

# ESI Overview



**The NYC Department of Education's research and development initiative dedicated to increasing outcomes for black and Latino young men in NYC public high schools.**

The Expanded Success Initiative is an educational component of New York City's Young Men's Initiative, the nation's boldest effort to tackle the disparities slowing the advancement of black and Latino young men.

Supported by Open Society Foundations, ESI is dedicated to advancing justice, equity, and access in education.

Since its inception in 2011, ESI has been an innovation hub for school leaders and staff to reimagine how schools serve black and Latino young men. Over three years, the 40 high schools selected to participate received direct funding to plan, develop, and implement strategies and programs with one goal: Increase the number of black and Latino young men who graduate high school prepared to enter, persist, and succeed in college and careers.

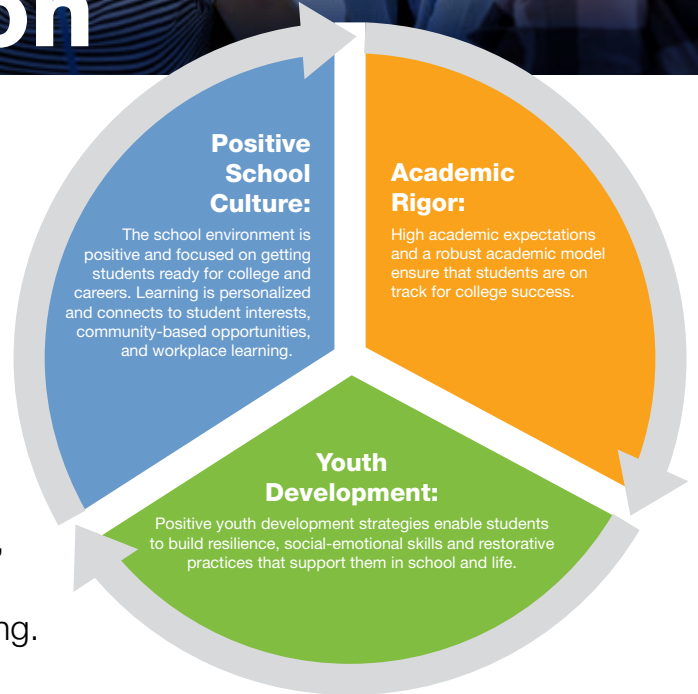


**ESI** Expanded Success Initiative



# Theory of Action

Our schools-designed program supports in three core areas essential to creating a college-going culture in NYC public high schools: academics, youth development, and school culture. Over the three years of direct investment, ESI schools have shown substantial operational shifts in the way that they address the needs of their black and Latino male students. These shifts have been shown through increased collaboration, a dedication to professional development, the creation of new offices, and enhanced programming.



## Academics

Our schools are intentional about increasing academic standards to meet the Common Core Standards for college and career readiness while providing the supports necessary to help students meet or exceed the standards. Schools have addressed this challenge in a variety of ways, including offering AP or early college courses, extended tutoring hours, and developing academic centers within the school.

This intentional intervention is necessary to prepare more of our black and Latino male students to meet the rigorous demands of college-level work and give them critical skills that are the foundation for success in their chosen career.

## Youth Development

Preparing students for college and career goes further than the classroom. Youth development strategies, often overlooked but critical to student achievement, attend to the social, emotional, intellectual, physical, mental, and career identities of our young people.

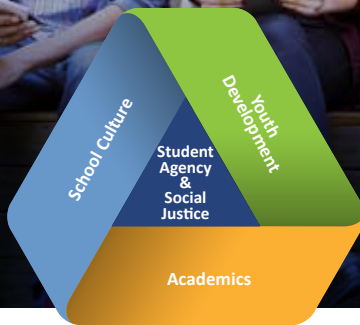
Our schools implement a variety of strategies aimed at supporting the social/emotional development of their young men of color such as targeted advisory groups, events, and retreats.

## School Culture

Creating a positive, college-going culture that reflects and supports all students is integral to increasing the number of black and Latino young men who graduate ready to succeed in college and career. Positive school culture requires the development of healthy, nurturing relationships among school staff, students, and families.

Our schools have received professional development around culturally responsive education, college access, and family engagement to help faculty better understand their students and assist in their role of providing guidance to students and families. Some schools have created teams with the sole purpose of increasing family engagement.





# Culturally Responsive Education

## ESI creates opportunities to actively engage students, their families, and their communities.

In order to effectively tackle the challenges facing black and Latino young men, we have to get comfortable acknowledging how the issues they face in their communities—*issues of race, gender, class, and identity*—also show up in our schools and classrooms.

Culturally responsive education (CRE) is a core tenet of our work. As part of that work, ESI seeks to create safe spaces for educators to engage in and learn how to have critical professional and sometimes personal conversations around issues of race and identity. Over half of our schools have taken part in CRE trainings led by professors from Teachers College at Columbia University, NYU Metro Center, and other partners.

