

**DOCUMENTING THE EXPERIENCES OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS AND  
SCHOLARS OF HISTORICALLY BLACK BOARDING SCHOOLS TO INFORM  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A 21<sup>ST</sup>-CENTURY MODEL OF BLACK EDUCATION  
AT ASCEND LEGACY ACADEMY.**

by

Chanel Gaither

An educational leadership portfolio proposal submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

Winter 2024

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## **DEDICATIONS**

This ELP is dedicated to my family. I am who I am because of the affirmations, unconditional love and support that I have received from each of you.

### **My Parents**

Tawana and Arnold, thank you for raising me to be an unstoppable force. Thank you for pouring into me, for teaching me about our lineage, history and culture. It is because of the foundation that you laid that I am able to stand firm in my beliefs and never back down even when obstacles and challenges present themselves. It is because of you that I am.

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## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Scholar:** Merriam-Webster's Dictionary (2017) defines a scholar as follows: (1) a person who attends a school or studies under a teacher (i.e., a pupil), (2a) a person who has done advanced study in a special field, (2b) a learned person, and (3) a holder of a scholarship.

In addition to the Merriam-Webster definition of scholar, I define scholar as an individual engaging in the quest for knowledge, support, and guidance at Ascend Legacy Academy.

**African American:** refers to people of African heritage, descent, or ancestry born in the United States (Alexander-Snow, 2010)

**Black:** Racially assertive, proud, and uncompromising (Rickford, 2016)

**Independent School:** Both private and free from influence and control of the white power structure (Rickford, 2016)

**Historically Black Boarding School:** Founded out of a social consciousness and concern for the cultural and social development of African American youth, historically Black private and independent schools have been touted for their culturally relevant teaching and for providing a rich, cultural, academic experience that instills positive self-concepts and cultural esteem (Alexander-Snow, 2010, p.183)

**Educational Violence:** How systems of schooling limit and kill Black lives (Mustaffa, 2017).

**Life-Making:** How Black people engage in alternative self-definition and self-care (Mustaffa, 2017).

***Self-concept*** is a relational term reflecting a student's perceptions about competence or skills through experiences with his or her environment, and social and academic interactions with peers and faculty relative to other students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

***Self-esteem***: reflects a student's sense of self-worth; the extent to which the student exhibits and expresses behaviors of significance, worth, and capability (Coopersmith, 1967).

***ASCD's Whole Child Approach***: Redefines a successful learner not as one "whose achievement is measured solely by academic tests" but rather as one "who is knowledgeable, emotionally and physically healthy, civically inspired, engaged in the arts, prepared for work and economic self-sufficiency, and ready for the world beyond formal schooling" (The Learning Compact, 2007, pg. 4)

***Racial Congruence***: Racial congruence is defined as a student attending a school where most of the school staff or students are of the same racial/ethnic group (Moore, A. B., MacGregor, C., & Cornelius-White, J. (2017)).

***Ascend Legacy Pedagogy***: Ascend Legacy Pedagogy is a set of affirmative practices, instructional strategies, and leadership principles that instills confidence and self-awareness in Black and Brown scholars while creating opportunities that allow them to harness their intellectual curiosity, nurture their purpose, center their faith, and create a legacy which extends beyond them and benefits generations to come.

***Fugitive Pedagogy***: a theory and practice of Black education in America. The enslaved learned to read in spite of widespread prohibitions; newly emancipated people braved the dangers of integrating all-White schools and the hardships of building Black

schools. Teachers developed covert instructional strategies, creative responses to the persistence of White opposition. From slavery through the Jim Crow era, Black people passed down this educational heritage (Givens, 2021)

***Culturally Responsive:*** Culturally responsive teaching means using students’ customs, characteristics, experience, and perspectives as tools for better classroom instruction (Gay, 2018)

***Culturally Sustaining:*** Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy affirms and respects the key components of the Asset-Based Pedagogies that preceded it, but also takes them to the next level. Instead of just accepting or affirming the backgrounds of students of color as seen in Culturally Relevant Pedagogy; or connecting to students’ cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and frames of reference as we see in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy; Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy views schools as places where the cultural ways of being in communities of color are sustained, rather than eradicated. Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy promotes equality across racial and ethnic communities and seeks to ensure access and opportunity. Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy also supports students to critique and question dominant power structures in societies (Alim Paris, 2017)

***Culturally relevant curricula.*** Teachers should include multiple perspectives in their instruction and make sure the images displayed in classrooms—such as on bulletin boards—represent a wide range of diversity. Teachers should also contextualize issues within race, class, ethnicity, and gender (Gay, 2018)

## **ABSTRACT**

This Educational Leadership Portfolio documents the experiences of instructional leaders and scholars of Historically Black Boarding Schools to inform the development of a 21st century model of Black education at Ascend Legacy Academy. The problem addressed is the lack of centrally accessible knowledge of practices and available resources to assist educational professionals in leading and developing a 21st century Black Boarding school with an academic environment that maximizes the educational benefits to Black scholars. The five improvement goals were to: 1) Identify the distinctive qualities of teaching at a selection of Historically Black Boarding Schools that contribute to scholar learning and empowerment; 2) Identify the distinctive qualities of leading at a selection of Historically Black Boarding Schools that contribute to scholar learning and empowerment in order to compile information to create professional learning communities and leadership training workshops; 3) Identify the distinctive features of the school community—e.g., residential life, mentorship, racial congruence, religious support—from the perspective of scholars at a selection of Historically Black Boarding Schools that contribute to scholar learning and empowerment; 4) Develop a course catalog for Ascend Legacy Academy by combining lessons gleaned from historical artifacts, the impactful features of teaching, leading, and the school community that have been identified; and 5) In partnership with my ASCD champions of education, leadership coaches will identify, compile, synthesize, and extract lessons to inform the development of a legacy toolkit that will serve as the foundation for the creation of the HBBS Legacy Fellowship for Black educators seeking to open, lead or serve in a Black Boarding school community.

In an effort to achieve the five improvement goals, I developed the following three strategies: 1) Documented and learned about leadership and curricula at Historically Black Boarding Schools (HBBS) through the distribution of a survey to faculty. 2) Documented and recorded the experiences of HBBS leaders and scholars through oral history through a series of interviews and 3) Reviewed historical artifacts and evidence of teaching and learning by conducting a document analysis.

This portfolio is the first step in the documentation process of instructional leaders and scholars which can serve as a resource for educators seeking to incorporate the Ascend Legacy Pedagogy into their own Black Boarding school. In future research, I will conduct additional qualitative analysis to examine the cultural, social, and academic outcomes of Black alumni and if the community which surrounds Black Boarding schools are a mechanism which contributes directly to the success of Black scholars.

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

Prior to reading this ELP, you must first understand *My Why*. *This* is who I am as a researcher and educator, and, more importantly, how my journey as a scholar in educational settings which centered white supremacy ideologies served as the impetus for the long-term goal of this Education Leadership Portfolio (ELP) which is increasing the accessibility to the knowledge of practices and resources to inform the founding of Ascend Legacy Academy, an International Independent School for Black scholars. In my quest to create a learning community of academic excellence where Black scholars can thrive and be affirmed, I have decided to focus on the leadership challenge I present in the subsequent chapters of this ELP. The leadership challenge is the lack of synthesized resources around Historically Black Boarding Schools accessible to Black leaders who wish to use that data to inform development and practices within All-Black learning communities.

As I reflect on my experiences as a scholar, one stands out the most because of how violent it was and how similar it was to my mother's encounter when she was in school, almost several decades before my existence.

Nigger! I remember those words as if it was yesterday. My ten-year-old soul melted when that racial epithet was hurled at me by Mrs. Clayman. After the initial shock wore off, I got up from my desk and walked towards the phone on the classroom wall to call the main office and ask them to call my parents. Still, before I could press the button, Mrs. Clayman came up from behind me, grabbed the phone, and struck me, so I

hit her back. Before I knew it, I was escorted to the main office, and my parents arrived. My parents were furious but what was more disturbing was that the school's administration suggested that my behavior warranted my transfer into the school's special education program. My parents asked for a copy of my student records, including my grades and test scores, because they knew that the school did not have the data to support this decision, and they were prepared to fight. This fight led my Mother to take a trip to downtown Manhattan to the NYC Board of Education, where she asked to file an official complaint against Mrs. Clayman and the administration at PS.104.

I never returned to PS.104, I was enrolled at PS. 106 the next week, and I remember being greeted by a Black woman, Mrs. Johnson; she was the principal, a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, a member of the church my Grandmother attended, but most importantly, she was a safe space.

### **Organization**

This ELP is organized as follows. First, I will share the problem that will be addressed and why this problem presents a leadership challenge. Next, I will describe my organizational context and role; then, I will give the purpose and background of the problem and the research questions that guide the inquiry of this ELP. In Chapter 3, I introduce the eight commonalities gleaned from the literature around Historically Black Boarding Schools and provide an overview of how the gaps within the literature generated the improvement goals and strategies of this ELP, which ultimately laid the groundwork for the creation of the following artifacts: ELP Proposal, Historical Document Padlet Link and Summary, Ascend Legacy Academy Course Catalog, Documentary Trailer Link and Summary, Survey Instrument, and Interview Protocol.

In Chapter 4, I will discuss my results using the themes that emerged during the historical document analysis and show that I triangulated the various research methods to inform the creation of the padlet and made the changes to the Ascend Legacy Academy (ALA) course catalog. I will then discuss the significance of the documentary artifact and, lastly, the outcomes of implementing the improvement strategies for developing ALA.

I conclude with Chapter 5, where I evaluate the effectiveness of the improvement strategies that were identified. I will then discuss the limitations of the strategies and methods that I used and my plans for future research. Next, I will share a list of leadership recommendations for Ascend Legacy Academy. Lastly, I will reflect on leadership development and how developing this ELP allowed me to reflect on the next phase of my career as the Founder and Interim Head of School at Ascend Legacy Academy.

## **Chapter 2**

### **PROBLEM ADDRESSED**

In this chapter, I will share the problem that will be addressed and why this problem presents a leadership challenge. Next, I will describe my organizational context; then, I will give the purpose and background of the study, introduce the five improvement goals and the research questions that guide the inquiry of this ELP.

#### **Problem Statement**

The challenge that I seek to address in my ELP is the lack of centrally accessible knowledge of practices and available resources to assist me in leading and developing a 21st century Black Boarding School with an academic environment that maximizes the educational benefits to Black scholars. My objective is to identify best practices for: (1) curriculum and learning, (2) student experiences, (3) residential community, and (4) finance and fundraising.

In identifying these practices, I hope further to inform the development and practices at Ascend Legacy Academy so it will become an educational model for Black leaders and scholars that will serve as a life-making mechanism against structural, cultural, and direct educational violence (Mustaffa, 2017).

While I am not asserting that the creation of Ascend Legacy Academy or other Black independent institutions like it will eliminate all of the challenges faced by Black scholars in the current educational ecosystem, I do believe that Ascend Legacy Academy will help disrupt the academic violence endured by Black scholars in majority environments by promoting self-concept and improving self-esteem in a racially harmonious environment. The Ascend Legacy Pedagogy that has been developed will

help address the current limitations of the culturally relevant and culturally sustaining pedagogy, which are frameworks, in my opinion, that promote the tolerance of Black scholars. At the same time, I created the Ascend Legacy Pedagogy around the direct social and academic needs of Black scholars to not only celebrate their identities but also promote their freedom.

It is worth noting that previous studies around the need for school integration have frequently told the story of a past of segregated learning environments with unfulfilled potential or promise. Still, there is a forgotten legacy and a story yet to be told about these institutions. Before the 1970s, there were approximately 100 historically African American boarding schools. Independent boarding schools were a significant opportunity for educational attainment and access for African Americans between the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement (Shipman & Taylor, 2019, p.156) despite what the academic literature said about the poor quality of the segregated schooling of African American Children, the voices from this community told another side of the story (Siddle-Walker, 1996). Siddle-Walker reminds us that failing to examine the other side of history regarding the success of segregated learning environments presents a historically incomplete picture.

Present-day there are only four remaining Black Boarding schools: The Piney Woods School, Pine Forge Academy, Laurinburg Institute, and Redemption Christian Academy, and despite the lack of attention or awareness about them in the education community at large, these institutions have formed a legacy that has continued throughout the twenty-first century and has contributed to both the growth and development of education in America (Shipman & Taylor, 2019,) According to

Historically Black Boarding schools graduates, these environments provided access to quality education, qualified faculty who embodied the characteristics of the scholars who attended, on-site health care facilities, stable housing, and a connection to a legacy of greatness that extended beyond just themselves: it was the beginning of a legacy for their respective communities.

