The State of City Leadership for Children and Families

2009

National League of Cities
Institute for Youth, Education, & Families

About the National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families

The Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute) is a special entity within the National League of Cities (NLC).

NLC is the oldest and largest national organization representing municipal government throughout the United States. Its mission is to strengthen and promote cities as centers of opportunity, leadership, and governance.

The YEF Institute helps municipal leaders take action on behalf of the children, youth, and families in their communities. NLC launched the YEF Institute in January 2000 in recognition of the unique and influential roles that mayors, city councilmembers, and other local leaders play in strengthening families and improving outcomes for children and youth.

Through the YEF Institute, municipal officials and other community leaders have direct access to a broad array of strategies and tools, including:

- Action kits that offer a menu of practical steps that officials can take to address key problems or challenges.
- Technical assistance projects in selected communities.
- The National Summit on Your City's Families and other workshops, training sessions, and cross-site meetings.
- Targeted research and periodic surveys of local officials.
- The YEF Institute's Web site, audioconferences, and e-mail listservs.

To learn more about these tools and other aspects of the YEF Institute's work, go to www.nlc.org/iyef or leave a message on the YEF Institute's information line at 202/626-3014.

Education

Education

Key Goals:

- Ensure that all students graduate prepared for college and the workforce.
- Expand access to and boost completion of postsecondary education and training.
- Engage residents in efforts to improve public schools.
- Draw upon the full range of community assets and resources to provide supports for learning beyond the K-12 classroom.
- Promote greater transparency and accountability for academic performance.

Innovations:

- Promoting educational entrepreneurship through a nonprofit intermediary.
- Taking a business approach to school improvement.
- Increasing transparency and accountability by issuing school progress reports.

Emerging Trends:

- Expanding college access through scholarship endowments and counseling.
- Creating community schools and offering school-based wraparound services.
- Offering teacher recruitment and retention incentives.
- Providing multiple pathways to graduation through alternative high schools.

Established Trends:

- Promoting parent and community engagement.
- Establishing mayoral control of public school governance.
- Developing joint use agreements for city and school facilities.
- Convening city and school leadership.

Innovations

Promoting educational entrepreneurship through a nonprofit intermediary.
Launched in 2006 and led by the city's former mayor and charter schools director, a city-based, 501(c)(3) nonprofit intermediary called the Mind Trust recruits successful education programs throughout the country to begin operating in Indianapolis and empowers education entrepreneurs to develop and implement new initiatives that have the potential to transform public education.

The Mind Trust recruits successful education programs throughout the country to begin operating in Indianapolis and empowers education entrepreneurs to develop and implement new initiatives that have the potential to transform public education.

By supporting the development of entrepreneurial education strategies, the creation of the Mind Trust builds on Indianapolis' nationally recognized mayoral charter schools' initiative. In 2001, the State of Indiana enacted a law that made former Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson the nation's first mayor with the authority to grant charters to nonprofit organizations seeking to open public charter schools — a power still held almost uniquely by current Mayor Gregory Ballard. Since then, 18 new charter schools serving more than 5,400 students have opened through a rigorous chartering process. This multi-step process includes a meticulous review of school finance and governance, televised hearings, review and approval by the mayor and ratification by the City-County Council.

According to a 2008 accountability report, pass rates on ISTEP+, Indiana's statewide assessment exam, increased by an average of nearly 6 percentage points in mayor-sponsored charter schools compared with less than 1 percent among all schools statewide. In addition, 94 percent of 2007-08 mayor-sponsored charter school graduates enrolled in college. While developing this initiative, Mayor Peterson and his charter schools director David Harris gained a deeper appreciation for the value that educational entrepreneurs can add to local schools. Together they launched the Mind Trust to expand transformative education initiatives. With Peterson as board chair and Harris as president and CEO, the Mind Trust employs two principal strategies to bring talented entrepreneurs and promising educational ventures to Indianapolis.

The Education Entrepreneur Fellowship cultivates innovative educational strategies by helping entrepreneurs develop and launch their ideas. Selected through a highly competitive application process, Education Entrepreneur Fellows receive nearly $250,000 in support over two years from the Mind Trust, providing them with a full-time salary, benefits, travel costs and customized training and support to bring their initiatives to scale. Fellows are also matched with a local "champion" — often a senior-level business or community leader — who provides guidance and support to the work. Mind Trust staff and board members offer ongoing feedback and support, and fellows can exchange ideas with a growing network of education entrepreneurs and other leaders throughout the city. Out of 488 applications received in 2008, the fellowship's first year, four fellows were selected. Since the project began, fellows have developed programs to help students become more engaged in their learning by creating and managing their own record labels; support talented teachers early in their careers to encourage them to stay in the profession; engage high school graduates in a "bridge year" of international service before college; and offer summer learning opportunities to disadvantaged elementary and middle school students.

