He pulls the truck into station number nine.
Walks upstairs one step at a time.
Closes the curtains, gets in bed.
And pulls the covers over his head.

Emily's brother cannot go on a ride. Almost it is time to go.
Sometimes on hot days, she cannot go to the beach.
Many people like big slides. She also likes big slides.

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City of Learners
ACTION REPORT
2015
Adil Baguirov, Dayton School Board
Cassie Barlow, Wright State University
Mary Boosalis, Premier Health
Jerry Brunswick, Dayton/Montgomery County Port Authority
Mary Burns, Miami Valley Child Development Centers
Michael Carter, Sinclair Community College
Jim Clark, IUE-CWA
Daniel Curran, University of Dayton
Robert Curry, Thompson Hine LLP
Wendy Deichmann, United Theological Seminary
Matt Diggs, Dayton Early College Academy and Community Leader
Deborah A. Feldman, Dayton Children’s Hospital
Richard Ferguson, University of Dayton
Ray Fitz, University of Dayton
Derrick Foward, NAACP
Sherry Gale, Grace United Methodist Church
Perry Henderson, Corinthian Baptist Church
David Hopkins, Wright State University
Cynthia Jackson Hammond, Central State University
Steven Lee Johnson, Sinclair Community College
Charles Jones, Community Leader
Helen Jones-Kelley, Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board
Bob Jones, College Hill Community Church
Tanisha Jumper, United Way of Greater Dayton
Tim Kambitsch, Dayton Metro Library
Tom Kelley, Montgomery County
Rodney Kennedy, First Baptist Church
Nick Kuntz, Montgomery County Juvenile Court
Joe Lacey, Dayton School Board
Ronald C. Lee, Dayton School Board
Jan Lepore-Jentleson, East End Community Services
Gary LeRoy, Wright State School of Medicine
Deborah A. Lieberman, Montgomery County Commission

Jack Ling, University of Dayton Institute of Diversity and Inclusion
Amy Luttrell, Goodwill Easter Seals (formerly)
Tom Maultsby, United Way of Greater Dayton
Frances McGee, Montgomery County Common Pleas Court
Patricia Meadows, Public Health - Dayton and Montgomery County
Michael Merz, U.S. District Court
Jeff Mims, City of Dayton
Gary Minyard, Victoria Theatre Association
Nancy Nerny, Dayton School Board
Ken Neufeld, Victoria Theatre Association
Emmett Orr, Parity, Inc.
Tony Ortiz, Wright State University
Mike Parks, The Dayton Foundation
Carolyn J. Patrick, Wright-Patterson AFB
Bill Pflaum, Seedling Foundation
Cathy Ponitz, CareSource Foundation
Steve Reeves, P&R Communications
David Romick, Dayton Education Association
Hazel Rountree, Dayton School Board
Jon Sebaly, Sebaly, Shillito & Dyer
Bob Taft, University of Dayton
Harris Tay, Wesley Community Center (formerly)
Sheila Taylor, Dayton School Board
Daniel Trick, Junior Achievement of Dayton and the Miami Valley
A.J. Wagner, Flanagan, Lieberman, Hoffman and Swaim
Robert C. Walker, Dayton School Board
T.J. Wallace, Dayton Leadership Academy
Lori Ward, Dayton Public Schools
Vanessa Ward, Omega Baptist Church
Debbie Watts Robinson, Miami Valley Housing Opportunities
Merle Wilberding, Coolidge Wall Co., LPA
Joey Williams, City of Dayton
Even if you’re not a parent, come in and see. *It can be anybody* who can make that one difference for a kid.
When I was sworn in as mayor just one year ago, I spoke about a number of issues and initiatives that are important to our City and to our community. One challenge rises above all others. It is to ensure that every child in Dayton leaves high school ready for college or to start a career.

I called on Dayton to become a City of Learners. I promised that I would be the biggest champion, the staunchest advocate and the most tireless supporter for high quality traditional public schools, and private and public charter schools in our City.

There can be no debate about this cause or this priority: Dayton will not prosper — our region will not prosper — if we do not give our children a world-class education. Businesses will not locate here, and they will not invest in our community if we do not have a skilled and talented workforce. They need employees who can create, innovate and deliver for 21st century enterprises.

Our schools are the foundation for creating a first-class workforce. They, of course, are not in this work alone, but that base must be strong. It must be built with the finest materials. Each building block must be aligned and secure. There can be no cracks in the mortar.

Today’s high-school freshmen will enter a world of work where nearly two out of every three jobs will require a college degree or a credential attesting that they have a skill. Put simply, the days of being able to join the middle-class with only a high-school education are over.
If we want our children to grow up to be successful adults and lifelong learners, we have to give them the education they deserve when they are young learners.

Among the first things I did after I took my oath was to create the City of Learners Committee. With more than 70 members, the group has worked for the last year to understand what is and is not working well for children in our schools and in our community. But we did not stop there. We also asked: What must change for every child to succeed?

This report is the product of the City of Learners Committee’s research and its willingness to unravel complexity.

As Mayor, I will annually report back about the progress we are making on each of the challenges the Committee has identified. We will celebrate our successes. We will own our failures. We will keep asking for the help we need to ensure our children succeed.

I am immensely grateful for the Committee’s boundless commitment and energy. It will take an army of us, resolved to do the ongoing hard work that being a highly educated community requires.

If you are interested in joining our efforts, please reach out to our Task Force staff. They welcome your involvement and thoughts. (See the list of contacts on page 15, right before the Appendix.)

Thank you for all that you do for our children, their schools and our future. We are not finished, but we are on our way to making an incalculable difference.

Sincerely,

Nan Whaley

Mayor Whaley at the Dayton Leadership Academy where the seventh City of Learners Listening Session was held.
The City of Learners Committee is composed of more than 70 community leaders who are committed to helping ensure that all children in the City of Dayton receive a high quality education. The committee began its work early in 2014 by reaching out to citizens – to hear ideas and concerns regarding the barriers to our children’s success in school and, ultimately, in life.