### **Why is This a Leadership Problem?**

The problem that I seek to address in my ELP is the lack of accessible knowledge of practices and available resources to assist me in leading and developing a 21st century Black Independent Boarding School with an academic environment that maximizes the educational benefits to Black scholars. The challenge is that there is a scant body of research dedicated to examining the success of Historically Black Boarding Schools (HBBS) and intentionally segregated learning environments. We urgently need to explore alternative education models for Black scholars since the failure rate among African American scholars continues to increase. “Educators and researchers have suggested that the high failure rate among African American youth reflects cultural disconnects between the school environment and students' social, cultural, and experiential backgrounds (e.g., Alexander-Snow, 1999; Boykin, 1986; Lotomey, 1990,1992; Lotomey & Brookins, 1988; Ogbu, 2003; Spencer, 1987). This disconnect between Black scholars and the current learning environments is what drove me to create a Black Boarding School. It continues to drive my quest to gather the necessary evidence and learn from the experiences of faculty, staff, and scholars of Historically Black Boarding schools to inform decision-making strategies at Ascend Legacy Academy.

There is no blueprint for designing and implementing what works effectively in founding, leading, developing, and sustaining a Black Boarding School. There is an extensive body of literature focusing on Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Charter Schools in urban settings; however, the dimension of what a boarding school community can provide for Black scholars is under-researched, but there is anecdotal evidence of its success.

My school, Ascend Legacy Academy, seeks to build upon the successes of Historically Black Boarding Schools (HBBS), which were numerous during the periods before desegregation but for which now only four remain. The four remaining schools are: Piney Woods School, Laurinburg Institute, Pine Forge Academy and Redemption Academy.

One of my objectives is to learn from the experience of other HBSS schools, particularly with regard to the factors that support student success, specifically those that are distinctive to teaching and learning in a Black Boarding School. However, there has been little investigation into the social, academic, and leadership mechanisms of success that drive the pedagogical framework, curricula and leadership structure at Historically Black Boarding Schools.

As a school leader, the literature gap around Historically Black Boarding Schools has impeded my ability to obtain resources and evidence to inform my leadership decisions. Since there is a limited number of historically Black boarding schools remaining, there is a limited examination of the black boarding school as an educational model. Even so, we should learn from those that remain, particularly about the factors

that most effectively support student success in such an educational environment. That is the purpose of this study.

### **Organizational Context and Role**

Sixty-six years after the landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*, our attention is drawn to current realities that predict education outcomes for American students of African descent. During the almost seven decades since the *Brown* decision, desegregation efforts coupled with numerous remediation and equity-focused programs have been introduced. Today, however, we face a stark reality; the *Brown* decision provided unprecedented hope for a future of educational equality – a hope that has yet to be realized (Echenique et al., 2005).

As an educational leader, I have been unyielding in my quest to create learning communities of academic excellence where Black scholars can thrive, be affirmed, and have a safe space for this hope to be realized. This quest has led me to found Ascend Legacy Academy, a Black-owned independent international boarding school focused on the education of Black scholars. African American families are finding it increasingly difficult to ensure African American children a safe learning environment where all school community members, teachers, students, administration, and parents share the same values of cultural and racial awareness and academic achievement (Alexander-Snow, 2010).

Ascend Legacy Academy is the first Black-owned independent international boarding school created since the 1970s. Ascend Legacy Academy is an independent boarding school for Black scholars with a focus on entrepreneurship, community redevelopment, civic engagement, STEM, project-based learning, group economics,

racial identity, and global leadership. Ascend Legacy Academy will have two residential campus locations: The first campus will be in Delaware/Pennsylvania and the second location will be in Dubai. Students will have the opportunity to participate in the residential community or attend as a day student.

**Ascend's Mission:** Ascend Legacy Academy is a 21st-century global education community that is grounded in the beliefs of Ascend Legacy Pedagogy. The Founder, The Board of Directors, and Founding teaching and leadership staff are committed to providing a rigorous learning environment that instills confidence and self-awareness in our Black scholars while affirming their racial identity and creating opportunities that allow them to harness their intellectual curiosity.

**Ascend's Vision:** Every Black scholar that attends Ascend Legacy Academy will become a leader in his community and create a legacy that extends beyond himself.

**Ascend's Student Demographics:** Ascend Legacy Academy is an academic independent international community for Black scholars in high school (Grades 9-12). Ascend Legacy Academy will recruit students from across the United States and the United Arab Emirates.

### **My Leadership Role**

As the Founder and Interim Head of the School of Ascend Legacy Academy, I have spent the past three years launching the academy. During this three-year period, I have engaged in activities that can be broken down into the following phases: Exploration Process, Initial Design Process, Major Design, and lastly the School licensure and Accreditation process.

The exploration phase took approximately 3 months. During the Exploration process, I completed the following tasks:

- Investigated state laws, policies and available funding
- Incorporated organization in state of Delaware
- Identified an accountant
- Worked with the Delaware Small Business Administration Advisor
- Recruited and trained Board of Directors
- Reviewed authorizing process
- Visited various independent schools
- Conducted research on independent schools, school models and design, and related areas
- Assessed community and student needs
- Researched district context
- Identified funding options
- Scheduled an appointment to review successful independent school models and budgets.

The initial Design Process took between three and six months to complete. During this time, I completed the following tasks:

- Formed a core design team with diverse skill and experience.
- Articulated the initial vision for Ascend Legacy Academy.
- Identified community members to serve on planning groups, advisory groups and family planning groups.
- Held community meetings to get input.

- Reviewed the results of a student and family’s needs assessment.
- Shared the vision with community members and corporations.
- Created a plan that identified the areas for the core design team which included: Education program/design, Governance, Budget/Finances, Facilities and Other.
- Created a school prospectus that was shared with the community, board members, and educators to get their input.
- Created a strategy to garner state level support.
- Worked with an architect to create specs and drawing of the facility and projected cost of the facility.
- Identified facility spaces for school and office.

The Major Design phase took between six and twelve months. There are several focus areas within this phase, they are the following: educational program, school culture and climate, school governance, school staffing, budget and finance, facilities and operations and a school accountability plan. Below is a brief status overview as it relates to each area:

**Educational Program:** To date, I have defined our educational approach and goals, outlined our academic standards, identified possible curriculum and instructional methods, identified assessments, developed a course catalog and instructional calendar and schedule. I have yet to finalize a professional development plan for my staff or publish the pedagogical model which will underpin our work, this will be one of the artifacts of my ELP which will be described later in this proposal.

**School Climate and Culture:** The parents of the scholars who participated in the 2022 summer pilot and Black women from Chester county are members of our community

engagement board. This Board has developed strategies and goals along with creating and articulating the vision for both scholars and staff. Created an accountability system that will be implemented for scholars.

**School Governance:** Board members have been identified and onboarded, and we have held monthly meetings since last Fall. The board has created a strategic plan for the school and they have reviewed and approved a pre-operational budget and 4-year budget. By-laws and policies have been approved and signed. With the help of the Board we have identified potential candidates that can serve as the Head of School and a two-year scholar recruitment strategy.

**School Staffing:** All school staff and personnel needs for the first four years of operation have been identified. These staff members participated in our summer pilot program last summer that was held at The University of Delaware. All of these staff members have been keeping a journal and documenting their experiences. These documents will be later used to inform the finalization of curricula and leadership development.

**Budget and Finances:** The school budget and financial plans have been developed and approved by the Board.

**Facilities and Operations:** I have identified potential facilities for the schools learning facilities, dorms and created operational plans.

**School Accountability Plan:** An accountability plan has been developed which outlines our academic, operational and governance goals. We have the appropriate insurance coverage which includes liability and child molestation insurance.

**School licensure and Accreditation:** This is the final phase. We have secured an account with the Delaware Department of Education and have been approved, we are awaiting final approval from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

### **Purpose**

This ELP aims to inform leadership decisions that influence Black scholar achievement and school leadership at 21st-century Black boarding schools, specifically the Ascend Academy I lead. This study will be based on the student and faculty experiences of those who participated and are participating in the learning community of Historically Black Boarding School models.

We are at a pivotal time in education as it relates to the outcomes of Black scholars; school districts and leaders across America are dismantling any semblance of Black history within their curricula, and although the inclusion of said curricula was never going to be enough to provide an accurate depiction of the rich history of Black across the diaspora, Rickford (2016) found that the inclusion of African-American history and culture in public school curricula had created little more than a black patchwork on a snow-white blanket of white nationalist education. These anti-Black attempts to purge Blackness and Black history from schools are violent and racist, and we must begin to recognize the challenges for Black scholars in majority environments and create independent Black institutions.

This ELP seeks to compile and synthesize data to further develop a historically independent education model for Black scholars through the development of Ascend Legacy Academy. In doing so, I have identified the five following improvement goals,

described below. In Chapter 3 I propose a set of improvement strategies that I pursue to accomplish these goals.

### **Improvement Goals**

In an effort to compile the necessary data, five improvement goals have been identified, and two research questions serve to guide the creation of the ELP artifacts, which I will expand on later in the text. The five improvement goals of this ELP are:

1. Identify the distinctive qualities of teaching at a selection of Historically Black Boarding Schools that contribute to scholar learning and empowerment (recall that I refer to students as scholars)
2. Identify the distinctive qualities of leading at a selection of Historically Black Boarding Schools that contribute to scholar learning and empowerment (recall that I refer to students as scholars) in order to compile information to create professional learning communities and leadership training workshops.
3. Identify the distinctive features of the school community—e.g., residential life, mentorship, racial congruence, religious support—from the perspective of scholars at a selection of Historically Black Boarding Schools that contribute to scholar learning and empowerment
4. Develop a course catalog for Ascend Legacy Academy by combining lessons gleaned from historical artifacts, the impactful features of teaching, leading, and the school community that have been identified.
5. In partnership with my ASCD champions of education, leadership coaches will identify, compile, synthesize, and extract lessons to inform the development of a legacy toolkit that will serve as the foundation for the creation of the HBBS Legacy

Fellowship for Black educators seeking to open, lead or serve in a Black Boarding school community.

### **Research Questions**

Though not required for the completion of the ELP, these research questions provided below helped guide my inquiry, data collection and analysis process, analysis of the relevant literature, and creation of the artifacts presented in this ELP. For these reasons, I include them here as I hope they will also illustrate my approach in developing improvement strategies to reach the aforementioned improvement goals.

1. How do Black scholars and faculty, including former scholars and faculty, characterize the learning and community aspects of Historically Black Boarding Schools that contributed to scholar learning and empowerment?
  - a. For learning, I am interested in analyzing their experiences with teachers, learning, and school leadership.
  - b. For community, I am interested in analyzing their experiences with peers, teachers, and school leaders outside the classroom.
2. How can the emerging themes that Black scholars and Faculty identify with those arising from Historical Documents be applied to the development of Ascend Legacy Academy?

## **Chapter 3**

### **IMPROVEMENT GOALS & STRATEGIES**

This chapter begins with the introduction of eight commonalities gleaned from the literature around Historically Black Boarding Schools. I then provide an overview of how the gaps within the literature generated the improvement goals and strategies of this ELP, ultimately laying the groundwork for the creation of the following artifacts: ELP Proposal, Literature Review, Historical Document Padlet, Ascend Legacy Academy Course Catalog, HBBS Documentary Trailer, Survey Instrument and Interview Protocol. I then include an overview of the improvement strategies and goals accompanied by a table to illustrate how each of the goals, strategies and artifacts support the problem that I am trying to address within this ELP. Lastly, I include a brief overview of each of the seven artifacts.

Though there are many theoretical characteristics of HBBS that one could use to identify as commonalities in their philosophical orientations, peer reviewed literature on this topic is limited, and to my knowledge only one text has tried to identify common features across these institutions. Lomotey (1992), provides the following features, which are reasonable, comprehensive, and align with my own philosophical orientations for the development of Ascend Academy. I therefore identify and summarize the eight characteristics provided by Lomotey.

1. An emphasis on high or superior academic achievement.
2. An emphasis on transmission of culture.
3. A sense of commitment to African American people.

4. An emphasis on self-determination, including the necessity for the schools themselves to be independent.
5. An implementation of an educational process based on distinct and explicit values.
6. An emphasis on developing a strong African American Identity and self-concept.
7. A commitment to the belief that African-American people are an African people with a common ancestry, a common condition or experience, and a common destiny.
8. A provision of political education through critical examination of current and historical events and how they relate to African American people.

