

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY, MD – Congressman Steny Hoyer (MD-05) announced the launching of the MEN (Men Equipped to Nurture) Program at Bowie State University today. The MEN Program will recruit and train more minority males, specifically African-Americans, to teach in Prince George's County. Hoyer obtained a \$350,000 federal grant in the Fiscal Year 2005 Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Bill to help fund this new partnership.

"I am pleased to mark the start of the MEN Program," said Hoyer today. "Next week, the first group of students will begin their coursework here at Bowie State University. And as a result, we will soon have dozens of newly certified minority male teachers working in the Prince George's County school system.

"These new teachers will serve as important role models and mentors for the next generation, and hopefully will play an important role in improving the academic achievement of young African-American boys," added Hoyer.

"I am impressed with the enthusiasm and commitment that Bowie State and the Prince George's County School System have shown in embracing this idea. This has been a very successful collaboration, with Bowie State providing reduced tuition and program support and Prince George's County Schools providing staff, as well as curriculum development and help identifying and selecting the students who will participate. My hope is that this project will prove to be such a success that it will be adopted in other areas of the country," concluded Hoyer.

Currently African-Americans make up only about five percent of teachers. In the past thirty years, the number of male teachers in K-12 classrooms has decreased from 34% to 21%. In addition, research has shown that one of the principle factors contributing to the under-representation of minority men in college, and their under-performance in primary and secondary schools, is the absence of male role models in education. Local leaders created the MEN program in response to these alarming statistics, understanding the importance of role models and mentors to academic achievement.

The program will begin with a class of approximately 40-45 students, most of whom already hold degrees in other areas. At the end of the year the students will take the tests required for teaching licenses. Ultimately, the program is designed to establish a national model for overcoming academic under-achievement by minority boys and to increase their presence in college by dramatically increasing the number of minority male teachers in public education classrooms across the United States.

Bowie State University is a public, non-profit historically black institution founded in 1865. Bowie State is located in Prince Georges County, Maryland and enrolls 5,200 students including African Americans, Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans as well as many white students.

Hoyer was joined at the event by several prominent Maryland educators and administrators including Calvin W. Lowe, President of Bowie State University, Scott Dantley, Acting Dean of the School of Education, Beatrice P. Tignor, Chair of the Prince George's County Board of Education, Howard A. Burnett, the Interim CEO of Prince George's County Public Schools, and Homer McCall, MEN Program Coordinator and former PGCPs teacher.

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