



BLACK ALABAMIANS
FOR
EDUCATION

END OF YEAR REPORT 2025



Parents
Know Best!

NATIONAL
SchoolChoice WEEK

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INSPIRED BY EDUCATION & EXCELLENCE

VISION

...that Black families are empowered with information to choose a high-quality K-12 education for their children that enables them to pursue the college or career path of their choice, become economically independent adults and engage in the practice of freedom

MISSION

...to equip, inform and empower Black families with information on accessing a high quality education



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After eight years of leading Black Alabamians for Education—and eight years of standing shoulder-to-shoulder with families across this state—2025 reaffirmed both the urgency of our mission and the undeniable power of our collective voice. Each year, we work to raise the bar, deepen parents' knowledge of K-12 educational options, and grow leaders who will shape the future of Alabama's children. It brings me immense gratitude to highlight a few of our shared successes from this year.

In a political climate that continues to shift and challenge the fight for educational equity, one truth remains constant: the pursuit of access, justice, and opportunity for every child must continue to be the rhythm that guides BA4E's work. The landscape may evolve, but our resolve does not waver.

This year, our annual Parent Symposium—held in historic Selma—brought together students, parents, educators, and thought leaders unified by a commitment to equity, accountability, and empowerment. The conversations sparked there ignited new momentum and strengthened our determination to build systems and supports that truly serve Black children and families.

We proudly celebrated the graduation of our Next Level Leaders Cohort II—five extraordinary emerging leaders prepared to step boldly into their next roles as advocates and community changemakers.

Through grassroots outreach, relationship-building, and collective action, our community organizing efforts expanded our reach and deepened our presence in neighborhoods, schools, and local decision-making spaces. We continue to meet families where they are, build trust, and ensure their voices shape the conversations that impact their children.



Neonta Williams,
Executive Director, BA4E

To our partners, funders, community members, and families—thank you for believing in this work and walking this journey with us. The road ahead is long, but together we are building something powerful, generational, and lasting.

We look forward to stepping **ONWARD** into 2026—united, energized, and committed to creating the future our children deserve.

PARENT EMPOWERMENT + COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This year, we are proud to highlight three significant partnerships that delivered meaningful outcomes for parents, students, and communities across Alabama:

1. Advancing the RAISE Act Through Statewide Advocacy

BA4E worked closely with A+ Education Partnership and Every Child Alabama Coalition (ECAC) to advocate for the passage of the RAISE Act—Alabama’s student-weighted funding formula designed to ensure K-12 resources are aligned with student needs. Throughout the legislative session, BA4E staff and parent advocates joined coalition partners at the State House, sharing personal stories and meeting with legislators to underscore why fully and equitably funding both traditional public and public charter schools is essential for Alabama families.



2. Hosting Our First National School Choice Week Event

In collaboration with the National School Choice Week Coalition, BA4E hosted its inaugural School Choice Week celebration at Regions Field in Birmingham, welcoming more than 350 students from a diverse mix of charter, private, public, and homeschool settings. Students showcased their talents and school pride through a friendly “Family Feud: School Edition” competition, creating a joyful and energetic atmosphere that highlighted the value of educational opportunity and choice.

3. Building Educator Capacity Through a New Partnership with Teach for America

BA4E launched a new partnership with Teach for America—Birmingham to provide professional development for first- and second-year teachers. This collaboration focuses on strengthening teacher-parent engagement, increasing cultural awareness, and helping educators better understand the family dynamics and community contexts that shape classroom experiences. Through this partnership, BA4E is helping build a stronger pipeline of educators who are aligned with our mission and equipped to foster meaningful relationships with the families they serve.



PARENT SYMPOSIUM



BA4E's Parent Symposium in historic Selma, Alabama was one of our most impactful gatherings to date, bringing together nearly 175 parents, students, educators, and community leaders for a day of truth, empowerment, and action. Our distinguished speakers, **Dr. Howard Fuller and Kenneth Campbell** delivered transformative messages that deeply resonated with attendees and elevated the urgency of our work.

Together, they inspired conversations that were honest, solution-focused, and rooted in the belief that Black children deserve schools that honor their brilliance and potential.

The symposium also achieved significant fundraising success, **generating \$30,000 in sponsorship support from AM Better Health, UNCF, Primer, and DFER**. This investment directly strengthened our parent engagement efforts and allowed us to deliver a high-impact convening in historic Selma, Alabama.

The impact of the symposium extended far beyond the event itself:

- Parents reported increased confidence in navigating school systems and speaking up for their children.
- Local leaders committed to deeper collaboration and continued engagement with BA4E.
- Participants expressed a strong desire for ongoing learning, advocacy training, and community building.

This year's symposium strengthened our movement, expanded our network of informed parent leaders, and reinforced our shared commitment to ensuring every child in Alabama has access to a high-quality education. It marked a defining moment for our organization—and a powerful step forward in our mission.

NEXT LEVEL LEADERSHIP (NLL) FELLOWSHIP



There is a powerful and direct connection between community advocacy and leadership development—one that lies at the heart of BA4E's mission. **Next Level Leaders (NLL)** was created to identify, cultivate, and elevate emerging leaders across diverse sectors who are committed to strengthening education and community outcomes.

Through this rigorous yet eye-opening experience, **Cohort II** fellows gained deep insight into the inner workings of K-12 education, the barriers families face, and the opportunities for meaningful community-driven change. The program is intentionally designed around four core objectives: **leadership development, networking opportunities, practical experience, and community engagement**. Together, these elements equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively advocate on behalf of children, families, and their communities.

This year, **five fellows successfully completed the Next Level Leaders program**, each demonstrating growth, courage, and a strengthened commitment to educational equity. We are especially proud to highlight a standout: **Dr. Henry Davis**, whose leadership journey embodies the purpose and promise of NLL and his personal story of impact as a NLL Fellow.



