



IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR  
YOUNG MEN OF COLOR IN HOUSTON

## LOCAL ACTION PLAN 2015



BROTHER'S KEEPER  
HOUSTON

[WWW.MBKHOUSTON.ORG](http://WWW.MBKHOUSTON.ORG)



The City of Houston accepted  
the President's Challenge to  
become a MBK Community in  
September 2014.

HERE IS OUR JOURNEY



**HOUSTON HEALTH**  
DEPARTMENT

**H**ouston is a city of opportunity. Individuals and families who live in this part of Southeast Texas recognize its unlimited potential for growth. Houston is a hub for ideas, inventions, and investment. With the world-renowned Texas Medical Center, multiple recognized institutions of higher education, and the thriving Port of Houston, individuals and companies are able to flourish in this environment of innovation. Not only is Houston the energy capital, it is a city driven by human capital. Investing in people ensures Houston's prosperity. Investments of time, energy, and resources must continue in education, health, employment, and various other fields, to support the growth of individuals and families.

Despite the opportunities available, many individuals are left behind. Some children and youth face poverty, food insecurity, and abuse or violence. Unfortunately, the data has shown that these issues affect and impact the lives of many boys and young men of color.

An opportunity has risen for individuals and organizations to focus efforts on these issues and barriers that face boys and young men of color. When Mayor Annise Parker accepted President Barack Obama's My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge,

she recognized the potential of this initiative to expand opportunities for boys and young men of color, as well as young people across the city.

To lead the effort, Mayor Parker appointed Stephen L. Williams, Director of the City of Houston Department of Health and Human Services. Since September 2014, My Brother's Keeper Houston (MBK Houston) has worked with various individuals and organizations, including faith leaders, community members, non-profits, and businesses. These individuals and organizations have contributed time, expertise, and resources to develop a plan for removing barriers and providing solutions. The result is this document, the MBK Houston Local Action Plan.

As we entered the 21st century, Houston became the most ethnically diverse city in the United States. Houston celebrates the diversity of its people and values each individual's contribution to the city's growth. More than 75% of Houston's male youth 10-24 years of age are boys and young men of color. As Houston grows and prospers, the city cannot afford to leave them behind. MBK Houston will work to eliminate the burdens and barriers facing boys and young men of color and improve access to better opportunities and brighter futures.



# MY BROTHERS KEEPER HOUSTON

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# CITY OF HOUSTON

Office of the Mayor

**Annise D. Parker**

Mayor

P.O. Box 1562  
Houston, Texas 77251-1562

Greetings!

Houston has always been a city of opportunities, a city where dreams come true. With this in mind, I accepted the President's My Brother's Keeper's (MBK) Community Challenge last September. On November 13, 2014, the initial MBK Local Action Summit was convened with representatives from more than 75 Houston area non-profit, public, and private sector groups. Since then work has continued toward creating Houston's plan for answering the President's national call to action. This report represents the blueprint that will guide this project moving forward.

The goal of the MBK local initiative is to put in place the building blocks for a support system that will positively impact the lives of our boys and young men of color for years to come. It is essential that they have access to employment and educational opportunities. They also need to have safe environments in which to function.

As the mother of a man of young man of color, I know firsthand the impact a positive support system can have. That is why this program resonates with me. As we move forward, I anticipate there will be additional opportunities for other groups to participate. Congratulations on the progress to date. I can't wait for what is yet to come from the Houston MBK initiative!

Sincerely

*Annise D. Parker*

Annise D. Parker  
Mayor





# FROM THE DIRECTOR



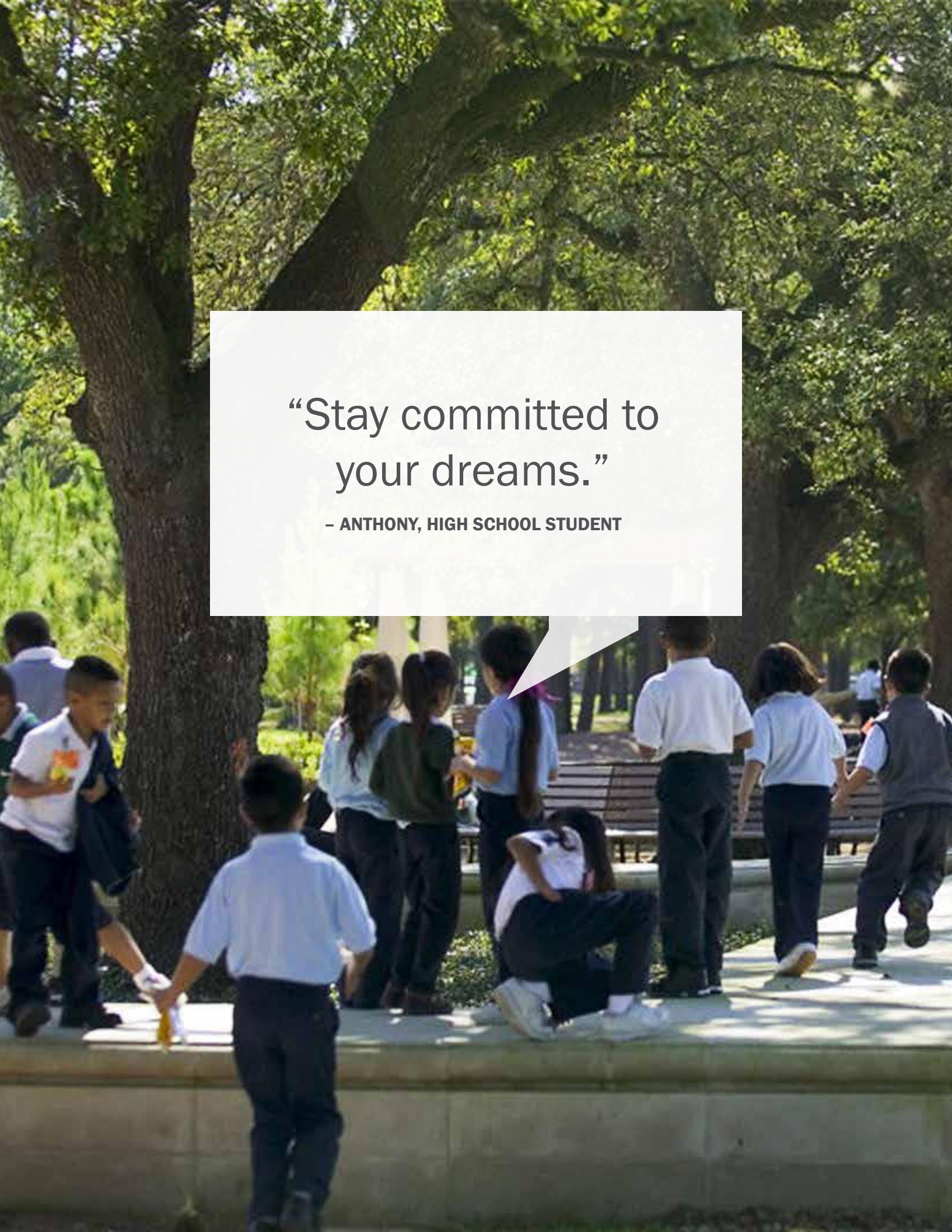
The Houston Department of Health and Human Services proudly accepted the charge to assist in the development of the Local Action Plan to address the barriers facing boys and young men of color in Houston. We look forward to engaging youth and parents who stand to benefit the most from this work. This will be an intentional interdisciplinary initiative to focus on improving life outcomes for all youth.

The work initiated with our boys and young men of color will be monumental and important to our future. Each milestone will benefit boys and young men of color and raise the ceiling of achievement for all children and youth.

The work proposed for boys and young men of color will become part of the fabric of all efforts in the city. I am grateful to all the organizations and individuals that came together to create this plan. We are looking forward to the many conversations and initiatives that will bring the plan to life. Improving opportunities and outcomes for boys and young men of color will result in better lives for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen L. Williams".

**Stephen L. Williams, M.Ed., M.P.A.**  
Director, City Of Houston  
City of Houston, Department of  
Health and Human Services



“Stay committed to  
your dreams.”

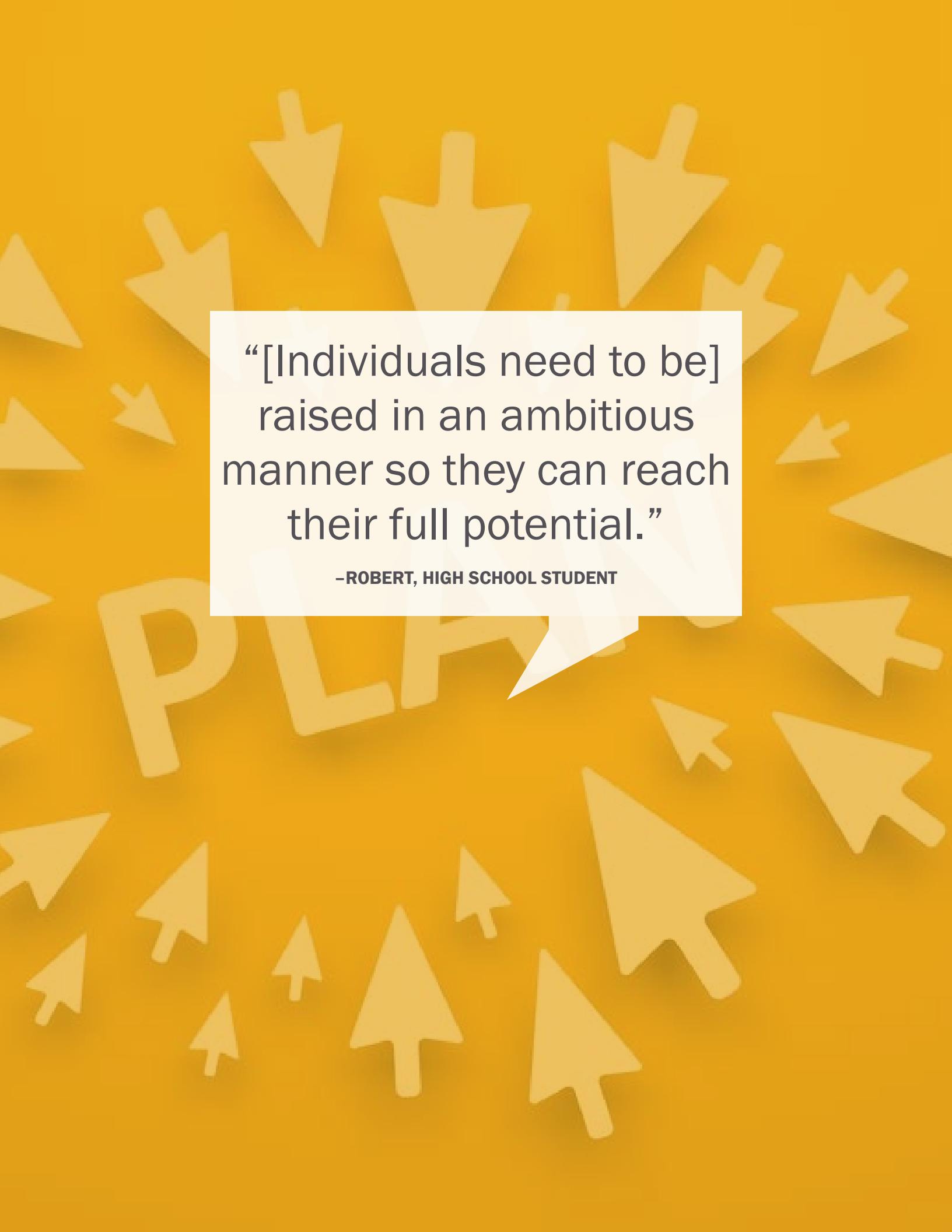
– ANTHONY, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT





**OVERVIEW**

**ON  
MEN**



“[Individuals need to be]  
raised in an ambitious  
manner so they can reach  
their full potential.”

-ROBERT, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

PLP

# ABOUT MY BROTHERS KEEPER



**In September 2014, President Barack Obama issued a challenge to cities, towns, counties, and tribal nations across the country to become My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Communities.**

The President's call to action charges participating entities to identify specific disparities facing young men of color and to enact policies, develop programs, and expand partnerships that offset those challenges.

Poverty, low graduation rates, and residence in high crime areas are burdens that minority communities face nationwide. Presently, 23.2% of Hispanics and 25.8% of Black Americans live in poverty, compared to 11.6% of White Americans.<sup>1</sup> Dropout rates among boys and young men of color are as high as 50% in some school districts across the country.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, although Black males account for 6% of the total population, they were 43% of the murder victims

in 2011.<sup>3</sup> These staggering statistics frame a real crisis facing many boys and young men of color. Perhaps most importantly, the data also reveals tremendous opportunities for designated MBK communities.

MBK Local Action Plans are coherent cradle-to-college-and-career strategies which MBK communities can implement to bolster appropriate and timely support and resources for young men of color. MBK implementation can significantly improve the likelihood of their personal, academic, and professional success.

The Local Action Plan for Houston focuses on six key milestones which, once engaged, will enrich the lives of boys and young men of color throughout the greater Houston area.

# milestones





BROTHER'S KEEPER  
HOUSTON

# MY BROTHER'S KEEPER ESTABLISHED SIX MILESTONES FOR ACHIEVEMENT FOR BOYS AND YOUNG MEN OF COLOR.

This local action plan for has been developed to ACHIEVE THESE MILESTONES for Houston's boys and young men of color.



## **ENTERING SCHOOL READY TO LEARN**

Close the word gap and support enriching home environments

Implement universal early health and developmental screenings

Ensure access to high-quality early care and education

Invest in a high-quality workforce of early childhood teachers

Eliminate suspensions and expulsions in early learning settings

**TARGET  
AGE 0-5**



## **READING AT GRADE LEVEL BY THIRD GRADE**

Promote family-school-community partnerships to support joint book reading and in-home literacy

Bring successful evidence-based practices to scale

**TARGET  
GRADE K-3**



## **GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL READY FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER**

Create the conditions for high-quality education for all

Increase student attendance and reduce dropouts – especially among the most vulnerable, such as foster and homeless youth

Accelerate efforts to transform high schools with the lowest graduation rates

Promote the use of alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices

Increase access to and success in rigorous coursework

**TARGET  
GRADE 4-12TH**

# 4

## **COMPLETING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION OR TRAINING**

Improve college advising services and support tools

Aim higher in high school by encouraging completion of financial aid and post-secondary applications

Expand access to early college, dual enrollment, Advanced Placement / International Baccalaureate courses, and rigorous college prep

**TARGET  
AGE 18+**

# 5

## **SUCCESSFULLY ENTERING THE WORKFORCE**

Implement broad growth and opportunity agenda

Increase entry-level job opportunities, mentorship, job training, and apprenticeship options

Expand and improve summer jobs initiatives

**TARGET  
AGE 18+**

# 6

## **REDUCING CRIME AND VIOLENCE AND PROVIDING A SECOND CHANCE**

Reduce violence in high-risk areas by integrating public health approaches

Reform the juvenile and criminal justice systems to keep youth and young adults on track

Foster neighborhood-oriented law enforcement strategies

Eliminate unnecessary barriers to reentry and encourage fair chance hiring options

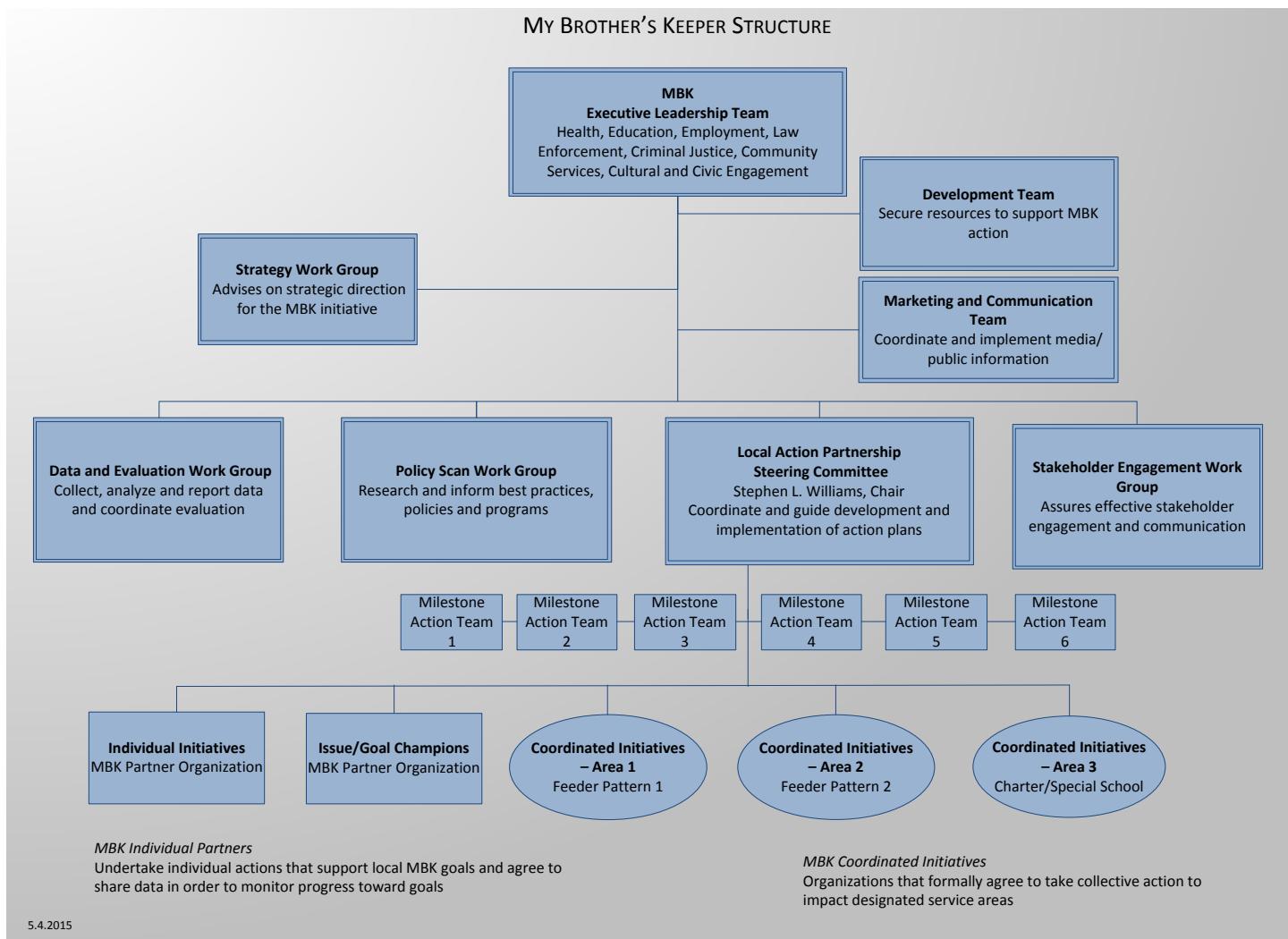
Address the possibility of disproportionate minority contact

Improve data

**TARGET  
ALL**

# STRUCTURE

**Many community partners have joined** and committed their time, resources, and passions to help form the MBK Houston Local Action Plan.



# EXECUTIVE TEAM

## LEADERSHIP TEAM

### **DR. JULIE BAKER FINCK**

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Houston Visitors Bureau  
My Brother's Keeper (national)  
White House

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## **DESIGNER**

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Stephanie Coleman

“There is a need for more programs where there are people...motivating you to do better for yourself.”

– FRANK, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT



# LOCAL ACTION PLAN BACKGROUND



**My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Local Action Summit was convened on November 13, 2014. More than 200 representatives from the non-profit, public, and private sectors responded to the President's call to action.**

Multiple work groups and teams were formed to work on expanding opportunities for boys and young men of color and ensuring that all youth can reach their full potential. Focus groups and key informant interviews were conducted to provide a community voice to the process. Work group and community engagement sessions focused on answering the primary question: What are the challenges facing boys and young men of color and what are the

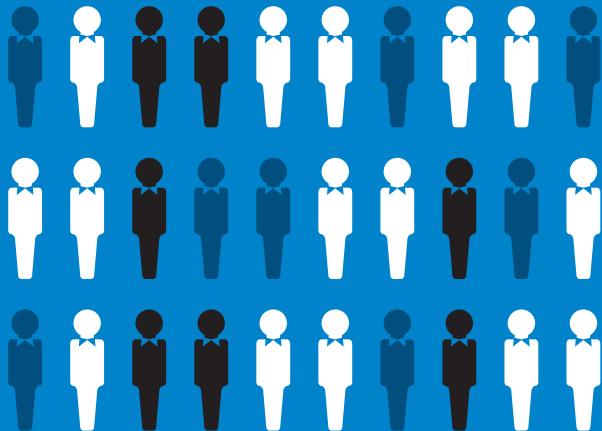
solutions that will help them achieve positive outcomes from birth to career?

