



Raising Achievement for Males of Color in Cleveland

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ClevelandMetroSchools.org

Raising Achievement for Males of Color in Cleveland

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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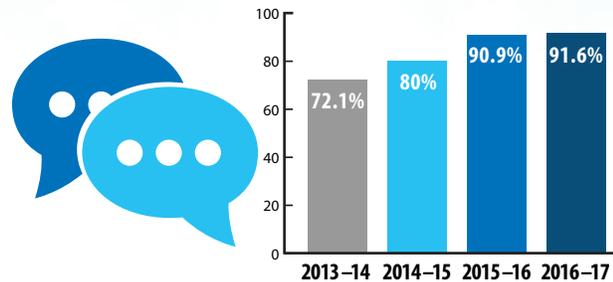
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Expanding school models, rising graduation rates

- 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.

Active Parent Engagement



Parent training and engagement



- Parents are taught to analyze their children's academic data and provide support at home. At some schools, Academic Parent Teacher Teams review student data, set goals for children and practice activities that can be used to reinforce lessons at home. Learn more at bit.ly/2fVdf4g

- *The Cleveland Plan* requires that parents have meaningful face-to-face contact with their children's teachers at least once a year, and 91 percent of CMSD parents met with their child's teachers last school year.

- CMSD's interactive website provides information on Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee. Visit bit.ly/1pqiYAU, where parents find tools they can use to help their children meet the Guarantee and earn promotion to fourth grade.

- CMSD's Parent University provides parent-training workshops. Parent University's College Bus Tours program exposes parents and students to higher education to help them understand admissions, financial aid and support systems. Read the Education Week story at bit.ly/1q9EXrX

- With assistance from the United Way and other agencies, 25 CMSD schools offer community wraparound services that help students and families overcome barriers to success. Examples include housing counseling, emergency food and shelter and social activities that engage and support families. Learn more at bit.ly/24FXD60

- At CMSD's annual High School Choice Fair event families meet with representatives of individual schools to help their children determine which schools are the right fit for them.

- CMSD's annual Fathers Walk event encourages dads and father figures to walk their children to school and become more involved in their education.





Talking about race and culture



- CMSD's Equity and Inclusion Strategy Team meets monthly to identify and address systemic inequities. Diverse demographic groups are involved, enabling the team to build understanding and raise awareness of workplace issues affecting trust, tolerance, cultural competence, equitable opportunities, rewards and recognition.
- Using a Theory of Change, CMSD's Equity and Inclusion Strategy Team is surveying its diverse workforce to address conditions affecting equity and to encourage meaningful dialogue around workforce inclusion, diversity identity and related issues.
- The District sponsors annual symposiums for Black and Hispanic students, creating a forum to discuss issues of concern among students of color.
- Facing History New Tech High School concentrates on social justice and human rights, combining the introspective *Facing History and Ourselves* curriculum with the technology-based approach of the New Tech Network.
- The John Marshall School of Information Technology, Martin Luther King Jr. Campus and New Tech West High School also incorporate the *Facing History and Ourselves* curriculum.
- Performances of CMSD's All-City Musical program tackle issues such as race relations, sexuality and gender roles with productions like *Rent* and *Memphis*.
- During the 2017-18 school year, CMSD high school students read the best-selling book *Hidden Figures*, the real-life story of three African-American women and NASA mathematicians whose calculations allowed America to send astronaut John Glenn on his historic space flight in 1962. At a meeting with author Margot Lee Shetterly, who won the 2017 Anisfield-Wolf Award for nonfiction, students were able to explore books that contribute to the understanding of racism and appreciation for diversity.
- Students attended a performance of *Soundtrack 1963*, a multimedia live music performance and cultural retrospective that takes audience members from the Civil Rights Movement to the Black Lives Matter Movement.