I came into this program as a Doctor of Physical Therapy, not someone embedded in the education world. I wasn't sure how my background fit, but Next Level Leaders challenged the way I viewed community impact and showed me that leadership isn't limited to your job title or industry. It helped me understand how decisions are made, who they affect and what real leadership looks like outside of your own profession. That clarity gave me the confidence to grow with more purpose, and it played a major role in me stepping into public service as a newly elected city council member. This program doesn't require you to be an educator. It just asks that you care about your community and it equips you to do something about it."

~ Dr. Henry Davis, Calera City Councilor

THE ADVOCATE'S CHAIR – PODCAST



THE ADVOCATE'S CHAIR

As part of our organizational strategic plan, we committed to launching a digital communications platform that would broaden our reach, strengthen our advocacy voice, and bring real-time education information directly to families. This year the vision came to life through the launch of **The Advocate's Chair podcast** a bold new step in expanding how Black Alabamians for Education informs, supports, and mobilizes communities across the state.



Left:Dr. Linda Warren, Right: Neonta Williams

This year, we proudly invested in building out the podcast's full production capacity, allowing us to deliver high-quality episodes that highlight the most important conversations happening in Alabama's K-12 landscape. **The Advocate's Chair** has quickly become a trusted space for honest dialogue, community storytelling, and powerful relationship-building.

Expanding Knowledge of K-12 Options

One of the core goals of the podcast is to ensure families have access to accurate and easy-to-understand information about all educational options available to them. Throughout our episodes, we have covered a range of topics, including:

- Understanding the differences between **charter, traditional public, private, and virtual schools**
- Insights into **homeschool, micro-school, and blended learning environments**
- Navigating **school accountability data and enrollment processes**
- Demystifying **education policy** in plain language
- Strategies for parents to effectively **advocate within their schools**

These conversations have empowered parents to become more informed and confident decision-makers for their children.

Featuring Diverse and Impactful Voices

We have been intentional in elevating voices from various sectors—community leaders, educators, advocates, and policymakers who are shaping the future of education in Alabama. This year's lineup included:

- **State Representative Ontario Tillman (District 56)**, who helped launch our monthly Legislative Talk series, offering direct insight into the policymaking process.
- **School leaders and education innovators** who shared firsthand experiences about school models and family engagement.
- **Parent advocates and alumni of BA4E programs**, who told their personal stories of navigating Alabama's education systems.
- **Community partners and nonprofit leaders**, spotlighting collaborative efforts happening statewide.
- **Educators from both traditional public and charter schools**, discussing how to build stronger relationships with families and respond to student needs.

Each guest brought authenticity, expertise, and passion—making the podcast a dynamic platform for connection and learning.



Left:State Representative Ontario Tillman (District 56, Right: Neonta Williams

A Growing Platform for Advocacy & Engagement

The impact of **The Advocate's Chair** extends far beyond recorded episodes. It has become:

- A **digital advocacy tool** that expands our reach across urban, rural, and underserved communities
- A **hub for policy updates**, especially during legislative session
- A **storytelling platform** that centers the experiences and voices of Black families
- A **bridge** between educators, lawmakers, and the families they serve
- A **vehicle for building public understanding** of why equitable access to high-quality education matters

The engagement and feedback we've received show that families are not only listening—they are learning, sharing, and acting.

Looking Ahead

As we move into 2026 and beyond, we are excited to continue growing the podcast with:



Left: Lashundra Richmond, Next Level Leaders, Right: Neonta Williams

- More episodes featuring **legislators, education experts, and parent leaders**
- Deeper dives into **community challenges and solutions**
- Expanded **video and live podcast formats**
- Enhanced promotion to reach thousands more families statewide

The Advocate's Chair is more than a podcast—it is a movement-building tool that strengthens our mission and centers the voices of the people we serve.

We are proud of this new chapter for Black Alabamians for Education and remain committed to using every platform available to uplift communities and advance educational equity across Alabama.

RIBBON CUTTING & OFFICE OPENING: A NEW HOME FOR ADVOCACY

In 2025, Black Alabamians for Education reached an extraordinary milestone with the opening of our first brick-and-mortar office, an accomplishment that reflects years of growth, steadfast commitment, and the unwavering support of the families and partners we serve. Our ribbon-cutting ceremony was more than an event; it was a celebration of community, progress, and the future of educational advocacy in Alabama.



Located in the heart of Birmingham, our new space serves as a physical home for connection, organizing, and empowerment. It represents a new chapter for BA4E one where parents, students, and leaders can gather, learn, strategize, and build together. The opening of this office reinforces our mission to remain deeply rooted in the communities we support and to create a hub where advocacy is nurtured and leadership is grown.

The new office has already become a vibrant gathering place. Throughout the year, it has hosted parent workshops, listening sessions, cohort meetings, partner convenings, and legislative engagement conversations. The space reflects our values —welcoming, intentional, and designed to elevate the voices of Black families across Alabama.

Opening our brick-and-mortar location marks a defining moment in BA4E's history. It stands as a testament to what can be achieved when community, vision, and perseverance come together. As we look toward 2026, this new home strengthens our foundation and fuels our commitment to building a more informed, empowered, and unified base of education advocates.

We are proud of this milestone—and even more inspired by the work that will be born within these walls!

Thank You!

TO OUR PARTNERS

National School Choice Week Foundation | Alabama Families for Great Schools
Faith Covenant Academy | A+ Education | Every Child Alabama Coalition
Am Better Health | United Negro College Fund (UNCF) | Primer | Ed Farm
New Schools for Alabama | Education Reform Network | Teach For America



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