



THE COALITION OF SCHOOLS EDUCATING BOYS OF COLOR

Standards and Promising
Practices for Schools
Educating Boys of
Color:

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color (COSEBOC) in partnership with the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education has developed the *Standards and Promising Practices for Schools Educating Boys of Color Tool* as a mechanism and set of guidelines that we hope will assist school districts and educational leaders that seek to develop and enhance schools and programs serving boys of color. COSEBOC, was founded in 2007 to serve as think tank and network for school leaders and educators from around the country that are concerned about the education of boys of color. Since the founding of COSBEC, the Metro Center at NYU has served as a partner and collaborator focused on conducting research that will further the mission of finding solutions to the challenges confronting boys of color.

Together we have introduced *Standards and Promising Practices for Schools Educating Boys of Color Tool* at the third annual conference of COSBEC in New Orleans. It is our hope that this document will help to insure that schools and districts focused on addressing the educational and social outcomes of boys of color and improving their social trajectories whether its through developing single sex schools or classrooms or conducting school-level reform, have the benefit of the best research and practice relevant to this population to guide their planning and ongoing implementation efforts. This tool outlines key areas, quality indicators, and promising practices pertinent to addressing these outcomes.

In today's educational context, most indicators of academic achievement and social outcomes for Black and Latino male students suggest that these students are facing severe hardships. Available data shows that there is a significant gap in achievement between males of color and all other groups (NCES, 2007). Moreover, on every indicator associated with success males of color are under represented, while on most indicators associated with failure and distress they are over represented (College Board, 2005; Noguera, 2008; Orfield, 2003). It is particularly disturbing that the problems experienced by boys of color in school parallel those experienced by males of color in adulthood. We believe that unless concerted action is taken to intervene effectively during childhood, another generation of adult males will be consigned to a life of hardship and despair.

This tool is based upon a set of assumptions about the problems experienced by boys of color. Our research and review of the relevant scholarly literature has led us to conclude that there is nothing inherently wrong with boys of color despite the preponderance of evidence that many face hardships both within and outside of school. Rather, the problems confronting many boys of

color are a byproduct of the social, economic, political, and educational forces that operate within American society. Specifically within schools, we have found that it is the interaction of policies, practices and beliefs that creates conditions for poor educational outcomes and problematic social behavior to become normalized.

However, there is also good news. There is a vast body of research on effective schools and successful educational strategies for serving the needs of disadvantaged students that shows that under the right conditions, all types of students, including males of color, can be successful. We have drawn heavily from this research to develop this tool. Put most simply, we feel it is important for educators who are interested in finding solutions to the challenges facing young males of color **to do more of what works and less of what doesn't**. This sounds like common sense but in our experience of working with and studying schools throughout the country, we have often found that common sense to often is not commonly practiced. We have also drawn from a small but significant number of evaluation studies of mentoring and tutorial programs that shed light on what works best for students, including boys, with un-met academic and social needs.

We have created this tool to begin merging what is known about promising practices for boys of color with the research on effective schools. Throughout this document we identify research-based “best practices” in curriculum, instruction, school design and out-of-school support programs. While we do not claim that these are the only methods that work, we do contend that unlike other strategies that may be in use in some schools or programs, there is empirical research documenting the efficacy of these approaches, particularly in relation to boys of color.

How the Self-Assessment Tool Works

This instrument is organized under 7 essential core areas for developing and sustaining effective schools and/or school programs for boys of color. Each core area contains a list of standards of practice or “quality indicators”, and promising practices for ensuring quality outcomes for boys of color. The Standards may not be specific to boys of color, but describe good schools regardless of who they serve. The guidelines of promising practices describe an approach aimed specifically at boys of color implemented by schools and/or organizations focused on enhancing the educational and social outcomes of this population.

The asterisk (*) denotes those indicators that are critical for schools to address for boys of color. Using the Performance Levels rating system (1-4), one can assess the level of competency or mastery of each benchmark, as defined by the quality indicators. The Priority Planning Level

grid allows schools to set priorities and determine the appropriate timeframe in which to meet or exceed the standards. This assessment, when performed in concert with other formal and informal evaluative efforts, such as participant, parent, and staff surveys, staff meetings, and participant and parent forums, can and should enable schools to identify strengths and deficits and arrive at a sound plan for addressing their needs accordingly.

Performance Levels

Schools are expected to work towards achieving, at minimum, a Satisfactory level in all of the quality indicators within each of the seven areas. Over time, schools must continue to strive to achieve a level of Excellence. The four Performance Levels are as follows:

- 4 Excellent/Exceeds Standards**.....Is prepared to help and work with others in this area.
- 3 Satisfactory/Meets Standards**.....Consistently demonstrates standards but needs help to prepare staff to work with others in this area.
- 2 Some Progress Made/Approaching Standard**.....Could use additional focused assistance in this area.
- 1 Must Address and Improve/Standard not Met**.....Needs significant support in this area.

