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Empower Parents To Raise Scholars

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We must work to close the educational achievement gap for Hillsborough County's black children, particularly boys. Without a solid education and the necessary skills to enter and advance in the workforce, black families will continue to suffer economic disparity. The Harvard Civil Rights Project reported in 2005 that Florida graduates 45 percent of black children from high school - and just 38 percent of black males.

We must demand more responsibility of parents but first empower them. Black parents of limited incomes have little or no power to demand better outcomes for their children.

There are heroes performing miracles in our public schools. We must give these heroes what they need to save our children. If parents feel that their children are not progressing, we must give them the power to choose a school that works - no matter who runs it. Empowering low-income parents will spur innovation in all schools.

The challenges facing black children are complex and daunting. To think that a "one size fits all" approach to education will work for these children is naïve. We must have innovation and creativity. We must have magnets, charters and vouchers. The bottom line: In education, we must have uniformity of opportunity, not uniformity of delivery systems. As we enter 2007, we must ferociously attack the education crisis facing Florida.

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