



NEW YORK STATE

My Brother's Keeper

FEB
2024

ON A PATH TO EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

The Story of MBK in New York State

Lester W. Young, Jr.
Chancellor of the
New York State
Board of Regents

Betty A. Rosa
Commissioner of
Education and
President of the
University of the
State of New York

◀ The New York State My Brother's Keeper logo is a multiracial image of a male at different stages of development. The triple image represents the anticipated and expected progress and development of boys and young men of color in New York State as a result of the My Brother's Keeper initiative.

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THIS BOOKLET IS DEDICATED TO NEW YORK'S
LEARNERS – PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE –
AS WE MARCH FORWARD ON A PATH TOWARDS
EDUCATIONAL EQUITY FOR ALL.

This project was made possible with support from Vice Chancellor *Emerita* Adelaide L. Sanford, whose generous gift to the Regents Research Fund to study the African experience in New York State, the Americas, and the diaspora helped fund the production of this publication. ■

▲ In the photo above, President Obama walks with the first group of *MBK* mentees on the South Lawn of the White House in October 2014. When one of the young men suggested that they shoot some hoops, the President responded, "Let's play now!" The photo depicts the group heading to the White House basketball court. (Official White House photo by Pete Souza)

FORWARD

BY LESTER W. YOUNG, JR., CHANCELLOR

The New York State Board of Regents and State Education Department ("NYSED") are committed to building a statewide education system in which all students have access to the high quality resources and opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. The *NYS My Brother's Keeper Initiative (NYSMBK)* plays a critical role in this effort.

The individuals who participate in *NYSMBK* pledge to continuously grow and improve as students, as people, and as contributing members of their communities. They learn from mentors and, in turn, pass that knowledge on to others. These students and their mentors represent the very best that New York has to offer – and I thank each of them for their passion and determination to improve their lives and the lives of others.

MBK is much more than a program; it is a movement. And, as described more fully throughout this document, the movement continues to steadily grow and strengthen. In 2016, when New York became the first state in the nation to enact *MBK* into law, five communities chose to participate. Today, there are 44 participating communities, including seven tribal nations. And 2023 saw the largest cohort of new *NYSMBK Fellows* inducted into the program. Strong and consistent growth is the hallmark of a successful enterprise.

This publication tells the story and documents the history of *New York State My Brothers Keeper (NYSMBK)*. It is crucial to tell this story now more than ever because boys and young men of color are often portrayed through a "single-story" lens that fails to capture their diverse experiences fairly and accurately. By documenting the history of *NYSMBK*, we can counter this limited perspective. Additionally, states nationwide are attempting to remove parts of America's history from their textbooks and curricula that they feel are too uncomfortable for students to learn. It is essential to understand that altering history to suit a particular narrative is risky and can produce grave consequences. As the philosopher George Santayana famously warned, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." We must not allow this to happen in New York.

It is a foundational American ideal that education is necessary to ensure the rights and liberties of all citizens. *MBK* remains an integral, indispensable part of New York's strategy to make that ideal possible for all.

I witnessed a scene at an *NYSMBK* event recently that captured the very essence of the movement. A student shared with the group his story of moving seven times during one school year because his family lacked permanent housing. He said that he was able to persevere through that experience only because of the support he consistently received from the others in the program. When he finished speaking, the young men in the audience – his brothers – surrounded him in an embrace of strength, love, and support. That is how we lift each other up. That is how we care for our brothers and sisters.

The *MBK* movement is real, and it is a powerful force for good in our communities and our State. But it would not exist in New York without the vision and hard work of so many individuals. In particular, I would like to thank my colleagues (past and present) on the Board of Regents for their unwavering commitment to the ideals of diversity, equity, and inclusion in our schools and beyond; New York State Education Commissioner Dr. Betty A. Rosa, for her tireless commitment and staunch leadership; and the members of the New York State Legislature who have consistently supported and funded *NYSMBK*, most notably, Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie and Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

Finally, I would like to thank Regents Research Intern Danielle Chan and the staff of the New York State Education Department for helping to create this important record of the *MBK Program* in New York State. ■



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This publication documents the development of the *My Brother’s Keeper (MBK)* initiative – from its establishment at the national level to its adoption and steady growth in New York State.

In 2014, President Barack Obama launched the federal *MBK Initiative* to address the race-based inequities that are so apparent in our nation’s schools. As described by the White House at that time, the goal of the initiative was to “address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and ensure that all young people can reach their full potential.”

