

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS AND
SHEILA KUEHL

July 21, 2020

Supporting an Expansion of School-Based Social Emotional Learning Interventions

Punitive policies and practices within public school districts and the juvenile justice system have stunted the potential of young Black men across Los Angeles County (County) and the nation. While Black males make up only nine percent of youth in the County, they account for 32 percent of all youth on probation and 80 percent are re-arrested within three years. According to a 2019 study published by the University of California, Los Angeles, racial disparities are similarly reflected in public schools where Black students, particularly young Black men, are disproportionately under-prepared for college, subjected to more punitive forms of discipline and chronically absent from school. Involvement with the justice system and youth disconnection from school have lasting effects into adulthood, leading to lower incomes, higher unemployment rates, trauma, substance abuse, and other negative health and mental outcomes that impact economic mobility and success. Finding solutions to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline for young Black men requires investments in innovative programs that are holistic, comprehensive and intergenerational.

With \$1.35 million in funding from the Department of Mental Health (DMH), Los Angeles County has an opportunity to expand programming that helps help young men of color succeed in high school, higher education and life. Building a Lifetime of Options

MOTION

SOLIS _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

KUEHL _____

HAHN _____

BARGER _____

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS AND SHEILA KUEHL
July 21, 2020
Page 2

and Opportunities for Men (BLOOM) and Becoming A Man (BAM) are two programs that have shown great promise. Both feature mentorships, character development and services specially tailored for young men of color. These school-based interventions bridge the opportunity gap by leading students towards educational success and healthy pathways. Both programs were created with youth of color in mind – creating a new sense of possibility, particularly for those who are most vulnerable to being caught up in the school-to-prison pipeline. The BLOOM and BAM programs seek out youth who are probation-involved, contending with behavioral issues, deficient in school credits and/or experiencing absenteeism or truancy. Most importantly, each program sees education and juvenile justice as being linked and seeks to address juvenile justice contact and academic achievement through supports that consider childhood trauma, cultural identity, social bonds, and educational supports.

Since 2012, more than 800 young men have transformed their futures through BLOOM, which was recognized by the White House as a promising model to be replicated nationally. In 2017, 100 percent of BLOOM seniors graduated from high school, nearly all of whom have gone on to attend college, and 97 percent upheld the terms of their probation and have not reoffended. Similarly, youth who have participated in BAM are 50 percent less likely to be arrested for violent crimes and 19 percent more likely to graduate from high school on time.

The County's My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Initiative aims to increase opportunities for youth and young men of color through the development of strategies and programming around six goal areas, including high school completion and college/employment.

Understanding the importance of addressing racial equity challenges faced by boys and young men of color and the impact unresolved trauma and violence can have on their ability to navigate life, the Department of Mental Health has identified \$1.35M over two years to support social emotional learning efforts in schools. This funding would expand the BLOOM/BAM programming offered in schools and provide young Black men

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS AND SHEILA KUEHL
July 21, 2020
Page 3

with targeted resources that enable them to better manage life challenges, engage in mental health services, and continue along a path of success.

Given the new role of the Youth Diversion and Development (YDD) division of the Department of Health Services' (DHS) Office of Diversion & Reentry (ODR) as the County's focal point for the development of practices related to youth development, YDD is uniquely situated to provide oversight and management of the DMH funds that will support this effort.

WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Delegate authority to the Director of the Department of Health Services (DHS), in collaboration with the Director of the Department of Mental Health (DMH), to contract with the California Community Foundation to expand its Building a Lifetime of Options and Opportunities for Men (BLOOM) and Becoming A Man (BAM) programs through sub-awards to community-based providers of youth development activities, to be funded with DMH funds of up to \$1,350,000 for a maximum term of two years; and
2. Direct the Office of Diversion & Reentry (ODR) through the Youth Diversion and Development (YDD) division to report back in writing within 180 days on the expansion of BLOOM/BAM Programming, including the number of schools and students participating, as well as any program modifications that have been implemented in order to adhere to COVID-19 public health guidelines.

#

(PC/EW)