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New York State Board of Regents

Workgroup to Improve Outcomes for Boys and Young Men of Color

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Over the past several years, diverse groups representing foundations, think tanks, and national/local leaders from a variety of arenas have emphasized an aggressive agenda dedicated to improving college readiness rates of our nation's students. However, the goals expressed by these and other stakeholders are unlikely to be achieved in the absence of a greater policy and action emphasis that supports all students, especially students who are victims of the access and opportunity gap. These disparities are most apparent for boys and young men of color.

Throughout the educational pipeline, both nationally and locally, too many males of color do not realize their full potential in our nation's schools and school systems. Numerous reports and studies have indicated that too often our schools have not served these students well. In many cases, in fact, we have simply failed them.¹

Boys of color graduate at lower rates; drop out at higher rates; participate less in Advanced Placement courses and preparatory tests, such as the PSAT; and are suspended from school at dramatically higher rates than their white counterparts.² There is broad consensus that the nation's public schools need to vastly improve the quality of education these students receive in order to succeed in college and careers.

In February 2014, as part of his plan to make 2014 a year of action focused on expanding opportunities for all Americans, President Obama unveiled the "My Brother's Keeper" initiative to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by young men of color and ensure that all young people can reach their full potential.

My Brother's Keeper is focused on six milestones:

- Getting a Healthy Start and Entering School Ready to Learn – All children should have a healthy start and enter school ready – cognitively, physically, socially, and emotionally.
- Reading at Grade Level by Third Grade – All children should be reading at grade level by age 8 – the age at which reading to learn becomes essential.
- Graduating from High School Ready for College and Career – All youth should receive a quality high school education and graduate with the skills and tools needed to advance to postsecondary education or training.

¹ Call for Change: A Preliminary Blueprint to Improve Educational Excellence and Opportunity for African American Males in Urban Public Schools, August 27, 2012,

<http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/88/Blueprint%2082312.pdf>;

Call for Change Providing Solutions for Black Male Achievement, December 2012,

http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/88/A%20Call%20For%20Change_FinaleBook.pdf; and Saving black and Latino boys: What schools can do to make a difference, February 2012,

<http://www.americanreading.com/documents/saving-black-and-latino-boys.pdf>

² Black Lives Matter: The Schott 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males, 2012, <http://www.blackboysreport.org/2015-black-boys-report.pdf>

- Completing Postsecondary Education or Training – Every American should have the option to attend postsecondary education and receive the education and training needed for the quality jobs of today and tomorrow.
- Successfully Entering the Workforce – Anyone who wants a job should be able to get a job that allows them to support themselves and their families.
- Keeping Kids on Track and Giving Them Second Chances – All youth and young adults should be safe from violent crime; and individuals who are confined should receive the education, training, and treatment they need for a second chance.

Workgroup to Improve Outcomes for Boys and Young Men of Color

New York has not proven to be an exception in failing to provide males of color with the necessary tools to realize their full potential in our school systems. Male students of color are falling behind early in their educational careers. The opportunity gap that persists in the state is particularly evident when looking at state test results in elementary school. The percentage of African-American and Latino male students performing at proficiency is more than half that of their white male counterparts on 3-8 English Language Arts and Math state tests.

This trend continues into high school and beyond. Male students of color in New York drop out of high school at a rate that is more than double that of white male students, and of those who remain in school, less than 60 percent are graduating from high school. This is compared with 85 percent graduation rate for white male students. Of students who graduated in 2014, just 15 percent of African-American and 19 percent of Latino students were deemed ready to do college-level coursework compared to nearly 51 percent of White students.

In light of these staggering statistics (which demonstrate only a fraction of the ways in which boys and young men of color are disadvantaged in New York's school system) and to address the goals of My Brother's Keeper in New York, the Board of Regents established the Workgroup to Improve Outcomes for Boys and Young Men of Color. Providing boys and young men of color with sustainable educational advancement opportunities is a matter of both social justice and economic importance. Providing boys and young men of color with greater access to the opportunities to earn a college degree or specialized postsecondary training can change the course of their lives and the lives of generations that follow.

