STATE PUBLIC EDUCATION POLICY
AND
LIFE PATHWAYS FOR BOYS AND YOUNG MEN OF COLOR

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INSTITUTE

DELLUMS COMMISSION

**BETTER HEALTH THROUGH
STRONGER COMMUNITIES:
PUBLIC POLICY REFORM TO
EXPAND LIFE PATHS OF YOUNG
MEN OF COLOR**

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CONTENTS

PREFACE

During the past twenty-five years, a series of public policies have had a negative impact upon young men from communities of color. These policies, which have been enacted and often amended incrementally, are numerous. They include the abandonment of rehabilitation and treatment for drug users in favor of interdiction and criminal sanctions in the 1980s, state policies to divert youthful offenders to adult criminal systems, and the imposition of zero-tolerance policies to exclude youth with problems from public schools in the 1990s. These policies have had a cumulative and hardening effect of limiting life options for young men of color. High school dropout rates and declining enrollment in postsecondary education, at the same time that rates of incarceration increase, are explained, to a significant degree, by these policies.

The Dellums Commission, chaired by former Congressman and Mayor-elect Ron Dellums, was formed by the Health Policy Institute of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies to analyze policies that affect the physical, emotional, and social health of young men of color and their communities and to develop an action plan to alter those public policies that limit life paths for young men of color. To understand the issues more fully and to inform its deliberations in formulating an ambitious but realistic action plan, the Dellums Commission asked experts in various fields to prepare background papers on specific issues. These background papers serve to inform the Dellums Commission's recommendations.

This background paper focuses on the barriers that are limiting the educational and life paths of boys and young men of color. Specifically, the paper creates an action agenda centered on nine topics within education policy: high-stakes testing, school finance, literacy, recruitment of representative teachers, teacher preparation, school choice, single-sex classrooms/schools, structure of school day/year, and zero-tolerance policies. A brief overview of each topic is provided, followed by a discussion of how advocates may bring the particular needs of young minority males into policy discussions on school reform. The paper then synthesizes the topics into three avenues for action: Educational Excellence—for Each and for All; School-Stakeholder Partnerships; and Zero Tolerance Is Intolerable. This paper complements and reinforces the conclusions of other Dellums Commission background papers on education, health, criminal and juvenile justice, recidivism, the child welfare system, the media, and community well-being.

The work of the Dellums Commission is part of a larger effort by the Joint Center Health Policy Institute (HPI) to ignite a "Fair Health" movement that gives people of color the inalienable right to equal opportunity for healthy lives. In igniting such a movement, HPI seeks to help communities of color identify short- and long-term policy objectives and related activities that:

- Address the economic, social, environmental, and behavioral determinants of health;

- Allocate resources for the prevention and effective treatment of chronic illness;

- Reduce infant mortality and improve child and maternal health;

- Reduce risk factors and support healthy behaviorsamong children and youth;

- Improve mental health and reduce factors that promote violence;

- Optimize access to quality health care; and

- Create conditions for healthy aging and the improvement of the quality of life for seniors.

We are grateful to Kay Randolph-Back for preparing this paper and to those Joint Center staff members who have contributed to the work of the Health Policy Institute and to the preparation, editing, design, and publication of this paper and the other background papers. Most of all, we are grateful to Mayor-elect Dellums, the members of the Commission, and Dr. Gail Christopher, Joint Center vice president for health, women and families, for their dedication and commitment to improving life options for young men of color across the United States.

Margaret C. Simms
Interim President and CEO
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

INTRODUCTION

"The extremely low graduation rates of Black, Latino, and Native American males cry out for immediate action informed by research. While the plight of minority male children is no secret in America, there is little research, intervention, or accountability directed specifically at subgroups of minority males. Education policymakers need to use research and proven interventions more proactively to address the unacceptably high rates of school failure experienced by Black, Latino, and Native American males" (emphasis in original).[1]

This background paper offers an action agenda for lowering the barriers that systems, policies, and practices have erected on the educational and life paths of boys and young men of color. Pursuit of the action agenda will help advocates and policymakers do the following *and more:*

- Turn around the tragic pattern of school failure decried in the call for action, quoted above, by Gary Orfield and colleagues of the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University and the Urban Institute;[2]

- Rectify the injustice of leaving too many young minority males who do graduate ill-prepared for achieving their full potential and succeeding in life;

- Reform the practice of teaching to the test (driven by the high stakes in standardized testing) that cripples the chance to learn of boys and young men of color; and

- Undo the intolerable "zero-tolerance" policies that put young minority males on the schoolhouse-to-jailhouse track.

The action agenda was inspired by the charge to the Dellums Commission, for which this paper was written, to identify—and recommend ways to lower—the barriers on the paths of male youth of color erected by systems, policies, and practices that limit their options in life. The paper begins to frame the agenda by exploring nine topics within education policy in order to discern how best to bring the specific perspectives and interests of boys and young men of color into the policy discussion. The nine topics chosen by the Dellums Commission are as follows: high-stakes testing, school finance, literacy, recruitment of representative teachers, teacher preparation, school choice, single-sex classrooms/schools, structure of school day/year, and zero-tolerance policies. The paper also

gives special attention to 10 jurisdictions of particular interest to the Commission: California, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Mississippi, New Mexico, New York, and Texas.

Section I of the paper introduces the reader to the topics by means of an overview. Section II considers how advocates may bring the particular needs of young minority males into policy discussions on school reform. Section III moves from treating the nine topics as compartmentalized—or, some might say, "siloed"—subjects to synthesizing them into three avenues for action. Many of the topics are captured in Avenue One: Educational Excellence—for Each and for All. Avenue Two: School-Stakeholder Partnerships incorporates several topics but also draws on ideas and research outside of those nine topics. Avenue Three: Zero Tolerance is Intolerable has received much greater attention in this paper because it is a policy area that has had an enormous and disproportionate impact on young men of color. Developed in the 1990s ostensibly to reduce crime and make schools safer, the policy has been more punitive than helpful. This section of the paper offers extensive information on this policy and concludes with options for action. For readers interested in deep background information, the same level of detail on the other topics discussed in this paper can be found in a separate appendix that is available on the Joint Center's Web site at www.jointcenter.org.[3]

I. OVERVIEW OF TOPICS OF INTEREST

School reform to enable all schools to meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) has spread throughout the United States.[4] The history of what has now become a sometimes desperate drive to satisfy NCLB's accountability standards goes back to the Reagan administration. In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education issued *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. Part of the response to this landmark call for action was a series of laws enacted by Congress in the 1990s. In some sense, this push for legislation culminated with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act as the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. As the response to *A Nation at Risk* evolved, states' assessment tests of students' proficiency in math, reading, and other subjects took on greater importance. The National Commission on Excellence in Education had called for an end to the testing of minimum competence and the begin-

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[1] Orfield et al. 2004: 7.

[2] Orfield is a professor and co-director of the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University; Losen and Wald are with the same organization; Swanson is with the Urban Institute.

[3] Readers interested in further background should note that the reference list with this paper is also published on the Web site and contains hot links to many of the source documents.

[4] Even Utah, which enacted a statute in 2005 giving precedence to state priorities over federal priorities in the No Child Left Behind Act, is willing to abide by the NCLB's benchmarking requirements, such as reporting Adequate Yearly Progress toward the act's reading and math goals. See Foy 2005.

ning of high-stakes testing that would drastically raise the nation's standards of achievement. The No Child Left Behind Act has taken the stakes to a higher level by conditioning states' and schools' receipt of its funding on their progress toward achieving "proficiency" in reading and math for 100 percent of students and ensuring the presence of a "highly qualified" teacher in every public school classroom in America. The act also specifies graduated obligatory sanctions for failure to comply. Today, more than two decades after *A Nation at Risk* appeared, its progeny, the No Child Left Behind Act, stands as the backdrop for many of the developments and issues in education policy and practice that this overview discusses.

Topic 1: High-Stakes Testing

"No matter what anybody tells you anymore, every district is chasing test scores," says one school superintendent.[5]

Chasing test scores has become the standard practice, yet research and analysis show it to be harmful. Educators' resistance to this practice, as well as concerns among policymakers and members of the public, may be growing. In addition, results have been published from rigorous research that help to make the case against the practice.[6] Research on student performance in 18 states has demonstrated that improvements in test scores do not necessarily represent improvements in learning. Rising scores can be the result of manipulations and distortions of numbers, which include excluding some scores or some students and outright cheating by teachers and administrators. Rising scores are regularly the result of "teaching to the test," which distorts curriculum, teaching, and learning, and, in fact, limits progress in "reading to learn" and substitutes "reading to perform." Exclusion of students from taking tests sometimes even goes as far as expulsion from school of those who would drag down scores.

Even more insidious are the following consequences of high-stakes testing:

1. The NCLB's mandates for yearly progress drive good teachers away from high-poverty schools, which have fewer qualified teachers to begin with.

2. Financial bonuses go to teachers and administrators for making scores (rather than learning) increase, and schools are subject to having dollars diverted from school improvement when scores fail to rise.[7] The

result is that dollars are drained away that could be used to help struggling schools improve.

3. Minorities disproportionately experience denial of graduation and denial of promotion on the basis of high-stakes test scores. This is especially true regarding the denial of promotion for African American males.

4. State scholarship dollars favor students from better resourced schools (where family income helps to bolster performance) rather than boosting the chances of graduates of schools serving minorities and the socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Topic 2: School Finance

Standards-based education reform starting in 1983 and litigation in 40 states combined with the publication of *Making Money Matter* by the National Research Council in 1999 to produce the following:

1. The shift in school finance from the principle of equity to the principle of adequacy;

2. The emergence and application of a developing state of the art in calculating what level of funding is adequate.

Equity is concerned with comparative access to resources across school districts and with de-linking a child's access to school funding from the comparative wealth of householders and businesses in the child's school district. A leading expert, Odden, provides the following explanation: "The legal test for adequacy is whether a state's school finance system provides sufficient revenues for the average school to teach the average student to state-determined performance standards and whether sufficient additional revenues are provided to help special-needs students also achieve at those performance levels. The legal problem is not really whether district A has less than district B but whether both districts—indeed all districts in the state—have revenues that are adequate to pay for the programs and strategies they need in order to educate students to high achievement levels."[8]

Moving from equity to adequacy is a step with significant implications for expenditures. Three examples illustrate this point. The first example involves the whole-school approach for calculating adequacy, which is also known as inference from whole-school designs. A New Jersey court employed this method, using the design of a high-performance school. The "court concluded that the schools covered under the [state's] Supreme Court mandate overturning the finance system had

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[5] Lisanti 2005.

[6] Amrein and Berliner 2002.

[7] The law requires schools that are continuing to fall short of the required levels of Adequate Yearly Progress to use their NCLB funding to pay for tutoring of students who request it (although comparatively few students do) and transportation to other schools in the district for students who request and receive permission to transfer.

[8] Odden 2001: 86.

been given sufficient resources by 1998 to finance the most expensive school design, Roots & Wings [a New American Schools model]. Moreover, the level of funds provided—approximately $9,000 per child plus state and federal categorical program dollars—was sufficient to fund an enhanced version of that school design, which included smaller class sizes, more professional development, more tutors, a full family/social services support team, and ample computer technologies."[9] The other examples involve the significant emerging method for calculating adequacy—the cost-function approach, which uses statistical models that incorporate school performance measures.[10] Researchers using cost functions, simulations, and other techniques to assess adequacy in Texas found that achieving adequacy—measured in terms of achieving the average change in test scores in all school districts in the state—*would have required state aid to double*.[11] About $6,370 per pupil was calculated to be an adequate expenditure level in Wisconsin, an amount that was close to the actual median spending level. In order to accommodate the needs of specific districts and students, this amount would vary from locality to locality; the range of these variations was estimated to be *from 49 percent to 460 percent of the $6,370 level*.[12] In addition to these examples, it should be noted that reform of teacher compensation has emerged on state and federal policy agendas and has expenditure implications. Effective and efficient production of education is thought to require reform of such compensation to take knowledge, skills, and school performance into account (in contrast to the current practice of rewarding teachers for longevity and earning master's degrees).

Finally, discussion of adequacy cannot be complete without considering whether proper methods are used to allocate and apply the funding provided in order to ensure that children's needs are actually being met. Adequate funding does not automatically translate into good educational outcomes. Very careful resource allocation methods have to be used at the district and school levels to make sure that the resources adequate for the education of each child—whatever that child's needs may be—flow into schooling that child. School-based management of allocation decisions is thought to hold great promise. In the opinion of experts such as Odden and Scafidi, however, school-based management cannot realize its promise unless administrators and faculty are provided sufficient autonomy, flexibility, and skills-training.[13]

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[9] Odden 2001: 87.