This document is the proposed MBK Houston Local Action Plan and it is the culmination of many hours of input from many organizations and institutions, representing various sectors of Houston. Over the course of six months, Houstonians engaged in a series of important tasks, from gathering data and conducting policy scans to attending community focus groups and conceiving programs. Each of these tasks has been critical in drafting viable recommendations for improving the quality of life for boys and young men of color.

# LOCAL ACTION PLAN

## THE NEED

**Houston can benefit greatly from participation in the MBK Challenge**



More than **50%** of Houston's youth aged 10-24 years are Hispanic and a quarter are Black.

OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION RATES FOR SERIOUS OFFENSES ARE  
**2X HIGHER AMONG BLACK MALE YOUTH**  
COMPARED TO WHITE MALE YOUTH.

BLACK MALES ARE  
**7X**  
MORE LIKELY TO HAVE AN ENCOUNTER WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT THAN WHITE MALES.

HISPANIC MALES WERE ALMOST  
**3X MORE LIKELY TO BE UNINSURED**  
THAN WHITE MALES.

**According to the 2015 national youth unemployment figures, nearly 1 in 5 teens who want to work don't have jobs.**

# LOCAL ACTION PLAN

## THE WORK



**Local Action Summit participants adopted an organizational framework which includes various work groups and teams that support a collective impact process. The MBK Houston collaborators will strive to bring a community wide solution to meet the scale of the challenge faced by some boys and young men of color.**

The Data and Evaluation, Policy Scan and Stakeholder Engagement work groups initiated the planning process. The Local Action Partnership Steering Committee and the Executive Leadership Team will provide support and guidance for the MBK work going forward. Six Milestone Action Teams have been formed from the Local Action Partnership Steering Committee to ensure that recommendations for each milestone are translated into action. Actions will be taken in selected school

feeder patterns and will be guided by the work of Area Action Teams. Other vital work such as generating resources and promoting the work of MBK Houston will be done by the Development and Marketing and Communications Team.

### **MBK HOUSTON LOCAL ACTION PLAN:**

Houston's action plan addresses all six MBK milestones. The MBK Local Action Plan is a culmination of the work of MBK Houston's Policy Scan, Data and Evaluation, and Stakeholder Engagement work groups. More than 20 recommendations were developed. The Local Action Partnership Steering Committee and the Executive Leadership Team reviewed and approved the MBK Houston Local Action Plan. The action plan includes six cross-cutting strategies and 20 recommendations for achieving the six MBK milestones.

# LOCAL ACTION PLAN

## CROSS-CUTTING STRATEGIES

**The MBK Houston Local Action Plan contains six cross-cutting strategies** that anchor the community improvement process for boys and young men of color across all six milestones.

### **1 ESTABLISH BASELINE DATA AND SUCCESS INDICATORS**

MBK Houston will determine baseline performance criteria and set measurable targets that are robust and practical. Data driven decision making will be foundational for determining community action.

### **2 BOLSTER PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT**

MBK Houston will encourage and facilitate parental participation by providing caregivers tools to support their children's academic and developmental progress and identify resources/services for meeting their children's psycho-social and developmental needs.

### **3 DRIVE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

MBK Houston will work to build and enhance partnerships that support achievement and ensure that the concerns and strengths of community organizations are central to implementation strategies.



## 4 PROMOTE IN-SCHOOL EFFORTS

MBK Houston will reinforce and enhance parallel efforts of the partner school districts. MBK Houston will work in tandem with existing initiatives to affect positive outcomes.

## 5 ENGAGE PROGRESS- MONITORING SYSTEMS

MBK Houston will focus on establishing early warning and intervention systems that prevent high-risk academic or disciplinary challenges from deteriorating into irreversibly negative outcomes. The system will be established across multiple domains including health, education, and justice.

## 6 ASSESS ACTION PLAN EFFECTIVENESS

MBK Houston will focus on doing what works and establish an evaluation framework and process to assess effectiveness and to report successes.

# LOCAL ACTION PLAN BY MILESTONES

## Recommendations by Milestone

The recommendations included in the MBK Houston Local Action Plan were developed as a result of the work of the Data and Evaluation, Policy Scan and Stakeholder Engagement work groups with input from the Local Action Partnership Steering Committee and the Executive Leadership Team.

*These recommendations were selected among many at a Policy Scan workgroup session as having the highest feasibility and potential impact. The 23 recommendations for action are presented on the next pages.*

### **1** MBK MILESTONE 1: ENTERING SCHOOL READY TO LEARN

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1.1**

Convene key stakeholders from education, childcare, and health to agree upon a best practice for a continuum of care, defined as the treatments and programs necessary to facilitate whole child development that will ensure school readiness.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1.2**

Develop and standardize

evidence-based metrics to evaluate school readiness to be used by early child care providers in education and health.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1.3**

Select and implement a recognized standard to ensure the quality of childcare providers and teachers.

### **2** MBK MILESTONE 2: READING AT GRADE LEVEL BY THIRD GRADE

#### **RECOMMENDATION 2.1**

Strengthen existing community-based nonprofit and private partnerships that include evidence-based wrap-around services, after school, summer school, and tutoring programs.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 2.2**

Connect in-school literacy programs to out-of-school services and support joint strategies that advance children's literacy.

**RECOMMENDATION 2.3**

Expand the number of children participating in high-quality full day pre-kindergarten programs.

**RECOMMENDATION 2.4**

Increase access to print and electronic books to K-3 children at home by connecting families to donation and reading support services.

## **3 MBK MILESTONE 3: GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL READY FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER**

**RECOMMENDATION 3.1**

Develop policies and practices around an early warning and response system that include whole child indicators and interventions, focused on reducing chronic absenteeism and exclusionary discipline.

**RECOMMENDATION 3.2**

Develop an evidence-based approved list of interventions for developing school environments that prepare students for college and career.

**RECOMMENDATION 3.3**

Partner with community-based organizations and businesses to increase experiential learning for student academic success and career exploration that includes socio-emotional support.

## **4 MBK MILESTONE 4: COMPLETING POST- SECONDARY EDUCATION OR TRAINING**

**RECOMMENDATION 4.1**

Increase the availability of non-academic skill development

programs for young men of color.

**RECOMMENDATION 4.2**

Increase the number of high school students that have access to college preparation services such as college entrance exam preparatory courses, in-school college counselors and financial aid assistance.

**RECOMMENDATION 4.3**

Expand and align career and technical education training received by young men of color with local, growth industries.

**RECOMMENDATION 4.4**

Increase the number of comprehensive initiatives with mentorship, coaching, and support opportunities for young men and boys of color in preparation for and during post-secondary education or training.

## **5 MBK MILESTONE 5: SUCCESSFULLY ENTER THE WORKFORCE**

**RECOMMENDATION 5.1**

Build partnerships among members of education, faith-based, business and other community organizations who provide information and training to ensure job readiness, leveraging existing resources within these organizations.

**RECOMMENDATION 5.2**

Provide enhanced work opportunities for young men of color in entrepreneurial small businesses.

**RECOMMENDATION 5.3**

Assure that minority owned businesses, if they are an appropriate fit, receive

consideration in contractual work, procurement and staffing.

## **6 MBK MILESTONE 6:S REDUCING CRIME AND VIOLENCE AND PROVIDING A SECOND CHANCE**

**RECOMMENDATION 6.1**

Develop a school-based early detection and intervention system of high risk youth that offer connections to services and support for parents.

**RECOMMENDATION 6.2**

Update evidence-based community policing such as procedural justice, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and Youth Empower Solutions (YES).

**RECOMMENDATION 6.3**

Improve the therapeutic environment in jails and juvenile placement via education, counseling, and reentry programs.

**RECOMMENDATION 6.4**

Increase parental supports and services, including family counseling, behavioral management, and socio-emotional support services.

**RECOMMENDATION 6.5**

Increase ability of parents to advocate on behalf of their children who are involved in the criminal justice system.

**RECOMMENDATION 6.6**

Educate the business community and local human resource industry of “Ban the Box” initiatives around the country.

# LOCAL ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



To bring these recommendations to action, members of the work groups and Local Action Partnership Steering Committee will work with an Area Action Team to implement community-based initiatives. The six Milestone Action Teams will take collaborative action to provide system-wide direction and support to achieve the action plan's recommendations.

The Milestone Action Teams will provide guidance and support to the Area Action Teams in each of the initial pilot areas, which includes the following HISD feeder patterns: Kashmere, Scarborough, and Wheatley High Schools. Each Area Action Team will consist of community members, educators, service providers, faith leaders, and youth.

## **Progress Monitoring and Evaluation**

In addition to expanding opportunities for boys and young men of color, MBK Houston will be data driven and focused on evaluation to assure that collective action is improving outcomes for boys and young men of color. A dashboard of key indicators will be developed to track progress toward moving the needle on the indicators that will demonstrate whether the community-wide action is achieving success.

# LOCAL ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

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**The MBK Houston Local Action Plan is the culmination of hours of work** from City of Houston staff and members of the Data and Evaluation, Policy Scan, Stakeholder Engagement, work groups with contributions by the Local Action Partnership Steering Committee and the Executive Leadership Team.

## **THE PLAN INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS:**

1. A detailed description of the steps taken to develop the plan
2. A report of data and information that validates the need and guides the work of MBK Houston
3. A detailed description of the MBK Houston recommendations
4. A report of how the geographic areas and school feeder patterns were selected and
5. An overview of the planned community improvement cycle and related geographical area implementation strategies.

# LOCAL ACTION PLAN PROCESS

**After the Local Action Summit, attendees volunteered for one of the three planning phase work groups.** The Policy Scan and Data and Evaluation work groups were the first to organize and to begin the planning process.

The Data and Evaluation work group solicited, collected, and analyzed relevant data regarding boys and young men of color in Houston.

The group also compiled a report, identifying success indicators.

One of the first actions of the Policy Scan work group was to identify community organizations and individual partners needed to establish a comprehensive knowledge base.

The work group was organized into four domains: health, education, justice, and employment. The domain groups met to identify and discuss local barriers and solutions for boys and young men of color.



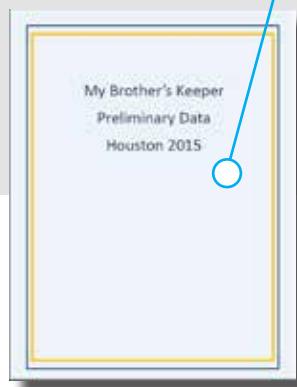
The following is a chronological recap of how the MBK Local Action Plan was developed from the work of the Data and Evaluation work group and the Policy Scan Work Group:

1

**DATA AND EVALUATION WORK GROUP MET BETWEEN DECEMBER 2014 AND FEBRUARY 2015.**

2

**THE GROUP PRODUCED THE PRELIMINARY DATA REPORT.**



3

**POLICY SCAN DOMAIN GROUPS MET BETWEEN JANUARY 2015 AND FEBRUARY 2015.**

4

**AN INVENTORY OF PROGRAMS WAS DEVELOPED**



## PROCESS

MBK Houston Planning Team summarized work group results and produced a crosswalk of the results with recommendations and proposed solutions from both the White House MBK Task Force Report and other comprehensive local reports such as the reports from the Barbara Bush Literacy Foundation and the Early Matters Coalition.



On February 24, 2015, the Policy Scan work group met to prioritize recommendations for the respective milestones. Recommendations that received highest rating for impact and feasibility were included in the plan and submitted to the Local Action Partnership Steering Committee for review.



On March 4, 2015, the Preliminary Local Action Plan was reviewed by the Local Action Partnership Steering Committee. The feedback from this committee was used to revise the Local Action Plan.



On March 26, 2015, the revised draft of the Local Action Plan was reviewed at a meeting of the Executive Leadership Team. The plan was accepted by the team with additional revisions. The final draft of the Local Action Plan was resubmitted to all participating stakeholders and prepared for release in May 2015.





**CHALLENGE**



A close-up photograph of a person's hands, wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt, holding a small globe. The globe shows green continents and blue oceans. The background is a solid yellow color.

“Self-motivation...  
If you tell yourself you  
can do it, it is possible.”

-JEROME, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

# MBK HOUSTON DISPARITY INDICATORS



**The Data and Evaluation work group convened three times in person. Members selected a lead from Houston Department of Health and Human Services and an external co-lead to steer the Data and Evaluation Work Group.** The lead assembled the key stakeholders who accessed data on boys and young men of color. The timeline required for the report to be ready for the Policy Scan work group in four weeks, which included identification of data sources, acquisition of data, analysis and presentation of data, and interpretation of data.

The Data and Evaluation work group was charged with scanning all data sources for local level data and developing a Data Report for the Policy Scan work group so that the Local Action Plan for Houston would include Policy Recommendations that were based on concrete evidence from the data. Discussions were initiated on readily available data, unprocessed data, and data gaps. In some cases the data did not come stratified by gender, therefore all relevant data for both genders was presented. The Data and Evaluation work group

decided on stratifying data by age as less than 5 years, Pre-K and Kindergarten, 10-16 years of age, 17-24 years of age, Grades 1-3 as required by the indicator in question. Data was also stratified by race/ethnicity.

In most cases data charts were presented on Black and Hispanic males compared with White and Asian Males. In some cases, males and females were compared and gender differences were highlighted.

Demographic data was analyzed and charted from the American Community Survey 5 year estimates.<sup>4</sup> Access to health insurance for males was measured by uninsured by age, race/ethnicity . Substantial data on the education domain was shared by Houston Independent School District (HISD).<sup>5</sup> Data was analyzed and charts were developed for the Data Report. Indicators such as graduation rates, dropout rates, suspension rates for Pre-K and K as well as high school, 3rd-grade STAAR Reading scores, violent crimes, and juvenile detention were presented in the Data Report.

# LOCAL ACTION PLAN

## DISPARITY

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**The following are key data points that illustrate the conditions, barriers, and opportunities for boys and young men of color.**

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Poverty

Child Abuse/neglect

Out-of-school suspensions

Teen Birth Rate

3rd grade reading level

Graduation rates

Education attainment

Unemployment rates

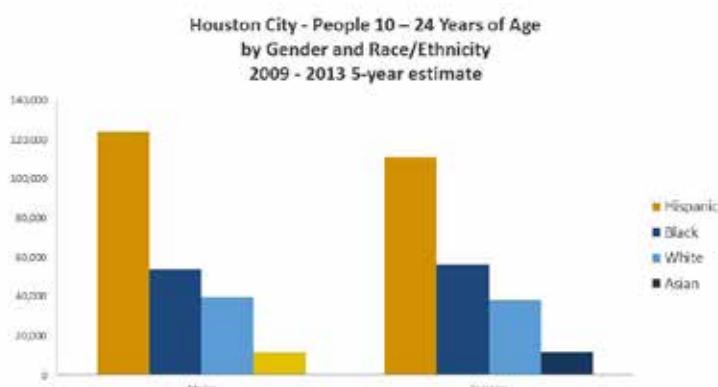
Violent crime and detention

Domestic violence rates



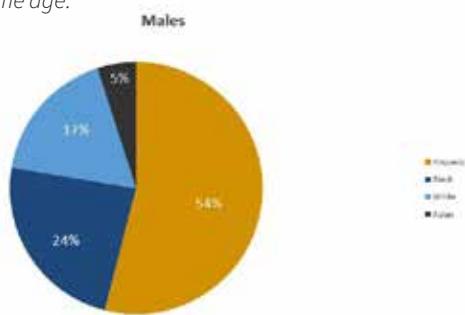
# DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

**Among young men 10-24 years old, there are three times as many Hispanic male youth and almost 1.4 times as many Black male youth in Houston compared to White male youth.**



Source: American Community Survey, 5-year estimate, 2009-2013

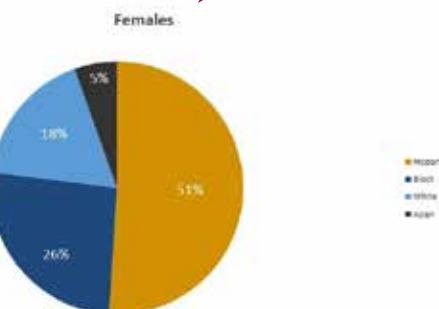
The population distribution for males are similar to that of females of the same age.



Source: American Community Survey, 5-year estimate, 2009-2013

**MORE THAN  
50%**

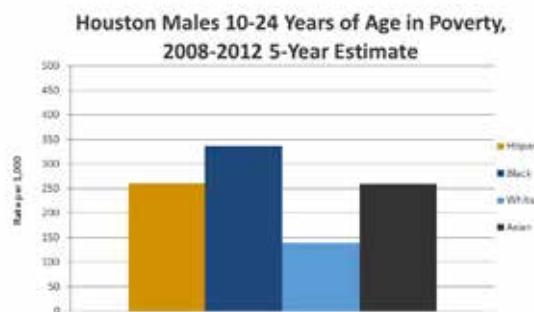
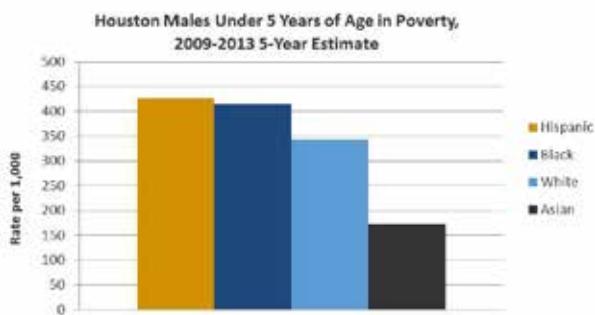
of Houston's youth between the ages of 10-24 years are Hispanic and 25% are Black.



Source: American Community Survey, 5-year estimate, 2009-2013

# DEMOGRAPHIC POVERTY

**More than 16 million children in the United States live in poverty.** Significantly, the rate of poverty for Black or Hispanic male children in the greater Houston area is more than 40 percent. In males aged 10-24 years poverty rates decrease slightly.



Source: American Community Survey, 5-year estimate, 2009-2013

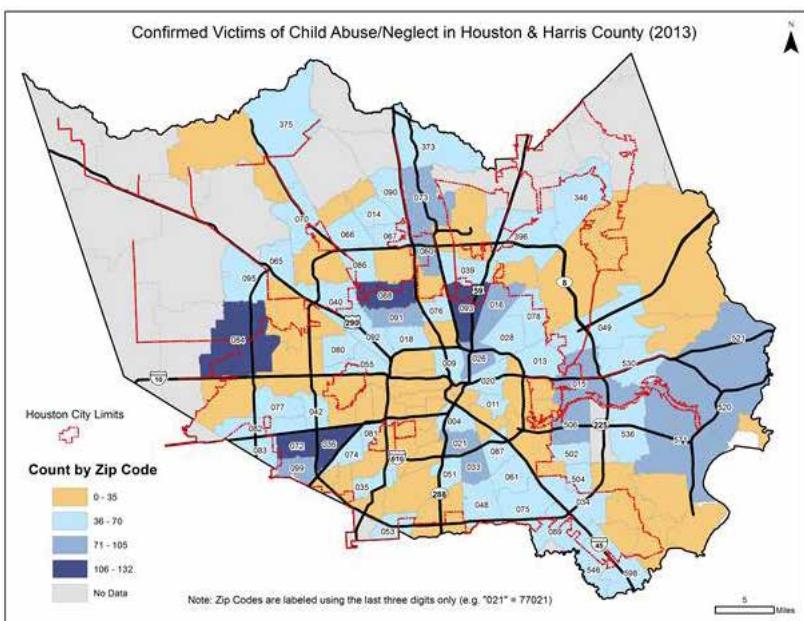
Source: American Community Survey, 5-year estimate, 2008-2012

Poverty has a profound impact on child development. Even when a child is in utero, poverty can delay or even damage a developing child's brain, and those effects can last a lifetime. Scientists have also found that early intervention before age 4 can help reverse some of the adverse effects

of poverty. For example, household poverty can subject children to chronic stress, resulting from poor nutrition, insufficient sleep, excessive parental stress, unsafe neighborhoods, and limited exposure to literacy enhancing activities that build vocabulary.

# CHILD ABUSE/ NEGLECT RATE

**Child abuse can manifest in many ways. Examples of physical abuse include acts of punching, beating, shaking, or throwing a child.**



Source: Texas Department of Family and Protective Services; Mapped by: Houston Department of Health and Human Services

Medical, educational or emotional neglect also qualify as child abuse. Moreover, any form of sexual abuse, psychological abuse, or substance abuse inflicted on a child by a parent or caregiver is considered child abuse or neglect. Childhood trauma resulting from abuse or neglect by a parent

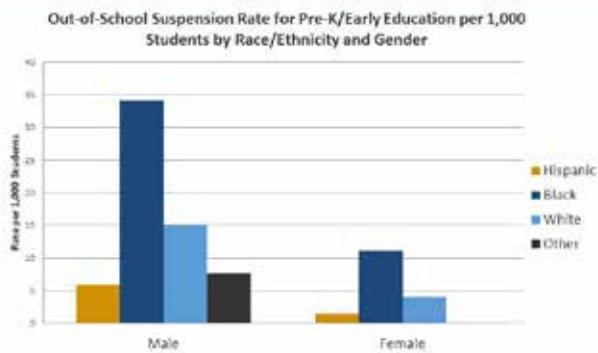
or caregiver has lifelong implications for a child's wellbeing. Cognitive delays and emotional difficulties are the most common and visible after-effects of childhood trauma. More subtle consequences can include damage to the nervous system and the immune system.

