LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Finding love in a hopeless place. This is an inversion of a post by Tressie McMillan Cottom, who blogged about the November 2016 election that resulted in Donald J. Trump being elected President. The post, titled Finding Hope in a Loveless Pace, reveals the deep knowledge that oppression and racism impart, a kind of knowledge that yields erasure, decimates hope, and yet inspires continuous struggle. How can we find love in a hopeless place? How can we seed hope in a national soil saturated in the blood of the oppressed?

We must ask such essential questions before they can ever be answered, but the asking is hard, lonely, uncomfortable yet courageous work. As a team of critical intellectuals, educators, researchers, and advocates, we understand that education is an embodied tool that can serve either oppression or freedom. Teaching and learning reflect power and foment resistance, and schools – as political institutions – can proliferate oppression or nurture hope.

Hope, however, is not an innocent concept. As an expectation to those for whom hope in our existing system is irrational, hope is hypocritical. It becomes what McMillan Cottom calls “transactional hope,” and she argues that hopelessness is superior to transactional hope:

My hopelessness is faith in things yet seen and works yet done. Hopelessness is necessary for the hard work of resisting tyranny and fascism. It is the precondition for sustained social movements because history isn’t a straight line. It is a spinning top that eventually moves forward but also always goes round and round as it does. Those erasers applied post-mortem confuse us to this, blind us to the defeats that will come and ill prepare us for the reality that most of what we believe in will not come to pass in our lifetimes. A transactional hope is anathema to social progress.
In this annual report, we outline projects that illustrate our commitment to the struggle for hope. We are honored to share the work of colleagues and accomplices who generate and engage with contexts that have risen from the soil of bondage and execution. Their work invite us to rethink the myths of meritocracy and inclusion. Their work is soiled with the blood and bones of people who who forged their own ways to teach and learn, while being prohibited from formal learning, and for whom school achievement has required rejection of cultural values.

In this report, we aim to raise questions, and to listen for questions that are not raised, because often the binding of education in its most formal or typical sense excludes perspectives. We aspire to scrutinize the margins, give voice to the silenced, and read deeply between the lines. We plan to press the “undo” key until erasures are visible on the page and voices of students, families, and ancestors are amplified. And we dig into difficult topics to cultivate hope through a language of action and through the action of language. Hope grows as we struggle together.

As committed educators, scholars, and advocates who will help students discover and hone the tools of education that will either oppress or empower, we ask that you open your heart to the challenges of this report, and we hope that you will find love here.

Dr. David E. Kirkland
About Us
Metro Center is dedicated to the pursuit of academic excellence and social justice for all children. We assist local and state educational agencies to ensure that all students, in particular young people from historically vulnerable groups, have equitable solutions, policy support and access to high standards of achievement.

The Center accomplishes this mission through the implementation of engaged research initiatives, provision of technical assistance to schools and sites, and direct services to students, teachers and administrators.
LEADERSHIP

The organization is guided by its executive director, a team of deputy directors, center and project directors, professional staff, and is supported by graduate students.

Metro Center’s staff of scholars and practitioners are on the front lines of educational reform, ensuring equal access to education with high standards of performance and achievement through the quality of their work and a shared vision of exemplary practice.
Areas of Work
We assist schools and districts in providing environments that are inclusive, welcoming and nurturing across religion, ethnicity, language ability, gender, sexual orientation and race.

“Children are more alike than they are different, and should be educated together.”

Carolyn Tomlin
We support leaders in shaping restorative, responsive, and safe environments that promote learning in culturally sustaining and academically rigorous ways. We put bold theories of educational excellence into practice and inspire conversations about the rights of all students to learn.

“The best way to predict the future is to invent it”

Alan Kay
Our services are designed to increase the representation of underserved populations in postsecondary education. We provide these students with access to educational opportunities while simultaneously developing their skills for becoming independent, self-sufficient and productive members of society.

“You can teach a student a lesson for a day; but if you can teach him to learn by creating curiosity, he will continue the learning process as long as he lives…”

Clay P. Bedford
We provide policymakers and service providers tools to assist parents and community-based organizations and skills to develop effective strategies for transforming their neighborhoods and communities into decision making “power blocks” so that children and youth are provided access to rich opportunities to learn and thrive in our world.

“We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community... Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own.”

Cesar Chavez
We mount programs whose emphasis is placed on parent engagement for those children who are early learners. We place equity work at the center of human development and deeply believe that every child, particularly in their early years, deserves equal access to a nurturing education.

“To assist a child we must provide [her] with an environment which will enable [her] to develop freely.”

Maria Montessori
We provide a construct for a structured response to the cultural and political contexts that frustrate and obstruct the educational achievement of vulnerable student populations. We maximize the resources of communities in need by providing enhanced learning opportunities for schools and other entities that support our youth.

“It is time to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength.”

Maya Angelou
We create and deliver services that enable teachers and other practitioners to achieve professional development and interventions to help schools develop multilingual models.

“Books saved my sanity, knowledge opened the locked places in me and taught me first how to survive and then how to soar.”

Gloria Anzaldúa
We address the increasing mandate of state and federal agencies through helping school districts structure effective programs that address home-school communications, develop symbiotic relationships, and develop parent leaders.

