AAEEBB Pilot Report

Office of Research, Planning, and Program Evaluation

2021 – 2022

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Executive Summary

The Achieving Academic Equity and Excellence for Black Boys (AAEEBB) Task Force was convened by the Maryland State Board of Education in 2020 to issue recommendations for tailored academic and socioemotional programming for Black boys in Maryland Public Schools. Beginning in the 2021-22 academic year, 14 schools across 8 LEAs received funding to implement programs aligned to the Task Force recommendations. This report presents a mixed methods analysis of 1) the descriptive characteristics of schools, 2) the implementation of programs, 3) their goals, and 4) successes and challenges the pilot year of the AAEEBB program. It concludes with a series of recommendations for years 2 and 3.

First, using school year 2021-22 data from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), analyses indicate that, on average, AAEEBB schools have higher proportions of Black/African American and non-white students compared to other public schools in the state. Roughly two-thirds of teachers in AAEEBB schools are white, though these schools had higher percentages of Black/African American teachers compared to other public schools. Average achievement and attendance rates are lower in AAEEBB schools compared to other schools in the state, while rates of exclusionary discipline were higher pre-pandemic. There is also evidence that suggests AAEEBB schools may have been particularly affected by the transition to virtual learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Second, using a survey administered to AAEEBB schools at the end of the 2021-22 school year, this report shows that although there were wide differences in schools' implementation of and goals for AAEEBB programs, there were also some important commonalities. For example, most schools implemented mentoring programs and/or professional learning/development for staff, in line with many of the recommendations issued by the Task Force.

Third, most schools adopted pilot year goals related to academic achievement and/or discipline. Among academic goals, schools were split evenly between goals related to course grades, and goals related to assessments or test scores. For behavior, most schools' goals were related to office and/or crisis center referrals. All but one of the 13 schools reported meeting all or most of the goals they had set for the pilot year; however, many schools' goals were not clearly defined.

Fourth, most schools reported their programs created awareness and demonstrated the unique needs of Black boys, and some were able to reference student and staff perception surveys to support their case. Despite the successes, many schools reported challenges relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, school closures and associated staffing/volunteer shortages. These challenges are an important reason for the delay that some schools experienced in getting their programs up and running in the first year.

To continue improving schools' AAEEBB programs, this report recommends improved clarity and monitoring around program goals. In the pilot year, many schools did not provide enough specificity regarding goals to be able to ascertain whether they were achieved. This report also recommends conducting an impact evaluation of program outcomes in years 2 and 3. The pilot survey showed that schools' programs could be grouped according to intervention type as well as outcomes targeted, which provides important information for designing a more rigorous analysis of program outcomes.

Overview

In Maryland, analyses of long-term educational trends show that Black boys consistently score lower on state assessments and have lower graduation rates compared to state averages. Data also indicate Black boys face higher rates of exclusionary discipline, including suspensions and expulsions.[1] These educational disparities in early childhood and adolescence contribute to worse employment outcomes in adulthood.[2] The task for educators, administrators and policymakers is to ensure that students from all backgrounds have equitable access to safe and nurturing educational opportunities.

For this reason, in the summer of 2020, the Maryland State Board of Education (MSDE) convened the Task Force on Achieving Academic Equity and Excellence for Black Boys (AAEEBB) to explore these inequities and to develop evidence-based strategies for improving educational experiences and outcomes for Black boys in Maryland. The Task Force was composed of 22 members drawn from the State Board of Education, staff from the Maryland State Department of Education, teachers and administrators from Maryland Public Schools, and researchers. Meeting monthly from July 2020 to March 2021, the Task Force formed study groups organized around the themes of social and emotional behavioral support, recruiting and training skilled, competent teachers and administrators, and curricula and instruction. In the summer of 2021, the Task Force issued 16 recommendations for schools and districts to tailor educational programs for Black boys[3] (See Appendix B, Table 1). The recommendations were provided with a call to action and, beginning in the 2021-22 academic year, 6 elementary, 6 middle, and 2 high schools[4] chosen by local superintendents who expressed interest in the program[5] were provided grant funding along with the task of adopting 2 or more recommendations issued by the Task Force. The average size of the grant per school was $76,923 for the pilot academic year, 2021-22.

This report summarizes the characteristics and experience of AAEEBB schools in the pilot year of the program. More specifically, it answers the following evaluation questions:

1. What are the characteristics of AAEEBB schools, and how do they compare to other schools in Maryland?

2. Which Task Force recommendations did schools adopt, and how did schools implement AAEEBB programs?

3. What are the goals of schools' AAEEBB programs, and did schools achieve their goals in the pilot year?

4. What were the successes and challenges of implementing AAEEBB programs, and what plans do schools have for programs in year 2?

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[1] Task Force on Achieving Academic Equity and Excellence for Black Boys. (MSDE, n.d.). Transforming the culture of Maryland's schools for Black boys.
https://marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2021/0427/MSDETransformCultureforBlackBoy.pdf

[2] See for example: Johnson, R.C. and Jackson, C.K. (2019). *Reducing inequality through dynamic complementarity: Evidence from Head Start and public school spending.* AEJ: Applied, 11, 4 and Bacher-Hicks, A., Billings, S.B., and Deming, D.J. (2019). *The school to prison pipeline: Long-run impacts of school suspensions on adult crime.* NBER Working Paper 26257.

[3] Task Force on Achieving Academic Equity and Excellence for Black Boys. (MSDE, n.d.).

[4] Although 14 schools were chosen for the pilot, only 13 schools provided survey responses and will continue in the AAEEBB program.

[5] Participating LEAs include Baltimore County, Calvert, Charles, Howard, Kent, Montgomery, Prince George's, and Queen Anne's.

This evaluation report proceeds as follows. First the sources and types of data used in the report are outlined, followed by the results for each of the four evaluation questions. Finally, recommendations for the AAEEBB program in year 2 are presented.