The Workgroup was charged with developing a series of educational policy, budget and legislative recommendations that reflect informed judgment, innovative "best" practices and collaborative efforts that must be taken across the Pre K- 20 pipeline to right the inequities that have impeded access to educational opportunities, and ultimately life opportunities for boys and young men of color in New York State. The Workgroup began its deliberations by identifying ten priority areas for action that was later refined to the following six:

1. Ensuring equitable access to quality schools, programs, curriculum, and opportunities during Pre K through Grade 12 and Postsecondary Education;
2. Establishing prevention, early warning, and intervention services;
3. Executing differentiated approaches based on need and culture that are racially, ethnically, linguistically, and socioeconomically appropriate;
4. Responding to structural and institutional racism;
5. Providing access to comprehensive and coordinated support services; and
6. Engaging families and communities.

Blue Ribbon Committee

The Workgroup convened a Blue Ribbon Committee (See pages 10-12) consisting of state, regional and national experts including practitioners representing education Pre K—20, community based organizations, youth development, health, elected officials, and state-wide professional organizations (New York State United Teachers, United Federation of Teachers, Council of School Supervisors and Administrators, New York State Council of School Superintendents, New York State School Boards Association). The committee was charged with examining the educational challenges and opportunities boys and young men of color face on a daily basis and to recommend strategies to address the challenges and expand opportunities to increase their educational successes. The Blue Ribbon Committee held two full day work sessions; one at Medgar Evers College, CUNY in Brooklyn on September 29, 2015 in which 120 people participated; and one at Nazareth College in Rochester on November 9, 2015 in which 114 people participated. Participants included Blue Ribbon Committee members; Regents; Youth Panelists; Superintendents; members of the NYS legislature; College Presidents; the City of Rochester's Mayor; members of the business community; community-based organizations; and Department staff.

Both Blue Ribbon Committee meetings included a morning Young People's Panel which provided the panelists, based on their backgrounds and individual journeys, an opportunity to share their experiences, opinions, and recommendations on how schools can improve. A video of the meetings including interviews with the students was developed by SED Communication Office. The morning panels were followed by six breakout sessions focused on each of the six priority areas. Blue Ribbon Committee members were asked to focus on recommendations that will help the Workgroup meet its charge of advancing a policy agenda for New York State on improving outcomes for boys and young men of color. Members were asked to categorize their recommendations into the areas of Educational Policy, Legislative Policy, and Budget Proposals.

Workgroup and Blue Ribbon Committee Recommendations to the Board of Regents

This is not the first time that we have had this kind of conversation in this country and state, but we are at a critical historical point in New York State to aggressively move beyond conversation to concrete action and policy change focused on: the recruitment, development, preparation and retention of professional staff with the necessary knowledge, pedagogical skills, and dispositions to improve outcomes for boys and young men of color; the importance of stakeholder relationships; the need to involve multiple institutions and agencies around a developmental/holistic approach; providing greater clarity on the roadmap leading to college and career success; and building equitable school systems. The Workgroup to Improve Outcomes for Boys and Young Men of Color and the Blue Ribbon Committee submit the following set of recommendations to the Board of Regents with the goal of making New York State the first state in the nation to develop a statewide policy specifically addressing the goals of My Brother's Keeper:

Educational Policy

1. Challenge school districts to support teachers, administrators, and pupil personnel services staff in ongoing professional development; and encourage college and universities offering teacher preparation programs to incorporate training that supports the expansion of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to provide competent educational approaches and practices to improve outcomes for boys and young men of color.
2. Expand the definition of college and career readiness in order to establish a clear/discernable path to college and career success which addresses milestones for kindergarten readiness, early grade reading, middle grade math, high school graduation, post-secondary enrollment, and post-secondary degree completion.
3. Convene a statewide council to review and analyze New York State data and identify critical data elements the Board of Regents need to collect to assess and address issues related to the impact of racial disparities in service delivery. The council would present a written report on findings and recommended actions to the Board of Regents.
4. Create a Pre K–12 Statewide Office of Family and Community Engagement within the Department to create a statewide policy with best practices and guidance for school districts related to providing families, community-based organizations, and local associations with necessary information about the Pre K –12 educational process. This new Office would encourage their participation in improving outcomes for all students, with an emphasis on improving outcomes for boys and young men of color. The Office would support the development of training programs for parents, students and personnel on how to engage,

interact, and sustain relationships. This office will also advocate services to educate parents and communities on how to navigate the educational system and query how they can support their child.

