

MILESTONE 3: GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL

MILESTONE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Roseanne Collins-Judon
Assistant Superintendent,
Yonkers Public Schools

Ian Sherman
Principal, Lincoln High School

Jamie Morales
Principal, Charles E. Gorton High School

Dr. Jason Baez
Assistant Principal,
Charles E. Gorton High School

Dr. Sandy Hattar
Principal, Yonkers Middle/High School

Dr. Eileen Rivera
Principal, Yonkers Montessori Academy

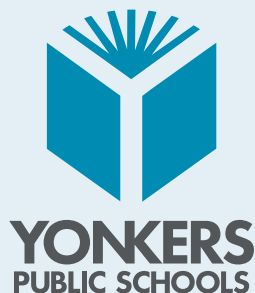
Sanah Naber
Principal, VIVE School

Andrew Hara
Principal, Barack Obama School
for Social Justice

Jeremy Rynders
Principal, Saunders Trades
and Technical High School

William Shaggura
Principal, Riverside High School

Edward DeChent
Principal, Roosevelt High School -
Early College Studies



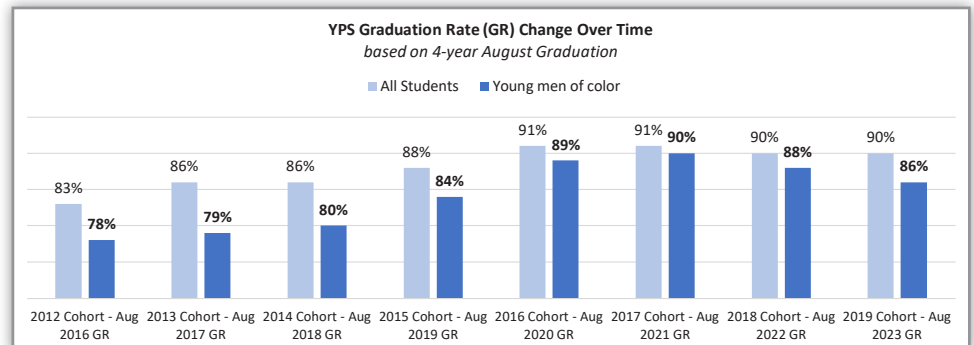
What is your 5-year goal for the selected Milestone?

The Yonkers Public Schools aims to continue to increase the graduation rates for boys and young men of color (BYMOC) and in so doing, close the gap in graduation rates between Black and Latino males and the overall student population. To accomplish this goal, we will be taking a multi-pronged approach, which ranges from universal strategies to ensure culturally responsive learning environments and enhancing students' sense of belonging and inclusion at the elementary and secondary levels through to targeted strategies, such as partnerships with community-based organizations that work with the youth providing opportunities to BYMOC and work on the implementation of alternatives to suspensions.

At this juncture, our goal for Yonkers graduates who are young men of color to graduate high school is guided by these specific goals, subject to refinements (especially increases) as the work progresses:

By August 2027, our Milestone 3 goal is to increase our cohort high school graduation rate for young men of color by 4%; Our 2023 graduation rate baseline is 86%. Our one-year goal will be an incremental increase of 1% in order to reach our long term 5-year goal of 90%.

We will work to maintain the graduation rates overall to over 85%, our BYMOC data should reflect trends in overall graduation rate, with an increase of 2% over that time frame.



Context for the Work

Today, the graduation rates for our BYMOC is 87% in August of 2023, which is approaching the graduation rate (89%) for our overall population. This closing of the gap represents specific strategic efforts in recent years, including creation of MBK chapters in each school building, increasing community involvement with BYMOC, continuing our efforts in restorative practices and providing targeted opportunities for exposure to post secondary experiences. But there is more work to do, and, described in more detail below, we continue to learn about what is needed.



Our Current Impressions + Insights:
Informing our Year 1 Strategic Activity

As part of this planning effort, we have learned that the social-emotional component of the school and classroom experiences, particularly that pertaining to fostering inclusivity and engaging in culturally responsive practices, maybe be a missing link for many of our students who do not graduate high school. Our anecdotal data suggest that many of these students feel out of place and lack a sense of purpose, and they cite experiences in school that are not relevant and/or lack connection to their lives. In addition, it is well known from the research that disciplinary practices that result in suspension, often trigger a cycle of suspension and create further psychological distance and disconnection from the school. At the same time, the YPS district suspension data trend towards having a disproportionate number of suspensions being from several subgroups, Black, Hispanic, SWD and male students; further, the data suggest that students who are suspended are recidivists, i.e., they are suspended multiple times for similar infractions.

These insights inform our strategy for year 1, described on the next page.

What progress do you hope to achieve by the end of year one implementation?