Data

Data used in this report come from two sources. The first data source is the Maryland State Department of Education, which includes data on student enrollment, attendance, achievement, course grades, suspensions, and staff from all Maryland public schools from the 2018-19 to 2020-21 school years. Student data includes student demographics, such as race/ethnicity, gender, and indicators for Students with Disabilities, English learners, and Economic Disadvantage, while staff data include race/ethnicity, education, and experience. The second data source is an end-of-year pilot survey administered by the MSDE Office of Research and Program Evaluation to AAEEBB schools between May and June 2022 (see Appendix 2 for the questionnaire).

The pilot survey included questions about the AAEEBB Task Force recommendations adopted by schools, the implementation of programs, the goals and sources of data that schools used to monitor their programs, as well as the successes, challenges and lessons learned in the first year of the program. The survey also asked schools about their plans for expansion in the second year. In total, 13 of 14 schools responded to the survey.

Evaluation Questions and Results

1. What are the characteristics of AAEEBB schools and how do they compare to other schools in Maryland? [6]

- Schools chosen for the pilot on average had higher percentages of Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Economically Disadvantaged students compared to other public schools in Maryland.

- Most teachers in AAEEBB schools were white, but AAEEBB schools had higher percentages of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino teachers compared to other public schools.

- Recent trends indicate increases in chronic absenteeism rates and core course failures for both AAEEBB schools overall and for Black boys in AAEEBB schools.

- Suspension rates for Black boys were higher in AAEEBB schools than non-AAEEBB schools prior to the pandemic.

RESULTS

Student Characteristics

There was not one type of AAEEBB school. As Panel A of Table 1 shows, the size of AAEEBB schools ranged from 400 students to almost 1,300 students and the percentage of Black students in AAEEBB schools ranged from 6% to 78%. AAEEBB schools also differed widely on achievement; between 19% and 69% of students in participating schools were proficient in ELA in 2019 and between 9% and 57% in math in the same year.

AAEEBB schools had higher proportions of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students, and lower proportions of White students, compared to all public elementary, middle, and high schools in Maryland. On average, 43.4% of students in AAEEBB schools were Black, compared to 30.5% of students in non-AAEEBB schools in Maryland. While AAEEBB schools on average had similar percentages of Students with Disabilities as non-AAEEBB schools, they had slightly higher percentages of English Learners and Economically Disadvantaged students.[7] In terms of achievement, AAEEBB schools had lower proficiency rates on the 2019 state ELA and math assessments, by 7 percentage points in ELA and 10 percentage points in math.

Teacher Characteristics

Panel B of Table 1 shows the characteristics of teachers in AAEEBB and non-AAEEBB schools. The proportion of Black teachers in AAEEBB schools ranged from 2.6% to 54.2% while the proportion of white teachers varied from 27.7% to 92.3%. On average, about a quarter of teachers in AAEEBB schools were Black, but this was ten percentage points higher than the average non-AAEEBB school in Maryland in 2020-2021. Both statewide and in AAEEBB schools, teacher demographics do not reflect student demographics; for example, in AAEEBB schools, 43.4% of students were Black while only 26.5% of teachers were of the same race/ethnicity. Despite these differences in race/ethnicity, teachers in AAEEBB schools had similar levels of education and experience teaching as all schools in Maryland overall.

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[6] Results in this section reflect data for the 14 schools initially chosen for the pilot. Subsequent sections rely on data provided by the 13 schools that completed the pilot survey. Characteristics and outcomes of schools are examined for the year prior to their selection as AAEEBB schools.

[7] See Appendix A for demographics of each AAEEBB school.

TABLE 1

Student and Teacher Characteristics of AAEEBB and non-AAEEBB Schools

	AAEEBB Schools			Non-AAEEBB Schools*		
	Mean	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max
	Panel A: Students					
Enrollment	719	402	1,295	674	62	3,220
Race/ethnicity						
Asian	4.3	0.0	14.0	6.3	0.0	53.4
Black/African American	43.4	6.1	77.9	30.5	0.0	99.0
Hispanic/Latino	25.6	4.1	89.2	19.3	0.0	96.5
White	21.1	0.7	80.2	38.0	0.0	99.4
Other†	5.6	0.5	13.2	5.8	0.0	19.3
Student group						
Students with Disabilities	13.0	7.9	17.2	12.6	0.7	53.9
English Learners	13.8	0.2	62.0	11.6	0.0	91.1
Economically Disadvantaged††	35.1	16.5	47.7	29.3	0.3	90.9
ELA Proficiency (2019)	36.7	19.0	68.8	43.8	0.4	94.9
Math Proficiency (2019)	26.7	9.0	57.2	37.0	0.0	90.3
	Panel B: Teachers					
Race/ethnicity						
Asian	3.4	0.0	15.6	3.6	0.0	35.6
Black/African American	26.5	2.6	54.2	16.5	0.0	87.5
Hispanic/Latino	5.0	0.0	13.8	3.5	0.0	84.8
White	63.7	27.7	92.3	74.5	0.0	100.0
Other†	1.9	0.0	20.0	1.4	0.0	6.8
Master's degree	70.5	44.0	90.0	72.3	28.0	100.0
Experience (years.)	11.5	7.6	16.4	12.5	3.7	22.8

Note: Data are percentages unless otherwise indicated and refer to the 2020-21 school year except for proficient which refer to the 2018-19 school year.

*Excludes Alternative Schools, Special Programs and schools with total enrollments less than 10 students.

†Includes race/ethnicity categories less than 5% of the sample, including American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Two or More Races.