I found that the literature on HBBS was limited in scope and only addressed, at most, only one of the eight commonalities identified by Lomotey, namely, an emphasis on self-determination, including the necessity for the schools themselves to be independent. The available literature that was included for this ELP did not address the seven remaining commonalities and does little to illuminate the academic, social, and cultural impact that these schools have had on scholars, nor have they included the experiences of faculty. Thus, I conclude that the improvement strategies I identify will need to come from conversations and study of current and past HBBS scholars and employees, as the literature itself is not revealing. Please see Appendix B: Synthesis of Selected Literature for a review of the literature in question.

The gaps and lack of evidence identified in the literature led to the creation of the three improvement strategies outlined below, which promoted the creation of the remaining artifacts included in this ELP. Each subsequent artifact helps to enable one or

more of the improvement goals mentioned in the previous chapter. The following section will introduce the three improvement goals of this ELP. Table 3.1 below helps to provide a visual outline that specifies which artifacts/improvement strategies aided in meeting the goals outlined in Chapter 2 of this ELP.

### **Improvement Strategies**

I will implement the following strategies to help address my leadership problem.

*Document and Learn about Leadership and Curricula at Historically Black Boarding Schools.* To document and learn about the leadership and curricula, I distributed a survey to the faculty of Historically Black Boarding Schools. Surveys were distributed by contacting current faculty at the remaining schools via email or LinkedIn and asking if they would be willing to participate in this study by taking a brief survey, and once the participants agreed to participate, they were provided with the survey link. Of the 15 faculty members invited to participate, 10 completed the survey.

*Document and Record the Experiences of HBBS Leaders and Scholars Through Oral History.* I conducted a series of Zoom and In-person semi-structured interviews to document and record the experiences of HBBS leaders and scholars through oral history. Purposeful and snowball sampling was used to identify participants for these 45-60 minute interviews. I initially identified 10 participants for interviews. 7 of the 8 participants have been video recorded and will be featured in the final documentary project. In addition to the 10 initial participants, 10 additional participants were recommended by those who have completed an interview, including the oldest living alumna from Laurinburg and the first graduate from Pine Forge Academy Lastly, out of

the 19 participants who completed the survey, 15 of those participants agreed to participate in a follow-up interview. All interviews were completed by May 21, 2022.

*Review Historical Artifacts and Evidence of Teaching and Learning at HBBS.* I found over 1,000 historical artifacts and records to conduct a document analysis. Document analysis is a method of qualitative research that I have decided to introduce into this study to help with the triangulation of data and sources to provide a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility (Eisner, 1991). Of the 1,000 documents initially obtained, I performed a content analysis on 30 of the sources from 1902- 2021 on the four remaining Historically Black Boarding schools and Palmer Institute. I randomly selected six to ten sources from the four categories listed below to compromise the 30 sources. These 30 sources included student report cards, secondary school reports, fundraising letters, dissertations, articles, books, videos, school packing lists, 990 forms, graduation requirements, newspaper clippings, commencement programs, and student handbooks. I assigned units of meaning based on keywords and imagery that aligned with the set categories, which I kept consistent with the objectives mentioned in Chapter 2 since these themes were also prevalent when respondents were asked open-ended survey questions and during the interview process; these categories are:

- Curriculum & Learning
- Student Experiences
- Residential Community
- Finances and Fundraising

Table 3.1 illustrates how the improvement strategies and artifacts align with the varying categories and which improvement goals they help to support. This table also

helps to provide the reader with a brief rationale for each of the strategies and goals identified.

**Table 3.1**  
***Relationship between Improvement Goals and Improvement Strategies***

<b>Improvement Goal(s)</b>	<b>Improvement Strategies/Artifacts</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<p>Develop a course catalog for Ascend Legacy Academy by combining lessons gleaned from historical artifacts, the impactful features of teaching, leading, and the school community that have been identified.</p> <p>Identify the distinctive qualities of teaching at a selection of Historically Black Boarding Schools that contribute to scholar learning and empowerment.</p>	<p>Document and Learn about leadership and curricula at Historically Black boarding schools.</p> <p>HBBS Faculty and Student Survey (Appendix F)</p> <p>Literature Review (Appendix B)</p> <p>Course Catalog (Appendix D)</p>	<p>Ensure that the creation of the Ascend Legacy Liberatory pedagogical model and curriculum aligns with that of HBBS and that the course catalog was developed using historical knowledge, scholar input and faculty best practices.</p>
<p>Identify the distinctive qualities of leading at a selection of Historically Black Boarding Schools that contribute to scholar learning and empowerment.</p> <p>Identify the distinctive qualities of teaching at a selection of Historically Black Boarding Schools that contribute to scholar learning and empowerment.</p>	<p>Document and record the experiences of HBBS leaders and scholars through oral history.</p> <p>Semi-Structured Interviews (Appendix G)</p> <p>Documentary Trailer (Appendix E)</p>	<p>Capture and record the historical accounts of scholars and leaders that participated in these learning communities.</p>
<p>Identify the distinctive features of the school community—e.g., residential life, mentorship, racial congruence, religious support—from the perspective of scholars at a selection of Historically Black Boarding Schools that contribute to</p>	<p>Review historical artifacts and evidence of teaching and learning at HBBS.</p> <p>Historical Document Padlet (Appendix C)</p>	<p>Ensure that the development of resources for ALA were created using historical knowledge and data and</p>

<p>scholar learning and empowerment.          Develop a course catalog for Ascend Legacy Academy by combining lessons gleaned from historical artifacts, the impactful features of teaching, leading, and the school community that have been identified.</p>		
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Included in this portfolio are seven artifacts which helped address the lack of centrally accessible knowledge of practices and available resources to assist me in leading and developing a 21st century Black Boarding School with an academic environment that maximizes the educational benefits to Black scholars.

1. **ELP Proposal Document:** This document outlines the leadership challenge that I faced as I was founding, Ascend Legacy Academy. It also provides a preliminary framework for addressing my leadership problem and outlines the long term and short-term goals of this project. The proposal provided a brief overview of the current status of Ascend Legacy Academy and how I plan to use the artifacts created within this ELP to advance the schools forward. The proposal was intended to guide the work in the ELP (see APPENDIX A)
2. **Literature Review:** This literature review (See Appendix B) was conducted to help accomplish the following goals: first, to help inform the reader on the history of the four remaining HBBS; and second, to help guide my inquiry around HBBS, which would allow me to identify the gaps that existed in the literature on these institutions. This review helped guide my development of the interview (See Appendix G) and survey instruments (See Appendix F) designed for this ELP.

The goal of this review was to situate the problem of the ELP within the context of the literature to help the reader and to use the gaps to guide the creation of several artifacts.

3. **Historical Document Padlet:** The purpose of this padlet was to compile a readily accessible resource for the reader and anyone interested in understanding the history of HBBS. This padlet was created to help me identify which of the thirty historical documents I would use to perform a document analysis credibly (Eisner, 1991). Of the 1,000 documents initially obtained, I performed a content analysis on 30 of the sources from 1902- 2021 on the four remaining Historically Black Boarding schools and Palmer Institute. Four of the five schools listed are currently operational. I selected Palmer Institute as part of the analysis since it was the first Black boarding school founded in 1902. The analysis was performed using student report cards, secondary school reports, fundraising letters, dissertations, articles, books, videos, school packing list, 990 forms, graduation requirements, newspaper clippings, commencement programs, and student handbooks. I assigned units of meaning based on keywords and imagery that aligned with the set categories, which I kept consistent with the objectives mentioned in Chapter 2 since these themes were also prevalent when respondents were asked open-ended survey questions and during the interview process; these categories are:

- Curriculum & Learning
- Student Experiences
- Residential Community

- Finances/Fundraising

4. **ALA Course Catalog:** This course catalog was developed to ensure that the academic and professional needs of our scholars were met while adhering to international and national standards. However, changes were made based on findings from the surveys and interviews that were conducted as part of the ELP (see Appendices F and G for a description of each, respectively). These changes are described in Chapters 4 and 5 of the ELP. This course catalog was created to make parents and the community aware of the educational program at ALA (SEE APPENDIX D).
5. **Documentary Trailer:** The inclusion of the trailer helps to provide a snapshot of the oral history that was collected during the creation of the ELP. While only the trailer was selected to be included in the ELP, the documentary was created to document and record the experiences of HBBS leaders and scholars through oral history. The footage chosen for the trailer was based on the series of interviews conducted at Pine Forge Academy since it was some of the earlier recorded footage, and the videographer was able to edit the footage in time to be used for the purpose of the ELP. This documentary is based on a series of Zoom and in-person semi-structured interviews that were designed to document and record the experiences of HBBS leaders and scholars through oral history. Purposeful and snowball sampling was used to identify participants for these 45-60 minute interviews (see Appendix G for details on the interview protocol). Out of the 10 participants that were identified, all completed the interviews (SEE APPENDIX E)

6. **Survey Instrument:** The survey data are meant to inform the revision of the course catalog (original catalog presented in Appendix D). I created the surveys to accomplish the improvement strategy *Document and Learn about leadership and curricula at historically Black boarding schools*. The survey questions were created because while all of the existing literature discussed the role of HBBS in affirming Black students and their success once they attend post-secondary institutions, there was a lack of evidence that focused on the academic and social aspects of these learning communities for scholars and leaders.

The questions contain a mixture of multiple choice and short answers. I attempted to make the survey as accessible as possible given the professional demands of survey participants. However, I wanted to provide them an opportunity to express in their own words features of the HBBS that they believe make it distinct from alternative schooling environments; for this reason, I included two short answer questions.

I distributed a survey to the faculty of Historically Black Boarding Schools. Surveys were distributed by contacting current faculty at the remaining schools via email or LinkedIn and asking if they would be willing to participate in this study by taking a brief survey, and once the participants agreed to participate, they were provided with the survey link. Of the 15 faculty members invited to participate, 10 completed the survey. To document and record the experiences of scholars, I distributed a survey to alumni of HBBS (SEE APPENDIX F)

7. **Interview Protocol:** This appendix consists of the interview questions and protocol that I created to identify the distinctive qualities of teaching and leading

at a selection of Historically Black Boarding Schools that contribute to scholar learning and empowerment. I conducted a series of Zoom and in-person semi-structured interviews to document and record the experiences of HBBS leaders and scholars through oral history.

Purposeful and snowball sampling was used to identify participants for these 45-60 minute interviews. Out of the 10 participants that were identified, all completed the interviews. In addition to the 10 participants, 10 were recommended by those who had completed an interview. Of the 10 additional individuals identified, 100% participated in an interview (SEE APPENDIX G)

## **Chapter 4**

### **IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY RESULTS**

This chapter of the ELP begins with a brief synthesis of the historical documents of the Historically Black Boarding Schools: Palmer Institute, Laurinburg Institute, Piney Woods School, Pine Forge Academy, and Redemption Academy. Next, I introduce the emerging categories identified in my review of historical documents, with each of the respective schools serving as a stand-alone case study reinforcing one of the emerging categories and supporting one or more of the improvement goals. I then reintroduce the improvement strategies from the previous chapter and share the findings from surveys and interview results that will be discussed in their connection to my research questions and improvement goals. Lastly, I discuss the significance of the unanticipated artifacts that support the improvement strategies that helped achieve the improvement goals, thereby mitigating the leadership challenge identified in this ELP.

The five case studies include documents obtained from searching historical archives and records; some were shared with me by alums from these institutions. The documents contained in this ELP were chosen because they helped to contextualize the improvement strategies identified and aided in the creation of several of the ELP artifacts. The documents share commonalities, but most importantly, each document helps to tell the individual leadership journey of these five school founders from which I was able to glean an understanding.

Four of the five schools listed are the remaining Black Boarding Schools. I selected Palmer Institute as part of the analysis since it was the first Black boarding school founded in 1902 and founded by a Black woman. Charlotte's journey as a school

founder resembles that of my own almost twenty-one years later. Redemption Academy was included because it is one of the surviving black boarding schools, and it was founded in 1979, after desegregation efforts, while the other institutions were all established before school desegregation.

### **Review of historical artifacts**

The collection of the historical documents helped to support the following improvement strategy: *Review Historical Artifacts and Evidence of Teaching and Learning at HBBS*. The other two improvement strategies will be discussed later in this section using the data from interviews and survey results.