The Mind Trust's second strategy is the Venture Fund, which recruits the nation's most successful education initiatives to serve Indianapolis students. The Mind Trust has provided nearly $3 million to date to bring Teach for America, College Summit, the New Teacher Project and the Alternative High School Initiative (AHSI) to the city. In 2008, 46 Teach for America corps members were working in Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS), and 47 more will be placed in IPS and charter schools for the 2009-10 school year. A pilot project to engage IPS Manual High School seniors in College Summit's intensive college preparation course helped 45 percent of participants attend college, representing a dramatic increase in enrollment. The New Teacher Project (TNTP) facilitates the transition of mid-career professionals into teaching subjects where teacher shortages exist, such as math, science, special education and Spanish. TNTP placed 51 teaching fellows in IPS schools in 2008-09 and 26 additional teachers in charter schools. Local philanthropies and national foundations have contributed more than $8 million to support the Mind Trust's work.

Since 2008, the City of Indianapolis and the Mind Trust have been working with AHSI to develop new schools that provide personalized support to students who struggle in traditional high schools (see "Multiple Pathways to Graduation" below). These new model schools include five Diploma Plus schools, a Big Picture Learning school and YouthBuild. Mayor Ballard recently hosted a resource fair to connect these schools with city agencies, community groups and college readiness organizations that offer wraparound services. For more information, see: www.themindtrust.org

Taking a business approach to school improvement.

Since 2002, St. Petersburg, Fla., Mayor Rick Baker has expanded Mayor's Mentors and More into one of the nation's most robust city-led educational initiatives. As former chairman of the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce, Mayor Baker has drawn on his relationships with the business community to engage corporate partners and residents in local public schools and provided an array of incentives and accountability methods for improving

Since 2002, St. Petersburg, Fla., Mayor Rick Baker has expanded Mayor's Mentors and More into one of the nation's most robust city-led educational initiatives.

student achievement. Although built on several strategies that are now emerging as trends in other cities, Mayor's Mentors and More stands out as an innovation by linking these strategies together under one coordinated, results-oriented model.

Central to Mayor's Mentors and More are the school-business partnerships that support the city's mentoring and school improvement goals. Mayor Baker has recruited 98 corporate partners — at least one for each of the city's 42 public schools — to provide financial and fundraising support, equipment donations, mentors, tutors, internships and assistance with long-range strategic planning. Corporate partners' employees and other residents are engaged as mentors in the schools and in programs such as 5,000 Role Models, which matches young men with successful male mentors from throughout Pinellas County. As it seeks to enlist mentors from the community, the city leads by example with its own administrative policy that provides municipal employees with up to one hour of paid leave plus travel time each week to mentor students in their schools. More than 160 employees serve as mentors and additional city staff tutor students after school at city recreation centers through the St. Pete Reads program. Mayor Baker's "Cabinet Challenge" encourages his cabinet members to increase the number of city employees mentoring in schools through quarterly contests.

Through a second component of Mayor's Mentors and More, more than 3,000 students benefit from the Doorways Scholar program, and Mayor Baker has set an ambitious goal to award 1,000 new Doorways Scholarships to sixth graders by 2010. Students are eligible for one of these pre-paid four-year college scholarships — which cost approximately $11,600 in today's dollars — if they receive free or reduced lunch, attend a St. Petersburg public school, maintain at least a C grade point average in all classes, attend school regularly, complete homework and study for tests, remain crime and drug free and have a mentor. In 2008, 93 percent of Doorways Scholars graduated from high school compared with a 75 percent statewide average. The mayor has raised nearly $10 million from businesses and residents, matched by the Pinellas Education Foundation and the state, to pay for these scholarships.

Finally, in keeping with the overall business-model approach, a variety of city-sponsored incentive programs help foster school improvement. In order to recruit and retain the best teachers, the A+ Housing Initiative offers interest-free loans of up to $20,000 to help teachers buy a home if they commit to living and teaching in St. Petersburg. The city forgives 10 percent of the loan each year the teacher remains in the home and works in a city school. School principals also receive incentives to improve achievement through the Mayor's Top Apple Award, which recognizes and provides bonuses to principals and assistant principals whose schools earn an "A" or improve their overall letter grade on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test. The proportion of St. Petersburg schools with an A or B letter grade increased from 26 percent in 2001 to 64 percent in 2008.

For more information on Mayor's Mentors and More, see: www.stpete.org/mentors/mentoring.asp

Related innovation:

- Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper provided active support for a November 2005 voter-approved tax levy — supported by teachers unions, businesses and the school district — to fund a new compensation system for teachers that increases their pay if they participate in professional development, teach in high-need schools or hard-to-staff subjects or increase student performance.

Increasing transparency and accountability by issuing school progress reports.

In November 2007, New York City launched an experiment in promoting transparency and holding public schools accountable when it became the nation's first municipality to grades schools on their progress in raising student achievement (Florida is the only state that grades schools in this way). These progress reports — which are not necessarily a commentary on the quality of a school but primarily highlight improvement over a given period of time — are made available online and distributed at parent-teacher conferences to inform parents and educators. Parents also receive guides for interpreting progress report results, which are available in eight languages. Schools' "grades" are determined based on scores in three categories:

- School environment (15 percent): Scores are based on learning environment surveys of parents, teachers and students, as well as attendance rates.
- Student performance (25 percent): Schools are assessed based on high school graduation rates and proficiency among elementary and middle school students in reading and math.
- Student progress (60 percent): This category measures year-over-year gains in reading and math proficiency, as well as credit accumulation and state exam pass rates among high school students. Schools that make significant progress in closing achievement gaps earn additional credit.