Research has shown that culturally relevant instructional practices engage students and create supportive environments where all students can learn—particularly black and Latino young men, who rarely see themselves in the curriculum.

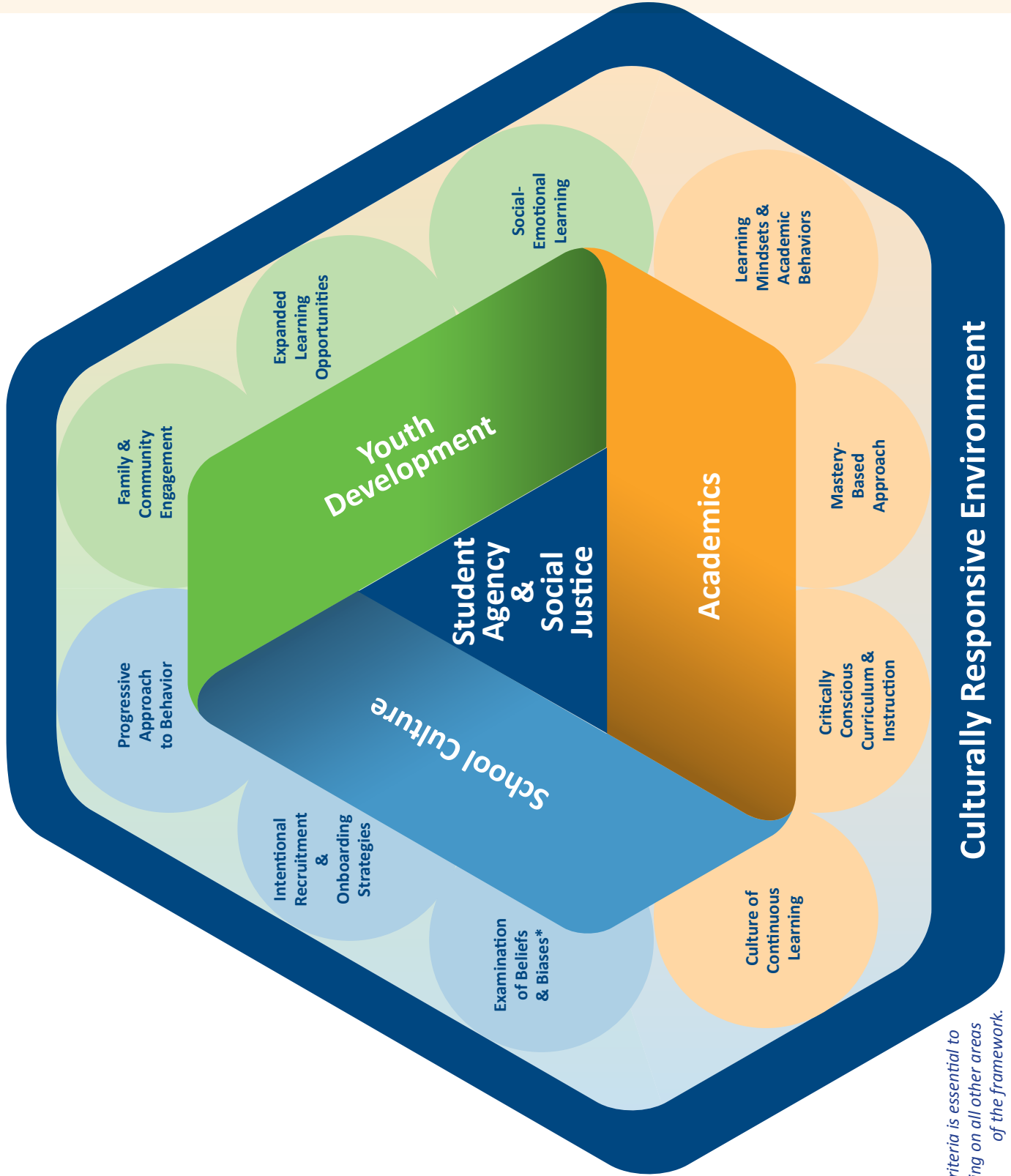
ESI empowers schools to incorporate the lived experiences of students and their families into the curriculum. This leads to a more engaged classroom and allows for teachers to get to know their students in a way that cultivates and nurtures positive relationships.

By facilitating supportive environments for educators and school leaders to discuss the implications of race, gender, and socioeconomic identity in their own lives and the impact of these factors on the lives of their students, we continuously work to help school leaders develop a cultural and critical awareness that is needed to better serve black and Latino male students.



The ESI team has hosted multiple young men's gatherings, leadership symposia, and a college road trip, exposing young men and their families to a variety of college campuses.