Over seven weeks, Committee members met with almost 450 people across the City of Dayton at 11 “Listening Sessions.” Many members also attended the 2nd Annual Montgomery County Educational Summit where nearly 200 school board members, superintendents and community leaders came together with state legislators and members of the state school board to discuss how to better prepare children for college and 21st century jobs.

These “Listening Sessions” captured the rich diversity of Dayton. They were held at a Dayton Public School; a Catholic elementary school; a Catholic high school; a charter school; two community centers; a church; a preschool; and at Sinclair Community College. Additional conversations were held with educators, as well as a group of high-school students.

The Committee heard from parents and grandparents; concerned citizens; educators; high-school students; college students; preschool providers; business owners; nonprofit advocates; the City’s immigrant community; retirees and many others.

Citizens are passionate about the success of Dayton’s children and eager to support their schools, which they expect to be high quality and accountable.
Among the things that citizens emphasized:

• Too many young people are not getting the education they deserve.

• The Mayor must be a leader on education because the quality of schools and the vitality of Dayton’s economy are at stake.

• Schools and teachers cannot succeed without the help of parents and the broader community. Teachers cannot reach children whose families do not get them to school on time each day. They cannot teach children who come to school hungry.

• Dayton must create a culture where families expect their children to go to college, earn a credential certifying that they have a skill or join the military.

• Nonprofits, faith-based groups, social-service agencies, foundations and businesses must collaborate to support families and children. This is imperative given that poverty is so pervasive in the City – almost three-quarters of Dayton’s 30,000 children live in families that earn under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Though poverty puts children at a serious disadvantage, it cannot be an excuse for failing to offer all children the education they deserve. Everyday children throughout the City are persevering and succeeding in spite of institutions, organizations, governments and adults who have let them down.

“Only the Mayor of the City of Dayton can bring us together so everybody gets involved.

—Citizen Participant

”
During these thoughtful, candid and heartfelt conversations, the City of Learners Committee heard about a multitude of barriers that prevent children from succeeding.

The Committee identified five challenges where we must do better and where we can measure progress year over year:

• Ensure all children attend a high quality school
• Ensure high quality preschool is offered to all children
• Increase business partnerships with schools
• Provide mentors to more children
• Expand sites for afterschool and summer learning

Subcommittees were created around these priorities, and each group has produced recommendations for action. These recommendations are based on research in the community, and they also reflect national best practices. (See the Appendix for each group’s complete list of recommendations.)

Some City of Learners subcommittees have divided into still smaller groups. Others created new committees, or expanded, or merged with existing efforts in the community. While each subcommittee has organized itself differently, important work is happening around each of the five challenges that we have promised to address. That work will continue.

When the City of Learners Committee was created, the task was specific and finite: Identify what must change to ensure the success of our children so they are prepared for college or a career.

That identification process is complete. Now we begin the much more vexing task of righting what is wrong and improving what is not excellent. There is no more important work that we can commit ourselves to doing.
Ensure all children attend a high quality school

Dayton cannot afford – and should not accept – low-performing traditional public schools, private schools or public charter schools. They cheat children, and they destabilize neighborhoods by discouraging families from living in Dayton.

Again and again, citizens spoke about the need to have high expectations for children and their schools. That conviction was expressed in conversations about Ohio’s new 3rd-Grade Reading Guarantee; in discussions about state report cards and standardized tests; and when people spoke about the need to teach young people "soft" skills.

Engaged parents want their children to have academically challenging classes. They understand the value of homework and grading systems that demand mastery of content. They do not want to be deluded about the quality of their children’s achievements, and they do not want their children to be misled about what is required to succeed.

Currently, there are 62 brick-and-mortar schools in the City of Dayton (28 Dayton Public Schools, 25 public charter schools and 9 private schools). This is entirely too many given the community’s limited resources and a student population estimated at 24,000.

Dayton has 25 public charter schools and four e-school schools that altogether enroll about 6,400 Dayton children. Some of these schools are crucial additions to Dayton’s educational landscape. Numerous, however, have been criticized by state authorities who doubt the schools’ ability to educate children and even their intention to give children a quality education.

“Kids everywhere will try to find a way to rise to those expectations ... we can’t allow for a philosophy of just settling.”
—Citizen Participant
There are too many schools in Dayton that fail children year after year — with no penalty. Educating children — particularly high concentrations of children living in poverty — requires tremendous commitment and talent. Some schools are succeeding at this heroic work despite the forces against them. These schools must be replicated throughout the community.

“Turning around” failing schools is an intense process that requires investments in people. It also will take patience and persistence.

The Dayton School Board closed two low-performing schools — Gardendale Academy and Gorman School — at the end of the 2013-14 school year. In addition, Rosa Parks PK-8 School has been “re-purposed” as a high quality preschool. The Dayton School Board’s laudable goal is to create a portfolio of high performing schools. Critical to the success of that effort will be the superintendent’s need — indeed responsibility — to assign teachers to schools according to the needs of children, not the preference of adults.

The school board and Superintendent Lori Ward must be encouraged and supported in these efforts. The Superintendent cannot be successful if her hands are tied. Further, the City will not achieve its goal if the School Board and Superintendent Ward are the only educational and community leaders who are deemed responsible for creating the schools that Dayton needs.

To address the challenge of failing schools, the City of Learners Committee supports the creation of a “Turn-Around Schools Task Force.”

The focus of the Task Force will be to “turn around” the lowest performing Dayton schools — whether they’re traditional public schools, private schools or public charters. The effort will be aimed at schools with the lowest student value-added performance or that have a disproportionate number of students who are not proficient in reading and math.

The Task Force will include urban educators, higher education representatives, community leaders and, where appropriate, educational think tank representatives.