During the collection process, I was able to locate over 1,000 historical artifacts and records to conduct a document analysis. Document analysis is a method of qualitative research that I have decided to introduce into this study to help with the triangulation of data and sources to provide a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility (Eisner, 1991). Of the 1,000 documents initially obtained, I performed a content analysis on 30 of the sources from 1902- 2021 on the four remaining Historically Black Boarding schools and Palmer Institute. Four of the five schools listed are currently operational. I selected Palmer Institute as part of the analysis since it was the first Black boarding school founded in 1902. The analysis was performed using student report cards, secondary school reports, fundraising letters, dissertations, articles, books, videos, school packing list, 990 forms, graduation requirements, newspaper clippings, commencement programs, and student handbooks.

These documents helped to shape my understanding of HBBS and provided me with a blueprint for creating resources for Ascend Legacy Academy around the areas of

curriculum and learning, student experiences, residential community, and finances and fundraising. The documents selected for this ELP are in no way a comprehensive overview of any of the aforementioned schools but they aided in the creation of this ELP and the revision of the ALA Course Catalog (See Appendix C).

The historical documents from Both Pine Forge and Palmer Institute contributed to revisions made to the ALA Course Catalog (See Appendices C for the historical information and D for the course catalog), the historical documents collected from these institutions were the Southern Association of Secondary Schools report for Palmer Institute and the Graduation requirements for Pine Forge Academy. The Southern Association of Secondary Schools Report from Palmer Institute provided a summary of the institution's academic performance, student enrollments, teacher credentials and academic schedule with the time spent on each academic subject which helped me reevaluate the academic requirements at ALA and propose an abbreviated weekly schedule. In addition, it is worth noting that there was a minor change in graduation requirements based on the academic requirements for Pine Forge; the world language requirement for ALA was increased to a minimum of 4 credits.

Although the fundraising plan for ALA is not included in this ELP, the lessons that were gleaned from Laurence Jones of Pineywoods center around fundraising, the documents included for Pineywoods are advertisements and letters seeking funding from various organizations and individuals, this is important to the survival of Pineywoods as the only HBBS with a endowment, which helped shift the focus of the fundraising plan for ALA so that our initial campaigns would specifically include language around an endowment.

Conversely, the lesson gleaned from the financial documents for Laurinburg was that their lack of an endowment left them vulnerable to others and opened up the school and leadership for critique. Overall, a lack of an endowment made it so that external auditors, who were not necessarily invested in the education of those Black scholars, could fault and undermine the functioning of the school. These lessons are evident throughout the 55-page document.

Lastly, the lesson gleaned from Redemption Academy emphasizes the student experience and residential community. I was able to review the student handbook and packing slip from Redemption Academy which aided in the creation of the guidelines for the ALA residential community and many of the correspondences that have been shared with our parents and students to date include the materials distributed during our 2020 summer pilot academy.

The remaining two improvement strategies are to *Document and Learn about Leadership and Curricula at Historically Black boarding schools* and *Document and Record about Leadership and Curricula at Historically Black Boarding Schools*. The survey results and interview results helped to achieve the results of these two strategies.

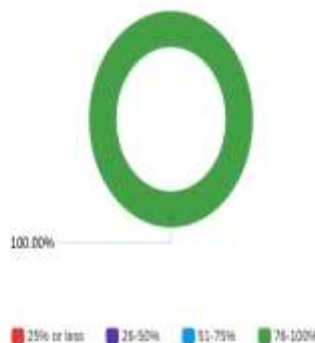
For this section, I will not focus on all of the results of the surveys or interviews; instead, I will only highlight a few results that help me to eliminate the problem addressed in this ELP which is the lack of centrally accessible knowledge of practices and available resources to assist me in leading and developing a 21st century Black Boarding School with an academic environment that maximizes the educational benefits to Black scholars. The first data points that I would like to highlight are those from the faculty survey.

## Faculty Survey Results

When asked what percentage of the faculty at these HBBS were black, all of the participants selected that between 76-100% of their staff and faculty are Black. This is important because it speaks to Racial Congruence which reminds us that Black students learn better in an environment where the faculty directly mirror the student demographics. Figure 4.1 below reflects these results:

**Figure 4.1**

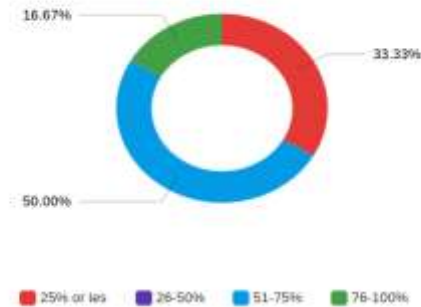
*Faculty Survey: Race*



Next, the faculty were asked to select what percentage of the faculty hold a degree beyond a bachelor's degree and 50% indicated that between 51-75% of their staff held a degree beyond a bachelor's degree, 16% of respondents indicated that between 76-100% of their staff held a degree beyond a bachelor's degree, while 33% indicated that 25% or less of their staff held a degree beyond a bachelor's degree. Figure 4.2 reflects these results:

**Figure 4.2**

***Faculty Survey: Educational Attainment***



Two data points that are worth mentioning in this section are that when asked what percentage of their students graduate from high school, the participants all shared that 100% of their students graduated from high school and when asked what percentage of their students were admitted into a 4-year college, the participants shared that 99.75% of their students were admitted into college.

Lastly when asked why it was important to preserve Black Boarding Schools, participants shared the following via short form responses:

- “One knowledge it provides as well as the home. Just like HBCUs it’s important to provide spaces created for our students.”
- “Black boarding schools are needed to immerse our students in academic and real-life experiences. These students learn life skills and can survive using them”
- “I think providing an alternative space for students is helpful and the continued connection to our historical heritage is beneficial in building strong character. I believe it begins early and is important for students. Also giving students a college feel early helps them be more successful when they enter college.”

- “It is important to preserve our black boarding schools because they are places where our youth can receive a high-quality education in an environment of love and acceptance. It is also a place where black teachers, deans, and support staff have opportunities to model excellence for black students in personal ways because of the boarding experience.”
- “Because often our kids fall through the cracks, or get mistreated, or not treated or considered at all. Here everyone is on an equal level with race, and there's no treatment given or withheld because of race.”

These last results characterize the importance faculty place on congruence of race for education Black scholars, the value of boarding schools for creating insulated and protected environments, which together result in high expectations and safety of Black scholars.

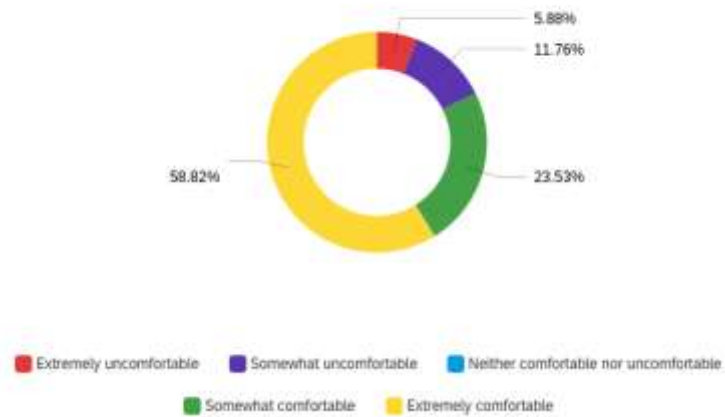
### **Alumni Survey Results**

When asked to indicate how comfortable they were interacting with the faculty in the HBBS community, at least 23% indicated that they were somewhat comfortable, 58% indicated that they were extremely comfortable, 11% indicated that they were somewhat uncomfortable, while at least 5% indicated that they were extremely uncomfortable.

Figure 4.3 represents the data presented above.

**Figure 4.3**

*Alumni Survey Comfort with Faculty*

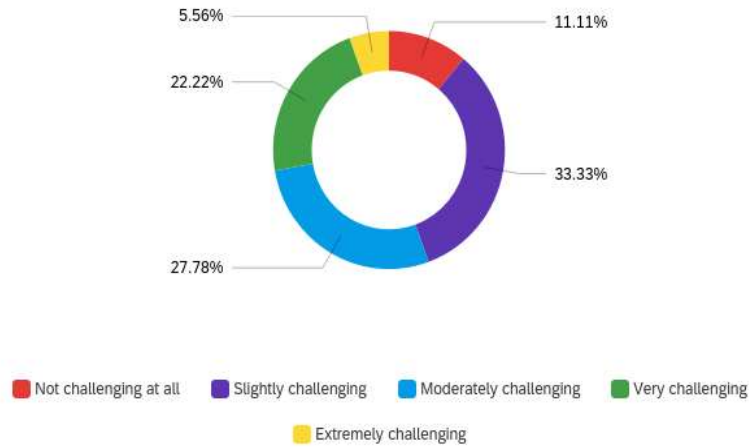


When asked to rate their overall experience with the HBBS Coursework and curriculum, participants reported the following: At least 11% indicated that the curriculum was not challenging at all, 33% indicated slightly challenging, slightly over 27% indicated that it was moderately challenging, 22% indicated that it was very challenging, while a little over 5% indicated that it was extremely challenging. Figure 4.4 represents the data mentioned above.

Though it is not easy to compare data from Figures 4.2 and 4.3 with experiences Black scholars might have at majority schools, the overall share of students who report comfort interacting with faculty and the challenge of experienced curriculum do indicate the success of the HBBS experience for these students.

**Figure 4.4**

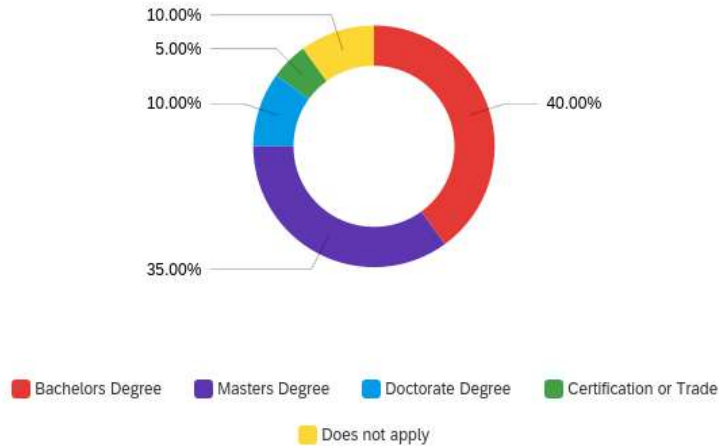
*Alumni Survey Experience with Coursework and Curriculum*



When asked what is the highest level of postsecondary degree awarded upon graduating from their HBBS, 85% of participants indicated that they were awarded a bachelor's degree or higher. Figure 4.5 below shows the data mentioned above.

**Figure 4.5**

*Alumni Survey Educational Attainment*



Lastly when asked to share why they believed that it was important to preserve Black Boarding Schools and to describe what attending a HBBS meant to them, the participants shared the following remarks:

- “Life change, life giving and lifesaving”
- “For some it’s a legacy, for others it’s life changing”.
- “They support developing a sense of Black cultural pride and community.”
- “Instrumental. It changed the trajectory of my life. After my friends went to jail and my high school bf was killed I saw an article about a homeless girl that went to PWS and went on to Harvard. I decided to go.”
- “Perseverance. To face the many challenges of being a black institution in the south and to not only overcome but still be here 100+ years later is beyond amazing”

- “Black boarding schools serve a unique purpose in society because they provide and encourage a close and protected environment. This serves to allow students to evolve with self-development without encumbered aspects of society at the same time they are mastering academics.
- “Black and brown children need spaces where they can see themselves so that they can be themselves. PWS provided a consistent model of what black excellence and black leadership looked like for me and my peers.”
- “They impact us in a way that prepares us for college socially and academically. I’ve taught students that didn’t know the basics of college life. I was already ready. Also, the networking and knowledge. We went to South Africa when I was a student. Only places I had been were NY and Chicago”

These last results emphasize many of the benefits of HBBS that faculty did, namely, Black culture and pride coupled with high expectations and safety emerging from an environment in which faculty and staff are racially congruous with the student body.

Through the surveys, I gained a better understanding of the experiences of faculty and students who were part of the HBBS communities. The survey results indicate a high expectation of academic excellence, commitment to Black history and culture, and that students feel supported within the HBBS Community.

In addition to the surveys, I conducted a series of interviews, many of which are featured in the full-length documentary. I will not share data from each interview, but I will provide a summary of the themes that occurred during the interviews with faculty

and alumni. It is worth noting that when I reached out to the faculty and alums from HBBS communities, they were not only excited to share their experiences, but they often provided me with the contact information for other faculty and alums so that they, too, could share their experiences. This speaks to the power of community found at HBBS and among those who have had the privilege of being in that space.

Both faculty and student interviews were analyzed using an inductive approach. As I listened to the transcripts and replayed the audio, the following themes were identified from faculty interviews: legacy, tradition, and intentional leadership.

