



American Promise
Discussion Questions

FOURTEEN YEARS IN THE MAKING

U.S. DOCUMENTARY
SPECIAL JURY AWARD
FOR ACHIEVEMENT
IN FILMMAKING
2013
SUNDANCE
FILM FESTIVAL

AMERICAN PROMISE

Success is Our Only Option.

THE RADA FILM GROUP produced in association with AMERICAN DOCUMENTARY | POV and THE INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE presents
A film by JOE BREWSTER and MICHELE STEPHENSON AMERICAN PROMISE OLUWASEUN SUMMERS IDRIS BREWSTER THE SUMMERS FAMILY THE BREWSTER FAMILY
Music Composed by MIRIAM CUTLER Edited by ERIN CASPER MARY MANHARDT ANDREW SIWOFF Cinematography by ERROL WEBBER ALFREDO ALCANTARA MARGARET BYRNE JON STUYVESANT
Co-Executive Producer DAN COGAN & IMPACT PARTNERS Executive Producer SIMON KILMURRY & CYNTHIA LOPEZ Produced by JOE BREWSTER & MICHELE STEPHENSON Directed by JOE BREWSTER & MICHELE STEPHENSON

Supporters:

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Discussion Questions

American Promise

1. What is the "American Promise"?
2. What does it mean to you?
3. How can we ensure that more of our boys of color succeed in school and graduate prepared for college?
4. Schools are not addressing the unique social and developmental needs of African American males. What can schools and educators do differently?
5. Were there any scenes between parent and child that you would like to freeze and re-write? If so, which ones and how?
6. In this story, the boys had similar demographic backgrounds and school environments, yet they achieved different outcomes - why? Do you think we would find better outcomes if schools were also gender-exclusive?
7. In 2011 - only 10% of Black male 8th graders were deemed proficient readers at the 8th grade level. What is this a consequence of?
8. Rather than reforming "attention deficient" policies, too many states and districts are taking the easy route and simply labeling those students as "disinterested", "slow," "bad" or as having ADD. How do you feel about this?
9. Consistent and positive role models for young black males are essential for enhancing their academic and social development. How can we provide more mentors for our black boys?
10. What is the number one thing parents should be doing to help their boys succeed? What about educators? And the boys themselves?
11. How do you define success? And what counts as success?
12. What is your understanding of a good, quality education?