Schools are evaluated in each of these categories based on a comparison with 40 peer schools that have similar student demographics over a period of three years. Two-thirds of school scores are determined based on a school's "peer horizon," with the remaining one-third based on the "city horizon" for all schools serving the same grade level. These evaluations are complemented by in-depth Quality Reviews, in which experienced educators conduct two to three-day visits to schools, observe classes, speak with students, parents and staff and learn how schools use information to improve student learning.

In November 2007, New York City launched an experiment in promoting transparency and holding public schools accountable when it became the nation's first municipality to grades schools on their progress in raising student achievement.

Schools that receive "A" grades and score well on Quality Reviews receive additional funding if they serve as demonstration sites for other schools. Schools receiving "D" and "F" grades, or scoring a "C" three years in a row, must work with the city's Department of Education (DOE) to develop detailed action plans for improving their performance. If these schools do not meet targets for improvement or receive low Quality Review scores, the city may close or restructure them or change their leadership. Schools that accept students transferring from failing schools receive additional funding. Thus far, progress reports have shown which districts and boroughs have the highest average school scores. The reports also demonstrate positive correlations between both high expectations for students and collaborative teacher-administrator relationships — as measured in the learning environment survey — and a school's overall grade. Although New York is one of just over a dozen cities that directly govern their school districts, the use of data to highlight and promote school improvement is applicable to many cities. For instance, Columbus, Ohio, leaders have used data on achievement gaps to build public will for reform strategies, while St. Petersburg posts a scorecard on its school system's progress on the city website (see the Infrastructure chapter).

Principals and teachers can also use the New York City DOE's Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS) to analyze both school and student-level data in areas in which they received low scores and compare their progress with similar schools to learn how they can improve. In addition to compiling real-time, aggregate data on school performance updated by nightly feeds from many DOE data systems, ARIS contains individual student profile data on enrollment history, credit accumulation, test scores, English Language Learner and special education status, grades, attendance, diagnostic assessments and family contact information. Principals and teachers can access information on any student enrolled in their school or class, respectively. Both school officials and parents can create customized reports analyzing individual students' progress. This data management system also offers a library of instructional resources and lesson plans contributed by educators across the city, and allows school staff to collaborate through a social networking site. DOE plans to train principals and teachers on how to use ARIS throughout the school year. For more information, see: http://schools.nyc.gov/accountability

Related innovations:

- A new Partnership for Los Angeles Schools formed by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) has developed a School Report Card that shows parents the progress of each individual LAUSD school. In addition,

the partnership has created a Web-based program called MyData to provide teachers with real-time data on student performance.

- The Indianapolis mayor's charter schools office produces an in-depth accountability report to measure the success of mayor-sponsored charter schools.

Emerging Trends

Expanding college access through scholarship endowments and counseling.
Municipal leaders are playing new roles in expanding college access for youth in their cities. One of the most exciting leadership trends is the growth of city-sponsored scholarship endowments that seek to guarantee college affordability for all of a city's public school students. These initiatives follow the model set by San Antonio and Kalamazoo, Mich. Since 1989, the San Antonio Education Partnership (SAEP) has provided more than $14 million to more than 3,000 college graduates, 95 percent of whom still live and work in San Antonio. SAEP currently supports 3,300 college students with scholarships of up to $4,000 and provides support services and pre-college preparation to incoming students. Kalamazoo Promise is a scholarship endowment launched in 2005 with funding from anonymous donors that ensures every Kalamazoo Public Schools graduate who meets certain criteria can afford tuition at a public university or community college in Michigan. The scholarship has been cited for boosting public school enrollment, test scores, college enrollment and local property values in Kalamazoo.

One of the most exciting leadership trends is the growth of city-sponsored scholarship endowments that seek to guarantee college affordability for all of a city's public school students.

These college access initiatives share several common elements. One distinguishing aspect is their attempt at universality — a guarantee that all students who graduate from local public high schools, or a particular set of schools, will have the means to afford college tuition. A second key element is that these students must meet certain criteria to qualify, such as a minimum grade point average, a minimum number of years of residence in a local school district, consistent attendance, participation in community service, eligibility and application for federal financial aid, half-time or full-time enrollment in a state university or college and/or progress toward degree or certificate completion. The scholarship endowments often begin with city and private investments that leverage a much larger source of private funding from local businesses, philanthropies and individuals. Finally, collaboration among the city, school districts, local universities and colleges, businesses, foundations and community organizations helps make these cities' ambitious goals a reality.

