

# Better Educating Young Men Of Color

by Dr. John Lee

(NAPSA)—A new national initiative by the College Board sheds light on the educational achievements of the students at greatest risk in the current economy— young men of color. A recent study by the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center finds that America continues to fall behind in the college completion race. This latest study captures student voices, explores research findings and offers ways to improve the education crisis facing young men of color.

## The Problem

Only 26 percent of African Americans, 18 percent of Hispanic Americans and 24 percent of Native Americans and Pacific Islanders have at least an associate degree. If current demographic and educational trends continue, the overall education level of the American workforce will decline for the first time in our nation's history.

## Looking For Answers

The College Board's national initiative recognizes that improving educational opportunities for minority male students is essential to a thriving and globally competitive economy.

"The Educational Experience of Young Men of Color" offers the following recommendations:

### For High School Students

- Achievement is measured by standardized tests, grades and placement in gifted or special education programs. Mentoring and educational support programs need to be encouraged at the state and district level. As a group, African-American, Hispanic and Native American students are overrepresented in special education, demonstrate lower academic achievement and have higher grade repetition. Asian-Americans and Pacific Islander students, on the other hand, struggle with the "model minority myth" that they are naturally academically gifted.



Courtesy of the College Board. Photograph copyrighted by George Lange.

**Three important factors are needed to get young men to enter and finish college: achievement, persistence and support.**

- Factors affecting persistence such as absenteeism, grade retention, suspension, expulsion and dropout rates must be tackled.

- Building webs of support, which include greater teacher accountability and counselor engagement, and parental and community involvement, is necessary.

### For Postsecondary Students

- Strengthening achievement: African-American students lack participation in college-preparatory courses and may be discouraged from attending college. Native American students often have no access to a core curriculum.

- Addressing the life pressures that decrease persistence: Asian-American and Pacific Islander students tend to face mental health issues and pressure to succeed. Hispanic students, meanwhile, are more likely to be academically underprepared and often have to deal with family obligations.

- Support can include increased community, business and school partnerships to provide mentoring and education reform, such as improved teacher education programs that provide professional development and cultural and gender-responsive training.

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