



NEW YORK STATE

My Brother's Keeper

New York State My Brother's Keeper Symposium

Empire State Plaza ♦ Albany, NY

Thursday, May 1, 2025

7:30 AM – 4:00 PM

7:30am	Continental Breakfast and Registration	Convention Hall
8:30	Welcome Dr. Anael Alston, Assistant Commissioner, NYSED, MBK Student TBD Dr. Betty A. Rosa, Commissioner, NYSED Dr. Lester W. Young, Jr., Chancellor, New York State Board of Regents Elected Official TBD Elected Official TBD	Convention Hall
9:00	Indigenous Ceremony Opening – Shinnecock (Tribal Nation Students) MBK	Convention Hall
9:15	Keynote: Brian Favors and Jordan Pierre <i>Our Ancestors Sacrifice, Your Highest Potential, and the Connection</i>	Convention Hall
10:15	MBK Fellows Student Panel moderated by Dr. Alfonso Wyatt “Lessons Learned, Lessons Applied” including Q&A	Convention Hall
11:00	Breakout Sessions Please see below for BOTH the adult and student breakout sessions.	Convention Hall
12:30 pm	Lunch/College Fair A dozen colleges, universities, and supporting organizations will help students design their post-graduate plans and share crucial information with adults.	Convention Hall
1:25	Pre-Afternoon Welcome Back: The Pathways High School Step Team Induction of the 2025 MBK Fellows Speaker Showcase – My MBK, Living and Learning featuring Buffalo MBK, Brentwood MBK, NYCMBK-Staten Island, Dunkirk MBK, Yonkers MBK, and Uniondale MBK	Convention Hall
2:30	Students Share Insights (Agree or Disagree?) NYC MBK Queens, Newburgh MBK, and Yonkers MBK	

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2:45	Special Presentation: Ms. Cheryl Wills (featuring Pathways HS Step Team) <i>Grandpa Sandy and the DNA of Resilience</i>	
3:15	NYSMBK Updates and Next Steps with Dr. Anael Alston	Convention Hall
3:30	Closing Remarks: Principal Kafele Where Do We Go from Here? The Power and Purpose Community	Convention Hall

***BREAKOUT SESSIONS (11:00 AM - 12:30 PM)**

STUDENT SESSIONS

Workshop Title and Descriptions

****College Application Insights: What You Need to Know (Meeting Room 5)**

Graduation is a matter of time—which means it is time to get serious about what’s next. Two big questions are front and center: *How do I apply to college?* and *how do I stand out on my college applications?*

This engaging and eye-opening workshop breaks down exactly what you need to know to take control of your college journey before senior year even begins. From choosing the right schools to writing a personal essay that actually sounds like you, this session is filled with insider tips and practical strategies most students don’t hear until it’s too late.

You will learn how to build a college list that fits your goals and budget, understand what admissions officers really look for, and find out how to use your summer wisely so you’re not overwhelmed in the fall.

By the end, you will walk away with a clear action plan, a checklist to stay on track, and examples of real application materials that worked.

Presenter:

Ms. Michelle Thompson-Taylor

Associate Dean of College Counseling, Choate Rosemary Hall

****This session meets the needs for students and adults.**

Are We There Yet? Navigating Post High School and Beyond (Meeting Room 6)

Inspired by Jalin Thomas’s groundbreaking book, *Clueless Compass*, this workshop is designed to equip teenagers with essential knowledge and skills to succeed and thrive well beyond high school. Here is what you can expect:

- Discover practical strategies to be successful in your first year of college or the first year of work
- Learn how to create and use the five daily habits that the most successful people use
- Hear from a panel of young people who are walking the walk

This empowering session will set you on the path to short term wins in life and long-term success. Do not miss this opportunity to take control of your future and live toward your highest potential.

