



# Associated Leaders of Urban Debate

## WHY URBAN DEBATE?

Debate competition involves a clash of ideas using research and reasoning. Students advance solutions to issues of national and international significance that their opponents subject to philosophical, economic and political critiques.

As Henry Giroux suggests: *The first responsibility of public schools is not to test students...but to address what it means to provide them with the critical reading, writing, language, technological skills, knowledge, social experiences, and resources they need. ...to transform the world in which they live.*

Once a staple of civics education, debate vanished from many urban school districts by the 1980s due to budget cuts. Urban debate signals a revival of this co-curricular tool. Debate training improves:

- ❖ Critical thinking
- ❖ Self Confidence
- ❖ Communication skills
- ❖ Problem Solving
- ❖ Research Abilities

A national study concluded that urban debate increases literacy by as much as 25% in a single year and debaters are three times less likely to engage in risk taking behaviors that lead to crime, drug use and violence.

In one city alone, urban debaters received \$2.5 million in college scholarship offers over a two-year span.

Educators across the country share stories of urban debaters' solid gains in class attendance, tests scores, and increased interest in academic achievement.

***“...what would occur if debate became as compulsory in inner-city educational culture as football or basketball? Imagine graduating from high school each year millions of underprivileged teenagers with the ability to articulate their own needs, the needs of others, and the ability to offer solutions. I am convinced that someone would be forced to listen.” Edward Lee, Memoir of a Former Urban Debate Participant***

Urban Debate is at a crossroads. Driven by the thrill of competition, at-risk students nationwide build the skills they need for success. Having served thousands, we need to serve millions. The Urban Debate movement now needs a national organization to capitalize on our successes and address our challenges. The Associated Leaders of Urban Debate (ALoud) will serve that role by developing educational opportunities for urban students through training in academic debate. ALoud promotes debate as a vehicle for urban education reform to develop civic participation and healthier communities. ALoud will focus on capacity building, research & evaluation, and professional development through its action plan. ALoud's ten-step program will:

**Allocate funds competitively to strengthen and build urban debate**

**Lead Intervention Teams to engage fledgling debate leagues**

**Open Training & Recruiting Centers for coaches**

**Uncover local collaborations to replicate nationally**

**Develop customized curricular models**

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**Advocate urban debate in education reform circles**

**Leverage funding relationships with national potential**

**Operate as a national information clearinghouse**

**Unleash coordinated national research efforts**

**Deliver summer scholarships for debate institutes**