Addressing chronic absenteeism

- Through a citywide effort to improve student attendance, 14 percent fewer students missed more than 10 days in a school year over the last two years at CMSD.
- The District's "Get 2 School. You Can Make It!" campaign emphasizes the importance of regular school attendance, with school staff and community partners led by the Cleveland Browns reinforcing the message and providing incentives to meet the campaign's attendance goals. Learn more about this initiative at get2schoolcleveland.com
- Schools, with the help of attendance liaisons, monitor attendance and follow up with families of students who are off track.
- CMSD's Safe Routes to School initiative includes city representatives and other partners in the development of plans for improved safety along major corridors where students bike and walk. The ultimate goal is to eliminate barriers that keep children from attending school while also improving their health, their focus and their environment. Learn more at bit.ly/2fVujY1
- CMSD collaborates with the Cleveland Municipal Court on the Redirecting Our Curfew Kids program. The court delivers a strong attendance message and waives fines for students caught violating daytime curfews and requires them to perform community service and attend a class. Parents must also attend a class and participate in a school meeting to learn about the importance of school attendance.



Mentoring and Dropout Prevention

- Mentors work one-on-one with students as they transition to and move through high school. The 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 Cleveland Foundation’s True2U program has 420 mentors who work with 2,479 eighth-graders in all 66 K-8 schools. Learn more at <http://neighborhoodleadership.org/programs/True2u/>
- The CEO’s Student Advisory Committee, comprised of more than 400 students from all 35 high schools meets quarterly and is made up of opportunity for the scholars to give feedback regarding their schools’ academic rigor, safety, adult support and their peers’ use of social and emotional skills through academic and social related activities. Learn more at bit.ly/1ntXx0d

Revising suspension and discipline policies

Much of CMSD’s work around student discipline is rooted in a social and emotional learning curriculum that has become a model for schools across the nation. Cleveland is a member of the Collaborating Districts Initiative, a group of 10 large urban systems brought together to share best practices.

- Analysis by the American Institutes for Research found a statistically significant difference in the average amount of time of suspension for black and white students in the 2014-15 school year but showed that CMSD had eliminated the gap by the 2016-17 school year.
- AIR also noted statistically a significant decline in the suspension rate for CMSD’s Latino students.
- The PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) curriculum teaches children in grades PreK-5 to understand and manage their emotions, build trusting relationships and make good decisions.
- The Second Step program—the District’s middle school curriculum for grades 6-8—is a follow-up to PATHS and emphasizes management of emotions, building trusted relationships and making good decisions. A similar high school program is in discussion with Class Meetings currently recommended for students in grade 9.
- Class Meetings are an evidence-based vehicle for classroom-level problem solving and decision-making. They give students a forum for airing their concerns, planning steps to improve the school climate and the means to work through academic assignments and general school-related concerns.
- CMSD’s school-based Student Support Teams (SSTs) are a problem-solving group comprised of school staff. The goal is to address students’ academic, behavior and attendance issues in a timely manner through evidence-based interventions proven to help students improve their focus and find success in school.
- Planning centers are located in every building in the District to provide support and interventions for students, teachers and families, with the goal of keeping students in school. Students placed in planning centers as an alternative to suspension reflect meaningfully on their behavior and chart strategies for more appropriate responses.
- CMSD’s Planning Centers promote social and emotional learning in a individualized, small group setting that provides evidence-based academic and behavioral intervention and assistance. Planning Centers are also used to assist new students in acclimating or returning to school.
- Our Rapid Response Teams provide immediate assistance schoolwide and for individual students experiencing mental health and social and emotional crisis situations. The District has 180 trained first responders (school nurses, psychologists and guidance counselors). Community resources are also utilized.
- Conditions For Learning (CFL) surveys give CMSD an opportunity to hear and record students’ voices. The survey is administered twice a year, in the fall and spring, for students in grades 2 -12 to measure the extent to which they feel safe and adequately supported at school and the extent to which they observe and exhibit social and emotional learning skills with their peers.
- Not on Our Watch (NOW) is the District’s anti-bullying program. This message is accomplished in all grade levels through schoolwide activities that promote social skills building, self-control, critical thinking, an appreciation of diversity and good decision-making.
- Working Against Violent Environments (WAVE) is the District’s peer mediation program and is active in schools throughout CMSD.



