

PSC-ED-OUS

**Moderator: Marco Davis
April 23, 2014
1:00 pm CT**

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you all for standing by. At this time, all participants are in a listen-only mode. After the presentation, we will conduct a question and answer session. To ask a question, you may press star and then 1. This call is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this point.

Now, I will turn the meeting over to your host, Mr. Marco Davis. Sir, you may begin.

Marco Davis: Thank you very much, (Regina). Welcome, everyone. Good afternoon. My name is Marco Davis. I'm the Deputy Director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics and I'm joined by several colleagues here at the Initiative. We want to thank you all for joining us for this important webinar today.

Two quick business matters. One, I want to inform and remind you that this Webinar is off the record and not intended for press purposes. Also, I want to remind you as the operator just said that this entire webinar including the Q&A discussion will be recorded and the recording and transcript along with the slide presentation you will see in a few moments will be posted to the

Initiative's Web site after the call to make the information available for anyone who was unable to join us for the live Webinar.

The agenda for today will go as follows. I will describe today's webinar topic very briefly in just a moment and then introduce our first presenters who will speak for up to 15 minute and make their presentation. Then, we will have 15 minutes of Q&A. We will open up the lines at that time.

Then, I will introduce our second presenter who will also speak for up to 15 minutes and then we'll open the floor again for Q&A for the remainder of the hour. When we get to the point of opening the floor for questions, the operator will come back on to provide guidance and to remind you all how to get into the queue to ask a question.

And now onto our discussion today -- increasing outcomes for Hispanic males. Data show that Hispanic and other boys and young men of color regardless of socio-economic background are disproportionately at risk throughout the journey from their youngest years to college and career. To ensure the economic and social viability of our nation, it is critically important that the education and life outcomes for students particularly for Hispanic and other boys and young men of color are enhanced.

Today, we're going to learn about a new effort called - or relatively new effort called Project MALES which is based at the University of Texas at Austin and seeks to increase Latino educational outcomes through a variety of innovative strategies. Then, we will learn about the president's new initiative, My Brother's Keeper, which is designed to reduce disparities and life outcomes for boys and men of color which obviously includes Hispanics.

So without further ado, I want to turn it over to our first presenter to take advantage of the time. Our presenters are Dr. Victor Saenz and Dr. Luis Ponjuan, who are the founders of Project MALES. Gentlemen.

Victor Saenz: Marco, thank you very much. My name is Victor Saenz, Associate Professor, UT Austin. I'm honored and humbled to have an opportunity to address this audience, the stakeholders across the country. Thank you to the White House Initiative of Educational Excellence for Hispanics for this great opportunity to share the good work that Luis and I and so many other partners have been engaged in for a number of years. Speaking of which, we'll see on that title slide that we have several of our partners listed here.

I want to acknowledge in particular TG and the Greater Texas Foundation for their great support over the last few years and helping us to enact this not only local initiative but a statewide consortium which we're very excited to share with you all this afternoon.

And also with our respective universities, University of Texas at Austin, the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement and Texas A&M University and both institutions, both of our home institutions, they represent obviously the flagship public research university in the state of Texas and it's truly important to acknowledge that both flagships are deeply engaged in this issue not only for the state but for the nation.

And then with that, let me turn over to the next slide which we'll share a little bit about how this project got started and it's important that we acknowledge obviously that this initiative emerged from various sources of inspiration and various forms of advocacy and I want to acknowledge the AAHHE -- American Association of Hispanics in Higher Ed -- as well as TG because

back in 2007, they asked me and Luis to commission - to write a paper on the vanishing Latino male in higher education.

And at that time, both he and I were fresh out of our doctoral programs really searching for an opportunity to make an impact in the field and beginning our respective academic careers and we really seized on the opportunity, recognizing the growing urgency of this issue across the country and across all communities because it's not unique to the Latino community in terms of this growing gender gap in educational attainment.

I also want to acknowledge several partners, Dr. William Serrata, now currently president of El Paso Community College but at the time, it's South Texas College as VP of Enrollment Management was a very key initial supporter of our work and provided us with the actual term Project MALES. MALES, of course, being an acronym for Mentoring to Achieve Latino Educational Success. And I just want to acknowledge that he continues to be a key partner for us, strategic partner in our efforts to improve educational outcomes for male students.

And then we also have a couple of very important programs that emerge early on for us as sources of inspiration. (Unintelligible) communities and education is actually a gear-up program in South Texas. They work with school districts and they do exactly what the name might imply. They connect fathers directly to communities and inject them into the educational enterprise for their children.

(Unintelligible) leadership and other effort in North County, San Diego, California have been around over 10 years. In both cases, in fact, they've been around well over a decade and have done some important work in the area of

targeting Latino male youth and also in the case of (unintelligible), of course, with fathers not to mention a whole host of other partners around the country.

So that - those sources of inspiration really help us lead into the research agenda that Luis and I have been engaged in going back seven years now. TG yet again came through and supported us in a research project called Boys in Peril that allowed us to do work - comparative work in Florida and in Texas and that particular research project which lasted 2 plus years focus on the educational pathways for Latino males. It really allowed us to forge a very important partnerships and Luis has gone - kind of returned to that in the second way that's so important in doing this work.

And ultimately, what has emerged from that is a series of articles research piece and an edited book with our good friend and partner, Dr. Julie Figueroa, from Sacramento State that we planned to have released through the end of the year so I asked the audience to look forward to that if you're interested in that.

And then finally, of course, we recognized the need to be able to translate our research agenda pretty exhausted looking (unintelligible) into some user benefit for our community and that's where we began with the development of a mentoring program here at UT Austin. It was born in 2010. It is housed within the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement and more importantly, we utilized a leverage existing partnerships that UT Austin had with our local community partners including Austin ISD, communities and schools and in particular, this boys program, the XY-Zone boys program which started about 14 years ago.

And, you know, with this kind of work, it's important - we don't need to reinvent the wheel. There's some really important models out there that we

can build upon and this was one an existing program literally in our backyard where they had already been a great partnership with university but the need that they had was in college readiness curriculum and they needed to be able to connect their young men in high school here in some of the local high schools and XY-Zone is in ten different high schools across Central Texas.