††Economic disadvantage is defined

SCHOOL OUTCOMES

In addition to understanding the characteristics of teachers and students in AAEEBB schools, it is also important to analyze how schools differed in terms of the Task Force's goals prior to implementation of their programs. Two outcomes targeted by Task Force recommendations were academic achievement and discipline. Figure 1 presents trends in attendance, discipline, and achievement[8] for students in AAEEBB schools for the 2018-19 through 2020-21 school years. To provide context, the figure compares trends for Black boys and for all students, both in AAEEBB schools and their counterparts in all Maryland public schools. There are three important takeaways from Figure 1:

- First, the rate of chronic absenteeism increased from 17.2% to 28.1% for Black boys in AAEEBB schools between the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, as shown by the solid blue line in left Panel A. Though chronic absenteeism increased for all students in AAEEBB schools (solid blue line in right Panel A), as well as for all students and Black boys at the state level (dotted gray lines in left and right Panel A respectively), it increased disproportionately for Black boys in AAEEBB schools; in fact, it almost doubled from 15.7% to 31.2%.

- Second, although the percent of students suspended declined to near zero for all students in 2020-21 (Panel B), it had been highest for Black boys in AAEEBB schools in the two previous school years, at 13-14%.[9]

- Last, the average percent of core courses failed, incomplete or withdrawn also almost doubled for Black males in AAEEBB schools (12.7% to 24.2%), a higher rate than for Black boys in Maryland public schools and for all students regardless of school. The data suggest that AAEEBB schools, and Black boys in AAEEBB schools in particular, may have been disproportionately affected by disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the switch to virtual learning.

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[8] Trend data was chosen based on the availability of relevant outcome data in the pre-period (2018-19 through 2020-21) as well as an anticipation of availability in future years.

[9] Most Maryland public schools were not in person in 2020-21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

FIGURE 1

Trends in School Outcomes by School AAEEBB Participation

Panel A: Percent of students chronically absent
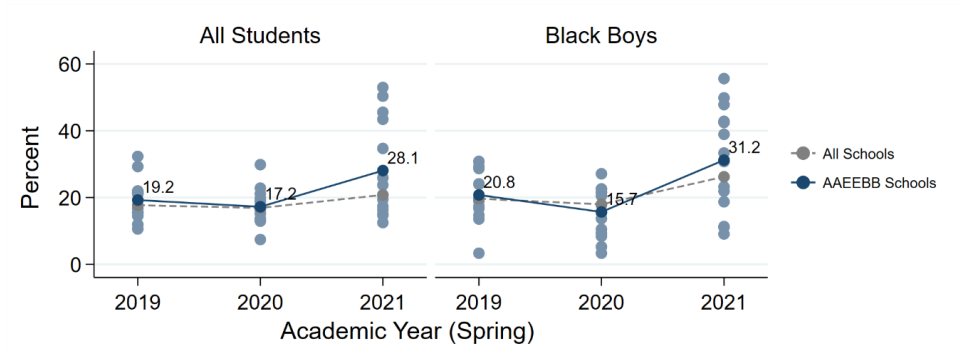
Panel B: Percent of students suspended
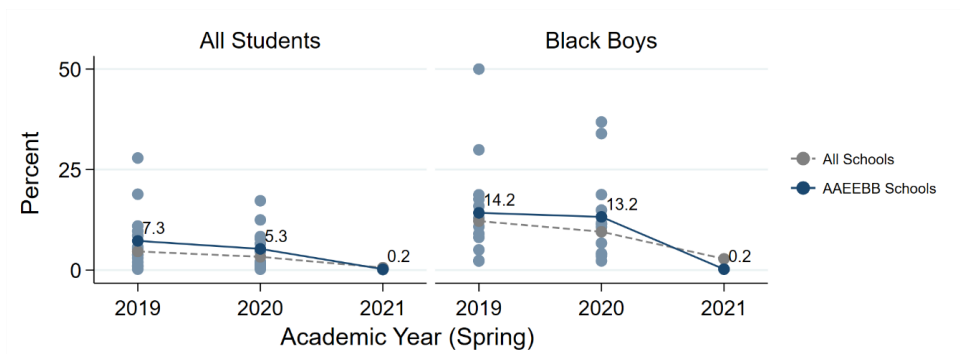
Panel C: Percent of core courses failed
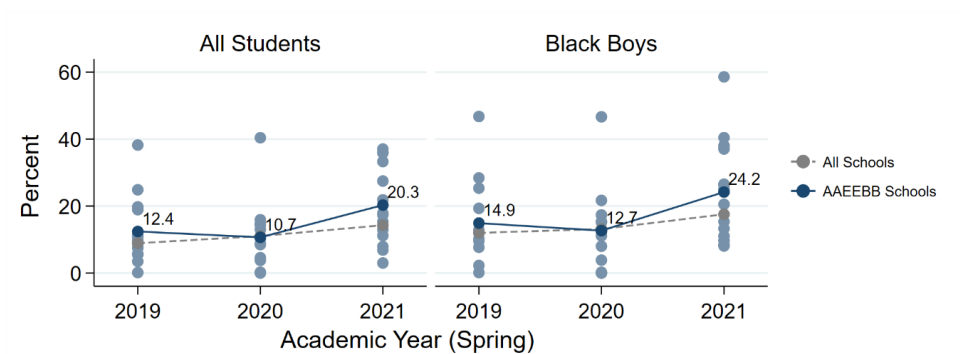
Note: Trend lines show the mean for AAEEBB (dark blue) and all public (gray) schools in Maryland, while light blue dots show variation across AAEEBB schools. Chronic absenteeism is defined as the number of students in K-12 who were absent at least 10% of the days enrolled. Percent of students suspended includes both in- and out-of-school suspensions to enrollment. Core course failures are an average per-student of the percent of core courses (English Language and Literature, Mathematics, Life and Physical Sciences and Social Sciences and History) failed, incomplete or withdrawn. Courses are not restricted by semester/term.

