
3. Plan a research agenda related to issues affecting African American Children
4. Engage in collaborative research studies

5. Plan collaborative grant seeking. Secure the attendance of Foundation Executives at future conferences.
6. Serve as a support group for scholars interested in topics related to the African American child in school. This support group will increase the numbers of scholars working in this area who pursue doctoral degrees, attain tenure and establish academic careers. This is the key to becoming a Think Tank that can provide intellectual leadership for the protection and nurturance of African American children.

Approximately 50 persons attended the conference. Nineteen persons signed up for committees to work with CORD as the research arm of ISAAC.

The decision was made to create an online journal that is named, the *African American Child in School (ACIS – pronounced A Kiss!)*. The title is taken from the perennial theme of the CORD conference which invites scholars to contribute who are interested in all issues pertinent to the education of African American children -- in school and out. CORD is a conference devoted to empirical research on the education of African American children. Numerous distinguished scholars volunteered to serve on the Editorial Board. All journal articles will be peer reviewed. **Dr. Gloria Boutte, Professor at the University of South Carolina and Dr. Hakim Rasheed, Associate Professor at Howard University have agreed to be co-editors-in-chief. Dr. V.P. Franklin, ISAAC founding sponsor and editor of the *Journal of African American History* will guide us in its establishment and will serve in a formal role.**

We will use the papers that are presented at CORD as a source for articles in the review. There will also be Calls for Papers and issues devoted to central topics. The CORD conference will be held at Hilton Head Island biannually. We are also planning a call for papers for an issue that will be devoted to Supplementary Education for African American children. To date, we have had one submission of a study that is under review for publication in ACIS.

ISAAC Round Table at NBCDI

The ISAAC Round Table on African American Education was held at the annual meeting of the National Black Child Development Institute. The meeting was held at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta on Saturday, October 24, 2009 from 9:00 am to 1:30 pm. The timing of our session was less favorable than last year when we were scheduled on Sunday. To attend our session, the conferees had to arrive on Friday and incur an extra day of cost. Ours was a pre-conference session. The trade off for the early time was that we were able to have a 5 ½ time block. Most sessions are only 1 ½ - 2 hours in length. The conference actually begins on Sunday and extends through Tuesday. In spite of the early scheduling, we ended up with a comparable number of attendees as measured by our sign-in sheet. Some people were in and out, but approximately 61 people signed in over the course of the day. We brought back around \$600 in donations and memberships. Some donated more than the membership fee. We signed up 10 new paid members. Membership forms were passed out to all in the packets we provided. We distributed fliers for our 3 future events planned for May 2010, July 2010 and May 2011. We provided information on the mission of ISAAC; the ISAAC Progress Report; evaluation forms for the session and online community sign-up forms.

Dr. James Young, professor at Clark Atlanta University served as moderator for the Round Table. Dr. Janice Hale, professor at Wayne State University presented the Mission of ISAAC and a second presentation on Best Practices for African American Children. Attorney Godfrey Dillard presented the plan for FIGHT, the Public Policy component of ISAAC. All of the feedback on the session was that it was Excellent.

College Board Conference, “A Dream Deferred” at Spelman and Morehouse Colleges in Atlanta, Georgia, April 29-30, 2010.

An invitation was extended to me to serve as a plenary speaker for a conference sponsored annually by the College Board (Princeton, New Jersey). The Conference addressed the future of African American Education. The conference, “A Dream Deferred” is usually held in Los Angeles, California. It was held on April 29-30, 2010 in Atlanta, Georgia on the campuses of Spelman and Morehouse Colleges. I served as the luncheon speaker at Morehouse on Thursday, April 29th. The exciting news for ISAAC is that I was invited to write an opinion piece for their newsletter which was posted on their website and is accessed by 100,000 educators throughout the nation. In that opinion piece, I was given the opportunity to mention the ISAAC initiatives, give a link to our web site and advertise our future events. The opinion piece is printed in the ISAAC July 17, 2010 Round Table Program, “Creating Educational Excellence for African American Children.” We also distributed fliers advertising our future events which were included in the packets of the conferees in April.

Organization Building Activities

Online Communities

With the assistance of **Conference Co-Chair, Debra Brundidge and Dr. Mary L. Waker**, we have updated 12 online communities as people have signed up at our various events. We have approximately 350 persons signed up. The online communities are WSU Listservs. The creation of these communities makes it easy for me to get messages out to our constituency. At the end of December, I sent a message to which I attached the 3 fliers for future events and a report of our future plans. I also asked for membership renewals and donations. Each person was also asked to disseminate our fliers through email blasts to their constituents.

Membership Renewals

Conference Co-Chair, Debra Brundidge contributed numerous hours of volunteer services in sending out membership renewal forms to all persons who initially paid for year one memberships. She set up the on-line email system for notifying members to renew their memberships.