They needed to connect them to college students in some meaningful way and so that's where we came in. We helped to fill that void and, of course, I mentioned here Austin ISD because there's yet another partner in providing us the space and access to working with these students to a collaboration with CIS and the XY-Zone boys program.

So what exactly does the mentoring program do? If you turn to the next slide, we're engaged in mentoring as our primary activity. We're also very much focused on community engagement service opportunities and ultimately a leadership development for our students.

So the philosophy that we use for our mentoring program is near peer and intergenerational. We include both high school students, college students and graduate students in intergenerational framework around mentoring to provide multiple ways of mentoring and being served in that way. We also utilize existing assets within our community.

Here at UT Austin, of course, that's our undergraduate student population and since 2010, we've had well over 100 students participate in our mentoring efforts in one way or another at the undergraduate level and about another 40 or 50 of the graduate level.

So we're excited about the kind of in roads we've made within the institution and recruiting mentors so then go out and be - to serve our community and

serve these young men within the XY-Zone boys program but we, you know, as with any effort, we have constantly looked for ways to expand and improve and so we did initially piloted in 2010. Since that point, we expanded in subsequent years to include more sites, more schools.

Now where at three high schools, where at a middle school. We just started mentoring program at UT elementary school. We've also been able to support of the Texas Higher Ed Coordinating Board a small grant to pay our mentors, modest stipend and their work as mentors to these young men in our community.

We have - also have graduate students that participate as site coordinators at each of our schools. We employ work studies as yet another creative way. We've been leveraging some of the grant resources we had. As all of you may know, you know, work study - the federal work study program matches \$7 to every 3 and so we've been able to utilize that strategy to really get a lot more mileage and leverage from our undergraduate students and place them at different sites around the Central Texas area.

Then finally, the annual evaluation of the program. I think -- and Luis is going to speak to this culture of evidence -- that's so important in developing these kinds of initiatives. The fact that we're at a research university I think really lends itself to constantly wanting to improve, wanting to evolve and that absolutely defined the very nature of project MALES mentoring program.

Our students are also engaged in a community. They do a number of service, events throughout the year, community outreach events. And then finally, also the last piece of sort of the Project MALES of the world and that is the professional leadership development. We have a series of (unintelligible) who

prepares students for successful entry into the workforce into (unintelligible) graduate careers, professional schools, et cetera.

And we also have a student council that's developed, an actual student organization from within the realm of mentors that we've recruited to the initiative.

The next slide really helps to put it all together just to give you the 30,000 foot perspective of our Project MALES organizational framework. As I said earlier, it starts with our research agenda focus on K to 16, Latino Male Educational Success. It has now morphed into translating that research work into a mentoring program that is constantly looking to improve and evolve made up of undergraduate student mentors, work studies and a very active and growing Project MALES student council.

And then last but not least is sort of the third leg of this stool and that is the new initiative that we just launched this past year which is really a culmination of sorts for us because we've been working on the research realm and then also - in the actual service delivery to students with our mentoring program but the next piece for us in terms of the long-term strategy for Project MALES was to pursue a much more strategic and larger scale venture and that's where the idea for consortium first came to be which really emerged from our initial research work with so many community colleges and other institutions around the state.

We had developed a very sort of informal network of partners made up of other similar institutions that were very committed to male student success and we wanted to find a vehicle to be able to leverage that informal network into something much more formal and that's where we launched this new Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color.

I'll now turn it over to my colleague, Luis Ponjuan.

Luis Ponjuan: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Luis Ponjuan. I'm an associate professor at Texas A&M University. It's an honor today to talk to you about the work that we're engaged in in the State of Texas. Next slide, please.

As you will see, Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color is an ambitious goal in terms of what we're trying to accomplish in the State of Texas. Commissioner Ray Paredes, the Texas higher Education Coordinating Board made it a state imperative to explore what's happening to Hispanic and African American males in Texas Higher Education. They were looking at the critical junctures of how these young men are not only starting in elementary school but actually attending higher education.

And what we found was that there was a lot of information out there about the disparities but there wasn't a lot of what we consider collaborative work focused on this issue across these different educational platforms. So the consortium has a very specific goal to collaborate shared expertise, advanced research and leverage resources in a coordinated effort to make a collective impact on the State of Texas imperative to improve male students of color success through the K12, K16 system.

When we thought about the strategies that we wanted to use, we realized that this was something that would take an effort that expands across not only educational institutions but taking a look at all of the other resources and organizations that are out there.

Then (unintelligible) private foundation initiatives, we use a strategy of collective impact to align existing problematic efforts across other institutions

as well as other organizations, to stimulate and create new capacity building initiatives that will enhance the educational attainment of Hispanic and African-American males. We started with a handful of institutions that had an awareness and a desire to take this task at hand. With that, we started the consortium. Next slide, please.

Here, you'll see a beginning snapshot of consortium partners that are engaged in this work. What you see among this partner is unique because it represents the six largest metropolitan areas in the State of Texas. These partners span across educational platforms that hence we include K12 independent school districts, two-year colleges and universities as well as four-year colleges and universities. They represent Hispanic-serving institutions, historically (unintelligible) colleges and universities and predominantly white institutions.

They also represent a spectrum of institutional initiatives focused on male students of color that is some of these institutions have emerging programs focused on Latino males and focusing on helping them not only navigate but actually complete a college degree. Some of them had new programs like Tarrant County College has a program specifically focused on helping African-American males and Hispanic males not only enroll into Tarrant County but actually complete a degree in Tarrant County.

And there are other programs that are more established so what you see here is an institution across these educational platform focused on a collective vision of what can we do to help these young men. Next slide, please.

And so what does that look like? Well, we recognize that the issue focused on Hispanic males is something that is new to the educational (unintelligible) in a sense that there has been a lot of conversation about what's happened to African-American males but due to the demographic realities of our country,

we need to increase our collective awareness of this issue because the Hispanic student educational agenda is the national educational agenda.

The reality is the more Hispanic students are attending higher education in education systems more than ever, and so we have to make this a national education agenda issue. We need to create a sustained programs for these students who are at the most educational risk.

Victor said earlier that there are concerns about males in particular across all ethnic groups across all socio-economic status but in particular, Hispanic males are critically at need of having programs focused on their well-being. We also need to create a culture of evidence to support program and future educational policy development.

