

# *Reaching all\* children and youth*

“The Roots of Violence: Wealth without work, Pleasure without conscience, Knowledge without character, Commerce without morality, Science without humanity, Worship without sacrifice, Politics without principles.”

~ Mahatma Gandhi

The unmet need for recognition is at the root of human aggression and violence. Each person has a basic need for food, clothing, and shelter. We also have a personal need for respect and regard, and to reach our potential. For marginalized communities of low-income urban youth of all colors, normal actions taken to meet such needs can become difficult. Efforts are stymied or blocked by society and individuals in the form of injustice, prejudice, and discrimination through social, economic, and political isolation. Having these needs unmet, leads to feelings of frustration, powerlessness, hopelessness, and eventually to apathy--the stage before violence. Thus, violence per se is not our problem, normalcy and indifference are. Situations which enable true human regard and respect will reduce the tendency to meet these needs in ways having anti-social consequences. Such situations are characterized by actions toward meeting psychological-social needs through personal and cultural clarification, and self-actualization. Using pedagogies of recognition and democratic education in our urban public schools, appreciating global hip hop culture via validating youths' search for authenticity, and an urban community enabling the uniqueness, self-determination, and human potential of each and every citizen are recommended to reduce crime and violence.

A response to the OpportunINDY Project

Black & Latin@ Policy Institute

Indianapolis, IN USA

Summer 2016

[www.bl-pi.org](http://www.bl-pi.org)

## Executive Summary

“How do we stop crime long-term? It's by meeting the needs of young people today.”  
~ Troy Riggs, Chief of Police, Indianapolis

Local news media have given positive reports on Project Indy, Mayor Hogsett's summer jobs program. The mayor wanted to give youth an opportunity to have someone feed them, look after them, provide them ways to make some money, and mentor them during the summers. Also, media reports portray IMPD Chief Riggs as a different kind of police chief: he talks as much or more about issues such as poverty, hunger, education and struggling families as he does about making arrests.

This proposal supports Mayor Hogsett and Chief Riggs because their positions reflect an understanding the basic questions about human violence: What are its sources? What does violence do for the individual or group? What purposes are achieved through violence?

The proposal supports validating the basic needs of youth for decent food, care, and mentors. It also sees the connections among issues of poverty, education, and daily survival with crime and violence.

This is why the *Reaching all\* children and youth* idea uses Abraham Maslow's pyramid of human needs to show what motivates behavior. At the triangle's base is our need for food, clothing, and shelter. Next are our needs for security and social needs for love, companionship, family, and friendship. Our “esteem needs” for recognition (attention), respect, status, and reputation follow. At the top of the pyramid is our need for self-actualization—our human drive to become who we are potentially. It's the natural growth toward the self-fulfillment of what is already in us, or more accurately, of making real what we uniquely and genuinely are. Self-actualized people are genuine, moral, creative, spontaneous, confident, and un-biased. Self-actualization will reduce the need to be violent.

The concept associates Maslow's hierarchy with Rollo May's ideas about the “5 Levels of Power” which are potentials in each of us. Our powers range from the basic power to be (the power to exist and stay alive) to self-affirmation and on to self-assertion, aggression, and finally to the power of violence.

As we live, we have to say “yes” to our existence. This is not just surviving, but living with a sense of importance. Our basic needs are met. We have self-respect. We seek and get appreciation from others.

When our basic needs for survival are not met, we have to be assertive--love ourselves enough to get food, housing, or security. When our needs for recognition and respect are not met, we can become assertive, even “pushy,” demanding that others see and hear us. Remember 3 or 4 year-olds who want the attention of a parent and become louder as they assert, “Mommy. Look mommy. MOMMY LOOK!”

The same “cry” for attention, for significance, is a behavior adults practice. Even groups and organizations that feel ignored are motivated to be assertive if they are to maintain self-respect and get the attention they think they deserve. “Here I am, I demand you notice me.” “I have rights and I am going to assert them.” Self-assertion, drawing “a line in the sand,” is a mentally healthy response to disregard. *The need for recognition is the core issue in self-affirmation, and so understanding violence.*

When assertion does not work, being aggressive can become a way to get basic and social needs met. Take our Civil Rights Movement. Sit-ins in the 1960s at southern lunch counters are prime examples. Dr. King took aggressive stances against poverty, fair wages, and voting rights. These were healthy stances because it became necessary to “cross the line” and be aggressive in order to be recognized and taken seriously. This non-violent approach worked; when the nation saw on TV what was going on, the public's assertive and aggressive outrage forced government to call off the water hoses and police dogs.

