

# **Office of Black Male Student Achievement (OBMSA)**

## **Targeted Support for 2015-2016 School Year**

In its second year, the Office of Black Male Student Achievement (OBMSA) in its second year is gearing up to launch our 2015-2016 support for our Kings. From the discovery of our Belief Framework in our first 100 days we arrived on three focus areas for our office. Those areas are Professional Development for Educators, Authentically Engaging our Families & Communities, and Direct Service with our Kings. We will be piloting this work at 8 sites, 4 high and 4 middle schools. In addition we will solicit 8 elementary school sites that will only go through our Professional Development series. Below we will briefly outline the work in these three areas.

### **Direct Service w/ Kings**

In partnership with the University of Minnesota and Dr. Keith Mayes we have developed a curriculum for our Black Males. The curriculum introduces students to the complexity of the black male experience by exploring the lived reality of black men in the United States. Ranging historically-far and thematically-wide, these courses will expose students to the experience of black male labor force participation and employment outcomes; deconstruct representations of black masculinity in popular culture; explore academic dilemmas associated with primary and secondary educational pursuits; and uncover issues connected with law, incarceration, and criminal justice. In addition, part of the curriculum will examine the relationship complexities involving black men and black women by looking closely at the African-American role in traditional and non-traditional family structures. Along with historical and sociological content, these courses will address the issue of character development and black male leadership. Thus, the courses seek to address the most central of questions: Who are black men and what is the black male experience, given the growing diversity of black maleness in Minnesota, the United States and the Diaspora? At the center of the curriculum is not only what other people have said about the black male historical and contemporary experience, but also how black men have imagined and constructed their own experience over time.

#### **BIG IDEAS of the course**

- Knowledge of Self
- Empowerment/Activism
- Student Engagement/Character Development
- Self-Identity

We have identified Community Experts in the field who will teach the BLACK course. This is a traditional course and not a group, meaning the class will meet daily (depending on your schools master schedule). Please note that we are capping the class at 20 students, with a preferred target of Black males enrolled.

## Professional Development for Educators

Along with the BLACK course, OBMSA is proposing the following outline of professional development:  
Five Professional Development Series (titles may change):

- 1) Strategies to Engage Black Males
  - a. Rituals and Classroom routines
  - b. Providing movement in class
  - c. Learn collaborative practices that reduce school suspensions and expulsions of young Black males
- 2) Linking Communities
  - a. Learn collaborative processes that lead to greater community involvement for school readiness
- 3) Black Male Voices
  - a. Learn effective student voice techniques that motivate and engage learners.
- 4) Unconscious Bias
  - a. Participants will use NUA instructional and learning strategies to interrogate their own belief system as it relates to personal bias about culture (and race), stereotype threat, and their professional practices
- 5) Pedagogy of Confidence
  - a. Learn key high operational practices to inspire exceptional instructional delivery;

These sessions will occur about every other month throughout the school year. In addition, we encourage a Collaborative Action Research Cohort (CARC) at each site to focus on the book Pedagogy of Confidence by Dr. Yvette Jackson. Please reserve a 1/2 day time slot on the district identified PD days on October 29th and January 19th. OBMSA will bring in the author of the CARC book study to provide deeper dives of the learning.

## **Authentically Engaging our Families & Communities**

The Office of Black Male Student Achievement (OBMSA) recognizes parent engagement is a shared partnership between school, community and home. OBMSA is committed to authentically engaging our parents in meaningful activities that foster a learning and growing community.

We are currently in the process of developing with a community based organization a Parent University. This will be the pilot year and we are strategically recruiting the families of the students who are taking the BLACK course. Parent University© is a six module, school-based training series designed to:

- **Help**–Parents understand and navigate the current education system
- **Build**–Parent engagement into school culture and teacher success
- **Develop**–Collaboration with school
- **Promote**–Scholar success at home and school
- **Support**–Development of Scholar–socially and emotionally
- **Provide**–Tools to prepare scholars for matriculation to college
- **Empower**–An advocacy frame to support schools towards the endeavor to bring equitable education to all children

This program is designed to give rise to a “lens shift” whereby parents are able to more effectively address students’ educational issues, realize and positively utilize their power to navigate the school, the education system and to learn about advocacy on behalf of their child’s education. Research has shown parents who attend parent education trainings show great understanding of how to support their child in the educational environment.