I think one of the biggest challenges that we face as we begin to explore this issue is to focus on how do we develop a culture of evidence not only across your individual institution's program but across consortium like we have here in the State of Texas. If you're going to inform educational policy, how are we doing that with the empirical evidence to support the positions that we take?

And then finally, we need to leverage our collective knowledge, resources and expertise at the local state and national levels and engage thought partners on this issue. We're very fortunate that we have many organizations private foundations like TG as well as the Greater Texas Foundation focused on being thought partners with us to address this issue. I encourage and urge you as participants to determine who are the thought partners that are in your communities to engage in this work. Last slide, please.

And so what you see here is a snapshot of what we're doing. In closing, our research agenda represents a community of scholars, practitioners, and

community leaders focused on plight of Hispanic males. We're committed to this work as a life-long endeavor to represent the many voices of Hispanic males who are not heard on this national platform.

We thank you and we look forward to working with the White House, the Department of Education and many others. Thank you very much.

Marco Davis: Thank you, gentlemen. Tremendous presentation. So now, (Regina), if you could come on and give folks instructions we'll now open the floor for Q&A.

Coordinator: Thank you, sir. We will now begin the question and answer session. If you would like to ask a question, please press star and then the number 1. Please unmute your phone and record your first name clearly when prompted. Your name is required to introduce the question. To withdraw the request, please press star 2. One moment, please, sir, for the first question.

Our first question, sir, comes from the line of (Bobby Williams). You may begin.

(Bobby Williams): Yes. Hi. I appreciate the presenter's information that we have just heard today. I was wondering how can I get a copy of the slides that were part of the webinar. I'm really interested in this topic and the information that was presented but there seems to be, I guess, there is a limit on how many people to see the slides over the webinar that was presented today so I was one of the unlucky ones that was not able to see the slides.

((Crosstalk))

(Bobby Williams): ...a copy of them.

Marco Davis: Thank you, (Bobby). So sorry about that. We didn't realize we'd reach capacity on our WebEx account but if you received a confirmation from having registered for the webinar, you should have had attached a PDF document which is actually the same slide that were presented and regardless if you didn't, just send an email to our office again and we'll make sure to send that PDF out to you and anyone listening who didn't get the slides, didn't get that attachment, just let us know and we'll send that back out to you and again, our email address is simply the one you use to RSVP for this webinar which is whieeh@ed.gov and it's the same information that was just presented on WebEx.

Victor Saenz: Marco, this is Victor. I'll also add -- (Bobby), I appreciate your comments and your interest -- if you go to the Project MALES Web site right on our home page, you can download the entire Power Point there. We uploaded it earlier today and it's Project MALES -- M-A-L-E-S.org. So projectmales.org. You can Google us, you know, find us on Facebook, Twitter, you name it.

You find us in all platforms but on the Web site -- and in fact, I'll encourage everybody on the call -- you'll find a whole host of resources there from our research work from our mentoring work and, of course, most importantly, these slides that we just presented.

Marco Davis: Great. If we could go on to the next question.

Coordinator: The next question comes from the line of (Luis Caldera). You may begin.

(Luis Caldera): Could you just give us, for example, with respect to the research and the insights that you've gained, one example of something that is a disparity or research finding, how the project then tries to address that research finding and whether there is an outcome that you can point to in terms of increased

success rates in a particular subject or - so tie it more, you know, more into the weeds of, "Okay, what are the strategies? How do they work? How do we know they're effective?"

Victor Saenz: Thank you, (Luis). This is Victor again. So one of the specific findings that has emerged about from our research work over the years is, you know, how these young men navigate their college pathways most effectively and efficiently and so as I mentioned briefly, obviously the former doesn't allow us to go too deep. I'll try to do the best I can but we definitely in our qualitative work have examined and spoken to hundreds of young men both here in Texas and Florida at different stages across their educational pathway and more often than not, the theme that emerged focused on how they were able to translate what they know about navigating college most effectively and efficiently as point towards a specific career path.

And I think in Texas, I know, you know, the state would then focus on college and career readiness sort of pathways now have been codified directly into state statutes and so you see many new sort of program's initiatives assessment, et cetera, built around that and so we took what we learned from the qualitative work and directly infuse it into our mentoring curriculum with the work - with our collaborations here with the XY-Zone Boys program and in particular, as part of that mentoring curriculum there is a strong emphasis on college readiness that kind of soft skills that student may need both soft and hard skills around time management, study skills, you name it, note taking skills.

But even more basic than that understanding how to navigate the complexities around financial aid or just financing college and so many of these young men in particular see college as such - potentially out of reach because of the

financial burden not recognizing the full set of strategies available to them to help finance that education.

So when they see the high cost and they translate that to an opportunity costs and then so many of these Latino males that we spoke to from working class backgrounds in particular are just so focused on, you know, being a provider, being responsible fulfilling those obligations to family and so they feel the constant pull of work and having to contribute financially to their family and college is not seen as necessarily at least not in a most efficient way to meet that kind of obligations.

So I think if we can educate our young men about, you know, not only the return on investment, if you will, of a college education but how they can be better served to help meet that obligation and sense of responsibility to family. That ultimately needs to be tied directly to a career pathway that make sense. So in the mentoring work that we do these young men and have been doing in the last few years, we're really focused on thinking about how a degree can facilitate that pathway towards career in meaningful ways through the kinds of experiences that our mentors provide them, the kind of exchanges that occur, the kind of interactions that we have throughout the year.

So those are - I mean to give you a tangible way, that's one of the ways. Another way that we found to translate our research findings was so many of our young men talk about strong female influence in their lives and whether it be a mother, an older sister, a cousin and the result of that particular finding, you know, we decided early on that we wanted to have both male and female mentors as part of Project MALES and sure enough, I mean our current cohort of 40 or so on the graduates at UT, it's about - it split about half and half.

And so that's a very direct, you know, result of what we've learned from talking to hundreds of young men both in Texas and Florida who told us more often than not how important it is that it was a strong female influence in their life that has continued to keep them sustained towards college and beyond.

(Luis Caldera): Thank you.

Luis Ponjuan: I want to go ahead and I had one more element to that that I think is also critical and I'll be remised if I don't mention this. In our research that we've done with the comparative study looking at Florida and Texas, we also found the other side of the equation and that is the awareness of educational administrators as well as educational practitioners who work with these young men of color.