The fifth level of power is violence. In most cases, it is an action done when all other actions fail. An excellent example is the early 1960's when repressive laws and loss of political rights forced South African freedom groups underground. They tried to explain their demands for fair treatment. They marched and protested aggressively. Each action brought only more oppression. Seeing no other choice, Dr. Nelson Mandela and others were driven to lead an armed resistance against Apartheid.

Violence against Apartheid was not the first option. Attempts via reason and non-aggressive actions were ignored. Protesters were shot. Leaders were jailed, tortured, and killed. This brought feelings of powerlessness, feeding apathy. “Violence is the expression of impotence,” Jacob Bronowski says.

Bronowski’s insight makes us consider these ideas: Power itself is not the problem. We cannot frame human power as all bad. Doing so removes our healthy self-assertion, and the vital aggression needed to fight cancer or social injustices. The problem is: in order to mitigate the need for violence, we must recognize the underlying causes of the social disease of impotence and its byproduct: apathy. We do not just want “Peace in the Streets.” Peace is not the opposite of violence, *indifference is the opposite*.

What *OpportunINDY* does not want is citizens saying, “It’s no use, there’s nothing we can do about it,” “I don’t care, it just doesn’t matter,” “No one’s going to listen to me,” or worse, “I don’t feel anything anymore.” As a high school student who was bullied by peers expressed it, “A sense of helplessness and hopelessness led me to consider violence as a solution.”

“We use violence to show our love.” As a city we must contemplate this remark by a Cape Town, South African youth speaking on how violence is used in her community to solve problems. If we agree with the statement or not, we can’t deny that we somehow understand it. *Violence is important*.

These examples do not mean any aggression is always OK or violence cannot be senseless or horrifying. It means that if society can meet the basic and social need of individuals or groups for recognition, if society can enable self-actualization, then these same persons or groups will not be motivated to use negative aggression and eventually violence to get these needs met.

We have discussed our basic, personal and social needs. In a perfect world, they are met by family and society and our pathway to self-fulfillment is clear. To help Indy I these ideas are proposed:

- *Culture of recognition* If recognition is the basis of understanding and reducing violence, a culture of recognition in schools is needed. Ways of teaching students based on relationships where staff recognize and embrace each student’s personhood, family, culture, and neighborhood are required. Ultimately Indianapolis has to reconstruct and redefine the purpose of education for these students.

- *Poverty* The journey toward self-actualization cannot be made if a person’s basic needs are not being met. If someone is always worried about food, where they are going to live, or what will happen next, their thoughts are not on developing their human potential. Poverty prevents self-actualization.

Gandhi says, “Poverty is the worst form of violence.” If true, *OpportunINDY* must recognize the need to reduce poverty. Besides “Stop the violence” signs, we need “Stop the poverty” signs.

- *Democratic Education* Currently there are 30 democratic schools in Israel. The purpose of these public schools is to discover and develop the uniqueness of the student. This approach ensures the process of self-actualization because democratic education sees “one-size-fits-all” *normalcy* as the source of problems in society. See: [www.democratic.co.il/en](http://www.democratic.co.il/en)

- *Strength-Based ILP* Special Ed students must have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). IEPs address learning and behavioral “deficiencies.” A Strength-Based Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) builds on the IEP, actualizing a student’s assets: their interests, passions and uniqueness. *The challenge is making a fluid educational system where difference is a “taken for granted” attribute of every child.*

- *Education City* In such a city, education is a priority. It is not what happens during certain hours or places, but is the city’s essence. Here, Excellent Centers provide citizens of all ages chances to discover, develop, and share interests and passions. This “culture of pluralistic learning” supports the idea that education for individual development and self-fulfillment improves the general quality of life for all\*.

In summary, *if our need for recognition is the central issue in understanding and reducing violence*, then *OpportunINDY* is the best approach. The initiative acknowledges that each of us needs a sense of significance, that we matter. It challenges us to realize that if the attention children and youth need cannot be obtained legitimately, they will obtain it *somehow...*

## Table of Contents I

The basic theme of *Engaging all\* children and youth* is personal, group, and community empowerment. Power corrupts, but so do powerlessness. Feeling powerless (“I feel so helpless and inadequate...”) leads to feeling impotent (No one listens to me...it’s no use”), which leads to indifference (“I just don’t care anymore...”) and then to apathy (“Nothing matters now...”).

Crime and violence in Indianapolis will be reduced when: young people have a voice and they are listened to; when they know they have global human rights; when their critical stances toward their experiences of survival in their neighborhoods and those aspects of public schooling emphasizing conformity and social control, not education for liberation, are regarded; when their global youth culture is recognized and validated; and, when they (not the status quo) name their world and that naming language is respected. Finally, crime and violence will be reduced when young people have a authentic sense of efficacy and know they can make a difference, and so are invited by the adults of Indianapolis to help solve the very problems they are seen as being a part of.

