

## **Beyond Insanity: Creating All Male Classrooms and Schools as a Policy Option in the Portfolio of Local School Districts**

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### **Abstract**

Over thousands of years the brain has evolved. Our ability to change its structure is quite limited. What we can do is change the way we work with the brain and appeal to it. These notions are the building blocks for this paper.

Three strands of intellectual work (neuroscience to include social intelligence, pedagogy, and environment/culture) are explored. Their relationship with each other is considered. The objective is to find a path with a higher probability of closing the fiercely persistent gender gap in educational performance especially for the performance of young men of color.

Instruction informed by the gender findings emerging from neuroscience to include social intelligence is a path forward likely to produce better best practices and educational interventions. The environment/culture strand aligned with better best educational practices will produce an intervention that works thus yielding a performance pay off for boys and girls. New male schools along with new ways of working with the parents of those who populate these schools and new ways of engaging the community can produce enduring performance success.

Educational interventions that work will aid in shrinking the persistent performance gap. This should insure that every child has a chance to wisely invest every day so that he or she can participate in the emerging flat world as an option.

### **I. Introduction**

#### **A. The Issue**

Albert Einstein observed that it is insanity to believe that you can travel the same path and get a different result. The simple truth is that American public schools work less well for males in general and are an abysmal disaster for young men of color (YMC).<sup>1</sup> Consider these observations drawn from U.S. National data<sup>2</sup>:

- Black children, especially males, are consistently less involved in home literacy activities.
- One out of three Black males will go to jail by the time they are thirty-five.
- Three out of four Black children grow up in single parent, principally female-headed households.
- In 2000, seven out of ten Black and Latino students attended predominately minority schools.
- More than six out of ten Black and Hispanic students attend predominately low-income schools.
- Three out of four Black males do not read on grade level in grade four.

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<sup>1</sup> Young Men of Color (YMC) for this paper refers to the 25 million males under eighteen who are of African American, Latino, African, and Caribbean decent. The statistical abstract of the United States:2002. 122<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Washington DC.

<sup>2</sup> The fact that black students lag behind their white counterparts was first established systematically, in the Coleman report (Coleman et al 1966) and has been the case every year thereafter. The statistical abstract of the United States: 2002. 122<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Washington, DC to track the performance of YMC's on a range of educational activity.

- In 1980, one out of four the American population, under the age of 20, was children of color. In 2006, America's population of children of color under 20 was more than four out of ten.

The last bullet is instructive. With the size of the population that public schools have failed to develop rising (Jonathan Tilove, "America's Conflicted About Diversity's Value", *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, July 8, 2007, p B-3) and likely to continue rising in the future, why would we want to continue the schooling insanity of doing what we have been doing given the outcomes. Thomas Friedman (See Box 1) (May 23, 2007) describes the upstream outcomes that result from the downstream dithering.

### Box 1

As the first Rensselaer graduates came to the stage, all of them doctoral students in biotechnology, computing, physics, engineering, and chemistry, it seemed as though they were all going to be foreign born. The last one called saved the day. If we cannot produce enough of our own children to compete at this level, we need to make sure we can import someone else's. Otherwise, we will not maintain our standing in the world nor our standard of living at home. Further, in an age when everyone increasingly has the same innovation tools, the key differentiator is human talent.

There is a huge disconnect, as Friedman, Bill Gates and others see it, between what is being produced and what is needed. Hence Friedman argues we should get talent from wherever we can if we cannot produce it.

At the state and local level where education is delivered the consternation mirrors Friedman's. The state and local financial investment in educational opportunity is huge.

In Georgia for example, HOPE Scholarship retention, especially for males, is a disaster<sup>3</sup>. This represents loss opportunities; opportunities needed to unravel the Box 1 story. In Prince George's (PG) County Schools in Maryland, another example, the anomaly is confounding. Prince George's is a principally Black and an economically prosperous county much like its neighbor Montgomery County. Its educational performance though is more akin to the performance of the Baltimore City schools instead of the performance of neighboring Montgomery County Schools. Peeling the onion for a more focused look at Prince George's yields the following information<sup>4</sup>:

- In 2005, only 1,299 males from a pool of 32,000 eligible in the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades sat for advanced placement examinations.
- Black males garnered six out of ten suspensions in school year 2004–05.
- African American males were more likely than other population segments to be placed in special education.
- African American males made up only 8.5% (8,523) of Maryland's college population in 2004–05.
- Of this number, only one-third (2,812) ultimately graduated college.