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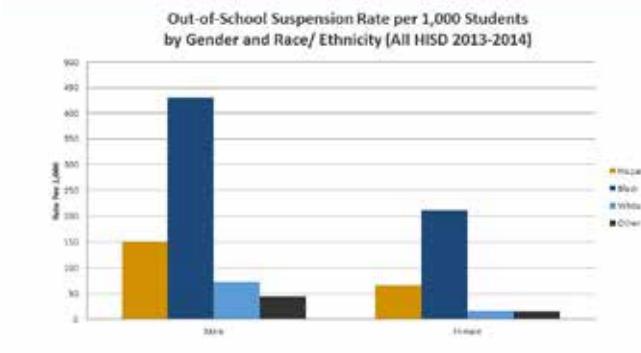
# OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION RATE

**Race and gender disparities are evident in the disproportionate rates of out-of-school suspensions for children attending Houston-area schools.**

To date, Black males were suspended from school three to four times more often than members of any other group.



Source: Houston Independent School District



Source: Houston Independent School District

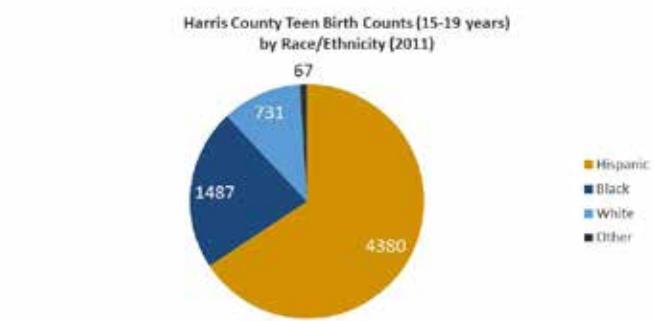
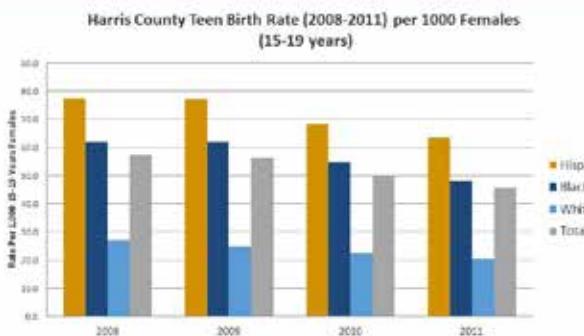
School districts adopt codes of student behavioral expectations to maintain a safe learning environment. In an effort to address unacceptable behavior, school districts can impose in-school or out-of-school suspension on students. Out-of-school suspensions are among the most severe forms of punishment schools can impose, and research

shows that similar exclusionary disciplinary practices are not only ineffective but they also negatively affect the offender, other students, the school district, and the extended learning community. Importantly, out-of-school suspensions have an educational, emotional, and social impact on the offending students and their families.

# TEEN BIRTH RATE

**For each year, the rates of births to teenage mothers is three to four times higher among Black and Hispanic females compared to other groups.**

*For each year, the rates of births to teenage mothers is about three times higher among Black and Hispanic females compared to other groups.*

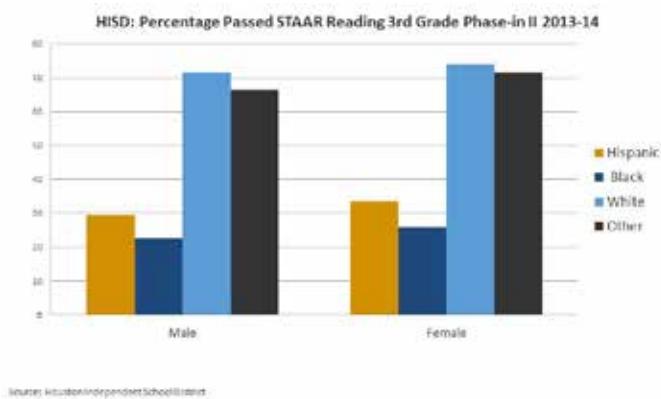


The national teen birth rate is 26.5 for every 1,000 females ages 15-19. The rates of teen pregnancies have declined each year. Research shows that about 77 percent of the teen births are unplanned (unwanted or occurred “too soon”). Almost 90 percent of all births occurred to teens who were not married. Teen childbearing is associated with

negative consequences for adolescent parents, their children and society. Teen mothers are unlikely to finish high school, are more likely to be dependent on government benefits, and to be single mothers. Children born to teen mothers are negatively affected in their behavioral, educational, and health outcomes.

# 3RD-GRADE READING STAAR PASSING RATES

**Research indicates that  
3rd Grade reading scores  
predict high school graduation.**

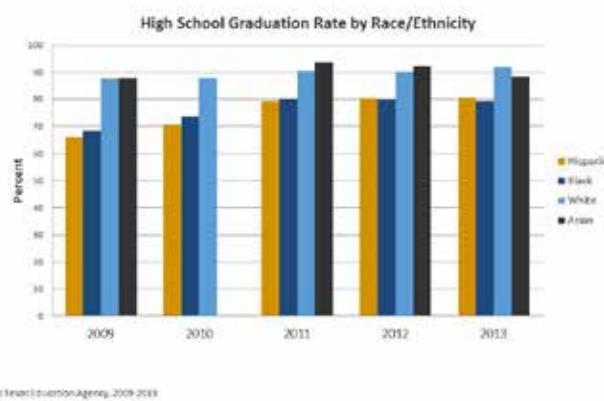


Third grade is the critical touch point year when the trajectory of future achievement can change. A student who cannot read at grade level by third grade is four times less likely to graduate high school than a child who reads at grade level. It is critical to monitor and remediate students who are lagging behind their peers. Low-income families have fewer financial resources and have competing

priorities that affect the family's survival. Parents in low-income households tend to not access libraries and own few books; consequently, children in these homes grow up with limited exposure to literacy during their formative years. Research indicates that a disproportionate number of parents in low-income households do not read to their children at an early age; thus, early language acquisition is stunted.

# HIGH-SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE

**Studies show that individuals who do not graduate from high school experience adverse effects in occupation, social, and emotional well-being.**



The lifetime risk of incarceration of Black males, in particular, who were high school dropouts is almost 70 percent. The national high school graduation rate is approximately 70 percent; however, according to Houston Independent School District (HISD) data, graduation rates have steadily increased in the five-

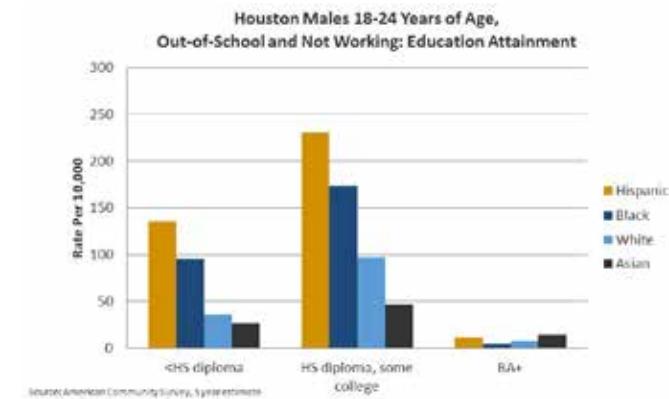
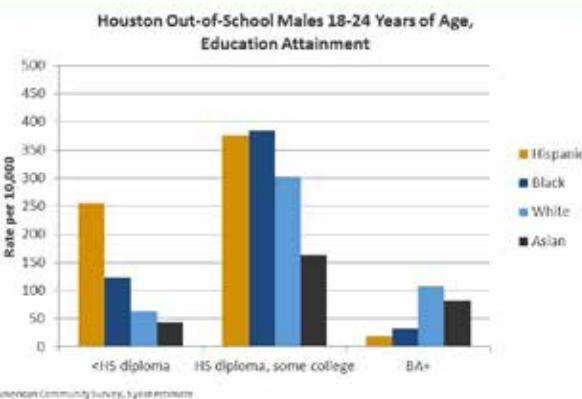
## TOP FOUR REASONS TO STAY IN SCHOOL<sup>6</sup>

1. High school dropouts are four times as likely to be unemployed as those who completed four or more years of college.
2. An individual's earning potential increases with every additional year of education after high school.
3. Individuals who drop out of high school are more likely to need public assistance.
4. Individuals who drop out of high school comprise a disproportionate percentage of the prison population, including inmates on death row.

year period between 2009 to 2013. In spite of notable improvements that can be attributed to in-school and after-school initiatives, a large gap still exists between the graduation rates of Black and Hispanic young men and their White and Asian counterparts.

# EDUCATION ATTAINMENT LEVEL AND UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

**In Houston, among males between the ages of 18-24 who were not in school, Black and Hispanics have the highest rates of “disconnection”.**



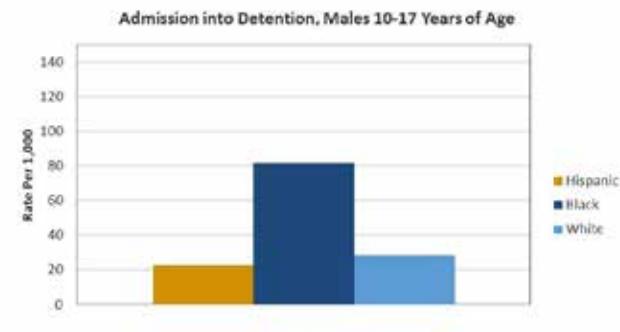
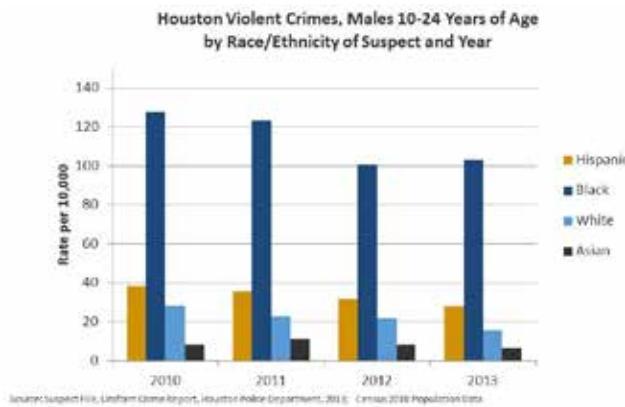
In essence, these youth lack strong social networks that can be helpful in finding employment or housing.

Lower educational attainment and lack of employment is also common among parents of disconnected youth.<sup>7</sup> Nationally, Black and Hispanic youth have the highest rates of disconnection. Houston data also follows the national trends.

Many youth from this population have childcare or homemaking responsibilities. This precludes them from exploring other options that may enhance their skills or educational attainment. Limited skills and fewer number of years of education perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

# VIOLENT CRIME AND DETENTION RATES

**Black and Hispanic boys and young men are disproportionately represented as crime victims as well as criminal offenders.**



In Houston, Black males are arrested for violent crimes more than three times Hispanic males and more than five to ten times more than White or Asian males. Incarceration rates are higher for impoverished and poorly-educated Black males than for males in other groups.

Black and Hispanic males face additional disadvantages if they reside in neighborhoods that experience heavy crime as they are more likely to be exposed to violence and crime at an early age. Rates of police contact, police stops, arrests, and early entry into the justice system are far higher among Black males than they are for members of other groups.

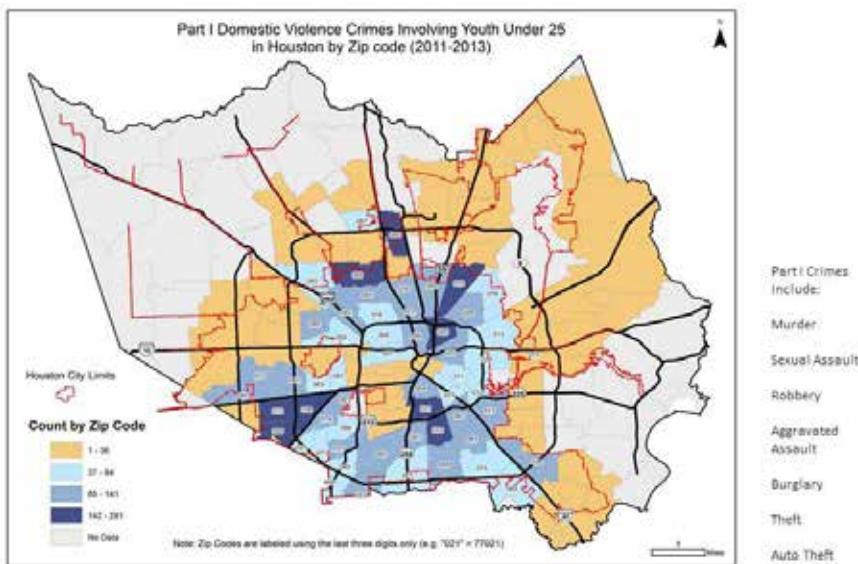
Similar to rates of arrests for violent crimes, the rate of Black males 10-17 years of age who are admitted into juvenile detention are discernably disproportionate. In Houston, the detention rate for Black males is two times higher than it is for Hispanic males and four times higher than it is for White males.

The labeling, or profiling of boys and young men of color as well as the inherent biases in some officials has been cited as causation for the disproportionate rates of juvenile detention.

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RATES INVOLVING YOUTH

*Involving youth under 25 years of age, by zip codes (Part I)*

**Domestic violence refers to a set of behaviors a person uses to establish power and to maintain control over his/her loved ones.**



Source: Houston Police Department; Mapped by: Houston Department of Health and Human Services

Domestic violence refers to a set of behaviors a person uses to establish power and to maintain control over his/her loved ones. For the purpose of this report, domestic violence includes intimate partner violence, elder abuse, and child abuse. Control can be exerted through intimidation, fear, and physical violence. Poverty, substance abuse, and neighborhood poverty are among the primary factors contributing to instances of intimate partner

violence. Although domestic violence cuts across all race/ethnicities and genders, intimate partner homicides of Black people account for almost a third of all intimate partner homicides in the US. Domestic violence victims suffer from numerous physical and mental health problems such as cardiovascular disease, other psychosomatic symptoms as well as depression, anxiety, and extreme emotional distress.



# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



In addition to collecting and analyzing quantitative data, the planning phase included collecting qualitative data through a Stakeholder Engagement Process that included focus groups and key informant interviews.

## FOCUS GROUPS

The Stakeholder Engagement team reached 150 individuals in 12 focus groups throughout the city. The groups were geographically and demographically diverse. Each of the groups were asked the following questions:

1. We want to insure that all young men and boys of color have opportunities to reach their full potential. What would have to happen for that to be possible?
2. What are the barriers preventing youth from reaching their full potential?
3. Where do you go to get help?
4. What are the solutions to the barriers?

Expanded resources in schools, mentor networks, and the importance of a caring adults arose as themes for what is needed to help young people achieve their full potential. The top barriers were negative perceptions and stereotypes along with negative influences of the environment and peers. The top responses for solutions included: increased cohesion of families, enhanced community engagement and involvement, wide availability of opportunities in education and vocational training, and maximized exposure to positive role models and positive environments.

## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS AND FAITH MEETING

A library of interviews has been collected which capture substantive dialogues and conversations with individuals across the city who have a perspective on the work MBK seeks to do. Interviews were conducted with a diverse group of participants: faith leaders, research professors, and business and industry leaders.



A photograph of a man in a dark shirt standing behind a wooden podium, gesturing with his hands while speaking. In the foreground, large, semi-transparent white letters spell out the word "IDEAS". A solid blue rectangular box contains the word "IDEAS" in white capital letters.

**IDEAS**



A collage of three images: a man in a lab coat, a classroom, and a person working at a desk.

“I get motivated when  
I see the people in  
college....It motivates  
me to do more.”

- MARCUS, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

# FINDING AND THEMES RECOMMENDATIONS



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**The data report, the policy group discussions, the scan of policies, programs and practices** and the information gathered from the stakeholder focus groups and interviews resulted in the recommendations for the MBK Houston Local Action Plan.

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The plan includes 1) five recommendations for systemwide implementation strategies and infrastructure support 2) six cross-cutting strategy

recommendations and more than 20 recommendations to achieve the six MBK milestones.

# RECOMMENDATIONS System Support & Approach

- 1. PRODUCE DISPARITY REPORT ANNUALLY**

Develop a report on a full range of indicators related to the well-being of young men of color in Houston, reporting disparities and update annually.
- 2. ALIGN RECOMMENDATIONS AROUND MBK MILESTONES**

Develop a priority set of recommendations for action in Houston aligned with the six indicators for action identified by the MBK national strategy.
- 3. ADDRESS STRATEGIES CITYWIDE WHEN APPROPRIATE**

Advance implementation on recommendations that demonstrate readiness and capability.

- 4. FOCUS ON SELECT COMMUNITIES TO PILOT REMAINING RECOMMENDATIONS**

Identify high-need communities with capacity for piloting recommendations.
- 5. CREATE A MANAGEMENT TEAM TO SHEPHERD IMPLEMENTATION, CREATE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR OUTCOMES AND EVALUATE IMPACT**

Establish a core management team to work full time to ensure the successful implementation of recommendations.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Cross-Cutting Strategies

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### 1. ESTABLISH BASELINE DATA AND SUCCESS INDICATORS

MBK Houston will determine baseline performance criteria and set measurable targets that are robust and practical. Data driven decision making will be foundational for determining community action.

### 2. BOLSTER PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

MBK Houston will encourage and facilitate parental participation by providing caregivers tools to support their children's academic and developmental progress and to identify resources/services for meeting their children's psychosocial and developmental needs.

### 3. DRIVE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

MBK Houston will work to build and enhance partnerships that support achievement and ensure that the concerns and strengths of community organizations are central to implementation strategies.

### 4. PROMOTE IN-SCHOOL EFFORTS

MBK Houston will reinforce and/or enhance parallel efforts of the partner school districts. MBK efforts will work in tandem with existing initiatives to affect positive outcomes.

### 5. ENGAGE PROGRESS-MONITORING SYSTEM

MBK Houston will focus on establishing early warning and intervention systems that prevent high-risk academic or disciplinary challenges from deteriorating into irreversibly negative outcomes. The system will be established across multiple domains including health, education and justice.

### 6. ASSESS ACTION PLAN EFFECTIVENESS

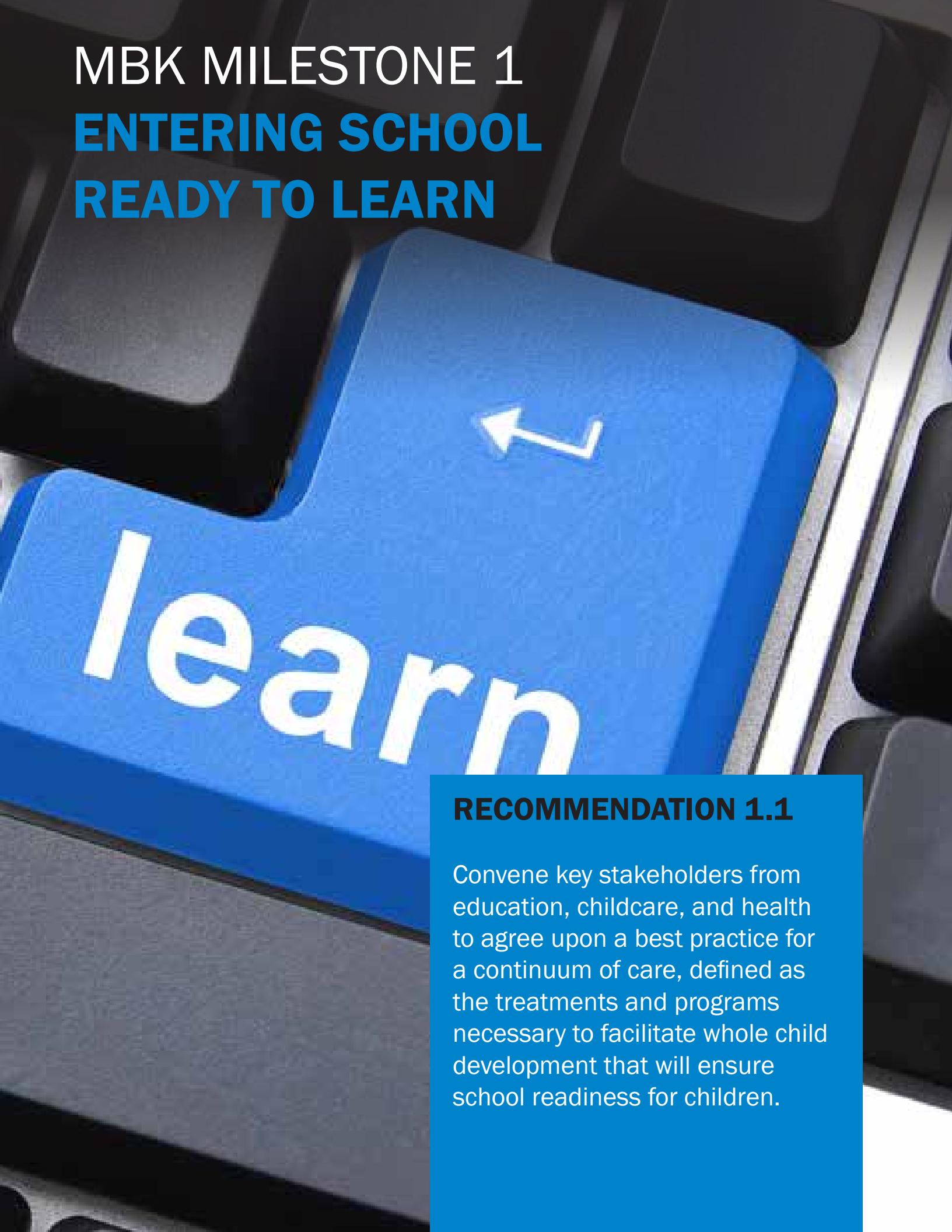
MBK Houston will focus on doing what works and establish an evaluation framework and process to assess effectiveness and to report successes.