The following year, in response to the national *MBK* initiative, the New York State Board of Regents established the *Regents Workgroup to Improve Outcomes for Boys and Young Men of Color*. The *Workgroup* was charged with examining the educational challenges and opportunities faced by boys and young men of color – and making policy, budget, and legislative recommendations to address these challenges.

New York became the first state in the nation to accept the *MBK Community Challenge* when the NYS Assembly secured \$20 million in the 2016-2017 State Budget to fund programs specifically aimed at helping boys and young men of color succeed inside and outside the classroom.

This report describes New York’s unique approach to implementing *MBK* statewide and documents the program’s steady growth over the years. It will provide the reader with insights into the policy decisions, organizational structures, legislative processes, and aggressive timeline that resulted in New York State becoming the first and only state in the nation to enact *MBK* into state law, together with a dedicated funding source.

The report also explains how *NYSMBK* utilizes community networks, grant programs, and student-centered symposia to drive change, and details the various resources the State makes available to schools and communities to help them implement the ideals of *MBK* throughout New York. The publication concludes with a look at the next steps in our march to educational equity. ■

MBK

HISTORICAL TIMELINE

FEBRUARY 27, 2014

President Obama issues a presidential memorandum to create and expand opportunities for boys and young men of color, creating the *MBK Initiative*.

SEPTEMBER 29, 2015

The first *MBK* forum is held to discuss the needs and strategies for implementing the initiative in New York State.

DECEMBER 15, 2015

The Board of Regents recommends a \$50 million investment to the Legislature to improve outcomes for boys and young men of color.

OCTOBER 9, 2019

NYSED announces \$2.65 million in *MBK Native American Program* grants to incentivize and support school districts to implement a coherent cradle-to-college/career strategy to improve life outcomes for disadvantaged Native Americans.

JANUARY 11, 2021

The Board of Regents unanimously elects Dr. Lester W. Young, Jr. as Chancellor, the first African American to serve in that role. He vows to build more equitable and empowering futures for all New York students.

APRIL 29, 2022

President Obama addresses *NYSMBK Symposium*.



FEBRUARY 26, 2012

Trayvon Martin is shot and killed in Florida, sparking national conversations around race and equity.

MAY 19, 2015

In New York State, the Board of Regents establishes the *Workgroup to Improve Outcomes for Boys and Young Men of Color*, Chaired by Regent Lester W. Young, Jr.

NOVEMBER 9, 2015

The second *MBK* forum is held. The *Blue Ribbon Committee* and the *Workgroup to Improve Outcomes for Boys and Young Men of Color* finalize priorities and strategies to present to the Board of Regents.

AUGUST 2015

A *Blue Ribbon Committee* consisting of stakeholders is convened to support the *Workgroup*.

APRIL 4, 2016

The 2016-2017 New York State budget is adopted with \$20 million secured for *MBK*.

FEBRUARY 8, 2021

The Board of Regents unanimously appoints Dr. Betty A. Rosa as Commissioner of Education, the first Latina to serve in that role. She promises to address the equity and opportunity gaps the State faces.

MAY 19, 2023

NYSMBK Network reaches 36 member communities.

MBK

IN NEW YORK STATE



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*We will beat the odds. We need to give every child, no matter what they look like, where they live, the chance to **reach their full potential**. Because if we do—if we help these wonderful young men become better husbands and fathers and well-educated, hardworking, good citizens—then not only will they **contribute to the growth and prosperity of this country**, but they will **pass those lessons on to their children**, on to their grandchildren, will start a different cycle. And this country will be **richer and stronger for it for generations to come**.*

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA, 2014

WHY DO WE NEED AN MBK PROGRAM?

Education is a vital component of future success, but for too many of our boys and young men of color, the pressures, stereotypes, and patterns of failure often begin in school and place them at risk throughout their lives. They often attend schools that lack adequate resources and personnel, are excessively disciplined while in school (usually through some form of exclusion), fail to graduate from high school and experience disproportionate contact with the criminal justice system.

By preparing students to actively engage with their communities, *NYSMBK* creates a “virtuous cycle.” In other words, when we give students the knowledge and tools they need to make the world a better place, we create a self-reinforcing chain of events that drives favorable outcomes.

Here's how it works: Engaged and knowledgeable citizens make their communities and the world around them better places to live and learn...which inescapably leads to future generations of informed and active citizens...ultimately creating a more civil and just society for all. ■



▲ President Barack Obama signs a presidential memorandum in February 2014 establishing the My Brother's Keeper Task Force.