[10] U.S. Department of Education 2003b.

[11] Reschovsky and Imazeki 2004.

[12] Odden 2001.

[13] Odden 2001; Scafidi et al. 2001.

Topic 3: Literacy

The RAND Corporation calls the statistics in its major 2004 study of literacy in grades four through 12 "sobering" due in part to the large achievement gaps for the poor and minorities. Data from state assessments of middle schoolers illustrate the size of the achievement gaps. States measure how much better whites are doing than African Americans and Hispanics, as well as how much better economically advantaged students are doing than economically disadvantaged students. RAND compared these gaps across the states, looking at the number of percentage points in each gap. Whites outscored African Americans by as few as 10 percentage points to as many as 64 percentage points. Whites outscored Hispanics by as few as 11 percentage points to as many as 65 percentage points. Economically advantaged students outscored economically disadvantaged students by as few as 17 percentage points to as many as 37 percentage points.

It is important to note the differences between national and state assessments of literacy, as each employs a separate set of standards. In the national assessment, no state had more than 43 percent of its fourth graders reading at the proficient level even though rates of proficiency for these students, when measured by the states, ranged from a low of 21 percent (10 percent on the national test) to 90 percent. Furthermore, in no state was the percentage of proficient students higher on the national assessment than on the state's own assessment. The national assessment can be used to compare population groups and states based on a single test that is used nationwide. Tables 1 and 2 provide information from 2003 testing, which has been extracted for its relevance to the specific concerns of this paper (see next page). Table 2 breaks the average scores down by gender and race/ethnicity.

Policy findings from the literature include the following important points. First, state tests mask failing readers' distinctive and multifaceted problems, which cannot be fixed by one-size-fits-all solutions. Second, a state's policymakers need to examine the achievement gaps measured by both the national assessment and the state's assessment because they are not always similar; dissimilarity can prompt fruitful probing into what is (or is not) being measured and the meaning of the dissimilarities. Lastly, state and national literacy goals cannot be achieved unless schools and teachers assume the "orphaned responsibility" of ensuring literacy beyond the primary grades. The responsibility may be considered "orphaned" because, in fourth grade, teaching shifts from the basics to the disciplines. In the primary grades, students are learning to read; after that, they are supposed to be reading to learn. When minority boys, in particular, cannot read well enough by fourth grade to continue learning, they are on a downhill path toward dropping out.

Table 1: Comparison of Average Test Scores for Nation and Selected States				
	Grade 4		**Grade 8**	
Jurisdiction	**Average score in 2003**	**Change from 1992 average score**	**Average score in 2003**	**Change from 1998 average score**
Nation[1,2]	216	2	261*	1
California	206*	3	251*	-1
District of Columbia	188*	rounds to 0	239*	3
Florida	218	10**	257*	3
Georgia	214*	1	258*	rounds to 0
Illinois	216	-	266*	-
Maryland	219	8**	262	1
Mississippi	205*	6**	255*	4
New Mexico	203*	-8**	252*	-6**
New York	222*	8**	265*	1
Texas	215	2	259*	-2

* Significantly different from national average in 2003. [The reason that the average score in the row for the nation can be significantly different from the national average is that one number averages scores of public school students and one number averages scores of public and private school students.]
** Change in score is statistically significant.

Notes: 1. National assessment scores at the state level include only public school students, but the national average shown in Table 2 includes public and private school students. 2. National results for assessments before 2003 are based on the national sample, not on aggregated state samples.
Source: U.S. Department of Education 2005: 123-124.

Table 2: Average Test Scores by Gender and by Race/Ethnicity, 2003		
Student characteristic	**Grade 4**	**Grade 8**
Total	218	263
Male	215	258
Female	222	269
American Indian	202	246
Asian/Pacific Islander	226	270
Black	198	244
White	229	272
Hispanic	200	245

Source: U.S. Department of Education 2005: 122.

Best practices for achieving high levels of literacy include both whole-school approaches (i.e., the overall practices in a school that bear on learning to read) and specific classroom practices or programs for reading. Noteworthy among whole-school approaches are the best practices the American Cities Foundation compiled by synthesizing practices from schools that are doing well in serving underrepresented minorities and the practices of the Amistad Academy, a public charter middle school in Hartford, Connecticut, whose black students have such dramatically high standardized test scores that, in the case of writing, they outdistanced white students statewide by 22 percentage points (91 percent of mastery versus 69 percent of mastery).

Practices and programs that fire the imagination, actively engage learners, inspire development of critical thinking, and nurture students' sense of self-worth deserve special atten-

tion. Noteworthy among these are the classroom practices of Rafe Esquith, which have gained national attention and private philanthropic support; the collaborative teaching in selected Chicago Public Schools sponsored by the Chicago Arts Partnership in Education; the Success for All/Exito Para Todos program, which is focused on reading achievement for students who are learning English; the Read Aloud America program, which is led by volunteers who coordinate gatherings of families with children from schools serving low-income and minority populations and is based on the successful teaching strategies of the laboratory school of the University of Hawaii (itself required to serve a student body that is representative of the state's demographics); and Touchstones, a structured discussion program designed to promote critical thinking in literature, mathematics, and life, which works with schools, including minority academies, and their teachers, as well as with inmates in the Maryland Correctional

Institute in Jessup. Testimonials from Touchstones[14] illustrate the potential of alternative strategies to enable students to go beyond decoding and to achieve the goal of reading to learn:

> One of the inmates stated the following in a letter to the *Washington Post*: "I have seen Touchstones[14] take these individuals out of themselves so they can begin to examine their own lives. [It] causes these men to explore more fully what it means to be human. They stop feeling sorry for themselves and begin to imagine the reality of things outside themselves."

> Talking about the Touchstones books *Where'd They Get That Idea?* and *Investigating Mathematics*, Pedro, a Newark, New Jersey, high school student said, "You [speaking to the teacher] did something that no other teacher in my lifetime has ever done where I live at. Which is having students state their opinion and have open discussions." He also remarked, "I always saw math as being something that was needed to be memorized, but when you think about it, [when] you remember something you're not really learning, just remembering. This class has not only given a glimpse of how college is, but [it] shows me that in order to understand something you have to dig deep for information and ask certain questions, like who made this up, how did this come into place, etc."

Topic 4: Teacher Preparation

The states' push for school reform during the last 15 years includes reform of the preparation, licensure, and certification of teachers. At the national level, funding to improve teacher training received new policy emphasis when Congress reauthorized Title II of the Higher Education Act in 1998. *To Touch the Future: Transforming the Way Teachers Are Taught*, published in 1999 by the American Council on Education, aims to influence college and university presidents. It asserts that the preparation and performance of teachers are inadequate and points out that the beginning of the 21st century offers *a special opportunity for high-impact action*. This opportunity arises from *the anticipated surge in the need for newly prepared teachers (2.5 million between 1999 and 2009) as a result of retirement, attrition, and modest growth in enrollment*. The need to change teacher education is so dire that the American Council on Education states that a college or university should terminate any program it is not willing to move to the center of its institutional agenda.

States are adopting various innovations to improve teacher education by crafting more demanding examinations and requirements for entrance to the teaching profession. In Mississippi, for example, public institutions of higher education

now "warrant the performance of graduates" and will provide remedial training at an institution's own expense if a graduate in 2002 or later is ineffective in the classroom.

There are serious questions, however, about whether action can be taken fast enough to generate a required supply of newly prepared teachers who themselves will not soon become part of the statistics on delayed entry into teaching and early attrition from teaching. *Education Week* has reported a large gap in qualified teachers in high-need districts. States have been filling the gap by issuing emergency teaching certificates and allowing teachers to teach subjects outside their field of training. The No Child Left Behind Act sets deadlines for ending these stop-gap practices. The gap increases the importance of preparing teachers through the alternative routes that states have created and the No Child Left Behind Act supports through grants. Alternative routes streamline entry into teaching and enable individuals whose degrees are not in the field of education to enter teaching. In practice, they are used both by new graduates and by more mature individuals with careers in other fields. Alternative-route programs have mixed reviews. Many assign full teaching workloads to individuals who have little experience working with children and who may also be required, at the same time, to take weekend and evening classes. While especially important for individuals in alternative-route programs, mentoring and other supports for what the field calls "induction" of new teachers are strategies that could reduce attrition among graduates of traditional programs as well, but are currently under-resourced.

While a need for developing cultural competence in prospective teachers is recognized on paper, problems in teacher education include shortfalls in preparing teachers for the growing racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of America's classrooms. New research findings on differences in the neurological makeup and learning needs of males and females indicate a necessary domain of competence for teachers that is also likely to be shortchanged in training programs.

Topic 5: Recruitment of a Representative Workforce of Teachers of High Quality

Studies of the "teacher quality gap"—the uneven distribution of qualified teachers across school districts, which leaves areas of high poverty with proportionately fewer qualified teachers—delineate the need for policy change to reverse disincentives for qualified teachers to work or stay in these areas and to bolster the ability of districts serving poor and minority students to attract and retain such teachers. Although they need veteran teachers the most, these districts have declining numbers of such educators on staff.[15] Federal policy does not adequately recognize that responsibility for the workforce of teachers is distributed across the state, district, and school

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[14] All quotations are from personal communications with Barbara Lund (Touchstones Discussion Project), May 2005.

[15] Rado 2005.

levels, according to Sunderman and Kim of the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University. They say these misalignments in state and federal policy undercut the chances of school districts to meet the No Child Left Behind Act's mandates concerning the presence of highly qualified teachers in every classroom.[16] Desperate districts are trying strategies such as hiring bonuses. Alternative routes for bringing people into the profession can come up short. For example, although alternative-route programs generally require a commitment of three years from college graduates without degrees in education who are in the process of entering teaching, the Chicago Public Schools are finding that fewer than half of teachers hired through the national Teach for America program are staying for even three years.[17]

An important recommendation for closing the teacher quality gap is to focus current efforts related to the overall shortage on the particular plight of high-need districts. Targeting could take into account the need for increased recruitment and retention of qualified minority male teachers. Analysis of an effective strategy to improve schools—comprehensive school reform—has identified the missing element of minority male teachers to serve as role models and infuse cultural congruence and cultural synchronization[18] into the experience of boys and young men of color in the classroom. Currently, however, minority male teachers are in short supply. This topic also arises in the literature on equity and adequacy of school finance, as the focus shifts toward ensuring that resources are made available and effectively used to respond to the needs of each child within a diverse student body. Responsiveness requires gender, cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity and sensitivity within the teacher workforce to reflect and be sensitive to the diversity among students.

The backdrop for the shortage of minority male teachers is the larger shortage of teachers and, within that, the shortage of male teachers. The National Education Association has reported that the number of men in teaching has dropped to the lowest level in 40 years, with men comprising only 25 percent of the 3 million teachers in the U.S.[19] Their participation as secondary school teachers in particular has dropped to a new low of 35 percent. In 1981, the percentage of teachers in elementary school who were male reached an all-time high of 18 percent; that percentage has now dropped to nine percent.

Topic 6: School Choice

Growth in the number of options for school choice has been an important part of the school reform movement of the last two decades. While magnet schools emerged in the 1970s as mechanisms to promote desegregation, the school choice options that emerged later are directed toward families who cannot afford either to live in more affluent jurisdictions with better schools or to use non-public schools. The options enable families to place their children, with public financing, in schools to which their districts have not assigned them. Magnet schools, then, were intended to change the demographic composition of student bodies, while the later crop of school choices have the broad intent of opening up escape routes from poor schools for people without the financial means to exercise choice of school. An argument proponents make in favor of providing such options is that low-income minority families living in deteriorating conditions of urban poverty should not be denied access to equal educational opportunity—the great uplifter—simply because they are geographically trapped in blighted educational venues. Those on one side of the debate further argue that school choice will not only help the students and their families, it will also help the schools and students left behind because the competition will make those schools improve.

The principal school choice options are the following:

1. Public charter schools;

2. Vouchers for use at a public or private school of the family's choice;

3. Intradistrict open enrollment;

4. Interdistrict open enrollment with per-pupil funding following the student; and

5. Specialized schools to which students must apply for admission through either lottery or competition.

The Education Commission of the States correctly counsels state policymakers that school choice is here to stay even if the evidence is not definitive about positive or deleterious effects and unintended consequences. Both consensus and schism are reported in the literature on school choice.[20] There is contention about whether school choice drains resources from under-performing schools. The literature displays the influence of ideology and the tractability of evidence to support whatever point of view one favors before examining the evidence. An irony permeating much of the discourse is the tension between today's mantra of "no child left behind" and the emphasis on reporting benefits of school choice for those children who leave other children behind.