“We have developed a culture in this community of just passing these students along. **We need to change that.**

—Citizen Participant

“**Our students are not being challenged to be No. 1.**

—Citizen Participant
As a parent and a grandparent and a great-grandparent, I think it (preschool) is important. *Parents have to start when kids are in the cradle talking about education.*
—Citizen Participant

Ensure high quality preschool is offered to all children in the City

The research is compelling. All children, but especially low-income children, benefit academically and socially from attending preschool. Children who attend preschool are consistently more prepared for kindergarten, which is an important predictor of 3rd-grade reading proficiency. Children who read on grade-level in 3rd grade are significantly more likely to graduate from high school.

In recognition of this research, some experts estimate that the return on investment in high quality preschool for low-income children is as much as 10% — a stunning payback by any yardstick.

Currently an estimated 40% of Dayton’s 4-year-olds do not attend preschool each year. (Of the 60% who do go to preschool, almost all are able to do so only because they are eligible for free school-provided, or free state-subsidized, preschool.)

Many of the almost 750 children who do not attend preschool will start school behind and will be playing catch up from the start of their school career. This process then will repeat itself every year with each new class of children.
Cost is a big factor. ... We’re struggling just to pay our bills and our student loans. We’re having to pay (for childcare) what we paid for college.

—Citizen Participant

Montgomery County and a cadre of business leaders are investigating a “Preschool Promise” for children throughout Montgomery County, an investment that would be especially beneficial to families in the City. By far, Dayton has the highest concentration of children who come to kindergarten without the skills they need to succeed in school.

Creating a “Preschool Promise” will require local governments, school districts, foundations, non-profit organizations and preschool providers to work together to identify funding sources to ensure that Dayton and the County are rich in high quality preschools.

Members of the Preschool Task Force are joining with those who support offering voluntary preschool to all children and eliminating cost as a barrier. Specifically, they are working with three different groups that are:

• exploring the technical aspects of implementing a Preschool Promise countywide (led by ReadySetSoar)
• assisting Montgomery County to identify funding streams to pay for a countywide Preschool Promise
• working to educate citizens and families about the value of preschool (led by ReadySetSoar).

Increase business partnerships with schools

Businesses in the Dayton region are contributing immeasurably to our schools, and to the success of children and young people. Many citizens told the City of Learners Committee how grateful they are for school-based business partnerships and emphasized the contributions of employees who volunteer as part of those efforts. They applauded businesses’ support of science fairs, career days, sports teams and other enriching activities.

Citizens also praised efforts to give young people summer jobs. Of particular note is Montgomery County’s Youth Works program, which provides summer jobs to 2,000 low-income students between the ages of 14 and 17 at no cost to employers.

The Business Partnerships Workforce Committee enthusiastically supports and encourages these commitments. But because the region’s critical “skills gap” is increasingly affecting the competitiveness of individual companies and the region overall, the Task Force has focused on workforce development.
While the formidable mismatch between employers’ needs and workers’ skill levels is very much a national phenomenon, failing to strategically address this challenge locally ensures that Dayton will lose jobs and fail in its bids to attract new ones.

In the face of this threat, the City of Learners Committee supports these recommendations:

• Create and sustain education “pathways” that allow students to move seamlessly from high school to a career or a credentialing program that attests that they have a skill.

The Miami Valley Career Technology Center (MVCTC) and the Ponitz Career Technology Center are models for successful and popular “pathway” programs. Judging by students’ interest in attending MVCTC and Ponitz — and by the schools’ job and college placement success — there is an unmet need for these types of programs. It is imperative that Dayton students have access to more programs that lead to marketable credentials or certificates for in-demand vocational fields. Many students and their families don’t know about the earning power and career opportunities that these educational tracks provide.

Additional pathways should be developed – paying particular attention to the needs of industries that are projected to grow and that are struggling to hire qualified workers.

• Dayton-area businesses must be encouraged and enticed to create more collegiate internships. These on-the-job opportunities are of particular importance in industries that have growth potential in the region and that can’t currently hire all the skilled employees they need.

While the Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education (SOCHE) and others are energetically working to expand the number of internships in the region and to facilitate the hiring process for employers, there’s much more that can be done to use internships to recruit talent to Dayton and the region.

“All of us. You’re not too old to come into a school and work with a 1st-grader and say, ‘You’re doing a good job.’

—Citizen Participant
• Create loan forgiveness programs for Montgomery County students who stay in the County for their post-secondary education or return to Montgomery County after completing a college degree or credential in specified in-demand fields (such as data analytics).

Too many talented young people leave the region for college and never return. Forgiving portions of students’ loans would be a powerful incentive for our young people to look first at the Dayton region when they’re considering where they want to work and make their home.

Provide mentors to more children

The City of Learners Committee believes that all children in Montgomery County are “at-promise,” not “at-risk,” and that mentors are vital to helping every child realize his or her promise.

While the importance of mentors is supported by national research, some convictions don’t have to be proven: It just stands to reason that children are more likely to excel if they have at least one adult who supports and takes a special interest in them.

The need for mentors came up at every City of Learners conversation. Citizens said that ideally parents and family should play that role. But, of course, not all young people have the support they crave and deserve. This attention is crucial throughout childhood, but it’s especially needed at critical crossroads in middle school and high school.

When children are choosing classes that will prepare them for college or to earn a credential certifying they have a marketable skill, they are making decisions that can benefit – or haunt – them for life. They are setting their sights on higher education or deciding – often mistakenly – that a degree or a credential is an impossible dream. It is also at these moments when young people are choosing friends who can get them into trouble – or keep them out of it.

Though students spoke in listening sessions about teachers and guidance counselors who had helped and inspired them to make good choices, schools lack the staff to support every child at the intense level many need.

While citizens said the need for mentors is great, they also insisted that many would-be mentors do not know where to go to volunteer or to get linked with a student. Others said volunteers aren’t always welcomed and supported when they offer to help.

“We have extraordinary students who are achieving with no parental involvement. But they have an advocate.