THE BEGINNING: MBK AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

In February 2012, Trayvon Martin – an unarmed black teen – was senselessly shot and killed near his home in Florida. Speaking to the nation following the acquittal of Trayvon's assailant, President Obama shared the anger, fear, and frustration that he and so many others felt. He implored us to do more for our boys and young men of color – to “give them the sense that their country cares about them, values them, and is willing to invest in them.”

Two years after Trayvon's death, on February 27, 2014, President Obama launched the *My Brother's Keeper Initiative* – a call to action to address the persistent opportunity gaps that face boys and young men of color and to ensure all young people can reach their full potential. The White House explained the impetus for the initiative this way: “For decades, opportunity has lagged behind for boys and

young men of color. But across the country, communities are adopting approaches to help put these boys and young men on the path to success...We can learn from communities that are partnering with local businesses and foundations to connect these boys and young men to mentoring, support networks, and skills they need to find a good job or go to college and work their way up into the middle class...We need to partner with communities and police to reduce violence and make our classrooms and streets safer. And we need to help these young men stay in school and find a good job – so they have the opportunity to reach their full potential, contribute to their communities and build decent lives for themselves and their families.”

In September 2014, the White House launched the *MBK Community Challenge* as a way to encourage cities, counties, suburban communities, rural municipalities, and tribal nations to implement coherent cradle-to-college and career strategies aimed at improving life outcomes for all young people.

The Community Challenge wasn't a new federal program, but rather a call to action for community leaders to build and execute comprehensive strategies to ensure MBK's Six Milestones are met; specifically:

- 1 All children should have a healthy start and enter school ready – cognitively, physically, socially, and emotionally.
- 2 All children should be reading at grade level by age 8 – the age at which reading to learn becomes essential.
- 3 All youth should receive a quality high school education and graduate with the skills and tools needed to advance to postsecondary education or training.
- 4 Every American should have the option to attend postsecondary education and receive the education and training needed for the quality jobs of today and tomorrow.
- 5 Anyone who wants a job should be able to get a job that allows them to support themselves and their families.
- 6 All youth and young adults should be safe from violent crime; and individuals who are confined should receive the education, training, and treatment they need for a second chance.

By the time of its launch in September 2014, more than 100 mayors, county officials and tribal nations had accepted the *MBK Community Challenge*. That number has grown to more than 200 communities today – representing 49 states, Washington DC, and 19 tribal nations. Mayors – both Republican and Democrat – as well as tribal leaders and county executives continue to work with community leaders and youth development experts across sectors to design and implement action plans to expand opportunity. ■

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How do we talk about the fact that when you believe in equity, you believe in fairness, but fairness isn't always equal?

**CHANCELLOR
LESTER W. YOUNG, JR, 2021**

▼ Protesters at the Million Hoodies Union Square protest demonstrating against Trayvon Martin's shooting death in Sanford, Florida. (Photo: David Shankbone).



NEW YORK ANSWERS THE CALL

The **New York State Board of Regents** responded quickly to President Obama's *MBK Challenge* and in May 2015, established the *Regents Workgroup to Improve Outcomes for Boys and Young Men of Color*. The *Workgroup* was charged with examining the educational challenges and opportunities faced by boys and young men of color – and making policy, budget, and legislative recommendations to address these challenges.

In addition to supporting the six milestones set at the national level, the *Workgroup* focused its deliberations on the following priorities:

- Ensuring equitable access to high quality schools and programs.
- Expanding prevention, early warning, and intervention services.
- Using differentiated approaches based on need and culture.
- Responding to structural and institutional racism;
- Making comprehensive and coordinated support services widely available.
- Engaging families and communities in a trusted and respectful way.

To help support the work of the *Workgroup*, the Board of Regents in 2015 convened a *Blue Ribbon Committee* consisting of national, state, and regional experts, including practitioners representing the entire education pipeline, community based organizations, youth development organizations, health and mental health agencies, elected officials, and statewide professional organizations.

The *Blue Ribbon Committee* held two full-day *MBK Forum* working sessions. The first was held on September 29, 2015, at CUNY's Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn; the second on November 9, 2015, at Nazareth College in Rochester. Combined, nearly 250 individuals participated, including *Blue Ribbon Committee* members, members of the Board of Regents, members of the New York State Legislature and other elected officials, members of the business community, community-based organizations, and State Education Department staff. Each work session included a *Young People's Panel*, which offered student participants an opportunity to share their unique stories and circumstances, and to recommend ways to improve the system.