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[16] Sunderman and Kim 2005.

[17] D. Williams 2004.

[18] Jordan and Cooper, authors of a paper presented to a Symposium on African American Male Achievement in Washington, DC, in December 2000, say that "in a race-conscious society (such as ours), cultural synchronization can be an important aspect of teaching and learning (Irvine, 1990). Teachers who have shared knowledge and understandings with students can be better equipped to solve students' problems and motivate them to learn." Jordan and Cooper 2002: 11.

[19] National Education Association 2003b.

[20] Lord 2003; Lieberman 2002; Greene 2001; Carnoy et al. 2005.

Topic 7: Single-Sex Classrooms or Schools

Contemporary brain research has uncovered and confirmed structural, functional, chemical, and hormonal differences in brain and neurological development in males and females that go far in explaining observed differences in how—including how fast—boys and girls learn. The findings provide impetus, support, and practical guidance for a small movement that has emerged in the past 17 years to educate boys and girls separately, either in sex-segregated classrooms within schools or in separate schools. The pace of development of public single-sex education is picking up. The National Association for Single Sex Public Schools reports that 211 public schools in which the genders are segregated by classroom or by school exist today, while four existed eight years ago.[21] This movement has included a state-sponsored pilot program for which an evaluation[22] was conducted. Under this program, six districts opened paired single-sex academies in California in the 1990s.

The movement has, however, encountered legal obstacles. Early on, elementary-level boys' academies in Detroit were blocked on grounds of sex discrimination by a federal district court, which required that girls also be admitted. Later, single-sex alternatives that were created in Baltimore and other urban systems "were closed down because they were said to discriminate against girls and segregated children."[23] Revisions to Title IX regulations proposed by the U.S. Department of Education in 2004 to lower barriers to public single-sex education have never been issued as final rules. The revisions met with strong opposition from the National Organization for Women, the National Women's Law Center, and the American Civil Liberties Union. In the arguments they briefed during the comment period on the proposed revisions, opponents relied in part on the U.S. Supreme Court's refusal in *United States v. Virginia*[24] to accept the argument from the state that women could properly be excluded from admission to the Virginia Military Institute because its "adversative" style of education was not suitable for them. Potentially, some resolution to the unsettled law on K-12 single-sex education could have been stimulated by the Detroit school system's plan to reestablish gender-specific schools in the 2005-2006 school year. The school system intended to open a high school for boys and one for girls, but dropped the plan in favor of coeducational academies after renewal of opposition from civil rights advocates.[25]

The differences between boys and girls can be taken into account through instructional strategies other than segregation by gender. Some school systems are adopting practical applications of the scientific findings (e.g., a multi-sensory approach) disseminated by the Gurian Institute, which provides training in teaching that takes into account gender differences in the brain.[26] Non-segregating strategies that are responsive to gender differences appear to be compatible with a point made by opponents of the proposed Title IX regulatory changes: the offering of different kinds of teaching styles geared to different kinds of learning styles is an acceptable, indeed desirable, practice so long as no person is, on the basis of gender, excluded from access to these offerings.

Topic 8: Structure of School Day/Week/Year

The options that states and school districts are using to restructure or lengthen the school day or year are as follows:

1. Adding hours to the regular school day;

2. Adding programs before or after school, on Saturday, and in the summer;

3. Restructuring the school day through "block scheduling" (which lengthens class periods, makes learning time less fragmented, and reduces the frequency of students' transitions between subjects, classes, and experiences);[27]

4. Restructuring the school week by creating four-day weeks in which the four days are longer and the fifth day may be used for enrichment or remedial programming;

5. Adding days to the regular school year; and

6. Restructuring the school year to create year-round schooling in which there are intersessions for enrichment, remediation, and vacation.

Allocating more time for school has vocal proponents and there is some evidence (not infrequently anecdotal rather than rigorously researched) that student performance improves when more time is spent in school. However, the greater body of research supports the view that time spent in school is not the central issue—the *use* of time is. Quality of instruction is the key, especially for creating "academic learning time," which differs from "seat time" and "time on task," and occurs when instruction and readiness are in alignment. Further, analysts point to the significant costs of adding time

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[21] National Association for Single Sex Public Schools n.d.f.

[22] Datnow et al. 2001.

[23] Holland 2003.

[24] 518 U.S. 515 [1996], discussed in Murphy et al. 2004.

[25] Brand-Williams 2005.

[26] Gurian Institute Website n.d

[27] Visher et al. 1999.

to the school day and the school year and point out that the four-day week and year-round schooling were actually created in part to save money on space and energy.

Structuring use of time outside school can be very important. Experience in the field suggests that use of non-school hours for enrichment, remediation, and academic and social support for at-risk students, including boys and young men of color in particular, has payoffs.

Topic 9: Zero-Tolerance Policies

The use of zero-tolerance discipline in school districts began in 1989 to counter a spike in juvenile crime. It was later reinforced by federal legislation in the 1990s to induce states to mandate expulsion of any student possessing a firearm on school grounds (while allowing for administrative waiver of the expulsion). The federal requirement turned into a policy floor on top of which states and school districts have piled additional punishable behaviors; additional punishments; limitations on administrative discretion in determining whether a punishable act has occurred and in selecting the punishment to impose; and new methods of enforcement. Methods of enforcement include the presence of municipal or school district police in schools, where they issue students summons for court appearances or arrest them. The extensive documentation by advocates for children and youth and reporters of the experience of students with zero-tolerance policies includes anecdotal accounts of harsh and outrageous treatment; detection of patterns of criminalizing childhood and adolescent behavior that falls within the range of normal and can consist of trivial misconduct or even non-infractions; evidence of infringement of children's rights and "push-out" (which schools initiate in contrast to "drop-out," which students initiate) from school that causes irreparable harm to educational opportunity; and statistics showing the creation of a school-to-prison pipeline (the "jailhouse track") with a disproportionate impact on minorities, especially males. The American Bar Association calls zero tolerance a form of mandatory sentencing (as discussed further in Section III).

Advocates for children and youth argue that zero-tolerance policies are out of line with the actual degree of safety in schools at the same time that the policies have failed to address real threats when they have occurred. They are also financially costly to implement. Opponents of the policies further say that the zero-tolerance approach to school discipline is incompatible with both recognized wisdom about schools' roles in nurturing healthy child development and basic principles about schools' responsibilities to manage day-to-day conflicts within their walls. Along with the abundant evidence and analysis they have amassed, advocates for children and youth have generated a comprehensive list of recommendations for policy change that range from the first principle—apply zero tolerance only to the most serious,

dangerous conduct—to many other points, including support for preventive strategies within schools to identify and help troubled youth, and assurance that children are given *Miranda* warnings when questioned by school administrators and security guards, who will make their answers available for use by the police.

II. MAKING A PLACE FOR BOYS AND YOUNG MEN OF COLOR IN THE SCHOOL REFORM POLICY DEBATE

The No Child Left Behind Act is an ineluctable force bearing down on schools, magnifying the momentum of school reform and spurring unparalleled urgency and activity. Another strong force is litigation concerning school finance. How can advocates carve out a niche in the policy debate to attract visibility for actionable recommendations on K-12 public education that reflect the needs and perspectives of boys and young men of color?

The literature suggests that choosing to place the niche within a comprehensive context might have merit as an initial course of action. It has been noted that the American Cities Foundation synthesized a comprehensive approach to making schools work for African American and Hispanic youth by carefully observing the practices and characteristics of schools that were doing well—or making good progress—on minority achievement. Other researchers have come from the other direction, starting with a recognized comprehensive approach and identifying what is missing from it. In a paper presented at the Symposium on African American Male Achievement in Washington, D.C., in December 2000, Jordan and Cooper examine comprehensive school reform and African American male achievement.[28] (Their commentary may be applied to underrepresented minority males in general.) They report that comprehensive school reform has been shown to make schools better and to improve student performance. They note that three components are crucial: reforms in structure; reforms in curriculum and instruction; and reforms in professional development. With respect to the success of African American boys and young men, two significant elements are missing: black male teachers and cultural congruence and synchronization. These authors make the crucial point that *comprehensive school reform can lift all boats while leaving the gap intact; everyone may do better in absolute terms, but the relative position of minority males stays the same*. In other words, the distribution of achievement does not change. Supplying the missing elements would, by contrast, help to close the gap, while failing to supply them helps to preserve the gap.

Another researcher also observes that it is not enough to have underrepresented minority males in good schools if the schools do not have characteristics and practices attuned to

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[28] Jordan and Cooper 2002.

these males. His is an insider's candid account of the status of black boys and young men in the suburban Washington, D.C., school district of Montgomery County, Maryland. Its population of professional, technical, and other workers contributing to the tax base of one of the wealthiest counties in the nation is racially diverse. The author of the account, Hawkins, an African American career researcher in the school system, identifies barriers to its minority male students' success. These include the school system's unwillingness to look racism in the face and call it what it is and black parents' failure to face up to their sons' needs and address them. According to this author, neither the schools nor the black parents are facing reality or organizing to insist and ensure that the distribution of achievement changes.[29]

If we now consider the No Child Left Behind Act in light of these authors' points, can we say that, even if its ambitious goal is met, the gap could remain? However laudable it is as a goal, achieving proficiency for 100 percent of children is not identical to closing the gap, especially if push-outs and drop-outs have removed low-achievers and people who are treated as undesirable members of the school community. Thus, boys and young men of color could, under the most ideal NCLB scenario for success, continue to experience the worst of the minority achievement gap and the gender achievement gap.

Thus, advocates and policymakers must look beyond improving schools—although that is an important goal—and beyond enabling every child, including the underrepresented minority male, to demonstrate satisfactory achievement on a suitable and fair measure (whether that is a state assessment test based on the current model or some other mode of assessment). Why? Because even those wished-for results could still leave struggling students behind—students who, having managed to clamber over the hurdle they were coached to climb, are nonetheless never on (or are knocked off) pathways to productive futures and fully realized potential. Furthermore, if the measure of achievement is a high-stakes test, it is perhaps not even measuring the child's chances for a fulfilling, contributing life, but rather the school's chances for incurring or avoiding sanctions.

The concept of redistributing achievement calls for adequacy of resources and their application to meet each child's needs, not just the needs of the average child or the amalgamated child. This line of reasoning suggests that the task for advocates is to capture and communicate what is necessary for ensuring the futures of boys and young men of color within the larger endeavor of school reform in which many people and organizations are active. What is necessary for meeting the needs of each of these young persons within the context of improving education for all? What is necessary to break the mold that shapes distribution of achievement in public education?

[29] Hawkins 1999.

As the overview suggests, there is already considerable activity regarding the topics described above undertaken by policymakers, educators, schools, researchers, national organizations, government agencies, courts, and others. This paper offers three avenues for action that, together, cover the nine topics of interest and suggest ways that advocates for boys and young men of color may make a unique—or niche—and important contribution to school reform efforts.

III. AVENUES FOR ACTION

Avenue One:
Educational Excellence – for Each and for All

State policy must recognize *both* the crisis in the life prospects of boys and young men of color across the socioeconomic spectrum served by public education *and* the crippling impact of losing them as a resource for the nation. The principle driving how state policy responds to these young people's needs must be educational excellence for each and for all. Policy and financing must expect and support the attainment of excellence by all schools and school systems.

Financing Excellence

Policies that undercut efforts to ensure that every school is excellent should be reversed, especially punitive policies that take away resources needed for excellence. School choice policies can be used to illustrate this point:

- Any school choice policy should provide that the choices are 1) within school districts and 2) not choices between "failing" schools and non-failing schools but, instead, choices among schools that are all excellent. Schools should differ not in excellence but in their offerings, which should be varied and enable students to choose classes and activities that are responsive to their different interests, gifts, cultures, and learning styles. No boy or young man of color—indeed, no student at all—should be denied the opportunity to live in a community with excellent schools.

- "Failing" and struggling schools should be given resources not punishments. This should be the criterion for judging any option for school choice, whether it concerns vouchers, charter schools, open enrollment, or even federally mandated, school-funded outside tutoring. For example, when the No Child Left Behind Act forces an officially "failing" school to use its federal dollars to pay for tutoring of children who request it, the federal resources are fragmented, being drawn away from improving the school and devoted, instead, to serving certain specific children. Another example is the school choice option that

permits and funds interdistrict transfers. It enables a child to be schooled in a district in which the child does not reside and transfers per-pupil funding to the new district. The effect on the school the child has left is to reduce the money available to carry out "whole-school" strategies. In Michigan, where the shift from local funding through property taxes to state funding has created portable capitation grants, "enrollments drive revenues" and transfers out of school districts have disproportionately affected "failing" schools.[30] Net loss of students in 2003 occurred only in rural districts (with net loss being around 500 students) and central city districts, where there were almost seven times more transfers out than transfers in.

