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Nashville joins Obama's 'My Brother's Keeper' initiative for minority boys

Joey Garrison, jgarrison@tennessean.com 12:46 p.m. CDT July 21, 2014



Metro Nashville Public Schools is one of 60 local school districts joining President Barack Obama's expanded effort to take on "opportunity gaps" that American black and Latino boys face.

Obama, turning to his personal story, announced in February the creation of "My Brother's Keeper," a five-year, \$200 million push to increase avenues of success for boys of color.

In Washington on Monday, more than 60 of the nation's largest districts — representing 3 million minority boys — signed on to an 11-point plan. MNPS, with a population that is two-thirds minority, and Shelby County Schools in Tennessee are among those that committed.

Metro's pledge comes as MNPS officials are also planning a comprehensive citywide initiative to tackle the "discipline gap" when it comes to minority males. MNPS is one of four districts, along with Chicago, Los Angeles and New York, to take part in a program called PASSAGE that will examine racial and disciplinary disparities and create a network to share best practices.

Though the move to expand “My Brother’s Keeper” doesn’t come with additional federal spending, a handful of private commitments totaling more than \$100 million was announced Monday to bolster the program.

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SOME BROTHER’S KEEPER STRATEGIES

- Expanding prekindergarten.
- Having early warning systems to prevent grade retention.
- Reducing suspensions and expulsions.
- Boosting access to rigorous coursework such as Advanced Placement.
- Ensuring that students complete college financial aid forms.