—Citizen Participant

"
With these concerns in mind, the Mentoring Task Force will support all mentoring approaches, including:

- Traditional 1-to-1 Mentoring
- E-Mentoring
- Peer Mentoring
- Team Mentoring
- Group Mentoring

The Mentoring Collaborative of Montgomery County has been at the forefront of shaping the “mentoring landscape” in Dayton for the past 15 years. During that time, more than 20,000 youth have been linked to caring volunteers. In light of the Collaborative’s experience and deep relationships in the community, there is no reason to create a new clearinghouse or organizing entity to recruit more mentors.

However, we recommend a thorough review of the Collaborative’s ability to reach more children, including an analysis of what additional resources – financial and otherwise – are needed.

Additionally, the Collaborative should create standards around training, background checks, and so forth for organizations that engage in mentoring.

The Committee also supports the new My Brother’s Keeper initiative, which aims to link males of color in Dayton Public Schools with community and business mentors.

**Beyond this work, the Mentoring Task Force also will focus on:**

- Developing a systematic approach for identifying children who need mentors (with particular attention on students who are frequently absent from school, truant or who have self-discipline issues).

- Mapping assets to identify organizations that are engaged, or could be engaged, in mentoring.

- Developing a data management system to maintain and track mentors, mentees and mentoring organizations.

“Even if you’re not a parent, come in and see. It can be anybody who can make that one difference for a kid.”

—Citizen Participant
Expand sites for afterschool and summer learning

It’s easy to forget that children spend fewer than half of their waking hours in school – the school year is about 180 days, a school day is typically just six hours. In light of those numbers, it’s not shocking that decades of research has found that engaging students afterschool and in the summer is critical to academic achievement – especially for low-income children.

Many citizens told the Committee that more high quality afterschool and summer learning programs are needed. Many children would benefit from more “time on task” outside of school to practice reading, do homework and get tutoring. Too often children are left alone and do not have constructive afterschool and summer activities.

There is no data about how many City of Dayton children are involved in this sort of programming. However, according to the Ohio After 3PM survey conducted by The Afterschool Alliance, only 15% of Ohio’s almost 8.5 million children participate in afterschool programs.

While many people said that Dayton’s recreation centers and parks are important resources for children and families, they added that they want these places and the City’s schools to become even more important centers of afterschool activity. Some citizens were adamant that existing buildings and resources are not being used to their fullest and are not as accessible as they should be.

Dayton Public Schools and the City’s Recreation and Youth Services Department have had successful summer partnerships in the past – at Cleveland PreK-6 School and at Fairview PreK-8 School – so there is precedent for leveraging money, staff, facilities and more.

To make the most of limited dollars, best-practice research recommends that after-school and summer learning programing should be targeted to the most at-risk students.
Another initiative that should be monitored is Dayton Public Schools’ five neighborhood school centers, which are bringing together families, children, school personnel and social-service agencies. These centers can promote important linkages – to the school, in the neighborhood and with families.

The Afterschool and Summer Learning Task Force will continue its work, focusing on these goals:

• Conduct a gap analysis to identify accessibility of afterschool services to young people in the City.

• Work with school leaders, afterschool and summer providers, and funders to set standards for what high quality afterschool and summer learning programs should include.

• Study the viability of supporting one new neighborhood school center site, supporting high quality afterschool programming at a Dayton Public School.

Conclusion

Earlier this year, John Pepper, retired CEO and Chairman of Procter & Gamble, spoke in Dayton about the importance and power of preschool. After sharing insights about Cincinnati’s efforts to create a Preschool Promise, he concluded by saying:

“We should never believe that by stating a goal that we have done something.”

That reminder remains a touchstone for members of the City of Learners Committee as each of our groups go forward. We understand that becoming a City of Learners must be a way of doing business, not a task to complete. In stating our objectives, we recognize we have laid out our work, not our accomplishments.
Everybody who sees a kid has some influence. ...

Help me (a prison guard) find a new line of work.

—Citizen Participant

The City of Learners Committee is grateful to the following individuals and organizations that hosted our Listening Sessions:

Adil Baguirov, Dayton School Board Member
Ahiska Turkish American Community Center

Karyn Hecker, Principal
Immaculate Conception School

Steven Johnson, President
Sinclair Community College

Kevin Jones, FROC Priority Board Chairperson
Fairview United Methodist Church

Robyn Lightcap, Director, ReadySetSoar
Dayton Christian Center

Dan Meixner, President
Chaminade Julienne High School

Harris Tay, Executive Director (former)
Wesley Community Center

T.J. Wallace, Executive Director
Dayton Leadership Academy

Lori Ward, Superintendent, Dayton Public Schools
Rivers Edge Montessori School

Karen Wick, Co-Owner
Coco’s Restaurant

Thank you also to President Dan Curran of the University of Dayton, and Frank DePalma, Superintendent of the Montgomery County Educational Service Center, for hosting the Committee’s meetings.

Photos contributed by the City of Dayton and Dayton Public Schools.

Contact List

High Quality Schools Committee
Amy Riegel, 937.333.3814, amy.riegel@daytonohio.gov

Preschool Promise Committee
Robyn Lightcap, 937.236.9965, robyn.lightcap@readysetsoar.org

Business Partnerships Committee
Thomas Lasley, 937.229.5773, tlasley1@udayton.edu
Ellen Belcher, 937.321.6325, ellenbelcherlanger@gmail.com

Afterschool and Summer Learning Committee
Ritika Kurup, 937.236.9965, ritika.kurup@readysetsoar.org

Mentoring Committee
Mary Tyler, 937.222.6225, mtyler@nccjgreaterdayton.org
I’m a non-profit person. ... Sometimes we can’t get in (to the schools). ... How can we build a better relationship so we’re more helpful?

How can we be better partners for you, so it’s productive for the schools, too?

