

# The Graduate Greater Louisville Collaborative Overview Brief for the Grad Nation Action Forum September 2009

## Collaborative Overview

The Graduate Greater Louisville Collaborative first came together to plan the July 2008 High School Dropout Solutions Summit. Following the Summit, four main focus areas emerged and groups agreed to take action on them. In the year since the Summit, these groups have demonstrated varying levels of engagement around the work.

- **Student Supports:** This group is working on Youth Visioning, led by Metro United Way (MUW), which will be completed this fall. The vision will be used to help the Youth Leadership Team (convened by Jefferson County Public Schools [JCPS], MUW and the city) develop a plan – called a YouthPrint – laying out a coordinated system of youth development. Metro Louisville made progress on mapping and surveying youth programs, developing an RFP for a market study of youth and their parents, and exploring how the KidTrax system could be used to augment an accountability framework.
- **Multiple Pathways/High School Innovation:** JCPS, with 100,000 students, is making significant changes (to fully take effect for the 2010-11 school year) toward improving three new R's – Relevance, Rigor and Relationships – for its high schools. Comprehensive high schools have been redesigned to provide smaller learning communities around Career Themes, Schools of Study, and nurturing Freshmen Academies. Going to a trimester schedule in most schools will give students the opportunity to immediately address needed remediation and give outstanding students the chance to accelerate content so they are appropriately challenged. In addition, JCPS will build highly supportive educational environments utilizing small-group discussions with faculty advisors, recruiting mentors and providing more meaningful and authentic experiences to students through internships and cooperative experiences.
- **Life Readiness & Education Beyond High School:** In an effort to better align with college and workforce needs, JCPS is creating a vertically-connected curriculum, integrating academics, career and technical education, providing for program entry at multiple grades, and providing advisement and support for postsecondary and career opportunities. In addition, Jefferson Technical and Community College's (JCTC) initiated a pilot program with two JCPS High Schools to improve college readiness for high school students in mathematics through incorporating on-line math instruction in the high school setting. Additionally, JCTC is working to align dual credit course offerings with the themes of the restructured high schools. Greater Louisville Inc. (the Chamber of Commerce), Metro United Way and Louisville Metro Government received a regional USDOL grant (WIRED 65) to improve college knowledge and college-going cultures in high schools with low college-going rates.
- **Policy Barriers to Graduation:** Proposed multiple times in past years, increasing the compulsory age for school attendance in Kentucky from 16 to 18 years of age made it through the House Education Committee for the first time during the 2009 legislative session, but was not supported by the governor during the session because its \$15M price tag conflicted with the state's severe budget deficit. Kentucky's Senate Bill 1 restructures the state's school accountability assessment system creating fewer, deeper standards and student tracking, as well as calling for alignment among systems. Though giving law enforcement officers the ability to pick up truants will require a change

in state statute, as an interim step a Truancy Summit was held with local judicial and law enforcement systems representatives to identify other ways to reduce truancy.

Today, with strong resources and leadership support from the Office of the Mayor, Jefferson County Public Schools, and Metro United Way, Louisville's Collaborative is specifically focusing on: (1) increasing participation in out-of-school-time programs (especially for older youth) by creating a system for youth development – the process is guided by a multi-component, long-term planning process that will produce a set of strategies and recommendations dubbed the "YouthPrint;" and (2) creating a community culture that address challenging cultural perceptions about the importance of high school graduation and college/career attainment.

### ***Structure & Governance***

- The Graduate Greater Louisville Collaborative is led by the Office of the Mayor. Leading partners include the City of Louisville's Office of Youth Development, Jefferson County Public Schools, and Metro United Way.
- Teams have formed to work on various projects.

## **About Our Work**

### ***Graduate Greater Louisville's vision and strategic goals:***

- Vision: Every student in Louisville graduates high school with the knowledge, skills and motivation required to obtain a high school degree and enter postsecondary education.
- Goals: (1) Reduce the dropout rate in JCPS by 50% in 10 years; (2) Louisville will move into the top tier among 15 competitive cities in high school graduation in 10 years.

### ***The focus areas for our work include:***

- City-Wide Afterschool System: Creating a coordinated system for the enhancement of youth services in Louisville
- Community culture: Creating a community culture that values education – creating a college-going culture; getting kids ready for college; getting kids and adults into/back into college; and keeping students in college until they graduate.

### ***Key initiatives and programs include:***

- Graduate Greater Louisville **High School Dropout Solutions Summit** (July 30, 2008). A one-year post-summit update is available at [www.louisvilleky.gov/OYD/dropout\\_summit](http://www.louisvilleky.gov/OYD/dropout_summit).
- A **Parent Engagement Conversation** (pilot) with Annie E. Casey Foundation (July 16, 2008).
- **Youth Visioning and YouthPrint** – Metro United Way heads a group of 25 "vision callers" who are developing a vision for youth. The Youth Leadership Team will use data and information gathered during the visioning process to help draft the YouthPrint. Modeling their work on the work of the DC Children's Trust Funds and Providence's After School Network, this team will also commission a market survey of parents and young people, map youth services and determine gaps, and revamp the city's website and searchable database of programs.
- **High school redesign** – The community-based School-to-Career Task Force is helping JCPS implement the Task Force's recommendations (listed on page 1) to create a comprehensive high school model of postsecondary preparation, planning and support. Community input is critical in restructuring high schools around five overarching themes and career emphasis program areas: 1) Human Services, Education and International Study; 2) Engineering (Aeronautics,

Architecture, Construction and Manufacturing); 3) Communication Media and Art; 4) Medicine, Health and the Environment; and 5) Business and information Technology.