The upstream impact on schooling performance in PG County and the subsequent college going behavior of Black males across Maryland is likely traceable to the downstream results

<sup>3</sup> [www.vinsoninstitute.org/hope/030918cornwell.pdf](http://www.vinsoninstitute.org/hope/030918cornwell.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Maryland Higher Education Commission



Educational interventions that work are the key idea here. Such interventions yield positive pay offs throughout the system. The other interesting insight is a transcendent one. These scholars were searching for better health outcomes and discovered the optimal health resolution was found outside of the health equation. This insight suggests that issues and problems cut across boundaries. Looking for solutions inside the boundaries that generate the problem(s) may be a bridge to nowhere.

What are the insights then of the Muennig/Woolf work? Education interventions that do not work generate all the downsides forecasted. Those most grievously impacted by the downsides given the data cited here are likely to be males especially young men of color and the women with whom they interact.<sup>6</sup> Educational underperformance creates a domino effect that occasions the rise of an interrelated set of negative outcomes for males and females. In fact, these negative outcomes are documentable. (Pierre, 2007) reports that 2,000 prisoners return to DC each year mostly men who are undereducated. In the DC census tracts with the highest concentration of these offenders unemployment rates are up to 35%. For those who need drug treatment, and most do, the price tag for one person per year is more than \$17,000.

Education interventions that work are key to new educational paths for males, especially young males of color. David Brooks (See Box 2) (May 2007) illuminates how organizations that house these new interventions might be built.

**Box 2**

Due to organizational and technological innovations guerilla insurgencies are increasingly able to take on and disrupt nation states. Modern groups in Iraq are open-source, small-decentralized conglomerations that are quasi independent. The insurgents are a swarm of disparate units that share information, learn from each other's experiments, and respond quickly to environmental signals. Their objective as noted is disruption not takeover. As a result, systems like governments feel stress but no threat; therefore, they do not mobilize appropriately for success and do things that are frequently counterproductive on their way to becoming immobilized, marginalized, and ossified thus becoming easy targets for the insurgents.

Karin Chenoweth in "Its Being Done" describes successful school organizations in terms similar to Brooks' description of how successful insurgent organizations operate<sup>7</sup>. Schools systems operate much like the governments as described by Brooks. Hence schools are easy targets for students to disrupt and students oblige by disrupting schools regularly. Key words from the insight analysis work are; educational interventions that work embedded in school organizations that are, new, smart, tough, nimble, learning, and responsive.

<sup>6</sup> Wahida Clark, *Every Thug Needs a Lady*, 27, 76, 134; *Thugs and the Women Who Love Them*, 3-6, 226-227; T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Pimps Up, Ho's Down: Hip Hop's Hold on Young Black Women*, 1-4.

<sup>7</sup> Karin Chenoweth *Its Being Done*, 213-227

## **II. A New Option: The Single Gender Male Academy**

### ***A. An Overview***

The remainder of this paper considers how these new, smaller, tough, more nimble learning and responsive male schools might be put together so as to better mesh content and context to produce an educational intervention that works. Learning from three literatures, referred to as strands, must be packaged in these intentional local enterprises aimed at males especially males of color.

