

# Proposal

Presented to  
Madison Metropolitan School District

Project Title:  
**The Youth Empowerment Academy:  
Comprehensive Supplemental Education for Black American Students**

By  
Charles Hamilton Houston Institute, Inc.  
501.(c)(3)

January, 2006

**Project Title: The Youth Empowerment Academy:  
Supplemental Education for Black American Students**

Name of Applicant Agency: Charles Hamilton Houston Institute, Inc.

Program: Youth Empowerment Academy

Physical Address: 149 East Wilson Street  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Mailing Address: Post Office Box 56165  
Madison, Wisconsin 53705

Contact Person: Dr. Joann Pritchett  
Telephone Number: 608 836-5555

Amount Requested: \$50,000.00

## Executive Summary

Black or African American people have been in the Madison area long before Madison's incorporation as a city and before Wisconsin's admission to the United States. The triumphs and trials of Black citizens in the Madison area mirror the experiences of Black people elsewhere in the nation. Yet, Madison prides itself on being different and better, as does the Madison Metropolitan School District. And in many ways, the pride is justified.

Some significant improvements have been made in the educational achievement of students of color generally and Black students particularly, due to: a long history of activism on the parts of some members of Madison's Black community; intense interest in educational progress by Madison's citizens in general; and, in particular, intensified efforts on the parts of the school district's leadership, educators and staff.

Nonetheless, some pernicious trends linger. On several key measures of academic success, Black students lag behind all other ethnic groups, forcing them perilously close to failure. On other negative measures, such as the rates of school suspensions, expulsions, drop-out rates and involvement in the criminal justice system, Black students exponentially exceed the rates of others. On some of these measures, Black students represent the only group in double digits.

The Youth Empowerment Academy of the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute, through its eleven strand strategy, is a comprehensive program to round out the educational and life needs of Black students. Our goal is to assist in developing significantly more Black youth who are able to contribute to the larger society through their gifts, talents, education and efforts. We intend to produce successful entrepreneurs or employees who are prepared and willing to help others as they were helped.

The Charles Hamilton Houston Institute seeks the support of the Madison Metropolitan School District to provide enhanced support to students in need of additional educational support, counseling and intervention.

### History of the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute

The Charles Hamilton Houston Institute (CHHI) a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, was founded in 2001 in Madison, Wisconsin as the first chapter of a national organization dedicated to promoting economic independence through self-help for Black or African Americans.

The genesis of CHHI is found in the book *Saving Black America: An Economic Plan for Civil Rights* by Dr. John Y. Odom. Published in 2001, *Saving Black America* proposed the transformation of the civil rights movement by elevating economic development as a civil rights strategy equal to that of the current dominant strategy-- the legislative-protest strategy.

A prestigious group of civic-minded professionals in the Madison area have lent their expertise and time to developing the concept that is CHHI. The current Board of Directors is comprised of the following individuals:

- Anthony L. Brown, Ph.D.
- Stan Davis, J.D.
- Prof. Richard Davis
- Bishop Eugene Johnson
- John Y. Odom, Ph.D.
- Joann Pritchett, Ph.D.
- Muriel Simms, Ph.D.
- Alfonso Studesville, M.S.
- Anthony Timmons, M.B.A.

Five of our board members hold advanced degrees in education. Three board members are currently teaching at the post-secondary level. And three members are former public and/or post-secondary educators. Three board members currently

hold Wisconsin teaching licenses. Members of the board will be directly involved in overseeing and implementing all programs of YEA.

CHHI is also informed and supported by an excellent advisory board which is comprised of some of Madison's most influential citizens. The current Advisory Board is comprised of the following members:

- Deborah Brandt, Ph.D., UW-Madison, Professor of English
- Pete Crear, President/CEO, World Council of Credit Unions
- Erroll Davis, Chancellor, University of Georgia System
- George Gialamas, President/CEO The Gialamas Company
- Robert Gorsuch, President/CEO Oak Bank
- Greg Monday, Partner, Foley & Lardner law firm
- Paul Soglin, J.D., former mayor, City of Madison
- Robert Steele, J.D., Counsel Kraft-Oscar Mayer

The organization was named for change agent, Prof. Charles Hamilton Houston, 1895-1950, due to his singular role in planning and helping to implement the dominant civil rights strategy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Prof. Houston:

