

Destructive Pressures Undermine Educational Aspirations of Minority Males

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New York, NY - Minority male students continue to face overwhelming barriers in educational attainment, notes a report released today by the College Board at a Capitol Hill briefing held in collaboration with the Asian Pacific American, Black, and Hispanic Congressional Caucuses. The report highlights some of the undeniable challenges among minority students, including a lack of role models, search for respect outside of education, loss of cultural memory, poverty challenges, language barriers, community pressures and a sense of a failing education system.

In *The Educational Crisis Facing Young Men of Color*, the College Board gathered the insights and firsthand experiences of more than 60 scholars, practitioners and activists from the African American, Latino, Asian American/Pacific Islanders and Native American communities, based on a series of four, one-day seminars called Dialogue Days, in which thought leaders from each community participated in a meaningful discussion to address the education needs of minority males.

“The United States is facing an educational challenge of great significance, with the crisis most acute for minority male students,” said College Board President Gaston Caperton. “The report offers a step in the direction of raising the visibility of a pressing problem in American society. If the United States is to achieve the President’s goals, then we will have to do a much more effective job in educating those populations with which we have traditionally failed.”

Based on the report’s findings, a number of recommendations are made to erase the disparities in educational attainment and to demonstrate new ways of reaching the increasingly diverse U.S. student population. The report calls on policymakers at the federal, state and local levels, as well as foundation and community leaders, to heighten public awareness and explore policy options to improve the plight of young minority men.

Congressman Michael Honda (D-CA) said, “An educator for over 30 years, I know the vital role a high school and college degree serves in impacting socio-economic future of a young student. We must remember that education is not only essential for surviving a tough economic climate where unemployment correlates directly with a lack of education, but it is also essential for empowering and mainstreaming minority groups who continue to struggle to break free from decades of marginalization. As chairman of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, I am deeply troubled by the fact that many Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders – over half of all Cambodian, Laotian, and Hmong, for example – lack even a high school degree. This is inexcusable, especially for a country like ours that prides itself on providing opportunity for all. We must fix this, which is why College Board’s efforts to raise awareness on the educational crisis facing young men of color are so necessary and timely.”

Congressman Danny K. Davis (D-IL) said, “In response to the growing educational disparities facing minority males, the College Board, in collaboration with the Tri-Caucus, has conducted a probing and unflinching examination of the underlying issues and has developed a solid and practical response to reduce, and hopefully, eliminate those disparities. This report could not be timelier, or more relevant to the future of our educational system.”

Congressman Raúl M. Grijalva (D-AZ) said, “Minorities are disproportionately represented in schools with high dropout rates, and we must work to turn those schools around. Every middle school and high school student should have the support they need to graduate, and they should be prepared for college regardless of their circumstances. Any policy

that fails students in these regards is a policy that fails the country.”

The report identifies the need for a more coordinated effort of K–12 schools, colleges and universities, and state higher education bodies to forge partnerships to help males of color get ready, get in and get through college. A number of ‘model’ education programs, for replication and expansion, were also identified. These successful programs have multiple commonalities, including more empowered student voices, partnerships at all levels from parent to community action, mentoring programs, male role models and wrap-around services.

One program particularly noteworthy in the area of wrap-around services is the Harlem Children’s Zone, <http://www.hcz.org>. This school program offers an innovative community-based approach to learning including education, social services, and community-building services to children and families. It wraps a comprehensive array of child and family services around schools in an entire neighborhood — parenting classes, job training, health clinics, charter schools — convinced that schools reflect what is going on in the communities around them. Students in these school programs show impressive achievement gains.

“We need to be resolved as a nation that the educational crisis facing minority males is not going away any time soon,” said Roy Jones, project director of Call Me MISTER program, Clemson University. “We created the Call Me MISTER initiative about 10 years ago in South Carolina, in collaboration with three historically Black colleges, to address the abysmal shortage of primarily African American male elementary teachers. We firmly believe that placing fully certified male teachers of color will not only address a significant shortage, but positively change the very school climate and culture in many of our underserved communities.”

The report, released in conjunction with a Capitol Hill briefing today, will convene educators, policymakers and advocates to discuss the report’s findings and call on leaders and communities to address this national crisis. Distinguished speakers will include:

- Χονγρεσσαν Δαννη Κ. Δαβις (Δ–ΙΛ), Χονγρεσσιοναλ Βλαχκ Χαυχυσ
- Χονγρεσσαν Ραλ Μ. Γριφαλωα (Δ–ΑΖ), Χονγρεσσιοναλ Ηισπανιχ Χαυχυσ
- Χονγρεσσαν Μικε Ηονδα (Δ–ΧΑ), Χηαιρ οφ τηε Χονγρεσσιοναλ Ασιαν Παχιφιχ Αμεριχαν Χαυχυσ
- Γαστον Χαπερτον, Χολλεγε Βοαρδ Πρεσιδεντ
- Σιδνεϋ Ριβεαυ, Πρεσιδεντ, Ηοωαρδ Υνιϋερσιτιϋ
- Λεε Βιτσοι, Ασσισταντ Προφεσσορ, Γεοργετωαν Υνιϋερσιτιϋ
- Ροϋ θονεσ, Προφεχτ Διρεχτορ, Χαλλ Με ΜΙΣΤΕΡ Προγραμ, Χλεμσον Υνιϋερσιτιϋ
- Λυισ Πονφουαν, Ασσισταντ Προφεσσορ, Υνιϋερσιτιϋ οφ Φλοριδα
- Τομ Ρυδιν, Σενιορ ςιχε Πρεσιδεντ, τηε Χολλεγε Βοαρδ
- Ηαλ Σμιτη, ςιχε Πρεσιδεντ Εδυχατιον & Ψουτη, Νατιοναλ Υρβαν Λεαγυε
- Αιλλιαν Σπαρκσ, Εξεχυτιϋε Διρεχτορ, Νατιοναλ Ινδιαν Εδυχατιον Ασσοχιατιον
- Ροβερτ Τερανισιη, Ασσοχιατε Προφεσσορ, Νεϋ Ψορκ Υνιϋερσιτιϋ

- Ροναλδ Ωιλλιαμσ, ριχε Πρεσιδεντ, Τηε Χολλεγε Βοαρδ

The College Board

The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board is composed of more than 5,700 schools, colleges, universities and other educational organizations. Each year, the College Board serves seven million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,800 colleges through major programs and services in college readiness, college admission, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning. Among its best-known programs are the SAT®, the PSAT/NMSQT® and the Advanced Placement Program® (AP®). The College Board is committed to the principles of excellence and equity, and that commitment is embodied in all of its programs, services, activities and concerns. For further information, visit www.collegeboard.com.

Additional resources:

To learn more about College Board advocacy, please visit www.collegeboard.com/advocacy or contact Stephanie Coggin at the College Board, communications@collegeboard.org or 212-713-8052.

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