The *Workgroup* presented the Board of Regents with a report containing 14 policy, legislative,

and budgetary recommendations, which the Board unanimously adopted in December 2015. The recommendations were then presented to the New York State Assembly for inclusion in the State budget that was being negotiated at that time. And on April 4, 2016, New York became the first state in the nation to accept President Obama's *MBK Challenge* when the State Assembly secured \$20 million in the 2016-2017 State Budget to specifically fund programs aimed at helping boys and young men of color succeed in school and in life.

As recommended by the *Workgroup*, legislative and budgetary support focused on four areas: cradle-to-career strategies and programs (*My Brother's Keeper Challenge*); recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers who reflect New York's diversity (*Teacher Opportunity Corps II*); strengthening family involvement in schools and communities (*Family and Community Engagement*); and the creation and expansion of school models that improve outcomes for boys and young men of color. (Each of these areas of focus, and others, will be explained in greater detail, below).

At the time of this report's publication, New York remains the only state to fund a statewide *MBK* initiative. From 2016-2021, New York invested nearly \$83 million in *MBK* funding. Now in its seventh year, *NYSMBK* currently operates with an annual budget of \$18 million. ■



My Brother's Keeper is emblematic of the Department's commitment to doing what is right for all students. It is up to each one of us to help eliminate the opportunity gaps these young adults face, and to guide them to reach their full potential. The remarkable young men and women who participate in NYMBK truly are the voices of our future and worthy champions of our cause.

**COMMISSIONER
BETTY A. ROSA**



NEW YORK MBK BY THE NUMBERS (SINCE INCEPTION)

OVERALL

Number of Fellows

443



29

Grants to
Colleges
and
Universities



106

Grant Funded
Districts



PROGRAMS AND NUMBERS SERVED



Teacher Opportunity Corps II Grant Awards: **40** Statewide Enrollment: **1949**

Challenge Grant Grant Awards: **105** Number Served: **497,470**

Family and Community Engagement Grant Awards: **107** Number Served: **1,332,000**

Indigenous Education Grant Awards: **34** Number Served: **20,676**

Exemplary School Models and Practcies Grant Awards: **5** and **5,000** served annually



STRUCTURE AND SUPPORT: THE PROGRAMS AND FUNDING BEHIND MBK'S SUCCESS IN NEW YORK



With this investment comes the opportunity to effect lasting and positive changes in our schools and districts that will ultimately help to eliminate the opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color.

NYSED MBK 2021

OVERVIEW

NYSEMBK continues to steadily grow and strengthen because of the structures and resources that support the program and its participants.

It is a multifaceted approach that involves:

- Partnerships with local governments, schools, and communities.
- Targeted funding through various grant programs.
- Continuous technical and pedagogical support from the NYS Education Department.
- Ongoing, annual opportunities for boys and young men of color to learn from mentors and other adults who care deeply about them.

While there are several “moving parts” to this strategy, the various components are designed to operate holistically to deliver positive outcomes for *NYSEMBK*’s students and fellows. ■

MBK COMMUNITIES

When President Obama launched the *MBK Initiative* in 2014, he did so by issuing a challenge to cities, towns, counties, and tribal nations across the country to become *MBK Communities*. The idea was to organize and capitalize on the commitment of community leaders to achieve the goal of the *MBK Initiative*; that is, to address the persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and ensure that all young people can reach their full potential.

New York follows the *Community Challenge* model, asking cities, counties, and tribal nations to work with community leaders, educators, business leaders, and youth development experts across sectors to design and implement action plans that expand opportunities for all young people, regardless of their background or circumstances.

The *NYSEMBK Community Network* currently includes 36 member communities – from Long Island

to Buffalo, and everywhere in between. To join the *Community Network*, a school superintendent and local government official must commit to meeting the six *MBK National Milestones* as well as the six *NYSMBK Priorities*.

Members of the statewide network receive support, guidance, and resources from the New York State Education Department's Office of Access, Equity, and Community Engagement Services – helping each member community develop and implement an action plan that is designed specifically to address their specific, local needs. ■



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*We in New York realize that young men and boys of color are still lagging behind in most measures of achievement. ... **By investing in their futures** through programming like that of *My Brother's Keeper*, we are **dismantling the often-told narrative of underachievement** faced by boys and men of color.*

**ASSEMBLY SPEAKER
CARL E. HEASTIE, 2019**



▲ (NYSED) Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie addresses the audience at the 2019 *MBK Symposium* in Albany.

