

# **THE BLACK MALE DONOR COLLABORATIVE**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Winning Strategies Education Working Group (WSEWG) is establishing the Black Male Donor Collaborative to reduce the academic achievement gap of Black males in New York City. WSEWG is seeking partners to join us in this highly focused, research-based, outcomes-driven endeavor. All initiatives supported by the Donor Collaborative will have the capacity to systemically improve the academic performance, graduation rates and college and employment readiness of Black male youth in New York City Public Schools. Toward this goal, the WSEWG will employ the “Donor Collaborative” model as a vehicle to identify, evaluate and distribute resources to support:

- research-based and scalable program interventions that represent best and promising practices;
- ongoing research and evaluation of programs and strategies; and,
- targeted and effective policy advocacy

To create the strongest basis for a successful long-term strategy, WSEWG will engage key partners to conduct two preliminary planning activities prior to launching a broad plan to fund programs or policy solutions. The planning activities are focused on critical information gaps and unaddressed issues, such as: the absence of generally accepted metrics for evaluating the success of programs for Black males leading to increased high school graduation rates and college and employment readiness; and, a lack of clearly identified scalable, research-tested program interventions capable of yielding systemic results. The two-part planning components are:

- identifying best and promising program intervention practices, research and evaluation methodologies; and,
- identifying and assessing policy advocacy strategies

The WSEWG, through the Black Male Donor Collaborative, seeks to recruit a broad base of foundations and corporate donors that together can leverage the engagement of partners and the level of funding needed to sustain systemic education reforms to reduce the Black male achievement gap in New York City. Donors will operate on a consensus basis to develop grant guidelines, bylaws and make funding decisions. Expanded advisory teams for research & program and for policy will include Donor Collaborative members as well as other experts in related fields.

The Schott Foundation for Public Education has extensive experience working with funder collaboratives and the challenges confronting Black males and will administer and coordinate the Black Male Donor Collaborative.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **I. NEED FOR THE DONOR COLLABORATIVE**

In America, educational achievement correlates with successful outcomes in employment, earning capacity, civic engagement, and levels of interactions with state and federal penal systems. Consequently, the Winning Strategies Education Working Group (WSEWG) aims to identify successful program interventions and policy levers to address the achievement disparities impacting the most extremely underperforming group in New York--Black males.

The U.S. Census estimates that over their working lives high school dropouts will earn on average \$270,000 less than high school graduates of the same race or ethnicity, a gap which continues to widen. These dropouts are less likely to graduate from college, less likely to be employed and to participate substantively in the U.S. democratic process. In the U.S., the high school dropout trend is most impactful on Black males. Black males persistently represent the bottom of the distribution of virtually every conventional indicator of educational access and achievement. Nationwide, fewer than half of Black males graduate from high school in four years: a 25% gap compared to the graduation rate of White males. The relatively few Black males enrolled in college are more likely to require remedial courses and less likely to graduate. Black male dropouts are also more likely than their White counterparts to be unemployed. Placed in context with the aforementioned trends, few are surprised by data which indicates that Black males who do not graduate from high school are 3.1 times more likely than are high school graduates to become incarcerated.

At the micro-level, Winning Strategies seeks to develop a donor collaborative to identify, support, and promote program interventions and policy levers to improve the achievement outcomes for low-income Black males in our target areas: Central Harlem and Central Brooklyn. The Winning Strategies hypothesis, based on the data above, is that increasing the educational performance of Black males will positively impact the lives of Black males in other areas such as access to the labor market and health care, civic participation and incarceration rates. Given the fundamental role education plays in overall success in life, resolving the current achievement gap faced by young Black males is an essential component of any set of winning strategies aimed at the pipeline crisis affecting these Americans. As Black males become fully integrated in the educational system, they will also likely become more active participants in other social institutions of our democratic society.

At the macro-level, Winning Strategies seeks to evaluate the involvement of corporate and foundation donors collectively in a “Donor Collaborative” model as an effective vehicle to yield systemic change and address the extreme underperformance of target populations. Over the past several years, one of the primary program models employed to address this challenge has been the development of national, state and local public and

private commissions.<sup>1</sup> Although commissions have been an effective model to develop key program and policy recommendations, very few have had the consistent political focus, public engagement or the sustained resources necessary to institutionalize and yield systemic change. This effort is centered on using the ‘Donor Collaborative’ model as a vehicle to promote and support effective program models and sustain the necessary inter-organizational engagement and public will to institutionalize the policy recommendations.