Excellence for each and excellence for all begins with adequacy of funding. Financial resources are not sufficient to produce excellence, but they are absolutely necessary. State policymakers must make a commitment to adequacy and keep it. The starting place for keeping this commitment is to expect and to use clear, well-calculated delineations of the resources that are fully adequate to ensure that when the resources are used effectively and efficiently, every student can receive an excellent education within the school system in which the student resides. Odden explains what must happen this way: "Determining adequate revenue levels entails first identifying the costs of effective programs and strategies and then translating those costs into appropriate school finance structures."[31] Prompted in part by litigation, the state of the art in determining adequacy of funding levels has advanced. Hearings with experts on calculating adequacy should not be confined to courtrooms. State legislators and executives should have up-to-date working knowledge of the options for calculating the costs of excellence and should determine the models for achieving excellence that they want to use to determine both the choice of an option and its implementation. Vagueness is unacceptable. Those who appropriate money and execute appropriations decisions must have a vision for the excellent schools that they want and for how dollars are going to flow in order to achieve that vision for all students—and for boys and young men of color in particular.

A series of steps—none necessarily easy—at the state, district, and school levels can bring the vision, the decision, and the dollars to bear on actually producing high performance. To make the process work, state policymakers must be informed themselves and help school administrators, school boards, and teachers have the state-of-the-art skills and tools necessary for their roles in the process. For example, a district can allocate adequate dollars to each school in recognition of "the costs of effective programs and the various special needs of its

student body."[32] The faculty at each school can be empowered through their participation in allocating these resources to the best approaches and retiring old strategies in favor of better ones.

The pivotal task of financing public education must remain at the forefront of policymakers' consciousness. Accountability of schools and financing of schools are bound together. Introducing a study of adequacy in Texas, for example, economists Reschovsky and Imazeki, who are advancing the state of the art in calculating adequacy, state the following:

> The underlying premise of the [No Child Left Behind Act]… is that schools must be held accountable for the academic performance of their students. The legislation will reward schools that succeed in meeting state imposed achievement goals and will sanction schools that fail. The intent is that all students, but especially students from disadvantaged backgrounds, show annual improvements in their academic performance as measured against state standards. Measuring student performance is thus a necessary component in a policy designed to improve the quality of education. We doubt it is a sufficient policy. In this article, we present evidence suggesting that *measuring student performance, setting performance standards, and threatening to sanction schools that fail to meet these standards are unlikely to close achievement gaps unless accompanied by a restructuring of the financing of public education* (emphasis added).[33]

Characteristics beyond the control of school boards, such as the concentration of poverty in their districts, bear on what levels of funding are adequate. Reschovsky and Imazeki observe that "[t]his implies that equal per pupil spending should not be expected to result in equal student performance gains in all districts."[34] The economists issue a further alert for policymakers, suggesting that politics do not belong in determining adequacy. In ascertaining what levels of funding from Texas district to district would be adequate for students to achieve a specified gain in performance, they found that the state's current method of calculating adjustments for cost differences across districts includes the use of one type of adjustment that is based on a careful empirical study *but also includes* the use of other adjustments of unknown origins that the economists suspect are the results "of complex political negotiations and thus are not likely to reflect true cost differences."[35]

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[30] Plank 2004.

[31] Odden 2001: 86.

[32] Odden 2001: 88.

[33] Reschovsky and Imazeki 2004: 36.

[34] Reschovsky and Imazeki 2004: 42.

[35] Reschovsky and Imazeki 2004: 44.

When resources are inadequate, state policymakers must take the steps necessary to secure or supply the missing resources. Not only must an assessment be made of the adequacy of state revenue to support funding for schools, but consideration must also be given to joining in lawsuits (with other states led by Connecticut) against the federal government for failing itself to comply with the mandate that states and schools will not be required to carry out any activities for which they do not receive funding from moneys appropriated under the act.[36]

An Excellent Workforce of Teachers

Excellence in the education of boys and young men of color cannot be achieved unless adequacy of resources is defined as encompassing the recruitment, professional development, and compensation of a diverse workforce of teachers that is reflective of the cultural, racial, ethnic, and gender composition of student bodies, and that is prepared to teach diverse student bodies with enthusiasm, appreciation, and skill.

Support of a diverse workforce of teachers that is prepared to teach diverse student bodies is a necessity for achieving responsiveness to differential student needs, which is the bedrock of effective education for each and all. As one academic commentator, Rodriguez, observes:

> Schools must be responsive to the differential needs of the students served, and one critical step in this process is being responsive to the needs of faculty in those schools. For instance, investments in professional development could help teachers adopt different pedagogical strategies, develop greater collaboration, utilize classroom-level data, or acquire 'cultural competence' training. Such investments… should be tailored to the needs of individual schools based on specific student and staff needs.[37]

If boys and young men of color are to flourish in our nation's schools, finely-tuned responsiveness to the differential needs in diverse student bodies is a moral necessity. Such fine-tuning cannot be gained by generalizing; realities have to be confronted. The presence and impact of pervasive racial and ethnic discrimination, the persistent setting of low expectations for young men who are *not* seen as youth with great potential, the differential learning needs of boys and young men of any race or ethnicity that are neglected despite new findings from the science of neurological and brain development—all of these must be taken into account by policymakers and practitioners, as well as by the public, press, and parents who hold them accountable. One requirement for ensuring responsiveness is intensified and purposeful recruit-

ment of males from underrepresented minorities into teacher education and alternative-track preparation and into teaching posts, especially in places where the needs of boys and young men of color are most pressing. The recruitment of minority male teachers will yield many benefits, including an infusion of cultural congruence and synchronization into the educational experience of boys and young men of color. A second requirement for achieving responsiveness is to ensure that all teachers are provided with an understanding of—and strategies for addressing—those learning needs of male students that scientific research indicates are based on neurological and brain differences between males and females. Responsiveness is not a side-bar to quality; it is a pillar of quality. Responsiveness must encompass devoted attention to the unique cultural needs of young minority males.

The ability of high-need districts to recruit highly qualified teachers must be bolstered by state policies. Historically, the division of responsibility between state and local levels has led states to defer to districts for recruitment, while they manage licensure and certification, as well as funding of the public institutions that provide education for prospective teachers, who must, in turn, meet the state's licensure and certification standards.[38] In the past, school finance policies have undermined the ability of high-need districts to provide the salaries and working conditions that influence teachers' choice of employment.[39] As Plank observes, public policy concerning teachers has been to "assign new teachers to [the] most challenging schools and classrooms," "[p]rovide better salaries and working conditions in suburban districts," and "draw [the] best teachers out of urban districts." All of this, in turn, "ensure[s] that the neediest kids are taught by the least qualified teachers."[40]

Achieving Responsiveness

To achieve excellence for each and excellence for all, state policy and financing should *both* support whole-school or comprehensive reform *and* insist that it be shaped by the principle of responsiveness to each student's uniqueness. For example, instructional strategies for literacy and numeracy used in whole-school or comprehensive approaches should *both* correspond to individual developmental readiness *and*, equally important, fire the imaginations of the young and challenge and train them to think critically. Fresh thinking is needed to achieve responsiveness. Rodriguez has been cited with approval for warning "against a reliance on 'deficit model thinking,' which explains school failure in terms of particular student characteristics (e.g., race, class, or sex) rather than in terms of institutional factors related to facilitating the

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[36] National Education Association 2005.

[37] Rodriguez 2004, cited in Rice 2004: 139-140.

[38] Sunderman and Kim 2005.

[39] American Council on Education 1999.

[40] Plank 2004: slide 25.

success of different kinds of students."[41] If our perspective is shifted, we can move away from looking at the neediness of the student and instead consider the capacity of the school to respond to the student. What is it about a school that means only certain students fare well there? This is the right question, Rodriguez suggests. She says that "all children come to school with different learning styles, strengths or talents, and needs,"[42] yet the schools are responsive only to some children. Lifting the chances of boys and young men of color depends on recognizing that they deserve responsiveness, too.

Teaching to high-stakes tests is the opposite of responsiveness. It undermines the fundamental skill of reading to learn, which boys and young men of color—and all students—need in order to realize their full potential to contribute to family, community, and economic life. Researchers report that rising test scores in Houston mask the inability of students in poor schools to find meaning in literature and make connections between their reading assignments, classroom discussions, and writing assignments.[43] By contrast, avid interest, discovery, delight, and critical thinking can be stimulated by teaching that is directed toward students rather than tests,[44] as well as by programs with highly structured discussion to build fundamental learning skills and programs incorporating reading aloud to students in classrooms and other settings.

Using Time Well

Management and instructional strategies should treasure time, not squander it, and should focus on gaining the most in learning from every moment. To that end, research findings on use of time should be heeded. "The consensus" in a 1997 synthesis of research on programs that extend the school day or year "was that although extending time in school might have non-instructional benefits, there was little evidence that it would elevate the level of student achievement. The extreme expense of such changes is also prohibitive."[45] Covering the 1993 findings of the National Education Commission on Time and Learning,[46] as well as studies of year-round schooling over 20 years and other research, the synthesis concluded that "time is a necessary but not sufficient condition for improving achievement. The crucial issue seems to be *how* the time is used, with *quality of instruction*

being the key" (emphasis added).[47] Whole-school strategies for improving learning and the climate for learning can take a careful, developmental approach to better use of time, as illustrated by the respected School Development Program movement founded by Dr. James Comer of Yale University, which is discussed further below.[48]

Avenue Two: School-Stakeholder Partnerships

Schools can be stronger when more stakeholders are involved. Beyond students, parents, teachers, and administrators, there are many outside stakeholders in schools. They include employers worried about the knowledge and skills of the rising workforce and the emerging gender gap within it; nonprofit organizations and citizens' groups with missions to serve and better their communities; promoters of economic growth and community development; and academic institutions that receive students from and train teachers for the public schools. School-stakeholder partnerships enlarge, enrich, and diversify the pool of resources and strategies available for the work that needs to be done for boys and young men of color (and for all students)—work that involves nurturing the finest in them and clearing pathways to productive lives.

The wide spectrum of stakeholder interests that create opportunities for their engagement with schools ranges across the interest of business in commercial profitability, the interest of universities in educating students for real life, and the passion of individuals for justice. The interest of business is illustrated by research commissioned by the Business Roundtable (a national group based in Washington, D.C.) on the implications for the workforce of the gender gap in men's educational attainment. The researchers concluded "with a 'brief summary of the more important links between male educational attainment and key labor market, economic, and social outcomes,' noting that '[t]he case for substantively boosting the number of men enrolling in post-secondary educational institutions and obtaining college degrees is based upon a variety of positive links between labor market, economic, political, and social outcomes and higher levels of formal schooling.'"[49]

The interest of universities as stakeholders is illustrated in *Rallying the Whole Village: The Comer Process for Reforming Education*, a publication about the School Development Program developed by Dr. James Comer of the Yale Child Study Center in 1968 and subsequently widely disseminated.[50] A core principle is that genuine collaboration among teachers, frontline and central office administrators, parents, and students creates the conditions for children to realize their

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[41] Rodriguez 2004, cited in Rice 2004: 137.

[42] Rodriguez 2004: 18.

[43] McNeil and Valenzuela, cited in Orfield and Wald 2000.

[44] Gardner 1999, cited in Amrein and Berliner 2002.

[45] Evans and Bechtel 1997: 1.

[46] Authorized by Title I of P.L. 102-62, the Education Council Act of 1991, the Commission was formed "to review the relationship between time and learning in the Nation's schools and make a report on its findings by April 1994." U.S. Department of Education 1994: 33.

[47] Evans and Bechtel 1997: 2.

[48] Comer et al. 1996.

[49] Sum et al. 2003, quoted in McKinney and Randolph-Back 2004: 24.