1. Brain-based learning to include social intelligence is the first strand.<sup>8</sup> What does this literature tell us about the brain and how it works for males; how it works for females; and the implications of these workings for school organization and pedagogy.
2. Pedagogy, the art and science of teaching and learning, is strand two. Pedagogy must be tightly linked to and informed by brain-based research findings. The interconnections should guide and inform any conversations about who delivers, how they deliver and what gets delivered, through which school curriculum design or mix of designs. These interconnections should inform how time is organized and what gets allocated in what time arrangements to produce an integrated set of best educational practices.
3. Culture and Environment is the third strand. It drives and sets the context and support infrastructure for the educational work that flows from the built interrelationships of strands one and two that form the content. It frames what is done and how it is communicated. If left unattended it has the potential to undermine the possibility to build interventions that work. Consider a few environmental forces over which schools have no control yet are forces to which schools must respond: (1) welfare reform;(2) two-wage earner households; (3) 75% of African-American children situated in single female headed households; (4) the stress of Iraq on families including children now and subsequently; (5) a shortfall in state and local revenue; (6) the flattening of the world and (7) a federal government obsessed with accountability through testing rather than having an obsession for how social capital is distributed.(8) work/life imbalances.

These environmental forces cannot be ignored in building successful school interventions that work. They and the culture shape the social context in which the school content is embedded. These contextual forces can undermine and create stress and conflict. Stress and conflict unmanaged drives learning down.

### ***B. Blending Brain--Based Findings and Pedagogy***

More and more brain-based evidence seems to suggest that gender does matter in educating students. In fact, in their quiet moments principals will admit that females especially are saviors in the culture of continuous testing. Equally they know that male performance has been in decline and they have been drifting yet it has been camouflaged by female performance<sup>9</sup>.

Reversing the decline and drift in male performance, while trying to understand the reasons, has tended to focus the search and conversation on the difficult environmental/cultural

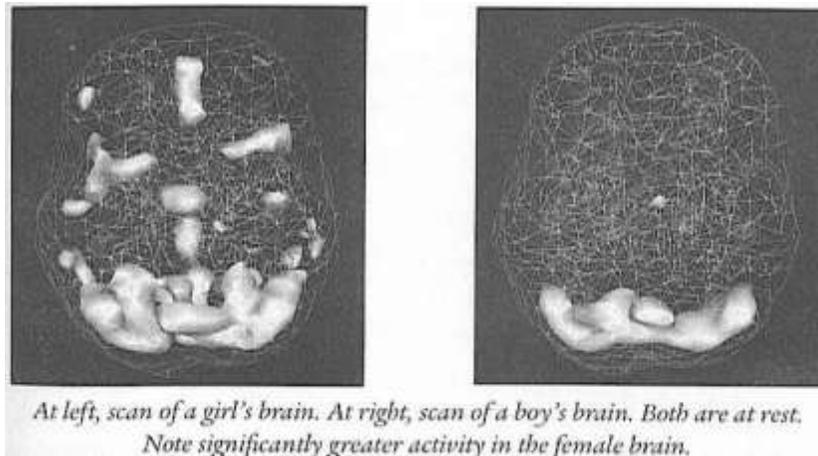
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<sup>8</sup> Michael Gurian, *Nurture the Nature*, 53-62

<sup>9</sup> Leonard Sax, *Boys Adrift* , 4-5, 8-9

strand.<sup>10</sup> Amen, Sax, Gurian Goleman and others have directed focus to the brain.<sup>11</sup> These writers and researchers argue that brain-based research can inform and must be considered in any conversation about declining male performance and what to do about it. More importantly, this path is likely to produce early necessary wins on a long, very long road to educational interventions that work. Figure 2 presents the male and female brain at rest.

**Figure 2**



Source: Gurian, M., *The Minds of Males*

These Positronic Emissions Tomography (PET) scans raise questions. Who benefits in the prevailing classroom organizational arrangement? Who benefits from the prevailing existing time arrangements and school academic calendar?<sup>12</sup> Who benefits from a narrowing and winnowing of the curriculum? The scans suggest that the scales unintentionally tilt toward females.

Let us consider block scheduling as a best practice to facilitate learning. The brain research suggests that females on average are better at multitasking.<sup>13</sup> If teachers use the time block to build multitasking environments then a good practice might become a bad practice for males. There is no issue with the idea of time on task. The issue is how the time is arranged to facilitate the learning of both males and females.