—Citizen Participant
Issue:
To provide every student in the City of Dayton a high quality school where students are engaged and demonstrate expected levels of academic, emotional and social growth and:

i. Teachers have deep content knowledge, a passion for teaching, and demonstrate the skills necessary to foster annual student academic growth goals

ii. Principals are engaged and effective in providing instructional leadership for teachers

iii. Principals and teachers hold high expectations for all the students

iv. Families experience mutual respect as engaged partners dealing with school issues and student needs

v. Community partners and stakeholders are engaged in the delivery of essential services to students, teachers and school leaders

Rationale:
High quality schools are essential for the growth of our community and for ensuring that our young people possess the skills they need for successfully transitioning through key educational benchmarks, including: kindergarten readiness, 3rd-grade reading proficiency, middle to high school matriculation, and college and career readiness.

Critical for school effectiveness is the presence of a high quality staff (teachers and leaders) as well as the services necessary and essential for helping all students to realize their full academic potential. Schools that have instructional teams in place to help students achieve their potential and assist the students who come to school with unique challenges and abilities, will be better able to help each student experience success at each of the key educational benchmarks.

The High Quality Schools Subcommittee of the City of Learners is focused on identifying a set of recommendations for practice that will help each and every current and future school in Dayton (public, charter or private) fulfill its obligation to maximize the academic and socio-emotional growth of the students being served. Initially the focus will be on all the lowest-performing schools. As action is taken to implement the recommendations, the effectiveness of the schools should be fostered and the academic performance of the students enhanced.
Definition of a High Quality School

High Quality Schools are ones where:

i. Students are engaged and demonstrate expected levels of academic, emotional and social growth

ii. Teachers have deep content knowledge, a passion for teaching, and demonstrate the skills necessary to foster annual student academic growth goals

iii. Principals are engaged and effective in providing instructional leadership for teachers

iv. Principals and teachers hold high expectations for all students

v. Families experience mutual respect as engaged partners dealing with school issues and student needs

vi. Community partners and stakeholders are engaged in the delivery of essential services to students, teachers and school leaders

Provided below are the key characteristics of a High Quality School within Dayton. The definition applies to all types of schools: public, charter and private. A High Quality School is one that helps all students achieve their full social and academic potential and ensures that all the professional staff (teachers and the school’s leadership) engage in practice that is personally and professionally rewarding.

The metrics suggested below do not constitute the level of quality we ultimately wish for our children. They represent a threshold for the lowest-performing schools to obtain.

Specifically, high quality schools are characterized by:

1. High rates of teacher attendance in the classroom - > 95%
2. High rates of student attendance - > 93%
3. Yearly academic growth of 1 year or more
4. Performance Index - ≥ 80.0 *
5. High school graduation rate - > 85%
6. Retain teachers, year to year, who are developing, skilled or accomplished as measured by the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES), in fostering student academic, emotional and social growth - > 90%

* The Performance Index (PI) Score measures the achievement of every student regardless of his/her level of proficiency. Schools receive points for every level of achievement, with more points being awarded for higher passing scores. There are 120 points possible.
Create a Dayton Turnaround Schools Task Force

The focus will be ensuring high quality schools for all Dayton children. Activities would focus on initiating turnaround efforts in the lowest-performing Dayton schools (i.e., schools that are evidencing the lowest student value-added performance and/or that have a disproportionate number of students who are not proficient in reading and mathematics), regardless of type, and creating higher performing schools in the highest-needs neighborhoods. This Task Force would consist of urban educators, higher education representatives, community leaders and, where appropriate, educational think tank representatives.

The turnaround task force will study the research findings of successful turnaround schools and review best practices across the United States to develop a set of non-negotiable elements that will be committed to by each school that applies for and qualifies for the turnaround project. Initial elements include improving school leader and teacher talent, identifying non-academic barriers to a child’s school success and engaging and supporting families in their children’s education.

1. Create a City of Dayton report card (in addition to the Ohio Department of Education Report Card) that more accurately reflects school and student performance and that correlates with the City of Learners’ definition of what it means to be a High Quality School.

2. Identify and create high quality school models to become part of the umbrella of educational options available for Dayton students.

A. Improve school leader and teacher talent

The focus would be on creating and improving the talent capacity of Dayton’s school teachers and leaders.

1. Create (and/or work with) Urban Teacher Academy programs at partner universities in the region that focus on the unique challenges of teaching in an urban environment. The participating institutions would make a commitment to place UTA students in clinical placements in Dayton high performing public and charter schools. Dayton schools (public and charter) would work with the teacher education partners to ensure the quality of those clinical placements with teachers who perform at the “skilled” or “accomplished” levels.

2. Develop recruitment incentives to attract and retain teacher and school administrator talent who have the capacity to foster desired levels of student academic and social growth.

3. Develop a City of Dayton Educator Inventory of teachers and administrators by school, by license, and by degree. Connect the profiles with the higher education institutions that are providing Dayton schools (public and charter) with their highest performing teachers, while working with those teacher preparation institutions to create partnership programs to attract more high quality teachers to Dayton schools.

4. Develop a marketing strategy and incentive plan for educators, to communicate the importance of early resignation notification and rewarding teachers who are leaving the district to provide notification by April 30th.
B. Identify non-academic barriers to a child’s school success and recommend specific school-based or community-focused programs that could help break through the barriers.

The focus would be on developing better and more coordinated support services for the highest needs students.

1. Implement City Connects or a similar program in at least one Dayton elementary school and one high school. The purpose is to have students engage and learn in school by connecting each child with a tailored set of enrichment, prevention, and intervention services.

2. Provide a site coordinator at selected schools that have the highest rates of student absenteeism. Site coordinators would have both educational and social work skills and would identify at-risk students and match them (and their families) with available support resources.

C. Engage and support families in their children’s education

The focus would be on having parents and families become a more vital part of the educational process for students.

1. Identify specific strategies to limit gratuitous student mobility or non-promotional school transfers (that is, the needless movement of students from school to school).

2. Engage parents in the key co-educator role of their children through extensive communication with teachers and administrators and through participation in parent advisory groups and volunteer opportunities.

3. Develop and implement strategies to help parents understand the importance and value of high quality schools and to help them understand ways that they can act to help ensure quality educational opportunities for their children.

