

# SEATTLE EDUCATION ACTION PLAN



**City of Seattle**

## MESSAGE FROM MAYOR MURRAY

One of our greatest challenges is how to build an equitable Seattle where all our youth have the education necessary to participate in Seattle’s 21<sup>st</sup>-century economy.

Last year, the City began an engagement process to listen to families, teachers, students, school district leadership, and community partners on achieving equity for students in our public schools. These conversations turned into an Education Summit Advisory Group which delivered a crystal-clear message – end the disparities in school achievement between white students and African-American/Black and other students of color who have traditionally been underserved. The Advisory Group set an ambitious, but essential, goal of ensuring that 70 percent of Seattle students achieve a college degree or complete a credential program. After months of discussions, the Advisory Group delivered their recommendations for how to eliminate opportunity gaps. I embrace this goal, and I am committed to action—these recommendations will not languish on a shelf.

The statistics never fail to shake me: in Seattle, students of color are meeting reading standards at a rate 31 percent lower than white students. In Seattle, we suspend and expel students of color at three times the rate of their white peers. And Seattle has the fifth largest achievement gap between white students and students of color in the nation.

Today we roll out the framework for making the Advisory Group’s highest-priority recommendations a reality. This Action Plan provides a road map of investments that have been identified by an extensive community process and negotiations with leaders from the Seattle Public Schools, educators, business, philanthropy, community-based organizations and higher education. We have a shared vision. Now is the time for action.

As we begin this action plan, I recognize there will be more to do. I am committed to working together with the Seattle Public Schools, the educators and families, and other partners to build this vision in a collaborative manner.

The creativity, intelligence and determination of the next generation is this city’s most important resource. These are all of our children. This is our opportunity to build our future.



Mayor Edward B. Murray  
City of Seattle

## COLLABORATION WITH SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 24, 2017

Dear Mayor Murray,

Thank you for leading the city's Summit on Eliminating Educational Opportunity Gaps and bringing our community together for this important conversation and commitment to action. A strong, quality public education system that ensures every student thrives is the bedrock of a healthy community. It is not only a moral imperative for Seattle but also an economic imperative. I could not be more enthusiastic about the support the City of Seattle is providing to ensure each and every student in the district has the benefit of an excellent education and is college, career and life ready.

The City support for Seattle Public Schools the only partnership like it in Washington. Although Washington State is forty-third nationally in portion of wealth spent for our public schools, our schools also receive an additional \$35 million in city support through the Families and Education Levy (FEL). These funds support our highest needs schools and provide universal health services in all of our comprehensive high schools, among many other services. Additionally, in the past two and a half years, the city and our voters have expanded their commitment to educational equity by working to provide high-quality universal preschool. Already, we are seeing strong gains and more students entering kindergarten on track and prepared.

Over the last year, through the Summit planning and convening, we have built even greater understanding and partnership between the City of Seattle and Seattle Public Schools. Your enlistment of our community's influential thought leaders and experts helped identify what is needed most to eliminate gaps. The time together brought improved clarity about how the city can help accelerate and expand the good work already happening in the district. Thank you for using your platform and influence to elevate the conversation. We now have community understanding and support for eliminating opportunity gaps, and as a result, countless community-based partners have stepped up to offer their assistance.

Thank you for Summit funding you have already provided: expanding My Brother's Keeper, a gap eliminating mentorship program, to four additional middle schools; enhanced support to summer school; high school innovation programs; and expansion of the 13<sup>th</sup> Year Scholarship Program, ensuring students from four of our comprehensive high schools have one year of college tuition paid. These investments make dreams a reality for our students.

These city and voter approved investments help us amplify the critical work underway. For the past three years, SPS has been on a quest to eliminate educational opportunity gaps. We are a high performing urban district and overall our students outperform like peers by nearly one full grade level. We also acknowledge, of the two hundred largest districts nationally, that we have one of the most significant achievement gaps between white and black students. We have been working with urgency to

remove barriers to opportunity, which we believe if addressed, will better support our students and improve academic achievement. This requires focusing on improving the system, not on fixing the student. We now have over a dozen schools leading the way statewide in rapidly eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps and we are working to replicate common practices across our schools. Specific strategies to eliminate opportunity gaps include:

- **Annual Goal Setting:** Each school sets an annual goal to close gaps, monitor progress, and make adjustments.
- **Race and Equity Partnerships:** We have partnered with the Seattle Education Association to increase our Race and Equity Teams' abilities to create awareness, influence decision-making, and improve practice. Currently teams are in thirty-one schools across the district.
- **Policy and Support Services:** The district implemented a moratorium on elementary suspensions and invested in alternatives including trauma informed practices and social-emotional curricula.
- **Relationships:** We are committed to, and have supported the development of, strong educator-student relationships, including training for over 4,000 employees and continuous monitoring of students' perceptions of school climate and belonging.