Continuing, schools for the most part are organized as a sitting, reading, talking, listening, and responding (SRTL) experience. From brain based findings we know male's brains function best when they are engaged in point, counterpoint, and competition.<sup>14</sup> Figure II suggests that it is perhaps easy for a male's brain to fall asleep during an SRTL experience

<sup>10</sup> James Coleman *Equality of Educational Opportunity* ; Roland Fryer *Acting White*, 10

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Amen *Making a Good Brain Great*, 4-7; Daniel Goleman, *Social Intelligence*, 3-10 , Michael Gurian, *Nurture the Nature*, 37-38; Leonard Sax, *Why Gender Matters*, 9 223-224

<sup>12</sup> One of the authors served on an urban school board for eight years. He does not recall one conversation on or off-line on brain functioning as it relates to the transportation or the academic calendar and clock arrangements.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Gurian and Kathy Stevens, *The Minds of Boys*, 48

<sup>14</sup> Michael Gurian and Kathy Stevens, *The Minds of Boys*, 48

even if his eyes are open. A student of one of the authors says as much when he exclaims, “I am not dumb. I just can’t stand that lady’s talking and talking and talking.”<sup>15</sup> Continuous talking in this case shuts the male’s brain down.<sup>16</sup>

Females on the other hand enjoy the SRTLRL experience. Mothers have long advised them to go somewhere; sit down and read. They have multiple language centers in the brain. Males do not<sup>17</sup>. In an SRTLRL environment, female’s ability at word production gives them a clear advantage. The SRTLRL experience must be reviewed in terms of its applicability as the central way to organize for male learning. This reconsideration can be easily done in a single gender environment along with more appropriate brain based clock and calendar considerations. Have you been to a co-ed high school graduation lately? Who are the Valedictorians? Who are wearing the cords?

The answer to the last two questions raises another; where are the males? The short answer is they are in special education. Frequently observed male behaviors do not comport well with SRTLRL: aggressiveness, being fidgety, disturbing their neighbor, speaking out of turn, challenging the teacher, tapping their pencils, falling asleep in class among others. When males repeatedly display these behaviors, special education is the school’s invitational assignment for the male.

Early brain-based findings suggest that the placement decision for any child, male or female, should be guided by neuroscience knowledge gleaned from a PET scan.<sup>18</sup> If PET scans become standard practice, a significant number of males are likely to be repatriated by the PET scan process to the school main stream and probably off of Ritalin or on a medically guided Ritalin regimen. Since male energy is different returning males and those males who avoided being invited to Special Education in the first place, would require a new organization, one that accommodates their energy. We have blended a few brain-based findings with best educational practices (pedagogy) as illustrative of the possible. There is an existing best practice that needs special elaboration. - The Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

It is an important application given the brain-based findings that suggest males are more fragile than heretofore believed and they need direction<sup>19</sup>. Moreover all of the brain-based literature confirms that males lag females in maturation. Extending an existing application, supported by these neuroscience insights is a smart developmental step. The better news is that it does not necessarily require an all male environment to exploit its usefulness. It is being done at Centennial Elementary School according to Karin Chenoweth.<sup>20</sup> Prince George’s uses the ILP as well. Visit its website.<sup>21</sup>

### ***C. The Individual Learning Plan: Making Connections, Giving Males Purpose***

In America, school systems and their staffs are accustomed to implementing special plans for special needs students. Individual Education Plans (IEP’s) and 504 Plans for challenged students are widely used applications. The single gender male academy should consider the use of the ILP. The ILP will utilize the Yale Child Study Center’s Developmental Pathways work to

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<sup>15</sup> Koby, a tenth grade student, Parksdale High School, PG County Schools

<sup>16</sup> Leonard Sax, *Why Gender Matters*, 94-95

<sup>17</sup> Michael Gurian and Kathy Stevens, *The Minds of Boys*, 48

<sup>18</sup> David Amen, *Making A Good Brain Great*, 19

<sup>19</sup> Michael Gurian and Kathy Stevens, *The Mind of Boys*, 216

<sup>20</sup> Karin Chenoweth, *Its Being Done*, 92

<sup>21</sup> [www.PGCPS.org](http://www.PGCPS.org)

determine tasks and goals for each male so as to facilitate a structured pathway to his preferred outcome.<sup>22</sup> This is more than a subject tracking and performance exercise. It is an education/guidance bargaining tool designed to facilitate successful learning for each male.