PARTNERS AND RESOURCES

1. Create a Dayton Turnaround Schools Task Force


- City of Dayton Report Card: Many districts, locally, are creating Quality Profiles. Vandalia-Butler and Oakwood are two local school districts that have produced a Quality Profile as well as Mariemont City Schools (www.mariemontschools.org), Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville, KY, produced an Equity Scorecard to communicate the importance of inclusion to build an equitable society (www.jefferson.k12.ky.us)

Turnaround Solutions:

- Success Academy Charter Schools (http://bit.ly/SACSarticle) or

- StepStone Academy (www.stepstoneacademy.org/) to become part of the umbrella of educational options available for Dayton students.

- Identify and develop a public college preparatory boarding school for Dayton students who have high academic potential but come from at-risk home environments. (http://bit.ly/SEEDfoundation)
Sampling of Turnaround and Talent Efforts

- Louisiana Recovery District focused on New Orleans and Baton Rouge
- Kauffman Schools in Kansas City
- A+ Denver
- Washington D.C. charters
- Mind Trust, Indianapolis
- Association of Recovery Schools (ARS)-focused on turning around high schools

2. Improve school leader and teacher talent

- Urban Teacher Academy (https://www.udayton.edu/education/uta/)

3. Study non-academic barriers to a child’s school success and recommend programs that could help break through the barriers

- Site Coordinators (http://bit.ly/NYT_SocialServices)

4. Engage and support families

- Engaging families to increase academic achievement: (http://bit.ly/MAECfamilies)
**PRESCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Issue:**
Ensure high-quality preschool is available and accessible for families in the City of Dayton and Montgomery County.

**Rationale:**
For the City of Dayton and Montgomery County to compete in the 21st century we need highly educated citizens and we know that building a strong foundation in the early years is necessary to improve results in high school and college. National, state, and local research all confirm that investments in high-quality preschool yield strong results, generating an ROI of 10% for low-income children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>4-year-olds attending Preschool</th>
<th>4-year-olds NOT attending</th>
<th>3-year-olds attending PreK</th>
<th>3-year-olds NOT attending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dayton</td>
<td>1,963</td>
<td>61% (1,204)</td>
<td>39% (759)</td>
<td>45% (883)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery County</td>
<td>6,393</td>
<td>63% (4,004)</td>
<td>37% (2,389)</td>
<td>50% (3,200)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Of the 2,067 low-income kids who are attending, 52% are attending programs that are not high-quality.

**ACTION STEPS**

**Short Term for City of Learners Preschool committee (2014-15 and 2015-16 school years)**

1. Community Education blitz on importance of preschool
   - Train champions to speak at community events (e.g. Rotary, Junior League, etc.)
   - Create flyers/handouts to be disseminated in pediatrician offices, health clinics, food pantries, churches
   - Consider a Pledge similar to Cincinnati
   - Hold a Preschool Promotion month in early 2015 similar to Kindergarten Registration month that has happened in April the last three years

2. Data Collection
   - Polling on early learning
   - Focus groups with parents, citizens
Note: There are two other groups outside of City of Learners that are working on the Preschool Promise development. One is focused on Development of the Model and the other is focused on Funding. These groups will be working on the following deliverables for the 2014-15 school year:

1. Determine preschool model to take to scale (Answer questions: 3- and 4-year-olds or just 4s, all income levels or only low-income, full-day or part-day, etc.)

2. Analyze funding streams for County-wide Preschool Promise with Montgomery County strategic budget review process January-June 2015

3. Launch Phase 2 pilot of Preschool Promise
   - Phase 2 in Dayton by 2014-15 school year
   - Continued expansion, Phase 3 by 2015-16 school year

Mid Term (by 2016)
1. Implement Preschool Promise to scale across the county

Long Term (by 2020)
1. Conduct on-going evaluation of Preschool Promise
2. Continued marketing/follow-up with alumni parents and children

PARTNERS
- ReadySetSoar to help with design of model and facilitation of development of Preschool Promise
- Business Leader Group to help with analysis of funding streams
- 4C for Children to help with management of Preschool Promise and provider relations, quality improvement
- Star-Rated Providers and school districts for delivery of preschool services
- United Way for marketing and messaging to parents, citizens
- Community groups, schools for marketing and messaging
- University of Dayton to help with child assessment, research and evaluation
RESOURCES
1. Reliable, sustainable funding stream for preschool tuition support
2. Marketing and communications to promote importance of preschool
3. Targeted, ongoing recruitment of children for preschool
4. Quality improvement resources and support for preschool providers

BEST PRACTICES
1. Denver Preschool Program: preschool for all 4-year-olds, tuition credits based on income, family size, Star Rating level and length of day (http://www.dpp.org/)
2. Cincinnati Preschool Promise: similar position to us, they have done two polls to determine interest and are looking at a tax on the ballot in spring 2015 (http://www.cincy-promise.org/)
3. Cleveland Universal PreK and new PRE4CLE: (http://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/pre4cle)
4. Pre-K 4 San Antonio (http://www.sanantonio.gov/Pre-K4SanAntonio.aspx)
The Dayton region’s economic success depends on having a well-educated and talented workforce. Locally, as well as across the country, employers increasingly complain that they cannot fill critical positions because job applicants don’t have the right skills or education.

Dayton cannot turn its back on businesses’ frustration. Failing to respond guarantees that our community will lose jobs and be unsuccessful in attracting new ones. When a company’s competitiveness is at stake, it will go where it can prosper.

Our recommendations are designed to help create the workforce that employers are demanding, while also recognizing that talented employees – especially young talented employees – have choices about where they live. The communities that succeed in attracting and keeping highly skilled workers will have the culture and amenities that are important to them.

As a region, Montgomery County has identified key industries that are of particular importance because of our history, synergistic clusters of businesses and our resources.

Those sectors are:

- Aerospace research and development
- Advanced materials and manufacturing
- IT/Data management
- Health care and Human Sciences

To keep and enhance the edge we’re so fortunate to have in these growth sectors, we need to provide employers the talent they need for in-demand positions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Expand internships (or career exploration opportunities) for high-demand jobs. These experiences connect young people to local employers and expose them to employment possibilities in the Dayton region while they’re still considering their career choices.

