

## INTRODUCTION

# MBK Community Action Resource Guide

## PURPOSE

In September 2014, President Obama issued a challenge to cities, towns, counties, and tribes across the country to join the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Community Challenge as "MBK Communities." The Challenge encourages communities (cities, rural municipalities, and tribal nations) to implement a coherent cradle-to-college-and-career strategy for improving the life outcomes of all young people to ensure that they can reach their full potential.

As an MBK Community leader, you have accepted this call to action indicating your commitment to enacting sustainable change in your community across some or all of the following key milestone areas identified by the May 2014 MBK Task Force Report<sup>1</sup>:

1. Entering school ready to learn
2. Reading at grade level by third grade
3. Graduating from high school ready for college and career
4. Completing post-secondary education or training
5. Successfully entering the workforce
6. Reducing violence and providing a second chance

This guide is intended as an informational resource to support your MBK Community Challenge efforts. It introduces an illustrative sample of key principles, practices, and resources to consider in building your local initiatives. These materials are not meant as requirements and are not intended to be exhaustive or definitive. Ideas and resources may not apply equally in every community as there is no one-size-fits-all solution to these complex issues. Our hope is that you will build on the illustrative examples highlighted in this resource guide, adapting them to create tailored solutions for your community.

**The MBK Community Action Resource Guide series is a project of the National Convening Council, with support and technical assistance from the White House and a number of Federal agencies.**

In preparing this guide, the National Convening Council is also grateful for the expertise and experience shared by National League of Cities, StriveTogether, United Way, PolicyLink, Urban Institute, and Deloitte. These groups comprise a wide variety of nongovernmental organizations, philanthropies, and academics that have studied and provided ongoing support to communities implementing cradle-to-college-and-career approaches.

These resource guides include information and examples from nongovernmental sources. These resource guides are provided for informational purposes only. Inclusion of nongovernmental information and resources does not indicate endorsement by the White House or the U.S. government of entities, their products or services, and the **information contained at referenced sites does not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. government.**

## OBJECTIVES

**After reading this guide, you should:**

- Build a high-level understanding of milestone-specific issues, critical players to engage, and key considerations in activating your community around this issue
- Recognize evidence-based practices and examples of programmatic success that can be adapted to meet local community needs
- Conduct a detailed needs assessment benchmarking current performance on the critical metrics for each of the six milestones
- Begin to understand institutional resources available for use in launching local initiatives
- Identify outstanding questions to address when developing local solutions
- Feel empowered to drive systemic change in your community

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

This guide is designed to support your planning and execution process through a series of three core steps: first, it helps you (1) **build an understanding** of the milestone-specific issue area; then it (2) **identifies several illustrative leading practices** to help inspire your approach; and finally, it provides a selection of (3) **key resources** to help guide you as you begin to take action.

### (1) Build Understanding

- **Milestone Overview:** an introduction to the key drivers affecting the milestone issue area, as outlined in the MBK Task Force Report published in May 2014
- **Engaging Your Community Ecosystem:** initial thoughts on how to mobilize key stakeholders within your community to create joint accountability and a shared vision
- **Key Principles:** milestone-specific thought leadership to help provide a trusted foundation for local action

### (2) Identify Leading Practices

- **Evidence-Based Practices:** illustrative set of effective milestone-specific practices included to help inspire policy and program development in your community
- **Programmatic Success from the Field:** sample of strategies and programs communities have used to improve outcomes on this milestone - demonstrating how to apply and adapt leading practices to meet local needs

### (3) Take Action

- **Turning Theory Into Action – Institutional Resources:** examples of resources to help you begin to create change, organized by key drivers outlined within the milestone overview

<sup>1</sup> Access the MBK Task Force Report here: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/053014\\_mbk\\_report.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/053014_mbk_report.pdf)

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER  
*Community Challenge*

# Graduating from High School Ready for College and Career

## STEP 1: Build Understanding

### MILESTONE OVERVIEW

Every American child should be college and career ready.

The dropout rate for all students is down, and college enrollment rates are at an all-time high, yet there remain significant gaps, where many young people leave high school without a diploma or the preparation needed to succeed in college or a career.

Research has demonstrated that schools with effective leaders, committed staff, involved parents, a supportive climate, and ambitious learning goals are successful in educating all students. Research has also demonstrated benefits from expanded learning time that enriches students' learning; partnerships with local businesses and post-secondary partners that link school work to real-world expectations and experiences; and out of school opportunities and community-based programs that enrich learning and reduce incidences of violence and crime. Together, these practices are strengthening the pipeline from high school into college and careers.