An age appropriate ILP will be the student's map to his chosen career and life path. It will help males identify the roads and paths to invest in as they seek to attain their preferred outcomes. It will be one part of the apparatus that gives purpose to a male's life. The brain-based finding is that males tend not to learn as well when sitting still.<sup>23</sup> If sitting still is required and a male cannot relate the learning experience to a future goal, a brain at rest as revealed by the male PET scan in Figure 2 is likely to occur or worse classroom disruption. Conversely, males become excited and will process the material to be learned, even in the torturous SRTLRL environment, if they can see a relationship in what they are doing and where they want to be. The ILP is the instrument designed to help connect the dots to ferret out those critical relationships. What is the evidence that this might work?

Consider the schoolboy athlete. All high schools across Georgia and in most places like PG County for example require that student athletes have a 2.0 grade point average and no failing grades to participate in athletics. Males who do sports manage to endure the SRTLRL environment and comply with all applicable academic rules. Further, many male athletes seem to tolerate the "SRTLRL" environment. They may not learn much, but they learn enough. They successfully complete their core courses. They meet the SAT benchmark. They gain approval from the NCAA Clearinghouse. This is the pattern especially for football players who know they must go to college to have a chance to go to professional football. There is a connection and they do what they need to do.

What is the implication? If the unique needs of "normal" males can be identified through the ILP process their academic team can help them learn how to integrate these needs so that the boys grow, develop and flourish. These plans will establish boundaries. Students want boundaries.<sup>24</sup> If everyone is on board with the behaviors and academic performance boundaries embedded in the plan, students who see the connection and the end state will probably choose to make the social capital investments needed to reach their goals. T.D. Jakes would describe the ILP and the social capital investments it encourages as tools that allow, in this case, male students, to position and reposition themselves.<sup>25</sup>

The final section directs attention to the perplexing third strand.

#### ***D. The Village: The Contextual Support For Schooling***

How do humans think, sense and do what they do beyond their hard wiring? The short answer is they are programmed. The starting point is a set of learned beliefs and values that prescribe behavior. Table 1 is an instructive, non-comprehensive snapshot. It attempts to capture a set of values and beliefs that prescribe behavior. Each package and its corresponding playbook that guides behavior in the community are in the oral tradition.

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<sup>22</sup> James Comer, *Child by Child*, 300

<sup>23</sup> Michael Gurian and Kathy Stevens, *The Mind of Boys*, 53

<sup>24</sup> Katy Ridnour, *Managing Your Classroom with Heart: A Guide for Nurturing Adolescent Learners*, 4.

<sup>25</sup> T.D. Jakes, *Reposition Yourself: Living Without Limits*, 3

**Table 1<sup>26</sup>**

**Packaging the Village Messages**

Message Package I	Message Package II
Respect for women	Little or no respect for women
Pay as you go (remember the layaway)	Trade tomorrow for today. Live in the present
Aspiring up, moving up	Living large, keeping it real.
School Matters	Test Matter
Raised by the extended family	Raised early by myself
Sense of Connectedness	Sense of Disconnectedness
Right and Wrong Absolutes	Situational Right
Buy America	Buy the World
Image	
Seen Not Heard	Heard and Seen
Elder Credibility	Street Credibility
	Just Do It
	Hyper Masculinity
	Whatever

How each package is programmed into the young is described by David Brooks (June 12, 2007), see Box 3,

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<sup>26</sup> T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Pimps Up, Ho's Down: Hip Hop's Hold on Young Black Women*, 54–55; Michael Eric Dyson, *Know What I Mean*, 3, 39-41; Wahida Clark, *Thug Matrimony*, 1-5, 88-90; Noire, *Thug-A-Licious*, 24-31; Robert Franklin, *Crisis In The Village*, 3, 5 & 16; Lonnae Parker, *The Old Kinship*, Washington Post, December 29, 2006, A1, A12-A13; Leonard Sax, *Boys Adrift*, 5-8.