   Because internships are a magnet for attracting young people to the region and keeping them here upon graduation, businesses should work with the Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education (SOCHE) and others to expand the number of local internships.

   In addition, internships need to be complemented with opportunities for high-school students to learn about the multitude of career opportunities that exist in the region. Connecting early with young people can open their eyes to careers and local job possibilities they don’t know exist.
RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Create and grow educational “pathways” where students begin their career in high school, taking a curriculum that ensures that they will have a marketable skill soon after graduation or that thoroughly prepares them to earn a credential or a degree.

The Miami Valley Career Technology Center and Dayton Public Schools’ Ponitz High School promote career pathways that give students an early and intense exposure to specific careers. These efforts should be expanded to match the needs of employers in high-demand fields. They also need to be expanded to ensure that all students have access to the pathway opportunities available in Montgomery County.

3. Identify high-demand fields in Montgomery County where qualified employees are in short supply.

Employers report that they struggle to fill essential jobs. But our schools, colleges and universities and community leaders can’t adopt strategies to grow and recruit the necessary talent if we have not documented where the greatest needs are and how short we’re actually falling.

4. Create loan forgiveness programs for Montgomery County students who get a post-secondary credential or degree in a high-demand field (e.g., data analytics) and take a job in Montgomery County after completing their degree or credential.

Many young people leave the region to attend college. Once they’ve left, too many don’t “come home” to pursue their career. Strategically developed loan forgiveness programs would incentivize young people to investigate and consider local job opportunities.

5. Create a vision for what Montgomery County must offer to attract and retain a high quality workforce.

What are the social, environmental, educational, and occupational assets that will encourage talented people to make the Dayton region their first choice when deciding where to live and work? Though Dayton is rich in some things we know that next-generation workers value, it’s essential to ask them what’s lacking – what might keep them from making this region their home.

6. Identify and link human resource professionals who are using best practices to attract next-generation workers.

Some regional employers are succeeding at attracting next-generation employees. Their strategies and innovations may be helpful to others who are struggling to find talented workers. Collaborating around recruitment, for example, may be beneficial even to businesses that perceive themselves as competitors; talented employees want to locate where they will have other employment options if a job doesn’t work out. Employers can benefit as well if collaborative recruiting increases the total pool of talent they have to choose from.

7. Identify best practices that other communities are using to attract talented and highly skilled employees.

The Cincinnati Partners for a Competitive Workforce is an excellent example of a workforce development best practice. The Dayton region needs to investigate best practices in other cities and emulate them in sectors that are critical to the region’s economic success.
Co-chairs: Jeff Mims and Michael Carter

Staff: Justin Bayer, Mary Tyler


The members of the committee understand and agree that there are numerous available mentoring opportunities to support the success of our youth. It is further understood that a student may require multiple approaches throughout his or her young life. Therefore, we wish to explore all mentoring opportunities, which may include but are not limited to the following types of mentoring programs.

• Traditional One to One
• E-Mentoring
• Peer Mentoring
• Team Mentoring
• Group Mentoring

We fully endorse the following issue and rational statements:

Issue:
We believe that all children in Montgomery County are not “At-Risk” but “At Promise” and can achieve success in life. We also believe that mentors are vital components in helping students succeed.

Rationale:
In Montgomery County, we share the desire that children and youth, especially those within under-represented populations, strengthen their individual capacity to achieve personal and academic goals. National research shows that a strong connection with a mentor and mentoring activities greatly increases the likelihood that a child will achieve success.

The recommendations contained within this summary are designed to inspire our youth, creating a sense of hope; support their well-being and emotional needs, help students develop essential life skills and overcome obstacles as they pursue personal and professional goals. Additionally, the recommendations are in alignment with the My Brother’s Keeper initiative and will ensure that all young people can reach their full potential. The action steps outlined will focus on the following four milestones:
1. Getting a healthy start and entering school ready to learn. All children should have a healthy start and enter school ready – cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally.

2. Graduating from high school ready for college and career. Every child should have the option to attend postsecondary education and receive the education and training needed for quality jobs of today and tomorrow.

3. Successfully entering the workforce. Anyone who wants a job should be able to get a job that allows them to support themselves and their families; and

4. Keeping youth on track and giving them second chances. All children should be safe from violent crime; and individuals who are confined should receive the education, training and treatment they need for a second chance.

Finally, the Mentoring Collaborative of Montgomery County has been at the forefront of shaping the “mentoring landscape” within our community for the past 15 years. More than 20,000 youth received support through the Collaborative as a result of thoughtful matches, caring volunteers, strong agency partnerships and their commitment to help every child reach their full potential. Since the Collaborative has capacity, infrastructure and support to lead such an effort, the committee sees no reason to recreate a new entity.

However, a thorough review of the organization’s ability for increased engagement should be completed to determine what level of additional support may be necessary to lead such an initiative. Additionally, the Collaborative is currently working within five districts – West Carrollton, Trotwood, Dayton Public Schools, Mad River and Northridge. Future consideration should be given to creating consistent mentoring standards (i.e. training, background checks, etc.) for the community.

