

# ***The limitations of a “college going” culture***

## **A middle-class ideology which ignores poverty and the other pertinent problems IPS students face daily in their neighborhoods**

The liberal model of urban education reform makes the mistake of attempting to replicate the schooling ideology of the middle class, emphasizing a "college-going culture." In so doing, it all but

- **ignores the material conditions of urban communities.**
  - *These social toxins, such as poverty, are an “existential threat” and thus are more pertinent to the lives of urban students and are far removed from the rhetoric of college.*

Public schools, especially charters, have “ads” which “guarantee” their students will attend university. What they cannot equally guarantee is graduation, although this is implied in the spiel. Nationally, 41% of African Americans who start college graduate in 6 years. In Indiana the number is 36%. The number for white Hoosiers is 59%. Thus, very few public urban schools are able to prepare students to complete college. This must be addressed realistically with authentic school reform and not with sales pitches or innuendo. <http://measuringup2008.highereducation.org/>

### **An education with relevance: Increasing college eligibility through using urban schools as sites to contest inequalities**

Let’s be clear, urban students should go to college at rates equal to their more affluent counterparts. The point here is a schooling environment that emphasizes the relationship between education and the most pressing conditions in the community, **an education with relevance**, *is most likely to produce notable increases in college eligibility.*

### **We advocate for an urban education model that**

- **utilizes critical counter-cultural communities of practice in urban classrooms which**
  - **developing a critical and engaged citizenry with have a democratic sensibility that**
    - **critiques and acts against all forms of social toxins, especially poverty**

**A counter-cultural community of practice recognizes** *the existence of a dominant set of institutional norms and practices used to perpetuate inequalities. The community of practice intentionally sets itself up to counter those powerful norms and practices.*

### **Making college a realistic option**

The unique lives and conditions of urban youth deserve an education system that accomplishes two goals in concert with one another:

1. preparation to confront the conditions of social and economic inequity in their daily lives, and
2. access to the academic literacies (reading, writing, math) that make college attendance a realistic option.

This approach to reform is a **double investment in urban communities:**

- it provides pedagogy and curricula that lend immediate relevance to school in the lives of urban youth.
- it also works to break the cycle of disinvestment of human capital in urban communities by
  - creating graduates who recognize their potential agency to improve urban centers and their neighborhoods,
    - rather than seeing them as places to escape.
- These prospects offer:
  - urban students a renewed sense of purpose with regard to school,
  - urban neighborhoods the necessary human and institutional capital to contribute to its social, economic, and political revitalization.

From *The Art of Critical Pedagogy* by Jeff Duncan-Andrade & Ernest Morrell

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