2. Which Task Force recommendations did schools adopt, and how did schools implement AAEBB programs?

- Most schools adopted Task Force recommendations related to student mentoring programs and professional learning and development for culturally relevant pedagogy/teaching and anti-bias practices.

- Six schools offered programs in elementary grades (PK-5), 6 schools offered programs in middle school grades (6-8) and 2 schools offered programs for high school students (grades 9-12).[10]

- Most mentoring programs focused on Black boys but some programs were open to all students.

- The number of student participants per school ranged from 14 to 163, with an average of 43 students.

- The number of staff and other adult participants per school ranged from 4 to 24, with an average of 13.[11]

RESULTS

In its April 2021 report, the AAEEBB Task Force issued 16 recommendations that "should be adopted to improve the learning environment for every black male student in Maryland public schools."[12] (See Appendix B, Table 1.) Schools could choose more than one recommendation and, in fact, ten schools chose to implement 2 recommendations, while three schools chose 3 recommendations. In terms of the types of recommendations selected,

- Eleven schools chose at least one recommendation related to social and emotional behavioral supports;

- Two schools chose at least one recommendation related to recruiting and training skilled, competent teachers and administrators; and

- Nine schools chose at least one recommendation related to curricula and instruction.

Table 2 summarizes the Task Force recommendations chosen by schools in year 1, as reported in the pilot survey. In total, schools chose 8 of the 16 recommendations but two recommendations were the most popular: mentoring programs (Recommendation 1.3), chosen by 11 schools, and professional learning (3.1), chosen by 6 schools. Six other recommendations were only selected by between one and three schools. Most of the eight recommendations not selected by any school were intended for school districts or the state to implement, not individual schools, such as financial incentives to recruit and retain racially and ethnically diverse teachers and administrators (2.1).

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[10] One, a combined school, offered programs for grades 6-12.

[11] Mentoring programs could include adults from the community and not just staff.

[12] Transforming the Culture of Maryland's Schools for Black Boys: Task Force on Achieving Academic Equity and Excellence for Black Boys. Maryland State Board of Education.

TABLE 2

AAEEBB Task Force Recommendations Chosen by Schools

Recommendation	Number of Schools	Description
1.1	3	Require de-escalation and other evidence-based intervention and training for all school staff.
1.3	11	Coordinate structured mentoring programs (adult male and/or peer mentoring) tailored to meet the social and emotional learning needs for identified Black boys in grades K-12.
1.4	1	Implement a Rites of Passage program for Black boys in grades 6-12.
2.4	2	Provide all teachers and school-based administrators, along with all other district personnel, continued professional development on culturally responsive teaching practices and methods to support the academic, social-emotional, and developmental needs of Black boys and young men.
3.1	6	Provide professional learning to support the implementation of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy/Culturally Responsive Teaching and Anti-bias practices in classrooms and schools.
3.2	2	Address ongoing achievement gaps by using the science of reading (systematic phonics instruction, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness methods to improve fluency, and ways to enhance comprehension) for grades K-3 and beyond for older struggling readers.
3.3	2	Address ongoing gaps in math and continual math decline through advancing grades by using standards-based, real-world math instruction infused with science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) activities.
3.6	2	Districts encourage individual co-ed schools to create single-gender classes across grades or for selected subjects. Districts may also consider approving charter schools with single-gender classes for boys and girls.

Note: Table is based on information provided by survey respondents (13 of 14 pilot schools.) See Appendix for a list of all recommendations that were issued by the AAEEBB Task Force.

Schools were asked in the pilot survey to describe the programs they chose to implement, the number of participating students and/or adults and how they were selected (see Appendix B, Table 2).[13] Students were chosen based on data that suggested they would benefit from tailored programming such as the number of referrals, academic outcomes, staff recommendations, or a combination of these factors. In two schools, mentorship programs were open to all students including Black boys, although in most cases program participants were chosen based on staff recommendations and/or personal or parental initiative. Again, the latter type of programs may have been open to a wider number of students (including girls), though Black boys were often the focus of program monitoring.

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[13] Some schools reported any teacher/adult who participated in a session, while some schools reported only staff who attended all sessions, making it difficult to compare numbers of staff participants across schools.

The most common program implemented by AAEEBB schools was mentoring, which tended to consist of weekly or bimonthly one-to-one sessions with some combination of field trips, guest speakers and/or other activities. Although programs generally strove to achieve one-to-one matches, some programs were forced to pair up to two mentees per mentor due to shortages of mentors and difficulties finding volunteers. Mentoring programs varied in the frequency of meetings, but most met weekly. Programs that focused more exclusively on mentoring tended to meet more frequently, sometimes combining daily homeroom meetings with weekly or bimonthly intensive sessions. For example, 7 of 8 schools that volunteered this information reported meeting weekly or more frequently. Some programs met during school and some programs met after school, though most that met after school also had a school day component.

A second type of program, implemented by 10 of 13 schools, included trainings, book clubs, and other professional development activities for school staff designed to improve academic and socioemotional outcomes for Black boys. These programs often combined mandatory and volunteer components and varied in their length and frequency throughout the year.

A third type of program, offered by 8 of 13 schools, aimed to provide students with additional academic instruction, exposure to culturally relevant materials, and/or opportunities to apply classroom knowledge to real-world situations. The form these programs took varied considerably across schools. For example, one school started a student-run store to provide financial literacy skills, while others sought to incorporate practical activities into class lessons, and still others provided culturally relevant materials in school libraries.

3. What were the goals of schools' AAEEBB programs, and did schools achieve their goals in the pilot year?

- The most common goals of schools' AAEEBB programs were related to student academic and behavioral outcomes. Almost half of respondents included both an academic and a behavioral goal.

- Among academic goals, schools were split evenly between goals related to course grades, and goals related to assessments or test scores. For behavior, most schools' goals were related to office and/or crisis center referrals.