Execution of this plan is critical. To ensure our success, we must stay focused on what is best for our children, excite and engage the community, follow through at every crucial stage of the plan, adjust our course as needed and acknowledge our accomplishments.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Action Steps</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify children requiring mentors, with particular attention to providing mentoring assistance to students who have issues with attendance, truancy and/or self-discipline.</td>
<td>Short term 2015-2016</td>
<td>Designate the Montgomery Mentoring Collaborative as lead organization</td>
<td>Agreement to allow access and information</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Establish a <em>clearing house</em> that includes access, monitoring and updating the needs of <em>students transitioning to high school</em></td>
<td>Funding for organizational review/audit for increased engagement</td>
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<td><em>Note: Interventions aimed at elementary, middle and high school youth (our local agency’s average age is 12 years old), such as youth development programs like Big Brothers Big Sisters offer important support to this population; It is anticipated that the Early Childhood Education Committee will address the mentoring needs of this population in support of the 3rd Grade Guarantee.</em></td>
<td>Funding for School-based Coordinator to respond to mentee needs, support, innovative approaches to mentoring; follow-up</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Create a proactive approach in support of <em>young men of color transitioning to high school</em></td>
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<td>2. Conduct asset mapping to identify community mentoring organizations and/or mentoring opportunities</td>
<td>Short term 2015-2016</td>
<td>Obtain information on services provided, type of mentoring program, site information, population served, reported outcomes, number of youth impacted, training and development opportunities, capacity for increased services</td>
<td>Financial and implementation support for survey design, dissemination and compilation</td>
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<td>Funding for maintaining information; certification criteria and agreed upon metrics</td>
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<td>3. Create a support system for mentors; focus recruitment of additional mentors, on high standards, procedures and evaluation—including recruitment, development, meaningful matches, safety, accountability, research, information sharing and feedback</td>
<td>Short term 2015-2016</td>
<td>Establish a clearing house to capture the qualifications, interest of mentors, design and delivery of mentoring services</td>
<td>Funding for development, networking opportunities; materials, required background checks, communication campaign, marketing, promotion and recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Develop a central data management system to maintain and track mentors, mentees and mentoring organizations and systems</td>
<td>Long term 2016-2018</td>
<td>Designate the Mentoring Collaborative of Montgomery as lead organization in the long term planning</td>
<td>Funding for infrastructure requirements—spacing, staffing, training, supervision, software capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Design a plan in support of increased capacity for the Mentoring Collaborative and additional partner agencies</td>
<td>Long term 2016-2018</td>
<td>Increase the number of youth being served and needed mentoring volunteers and/or activities</td>
<td>Identification of new resource pool and/or re-distribution of current resources</td>
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Issue:
To ensure access to quality afterschool and summer learning opportunities for K-12 students (DPS as well as other local schools) in the City of Dayton.

Rationale:
Children spend less than half of their waking time in schools (180 days approximately 6.5 hours a day), yet we hold schools entirely responsible for their growth and development.

Decades of national research has demonstrated that out-of-school times (defined as a combination of afterschool as well as summer learning) are critical in addressing the academic as well as opportunity gap that children living in poverty face. High quality learning opportunities in the out-of-school time are important to their cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development of children.

Due to lack of a central system of data collection of where children are in afterschool hours and summer time, we do not have data available on how many children in the City of Dayton have access to the programming. However, according to the Ohio After 3PM survey conducted by The Afterschool Alliance only 15% of Ohio’s close to 8.5 million children participate in afterschool programs.

ACTION STEPS

Short Term Steps (2014-16):

1. Develop a common definition of afterschool and summer learning to facilitate shared understanding among all stakeholders.

2. Needs assessment to identify access issues:
   - Conduct market research and gap analysis to identify how many Dayton students are not receiving afterschool and summer learning programming and in which neighborhoods the need is the highest for additional services.
   - Conduct a qualitative survey of families to identify needs of the families in the City of Dayton.

3. Common vision development to develop universal definition of quality:
   - Work with Dayton and other local schools, afterschool and summer providers, and local funders to identify basic tenets for quality standards and guidelines for afterschool and summer programming.
   - In consultation with key stakeholders identify common data tracking and monitoring mechanisms.
4. Delivery mechanisms to efficiently and effectively serve maximum number of children:
   - Establish City-wide commitment to the neighborhood school center delivery model for afterschool services.
   - Partner with established community providers to serve children within the school buildings using the neighborhood school center model.
   - Expand neighborhood school center model to at least 2 more Dayton City schools by end of 2016 (currently DPS has 5 neighborhood schools).

Long Term Steps (2016-18):
Develop a coordinated and sustainable system of delivery to provide afterschool and summer services to a minimum of 10% more K-12 Dayton City children by:
   - Securing additional local, state, and national sources of funding.
   - Providing ongoing professional development and quality improvement resources to afterschool and summer providers.
   - Supporting development of an information sharing system.
   - Funding for quality programming to expand to neighborhoods with need to serve more children.

PARTNERS
   - Dayton and other local schools and Neighborhood School Centers for planning and delivery of services
   - Summer and Afterschool Programs in the City for planning and delivery of services
   - Learn to Earn Dayton/ReadySetSoar for researching best practices and facilitation, coordination, and support of system development
   - City of Dayton in providing support and cultivating additional state and national level funders
   - Montgomery County for leadership and support with adoption of best practices
   - United Way of Greater Dayton Area for leadership and support with adoption of best practices
   - 4C for Children for training and coaching support
   - University of Dayton Business Research Group for data analysis support
   - Local Philanthropic community for supporting increased access to services in high poverty neighborhoods
   - University of Dayton Fitz Center for expertise and leadership with the neighborhood schools model
RESOURCES

- Mayoral support
- Additional local, state, and federal funding
- Expertise of providers and Neighborhood School Centers
- Ongoing professional development and continuous quality development resources to local providers
- Marketing and PR to communicate importance of afterschool and summer learning to families

BEST PRACTICES

- Wallace Foundation funded and evaluated five cities that provided a “proof of principle”—that stakeholders across a city could work together to create a system of out of school services for vulnerable children (Hours of Opportunity). These five cities were Rhode Island, Boston, New York City, Chicago, and Washington D.C.
- Cincinnati is using a common data collection system to share data between district and providers.
- Cleveland has a funders’ network working together on developing a common application and metrics to streamline the process for providers.
- Birmingham, Alabama has created a coordinated system of service delivery for summer learning services.
- National Summer Learning Association and America Afterschool Alliance provide several resources for systems support.
- Coalition for Community Schools has extensive research on afterschool and summer learning programming using community schools (neighborhood school center) model.
Questions?
Please contact Amy Riegel at 937.333.3814 or amy.riegel@daytonohio.gov