

# BENJAMIN J. HARPER

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Charles R. Drew Charter School Senior Academy



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## ***SCHOLAR | LEADER | ATHLETE***

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**PROMPT: Current reports note that "86% of people 13 to 38 years old want to be social media influencers, but only 12% of those surveyed currently consider themselves a social media influencer." Explain how the desire to be a social media influencer may or may not affect a high school student's decision to pursue a college education.**

The thought of becoming a social media influencer could affect a high school student's decision to pursue a college education. However, early in the process they would learn a college education can help them go further in life. Due to social media, there is an increase in teens (and some adults) that feel like it is a possible way to make money and become rich. As a young Black male living in Atlanta, I have always wondered why it seems Black people do not have the same generational wealth as our white counterparts. Why is it that we as Black people have the need to try to find "quick ways" of making money. According to Forbes, Black households have 6% of wealth when compared to white households. This is not because Black people spend more money. I believe the root cause is more complex and has historical links to lack of opportunities and possibly racism. The solution for all is to learn how to create generational wealth that can be passed down so that one would not have to find ways to make "quick money". Increasing the wealth of Black people would become the catalyst to produce more Black executives, increase political influence, increase the number of Black people obtaining higher education, increase access to healthy foods and healthcare, increase the lifespan of Black people, decrease poverty rates, and ultimately reduce the overall economic pressures that Black people face daily. I am on a quest to help change the trajectory of wealth in our community.

My high school, Charles R. Drew Charter School (Drew Charter) in Atlanta, GA, is the first STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics) certified K-12 school in the state. The golf team became the first all-black team to win a state championship in 2019. Drew Charter was created as a "cradle to college" pipeline school built to alleviate the "cradle to prison" system of an economically disadvantaged area. Living in this community, serving as an architecture intern for a major firm, being selected for the 2022-2023 "Morgan Stanley JumpStart Scholars in Finance" program, and being a competitive black golfer, I came to realize the magnitude of economic inequities that exist.

Building generational wealth in the Black community is necessary for economic security. Participating in golf demonstrated this for me. I plan to attend Morehouse College and major in economics and minor African American studies to advocate for better policies for economically disadvantaged communities: policies that will increase minimum wages, support home ownership, and end economic inequities. I also plan to create a non-profit to educate youth on building wealth and create opportunities around the world to ultimately reduce economic pressures. I aspire to be a changemaker and influence today's policies for a better tomorrow. A tomorrow that is built in financial security to alleviate the need for "quick money".