# MBK MILESTONE 1

## ENTERING SCHOOL

### READY TO LEARN



learn

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1.1**

Convene key stakeholders from education, childcare, and health to agree upon a best practice for a continuum of care, defined as the treatments and programs necessary to facilitate whole child development that will ensure school readiness for children.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 1 Action Team will convene key public and private stakeholders to define the components of a continuum of care that encompasses programs, services and interventions that will assure children in the target area receive the health, education and social services needed to assure children 0-5 years of age achieve age appropriate developmental milestones. The team will determine system gaps and take appropriate actions to make a full continuum of services available in the target communities. The team will make policy recommendations that support this action as well as seek resources as indicated to achieve this goal.



## DELIVERABLES

1. A report describing a continuum of care, identifying key system gaps and making recommendations for actions including implementation of best practices and quality assessment and improvement
2. A detailed action plan to make a model continuum of care available for children ages 0-5 in the target area, including child care and education services and developmental interventions for children falling behind
3. Signed agreements that facilitate coordination of services and collaboration among key health, education and social services partners
4. A baseline report of current state of key indicators on short term, intermediate and long term outcomes
5. A dashboard of key outcome measures

### Potential Indicator

Number of boys of color enrolled in Pre-K/Early Learning

# MBK MILESTONE 1

## ENTERING SCHOOL READY TO LEARN

### RECOMMENDATION 1.2

Develop and standardize evidence-based metrics to evaluate school readiness to be used by early child care providers in education and health.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 1 Action Team will define the components of a system of universal access to developmental, health and behavioral screening and referral processes to reduce delay in providing services to children who are falling behind in developmental growth. The team will determine system gaps and take appropriate actions to make a full series of age-appropriate assessments available in the target communities. The team will make policy recommendations that support this action as well as seek resources as indicated to achieve this recommendation.



## DELIVERABLES

1. Identification of a uniform standard to measure age appropriate progress in early child development
2. Identification of evidence based assessment tools to gauge progress
3. A map of the child development milestones to be assessed and recommended
- 
4. A report identifying current utilization levels of assessment tools, and setting priorities for addressing practice gaps
5. Signed agreements that facilitate coordination of training and utilization points for assessment contact and referral
- 
6. A baseline report of current state of key indicators for tracking short term, intermediate and long term outcomes
7. A dashboard of key outcome measures

## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

**Number of children receiving age-appropriate developmental screenings among MBK Houston partners.**

**Percentage of children whose developmental delays are identified in timely manner and linked to appropriate services among MBK Houston partners**

# MBK MILESTONE 1

## ENTERING SCHOOL

## READY TO LEARN

### RECOMMENDATION 1.3

Select and implement a recognized standard to ensure the quality of childcare providers and teachers.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 1 Action Team will develop a strategy for the professional development and support of early childcare educators and specialists to ensure those in the profession are equipped with knowledge about social-emotional development of children and strategies to facilitate child growth and development. The team will determine system gaps and take appropriate actions to deliver high quality professional development. The team will make policy recommendations that support this action as well as seek resources to achieve this recommendation.



## DELIVERABLES

1. Identify ideal job description for child care providers and teachers, including education and experience
2. Identify education and training programs ideally suited to ensure those serving as childcare providers and teachers have the skills to perform the job
3. Identify strategies for moving Houston service providers and teachers closer to uniform high-quality standards
4. Identify assessment processes necessary to ensure childcare providers and teachers are providing high-quality services

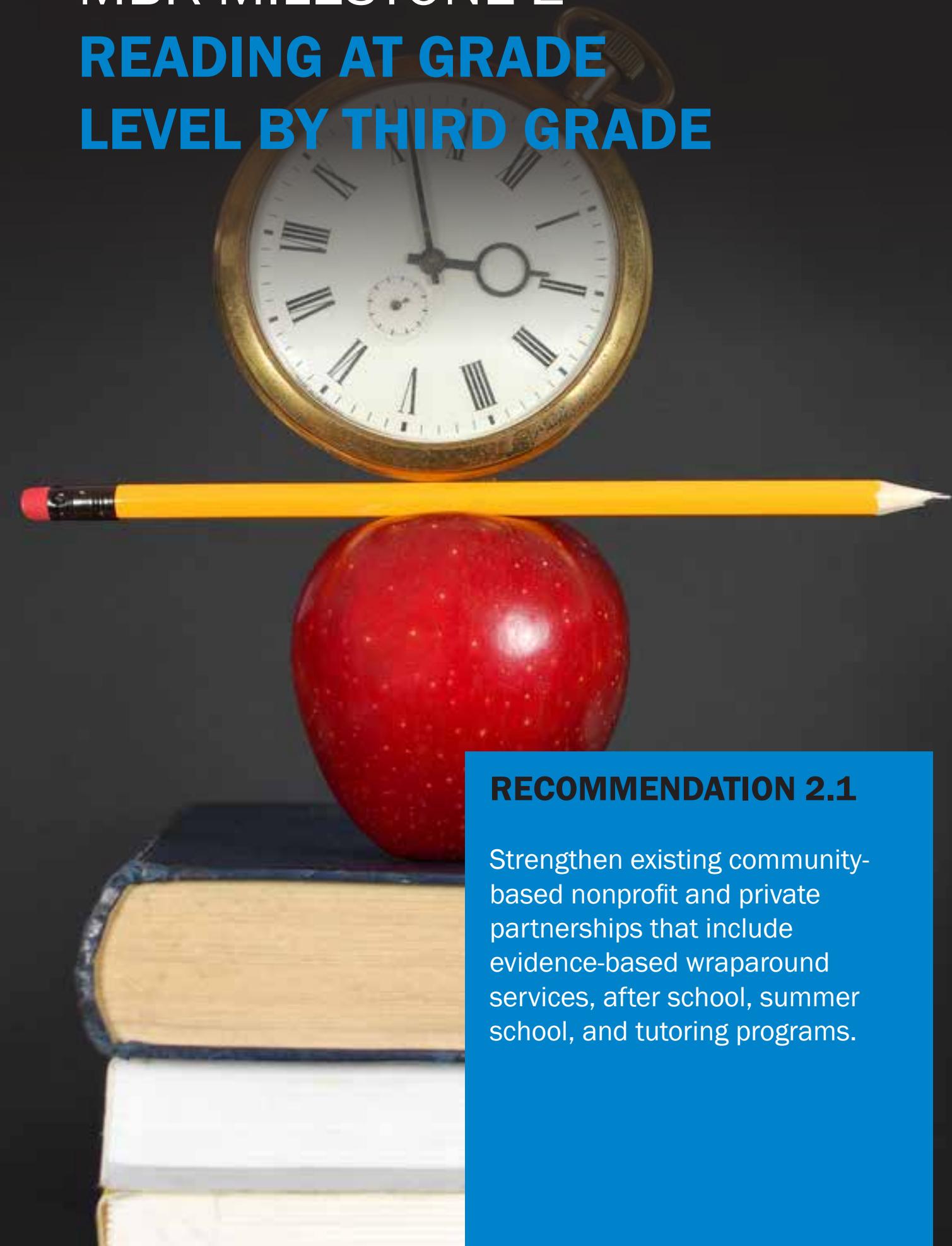
## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

**Percentage of childcare providers who meet the required standard**

**Percentage of childcare providers delivering services at the level that meets the standard**

# MBK MILESTONE 2

## READING AT GRADE LEVEL BY THIRD GRADE



### RECOMMENDATION 2.1

Strengthen existing community-based nonprofit and private partnerships that include evidence-based wraparound services, after school, summer school, and tutoring programs.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 2 Action Team will research evidence-based best practices of learning strategies in literacy programs from key partners such as summer reading programs. The action team will also map a continuum of community-based partnerships for wraparound and out-of-school literacy programs. The action team will capitalize on key outcome-based partnership models by using their technical support for setting up or strengthening partnerships in new neighborhoods, and improve use of data tracking metrics in education system from pre-kindergarten to third grade. The action team will assist in increasing training and professional development of early child literacy service providers such as teachers, administrators, and mentors.



## DELIVERABLES

1. An asset map of out-of-school literacy programs available to be shared between partners.
2. A gap analysis showing where out-of-school literacy programs are missing or duplicated
3. A shared resource between in-school and out-of-school partners that identify evidence and/or outcomes- based literacy strategies
4. Compilation and dissemination of outcomes-based best practices for out-of-school literacy program strategies
5. A detailed action plan for increasing capacity of out-of-school public and private programs through partnerships in neighborhoods with low literacy performance levels
6. Education campaign to parents on availability and importance of out-of-school literacy programs

## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

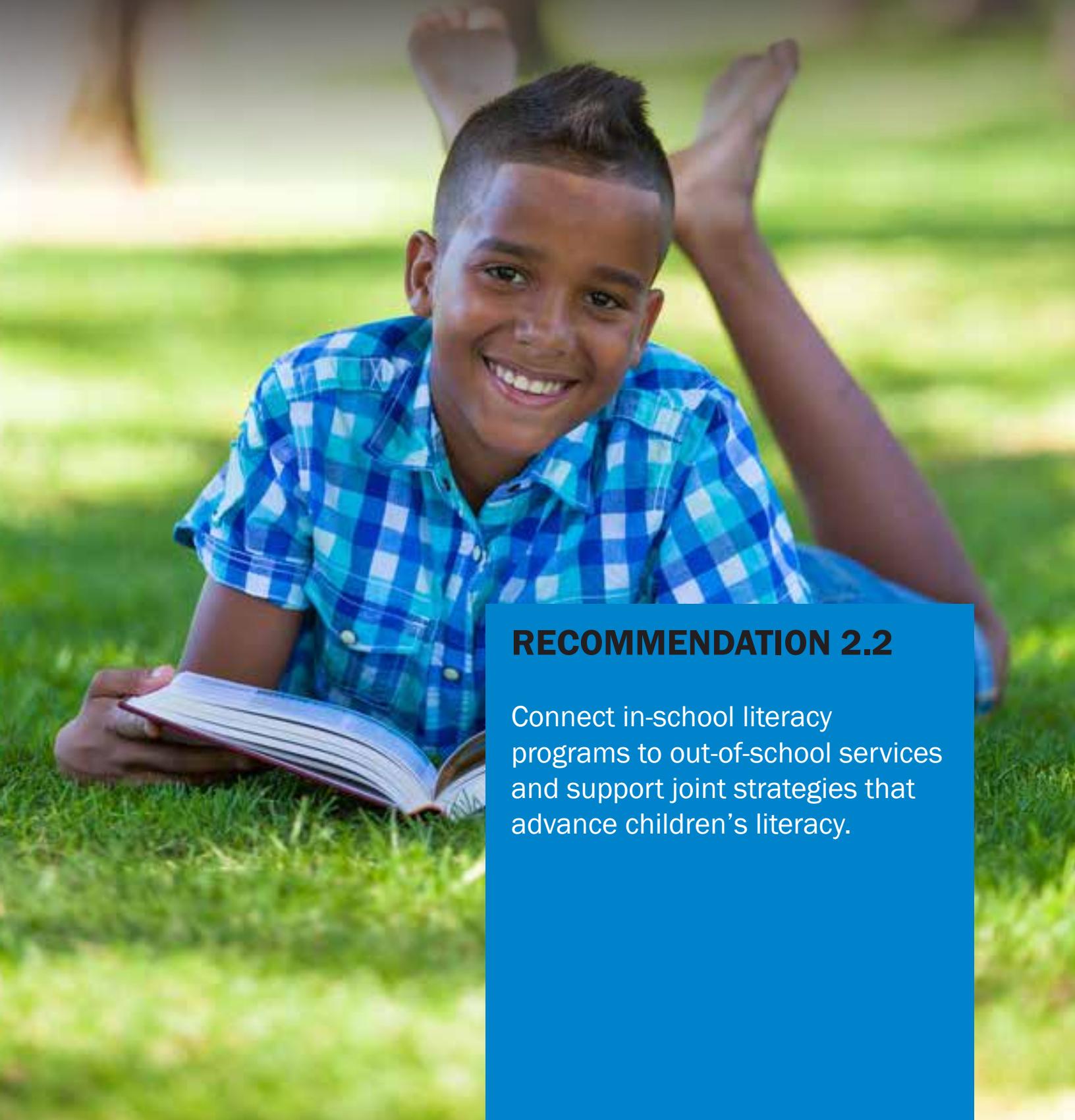
**Number of students participating in evidence-based wraparound services among MBK Houston partners**

### Potential Indicator

Scores in reading comprehension related activities, grades K-3

# MBK MILESTONE 2

## READING AT GRADE LEVEL BY THIRD GRADE



### RECOMMENDATION 2.2

Connect in-school literacy programs to out-of-school services and support joint strategies that advance children's literacy.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 2 Action Team will identify in-school literacy best practices that can support and strengthen the school system's approach to achieving literacy levels, particularly at the third grade. The team will identify relevant stakeholders who focus on childhood literacy. A gap analysis of literacy programs will be completed to identify gaps and duplications in literacy support services in and out of school. Evidence- and outcome-based strategies will be shared between partners. The team will assist in connecting programs and other literacy efforts between in-school and out-of-school partners to encourage alignment and reduce repetition of efforts in the same areas.



## DELIVERABLES

1. An asset map of in-school literacy programs
2. An assessment of best evidence- and/or outcomes-based literacy strategies in-school literacy improvement practices
3. A gap analysis showing where in-school literacy programs are missing or duplicated
4. A detailed action plan for increasing capacity of in-school public and private programs through partnerships in neighborhoods with low literacy performance levels

## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

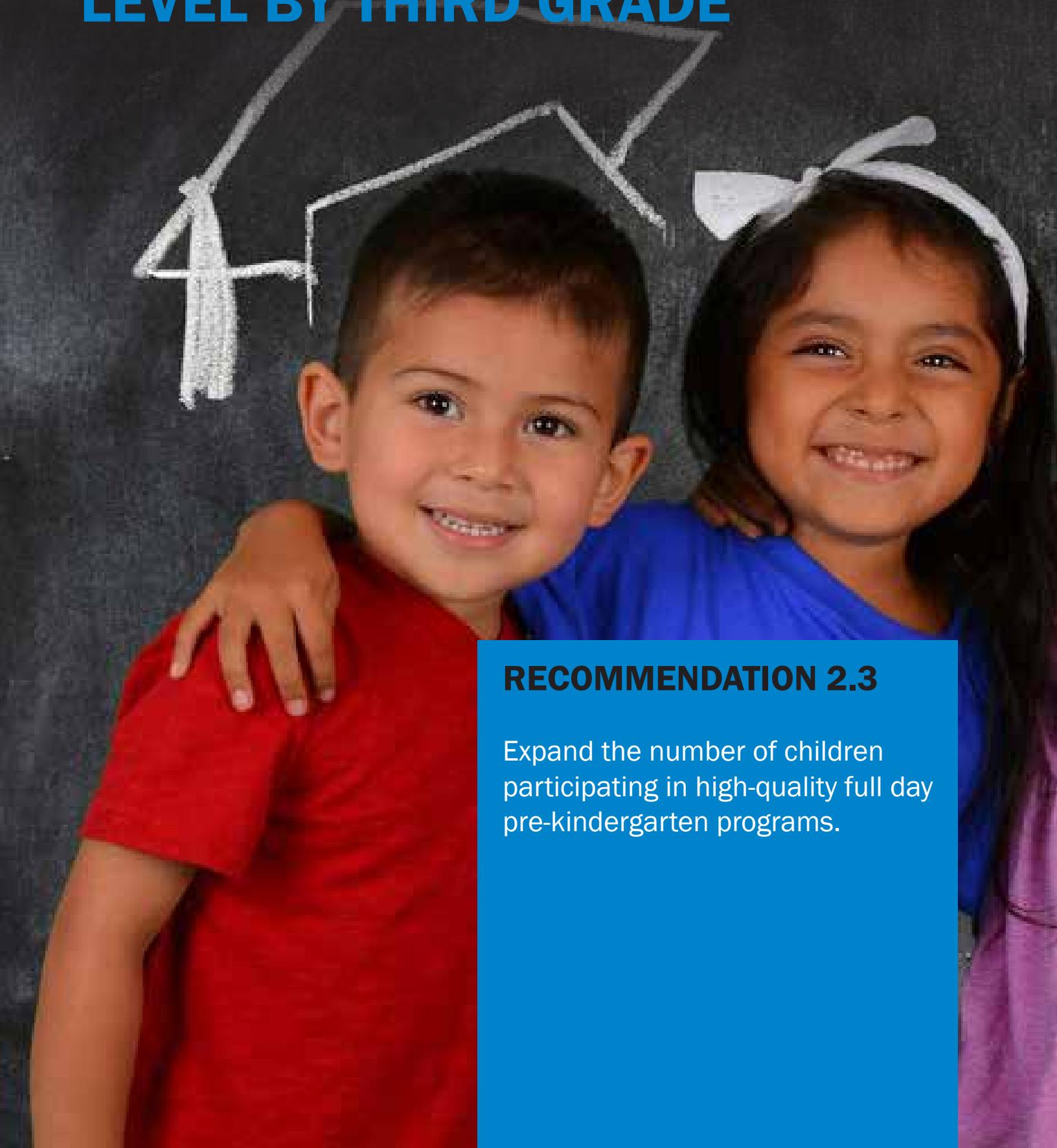
**Number of out-of-school partners working in connection with in-school literacy programs among MBK Houston Partners**

### Potential Indicator

Scores in reading comprehension related activities, grades K-3

# MBK MILESTONE 2

## READING AT GRADE LEVEL BY THIRD GRADE



### RECOMMENDATION 2.3

Expand the number of children participating in high-quality full day pre-kindergarten programs.

## ACTION PLAN

The Milestone Action Team 2 will identify key policymakers and local early childhood education service providers. After a comprehensive assessment of existing resources, the team will compile best practices of evidence-based learning strategies in high-quality pre-K programs. The team will also analyze the gaps (geographical, financial, ESL) in early child education enrollment and strategize how the partnership can fill these gaps. The team will also launch a public awareness campaign to increase knowledge about available resources which assist parents to utilize resources available to enroll in pre-K, ensuring the inclusion of ESL communities. The team will make policy recommendations that support expansion of full day pre-K programs and adoption of regulated child care program quality rating system.



## DELIVERABLES

1. A public resource inventory of the early childhood education system including all Head Start, ISD pre-K, and home- or center- based childcare
2. A multi-lingual information sharing system for best practices for advancing childhood literacy for service providers
3. Signed agreements that facilitate coordination of services and collaboration among key early childhood education partners
4. A public awareness campaign to parents about enrolling in licensed early childcare education
5. A dashboard of key outcome measures

## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

**Number of children enrolled in full day pre-K programs**

**Number of children enrolled in half day pre-K programs**

# MBK MILESTONE 2

## READING AT GRADE LEVEL BY THIRD GRADE

### RECOMMENDATION 2.4

Increase access to print and electronic books to K-3 children at home by connecting families to donation and reading support services.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 2 Action Team will identify the key public, private, and philanthropic partners who focus on childhood literacy. The team will also leverage other areas of service (e.g. health facilities, churches, and recreation facilities) as partners in advocating childhood literacy. After assessing the existing local resources, the team will identify and analyze accessibility gaps in services and resources, such as availability of in-school libraries and/or librarians, and library accessibility hours. Together with stakeholders, the team will identify and promote best practices for teacher instruction and that help youth access literacy learning tools, particularly with English as a Second Language (ESL) youth. The team will promote out-of-school reading in homes that encourage literacy learning for youth in grades K-3.