ANNUAL MBK SYMPOSIUM

Since 2017, NYSED has hosted an *MBK Symposium* (with the exception of 2020, when the event had to be cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic). Hundreds of students, parents, educational leaders, advocates, and experts from across the nation gather in Albany, New York to meet and connect with one another; hear from nationally renowned guest speakers; and engage with expert panels on areas of shared concern. Each symposium also includes an induction ceremony at which NYSED inducts a new cohort of *NYSMBK Fellows* into the program. As described more fully below, each Fellow is then matched with a mentor from a *NYSMBK Community Network* partner and given a fellowship opportunity.

In many ways the annual symposia are at the very heart of what *MBK* is all about: a chance for students to interact with others who face similar challenges; to meet and learn from caring, skilled mentors; to build emotional support networks; and to learn the value of professional networking

and the importance of making friends and contacts who may be helpful in their plans for higher education and careers. Critically, participants get to hear inspirational stories of success at overcoming the odds from people who have lived the struggle.



MBK Cares - Chancellor Rosa



MBK Cares - Regent Young



MBK Cares - Mr. Greg Joyner



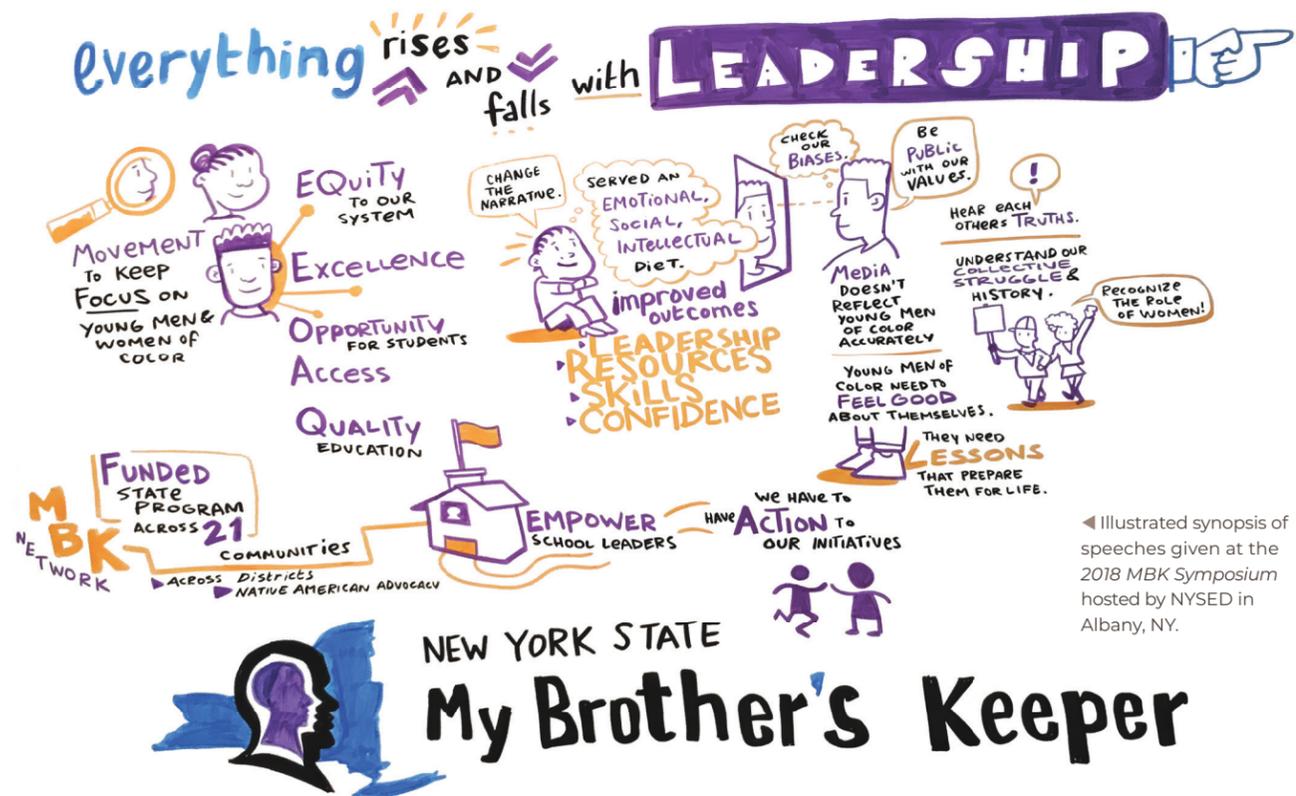
MBK Cares - Dr. Anael Alston



MBK Cares - Dr. Jim Bostic

◀ (NYSED) In May 2020, then Chancellor Rosa and Regent Young encouraged the *MBK Fellows* to use an online platform (NYSMBK 2020).