- Served as Dean of the Howard University Law School
- Served as the first director of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund
- Was the first Black lawyer to argue before the United States Supreme Court
- Won all four of his cases before the Supreme Court
- These cases served as the legal precedents upon which Brown v. Topeka Board of Education was won
- Mentored most of the plaintiff attorneys involved in the Brown case
- Was the mentor and law professor of Justice Thurgood Marshall
- Served on the Washington D.C. Board of Education

The vision statement of CHHI is as follows:

**Economic Independence for Black Americans**

## History of the Youth Empowerment Academy

CHHI has a few key priorities and the highest among them is the Youth Empowerment Academy (YEA). YEA is a teaching center designed to supplement the public school experience and time. YEA focuses on completing or rounding out our students' educational experiences with the goal of preparing students for economic independence for them, their families and their communities through employment or entrepreneurialism.

The mission statement of CHHI is as follows:

**To organize and operate the Youth Empowerment Academy through which to prepare Black youth for economic independence.**

YEA will develop programming in as many broad areas as possible to address the needs of some or all YEA students. The areas in which current programs are being developed or have been developed follow:

- Academic achievement
- Personal development
- Ethnic Pride: Rights of Passage
- Business awareness and work skills
- Health
- Arts
- Relationships/Networking
- Technology
- citizenship
- community service
- Parent Education

Each program offering will include the following constants:

- A course or program description including goal statements
- An emphasis on the economic potential of the topic
- A Black perspective
- Service to others
- Pre and post assessments

In addition, a condition of participation for all center students and their parents or a parent surrogate is the signing of a pledge that relates to behavior, effort and service.

### **The Need**

The overall needs of Black students in the Madison, Dane County area remain direr than the needs of all other ethnic groups. CHHI is pleased that some significant progress has occurred, nonetheless, other negative trends remain unchanged.

Despite the fact that Black citizens have been in the Madison area for centuries, other ethnic groups representing more recent arrivals to the area historically perform at higher and better rates than do Black students on key measures.

Schools of Hope (SOH) is a collaborative community effort facilitated by the United Way of Dane County. The leadership team of SOH is comprised of high level civic, private sector and community leaders who work together to support MMSD's efforts to increase significantly and measurably the academic success of low performing students. The efforts of SOH and MMSD have resulted in some impressive gains in key state achievement measures and in other measures deemed as critical indicia of student success, such as school attendance rates.

The district verifies that the metrics are fair, valid and consistent with data analysis decision rules from previous years. Given these facts, there remains disturbing truths regarding the Black student populations of elementary and secondary students.

Native born Black students lag behind the academic rates of other racial groups –

whose populations are comprised of many students who were foreign-born and whose native language is one other than English.

According to MMSD data for the 2004-2005 school year, in spite of some positive trends, Black student trail all other groups in the following areas:

- 1) eliminating the achievement gap at the basic, proficient and advanced levels
- 2) becoming increasingly proficient and advanced in third grade reading
- 3) completing algebra at the beginning of 10<sup>th</sup> grade
- 4) graduation rates.

More disturbing trends emerge through a closer examination of other indicators of success or failure.

The following chart breaks out the district's suspension data by ethnicity. It indicates that while Black students represent approximately 20% of the district's student population they represented a staggering 57% of all district suspensions for the 2004-2005 school year. The reader will note that nearly a fourth of all Black students were suspended last school year, while no other ethnic group was in double digits.

| <b>Ethnicity</b>        | <b>Total Enrollment<br/>Pre-K - 12</b> | <b>No. of Students<br/>Suspended</b> | <b>Suspension<br/>Percent</b> |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Native American         | 155                                    | 12                                   | 7.7%                          |
| <b>African American</b> | <b>5069</b>                            | <b>1188</b>                          | <b>23.4%</b>                  |
| Hispanic                | 2703                                   | 252                                  | 9.3%                          |
| Asian                   | 2509                                   | 66                                   | 2.6%                          |
| White                   | 14274                                  | 571                                  | 4.0%                          |
| District Total          | 24710                                  | 2089                                 | 8.5%                          |



High suspension rates represent serious discipline problems, either on the parts of students and/or on the parts of educators. And high suspension rates are predictors of high expulsion rates.

