Reflecting on Their Highest Potential 20 Years Later: Implications for History, Policy, and Practice

To mark the 20th Anniversary of Vanessa Siddle Walker’s *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South*, this symposium will offer vibrant and thoughtful reflections that extend our understanding of *Their Highest Potential* as it relates to educational history, policy, and practice. Participants will share interdisciplinary perspectives on the work’s historiographical significance; its import for considering desegregation, resegregation, and school choice; its relationship to literacy, social justice, teacher education, and black educational research; contemporary manifestations of theory, practice, and school leadership; and considerations of the work in light of what we know now about black educational history. This symposium signals the importance of amplifying African American voices, past and present, who speak to their respective contexts and experiences, and challenges us to consider if and how we take heed of their voices today.

Symposium Participants

**James D. Anderson**  
Edward William and Jane Marr Gutsell Professor of Education  
University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana

**Amy Stuart Wells**  
Professor of Sociology and Education  
Teachers College and Columbia University

**Maisha T. Winn**  
Susan J. Cellmer Endowed Chair in English Education and Professor in Language and Literacy  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Sheryl J. Croft**  
Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership  
Kennesaw State University

**Vanessa Siddle Walker**  
Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor of Educational Studies  
Emory University

Symposium Co-Chairs

**Joy Williamson-Lott**  
Professor, History of American Education  
University of Washington

**Michelle A. Purdy**  
Assistant Professor of Education  
Washington University in St. Louis

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Research Focus on Black Education SIG (RFBE)