

# African American Young Men in Michigan Conference

August 4, 2015

## Breakout Sessions #1

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### **Creating Conditions for Learning while Reducing Suspensions and Expulsions**

Presenter: Yolanda Urquhart-Williams, Bersheril Bailey, and Tara Zuber

When students feel connected, engaged and supported in their schools, they are more likely to achieve academic and personal success. Relying on suspensions and expulsions as a means of discipline is not the answer. Due to exclusionary practices, children of color and those with disabilities are often suspended at a higher rate, even for minor infractions.

In 2014, the State Board of Education approved the Model Policy on Reducing Suspensions and Expulsions and the Model Code of Student Conduct. This session will explore the online Alternatives to Suspensions and Expulsions Toolkit which will be available to all districts in Michigan. The toolkit provides guidance to administrators on enacting culture change in K-12 schools and addresses behavior concerns using non-exclusionary methods. It also has a section for families to get information on how to support their child after a suspension or expulsion.

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### **My Brother's Keeper: Powerful Learners & Leaders**

Presenters: Angela Waters Austin, Richard Carson and Ginna Holmes

Several Michigan municipalities are forming a My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Community of Practice Network to increase the number of young men (and women) of color graduating from high school ready for college, career and civic engagement. This session will discuss: 1. The mutually reinforcing benefits of engaging students as agents of change in and out of the classroom through project-based learning and action research, and, 2. Connecting learners with academic and career-focused mentors that provide exposure to post-secondary pursuits. Join this session to learn how your municipality, school district and ISD can accept the MBK Michigan Challenge.

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### **Resources When You Want Them: A Web Tour of Professional Learning Tools that Promote Supportive and Productive Learning Environments for African American Males**

Presenter: Dr. Cynthia Overton

Join Cynthia Overton of the GLCC for a tour of an online collection of resources that help close the achievement gap. This collection of resources was inspired by the AAYMPI and informed by the needs and interests of its participants. Bring your mobile devices to follow along and experience, first hand, how you can identify white papers, articles, videos and other learning tools to incorporate into your professional practices.

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### **Updates from the State School Reform/Redesign Office (SRO)**

Presenters: Gloria Chapman and Steven Curry

The State School Reform/Redesign Office (SRO) will provide a current updates and a history of state supports for Michigan's Priority Schools under SRO authority. An overview of the mission, vision, goals, theory of action, resources, and supports will be provided.

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## Breakout Sessions #2

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### **Creating Positive School Culture through Restorative Practices**

Presenter: Amanda Howison

This session will explore the online Restorative Practices Toolkit which will be available to all districts in Michigan. The toolkit provides guidance to administrators on implementing a restorative practices approach in K-12 schools. The toolkit will discuss why a zero tolerance policy is not effective, the impact suspensions and expulsions have on African-American Youth, How and Why Restorative Practices is effective. This session will also discuss how formal and informal Restorative Practices can be implemented into schools. This is particularly important for African American Youth, who are disproportionately suspended and expelled, ultimately ending up in jail.

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### **Effective Strategies for Educating African American Males**

Presenter: Dr. Jay B. Marks

The education of African American students has been the subject of research and investigation for more than 50 years. Current research has exposed the educational inequalities and dilemmas that continue to effect African American students in today's society; particularly, African American males. This presentation will focus on some of the current issues that impact the schooling experiences of African American male students, as well as provide participants with practical, research-based strategies and tools for increasing educational opportunities and academic achievement for this student population.

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### **Engaging School Communities in Critical Reflection on Policy: Process and Tool**

Presenter: Dr. Seena M. Skelton

This session will present a process for engaging diverse stakeholders in examining district and school-based policies utilizing an equity lens.

During this session participants will:

- examine the role policy plays in supporting equitable practices
  - discussion the rationale for engaging stakeholders in critical policy review
  - learn about the Great Lakes Equity Center Policy Equity Analysis Tool (PEAT)
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### **Wellness Promotion Enhances School Climate**

Presenter: Janie Colton

School Climate refers to the social and environmental factors that contribute to students' experience of, and attitude towards, their school. A positive school climate is related to how well students and staff feel connected with others at their school. Discover how wellness initiatives can enhance this desired connectedness.

The presenter will assist participants in defining a wellness agenda, and share details from previous experiences on community collaboration, student-driven activities, specific staff offerings, and potential resources.

