

# 10 Boys Initiative

*Changing Lives by Giving Roots and Wings*



## ***‘School through Prisms’ Pipeline***

Supporting Boys of Color through rituals and rites that encourage active, relevant, yet culturally historical learning to improve systemic outcomes.

The 10 Boys Initiative is a tier-1 intervention focused on the socio-emotional development of Boys of Color in Boston Public Schools (BPS). Currently serving nearly 300 students, the 10 Boys Initiative offers a character-based curriculum model to improve students’ academic performance while working to reshape their life trajectory. The initiative hopes to motivate Black and Latino boys to enhance their leadership, decision-making, and critical-thinking capacities. The 10 Boys Initiative focuses on academic rigor, physical challenges, tutoring, “real-talk” spaces, and community service learning. The initiative is rooted in rites of passage traditions modified to fit the school context.

**1**

### **CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT**

10 Boys is focused on improving attendance and involvement in school and community activities.

**2**

### **SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL**

10 Boys works to empower Black & Latino males to experience positive and healthy social development.

**3**

### **STATE ASSESSMENTS**

10 Boys involves a culturally relevant curriculum that ensures successful learning outcomes.



### **Positive Group Dynamics**

10 Boys will provide positive peer support and establish unified group identity.



### **Academic Rigor**

10 Boys will use rigorous culturally rich text to challenge and enhance participants’ reading capacity.



### **Rooting Experiences in Cultural Identity**

10 Boys will carry young men through experiences that allow them to define their cultural and historical identities to mold their futures.

## Changing Lives

### *10 Boys at a Time*

The 10 Boys Initiative is a staple program within BPS. From the vision of Dr. Ingrid Carney to the expansion under the guidance of Dr. Carroll Blake, the 10 Boys Initiative has served thousands of students for over twenty years, creating academic and holistic interventions that foster positive experiences for historically marginalized males to better their life outcomes. Now with the leadership of Mwalimu Donkor Issa, the 10 Boys Initiative seeks to reaffirm young men of color through an asset-based curriculum to ensure they graduate from BPS and are college and career ready. Based on recent census data sources, the BPS have 77.8% Black and Latino males within their schools. With Black and Latino males identified for special education needs 1.5 times more than their white and asian counterparts, the 10 Boys Initiative facilitators will serve as advocates for boys of color at the school level. With one standard curriculum, all schools have one unified experience so that data can be collected to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.



Through the Office of Opportunity and Achievement Gap (OAG), the 10 Boys Initiative now seeks to apply nationally recognized practices provided by the Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color (COSEBOC). The 10 Boys Initiative is a specialty class designed to impact a heterogeneous group of Black and Latino males of no more than twenty students per cohort. The 10 Boys Initiative aims to eliminate some of the current data that suggests that Black & Latino males hold the highest suspension rates, occupy the most police arrests, and perform the worst in regards to literacy on state standardized assessments. By leveraging community partnerships, researching and implementing best instructional strategies, this program will continue to pave the way for students for many more generations to come.

### **MWALIMU DONKOR ISSA**

#### **Program Coordinator**

Educating in Boston Public Schools for over a decade, Donkor currently manages the 10 Boys Initiative and manages a host of programs hosted by the Office of Opportunity and Achievement Gap, under the leadership of Superintendent Tommy Chang. Previously, Donkor served as a teacher at the James P. Timilty Middle School, at which he launched his first young men's group. For five years at the Tobin K-8 School, he taught English Language Arts and created a formal rites of passage process entitled "Sankofa MPA" (Manchild with a Positive Attitude), employing traditional African-centered and indigenous rites strategies. Leading work around district-wide rites of passage training, Donkor supports schools facilitating young men's leadership groups. He believes education is a liberating process and says, "Education should be a reciprocal process where the educator and the scholar both transform throughout the process."



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