- **KidTrax and Early Warning Tool** – Louisville is the only city that has successfully implemented a data integration system (KidTrax) that links our local school system database to youth service providers to target services needed by individual youth. More than 60 youth service and community service agencies, local government, the Chamber of Commerce, Metro United Way and JCPS have collaborated to implement a successful Every1Reads initiative that has helped significantly increase the number of public school students reading on grade level. JCPS also is working on an early warning indicator program that alerts school staff, in real time, of warning signs and recommends several proven interventions. We hope to create a feedback loop between these early warning and success-tracking programs that informs the new youth development system.
- **Ready By 21 Quality Counts** – Louisville is part of Kentucky’s Quality Counts Initiative; a city employee on the team is a certified trainer who works with youth-serving programs to assess quality and improve processes using the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YQA) tool, quality improvement plans and training.
- **Campaign for College** – funded by a Department of Labor WIRED grant and led by the Chamber of Commerce, the Campaign for College Team is implementing “Close the Deal” (providing a “road map” to high school seniors on how to get into, pay for and succeed in college in high schools with low college-going rates), regional forums and a PR campaign for [www.KnowHow2Go](http://www.KnowHow2Go).

## Resources Needed to Bring Our Work to Scale

- Data collection and analysis:
  - Community-wide market research with young people and parents (what do they want and need during out-of-school time); analysis of research results
  - Conducting neighborhood asset mapping to determine what assets exist in neighborhoods; conducting program landscape mapping to determine quality programs; performing gaps analysis.
- Investment in new, themed high schools, developing early college options and career pathways
- Technical assistance on how to structure a coordinated system of youth development
- Message development for fund-raising

## Questions & Challenges for Consideration

1. How do we increase participation in out-of-school-time programs, particularly older youth? What results have you achieved? What was the best method of communication used and what messages resonated most effectively? What do we do about vulnerable populations (e.g. homeless youth) and cultural groups (e.g. certain immigrant populations)? What tools and resources have you used? What are your key lessons learned? What community-based organizations were most helpful? What techniques have you used to maximize participation? How have you successfully engaged parents, teachers, social workers, business leaders?

2. How do we increase parent engagement, both during in-school and out-of-school time? How do we promote a culture of education among parents, particularly those who have not encouraged high school graduation and college attainment?
3. How do we create an organization (or build on to an existing organization) to maintain and govern a vibrant youth service system and/or a larger organization that looks at the range of elements to creating successful youth and adults from birth through post-secondary education? This would include developing funds plans and business engagement models.
4. We're in need of transportation ideas and resources for afterschool program participants. We're interested in any solutions or ideas that others have used to inexpensively help get young people safely to their programs.
5. We'd like to know the best way to build a "culture for college" (college = all post-secondary training). This involves understanding how to engage and activate cultures where the data show little value is placed on college/career attainment (e.g. black males, white females, blue collar populations). Colleges and technical schools in the Louisville region average 40-45% first-generation college-goers among first-time freshmen, versus the national average of 15%.
6. What data points do business and foundation leaders find most compelling to move their organizations to action? How do we best engage and activate leadership in positions of power (business, foundations, government, community-based organizations, etc.)?

## **Appendix A: Graduate Greater Louisville Member List**

**Convener:** Mary Gwen Wheeler, Mayor Jerry E. Abramson’s Senior Advisor on Education and Youth

### **Participating Organizations**

AT&T

Boys and Girls Clubs of Kentuckiana

Catholic Charities of Louisville, Inc.

City of Louisville Crime Commission

Greater Louisville Inc. (Chamber of Commerce) (GLI)

GLI Business Leaders for Education

Greater Louisville Project

Jefferson Community & Technical College

Jefferson County Public Schools

JobCorps

KentuckianaWorks

Kentucky State Legislature

Louisville Alliance for Youth

Louisville Metro Council

Louisville Metro Police Department

Louisville Urban League

Making Connections (Annie E. Casey Foundation)

Metro Parks

Metro United Way

National Center for Family Literacy

Neighborhood Place

Newburg Youth Council/Peace Presbyterian/Newburg Ministerial Association

Office of Youth Development

Salvation Army Boys and Girls Clubs

Seven Counties Services

University of Louisville

YMCA of Louisville

YouthBuild Louisville

Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) Center

## **Appendix B: Demographics & Statistics, Jefferson County Public Schools**

- 135 schools and 20 learning centers; more than 100,000 students<sup>i</sup>
- Ethnic distribution: 57.6% Caucasian, 34.7% African American, 3.4% Hispanic
- 57% of students receive free or reduced-price lunch rates
- Graduation rate: 72.55% in 2007 (rate used for Summit)<sup>ii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Jefferson County Public Schools website, “JCPS At a Glance,” <http://www.jefferson.k12.ky.us/AboutUs/About.html>

<sup>ii</sup> Graduation Rate Trends Data 2004-2008, Kentucky Department of Education, Office of Assessment and Accountability