



Our Urban Trailblazer Alecia K. Eugene-Chasten Background



The innovation and creation of the Urban Advocates & Achievers, (UAA) is designed for marginalized students to receive an equitable education and prepared for college and 21st Century Career Technical opportunities. Ms. Eugene-Chasten's pioneering and revolutionary creation of UAA is eliminating the **School-to-Prison-Pipeline for marginalized students and provides the Pipeline-to-College and 21st Century Career Technical Opportunities.**

Ms. Eugene-Chasten manages and oversees eight core programs:

1. **Educational Advocacy,**
2. **Achievement Tutors,**
3. **Urban Arts,**
4. **Healthy Minds & Bodies,**
5. **Family Academy,**
6. **Achievement Mentors,**
7. **Reservation for College Community Program**
8. **STEM/STEAM**

Ms. Eugene-Chasten's background includes a distinguished 30-year Civil Service career with the State of California as an Information Security Officer. Alecia was elected the first African American Woman School Board Trustee for Twin Rivers Unified School District between 2007 through 2012.

Ms. Eugene-Chasten earned her Business Management Certificate from Sacramento State University and received her Network Administration & Business Certificate from the University of California, Davis. Alecia is an Emerge California graduate in 2008, a training program for women entering politics and she also served as a Union Steward with SEIU Local 1000. Alecia's past accomplishments include Board Director with the North Highlands Park and Recreation District and she was crowned Miss North Highlands in 1981.

In November 2020, Chancellor Gary May at the University of California Davis, recognized and awarded Ms. Eugene-Chasten as the recipient of the Chancellor's Community Member and Organization Award for her exemplary service to UC Davis and active leadership and involvement in Pre-College partnership initiatives.

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Alecia's Personal Story

Ms. Eugene-Chasten explains that two of her children received inadequate services for an “Equitable, Free and Appropriate Public Education”, (E-FAPE). In addition, Mr. and Mrs. Chasten spent over \$15,000 at Sylvan Learning Center to help their children receive help in reading and math. The most devastating experience involved the inappropriate behavior of a resource teacher at an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), meeting.

At the IEP Meeting for Ms. Chasten's 9-year-old fourth grader, the resource teacher said, “because her child was struggling in math, her child could aspire to be a warehouse worker!” Ms. Eugene-Chasten was shocked and angry. She also noticed that the words spoken by the resource teacher flowed out so easily out of the resource teacher's mouth! Alecia thought, how many other students did the resource teacher destroy student's confidence and dreams? How many other students did the resource teacher stereotype and give-up on to provide resources???



Ms. Eugene-Chasten immediately “set the resource teacher straight” and sternly informed the resource teacher that her comment is inappropriate and indicated that “her 9-year will be next CEO of the next fortune 500 Company”! Ms. Chasten also indicated that the resource teacher did not have the right to decide what Ms. Chasten's child would become and furthermore her child will aspire to the profession of his choice!

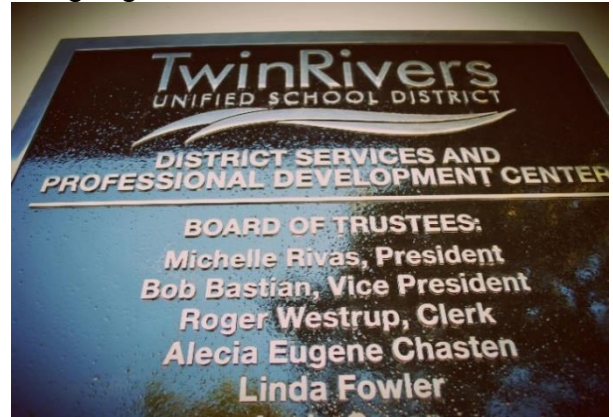
It was then Ms. Eugene-Chasten took immediate action and learned how to advocate on behalf of her children and received the needed resources to support her children's educational success!



The outcomes for each of Ms. Eugene-Chasten's children after high school graduation produced college graduates from Mills College in Oakland, California State University, EastBay and San Jose State University.

Ms. Eugene-Chasten's adult children are successful entrepreneurs, business professionals and productive citizens that are making their “American Dream” a reality!

