

Save Dr. King's Vision for America in Berkeley Keep Berkeley Schools Public and Integrated: No Charter Schools!

Defend the Right to Free Public Education!

Make Integration Work:

Eliminate Tracking, Reduce Class Size, Teach Critical Thinking, Reduce Teaching to the Test, and Structure Frank Discussions on Campus Climate about How Race Affects Students' Experiences at School

Student & Community Meeting to Defend Public Education

— With BAMN National Chair Shanta Driver —

Sunday, Nov. 8 at 2:00 pm

UC-Berkeley, Room 106 Wheeler Hall (near Bancroft + Telegraph, just north of Sather Gate)

— **BAMN Meets twice weekly: every Sunday at 2:00 pm in room 106 Wheeler Hall and —
Every Monday at 6:30 pm, 4th Floor of MLK Student Union, UC-Berkeley** (near Bancroft + Telegraph)

The right of every child living in America to receive a public education is a right most Americans take for granted and could not imagine losing. The national campaign being spearheaded by Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education, to create a new, parallel, privately controlled, profit-driven system of 5,000 charter schools, which will be publicly subsidized but minimally regulated, will eviscerate this right.

The right to universal public education, like the universal right to vote, was won out of the great civil rights struggles of the 1950's and 1960's. Together, they represent the cornerstones of American democracy and freedom, concrete expressions of our shared national commitment to equality and diversity. Creating a new education system dominated by privately controlled, publicly and privately funded charter schools, supplemented by a safety net of under-resourced public schools, will make the right to a public education more like the new proposed "right" of all to health care. Public education will become another government entitlement, subject to the laws of the market economy, completely unequal in its outcomes, highly stratified by socio-economic, race and immigration status. All due process, civil rights, first amendment, and labor protections for teachers, students and parents incorporated into current public school rubric, will be eliminated.

The most vulnerable students: black, Latina/o, immigrant, and poor students of all races who are cynically being presented by charter advocates as the "driving" concern of their movement, will face intensified segregation, isolation, and inequality if the charter scheme is adopted. The families of these students will lose any democratic or regulatory control over the schools their daughters and sons



Contact the following officials and urge them not to support the charter school:

BERKELEY BOARD OF EDUCATION

(510) 644-6550

Press 2 for Beatriz Leyva-Cutler

Press 3 for Nancy Riddle

Press 4 for Karen Hemphill

Press 6 for John Selawsky

Press 7 for Shirley Issel

Press 8 for all the Board Members

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are being pressed to attend. Special needs students, who the charters do not even feign concern for, will be permanently assigned to second class status. Instead of solving the "achievement gap," charters will exacerbate it.

Currently in Berkeley, a group is trying to establish this city's first charter school. The school will likely be predominantly black and Latina/o and segregated because, unlike the rest of the Berkeley schools, it would not comply with Berkeley's historic desegregation program. It would provide a substandard, second-class education with far fewer extracurricular activities and programs than are available in Berkeley's public schools.

Berkeley must not sign onto this national attack on public education. We must continue to be a model for the nation. We must be what we have been, a community distinguished by our stubborn refusal to abandon our egalitarian principles. A community striving to create equal, integrated, diverse public schools, even if it takes constant struggle, constant friction and constant change to succeed. We have stood on the principles of *Brown v. Board of Education* for more than 40 years—now is not the time to give up and bow down to assumptions or inequalities of the new Jim Crow, no matter how superficially it is dressed up.

The New "Liberal" Push for Privatization and the New Jim Crow

The fundamental right of black, Latina/o, immigrant, other minority and poor children in America to receive a public education is now in jeopardy. The right of minorities to equal voting rights and other basic and fundamental democratic rights won by the civil rights movement are also under attack. Indeed, the driving principle of the civil rights movement – that the only way to defeat institutional racism and all other socially created inequalities is to implement a set of public policies/laws that the government is bound to enforce – is being called into question by both liberals and conservatives.

A central social, political and legal justification for the old Jim Crow was that the government should play no, or at most a minimal role, in combating discrimination, prejudice, inequality and injustice. Private, individual rather than public, collective measures were seen as the foundation for achieving prosperity and progress. This ideology was pressed by politicians of all the major political parties including both left and right wing populists.

Today, not only Republican but also key civil rights, labor, progressive and Democratic Party leaders are pressing the view that private, market-based solutions are the only way to redress inequality. There is near-unanimous agreement between the leaderships of both political parties that the gains of the civil rights movement should be placed on the backburner and that today's captains of industry should be entrusted with the power to oversee and determine the character of black, Latina/o, other minority and poor students' educational opportunities. The premise of this new paternalistic Jim Crow is that closing the achievement/opportunity gap between black and other minority students and more privileged white students can best be solved through market principles.

This theory is driving the campaign to dismantle public education, to force charter schools on black, Latina/o and poor communities despite massive popular opposition, and to turn inner-city public schools into separate, segregated, unregulated,

SIGN THE ONLINE PETITION:

[http://www.petitionsite.com/2/
no-charter-in-berkeley](http://www.petitionsite.com/2/no-charter-in-berkeley)

Berkeley Daily Planet op-ed:

[http://www.berkeleydailyplanet.com/
issue/2009-10-15/article/33939](http://www.berkeleydailyplanet.com/issue/2009-10-15/article/33939)

stripped-down, regimented vocational schools, devoid of art, music, sports, AP and other vital academic offerings. It is also behind the concerted campaign of liberal faculty and administrators at many elite universities to get young minority students to emulate Booker T. Washington.

On these campuses, minority students are urged to seek and rely on the support of private benefactors/philanthropists to maintain desperately-needed targeted scholarship, recruitment and retention programs to compensate for the loss of programs ended by the ban on affirmative action. Instead of standing up and becoming leaders of the new integrated civil rights movement, these young and talented students are urged to sell the new Jim Crow to their communities. They are being urged to promote the ideology of black and Latina/o inferiority and to encourage cynicism, growing atomization and despair.

BAMN opposes this whole sordid plan. We know the vast majority of Americans support the right of all to a quality public education. We know from the outpouring of hope and support expressed in the campaign of Barack Obama how deeply Americans of all races believe in standing on Dr. King's vision for America. And we know from that campaign that most Americans believe that progress for America and the ascension of young black and other minority political leaders to power are inextricably bound together. BAMN intends to prove them right.

We reject the view that blacks or Latinas/os must accept abuse to attain an education, a career or the hope of a decent, fulfilling life. We do not believe that separate can ever be equal. We do not accept the popular lie that integration failed; rather, judging from all the evidence of how successful school integration and magnet school programs are in closing the achievement gap and improving educational outcomes, we believe the problem is there has been too little integration rather than too much. Finally, we reject the theory that we should have to seek charity or philanthropy to achieve equality or even the hope of a decent education. We reject all notions that the laws of the free market should replace the legal and social conclusions of *Brown v. Board of Education* and the other far-reaching achievements and conclusions of the civil rights movement. We stand for and on the vision of Dr. King for America. We believe that every American deserves freedom, equality, justice, and dignity and so we fight for a truly egalitarian America.

BAMN invites everyone who stands for justice and equality to join us in stopping the attack on public education here in Berkeley and throughout the nation. But most of all, we invite black, Latina/o, immigrant, and other minority youth and students to become leaders of the new movement and to assume your rightful place at the forefront of this nation.

BAMN

Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action, Integration, and Immigrant Rights and Fight for Equality

By Any Means Necessary – BAMN.com (510) 501-2435 california@bamn.com *ASUC-sponsored*