



African American Male Initiative

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Mission and Purpose:

The new currency in the world today is EDUCATION. Students today seeking a good future and the ability to make positive contributions to society will have to be educated. That means beginning at a child's birth, that child must be prepared for the learning that is required and needed for their positive survival. Students must be able to read and develop analytical skills for a successful future. Many students will receive the proper training needed for their academic development in their home environment. But some students will have to rely on outside forces/environment to obtain this training i.e. mentors, school personnel and community leaders.

Many of today leaders can successfully identify a school person who supported, mentored and pushed them toward their positive achievements. Today, much of that support comes from a school principal who sees all students as positive learners.

The African American male student today is still lagging behind most students in academic achievement. In most cities across these United States less than 40 percent of African American males are successfully passing standardized test. Many students point to a lack of interest in school and not being challenged in their subjects. Somehow, we must convince today's African American male that his and our community survival depends on his level of education. This initiative has been created for the purpose of identifying and utilizing those forces that bring about a change in his performance.

School Strands:

- Dunbar High, Dunbar 7th Grade Center, Dunbar 6th Grade Center and Logan Elementary
- Southwest High, South Hills High, Wedgewood Middle School, Wedgewood 6th Grade Center, Greenbriar, Shulkey, Stevens, Westcreek and Woodway Elementary Schools
- Wyatt High, Forest Oak Middle, **Morningside Middle**, Glencrest 6th Grade Ctr., Beal, Carter Park, Glen Park, W. M. Green, Mitchell, **Morningside** Oaklawn, David K. Sellars Elementary Schools and New Lives Ctr.

Principles for Principals:

Group 1: This group deals with a principal's personal relationship with his/her students

- Principals must care for all students
- Principals must meet with African American males regularly to discuss their future and how they can make positive contributions to society
- Principals must protect the “weakest” of their students. Bullying must never be a standard procedure at a campus
 1. Bullying is a learned behavior that must be unlearned
 2. School personnel should never model tolerance of bullying by students
 3. In elementary and middle school, the most common form of bullying is, in fact, teasing. However, physical abuse (for boys) and social ostracism (for girls) are in second place
 4. Bullies often attack smaller, weaker children to model what happens to them in their homes. The worst possible punishment for bullies is physical
 5. **SCHOOLS WITH CLEAR RULES OF CONDUCT ENFORCED BY THE PRINCIPAL REPORT LESS VIOLENCE**
 6. A principal who appears to be ineffective or invisible to students report more violence in school
 7. Schools with principals who provide opportunities for teachers and students to participate in decision-making report less violence
 8. Bullying can be put to rest only when it is recognized and steps are taken to prevent it. Ignoring the problem will not make it go away” (The Bully Free Classroom).
- Principals must identify those African American male students with the propensity for violence and a lack of desire to learn and see that the proper support system is provided for that student
- Principals must keep before his/her students the role of the school

Group 2: This group deals with a principal's stern requirement that student's attire is appropriate for learning

- Principals must insure that clothing or other fashion statements do not interfere with the daily role of learning
- Principals should establish public etiquette programs: teaching our young men how to live (appropriate dress) in public
- Principals should strongly encourage African American males to learn how to respect each other and adults. Students should never be allowed to rail against his/her parent(s) or other adults, but should be taught how to control their temper

Group 3: This group deals with the academic preparation of all students but especially African American Male

- Principals must insure that students take courses appropriate to their ability. All students will not be able to succeed in calculus or advanced placement courses
- At the elementary school level all student (male and female) must learn their multiplication table through the 12's by the end of the 4th grade
- African American males must be encouraged to develop a vocabulary and that the instructional staff should never accept misuse of words in their conversation
- Principals must encourage African American males to enroll in courses that will help them develop skills with musical instruments. Encourage young men to learn how to play instruments other than the drums
- Principals must encourage African American males to enroll in art classes to develop cognitive skills as it relates to thinking and transferring that thought to paper
- Principals must at the elementary school level see that students are reading on a regular basis especially from their favorite books. Books such as "Gifted Hands" (the story of the rise of Dr. Benjamin Carson from the Detroit streets of violence to become one of the world's great brain surgeons), "Michelle" (the story of the rise of Michelle Robinson from the political demands of Chicago to become the next first lady of this country) and "Dreams from My Father: A story of Race and Inheritance" by Barack Obama. For high school students I recommend the book "Bearing the Cross" (an historical account of the rise of the Civil Rights Movement from Montgomery to Memphis). Our young men must understand the role played by many to get African American's to this point in history.
- Emma Wolfe Hamilton has written a book entitled "Raising Bookworms" in which she states several points:
 1. "Students should discover reading at any age
 2. Keep a connection between reading and joy
 3. Reading is how language is learned
 4. Parents must read to and with their children. If parents are not available, other family members should become readers with the student." We must work to see that African American males are reading

- Principals must encourage the development of student’s motor skills. This means we must encourage our young men to become active in today’s sports
- Principal should establish a “Discipline Committee” to examine how to best administer discipline to students and to how best to avoid discipline issues
- Principals should identify early in the school year those students who are struggling academically and provide support for each student.

Group 4: This group deals with outside school environment

- Principals should ensure that students are exposed to quality learning programs, i.e. museums and college campuses, to broaden each student’s horizon and receive a glimpse into this world’s development
- Principals should ensure that appropriate African American (and non African American) professional are invited to visit the school on a regular basis to speak with students and listen to students comments
- Principals should ensure that struggling students receive a mentor
- Principals should invite parents to attend and visit school classrooms on a regular basis. A program should be develop that ensures that parents are on campus on a regular basis and invited to sit in classrooms during class time
- Principals should invite religious, community and business leaders to walk their halls to be seen by students
- Principals should take full advantage of the UMOJA project to help African American Males

TAKS SCHOOL STRATEGIES:

1. Identify all African American males (secondary) who have not successfully passed TAKS
2. Ensure that these students are taking advantage of scheduled tutorial sessions. Also, utilize mentors to come and talk with students on the importance of preparing for TAKS. Take advantage of UMOJA, FWABSE and other individuals and organizations to receive support for these students.
3. Principals should ensure that struggling students are visited by the principal regularly to demonstrate to students that they have the support of the principal for academic improvement.