Unfortunately, and sadly, according to Ms. Eugene-Chasten there are many stories that do not end with successful outcomes. The travesty continues to be perpetuated with structural racism through policies, practices, procedures, excessive expulsions, and suspensions and including the process that moves many students without mastery of basic coursework to the next grade level that create gaps in education. Other factors include: Student English Language learners, homeless students, “At Risk” Students, including student-to-teacher ratios and students with disabilities not having access to resources, opportunities, that will allow them to succeed.



Ms. Eugene-Chasten validates the above-mentioned information with other noted experts including Dr. Rahim Reed, Office of Campus Community Relations at UC Davis, Dr. Elisha Smith Arrillaga, Education Trust West, Hugh Vasquez, National Equity Project, E. Toby Boyd, CTA, and Dr. Westly Smith, Association of California School Administrators.

Ms. Eugene-Chasten was elected and served as the first African American Woman Board Trustee to the Twin Rivers Unified School District (TRUSD), the third largest school district in California, during 2008 through 2012. During this rewarding and tumultuous journey, Alecia experienced discrimination, harassment and threats from the superintendent Frank Porter, and board members: Michele Rivas, Linda Fowler, Bob Bastian, Rodger Westrup and contract lead attorney Tim Carey.



As a Board Trustee, Ms. Eugene-Chasten witnessed, first-hand how African American, and Hispanic Students were placed in the School-to-Prison Pipeline in greater proportion compared to Caucasian Students at TRUSD utilizing disciplinary methods such as suspensions and expulsions.

It also should be noted, according to Ms. Eugene-Chasten, students with disabilities and Students in the Education Gap received inadequate or no services as a major complaint by Parents at Board Meetings including school closures in Del Paso Heights and the lack of transportation and resources.

At one specific board meeting regarding school closures, Ms. Eugene-Chasten mentioned that many schools in Del Paso Heights were being closed and schools in Rio Linda remained “open,” giving the appearance of segregation and inequities in education.

During the board meeting Ms. Eugene-Chasten further stated the design of the school closures will impact students of color because no transportation of busses would be provided for students resulting in serious safety concerns for parents and for their children. Immediately, Superintendent Porter and Board President, Rivas immediately “stopped and recessed” the board meeting because Ms. Eugene-Chasten said the word “**SEGREGATION.**”



Ms. Eugene-Chasten used her voice to vigorously and passionately discussing the Education Gap and opening an investigation with the Sacramento Grand Jury Office regarding TRUSD’s misappropriation of funds including discrimination of former employees from Grant Unified School District, questionable hiring practices and police abuses in communities of color and specifically in the Del Paso Heights community.

During Ms. Eugene-Chasten’s 5-years as Board Trustee, the Superintendent, Frank Porter, and board members: Rivas, Fowler, Westrup, Green and Bastian tried to vote to censor and/or suppress Ms. Eugene-Chasten’s voice and categorized Alecia as the “ill-informed and angry Black Woman”.

Ms. Eugene-Chasten demonstrated strength, courage, passion and more importantly used her voice to help students in the Education Gap, students “At-Risk”, and students with disabilities. Ms. Eugene-Chasten is especially grateful for the valuable support from Mr. Cortez Quinn, past Board Member TRUSD, and community members and thankful for the valuable support from the Black Parallel School Board, the Sacramento NAACP, and the Greater Sacramento Urban League while she served as Board Trustee with TRUSD.



According to Ms. Eugene-Chasten, it was just over 9 years ago, after serving as School Board TRUSD that she was inspired to create UAA. The importance of UAA has positively impacted students and families. Furthermore, UAA is leveling the playing field for young people from under-resourced communities.



UAA Staff Members

In closing, Ms. Eugene-Chasten shares that UAA are **Education First Responders** equipped with the **educational antidote** and **commitment** to ensure students receive an equitable education, are proficient in reading and math, on track to graduate high school, and meet the A through G requirements for entry into college, trade schools, and/or career technical opportunities.

UAA strategically coordinates and aligns resources of an entire community together to increase the educational success for students in the Promise Zone, Sacramento's federally designated high-poverty areas. As stated by Ms. Alecia K. Eugene-Chasten, The Urban Trailblazer,

“UAA are passionate “Social Change Makers and Education First Responders” with the belief that when “EQUITY” is applied strategically there will no longer be an education gap.”

Ms. Eugene-Chasten is proud and excited to officially launch and committed to helping Students and Families achieve.

UAA will be hosting future virtual workshops and fundraisers and events throughout 2021.



2012 - 2015 UAA Board Members