“At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child’s success is the positive involvement of parents”

Jane D. Hull
Our engaged scholarship promotes inquiry that will expand knowledge of issues that impact school improvement, teaching and learning, school reform and education equity. Functions include program-related technical assistance, evaluation activities, collegial reviews, dissemination of findings and publications.

“It’s essential to keep moving, learning and evolving for as long as you’re here and this world keeps spinning.”

Rasheed Ogunlaru
Center programs assist districts in developing positive school climates that promote diverse, inclusive and equitable environment for culturally and linguistically diverse students and staff.

“The classroom should be an entrance into the world, not an escape from it.”

John Ciardi
Student support services assist in developing and enhancing students’ academics, college, career and personal development skills. Those services include but are not limited to tutoring in core academic subjects, workforce development, individual and small-group counseling and mentoring.

“The question is not whether we can afford to invest in every child; it is whether we can afford not to.”

Marian Wright Edelman
Spotlight on Success
Our concerns for the nation’s public school system continue to focus largely on its failures. In AY 2015-2016, the Metro Center provided schools and states with much needed programs and tools for success, reinforcing our forward-looking commitment to public education.

Our technical assistance programs (LRBERN, TAC-D, and NEST) provided state and regional school districts with policy briefs, webinars, research based forums, professional development, and on-site consultation for teachers.

We engaged staff and personnel from more than 700 school districts across New York State, impacting 180 middle schools & high-schools, and 210 elementary schools. These programs engaged THOUSANDS of people including:

- 15,204 in Parenting & Community Engagement
- 12,442 through Alignment of Curriculum
- 71,920 through Instructional Strategies
- 13,160 through Comprehensive Implementation & Assessment
- 10,814 through Teacher Content Areas
- 11,484 through understanding implementation of standards & academic content
Partners
A special thank you to our partners who, year after year, support our work.

Meringoff Foundation  Kellogg Foundation
Voya Foundation  Freedom Writer
National Science Foundation  Child Care - 1199
University of Michigan  Pinkerton Funds
Boston College  Teagle Foundation
Casey Foundation  Arizona State University
Deutschen Bank  Einhorn Family
New York City Department of Education
New York State Association for Bilingual Education
Center for Educational Innovation – Public Education Association
New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development
Centers & Projects
Liberty Partnership Program (LPP) offers comprehensive pre-collegiate/dropout prevention programs and services to youth across New York State.

The NYU LPP focuses on the New York City public schools in grades 6 through 12.

It utilizes a union of resources through counseling, college and career exploration, and academic support.

Over the past 4 years we have served 1,940 students.

68% of students enrolled in the program attended second-chance high schools.

82% graduated high school & 70% planned to attend college.
Center for Strategic Solutions (CSS) assists school districts in building capacity to challenge structural discrimination, develop research based solutions and outcomes, and interrupt bullying and school violence.

we have worked with
2,100+ educators
& influenced
24,000 students nationwide
The New York State-Wide Language Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network [LRBE-RN] provides support for the education of English Learners and students of languages other than English through technical assistance, professional development, and resource material development.

It has provided translations of the subject area glossaries in the 10 predominant ELL languages available online impacting 240,000 ELLs, administrators, teachers and parents.
The TAC-D’s work includes building the capacity of regions and districts in understanding root causes of educational disparities to systemically address the disproportionate assignment of various groups in special education.

48% of the districts cited by New York State Education Department have been removed from the citation’s lists for classification rate.

70% of the districts in New York State have a better understanding of how to address instances of disproportionality in school.
The NYU NEST program provides training and support for educators working with students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Developed skills of educators working with 1,100+ students with autism spectrum disorder across New York City. Over 600 of non-NEST schools throughout New York City have increased the capacity of staff working with students with autism spectrum disorder.
The Project for the Advancement of our Common Humanity [PACH] is a think-tank designed to engage researchers, policy makers, practitioners, activists, educators, artists and journalists in a series of conversations to determine what lies at the root of our crisis of human connection.

Provided a series of public lectures on moral injury & our common humanity

The 150+ attendees included NYU faculty, thought leaders & policymakers who impact over 2,000 people
Metro Center’s Saturday and Summer College Prep Academies [CEI-1199] are supplemental college-preparatory program that enables roughly 300 high school students from high-needs communities to attend our central NYU campus for intensive Saturday and summer sessions, focused on academic enrichment, tutoring, mentoring, college readiness, career planning, and professional internship experience.

100% of seniors who attended the academy successfully graduated high school & matriculated to college

80% are poised to become 1st generation college graduates

87% are African American & Latino

90% are deemed eligible for financial aid
Financial Summary
REVENUE
FISCAL YEAR 2016

- Government Awards: $4,870,118
- Foundation Awards: $482,607
- Fee for Services: $2,299,304
- Gifts: $217,800
- Others: $1,934,418
EXPENSES
FISCAL YEAR 2016

Salaries & Wages: $4,117,436
Fringe Benefits: $1,194,056
Fringe Benefits RA: $26,986
Consultants & Subcontracts: $1,240,000
Projects & Programs: $917,447
Travel & Transportation: $861,000
Miscellaneous: $168,506
Indirect Costs: $1,278,815
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