## **New York City**

New York City educates the largest group of Black male students in the country. New York City’s available race and gender data paints an abysmal picture of Black male educational outcomes. There are approximately 172,000 Black male students in New York City schools, 16% of the total school enrollment.<sup>2</sup> The Schott Foundation for Public Education has estimated that the New York City high school graduation rate for Black male students is 32%, compared to an estimate of 50% for White male students.<sup>3</sup> Thousands more are not yet in high school, have already dropped out, have been pushed out or have left high school without a diploma. This lack of clear accountability for counting children and youth in and of itself presents major challenges.

Further, Black males are underrepresented in the best educational settings in the city. An estimated 50% (87,000) of all of the Black male students are enrolled in only six of the 32 community school districts: Districts 5, 11, 17, 18, 22, 29. Twenty percent (35,000) of all of the Black male students are being educated in Region 6, which is in central Brooklyn. This inequity exists at all levels, in elementary, middle and high schools.<sup>4</sup> For example, at the elementary school level, in the ten (10) schools that performed best on the ELA test, only 3.8% of the student body was composed of Black males. In the ten schools that performed the worst, however, 19.1% of the student body was composed of Black males.

Similarly, the 10 junior high schools that performed the lowest on the math test had student bodies that were on average 24.9% Black male students, twice the system average. At the high school level, the 10 schools with at least 100 students with the

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<sup>1</sup> U. S. Commission on the Plight of Black Males, The National Urban League Commission on Black Males, and over 15 state and local commissions

<sup>2</sup> The count of students was obtained from the New York City Department of Education’s website based on the register as of October 31, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Forthcoming *Public Education and Black Male Students: The 2008 State Report Card*

<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the 10 junior highs that performed the lowest on the math test had student bodies that were on average 24.9% Black male students, twice the system average. At the high school level, the 10 schools with at least 100 students with the highest graduation rates had student bodies that were on average only 5.6% Black males. It is notable that one school, Brooklyn Tech, with over 7% Black male students threw off this figure; Stuyvesant has only 1% Black males, while Bronx Science has 2% of its student body comprised of Black males. On the flip side of the coin, the 10 schools with the lowest graduation rates had student bodies where 30.3% of the students were Black males. Most striking, three of the top performing schools (Staten Island Technical High School, Baruch College Campus High School and Eleanor Roosevelt High School), had only six, five and nine Black male students, respectively. Conversely, the 10 schools with the highest dropout rates had 10 times as many Black students as white students.

highest graduation rates had student bodies that were on average only 5.6% Black males. This figure over-inflates the actual number, since one school, Brooklyn Tech, has over 7% Black male students, while Stuyvesant has only 1% Black males and Bronx Science has only 2% of its student body comprised of Black males. Alternatively, the 10 schools with the lowest graduation rates had student bodies where 30.3% of the students were Black males. Most striking, three of the top performing schools (Staten Island Technical High School, Baruch College Campus High School and Eleanor Roosevelt High School), had only six, five and nine Black male students, respectively. Conversely, the 10 schools with the highest dropout rates had 10 times as many Black students as white students.

Black male students in New York City are significantly overrepresented in the settings that run the greatest risk of sending children to the justice system:

- Black males comprise 42-51% of the students in long-term suspension centers, called Second Opportunity Schools (SOS). Black students comprise 63-70% of the SOS population in general.
- In District 75, New York City's Special Education district, 34% of the students (7,488) are Black males—twice their share in the general enrollment.
- Black males comprise 55% of Phoenix Academy (a drug treatment school) and 61% of Passages Academy, the juvenile detention school.
- Black male enrollment in the Alternative Schools Division is 25%.

These data highlight the systemic trend of providing inequitable educational opportunities for Black males in New York City. The presence of new potential stakeholders in this work, such as financial services institutions, law firms and businesses who have partnered through Winning Strategies, presents a unique opportunity for engagement and partnership to achieve outcomes on an unprecedented scale. In addition, the ability to identify program interventions that work to address the specific social and academic challenges confronting Black males at various stages of their academic development will tremendously advance the program and policy work in this area for years to come.