- All but one of the 13 schools reported meeting all or most of the goals they had set for the pilot year; however, many schools' goals were not clearly defined.

RESULTS

In the pilot survey, schools were asked to document their goals for the program. Of the 13 responding schools,

- 6 schools included at least one academic and one behavioral goal/target for the outcome of their programming;

- 7 schools had at least one academic goal; and

- 9 schools had at least one behavioral goal.

Of the 7 schools with at least one academic goal, 4 schools focused on improvements in students' grades and 3 schools focused on improvements in a benchmark learning assessment. All of the 9 schools with at least one behavioral goal had a goal related to office and/or crisis center referrals and 2 of the 9 schools also had a goal focused on suspensions (see Appendix B, Table 3 for more details).

Of the 13 survey respondents, 6 schools had at least one goal that was not directly focused on an academic or behavioral outcome. These goals were largely related to one or both of the following:

1) using surveys to demonstrate positive or improved perceptions of the program among parents or caregivers, students, and/or teachers; and/or

2) demonstrating evidence that the programs resulted in changes in intermediate outputs, such as the incorporation of culturally responsive material into teachers' lesson plans or exposure of students to components of the programs.

The majority of schools' goals for their AAEEBB program were met. In fact, among all goals submitted for the 13 schools, only one single goal was reported to not have been met; this school was able to meet its academic goals but not its behavioral goals, as it reported that suspensions and referrals increased from semester 1 to semester 2.[14] Of the 7 schools with at least one academic goal, 4 schools saw improvements in course grades and/or course pass rates, while the other 3 schools reported improvements in math or reading assessments. Although most schools reported meeting their goals in the pilot year, it is important to note that in many cases not enough information was provided to be able to determine whether the programs had a significant impact on student outcomes. For example, many goals were not specific, and few

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[14] Some schools had yet to collect data to be able to evaluate all of their goals at the time of pilot data collection. See Appendix B, Table 3 for details.

schools identified a comparison group for AAEEBB participants. More information on schools' goals is provided in the Recommendations section of this report.

4. What were the successes and challenges of implementing AAEEBB programs, and what plans do schools have for programs in year 2?

- Most schools reported their programs created awareness and demonstrated the unique needs of Black boys, and some were able to reference student and staff perception surveys to support these claims.

- Despite the reported successes, many schools also reported challenges relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, school closures and related staffing/volunteer shortages. These challenges are an major reason for the delays that some schools experienced in getting their programs up and running in the first year.

RESULTS

In the final section of the pilot survey, schools were asked about the successes, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing their programs. Perhaps the most common reported success of schools' AAEEBB programs was the increased awareness and demonstration of the academic and behavioral needs of Black boys among teachers, school personnel and other adults affiliated with the program. Five schools referenced the results of perception surveys, administered to a range of stakeholders, as evidence of success. Another success highlighted by pilot survey respondents was the perceived improved sense of community, interpersonal connections, and feelings of trust among male participants.

By far the greatest challenge highlighted by schools was related to finding and training mentors. Six schools reported this challenge, which they thought was exacerbated by the pandemic. Several schools mentioned the importance of designing mentorship programs in a way that responded to the unique needs of their students, which required having pre-existing knowledge of and relationships with students in the higher grades. For example, a middle school that wanted to offer programs for grade 6 students struggled in implementation because teachers had less familiarity with these students new to the school compared to grade 8 students who had already been in the school for a few years. Staff with pre-existing relationships with students were often heavily relied on in mentorship programs. Another common challenge was coordinating virtual programs or switching from virtual to in-person programs. This challenge was highlighted for both mentoring programs and for those designed to foster professional learning and development.

Schools also reported on lessons learned in the first year of the program. The most common lesson learned by schools was the importance of beginning the planning and administration of programs earlier in the school year. For many, the challenges of recruiting participants, orienting, and recruiting staff and volunteers, and dealing with the uncertainties caused by the pandemic were difficult to overcome in the first year. For example, one school decided to use grant funds to hire a dedicated coordinator to oversee the program. The time it took to find and hire this person itself proved to be a substantial challenge. Another school mentioned the importance of having a list of outside organizations and business partners at hand for the purposes of carrying out program activities. Several schools relied on outside organizations to provide mentorship or leadership talks for students. Other lessons learned reported by multiple schools included the importance of starting small and not trying to take on too much too soon, and the importance of listening to stakeholders, including parents and students.

Lastly, schools reported on plans for their AAEEBB programs in year 2. Plans varied widely, with five main types of planned changes. First, over half of schools reported plans for increased engagement with community members or community partner organizations. The pilot year afforded schools an opportunity to promote their AAEEBB programs to parents and children, and many felt this would be beneficial for

continuing to build relationships with the wider community. Second, roughly half of the participating schools also reported plans for expansion, including concerted efforts to bring more students, staff, and adult participants into their programs. Two of these schools mentioned plans to expand peer to peer mentoring programs to include high school students, and one planned to coordinate mentor programs with its feeder elementary school. Third, some schools have plans to include more exposure to extracurricular and/or cultural experiences, such as field trips. Fourth, several schools plan to change how they implement programs, including starting programs earlier, increasing their frequency and providing more structure such as community calendars and dedicated meeting times. Lastly, two schools mentioned plans to expand to include another AAEEBB Task Force recommendation.

Recommendations

This section presents recommendations for improved implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of AAEEBB programs in year 2.

Recommendation 1: Schools should improve the clarity of program goals and outcomes

Most goals provided by schools were not specific and/or did not identify an appropriate comparison group to allow for an assessment of how the program might have changed outcomes for participants. Goals lacked clarity regarding the time over which a goal was being assessed and regarding relevant courses or subjects for academic goals and targets. Most goals and targets did not identify a comparison group for program participants, making it difficult to attribute improvements to program participation. Two schools, however, compared changes in outcomes for both program participants and for the school as a whole. The advantage of this approach is that it provides an idea of how the outcomes of participants may have been impacted in the absence of the program. Schools should also present data for the wider student body to give some sense about the appropriate comparison group for program participants.

