

MEMORANDUM

March 3, 2016

TO: Education Committee

FROM: Linda McMillan, Senior Legislative Analyst *L.Mc*

SUBJECT: **Briefing: My Brother's Keeper**

Expected for this session:

Elijah Wheeler, Social Justice Director and Disproportionate Minority Contact Reduction Coordinator, Collaboration Council for Children, Youth, and Families
Julian Norment, County Executive's African American Community Liaison
Dr. Kimberly Statham, Deputy Superintendent, Office of School Support and Improvement, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)
Timothy Warner, Chief Engagement and Policy Officer, MCPS
Officer Richard Reynolds, Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD)

At this session, the Committee will receive an update from Elijah Wheeler and Julian Norment on Montgomery County's participation in the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) initiative. Also attending are Dr. Stratham and Mr. Warner from MCPS and Officer Reynolds from MCPD who can provide comments on MCPS and MCPD participation in and support of this initiative and who are serving as members of the MBK Steering Committee.

My Brother's Keeper – Background

President Barack Obama launched the My Brother's Keeper initiative in February 2014. The one-year progress report from the MBK Task Force says that the President, "encouraged candid dialogues around the country and a greater sense of responsibility among community leaders and young people themselves to put all youth in a position to thrive, regardless of their race, gender, or socioeconomic status." Part of the effort is a challenge to communities to sign on to this effort. There is also a challenge to business, philanthropy, and non-profit organizations and a commitment to a Federal response.

For communities that accept the challenge to join MBK, the White House suggests following these four steps:

1. Accept the President's challenge.
2. Convene a "Local Action Summit" to build a MBK Community.
3. Conduct a policy review and form recommendations for action.
4. Launch a plan of action, next steps, and a timetable for review.

County Priorities and Upcoming Event

The Committee will receive an update on the first MBK Youth Summit that was held in May of 2015 as well as plans for a second summit on April 30th at Clifton Park Baptist Church in Silver Spring.

As a result of the first summit, the County has selected the following two goals for MBK:

- Ensuring all youth graduate from high school.
- Ensuring all youth remain safe from violent crime.

The County is looking to address the disproportionality of outcomes and challenges faced by youth of color as well as LGBTQ youth. They have also decided to build on the findings of the two "Connecting Youth to Opportunity" reports commissioned by the Community Foundation.

Attached to this memo is an expert from the MBK Task Force's one-year report and steps for action (©1-3).

Members of the MBK Steering Committee are: Nestor Alvorenga (CE and Community Partnerships), Carlos Aparicio (City of Rockville), Dr. Raymond Crowel (DHHS), Jennifer Gauthier (Lead4Life), Ohene Gyapong (Public Information), Carson Henry (YMCA), Will Jawando, Brandon Johns (MANUP), April Kaplan (Collaboration Council), Daniel Koroma (CE and Community Partnerships), Lupi Quinteros-Grady (Latin American Youth Center), Luisa Montero (Montgomery College), Julian Norment (CE and Community Partnerships), Officer Richard Reynolds (MCPD), Dr. Kimberly Statham (MCPS), Michael Subin (CE and CJCC), and Michelle Taylor (BETAH).

Highlights from "Connecting Youth to Opportunity" Reports

The Community Foundation commissioned two reports, the first on Latino youth (researched by Identity, Inc.) and the second on Black and African American youth (researched by BETAH Associates, Inc.). As the MBK Initiative is using these reports in their work, Council staff is providing the following summaries of these reports as background for this discussion.

Both reports are based on surveys that acknowledge the need to seek input from youth in order to gain a better understanding of:

1. The needs and assets of disconnected Latino/Black or African American youth and Latino/Black or African American youth on the verge of disconnection in Montgomery County.