### Key IDEAS

- IDEA 1a *OpportunINDY’s* Rights of the Child: Recognizing Indianapolis children and youth have global human rights by composing a local version of a children’s rights compact reflecting our city’s regard for its young citizens p. 8
- IDEA 1b The Global Human Rights of Children: Strengthening the school participation and civic engagement of children and youth p. 9
- IDEA 2a Violence is important: The issues are “normalcy,” apathy, and the unmet basic human need for respect and recognition, not violence p. 9
- IDEA 2b Accepting difference as a way to reduce violence: Validating the *differon*, self-actualization and social-actualization, and meeting our human need for recognition p. 10
- IDEA 2c A proposal to re-invent disability: A Strength-Based ILP for all\* Marion County special education students and their families p. 10
- IDEA 3a Urban schools don’t need fixing: We can’t call schools designed to fail “broken” p. 11
- IDEA 3b Urban school reform, and crime and violence: Is IPS school reform really about land development, and not about schools or reform? p. 11
- IDEA 4 Why Black males don’t go into teaching and what to do about it: A recourse for culturally, politically, and critically conscious educators p. 12
- IDEA 5 Recognize, confront, organize, and act to ease racial and class isolation in Indianapolis, one of America’s 21 most segregated cities p. 12
- IDEA 6 How Indianapolis can reduce violence by enabling diversity, excellence, and self-actualization: A Destination City or An Education City...or both? p. 13
- IDEA 7 Youthtopias: Establishing opportunity for Indianapolis youth to help create the world they will inherit p. 14
- IDEA 8 Social Entrepreneurs: People forming businesses to tackle social problems, improve communities and people's life chances, or save the environment p. 14
- IDEA 9 School disaffection is a global issue, not just in Indianapolis, IN p. 15
- IDEA 10 A Learner’s Bill of Rights: Keeping children and youth in school and graduating by empowering them to make sure their teachers view all\* students as naturally curious and motivated to learn p. 15

## Table of Contents II

### Adolescence

- IDEA 11 Adolescence is not for everybody
- IDEA 12 A proposal to re-invent adolescence and create a Community Youth Charter
- IDEA 13 Transform Rites of Passage: Providing young people what they must have: Combine the walkabout model and the accelerated learning concept
- IDEA 14 Combine rites of passage and citizenship education: Helping both young people and our community

### Alternative Education

- IDEA 15 Alternatives *of* the status quo vs. alternatives *to* the status quo
- IDEA 16 What are the characteristics of real alternative programs and schools?
- IDEA 17 “Don’t call us alternative...”
- IDEA 18 Embracing real alternative education: From second chance programs or a last chance “soft jail” model emphasizing behavior to proactive academic models emphasizing learning, teaching, and assessment alternatives
- IDEA 19 Why wait until students become disruptive? Give under-served Black male students real alternative programs by following Recommendation #47 of the Indiana Commission on Disproportionality

### Assessments

- IDEA 20 Standardized testing: A measurement that perpetuates inequalities
- IDEA 21 Multiple assessments: Options for students to show what they know, understand, and can do
- IDEA 22 Formative assessment: Learning from successes and mistakes
- IDEA 23 Multiple measures for high school graduation: Ensuring the teaching and assessment of a wider variety of skills so all\* students graduate

### Parents

- IDEA 24 Levels of Parental Participation: From involvement to engagement to empowerment
- IDEA 25 Parent Power Talking Points: Preserving the public good of public schools: Enabling all\* parents to be a part of the politics of public education
- IDEA 26 Is parental involvement “bait & switch”?
- IDEA 27 Parent Power, Indianapolis: Filling in “The Parent Gap”
- IDEA 28 Local School Councils: Returning ownership of our public schools directly to the public
- IDEA 29 We need a new coalition of solidarity among urban teachers and urban parent

### Pedagogy

- IDEA 30 Attracting and keeping Black male teachers: A pedagogy of hip hop: Establishing learning environments supportive for urban teachers

- IDEA 31 A Pedagogy of Recognition: Meeting the need of urban children and youth for positive recognition while helping teachers reconstruct and redefine the purpose of education for their students
- IDEA 32 Critical Hip hop Pedagogy: Making schools work for urban teachers and their students
- IDEA 33 Reality Pedagogy: Urban education as neo-colonial, students as neo-indigenous, and teachers as colonizing faux-liberators
- IDEA 34 THUG LIFE Pedagogy: Engaging disaffected urban students
- IDEA 35 Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: Advancing culturally relevant teaching to the next level