Approximately a dozen cities have initiated scholarship programs. In November 2006, Mayor John Hickenlooper joined private donors in establishing the Denver Scholarship Foundation (DSF). The DSF Scholarship offers need-based aid of up to $5,000 per year that Denver Public Schools students can use at 39 state and private postsecondary institutions. The program also pays for admission and financial aid counselors at each of the district's 21 high schools. Combined with Pell Grants and university financial aid, the DSF Scholarship can eliminate many financial barriers to postsecondary education. DSF has successfully obtained $80 million from the business community in its goal to create a $200 million endowment that can support up to 6,000 students per year. Through a similar initiative in San Francisco, SF Promise Fund investments performed well enough last year to pay for every 10th grader in the city to take the PSATs. Since 2006, the Minneapolis Promise has provided more than 400 students with free tuition and fees for two years or 72 credits, along with career and college counseling and summer jobs.

Small cities such as Burleson, Texas, and West Hollywood, Calif., are also adapting the scholarship endowment model. Through a dedicated .5 percent sales and use tax that funds its Economic Development Board, the City of Burleson provided $25,000 in seed money to establish the Burleson Opportunity Fund, matched by the school

district and supplemented with private sector funds. Thirty students have been able to attend Hill College, which enrolls fund recipients at a reduced college district rate.

Several other cities have focused their attention on developing robust partnerships that provide high school students with college counseling and preparation. In 2007, Springfield, Ill., Mayor Timothy Davlin worked with a local public library to open the College Assistance Program Center that offers one-to-one scholarship advice to low-income and minority students who would be the first in their family to attend college. Students also receive assistance in applying to colleges and choosing a career and a major. Similarly, Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin works in partnership with the Atlanta Workforce Development Agency, businesses and Atlanta Public Schools (APS) to sponsor the Mayor's Youth Program. Since 2005, the program has provided more than 2,000 students with mentoring and counseling about post-graduation options, including college, technical school, the military and the workforce. In 2008, more than 600 APS graduates received help with tuition, laptops, supplies and other assistance. Over the past four years, Mayor Franklin has met individually with hundreds of APS seniors on scheduled Saturdays to discuss their post-graduation plans.

Selected cities that have helped create college scholarship endowments or programs: Burleson, Texas; Denver; El Dorado, Ark.; Hammond, Ind.; Hickory, N.C.; Minneapolis; Peoria, Ill.; Philadelphia; Pittsburgh; San Antonio; San Francisco; West Hollywood, Calif.

Creating community schools and offering school-based wraparound services. Using public schools as neighborhood hubs, community schools bring together many partners to offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, youth and families, according to the Coalition for Community Schools. These partnerships provide an integrated focus on student learning and family well-being and bring health and social services, out-of-school time programs and adult education into school buildings. Cities throughout the nation have applied this model to turn local public schools into centers of learning and community that keep their facilities — including computer rooms, gyms and classrooms — open during the non-school hours. Each community school is run differently, but generally, a lead agency and/or school principal appoints a site manager at each school to coordinate networks of services and classes, while neighborhood advisory boards engage a broad range of teachers, school administrators, students, parents and other residents and partners in site planning and communication.

> *Community schools provide an integrated focus on student learning and family well-being, and bring health and social services, out-of-school time programs and adult education into school buildings.*

The City of Chicago's Community Schools Initiative is the largest in the nation, and was created under the leadership of former Chicago Public Schools (CPS) CEO and current Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. These schools offer afterschool academic programs ranging from literacy development to music to martial arts, and help parents earn a GED or receive counseling, language or job search assistance. Families can gain access to medical and dental care on site. CPS now runs 150 community schools — 25 percent of the city's public schools — that involve more than 400 partners and have raised test scores higher and improved classroom behavior more than their counterparts.

Several other cities have committed to this strategy at a citywide level. Baltimore's Community Schools Initiative comprises 43, or about one-quarter, of the city's schools. The city provides nearly $4 million to community organizations to hire site coordinators who work with coordinating councils at each school on attendance, family engagement and school safety. A steering committee provides guidance to an initiative-wide coordinator. In Portland, Ore., a collaboration of the city, county, state, community organizations and six school districts built on existing partnerships to develop 55 SUN Community Schools (SUN CS) for children of all ages. SUN CS site managers connect schools with libraries and community centers, as well as neighborhood health clinics, churches and businesses. Of the more than 17,000 students participating in SUN CS classes and activities, nearly three-quarters met or exceeded state benchmark scores in reading and math, and average daily attendance was 94 percent. In Lincoln,

Neb., 15 school-based Community Learning Centers — another recognized community school model — offer safe, supervised enrichment opportunities before and after school, on weekends and during the summer, as well as adult education and financial literacy.

Through the Elev8 (formerly Integrated Services in Schools) initiative, Chicago, Baltimore, Oakland and several New Mexico cities are taking steps to ensure that middle school youth are prepared for high school by the eighth grade by linking schools with community resources. To achieve this goal, Elev8 school sites extend the school day and year with high-quality learning and enrichment programs, and offer school-based mentoring programs, on-site health and mental health services and family supports that include adult education and public benefits screening. This model, which was developed and supported by The Atlantic Philanthropies, also puts a strong emphasis on parent engagement and advocacy.