This is THE challenge of our time. America has never served students who are experiencing poverty or students of color well. In order to realize our vision and commitment, we have to reimagine instructional practices, provide supports and services that honor a student's story, build on his or her strengths, and then address areas of growth and need. We are looking to national groups like My Brother's Keeper and the Council of Great City Schools for promising practices and we are learning from national outliers like Montgomery County Public Schools where we believe there are emerging positive trends.

Thank you for support you have already provided for Summit recommendations. Thank you for the commitment to find new funding initiatives to expand the work further. We, at Seattle Public Schools, cannot do this work alone, especially in light of the state's delay to fully fund basic education and fulfill their Constitutional obligation. This is why the City of Seattle partnership is so very much appreciated. On behalf of our 53,000 students and their families. Thank you! Together we will become one of the first urban districts in America to do right by every single one of our students. We will create a public school system where every student is college, career, and life ready. I look forward to our continued work together and realizing the vision we share for our youth, Seattle Public Schools, and the City of Seattle.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Larry Nyland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dr. Larry Nyland  
Superintendent  
Seattle Public Schools

## INTRODUCTION

“For more than a century, public education has been viewed as opening doors to the American Dream. The idea that our public education system should offer opportunities for all children to learn skills and knowledge that will allow them to thrive and succeed in life remains a powerful vision, but one that is not experienced by many children today. Unfortunately, our public education system across the country is characterized more by racial and economic disparity than equity. For decades, we have failed to change outcomes for too many students of color and low-income students.

In Seattle Public Schools, there is much good work underway. But as in many large urban public school systems, disparities in child outcomes have existed for far too long and still exist in Seattle today....

In Seattle Public Schools, students of color meet the 3rd grade reading standards at a rate 31 percent lower than white students. Students of color are suspended or expelled at three times the rate of their white peers. Students of color graduate on time at a rate 24 percent lower than white students. A shocking 43 percent of African American and Latino students do not graduate on time or at all.

These disparities are unacceptable....

After considerable discussion, we agreed that a laser-like focus on closing the opportunity gap for African American/Black students and other underserved children of color is what is needed....

We set a goal of helping 70 percent of our African American/Black students and other students of color achieve success in college or a credential program. We called this our ‘North Star.’ This goal is important to us because research done by the Georgetown University Center on Education in the Workforce states that by 2018 fully 67 percent of jobs in Washington state will require some form of post-secondary credential.

**“Without making major changes to the ways in which we support African American/Black students and other students of color, they will be left behind as the workforce for the next generation is created.”**

— *The Mayor’s Education Summit Advisory Group Co-Chairs  
Advisory Group Final Report, November 2016*

In early 2016, the City of Seattle began a process that brought together families, teachers, students, school district leadership, business and philanthropic leaders, and community partners to develop a shared vision for ensuring equity and excellence for each Seattle student. These community conversations stemmed from an urgent need to understand and address decades of poor outcomes for

Seattle’s students of color. Although the Seattle School District regularly outperforms districts across the state, a closer look at the data reveals that among the 200 largest districts in the U.S., Seattle has the **fifth largest achievement gap**<sup>1</sup> between African American and white students. We must commit to closing this gap by removing the barriers to opportunity that help determine our students’ success. Following the recommendations of the Education Advisory Group, the Education Action Plan is focused on addressing the Advisory Group’s goal of specifically targeting African American/Black students and other students of color who have been traditionally underserved.

Throughout this effort, we worked to examine and re-commit to the work of closing the opportunity gap. The perspectives shared and information gathered during this unprecedented collaboration between the City, School District, and community stakeholders has given us a unique chance to make a significant impact on closing achievement gaps.

While individual programs and efforts are important, they cannot by themselves address the systemic contributors to inequity. Customary thinking and institutional practices can be difficult to change, but research shows that addressing systemic preconceptions and biases will create the outcomes we all want for each and every one of our students.

That is why the City of Seattle, the Seattle School District, and business and community partners are committing to a new collaborative relationship that will, over the next several years, participate in the implementation of recommendations from the Mayor’s Education Summit Advisory Group. The collective impact of this partnership will significantly improve the programs and systems that affect outcomes for our students of color, low income students, and English Language Learners, who are disproportionately impacted by the disparities in educational opportunity.

This Education Action Plan outlines how the recommendations and newly-formed partnerships will work together to create powerful and lasting change in our schools and in the lives of these students.

We will seek to meet children’s needs across the continuum of child development, from birth to post-secondary education and work.

We will make new investments that focus on early child development and early education, mentorship programs in middle schools, increased summer and out-of-school programs, nurturing innovation in high schools, increasing the diversity of our teacher corps, reducing disproportionate discipline and improving school climate, enhancing college and career readiness, and reducing financial barriers to post-secondary programs.