And what we found is that while there's a lot of awareness and a lot of attention to African-American males, we found that it was less awareness or less understanding of the unique challenges that Hispanic male face in our educational system. When you think about the issues related to Hispanic males in particular, you can come to mind really quickly about the language barrier.

And so it just raises some additional questions about not only helping young men think about how to navigate and have the soft skills necessary to be successful but also require us to look at the other side of the equation and that is what do institutions particularly K12 and educational institutions are doing to meet the need of these young men so that they understand their unique challenges.

Too often, we try to use a monolithic term to understand these issues when in reality, there's some specific issues are germane to Latino and Hispanic males

that administratively need to become more aware of and that's one of the things that we found that there's a greater need for a research and there's a greater need for awareness of individuals to understand how Hispanic males are navigating the system.

So it's a two-prong approach. Not only do we need to help these young men understand the role and the importance of getting a college education but we also need to address institutions and practitioners and leaders to understand the unique needs of Hispanic males.

(Luis Caldera): That's very helpful. Thank you.

Marco Davis: Great. We've got time, I think, for one -- possibly two -- more questions. So let's go to the next one if we could.

Coordinator: Yes. The next question comes from the line of (Nestor Melendez). You may begin.

(Nestor Melendez): Yes. Thank you and this is great to be catching up with Dr. Ponjuan again. I got a chance to meet you at Black, Brown and College Bound last February. My question is and it's kind of piggy back from your last response, is it better to do a joint effort for both the Latino and black males or would we be better served to maybe do separate efforts that have crossroads with each other at certain points?

Victor Saenz: This is Victor -- I'll chime in. Great question, (Nestor), and one has is often post to us by our partners, this is one of the ways that this consortium community, this learning community that we're developing is coming to be so helpful because we're able to have this sort of important and sensitive conversations within the safe space of partners who are like-minded and

committed to the same mission around male student success and I think as with any issue around race and whatnot, I mean we have to approach it, one, honestly and transparently and with much sensitivity and awareness.

And what we have found among our partners within the consortium is that they have tried a variety of different strategies where they do for the lack of better way of saying it, segregate, you know, Latino male and African-American male but they also provide opportunities, for example, the Lone Star College in North Harris with their Brother to Brother program which is an offshoot of their sub programs, Student African-American Brotherhood.

They're able to bring both communities together because I think - and Luis pointed out - he said several times, you know, that the research literature on African-American men is much more developed, it's got a richer history and, you know, and unfortunately, there are simply not enough research on Latino males out there in education and it's coming at the worst possible time when we need it the most given the demographic urgency of our present and future time.

So how can we find ways to do that proactively? I think we look at models like Brother to Brother, like Tarrant County Colleges minority male mentoring program where they are indeed working with both populations and in fact in their case, they're doing cross-racial mentoring and there are certainly researchers out there that are doing more around those areas and I'll defer to that word but I think that as with any issue of this sensitive nature, you know, we have to be purposeful, thoughtful and just very creative in a way that we bring both communities together.

There are some common issues and the way that I've seen, for example, organizations like (SAB) and that (Tyron Bledsoe) who have had several

opportunities to meet with and coordinate with. You know, his conference, for example, they just have the big conference last month, brings both communities together and they were very intentional in the kind of opportunities and spaces they created recognizing the commonality of the experiences of so many of these young men especially those that come from urban core centers around the country but also respecting and validating the differences as they emerge.

And I think with any space like this, any mentoring program or bridge program or any other kind of strategy that any institution is thinking about establishing. It's important to come at this work in a healthy and transparent way and ultimately focus on male student success with (unintelligible) and I think that ties much more broadly into the national imperative that has emerged around Men of Color. In higher education, you see that obviously very much manifested in My Brother's Keeper Initiative and their strategy to focus on various communities of color.

Ultimately, I think that makes it even more - it just makes common sense to think about this issue in conjunction with other communities recognizing the commonality of experience but also respecting the opportunities where there are differences and validating those differences.

(Nestor Melendez): Thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you. The next question...

Marco Davis: (Regina), so we're going to try to take this last question but then we're going to move on to the second presentation. So if this last question could be brief, that would be great.

Coordinator: All right, sir. The next question comes from the line of (Rick Castaneda). Sir, you may begin.

(Rick Castaneda): Yes. My question has a lot - it has to do with how impressive this model is and the way you approach it in the State of Texas and in Florida. Is there a plan from the White House and from the My Brother's Keeper Initiative to replicate this model from state to state? We know the Latino demographics are drastically different from state to state and so the approach is and even the research behind it would need to have a different emphasis, a different plan.

Marco Davis: Great. Thanks, (Rick), and actually I think your question makes a perfect segue to our second presenter, Rafael Lopez. What I will say briefly directly to your question since I know about that is going to speak broadly about My Brother's Keeper but one of the things, one of the purposes of My Brother's Keeper is to, in fact, shed light on efforts like this so that more people are aware of it so that the programs themselves can attract more attention and more support so that perhaps, for example, in the private sector, folks could make investments and assist a program like this in being scaled up.

But let me turn it over to Rafael who can actually provide broader context about the My Brother's Keeper Initiative, what it's designed to do, what some of its limitations are and to help everybody get a better sense of how a program like Project MALES fit into the large universe that is the focus of My Brother's Keeper.

So with that, let me turn it over to the Senior Policy Advisor - a Senior Policy Advisor at the White House, Rafael Lopez. Rafael.

Rafael Lopez: Thank you, Marco. And thank you to the White House Initiatives . Your leadership and scheduling and making this call happen. And to Dr. Saenz and

Ponjuan, thank you for your trailblazing leadership in the Latino community. We appreciate all that you're doing both in the state of Texas and on behalf of the country, we really appreciate everything you do.

So for everyone on the call, you know, it's such a pleasure to join you virtually. Whether you are in the non-profit community or an academic or in business or philanthropy or a (unintelligible) based leader, we know how hard you work every single day on the ground to ensure that every single American has access to the most incredible opportunity in this country and we just thank you for all that you're doing. Your work does not go unnoticed. So with deep respect, we admire all that you do.