Recommendation 2: Schools should ensure adequate planning time

As detailed above, a major challenge for schools in year one was related to timely planning and administration of programs. Starting in year 2, schools should ensure that they begin planning their AAEEBB programs as early as possible, in order to avoid many of the challenges faced in year one. With the benefit of a year of program implementation, schools will be better placed to begin supporting AAEEBB programs earlier in the school year.

Recommendation 3: MSDE should monitor program fidelity

In the pilot year, MSDE staff met periodically with schools, offering assistance in crafting program goals and understanding programs as they were launched. At the beginning of the 2022-23 school year, schools should submit detailed plans for their AAEEBB programs. These plans will include clear data points tied to program goals and will form the basis for quarterly check-ins with MSDE staff around budgeting and monitoring programs for fidelity.

Recommendation 4: MSDE should conduct an impact evaluation for years 2 and 3

A challenge for understanding the impact of schools' AAEEBB programs is that no two programs are the same. As the pilot survey showed, programs took a variety of forms and schools adopted a variety of means by which to improve outcomes for student participants. Yet at the same time, the survey revealed some commonalities. Schools' programs most often took the form of mentorship for students and professional development for staff. Most schools also adopted goals related to student academics, achievement and/or behavior. Given the importance of understanding whether and how AAEEBB programs worked to improve outcomes for participants, MSDE research staff will undertake an impact evaluation of the program in years 2 and 3 which will yield answers to the questions of whether AAEEBB programs are working, and for whom.

Appendices

Appendix A

DEMOGRAPHICS OF AAEEBB SCHOOLS, 2021-2022

LEA	School Name	School Type	Enrollment	SwD	Econ Disadv	EL	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White
Baltimore County	Golden Ring	Middle	851	17%	48%	<5%	5%	61%	13%	16%
Baltimore County	Pikesville	Middle	967	16%	37%	<5%	<5%	65%	11%	16%
Baltimore County	Southwest Academy	Middle	794	16%	45%	<5%	14%	65%	14%	<5%
Calvert	Calvert	Elementary	496	14%	30%	<5%	<5%	22%	<5%	61%
Charles	J. P. Ryon	Elementary	630	10%	43%	11%	<5%	63%	19%	7%
Charles	Westlake	High	1,139	13%	23%	<5%	<5%	78%	8%	6%
Howard	Longfellow	Elementary	485	12%	31%	10%	10%	35%	27%	20%
Howard	Running Brook	Elementary	402	15%	42%	6%	8%	53%	13%	16%
Kent	Kent County	High	580	14%	39%	<5%	<5%	21%	10%	60%
Montgomery	Francis Scott Key	Middle	966	8%	31%	25%	8%	42%	45%	<5%
Montgomery	New Hampshire Estates	Elementary	448	13%	36%	62%	<5%	18%	76%	<5%
Prince George's	Buck Lodge	Middle	1,295	12%	28%	47%	<5%	9%	89%	<5%
Prince George's	Catherine T. Reed	Elementary	466	13%	42%	18%	<5%	71%	20%	<5%
Queen Anne's	Centreville	Middle	549	9%	17%	<5%	<5%	6%	8%	80%

Note: SwD indicates Students with Disabilities. Econ Disadv indicates students identified as economically disadvantaged by direct certification. EL refers to English learners. Student counts less than 10 or percentages less than 5% are suppressed for student privacy. Less than ten students were either American Indian/Alaskan Native or Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian in all schools.

Appendix B

Table 1: AAEEBB Task Force Recommendations

Study Group	Number	Recommendation
Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Supports	1.1	Require de-escalation and other evidence-based intervention and training for all school staff.
	1.2	Include gender equity as part of the Maryland School Report Card, which would give a true measure of equity or lack of equity being achieved for Black boys.
	1.3	Coordinate structured mentoring programs (adult male and/or peer mentoring) tailored to meet the social and emotional learning needs for identified Black boys in grades K-12.
	1.4	Implement a Rites of Passage program for Black boys in Grades 6-12.
Recruiting and Training Skilled, Competent Teachers and Administrators	2.1	Provide financial incentives to recruit and retain racially and ethnically diverse teachers and administrators in the profession.
	2.2	Require school district representatives with teacher and administrator hiring responsibilities (e.g., human resource officers, supervisors, and school principals) to have training on equitable hiring practices of racially and ethnically diverse teacher candidates.
	2.3	Recruit racially and ethnically diverse teacher and administrator candidates into programs to educate and prepare them to enter the profession.
	2.4	Provide all teachers and school-based administrators, along with all other district personnel, continued professional development on culturally responsive teaching practices and methods to support the academic, social-emotional, and developmental needs of Black boys and young men.
	2.5	Use a multi-prong approach to retain Black men and other ethnically diverse teachers and administrators in the profession.
Curricula and Instruction	3.1	Provide professional learning to support the implementation of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy/Culturally Responsive Teaching and Anti-bias practices in classrooms and schools.
	3.2	Address ongoing achievement gaps by using the science of reading (systematic phonics instruction, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, methods to improve fluency, and ways to enhance comprehension) for grades K-3 and beyond for older struggling readers.

Study Group	Number	Recommendation
	3.3	Address ongoing gaps in math, and continual math decline through advancing grades by using standards-based, real-world math instruction infused with science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) activities.
	3.4	Use a proven program, such as The Algebra Project, to address persistent gaps in math and the continual decline in math achievement through advancing grades.
	3.5	Expand Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS) and the African American Male Initiative (AAMI) to address reduced enrollment in Advanced Placement courses and gaps in advancement to college and college graduation.
	3.6	Districts encourage individual co-ed schools to create single gender classes across grades or for selected subjects. Districts may also consider approving charter schools with single-gender classes for boys and girls.
	3.7	An annual symposium on teaching and engaging Black boys hosted by the Maryland Department of Education (MSDE).