Black students in MMSD have, by far, the highest expulsion referral rates and the highest actual expulsion rates of any other groups in the district. According to MMSD's Expulsion Report for 2004-2005, Black students represent 67% of all students who were recommended for expulsion, although Black students represent 20% of the district's student population. The next highest group is White students at 22.7% although White students represent 58% of all students. Black students represent 48% of students who were actually expelled. The next highest group is White students at 30%.

| <b>Ethnicity</b>        | <b>% Recommended but Not Expelled</b> | <b>% Expelled</b> | <b>% TOTAL OF Recommended &amp; Expelled</b> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Native American         | 0.0%                                  | 1.9%              | 0.8%   |
| <b>African American</b> | <b>66.7%</b>                          | <b>48.1%</b>      | <b>58.3%</b>                                 |
| Hispanic                | 4.5%                                  | 16.7%             | 10.0%  |
| Asian                   | 6.1%                                  | 3.7%              | 5.0%   |
| White                   | 22.7%                                 | 29.6%             | 25.8%  |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>      | <b>55.0%</b>                          | <b>45.0%</b>      | <b>100.0%</b>                                |

Now, an assessment of graduation/drop out rates in the district is also instructive. We are pleased that overall Black graduation trends in the district have improved decidedly over the past 10 years, from a low of 45% to the current high of 78%. But this high is the lowest among all ethnics groups, as illustrated by the chart below.

### 2005 Graduation Year

| Ethnicity        | Drop Out % | Graduation % |
|------------------|------------|--------------|
| African American | 23         | 78           |
| Hispanic         | 13         | 87           |
| Asian, Not SE    | 3          | 97           |
| SE Asian         | 13         | 87           |
| White            | 3          | 97           |
| TOTAL            | 6          | 94           |

#### Life and Death

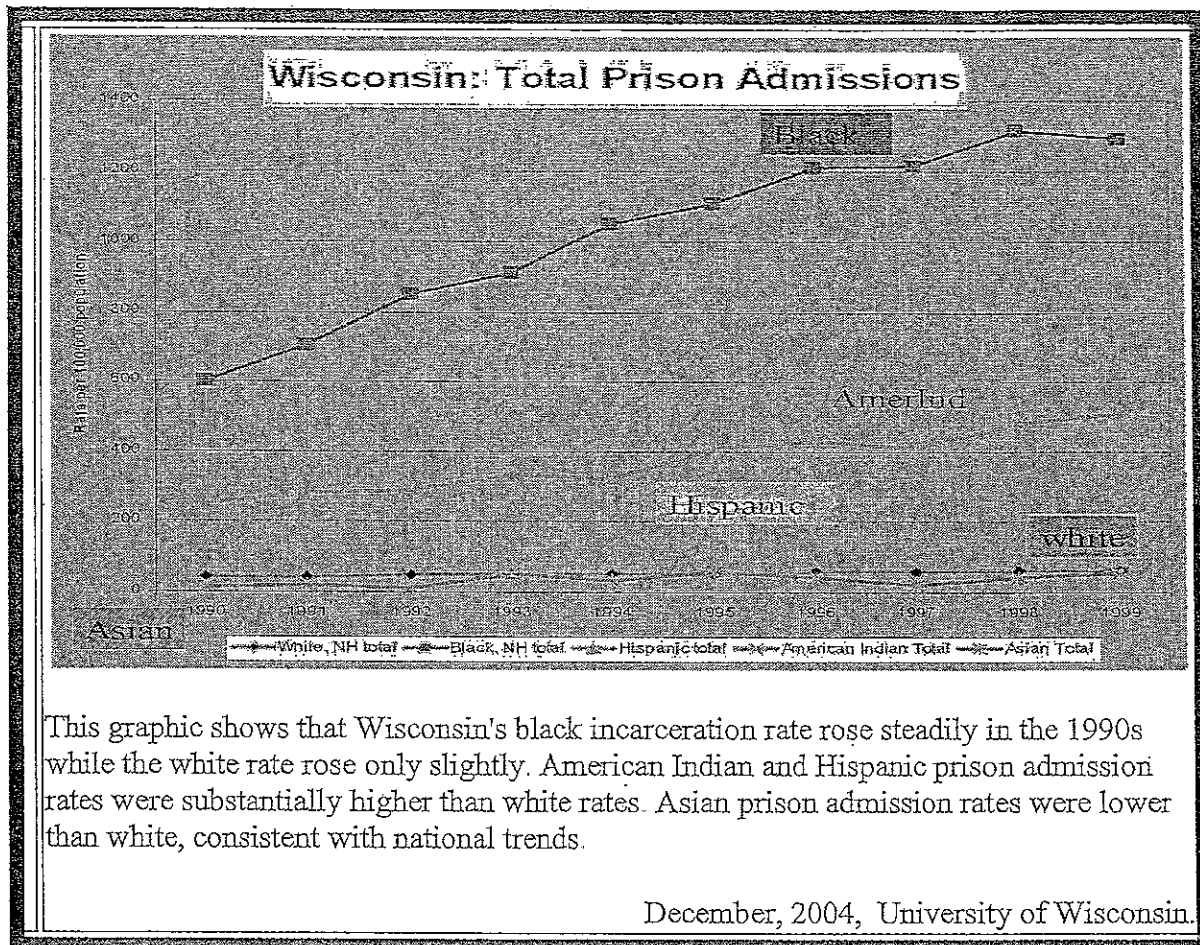
It is contended that there is a direct nexus between school discipline and drop out problems and eventual incarceration. When troubled kids become troubled adults, jail and prison are too often the remedies provided by society. The causes of these problems are shared between students, their parents and school officials. But regardless of their causes, they must be addressed due to the peril to Black youth, the Black community and the larger society.

