

blackboysreport.org

July 25, 2008

More than a half-century after *Brown v. Board of Education*, the nation's urban public school systems continue to be a pipeline to failure for most Black male students, a report by the Schott Foundation for Public Education finds. The full data set is available online at www.blackboysreport.org.

Entitled "Given Half a Chance: The Schott 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males," the report was announced at a press briefing at the Unity '08 Convention, the nation's largest gathering of journalists of color. Dr. John H. Jackson, President & CEO, Schott Foundation for Public Education, was flanked by national leaders Marc H. Morial, President & Chief Executive Officer, National Urban League, William Schroeder of Sullivan & Cromwell, Nicole Campbell, Vice President, Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation and the Chief Executive Officer, Chicago Public Schools Arne Duncan. These experts presented a course of action in response to the report's state-by-state analysis, which reveals a racial gap in the treatment and achievement levels of Black male students.

"This report sheds light on a national crisis, and puts valuable information into the hands of public school advocates and stakeholders, who can use it to hold the stewards of the nearly 15,000 U.S. school districts accountable for eradicating systemic failure as well as open avenues of opportunity to millions of Black male students," said Jackson.

Current inequities in our school systems deny equal rights to a quality education, because many Black males have little choice but to attend substandard schools with overcrowded classrooms, placing them squarely on a path to failure, the report finds.

Among the study findings are these:

- Only 47% of Black male students nationwide graduate from high school on time.
- Forty-six percent of male Black students nationally score at or above basic Grade 8 level in reading and math.
- The million Black male students enrolled in New York, Florida, and Georgia public high schools are twice as likely not to graduate with their class as do their White peers.
- Nevada and Florida graduated just over one-third of their Black male students on schedule, while Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, South Carolina, and Wisconsin graduated fewer Black males with their peer group than the national average.
- Nationally, nearly three times as many male Black students are expelled or given out-of-school suspensions as would be appropriate, given their share of enrollments. According to the report, suspensions are an efficient means to close off educational opportunities for Black youth.

“We are going to disrupt this trajectory,” said Marc H. Morial, National Urban League President and CEO. “The U.S. is in a global economic battle for our future. We need everybody, including every African American boy and man engaged.”

This issue is important to the nation as a whole because the failure to adequately educate more than half of a generation of Black males places increased pressure on society, the report points out. Inequitable resources, biased policies, and unfair institutional decisions push Black male students out of school and into the streets or into jail.

Arne Duncan, Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools said, “This is not just about education. This is a fight for social justice.” He noted however, progress of the past five years in the Chicago Public Schools including more than double the number of African American males taking and passing Advanced Placement courses. “We’ve got to be talking about these students going to college,” he added.

“The data are compelling, there is a pipeline crisis, but we know what to do and what works,” said William Schroeder, of Sullivan & Cromwell. “We need to look at early childhood education; criminal and juvenile justice systems and we need to develop employment opportunities.”

“Private sector partnerships are essential,” said Nicole Campbell, Vice President, Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation. She thanked the Schott Foundation for its “rigorous research” and added that “investing in Black males is a strategy that delivers.”

“This systemic failure has far-reaching consequences,” Dr. Jackson said. “The tangible result is that Black males have fewer educational qualifications, earn much less than their White counterparts, are many times more likely to be sent to jail for longer periods than others, and die much earlier.”

The report also offers educational success stories, citing examples of counties that have sustained positive results due to unbiased institutional decision making.

- This year the public schools in Fort Bend, Texas enrolled over 10,000 male Black students, graduating over 80% on time, a graduation rate identical to the district’s graduation rate for male White, non-Hispanic students.
- Two large suburban Maryland districts - Baltimore and Montgomery counties - have large Black enrollments and graduate male Black students with their peers at a rate comparable to the national average for White, non-Hispanic male students.
- The state of New Jersey, as a whole, graduates its male Black students at the same rate as the national average for White, non-Hispanic male students.

For the 50-state data set and further information, visit www.blackboysreport.org or www.schottfoundation.org.