

# The Passing of the Torch for Solutions to our Nation's Urban Schools: A Foreword

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**T**he public educational system in the United States is in a state of crisis. This educational system has not met the challenge of effectively educating *all* of our nation's children. While all schools and school districts have its set of challenges in the educational process, students in our largest urban cities – particularly those from low wealth backgrounds - have not received the same quality of education as students from wealthier backgrounds. In these large urban cities (i.e., Atlanta, Baltimore, Charlotte, Chicago, Detroit, Washington, DC, Houston, Los Angeles, New York City, Philadelphia, etc.), we find that all racial groups of students are struggling academically. In most cases, nearly 50 percent to 90 percent of students have not reached the barometer set for proficiency levels in core content areas such as reading and mathematics. Given the major educational policies (i.e., *No Child Left Behind* and *Race to the Top*) have attempted to mandate academic achievement at the federal level, none of these efforts can be considered 'successful'

when we examine the academic achievement data of our nation's students in urban schools. Our nation's educational system cannot continue to function at this level of mediocrity.

The challenge for the educational stakeholders that are truly passionate about transforming the educational process for our nation's urban students is that solutions are achievable and attainable. As a case in point, the scholarly literature highlights that true change comes from research-based practices that improve the teaching and learning process at the local level. As a result, the time is now for our nation's educators to have a central place where they can access (anytime and anywhere) the best research-based practices and policies at the local, state, regional and national levels that actually work! It is this passion for change where the *Urban Education Research and Policy Annuals (UERPA)* on-line academic journal at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte was initiated.



The *Urban Education Research and Policy Annuals (UERPA)* is a place for intellectual exchange of scholarly investigations and best practices of the teaching and learning process that work for urban students. Even more exciting is that this journal will provide a space for our nation's graduate students – who are pursuing the highest degrees that the United States – to showcase their research either through peer-reviewed journal articles, research and policy briefs, book reviews and other scholarly products to advance our knowledge base in the field of urban education. We welcome submissions from graduate students in different academic disciplines with a key focus on solutions. Our nation's students deserve the best education that our schools and school districts can offer. As a result, I challenge graduate students and their faculty mentors (with graduate students serving as the

primary authors) to send us their best work to inform all educational stakeholders with cutting-edge work that has true potential for impact in our nation's classrooms.

Finally, the launch of this journal could not have occurred without the unwavering support of several key stakeholders at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (i.e., *the Urban Education Collaborative; the Urban Educators for Change Graduate Student Organization; the Department of Middle, Secondary and K-12 Education; the College of Education; the University Library and the Media Relations Department*). It is through this collaborative effort that the launch of this preeminent journal became a reality to fill a major void in the field of education. We look forward to many years of providing answers to some of the most pressing issues in the field of urban education. Let's make a difference!

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