

# Commentary: Why schools are SCALA's top concern

By David A. Jones Sr.

Your criticism has focused on SCALA's temerity in [studying education](#) – but has not mentioned why schools are the group's top concern. The answer is simple: Too many poor Louisville kids, and especially poor African-American kids, leave JCPS without a solid education. This has been true for a long time, under different superintendents and school boards, and shows no sign of changing.

Instead of calling names, let's look at the data. According to JCPS, 80 percent of its students graduate but only 57 percent of its graduates were college or career ready in 2017 – and only 38 percent of African-American grads. The math I learned in Louisville's public schools tells me this means only 46 percent of JCPS students leave our schools ready for their future.



David Jones Sr. | Courtesy of UofL

And elementary school data suggest that things won't improve soon. Low income and minority students make up more than half of all JCPS students today – but only 29 percent of African-American elementary students, and 36 percent of students eligible for free or reduced lunch, are proficient or better in reading today, according to state data.

That's why a large and diverse group of achieving and engaged local leaders believe that public education is a truly vital issue that should be broadly addressed.

I'm pleased that we brought it to your attention.

*David A. Jones Sr. is a co-founder of the Steering Committee for Action on Louisville's Agenda (SCALA).*

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