### **Faculty Interviews**

The faculty interviews helped me to *Document and Record the experiences of HBBS Leaders* at Historically Black Schools in a way that could not be captured with survey data alone. Many of the interviewees who served in the capacity of faculty at their respective boarding schools also attended as a student, and many of their children and grandchildren also attended these institutions. This legacy resembles what can be found at historically white independent schools, and interviewees commented that there is no equivalent educational ecosystem in the US where Black families can sustain such a powerful tradition outside of those found at HBBS. Faculty Member 1 jokes, "Lord's will, my grandchildren's, children's, children will also attend Pine Forge Academy." This quotation speaks to the pride and commitment these leaders attribute to these institutions. It also speaks to the traditions that have been established at these schools. Faculty Member 2 accounts his experience as the current leader who did not attend an HBBS and shared that, "I thought that they were joking when they said that the upper-level students would mentor the first- and second-year students and support them as their dorm parents,

aunts, and uncles, but it is truly a tradition, and they are family, they look out for each other and support one another, in ways that you would not see anywhere else."

When asked to describe leadership at her HBBS, Faculty Member 3 said, "Intentional leadership." This phrase has resonated with me since my interview. It sticks out to me because, after several interviews with faculty, it is apparent that their leadership is a calling in their lives, and they lead with purpose. These leaders recognize what is at stake for Black scholars, and they have all risen to the challenge and have done so frequently without receiving the recognition they deserve.

These interviews alone have served as a blueprint for me as I build Ascend Legacy Academy; they have helped me to understand the importance of legacy, tradition, and what it means to be an intentional leader. These interviews gave me an understanding of what it takes to find and lead at an HBBS and select a leadership team to support my vision. I have learned many valuable lessons from each of the leaders at these HBBS, many of which I will include in a book on my journey as a founder of a Black boarding school and how these respective interviews and historical case studies have helped to teach me some invaluable leadership lessons. Through practicing intentional leadership, these HBBS communities can create a tradition that sustains their legacy.

### **Alumni Interviews**

The alumni interviews helped me document and record scholars' experiences *at HBBS*. The alumni interviews were scheduled for 45-60 minute time slots; however, many of the interviews lasted double the allotted time. Once alumni were asked about their experiences at HBBS, many were beaming with joy and pride and wanted to share

their stories. The emerging themes from these interviews were community, family, transformational, empowerment, and grace.

Many interviewees attributed their individual success and life achievements to belonging to a community of Black scholars and leaders who helped provide them with the necessary tools to propel them into the future.

When asked what attending an HBBS meant to him, Alumnus 1 shared that he knows that his life outcomes would be vastly different as a young father if not for the community that enveloped him at his HBBS and then having that same community while enrolling into their feeder university. He said, "*I learned how to be a man; more importantly, I learned how to be a father.*"

Like many of the other alumni, they often referenced how attending an HBBS was transformative and empowering; alumni recall specific times when they were encouraged to take a leadership role, participate in the choir, or just enjoy their youth because they felt safe enough to make mistakes knowing that the faculty would extend grace.

When asked to describe his experience at his HBBS, alumnus 2 said, "*We were the standard.*" This is a powerful statement beyond measure; attending an HBBS provided a sense of power to the scholars who attended them, and they were never taught to measure themselves against some arbitrary standards set by White America but that they were the standard.

The alumni interviews helped to illuminate the scholar experience at HBBS and have thus allowed me to put into words what so many have experienced but has yet to be captured or recorded. These experiences have helped shape my understanding of how Black scholars can thrive in HBBS environments and how they carry those lessons into

their futures. The community and support that these alumni have for one another are unparalleled, and being able to capture it through oral history has been a tremendous gift; I am often reminded of something one of the current leaders at HBBS said when asked what makes HBBS so successful, and his response was "LOVE." The simplicity of that response is powerful.

Lastly, I would like to share a statement from my discussion with the oldest living alumnae from one of the remaining HBBS; she was 106 years old during my interview. When asked to describe her educational experience in the segregated south, she said, *"There were times that I wished I was dead because of how poorly White folks would treat us, but that changed being in an all-Black environment."* As she finished the ending of that sentence, she had the biggest smile on her face and it was then that I knew that Black Boarding Schools are for Black children, a safe space.

## Chapter 5

### REFLECTION ON IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY RESULTS

In this chapter, I reflect on the improvement goals that I laid out in the beginning and my ability to meet these goals given the strategies I developed. As I reflect on the execution and the outcomes of this study, four out of five of the initial improvement goals were met. The fifth improvement goal which was to develop a legacy toolkit to serve as the foundation for the creation of the HBBS Legacy Fellowship for Black educators seeking to open, lead, or serve in a Black Boarding school community is still in development, though the information I gathered during this ELP certainly have informed it. Below, I review my improvement goals and provide details about how my improvement strategies allowed me to, at least partially, accomplish these goals.

#### **Identify the distinctive qualities of teaching at a selection of HBBS**

The survey and interview participants provided enough data and evidence to perform a thorough qualitative analysis to introduce concrete preliminary findings around the distinctive qualities of teaching, leading, and learning at Historically Black Boarding Schools. These instruments, combined with the evidence from the case studies, helped inform the creation of the course catalog (see Appendix D) for Ascend Legacy Academy. Specifically, as these surveys and case studies emphasized community, racial and cultural congruence, and rigor, the course catalog summarizes our mission, vision, and philosophy, which is informed by these ideas. Though these surveys and interviews do not inform the specific listing of course requirements, they did influence the kinds of courses and course sequences that are expected of students. As should be clear, these

leadership qualities also impacted the completion of learning goal four, developing a course catalog, which is summarized below.

I think more importantly; these data informed the creation of the Ascend Legacy pedagogical model. This pedagogical model, though not explicitly part of my initial improvement goals, is vitally important, as it will be used to develop our ALA teaching training institute and the standard by which we build out all of our courses, programs and services. Our teaching rubrics will be designed using data and feedback from the faculty survey and interviews.

### **Identify the distinctive qualities of leading at a selection of HBBS**

The biggest lesson that I learned from my interviews with faculty at HBBS is that intentional leadership can be used to create long-lasting institutional traditions, and that these traditions are often what allow HBBS to have sustained impact and multigenerational longevity. Put differently, traditions stem from leadership, and traditions are what faculty adhere to and alumni recollect after they have graduated.

Identifying and creating the right traditions remains a challenge, but my interviews helped to shape what those traditions will look like. Specifically, they have led me to emphasize religious values, cultural affirmation, safety, and rigor. Infusing those aspects into the daily life of instructional practice and community will help to create traditions that will then resonate and sustain Ascend Legacy Academy.

The historical archives also helped to reinforce these ideas. In addition to the faculty interviews, the leadership lessons gleaned from the historical document analysis will help establish a framework for the creation of a leadership fellowship and several leadership articles that center the lessons from the five founders mentioned in Chapter 4.

This fellowship will be centered around the themes that emerged during the faculty surveys and interviews which include legacy, tradition, and intentional leadership. These emerging themes will be used as the primary tenets for the fellowship program. Aspiring leaders looking to found a Black boarding school or education leaders who are seeking to become certified in our leadership model will participate in a series of workshops and trainings designed around the emerging themes included in this ELP and other themes that were discovered as a result of this study.

Additionally, leadership articles will be written around the three main themes mentioned above and other crucial themes that emerged throughout the course of this research; many will also be discussed in the full-length documentary. These articles will be written to feature the historical lesson that has been learned from the five respective founders of the HBBS and a case study will be designed to evaluate the leadership of each of the five founders and others that were not included in this ELP.

### **Identify the distinctive features of the school community at a selection of HBBS**

The alumni surveys and interviews, coupled with my on-campus visits, have helped me and our architect to design the layout for ALA, the dorms, and community centers on campus. Those distinctive features are the themes that emerged directly from the alumni interviews which were: community, family, transformation, empowerment, and grace. The dorm facilities have been designed as homes instead of your traditional campus dormitory to create a campus that fosters a sense of community and family. All homes will be assigned a house parent who will provide constant care for our scholars, which also helps to boost grace between the adult-student relationship since these house parents will only be responsible for the nurture and care of our scholars. To provide a

campus where transformation and empowerment develop, our students will have access to a community garden, a student-run coffee shop, and a cafe, and they will run the businesses on campus, which have been designed specifically for scholar leadership.

These data have also helped me to have a better understanding of the types of support mechanisms that will need to be implemented once scholars are on campus and the activities that need to be designed to foster a sense of community. Though I cannot provide too many specific details about these support mechanisms, as they are part of the intellectual property of ALA, broadly speaking, these support mechanisms are programs and curricula that help to reinforce self-concept and self-esteem for Black scholars. All programs and curricula have been designed from a decolonization lens to promote awareness of self while always centering the student experience. As one example, ALA will feature a student-run and student-led academic research center so that they can contribute to the growing body of knowledge that they are expected to consume. Lastly, as part of the academic requirements, students must attend classes at our Dubai campus and participate in our global learning program. Though not all of these community-driven experiences can be directly attributed to my implementation strategies, the data I collected infused the general approach we took to build a campus where scholars are vital contributors, affirmed, and challenged.

**Develop a course catalog for ALA by combining lessons gleaned from historical artifacts, the impactful features of teaching, leading, and the school community that have been identified.**

The ALA course catalog was designed to help guide the academic standards of ALA. There have been changes made to this catalog as noted in Chapter 4, primarily

changed using improvement strategy #3 which is to *review historical artifacts and evidence and teaching and learning at HBBS*. The analysis of old student report cards, accreditation reports, and graduation requirements served as the impetus for the changes to the ALA course catalog. As I wrote in chapter 4, the historical documents from Both Pine Forge and Palmer Institute included information from Southern Association of Secondary Schools and Graduation requirements, respectively. The Southern Association of Secondary Schools Report from Palmer Institute provided a summary of the institution's academic performance, student enrollments, teacher credentials and academic schedule with the time spent on each academic subject which helped me reevaluate the academic requirements at ALA and to propose an abbreviated weekly schedule. In addition, it is worth noting that there was a minor change in graduation requirements based on the academic requirements for Pine Forge; the world language requirement for ALA was increased to a minimum of 4 credits.

**In partnership with my ASCD champions of education, leadership coaches will identify, compile, synthesize, and extract lessons to inform the development of a legacy toolkit**

Although this goal was not completely achieved through my ELP, the interviews, surveys, and review of historical documents have all helped shape the preliminary proposal that has been developed. In addition, I formed a leadership committee with several other HBBS faculty and heads of schools who have agreed to serve alongside me to help facilitate the creation of a toolkit that will be shared with future leaders of Black Independent schools. I will also borrow lessons I learned from the distinctive qualities of leading improvement goals to assist in the development of this toolkit.

### **Reflection: How did the ELP Help Develop my Understanding of Leadership?**

Developing this ELP has enabled me to further my understanding of Historically Black boarding schools and enhance my knowledge of the experiences of scholars and leaders at these institutions. Throughout the research and data collection processes, I have developed the leadership mechanisms that will be implemented at Ascend Legacy Academy and grounded in the results of my research.

This research process has also allowed me to thoroughly develop the procedures and policies governing the Ascend Legacy Academy. I can further articulate the vision, mission, and values of the Ascend Legacy Academy in a way that will allow other educational leaders to replicate a similar model.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

Additionally, although I believe that I was able to gather enough evidence from the instruments used in this study, I think it would be beneficial to increase the number of survey respondents so that each of the Black boarding schools is represented equally within the data and analysis. Therefore, I will keep the alumni and leadership survey open to collect enough data to perform additional analysis.

In future studies, I would like to conduct more quantitative analysis to examine the cultural, social, and academic outcomes of Black alums and if the community surrounding the school was a mechanism that contributed directly to their success. Thus, generating evidence can be further investigated to create policies that will allow us to design future thriving learning communities that benefit American students of African descent.

This study allowed me to document processes that I hope can serve as a resource in the toolkit for future Black educators seeking to incorporate the Ascend Legacy Pedagogy or found their own Black Boarding School.

As a champion of hope and equity, my next steps are to continue to work alongside current and former leaders of Historically Black Boarding Schools, continue to examine and analyze the remaining historical documents that were not included in this ELP to continue to add to the and build out the capacity of Ascend Legacy Academy to be a safe and free space for Black scholars.

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## **Appendix A**

### **ARTIFACT 1: ELP PROPOSAL**

Full proposal has been excluded for purposes of space.

