

# Milwaukee Public Schools: Launches new Black & Latino Male Achievement Department, hires staff

Posted on Tuesday, Aug 15, 2017

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## ***District sees new department as a critical opportunity for all of Milwaukee***

**MILWAUKEE - August 15, 2017:** This fall, Milwaukee Public Schools is launching the new Department of Black and Latino Male Achievement to address the disparities in academic and life outcomes for Black and Latino boys and young men. In late July, the Milwaukee Board of School Directors unanimously approved four staff members for the department, who begin this week.

The department will report directly to Superintendent Darienne Driver and will work to analyze data and adopt local and national best practices that result in improved academic and life outcomes for this population.

“When we examine student achievement data for all of our students, our Black and Latino male students are consistently below their peers. This is simply unacceptable, we can and will do better,” said Dr. Driver. “We believe that it is critical to improve outcomes for all our young people. Focusing specifically on Black and Latino male achievement will benefit all students in our district.”

## **Initial strategies of the department will include:**

- Aligning district and city-wide efforts that specifically support Black and Latino boys and young men;

- Creating Manhood Development courses that provide safe and protected spaces for Black and Latino male students to explore identity and history among a community of their peers;
- Working with school communities to analyze data and develop plans and strategies for addressing significant disparities in outcomes; and
- Launching a communication strategy to positively change the narratives surrounding Black and Latino boys and young men in Milwaukee.

The National Campaign for Black Male Achievement (CBMA) will support the Department of Black and Latino Male Achievement through a strong partnership. CBMA has selected Milwaukee as one of five priority cities and has worked closely with district and community leaders to identify proven strategies and to coordinate resources to improve academic and life outcomes for boys and men of color. The staff for the Department of Black and Latino Male Achievement includes a mix of internal and external MPS employees with diverse perspectives and experiences.

**Juan Baez, Ed.D., Director, Black and Latino Male Achievement:** An alumnus of Milwaukee's North Division High School, Baez is a former Milwaukee Public Schools principal who led turnaround efforts at both Hopkins-Lloyd Community School and Alexander Mitchell Integrated Arts School. Most recently, Baez oversaw the district's Educator Effectiveness Program.

**Lanelle Ramey, Director, Black and Latino Male Achievement:** An alumna of Riverside University High School, Ramey most recently was Senior Director of programs at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee. Through his work, he regularly partnered with Milwaukee Public Schools and MPS Recreation. Ramey is a volunteer committee chair and mentor for MKE Fellows, an organization that supports Black male youth who are heading to college and returning to Milwaukee to work and live.

**Paul Moga, Coordinator, Black and Latino Male Achievement:** A proud MPS alumnus, Moga is a former English teacher and department chair of Riverside University High School. He most recently served as a Culturally Responsive Teacher Leader for MPS, providing professional development for teachers and administrators in culturally relevant, student-centered classroom practices, emphasizing increased student engagement and celebration of culture. He also served as a member of the district's Equity Commission.

**David Castillo, Planning Assistant, Black and Latino Male Achievement:** A

native of Los Angeles, CA, Castillo most recently worked as a special education teacher at Milwaukee's Pulaski High School, where he also coordinated Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) for the school. In addition, Castillo provided support in developing and leading the school's Freshman Academy. A Teach For America alumnus, Castillo worked this summer training new teachers through Teach For America in Milwaukee's summer training institute.