The 2023 Symposium was particularly exciting because participants were once again able to meet in person – for the first time since 2019. While technology allowed the symposia to continue throughout the worst of the pandemic, there is something special about being able to gather together in person. To a great extent, *MBK* is about the personal connections – the human bonds – that hold us together.



◀ Illustrated synopsis of speeches given at the 2018 MBK Symposium hosted by NYSED in Albany, NY.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

NYSMBK works because of its exceptional volunteers and mentors; because of the technical support member communities receive from the New York State Education Department; and because the program receives critical financial support from the New York State Legislature. This legislative support, in turn, enables the Department to fund six separate grant programs that support *NYSMBK* in vitally important ways.

MBK CHALLENGE GRANT

The *MBK Challenge Grant* provides financial incentives and supports for school districts that commit to participating in the *NYSMBK Program*. Districts that are awarded *MBK Challenge Grants* receive critical funding that enables them to work with community-based organizations and other groups to develop and execute strategies aimed at improving the life outcomes of boys and young men of color. New York chose to house *NYSMBK* within the State Education Department and to focus on school district collaborations – because school is where boys and young men should be, and where they are legally required to be.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM GRANT

Family and Community Engagement Program (FCEP) grants aim to increase the academic achievement and college and career readiness of boys and young men of color by helping them develop and sustain effective relationships with their families and communities.

As NYS Assembly Speaker Heastie said at the establishment of the *FCEP*, "Family and community engagement are two of the most important factors in determining a student's future success...The State Education Department has made an exemplary commitment to this initiative that means so much to communities across the state."

Family and community engagement efforts can include parent advocacy, incorporating the use of mentors to improve student achievement, and creating outreach materials in families' native languages.

Once again, the New York State Legislature has been instrumental in the success of this grant program – providing funding not only for the annual grant awards, but also to establish a new *Office of Family and Community Engagement* within the State Education Department.



▲ (NYSED) In 2018, Principal Kafefe spoke to *FCEP MBK Scholars* in Newburg (NYSMBK 2018).

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM GRANT

While *NYSMBK* naturally focuses a great deal on boys and young men of color, it is important to understand and recognize that the program is intended to lift up all young people who lack equitable access to educational and life opportunities – regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, or any other characteristic. To that end, NYSED's Indigenous Education Program grants enable participants to engage in culturally centered interactions and role modeling in an effort to increase academic achievement and college/career readiness for Indigenous male youth.

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER TEACHER OPPORTUNITY CORPS II GRANT

Teacher Opportunity Corps II (TOC II) Grants are intended to significantly increase the number of individuals from historically underrepresented and economically disadvantaged groups who enter teaching careers. *TOC II* programs incorporate strategies to not only recruit new teachers, but to retain them as well. These grants are only available to New York colleges and universities with teacher preparation programs. Since the program's inception in 2016, the Department awarded approximately \$3 million in *TOC II* funding annually; that allocation increased to \$6 million in 2023-2024.

Successful grant recipients commit to do the following in their teacher preparation programs:

- Include instructional strategies that are designed to meet the learning needs of at-risk students.
- Support new teachers by using mentors and systems that are designed to have a lasting and positive effect on classroom performance.
- Reflect the current research on teaching and learning; culturally and linguistically relevant teaching; youth development; restorative practices; and STEM concentrations at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.
- Include partnerships with high-needs schools and community-based organizations to help prepare pre-service teachers to develop and implement culturally sustaining practices that address the learning needs of all students.
- Foster the retention of highly qualified educators who value diversity and equity.



◀ (NYSED) *Teacher Opportunity Corps II* participants at the 2019 Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Conference (NYSMBK 2019).

NYSMBK FELLOWS PROGRAM GRANT

Under the *NYSMBK Fellows Program*, rising high seniors who have been identified as leaders in their schools and communities are given the chance to engage in authentic leadership opportunities in government, education, and business, with guidance from experienced mentors.



▲ (NYSED) The 2019-20 MBK fellows at the *Stand and Deliver* Workshop (NYSMBK 2020).

The Fellows program began in 2018, with an inaugural class of 36 students. The program continues to grow and, in 2023, NYSED inducted 97 new Fellows, the largest cohort of students to date.