Strategic Activity	
ALTERNATIVE TO SUSPENSION: A RESTORATIVE PRACTICES PROGRAM	<p>Yonkers Public Schools will train an identified MBK Assistant Principal in Restorative Practices as an alternative to suspension option. In an effort to reduce suspensions, improve attendance and academic outcomes for those sub-groups, this initiative will promote a more positive school culture, increase MBK chapter participation and will address Milestone 3 and 6 simultaneously. If implementation is successful, we should see the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in overall suspension rates for Boys and Young Men of Color (BYMOC) <i>*Percentages to be included</i> Reduction of recidivist suspension rates for BYMOC by 10% <i>*Percentages to be included</i> Improvement in chronic absenteeism by 15% for BYMOC <i>*Percentages to be included</i> MBK Student enrollment and participation increase by 50% <i>*Percentages to be included</i>
DATA COLLECTION & REVIEW TO INFORM ACTION	<p>As with the group working on Milestone 1, we will engage in comprehensive data analysis to identify and examine trends in attendance from PreK to 8th grade, to better understand these patterns in the year before high school.</p>
CROSS-SCHOOL INITIATIVES TO INCREASE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND MENTORSHIP	<p>Train MBK scholars to engage in cross-age literacy tutoring at neighboring elementary schools. This facilitates growth of MBK chapters at both the high school and elementary levels; creates peer mentoring across school community; expands feeder patterns and school choice in YPS; it contributes to Milestones 3 and 2 simultaneously. At the same time, it supports MBK scholars who are working towards the Seal of Civic Readiness Graduation endorsement, required hours for various school-based honor societies and/or serves as Work Based Learning for certain approved CTE programs.</p> <p>If implementation is successful, we should see the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Every High School establishing a partnership with at least one elementary school. An Increase in BYMOC receiving their seal of civic readiness distinction by 5%
REDUCING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM	<p>In addition to close work with our data on attendance and absenteeism, we will also focus the lens on attendance in high school. We will engage in strategies to incentivize and celebrate increased attendance. Creation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports to be implemented in each school building. We will also work with our families to address transportation needs, as well as student difficulties with motivation (adding social emotional guidance with Pupil personnel support staff).</p>
EXPANDING COLLEGE, CAREER, AND CIVIC READINESS OPPORTUNITIES	<p>In addition to our regular programming and supports in this area, we will engage in new strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning college trips for MBK scholars Providing dedicated mentors for each MBK scholar, through community-based and philanthropic organizations Offer CCCR trips for MBK scholars to include theatre, museum, sporting events, conferences, dinner etc. Workshops on career inventories, resume writing, SAT preparation, assistance in part time employment, effective use of social media, preparing for college interviews, how to write college essay etc. Offer targeted academic assistance for MBK scholars to include afterschool, Saturday and summer enrichment programs to improve Regents outcomes that impacts cohort credit accumulation, GPA, honor roll, rank, college acceptances, scholarship opportunities and CCCR etc. Expand CCCR course offerings in all 8 high schools including IB, AP, College Link, PTECH and CTE. 122 combined advanced course offerings, looking to expand to 128 (Not including CTE), which is 5%. If implementation is successful, we should see the following: Access and enrollment for BYMOC into AP, CL, PTECH, CTE and IB courses increase by 5%



In addition:



Offer CCCR trips for MBK scholars to include theatre, museum, sporting events, conferences, dinner etc. (use survey data to provide meaningful and intentional opportunities for students to begin the process of branding on Linked In to support CCCR process). This will contribute to helping our students learn their desired direction. This can be the difference between a student choosing a major, thus choosing the proper school to apply to, and being unmotivated to apply due to “undecided” stigma.



Workshops on career inventories, resume writing, SAT preparation, assistance in part time employment, effective use of social media, preparing for college interviews, how to write college essay etc. Community organizations and school Admin/teacher staff. Many schools offer one or more of these, however, expansion of workshops throughout the district will provide similar access and opportunity for all students in Yonkers. Targeting MBK students as participants, we will be able to take accurate attendance and track participation through online means.

Provide opportunities for MBK families to engage in the school communities in creative ways.

The following are ways to engage the total school community:

- **Town hall style presentations/discussions with school and district administration.** This provides a long-form opportunity for school officials to discuss salient student/school issues and gain meaningful feedback/input from the families of the students we serve.
- **Engage more intently with PTSA and include leadership within each chapter to aid in facilitation and support for programming regarding MBK.** This will support overall Secondary PTSA involvement (the data suggests a drop in participation with secondary schools).
- **Provide parents with helpful parent education workshops aimed at creating a more school fluent partner at home.** Suggested workshops may include, but are not limited to, Instructional Technology Fluency, mental health check ins and red flags, substance abuse look sessions, transcript analysis, Roadmap to Graduation, English as a New Language.
- **Provide parents with additional access to employment training at our VIVE/Pathways to Success Program**
- **Quarterly Family Fun Evenings** at all 8 high schools that expand existing welcoming affirming and culturally responsive environments necessary for children to thrive in YPS. Train our MBK scholars in American Red Cross babysitting as well basic First Aid to provide childcare.

If implementation is successful, we should see the following:

- a. Creation of a district wide parental involvement framework with specific events designed to be conducted at each individual High School
- b. PTSA enrollment increase by 10%