5. Encourage all school districts to offer boys and young men of color high-quality coursework such as Advanced Placement courses; Honors Programs; Science, Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) programs; Arts and Fine Arts Programs, among others. Research has shown that higher expectations result in higher performance; simply, students with high expectations perform at a higher level than those with low expectations.
6. Develop and implement a plan that would accelerate the rate of individuals of color, including a targeted emphasis on men of color, entering the teaching profession in New York State school systems, including creating pathways for school personnel to become teachers. The teaching force in the State should be as diverse as the student population being served by our schools.
7. Serve as a resource to school districts that accept the My Brother's Keeper Challenge and implement a coherent cradle-to-college and career strategy aimed at improving life outcomes for boys and young men of color. Support their local planning process, assist them in developing successful strategies for action, and track their progress.

Legislative Policy and Budget Proposal

1. Create a New York State Interagency Joint Council to provide coordination among State Departments of Health, Education, the Office of Mental Health as well as other State agencies to develop and monitor current and future policy, plans, and partnerships among schools, community-based organizations, and businesses to address important health and educational outcomes of students across the continuum of Pre K-16. Particular focus should be on schools and districts with greatest inequities and highest population of boys and young men of color. A singular person would lead the Joint Council, and be directly responsible to each agency head to ensure the goals of the Joint Council are met.
2. Provide \$12.5 million for expanding family and community engagement programs, with a significant portion of the funding directed to school districts targeted at improving outcomes for boys and young men of color. Funds would also be needed for the Department to support the newly formed Office of Family and Community Engagement. (State Aid and Budget Proposal)
3. Create a set aside of \$6.5 million in Career and Technical Education (CTE) funding for expanding participation rates of boys and young men of color in these types of programs. High quality CTE programs provide opportunities for students to demonstrate and reinforce both academic and technical skills as well as experiences in work-based learning where on the job mentoring can play a

critical role in developing life-long, transferable employability skills for a constantly changing global economy. More examples of the NYS P-TECH³ model need to be implemented in our large cities to provide targeted populations with the opportunities to experience academic and career-focused success at an early grade level. Outreach in middle schools for such programs helps students and families make decisions on education, and careers that can transform lives. They provide work-based learning opportunities that enable students to connect what they are learning to real-life career scenarios and choices. Redefining college readiness to include these components will also help lead our students to successful rewarding employment and success in life. (State Aid Proposal)

4. Invest \$5.5 million in funding the expansion and development of exemplary school models and practices that demonstrate cultural and linguistic responsiveness to the needs of boys and young men of color, e.g. schools that create a 9-16 continuum for the eventual placement of college graduates into teaching and other educational professions. Direct a majority of the requested \$5.5 million to the big four city school districts outside of New York City with a portion available through an RFP process to other districts. (Budget Proposal)
5. Dedicate an additional \$5 million⁴ in Teacher Opportunity Corps funding to support the recruitment and retention of teachers of color by providing incentives such as tuition, fees, stipends, program development costs, faculty staff time, as well as creating pathways for school personnel to become teachers in high concentration of disadvantaged people. (Budget Proposal)
6. Provide \$7 million as an incentive for school districts to accept the My Brother's Keeper Challenge to encourage school districts to implement a coherent cradle-to-college and career strategy aimed at improving life outcomes for boys and young men of color. (Budget Proposal)
7. Provide \$10 million for supporting school professional development programs that expand knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to provide competent educational approaches and practices to improve outcomes for boys and young men of color. (State Aid Proposal)

³ NYS Pathways in Technology Early College High School (NYS P-TECH) partnerships provide nearly 6,000 students with a high school diploma, college degree and pathway to a job. Students earn an associate degree at no cost to their families and will be first in line for jobs with participating companies when they graduate.

⁴ The 2016-17 Regents Budget Priority for Supporting NYS Access & Opportunity Programs discussed at the November 2015 Regents meeting requested \$3 million for Teacher Opportunity Corps, this proposal would add an addition \$5 million for a total requested increase of \$8 million.

Next Steps

If the Board of Regents approves these recommendations, the Department will:

- Advocate for the inclusion of these recommendations during the upcoming State Budget process and Legislative Session;
- Advance the implementation of the Education policy recommendations, including conducting an assessment of tasks to be completed, establishing timelines, and identifying and securing any additional needed resources; and
- Continue to gather information from other areas across the State related to improving outcomes for boys and young men of color.

BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE

Mr. Antonio Aponte <i>Director of Educational Services</i> Boys Club of New York	Honorable Jeffrion Aubry <i>Assemblymember</i> New York State Assembly
Mr. David Banks <i>President</i> Eagle Academy Foundation	Mr. Leroy Barr <i>Assistant Secretary</i> United Federation of Teachers
Dr. Luis Barrios <i>Professor</i> John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY	Ms. Crystal Barton <i>Principal</i> PS 305 McKinley High School
Honorable Michael Blake <i>Assemblymember</i> New York State Assembly	Dr. Suzanne Carothers <i>Professor</i> The Steinhardt School of Education
Mr. Héctor Calderón <i>Cofounder and Former Principal</i> El Puente Academy	Dr. Kriner Cash <i>Superintendent</i> Buffalo Public Schools
Mr. Kevin Casey <i>Executive Director</i> School Administrators Association of NYS	Mr. Michael Casserly <i>Executive Director</i> Council of the Great City Schools
Dr. Sharon Contreras <i>Superintendent</i> Syracuse City School District	Dr. Rudolph Crew <i>President</i> Medgar Evers College
Honorable Marcos A. Crespo <i>Assemblymember</i> New York State Assembly	Mr. Shawn Dove <i>Chief Executive Officer</i> Campaign for Black Male Achievement
Chancellor Carmen Fariña <i>Chancellor</i> New York City Department of Education	Dr. Edward Fergus <i>Assistant Professor</i> New York University
Dr. Ronald Ferguson, <i>Faculty Co-chair and Director</i> Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University	Mr. Kesi Foster <i>Administrative Coordinator</i> Annenberg Institute of School Reform, Brown University
Ms. Catalina Fortino <i>Vice President</i> New York State United Teachers	Mr. W Cyrus Garrett <i>Director</i> NYC Young Men's Initiative
Dr. Dorita Gibson <i>Senior Deputy Chancellor</i> New York City Department of Education	Honorable Deborah Glick <i>Chair, Higher Education Committee</i> New York State Assembly
Ms. Cheryl Hamilton <i>Director</i> Educational Opportunities Program	Dr. Ramona Hernandez <i>Professor</i> The City College of New York

BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE

Dr. Gerry House <i>President</i> Institute for Student Achievement	Mr. Roderick Jenkins <i>Senior Program Officer</i> NYC Community Trust Foundation
Honorable Judith Kaye <i>Former Chief Judge of New York</i> Skadden, Arps. Slate, Meagher and Flom, LLP	Dr. David Kirkland <i>Executive Director, Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity, New York University</i>
Mr. Timothy Kremer <i>Executive Director</i> NYS School Boards Association	Mr. Khary Lazarre-White <i>Executive Director and Co-Founder</i> The Brotherhood/Sister Sol
Dr. Andrew Livanis <i>President Elect</i> NY Association of School Psychologists	Mr. Ernest Logan <i>President</i> Council of School Supervisors and Administrators
Dr. Barbara Martin <i>Director</i> Bronx Community College COPE Program	Dr. Félix Matos Rodríguez <i>President</i> Queens College, CUNY
Dr. Aletha Maybank <i>Associate Commissioner</i> NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene	Dr. Carlos N. Medina <i>System Administrator</i> SUNY
Honorable Velmanette Montgomery <i>Senator</i> New York State Senate	Honorable Walter T. Mosely <i>Assemblymember</i> New York State Assembly
Dr. Khalil Gibran Muhammad <i>Director</i> Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture	Mr. Jai Nanda <i>Founder and Executive Director</i> Urban Dove
Dr. Michael T. Nettles <i>Senior Vice President Policy Evaluation and Research Center, Education Testing Service</i>	Honorable Catherine Nolan <i>Chair, Education Committee</i> New York State Assembly
Mr. Greg Owens <i>Director of Special Projects</i> NYS Office of Children and Family Services	Dr. Roberto Padilla <i>Superintendent</i> Newburgh City School District
Honorable Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes <i>Assemblymember</i> New York State Assembly	Dr. Robert J. Reidy, Jr. <i>Executive Director</i> NYS Council of School Superintendents
Dr. Luis O. Reyes <i>Research Associate</i> Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College	Dr. Frank Sanchez <i>Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs</i> City University of New York

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Mr. Paul Washington <i>Director of Outreach Male Development Empowerment Center,</i> Medgar Evers College	Mr. Jermaine Wright <i>University Director</i> Black Male Initiative, City University of New York
Rev. Dr. Alfonso Wyatt <i>Founder Strategic Destiny: Designing Futures Through Faith And Facts</i>	Dr. Michael Yazurlo <i>Superintendent</i> Yonkers City School District
Ms. Irma Zardoya <i>President and Chief Executive Officer</i> NYC Leadership Academy	