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COSEBOC Staff

Ron Walker
Executive Director

Brenda Artwell
Director of Professional Development

Esther Kaplan
Institutional Advancement

Terri Brown
Business Manager

Andrea Hurley
Web Designer and Developer

Eric Marshall
Newsletter Editor

**Coalition of Schools Educating
Boys of Color**

PO Box 440130
West Somerville, MA 02144

Email: info@coseboc.org
Phone: 855-267-3262
www.twitter.com/COSEBOC
www.facebook.com/pages/COSEBOC/123360487703259



Dear Reader,

Welcome to the latest issue of *The Vanguard*, the newsletter of the Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color (COSEBOC). This is an exciting time for our organization, as we get ready to host our 5th Annual Gathering of Leaders Conference in Philadelphia from April 28-30, 2011. If you have not already done so, please visit our website to register for this one of a kind professional development and networking experience. Online registration ends on April 22, 2011, and on-site, day of registrations are extremely limited.

One of the most popular sessions at this and past Gatherings is entitled "For Leaders Only." This highly interactive session provides an opportunity for emerging and established leaders to discuss how they conceptualize and demonstrate leadership in context of affirmatively developing and educating boys and young men of color. It also focuses attention not only on what a leader needs to know, but more importantly on why leaders believe that they have been called to lead.

Having strong and committed leaders is incredibly important in the struggle to educate students of color. The subject of this month's feature article, Partners for Developing Futures, believes that minority leaders of charter schools have an especially important role in the mission to save



our sons and daughters. Partners is an organization that supports minority entrepreneurs in starting and running charter schools across the country. Learn how Partners works, and how they are supporting leaders such as Ian Rowe of New York's Public Prep Network, and Tiffany Hardrick of Miller-McCoy Academy in New Orleans.

This issue of *The Vanguard* also features more details about the Gathering, and links to resources that can assist you in your work.

Happy reading and I hope to see you in Philly in a few weeks time.

Sincerely,

Ron Walker
Executive Director
Coalition of Schools Educating Boys
of Color

Feature Article

A century ago, W.E.B. Du Bois put forth the idea that if the best and brightest members of the Black community received proper training and support, they could serve in local schools and uplift the race as a whole. Du Bois referred to these individuals as the “Talented Tenth.” Fast forward to the present and a new “Talented Tenth” is emerging with the aid of Partners for Developing Futures.

“We are an investment fund that invests in talented leaders of color who desire to start and run high quality charter schools,” says Isha James, Program Director at Partners. “There are currently five grantees in our portfolio; we are currently seeking new applications, specifically early-stage applicants with great potential to create a high quality charter school.

Partners launched in 2008 to provide talented leaders of color financial and technical assistance to create new charter schools and support existing charters in their first three years of operation. Few organizations provide the type of aid Partners does, especially in regards to supporting minority entrepreneurs. Partners believes that charters, particularly those with minorities in leadership roles—founder, board members, and CEO, have an important role in educating low income children of color. As their website states:

Leaders of color are uniquely positioned in predominantly minority and low-income communities; they bring important attributes that add significant value to the charter schools they run and the communities they serve. Many have grown in or live in the community they serve, which



W.E.B. Du Bois

helps build trust and respect among families. They hold high expectations and serve as positive role models for students and families. More importantly, leaders of color understand the educational barriers facing underserved students and unyielding in their push to help more students graduate from high school and college.

The organization recruits individuals from a variety of fields, and is focused on their grantees ability to demonstrate leadership, exceed local student performance, and successfully manage their schools once Partners’ involvement has ended. Funds from Partners can be used in a variety of ways, including for operational costs and professional development.

“There is a rigorous grant process that takes from six to nine months to complete. It is a rolling grant, with no minimum or maximum reward amounts. Our board makes the final approval,” explains James.

Partners in Action

New York

Public Prep Network launched in 2008 when the founders of Girls Prep Lower East Side (the first all-girls charter school in New York City) realized their was a need to provide more school choices to the children of New York City. There are currently three all-girl schools in the Public Prep Network, serving students from kindergarten to middle school.

“Low-income parents often never get

the chance to choose a single gender school, we are giving them the choice to do so,” says Ian Rowe, Chief Executive Officer of Public Prep. “We want to lay the foundation of learning early because kids are entering school with a language deficit of up to 10 million words, which if not addressed in K-3, will continue to grow over time.”