[50] Comer et al. 1996.

potential and achieve well-being. Institutions and individuals from the broader community can also be involved. Teacher preparation is a key component and, early in the life of the Comer approach, a partnership for teacher preparation was formed with a historically black institution. The authors observe that "[t]he partnership of the… [School Development Program], Southern University of New Orleans, and the New Orleans Public Schools offers striking proof that teachers and students from kindergarten through grade 16 can combine forces to teach and learn creatively in the real world."[51]

An illustration of the passion for justice that school-stakeholder partnerships could mobilize comes from Project 2000, founded in Washington, D.C., by Dr. Spencer Holland in conjunction with Concerned Black Men.[52] In 2003, he testified to the Congressional Black Caucus as follows:

> Finally, I leave you with a question. What credibility do we have when we indict predominantly white school systems for not being able to close the achievement gap between majority and minority students, when the urban school systems throughout this nation which are primarily owned and operated by black people for black children do not educate their own? If we do not teach our boys to read, they will continue to fill the ever increasing numbers of new prisons where their average reading level is generally no higher than the average 5th grader.[53]

Holland was prompted to found Project 2000 by the discovery that "more than 90 percent of the children who were retained in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades [in the Washington, D.C. public schools] were boys… a phenomenon… [found] in every urban school system in the nation which was brave enough to separate its student achievement data by gender."[54] Project 2000 began in 1988 with men (including NFL players, plumbers, lawyers, truck drivers, Howard undergraduates, engineers, and bus drivers) serving as teaching assistants one-half day per week.[55] Because of its success and the enthusiasm of all concerned, it grew into a comprehensive program that is housed outside the schools and features a wide range of mentoring and academic support for African American students in grades one through 12, especially boys and young men.

The possible purposes of partnerships are limited only by imagination and will. The range of stakeholder interests, resources, and talents can be wide, as can the range of in-

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[51] Smith and Kaltenbaugh 1996: 72.

[52] Project 2000 n.d.a.

[53] Holland 2003.

[54] Holland 2003.

[55] Project 2000 n.d.b.

tended gains they seek from their organizational or personal investments in schools and students. Potential opportunities, therefore, abound. The New Century High Schools initiative in New York City affords a model for designing and positioning effort within—or on behalf of—a school system to foster varied opportunities for school-stakeholder partnerships. The initiative has been structured to capitalize on the wide range of potential stakeholder partners and their interests. This initiative launches public schools that each have a lead partner, which is an organization or institution in the community with its own métier. It is discussed in the Appendix under the heading of the Eagle Academy for Young Men in the Bronx, for which the lead partner is One Hundred Black Men. Lead partners for other schools include a university college, a medical center, and a museum. Thus, the initiative is a model because it is *structured* to draw in varied partners for significant roles.

The purposes of partnerships that are especially germane to clearing life pathways for young minority males are the following: 1) to build pipelines to and through high school graduation and to jobs and education thereafter and 2) to recruit, prepare, support, and develop teachers. Models and state policy options exist for each of these.

Building Pipelines

Mentoring, academic support, planning for postsecondary education and employment, parental support networks, opportunities for envisioning and planning alternative futures, internships, bonding with adult males—all of these are among the features of exemplary programs with the power to boost the achievement and life chances of boys and young men of color. Linkages among schools, communities, and institutions can bolster the ability of each sector to support the development of these youth and their safe passage through sometimes hostile environments into bright futures. The purpose of building pipelines is to ensure diversity in the professional and occupational workforce—and in the student bodies of postsecondary preparatory institutions—by creating opportunities for participation in that workforce by a diverse cadre of individuals who might otherwise be barred by discrimination and socioeconomic disadvantage. Funding for building pipelines tends to be fragile, but there are policy opportunities to give it a firmer foundation. It may be argued that public education itself ought to be the pipeline through which the diverse cadre is routinely prepared and that this pipeline should function without boosts from philanthropy, volunteers, universities, and others. Public education is not that pipeline, however, and lamenting that reality will not change it.

Some exciting models of pipelines in the field are described in Appendix 1. It also describes the development by a state university system of a policy focus on the gender gap for Af-

rican American males. That heartening focus, however, does have a financial gap. The university system is able to put some money into pipeline programming, but it expects to look to other funding sources due to budgetary constraints.[56] Not every dollar for pipeline programming is soft, but many are, whether charitable or governmental. Advocates for boys and young men of color could translate the financial challenge typical for pipeline programming into a state policy opportunity for creating funding streams. The models are significant to advocacy for funding streams because they demonstrate that know-how exists. The university system's backing of pipeline programming as part of its policy focus on the gender gap is significant also because it substantiates the need for and value of the programming.

Recruiting, Preparing, Supporting, and Developing Teachers

The literature repeatedly reports that quality of teaching is the most important determinant of good education. At the same time, however, qualified teachers for high-need districts are in short supply and even those who meet the No Child Left Behind Act's test of "highly qualified" are at risk of being ill-prepared to teach in communities of poverty and racial and ethnic diversity. Cutting-edge partnership approaches to preparing, supporting, and developing teachers are now being demonstrated, and an array of linkages is possible. New teachers can be better linked to academic faculty, while academic faculty can be more closely connected with public school instruction, for example. The expertise of master K-12 teachers can be incorporated into the design and delivery of training for prospective teachers.

Examples of features of stronger academic-school partnerships include the mentoring of new teachers by academic faculty and the intensified and longer student teaching that comes with adding a fifth year to teacher education, as some universities have done.[57] Another illustration is provided by the 2003 report of the Task Force on Teacher Quality of the Public Education Forum of Mississippi:

> Collaboration between institutions of higher education and elementary and secondary schools ensures that K-12 curriculum and performance standards and substantive field experiences are incorporated into teacher training. Recommendations for enhancing collaboration include using teams of university professors and K-12 master teachers to teach courses on the campuses of elementary and secondary schools and appointing K-12 educators to university teams that design, deliver, and assess teacher education programs. The Center of Pedagogy at New Jersey's Montclair

State University brings together university faculty in education and the arts and sciences and public school faculty in the design and delivery of teacher training and classroom instruction. Mississippi's pool of National Board Certified teachers could make a significant contribution to teacher preparation programs.[58]

Partnerships are not only among educators; students and communities can be involved. Collaboration can, for example, function within an institutional partnership system of ongoing relationships linking high school and college students in learning communities; institutions of higher education to public school students' families; and so on (as seen in the Santa Ana Partnership described in Appendix 1).[59]

A method of research known as participatory action research offers promise for building partnerships among university and K-12 students with the support of their respective teachers and even the potential support of local governmental agencies. Participatory action research is oriented toward "just social change" in communities, the "lived experience" of community members who are participants in the research, and alliances between these participants and researchers. Rather than being traditional research subjects, the participating community members help to direct the research. McIntyre, an educator in a university located outside a city, decided to test participatory action research as a means to inculcate cultural competence in non-minority education students.[60] She was prompted to try a new approach—one that was calculated to give her students direct experience with the lives and dreams of inner-city youngsters—by the grim statistic that 40 to 50 percent of new teachers in urban schools leave their jobs within five years. A three-year partnership project was formed among the faculty members, the university students, and 12 boys and 12 girls in an inner-city sixth grade.[61] In accordance with the protocol of participatory action research, the children set the agenda for project activities. The university students had to learn not to be in charge, to listen, and to adjust, which proved to be a positive and productive experience for them.

The educator's small project has implications for community development and teacher preparation. The project awakened the thinking of the kids about their community and their own futures. The community development impact of their action strategy for neighborhood clean-up included the city's decision to assist the young people's endeavor. Most importantly, the project showed that teachers-in-training can become actively engaged in the realities of the lives of inner-

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[56] McKinney and Randolph-Back 2004.

[57] Five-year programs are discussed in Background on Topic 4: Teacher Preparation, which may be found in the Web-published appendix of this paper.

[58] Public Education Forum Task Force 2003: 8.

[59] W. K. Kellogg Foundation 2004.

[60] Under the research protocol, the name of the city and university were not published in the article reporting the research.

[61] McIntyre 2003.

city kids, involved in community improvement projects that the kids lead, and enthusiastic about teaching in high-need districts. Four of the 15 students on the research team went on to teach in the city, a big improvement over the norm. Although their school is located near the city, the university students generally avoided it and knew nothing about the children living there. One student in the project reported, "I love being in… [the city]. I love the kids, the challenges, the fact that I get to practice what I learned in the program with kids who are so often dismissed as not worth it."[62]

Four is a very small number of students, but the fact that their number constitutes better than 25 percent of the 15 students in the project makes the result thought-provoking. Why? Because, according to the American Council on Education, "[m]ost teachers avoid teaching in high-poverty schools. Many fully prepared graduates serve as substitutes in more affluent districts or work outside education until the job they want becomes available, rather than taking positions in less affluent schools. High-poverty schools, whether inner-city or rural, also have the largest number of unqualified teachers."[63] When the method for avoiding teaching in a high-need school is to work in another field, the shortage of teachers is further exacerbated. The shortage makes it harder for high-poverty districts to compete for qualified teachers. Delayed entry also contributes to shortage. The American Council on Education reports the following: "Currently, only about two-thirds of newly prepared teachers enter the profession immediately after graduation [citation omitted]. For that reason, returning teachers and delayed entrants together fill more openings than newly prepared teachers… If all graduates of teacher education programs entered the field, these new entrants alone would meet most of the demand for teachers."[64]

The recruitment of minority male teachers has not risen to a place of high priority on state policy agendas. The percentage of male teachers has declined in part because teaching has traditionally been identified as women's work and as less valuable than other pursuits.[65] Attracting minority men to the teaching profession is a difficult challenge. The formidable task of staffing all public school classrooms with "highly qualified" teachers—that is, teachers who meet state licensing and certification standards, as required by the No Child Left Behind Act—may crowd out concerns about the gender and race/ethnicity of the people who some fear will be treated as only "warm bodies" for the jobs. Applying the concept of school-stakeholder partnership to the task of increasing the number of minority male teachers may be worthwhile for

state policymakers to consider. For example, pilot programs might be funded, drawing upon the following models and ideas:

- In the Community Partnerships in Health Professions Education Initiative of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, East Tennessee State University formed partnerships with rural communities that 1) made community residents into stakeholders in the program as they experienced the new access to services it created and came to hope that the health professionals in training would choose their communities as sites for permanent practice; 2) made students realize that people wanted them to come practice in their communities; and 3) prompted more high schoolers from the communities to apply to the university after their exposure to the young people in health professions training.

- *Closing the Invisible Gender Gap in Higher Education: Creating Partnerships for Pipelines and Pathways for the Matriculation and Graduation of Men from Underrepresented Minorities*, a paper commissioned by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, proposes creating K-16 pipeline systems in which community-school-university partnerships weave together a web of protective factors to provide safe passage for boys and young men of color.[66] The Young Leaders' Academy and Gentlemen on the Move programs (discussed in Appendix 1 to this paper) are models for constituent parts of such a pipeline system. The connections within a partnership system create the possibility for different kinds of benefits and targets. Conceivably, then, a multipurpose pipeline partnership could aim to do the following: 1) create encouragement and supports for men who are volunteers in the pipeline programming to undertake entrance into teaching via an alternative track for certification; 2) provide ongoing support for men who have newly entered teaching—either through the alternative track or through regular teacher education—to help increase the chances that they will stay in teaching and stay in high-need schools; 3) increase early recruitment efforts to encourage boys and young men of color who are moving through the K-16 pipeline system to choose careers in teaching; and 4) develop various kinds of linkages among K-12 students and college students that help them learn from and about each other, with the goal of increasing the probability that some of the K-12 students will attend college and that some of the college students will become K-12 teachers. Participatory action research might be used to form such linkages.

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[62] McIntyre 2003: 37.

[63] American Council on Education 1999: 12.

[64] American Council on Education 1999: 1.

[65] National Education Association 2003.

[66] McKinney and Randolph-Back 2004.

Avenue Three: Zero Tolerance Is Intolerable

Can school safety be protected by less onerous and more effective means than current zero-tolerance policies and practices? Does zero tolerance have hidden costs and hidden effects that undermine the welfare of the society as a whole and its capacity to educate and prepare the next generation? At the same time, does zero tolerance fall short of actually ensuring safety? The term "zero tolerance" was borrowed from the war on drugs. Starting in 1989, school districts began adopting zero-tolerance discipline to counter a spike in juvenile crime, while states began making expulsion mandatory for certain offenses.[67] Congress reinforced this incipient trend with passage of the Gun-Free School Zones Act in 1990 and then, when that was ruled unconstitutional, with passage of the Gun-Free Schools Act in 1994.[68] The latter conditioned receipt of Elementary and Secondary Education Act funds on states' mandating that "schools expel any student found on school property with a firearm,"[69] although it allowed for "local review on a case-by-case basis."[70] As the states responded, the federal law was often only a floor for state policy. Many states now require expulsion or suspension for other serious violations on school grounds, including assault, drug possession, and possession of any weapon. On top of the federal floor state and school district policies have piled on additional punishable behaviors and punishments; limitations on discretion in determining whether a punishable event has occurred and in selecting the punishment to impose; and new methods of enforcement.