You know, I wanted to start by actually quoting the president from his remarks on February 27 of this year only because, you know, it's not too easy to paraphrase the president and his words are always so much more eloquent than our own. So I'm going to quote a piece of his remarks that began "It's an issue that goes to the very heart of why I run for president because if America stands for anything, it's stands for the idea of opportunity for everybody. The notion that no matter who you are or where you come from or the circumstances into which you are born, if you work hard, if you take responsibility, then you make it in this country.

But the plain fact is that there are some Americans who in aggregates are consistently doing worse in our society. Groups that have had the odd stacks against them in unique ways that require unique solutions, group who've seen fewer opportunities that have spanned generations and by almost every measure, the group that is facing some of the most severe challenges in the 21st century in this country are boys and young men of color."

And if you haven't had the opportunity to do so, I would strongly encourage you to visit whitehouse.gov/my-brother-keeper which is the direct page that has the president's remark not only were they deeply personal and moving but they were grounded and why this is a presidential priority and I wanted to speak to that in terms of one of the questions that Luis have asked earlier around empirical evidence and the reason why this is the presidential priority is because ultimately, the data makes clear that there is a disproportionate number of African-American and Latino young boys and men who face persistent gaps across multiple sectors and employment, educational outcomes, career skills.

And one of the ways in which you can look at this of what's happening early on in a young child's life, for instance, large disparities remain in reading proficiency. Again, this might not be a surprise for many of you but for those of you who do not know that 83% of African-American and the 81% of Latino children read below proficiency levels by the fourth grade that is simply unacceptable for every one of our communities and the country as a whole.

So this presidential priority framed by the words that I quoted from the president, framed in the empirical evidence that exist called us to this unique challenge and opportunity in this moment in time. I wanted to make sure that we all have some sort of grounding about the initiative at large. So as I mentioned on February 27, President Obama joined foundations, businesses, community leaders from across the country to launch My Brother's Keeper, a nationwide initiative to help every boy and young men of color who was willing to do the hard work to get ahead in this country.

And with that launch, kick off a federal interagency taskforce led by the US Department of Education and specifically Deputy Education Secretary Jim

Shelton, who's serving as executive a director of the taskforce and chaired by the President Obama's Cabinet Secretary, Broderick Johnson.

The taskforce is comprised of some 18 departments and agencies overall and was formed to lead this effort and specifically, the President asked that within 90 days, the taskforce comes back to the President with a set of recommendations on a couple of important areas all under the guise of improving the expected life outcomes for boys and young men of color by one of the following three areas.

One, making sure that we are driving database of specimens of what is and is not working in our communities and in a federal government tool kits surrounding this demographic, making sure we understand very clearly what is happening across the federal family.

Two, making sure that we're helping change the public narrative about and the perception of this demographic as Dr. Saenz and Ponjuan pointed out the number of young Latinos who desperately want to do well for their families, for the neighborhoods, for their community, for this country. They are plentiful and they simply want the help they need to move on with their lives and to fulfill their dreams and their great potential.

And finally, we want to make sure that we are increasing federal leadership and creating incentives for local officials, the community level, the state level, the private sector and the philanthropic communities to support efforts aimed at the goal of making sure that the outcomes for boys and men of color are improved.

There are three key deliverables that were outlined in the presidential memorandum which you can also download on the Web site that I mentioned

to you on whitehouse.gov. One that the taskforce come back with recommending specific critical indicators on life outcomes and well-being; two, that we identify evidence-based strategies and solutions to challenge (unintelligible) disproportionately by boys and young men of color; and three, that within those 90 days that I mentioned, that the taskforce provide the president with a report and it's progress.

And we're just about narrowing down to the end of the timeline, the end of May beginning of June will be when the taskforce offers it report to the president and the president will accept that report and will move forward from that point.

I also wanted to spend a little bit of time focusing on the five sort of major areas of a young boy and a young men of color's life that are the focus of My Brother's Keeper and wanted to point you again to the empirical data which exists very widely and publically at any number of factors.

One can only look at the US Census Bureau and do demographic analysis at the micro level. One can look at the Annie Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT Data Book or tools online or it's recently released Race for Results which talks about building a path to opportunity for all children and highlights the disproportionate impact that's happening to a children of color in this country.

So one of those five areas is the area of early learning and speaking about how important it is that parents and caretakers are (unintelligible) first and most important early teacher. We want to make sure that we are lifting up with working around making sure that parents and caretakers are actively ready and engaged to give their children a healthy start in life that the kids are ready in their school on day 1 whether it's helping make sure they have well-developed pre-reading skills, investment in their cognitive and emotional development.

Second area on strategic focus for the My Brother's Keeper Initiative is around K through 3 literacy. Again as I mentioned early during this call that we are making sure that our children are on track and at grade level and reading and for math by the third grade and the importance of investing in the social and emotional skills so critical that making sure our kids get to this point.

And again, it certainly (unintelligible) should repeat this (unintelligible) that 81% of Latino children read below proficiency level by the fourth grade. So we have massive (unintelligible) to make in this particular area.

The third focus area is the importance of making sure that our children are On Track to College and Career and specifically taking a closer look at school discipline as we've seen Attorney General Holder and Education Secretary Duncan have been leaders on this front recently talking about the importance of thinking about how we discipline our children in schools and (unintelligible) impact of those kinds of processes can have on our children's future.

So it's really critical to think about the importance of early college opportunities and prepping kids for college. The work that Dr. Saenz and Ponjuan are doing - is exactly focused on that making sure these young boys have access to an exposure to a world beyond their immediate environment and that they're dreaming bigger and better about their futures.

We want to make sure that we are removing negative obstacles in their way like (unintelligible) discipline processes which as many of you know in this call disproportionately impact Latino and African-American communities. We want to make sure that our kids when they're off track get back on track

whether it's through mentoring program or internships or job opportunities that make sure they are connected to people who are invested in their success and not invested in their failure. We want to make sure that we continue to increase the high school graduation rates.

The fourth area of focus for the initiative is around ladders to job and again linking this kind of work back to mentoring and the building of support network. As we all know, the way in which one gets a job isn't just opening up the newspaper and applying to a job. It's about networking and the development of those networks and social connections that are important to making sure doors of opportunity are open to all of our children.

