

Business and faith communities launch voting campaign



By **Melissa Daniels**, staff writer
Messenger Post

Posted Sep 21, 2011 @ 12:47 PM

Last update Sep 21, 2011 @ 06:31 PM

Recommend

Be the first of your friends to recommend this.



Rochester, N.Y. — The Rochester Business Alliance and the Rochester Faith Alliance are combining their efforts in a brand new voter registration campaign, targeting city voters and the Rochester City School District Board of Education election on Nov. 8.

The "**Vote, Be Heard**" campaign is a series of ads, billboards and television commercials depicting African American citizens with tape over their mouths, and messages about wanting to believe in the system. Organizers say the campaign, which was in its infancy before the September primary, is designed to spur turnout, and encourage residents to participate in the democratic process.

Sandy Parker, chief executive officer and president of RBA, says that the failure, or success, of the Rochester City School District, has a ripple effect throughout the Finger Lakes region.

"It's a grave concern for our economy and our region's future," Parker said. "A healthy, stable population and well-educated workforce are imperative for the success of our local economy."

Parker says the campaign is funding privately, with the money raised through the community.

Minister Clifford Florence, Sr., representing the Rochester Faith

Yellow Pages

Find whatever you're looking for with **Totally Local Yellow Pages**

Search provided by local.com



Featured Business »

Alliance, said that the status quo of the school system isn't acceptable, and the election marks an opportunity to make calls for change heard.

Special attention will be given towards younger generations and first-time voters, he said. As part of the campaign, registration forms will be located in at all city YMCA locations, city post offices, Rochester Faith Alliance member churches, Java's Cafe and other locations.

"This is a great opportunity for the faith community and business alliance to work together on a crucial and critical issue facing our community," Florence said.

Graduation rates in the city school district are under 50 percent, with voter turnout in this month's primary at around 9.7 percent, before counting absentee and affidavit ballots.

In addition to the registration push, the "Vote, Be Heard" campaign will be providing profiles of each of the six candidates to inform voters about their choices.

The general election for the Board of Education is on Tuesday, Nov. 8. The deadline to register is Oct. 14.