



FAITH IN ACTION: Tips and Tools for Education Advocacy



HOPE IN ACTION FOR STUDENTS

#FaithEdAdvocacy

#UNCFK12

#TEPK12



The Call - *“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”- Micah 6:8, ESV*

Faith and justice are inextricably linked. A profession of faith calls for compassion and a willingness to speak up against injustice. For more than 75 years, UNCF has engaged in this work to provide high quality educational opportunities for students and has worked with leaders of faith, policymakers and the education community to fight for equity in education. The Expectations Project (TEP) has championed members of the faith community to engage in faithful advocacy in the education community so that all God’s children receive a high quality education.

We believe that the faith community has the power to enact change on behalf of students. We believe there is hope in action. There are more than 300,000 places of worship across America compared with roughly 23,000 high-poverty public schools, struggling to meet student needs—a ratio of 13 to 1.¹ We urge the faith community to address the vast inequities in public education and speak up and act on behalf of “the least of these.” (Matthew 25:40)



The Problem - *“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed. Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice.” - Proverbs 31:8-9, NLT*


- School districts serving the most students of color receive **\$1,800 less** in state and local funding per student than districts with the fewest students of color.²
- **1.7 million students** are in schools with a sworn law enforcement officer but no school counselor.³
- African American graduates who took the American College Test (ACT) were **four times less likely** than white students to meet three or more college college readiness benchmarks.⁴



The Committed - *“Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.” - Matthew 9:37, NIV*

UNCF research shows that Black clergy are the most actively engaged and involved in K-12 advocacy issues, more so than business, non-profit, education and government leaders.⁵

- **89% of Black clergy** talked to members of their community about improving education.
- **85% of Black clergy** provided information to educators, parents or students by hosting events.
- UNCF research shows that **churches were identified as the top influential and trustworthy source** for supporting black parents in their child’s educational journey.⁶
- **77% of practicing Christians** agree that churches and faith-based groups should be given more opportunities to support local public schools.⁷
- **95% of pastors and 85% of practicing Christians** agree that Christians should get involved in helping improve public schools.⁸



The Action - “...let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” - Amos 5:24, ESV

UNCF and TEP think that people of faith can and should get involved in advocating to make public schools better. Whether you are a seasoned advocate or this is your first time thinking about it, there is a place for you. **Here are four ways to get involved.** For more tips go to [UNCF.org/FaithEdAdvocacy](https://www.uncf.org/FaithEdAdvocacy) or [expectations.org/uncf-faith-ed-advocacy](https://www.expectations.org/uncf-faith-ed-advocacy).

LEARN about local public education issues that matter in your community and share key resources with the congregation. Consider including education advocacy tips in a sermon.

ENGAGE in school board and government hearings (virtually attend, update congregation on issues or provide testimony).

HOST a forum (virtually, during the COVID-19 pandemic) where you invite congregants, other churches and the community to learn about and share concerns about local public schools.

WRITE an opinion editorial (op-ed) that includes a call to action.

“If churches fully embrace the cause of equitable schools for all of God’s children, the academic achievement gap in U.S. public education can be closed in our lifetimes.”

— The Expectations Project

Share your advocacy stories with us at [#FaithEdAdvocacy](https://www.facebook.com/FaithEdAdvocacy)

For more advocacy resources, visit [UNCF.org/FaithEdAdvocacy](https://www.uncf.org/FaithEdAdvocacy) or [expectations.org/uncf-faith-ed-advocacy](https://www.expectations.org/uncf-faith-ed-advocacy)

To learn more about The Expectations Project or UNCF, visit [expectations.org](https://www.expectations.org) and [UNCF.org](https://www.uncf.org).

¹Digest for Education Statistics. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES): https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_216.90b.asp

²*Funding Gaps: An Analysis of School Funding Equity Across the U.S. and in Each State*. 2018. The Education Trust.

³*Cops and No Counselors: How the Lack of School Mental Health Staff is Hurting Students*. ACLU

⁴*The Condition of College and Career Readiness 2019*. ACT

⁵For more information on the survey methodology, please see: Anderson,

Meredith B.L., Caroline Harper., & Brian K. Bridges. 2017. *Lift Every Voice and Lead: African American Leaders’ Perceptions of K-12 Education Reform*. Washington, DC: Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute, UNCF.

⁶Bridges, Brian K., Janet Awokoya, & Frances Messano. 2012. *Done to Us, Not With Us: African American Parent Perceptions of K-12 Education*. Washington, DC: Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute, UNCF

⁷Fulgham, Nicole. 2013. *Schools in Crisis: They Need Your Help*. Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan

⁸Ibid