## DELIVERABLES

1. Resource map of libraries in- and out-of- schools and Houston Public Library (HPL) and other literacy direct resources
2. A strategy to expand the number and volume of book donation and sharing efforts
3. A strategy to introduce a range of tools for parents to improve in home reading and word development
4. An online or print community toolkit with access to out-of-school literacy learning resources
5. A sustainability plan for collaborations between non-profit, business, faith-based, and education partners

### Potential Indicator

Number of books in low-income-area homes

# MBK MILESTONE 3

## GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL READY FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER



### RECOMMENDATION 3.1

Develop practices and policies around an early warning and response system that includes whole child indicators and interventions, focused on reducing chronic absenteeism and exclusionary discipline.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 3 Action Team will develop practices and policies around a comprehensive, middle and high school early warning and response system that includes whole child indicators and interventions, focused on reducing chronic absenteeism and exclusionary discipline (school suspensions). The team will identify existing or current early warning systems used in Houston public agencies serving youth. The team will also research and establish a cross-institutional universal tracking system for youth development outcomes. Team members and community stakeholders will identify the inputs needed to capture early warning signs and outputs to bridge whole child indicators and interventions. The team will make policy recommendations that support this action and seek resources as indicated to achieve this recommendation.



## DELIVERABLES

1. A report that audits current early warning and response systems, highlighting chronic absenteeism and school suspensions, and assessing current practice and alternative non-exclusionary strategies
2. A detailed action plan to establish a cross-institutional universal tracking system for youth development
3. Signed agreements that facilitate coordination of services and collaboration among key service providers who work with youth
4. A baseline report of current state of key indicators or short term, intermediate and long term outcome
5. A dashboard of key outcome measures

## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

**Percentage of young men and boys of color receiving services after identification through the early warning and response system**

### Potential Indicator

Number of suspensions and expulsions for young men and boys of color

# MBK MILESTONE 3

## GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL READY FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER



### RECOMMENDATION 3.2

Develop practices and policies around an early warning and response system that includes whole child indicators and interventions, focused on reducing chronic absenteeism and exclusionary discipline.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 3 Action Team will review evidence based interventions for school environments, with a particular focus on college and career readiness. The team will identify benchmarks for each year of middle and high school which correlate with college and career readiness. Early exposure to diverse pathways will be of high emphasis. Efforts should also support the development of soft skills and financial literacy. The team will prioritize proven and evidence based outcomes that drive student success: **(1)** effective leaders, **(2)** collaborative teachers committed to the school, **(3)** involved families who have strong relationships with school staff, **(4)** supportive environments where the school is safe, **(5)** ambitious instruction where classes are academically demanding and engage students, and **(6)** college test preparation and advising capacity.



## DELIVERABLES

1. Grade specific benchmarks for college and career readiness
2. School enhancement development plan
3. Training opportunities for school leaders and teachers

## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

### Percentage of students completing AP/IB tests

## Potential Indicators

- Percentage of students taking SAT
- Percentage of schools having a college/career readiness plan
- Percentage of students accepted to college
- Percentage of students retained after the first year of college

# MBK MILESTONE 3

## GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL READY FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER

### RECOMMENDATION 3.3

Partner with community-based organizations and businesses to increase experiential learning for student academic success and career exploration that includes socio-emotional support.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 3 Action Team will support partnerships between community-based organizations and companies to increase experiential learning for student academic success and career exploration. This should include socio-emotional support structures. The team will identify a mechanism to inform and to connect students to the experiential learning opportunities provided by community-based organizations and companies. The team will determine how to leverage the partnerships to promote career exploration.



## DELIVERABLES

1. Identify and engage business and civic leaders in the Houston community who provide students' experiential learning
2. Define and research best practices in the experiential learning field
3. Develop partnership agreements
4. Create a plan to establish new opportunities for experiential learning in after-school settings
5. Create a plan to provide a community resource for career exploration options
6. Identify appropriate tools to measure socio-emotional outcomes

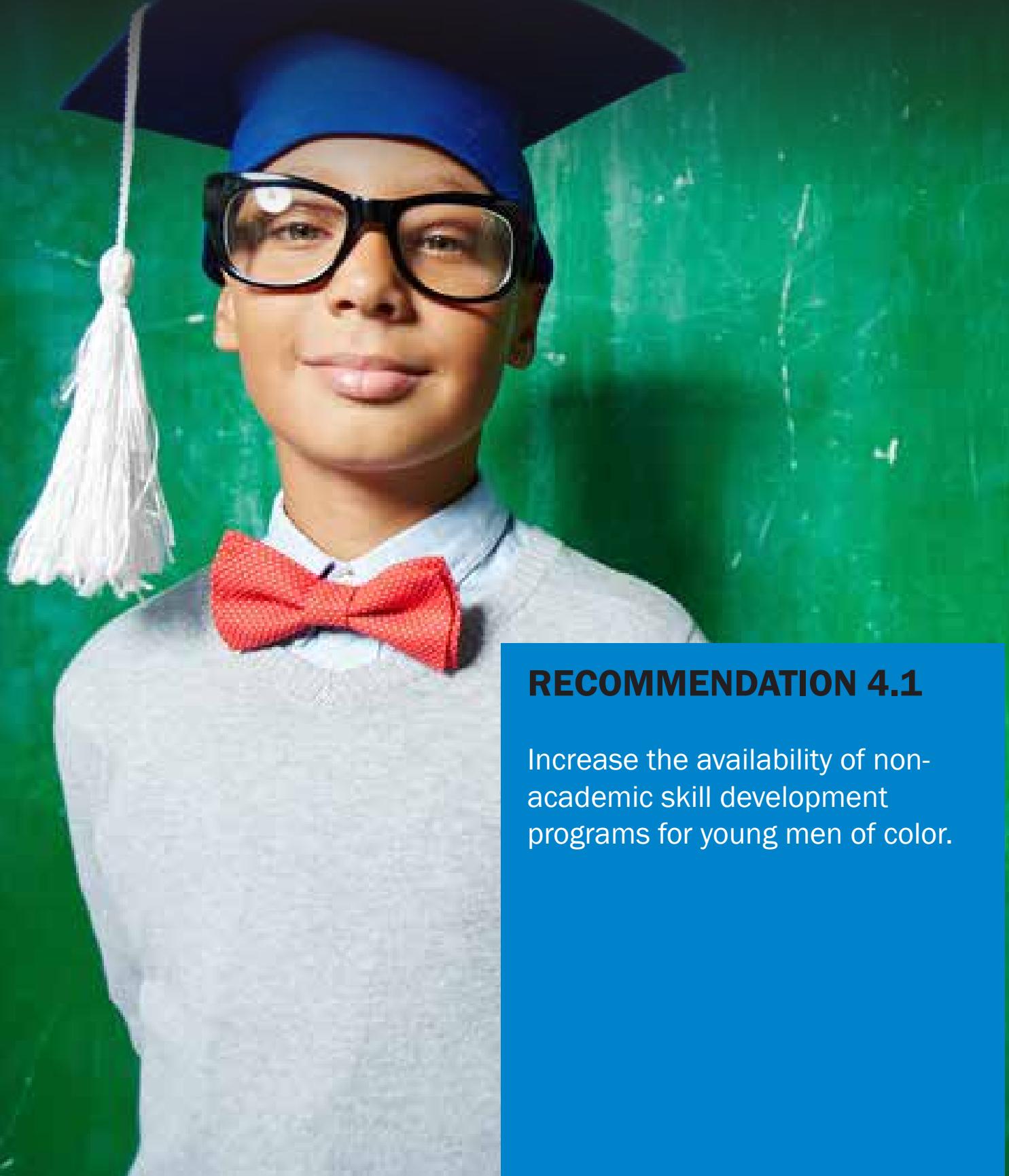
## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

**Number of MBK Houston partners**

**Number of students participating in experiential learning among MBK Houston partners**

# MBK MILESTONE 4

## COMPLETING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION OR TRAINING



### RECOMMENDATION 4.1

Increase the availability of non-academic skill development programs for young men of color.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 4 Action Team will identify key components for non-academic skill development programs, as well as career exploration (leadership, etiquette, communication, time-management, financial education, social support). The team will identify key partners who deliver these services and work across sectors and identify the role of mentoring in modeling and supporting these skills. The team will identify strong programs to replicate/expand and perform a gap assessment of what is needed going forward.



## DELIVERABLES

1. An outline of current and proposed programs that address critical points of intervention, have evidence to support past success and can be expanded or better utilized
2. A detailed action plan to expand strong programs, re-organize/repurpose underutilized programs and implement new programs
3. A implementation process to include mentoring strategies into programs
4. A sustainability plan for collaborations between non-profit, business, faith-based, and education partners
5. A baseline report of current key indicators or short term, intermediate and long term outcomes
6. A dashboard of key outcome measures

## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

**Number of non-academic skill development programs among MBK Houston partners**

**Number of young men and boys of color completing programs among MBK Houston partners**

**Number of young men and boys of color with mentors among MBK Houston partners**

# MBK MILESTONE 4

## COMPLETING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION OR TRAINING

### RECOMMENDATION 4.2

Increase the number of high school students that have access to college preparation services such as college entrance exam preparatory courses, in-school college counselors and financial aid assistance.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 4 Action Team will gather information on completions of Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), high schools without college counselors, and current programs delivering college preparatory services. Based on this assessment, the team will set a target of FAFSA completion and the strategy to meet it, including collaborations between non-profit, faith-based, and community partners. The team will highlight the utilization of scholarships and grants. The team will identify high schools with no college counselors (and those with the lowest FAFSA completions) and work with school districts and community partners to increase counseling services. The team should also identify partners who already deliver SAT, ACT, and other entrance exam prep courses to low-income students and determine which programs to expand or replicate.



## DELIVERABLES

1. Baseline assessment of FAFSA completions, college counselors availability and student counselor ratios, and college prep strategy success rates
2. A detailed action plan for increasing FAFSA completion rates, increasing college counselor(s) in target schools or in the community, increasing successful college prep courses
3. Agreements between partners to deliver services around FAFSA completion, college counseling, and college prep support
4. A dashboard of key outcome measures

## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

**Number of young men of color having access to college entrance exam preparatory courses**

**Number of college counselors (or similar role) in target high schools**

**Number of young men of color completing FAFSA**

# MBK MILESTONE 4

## COMPLETING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION OR TRAINING

### RECOMMENDATION 4.3

Expand and align career and technical education training received by young men of color with local, growth industries.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 4 Action Team will gather information on growth industries in Houston and inventory career and technical education (CTE) training programs within schools and communities. The team will align identified programs with areas of growth. The team will identify key partners delivering CTE training and those working in cross-sector collaborations. The strongest programs should be identified and examined for expansion or replication, while enhancing and supporting other programs. A gap analysis should be completed to discover untapped areas of opportunity. Strategies will be identified to target recruitment and enrollment of young men of color into these programs. The team will develop partnerships with cross-sector stakeholders who will spearhead the work toward expanding industry-aligned CTE training programs.



## DELIVERABLES

1. A crosswalk of growth industries and current CTE training programs
2. An outline of current and proposed programs aligned with growth industries, have internship/apprenticeship placement, have evidence to support past successes, and can be expanded/better utilized
3. A detailed action plan to expand strong programs, re-organize/repurpose underutilized programs and implement new programs, and recruit young men of color into the programs
4. A sustainability plan for collaborations between non-profit, business, and education partners
5. A baseline report of current state of key indicators or short term, intermediate and long term outcomes
6. A dashboard of key outcome measures

## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

**Number of career and technical education training programs aligned with growth industries**

**Number of programs with internship/apprenticeship placements among MBK Houston partners**

**Number of young men of color completing career and technical education training programs**

**Number of sustainable cross-sector collaborations among MBK Houston partners**

# MBK MILESTONE 4

## COMPLETING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION OR TRAINING

### RECOMMENDATION 4.4

Increase the number of comprehensive initiatives with mentorship, coaching, and support opportunities for young men and boys of color in preparation for and during post-secondary education or training.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 4 Action Team will strengthen education and employment initiatives by utilizing successful strategies that incorporate mentorship and coaching for young men of color. The team will identify the range of best practices nationally in education and employment. They will work to explore opportunities that ensure youth have access to transitional coaching during school matriculation and beyond, including in-school and community based approaches. The team will also identify additional peer support programs that are evidence based.



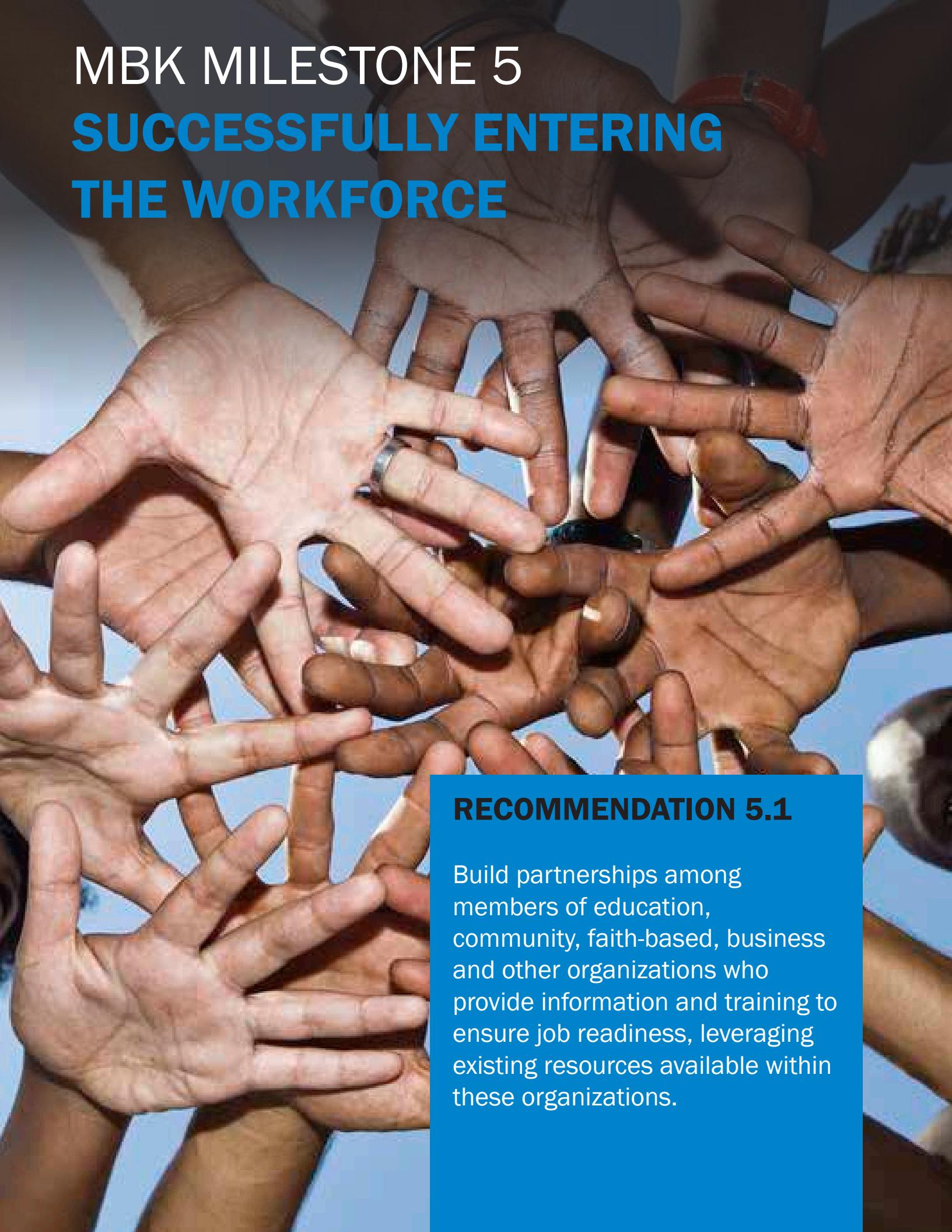
## DELIVERABLES

1. Develop database of current mentorship, coaching, and support opportunities for young men of color
2. Produce best practice research scan for mentorship, coaching and peer support in employment and education
3. Recommendations of strategies to build on existing base of services to advance opportunities
4. Develop recruitment strategies for initiatives that need additional volunteers to match requests

## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

**Number of Houston residents who participate as mentors or coaches among MBK Houston partners**

**Number of youth who participate as peer mentors among MBK Houston**



# MBK MILESTONE 5

## SUCCESSFULLY ENTERING THE WORKFORCE

### RECOMMENDATION 5.1

Build partnerships among members of education, community, faith-based, business and other organizations who provide information and training to ensure job readiness, leveraging existing resources available within these organizations.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 5 Action Team will identify cross-sector partners who provide information and training on job readiness. The team will foster the development and growth of partnerships. The team will develop a public database to share information about organizational resources available. The team will identify gaps in services provided for job readiness and develop recommendations for programs or services in job readiness.



## DELIVERABLES

1. An inventory of workforce and job readiness programs and services available to the public
2. A review of outcome- and evidence- based strategies in skills training and development showing greatest impact for young men of color, including attention to young men who have been involved with the justice system
3. A review of the role of mentoring in supporting young men with career exploration and sustainability of employment success
4. A detailed action plan to strengthen and align job readiness programs and services across industries

## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

**Number of organizations contributing to centralized workforce development program inventory among MBK Houston partners**

**Number of organizations involved in new or strengthened job readiness partnerships among MBK Houston partners**

**Number of youth and young adults in new work placements after training**

**Number of jobs created by the private sector**

# MBK MILESTONE 5

## SUCCESSFULLY ENTERING THE WORKFORCE

### RECOMMENDATION 5.2

Provide enhanced work opportunities for young men of color in entrepreneurial small businesses.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 5 Action Team will support business owners in their efforts to hire young men of color. The team will assess barriers for young men that impede their ability to seek and accept jobs. Added attention will be given to strategies that help overcome the stigma of a history of involvement in the justice system and explore hiring practices that offer second chances. The team will determine what resources or incentives are needed to support businesses and potential employees. The team will also make local policy recommendations that support this action.



## DELIVERABLES

1. Develop hiring and support strategies that increase employment opportunities for young men of color
2. Identify resources and incentives to support businesses and potential employers that hire young men of color
3. Address barriers that impede access to employment for young men of color

## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

**Number of successfully employed young men of color by entrepreneurs and businesses**

**Number of new jobs created by small businesses**

# MBK MILESTONE 5

## SUCCESSFULLY ENTERING THE WORKFORCE

### **RECOMMENDATION 5.3**

Assure that minority owned businesses, if they are of appropriate fit, receive primary consideration in contractual work, procurement and staffing.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 5 Action Team will encourage industry leaders to increase opportunities for minority owned businesses. The team will work to develop increased job opportunities for young men of color in minority-owned businesses. The team will also compile resources for capacity building within minority-owned businesses and minority individuals.