Presenters:

Mr. Jeremiah Brown, Mr. Jalin Thomas, (three MBK students/alum TBD)

Media Literacy Matters: How to Decode the Messages That Shape Our World (Swyer Theater)

In a world where we scroll more than we speak and headlines come faster than facts, understanding how media works is not optional—it’s essential. This interactive workshop is designed to help young people become *critical thinkers, smart consumers, and confident creators* of media in all its forms. Participants will explore how media is used to inform, educate, entertain, and influence—from news reports and social media trends to advertising and pop culture. Together, we will break down how messages are constructed, who creates them, what’s left out, and why it matters. Through real-world examples, short video clips, and collaborative discussions, attendees will gain tools to:

- Recognize bias, manipulation, and misinformation
- Analyze how media shapes opinions and identity
- Understand the power of storytelling in shaping social norms
- Build awareness of how algorithms and platforms affect what we see and believe

Whether it is a viral TikTok or a breaking news alert, this workshop empowers young people to ask better questions, think deeper, and take control of how they interact with media—not just consume it.

Presenters:

Mr. Brian Favors and Mr. Jordan Pierre

ADULT SESSIONS

Workshop Titles and Descriptions

What is My Impact and Value of the MBK Program That I Participate In? Meeting Rooms 2 and 3

In this highly engaging and introspective workshop, renowned author, and dynamic speaker Baruti Kafele guides participants through a transformative exploration of their personal and collective impact within the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Program. Drawing insights from his latest book, "What Is My Value Instructionally to the Teachers I Supervise?", Kafele adapts his powerful framework to the unique contexts and experiences of MBK mentors, educators, and leaders. Participants will engage in reflective activities designed to uncover and articulate the specific ways their involvement in MBK directly influences and empowers the young men they serve. Through thought-provoking dialogue and actionable strategies, attendees will leave equipped to clearly communicate the significance and profound value of their work within MBK, renewing their commitment to leadership and advocacy in their communities.

Presenter:

Principal Baruti Kafele

Reaching Their Highest Potential: The Role of the Culturally Relevant Classroom in Student Belonging

– Meeting Room 4

This workshop is a call to the heart—and a call to action—for mentors, educators, and advocates who walk alongside our young people, especially those supported through My Brother's Keeper. Together, we will explore how culturally relevant classrooms become more than learning spaces—they become sites of liberation where Black and Brown boys are affirmed, challenged, and empowered to reach their highest potential. Grounded in love, research, and the lens of the *Archaeology of Self*[™], this session invites participants to reflect on how affirming identity, honoring lived experience, and building authentic relationships contribute to student success. It is a space to replenish your spirit, sharpen your tools, and recommit to the sacred work of fostering belonging, purpose, and possibility in the lives of those we are called to serve—because when our young people feel they belong, they don't just show up. They shine.

Presenters:

Drs. Yolanda Sealey Ruiz and Autumn A. Griffin

MBK Yonkers, Yonkers Magic: How We Bring Out Their Highest Potential – Meeting Room 1

What methods can be used to convert an equity vision into tangible results for boys and young men of color? MBK Yonkers achieved national recognition as a model community from the Obama Foundation for its success in Milestone 3: Ensuring On-Time Graduation.

Listen to Superintendent of Schools Anibal Soler, Jr., along with Dr. Jason Baez, the Executive Director of MBK, as they reveal their successful strategies. In this interactive session, you will:

- **Hear the Inside Story:** Yonkers achieved national MBK success status by combining strategic leadership with an unwavering focus and community involvement.
- **Gain Practical Strategies:** Explore affordable yet powerful initiatives that districts can use to uplift boys and young men of color, and all students without needing large financial resources.
- **Take Immediate Action:** Participants will obtain instantly applicable strategies, along with defined steps to either enhance or initiate their MBK program.
- **Build Your Network:** Network with leaders who share your dedication to eliminating opportunity gaps and advancing student achievement.

This workshop offers practical solutions and inspiration to assist you in helping our students reach their highest potential whether you're beginning your MBK journey or looking to expand your impact.

Presenters:

Mr. Anibal Soler and Dr. Jason Baez

*Each session is 50-60 minutes inclusive of Q&A.