

Times of San Diego

Leaders Pledge Support of San Diego Schools for Obama's 'My Brother's Keeper' Program

Posted by [Jennifer Vigil](#) on July 21, 2014 in [Education](#) |

The [San Diego Unified School District](#) was one of 60 big-city public school organizations around the U.S. that pledged Monday in Washington, D.C., to improve the academic and social outcomes of boys and young men of color.

The pledge is part of President Barack Obama's five-year, \$200 million ["My Brother's Keeper" program](#) to assist African-American and Latino youth.

The districts making the pledge are responsible for educating 40 percent of African-American and Latino children in the U.S. who are living under the poverty line.

"The pledge we are making with President Obama is a promise to our boys and young men of color that we firmly support equity and the opportunity for our students to fully realize their potential," said SDUSD Superintendent Cindy Marten.



President Obama being introduced by NBA player Chris Paul July 21, 2014. Photo credit: NBA via YouTube.

"It represents an unprecedented platform that sends a strong signal to the nation," Marten said. "As leaders of the largest public urban school districts, we stand with the White House to commit our resources, efforts, hearts and minds to act with courage and conviction to positively impact the life outcomes of our young men."

San Diego schools enrollment is 46.5 percent Hispanic and 10.5 percent African-American, according to Marten.

The graduation rate for white students in the SDUSD last year was 94.1 percent, and 92.9 percent for Asians. The rate was 82.8 percent for African American students and 81.6 percent for Hispanics.

“The achievement gap is an urgent matter that we must address as a school district,” said SDUSD trustee Marne Foster. “We have established multiple strategies and are closely monitoring students who are on track for graduation in order to have a laser-like focus on supporting our students.”

The district’s Board of Education adopted a resolution on June 10 to support the pledge.

Steps that will be taken, according to the SDUSD, include:

- monitoring the progress of black and Hispanic males in completing the so-called “A-G Courses” required by the [University of California](#) and [California State University](#) systems
- establishing a middle-college program with the San Diego Community College District that focuses on science, engineering and math instruction
- collaborating with black and Latino education groups
- forming a diversity committee to make recommendations to the superintendent and trustees
- addressing diversity among the teacher ranks
- implementing a uniform policy with direction to principals to reduce the disproportionate number of suspensions of young men of color.

– *City News Service*