## DELIVERABLES

1. Signed agreements between key partners to commit to an established level of representation in contracts for minority-owned businesses
2. Dispersal of online or print resource materials for minority-owned businesses to build capacity and become aware of contract opportunities

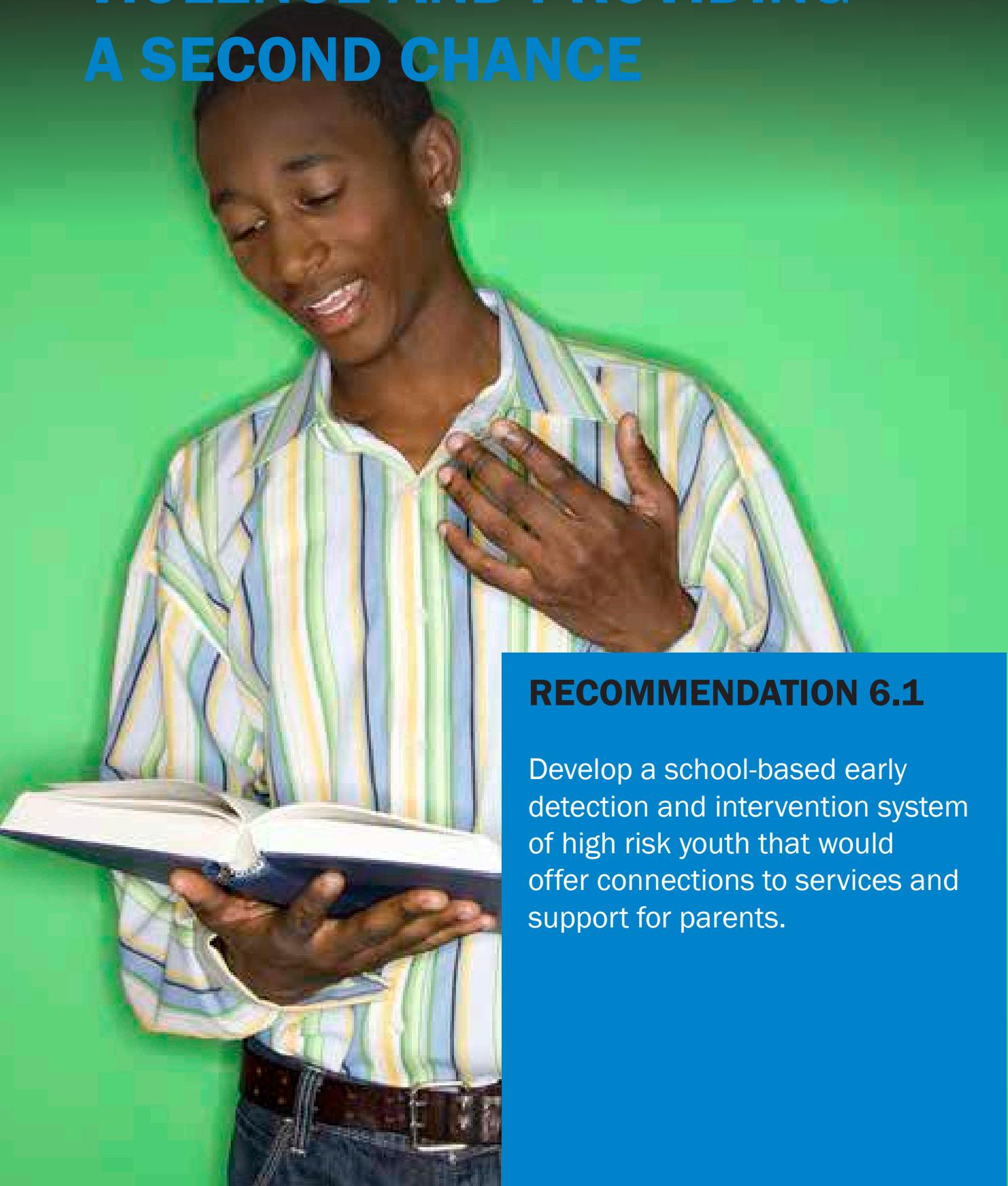
## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

**Number of successfully employed young men of color by minority owned businesses**

**Number of minority owned businesses engaged as MBK Houston partners**

# MBK MILESTONE 6

## REDUCING CRIME AND VIOLENCE AND PROVIDING A SECOND CHANCE



### **RECOMMENDATION 6.1**

Develop a school-based early detection and intervention system of high risk youth that would offer connections to services and support for parents.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 6 Action Team will identify behaviors and characteristics that are early warning signs for risk of later school discipline and justice involvement, including child level, family level, school level and community level indicators. The team will recommend detection strategies, and referral alternatives to address early warning signs and avoid worsening of conditions. Various evidence based practices will be explored in intervening to positively impact the behavior without excluding the child from the school environment, including in-school, after-school and home based alternatives with attention to the needs of parents in supporting their child.



## DELIVERABLES

1. Identification of risk factors that predict later justice involvement
2. Identification of potential points of intervention and best practice services correlated to each of the risk behaviors
3. Identification of parental engagement and support involved in each of the interventions identified
4. Report on the gaps in service between what is currently in place compared to this recommended
5. Recommendations for metrics to establish the baseline condition, set goals and monitor progress

## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

**Rate of children and adolescents suspended from the classroom/school, by grade level**

**Percentage of children with chronic absenteeism, by grade level**

**Percentage of children falling behind on critical education indicators, TBD, by grade level**

**Percentage of youth utilizing alternative or diversion programs**

# MBK MILESTONE 6

## REDUCING CRIME AND VIOLENCE AND PROVIDING A SECOND CHANCE

### RECOMMENDATION 6.2

Update evidence-based community policing such as procedural justice, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and Youth Empower Solutions (YES).

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 6 Action Team will analyze the practices of various law enforcement agencies in Houston, and will recommend best practice policies to advance law enforcement-citizen relations. Recommendations will evaluate procedural justice strategies, experiential training, and mentoring programs that create opportunities for civic communication and engagement to support community relationships. Particular attention will be given to affirming and integrating youth voices into community dialog and positive youth/police collaboration and interaction. All evaluations will address improvements that can be made without compromising public safety.



## DELIVERABLES

1. Diagnostic assessment of current policing strategies and the nature of community/law enforcement relations, including strengths and opportunities for improvement
2. Summary of best practices in procedural justice, experiential training, community engagement and youth/law enforcement collaborations
3. Recommendations for actions to be taken by each of the law enforcement agencies that can strengthen the youth/law enforcement relationship and the community/law enforcement relationships
4. Identification of strategies to successfully implement recommendations including training, partnerships, community collaborations, and the resources required

## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

**Number of mentors and trainings, related to adopted recommendations**

## Potential Indicators

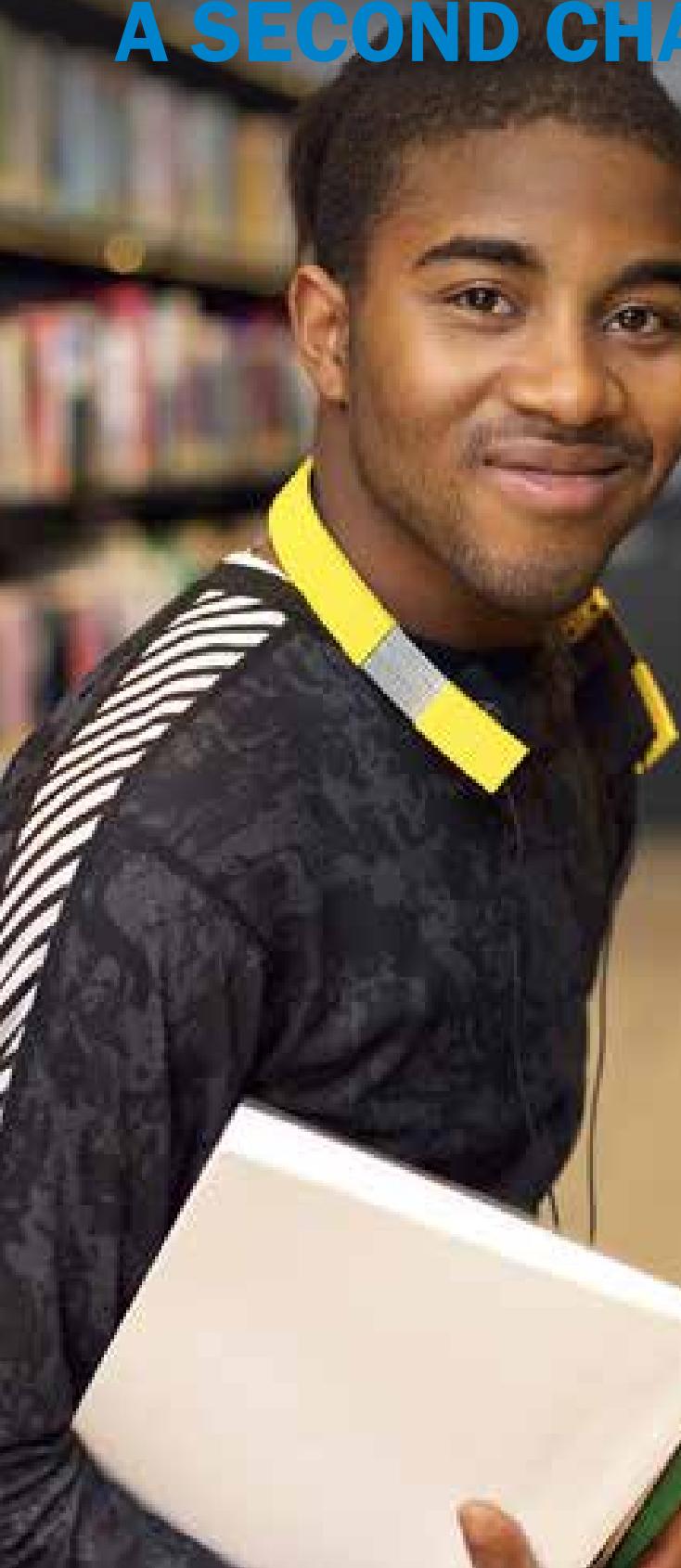
Number of arrests for misdemeanors, felonies, by age and ethnicity

Number of complaints against the departments

Number and diversity of applicants and hires to serve within the departments

# MBK MILESTONE 6

## REDUCING CRIME AND VIOLENCE AND PROVIDING A SECOND CHANCE



### RECOMMENDATION 6.3

Improve the therapeutic environment in jails and juvenile placement via education, counseling, and reentry programs.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 6 Action Team will recommend strategies for improving the conditions of confinement for juveniles in youth placements and for young adults in adult jails. The team will evaluate evidence-based strategies for providing education, skills training, and various counseling services that improve recidivism upon discharge. Evidence-based strategies for sustaining employment will also be analyzed from post-discharge training, mentoring, employment, and apprenticeships. The team will explore disciplinary practices within placement and jail, and identify the extent to which behavioral health services as an alternative disciplinary approach can help to improve outcomes.



## DELIVERABLES

1. Baseline assessment of services within juvenile placement and adult jail systems, and the range of alternative to placement/incarceration services, highlighting current rates of recidivism for both
2. Overview of best practices in juvenile placement and adult jail stay, focusing on discipline and alternatives, mental health interventions, conditions of confinement including rehabilitative interventions, and post discharge supports and services
3. Recommendations for actions to be taken in juvenile justice and adult justice to strengthen the approach taken for residents in placement or incarceration, including identification of resources required to achieve the recommendations

## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

**Rates of recidivism for juveniles and adults for placement and jail stay**

**Rates of recidivism for program participants**

**Rates of engagement and completion for programs identified**

# MBK MILESTONE 6

## REDUCING CRIME AND VIOLENCE AND PROVIDING A SECOND CHANCE

### RECOMMENDATION 6.4

Increase parental supports and services, including family counseling, behavioral management, and socio-emotional support services.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 6 Action Team will research and recommend best practices in parental engagement and support for justice involved children and young adults. The team will assess appropriate evidence-based services to the service continuum that demonstrate success in both supporting families and youth and addressing family and household dynamics that exacerbate disruption and delinquency. Recommendations will be made on building these supports into a broad community engagement that leverages networked community organizations to supplement and reinforce supports.



## DELIVERABLES

1. Best practice report on parental supports and services for justice involved youth
2. Gap analysis that compares the current available family services present in Houston to identified best practices
3. Recommendations for the most promising strategies that should be introduced

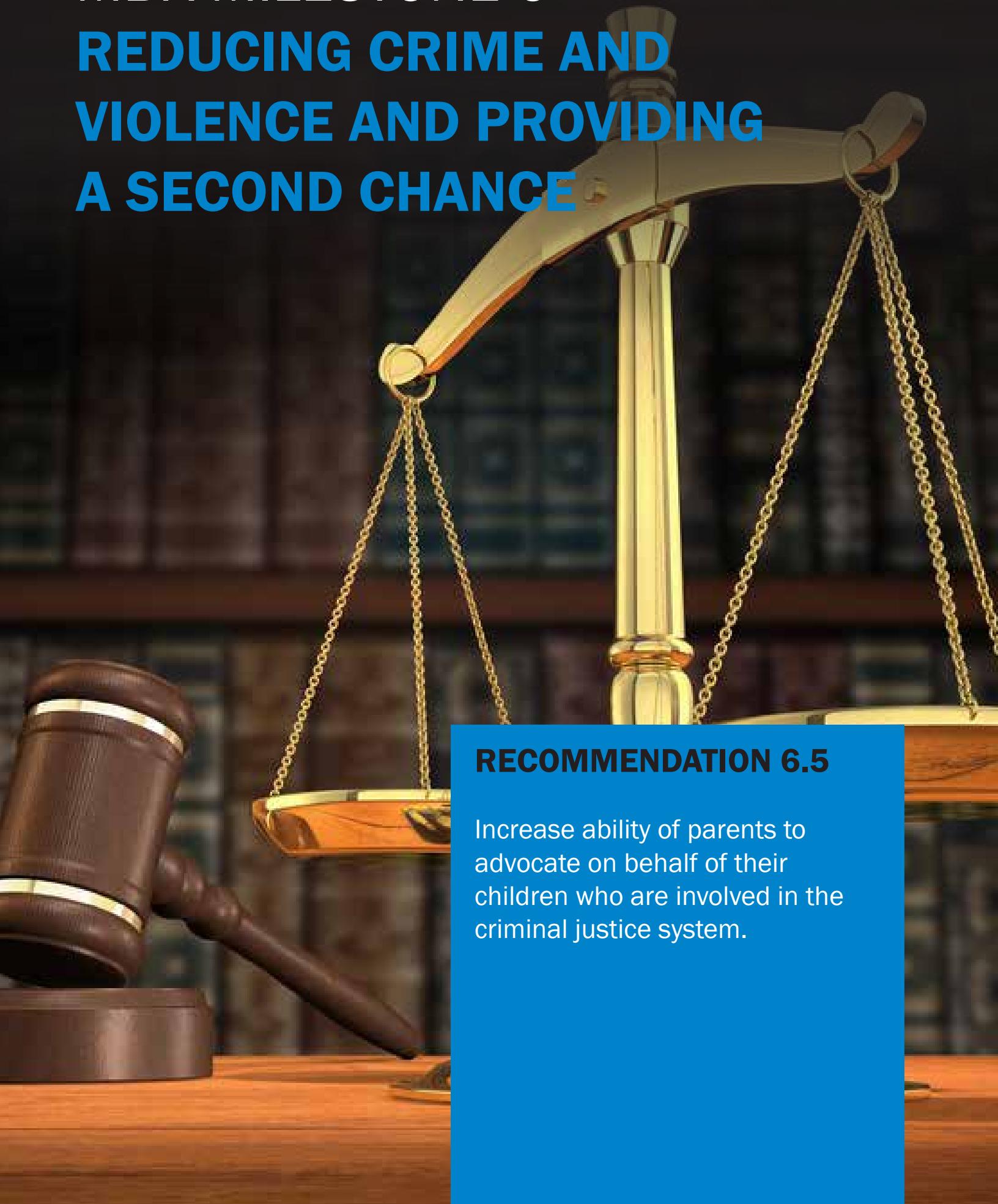
## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

**Number of households with justice involved youth receiving support services**

**Rates of offense or re-offense of the youth in households receiving support services**

# MBK MILESTONE 6

## REDUCING CRIME AND VIOLENCE AND PROVIDING A SECOND CHANCE



### RECOMMENDATION 6.5

Increase ability of parents to advocate on behalf of their children who are involved in the criminal justice system.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 6 Action Team will develop and disseminate best practices for parental advocates with children in the criminal justice system. The team will work in partnership with local parent engagement organizations to develop a dissemination strategy. Information will be developed from researching programs with the Houston Police Department, Harris County Sheriff's Office, and the District Attorney's Office and from best practice research nationally.



## DELIVERABLES

1. Identify organizations working on parent advocacy within the Houston area, particularly in the justice area, to guide and support discussions on expanding skills and resources
2. Identify existing programs in the Houston area that provide parent support and training
3. Identify best practices nationally which are focused on equipping parents with skills to advocate for their children when they are involved in the justice system
4. Identify a range of activities that typically burden a person who has been arrested or incarcerated for which advocacy can provide relief (e.g., “second chance”, record expunging, and other diversion program opportunities), as points of focus to direct parent advocates
5. Disseminate resources to parents via community, civic, and faith groups
6. Create long term sustainability plans for ensuring that parents are aware of all viable opportunities

## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

**Number of parent advocacy support groups**

**Number of parents in advocacy support groups**

# MBK MILESTONE 6

## **REDUCING CRIME AND VIOLENCE AND PROVIDING A SECOND CHANCE**

### **RECOMMENDATION 6.6**

Educate the business community and local human resource industry of “Ban the Box” initiatives around the country.

## ACTION PLAN

The MBK Milestone 6 Action Team will work to remove barriers to employment for qualified workers with criminal records, specifically by pursuing “Ban the Box” initiatives that remove conviction history questions from job applications and postpone inquiry of criminal history until an appropriate pre-employment offer. The team will develop innovative strategies to incentivize businesses to transition from criminal record questions on job applications. Best practices cite examples such as conducting background checks after a conditional offer of employment and background check only being required for some positions as promising strategies.



## DELIVERABLES

1. Engage public sector and private sector leaders to generate support of local “Ban the Box” initiatives
2. Generate “Ban the Box” standards, process and qualified position list (and exceptions) for users to employ
3. Develop recommendations for incentives for businesses to voluntarily “Ban the Box”
4. Recruit “Ban the Box” participants, and track success in hiring practices

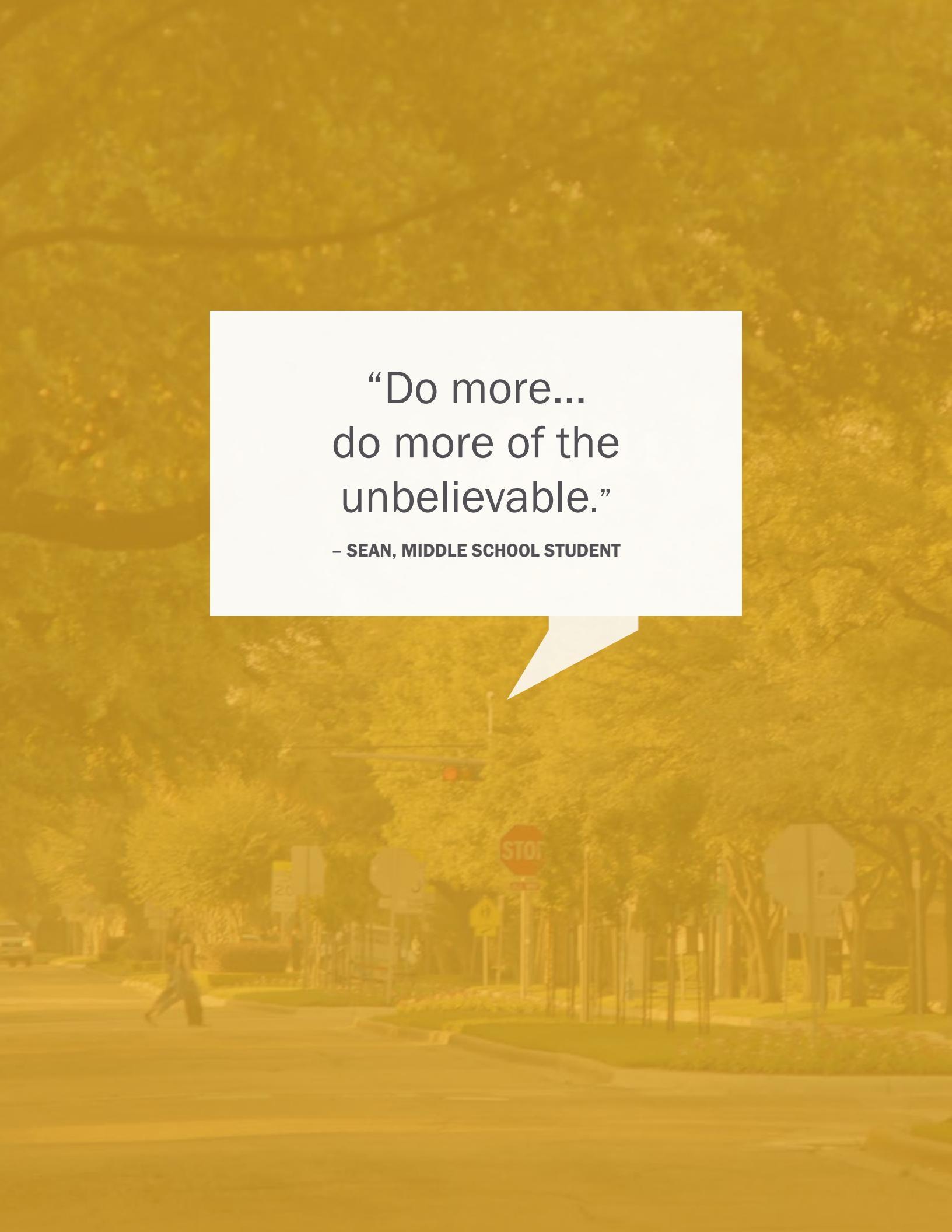
## DATA OPPORTUNITIES

**Number of employers participating in “Ban the Box”**





**TARGET**



“Do more...  
do more of the  
unbelievable.”