Public Prep has been very successful to date. The schools have an extended daily schedule as well as low student to teacher ratios. Among the networks unique features include classrooms named after female role models, two teachers in each K-2 classroom, and requiring parents to sign-off daily on all homework assignments. The most recent test results show that 84 percent of Girls Prep third and fourth graders scored advanced or proficient on the New York State math exam; and 60 percent of third and fourth grade scored advanced or proficient on the New York State English Language Arts exam. Both set of numbers are above the city, state and district average. Additionally, the school is incredibly popular among families, with five to seven students applying for every spot, and 98 percent of parents are satisfied or extremely satisfied with the education their children receive.

“We are working with Partners to figure out what can be replicated in our system,” says Rowe. In fact, Rowe wanted to be very deliberate in replicating the Public Prep model, and delayed the opening of the boy’s school to visit high performing all boys charters and to strengthen the core of the existing schools in the Public Prep Network.

“Our model is designed to empower each student to build strong character, demonstrate critical thinking, possess a core body of knowledge and be on a predictive path to earn a degree from a four-year university. We will have these same four expectations for our male students.”

New Orleans

Founded in the aftermath of Katrina, Miller-McCoy Academy is New Orleans’ only all-boys charter public school. The school is college preparatory focused, with a special

[continued on next page]

The New Talented Tenth (continued)

a special emphasis on math, science, and business. Next year Miller-McCoy will expand to 700 students in grades five through twelve, and graduate its first class.

“We provide all of our students the skills needed to be analytical thinkers, self sufficient and successful entrepreneurs, inventors, and positive contributors to society,” says school co-founder, Tiffany Hardrick.

The school gets its name from Kelly Miller, a prominent mathematician, and Elijah McCoy, a prominent inventor/entrepreneur. The influence of these two men’s life and work on Miller-McCoy’s curriculum is striking.

“All of our students take two math classes a year, and in eighth grade they take their first business class. By the end of ninth grade, students produce a preliminary business plan. They are required to take one business elective each year in subjects like economics, accounting, and marketing where they really learn how a business works,” says Hardrick.

Miller-McCoy opened in 2008, with 180 students in grades six through nine. In the following year, the school saw dramatic gains in mathematics and language arts on the Louisiana state assessment. Sixth graders experienced a 29 point percentage increase in math scores and a 34 point percentage increase in English Language Arts results. Ninth graders had a 21 point percentage increase in math scores and a 33 point

percentage increase in English Language Arts.

“One of the things that makes our school so strong is our co-leadership model,” explains Hardrick. “I’m the middle school principal and have a background in math and business; Keith [Sanders, the school’s co-founder] is the high school principal and has an English background. But the lines are blurred between us and we both work school-wide. Students would say both our names if asked who the principal is.”

With the aid of Partners, Miller-McCoy plans to extend their successful model to the Southeast region of the country. “We are really excited that Partners made us part of their Portfolio. We are currently in the process of perfecting our model and building our network,” says Hardrick.

With the leadership currently in place at Public Prep and Miller-McCoy, Partner’s investment in leaders of color, and by extension students of color, seems quite wise.

Learn More

Partners for Developing Futures
www.partnersdevelopingfutures.org/

Public Prep Network
<http://publicprep.org/>

Miller-McCoy Academy for Mathematics and Business
<http://www.millermccoy.org/>

PRESTIGE ACADEMY

Join Our Team. Located just 30 minutes from Philadelphia, PA, Prestige Academy is a great place to begin or continue your career as an educational leader. Prestige Academy is always looking for talented teachers, leaders, and builders to help us close the achievement gap. If you, or anyone you know, would be interested in pursuing job opportunities at Prestige Academy, please review our list of openings at: <http://www.prestigeacademycs.org/> or contact us at info@pa.k12.de.us

COSEBOC Fifth Annual Gathering of Leaders

Boy, Don't You Turn Back: The Power of Resilience

PHILADELPHIA
April 28-30, 2011

Learn More »

Webinar/Event

Date: Tuesday, May 3, 2011
Time: 2:00 pm ET / 11:00 am PT
Duration: 1 hour
Sponsor: American Education Corporation

In this webinar, Benjamin Wright, an honoree at the COSEBOC Gathering Award Celebration and the current Assistant Superintendent of Academic District 4 of the Philadelphia School System, explores new practices in re-engaging potentially failure-bound students in a challenging environment. Instructional strategies must meet the needs of an ever-churning school population, and approaches that result in personalized student educational plans show great promise. There is a proven alternative to the "one size fits all" approach to education.

Learn more and register:
http://www.eschoolnews.com/e/webinars/Re-engaging_Students.htm

Date: Thursday, May 5, 2011
Time: 5:00 pm ET
Location: 388 Greenwich Street
 New York, NY 10013
Duration: 2 hours
Sponsor: Classroom, Inc.