Expanding AP / Gifted & Talented Programs

- Eight CMSD high schools participate in the National Math and Science Initiative's College Readiness Program, designed to move more students, especially those from underserved groups, into Advanced Placement courses with more rigorous instruction. In those schools, about 73 percent of students taking the courses are males of color. Students receive help studying and paying for exams.

CMSD offers 98 different AP classes in 21 schools and 18 subjects, with total enrollment of more than 895. Chief Executive Officer Eric Gordon is seeking to increase AP participation and scores.

- The John Hay Campus provides an option for high school students who meet academic criteria. The campus consists of three small schools that partner with institutions in the surrounding University Circle and focus, respectively, on science and medicine, architecture and design and an early-college program.
- Five K-8 schools have Gifted and Talented classrooms. Fifteen others have pullout reading and math programs.





Developing male educators of color



- CMSD places special emphasis on hiring, training and supporting male educators of color through the annual Teach Cleveland recruitment campaign.
- Through a fellowship training program and leadership pipeline, male educators of color are provided with opportunities to participate in a weekend summer institute, attend weekly professional development, receive coaching and complete a capstone project.
- The District has begun working with Profound Gentlemen to increase the number of male educators of color in classrooms.
- Through the **Men of Color sHaping Academics Initiative (M.O.C.H.A.)**, CMSD provides programming and support designed to increase engagement, retention, and leadership rates for Black and Latino men in academics within CMSD.
- A Males of Color “mixer” in the spring provided an opportunity for Black and Latino male educators to network and mingle with peers and District leaders, to learn about opportunities for career development and leadership growth.
- In partnership with the NYC Leadership Academy, CMSD’s innovative standards-based Aspiring Principals Academy prepares future principals to transform under-performing schools in Cleveland. A small cohort is selected to develop their skills in change management and instructional leadership through intensive experiential and problem-based learning over 12 months.
- CMSD has increased diversity within the Aspiring Principals program; 60% of the participants in the District’s 2018-2019 Aspiring Principals Cohort are men of color.
- To attract applicants of color, CMSD’s Teach Cleveland campaign continues to update its *Black in Cleveland* and *Latino in Cleveland* recruitment materials to familiarize current and prospective African-American and Latinos with the cultural diversity, professional networking opportunities and the extensive social network available for Black and Latino professionals in Cleveland.
- Staff recruiters on CMSD’s Talent Team travel to various colleges and universities, including institutions in San Juan, Puerto Rico, to recruit males of color to teach in Cleveland.



Expanding access to college



- CMSD belongs to the Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland, created to ensure that more District students attend and complete college or other post-secondary education. Learn more at highereducationcompact.org
- The Compact, which includes colleges and universities, tracks performance and publishes an annual report. Data shows that graduates are better prepared for higher education and are more persistent in obtaining their degrees.
- The District and Compact aggressively promote completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and provides guidance in and outside of school as students apply for admission and aid. College Now Greater Cleveland staff work directly with students in schools.
- Students in grades six through 12 use Naviance, an online college and career-planning tool. Working with community partners under the umbrella of the True2U program, mentors work with every eighth-grader in the District to plan not only for high school but also for college and careers.
- Middle school and high school students participate in mid-semester and spring break trips to cultural sites and two- and four-year colleges and universities.



- CMSD served this year as an SAT and ACT test site and will transition next year to SAT because students in grades eight to 11 take the PSAT and CMSD pays to have eighth-graders take the PSAT.