- SEAN, MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT

# TARGET AREA CRITERIA



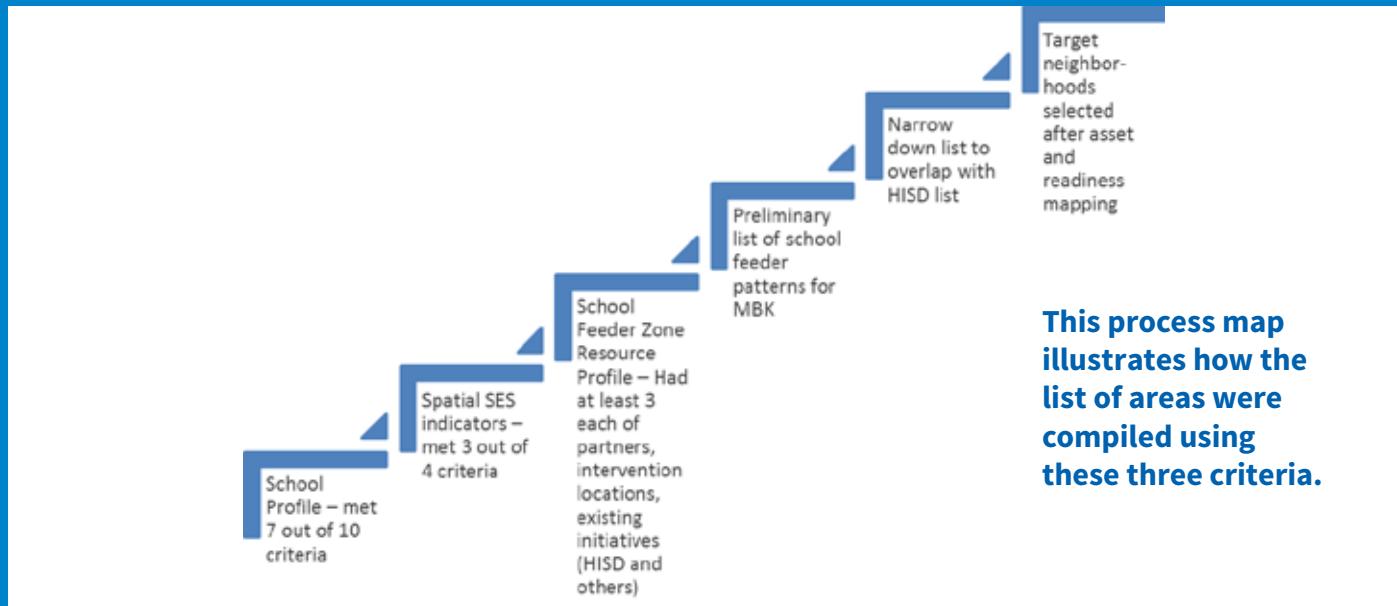
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**The Target Areas were selected based on high school feeder patterns and a resource review assessment.** The three basic criteria used to select the initial target areas were school profile, spatial socioeconomic status indicators, and school feeder resource profile.

---

The resource review assessment was conducted by the Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs at Texas Southern University.

# TARGET AREA SELECTION CRITERIA



**MBK Milestone Action Teams will focus their efforts in three Houston school feeder pattern areas, performing community based interventions of the MBK recommendations.**

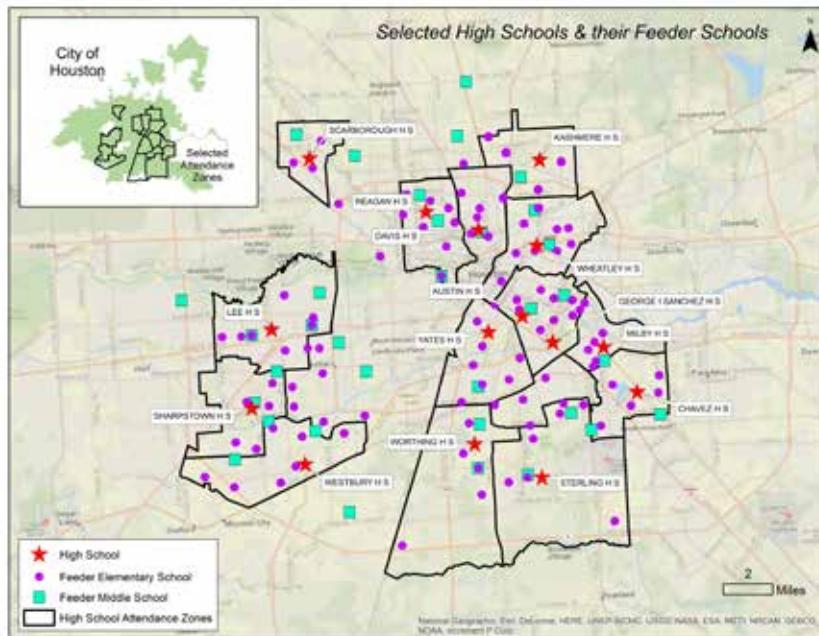
Target-area selections were based on three criteria:

- 1 SCHOOL PROFILE** – academic and behavioral indicators
- 2 SPATIAL SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS (SES)** indicators

- 3 SCHOOL FEEDER RESOURCE PROFILE** – partners, intervention location, and existing initiatives

# SELECTION CRITERIA SCHOOL PROFILE INDICATORS

**FIGURE 1: SELECTED HIGH SCHOOLS AND THEIR FEEDER SCHOOLS**



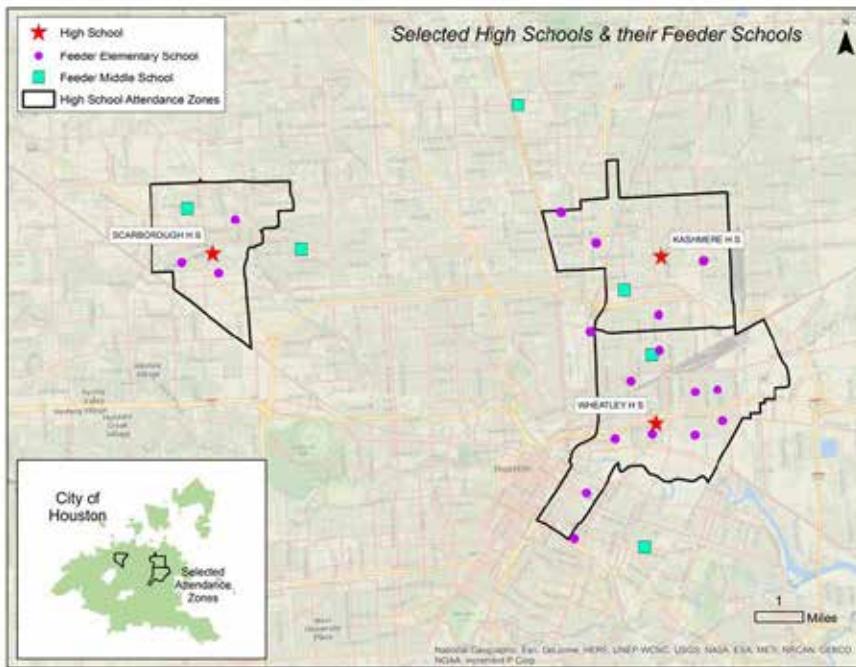
This map highlights the high school feeder zones that met 7 out of 10 criteria for poor academic and behavioral indicators.

- Graduation rates
- STAAR Algebra
- STAAR English
- Economically disadvantaged
- Limited English proficiency
- Dropout rates
- Out-of-school suspension
- Expulsion
- At-risk Students
- Career and technical education

# SELECTION CRITERIA

## SCHOOL PROFILE INDICATORS

**FIGURE 2: SELECTED TARGET AREAS**



**To conduct place-based initiatives in a city as spread out as Houston**, specific geographic areas needed to be identified as target areas for the initial implementation of MBK Houston.

Instead of a neighborhood or zip code approach, school feeder patterns were used to define the geographic area since most of the MBK milestones focus on working closely with the schools and the surrounding community. The MBK initial implementation plan involves working with

Houston Independent School District. With further refinement, additional school districts in the Houston region will be invited to participate. For additional details please go to <http://www.mbkhouston.org>.

# SELECTION CRITERIA SCHOOL PROFILE INDICATORS

**A three step process was used to select the MBK target areas for initial implementation.**

---

## **1 HIGH SCHOOL PROFILES**

with key academic and behavioral indicators

## **2 SPATIAL MAPS of**

socio-economic data

---

## **3 RESOURCE REVIEW**

to finalize target areas

The map of the Selected High Schools and their Feeder Schools (Figure 1) on page 113 highlights the high school feeder areas that met 7 out of 10 criteria for academic and behavioral indicators listed on page 113. Schools in these areas had the greatest needs and challenges.

Spatial socioeconomic indicators provided additional information for pinpointing the target

areas among the selected high schools and their feeder elementary and middle schools. Data on poverty, educational attainment, unemployment and median housing value was overlaid on the map of high schools that met 7 out of 10 criteria. Using the socioeconomic data and aligning MBK efforts with current initiatives, the original list was shortened to six of the school feeder patterns.

# SELECTION CRITERIA SCHOOL PROFILE INDICATORS

**Further resource review analysis was completed by Texas Southern University (TSU) to identify the three school feeder zones for the initial implementation of MBK Houston.**

---

The Mickey Leland Center for Environment, Justice and Sustainability in the Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs at Texas Southern University was tasked with assisting MBK Houston to further narrow down the number of schools from six to three.

**THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA WERE USED BY TSU RESEARCHERS:**

**1** **GEOGRAPHIC**  
distribution  
of the schools

**2** **PRESENCE** of  
a community  
center where  
initiatives  
could be  
facilitated

**3** **RACIAL/  
ETHNIC**  
demographics  
of the high  
school student  
population

**4** **POTENTIAL  
RELEVANCE**  
to MBK  
Milestones 3  
and 4

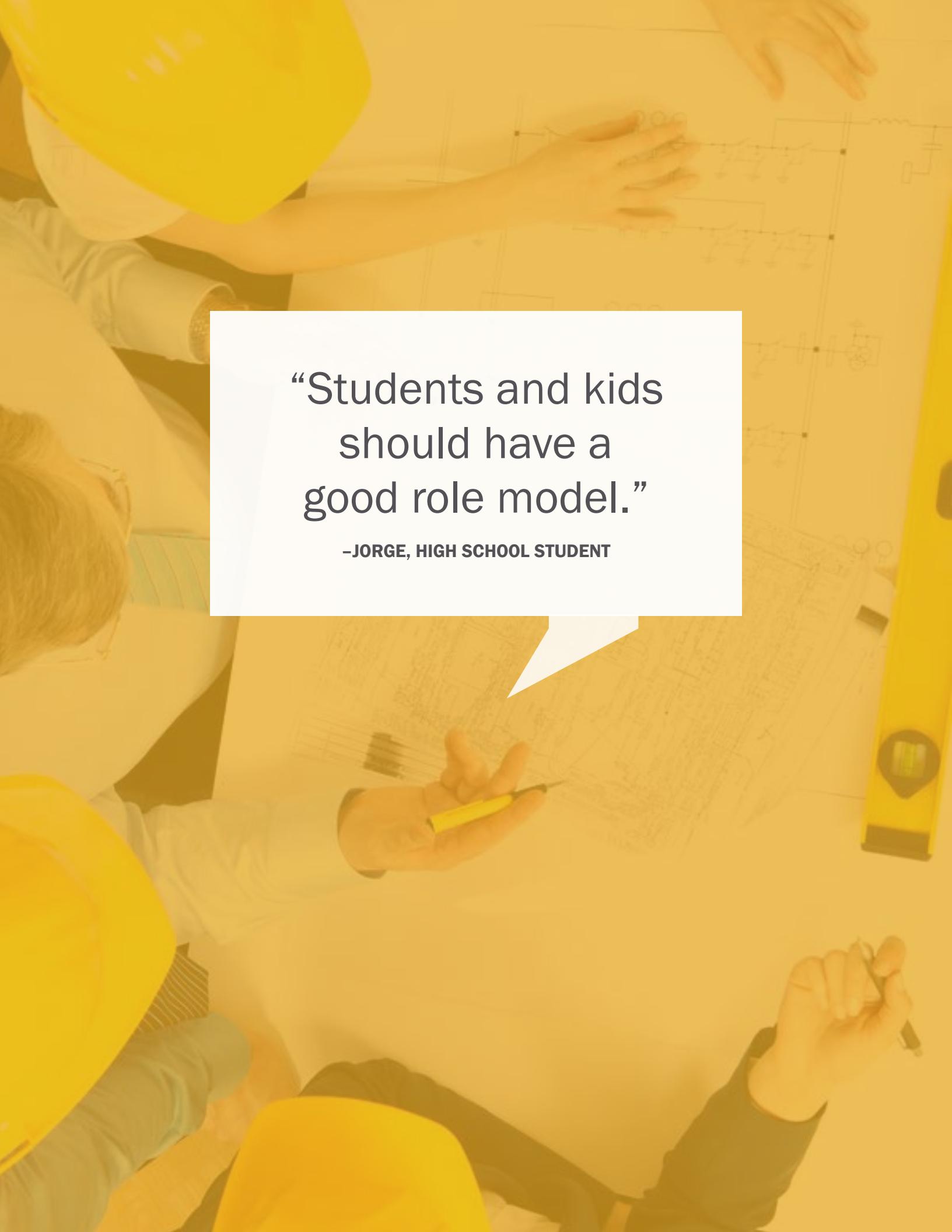
The three high schools selected using this methodology were 1) Scarborough, 2) Wheatley and 3) Kashmere. The racial/ethnic distribution of students in these three schools is a closer

approximation to Houston demographics, while also meeting the MBK goal of ensuring that all boys and young men of color achieve their potential.



**NEXT STEPS**

**NEXT**



A background photograph shows several students in a classroom or workshop setting. One student in the foreground is drawing on a large sheet of graph paper. Another student is visible in the background, working on a model airplane. The scene is lit with warm, golden light.

“Students and kids  
should have a  
good role model.”

-JORGE, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

# COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT THROUGH COLLECTIVE ACTION

**Because Houston is such a large community,** the approach is to establish collaborative relationships and planning that establishes systemwide standards, processes and best practice actions and applies them to defined geographic areas.

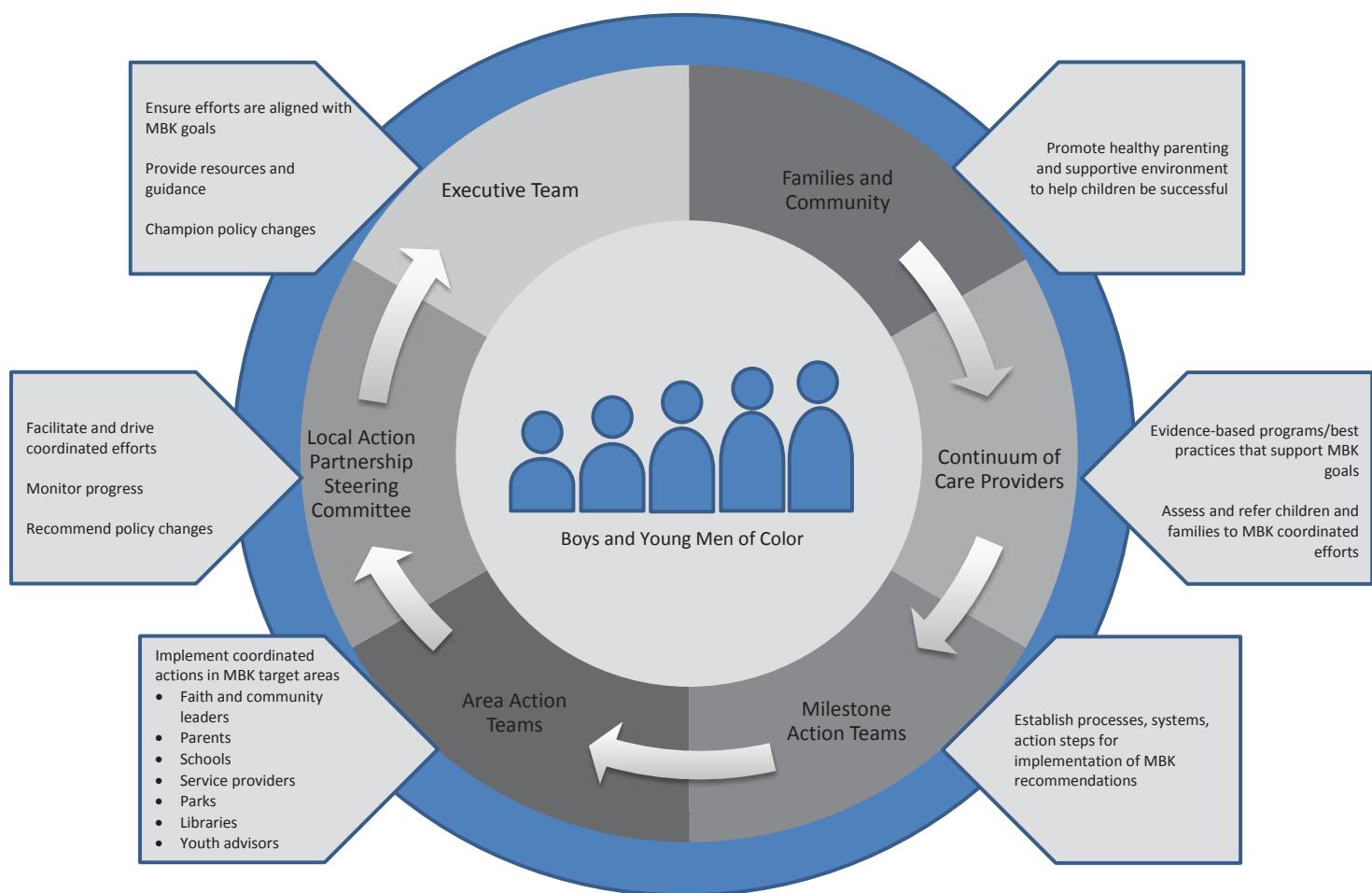
This approach is intended to bring a higher concentration of resources in a defined area for a defined population in a concerted effort to move the needle of key indicators of success for boys and young men of color.

The diagram on page 120 illustrates how the MBK teams will work collaboratively to achieve milestones associated with cradle to career success for boys and young men of color systemwide and in selected geographic areas.



# COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CYCLE

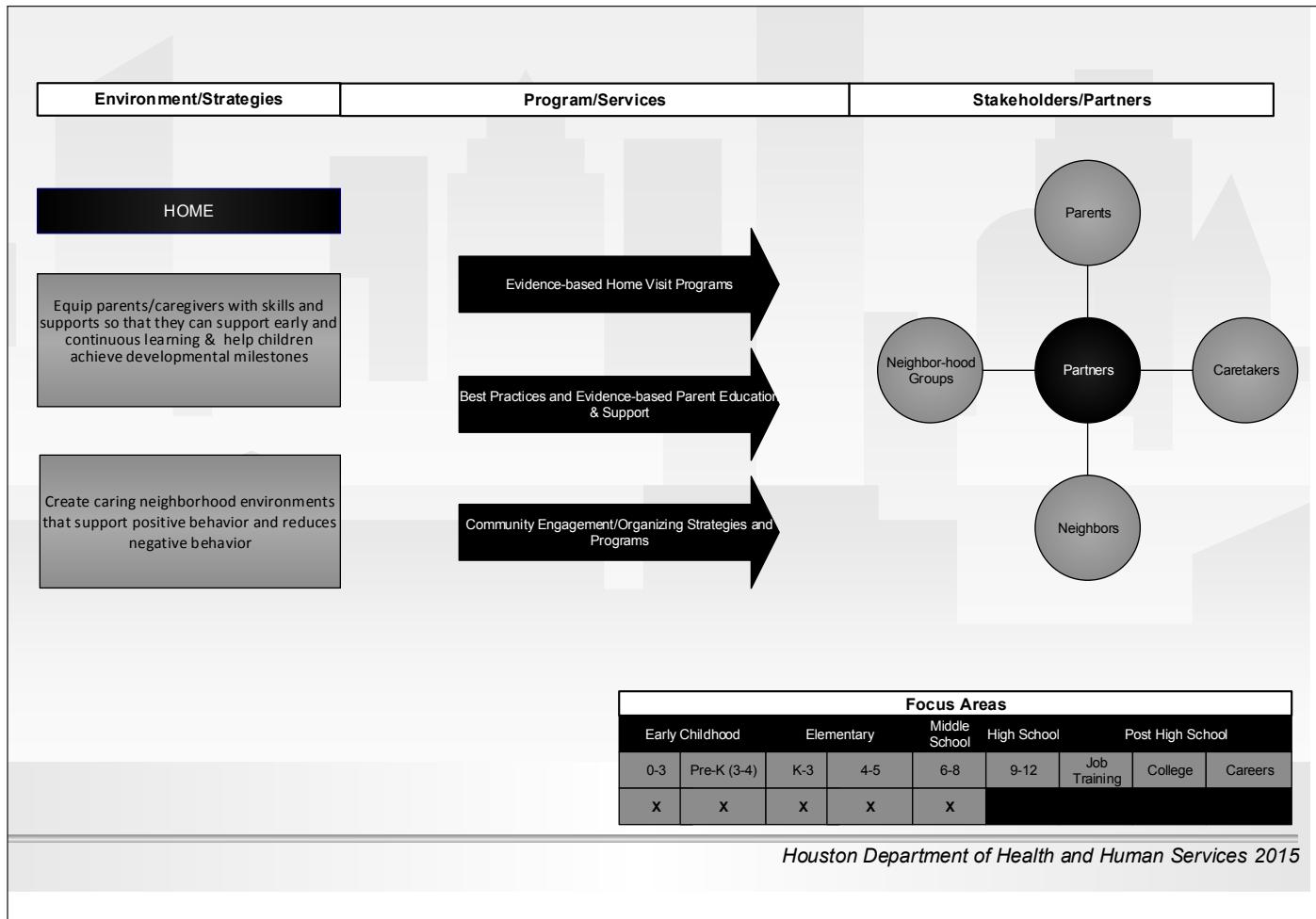
The diagram illustrates the process that will be used to implement actions and achieve outcomes in Houston.