Appendix B

Table 2 - Details of AAEEBB program implementation

School	Description	Dates	Grades	Number of student participants	How participants were selected
Golden Ring	Daily mentoring in homeroom including field trips	Sept. – June	7	25	Student and parent opt-in; staff recommendations
Pikesville	Daily mentoring during homeroom, parents' night and field trips	Oct. – April	6-8	25	Academic and referral data, staff recommendations
Southwest Academy	Weekly after-school mentoring with field trips and guest speakers; combination of mandatory and voluntary culturally responsive planning and learning for staff.	Sept. - June	6-8	17	Low grades; less than 95% attendance, and 5+ referrals; staff recommendations
Calvert	Additional learning opportunities in the form of culturally responsive books and reading materials for library	Oct. – April	PK-5	66	All black boys
J.P. Ryon	Weekly/biweekly mentoring; Monthly programs/activities; Group-based activities, play cash incentives/prizes; Professional development	Dec. – June	3-5	163	All students in grades 3-5
Westlake	Staff training and book study on positive behavior and de-escalation; peer-to-peer and staff-led mentorship program	Sept. – May	9-12	66	Staff recommendations
Longfellow	Bimonthly mentoring/karate; restorative justice book study and optional trainings for staff	Oct. - June	3-5	18	Black boys invited using parent/caretaker interest letter

School	Description	Dates	Grades	Number of student participants	How participants were selected
Running Brook	Weekly all-male classes with culturally relevant coursework; after school arts activities and mentorship (1-2x per month), field trips	Aug. - June	3-5	24	Staff recommendation, alternative education students
Kent County	Mentorship, some extracurricular activities	Aug. – June	6-12	37	Staff recommendations
Francis Scott Key	Prof. development from authors and motivational speakers, leadership talks and community service, supports and team-building activities, parents' nights.	Oct. – May	8-12	53	Parent permission and student interest
New Hampshire Estates	Weekly mentoring; teacher trainings in phonics and literacy instruction, implementation of "Knowledge Block" integrated instruction	Nov. – April	K-2	22-25	All students received instructional supports; staff recommendations for mentoring
Catherine T. Reed	Weekly mentoring; monthly gender-based learning trainings	Nov. – Nov.	3-5	24	Black boys with interest and parental consent
Centreville	Weekly after-school activity, book clubs, STEM activities, career/cultural days	March – Aug.	6-8	14	Black boys alerted about activities, surveyed for interest

Appendix B

Table 3. AAEEBB program goals and outcomes by school

School	Category	Goals	Outcome(s)
Golden Ring	Behavioral	All participants will have less suspensions and referrals during MP 3 and MP 4 as compared to first Semester.	Of participants, 20 had referrals (25 total) in MPs 1 and 2; 20 referrals MPs 3 and 4; 11 suspensions 1 and 2, 7 for 3 and 4
Pikesville	Academic	All participants will have demonstrated improvement in at least one core course from the first to third marking period.	Report card; 18 (67%) showed improvement by at least 1 letter grade from 1st - 2nd Q, in at least 1 major subject
	Behavioral	Participants will have demonstrated a reduction in referrals by teachers from 1st to 3rd Q.	7 rec'd referrals in 1st Q, 4 rec'd referrals in 2nd Q
Southwest Academy	Academic	Increased academic achievement	Participants receiving As and Bs increased from 54 to 62% b/t semesters; Cs and Ds decreased.
	Behavioral	Decreased office referrals	13 of 17 participants improved office referral rate
Calvert	Academic	All participants will perform above the 50th% in MAP reading spring 2021-22 semester or show significant improvements in percentile ranking from fall to spring.	Of the 66 program participants, 63 had improved MAP percentile compared to fall 2021-22
J.P. Ryon	Other	To increase the presence of adult support and like representation for black boys in grades 3-5	Goal was met by having meetings with mentors, participating in events, and positive survey responses
Westlake	Behavioral	Staff that receive de-escalation training will decrease discipline referrals for African American male students	Pending

School	Category	Goals	Outcome(s)
	Other	85% of Westlake staff will receive de-escalation training	20/119 staff received trainings
	Other	Students in the Rites of Passage program will establish a sense of school belonging and participate in school activities	Pending
Longfellow	Other	n/a	Parent/caretaker satisfaction was high as evidenced by survey
Running Brook	Behavioral	Participants will have decreased office referrals compared to 2 and 3 years previous	Office referrals for participants declined from 30% to 22%
Kent County	Behavioral	All HS staff will participate in CPI training, gender training, leading to lower discipline referrals	Referrals for Black boys dropped from 0.5 in 2018-19 to 0.27 in 2019-20.
	Behavioral	All Black boys will participate in and receive a mentor, leading to lower discipline referrals	See above.
Francis Scott Key	Academic	Students make honor roll for at least one quarter for the 2021-2022 school year or be academically eligible for two of three marking periods.	21 students made honor roll for at least 1q.
	Other	Increased evidence of positive self-efficacy and leadership skills from pre-post survey	Goal was met
	Other	Student participation in community service activities	Goal was met
New Hampshire Estates	Academic	Participants improve DIBELS literacy outcomes from beginning to end of year	Schoolwide K (28-41% met target), 1st (26-44%) 2nd (33-44%); K-2 black boys (60-87%; 23 out of 26)
	Behavioral	50% reduction in crisis center referrals from 1st to 2nd semester, across whole	10 schoolwide crisis center referrals 1st semester, 10 2nd semester, 6 among participants in 1st semester and 3 in 2nd semester