## **Appendix B**

### **ARTIFACT 2:**

#### **SYNTHESIS OF SELECTED LITERATURE**

This appendix consists of a synthesis of the literature on Historically Black Boarding Schools (HBBS). I conducted this literature review to accomplish the following goals: first, to help inform the reader on the history of the four remaining HBBS; and second, to help guide my inquiry around HBBS, which would allow me to identify the gaps that existed in the literature on these institutions. Ultimately, this review helped guide my development of the interview and survey instruments designed for this ELP.

At the onset, I acknowledge little peer-reviewed scholarship on the structure and impact of HBBS. Much of the existing literature I have included in this review is on the experiences of Black graduates of the Piney Woods School, one of four remaining boarding schools operating in the United States. In contrast, more existing peer-reviewed literature focuses on the impact of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) on the social, academic, and economic outcomes of Black students. I am choosing to focus on literature pertaining to HBBS, since this is the model that I have chosen to replicate through the creation of Ascend Legacy Academy. My literature review is, therefore, unavoidably thin, but it attempts to be comprehensive; the scholarly literature on HBBS needs to be more varied, which is why I was motivated to conduct these additional data collection efforts, summarized in Appendixes C through I.

This review will begin with a brief overview of the significance of HBBS and eight commonalities shared between these institutions. It will then provide some

background information on the four remaining HBBS: Laurinburg Institute, Pine Forge Academy, Piney Woods School, and Redemption Academy. I also provide a brief introduction to Palmer Institute and why I made the deliberate decision to include Palmer Institute within this project. Lastly, it will also address the results of a qualitative case study and naturalistic inquiry that illustrate how graduates of HBBS integrate into Historically White Institutions.

### **Significance of Historically Black Boarding Schools**

The educational opportunities between the Civil War and Civil Rights movement were limited for Black scholars in the United States; however, there was a group of visionaries who were determined to teach African American students beyond the fundamentals of reading and writing; they wanted to create opportunities for them to receive training for jobs that were typically not in their reach. The visions of schools designed for African Americans led to the creation and opening of African American boarding schools (Shipman & Taylor, 2019).

Historically Black boarding schools serve to affirm Black students by providing them with experiences where they are immersed in their culture; these schools are characterized as communities that educate “the head, heart and hands” (Alexander-Snow, 2011 p.329) Historically Black Boarding schools are critical learning environments for Black children because they were communities of excellence, support, and affirmation. These communities do not resemble any other educational model in the United States. While the school day focuses on student learning for the standard eight hours, the boarding school experience is vastly different, as it includes community development and shared meals with family and staff, along with religious practices (Alexander-Snow,

2010). These communities are an integral part of how these schools serve as life-making instruments that mitigate educational violence; students' educational experience is a function of the interaction of all segments of the school's social system and its curricula (Spenser & Marstrom-Adams, 1990). Students are immersed in an academic and social system focused on African American culture, the African-American experience, and African American achievement (Brookins, 1984).

### **Philosophical Orientation of Historically Black Boarding Schools**

Though there are many theoretical characteristics of HBBS that one could use to identify as commonalities in their philosophical orientations, peer reviewed literature on this topic is limited, and to my knowledge only one text has tried to identify common features across these institutions. Lomotey, 1992, p.459 provides the following features, which are reasonable, comprehensive, and align with my own philosophical orientations for the development of Ascend Academy. I therefore identify and summarize the eight characteristics provided by Lomotey.

1. There is an emphasis on high or superior academic achievement.
2. There is an emphasis on transmission of culture.
3. There is a sense of commitment to African American people.
4. There is an emphasis on self-determination, including the necessity for the schools themselves to be independent.
5. There is an implementation of an educational process based on distinct and explicit values.
6. There is an emphasis on developing a strong African American Identity and self-concept.

7. There is a commitment to the belief that African-American people are an African people with a common ancestry, a common condition or experience, and a common destiny.
8. The provision of political education through critical examination of current and historical events and how they relate to African American people.

Now that we have an understanding around the significance of HBBS and some features they have in common, I now turn to the historical facts that have been included in the literature around the four remaining HBBS.

### **Historical Origins of the Four Remaining HBBS & Palmer Institute**

There were a little over one hundred Historically Black Boarding Schools before integration (Shipman & Taylor, 2019). *Brown v. Board of Education* led to desegregation between schools, ultimately preserving only four HBBS (Shipman & Taylor, 2019). In order of when they were founded, the four remaining schools are Laurinburg Institute, Piney Woods, Pine Forge Academy, and Redemption Academy. Despite what has been included in the literature, which states that the oldest Black Boarding institution is Laurinburg Institute, founded in 1904. Palmer Institute, founded in 1901, is the oldest historically Black boarding school and is currently operating as a museum and educational center. Palmer was founded in 1901 by Charlotte Hawkins Brown, the first Black Boarding school and the first to be founded by a Black woman. I will provide additional insight into why I decided to include Palmer Institute in this project later in Chapter 4 when I review the improvement strategies. In the following, I

will review the four remaining HBBS, their origin, and the student body that they were created to serve.

Three of the four currently operational remaining HBBS were founded to address the specific needs in the education of Black students prior to desegregation efforts. In contrast, RCA was founded after the Landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* and it still maintains the founding educational philosophy.

### **Laurinburg Institute**

According to Shipman and Taylor (2019), the oldest historically African American boarding school was founded in 1904 based on the suggestion of Booker T. Washington by Emmanuel Monty and Tinny McDuffie in North Carolina on a small piece of swamp land sold to the McDuffie's by a former Confederate colonel. The Laurinburg Institute would dedicate a portion of the curriculum to training's in carpentry and brick making which would help prepare African Americans for the jobs that were not traditionally offered to them. By the 1920s, Laurinburg would serve close to 2300 students and in 2009, the McDuffie family would receive recognition from the United States House of Representatives for their contributions to educating African American Students with excellence.

### **Piney Woods**

Pineywoods was founded in 1909 by Laurence C Jones in Mississippi. The motto for Piney Woods is "changing one student at a time," and the mission of Piney woods was to transform troubled adolescents into academic scholars (Shipman & Taylor, 2019)

Piney Woods would educate students in a Christian environment (Lehrer, 2001 as cited in Shipman and Taylor, 2019).

According to Shipman and Taylor, Piney Woods enrolls students from over 20 states, the Caribbean, African nations and Mexico and remains the largest of the four remaining African American Boarding schools (Roach, 2003 as cited in Shipman and Taylor, 2019). The students at Pineywoods are subjected to a strict learning environment with a focus on religion. Both faculty and students are required to attend prayer services throughout the week and church services on Sunday (Roach as cited in Shipman and Taylor, 2019). Students must perform chores, class attendance is mandatory, and they must study two hours nightly.

### **Pine Forge Academy**

Pine Forge Academy is registered on the National register of Historic places. This school was founded in 1946 on the property of Thomas Rutter, in Pennsylvania. Thomas Rutter was a Quaker abolitionist who used his home as a stop on the Underground Railroad (Devlin, 2015 as cited in Shipman and Taylor, 2019).

The impetus for establishing Pine Forge Academy was The President of the Allegheny conference of seventh day Adventist, Elder John Wagner, Sr., envisioned a school where African American students would be able to attend without being burdened by the racial issues of schools in the South (Legacy, 2017 as cited in Shipman and Taylor, 2019) Pine Forge Academy was founded to allow its students the opportunity to explore connections between residential, community, and academic life, which has resulted in significant student achievement (Shipman and Taylor, 2019). A unique factor of Pine

Forge is that it is part of the Seventh-day Adventist education system providing a holistic approach that develops the heart, head, and hand.

### **Redemption Christian Academy (RCA)**

Redemption Christian Academy was founded in 1979 in New York by Pastor John Massey, Jr. The goal of RCA was to provide a quality affordable education in a Christian Environment. RCA began as a small church school and its main goals were to expose students to the academic, athletic and spiritual challenges by building a community-like environment. Redemption Christian Academy focuses on educating the hand, head, and heart is the school's educational philosophy that has allowed the institution to transform the lives of students from all over the globe (Shipman & Taylor, 2019). Redemption Christian Academy adopted a Christian-centered academic environment similar to that at Piney Woods.

The brief historical origin provided for the remaining operational HBBS is clearly limited in scope and addresses, at most, only one of the eight commonalities identified by Lomotey, namely, an emphasis on self-determination, including the necessity for the schools themselves to be independent. However, the available literature that was included for this section of the synthesis does not address the seven remaining commonalities and does little to illuminate the academic, social, and cultural impact that these schools have had on scholars, nor have they included the experiences of faculty.

Unfortunately, such a comprehensive record for these HBBS is not available. Instead, what I aim to provide in the next section is an attempt to synthesize the results of a qualitative case study and naturalistic inquiry which explored the cultural impact of a historically Black independent boarding school on the social and academic experiences of

four of its graduates who attended traditionally White universities (Alexander-Snow, 2021). The following is based on the work of Alexander-Snow (2010; 2011), who provides the only in-depth characterizations of HBBS students' experiences in Piney Woods and their transition to predominantly White higher education institutions. Following Snow, I organize the summary into three core HBBS experiences – culture, congruence of student and staff, and incorporation of religious values. Then, I describe how HBBS graduates took those aspects of their HBBS experience with them as they transitioned to higher education in predominantly White institutions.

### **Affirmations, Faith, Cultural Identity**

Historically Black boarding schools act as instruments of life-making against educational violence by affirming Black students and providing experiences where they are immersed in their culture; these schools are characterized as communities that educate “the head, heart, and hands” (Alexander-Snow, 2011). According to one student, this learning community helped her to “develop a greater love for her people and her spirit by its strong emphasis on culturally relevant teaching and Christian underpinning,” (Alexander-Snow, 2011). Learning in an environment that embraces and provides positive reinforcement about oneself is one of the essential life-making instruments to mitigate the educational violence faced by Black students in the United States; as noted by one of the graduates of Piney Woods, he realized that he performed best in an environment that would encourage him to seek out intellectual challenges by affirming his talents (Alexander-Snow, 2011).

Historically Black Boarding schools hire and retain staff members that directly mirror the students they serve. This representation is significant in the relationship

between racial congruence and student achievement; African American teachers, compared to White teachers, rated all children as having more competencies and fewer problems and had more positive academic expectations for all children (Pigott and Cowen). The staff members at these schools are critical in the affirmation of the Black scholars; the Piney Woods faculty and staff instilled in students the importance of self-discipline and high achievement (Alexander-Snow, 2011). One student attributed her sense of comfort and security to being at an institution with mostly Black faculty, staff, and students (Alexander-Snow, 2011).

Surprisingly, the same religion used to oppress Blacks has served as a mechanism of resistance for Blacks during periods of enslavement. This mechanism is present at HBBS and would help establish a sense of community, faith, and belonging. According to a graduate of Pineywoods, hearing the gospel was so moving; I think it made me and my friends become friends because everyone was crying (Alexander-Snow, 2011). Other students would characterize the religious-based practices of attending church and the Rite of Passage ceremony as ways to “fortify students' spirituality” (Alexander-Snow, 2011)

### **HBBS Graduates Surviving Educational Violence at Institutions of Higher Education**

These institutions armed their Black students with an arsenal of pride, faith, culture, and self-worth, which would be necessary for their survival against the threats of educational violence they would face while attending institutions of higher education. During enrollment at predominantly white institutions of higher education, graduates felt that their university lacked commitment to different cultural experiences and perspectives, particularly the African American experience. When asked the question,

"[i]f you could take something from the Piney Woods School and place it on the campus, what would you bring? One graduate replied, "The Black experience: I think if you were to turn this school into an all-Black school, it would be one of the best schools in the nation (Alexander-Snow, 2011)

How attending a Black boarding school affirmed Black scholar's identities before thrusting them into settings plagued by educational violence is worth noting; these students knew going into these environments that "it made me realize that Black people all have talents, that we are not social misfits," (Alexander-Snow, 2011) and "I know for a fact that my ancestors did this" (Alexander-Snow, 2011). Once Graduates were able to get over the initial shock of being in a majority white environment, they were able to reach into that arsenal and draw on the mechanisms of Black life-making that they received during their tenure at Historically Black Boarding Schools. As Alexander-Snow writes, "the independent boarding school experiences gave him a strong sense of personal pride and allowed him to counter negative messages about himself and his capabilities that he had received from the Southeastern community, another student believed that if more African American youth or other ethnic minorities had the opportunity to learn about their cultural roots, they too would be able to develop the coping strategies to counter the attack of being devalued by the culture and climate of places like Midwestern," (Alexander-Snow, 2010).