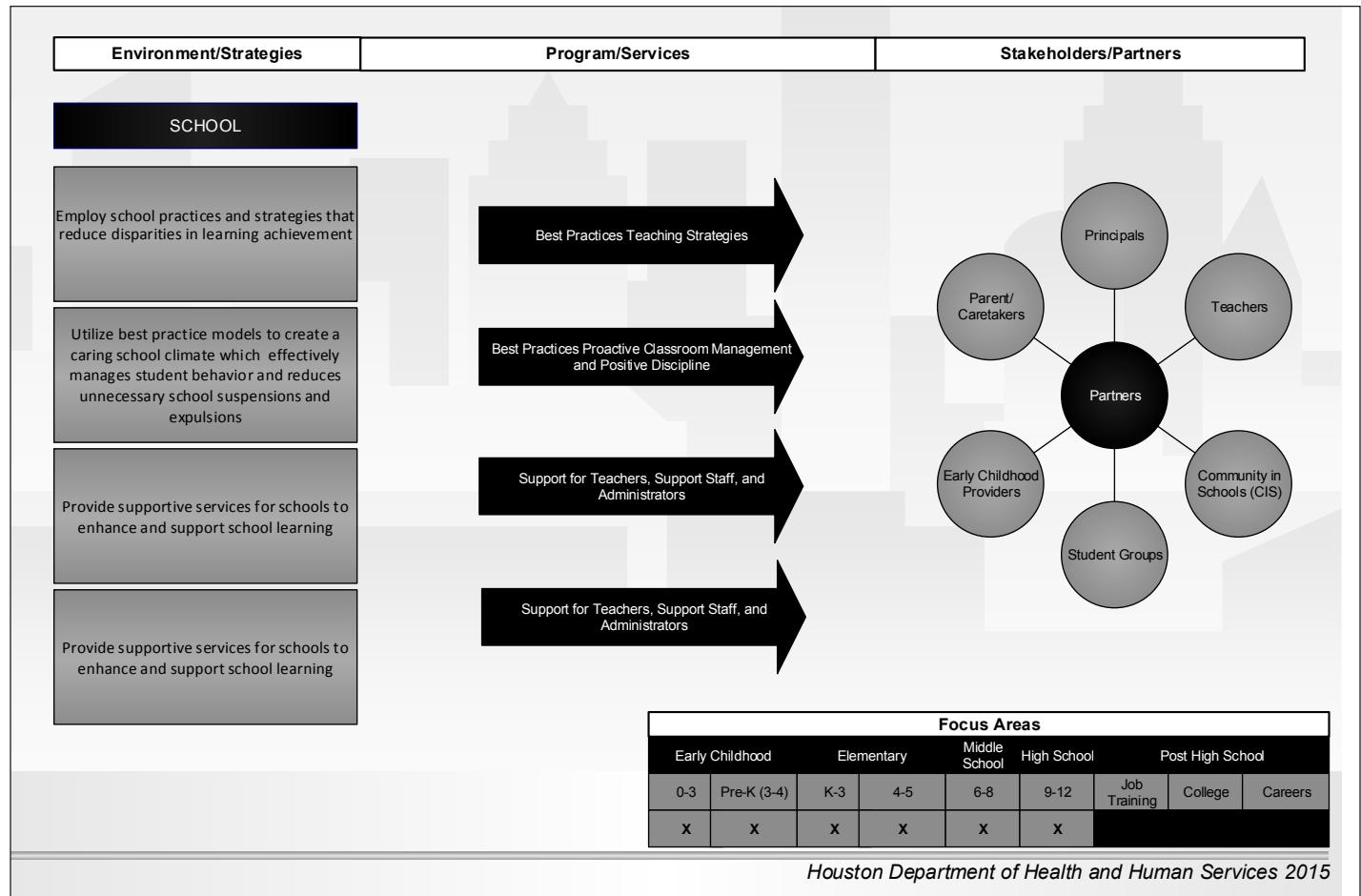
# COMPREHENSIVE GEOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO CREATING ENVIRONMENTS FOR CRADLE TO CAREER SUCCESS

**The diagrams on the following pages are models** that illustrate the strategies, programs and partners which are key to achieving MBK milestones across the following environments that touch the lives of children and young adults: home, school, out-of-school time, health and other specialized areas such as criminal justice settings and the workforce.

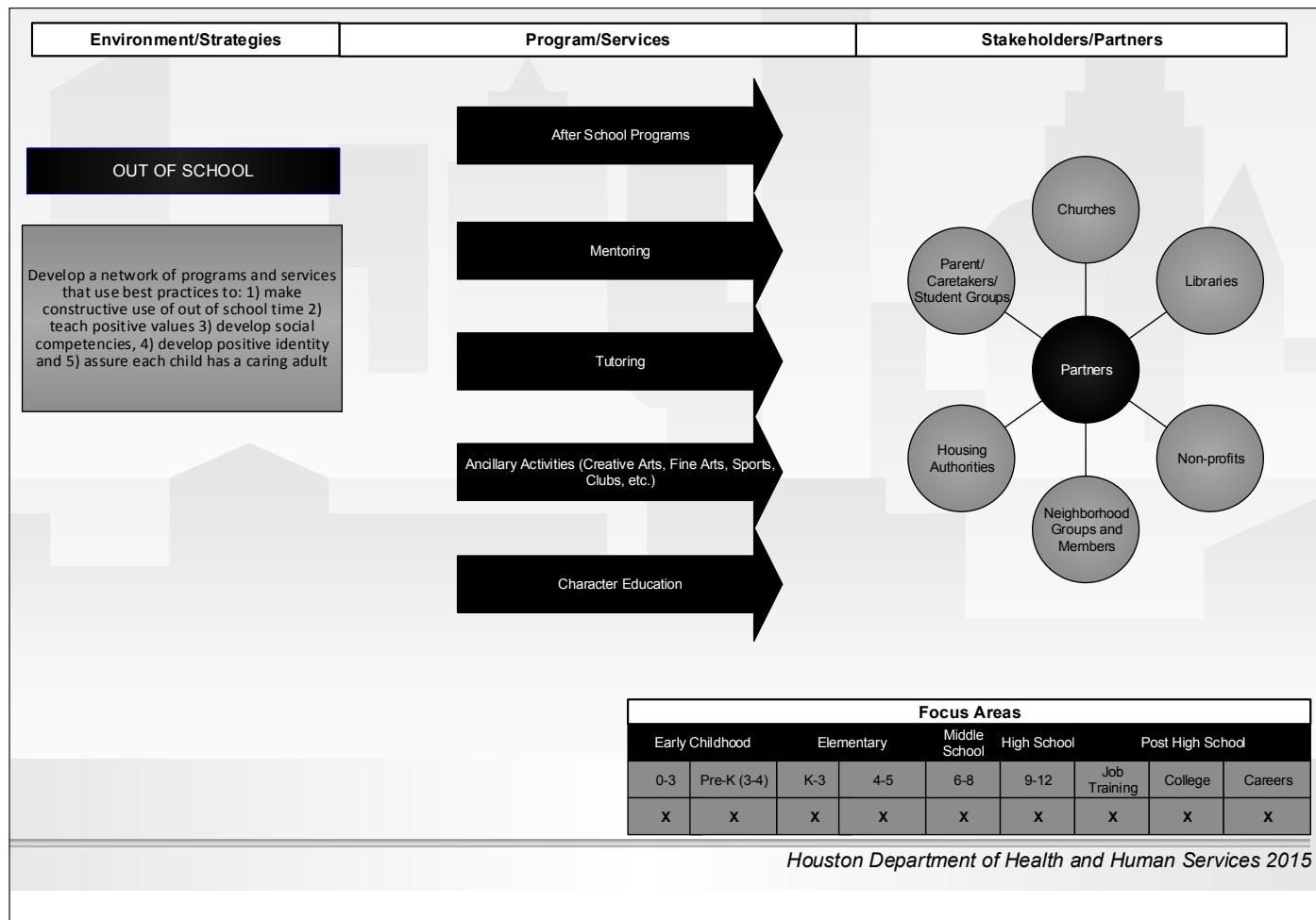
# MBK HOUSTON MODEL HOME



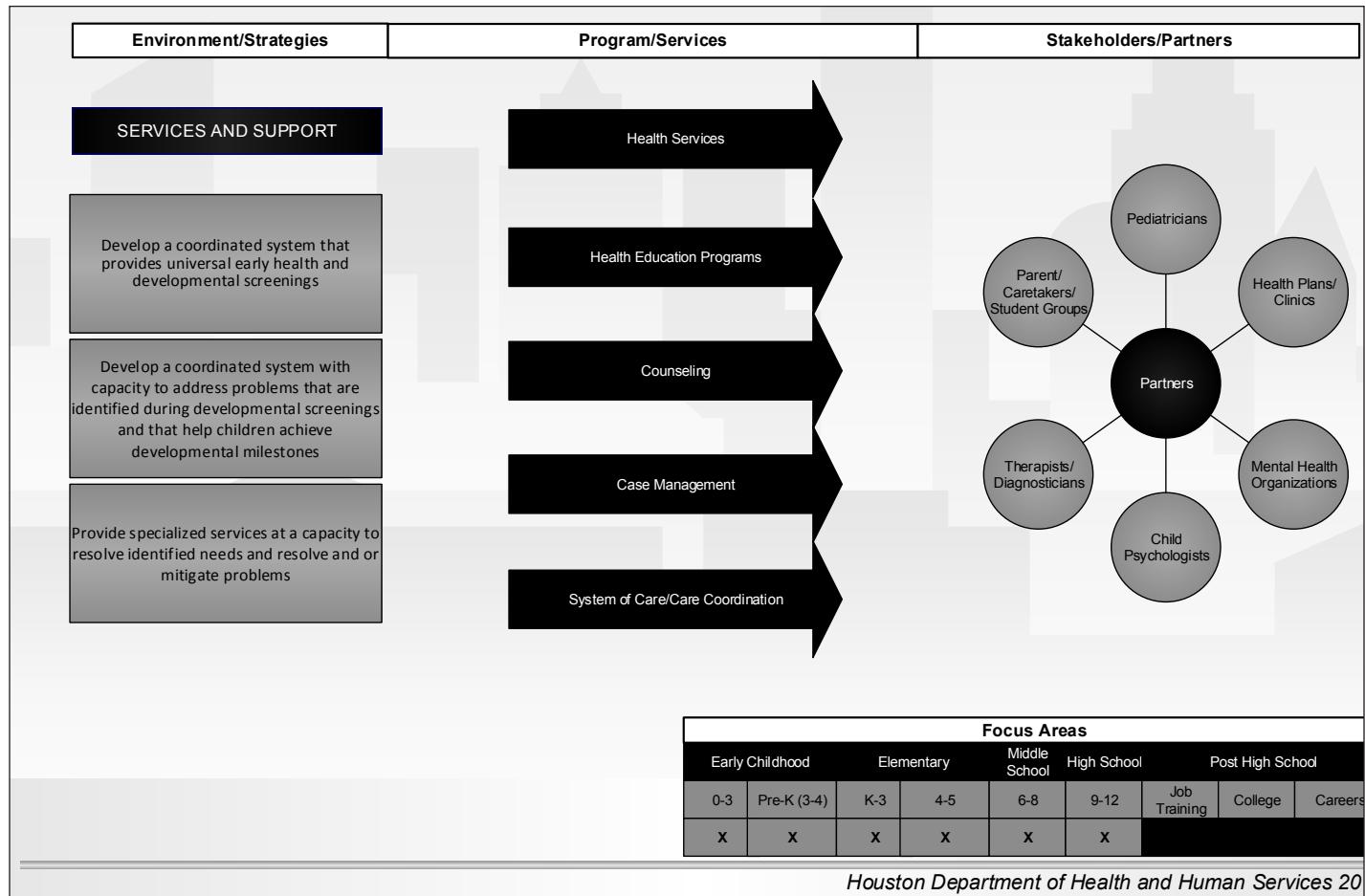
# MBK HOUSTON MODEL SCHOOL



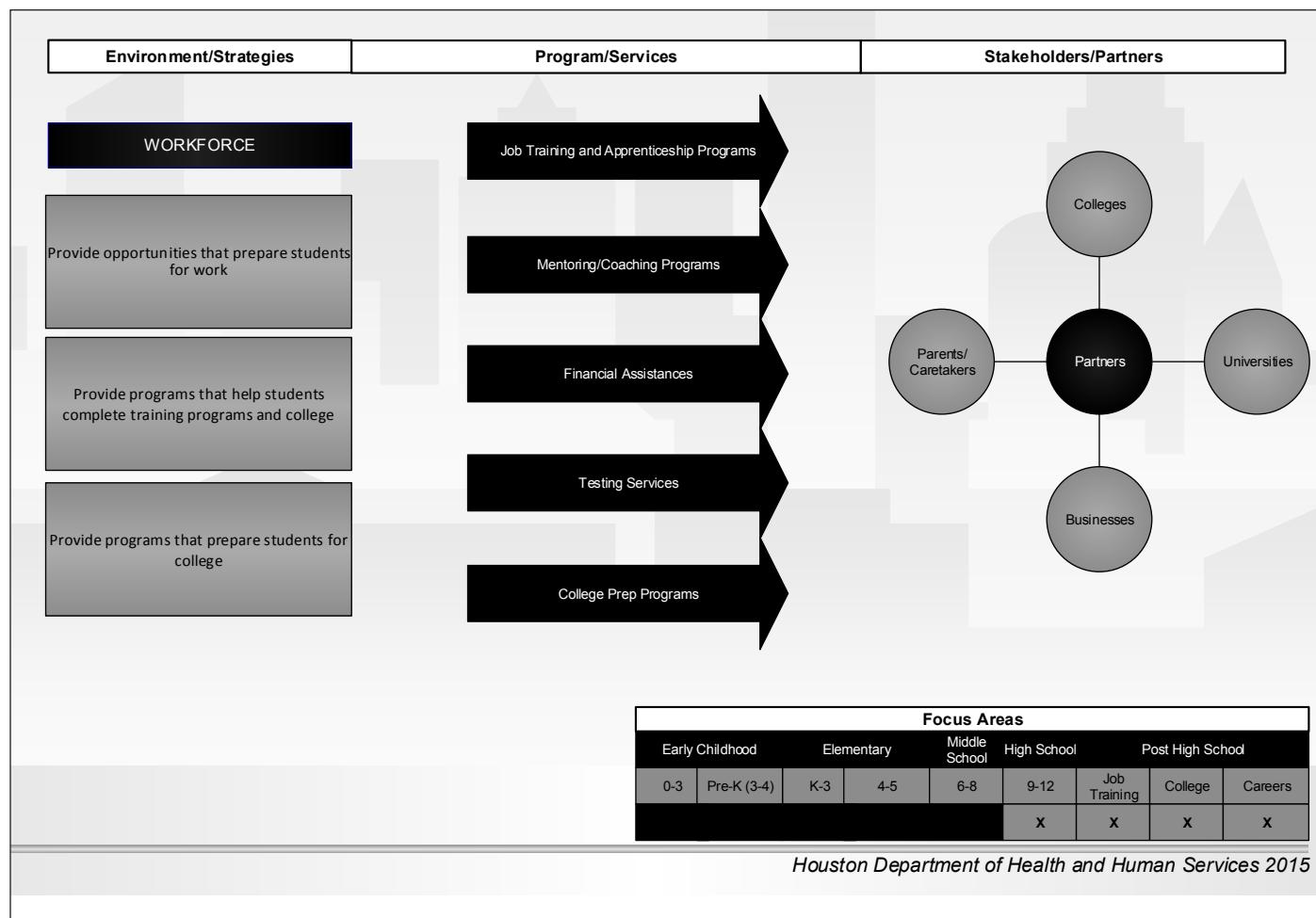
# MBK HOUSTON MODEL OUT-OF-SCHOOL



# MBK HOUSTON MODEL SERVICES AND SUPPORT



# MBK HOUSTON MODEL WORKFORCE



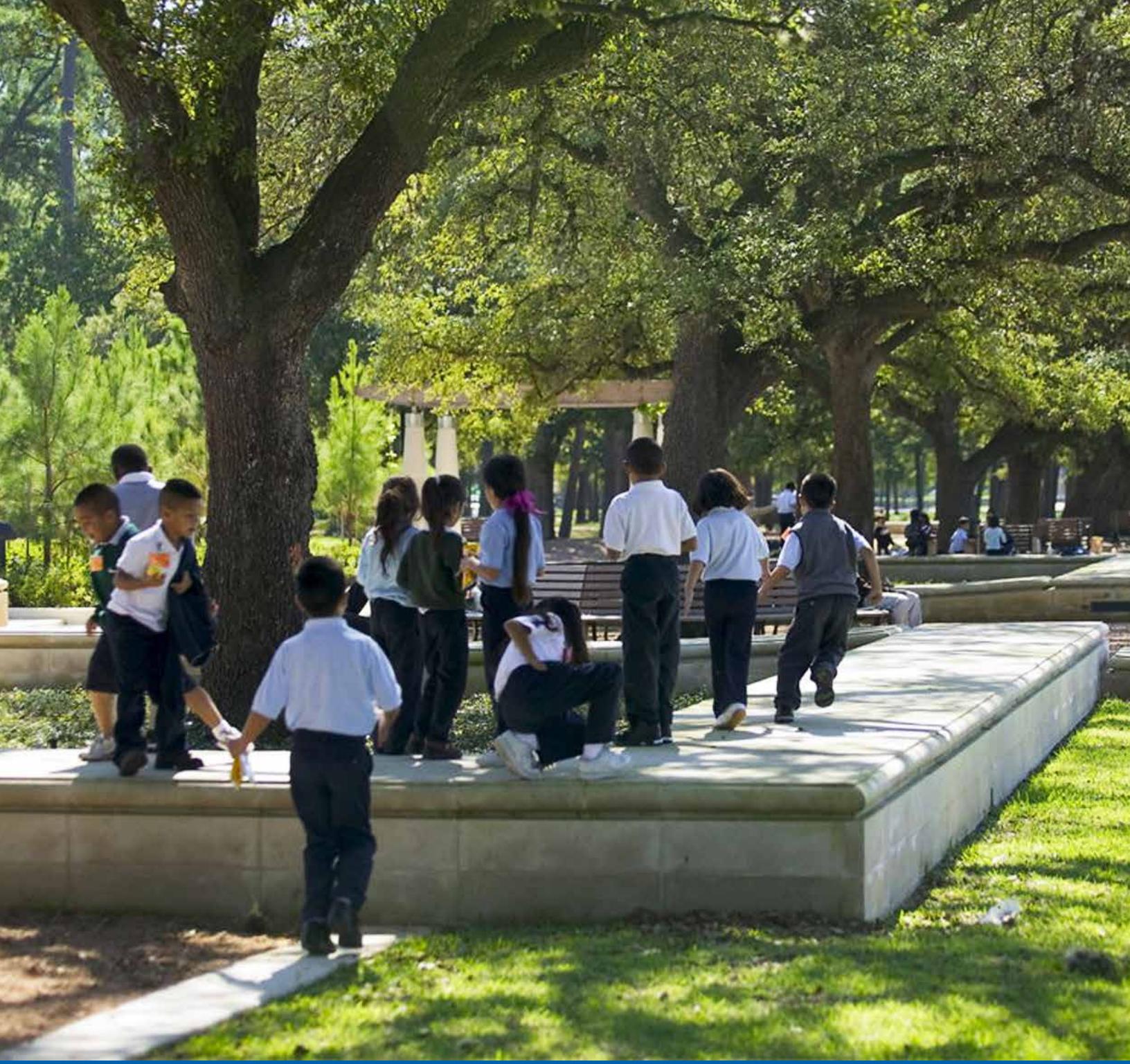
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