Although citywide community school models are found in only a handful of municipalities, a larger number of cities have adapted many of the elements of this model by partnering with schools to provide children with various wraparound services. The New Haven, Conn., Coordinated School Health Program offers an example of school-based service delivery through the integration of various partners' resources. The program consists of eight components geared toward improving child health and school success: health education; school-based health, nursing, early childhood and mental health services; development of healthy school environments; health promotion for staff; physical education; nutrition services; counseling and social services; and family resource centers. The New Haven Public Schools Foundation mobilizes resources to support these partnerships and engages volunteers in tutoring and mentoring students after school. The City of Berkeley, Calif., offers another notable example in its Schools Mental Health Partnership among the city mental health and public health divisions, Alameda County behavioral health department, Berkeley Unified School District, Berkeley Alliance, local universities, mental health service providers and community organizations.

Selected cities with community schools, community learning centers, Elev8 schools and comprehensive school-based wraparound services: Akron, Ohio; Baltimore; Berkeley, Calif.; Birmingham, Ala.; Charleston, S.C.; Chicago; Evansville, Ind.; Lincoln, Neb.; Louisville, Ky.; New Haven, Conn.; Oakland, Calif.; Portland, Ore.; Phoenix; Tukwila, Wash.; Tulsa, Okla.

Offering teacher recruitment and retention incentives.
Like St. Petersburg, Fla., at least a half dozen other cities seeking to attract and retain high-quality teachers are providing them with homebuyer loans, rental assistance and other financial incentives. Several of these cities offer zero or low-interest, deferred-payment loans for teachers' first home purchases. Credentialed teachers who receive assistance must typically complete a homebuyer education course. Eligibility is also restricted to teachers whose household incomes meet specific guidelines.

Since 1999, the San José, Calif., Mayor's Teacher Homebuyer Program, administered by the city's Department of Housing, has offered teachers zero-percent interest, deferred-payment loans of $40,000 or $65,000 depending on their household incomes and monthly housing payments. Loans are payable in 30 years or upon sale or transfer of the property. To qualify, teachers must be employed full-time at a public K-12 school within the city or at a public school where at least half of the students are San José residents. In addition, recipients must have acceptable credit

At least a half dozen cities seeking to attract and retain high-quality teachers are providing them with homebuyer loans, rental assistance and other financial incentives.

histories and household incomes that do not exceed 120 percent of Santa Clara County's median income, adjusted for family size. The program can only be used for the purchase of a first home in San José city boundaries. Properties purchased are subject to a 45-year affordability restriction requiring that either the property be sold to an income-qualified household at an affordable price, or the city and borrower share increases in equity that accrue between the date of purchase and sale. For renters, the city also sponsors the Teach Here, Live Here Rental Assis-

tance Program in partnership with the Silicon Valley Education Foundation, providing grants to first-time teachers in math, science and special education.

Similarly, the Seattle Teacher Homebuyer Program provides up to $45,000 in deferred-payment financing for teachers' first home purchases at a 3 percent interest rate. The city Office of Housing's lending partner offers free credit counseling, waives lender fees and discounts closing costs. San Francisco's Teacher Next Door Loan Program gives up to $20,000 in down payment/closing cost assistance loans to credentialed teachers whose household income is below 200 percent of area median income. Teachers who leave the district within five years must repay the loan in full. After five years, these no-interest loans are forgivable based on the number of years of service in the district.

Selected cities that offer teacher housing incentives: Baltimore; Chicago; New York City; San Francisco; San José, Calif.; Seattle; St. Petersburg, Fla.

Providing multiple pathways to graduation through alternative high schools.
At a time when roughly one-third of the nation's students leave high school without a diploma, cities are putting a growing emphasis on dropout prevention and recovery through multiple pathways to graduation, including: alternative high schools; credit recovery programs; flexible diploma and GED programs linked to job training; dual enrollment options; and other programs that offer wraparound services and connect classroom instruction with career and college readiness. While these pathways may also involve reengaging students in traditional high schools, several cities and school districts are working together to expand the number of alternative high schools available to students who struggle in traditional high school settings. Hallmarks of these alternative schools include a rigorous and relevant curriculum, project-based learning, close student-teacher relationships, youth voice and leadership development. Municipal officials are well positioned to connect students in alternative high schools with supportive wraparound services provided by city agencies and community organizations. At the same time, city leaders are also forging connections with postsecondary institutions and businesses to expand college and career options.

Several cities and school districts are working together to expand the number of alternative high schools available to students who struggle in traditional high school settings.

As partners of the Alternative High School Initiative (AHSI) — a national network of 12 youth development organizations committed to creating educational options for youth who have struggled in or dropped out of traditional high schools — the cities of Indianapolis, Nashville, Tenn., and Newark, N.J., are at the forefront of this emerging movement. Each of these cities is bringing to scale a portfolio of national alternative school models to meet the needs of these youth. AHSI program models frequently offer a smaller, more supportive setting (e.g., Diploma Plus) and provide students with personal support and self-paced coursework options (Communities in Schools' Performance Learning Center). Other models provide opportunities to pair high school class work with construction trade skills (YouthBuild), internships (Big Picture schools) or dual enrollment at a local college (Gateway to College).