As we implement this Action Plan, we will examine existing City-funded programs to strengthen those that are working and revise those that could better serve students of color. This will help align the City with equity-driven efforts by the School District, by philanthropy partners, and by King County’s Best Starts for Kids programming.

For these investments to be fruitful, we must remain cognizant of the social, historical and economic contexts that have hindered success for our low-income students and students of color. Bringing

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<sup>1</sup> Stanford CEPA Center for Education Policy Analysis

together multiple public sectors - health, human services, recreation, juvenile justice and education - affords a diversity of knowledge and support to help ensure that success.

We must also maintain our conversations with the community, be willing to listen to how the City can support good work already happening for our students, and fill in gaps where needed. And we must examine our investments, progress, and outcomes through a racial equity lens, because our goals and efforts are deeply tied to the continued movement to undo racism in our city.

Everyone benefits when children succeed in school. In another generation, today's students will be making the decisions that shape our community. The City of Seattle stands committed to partnering with the families, teachers, students, and leadership of the Seattle Public Schools, leaders in higher education, business and philanthropy and voices of the community to improve educational achievement for all our students.

## COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

During the many community conversations held during the first phase of the Education Summit, nine themes emerged:

1. **Improve school climate** – the quality of school life, values and expectations, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures that support or do not support students
2. **Improve in-school instruction and programming** – the quality of instruction and curriculum, use of multicultural and bilingual curricula and programs, and the quality of ELL, special education and other programs
3. **Improve family/community engagement and partnerships** – using culturally and language-appropriate ways to communicate and engage with parents, and creating partnerships with community-based organizations and businesses
4. **Support community and family needs** – ways to help families, especially lower income families and families of color, thrive and help their children be successful in school
5. **Strengthen post-secondary access and attainment** – helping students learn about careers, college, job and internship opportunities, and connect their classes and their future
6. **Increase school-city collaboration** – developing a shared vision and goals, and strengthening leadership
7. **Recruit, support and retain a diverse and high-quality educator workforce** – increasing diversity among educators and administrators to better reflect the student population, and actively recruiting and retaining teachers of color
8. **Improve access to quality expanded K-12 opportunities** – providing meaningful and culturally relevant before- and after-school and summer opportunities
9. **Expand access to quality early learning** – providing high-quality and affordable early learning, and expanding training opportunities for early learning teachers



## ADVISORY GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Mayor Murray’s Education Advisory Group met 13 times between February and October 2016. They collected and processed extensive community input on addressing the disparities in educational opportunities and outcomes affecting students of color and those from low-income families. The Advisory Group recommended the following strategies to address Seattle’s opportunity gap for African American/Black and other students of color:

### ***Improving Access to High Quality Learning Opportunities and Programs***

- A. **Expand the Innovation School Model to Additional Elementary and Middle Schools; Develop a Comprehensive Approach for High Schools.** Build on the success of programs at Aki Kurose, Mercer and Denny middle schools. Schools are required to have a tiered approach to intervention with students who are performing below grade level.
- B. **Expand Summer Learning Program.** Summer learning provides struggling students with additional academic time to catch up with their peers, free and nutritious meals, and high-quality enrichment experiences. Expand the existing successful program.
- C. **Establish and Expand School-Based Mentoring Programs.** The goal is to match a caring adult with every child who is struggling to keep up with school requirements. This can include expansion of existing programs (e.g. My Brother’s Keeper), and creation of new programs.
- D. **Enhance Opportunities for Before- and After-School Programs.** These programs occur outside of regular school hours – before school, after school, or weekends.
- E. **Increase Support for Parents and Caregivers of Children, Prenatal – 3 Years.** Work with the King County levy initiative Best Starts to develop an implementation plan that will provide support for parents, families and caregivers; screen children to prevent potential problems and allow for early intervention; cultivate caregiver knowledge; and support high-quality childcare.

### ***Creating Positive, Supportive and High-Quality Teaching and Learning Opportunities***

- A. **Expand the Innovation School Model to Additional Elementary and Middle Schools; Develop a Comprehensive Approach for High Schools.** (Described in Work Group #1 above.) In addition, this model helps reduce discipline disproportionality, improves attendance and school climate, encourages use of more rigorous curriculum, promotes the creation or adoption of more culturally relevant curricula, and improves college and career planning.
- B. **Increase Diversity in the Educator Workforce.** Increase the diversity pipeline by creating opportunities for instructional assistants to earn their teaching certificates. Tuition assistance

could be provided to increase the number of instructional assistants that participate in the program.

- C. **Reducing Disproportionality in Discipline – Build and Sustain a Positive School Culture and Climate.** Expand into entire district feeder patterns at multiple levels strategies that build positive school culture and climate, and support student social-emotional development. These include RULER, Collaborative Learning for Educational Achievement and Resilience (CLEAR), Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS), Restorative Justice, and wrap-around services.