### **Poverty**

- IDEA 36 A culture of poverty: Reality or myth?
- IDEA 37 A comprehensive vision for urban school transformation
- IDEA 38 What are urban schools for: Disrupting or eradicating poverty?
- IDEA 39 Transformational Community Schools: Ending neighborhood poverty through self-reliance and self-determination
- IDEA 40 Involving students in high poverty schools to ease and eradicate poverty: Following Canada's example of *Campaign 2000*
- IDEA 41 American and international anti-poverty programs involving students
- IDEA 42 Envisioning a collaboration among the Southeast Working-Class Task Force, The Gene and Mary Ann Zink Poverty Institute, and the Southeast Education Task Force to ease and eradicate poverty in southeast Indianapolis
- IDEA 43 Equity Literacy: The challenge to urban educators to appreciate equity in regard to students living in the circumstances of poverty

### **Reading**

- IDEA 44 Learning how to read as a political act: Critical literacy in the 21st century
- IDEA 45 Literacy with an attitude: Educating working-class children in their own self-interest
- IDEA 46 School-wide cross-curriculum reading program: How students in every course practice reading and writing
- IDEA 47 Media Literacy as the 4<sup>th</sup> R: Engaging all\* students by providing multiple ways to teach, learn, and show learning
- IDEA 48 Why media literacy is important for Indianapolis young people: The relationship between media literacy and personal efficacy, and between median literacy and personal violence
- IDEA 49 Epi-literacy: Reaching all\* students: Moving past traditional *struggles* around what literacy is and especially what being literate means today

### **Student voice and youth voice**

- IDEA 50 Civic Literacy: What does America's democratic republic require of its schools?
- IDEA 51 First Amendment Schools: Helping students be active citizens in their schools

- IDEA 52a A democratic science education: Building a more empowering science education for urban students through democratic ideals
- IDEA 52b Classroom and school shared decision-making: The practice of multi-cultural education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- IDEA 53 Indianapolis Youth (Empowerment) Council
- IDEA 54 The Seattle Youth Commission: Now Indy doesn't have to reinvent the wheel
- IDEA 55 Students as change agents: From community service to community change
- IDEA 56 Student voice or student action in Indianapolis?
- IDEA 57 Students on Marion County school boards: Providing youth a sense of responsibility for their school district

### **Teachers**

- IDEA 58 Cultural competency is not enough: Advancing culturally relevant teaching as politically relevant teaching
- IDEA 59 Culturally Relevant Teaching: Solving the paradox: Education as both a barrier and solution to full participation in society for urban youth
- IDEA 60a Teaching for social justice: How urban educators can win the hearts and minds of urban students, urban families, and urban neighborhoods
- IDEA 60b Learning to teach for social justice in a context of neo-liberalism

### **Urban Education**

- IDEA 61a Too much school, too little education: Why school is the enemy for urban students...and what to do about it
- IDEA 61b What is a high quality education for urban students?
- IDEA 62 What is hip hop?
- IDEA 63 Engaging youth who identify with hip hop culture: Education as a political act for disaffected "neo-indigenous" urban students: *OpportunINDY's* fundamental support of critical pedagogy
- IDEA 64 What is hip hop-based education doing in nice fields such as early childhood and elementary education?
- IDEA 65 We cannot be against all resistance of urban students to school; we have to enable opposition that is transformational
- IDEA 66 A questions for rigor vs. vigor: Which concept is more academically appropriate and culturally relevant for all\* students, especially African Americans?

### **Youth culture**

- IDEA 67 The disconnect of urban youth: Indianapolis as among the worst in America for youth engagement
- IDEA 68 Disconnections between the Civil Rights Generation and the Hip Hop Generation which can effect urban education and urban violence
- IDEA 69 Hip hop culture is central to appreciating the identities of Marion County Black youth because it is an essential pathway to understanding their struggles, realities, and possibilities

- IDEA 70 Understanding the political engagement of Black youth in their schools and neighborhoods: Expanding on the ideas of Dr. Shawn Ginwright

## Key IDEAS

### ***Intro* IDEA 1a *OpportunINDY's* Rights of the Child: Recognizing Indianapolis children and youth have global human rights by composing a local version of a children's rights compact reflecting our city's regard for its young citizens**

“How we stop crime long-term? It's by meeting the needs of young people today.”

~ Troy Riggs, IMPD Chief

“How we stop crime long-term? It's by validating the global human rights of young people today.”

~ John Harris Loflin, Black & Latin@ Policy Institute

“The right to have rights, bases human rights on the right to belong to a political community in which individuals are judged by their actions and opinions. Only this type and level of political belonging guarantees the recognition of individuals as members of humanity...”

~ Paraphrased from *Disability Theory* by Tobin Siebers, p. 176

Rights are not something someone is given or receives, but that which cannot be taken away. As a consequence, the global human rights of children/youth validate the reality that the right to belong to humanity is guaranteed by humanity itself.