Similarly, New York City's Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation provides over-age and under-credited students with various options to help them complete high school. The city's Young Adult Borough Centers allow students with adult responsibilities to take the evening classes they need to graduate, and Transfer Schools offer small, personalized learning environments and connections to college for students who are behind grade level. Students can also participate in a GED program, and each of these three options can be blended with Learning to Work programs, which provide job readiness skills and career exploration. Wraparound services are provided by community organization partners and are integrated across participating schools and programs. The New York City Department of Education's Referral Centers for High School Alternatives, located in every borough, refer students to the District 79 alternative schools and provide information on school options and enrollment procedures.

In Philadelphia, the Mayor's Office of Education and the Department of Human Services have partnered with school district officials and other community stakeholders to expand the availability of multiple pathways to gradu-

ation through Project U-Turn. With support from the Project U-Turn steering committee and larger collaborative, more than 2,000 additional seats have been created in small, "accelerated" high schools for over-age and under-credited youth and young adults (similar to New York's Transfer Schools, discussed above). Project U-Turn also helped the school district create a Reengagement Center, which has served more than 2,100 out-of-school youth seeking to re-enroll, and has referred almost 1,700 of these young people to educational programming. In addition, the collaborative has worked with Johns Hopkins University researchers to show that 80 percent of dropouts can be identified in the eighth or ninth grade based on whether they failed math or English, had poor attendance, earned too few credits or were not promoted to 10th grade. Based on this and other Philadelphia-specific research, as well as national studies of effective practice, Project U-Turn has promoted middle school early warning systems, advocated for Student Success Centers in neighborhood high schools to support graduation and postsecondary access and expanded the original set of three Youth Opportunity Centers (now known as E^3 — Education, Employment and Empowerment) to serve out-of-school and adjudicated youth at five neighborhood locations.

Finally, the Portland, Ore., Connected by 25 effort includes an alternative schools network that helps recover nearly 1,500 students per year. Connected by 25 has supported struggling eighth graders in their transition to high school and worked to tailor options to specific segments of the population, including Native American, Latino and homeless and runaway youth.

Selected cities that have supported multiple pathways to graduation: Boston; Chicago; Indianapolis; New York City; Nashville, Tenn.; Newark, N.J.; Philadelphia; Portland, Ore.; San José, Calif.

Established Trends

Promoting parent and community engagement.

A wide body of research shows that parent and community engagement in children's education has a strong, positive impact on student grades and test scores, attendance and behavior, grade promotion, graduation and postsecondary enrollment. These findings, compiled in a 2002 report by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, apply to families of all income levels and backgrounds. Furthermore, organized interventions and programs to promote family engagement have proven successful in supporting children's learning and improving low-performing schools.

Many cities, such as Charleston, S.C., work with school districts to sponsor annual First Day of School events that foster relationships among parents, students and teachers, and engage businesses and other residents in local schools.

Recognizing the importance of family connections to public schools, cities are making concerted efforts to involve parents and other residents in efforts to improve education. For instance, many cities work with school districts to sponsor annual First Day of School events that foster relationships among parents, students and teachers, and engage businesses and other residents in local schools. The Charleston, S.C., First Day Festival drew more than 9,000 children and families in 2008. The event encourages parents to attend school with their children on the first day, and provides them with information on health, wellness and student support services from more than 90 community and school-based providers. In addition, students receive free school supplies and backpacks, healthy snacks and free harbor boat rides and tours of local cultural attractions. The festival also features live entertainment and recreational activities. Mayor Joseph P. Riley Jr., who borrowed the festival idea from former Nashville, Tenn., Mayor Bill Purcell, recognizes businesses that give employees leave time to attend the festival, take their children to school on the first day, and participate or volunteer at their child's school throughout the year.

Other municipal leaders are focusing their efforts on engaging the community to address disparities in student achievement. Throughout 2007, Springfield, Ill., Mayor Timothy Davlin hosted an Educational Policy Series on Closing the

Achievement Gap. The city's Office of Education Liaison cosponsored three forums with the University of Illinois at Springfield, engaging a broad range of educators and other stakeholders. In Denver, Mayor John Hickenlooper convened a Summit on Latino Academic Achievement in 2004 that brought together 300 business, civic and educational leaders, many of whom requested and planned the event. These leaders focused on best practices to address the needs of Latino students, who make up nearly 60 percent of Denver Public Schools students yet have the lowest graduation rates. In addition to recommending a more rigorous curriculum and incentives to improve teacher quality, summit participants made several suggestions for engaging parents, from new teacher training courses on parental involvement and cultural competency to expanded bilingual early education options. More than 200 attendees participated in a follow up meeting 100 days after the summit to carry out these recommendations.

Mayors have also successfully engaged parents and community partners in discussions about how to reduce the number of students dropping out of school. Many cities nationwide have hosted dropout prevention summits with support from America's Promise – the Alliance for Youth. For instance, Louisville, Ky., Mayor Jerry Abramson and Jefferson County Public Schools Superintendent Sheldon Berman hosted a Graduate Greater Louisville Dropout Solutions Summit in 2008 that laid the groundwork for a comprehensive action agenda. Committees on multiple pathways, student supports, policy barriers to graduation, life readiness and education beyond high school, data and youth and parent voice will implement this broad agenda.