Use of school security guards has been supplemented by partnerships formed with police who, in some cases, are not just called in when trouble arises—they actually work on campus. Those working on campus are either on assignment from the local police force (which the schools may pay for their services) or are employed by the school system's own police force (as in Miami, Baltimore, Houston, Los Angeles, and Palm Beach County). The police are often not trained for working with children and teens. They represent more than a presence for maintaining order; they take action, issuing students summons to appear in court or arresting them. With these new options in place, students alleged to have violated rules are not just sent to principals' offices, but rather to juvenile and criminal courts. Now such students may find themselves not only thrown out the school door with nowhere to go for education, but also thrown into jail or juvenile detention or placed on probation. Although the story of the little girl handcuffed in a Florida kindergarten is freshest in the national news, the popular press and professional literature are filled with other moving stories, such as this:

> A 7-year-old African American boy who has Attention Deficit Disorder was arrested and hauled off to the county jail for hitting a classmate, a teacher, and a principal and scratching a school resource officer. The 4-foot, 6-inch, 60-pound second grader was fingerprinted and eventually cried himself to sleep in his jail cell.[71]

Documentation of what is happening shows the grave consequences for students, especially students of color. These consequences are incommensurate with schools' interest in safety and incompatible with schools' duty to educate. The documentation and commentary also suggest that the extraordinarily high and unconscionable price that these consequences represent is not buying the level of school safety that could be achieved through other, less onerous means.

Six key themes are synthesized here from the literature on zero tolerance.

Theme One: Rates are Rising for Suspensions and Expulsions from Preschool through High School

Those "most likely to receive school exclusion penalties" are in the vulnerable developmental period of early adolescence when opportunities for healthy risk-taking, experimentation with new attitudes and behaviors (within limits), and redirection of unwanted behaviors to positive alternatives are especially needed.[72] Exclusionary practices, however, also reach down into elementary school and preschool. For example, in the Chicago Public Schools, the number of annual suspensions of elementary school students rose from 8,870 in 1994 to 20,312 in 2003.[73]

A study of preschool expulsions released in May 2005 reports that the national K-12 expulsion rate is 2.09 per 1,000 students, while the national pre-K expulsion rate for state-funded programs is 6.67 per 1,000 students, with disproportionate expulsions for males and African American children. Table 3 shows the rates per 1,000 in states of special interest to this paper.

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[67] Zweifler and DeBeers 2002; Advancement Project 2005.

[68] Zweifler and DeBeers 2002.

[69] Advancement Project 2005: 7.

[70] Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence 2005.

[71] Advancement Project 2005: 12.

[72] Zweifler and DeBeers 2002: 206-207.

[73] Advancement Project 2005.

Table 3: Number of Expulsions Per 1,000 Students, Selected States, 2003-2004		
State	**K – 12**	**Pre-K**
California	2.52	7.49
Florida	0.37	6.64
Georgia	1.76	8.58
Illinois	0.96	2.70
Maryland	0.97	5.97
Mississippi	3.20	No state pre-K
New Mexico	1.48	21.10
New York	0.47	9.91
Texas	2.93	5.99
Source: Gilliam 2005: 8.		

The following district-wide numbers (see Table 4) cover children of all ages in the 72,489-student Denver public school system, one of three districts intensively studied for the Advancement Project's publication of *Education on Lockdown: The Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track.*

Table 4: Total Number of Expulsions, Suspensions, and Referrals to Law Enforcement in Denver Public Schools		
	2000 – 2001	**2003 – 2004**
Expulsions	116	146
Suspensions	9,846	13,423
Referrals to Law Enforcement	818	1,401*
*A 71 percent increase during a period when enrollment grew by two percent.		
Source: Advancement Project 2005: 23.		

Theme Two: Zero tolerance has created a school-to-prison pipeline and imperiled the education of tens of thousands of children

Direct costs of zero tolerance include hundreds of millions of dollars for use of police and security devices, subsidized by $79.5 million from the federal government in 2004.[74] Yet, despite such expenses, in 1998, when a National Center for Educational Statistics survey allowed comparisons to be made between schools with zero-tolerance policies (after four years of implementation) and schools without such policies, those with policies were found to be "still less safe than those without such policies."[75] The American Bar Association believes that the cost appraisal of zero-tolerance policies should compare the costs of schooling a child or youth with problem behaviors to the costs of incarceration—both the costs of initial incarceration as well as costs for recidivism (that is, for repeated incarceration). Expelled or suspended students can fall further behind academically or into criminal activity that

leads to incarceration followed by recidivism. Citing analysis published by the Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence, the American Bar Association finds it important that continuing a child's education in school, even if done through alternative education, may lower the chance that the child will become a career criminal.[76]

Expulsion, suspension, and arrest imperil children's educational progress, likely setting them so far back academically that they will perhaps never catch up, even if they are able to return to their schools.[77] The Advancement Project aptly describes the difficulties that children face due to expulsion, suspension, and arrest:

> The criminalization of children by their schools can leave them with no education and no future. These students must face the emotional trauma, embarrassment and stigma of being handcuffed and taken away from school, and later to be placed on an ankle-monitoring device. These youth must then serve time on probation with no slip-ups, whether they are big or small. One class missed, and the next step may be a juvenile detention facility. After time served, these students will probably be excluded from their schools or be re-admitted to face the same staff that participated in the original prosecution of the student. Many of these students may never return to school.[78]

The use of expulsion and suspension in the pre-K, elementary, and middle school years threatens the chances for high school graduation later. Croninger and Lee found that "[t]he level of academic performance of students before entering high school correlates significantly to their likelihood of dropping out."[79]

Theme Three: Disadvantaged minorities, especially African Americans, are disproportionately affected by suspension, expulsion, and arrest

The abundant evidence of disproportionate impact is illustrated here by national and by local data from jurisdictions of interest to this paper. The national data in Figure 1 (next page) show enrollment, suspension, and expulsion percentages by racial/ethnic category.

The Schott Foundation for Public Education has compiled significant local data in its state-by-state report card focusing on African American males' abysmally low rates of high

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[74] Advancement Project 2005.

[75] Skiba and Petersen 1999: 4.
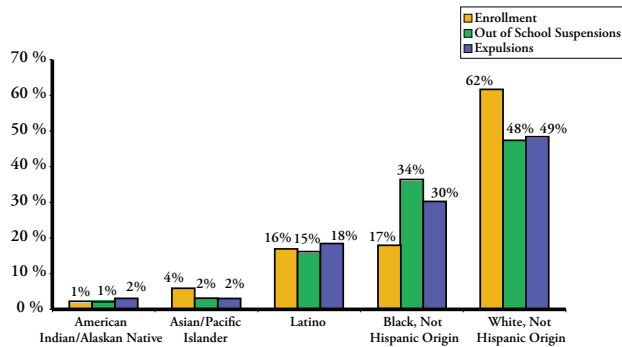
[76] May 2000, cited by Martin II 2001.

[77] Stone-Palmquist 2005.

[78] Browne 2003: 29.

[79] Croninger and Lee 2001.

Figure 1: National Enrollment, Suspension, and Expulsion by Race/Ethnicity

National Enrollment versus Discipline
Source: U.S. Department of Education, 2000 OCR Elementary and Secondary School Survey
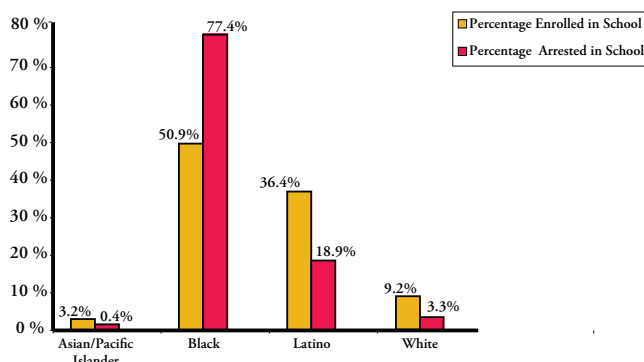
Source: Advancement Project 2005: 18.

school graduation. Shown in Tables 5 and 6 are data for Houston and Los Angeles, major cities in states of particular interest to this paper. Schott presents local data by race and gender in five classifications: suspensions, expulsions, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, and specific learning disability. Administrative determinations by schools under each of these classifications can limit chances for graduation irrespective of whether disproportion in the determinations reflects racial discrimination or racial disparities in rates of risk (or both).

Local data on arrests in school have been compiled for a school district in Illinois, another state of particular interest to this paper. The Chicago Public Schools were the subject of another of the three intensive case studies reported in *Education on Lockdown: The Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track* (see Figure 2).

Theme Four: Children's rights are at issue

The American Bar Association calls zero tolerance a form of mandatory sentencing.[80] The ABA explains this position by calling zero tolerance a "one-size-fits-all solution to all the

Figure 2: Rates of Enrollment and Arrest in Chicago Public Schools, by Race/Ethnicity, 2003

Source: Advancement Project 2005: 33 (data source: Chicago Police Department).

problems that schools confront" that "treats alike first graders and twelfth graders" and equates "students who misbehave intentionally" with "those who misbehave as a result of emotional problems, or other disabilities, or who merely forget what is in their pocket after legitimate non-school activities."[81] The ABA criticizes current policy, observing that "most current policies eliminate the common sense that comes with discretion and, at great cost to society and to children and families, do little to improve school safety."[82]

Zweifler and DeBeers find that due process for expulsion and suspension from school is limited.[83] For children with disabilities it is greater, due to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.[84] But this extra protection against ouster from school may actually operate as an incentive for educators to dodge recognizing a disability in order to avoid this barrier to removing a child from school.[85] The due process limitations are such that a young person can be jailed as the outcome of a process in which representation by an attorney is not available, according to the Advancement Project, which reports that "statements given by students to school officials prior to arrest—without an attorney or even a parent present, are routinely used against them in court. Miranda warnings are not required, and students routinely incriminate themselves, even when they have done little that would normally interest law enforcement officials."[86] Once pushed out of regular school under zero-tolerance policies, students may find themselves without guaranteed access to alternative public education.[87]

Schools are putting at issue both the rights of students to whom zero-tolerance policies are applied and those of students who have been victims of violence at school or fear becoming victims because their schools are persistently dangerous. The No Child Left Behind Act protects the latter students by requiring that state policies enable them to transfer to safe schools within their districts.[88] In some districts, the protection is meaningless. For example, in Camden, New Jersey, a student who was nearly killed when he refused to give up his lab seat to a peer who arrived late had only one route to escape the dangerous environment—transfer to the district's other high school, which "is officially designated 'persistently dangerous.'"[89]

[80] Martin II 2001.

[81] Martin II 2001: paragraphs 2-3.

[82] Martin II 2001: concluding paragraph.

[83] Zweifler and DeBeers 2002.

[84] Zweifler and DeBeers 2002.

[85] Zweifler and DeBeers 2002.

[86] Browne 2003: 12.

[87] Zweifler and DeBeers 2002.

[88] U.S. Department of Education 2002.

[89] Snell 2004: paragraph 4.

Table 5: Houston				
Houston Students	**Number of Students**			
Sex	**Female**		**Male**	
Race (Non-Hispanic)	**Black**	**White**	**Black**	**White**
Enrollment	31,625	10,015	32,090	10,535
Out of School Suspensions	3,485	235	6,350	680
Total Expulsions	25	0	55	5
Total Mental Retardation	350	50	520	60
Emotional Disturbance	210	35	715	180
Specific Learning Disability	1,835	255	3,205	555
Houston Students	**Percentage of Students**			
Sex	**Female**		**Male**	
Race (Non-Hispanic)	**Black**	**White**	**Black**	**White**
Enrollment	16.05	5.08	16.29	5.35
Out of School Suspensions	15.86	1.07	28.89	3.09
Total Expulsions	15.15	0.00	33.33	3.03
Total Mental Retardation	21.28	3.04	31.61	3.65
Emotional Disturbance	13.86	2.31	47.19	11.88
Specific Learning Disability	15.85	2.20	27.68	4.79
Source: Holzman 2004:20.				