Children and youth need *not be* excluded from “political membership” in Marion County which is under the leadership of Mayor Joe Hogsett. With no or little protection from the political community, the dignity and condition of children and youth can be reduced to mere existence.

It is those Marion County children/youth who are vulnerable, fragile, and dependent which forms the basis for such “rights bearing status.” This situation compels a moral society to recognize and activate the global human rights of young people at the point of greatest need, recognizing the humanity of those at the greatest risk of “...losing their place in the world.”

It is common knowledge that the United States has not signed on to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and has no future intention to. This proposal is not asking *OpportunINDY* to endorse the UN petition. Still, if it is the “vulnerable, fragile, and dependent” status of Indy's children/youth which contributes to their need for human rights and thus the city's responsibility for such rights (Seibers, 2008), then it is *OpportunINDY's* responsibility to *create a local version reflecting the city's respect for our young citizens*.

Indy's children/youth must know they have global human rights and that the community will recognize their rights in the actions. All children are entitled to protection from abuse; provision of education, health care and an adequate standard of living; having their views heard, and; children vulnerable to discrimination are entitled to specific protections.

We cannot expect the county's children and youth to be and feel safe physically, emotionally, culturally, or politically. We cannot allow those adults of the community or those who work professionally in the community (DCS/CPS, juvenile justice, foster care, police, schools, teachers, etc) to disregard the minds and bodies of Indy's children and youth by not determining actions and policies based on global human rights.

This is fundamental. *OpportunINDY* must recognize in policy and actions, the global human rights of all Marion County children and youth.

This essay is a compilation of ideas and quotes found in Chapter 9, “Disability: The right to have rights” taken from *Disability Theory* by Tobin Siebers and published through University of Michigan Press in 2008.

**IDEA 1a *OpportunINDY*'s Rights of the Child: Recognizing Indianapolis children and youth have global human rights by composing a local version of a children's rights compact reflecting our city's regard for its young citizens**

<http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/OpportunINDYs-Rights-of-the-Child-Recognizing-Indianapolis-children-and-youth-have-global-human-rights-by-composing-a-local-version-of-a-childrens-rights-compact-reflecting-regard-for-young-citizens.pdf>

***Intro* IDEA 1b The Global Human Rights of Children: Strengthening the school participation and civic engagement of children and youth**

Having the global human right to be heard in decisions which affect them in school and their community boosts young people's sense of security, but also their self-confidence.

Knowing they have the global human right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously, helps them see themselves as actors in their own lives.

This opens the way to developing and applying the skills, language, and concepts that empower them to be engaged students. It also fosters engaged citizenship in their neighborhood and community during schooling and after graduation.

**IDEA 1b The Global Human Rights of Children: Strengthening the school participation and civic engagement of children and youth**

<http://kinumedia.org/vorcreatex2/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Global-Human-Rights-Inceasinsg-school-engagement-civic-participation.pdf>

***Intro* IDEA 2a Violence is important: The issues are “normalcy,” apathy, and the unmet basic human need for respect and recognition, not violence**

“Violence is important” is the theme of this IDEA of the *Reaching all\* children and youth* concept. The proposal searches for the sources of human aggression and violence. What the search found was the issues are “normalcy” and indifference, *not violence*.

Possible links between the human need to be recognized and validated and the resulting negative aggressive/violent behavior when these needs go unfulfilled are examined.

Through this concept, *OpportunINDY* will understand how to reduce the need for human aggression and violence by helping the initiative:

- unpack the sources of aggression and violence in the levels of human power
- understand what leads to apathy, the stage before violence
- see the connection among the concepts of self-actualization, hip hop culture, and democratic education as healthy ways to help meet our need for recognition
- envision the positive outcomes of education which abandons a one-size-fits-all paradigm through schooling based on discovering and developing the uniqueness of each student

**IDEA 2a Violence is important: The issues are “normalcy,” apathy, and the unmet basic human need for respect and recognition, not violence**

<http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Violence-is-important-The-issues-are-normalcy-apaty-and-the-unmet-basic-human-need-for-respect-and-recognition-not-violence.pdf>

***Intro* IDEA 2b Accepting difference as a way to reduce violence: validating the *differon*, self-actualization and social-actualization, and meeting our human need for recognition**

Although variety and difference is the theme our vast Universe, most people get “bullied” because they are deemed different and odd, or even worse “weird.” *What if we can make difference a standard and uniqueness a goal?*

IDEA 2b proposes using the concepts of self-actualization and social-actualization to make “difference” “normal.”

