

CTA ETHNIC CAUCUS ISSUES CONFERENCE: A REPORT.

BY Fola Odebunmi

This conference provided an atmosphere for genuine interaction among colleagues on topics of special interest. Here are some of the topics covered at several of the sessions:

- Creating Partnerships in the Minority Communities: Advocating for Black Students in the Public Schools.
- Race Relations with Non-Minority Educators.
- Impact of Legislation on Communities of Color.
- Educators and immigrant Communities; to mention a few.

These sessions were relatively less K-12 focused and they were the sessions that I attended. It was impressive that several of the presentations had extensive data to substantiate the concepts in the presentation.

In summary, it was pointed out in one of the sessions that the impact of legislation had often sought to correct inequalities in the society. But that ideas at times had been impulsive and reactionary, responding to a local news story which highlighted an injustice and demanding an action. It was also pointed out that at other times, there had been a more deliberate attempt to help marginalized populations succeed. Some of the most recent legislations are likely to have negative impacts on students and educators of color.

In the context of race relations with non-minority educators, presenters talked about a set of data that shows evidence that there is underrepresentation of minority educators educating minority students. Research, according to the presenters, shows that the race of the educator could matter in the success of the student.

One of the main solutions suggested at multiple sessions is to establish partnerships between public schools, colleges in the case of higher education, and the minority communities. After the partnerships are formed, they would need to be sustained. Conversations need to be initiated with the community members in order to advocate for students of color.

For CCA, it is more important, in today's environment, that the organization's committees, such as Legislation; Policy; and Membership for example, pay attention to the short-run and long-run impact of legislation and policy on all students generally, and students of color particularly, as well as the educators. CCA can also look into how to incorporate these perspectives into the membership / community engagement campaign.