To drive real change in our community, we must seek opportunities to:

- Create the Conditions for High-Quality Education for All
- Increase Student Attendance and Reduce Dropouts – Especially Among the Most Vulnerable, such as Foster and Homeless Youth
- Accelerate Efforts to Transform High Schools with the Lowest Graduation Rates
- Promote the Use of Alternatives to Exclusionary Discipline Practices
- Increase Access to and Success in Rigorous Coursework

For a more detailed explanation of these drivers, see the My Brother's Keeper Task Force Report, May 2014, [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/053014\\_mbk\\_report.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/053014_mbk_report.pdf)

### ENGAGING YOUR COMMUNITY ECOSYSTEM

A key next step toward driving change involves assessing community needs, with a focus on engaging and connecting key stakeholder groups,\* including:



\*These key stakeholder groups are meant to serve as an illustrative sampling, to be validated and adapted as relevant to your specific community

### KEY PRINCIPLES

1. **A data system that tracks the allocation of resources across schools** can highlight disparities and opportunity gaps for students in your community.
2. Resources should be available to **encourage positive school climates with the social, emotional, and behavioral supports** to ensure success for all youth.
3. Creating opportunities for **expanded learning time in school and quality time out of school** can help engage students and accelerate socio-emotional and academic learning and health.
4. The quality of education offered in public schools depends on having high expectations for students from all backgrounds. **Schools must provide a rigorous curriculum, including Advanced Placement (AP) / International Baccalaureate (IB) and dual enrollment options, as well as highly effective teachers** to help ensure that every child realizes his / her potential.
5. Adoption of promising and evidence-based practices should be identified and accelerated throughout the community, including **early warning systems to reduce dropouts**.
6. Focus intensively on the schools that produce the largest number of school dropouts and, among other actions, **develop alternative pathways to graduation**.
7. **Discriminatory discipline policies should be ended and supportive school discipline models should be implemented** across the P-12 system.

## MY BROTHER'S KEEPER *Community Challenge*

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## STEP 2: Identify Leading Practices

### EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

*This section is intended as an informational resource to support your MBK Community Challenge efforts. It introduces an illustrative sample of principles, practices, and resources to consider in building your local initiatives. Ideas and resources may not apply equally in every community as there is no one-size-fits-all solution to these complex issues.*

#### Practice 1: Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS)

PBIS is an approach that advances work on improving school-wide discipline, including strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments. Instead of using a piecemeal approach of individual behavioral management plans, PBIS focuses on developing a continuum of positive behavior support for all students within a school. It is implemented in areas including classroom and non-classroom settings (such as hallways, buses, and restrooms). Positive behavior support is an application of a behaviorally-based systems approach to enhance the capacity of schools, families, and communities to design effective learning environments.

#### Practice 2: Early Warning Systems (EWS)

EWS is a strategy that uses readily available school data to identify students who are at risk of dropping out, allowing educators to intervene early. Schools can use information from an EWS to support students who are at risk of dropping out with both school-wide strategies and targeted interventions. Districts and schools can use early warning system data to examine school-level patterns in the current school year and over time, in order to address systemic issues that may be impeding a student's ability to graduate.

#### Practice 3: Multi-tiered Systems of Academic and Behavioral Support

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a framework designed to respond to the needs of all students within a system which integrates, but is not limited to, tiered behavior (e.g., Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) and academic (e.g., Response to Intervention) supports. MTSS is a whole-school, data-driven, prevention-based framework for improving learning outcomes for all students through a layered continuum of evidence-based practices and systems.

#### Practice 4: Expanded Learning Time (ELT)/Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO)

Expanded learning time (ELT) is a strategy employed by schools to redesign their school days and / or years in order to provide students, particularly in low income communities, with substantially more and better learning time. ELT is often a core element of school improvement or turnaround efforts, such that other practices such as teacher collaboration, data-driven instruction, and integrated enrichment can be more effectively implemented. Expanded learning opportunities (ELOs) provide out of school time for educational enrichment and support.

### PROGRAMMATIC SUCCESS IN THE FIELD

*The following programs are highlights received from organizations participating in the MBK Community Challenge. Their efforts are not sponsored, supervised, or independently evaluated by the U.S. Government.*

#### Snapshot 1: Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-Tech) – Brooklyn, NY

P-Tech is a grades 9–12 high school in Brooklyn that is increasing college and career readiness by offering occupationally focused education with a specific path to a degree program and jobs in the technology field. The educational program features work-based learning, vocational content, and the strong involvement of IBM, the lead employer partner.

##### Key Takeaways

- 48 percent of all P-Tech students met the CUNY college readiness (CR) indicators after two semesters (up from 33 percent)
- After four semesters, 50 percent of the legacy cohort met college-ready benchmarks in English and math
- P-Tech had a 94.2 percent attendance rate in the first year of implementation, and a 97 percent of students returned for a second year of enrollment in the high school

#### Snapshot 2: YO! Baltimore – Baltimore, MD

YO! Baltimore is a community-based program that connects out-of-school youth and young adults age 16–21 with caring adults to provide comprehensive support services so they can achieve their academic and employment goals.