Addressing Special Education over-identification

- While CMSD has a high rate of students identified as needing an IEP, the Council of the Great City Schools, in its strategic support team report did not find disproportionate identification of African-American students, an unusual factor for an urban district.
- The CGCS study lauded the District for providing a more inclusive environment for PreK students where the District is showing positive results in early childhood outcomes for behavior and use of knowledge and skills.
- Math and reading achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) of students with disabilities has increased over years that the District has participated in the Trial Urban District Assessment.
- District graduation rates for students with disabilities are higher than the statewide average for such students.
- The District has generous staffing levels among professionals working with students with disabilities and the CGCS report noted the extensive data reports provided to principals. CMSD's Goalbook Toolbox and Goalbook Pathways were cited as strong tools for school staff.
- Since early 2017, a team of Behavior Services Managers provides direct support to schools that typically required restricted environments to manage student behavior. Students in need of substantial intervention are now served in the general education classroom prior to any decision to change placement, a strategy that has reduced the number of classrooms for Emotional Disturbance by 15%.
- The District is committed to building a strong foundation for children in language and reading by emphasizing early literacy. Federal dollars for early intervention services have been allocated to fund five additional Reading Recovery teachers who work with students in first and third grade in high-need schools.
- CMSD works with building leaders and teachers to develop intervention plans that target specific deficits in reading. Teachers receive extensive training and coaching to address deficits.
- CMSD actively works to reduce the number of male students of color who are placed in classrooms exclusively for those who are emotionally disturbed. Students are instead placed in more inclusive classrooms, where, with support they receive the same exposure to the Common Core and focus on career and college readiness as their peers.





PRE4CLE

Expanding Preschool

- CMSD is a major partner in PRE4CLE, a network of District and private entities formed to make sure that all of Cleveland's 3- and 4-year-olds have access to high-quality preschool.
- CMSD continues to add high-quality preschool seats throughout the city with a commitment to having PreK sites rated under Ohio's Step Up to Quality system. Forty-nine sites have undergone review and all have earned the top rating of five stars.
- Since 2013, enrollment in high-quality preschool has increased by more than 50 percent, with 2,232 prekindergarten seats in the 2018-19 school year. Learn more about CMSD PreK programs at bit.ly/1TV9YjN
- The Pre4CLE network serves more than 4,500 children at 114 sites, markets preschool to families and works to help centers obtain state quality certification.
- President Obama praised the network as an outstanding public-private partnership. Learn more about PRE4CLE at pre4cle.org





Bolstering a pipeline of academic success



- Working with teachers and families, CMSD continues to place a strong emphasis on early literacy. The goal is to help children read at levels required to meet Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee and earn promotion to fourth grade.
- All schools have adopted a structured 90-minute literacy block in kindergarten through third grade, using research-based strategies and materials.
- In 12 schools, Reading Recovery teachers conduct one-on-one instruction for first-graders who are off track in reading and small-group instruction for third-graders who are off track.
- CMSD offers a free six-week summer reading academy for all children in kindergarten through third grade who are reading below grade level.
- District schools follow SpringBoard, a rigorous College Board curriculum designed to prepare students in the sixth through 12th grades for college and career.
- CMSD's Closing the Achievement Gap program offers a summer bridge camp to help eighth-graders successfully make the transition to high school. The camp includes workshops, leadership training and team building.



Closing the Achievement Gap



Developing data systems for tracking

- The District tracks academic, attendance, behavior and other data on every student measure, creating an early-warning system for those who are off track.
- CMSD uses a series of assessments to identify students in kindergarten through third grade who are off track in reading—kindergarten readiness assessment for children at that level, NWEA for first through third grades and state assessments for third-graders.
- Teachers create Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans for students who are off track in reading. Teachers work with parents to determine student needs and strategies for intervention.
- Using AIMSWeb, the District creates a benchmark in literacy for every student in kindergarten through third grade and monitors progress biweekly. The data is kept in the SchoolNet database, where it is available to all teachers who work with the students.
- CMSD has developed the School Performance and Planning Framework, a District-created report card that provides schools with a more detailed view of their performance. The framework combines measures such as achievement or progress with measures of school culture or building instruction, leadership and operations. It also compares a school's performance on quality metrics against the average performance of schools with similar demographics.





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