## **II. GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

The Black Male Donor Collaborative's overarching mission is to demonstrably raise the academic performance, graduation rates and college and employment readiness rates for Black males in New York City. The mission will be achieved through the Donor Collaborative's strategy to support the following types of work focused on improving academic outcomes for Black males in New York City: (a) research-based scalable program interventions that represent best and promising practices; (b) ongoing research and evaluation of programs and strategies; and (c) targeted and effective policy advocacy.

## **III. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Although there are a number of programs already delivering direct services to children and youth in New York City, the WSEWG group identified a need to seek out programs

whose activities and/or methodologies are supported by research and which promise to improve Black male education outcomes. WSEWG has identified a number of unaddressed issues and gaps in information that must be answered before launching a broad plan to fund programs or focus on policy solutions. These issues include:

- The absence of generally accepted metrics for evaluating the success of programs for Black males in terms correlated to high school graduation, college and employment readiness;
- Using the academic achievement of Black males as a metric/litmus test to determine the success of a public school system;
- A lack of clearly identified research-tested and scalable strategies or practices which foundations, businesses and communities could support for replication and expansion in a public school setting;
- Insufficient coordination and communication between leaders and groups focusing on Black male issues;
- Outstanding legal questions impacting the manner in which investments for programs can be made; and,
- The lack of a clear plan to develop and sustain an agenda to address local advocacy and policy issues facing Black males with corresponding strategies (i.e., legislation, advocacy, organizing, litigation, etc.).

In order to bridge these and other potential gaps, prior to undertaking a widespread funding effort, WSEWG will seek to recruit key partners to initially fund two preliminary planning activities, which will lay the groundwork for a successful, long-term strategy: (1) Identifying Program Intervention Best and Promising Practices, Research and Evaluation; and (2) Identifying Effective Policy Advocacy Efforts.

### **Identifying Best and Promising Practices, Research & Evaluation**

**Phase I.** The Winning Strategies Education Working Group will identify a research support team to collect relevant data on the education of Black males in public schools (K-12) in New York City.

Their proposed strategy incorporates the following components:

- **Assessing and monitoring** the education of Black males in New York City public schools and producing a *State of Black Males in New York City Public Schools Report*. The report will contain school-based achievement data, including graduation, retention and attrition rates, across the K-12 public education system.
- Undertaking an **extensive review of documents and reports** on existing programs and strategies designed to improve outcomes for underrepresented minority and/or disadvantaged students on the K-12 level.
  - Because of the large number of supplementary programs across the city, they propose an initial review of documents and reports for large-scale, well known programs that operate in targeted areas of Central Harlem and

Central Brooklyn. The review will also include interviews with principals and other professionals working in those areas to uncover supplementary programs that principals hold in high regard and feel are working well for their students.

- After key programs, members of the research team will visit these programs to conduct assessments using a set of benchmarks that are still under discussion. Based on these assessments, the research team will narrow down to four to five programs to examine more in depth during years two and three of the project.
- Conducting a **series of intervention studies** aimed at evaluating schools and programs identified through the above assessment that seem to be working well at meeting the academic and social needs of Black male students. These studies may be targeted initially at schools and community programs in Central Harlem and Central Brooklyn. Schools and community programs in other neighborhoods will be identified based on findings from the annual report.
- **Commissioned research** – This area of research will be conducted in response to research requests from members of the Donor Collaborative Research and Program and Policy Advisory Groups.
- **Policy research and development** — Based on the research agenda outlined above, WSEWG will identify a research team to outline specific policy recommendations that further the goals of the project.

**Phase II.** After the scan to identify programs working with Black male children and youth is conducted, the Donor Collaborative will seek to make grants to support the expansion of successful programs identified as well as further research on programs utilizing promising practices. However, if the initial research does not identify a critical mass of programs that demonstrate successful outcomes, the second round of grants will focus more heavily on an expanded search to identify successful program models to address the social deficits that lead to the underperformance of Black males. Ultimately, the goal is to fund successful and promising programs that can be replicated to scale starting in Harlem and Central Brooklyn and later expanded throughout New York City.

