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**Alameda County
Supervisor Keith Carson, Fifth
District**

For Immediate Release

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Press Release

Supervisor Keith Carson Honors Youth and Community Leaders In Celebration of Black History Month

In celebration of Black History Month, on Tuesday, February 7, 2012 Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson honored 28 African American young men from the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) who received perfect scores on the 2011 Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) exam.

“You are the role models for those who are going through tough times,” Supervisor Carson said to the youth. “Your achievements show that yes, we can achieve anything we put our minds to.”

The eight youth who attended were: Anthony Davenport, Carl Munck Elementary; Joshua Ford Walker, ACORD Woodland Elementary; Hezekiah Haylett, Marshall Elementary; Darius Jackson-Rubio, Grass Valley Elementary; Henos Michael Mekonenn, Lakeview Elementary; Ramell Phillips, Fruitvale Elementary; John H. Wade III, Grass Valley Elementary; Kheshawn Wynn, Marshall Elementary.

“No person achieves greatness on their own,” Supervisor Carson said. “I would also like to recognize the parents, families and friends who support these young people on their educational path.”

In 2011, 28 OUSD young men between grades 2 and 11 received perfect scores on the Math, English Language Arts or Science portions of the exam. The students attend elementary, middle and high schools throughout Oakland. The STAR exams are administered every year to public school children grade 2-11 in the State of California.

The achievements of these 28 youth are significant considering the challenges faced by young African American boys and men in and out of school. According to the OUSD Task Force Summary Report on African American Male Achievement, 28% of African American males were proficient or higher on the English Language Arts California Standards Test (CST) in 2009-10, compared to 78% of White males. These figures represent a 50 percentage-point gap. According to the same report, 30% of African American males were proficient or higher on the Math CST in 2009-10, compared to 76% of White males (a 46 percentage-point gap).

Facing these staggering inequities, OUSD established the African American Male Achievement Department in school year 2010-2011 with Chris Chatmon as Executive Director. Their mission is to stop the epidemic failure of African American Male students in OUSD by creating the systems, structures, and spaces that guarantee success for all African American Male students.

For more information about African American Male Achievement in Oakland, please visit:

<http://www.thrivingstudents.org/5>

Photograph from the recognition event:



Supervisor Keith Carson presents commendations to African American young men who received perfect scores on the 2011 STAR exam. From left:

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Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson represents the Fifth District, which includes Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Piedmont, and parts of Oakland (North Oakland, Rockridge, Grand Lake, Fruitvale, and Dimond District neighborhoods). For more information about District 5 and Supervisor Keith Carson, please call (510) 272-6695 or visit <http://www.keithcarson.org/>