We want to make sure that we have the right skill and job training opportunities like more apprenticeships, access to networks and opportunities that ultimately are young boys and our young men of color can work their way into middle class and beyond.

The fifth and final strategic focus area is around criminal justice and violent crime intervention -- I'm sorry --- interaction which is to say that we really want to make sure we are supporting our young boys and young men to make good choices and reduce negative interactions with the criminal justice system and reduce violence in our communities and make them as safe as possible and certainly make them safe from here on out.

As I mentioned earlier on the 90-day process that the president kick off this taskforce and launch My Brother's Keeper, we are in - the initiative is in the listening and planning mode which is why it's so important to actively engage your input particularly now and as I give you the information to continue following up with us.

The taskforce is knee-deep in taking a look at the data that I've mentioned taking a look at this processes and trying to figure out exactly what those indicators are going to be that will form a dashboards to track our progress over time and ultimately, we want to focus like a laser on that sort of cradle to career pipeline of 0 to 25 years of age and the life of young boys and men of color and think about the potential points of intervention where we know again by the data and by empirical evidence that intervening makes the most sense.

So, for example, thinking about early learning. We may focus on increasing the percentage of quality preschool and access of preschool taking a look at what are we doing as a nation to ensure they were increasing the percentage of Latino children who are entering school ready.

In the area of K through 3 literacy, so those are 5-9-year-old space making sure that we are increasing the percentage of students who are reading at grade level by third grade. In the area of On Track to College and Career and (unintelligible) making sure that we are reducing the percentage of our kids who are being suspended and expelled and we are keeping them within our family, within our school communities to make sure that they are getting the attention and the help they deserve and making sure that we are increasing the percentage of our community for taking AP classes and make sure that they're reaching their greatest potential.

In the fourth area around criminal justice and violent crime interaction, we want to make sure that we are reducing the arrest rates and reducing the percentage of victims of violent crime. And the fifth and final area to give an example again as a potential point of intervention is to think about those ladders to job and support networks.

Making sure that we are reducing the percentage of disconnected youth and as many of you on this call know, we know again by empirical evidence how important it is to make sure that our kids stay in school and are connected to meaningful interactions whether through at the school time activities, at a school time placements or a various kinds of ways that wrap around services for kids.

And again back to the data which I think was so eloquently framed by Dr. Saenz and Ponjuan, we know as a nation that having one or more of four early warning adequate indicators matters mentally in the future of young boys and men of color. Specifically, we know that if we are tracking kids and they are having poor attendance or they have failing grades in reading or mathematics or they have a failing mark in action and discipline that this falling behind early on in their lives creates a greater than 75% probability that that student will drop out of school within six years.

So knowing the data, knowing the empirical evidence, we know we can do better across the board. So (unintelligible), I wanted to make sure we gave you on behalf of the administration a sense of the importance of My Brother's Keeper as a presidential priority, framed it in the context of the president's words that he shared on February 27, (unintelligible) sort of overarching framework of the initiative and that fact that when this listening and planning mode and then make sure we have the opportunity for you to remain engaged.

So I will start by something that I think it was Dr. Ponjuan said about the need for our country to see more empirical data and studies related to Latino community and (unintelligible) I couldn't agree more personally. I do want to say, however, how important it is for everyone is in this call to not wait for an invitation to give us your best thinking, to please step up now whether it's today or tomorrow on the Web site and share with us what you are seeing out

in your communities, your best practices on the ground, your connections of network, your idea on how we can do this better as a nation.

And there's a couple of ways in which you can remain engaged. As I mentioned, you can visit whitehouse.gov/my-brother-keeper. There's a link there in an active form to enter your name and contact information so we can remain in contact with you (unintelligible) forward. You can also directly email us at mybrotherskeeper@who.eop.gov. Again, all one word mybrotherskeeper@who.eop.gov.

And if you have not received an invitation to submit anything prior to this conversation, consider yourself invited. We need your best ideas, your best thinking and your willingness to take a step forward with us. So thank you so much for allowing this opportunity to share some information with you and I'll turn it back over to Marco.

Marco Davis: Thank you so much, Rafael for that very important information that you shared. So at this point, let's open it up with the last few minutes we have here for Q&A again. So (Regina), if you could give folks - remind folks again how to get into queue and ask question.

Coordinator: To ask a question, they can go ahead, sir, and press star and then 1. It will be prompting them to record their name and to withdraw their request, they can press star and then 2. And we do have a question, sir, on queue right now and that question comes from the line of (Comera Guinet). You may begin.

(Comera Guinet): Hi. This question is actually for the previous presenter so I'm sorry about that.

Rafael Lopez: No problem. Thanks very much.

Coordinator: All right.

((Crosstalk))

Coordinator: Mr. Davis, would you like to go ahead and go over...

Marco Davis: Yes. Sorry. Yes. Let's go to the next question.

Coordinator: Next question comes from the line of (David Hernandez). Sir, you may begin.
Mr. (Hernandez).

(David Hernandez): Yes. Good afternoon, everybody. Actually, my question was for the previous presenters but actually, I do have a question for Mr. Lopez. Great information that you've shared regarding My Brother's Keeper and White House Initiative. You had mentioned sharing best practices. Could you kind of detail out - that out a little bit? We have a program that we run through regional 1 education service here in South Texas called (unintelligible) that we would definitely like to highlight and share out with other programs across the country.

So if you could kind of detail and share how we can go about doing that.

Rafael Lopez: Sure. I'll give you what we know so far. As I've mentioned, we're in a listening and planning mode and part of that is building the internal infrastructure and architecture to capture this kind of things. The quickest thing you can do is visit the Web site that I mentioned and on there is a form that ask for your name, email address and (unintelligible) share your story. It will be fantastic for you to share what are you working on.

So what is the commitment that you're going to make in South Texas to make this work continue to move forward and I'm giving (unintelligible) sharing links with us and contacts about the work that you're doing. The first and quickest thing everyone can do.

Secondly, once we get past the 90 days, we will look towards making sure that there are some way to share evidence-based practices and best practices across the country so those who were interested in learning from them and making sure that others can connect with you so there'll be multiple opportunities for you to do that, the quickest of which is signing on in the Web site this afternoon and sharing your contact information and the work that you're doing there.