In addition to the mentorship component of the program, each Fellow is required to develop and execute a service project related to one of the *NYSMBK Milestones*. Examples of service projects could include ensuring equitable access to high-quality schools and programs; expanding prevention, early warning, and intervention services; responding to structural and institutional racism; and working to engage families and communities in meaningful ways.

NYSED provides all *NYSMBK Fellows* with additional learning opportunities to help improve their chances of getting into college and succeeding there. For example, students can attend college essay-writing classes; participate in mastermind book study groups with their mentors; and

participate in leadership workshops where they receive guidance and instruction in areas like self-awareness, self-confidence, and public speaking. As well, they are given a chance to interact directly with members of the New York State Legislature, so that they can better appreciate the power and importance of civic engagement in driving societal changes.

EXEMPLARY SCHOOL MODELS AND PRACTICES GRANT

Exemplary School Models and Practices (ESMP) grants are awarded to school districts to enable them to develop and expand high quality college and career readiness school models, programs, and practices that are culturally and linguistically responsive and that emphasize the needs of boys and young men of color.

As Regent (now Chancellor) Young said at the launch of the *ESMP* program, “This [grant] is at the heart of what *MBK* truly is – we are identifying and replicating strategies that have demonstrated improved outcomes for boys and young men of color.”



◀ (NYSED) *Exemplary School Models and Practices* District 5, NYC, with *Mentoring in Medicine*. Middle school students examined the kidneys of pigs and learned how untreated hypertension can damage organs (NYSMBK 2019).



practices that are currently being implemented in schools and communities around the country – including, among other things, using curricula and materials that are culturally relevant to more students; maintaining diverse faculties; employing character education programs; and establishing community schools.

Emerging Practices for Schools and Communities is an invaluable resource for school districts and communities that are seeking insights and best practices to emulate as they continue their work to provide a more equitable educational experience for all students. ■

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*At the heart of what supports My Brother's Keeper is the belief that **if we can equally distribute opportunity, it can go a long way for young people.***

CHANCELLOR
LESTER W. YOUNG, JR

WE KNOW HOW TO DO THIS

NYSED has developed – and continues to develop – helpful tools and resources for school districts and communities to use as they work to implement the *NY SMBK* goals. These user-friendly tools and resources are posted on the Department's *MBK* website and are available for all to use:

<https://www.nysed.gov/mbk>

Posted resources include videos captured at each year's *NY SMBK Symposium* and access to *NY SMBK's* regularly published newsletter, *Changing the Narrative*.

As well, in 2016 NYSED commissioned the Northeast Comprehensive Center (in partnership with Dr. Edward Fergus of New York University) to develop a guidance document to assist school and community practitioners in their work to implement *MBK* in New York. The document, *Emerging Practices for Schools and Communities*, describes and analyzes the efficacy of various strategies and





