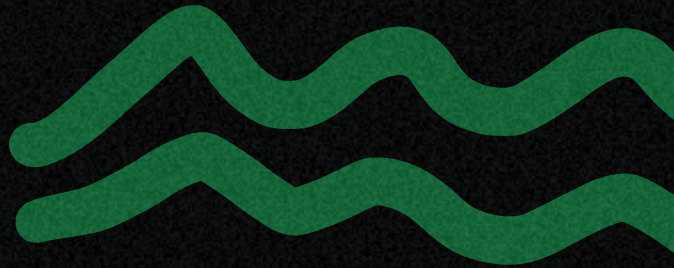


# EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

## An EPiC Impact Report



# EMPOWERING CHANGE

## Leadership for Equity and Lasting Impact in Education

We can all agree that every child deserves an equal opportunity to succeed in school. Systemic racism and bias have created an uneven playing field for Black students. Discipline disparities and access to advanced academics are just a couple of areas in which inequities have continued to negatively impact Black students. With unwavering commitment, EPiC was founded in 2019, equipping parents with the tools, knowledge, and organizing strategies needed to drive awareness and champion equitable opportunities for all children.

EPiC has proven to be a beacon of hope and empowerment dedicated to uplifting parents and advocating for transformative change within the Durham community and beyond. In the 2022-23 school year, we solidified our processes and programs with a growing team. In the 2023-24 school year, we successfully increased awareness of our mission and provided community based services including our kitchen table conversations, a special education summit, and multiple Circles of Hope throughout the year. Our team is poised and ready to cultivate Black parent leadership and celebrate Black student success with community actions and events highlighted in this report.

EPiC's growing team consists of 5 empowered women who ensure we have an emphasis on supporting our individual and collective wellness so that we can maintain the energy required to support our community and advocate for such systemic change. This dynamic group of women are forging connections, reshaping school climates, and driving systemic change towards a culturally inclusive and equitable education system. Our vision extends beyond Durham County, as we eagerly look forward to expanding our impact into neighboring communities, fostering a ripple effect of empowerment and equity throughout the region. With each step forward, we are committed to building a future where every child's potential is recognized, nurtured, and celebrated.



Founder &  
Executive Director



# A VISION AWAKENED, A COMMUNITY TRANSFORMED

## WHO WE ARE:

Empowered Parents in Community (EPiC) is a Black-led, community-rooted, asset-based organization unapologetically focused on Black children and their success at school and in life. We build individual parent capacity, collective awareness about the history of education, and community power to advocate for systemic change to stop failing Black students.

## LIVES WE'VE IMPACTED:

**444**

**TOTAL DIRECTLY IMPACTED INDIVIDUALS**

**3,583**

**TOTAL INDIRECTLY IMPACTED INDIVIDUALS**



# WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST

## STATISTIC #1

According to local data from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Black students represent 39.9% of the overall student body, but only 7.8% of the Academically or Intellectually Gifted Students.

## STATISTIC #2

For high school aged students, Black students make up 15% of high schoolers nationwide, but only 9% of students enrolled in at least one AP course.

## STATISTIC #3

Black boys are 4x as likely to be suspended than their white counterparts for the same behavior.

## STATISTIC #4

Only 7% of public school teachers are Black. Research has found that Black teachers are less likely to suspend, expel, or give detention to Black students, who are disproportionately given exclusionary discipline.

## STATISTIC #5

Black students who'd had just one Black teacher by third grade were 13% more likely to enroll in college - and those who'd had two were 32% more likely.

# EPIC'S CORE BELIEFS

## BELIEF #1

Parents are essential in both supporting and holding schools accountable.

## BELIEF #2

When parents understand racial equity and teachers feel supported, we can foster collaboration for the success of all students, especially those marginalized.

## BELIEF #3

Parents who have the desire, time, and resources commit to fiercely "stand in the gap" for those who do not, without judgment.

## BELIEF #4

By combining our wisdom and resources, parents and community partners can drive meaningful progress in eliminating educational inequities.

## BELIEF #5

Trusting the lived experience of committed parents stepping in for those who cannot to close the opportunity gaps.

# EMPOWERING FUTURES, ONE STEP AT A TIME

## Programs That Ignite the Spark of Change

**Focus Groups/Community Learning** allow a way to build collaborative relationships with families and educators and facilitate family and community discussions to map the concerns, priorities and insights that then inform our local, system-change goals to improve educational practices and policies. EPiC has skilled Community Learning facilitators who collect concerns and themes that resonate with the community.

