



IUPUI SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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School of Education at IUPUI Receives First-Round Funding from the Indianapolis African American Quality of Life Initiative to Support Recruitment of Teachers of Color

Funding will support partnerships with Marion County high schools to develop a pipeline for teacher candidates of color focused on ethnic studies.

INDIANAPOLIS, IN – IU School of Education at IUPUI was one of 52 recipients (and the only Indiana University unit) awarded first-round funding from the [Indianapolis African American Quality of Life Initiative \(IAAQLI\)](#). The grants support projects with funding totaling more than \$21M. The Initiative is a partnership between the [National Urban League](#), the [Indianapolis Urban League](#), and the African American Coalition of Indianapolis. The initiative was created in 2020 through a \$100M grant from the [Lilly Endowment](#).

The IU School of Education at IUPUI received \$400,000 over 3 years to work with Marion County high schools and support the recruitment of teachers of color through a project titled *Culturally Relevant Ethnic Studies Teaching (CREST)*. The School of Education and the Africana Studies program have created a dual degree pathway in Africana Studies and Urban Teacher Education degree programs (ASTUTE). This pathway provides students with an accelerated interdisciplinary course of study resulting in the completion of two majors within a four-year period. The collective focus for the proposed project is on preparing and supporting effective teachers for urban school contexts grounded in ethnic studies as content knowledge for culturally relevant teaching competencies across academic subject areas.

“As an urban-focused School of Education we have a significant responsibility to produce teachers of color who have an understanding of historical and systemic inequities in education for Black youth,” said Tambra Jackson, dean of the School of Education at IUPUI and professor of urban teacher education.

“The term culturally relevant has become a buzz word in education circles but teaching practices should be guided by deep cultural knowledge of students, not just superficial displays in classrooms.”

“The interdisciplinary nature of Black Studies can offer any teacher preparation program a viable resource in the development of practitioners,” said Leslie Etienne, director of the African Studies program in the School of Liberal Arts. “Black teachers were at the forefront of expanding Black History Month; this project offers us an opportunity to contribute to that continuum of history.”

Jackson and Etienne are the principal investigators on the grant while fellow professors Cleveland Hayes, Ronda Henry, Lasana Kazembe, Cristina Santamaría Graff, Joseph Tucker Edmonds, Patricia Turley and interim assistant dean for student support and diversity, Tim Williams, comprise the remainder of the core grant team. The project will also engage the support of the Indianapolis NAACP chapter and the Joseph Taylor branch of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History and as community partners.

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