Students' reading and math losses over the summer account for 67 percent of the achievement gap. Principals concerned about this do not just rely on the school year to narrow the gap and improve on Department of Education accountability measures—they make good use of summer learning time. This expert summer learning panel, featuring COSEBOC Executive Director Ron Walker, can help New York City school leaders create their most successful summer program this year. This event is open to all who can travel to the New York area to attend.

To register:
<http://www.classroominc.org/node/392>

Book

Diversity Awareness for K-6 Teachers: The Impact on Student Learning

By Rona Leach McLeod

Rowman & Littlefield Education

ISBN: 9781610484213 (Paper)
 Price: \$19.95

ISBN: 9781610484220 (Electronic)
 Price: \$19.95

Release Date: June 28, 2011

Diversity Awareness for K-6 Teachers: The Impact on Student Learning is a resource guide for elementary teachers and college-level student teachers for teaching diversity awareness across the various areas of content. It contains many exciting activities teachers can use to enhance learning while making learning and teaching fun and exciting. Specific "themes" are covered as a part of diversity awareness lessons. Teachers have opportunities to create and develop additional activities and document outcome of lessons.

Rona Leach McLeod, Ed.D., presently serves as assistant visiting professor of education at St. Andrews Presbyterian College in Laurinburg, North Carolina.

Research

Misplaced Priorities, a new report from the NAACP, tracks the steady shift of state funds away from education and toward the criminal justice system. Researchers have found that over-incarceration most often impacts vulnerable and minority populations, and that it destabilizes communities.

Download a copy:
<http://www.naacp.org/pages/misplaced-priorities>

A new report from the Anne E. Casey Foundation, *Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation*, finds that students who don't read proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to leave without a diploma than proficient readers. It is notable in breaking down for the first time the likelihood of graduation by different reading skill levels and poverty experiences.

Download a copy:
<http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/Publications.aspx?pubguid={D4DBAD77-DE2E-4FAE-B443-A9AEEBBC6E35}>

We Dream a World, a report from the Twenty-First Century Foundation and the 2025 Campaign for Black Men and Boys, is a call to action for America to begin strategically addressing the problems that hinder Black men and boys. It lays out a comprehensive agenda of reform that, if implemented, will significantly change the life trajectory of Black men and boys.

Download a copy:
<http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/documents/files/2025BMBfulldoc.pdf>

A Commentary By Ron Walker

What happens when a species in the wild becomes endangered and in jeopardy of becoming extinct? The response from animal rights groups, environmentalists, and caring individuals is typically swift and loud.

In short order a compelling lobbying campaign is put into action to save the particular animal or plant life in danger of elimination. Their cause is championed by people who think that the loss of the particular species at risk is a greater loss for mankind and the environment.

I want to make the same case on behalf of our boys and young men of color. As a reader you are already well acquainted with the societal and environmental perils and dangers that daily endanger this student group. The essential questions that follow are critical ones. Do we value African American and Latino boys and young men enough to rescue them from impending doom? Would their extinction diminish us a society?

The Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color (COSEBOC) believes that the opportunity to mine the brilliance that lies within this student group rests in our collective hands. COSEBOC also believes that if we rally around an asset based approach to supporting their affirmative development, our prospects of saving our boys and young men will increase immeasurably.

COSEBOC advocates for a campaign that endorses that this group is of significant value to our local, national and world communities. Without their present and future contributions to the well-being of our world, we as a people become at risk of losing enormous potential, creativity, and talent. As it relates to our boys and young men of color, their endangerment and threat of extinction must not be an option.

A Call to Action

COSEBOC is pleased to announce the "Service Project," an exciting half day experience focused on responding to the urgent needs of incarcerated adolescent African American males. The service project will kick off the 5th Annual COSEBOC Gathering on Wednesday, April 28, 2011 from 10:00 am until noon at the Philadelphia City Jail (Penny Pack School).

A group of twenty dedicated volunteers led by David Miller (Urban Leadership Institute and co-founder of the Raising Him Alone Campaign) and Dr. Alfred Tatum (University of Chicago) will facilitate a group workshop experience for thirty young males who are detained at the facility. According to Miller, "It is increasing important that we reconnect with school age young males who are serving time in jail. Often these young males who are 14 and 15 years old are released without any plans. The service project is an attempt to promote alternatives to a life of crime and develop a road map for the future."

The service project is designed to engage a cohort of African American around issues related to manhood, forgiveness, survival and discipline.

Specific activities will focus on Kinship Writing (allowing young males to write about their experiences) and Time Line Activity (allows the young males to examine choices, consequences and hopes for the future).

All future COSEBOC Gatherings will feature a service project similar to this one.