**Box 3**

“The brain receives huge amounts of information from the world and what we primarily do is turn that data into a series of generalizations, stereotypes and theories that we can use to navigate our way through life. Once we’ve perceived a situation and construed it so that it fits one of the patterns we carry in our memory, we are pretty much rigged in terms of how we are likely to react even though we haven’t consciously sat down to make a decision.

When a teenage couple is in the backseat of a car about to have sex or not, or unprotected sex or not, they are not autonomous creatures making decisions based upon classroom maxims or health risk reports. Their behavior is shaped by the subconscious landscapes of reality that have been implanted since birth

Did they grow up in homes where they felt emotionally secure? Do they often feel socially excluded? Did they grow up in a neighborhood where promiscuity was considered repulsive? Did they grow up in a sex-drenched environment or in an environment where children were buffered from it?

In other words, the teenagers in that car won’t really be alone. They’ll be in there with a whole web of attitudes from friends, family and the world at large. Some teenagers will derive from those shared patterns a sense of subconscious no-go zones. They’ll regard activities in that no-go zone as the vegetarian regards meat—as taboo, beyond immediate possibility.”

When the content becomes a part of the programming, as Brooks points out, “the teenagers in that car won’t really be alone.” Additionally, Box 3 suggests that the socialization process is a four-step arrangement. The first step is a strategy for determining the content to be programmed; the second is the transmission vehicle(s) for delivering the content; third is the follow-up strategy to ensure that the content is programmed; and fourth is the consequences for inductees who fail to act as expected. Table 1 (A) is an extension of Table 1. It captures the principal vehicles used to transmit content to be inculcated and the environment in which it is embedded.

**Table 1 (A)**

**Transmission of Village and Family Messages**

Message Package I	Message Package II
Oral through intergenerational networks and visual	Oral through generational networks and visual
Family, School, Community, Church and Media as <b>one</b>	Family, School, Community, Church and Media as <b>separates</b>
Narrow Bandwidth	Broad Bandwidth (music, video, cell & cable)
Workers and Professionals	Stars, Athletes, Rappers, Peers
The Bull Elephants <sup>27</sup>	Jail, Prison and Welfare Systems

Table I and its extension (I (A)) captures some of the content and method for this aspect of the socialization process. For the purposes of this paper two different sets of content, two fundamentally different transmission processes and two different implicit environments, are described all in the oral tradition and visually. The content and methods in Box 4 covers first, the same socialization process covered in Box 3 but from the perspective of the inductee.

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<sup>27</sup> 60 Minutes II, *The Delinquents, A Spate of Rhino Killings*, August 22, 2000

**Box 4**<sup>28</sup>

I WAS DRUGGED AS A CHILD

The other day, someone at a store in our town read that a methamphetamine lab had been found in an old farmhouse in the adjoining county and he asked me a rhetorical question, 'Why didn't we have a drug problem when you and I were growing up?'

I replied: I had a drug problem when I was young: I was drug to church on Sunday morning. I was drug to church for weddings and funerals. I was drug to family reunions and community socials no matter the weather.

I was also drug to the woodshed when I disobeyed my parents, told a lie, brought home a bad report card, did not speak with respect, spoke ill of the teacher or the preacher, or if I didn't put forth my best effort in everything that was asked of me.

I was drug to the kitchen sink to have my mouth washed out with soap if I uttered a profane four-letter word.

I was drug out to pull weeds in my grandmother's garden and flowerbeds and cockleburrs out of her field's fields.

I was drug to the homes of family, friends, and neighbors to help out some poor soul, who had no one to mow the yard, repair the clothesline, or chop some firewood; and, if my father had ever known that I took a single dime as a tip for this kindness, he would have drug me back to the woodshed.

I was drug by my ears when I was disrespectful to adults.