2. The predictors of disconnection from the school system.
3. The predictors of disconnection from the labor market.

“How Latino Youth Perspectives Can Inform a Blueprint for Improving Opportunity in Montgomery County, Maryland” (June 2014). The report can be found at:

http://www.thecommunityfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/HS-CYO-LatinoYouth_Report_PDF-FINAL.pdf

Some highlights of the survey results are:

- A total of 960 people were surveyed; 321 were high school students, 330 were high school graduates, and 309 were dropouts. Participants were ages 14 to 24. “Disconnected youth” are youth that are not studying or working.” 151 youth were disconnected; 27 disconnected youth had graduated from high school and 124 were dropouts.
- 59% of dropouts reported abandoning school at age 16 or 17.
- 31% of current high school students reported that their parents/guardians did not complete high school. 45% of disconnected youth reported that their parents/guardians had less than a high school education.
- 49% of high school dropouts reported having a GPA of 1.5 or less; 14% reported having a GPA of 3.0 or higher.
- 69% of high school graduates reported having regular access to a computer and the internet during their last year of school compared to 37% of dropouts.
- 59% of high school graduates reported they participated in extra-curricular activities during high school compared to 25% of dropouts.
- 42% of high school graduates reported having a negative perception of the school environment while in high school compared to 59% of dropouts and 65% of disconnected youth. 58% of disconnected youth had a negative perception of school in middle school.
- 19% of disconnected youth identified themselves as other than heterosexual compared to 9% of high school graduates and 13% of the total surveyed.
- 27% of high school students reported having experienced depression compared to 38% of dropouts.
- 74% of high school dropouts reported being employed compared to 56% of dropouts. Most of those that were unemployed reported never having received job training.

- 18% of disconnected youth reported being fired from a job. These were the top four reasons given: (1) arrived late or missed a lot of days, (2) had a fight with supervisor or co-worker, (3) supervisor was not happy with the youth's work, (4) had a previous arrest.

The report contains three recommendations:

1. MCPS should work with the community and other key stake-holders to develop an action plan to lower the Latino dropout rate and close the achievement gap by addressing the key indicators identified in this report.
2. Montgomery County must improve its workforce development efforts, including programs for students in school and those who are not in school but lack work-ready skills.
3. The nonprofit sector, County government, and MCPS should assist with providing avenues to help strengthen the ability of the Latino community, particularly parents, to increase their civic engagement and support them in their efforts to become more involved in their children's education.

“How Black and African American Youth Perspectives Can Inform a Blueprint for Improving Opportunity in Montgomery County, Maryland” (October 2015). The report can be found at:

<http://thecommunityfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/MC-CommFdn-2015-Report.pdf>

Some highlights of the survey results are:

- A total of 1,210 people were surveyed; 403 were identified as high school students, 406 were high school graduates, and 401 were high school dropouts (a dropout may have earned a GED after dropping out of high school). Not all responded to all questions. Participants were ages 14 to 24. One hundred and twenty-four (124) youth were disconnected (neither in school nor working); 51 were high school graduates and 73 were high school dropouts. The report identifies another 235 participants as being at risk of disconnection or possibly disconnected. Respondents were Montgomery County residents throughout childhood and young adulthood.
- 11% of high school graduates reported having 3 or more suspensions in the last school year compared to 30% of high school dropouts.
- 17.5% of high school graduates reported feeling sad or hopeless compared to 28.9% of high school dropouts.
- 5.2% of respondents said they were in a gang compared to 12.1% of high school graduates and 26.4% of dropouts. 32% of both high school and high school graduates said they had peers in a gang compared to 48% of dropouts.

- 49.3% of high school graduates reported having ever been stopped by the police compared to 63.8% of dropouts; 19.5% of high school graduates reported having ever been arrested compared to 45.4% of dropouts; and, 17.5% of high school graduates reported having ever been in juvenile detention or jail compared to 41.9% of dropouts.
- 68% of high school graduates said that their parents expected them to finish high school compared to 51% of dropouts.
- 63.5% of high school graduates felt like they were part of their school compared to 39.4% of dropouts.
- 81.9% of those in high school respondents said that they felt physically safe at school compared to 72.9% of high school graduates and 59.9% of dropouts.
- 70% of high school respondents said that more teachers/counselors that care about Blacks/African Americans being successful are needed compared to 62% of high school graduates, and 56% of dropouts.
- 39% of high school respondents said that more extracurricular activities that do not require a GPA of 2.0 are needed compared to 46% of high school graduates and 43% of dropouts.
- 86% of high school respondents assessed their economic situation as good or very good compared to 71% of high school graduates and 52% of high school dropouts.
- 39.7% of high school graduates were currently working compared to 30.7% of dropouts.