**IDEA 2b Accepting difference as a way to reduce violence: validating the *differon*, self-actualization and social-actualization, and meeting our human need for recognition**

<http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Accepting-difference-as-a-way-to-reduce-violence-Validating-the-differon-self-actualization-and-social-actualization-and-meeting-our-human-need-for-recognition.pdf>

***Intro* IDEA 2c A proposal to re-invent disability: A Strength-Based ILP for all\* Marion County special education students and their families**

Imagine a public school in our Marion County where difference is a “taken for granted” attribute of every child who enters a classroom. Here, students deemed “Special Ed.” have opportunity to explore, discover, and actualize those areas of knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to graduate, while doing the same regarding their interests, passions, and indeed their very uniqueness.

A Strength-Based Individualized Learning Plan intends to have our public schools spend just as much time and effort helping a special education student build strengths as remediating school-based deficiencies.

“Re-inventing disability” presents an unprecedented and truly transformational concept to foster the reduction in suspensions as well as expulsions of students deemed “Special Ed.”

*IPS teacher aide A:* “The ISTEP test is today. I am worried about Chester. He can’t subtract and he’s a very slow reader. And, he has a hard time paying attention. He’ll do poorly.”

*IPS teacher aide B:* “That’s not good. He has a lot of weaknesses. Hey, though...regarding Chester, what can he do?”

IPS teacher aide A: (pausing) “Well, I... I never thought of that.”

**IDEA 2c A proposal to re-invent disability: A Strength-Based ILP for all\* Marion County special education students and their families**

<http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/A-proposal-to-re-invent-disability-A-Strength-Based-Individualized-Learning-Plan-for-all-Marion-County-special-education-students-and-their-families.pdf>

**Intro IDEA 3a Urban schools don't need fixing: We can't call schools designed to fail “broken”**

The idea public urban schools are broken and need fixing is the basis for the current IPS school reform debate. Commentaries and articles such as “IPS, Mind Trust propose fellowships to fix failing schools” (<http://www.indystar.com/story/news/education/2014/04/22/ips-mind-trust-propose-fellowships-fix-failing-schools/8030139/>) or “Blame is not going to rescue failing schools” ([http://www.indianapolisrecorder.com/education/article\\_09198126-6b44-11e4-9c3d-a3bb057643do.html](http://www.indianapolisrecorder.com/education/article_09198126-6b44-11e4-9c3d-a3bb057643do.html)) reflect this issue.

**Here's the question:**

Has our public school system ever made its actual mission to educate all children equally and effectively? The obvious answer is no. Reality reveals decades of fiscal, political, and structural policies which deliberately undercut and demean urban public schools.

Indeed, urban schools produce academic failure. Yet, according to Dr. Duncan-Andrade, this happens inside a system designed to predetermine winners and losers: some schools have resources for success and others do not. Thus, the “failure” of urban schools is not actually the result of failing. Urban districts like IPS are not broken. *They're working exactly as designed!*

**IDEA 3a Urban schools don't need fixing: We can't call schools designed to fail “broken”**

<http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Urban-schools-dont-need-fixing-We-cant-call-schools-designed-to-fail-broken.pdf>

**Intro IDEA 3b Urban school reform, and crime and violence: Is IPS school reform really about land development, and not about schools or reform?**

Most Marion County citizens know about the relationship between education and crime and violence rates. With the advent of IPS “school reform” via current issues around closing and selling schools and property, and other issues around moving schools and racial balance, exemplified by the “gentrification” of Shortridge ([gaylecosby.wordpress.com/category/desegregation/](http://gaylecosby.wordpress.com/category/desegregation/)), what is happening in Indy fits well the scenario described by the Howard School of Education's Dean Leslie T. Fenwick in, “Urban school reform is really about land development (not kids).”

Fenwick's article raises 2 serious questions *OpportunINDY* must consider regarding current urban school reform in IPS and the effects of these changes on crime and violence:

- Are IPS School Board schemes designed to cure what ails its under-performing schools?

or

- Are they designed to shift tax dollars away from schools serving black and poor students; reclaim inner city land; and, use its schools to re-calculate urban land value; displace authentic black educational leadership; erode national commitment to the ideal of public education; and export/displace Indy's urban poor?

**IDEA 3b Urban school reform, and crime and violence: Is IPS school reform really about land development, and not about schools or reform?**

<http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Urban-School-reform-and-crime-and-violence-Is-IPS-school-reform-really-about-land-development-and-not-about-schools-or-reform.pdf>

**Intro IDEA 4 Why Black males don't go into teaching and what to do about it: A recourse for culturally, politically, and critically conscious educators**

The political/cultural contradictions inherent in urban education and the climate in urban schools make it difficult for Black male teachers in middle and high schools to simultaneously support the urban identities of their students and engage them in questioning the nature of their historical and social situation, and receive the respect of the teaching peers—all while fulfilling the educational requirements of the state.