Victor Saenz: (David), this is Victor. I'm familiar with (unintelligible), I'm from South Texas myself. I think that's a creative example of how you have a variety of community and school partners coming together focus on male student success down the (unintelligible) Valley. In this case, also partnering what I know one of the NBA D-Leagues team down there.

So I like the model. Here's what I would say, Rafael, to your point about research informed and the use of the word best practice and maybe - I'm sure there are lot of practitioners on the line. I think we got to be very careful and thoughtful in how we think about "best practice" even in the work with Project MALES I often described as the promising practices because it is still evolving and as because you have a whole infrastructure of research and evaluation behind it.

And while there is an urgent need at the moment in real time for best practices, I think because this work for the most part and I mentioned a few programs that I know of nationally and there are certainly many more out

there, it's very critical that we raise our capacity to be able to purposely evaluate and constantly improve that feedback loop of these programs and then be able to derive strategies that might be translatable to other context and that always may not be the case.

And so as a researcher, I'm here - that and just to suggest that all of us need to raise our game around how we work towards evaluating and improving our efforts and even in Project MALES case, as much as I - you know, we're very passionate about it. We're constantly trying to improve what we're doing and learning from our partners CIS and the ISD and you name it but that idea of best practice I mean really needs to be taken very seriously. So many - the stakes are so high around this issue.

And as you can see, so many folks behind this issue including the White House now President Obama and we're so appreciative of that of the opportunity to shed light on the need for data driven, research informed best practices and understanding exactly what that means and how that can ultimately be translated and shared with others.

Marco Davis: Thank you so much, Victor. That's an absolutely excellent point for practitioners to keep in mind. We've got just a couple of minutes left for questions so I do want to get back to the queue. So (Regina), if you could let us know the next question.

Coordinator: Yes, sir. The next question comes from the line of Mr. (Juan Alcala). Sir, you may proceed.

(Juan Alcala): Hi. Good afternoon. I too had a question for the first group of presenters. So I apologize as well.

Marco Davis: No problem. Sorry. It seems we had a lot of folks lined up in the queue when the first session timed out but so let's go on to the next one, (Regina).

Coordinator: The next one comes from the line of (Daniel Silva). You may proceed.

(Daniel Silva): Yes. Thank you and again, I really appreciate all of the presentations. Some of my question was answered already but I really like to hear how the business community is being engaged or to what degree, what role they're playing currently.

Rafael Lopez: Sure. Happy to talk about that. So we've actually, in the - the initiative was launched by the president (unintelligible) a second external process of being led by the private sector by philanthropy and business leaders who joined the president on February 27 and there's a group of founding foundations who may have made an initial commitments financially as well as the commitment to rally additional private sector support.

So the president was very clear on that day that this cannot be done by government alone. It needs to be done across sectors, be actively engaged and have with him on that day as we were there in the east room, leaders from across sectors, private sector fortune 100, 500 companies who are in the room of big (unintelligible) organizations (unintelligible) organization and I would encourage you to go to again the whitehouse.gov Web site. It has a link to an external group of foundations.

Many of them, some of the nation's largest as well as some other smaller foundations who are taking the lead on helping frame up the private sector involvement and you can get to that link by visiting our whitehouse.gov Web site.

(Daniel Silva): Thank you.

Marco Davis: Great. Let's go on the next question.

Coordinator: The next question comes from the line of (Chris Alvarado). Sir, you may begin.

(Chris Alvarado): Good afternoon. Actually, my question was for the first presenters. Thank you.

Rafael Lopez: (Unintelligible) conference call with the first presenters.

Marco Davis: So one thing - by the way, I do want to mention to folks since there were a lot of questions in the queue that we didn't get a chance to get answer is you might notice in the slides and in the attachment that you received, Dr. Saenz and Dr. Ponjuan's contact info was provided so if you have specific questions that can help you in your work, feel free to reach out to them directly and ask the question and similarly, if you want a question that you think might be of benefit for the broader group, feel free to email us at our email address and we'll then be able to share.

If the answer could provide information of use to everyone, we can then coordinate through with Dr. Saenz and Dr. Ponjuan the answers so that we share that with everyone who registered for the call. So let's see if we have another question in the queue still before we wrap up for the day.

Coordinator: Yes, sir. We do have one. It will be coming from the line of (Cynthia Orillana). Ma'am, you may begin.

(Cynthia Orillana): Hi. Again, my name is (Cynthia). I actually had an opportunity to meet Dr. Saenz (unintelligible) last year. I'm from Massachusetts Department of Higher Education and I had an opportunity to go visit the UT Austin Texas Male Mentoring sort of conference that we've held last year and have been in conversation with some other stuff over the year.

My question is for Rafael Lopez. In light of the work that Dr. Saenz is doing in Texas and the consortium piece. I think for me that's been the most interesting takeaway. Being in Massachusetts, I'm working as I said before in a Department of Higher Education which is a state agency. We're trying to figure out how as a state we can take a real stake in this work and put some actual work - do some actual work around organizing different stakeholders across the state, different sort of cross-sector, partners across the state, very much in the same spirit of what Texas is doing around the consortium.

And so I'm wondering if My Brother's Keeper at some point will have some sort of call to action or some sort of guide as to how states as a whole can take leadership on this issue and I see that also because there's a lot of programs and I heard that there's a lot of people who are running programs on the line but as someone who's working in the system's office, you know, we know that there are several different programs that are working in their own silos across the state and we're trying to figure out how do we make this a systemic organized statewide effort.

And so I'm wondering if there's any guidance or any thoughts on how we can get states as a whole to take on that commitment.

Rafael Lopez: Thank you for your question. So first off, I would encourage you to connect with our friends in Texas and figure out what Texas and Massachusetts could do already on their own, right. That's number 1.

Number 2, as I mentioned, the initiative is still in listening and planning mode so we have not released specifically how that will take place but I'll point to things that are already happening that would sort of frame-up a ways in which you could move forward.

So I mentioned, the Attorney General Eric Holder and Education Secretary Arne Duncan release information that talks about school discipline and the ways in which states and school district could take actions sort of executive actions to make sure that we are approaching change from a systemic issue in terms of the institutions that are run so one can imagine that those are the kinds of guidance issues that could be used and are potential sources of both framing and inspiration for state to take on themselves.