Last summer, The Black Commentator, a national online newsletter, dubbed Wisconsin as the worst state in the nation for Black people, based on our state's prison population. Specifically, The Black Commentator said:

Wisconsin leads the nation in the percentage of its Black inhabitants under lock and key. Just over 4% of Black Wisconsin, including the very old and the very young of both sexes, are behind bars... Most of its Black prisoner are drawn from just a handful of poor and economically deprived Black communities where jobs, intact families are the scarcest, and paroled back into those same neighborhoods. So Wisconsin... justly merit(s) the invidious distinction of the Worst Place in the Nation to be Black.

While it is unfair to determine "the worst place in the nation to be Black" based on one criterion, imprisonment is a very serious and bellwether indicator.

The following chart developed by Prof. Pam Oliver of the University of Wisconsin-Madison demonstrates the incarceration trend in Wisconsin.



As David Cole declared in his seminal work No Equal Justice: Race and Class in the American Criminal Justice System,

... I contend that our criminal justice system affirmatively depends on inequality... If incarceration rates continue their current trends, one in four young black males born today will serve time in prison during his lifetime (meaning that he will be convicted and sentenced to more than one year of incarceration). Nationally, for every one black man who graduates from college, 100 are arrested (pp. 4-5).

Cole states that the criminal justice system does more than respond to crime; Cole contends that the criminal justice system stimulates and promotes more crime in the Black community; that the system is not neutral.

The fact that Madison is the second largest metropolitan area in the state with the highest incarceration of Black people in the nation is worth highlighting. Dane County statistics show that Black youth from our area contribute greatly to Wisconsin's crime and incarceration rates. CHHI proposes to enhance positive MMSD developments on behalf of Black students and to counter, through education, systemic forces in all public county structures that are inimical to the best interests of Black and other students.

### **Population to be Served**

YEA will initially focus on Black male and female students, grade 7-12, at its downtown center, since our students and their parents or guardians will be responsible for their own transportation.

### **Initial Program Offerings**

Our initial program will consist of five programs. A description of each program follows.

#### **1. YEA Seminar**

Our key program will be a seminar the curriculum for which will be based on an overview of nine of our curricular strands. The overview will be comprised of 1-2 week sessions on each of the following topics: 1) academics, 2) personal development, 3) health and wellness, 4) business development, 5) the arts, 6) technology, 7) relationship development, 8) community service, 9) ethnic pride and rights of passage.

An element of each session will be to assess each student's needs and interests in related topics. From these assessments, we will map the development of future

course and workshop offerings. We will begin our program with a cohort of approximately 36 students and grow our program from that group.

Expected Outcome(s):

A) 90% of participants will express increased awareness of positive educational and life options.

B) 90% of participants will express significantly increased motivation toward greater academic achievement.