### **Identifying Effective Policy Advocacy Efforts**

**Phase I.** The Schott Foundation for Public Education will lead the process of conducting a policy and advocacy assessment for New York City, with support from the Winning Strategies Team Leaders. Researchers and legal and policy experts will also serve as key members of the policy assessment team. The goal of the policy and advocacy assessment will be to develop an effective set of legal, policy and advocacy solutions to improve academic achievement of Black males in New York City.

The process for developing the assessment will include the following activities:

- Conduct a local and national “scan” of what experts (legal, policy, academic and community-based) have identified as policies and/or practices that, if supported or eliminated, could improve achievement for Black male students in NYC. The initial set of experts contacted will be identified by The Schott Foundation, the Winning Strategies Team, researchers and legal and policy experts.
- Identify and collect any existing education-related policy/legal recommendations (on a national, state and local level) that have already been developed by experts and determine which, if any, of these recommendations would be applicable/feasible based on the particular circumstances in NYC.
- Work with researchers and policy experts to identify necessary data and information to assist with answering critical policy/legal questions raised by the above analyses (e.g., how much do the discipline, special education, juvenile justice systems, etc. impact the children in NYC in terms of breadth and depth of school failure).
- Develop a set of clear policy and advocacy goals.
- Develop a set of recommendations designed to achieve the above goals using legal, policy and advocacy strategies.
- Support the development and distribution of national awards to high performing districts where the educational access and achievement for Black males is on par with other high performing populations in the district.

**Phase II.** Following the development of the assessment and strategy, with feedback from the policy team, the Donor Collaborative will issue an RFP designed to achieve implementation of a public will campaign to address the policy and advocacy agenda recommendations.

## **V. OPERATIONAL PLATFORM**

WESWG’s proposed vision for the Black Male Donor Collaborative is to recruit a broad base of foundations and corporate donors that will operate in a manner similar to the New York Donors’ Education Collaborative.<sup>5</sup> Yet, this fund will be narrower in its target beneficiaries (i.e. Black males in New York City) and will incorporate a broader set of funding parameters, which will include direct programmatic, policy and advocacy grants as well as research and evaluation grants.

Given that the Winning Strategies Education Working Group is in the preliminary stages and seeks to ensure that any potential Collaborative member has a stake in the operational structure, this section outlining operational guidelines reflects preliminary thoughts and is subject to revision by group consensus.

### **Operational Principles**

We envision that the fund will incorporate the following operational principles:

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<sup>5</sup> For an overview of the Donor’s Education Collaborative please see [GFE doc citation].

- Minimum contribution level
- One vote for each member
- Members can apply for funding, but will then be disqualified from voting during that round of funding.
- The fund will recruit a Research & Program Advisory Team and a Policy Advisory Team. Each of the teams will include the Winning Strategies Education Working Group team members, as well as other experts in the fields of research, program, policy and legal advocacy.
- The fund will develop Grant Guidelines/Bylaws for making contributions to support Research & Evaluation, Program and Policy Advocacy.
- The fund will support projects that are solicited by the Collaborative's members or through an RFP process.
- The fund will support projects that have systemic impact or can be taken to scale in a public school or community-based organization.
- The Schott Foundation for Public Education will serve as the fund's coordinator and administrative home

### **Role of the Donors and Advisory Teams**

The donors will operate in a collaborative manner, making joint decisions about grants. The advisory teams, including the Winning Strategies team leaders, will provide support and advice to the Donor Collaborative in their areas of expertise, review and give feedback on the proposals and reports, and provide input into potential grantees.

### **Schott Foundation's Role as Administrator**

The Schott Foundation will serve as the fund's coordinator and administrator and will house the Donor Collaborative's staff.

## **VI. TIMELINE (Tentative)**

### **2008**

- **MAY**-Meet with potential collaborative funders and partners
- **AUGUST**- Launch Donor Collaborative/announce partners and focus
- **SEPTEMBER**-First Donor Collaborative meeting
- **SEPTEMBER**-Join Policy Alliance to include recommendations in Federal Education Policy Framework
- **SEPTEMBER**- Host Convening on Issues Confronting Polices and Programs Designed to Impact Black Males

### **2009**

- **JANUARY**- Release Study on Black Male Outcomes in New York City
- **FEBRUARY**-Second Donor Collaborative meeting
- **FEBRUARY**-Release policy recommendations
- **JULY**-Release initial results of program interventions