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## Breakout Sessions #3

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### **African American Young Men of Promise Initiative (AAYMPI) Climate & Culture – Lessons Learned**

Presenters: James Miller and Dr. Theresa Saunders

James Miller and Dr. Saunders will close the conference with a discussion about the condition of African American young men in Michigan, what has been learned during the two years of AAYMPI work and the plan for the third year of the AAYMPI. Lessons learned and strategies from a school that has participated in the three-year initiative will be shared. You won't want to miss this conversation or the resources!

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### **College Ambition Program (CAP) (High Schools Only)**

Presenters:

The College Ambition Program (CAP) is a Michigan State University (MSU) research study designed to promote postsecondary school attendance and completion by implementing a series of research-based activities in the high school.

This is a **school-wide initiative** designed to reach the staff, administration, district and community. We want the students to succeed, which is why we place special emphasis on the skills and industries that are most needed now and in the future. Therefore CAP is aimed at encouraging, and preparing students to pursue college and professional careers in *Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)*.

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### **Powerful Voices for Change**

Presenters: Jacquelynne Borden-Conyers, Mario Dewberry, and Dr. Dorinda Carter Andrews

#### Workshop Goals

- To show participants how to integrate "Student Voice" findings into professional development and practice
- To familiarize participants with the focus group process and explain why it is not color blind
- To illustrate how "Student Voice" findings can inform efforts to improve African American male academic performance

#### Workshop Summary

The one hour session will provide an overview of the "Student Voice" focus group process, review major findings from the first two years of the Initiative and provide an opportunity for participants to examine their knowledge and assumptions about students and the value of hearing and understanding their voices. School teams will use their own data and community context to develop focus group questions.

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## Breakout Sessions #3, Continued

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### **The Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency in Action: Academic Vocabulary and Positive Phone Calls Home**

Presenters: Brandy Archer and Jill Griffin

Brandy Archer and Jill Griffin will present on the climate/culture and instructional interventions utilized in the AAYMPI project. The processes and activities for making positive phone calls home and instructing academic vocabulary for the initiative will be explained. Tools and resources will be shared to demonstrate how these strategies were implemented through a lens of the essential elements of cultural proficiency

## Lunch Plenary

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### **Where are the Black Male Teachers?**

Presenter: Kenneth Sherman

According to recent data from the National Center for Education Statistics, nearly 82 percent of public school teachers in school years 2011-2014 were white. Black men are largely underrepresented in our nation's classrooms; it has been widely reported that they make up less than 2 percent of our country's teachers. Join us for this keynote session where we will look at challenges and barriers that face black men in early childhood education, and how we can overcome these challenges.

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## Concurrent Sessions

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### **Essential Tools of Cultural Proficiency**

Presenter: Dr. Franklin Campbell Jones

Cultural proficiency is an inside-out approach to sustainable change. It is an approach that uses specific tools and processes to create an environment that fosters powerful learning opportunities for educators who are the linchpin for the academic and social success of children in schools. In this session you will learn of the tools of cultural proficiency and begin application to your school setting.

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### **An Unlikely Young Man of Promise Achieving: Increasing Student Engagement for African American Young Men in Michigan**

Presenter: Dr. Ted Ransaw

Educators in Michigan have made gains in closing achievement gaps for African American males in Michigan. The Unlikely Young Man of Promise Achieving presentation will help to expand and supplement what we already know about Black males in MDE and help them to achieve even more. We will deepen our understanding of how cool works in the classroom, bridge gaps in student engagement and increase our ability to make student teacher connections.

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### **A Life Course Framework for Improving the Lives of Boys and Young Men of Color**

Presenter: Arnold Chandler

This presentation provides a holistic analytic framework and a strategic canvas for improving the life outcomes for males of color. Key elements of the presentation include:

1. A survey of research charting economic, criminal justice, family and socio-ecological changes in the U.S. over the past forty years that helps articulate how race, gender and place intersect in ways that drive disparate life outcomes for males of color
2. Using a visual life course approach, the framework demonstrates: 1) how well-being is a consequence of multiple interacting determinants; 2) that different trajectories of well-being are the product of cumulative risk, protective factors and other influences over one's lifetime; and, 3) how the timing and sequence of what we experience influences the development and life outcomes of both individuals and populations
3. Lastly, the framework considers the inter-generational implications of this approach and outlines principles for applying collaborative strategies to improve population-level outcomes for males of color