## 2. Senior Saturdays

CHHI has concluded that many Black high school seniors still have questions as to what they will do after graduation. CHHI is delighted that seniors have survived 12-13 years of public schooling, yet we are concerned that many students have arrived at the second semester of their final year unclear as to their next major life step. So, beginning as soon as possible, YEA will work with area high schools, colleges and the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW) to host at least two "Senior Saturdays" to which we will invite area high school seniors and juniors to meet with high school and post-secondary counselors to explore possibilities for college, technical college and employment. High school juniors will be welcome to attend, to avoid the crisis that some seniors are now experiencing.

Expected Outcome(s):

A) 90% of participants will declare the experience to be "Very Helpful."

B) 60% of participants will determine their next career move through the process.

## 3. Computer Gaming

Prof. Kurt Squire of UW-Madison is one of the nation's leading experts on academic achievement through computer gaming. Prof. Squire's research indicates that far more Black students are already "gamers" than the average educator realizes. Prof. Squire has agreed to lead the forming a "Gaming Society" at YEA.

Expected Outcome(s):

A) 90% of participants will declare the experience to be "Very Helpful."

B) 75% of participants will demonstrate an increase in overall GPA by the end of the first semester of the ensuing regular school semester.

4. **Study Hall**

Study Hall represents quiet time for homework, scholarly or leisure reading and one-on-one skill building. The center represents "A Place of Peace"; our space provides ample room for students to work on projects individually or in small groups. Study Hall can enhance school-based remediation and enrichment activities. YEA adults will be available from time-to-time to mentor and proctor students. Student-to-student support will be encouraged.

Expected Outcome(s):

A) 90% of participants will declare the experience to be "Very Helpful."

B) 75% of participants will demonstrate an increase in overall GPA by the following regular school semester

5. **Three Courses Mapped**

As a result of the seminar described in number one of this section, three course concepts will be identified as the result of a needs assessment done with students and course plans and curriculums will be developed for those courses.

Expected Outcome(s):

A) Three future course concepts will be identified.

B) Curricular plans for the aforementioned courses will be satisfactorily developed as determined by a MMSD designee

Overall, the attendance and grade point averages of participating YEA students who will return to MMSD for the 2006-2007 school year will increase significantly by the end of the first semester.

## Project Management and Implementation

YEA will retain the services of an Academy Coordinator to oversee the development and implementation of programs and curricula and to teach in areas of expertise.

Whenever possible, to effectuate cost-savings, volunteers will be sought to present at YEA sessions and to counsel with students. The Academy Coordinator will be retained as a consultant.

Whenever possible, without compromising our mission, YEA will seek to collaborate with other public and private agencies to create synergies of mission and expenses.

As often as possible, YEA will support learning with technology as familiarity and comfort with technology is viewed as a basic skill.

YEA has developed a student referral process through which to identify potential students. Students may be referred by school officials, community members, other students or by themselves.

## Budget Narrative

Eighty four percent (84%) of the requested amount will be dedicated to direct instructional of students and to support for parents of students. The aide position will concentrate on parent outreach. In addition, to the extent possible, YEA will use contemporary, highly motivational and proven multi-media curricular materials, adopting or adapting them as deemed appropriate. CHHI carries adequate liability and property insurance.

### Proposed Budget

| <u>CATEGORY</u>                                     | <u>FTE</u> | <u>TOTAL</u>    |
|---|------------|-----------------|
| <b><u>Human Resources</u></b>                       |            |                 |
| - Academy Coordinator                               | 0.50       | 22,500          |
| - Course/Project Leaders                            |            | 12,500          |
| - Aide  | 0.33       | 7,000           |
| - Evaluation/Assessment                             |            | 1,000           |
| <b><u>Supplies</u></b>                              |            |                 |
| - Instructional                                     |            | 4,500           |
| - Office  |            | 700             |
| <b><u>Overhead</u></b>                              |            |                 |
| - (Rent, Internet, telephone, utilities)            |            | 3,250           |
| - Insurance   |            | 1,200           |
| <b><u>Travel Reimbursement</u></b>                  |            | 750             |
| <b><u>Meals</u></b> (student treats/adult planning) |            | 1,000           |
| <b><u>Miscellany</u></b>                            |            | 600             |
| <b>Total</b>  |            | <b>\$55,000</b> |
| <b>CHHI Contribution</b>                            |            | <b>5,000</b>    |
| <b>TOTAL REQUESTED</b>                              |            | <b>\$50,000</b> |