- **AUGUST**-Release result from program evaluations
- **AUGUST**-Third Donor Collaborative meeting

## **VII. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: CURRENT FOUNDING MEMBERS**

### **The Winning Strategies Education Working Group**

The Winning Strategies Initiative is a multi-disciplinary community engagement initiative which was spearheaded by Sullivan & Cromwell LLP and Goldman Sachs to address the crisis facing Black males. The overall initiative is divided into five working groups: Education; Early Childhood Education; High Potential Youth; Employment and Economic Development; and Criminal Justice. Each subgroup is responsible for its own planning and fundraising efforts.

The Education Working Group is comprised of attorneys, financial sector professionals, non-profit professionals, academics, educators, government agency representatives and leaders in the philanthropy sector. The Team Leaders of the Education Working Group of the Winning Strategies Initiative are: Roger Blissett, Managing Director, U.S. Strategy RBC Capital Markets; Nicole Campbell, Assistant Vice President, Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation; Joe Scantlebury, Senior Policy Officer, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; Elisa Hyman, Principal Consultant, Elisa Hyman Consulting, Inc.; and Dr. John H. Jackson, President and CEO, the Schott Foundation for Public Education.

William Schroeder and William Snipes from Sullivan and Cromwell are the founding members of the overall Winning Strategies initiative.

Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation (DB) has been the inaugural donor for the fund, generously committing an initial \$40,000 as a starting point. We are hopeful that DB will consider expanding their contribution once other funders join our effort.

### **About The Schott Foundation for Public Education**

The Schott Foundation for Public Education seeks to improve public education, especially for underserved children, through strategic philanthropy aimed at achieving educational resource, racial and gender equity in public education. Schott promotes grant-making, convenings, strategic planning and donor collaborations to develop and strengthen a broad representative movement towards high quality pre-kindergarten through 12 public education for *all* children. In 2001, Schott began *A Positive Future for Black Boys Initiative* with the goal of creating a movement to improve the public education experiences of Black boys. In New York, Schott played a major role in the success of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE), resulting in several billion dollars more annually for New York City schools. In Massachusetts, Schott initiated and supports Early Education for All (EEA), which won broad support for the bill for a phased-in model of universal quality early childhood education. Schott also created The Schott Fellowship in Early Care and Education which prepares leaders from early education to become statewide policymakers.

The Schott Foundation's strategic philanthropy includes as a central tenet our commitment to building collaborations that can leverage the engagement of partners and level of funding needed for sustained, systemic education reforms. Since 1999 the Schott Foundation has been an active member of New York's Donors' Education Collaborative (DEC) which has raised and spent approximately one million dollars each of the past eleven years supporting constituency building for education equity and policy reform. DEC has worked through consensus and has developed a powerful model for donor collaboratives. Additionally, Schott was involved in establishing and has been an active participant in a national collaborative on education organizing known as Communities for Public Education Reform. We are proud to have partnered The Gates Foundation in both of these collaboratives.

Further information about Schott Foundation's organizational capacity, see [www.SchottFoundation.org](http://www.SchottFoundation.org)

## **VIII. POTENTIAL RISKS AND CHALLENGES**

There are significant advantages of the Black Male Donor Collaborative approach, including shared research and evaluation of best practices and concentrated sustained funding to the most promising projects. The collaborative approach will help to promulgate the outcomes and their impact to a larger advocacy base.

A potential challenge arises if the Donor Collaborative becomes an entity designed to support and sustain programs rather than maintaining its uniqueness as a vehicle for identifying scalable program models and policy solutions. The Collaborative must consistently evaluate its funding decisions using the latter lens rather than the former.

## **IX. SUSTAINABILITY**

In recruiting members for the Black Male Donor Collaborative, WSEWG will seek funders who understand that it requires long-term efforts to have any significant impact on the systemic problems the group desires to tackle. Thus, funders will be asked to consider multi-year funding strategies. A core operating philosophy will be to target philanthropic funds in highly leveraged ways that help achieve scalable results in programs that can eventually be sustained over time within the public school system in New York City. Building public will to support policy advocacy and proven reforms is an essential component of the Donor Collaborative's strategy to help ensure the sustainability of successful program models and policy reform.