The PAS Initiative:  
*Promoting Academic Success of Boys of Color*

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.....Bringing together networks of families, schools, communities, and agencies to improve the academic, social, and emotional development of African American and Latino boys ages three through eight.
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Presentation Outline

• Ways that families, schools, and communities can undermine the success of boys of color

• PAS model
  – Parent Involvement
  – School Enhancement
PAS’ Acknowledgement

- MANY families and schools do things to strengthen children’s learning and success.

- When families and schools are positive and responsive to children’s needs, children have positive outcomes.

- Not all families and schools are engaged in practices that are hinder boys’ success.

- However, some families and schools engage in practices that do not promote boys’ positive learning and motivation in school.
Some Families

How might they hinder success?

1) Practices and climates that fail to optimize boys’ development

2) Limited and sometimes poor relationships with schools and their children’s education

3) Dearth of competent, nurturing, male role models
Some Families: Educational Practices

- Limited involvement in their children’s education
  - Provide few enrichment opportunities (science kits, building blocks, books of interest, etc.)
  - Little use of print materials for recreation and learning

- Limited joint storytelling, reading, and conversations about shared experiences

- Limited modeling of life-long learning process in ways that boys like
  - Over-reliance on TV and games that provide little intellectual stimulation
Parent Involvement in School Activities

Number of Involvements

SES Group (by quintile)
Child’s Weekday TV Viewing

![Bar chart showing weekday TV viewing hours by SES group (by quintile) for different ethnic groups.](chart.png)
Child’s Weekend TV Viewing

[Graph showing the hours of TV viewing for different SES groups (by quintile) for White, Black, Latino, and Asian groups.]
Some Families: Climate

- Excessively high levels of direction and criticism
- Demand for unquestioning obedience to authority (very strict)
- Trauma and loss (deaths, health problems, stresses of poverty)
- Racial and gender oppression
  - “You’re a black male. Try twice as hard and you still get nothing”
- Low expectations
  - Looking good is better than doing good
Some Families: Relationships with Schools

- Limited contact with schools
  - Lack of knowledge about what schools expect or about current events and activities

- Little involvement in or understanding of ways to educate their children

- Hostile or antagonistic contact with schools
Some Families:
Male Role Models

• Confusion about how a man is supposed to act and to behave

• Distorted or exaggerated views of masculinity

• Taking on the role of “protector” or “man of the house”

• Acting independently without the requisite maturity and good judgment
Some Schools

How might they hinder success?

1) Poor fit between boys’ attitudes and skills and the ways classrooms are organized (Mismatch)

2) Poorly prepared to educate boys of color and engage their families as educational partners

3) “Risky” contexts
Some Schools: Mismatch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys are predisposed toward</th>
<th>Schools prefer and reward</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicating and interacting through kinesthetic &amp; movement</td>
<td>Verbal mastery and fluency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct communication</td>
<td>Inductive, indirect communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hands-on activities that rely on gross motor skills</td>
<td>Quiet desk work using fine motor skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low/later control of behavior</td>
<td>High/early control of behavior</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Some Schools: Poor Preparation

- Misinterpreting boys’ behavior
  - Viewed as miscreants or poorly adjusted

- Excessive use of ineffective, harsh discipline strategies
  - Suspensions, expulsions, “BEH” classes, retention rarely work
  - Emotionally distant and overly punitive responses to boys

- Little use of effective strategies
  - Realistic expectations for behavior and achievement
  - Firm, even-handed control
  - Close, emotionally expressive contact
  - Interpersonal warmth
Some Schools:
Context

• Higher concentrations of ethnic minority, poor children who have little preparation and below average skills

• Higher concentrations of less experienced and lower paid staff
  – Their backgrounds are not similar to the boys they teach
  – Some school personnel have problematic attitudes and beliefs
    • Lower academic expectations & higher athletic expectations

• Greater physical danger

• Less adequate facilities
  – Smaller libraries and fewer books
  – Less adequate science labs and less access to the Internet
  – Fewer music, art, and drama rooms
What can PAS do?
Activities

- Maintain positive instructional and affective CLIMATES
- Use effective socialization PRACTICES
- Develop deep, positive RELATIONSHIPS
- Provide enriching EXPERIENCES

Parent-Child activities, Parent involvement activities
Teacher training, Classroom observation & feedback, Web-based learning communities, Extended-day activities
Training workshops, After school & summer activities

OUTCOMES
Academic Achievement
Language
Literacy
Math Skills
Interpersonal Competence
Friends
Family
Mental Health
Physical Health
Self-Regulation/Self-Esteem
Virtues
Ethics
Morality
Altruism
Parent Involvement
Build on Family Strengths

Nearly universal strengths
• Want the best for their children
• Like people who do their best to help their children
• Have high educational aspirations for their children (early on)

Selected strengths
• Have high regard for the expertise of school administrators and give them the benefit of the doubt
• Put a great deal of energy into teaching children the things they think children need to know
• Do what is in their power to help their children
Parent Involvement: Philosophy

Parents have three responsibilities:

- **Affection**: Love and respect their son and teach him to love and respect others
- **Protection**: Keep their son safe and teach him to be safe and grow up to take care of himself
  - Race, gender, class, appearance, education, & community
- **Correction**: Correct his mistakes and teach him to correct his own and others’ mistakes

(Dr. Howard Stevenson, 2001)
Parent Involvement: Community Activities

- **Library** (read, use the computer, crafts, plays)
- **Museums** (animals, machines, planes, dinosaurs)
- **Free events** (sports, music, farmers market, fire station, park, learn the city, visit minority owned businesses, cultural activities, male speeches, college campuses, bookstores)
- **Pay events** (zoo, movies, bookstores, sporting events, museums, historic sites)
- **Join groups** (boys and girls club, scouts, band, karate)
Parent Involvement: In-School Activities

- Open Houses (parents get to know the teachers and talk about ways to help their boys succeed)
- School Performances
- Parent-Teacher conferences
- Fun activities for parents and sons (help start some if the school does not have any)
- Volunteer in the classroom (read to boys, go on field trip, help bake goods, surprise your son with a visit to his school)
Parent Involvement: Home Activities

- Read together (self-esteem & cultural heritage)
- Talk and really listen
- Encourage him to dream, do, and achieve (Emily K)
- Make things (towers, build cars, puppets, meals) or grow plants
- Play together (board games, soccer)
- Make or give something to someone in need
- Teach him to respect what the family has and keep it neat and tidy
- Learn about positive males (books, magazines, computer, TV)
- Review homework (practice writing and spelling, learn new words)
School Enhancement
School Personnel: Practices

- Develop warm, close, personal relationships with boys of color (Barbarin, 2000; Irvine, 1998)
- Use teaching styles filled with rhythmic language, call and response, and lively discussions (Irvine, 1998)
- Use cooperative learning strategies (Barbarin, 2007)
- Meter out strong yet compassionate discipline (Barbarin, 2000, Irvine 1998)
School Personnel: Practices

- Help students bridge home-school mismatch
- Have realistic expectations for behavior and achievement (Barbarin, 2000)
- Focus on language and literacy, socio-emotional competence, enjoyment of reading, and self-regulation (Barbarin, 2000)
- Act as parental surrogates and advocates for students (promote strong, healthy emotional ties to peers & school)
- Promote healthy racial and gender identity
Relationships with Parents

- Engage parents as a resource - “home-school collaboration” implies that parents and schools work together to promote positive child outcomes
- Educate parents on how schools are structured and how to participate in their children’s education
- Create welcoming environments
Comments/Questions??

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