



Letter to Editor, New York Times

In Response to: [Louisiana School Made Headlines for Sending Black Kids to Elite Colleges. Here's the Reality](#), New York Times 11.30.18

To the Editor:

Helping students from traditionally underrepresented minorities need not be a confidence game. While recent headlines highlighted the falsifying of records (and shockingly abusive practices towards students) by the T.M. Landry school in Louisiana, there should be no clarion call questioning the genuine academic talent and unmistakable promise to be found in our nation's lower income, minority, and first generation college students.

There are many reputable community based organizations and schools that know there is no need to lie on transcripts or recommendation letters. Their students have the academic merit, talent, drive, resilience, time management skills, and other qualities that will help them succeed on elite college campuses. I know this because I am a proud part of such a legitimate organization where we have been serving students for nearly 11 years.

We don't have a lot of videos going viral of students jumping up and down with Ivy League acceptances and we haven't been featured on TV. Nevertheless, we have our own documented record of success. Every year and every day we partner with and support the dreams of hundreds of students whose families live at or below the federal poverty line, whose parents are immigrants, whose parents did not go to college. We know there is no magical secret sauce or short cut for student achievement except hard work, good teaching, positive peers, and caring adults. Unlike the Landry's damaging charade, our success does speak for itself: we have students currently thriving at some of this country's most selective colleges including Harvard, Yale, University of Pennsylvania, Georgetown and others. And we are not alone; there are many other unsung organizations with similar missions and authentic accomplishments.

Make no mistake. Talent exists among our poorest young American students. These students need and deserve our support. There is no need to lie about it.

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