Those drugs are still in my veins; and they affect my behavior in everything I do, say, and think.

They are stronger than meth, weed, cocaine, crack, or heroin; and, if today's children had this kind of drug problem, America would be a better place.

~Author unknown

Second, Box 4 describes an environment that is far simpler in content and method. The elegance of its simplicity isn't even imaginable for Package II. For the purposes of this paper note the school specifically is differentially treated. In one, school matters; in the other it does not. Starkly different approaches to content, complexity, different programming vehicles with paradoxes and punctuated setbacks are the crux of the dynamic schooling context problem.

In today's environment actors programmed in Package I, and those subsequently programmed in Package II, are challenged as they share the same schoolhouse space. They are destined to collide. Students without authority raised in Package II suffer in silence yet do, along

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<sup>28</sup> Benson Penick, "I Was Drugged as a Child", email, August 11, 2007.

with their similarly situated parents, exactly what Brooks describes in Box 2. They put their social capital in disruption while the schooling enterprise investment goes wanting. This is the documentable schooling contextual tragedy that fuels male underperformance particularly for males of color.<sup>29</sup> Actually, it's a low grade "war" on all fronts.

Is there a path to interrupt this vicious cycle of interruption/disruption? The answer is yes. The approach cannot be piecemeal. A labyrinth approach is required if schools are to matter again.<sup>30</sup> In the Package II world not only does school not matter but also women are not respected yet schools are staffed predominately by women. Further schools are organized as a step-by-step process. Males trained up in Package II "just do it, now." How do you make schools work if moving up --an outcome of the process -- is thought of as not "keeping it real" and "acting white"? Then there is the issue of pecking orders those spawned by the package and those spawned by the school, which further fuels the debilitating cycle of interruption/disruption that leaves schools in turmoil and the Box 1 crisis standing and in play.

The third strand justifies the creation of these male academies to move the schooling enterprise beyond insanity. The features of these new organizations have been previously identified: smart, tough, nimble.... The school organization builds from grade 6 (probably should be grade 4) and adds a grade each year up to grade 12. The organization builds a culture of achievement at each step. Other grade schemes ought to be considered given the availability of information and the widespread use of technology tools. The culture building effort in any new grade schemes must be kept at the forefront.

In this new organization teachers and school leaders will do the "engineering" required by mastering and integrating as appropriate the continuously emerging findings from neuroscience. This will facilitate building better educational best practices and school curriculum designs. For the cultural context issue, schools must turn to the community itself for help on this account as it does its part. Some suggestions on how to proceed can be found in Appendix 1. Suffice it to say, in a metaphor, the following. A new symphony plus a new orchestra wisely led is required to create an educational intervention that works to arrest male schooling underperformance. A new symphony has been written and played for females. It is a work in progress; it is headed in the right direction. The success of women suggests that tinkering at the margins for males will not get the job done but a new symphony, led by a new conductor and played by a new orchestra may.

### III. Closing Observations: A Summary

Is there a state beyond insanity? Can educational interventions that work be built? Can schools be made to mater? Progress on these three questions is possible and can be asserted. There is evidence to support the possibility for progress.<sup>31</sup>

- Think a focused, positive, comprehensive labyrinth approach.
- Think a new school organization with these features: small, nimble, learning, tough and responsive.
- Think three integrated strands successfully synched that create a symbiosis between content and context.

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<sup>29</sup> Robert Franklin *Crisis In The Village*, 41; Thomas Williams, *Blacks Must Learn to Loosen the Hip Hop Grip*, A17; Lonnae Parker, *The Old Kinship*, A1 and A12-13

<sup>30</sup> Alice H. Eagley and Linda Carli, *Women and The Labyrinth of Leadership*, 63

