

## **International Conference on Urban Education 2024 Conference Proposal**

**Program Title:** *Breaking Barriers Beyond Higher Education: A Twenty-Year Journey of Three Equity-Based School & Community Partnerships*

### **Abstract:**

Institutions of higher education often work in silos and fail to create solid partnerships with K-12 community stakeholders to meet the ever-shifting demands in education. For schools of education, especially, it is imperative to break existing barriers beyond the walls of academia to better train future and current educators on equity, access, and racial justice. This presentation will overview three unique equity-based school and community partnership programs within a School of Education at one university and highlight their individual and collective impacts on fostering educational equity and racial justice over twenty years.

### **1. Purpose**

This presentation will overview three unique equity-based school and community partnership programs within a School of Education at one university and highlight their individual and collective impacts on fostering educational equity and racial justice over twenty years.

### **2) Concept/Project/Innovative strategy- included levels)**

Over the past 20 years, three unique programs have been developed and implemented to meet various needs in our surrounding school communities and address racial justice and equity issues in education. Each program provides different services to achieve these results. The three programs are 1) The Central Jersey Consortium for Excellence and Equity (CJCEE), 2) The Monmouth University Social Justice Academy (SJA), and 3) the Empowering Young Black Males Leadership Mentoring Program (EYBM).

The Central Jersey Consortium for Excellence and Equity (CJCEE) is an evolving collaboration of K-12 personnel, parents, and students, collectively committed to learning and working together to enhance the achievement and well-being of all students and increase the academic performance, engagement, and future success of traditionally underachieving students. CJCEE focuses on inter-district collaboration and shared learning for continuous improvement in eliminating the disparities in achievement and school engagement among students.

The Social Justice Academy (SJA) directly supports K-12 schools across New Jersey for their ongoing social justice education and curriculum development efforts. School personnel participate in anti-racist training and receive grant funding to implement social justice projects in their schools and districts. Additionally, the SJA serves as a professional development hub for members of Monmouth University and the local community.

The Empowering Young Black Males mentoring program (EYBM) is a tri-partner collaboration between Monmouth University Educational Counseling Program, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal and Northern New Jersey, and local high schools. EYBM serves dual roles: one as a catalyst for access to opportunities for personal and academic achievement for high school Black

male students (mentees) and a retention initiative for current Black male college students (mentors).

### **3) Data Driven Support**

Program evaluations will serve as the statistical data for this presentation. The lived experiences shared through visuals will provide the audience with several ways the implementation of the three programs has impacted the surrounding school communities. These two sources will demonstrate the effectiveness of the programs on urban education.

### **4) Goals or Outcomes of the strategy, project, or concept**

The overarching goal among all three distinct programs is to provide training and professional development to assist in building equity in education. Working with middle and high school students along with their educators, these programs offer numerous resources such as mentoring, access, and exposure to social justice-related topics. Additionally, all three programs collectively fill the university's educational equity and anti-racism training gap.

### **5) Implications of concept, project, or in an urban context.**

The lack of an urban education program within the School of Education at the university has required extended programs. Through these three unique equity-based programs, the coordinators and the surrounding school communities are breaking the barriers down through connections, social justice advocacy, and training among school constituents – thus filling the gap at the university and school level.

**Strand:** *(Choose appropriate strand for proposal content)*

Social Justice & Advocacy

**Session Type:** *(Paper, Roundtable, or Poster)*

Paper

**Keywords:** *(no more than 3 keywords or phrases): Descriptors of proposal content)*

Social Justice Advocacy & Training

Racial Justice

Equity & Education

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