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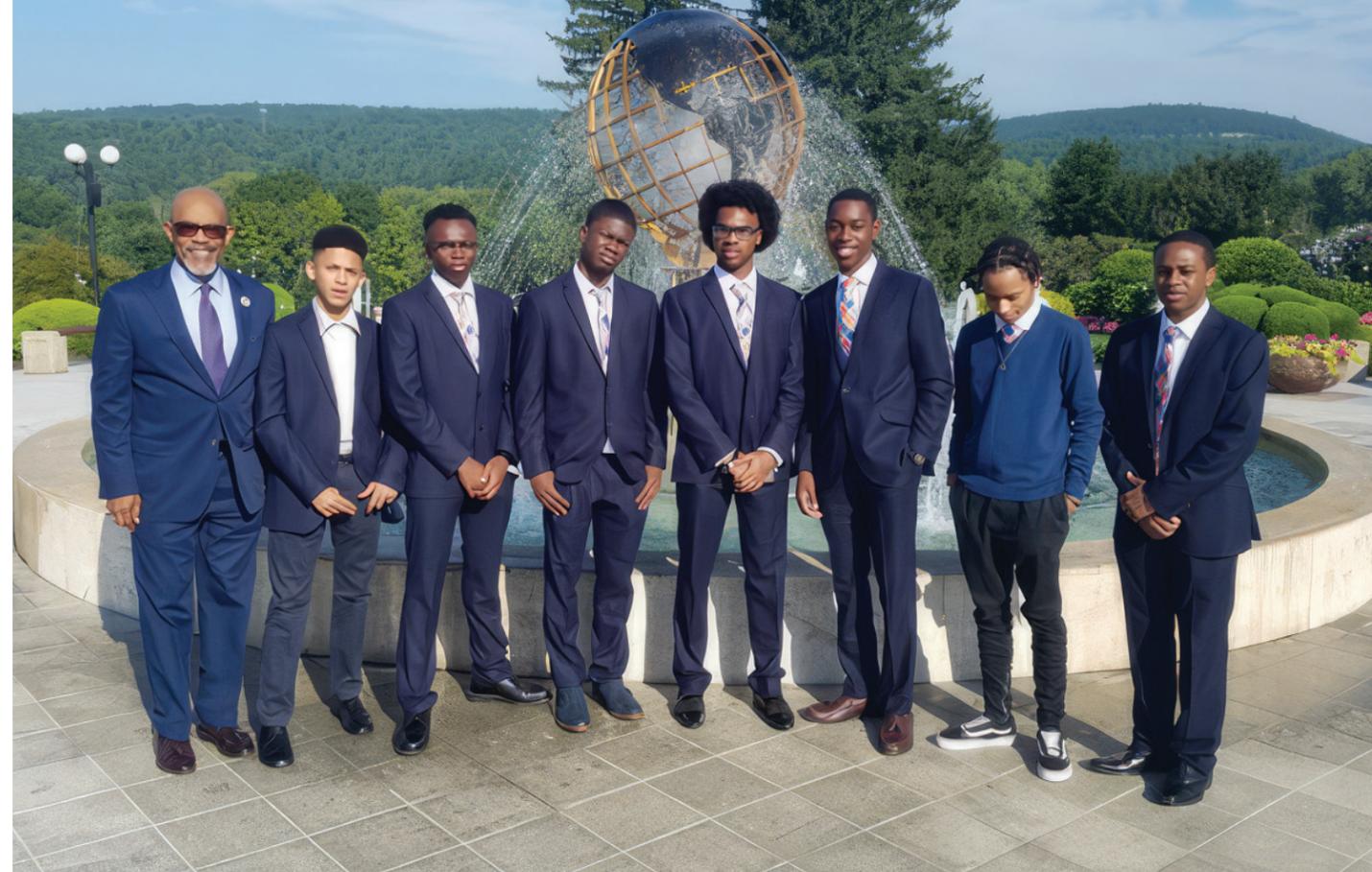
*As the **state and nation continue to wrestle with our values and beliefs**, we, as members of New York’s education communities, must endeavor to hold ourselves to the **standards and ideals of our highest potential**.*

CHANCELLOR LESTER W. YOUNG, 2021

THE ROAD AHEAD

As described in the pages of this report, the *MBK Initiative*, first articulated by President Obama in 2014, has found a true home in New York State. The need for *NYSMBK* is undeniable. Simply put, too many boys and young men of color are placed at risk of failing to reach their highest potential because of historic, systemic barriers that impede their progress in and out of school and we must act with a sense of urgency.

Changing the narrative and preparing all students for success requires a coherent, comprehensive and collaborative approach that goes beyond traditional fixes. Educators must build strong relationships with students, families, and community stakeholders to provide all students with the opportunities and support necessary to ensure that they are able to go as far as their hopes, dreams, and hard work will take them. ■



▲ (NYSED) In 2018 Regent Young posed with MBK fellows at the first leadership retreat. (NYSMBK 2018).

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*And that’s what ‘**My Brother’s Keeper**’ is all about—helping more of our **young people stay on track**; providing the **support they need** to think more broadly about their future; **building on what works**, when it works, **in those critical life-changing moments**.*

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA



*Thank you to the NYSED MBK
Volunteer Committee,*

With deepest gratitude.



Chancellor Lester W. Young, Jr. (seated) and Vice Chancellor *Emerita* Adelaide L. Sanford (seated) with members of NYSED's MBK Volunteer Committee (standing; from left to right): Sharon Holder, retired, Director of Student Support Services; Stanley Hansen, Jr., retired, Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Access, Equity and Community Engagement; Renee Rider, former Associate Commissioner for the Office of School Operations and Management Services; Maxine Meadows-Shuford, retired, Director of Title I Schools and Community Services; Carlos Garcia, Associate in Higher Education Opportunity; Debora Brown-Johnson, retired, Director of Operations; and Sharon Cates-Williams, Executive Deputy Commissioner.

This photograph was taken on September 12, 2016, to memorialize Vice Chancellor *Emerita* Sanford's designation as an Honorary Co Chair of the Regents Workgroup to Improve Outcomes for Boys and Young Men of Color.