



Legislation Text

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140602
ORIGINAL

ALD. HAMILTON

Resolution relating to the establishment of the Be the Change Literacy, Leadership and Life Skills program as an official City of Milwaukee program.

This resolution establishes the Be the Change Literacy, Leadership and Life Skills Program as an official City of Milwaukee program. Be the Change is a program that provides black 8th grade males students with special intervention and support services aimed at improving their reading ability while also transmitting valuable life and applied leadership skills. The Department of Administration shall, in cooperation with Milwaukee Public Schools and the Universal Companies, implement and administer the program. No City funds shall be expended for Be the Change without further Common Council approval.

Whereas, Milwaukee black male youth population has long been plagued by the problems of low literacy, low academic achievement and high drop-out rates; and

Whereas, In the 2012-2013 school year, only 7.7% of black students in Milwaukee Public Schools scored at the proficient or advanced levels in reading on the Wisconsin Standardized Assessment System test, compared to 35.8% of white students; and

Whereas, The 2012-2013 Milwaukee Public Schools graduation rate for black students was 58.3%, compared to 74.0% for white students; and

Whereas, The consequences of low literacy and high drop-out rates include high rates of unemployment and underemployment among black males, as well as disproportionately high rates of incarceration; and

Whereas, In Milwaukee, young black males are 3 times as likely to be incarcerated than to enroll in college; and

Whereas, These statistics point to the need for implementation of innovative approaches to improving literacy and life skills among Milwaukee's young black males; and

Whereas, For this reason, in June of 2011 a coalition of agencies led by the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee Public Schools launched the Be the Change Literacy, Leadership and Life Skills Program to provide critical interventions for 8th grade Milwaukee students entering high school; and

Whereas, Be the Change provides the targeted students with support for improving their reading ability while learning valuable life and applied leadership skills; and

Whereas, Specific goals for Be the Change include:

1. Improve reading comprehension and English composition skills.
2. Improve student confidence and attitudes toward learning.
3. Improve school attendance rates among program participants.
4. Lower the rates of disciplinary referral, detention and suspension among program participants.
5. Establish, promote and enforce positive social norms and behavioral standards among participating students through a culturally-relevant rites-of-passage program.
6. Provide opportunities for life-skill development in the areas of health, finance, character, leadership and career readiness.
7. Increase the levels of community service and civic engagement among participating students.

; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the Be the Change Literacy, Leadership and Life Skills Program is established as an official City of Milwaukee program; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the City of Milwaukee endorses the above-recited goals for Be the Change; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the Department of Administration shall, in cooperation with Milwaukee Public Schools and the Universal Companies, implement and administer Be the Change; and, be it

Further Resolved, That no City funds for implementation of Be the Change shall be expended without further Common Council approval.

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Jeff Osterman
07/22/2014