Dear Colleagues, Partners, and Friends,

I hope that you have had a smooth opening and the school year is off to a fantastic start. We know that strong beginnings lead to better endings. With that in mind, I want to briefly remind you of the vision and specific target that we cast at the 2019 My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Symposium in May. The vision for New York State MBK is success for all of our Young Men of Color (YMOC). A significant marker that we will use to measure success for our young people is high school graduation. Statewide the graduation rate for YMOC is currently 64%. However, our #NYSMBK Target for 2024 is to have 90% of our YMOC graduating high school with the emphasis remaining "Success for All."

We offer the #NYSMBK prescription to reach our audacious target of 90% graduation rate in five years and success for all of our young men in #NYSMBK communities and grant-funded programs. To position our young people for success, we must create the conditions and circumstances that:

1. Inform young men who they are and their appropriate place in history;
2. Intentionally engage in activities that raise their self-image;
3. Provide equal access to quality opportunities and experiences for young men; and
4. Connect youth to role models, elders, and mentors who provide immediate, consistent and positive feedback and guidance when mistakes are made.

Dr. Anael Alston
Assistant Commissioner
We find that when these young men focus and work hard, positive feedback breeds feelings of success. This support increases their self-esteem and motivates the young men to work even harder. MBK is about creating the success cycle for young men across New York State. To learn more about how we are changing the narrative and improving life outcomes for boys and young men of color, take a look at my blog on the NYS MBK Movement and visit the #NYSMBK website. Join us!

Your Partner in Education,

Dr. Anael Alston
Assistant Commissioner

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**MBK Launches New Website**

To kick off the new school year, we are excited to announce that we recently launched our new My Brother's Keeper website! The updated website features a streamlined design that presents information more efficiently, enabling you to find what you're looking for quickly and easily.

The new website includes the following elements:

- a new landing page displaying four main categories of information for ease of navigation,
- a prominent section for news and upcoming events,
- quick links to contact us and sign up for our newsletter, and
- program spotlights that highlight the great things happening in MBK programs across New York State.

We hope you will take a moment to check out the new website. We'd love to hear your feedback!

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**2019 New York State My Brother's Keeper Symposium Video**
The 2019 New York State My Brother's Keeper Symposium video is now available online! The video recaps key messages from speakers at the third annual Symposium held on May 31, 2019 in Albany, NY. It also includes footage of MBK Fellows explaining what MBK means to them and how it has positively impacted their lives.

"MBK opened doors for me that otherwise would have been shut. It gave me the opportunity to not only be successful, but to know that I could be successful," remarked Patrick Saint Ange, 2018 MBK Fellow, Ossining Union Free School District.

"Regardless of where you are in New York State, we have young people and adults working to change the false narrative that says our young men cannot be all that they can be," said Regent Lester W. Young.

Watch the 2019 MBK Symposium video.

My Brother's Keeper Community Network

The New York State My Brother's Keeper Community Network includes more than 20 member communities that have joined the growing initiative to improve outcomes for boys and young men of color. To join the NYS MBK Community Network, the school superintendent and local government official must sign a joint letter to Interim Commissioner Beth Berlin indicating their support of and commitment to meeting the six (6) MBK National Milestones and the six (6) New York State MBK Goals. Detailed instructions for becoming a New York State MBK Community can be found here. Upon becoming a member of the statewide network, a community gains the support of NYSED's Office of Access, Equity, and Community Engagement Services to help build
a community initiative and develop a local MBK action plan.

**Community Spotlight: Schools and Organizations Align to Host their 2nd Annual MBK Convening and Black August Poetry Jam**

On August 7th, Lyons School District, Wayne County's MBK, and Youth Advocate Programs Inc. of Wayne County held the second annual MBK convening and the first-ever Black August Poetry Jam event. The event took place at Lyons Senior High School and was a time to celebrate the progress of MBK and hear new perspectives. Lyons School District Superintendent, Donald Putnam, introduced the District's MBK Fellows, Seth Dejesus and Benjamin Kemp, and spoke highly of their roles as leaders in the community.

Nicole Brown and Kevin Coleman, Teacher Opportunity Corps (TOC II) participants from SUNY Oswego, shared their experiences in college and discussed how TOC II has given them opportunities to succeed. There were breakout sessions with Shawn William, spoken word poet; Jesse Cruz, local author from Newark, NY; and Arkee Allen, principal of Sodus High School. The event concluded with a panel discussion on the school-to-prison pipeline facilitated by NBA star John Wallace.

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**My Brother's Keeper Challenge Grant**

The purpose of the [My Brother's Keeper Challenge Grant](#) is to incentivize and support school districts to develop and execute coherent cradle-to-college strategies aimed at improving life outcomes for boys and young men of color.