# CRE Framework



*\*This criteria is essential to working on all other areas of the framework.*

**Progressive Approach to Behavior:**  
 Schools sustain a positive social/emotional community by using approaches such as restorative practices and positive behavioral interventions to repair harm and heal social issues.

**Family & Community Engagement:**  
 Schools see actively engaged families, community members, and local organizations as valuable collaborators who enrich and support young learners.

**Intentional Recruitment & Onboarding Strategies:**  
 Schools recognize that students thrive when they have academic role models who look like them, and recruiting strategies consider this as a factor.

**Expanded Learning Opportunities:**  
 Schools connect students to expanded learning opportunities via partnerships, workplace experiences, and project-based learning that extends to the local community and the city.

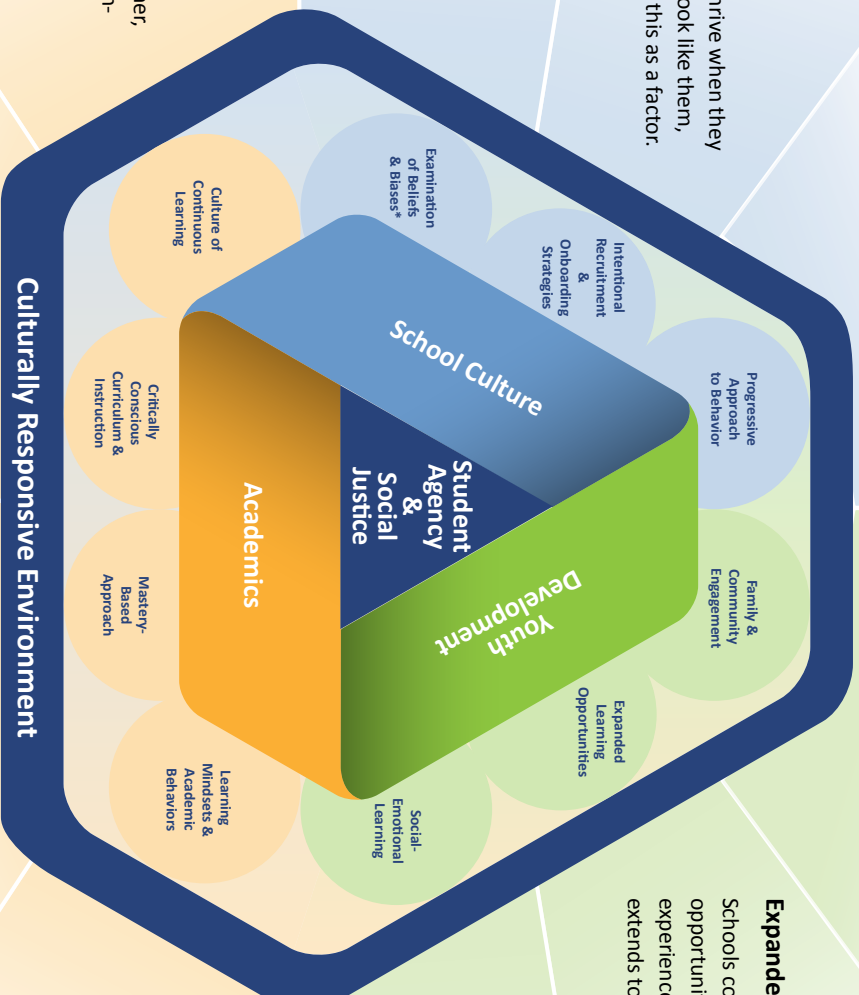
**Examination of Beliefs & Biases:**  
 To foster a positive, just learning environment, educators engage in ongoing reflection of their beliefs and biases related to social identities (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation etc.).  
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**Social-Emotional Learning:**  
 Everyone in the school benefits from learning to understand/manage emotions, create positive relationships, empathize, and make responsible, community-minded decisions.

**Culture of Continuous Learning:**  
 Everyone in the school identifies as a learner, and learning is seen as a collaborative, non-competitive endeavor.

**Critically Conscious Curriculum & Instruction:**  
 Educators work to ensure all aspects of their students' identities are reflected in the curriculum and processes of learning.

**Mastery-Based Approach:**  
 Learning goals are clear from the outset. Students progress when they can show independent mastery of key skills and knowledge in each course.







# CREATES

## Creates

Culturally Responsive Environments Attaining Transformative Equitable Solutions (CREATES) is a cohort of schools that is using the CRE Framework (see pages 4 and 5) to ensure that policies, practices and procedures that exist, and those that are created, are filtered through a culturally responsive and equity lens. By using this framework and lens, ESI will support these schools on their collective journey toward equitable outcomes for all students.