Teaching a state mandated curriculum which is resisted by urban students due to its irrelevance to the existential needs of their families and neighborhoods puts Black male teachers and students at odds.

Yet, if these teachers do not follow protocol and uphold their responsibilities, they chance losing the regard of their peers—as well as their jobs. This causes a rub that forces many Black males out of the profession regardless of the financial benefits.

Fortunately, there are solutions to this dilemma.

**IDEA 4 Why Black males don't go into teaching and what to do about it: A recourse for culturally, politically, and critically conscious educators**

<http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Why-Black-males-dont-go-into-teaching-and-what-to-do-about-it-A-recourse-for-culturally-politically-and-critically-conscious-educators.pdf>

**Intro IDEA 5 Recognize, confront, organize, and act to ease racial and class isolation in Indianapolis, one of America's 21 most segregated cities**

Based on the 2010 census, Indianapolis is one of America's 21 most segregated cities. Associated with such segregation is racism, and the classism that accompanies it. Associated with race and class are levels of crime and violence; food deserts; housing, health, and education issues; unemployment; drug and alcohol abuse; one parent homes, etc.

*Engaging all\* children and youth* knows *OpportunINDY* realizes that this did not happen overnight. Yet, is the initiative ready to face the extent racism and classism (and ableism) are in the DNA of the state due Indiana's passage of the world's first Eugenics Law in 1907? This unprecedented legislation legalized "normalcy" and the sterilization of certain "defectives."

<sup>13</sup> Sprouting, unfortunately, from our Hoosier Eugenics movement was the WW II German Eugenics program. During the 1947 trials of German doctors at Nuremberg, Nazi physicians

said their sterilization program, which aimed at combating “racial degeneracy,” was American. The Germans used "the Indiana Procedure" to develop their forced sterilization program. See <http://www.newswithviews.com/NWO/newworld17.htm>

The legacy of Hoosier racism/classism is also feeding the on-going gentrification in Indy which displaces existing residents and established modes of social life. In the context of our center-city, the burdens of these displacements fall disproportionately on African Americans and low-income whites. These displacements continue to be a feature of our city’s political economy since at least the 1960s, generating the kind of resentment, distrust, and opposition that derailed *E Pluribus Unum*.” See “Placing *E Pluribus Unum* on the Indianapolis Cultural Trail” by Dwyer & McCourt. <http://kinumedia.org/vorcreatex2/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Placing-E-Pluribus-Unum-on-Indy-Cultural-Trail-March-2014.pdf>

### **IDEA 5 Recognize, confront, organize, and act to ease racial and class isolation in Indianapolis, one of America’s 21 most segregated cities**

<http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Recognize-confront-organize-and-act-to-ease-racial-and-class-isolation-in-Indy-one-of-Americas-most-segregated-cities.pdf>

### **Intro IDEA 6 How Indianapolis can reduce violence by enabling diversity, excellence, and self-actualization: A Destination City or An Education City...or both?**

Attempts to improve Indianapolis by making it a destination city for conventioners and tourists are working. Indy has world-class attractions, unique cultural districts, an incredible urban park, amazing shopping, exceptional restaurants, memorable venues, a dynamic nightlife, a deliberately designed downtown, and many other arts, cultural, entertainment and sports offerings.

Yet, if we view *every aspect* of Indianapolis, we expose the underbelly of a city not heading towards success, but at the crossroads. Increases in poverty, despair, crime, violence, homelessness, school dropout, dead-end service jobs, and many other socio-economic problems and issues are creating an underclass for many as affluence increases for some.

Today our legacy must be we cared about future generations, we realized our responsibility, we thought deeply about each citizen, we saw our place in a global society, and in doing so we built the foundation for an equitable, authentic, broadly representative, and sustainable 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our legacy will be that of an Education City.

#### **An Education City:**

- chooses to position education at the head of their priorities--driven by the belief that developing education leads to improving the general quality of life
- is a destination city for learning as well as for tourists
- is based on democratic values which aim at developing a society that recognizes and supports the equal rights of all its members for self-actualization in their own community
  - promotes this value together with actual initiatives and entrepreneurial actions that realize it, and as such acts as a significant driving force for social and economical development

- encourages lifelong learning, promotes innovation and "produces" human capital by providing all citizens (at any age) with the opportunity to develop their self and their unique initiatives
- is an engine for economic and social growth and catalyzes the creation of a true *knowledge society* needed for life in post-industrial Marion County

**IDEA 6 How Indianapolis can reduce violence by enabling diversity, excellence, and self-actualization: A Destination City or An Education City...or both?**

<http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/How-Indianapolis-can-reduce-violence-by-enabling-diversity-excellence-and-self-actualization-A-Destination-City-or-An-Education-City...or-both.pdf>

**Intro IDEA 7 Youthtopias: Establishing opportunity for Indianapolis youth to help create the world they will inherit**

Youthtopias explain processes of creating systematic, formal and informal, traditional and non-traditional educational spaces that produce pedagogies of care, resistance, resiliency, hope and healing.