Improvement Planning Guidance

Once programs assess their Performance Level for each of the quality indicators, they should develop a timeline for school improvement, using the “Plan to Improve” section for each quality indicator. The quality indicators denoted by an asterisk (*) should receive priority in the improvement plan, as those are deemed most critical to schools working with boys of color. In devising an improvement plan, schools should begin to establish benchmarks and develop an Action Plan to reach or exceed those benchmarks, that will be assessed periodically during the school year. The Plan to Improve levels are as follows:

Right Now	Area will be addressed in the next several months
This Year	Area will be addressed during the school year.
Next Year	Area will be re-evaluated prior to the start of the next school year.

The goal of this Self-Assessment tool is to assist schools in their pursuit of ongoing school improvement. It is not to be used simply as a checklist to highlight school strengths and deficiencies; nor is its use meant to overwhelm practitioners such that they are unable to discharge daily school responsibilities. The Plan to Improve section should serve as a guide that will help schools develop both short and long-term plans for addressing needs.

How to Begin the Self-Assessment Process

The process of examining school practices is time-consuming and difficult. To assist in this process we suggest making the following decisions:

1. Decide which core areas to examine for this school year. Think about which core areas necessitate close attention and improvement. Remember the process of examining a core area also entails the planning, implementation and evaluation of new practices.
 2. Define the process of examination. The tool can be used by a school team that includes administrators, teachers, students, parents, and support staff or could involve an outside evaluator. Using a school team or an outside evaluator will still involve defining what period of time will be spent on examining the practices, planning for improvements, implementing improvements, and evaluating improvements. If a team approach is used to conduct the self-assessment, multiple formats would work for the self-assessment with school staff, students and parents, for example, professional development days, committee meetings, grade or content level meetings, parent meetings, etc.
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3. Identify a good facilitator for the examination process. The facilitator must be able to engage all participants, actively listens and connects ideas from multiple constituents, avoids personalizing feedback, remains non-judgmental, and is able to bring consensus.

Core Area 1: Assessment

“Assessment” here refers to a process of determining the rate by which or amount of what a student has learned, what his needs may be, and how to best meet his needs. Similarly, “evaluation” refers to the process of determining a condition, significance, or worth of an element of the teaching/learning process (i.e. how a student has learned something, how a teacher may improve his/her lesson, etc.). Assessment, in other words, is something that can be calculated or measured through a system, often consisting of numbered scores, whereas evaluation is based on study or observation, typically conducted over a period of time.

Subcategories:

1. Standardized Assessment Preparation
2. “Alternate” or “Authentic” Assessment
3. Self-Assessment
4. Special Education Assessment
5. Honors/AP Program Assessment

Core Area 2: Parent/Family/Community Partnership

The Parent/Family/Community Partnership refers to the development of a close social safety net surrounding children at all school levels.

Subcategories:

1. Teacher-Family or School-Family Communication
2. Parent Involvement
3. Community Involvement
4. Parent collaborations
5. Schools provide learning at home
6. School provides decision making opportunities

Core Area 3: Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum and instruction core area refers to the central elements involved in the delivery of curriculum and the quality indicators of “good” instruction.

Subcategories:

1. Culturally Relevant Instruction
2. Multicultural Education
3. Gender Relevant Instruction
4. Student-Centered Instruction
5. “Rigorous” Curriculum and Instruction

6. “Character” Education
7. Professional Development
8. Teacher Self-Awareness

Core Area 4: School Environment and Climate

School Climate is the social atmosphere of a setting or learning environment in which students have different experiences, depending upon the protocols set up by the teachers and administrators.

Subcategories:

1. Physical Environment
2. Student Leadership & Voice
3. *Inclusive* Policies and Practices

Core Area 5: School Leadership

School leadership is the process of enlisting and guiding the talents and energies of teachers, pupils, and parents toward achieving common educational aims.

Subcategories:

1. Instructional leadership
2. Community leadership
3. Visionary leadership
4. School leaders Self-Awareness

School Area 6: School Counseling

School Counseling and Guidance refers to the work of school counselors. A school counselor is a counselor and educator who works in elementary, middle, and high schools to provide academic, career, college readiness, and personal/social competencies to all students through advocacy, leadership, systemic change, and teaming and collaborating with other stakeholders as part of a comprehensive developmental school counseling program.

Subcategories:

1. Counseling programs
2. Social and Health Services in the community
3. School Counselors Self-Awareness

Core Area 7: School Organization

School Organization – The social and/or structural arrangement of an educational institution that includes (but may or may not be limited to) course schedule, leadership structure, staffing arrangements, etc.

Subcategories:

1. Core mission/vision statement
2. Eliminated tracks that are not academically rigorous
3. Aligned high school curricula and college enrollment requirements (HIGH SCHOOL ONLY):
4. Implement a common core curriculum that includes requirements for students to complete advanced work in mathematics, science, and literacy
5. Small learning communities (MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL ONLY)