### **Conclusion**

My research beyond this ELP will help expand the current body of knowledge around the remaining historically Black boarding schools that have yet to be researched. More relevant to my own professional goals, understanding how students benefited from

their experiences in HBBS historically can help me shape the kinds of experiences I want students to have at Ascend Academy. My work can also fill specific gaps in our knowledge, such as the academic achievements of the students who attended these secondary institutions. Given the lack of adequate literature on Historically Black Boarding schools, researchers do not know how these schools are effective in preparing African American students for academic achievement (Alexander-Snow, 2011). Additionally, my research will evaluate and document the experiences of those alumni and provide academic and social data that will allow us to assess the school's historical significance in educating Black scholars before and after the Brown decision.

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## Appendix C

### ARTIFACT 3: HISTORICAL DOCUMENT PADLET AND SUMMARY

This appendix consists of the following items: a link to a padlet of historical artifacts and Table 1. Table 1 illustrates how the artifacts align with the varying categories and which improvement goals they help to support.

During the collection process, I was able to locate over one thousand historical artifacts and records to conduct a document analysis. Document analysis is a method of qualitative research that I have decided to introduce into this study to help with the triangulation of data and sources to provide a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility (Eisner, 1991). Of the one thousand documents initially obtained, I performed a content analysis on 30 of the sources from 1902- 2021 on the four remaining Historically Black Boarding schools and Palmer Institute. I randomly selected six to ten sources from the four categories listed below to compromise the 30 sources. These 30 sources included student report cards, secondary school reports, fundraising letters, dissertations, articles, books, videos, school packing lists, 990 forms, graduation requirements, newspaper clippings, commencement programs, and student handbooks. Four of the five schools listed are currently operational. I selected Palmer Institute as part of the analysis since it was the first Black boarding school founded in 1902. The analysis was performed using student report cards, secondary school reports, fundraising letters, dissertations, articles, books, videos, school packing list, 990 forms, graduation requirements, newspaper clippings, commencement programs, and student handbooks. I assigned units of meaning based on keywords and imagery that aligned with the set categories, which I kept consistent with the objectives mentioned in Chapter 2 since these

themes were also prevalent when respondents were asked open-ended survey questions and during the interview process; these categories are:

- Curriculum & Learning
- Student Experiences
- Residential Community
- Finances/Fundraising

In Table 1 below, I provide links to specific documents – all contained in the URL to the Padlet below. The table organizes the historical documents I identified based on the school they describe and the improvement goal they inform. These improvement goals are outlined in Chapter 2 of the ELP. For example, the first URL listed under Palmer Institute contributes to improvement goals 1, 2, 4, and 5. In Chapter 4 of the ELP dissertation, I synthesize the lessons distilled from each historical document and reflect on how these historical documents contributed to my improvement goals.

**Table C.1:**

*Overview of Historical Documents Contained in Padlet*

<b>HBBS</b>	<b>Founder</b>	<b>Lesson(s)</b>	<b>Padlet Link &amp; Artifact Improved</b>	<b>Improvement Goal</b>
Palmer Institute	Charlotte Brown Hawkins	Curriculum and Learning & Student Experiences.	<a href="#">Application Form the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Accreditation for Palmer Institute: September 1, 1958</a>  <a href="#">ALA Course Catalog</a>	1,2,4,&5
Laurinburg	Frank McDuffie	Finances/Fund raising	<a href="#">Funding Requests for Laurinburg Institute</a>	2,5

			<a href="#">ALA Pitch Deck</a>	
Piney Woods School	Laurence Jones	Finances / Fundraising	<a href="#">Piney Woods Endowment Request (Science Chair)</a>  <a href="https://www.ascendlegacyacademy.org/giving-back">https://www.ascendlegacyacademy.org/giving-back</a>	2,3,&5
Pine Forge Academy	Elder Wagner	Curriculum and Learning	<a href="#">Academic Requirements</a>	1,2,3
Redemption Academy	Pastor Massey	Student Experience and Residential Community	<a href="#">RCA Student Handbook</a>	4 &5

The following link will redirect you to the entire padlet that contains a selection of the historical documents gathered during the data collection process of this study. The padlet is organized by the categories mentioned above. <https://padlet.com/ctg6/hbbs-elp-historical-document-analysis-bmcme8un528ef8vr>

## **Appendix D**

### **ARTIFACT 4: ASCEND LEGACY ACADEMY COURSE CATALOG**

This appendix consists of the course catalog for the Ascend Legacy Academy. It is important to acknowledge that this course catalog was created prior to the completion of the ELP and that it was based on the feedback provided by scholars and families who participated in our pilot program. The pilot program occurred in the summer of 2022. The catalog was also designed to ensure that the academic and professional needs of our scholars were met while adhering to international and national standards. However, changes were made based on findings from the surveys and interviews that were conducted as part of the ELP (see Appendices F and G for a description of each, respectively). These changes are described in Chapters 4 and 5 of the ELP.

# Course Catalog

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**About Us**

The Ascend Legacy Academy is the first Black-owned single-gender international boarding school since the 1970s. We are a progressive boarding school for Black male scholars, and our focus is on entrepreneurship, community redevelopment, civic engagement, STEM, project-based learning, and global leadership.

**Mission**

Ascend Legacy Academy is a 21st-century global education community that is grounded in the beliefs of progressive education. We are committed to providing a rigorous learning environment that instills confidence and self-awareness in our Black male scholars while creating opportunities that allow them to harness their intellectual curiosity.

**Vision**

Every Black Male scholar that attends ALA will become a leader in his community and create a legacy that extends beyond himself.

**Core Values**

Ingenuity  
Scholarship  
Service and  
Community  
Global Learning  
Character

**Philosophy**  
Progressive Education  
Pan-Africanism  
Transformative Education  
Self-Directed Learning

**Programs**

Day School  
Full Boarding Program

**Entrance Requirements**

Student Eligibility

Students must have a 3.0 or B average in order to be accepted into the Ascend Legacy Academy.

Entrance exams

Students will be required to take entrance exams to determine appropriate placement in math, science, and world languages. These exams will occur prior to acceptance into the program.

Students who have interest and appropriate background may place out of Algebra I or Geometry their freshman year and may be accelerated in the sequence. Students who have interest and appropriate background may place out of the first year(s) of World Language, and may be accelerated in the sequence.

**Course Requirements**

<i>Credits</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Subject</i>
4	English	1	Humanities
4	Mathematics	1	Financial Literacy
4	Science	.5	Art
3	Social Studies	4	Electives or Business/Research Track
3	World Language & International Studies	4	Experiential Learning
1	Health, Fitness, & Wellness		

**Course Placement**

Placement in math, science, and world language will be based initially on satisfactory performance on an entrance exam and/or the student’s having satisfactorily completed the

previous level at another school. Reassignments may need to be made once school begins.

## Grading

The ALA grading scale is as follows:			
A+ = 98 - 100	B+ = 88 - 89	C+ = 78 - 79	D = 60 - 69
A = 93 - 97	B = 83 - 87	C = 73 - 77	F = 0 - 59
A- = 90 - 92	B- = 80 - 82	C- = 70 - 72	

## Core & Elective Courses

### Core Courses -

(1.0 - Full-year)

### \*Elective Courses -

(1.0 - Full-year; 0.5 -

Semester)

Total Required Credits = 23.5

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### English Courses - 4 Credits Required

English I - (1.0)

English II - (1.0)

English III - (1.0)

English IV - (1.0)

\*Literature - (1.0)

\*Creative Writing - (0.5)

\*Publishing - (0.5)

\*Sports Journalism - (0.5)

### Math Courses - 4 Credits Required

**(Sequential)**

Algebra II - (1.0)

Geometry - (1.0)

Calculus - (1.0)

Calculus AB/BC - (1.0)

Multivariate Calculus - (1.0)

Statistics - (1.0)

### Science Courses - 4 Credits Required

Physics - (1.0)

Chemistry - (1.0)

Biology - (1.0)

\*Earth Science - (1.0)

\*Astronomy - (1.0)

\*Engineering - (1.0)

\*Robotics - (1.0)

\*Computer Science - (1.0)

\*Data Science - (1.0)

\*Coding - (1.0)

\*Conducting Research (SPSS/R/STATA - (1.0)

### Social Studies Courses - 3 Credits Required

World History - (1.0)

US History - (1.0)

Government and Politics (1.0)

1619 Project & Critical Race Theory - (1.0)

Africa (The Diaspora) - (1.0)

\*Criminal Justice/Law - (1.0)

\*Gender Studies - (1.0)

\*Understanding Debt, Credit, & Loans - (0.5)

\*Stocks, Bonds and Mutual Funds - (0.5)

**\*Entrepreneur Track - (4.0)**

### **World Language & International**

#### **Studies - 3 Credits Required**

Spanish I (Phase 1) - (1.0)

Spanish II - (1.0)

Spanish III - (1.0)

Spanish IV - (1.0)

Arabic I - (1.0)

Sign Language - (1.0)

#### **Humanities Courses - 1.0 Credit Required**

\*Social Policy and Welfare Reform (0.5)

\*Public Administration (0.5)

\*Civic Engagement and Positionality (0.5)

\*Powernomics (0.5)

**\*Research Track (4.0)**

#### **Health, Fitness and Wellness Courses**

##### **- 1.0 Credit Required**

Yoga - (0.5)

Mindfulness - (0.5)

Cycling/Spin Class - (0.5)

HIT Sessions - (0.5)

Basketball - (0.5)

Weight Room - (0.5)

#### **Art Courses - 0.5 Credits Required**

Studio Art - (0.5)

Music Theory - (0.5)

History of Jazz - (0.5)

New Orleans History - (0.5)

Theater/Dance - (0.5)

#### **Financial Literacy Courses - 1.0**

##### **Credit Required**

Black Wall Street (Phase 1) - *“How money works, investments and money management”*- Required (0.5)

#### **Experiential Learning**

Muhammad Ali - The Champion of Social

Justice - (Study Exchange) - Required - (2.0)

Cultural Immersion (Study Abroad) - Required - (2.0)

## Research Track - 4 Credits

### Core Courses

- Research Design: Teaches students the basics of the scientific method, including question and hypothesis formulation, study design, identifying and evaluating data sources, and presenting findings. This yearlong course will be divided into two semesters. Semester one will focus on quantitative designs while the second semester will explore qualitative modes of inquiry.
- Quantitative Reasoning: Introduces students to basic concepts in statistics. Students will learn how to use numerical and graphical tools to describe a single variable, summarize the distribution of a variable, and describe the relationship between a pair of variables.
- Information Design: This course introduces students to the tools and methods for making compelling graphics for the analysis and communication of quantitative data. Students will learn how to use programming and software applications useful for data visualization including Excel, R, and Tableau.
- Youth Participatory Action Research: This course will introduce and engage students in participatory action research. Students will engage in learning and research around building an equitable school culture.

- Social Inquiry: Through a series of conversations and lectures students will gain insight into their personal values and beliefs, reflect on their emerging knowledge of social, cultural, and political issues, and explore how social knowledge is produced, assessed, and used within everyday contexts.

### **Practical Experience**

- Data Practicum: *Experiential learning course*. Students will be matched with a mentor in industry or academia to address a real-world problem.
- Research Internship: *Experiential learning course*. Students will be matched with and placed in a public agency, community organization, or university center/lab to learn how research and data are used in practice, gain experience conducting research, and forge new networks.
- Data for Social Justice Lab: *Experiential learning course*. Students will develop a project (individually or as part of a team) that examines a social or political issue using data. Students will be paired with a mentor with whom they will work for the duration of the summer. Students will present their findings at a symposium.
- **Senior Capstone/Research Project**

### **Entrepreneurship Track - 4 Credits**

#### **Core Courses**

- Entrepreneurial Thinking – from Ideation to Action: Teaches students how to research, test, and pitch business ideas. Students will build a toolkit for creating and

evaluating entrepreneurial opportunities, organize resources, form creative teams, leadership decisions, and take smart action.

- Business Communications: Students will learn strategies and skills needed to become effective written and verbal communicators.
- Marketing: Students will learn how to plan, price, promote and distribute products and services. At the end of the course, students will be expected to design and present a marketing plan for a new product to potential customers.
- Fundamentals of Entrepreneurial Finance: Students will learn and apply fundamental financial and accounting concepts that are essential for starting and running a business. At the end of the course, students will have the financial tools they need to effectively manage a new venture.
- New Venture Financing: This course will focus on financial thinking, tools, and techniques that are relevant for seeking new venture financing and making investment decisions,

### **Practical Experience**

- Social Entrepreneurship Practicum: *Experiential learning course*. Students will develop a concept for a new social enterprise, work on the development of a new concept at a social enterprise or work on new innovations at an existing social enterprise or nonprofit. Students will be paired with a mentor.