Research about urban youth has traditionally focused on understanding the *causes* of problem behavior such as violence, school failure, substance abuse and crime. This *social disorganization* explanation has under-appreciated the role of youth agency, and the capacity of urban and suburban youth to respond to community social problems.

IDEA 7 challenges the standard conceptualization of social capital youth have by:

- attending to the ways that young people themselves invest in and foster constructive collective action
- presenting a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which new kinds of learning and teaching spaces can produce important forms of social capital whereby resistance and resiliency are systematically developed through formal (and informal) processes, educational structures, and youth cultural practices.

**IDEA 7 Youthtopias: Establishing opportunity for Indianapolis youth to help create the world they will inherit**

<http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Youthtopias-Establishing-opportunity-for-Indianapolis-youth-to-create-a-world-they-will-inherit.pdf>

**Intro IDEA 8 Social Entrepreneurs: People forming businesses to tackle social problems, improve communities and people's life chances, or save the environment**

One of the major themes of *Reaching all\* children and youth* is providing young people opportunity to be agents of change. Social entrepreneurship is such an opportunity.

*What is a Social Entrepreneur?*

Over the past two decades, the citizen sector has discovered what the business sector learned long ago: There is nothing as powerful as a new idea in the hands of a first-class entrepreneur.

Social entrepreneurs are individuals with innovative solutions to society's most pressing social problems. They are known to be ambitious and persistent, tackling major social issues and offering new ideas for wide-scale change. They form businesses that trade to tackle social problems, improve communities, people's life chances, or the environment. They make their money from selling goods and services in the open market, but they reinvest their profits back into the business or the local community.

**IDEA 8 Social Entrepreneurs: People forming businesses to tackle social problems, improve communities and people's life chances, or save the environment**

<http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Social-entrepreneurs-People-forming-businesses-to-tackle-social-problems-improve-communities-and-peoples-life-chances-or-save-the-environment.pdf>

**Intro IDEA 9 School disaffection is a global issue, not just in Indianapolis, IN**

While many students are happy at school, disaffection and non-attendance are also not at all uncommon around the world. School is very far from automatically being a good thing either for individuals or societies. *Governments internationally would do well to examine what it is about the nature and practices of schooling that alienates so many.*

In this light, it will help *OpportunINDY* to realize and appreciate that the issues we in Indianapolis are having concerning young people and their education are global. What this means is that we can now begin to investigate, understand, and influence the common factors influencing this disengagement.

“Schooling worldwide is characterized by misery, boredom, bullying, deceit, anxiety, humiliation, brutalization, ethnic – and many other types of – discrimination, religious – and many other forms of – indoctrination, sexual – and many other kinds of – exploitation, and testing to destruction. It should not be like that. It should be fun.”

~ Mike Douse “Learning and Laughter – and let the Livelihood Come Later”

**IDEA 9 School disaffection is a global issue, not just in Indianapolis, IN**

<http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/School-disaffection-is-a-global-issue-not-just-in-Indianapolis.pdf>

**Intro IDEA 10 A Learner’s Bill of Rights: Keeping children and youth in school and graduating by empowering them to make sure their teachers view all\* students as naturally curious and motivated to learn**

We human beings are born curious and motivated to learn. We have to be to survive. This idea is common sense to most people. Yet, what is also common knowledge is that by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade a child’s natural curiosity and motivation begin to fade. We have heard the remark: “Children are naturally curious and love to learn...then comes school.”

A Learner’s Bill of Rights (LBR) was composed in 1992 for an IPS Strategic Plan Action Team on how do schools create the joy and passion for learning in students. Knowing such passion and joy are natural and so do not have to be “created,” the LBR was composed to cover the

factors that keep curiosity going and the factors that kill it. It reasons with educators that they can maintain and sustain children's natural curiosity and motivation to learn by empowering students to be the ones responsible for making sure they view themselves and that their teachers view them as capable of learning.

**IDEA 10 A Learner's Bill of Rights: Keeping children and youth in school and graduating by empowering them to make sure their teachers view all\* students as naturally curious and motivated to learn**

<http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/A-Learners-Bill-of-Rights-Keeping-children-and-youth-in-school-and-graduating-by-empowering-them-to-make-sure-their-teachers-view-all-students-as-naturally-curious-and-motivated-to-learn.pdf>

DRAFT