The report contains four recommendations:

1. MCPS should work with the key stakeholders to change policies, practices, and resource allocation to lower the dropout rate and close the achievement gap for Black and African American students.
2. Montgomery County should create a coordinated array of services and supports designed to reconnect disconnected youth to education and the workforce.
3. The Black and African American community along with local law enforcement, State's Attorney's Office, MCPS, and Montgomery County government must find ways to reduce Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) with the justice system.
4. The philanthropic sector, community or engagement organizations should use the momentum generated by the report to galvanize support for a coordinated countywide campaign to reconnect disconnected youth.



President Barack Obama meets with the My Brother's Keeper Task Force at the White House, May 30, 2014.

Executive Summary

On February 27, 2014, in the East Room of the White House, President Barack Obama launched "My Brother's Keeper" (MBK). The President's call to action was a reflection of his commitment to close opportunity gaps still faced by too many young people, and often faced by boys and young men of color in particular. The President's vision found its roots in the idea that "my neighbor's child is my child – that each of us has an obligation to give every child the same chance this country gave so many of us."² The President's announcement encouraged candid dialogues around the country and a greater sense of responsibility among community leaders and young people themselves to put all youth in a position to thrive, regardless of their race, gender, or socioeconomic status.

Over the course of the past year, efforts have advanced along three interdependent areas of focus based on the goals laid out in the MBK Presidential Memorandum: Place-Based State and Local Engagement (the MBK Community Challenge); Private-Sector Action (e.g. independent nonprofit, philanthropic and corporate action); and Public Policy review and reform (the work of the MBK Task Force). This report provides an update on all three approaches.

Place-Based State and Local Engagement: The MBK Community Challenge

Since late September 2014, nearly 200 mayors, tribal leaders, and county executives across 43 states and the District of Columbia have accepted the MBK Community Challenge (“Challenge”) in partnership with more than 2,000 individual community-based allies – a mix of citizens and community organizations and leaders who have committed to support the MBK initiatives of their communities. These “MBK Communities” are working with leading experts in youth and community development to design and implement cradle-to-college-and-career action plans.

Within six months of accepting the Challenge, MBK Communities commit to review local public policy, host action summits, and implement their locally tailored action plans to address opportunity gaps. Dozens of MBK Community leaders have already hosted summits, and others are being planned.

MBK Communities that have held their summits are provided with technical assistance to develop, implement, and track plans of action from both federal agencies and independent organizations with related expertise. On February 12, 2015, more than 200 local and national leaders and practitioners gathered at the White House for the MBK Community Challenge National Convening to learn and share best practices.

Private-Sector Action: Business, Philanthropy, and Nonprofit Action

Foundations, businesses, and social enterprises have responded to the President’s call to action by taking steps to ensure that communities have the support they need, and by providing funding and advice for aligned national initiatives. More than \$300 million in grants and in-kind resources have been independently committed already to advance the mission of MBK. These funds include investments in safe and effective schools, mentoring programs, juvenile justice reforms, school redesign, and efforts like the National Basketball Association’s (NBA’s) “Be Someone Who Matters to Someone Who Matters” mentorship public service announcement (PSA) campaign. Finally, the National Convening Council, led by retired Deloitte Consulting CEO Joe Echevarria and former NBA star and entrepreneur Earvin “Magic” Johnson, and other private and philanthropic organizations have provided technical assistance to help MBK Communities create and execute their own independent MBK action plans.