**MBK Challenge Spotlight: August Martin High School**
At August Martin High School in Jamaica, NY, 30 young men are participating in the MBK program. The students have been busy serving their community, engaging in experimental learning, working on personal and professional development, and supporting one another through brotherhood. The young men have participated in multiple community service events, such as fundraising for the school's beautification project and tutoring other students. They have worked on their professional development by creating personal portfolios consisting of materials including resumes, professional photos, school transcripts, personal statements, and reference letters.

They have also had impactful leadership experiences that include trips to the United Nations, Gracie Mansion, Greenville Retreat Center, and the TWA Hotel Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. In addition, they have met at least weekly with other student groups and monthly with leaders from their school and district to collaborate and share best practices. August Martin High School will continue its MBK Challenge Program this year.

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**Teacher Opportunity Corps (TOC) II**

The purpose of TOC II is to increase the rate of historically underrepresented and economically disadvantaged individuals in teaching careers. TOC II programs incorporate strategies for teacher retention and best practice, such as mentors for new teachers and differentiated instructional techniques.

**TOC II Spotlight: Brooklyn College**

TOC II panelists in alphabetical order: Monica Aquino, Howard Goldspiel, Juliet Octavius, and Keara Small
TOC II students participated on a panel at the 2019 National Network for Educational Renewal Summer Institute held at Brooklyn College. Alongside their Urban Community Teacher mentors, TOC II students shared insights from their Civil Rights Tour this spring. Those on the panel included TOC II scholars Monica Aquino, Howard Goldspiel, Juliet Octavius, and Keara Small and their mentors Akeem Barnes, Clifford Dupoux, Dr. Haroon Kharem, and Alexandria Timoll.

Panelists reflected on how the place-based experiences designed by Professor Haroon Kharem have impacted their perspectives of teaching. They also shared ways to use place-based experiences in the classroom as a learning tool. Following the panel, TOC II students and attendees visited the African Burial Ground in Manhattan, and the group discussed how to incorporate local history into school curriculum.

**Family and Community Engagement Program (FCEP)**

*The purpose of the FCEP is to increase the academic achievement and college and career readiness of boys and young men of color by developing and sustaining effective relationships with families in order to achieve student success.*

**FCEP Spotlight: Peekskill Central School District (CSD)**

This year, Peekskill CSD launched a Saturday Academy program at Peekskill Middle School, which provides community members with free services and workshops. Weekly sessions included academic workshops, yoga classes, dental screenings, crafts, and a petting zoo, among others. The program also featured guest speakers such as Peekskill Mayor, Andre Rainey; Peekskill Board of Education trustees; and New York State Senators Robert Jackson, Shelley Mayer, and Peter Harckham.

Peekskill CSD has also opened the District’s Lisa Rolleri Parent Resource Center, which provides families with access to 30 new laptops, a children’s library and play area, and a parents' library. In addition, the Center provides workshops on career readiness, financial literacy, and parenting.

**Exemplary School Models and Practices (ESMP)**
The purpose of ESMP is to develop and/or expand exemplary high quality college and career readiness school models, programs and practices that demonstrate cultural and linguistic responsiveness, and emphasize the needs of boys and young men of color. To date, the State Education Department has awarded $1.15 million to five schools for Exemplary School Models and Practices.

### ESMP Spotlight: New York City School District #5

New York City School District #5 partnered with Mentoring in Medicine, Inc. to host a program this summer for students in grades 6-8. Thirty-two students attended the program, entitled Science of Sports, where they explored biomedical professions and learned from experienced healthcare professionals and scientists from around the country.

The program employed a multi-dimensional, culturally-sensitive, and proactive approach to instruction. Participating students learned about mental and physical fitness, developed academic skills, and worked together in teams.

Students examined the kidneys of pigs and learned how untreated hypertension can damage organs.

### NYS MBK Office Receives New Sign Created By Science and Technology Entry Program Students

The NYS MBK office recently received a custom handmade sign from students in the NYS Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP). Mark Parsons, Executive Director of the Pratt Consortium for Research and Robotics and STEP Director for the Pratt Institute, had summer STEP students use the project as an opportunity to develop their skills. STEP students used computer-aided design (CAD), laser cutting, 3D printing, robotic milling, and material post-processing (i.e. sanding and painting) to create the sign.

The students had previously created a similar sign to commemorate the 30th anniversary of STEP. The NYS MBK staff loves the finished result and is thankful for the Pratt Institute’s generosity and hard work. We are always happy to collaborate with other opportunity programs.
Learn More

Find out more about New York State's My Brother's Keeper initiative by visiting our MBK website, which provides details about the grants mentioned in this newsletter. The website also includes sharable videos about MBK, featuring young men of color from New York State.

Join the Conversation

If your school or community would like to share a story to include in a future edition of this newsletter, please email photos and news items to NYSMBK@nysed.gov. Similarly, if you are hosting an upcoming event, please let us know. We will add it to our calendar and help you get the word out!

Don't forget to follow us on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn and tag us in your posts so we can follow you and share your success stories. Be sure to use the #NYSMBK hashtag!

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