Third point is the importance of the sort of cross-state, cross-governmental conversations that all can lead up to sort of what are been called ten zone actions. The president has talked a lot about since the State of Union speech the importance of him picking up his - using the pen and a phone to take executive actions. So if you have concrete actionable executive actions that you recommend based on your work in Massachusetts, please don't be shy about forwarding those to us both at the email address I gave as well as through the whitehouse.gov Web site link that I shared with you and the more kinds of actionable executive actions that are out there that we would love to see them.

Please, feel free to submit them.

Luis Ponjuan: Can I add another comment to that last question, please? This is Luis Ponjuan from Texas A&M University.

Coordinator: Yes, sir.

Marco Davis: Go ahead, Luis.

Luis Ponjuan: Yes. I want to thank you for that question because I think that's one of the things that a lot of folks don't understand when we talk about the State of Texas, people think, well, the State of Texas is predominantly Hispanic and we don't need to worry about that when in reality, states like Massachusetts, Illinois are becoming one of the fastest growing sectors or the fastest growing states dealing with this issue.

And I would strongly recommend that we think about creating cross-state collaborations because when you think about how we address this issue, it requires us to have some partnership and I can't stress to you enough the importance of collaboration.

As Marco had mentioned and as well as others have mentioned, this idea of connecting the folks who are on the ground floor doing this and folks at the Texas on higher education coordinating board as well as the flagship institutions in the State of Texas are focused and willing to work with other states addressing this issue. I commend the State of Massachusetts to address this issue but the State of Massachusetts is one of many.

The reality is 52 million of United States - 52 million Hispanics make up the United States population. And so this is an issue that's just not stationed just in the State of Texas but goes well beyond into these other states. So I think it's important to do like I said earlier this collective capacity of focus on this issue. So I strongly recommend that folks who represent other states get together with folks like us to talk about ways to leverage our collective expertise. Thank you very much.

Marco Davis: Great. I think we got time for one last question, operator.

Coordinator: Yes. The next question comes from the line of (Juan Arsola). Sir, you may begin.

(Juan Arsola): Actually, my question was for the first presenters. Thank you.

Marco Davis: All right. Let's try it one more. Thank you.

Coordinator: Next question comes from the line of Mr. (Nestor Melendez). Sir, you may begin.

(Nestor Melendez): Yes. Thank you. I think it might be a research question but the narrative, I think, for so many of our Latino brethren is that we are first generation college students and so the environment is alien to us to some degree and I was wondering if there's any credence or friction behind the idea that those of us that may have come from families that have a history of college are more successful than those of us who are the first generation and/or first representative going into that environment.

Rafael Lopez: Is this question for me or for the research?

(Nestor Melendez): I think it's - it could be for any of the presenters but it's just something that occurred to me is part of this conversation that I definitely am intrigued and was wondering if there's any of the research or the initiatives focus on divergent paths for how we get to the institution of higher education.

Rafael Lopez: So let me speak - doctors, do you want to speak to it first and I can comment on...

((Crosstalk))

Luis Ponjuan: Yes. I'll give a brief response to that. We - Victor and I have closely looked at Latino males and one of the things that you will soon realize is the intersection or the intersectionality of Latinos and first generation and what you're pointing out is a stark reality of what we're dealing with and the fact that as a first generation college student myself, that's something that I've come to accept and understand that the pathways of folks who are first generation students as well as first generation and Hispanic is a very what I would consider start stop not continuous and more critically a very challenging pathway as it is.

So what you're pointing out is this reality that there is not only the challenge of understanding what it means to be Hispanic male but also adds a level of complexity of doing this as a first generation student and so we are acutely aware of that issue and our work is definitely looking into that dynamic and that - the dynamic of that interaction term and so it just raises additional questions about being mindful of the unique challenges that both of those characteristics portray for these young men.

Marco Davis: Rafael, do you have anything to add?

Rafael Lopez: No. I think that that's great. I just want - what I wanted to sort of - my response was that, you know, (unintelligible) look at the data, what does the data tell us and I think there's a, you know, different stories depending on where you are in this country. There are new integrated gateways that have emerged across the country. So states like Florida and New York, Texas, California, others while they continue to be gateways for new community, there are many other (unintelligible) demographic just in the country.

We're finding, you know, explosive growth in terms of Latino population, North Carolina, for example and in Georgia and other area. So our sense is that some of the (unintelligible) sort of focus area that I outlined, there will be many paths to including many kinds of communities in terms of making sure that one, they have the access to the opportunities to do well; and two, that they are connected to program and services that these children need to succeed again myself as doctor just said I am a first generation student here who's the first in his family to graduate from high school, college and graduate school.

And that particular journey and narrative is not unique just to my family but to many immigrant communities. And I also think that there are (unintelligible) Latino community, there are families who have been in this country for hundreds and hundreds of years of some would argue thousand generations who have their unique narrative about how they are or have become American and what is critical is to make sure that whether you are new to this country and are first generation born or have been here for multiple generations, that we work together to figure out how best to provide for the Latino community and everyone else in this country, ladders of opportunities to succeed.

Ladders of opportunities to reach the middle class and beyond and that is something the president cares deeply about.

Marco Davis: Great. Thank you so much, Rafael, for sharing that. I think that's a good point that helps provide sort of the larger frame and context in which we're all I think doing this work.

So I am mindful of the time we have gone over our typical allotted time. We've also have a larger than normal turn-out so I took the liberty of a few

extra minutes but I know that folks' time is valuable so at this point, we're going to wrap up the webinar.

We'd like to thank everyone who joined us today for this important conversation. We also most importantly want to thank all the folks who are doing the work out in communities throughout the nation on this and other important topics for the Latino community.

I want to remind you that our contact info and Dr. Saenz's and Dr. Ponjuan's contact info were on the slides in that attachments. If you did not get the slides, please send an email to us and we will send that attachment back out to you in PDF form and look forward to having another dialogue with folks next month in our next webinar. Look out for that for the topic and the date in time coming up soon.

With that, thank you to our presenters, to Rafael, to Luis and to Victor. We really appreciate your time and everyone, please, have a great day. Thank you.

Man: Thank you very much.

Man: Thank you.

Coordinator: That concludes today's conference. Thank you for participating. You may now disconnect.

END