



The Black Belt Community Foundation

DATA IMPACT CENTER

The Black Belt Bulletin

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BBCF Prepares to Introduce the Boulevard Initiative

With recent focus on declining enrollment, lower than average proficiency rates, graduation rates, as well as College and Career Readiness throughout K-12 schools in the Black Belt region, the BBCF has focused its efforts and attention on pathways towards post-secondary education opportunities via mentoring and partnerships beyond the classroom as it prepares to roll-out the **Boulevard Initiative** beginning with high schools in Selma/Dallas County in Fall 2023.

The reality is, students in K-12 schools in the Black Belt are performing disproportionately lower than non-Black Belt schools throughout the state. Many of these trends are attributed to the direct and indirect effects of extreme poverty, teacher shortages, and lack of broadband and technology access—among other reasons. And, as the University of Alabama’s Education Policy Center estimates 60% of jobs in Alabama will require education beyond a high school diploma by 2025, the need for the Boulevard Initiative is clear.

To respond to this reality, the BBCF aims to engage and establish “connective tissue” with students beyond their typical community networks, such as family or local churches. The prevailing rationale for this intervention initiative is, “...each one to reach one and teach one...” according to BBCF Community Engagement Officer and Initiative Coordinator, Erica Williams. She further adds, “...we cannot change some of the staffing and instructional dilemmas happening directly in the classroom, but we can leverage our relationships with schools and districts and be proactive in creating impactful change to make a difference for students in terms of how they see their future.” The Boulevard Initiative will build connections between 11th and 12th grade students and professional mentors from in and around the community by cultivating one-on-one relationships, using app-based technology as the primary vehicle for establishing those relationships.



Erica Williams, BBCF Community Engagement Officer & Boulevard Initiative Coordinator

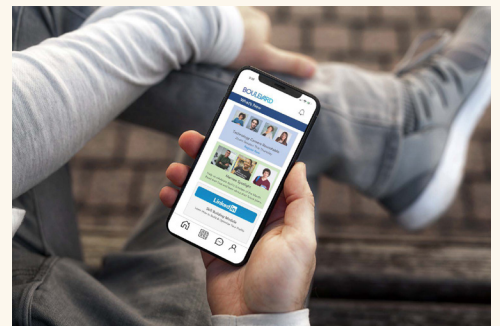
Indeed, the Boulevard Initiative reflects the essence of the BBCF, and we are confident the initiative will positively impact the lives and learning outcomes of the students we reach throughout the Black Belt.

Sources: alreporter.com (3/8/22); University of Alabama Education Policy Center - edpolicy.ua.edu/ (July 2022)

MOVEMENT, MOMENTUM, & MENTORSHIP - BOULEVARD -

Boulevard is a tech-enabled mentor system that provides companies with impactful employee or student engagement opportunities as well as creating an immediate and measurable pipeline of high quality matched talent.

Boulevard’s app-based technology will be the primary vehicle for establishing the one-on-one relationships between the 11th and 12th grade Black Belt students and professional mentors.



Source: blvdmentor.com

K-12 EDUCATION IN ALABAMA

By 2025, it is estimated that 60% of Alabama’s jobs will require education beyond a high school diploma. The map and bar graph to the right underscore that Black Belt schools are disproportionately lower performing than non-Black Belt schools by graduation and college & career readiness rates.

Source: edpolicy.ua.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2207_Black-Belt_Series-Book.pdf