### On this journey, schools are developing spaces where:

- The **school culture** attends to race, ethnicity, culture, gender, gender identity, religion, (dis)ability and socioeconomic background of each school community member including students, families, teachers, staff and administrators.
- The school fosters social, environmental, and relational conditions for promoting **academic achievement** in practices that are responsive to, and continuously centering the evolving needs of, the current student population. Specific attention is made to the most vulnerable student populations.
- The school provides equitable access and opportunity for **youth development** through curriculum, pedagogy, and relational trust centered in positive racial identity development and both formal and informal mechanisms to capture and respond to student voice and lived experience. Equitable access and opportunity is deeply attuned to the experiences and outcomes of black and Latino students and families.





# Peer to Peer Mentoring

## Overview

New York City Young Men's Initiative (YMI), in partnership with the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) and the New York City Department of Education's Expanded Success Initiative (ESI), has embarked on the mission of supporting New York City high schools with existing peer to peer mentoring programs to increase the number of students engaged while strengthening and expanding the quality of service provided within priority communities. Through funding requests, schools have been selected with comprehensive programs that demonstrate versatility and also incorporate elements that align with ESI's core tenets in order to continue to increase the number of black and Latino young men that graduate college and career ready.

ESI works with a cohort of high schools to help build capacity, improve sustainability, and enhance the use of evidence based practices to better serve the needs of their students and the school community.

### Program Goals

- Professional development for school based liaisons
- Training for mentors and mentees
- College Visits
- Cultural Excursions
- Teambuilding Retreats
- Career Exploration
- Financial Literacy

### ESI Central Supports

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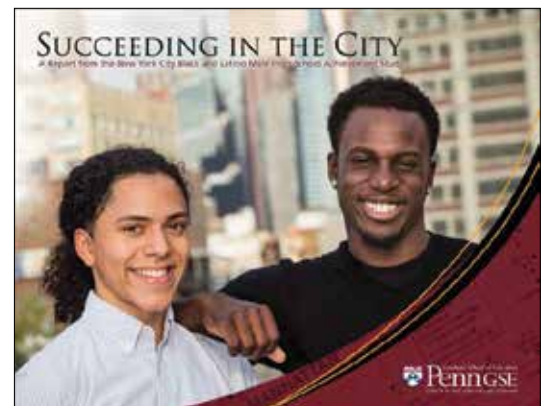
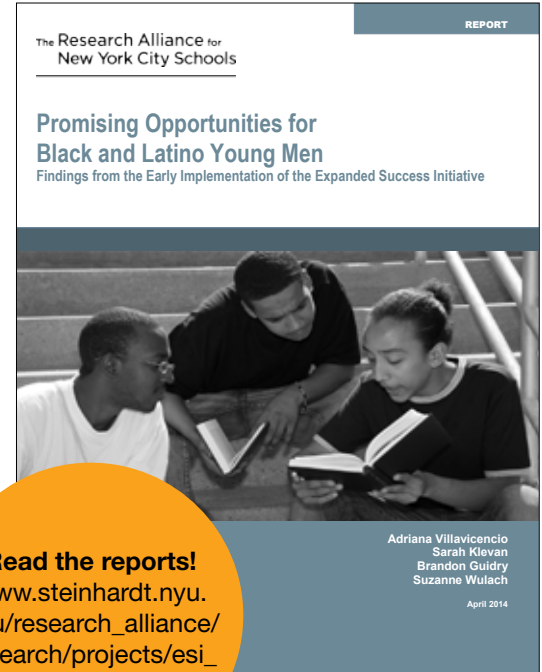
# What We Are Learning

Essential to eliminating educational and opportunity gaps is identifying strategies that work and can be replicated and brought to scale. During each year of implementation, NYU Research Alliance for NYC Schools worked with the ESI team collect data about the initiative at the program and school level. Four reports have been released so far:

- Moving the Needle (2013)
- Preparing Black and Latino Young Men for College and Careers (2013)
- Promising Opportunities for Black and Latino Young Men (2014)
- Changing How High Schools Serve Black and Latino Young Men (2015)
- Strategies for Improving School Culture: Educator Reflections on Transforming the High School Experience for Black and Latino Young Men (2016)
- More Than an Application: How Two NYC High Schools Work with Students and Families on the Road to College (2017)
- Learning Out Loud: Elevating Student Voices in Education (2017)

Additionally, ESI has also partnered with Dr. Shaun Harper, founder of UPenn's Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education, to deliver **"Succeeding in the City: A Report from the New York City Black and Latino Male High School Achievement Study"**. While much research has been done on the educational deficits of black and Latino young men, Harper's report took an asset-based approach on evaluating black and Latino males from ESI schools who were on track for college and career readiness.

**Read it here: [www.gse.upenn.edu/equity/nycReport](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/equity/nycReport)**



## Contact Us

✉ **Paul Forbes: Senior Director**  
[pforbes@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:pforbes@schools.nyc.gov)

✉ **Camille Kinlock: Director**  
[ckinlock@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:ckinlock@schools.nyc.gov)

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