<sup>31</sup> Frank Mathews, *The Envy of Its Peers?*, 2-6

1. The neuroscience including social intelligence (brain-based) strand
  2. The pedagogy strand
  3. The environment /cultural strand
- The content “engineering” will deliver needed early wins. It will connect the brain-based work, and that work yet to come, to educational best practices and curriculum designs. This will transform them into better best practices and designs. The neuroscience work done to date can enhance approaches to school clock, school organization, transportation, the way buildings must be built and/or retrofitted in the service of males and females and where boys and girls are seated in class..
  - Use of the ILP, informed by findings from neuroscience, that helps to connect the dots, is offered as an important new application. It has good promise for “normal students” especially males of color.
  - The environmental /culture strand – the context – that “houses” the schooling content experience is a stubbornly uncooperative puzzle piece. The good news is that as new enterprises or as old enterprises doing a new thing, even in too busy America, presents an opportunity to expand the existing package II. The opportunity is easily stated but the challenge is deceptively monumental.

It is clear, that new male enterprises with new leaders represent a potential new symphony and orchestra likely to unravel the (YMC) human capital crisis. It is likely also to address “The Boy in the Coffin”, (Timothy Egan, 2007.) which is an all too often occurrence.

New possibilities for girls are likely to result.

The opportunity to produce a new culture alone is a sufficient and necessary reason to advocate for the establishment of these new single gender schools as an option in the schooling portfolios of local school districts. These schools create new possibilities that will create new communities with the added cultural overlay that supports again the idea that school and high expectations matter. In addition, these proposed new schools move the schooling enterprise beyond insanity. These new enterprises set a path forward to capture, harness, and develop boys and girls on their own brain terms.

## **Appendix**

### **A Cultural Labyrinth Approach**

This appendix outlines a set of considerations for mounting an attack on the existing cultural labyrinth that causes school not to matter.

Every teacher and every principal must understand that they are building a cultural context that is essential to the success of their effective engineering. To do this though they must turn to the community. The focus of this cultural context effort must lead to wiser social capital investment decisions by students as they move forward from grade to grade.

Here are four specifics that fall in the school’s domain.

- Set high expectations even if they seem impossible.
- Introduce as curriculum or extra curriculum, on an age appropriate basis, the decision sciences.

- Publish, as every manufacturer does, at each local school site a process manual that describes how to use this particular school product with updates (as in the software world) when there are changes or modifications made to the product.
- Train parents and on an age appropriate basis their student(s) in the use of the manual.

The principal, as a community organizer, must mobilize the parent and/or guardian domain. This is to be done with the help of community organizations like the Housing Authority and others. The cultural building work here is to help home create a home environment that supports behaviorally the idea that school matters. Some suggestions are:

- Teach parents how to set high performance expectations by inspecting what they expect. Where it is possible to do so, hold parents accountable.
- Present to parents the brain-based work and implications of the work for actions at home.
  - Assure that the brain gets the food and drink it needs.
  - Limit television time, and insist that there be no televisions in bedrooms.
  - Make sure especially now that at least nine hours of rest is had. Nine hours is recommended by the neuroscience community.
- Help parents generally
  - Appreciate the need for dedicated homework space and dedicated time to do homework
  - Understand the importance of parent/school engagement using via technology an expanded engagement portfolio. Parents regularly must know or have some idea about what goes on at the school.
  - Appreciate the need to know more generally the information flowing to and from their child as a student.

The community domain must be energized to build again a school matters culture especially as students enter grade seven and beyond. Some ideas that can be considered in this domain are as follows:

- Enlist men to run the Mindset Mentoring and Management program built on the highly successful Morehouse College Chapel model.
- Enlist the community through business partnerships to support appropriate performance celebrations as proposed by Roland Fryor selected for New York Public Schools or as was done under Gavin Samms at Georgia Tech.
- Enlist the political will of the community to add these proposed new single gender entities to the schooling portfolio of the public schools.
- Assure, as a matter of policy that all children have a chance to live and grow in healthy "relativity" stress free environments. Request of every organization that has a media outlet, commercial or organizational in house publication including churches to have a positive school blurb and where sensible a major story on schools or individual successful school performance in every published issue. These are cross community domain considerations.

This is a cultural building agenda from a labyrinth perspective. It is an augmentation to the “cultural labyrinth” currently in play in Package II.

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