- Incubator Internship: *Experiential learning course*. Students will be matched with and placed in an accelerator or incubator to learn what makes ventures succeed, gain experience supporting startups and new ventures, and forge new networks.
- Entrepreneurship Practicum: *Experiential learning course*. Students will develop a new business idea and prepare and present a business plan that details the process of bringing the innovation to market. Students will be paired with a mentor.
- **Entrepreneur/Business Plan**

## **Credit Information**

### **Outside Credit**

Students wishing to pursue learning projects outside of ALA may receive ALA credit for classwork that has been pre-approved by the Associate Head of School. While ALA grants credit for these courses, grades will not be transferred; any grades received for outside coursework will not be averaged into the student's GPA. Students may be required to pass an ALA examination in order to receive credit for required courses.

### **Transfer Credit**

Students transferring to ALA must request that an official transcript from their previous school be sent to the Registrar's Office. The previous school's transcript will be attached to the ALA transcript. Credits earned at a previous school(s) will be included in the total number of credits required for graduation from ALA, although grades from previous schools will not be included in the ALA GPA. ALA transcripts show semester grades.

## **Appendix E**

### **ARTIFACT 5: DOCUMENTARY TRAILER AND LINK**

This appendix provides a link to a documentary trailer. While only the trailer was selected to be included in the ELP, the documentary was created to document and record the experiences of HBBS leaders and scholars through oral history. The footage chosen for the trailer was based on the series of interviews conducted at Pine Forge Academy since it was some of the earlier recorded footage, and the videographer was able to edit the footage in time to be used for the purpose of the ELP.

This documentary is based on a series of Zoom and in-person semi-structured interviews that were designed to document and record the experiences of HBBS leaders and scholars through oral history. Purposeful and snowball sampling was used to identify participants for these 45-60-minute interviews (see Appendix G for details on the interview protocol). Out of the 10 participants that were identified, all completed the interviews. Seven of the 10 participants were video recorded and will be featured in the final documentary project.

The inclusion of the trailer helps to provide a snapshot of the oral history that was collected during the creation of the ELP, which helps to support the three ELP Goals:

- 1. Identify the distinctive qualities of teaching at a selection of Historically Black Boarding Schools that contribute to scholar learning and empowerment.*
- 2. Identify the distinctive qualities of leading at a selection of Historically Black Boarding Schools that contribute to scholar learning and empowerment to compile information to create professional learning communities and leadership training workshops.*

*3. Identify the distinctive features of the school community—e.g., residential life, mentorship, racial congruence, religious support—from the perspective of scholars at a selection of Historically Black Boarding Schools that contribute to scholar learning and empowerment.*

The link to the documentary trailer is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swg2CrUuJnw>

## Appendix F

### ARTIFACT 6: SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

This appendix includes two survey instruments that were used to obtain information about Historically Black Boarding Schools (HBBS). Each survey is presented at the end of this appendix. The survey data are meant to inform the revision of the course catalog (original catalog presented in Appendix D. I created the surveys to *Document and Learn about leadership and Curricula at Historically Black boarding schools*. The survey questions were created because while all of the existing literature discusses the role of HBBS in affirming Black students and their success once they attend post-secondary institutions, there was a lack of evidence that focused on the academic and social aspects of these learning communities for scholars and leaders. The gaps and lack of evidence identified in the literature led to the creation of the three improvement strategies outlined below, which promoted the creation of the remaining artifacts included in this ELP. Each subsequent artifact helps to promote one or more of the improvement goals mentioned in the previous chapter.

The questions contain a mixture of multiple choice and short answers. I attempted to make the survey as accessible as possible given the professional demands of survey participants. However, I wanted to provide them an opportunity to express in their own words features of the HBBS that they believe make it distinct from alternative schooling environments; for this reason, I included two short answer questions.

I distributed a survey to the faculty of Historically Black Boarding Schools. Surveys were distributed by contacting current faculty at the remaining schools via email

or LinkedIn and asking if they would be willing to participate in this study by taking a brief survey, and once the participants agreed to participate, they were provided with the survey link. Of the 15 faculty members invited to participate, 10 completed the survey.

### **Scholar Experience**

To document and record the experiences of scholars, I distributed a survey to alumni of HBBS. Surveys were distributed through social media and by contacting alumni that I have met during my research journey. Once participants agreed to participate, they were provided with the survey link. Twenty-two alumni completed the survey.

### **Leadership/Curricula**

To document and learn about the leadership and curricula, I distributed a survey to the faculty of HBBS. Surveys were distributed by contacting current faculty at the remaining schools via email or LinkedIn and asking if they would be willing to participate in this study by taking a brief survey, and once the participants agreed to participate, they were provided with the survey link. Of the 15 faculty members invited to participate, 11 completed the survey.

## **Intro Historically Black Boarding School (HBBS) Alumni Survey**

**Why am I being asked to complete this survey? You are receiving this survey because you graduated from a Historically Black Boarding School. This survey is being conducted to document the experiences of instructional leaders and scholars of Historically Black Boarding Schools to inform curricula and leadership practices in 21st century all-Black learning communities.**

**Who will know I completed this survey? Researchers from the University of Delaware will administer the survey and collect the data. Your responses will be kept confidential and combined with those from other respondents when reporting results.**

**Do I have to participate? No, taking this survey is voluntary. However, we hope you will consider providing your input so that policy and practice can be shaped through your feedback.**

**What if I have questions? If you have questions about the study, please email me, Chanel Gaither, at [ctg@udel.edu](mailto:ctg@udel.edu) or email my advisor, Dr. Ken Shores, at [kshores@udel.edu](mailto:kshores@udel.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board at [hsrb-research@udel.edu](mailto:hsrb-research@udel.edu).**

**Q1 Please provide the name the Historically Black Boarding School you attended:**

**Q2 How long did you attend this institution?**

1 year

2-3 years

4 years

**Q4 Please select when you graduated from your HBBS?**

1940-1960

1961-1980

1981-2000

2001-2020

**Q3 Upon graduating from your HBBS, what is the highest level post-secondary degree you were awarded?**

Bachelor's Degree

**Masters Degree**

**Doctorate Degree**

**Certification or Trade**

**Does not apply**

**Q5 Approximately What percentage of your teachers were Black?**

**25% or less**

**26-50%**

**51-75%**

**76-100%**

**Q6 Approximately how many college visits did you attend hosted by admission officers at a PWI (Predominately White Institution)?**

**None**

1-5

6-10

11-15

More than 15

**Q7 Approximately how many college visits did you attend hosted by admission officers at an HBCU (Historically Black College or University)?**

None

1-5

6-10

11-15

More than 15

**Q8 In your opinion, what distinguishes your Black boarding school from other boarding school institutions?**

**Q9 Please provide an unknown or little-known fact about your institution:**

## **Appendix G**

### **ARTIFACT 7: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

This appendix consists of the interview questions and protocol that I created to identify the distinctive qualities of teaching and leading at a selection of Historically Black Boarding Schools that contribute to scholar learning and empowerment. I conducted a series of Zoom and in-person semi-structured interviews to document and record the experiences of HBBS leaders and scholars through oral history.

Purposeful and snowball sampling was used to identify participants for these 45-60 minute interviews. Since I began filming the documentary footage before the start of my ELP, I had access to the alumni networks of the four remaining Black boarding schools and the Palmer Institute. Additionally, I was provided with the information of the former leaders at these institutions. From this access, I created a database of all the individuals I would like to interview and identified 10 participants. Out of the 10 participants that were identified, all completed the interviews. Seven of the 10 participants were video recorded and will be featured in the final documentary project. In addition to the 10 participants, 10 were recommended by those who had completed an interview, including the oldest living alumna from Laurinburg and the first graduate from Pine Forge Academy. Of the 10 additional individuals identified, 100% participated in an interview. Of the 22 participants who completed the survey, 15 agreed to participate in a follow-up interview. The interview questions are presented below.

I wanted the interview to be adaptive, meaning that interviewees could steer the conversation in different directions. At the same time, there were critical pieces of

information I wanted to obtain about teaching, leadership, and school culture, and I therefore made sure to include those questions in the interview protocol.

## Historically Black Boarding School Project

### Administrator/Teacher Interview

**Interview Participant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interview Date/Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interview Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Interview Questions**

1. My name is (Interviewer). The date is \_\_\_\_\_ and this interview is taking place at (location) in (town, state). Thanks for allowing me to talk with you today about your life as a faculty member at a HBBS.
2. For the record, please state your name, where you were born and grew up.
3. What was life like growing up in your hometown? Describe your schooling experience during your formative years.
4. When did you begin teaching/leading at a HBBS and why did you choose teaching at a HBBS?
5. Where did you receive your training in teaching and what was that training like?

6. Did/Do you belong to any teacher organizations? If so, which organizations? How did the organization influence your teaching and service to the HBBS community?
7. What distinguishes your HBBS from other historically Black Boarding Schools? What distinguishes your HBBS from other independent schools in the country?
8. Describe what a typical day was/is like as a faculty member at HBBS.
9. Can you describe the academic expectations at HBBS
10. Faith is an integral part of the HBBS community, how has that shaped your role as a teacher? Administrator?
11. Can you describe your daily interactions with the students?
12. Please describe what it is like to be a part of the residential community at a HBBS?
13. Can you describe the professional development opportunities offered by the HBBS?
14. After reading the scant body of literature about HBBS, the three words that resonated with me were, Faith, Family and Community. What would you add?
15. What would you want teachers and students today to know about Historically Black Boarding Schools?
16. Thank you for taking time for us to interview you today. Is there anything you would like to share with us that we have not covered in our discussion? Thank you, again.



## Historically Black Boarding School Project

### Student/Alumni

1. My name is (Interviewer). The date is \_\_\_\_\_ and this interview is taking place at (location) in (town, state). Thanks for allowing me to talk with you today about your life as a faculty member at HBBS.
2. For the record, please state your name, where you were born and grew up.
3. When did you begin attending HBBS? Why did you choose to attend a HBBS? How does your previous schooling experience compare to that of a HBBS?
4. Can you recall a time when a particular teacher went beyond the call of duty? Why? How?
5. Can you talk about whether or not you enjoy(ed) being part of a segregated learning community?
6. What are the academic expectations of HBBS?
7. Can you share your thoughts on learning in a school community where all of the educators are/were Black?
8. What is something from the community that you carry in your heart today?

9. What steps/actions did the HBBS community take to affirm your cultural identity as a Black man or woman?
10. What stands out to you as a defining characteristic of the HBBS Community?
11. Can you describe how attending HBBS prepared you for a family? life? College? Career?
12. Tell me more about how Faith being an integral part of the community helped to shape you? Mitigate challenges?
13. What is (was) your favorite academic subject? Why?
14. Please describe what it is like to be a part of the residential community at a HBBS?
15. After reading the scant body of literature about HBBS, the three words that resonated with me were, Faith, Family and Community. What would you add?
16. What would you want teachers and students today to know about Historically Black Boarding Schools?
17. Thank you for taking time for us to interview you today. Is there anything you would like to share with us that we have not covered in our discussion? Thank you, again.

## Appendix H

### ARTIFACT 8: IRB APPROVAL LETTER



Institutional Review Board

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Hall

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DE

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Phone: 302-831-2137

Fax: 302-831-2828

DATE: April 3, 2023

TO: Chanel Gaither

FROM: University of Delaware IRB

STUDY TITLE: [2016383-1] Documenting and validating the experiences of instructional leaders and scholars of Historically Black Boarding Schools to inform the current curricula and leadership practices in 21st-century all-Black learning communities.

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF  
EXEMPT STATUS EFFECTIVE DATE: April 3, 2023

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # (2,4)

Thank you for your New Project submission to the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board (UD IRB). According to the pertinent regulations, the UD IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT from most federal policy requirements for the protection of human subjects. The privacy of subjects and the confidentiality of participants must be safeguarded as prescribed in the reviewed protocol form.

This exempt determination is valid for the research study as described by the documents in this submission. Proposed revisions to previously approved procedures and documents that may affect this exempt determination must be reviewed and approved by this office prior to initiation. The UD amendment form must be used to request the review of changes that may substantially change the study design or data collected.

Unanticipated problems and serious adverse events involving risk to participants must be reported to this office in a timely fashion according with the UD requirements for

reportable events.

A copy of this correspondence will be kept on file by our office. If you have any questions, please contact the UD IRB Office at (302) 831-2137 or via email at [hsrb-research@udel.edu](mailto:hsrb-research@udel.edu). Please include the study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.