**Listening Sessions** are a way in which we elevate the parent/caregivers voice within a school community to have authentic inclusion of educating their children with trained professionals/educators allowing for connectivity between lessons given at school and reinforced at home and vice versa. Giving parents/caregivers a platform to be heard opens the door for them to hear from educators and meet the goal to provide all students with academic support (e.g., tutoring, co-curricular activities, tiered interventions) to keep them on track for graduation.

**Circle of Hope (COH)** is a safe, supportive space for Black parents to practice community self-care and build relationships with each other. Ultimately, these supportive spaces aim to reduce parental/caregiver and provider/educator stress levels, which in turn creates more collective healing and building relationships that will have a positive impact on the safety and wellness of all, but especially the youth in their care. In addition to our popular group for Black mothers/caregivers, groups have been made available specifically for childcare providers, educators, single parents and Black fathers/caregivers. Our Circles of Hope are facilitated by at least one licensed clinician.

**Community Forum** with educators, parents, and students who bring their lived experiences together to offer parent-led solutions that address data driven inequities found within a school or school system. They provide an educational series with parents/caregivers separately and together to strengthen and build a positive relationship between educators and parents/caregivers.

**Collective Communities** are where families collaborate with one another to form a Collectives and move from seeing themselves as consumers of service, to gaining positions of leadership and holding power to drive efforts to close the opportunity gap. These monthly meetings increase networks and build social capital to influence levers of change and advocate for the desires of the Collective to better support Black students' academic success. In our Collectives, we evaluate and uncover the root causes of racially unequal outcomes in the educational system and increase parent and school stakeholder awareness of the magnitude of the opportunity gap.

Looking forward to partnering with EPiC and engaging additional parents from our mentoring group to support our kids in schools.

-Community Participant



# RISING HIGHER: OUR IMPACT **2022-2023**

We held **six** Circles of Hope, where parents had the opportunity to gain support from other parents facing similar parenting challenges and experiences. The average number of weekly group participants was 6-8 people/group, and 99% of male participants agreed that Circle of Hope helped to reduce stress. In the single parent's Circle of Hope, 100% of the participants agreed that they learned skills to better balance family, work and parenting.

We held **four** listening sessions. In the listening sessions facilitated in 2023, 100% of participants reported feeling **seen, heard, and valued**, and felt that they had an opportunity to share their needs, obstacles, or opportunities. When listening to Black parents and their experience with local schools, 50% of participants felt their child was unfairly disciplined in their academic environments. We also held **five** community forums.



# HISTORY OF ENGAGEMENT

From a subcommittee of school PTAs into a self-governed, community-based organization. The numbers shared below reflect black parent leaders.

**2016-2017**

**3 LEADERS**

**2017-2018**

**8 LEADERS**

**2018-2019**

**15 LEADERS**

**2019-2020**

**24 LEADERS**

**2020-2021**

**21 LEADERS**

**2021-2022**

**26 LEADERS**

**80%**  
**GROWTH**  
**BLACK PARENT LEADERS!**

# STILL CLIMBING: BY THE NUMBERS **2023-2024**

At EPiC, we listen to one's lived experience, we educate on inequities, and we support parent-led advocacy for Black students. We connect with Black families to create a safe space to collectively disrupt, dismantle, and rebuild a better system for our children.