Establishing mayoral control of public school governance.

In recent years, several prominent, large-city mayors have taken control of school governance in their cities. This trend has began in 1991 when Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino gained authority from the State of Massachusetts to hold a referendum on mayoral appointment of the seven-member school committee for Boston Public Schools, a change upheld by voters in 1996.

Since then, a number of large cities have followed Boston's lead, beginning with Chicago in 1995, where the mayor is solely responsible for appointing members of the Chicago Board of Education and the school district CEO. In Philadelphia and Baltimore, the mayor and governor jointly appoint school board members. Cleveland's mayor appoints school board members from a slate of 18 nominees recommended by a panel of parents, educators and business leaders; at least four of the nine appointees must have expertise in education, finance or business management. The board hires the school district CEO with approval by the mayor. Washington, D.C., Mayor Adrian Fenty gained control over D.C. Public Schools in 2007 and has since worked with Chancellor Michelle Rhee to reorganize and consolidate the school system.

Mayoral control is not solely a large-city model. The mayors of Harrisburg, Pa., New Haven, Conn., and Trenton, N.J., also appoint their school districts' governing bodies, while the mayor of Hartford selects a school board majority. In Providence, R.I., the mayor appoints the school board with confirmation by the city council — a system in place in Jackson, Miss., for over half of a century.

Mayoral takeovers elicit strong reactions among public officials and the education community. Proponents point to achievement gains — particularly in the lowest performing schools — in Boston, Cleveland, Chicago and New York, as well as more stable and accountable school administration. The percentage of Chicago Public Schools students in third through eighth grades performing above national norms for the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in math doubled between 1995 and 2005, and increased by 17 percentage points for reading. In New York City, the proportion of students proficient in math rose 32 percentage points for fourth graders and 18 percentage points among eight graders between 2000 and 2005 (the mayor has controlled the school system since 2002). In Boston, 10th-grade state test score proficiency levels increased by 18 percentage points in reading and doubled in math between 1998 and 2002. Supporters of mayoral control cite mayors' accountability for system-wide results, flexibility in implementing new reforms, smoother negotiations with teachers and the political clout that mayors have in leveraging resources from other levels of government and the business community to improve school finances, capacity and infrastructure.

Critics of mayoral control see it as a one-size-fits-all approach that may limit parent input and the autonomy of individual schools and neighborhoods with different needs. In 2006, judges in California ruled that an effort to enhance mayoral control of the Los Angeles Unified School District was unconstitutional because it would countermand voter control of the school governance structure. The mayor and school board have since launched a new partnership to replicate best practices in schools across the district. Other skeptics of mayoral control are wary of increasing mayors' political influence on school administration, and express caution about the impact of electoral transitions on school improvement. In addition, cities' experiences with this system vary. For instance, Detroit had mixed results in impacting student achievement and voters chose to return to an elected school board. Despite these concerns and the limited possibilities for adapting this approach in many communities, the push for mayoral control will likely continue as a far-reaching response in cities with the most struggling schools.

Developing joint use agreements for city and school facilities.
By establishing agreements for the joint use of facilities owned by cities and school districts, such as libraries, recreation centers, classrooms, computer labs, theaters and auditoriums, municipal and school officials can maximize local tax dollars and public property to support educational goals. Benefits include more efficient use of existing resources, less duplication and the opening of public space to broader community purposes. Because municipal zoning and land use decisions impact the location of new schools and recreation facilities, city officials can take advantage of these opportunities to explore possibilities for joint use.

By establishing agreements for the joint use of facilities owned by cities and school districts, municipal and school officials can maximize local tax dollars and public property to support educational goals.

Several provisions are common to these intergovernmental agreements, the most basic of which is a decision about how and when the city and school district will use the facility. For instance, cities are often allowed to use school properties when they are not designated for school-related activities (e.g., afterschool programs, summer school), and schools can schedule activities at city parks and recreation centers when they are not being used by the city. Local officials can also outline the degree of flexibility with which use policies can be modified and who will coordinate usage. In Tualatin, Ore., where voters in 2004 passed a bond for the development of a multi-use sports field and cross-country running trail, the city community services director and school district athletic coordinator manage usage on a day-to-day basis. Other provisions focus on supervision, security, maintenance and repairs, rental fee revenue and insurance. The agreement also stipulates joint responsibilities for investment, distribution of operational costs and terms of ownership.

Joint use agreements take different forms depending on communities' local needs and priorities. The City of Ralston, Neb., utilized a joint use agreement when voters approved a $25.7 million bond package to renovate the local high school, but the total did not include enough funding for the interior fitting of the high school's future theater. The city stepped in by providing $60,000 a year for five years from local lottery funds. In addition to the high school's theatrical productions, the city's 6,300 residents use the theater for performances by the Ralston Community Theater group, music recitals, meetings and seminars. In Alameda and El Segundo, Calif., city and school leaders have implemented joint use agreements for the administration of city or school libraries, thereby improving resources, streamlining operations and eliminating duplicate materials.