Table 6: Los Angeles				
Los Angeles Students	**Number of Students**			
Sex	**Female**		**Male**	
Race (Non-Hispanic)	**Black**	**White**	**Black**	**White**
Enrollment	45,745	33,865	45,720	36,955
Out of School Suspensions	4,415	785	8,770	2,895
Total Expulsions	30	5	85	45
Total Mental Retardation	305	175	500	235
Emotional Disturbance	120	50	450	220
Specific Learning Disability	3,260	1,390	5,735	2,650
Los Angeles Students	**Percentage of Students**			
Sex	**Female**		**Male**	
Race (Non-Hispanic)	**Black**	**White**	**Black**	**White**
Enrollment	6.36	4.71	6.35	5.13
Out of School Suspensions	9.14	1.63	18.16	5.99
Total Expulsions	5.45	0.91	15.45	8.18
Total Mental Retardation	6.23	3.58	10.21	4.80
Emotional Disturbance	8.16	3.40	30.61	14.97
Specific Learning Disability	7.29	3.11	12.83	5.93
Source: Holzman 2004:45.				

Theme Five: Schools use zero tolerance to dodge their own duties

Schools avoid their responsibilities when they engage in any of the following actions: ousting youth with problems instead of addressing those problems; exchanging the presence of security officers for the powerful influence of strong bonds with caring adults; and substituting punishment for prevention, with the result that they frequently—even absurdly—punish the trivial, while they also allow life-threatening danger to escape notice until it is too late.

One distressing trend is the egregious misapplication of the principle of zero tolerance to trivial conduct. Examples include the cases of "a six-year-old student… arrested for trespassing on school property… [while] walking through the school yard, after school hours, on his way home," and "two elementary school boys [who] were arrested and charged with terroristic threatening for playing cops and robbers with a paper gun."[90]Advocates decry "the shift of school discipline for trivial incidents from principals' offices to police stations and courtrooms."[91] And, in statistics like the following, they report a nationwide rise in "criminalization" of behaviors traditionally handled by schools themselves: "[I]n 2002, of the 4,002 arrests of youths by Houston Independent School District Police, 660, or almost 17 percent, were for disruption (disruptive activities, disruption of classes, and disruption of transportation). Another 1,041 arrests, or 26 percent, were for disorderly conduct."[92] The Houston experience sits within the context that, under Texas law, intentional conduct to disrupt classes is a misdemeanor, a crime, and includes "enticing another student to 'cut' class."[93]

Criminalization of the trivial stands in sharp contrast to failure to detect the deadly. Writing for a law journal, Zweifler and DeBeers (advocates for students in Michigan) point out a pattern of failure to detect clear signals of life-threatening danger: "In most cases, the assailant-to-be had exhibited clear signals of the impending aggression. For instance, Kip Kinkel, the fifteen-year-old high school student whose shooting rampage left his parents and two of his classmates dead and another 22 students injured, had read a passage of his journal about killing other students out loud in school. He was caught with a gun the day before the shooting and was

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[90] Browne 2003: 11, endnotes omitted.

[91] Advancement Project 2005: 12.

[92] Advancement Project 2005: 15.

[93] Browne 2003: 38.

subsequently expelled from school. No one intervened either before or after the expulsion, thereby further marginalizing an already angry and frustrated young man."[94]

One critic, Snell, has reported how a school district topped off its failure to protect students from real harm—and to afford them transfer to safer schools—by charging the responsible adults in their lives with allowing truancy when they kept the students home from school for their safety. In the troubled urban district, a 12-year-old and her classmates were locked by their irritated gym teacher in the boys' locker room where two boys pinned her down and fondled her for ten minutes. The girl was left with her assault unacknowledged by the principal, denied a transfer out of the school, and subjected to confrontations with other boys after the incident. She was finally kept at home by her mother, who then received a court summons for truancy. A grandmother of a youth whose nose was broken and teeth chipped when two boys hit him in the face was similarly "charged with allowing truancy while she sought permission for… [her grandson] to complete his senior year studies at home."[95]

There are, however, compelling arguments for ways to change how schools approach safety. Observing that "[z]ero tolerance policies inherently conflict with prescriptions for healthy child development" and the powerful influence of strong bonds with caring adults, the authors of an advocacy report, *Opportunities Suspended: The Devastating Consequences of Zero Tolerance and School Discipline*, quote James Comer and Alvin Poussaint in *Raising Black Children* as follows, "When parents, teachers, principals, and others convey to the child that we want you, like you, and would like to have you in this school and this classroom, but there are certain things we expect of you, the response is often miraculous."[96]

Conduct disorder in boys between the ages of 12 and 17 is associated with carrying concealed guns, and carrying a gun can be considered symptomatic of conduct disorder.[97] While carrying a gun was explicitly found not to predict violence, the research suggests a preventive—rather than punitive—measure to protect both safety and boys' futures: give boys who either are found with concealed weapons or show signs of behavioral problems caring attention and referral for diagnosis and care.

The director of social services in the New Orleans school district noted in an interview that the videotaped incident of the handcuffed kindergartner could not have occurred in his district. "His district has been using a national nonvio-lent-crisis-intervention program since the mid-1990s. The program—created by the Crisis Prevention Institute, Inc., a Brookfield, Wis.-based organization that promotes non-violent approaches to managing disruptive behavior—trains educators and security personnel in how to deal with disruptive or unruly students, as well as how to use physical restraints effectively as a last resort."[98]

Theme Six: Tough discipline has supporters

The perceptions and rationales of supporters of discipline cannot be ignored. Advocates maintain that public perception of danger in schools is trumping the statistics about school safety,[99] statistics such as a 2002 U.S. Department of Justice finding that "90 percent of our schools are free from serious crime."[100] Supporters of a law-and-order approach say that legal restraints make it difficult for teachers to manage unruly pupils on their own;[101] that administrators must protect schools from suit for failure to prevent injury or death;[102] and that carefully crafted "we-mean-business" disciplinary policies can deter misconduct, avert tragedy, and bring harmony and better security to the learning environment.[103] For example, the principal of a New York City high school where major crime was down by 43 percent and overall crime was down by 33 percent compared to the prior year applauds having more "safety agents"[104] and policy directives, from suspending students who are "chronically disruptive" or show "a consistent pattern of cutting classes" to banning hats.[105] The school system's newsletter article on these sterner measures seems to take for granted that schools have become venues for crime and not just learning.

Options for Action

The literature offers explicit recommendations from advocates, ideas that can be translated into recommendations for both substance and process, and illustrations of failures to follow legal mandates in practice. Using these as thought-starters, advocates for zero-tolerance reform on behalf of young minority males—and all youth—could devise recommendations for state policymakers in both the legislative and executive branches and package them as a guide for the following:

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[94] Zweifler and DeBeers 2002: 193.

[95] Snell 2004: paragraph 3.

[96] Advancement Project and the Civil Rights Project 2000: 9.

[97] Loeber et al. 2004.

[98] Hurst 2005: 'Unappreciated Problem' paragraph 6.

[99] Advancement Project 2005.

[100] Zweifler and DeBeers 2002: 193.

[101] Hurst 2005.

[102] Browne 2003; Advancement Project and the Civil Rights Project 2000.

[103] Advancement Project 2005.

[104] School safety agents in New York City are "authorized to make arrests but not carry weapons." Browne 2003: 17.

[105] New York City Department of Education 2005.

1. Oversight or investigative hearings on zero tolerance by legislative committees and a state's highest education authority intended to launch a course of state action. The guide would identify, for example, what data to ask for, what questions to ask of whom, what the experience in other states has been, sources of expert opinion, and best practices as points of comparison.

2. Model state law and regulations.[106]

3. Model state methods of oversight of local districts' policies and practices relevant to zero tolerance.

4. Model state methods of guidance to local administrators and law enforcement.

Consolidating recommendations into a package that pinpoints who should do what to undertake reform of zero tolerance policy and practice would have two important purposes: to stimulate engagement of policymakers in learning what is actually happening in their states[107] and to facilitate practical action by all those who are, together, necessary for the implementation of solutions that work—that is, action that encompasses the many forks in the road where young men of color may be pushed down paths to damaged futures.

Three keys to lasting and meaningful change are *policymaker engagement, reform throughout the spectrum of policies and practices,* and *ongoing monitoring* of the implementation of reformed policies and practices and their impact on the status of minority male students. Monitoring might be incorporated into the frameworks set up for reporting Adequate Yearly Progress under the No Child Left Behind Act. The following are critical policy and practice reforms to consider:

• Narrow the application of zero tolerance to only serious threats, prevent district-by-district expansion of the policy's scope, use arrests only in extreme circumstances, provide (as 35 states do) for case-by-case exceptions to mandatory expulsions for guns, and ensure that administrators implement the exception provision.

• Mandate collection and reporting of sufficient demographic and other data on arrests in schools,

expulsions, and suspensions to support ongoing monitoring of fairness, effectiveness, disparate impact, and other variables by local oversight committees, state education authorities, legislative committees, researchers, advocates, and the public.

• Condition school funding on reductions in suspensions, expulsions, arrests, and disparate impacts of disciplinary actions and require schools to document exhaustion of in-school alternatives before resorting to expulsion.

• Issue clear guidelines to students, parents, school personnel, and police regarding what constitutes an offense and what disciplinary actions (expulsion, suspension, referral to the police, summons/ticket/citation, arrest) can or must be applied to specific offenses. Make unambiguously clear to school administrators which administrative sanctions are mandatory and which are discretionary.

• Provide special training to police officers with responsibilities in schools.

• Establish local school discipline oversight committees that include parents and students and have the scope and information necessary to address fairness and nondiscrimination in school practices.

• Guarantee expelled students referral to and placement and tracking of their progress in free, accessible, appropriate, standards-based, public alternative education and ensure the opportunity for re-admission to the expelling school.

• Ensure—through substantive law, funding formulas, and annual appropriations—the availability of alternative education and sufficient support for prevention and intervention programs and guidance counselors in alternative and regular schools.

• Afford due process for suspension and expulsion and free legal representation for indigent youth in court proceedings that may produce a juvenile or criminal record or time in jail.

• Ensure students *Miranda* protection—and, preferably, the presence of a parent or attorney—during questioning by school administrators or security guards that is equivalent to questioning by police.

• Require referral of students by schools and law enforcement officers to programs that are alternatives to suspensions, expulsions, and arrests in certain circumstances. (A model is the Diversion and Early

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[106] It might further be recommended that particular national organizations draft a model state law and regulations.

[107] Michigan offers a timely and heartening example. In May 2005, the Student Advocacy Center of Michigan released *Nowhere To Go: The Devastating Journey of Youth Expelled from Michigan School*, written by a graduate student at the University of Michigan. Based on interviews, the report exposed the lack of alternative education for expelled students, as well as other problems. The State Board of Education asked the Michigan Department of Education for recommendations for new policies, which the Board expected to begin drafting in July 2005. *Gongwer Michigan Report* 2005: 5.

Behavioral Intervention Initiative of the Baltimore School Police.) Establish a norm of providing substance abuse treatment for children and youth found to possess illegal substances.

• Adopt best practices for conflict management and resolution of incidents of misconduct, using means that foster cooperative learning environments and cause the least disruption in the course of every child's education. Adopt, commit to, and adequately support prevention and intervention programs that are tailored to address the most common incidents in schools and that are proven to be effective (e.g., Peer Juries and Community Panels for Youth).

• Proactively identify children with disabilities and children who exhibit risk indicators and ensure that school districts are implementing the Child Find provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997.

IV. CONCLUSION

Clearly, there is an urgent need to write and adjust education reform policies that, while well-intentioned, are having a negative impact upon life options for young men of color. The effects of high-stakes testing, school finance, literacy, teacher recruitment and preparation, and zero-tolerance policies create an imperative for intervention on behalf of vulnerable youth. This paper has provided analysis and options for actions by both policymakers and practitioners. Its findings are integrated into the final report of the Joint Center Health Policy Institute's Dellums Commission.

APPENDIX 1
Models and Opportunities
for Partnership Pipeline Programming
for Boys and Young Men of Color

1. Carnegie Corporation Findings

In a 1994 study of risk and opportunity during out-of-school hours, the Carnegie Corporation came out in favor of "a strong support system for youth in school facilities from early morning until evening hours." The study's recommendations include the following:

- Recognize joint opportunities to apply and extend what is learned in schools.

- Expand school operating hours and enable community groups to use school facilities before, during, and after school hours, including weekends and summers.[108]

The study also encouraged schools to recognize what other organizations can do for youth in non-school hours and to facilitate involvement of "community youth organizations, libraries, parks and recreation departments, health agencies, businesses, and institutions of higher education."[109]

2. 21st Century Community Learning Centers

The most important feature of these entities is that they are supported by a federal funding stream. The No Child Left Behind Act opened the door for community- and faith-based organizations and other non-school entities to be Community Learning Center grantees. In other words, organizations with different constituencies, skills, interests, and perspectives can be involved and funded. The NCLB devolved administration of grants for Community Learning Centers to the states. Although state agencies obviously have to conform to federal requirements, they have some discretion, which means that their exercise of discretion could be a target for future policy recommendations.