School	Category	Goals	Outcome(s)
		school and among students participating in program	
	Other	At least 50% of classroom teachers will report mentoring relationships had highly positive impact on behavior and well-being of mentees	Teacher survey showed 85% of teachers thought program had positive impact
Catherine T. Reed	Academic	Increase of 5% on benchmark assessment	10 of 13 grade 5 met or surpassed from benchmark I to III; 8 of 9 met or surpassed grade 4
	Behavioral	Decrease of 5% in discipline and office referrals	n/a
	Other	Increased awareness of differences b/t learning for boys and girls (teacher)	n/a
	Other	Teacher observation of student engagement	n/a
Centreville	Academic	Students participating in after-school tutoring will improve math pass rates	Of 15 students that attended after-school tutoring for avg. of 3+ days per month, 14 passed math for year (4 were black males)
	Behavioral	Referrals and suspensions for participants decrease by 5% from first half to second half	Of 14 regular program participants, referrals increased from 8 to 12 and out-of-school suspensions increased from 2 to 4 b/t semester 1 and 2
	Other	Goals related to positive perceptions; goals related to reading/interacting with (students) and incorporating materials into lessons (teachers)	Goals were either met or are pending

Appendix C

Year 1 Survey Instrument

PROGRAM INFORMATION

School name:

Enter information

Contact name and email/phone:

Enter information

Recommendation chosen:

Brief description of program (no more than about 100 words):

Enter information

Number and grade level(s) of participating students, if applicable:

Enter information

Selection criteria for participating students—how were participants chosen?

Enter information

Number and grade level/positions of participating teachers, if applicable:

Enter information

Selection criteria for participating teachers—how were participants chosen?

Enter information

Implementation Data

Directions: In this section, please (1) describe the planned implementation, (2) describe the actual implementation, and (3) if applicable or known, share thoughts, reasons, or lessons learned about why planned implementation differed from actual implementation.

[Optional] Besides what you have reported, what else would you like to share about the implementation of the program?

One possible format for this is a table, although there might also be information you'd like to share with us about implementation that doesn't fit this format.

Implementation data to describe might include:

- Program start date

- Program duration (number of weeks/months)

- Number of participating students

- Number of participating adults

- Program schedule (how often meetings occurred, when, where, and for how many minutes/hours)

- Program materials (textbooks, technology, etc.)

- Program activities other than meetings (field trips, assemblies, etc.)

Implementation Data	Planned	Actual	Comments
Start date	September 2021	End of October, 2021	Needed parent permission to provide mentoring; permission took two months to fully obtain
Program duration	September 2021 – June 2022	November 2021 – March 2022	Permissions delayed the start, and we realized we could not continue in spring due to state testing
Participating students	30 5th graders	35 4th and 5th graders	We planned to do only 5th graders but realized working with 4th graders (who would stay at the school longer) would be positive as well
Participating adults	3 teachers, 15 community mentors	3 teachers, 5 community mentors	The teacher mentors participated as planned, but rather than 15 community mentors (one per week) we decided to work with only 5, who kept coming consistently

Implementation Data	Planned	Actual	Comments
Program schedule	One meeting per week for 60 minutes, after school, in-person	One meeting per week for 60 minutes, virtual or in-person, during school hours	We switched to virtual for some meetings due to scheduling. We also found that student attendance and engagement was better if meetings were held during school hours

Program Goals, Data to Track Progress to Goals, and Progress-to-Date

Directions:

1. Please describe the quantifiable, observable goals of the program, including the time frame for the goal. If possible/applicable, please describe the target and/or targeted degree of improvement.

2. For each goal, please describe the data you are using to track progress toward program goals. Please also include the point(s) in time you are collecting the data, and what data you are comparing in order to determine progress.

3. For each goal, please share what the data show as of the end of the school year and, if applicable, the comparison across data points.

(Optional): Please describe any goals that are not easily quantified, measured, and/or observed. Describe the goal, what data/evidence you are using to observe the goal, and what you've seen so far.

Example 1:

1. Goal: Participants will have improved attendance compared to their attendance before the mentoring program.

2. Target: All participants will have 95% attendance or better in the spring 2021-22 semester.

3. Data source: Daily attendance for participants, spring 2021-22
Comparison: Daily attendance for participants, fall 2019-20

4. Data: Of the 25 program participants:

   a. 23 of 25 had improved attendance compared to fall 2019-20

   b. Average attendance for all 25 participants in fall 2019-20 was 80%. Average attendance for all participants in spring 2021-22 was 96%.

   c. 14 of 25 participants met the goal of 95% attendance.

- (Optional): A second goal of the program is improved student confidence. To assess progress on this goal, we are relying on the assessments of school guidance counselors, who regularly interact with students and teachers, and are a good source of information because they are well placed to impartially observe changes in students' behavior. So far, indications are that program participants are more likely to participate in class discussions and volunteer answers to teachers' prompts.

Example 2:

1. Goal: Teachers who received the training will decrease their discipline referrals for African American male students.

2. Data source: Discipline referral rates for African American male students
    Comparison: Referral rates of teachers who fully participated in the PD, and referral rates for teachers who did not

3. Data: Teachers who received the training reduced their referral rate from 0.5 to 0.1 referrals per student after the training; teachers who did not receive or fully participate in the training did not significantly reduce their referral rate.

	Teachers who received training	Teachers who did not receive training
Number of Black male students taught, 2021-22	150	300
Total number of referrals of Black male students, fall 2021-22 (prior to training dates)	75	150
Discipline rate for Black male students, fall 2021-22	0.5 referrals per student (= 75/150)	0.5 referrals per student (= 150/300)
Total number of referrals, Black male students, spring 2021-22 (after training dates)	15	140
Discipline rate for Black male students, spring 2021-22	0.1 referrals per student (= 15/150)	0.47 referrals per student (= 140/300)