

## CRUSADE FOR BLACK SCHOOLCHILDREN

# Cosby should focus more on institutional racism

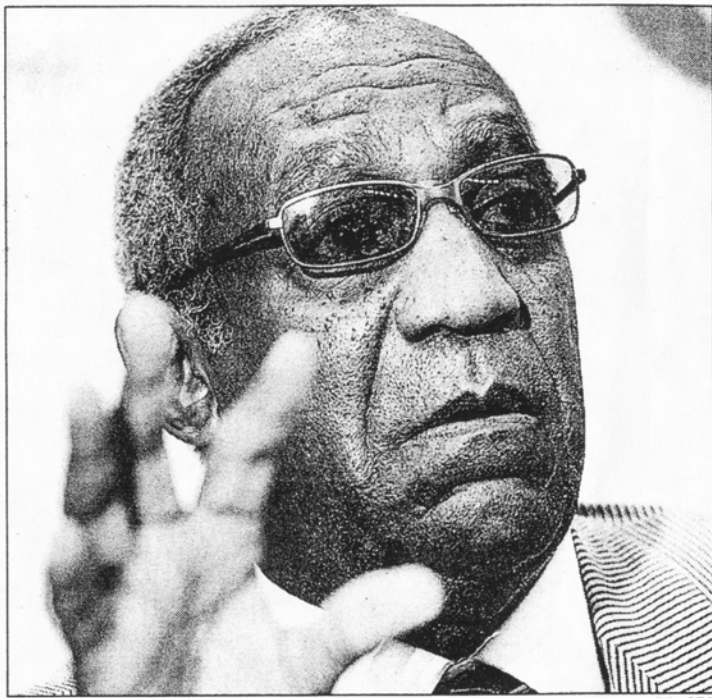
Regarding "Cosby's on right track, sticking to his guns" [Opinion, Nov. 15]: Bill Cosby continues to hammer away at the problems of the African-American community. He frequently appears at public venues decrying the state of black schoolchildren and their parents who do not give their children better choices.

As an African-American educator I understand the importance of Cosby's efforts and that his comments indirectly reflect the daunting life challenges of many children of color who struggle in poverty. Cosby continues to remind us of the positive, namely that striving, self-improvement and acculturation into the worlds of American study and work are possible for everyone.

Yet Cosby continues not to speak to our society and its systems and institutions, which rather than supporting change for schoolchildren, hamper the opportunity of our youth for whom success is a mirage. They are oppressed by substandard housing, job discrimination, substandard educational opportunity and divisive social policies that undermine families, particularly of people of color.

The heroic American individuals and families that rise above the damage of history and contemporary racism are to be celebrated and applauded for their accomplishments.

Rather than pointing fin-



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**Bill Cosby has been critical of black parents.**

gers, we need to work on both the individual and institutional sides of the success equation. All Americans should get behind the "audacity of hope" that Cosby is attempting to build in support of African-American schoolchildren and youth. Parents, relatives and friends obviously need to be called to action. Yet we must remember that for the hours for which schools are engaging students, effective schools by their nature educate all of their stu-

dents, whatever family and financial challenges many are forced to face. Where are the leaders who challenge the inequities that exist in our educational systems? This is where influential leaders such as Cosby and others should direct their frustrations.

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*Editor's note: The writer is president of the National Urban Alliance for Effective Education.*