



Raising Achievement for Males of Color in Cleveland

JUNE 2018



ClevelandMetroSchools.org

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Raising achievement for young men of color in America is a challenge in every big city school district. But in Cleveland, staff at the Cleveland Metropolitan School District serve the second-highest population of poor children in the nation, and closing the achievement gap is a moral imperative.

Using federal funding to assist at-risk male students of color in their quest to become high school graduates, CMSD identified four risk factors that pose a danger to minority males in progressing with their grade-level peers, including:

- Failing two or more core classes in eighth grade
- Being absent more than 20 percent of the school year
- Receiving five or more days of out-of-school suspension
- Being over age for their grade, an indication of possible retention

Schools with a three-year overall average graduation rate of 80 percent or less are required to have additional supports to close the achievement gap.

CMSD's Linkage Coordinators

At each CMSD school, Linkage Coordinators:

- serve as mentors, life coaches, motivators and advocates for male students of color.
- provide life-changing experiences through events and activities outside the students' neighborhoods.
- guide students through a range of social and emotional developmental interventions in their school and community.
- foster strong working relationships between male students of color and their school administrators, teachers and staff.

CMSD provides high-quality professional development for educators and access to culturally relevant pedagogy focused on developing males of color in every way—physically, emotionally and intellectually—from the pivotal ninth-grade year to college and career.

At the heart of the strategy is *The Cleveland Plan*

CMSD's customized blueprint for education reform was written into state law at the urging of school and community leaders in 2011. The plan's fundamental purpose is to ensure that every child in every neighborhood has access to a quality education.

The following pages break down these efforts by category, particularly as they pertain to raising achievement for males of color.



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Expanding school models, rising graduation rates

- The graduation rate of CMSD's 2016 cohort rose to 72.4, placing CMSD's African-American students at a higher graduation rate than African-American students in the State.
- Ohio Department of Education data shows that CMSD's Black students graduate 4.9 percentage points higher than the state average for African-American students and have graduated at higher rates than their statewide peers for the past four years.
- Latino students graduate only slightly lower (2.7%) than the state average for Latino students, closing the gap by 15.6 percentage points in just five years.
- Since 2011, CMSD has the third fastest growing graduation rate in the state and the fastest growing rate among the eight large urban school districts in Ohio.
- CMSD is a portfolio district that offers a growing number of school models from which students can find their best fit. Options include STEM education, performing arts, digital arts, single-gender academies, schools of architecture and design, science and medicine, early-college study, International Baccalaureate, aerospace and maritime, career tech, engineering, civic and business leadership, information technology, science and health, environmental studies and social justice.
- CMSD's single-gender schools include Ginn Academy, believed to be the only public all-male high school in the nation, and two all-male K-8 schools, Kenneth W. Clement Boys' Leadership Academy and Valley View Boys' Leadership Academy.
- Ginn Academy has gained national attention as a school for at-risk boys and a predominantly African-American enrollment whose four-year graduation rate of 95.0 percent is well above the District's record 72.1 percent graduation rate.
- Project-based schools provide a hands-on, experiential approach to learning that puts students in charge of their education. An increasing number of CMSD high schools feature mastery learning, which lets a student progress at his own pace.
- CMSD's five career-technical schools are revamping their programs to increase rigor and meet the needs of the modern workforce. Learn more at bit.ly/1YaEh5g
- Mentors work one-on-one with students as they transition to and move through high school. CMSD's Closing the Achievement Gap program makes Linkage Coordinators available to at-risk students in select high schools 24 hours a day. Learn more at bit.ly/1oV5VXE
- The School of One provides individual learning plans for high school students who face barriers in education. Advisors provide personal attention and stay with the same limited number of students until they graduate.