**03** LISTENING SESSIONS

**05** CIRCLES OF HOPE

**06** COLLECTIVE MEETINGS

**07** ORGANIZATION COLLABS

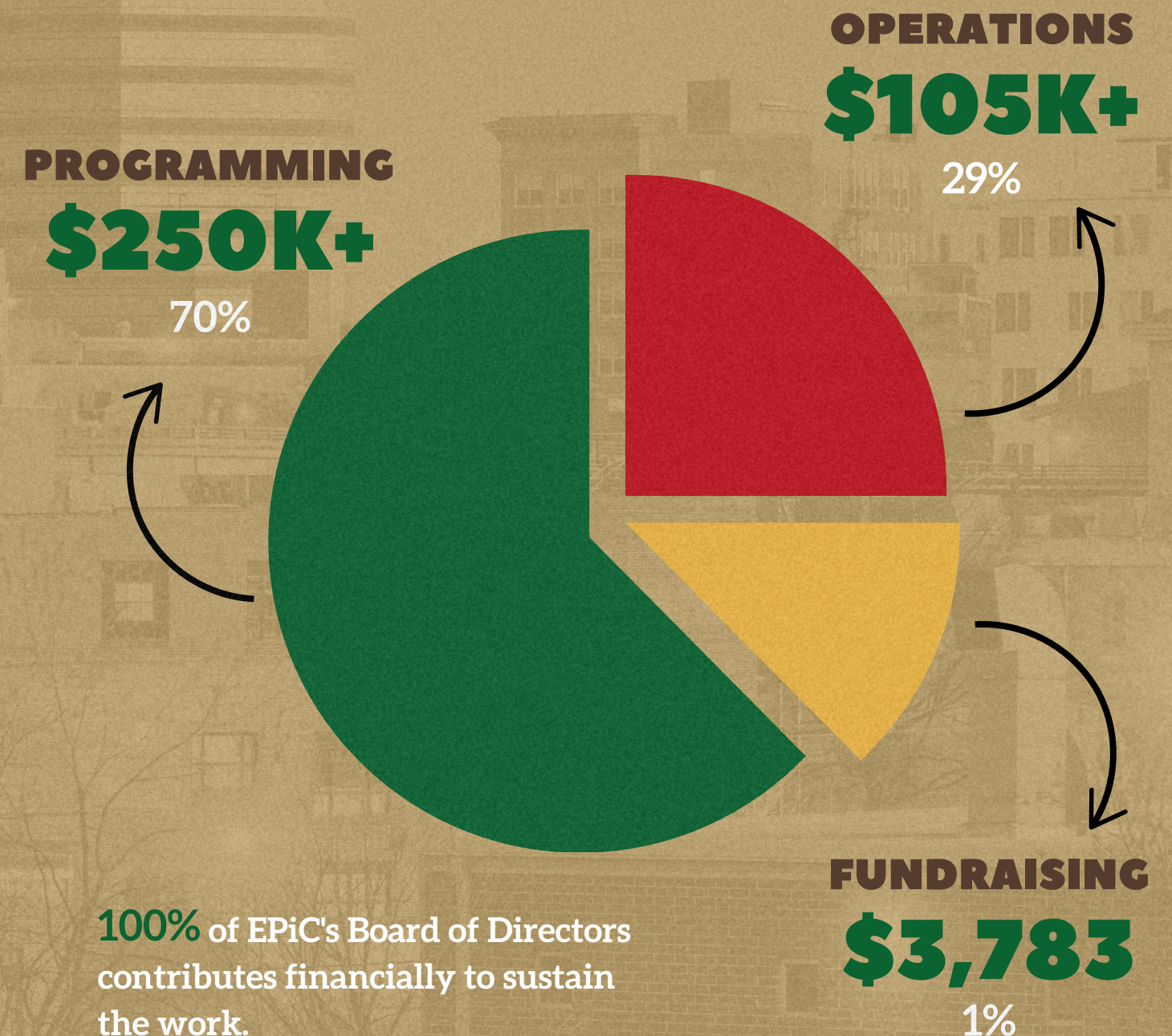
**08** COMMUNITY FORUMS

**49** TOTAL EVENTS

In 2023, with the Duke Durham Community Affairs' Building Healthy Communities grant, we engaged six low-wealth schools, directly contributing to their family engagement budgets while strengthening relationships with parents. This effort led to a 15% increase in family engagement funding, benefiting over 1,900 students.

# SUCCESS TRACKED: KEY FIGURES

The pie chart below shows a breakdown of our total expenses for 2023, amounting to \$360,182, with funds allocated across operations, fundraising, and programming. Our total income for the year was \$530,159, offering a clear view of how resources were managed and distributed.



# FUELING THE MISSION: FINANCIAL IMPACT

How We Sustain the Work of Transformation

Every

**\$500**

gives a parent access to a 6-week community support group, enhancing their mental health and resilience. This transformative experience empowers parents to build strength and capacity, equipping them to better meet their child's needs.

Every

**\$1,000**

gives a school community access to a customized assessment and Community Forum specific to their school. Our programming disrupts inequities and removes barriers to access.

**\$1,250**

a \$100 monthly sustainer commitment will equate to \$1,250/year. With 10 sustainers, we can develop 5 Community Collectives serving over 500 students!

# BOLSTERING THE MISSION: SUSTAINING IMPACT

When you sustain EPIc services, the community gets:

## ACCESS

Highlight and create opportunities to support student academic success.

## PARENT EMPOWERMENT

Address academic disparities and create systemic change.

## CONNECTION

Encourage authentic parent, teacher and student relationships.

## RESOURCES

Reallocation of resources led by those most closely impacted by inequity.

## SUPPORT & PARTNERSHIP

Strategic, parent-led, organized advocacy.

Scan Here to Donate:





# THANKS TO OUR MAJOR DONORS:



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# VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

[EPIC-NC.ORG](http://EPIC-NC.ORG)

**EPiC**  
EMPOWERED PARENTS IN COMMUNITY