A center could, in concept, be an organizational focal point for collaborative programming reaching beyond the school environment to address the unique cultural and developmental needs of minority males, along with their academic needs. As explained on the Web site of a regional laboratory of the U.S. Department of Education:

The original intent of the U.S. Department of Education's 21st CCLC program was to utilize schools in a variety of ways and at a variety of times for the benefit of the entire community. The idea was to form a true Community Learning Center (CLC). The CLC would provide educational and enrichment opportunities for youth and adults in the community and would not close its doors when school gets out every afternoon. Rather, the center would offer activities in the mornings, evenings, and even on weekends. The center would be a place for community members to come together to learn and better their own lives, as well as to help better the lives of others in their community. Generally school-based, these learning centers can provide safe, drug-free, supervised and cost-effective after-school, weekend or summer havens for children, youth, and their families. Community Learning Centers provide a safe place for youth. This is especially critical during the after-school hours when juvenile crime, violence, injury, and teen sexual activity are at a peak.[110]

Note that this paper and appendix do not provide information from evaluations of how well the Community Learning Centers are doing to date.

3. Communities In Schools® National

This organization is a long-established nonprofit with operations and projects in 28 states. It annually provides two million young people with access to services and is experienced in public-private collaboration for students at risk. Its "five basics" are "a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult, a safe place to learn and grow, a healthy start and a healthy future, a marketable skill to use upon graduation, and a chance to give back to peers and community."[111] In California, the organization's partnership approach has been taken to a higher level. There, an affiliate of the national organization provides financial and programming support to a public alternative middle school, the San Francisco 49ers Academy, serving at-risk children with personalized education that includes, *inter alia*, single-gender instruction.[112] Communities In Schools National has recently launched a three-year public awareness campaign about obstacles facing children. With its established relationships, this organization could be engaged to focus on minority males.

4. ENLACE

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation's national initiative, ENLACE, supports community-school partnerships to encourage Hispanic and Latino/a youth to thrive in school and prepare for college. ENLACE stands for ENgaging LAtino Communities for Education.

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[108] Evans and Bechtel 1997: 2, reporting on Carnegie Corporation 1994.

[109] Evans and Bechtel 1997: 2.

[110] Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory 2005.

[111] Communities In Schools n.d.

[112] San Francisco 49ers Academy n.d.

Family Resource Centers, New Mexico — The ENLACE Family Centers have gained Governor Bill Richardson's approval to go statewide in New Mexico. The state recently awarded $710,000 to ENLACE for its expansion, with $1.2 million planned for the family centers next year. Created by and for parents, the school-based family centers have won the governor's support "as an important option for New Mexico families and students who are looking for support to stay in school and prepare for college."[113] The family center model has established a track record in dropout prevention and gained positive media coverage as an innovation creating hope in public education.

The Santa Ana Partnership, California — Considered an exemplar within ENLACE, the Santa Ana Partnership has been built up over 22 years with public and private funding and the participation of dedicated people and organizations. It stands for the proposition that a very complex partnership can be created, survive, and mature when people and organizations are committed enough to the futures of minority youth to lift themselves above their turf wars and differences in personal and organizational cultures. The data show that the Santa Ana Partnership has delivered on cutting and clearing pathways for Hispanic-Latino/a youth and their families. With an impressive array of innovations enabled by its programmatic complexity and the variety of its partners, the Santa Ana Partnership offers young people a comprehensive continuum of opportunities and supports that interlace P-16 students, two public universities, a community college, a school system, parents, community volunteers, and community-based organizations.[114]

5. African American Male Initiative of the University System of Georgia

The legislature and the top leadership of this multi-institutional public system laid the groundwork for a multi-sector collaborative approach to increasing the number of African American males entering higher education. As McKinney and Randolph-Back explain, "The chancellor and board secured a line item from the legislature to inaugurate the initiative, and top executives and board members participated in the task force that researched the

field and devised recommendations issued in 2003."[115] The collaborative approach includes partnering with the state department of education to increase the number of African American male teachers in K-12 classrooms and supporting programs to build the pipeline to college that involve families, communities, schools, and colleges. The task force identified exemplary pipeline programs around the nation.

6. Gentlemen on the Move

This program was created by Dr. Deryl Bailey, an enterprising high school counselor who later moved to the faculty of the University of Georgia and brought the program with him. Gentlemen on the Move is one of the exemplary programs listed by the University System of Georgia task force. As described by McKinney and Randolph-Back, "The program provides high school students with weekly intensive sessions on academics and social skills, a summer academy, a Saturday academy, lock-ins before mid-year and final exams, community service, tutoring after school, counseling services, and a Parent Support Network. It is built around the principles of parental involvement and comprehensive support, including group and individual counseling, for students' development as well-rounded young men. Thus, the range of activities includes camping, field trips, [and] exercises in team building and communication. Participants' success is measured quantitatively and qualitatively and includes earning higher scores on exams than were earned by students with comparable semester test averages and enrolling in more advanced college preparatory courses than comparable nonparticipating males enroll in."[116] A moving testimonial shows that Dr. Bailey's dedication to the participants has been pivotal to changing their life courses and putting them securely on pathways to success:

> Despite all of the wonderful things that Dr. Bailey and Gentlemen on the Move have provided for me, perhaps the biggest example of Dr. Bailey's dedication to me was his assistance with my college application process. Being the first person in my family to go to college, I had no idea what an SAT was, how to take one, and what to do after that. It was Dr. Bailey who told me the dates of the test and how to sign up. Some people may say that as a guidance counselor he was just doing his job. But when I was told by one university to go to junior college due to the combination of my low GPA and SAT score, it was Dr. Bailey that helped me devise a plan. He printed out a list of every Historically Black University in the country and told me to call every one until I had a college acceptance. When I finally got a yes the admission's counselor told me, 'I don't know who this

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[113] Gov. Bill Richardson 2005, quoted in W. K. Kellogg Foundation 2005.

[114] A very informative case study, The Santa Ana Partnership, is available at http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/YouthED/Santa_Ana_Case_Study_00252_03796.pdf or can be ordered from the Foundation. Pages 41 through 43 of the publication contain matrices that lay out the comprehensive continuum. Page 6 has a chronology of funding and developments. From the perspective of formulating policy recommendations, it is important to note from the chronology the staying power the partnership has through attracting public and private grants.

[115] McKinney and Randolph-Back 2004: 27.

[116] McKinney and Randolph-Back 2004: 34.

Dr. Bailey is but he sure is in your corner.' Dr. Bailey had spoken to the admissions counselor, and I was now going to college.

All of the examples of Dr. Bailey's dedication are too numerous to name. As he walked with me and continues to walk with me on the path of manhood, each accomplishment and disappointment has taught me a valuable lesson. It may sound cliché but hard work, love, respect, and the opportunities to have someone believe in you are the beautiful gifts that Dr. Bailey and Gentlemen on the Move have provided to so many others and me. I am not minimizing the fruits of my own hard work but I know that as I write this letter a successful, God fearing man that has started my own family, I could not have achieved these things without Dr. Bailey's dedication to me before I was dedicated to myself. Dr. Bailey's efforts with Gentlemen on the Move were not just a phase in my life that got left behind when I made it to the next level, but a legacy that I will take with me a lifetime and pass on to my children.[117]

7. Young Leaders' Academy, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

The University System of Georgia task force also identified the academy as exemplary. McKinney and Randolph-Back provide the following description: "Launched in 1993 with funding from the community's foundation, school system, and chamber of commerce, this nonprofit partners with 29 inner city schools, universities, community service groups, and national organizations, such as America's Promise… and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (a funder of the Social Development Strategy discussed below). A winner of $50,000 from Oprah's Angel Network, the Academy is sustained by major national and local donors as well as small contributions from individuals. Boys chosen by elementary school principals can begin as early as third grade and continue until high school graduation. The program components are a summer academy, Saturday academy, mentoring, tutoring after school, community service, and a parental support network. In their final four years as a Young Leader, boys benefit from college and life-skills preparation and participation in a corporate internship."[118]

8. Eagle Academy for Young Men, Bronx, NY

Opened in 2004, this public school for 100 students is one of 75 New Century High Schools in New York City.[119] These schools are operated under the aegis of New Visions

for Public Schools, a community advocacy organization, and are created and run by partnerships between a wide range of nonprofit organizations and the school system that are funded in part by a philanthropic consortium.[120] A burgeoning supply of new, small, theme-based schools is being created by breaking apart large schools, dismantling their bureaucratic structures, and conferring autonomy on principals in exchange for accountability.[121] By design, the lead private partners at the various schools are not just assigned peripheral roles or confined to offering supplemental services. The lead partner at the Eagle Academy is One Hundred Black Men of New York City.[122] The vision is that, through this organization, every young man in the academy has access to a mentor. In addition to the mentoring program, the school's special programs are a Saturday institute and an extended-day program.[123]

9. Research Identifies Pivotal Points on Educational Trajectory

The Pew Hispanic Center has sponsored research using the National Education Longitudinal Survey and other sources to delineate the low educational trajectories of Hispanic young people.[124] One of the study's virtues is that it identifies with great specificity the factors and turning points that influence rates of enrollment in and graduation from college among Hispanic youth. Delaying entry to college or choosing an open enrollment or nonselective institution when one is qualified for a selective institution does, in fact, have implications for youth, for example. Programs to encourage young men of color to plan positive futures could make excellent use of this kind of information for the purpose of providing guidance to youth and tracking program performance in putting young men on the paths best calculated to produce success.[125]

10. Communities That Care: Risk-Focused Prevention Using the Social Development Strategy

Often called the Hawkins-Catalano model after its developers, David Hawkins and Richard Catalano of the University of Washington, the Social Development Strategy is evidence-based. Federal and state grant programs use it for Communities That Care—a model for broad, multi-sector action collaboratives in communities—to

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[117] McKinney and Randolph-Back: 40, quoting Bailey n.d.

[118] McKinney and Randolph-Back 2004: 34. See the program's informative website at: http://www.youngleaders.org/.

[119] New Visions for Public Schools, Facts 2005.

[120] New Visions for Public Schools, FAQ 2005.

[121] Gross 2005.

[122] New Visions for Public Schools, Bronx Schools 2005.

[123] New York City Department of Education, the Eagle Academy for Young Men 2005.

[124] Fry 2004.

[125] McKinney and Randolph-Back 2004.

reduce problem behaviors among adolescents, especially substance abuse, crime, and delinquency. In essence, the evidence is that youth with significant risk factors for these behaviors in their lives can gain enough resilience from protective factors to avoid the behaviors nonetheless. Both risk factors and protective factors have cumulative effects. Because the risk and protective factors arise in four domains—individual/peer group, family, school, and community—the involvement of people and organizations from different sectors is needed to fully realize the model's

potential. The protective factors include social bonding through attachment and commitment, healthy beliefs, and clear standards. As McKinney and Randolph-Back find, "Bringing multiple protective factors into multiple domains of a young person's life yields greater protection. A systems approach that connects and coordinates efforts in multiple domains stands a better chance of spinning a web of protective factors than do isolated efforts."[126] Such a systemic approach could aim to construct a pipeline or pathway for safe passage through perilous environments to college or a career.

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[126] McKinney and Randolph-Back 2004: 38.

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This list includes references for this paper as well as for a deep background appendix published separately on the Joint Center's Web site at www.jointcenter.org. The web-published appendix provides extensive information on eight of the nine topics discussed in this paper (the ninth topic, zero tolerance, is treated at length in this paper). This reference list is also available online.

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Kay Randolph-Back is a consultant in health policy. From 1993 to 2003, she served as program analyst in health programming at the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Previously, her career was in state government in Michigan where she was health consultant to the health and social services committee in the Senate, served the directors of three executive departments as special assistant in the areas of health and human services law and policy, actively developed legislative and executive proposals, and staffed two gubernatorial blue-ribbon commissions, one concerning Medicaid and health care cost containment, the other, welfare reform. She has also been senior policy analyst at the New York Academy of Medicine and public policy director for the statewide work of an anti-hunger coalition.

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The mission of the Joint Center Health Policy Institute (HPI) is to ignite a "Fair Health" movement that gives people of color the inalienable right to equal opportunity for healthy lives. HPI's goal is to help communities of color identify short- and long-term policy objectives and related activities in key areas. The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies is a national, nonprofit research and public policy institution. Founded in 1970 by black intellectuals and professionals to provide training and technical assistance to newly elected black officials, the Joint Center is recognized today as one of the nation's premier think tanks on a broad range of public policy issues of concern to African Americans and other communities of color.

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