##### Key Takeaways

- YO! participants received 35 percent higher average earnings and had 17 percent higher labor market attachment rates than comparable, non-YO! participants
- Youth who were in school when they began YO! had higher attendance rates, were 50 percent less likely to drop out of school, and had a higher overall graduation rate compared to non-YO! youth enrolled at the same schools

#### Snapshot 3: ONTRACK – Chicago, IL

Chicago Public Schools launched a major graduation and retention effort in 2007 that relies on real-time data regarding students' attendance and course performance in the ninth grade to guide timely interventions.

##### Key Takeaways

- Students who finish the ninth grade on-track to graduate are nearly four times more likely to ultimately complete high school than their peers who fall behind
- Matching interventions to student needs can dramatically decrease performance declines traditionally associated with the transition to high school
- Since 2007, Chicago Public Schools has increased its high school graduation rate from 58 percent to 69 percent

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## STEP 3: Take Action

### TURNING THEORY INTO ACTION: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

**Now is the time to drive impact in helping youth graduate from high school ready for college and their careers** by finding ways to turn around poorly performing schools, recognizing early warning signals in students, and encouraging fair discipline practices.

Here are some helpful resources to get you started. *These resources include information and examples from nongovernmental sources. These resources are provided for informational purposes only. Inclusion of nongovernmental information and resources does not indicate endorsement by the White House or the U.S. government of entities, their products or services, and the information contained at referenced sites does not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. government.*

#### Create the Conditions for High-quality Education for All

Improving College and Career Readiness by Incorporating Social and Emotional Learning: This American Institutes for Research report describes how social and emotional learning aligns with (1) goals and expectations for college and career readiness, (2) pathways and supports for college and career preparation, and (3) outcomes and measures for college and career success. It also outlines what high school graduates should know and be able to do; what policies, programs, and structures will help high school graduates meet expectations; and how to know when high school graduates meet expectations. ***This is not a U.S. Government guidance document.***

Access the report here:

<http://www.ccrscenter.org/products-resources/improving-college-and-career-readiness-incorporating-social-and-emotional>

STEM Programs at the Department of Education: This Department of Education website outlines key national STEM initiatives available for implementation on a local level. In order to effectively compete, companies need the best and brightest from all socioeconomic backgrounds, and see investments in programs to expand access to STEM opportunities for all students as smart for their businesses and their communities. Identify opportunities to partner with companies, universities, and other community leaders who have demonstrated an interest in expanding STEM to support underrepresented students and your local economy.

Access the website here:

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/green-strides/stem.html>

#### Accelerate Efforts to Transform High Schools with the Lowest Graduation Rates

School Turnaround Learning Community (STLC): The STLC is a key element in the U.S. Department of Education's effort to provide support to state, district, and school leaders working to turn around the nation's lowest-achieving schools. The site offers a wide range of resources and tools enabling users to share school turnaround practices and lessons learned to strengthen teaching and learning for all schools. ***This is not a U.S. Government guidance document.***

Access the platform here:

<http://schoolturnaroundsupport.org/>

#### Increase Student Attendance and Reduce Dropouts – Especially Among the Most Vulnerable, such as Foster and Homeless Youth

Early Warning Indicators and Segmentation Analysis: A Technical Guide on Data Studies that Inform Dropout Prevention and Recovery: This Department of Education report describes how to develop effective early warning systems through selection of strong indicators that can identify students who are considerably off-track to graduate (i.e., two or more years away from graduation based on age and credits) and, further, how to inform district decisions on scheduling, curricula, and staffing of dropout prevention programs based on the data.

Access the report here:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/dropout/resources.html>

Foster and Homeless Youth: The Department of Health and Human Services provides guidance and resources on best practices to improve the life chances for foster and homeless youth including how best to ensure that their educational needs are met.

Access the platform here:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/focus-areas/foster-care>

#### Promote the Use of Alternatives to Exclusionary Discipline Practices

The School Discipline Guidance Package: This Department of Education guidance package provides guiding principles for reforming school climate and school discipline practices, and explains each school's legal obligation, under federal civil rights laws, to not discriminate on the basis of race in the administration of discipline. It also includes an archived webinar series and a directory of federal resources, and a compendium of state school discipline laws.

Access the guidance package here:

<http://www.ed.gov/school-discipline>

#### Increase Access to and Success in Rigorous Coursework

Promoting Rigorous Courses for all Students: This National Association of Secondary School Principals article offers recommendations that promote and facilitate rigorous courses for all students in middle and high schools. ***This is not a U.S. Government guidance document.***

Access the article here:

<http://www.nassp.org/Content.aspx?topic=61041>