Policy: The Federal Response

The MBK Task Force has encouraged and tracked implementation of the recommendations outlined in the initial 90-day report issued in May (the Task Force Report). Those efforts have led to greater focus on federal investments that support evidence-based interventions. For example, grant programs, like the Department of Labor’s American Apprenticeship Initiative, will harness federal resources to create clearer pathways to success for youth using earn-and-learn and other job-driven training models. Similarly, the departments of Education and Justice issued correctional education guidance to help to ensure that incarcerated youth have the full protection of existing laws and benefits. The federal government has also advanced its efforts to track quality data for boys and young men of color and their peers.

This report provides a high-level review of the policy progress in each key milestone identified in the *Task Force Report* as well as descriptions of significant policy accomplishments. The milestones are based on research that has identified key points on the path to adulthood that are especially predictive of later success and where interventions can have the greatest impact.

Targeted areas include



LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR AN MBK COMMUNITY

✓ STEP #1: ACCEPT THE PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE

Notify the White House that you will participate (localgovernment@who.eop.gov), provide a designated point of contact on your staff, confirm your pledge to build and execute a plan to accomplish as many of the goals listed below as possible, and announce your acceptance of the challenge with a press release or media statement.

- | | |
|---|---|
| A. Ensure all children enter school cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally ready | D. Ensure all youth complete post-secondary education or training |
| B. Ensure all children read at grade level by 3rd grade | E. Ensure all youth out of school are employed |
| C. Ensure all youth graduate from high school | F. Ensure all youth remain safe from violent crime |

✓ STEP #2: CONVENE A "LOCAL ACTION SUMMIT" TO BUILD AN MBK COMMUNITY

This effort will require a coalition of partners with an ownership stake in the strategy, and a sense of empowerment to help lead the effort. **Within 45 days** of accepting the President's Challenge, host a Local Action Summit with key stakeholders to assess needs and assets, determine priorities, and set concrete goals.

EXTERNAL PARTNERS

- University presidents
- Job training programs
- Chambers of Commerce
- Local business owners
- Faith groups & leaders
- PTA & parent groups
- Student groups
- Youth leadership orgs
- Non-profit orgs
- Local philanthropies
- Teachers, educators
- Banks/financial orgs

GOV'T STAKEHOLDERS

- School systems
- Law enforcement
- Child & Family Services
- Employment Services
- Public Health
- Public Housing
- Parks and Recreation
- State & Federal partners

✓ STEP #3: CONDUCT A POLICY REVIEW & FORM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Following your Local Action Summit, direct a working group of pertinent government stakeholders to scour existing local policies, programs, and practices in search of ways to introduce or expand on existing efforts to better serve the needs of the community's youth. The working group should assess the impact of both existing and proposed programs. **Within 120 days** of accepting the President's Challenge, this body should produce a report with recommendations for action on your selected areas of focus (from Step 1), standards for tracking and sharing data across public agencies and community partners, and structural recommendations for institutionalizing the effort until goals are reached.

SUGGESTED DATA FIELDS FOR COMMUNITY TRACKING (not exhaustive):

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------|
| - Enrollment in quality pre-K | - School attendance | - Median earnings |
| - Children entering kindergarten ready to learn | - High school graduation rate | - Summer employment |
| - Adolescent births | - AP/IB/Dual Enrollment | - Arrest rate |
| - Low birth weight | - Advanced degree enrollment/completion | - Exposure to violence |
| - Child maltreatment | - STEM BA enrollment/completion | - Imprisonment/detention rate |
| - Youth developmental screening | - Youth in school or working | - Homicide rate |
| - Reading and math achievement | - Labor force participation rate | - Adolescent mortality |
| | | - Youth with effective mentors |

✓ STEP #4: LAUNCH A PLAN OF ACTION, NEXT STEPS & A TIMETABLE FOR REVIEW

Within 180 days of accepting the President's Challenge, convene key partners to publicly launch a plan of action for accomplishing selected goals based off the results of your policy review. It should include a protocol for tracking data, benchmarks and timelines for review to ensure the transparent assessment of progress towards goals, and the open examination and retooling of ineffective strategies. Include a blueprint for resourcing your efforts which outlines plans to use or redirect existing resources, new public or private sector commitments, and specific areas where additional commitments, investment, or partnership could help your community reach its MBK goals and help potential new partners target their involvement.