Joint use agreements are not limited to pacts between cities and school districts, but can also apply to contracts with counties, community organizations, or other stakeholders. For instance, in Lincoln, Calif., the city and school district joined the local community college in applying for funding to create a shared library. In addition, city and school leaders jointly funded a new administrative office for both municipal employees and school district administrators.

The development of joint use agreements for athletic fields, parks, gyms, pools and the accompanying maintenance vehicles and equipment is also a widespread trend in communities throughout the country, as described in the Community Wellness chapter.

Convening city and school leadership.

One important first step that municipal leaders can take to support public schools is to meet regularly with school district leaders. Many cities, such as Minneapolis, have formalized these regular meetings between mayors, superintendents, city managers and city council and school board members. By building ongoing relationships, city and school district officials can address issues of joint concern and identify opportunities to work together on behalf of children and youth. For example, Claremont, Calif., leaders instituted a regular "six-pack" meeting schedule in which the mayor, mayor pro tem, school board president and vice president, city manager and school superintendent discuss the city's youth master plan. In San José, Calif., Mayor Chuck Reed and Vice Mayor Judy Chirco hold quarterly meetings with superintendents from the 19 school districts serving San José students through a city-school collaborative. The collaborative includes three subcommittees working on school safety, teacher recruitment and joint use issues. In Louisville, Ky., the mayor and superintendent attend each other's cabinet meetings.

One important first step that municipal leaders can take to support public schools is to meet regularly with school district leaders.

Other cities convene more expansive groups of leaders focused on education. Evansville, Ind., Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel established the Evansville Education Roundtable in 2004 with representation from government, education, local businesses and the community. The roundtable has helped establish the Southern Indiana College Access Network, an early childhood development coalition and a youth mentoring program. Following a citywide education summit, former San Antonio Mayor Phil Hardberger established the P-16 Plus Council of Greater Bexar County in January 2008. The council seeks to align the work of early childhood providers, school districts, community colleges, universities and career training programs to create a unified educational system and identify ways to improve student achievement. Since 1983, the Portland, Ore., Leaders Roundtable has brought together local elected officials and education and business leaders to eliminate barriers to student success.

FOUR NEW IDEAS TO CONSIDER

Education

Work to boost college completion rates. Only about one-half of students enrolling in postsecondary institutions, and fewer than 40 percent who enter community colleges, make it to the "finish line" and earn a two- or four-year degree within six years. City leaders can play a key role in highlighting this challenge and forging lasting partnerships among schools, community colleges and other postsecondary institutions, job training programs, business leaders and nonprofit groups to increase the number of young adults attaining postsecondary credentials. Through community-wide collaborations, cities can also address barriers to college completion such as lack of earnings or child care, support efforts by alternative high schools and colleges to offer dual enrollment and develop data systems that track student outcomes (e.g., see Hartford, Conn., in the Infrastructure chapter).

Combat health and housing problems that interrupt students' schooling. Chronic absenteeism and frequent or abrupt shifts from one school to another can quickly derail students' progress and undermine academic achievement. By targeting one or more of the problems that lead to disruptions in schooling, city and school leaders have an opportunity to improve educational outcomes while also advancing the health and well being of children and their families. For example, municipal officials can work in concert with school personnel to identify children suffering from severe asthma and then use housing inspections and code enforcement measures to ensure that landlords eliminate building conditions that exacerbate asthma problems. Similarly, city and school officials can collaborate to minimize school disruptions when families lose their housing through evictions or foreclosures, arranging emergency shelter and adopting policies that enable students to remain in their school during a period of transition.

Create a "0-8 strategy" for school readiness and early literacy. Research suggests that students who are not reading on grade level by third grade face a high risk in later years of failing to graduate from high school. Knowing that school readiness and early literacy are keys to future academic success, mayors and other city leaders can collaborate with their school counterparts to craft a strategy that supports early learning for children from birth through age eight. Important gains can be made by aligning curricula and assessments used by preschool or other early care and education providers with those adopted by local elementary schools. Other areas ripe for city-school partnerships include improved parent involvement and communication efforts to smooth the transition to kindergarten as well as expanded outreach to and support for parents with infants and toddlers.

Pursue school integration based on socioeconomic status. One year after the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional efforts in Jefferson County (Louisville), Ky., and Seattle, Wash., to make public schools more integrated by using race as a factor in school assignments, the Jefferson County school board crafted a new school integration plan that assigns students to schools based in part on parents' income and education levels, while still taking neighborhood demographics into account. According to Richard Kahlenberg at The Century Foundation, similar plans exist or are being considered in more than 45 school districts across the country. For instance, Wake County, N.C., ensures that no schools have more than 40 percent of students receiving free or reduced price lunch. City leaders, whether or not they have a role in the governance of public schools, can help local residents understand the benefits of integrated schools and provide vocal support for the efforts of school leaders to bring together students of diverse backgrounds.