### ***Providing Authentic Family and Community Support and Engagement***

- A. **Expand School-Based Health Centers.** Expand the provision of comprehensive medical and mental health care to students, including the hours, the number of schools served, and collaboration with public agencies (Public Health-Seattle & King County) and community-based organizations.
- B. **Increase Family Engagement and Partnership.** Provide and expand systemic opportunities that: (a) increase parents' ability to support their child's learning at home and at the school-building, and advocate for them (e.g. navigating the system); and (b) increase educators' ability to authentically engage parents in measurable ways and accelerate student learning.
- C. **Enhance Family Support – Create Comprehensive, Robust System of Support for Families.** Collaborate with community-based organizations and SPS to expand family supports and services. Ideas include allowing schools to operate as hubs to connect families to services, expand collaborations with community organizations to provide services in schools, in-school case managers, culturally and linguistically appropriate supports for families.
- D. **Improve Transportation – Provide Safe, Affordable Options to School and Extended Learning Programs.** Provide transportation and childcare to enable low-income families to attend school-sponsored events; fund Safe Passage program to enhance safe routes to/from school; and expand free Metro pass program for low-income students, including summer programs.
- E. **Address the Needs of Homeless Students.** Provide personalized supports to students and families experiencing homelessness that will meet their academic and social needs. Also address the academic needs of foster care students.

### ***Strengthening Post-Secondary Access and Attainment***

- A. **Workplace-Based Learning – Complement Career/College prep in K-12.** Expand Mayor's Youth Employment Initiative; increase access to job-shadow and workplace-based learning; coordinate employer site visits; expand employer classroom visits; include local hiring ordinance training programs as part of the learning system; create industry-focused, hands-on learning at high schools.

- B. Financing Post-Secondary Attainment – Remove Financial Barriers to Education and Training.** Create programs and support advocacy to minimize the financial barriers to pursue school or career training, including: expand the 13<sup>th</sup> Year program currently available at three Seattle high schools; create a new Seattle Promise program, and advocate for full funding of the state need grant and continued full funding for the college-bound scholarships.
- C. Career/College Planning – Increase Post-Secondary Access and Persistence by Raising Career and College Awareness Through Guiding Curriculum.** Expand program activity to help prepare students for college, training and careers. Create a “college-going” culture in all schools. It is also important to support students’ access to opportunities for post-secondary credential attainment. Create a career pathways class in all high schools that leads to every student working toward a living wage and a successful job; increase the number of career counselors; partner with higher education to change the culture for students who do not believe they have post-secondary educational opportunities; and create a “summer melt” program.
- D. International Baccalaureate (IB) Pathway – Expand the Continuum through Elementary and Middle Schools.** Expand the existing IB programs to one elementary school and one middle school.
- E. Expand Seattle Public School International Schools/Dual Language Immersion Programs.** Complete and strengthen current International Schools/Dual Language Immersion Program in southeast and southwest Seattle with options to expand the model in other regions of the city.
- F. Support Open Doors Programs – Increase Capacity of School Re-entry Programs.** Expand the capacity of Open Doors, a drop-out reengagement program that provides education and services to older youth, ages 16 to 21, who have dropped out of school, including those who are released due to “discipline,” or are not expected to graduate from high school by the age of 21.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS: IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

To reach the goal of eliminating achievement and opportunity gaps, and improving educational and life outcomes for Seattle’s African American/Black youth and underserved children of color (particularly Native American, Pacific Islanders, and immigrant and refugee youth), the implementation of Education Summit Advisory Group recommendations must be intentional and strategic. These guidelines will guide implementation of the recommendations by addressing education from birth through post-secondary education.

- I. Any strategies and funding must be directly tied to eliminating educational disparities for African American/Black youth and other children of color. The impacts and changes for these communities of color must be tracked and monitored.***

The City must utilize a racial equity policy and/or impact screen such as the City’s Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) toolkit, and continue to refine disaggregated student data to ensure African American/Black communities and other communities of color are prioritized during the design and implementation of the recommendations. Data analysis should be available and transparent to the public. Strategies should inspire hope and high expectations for success in youth.

- II. Ensure ongoing and authentic community, family, and student engagement.***

Seattle’s student population is rich in cultural and linguistic diversity. Policies and practices must address this diversity and engage communities of color to uplift their voices. The City of Seattle must provide transparency in implementing the recommendations, and ensure accountability to and engagement with those most impacted by education inequities.

- III. Continue a whole-child approach to the City’s support for Seattle’s children and families.***

Educational challenges are related to both classroom instruction and to situations students experience at home and in their communities. The City’s role in supporting Seattle’s children should continue to support the diverse array of educational, health, community, and cultural needs, with a focus on supporting students to achieve academic success. There are no easy solutions to closing opportunity gaps; effective solutions vary by the unique needs of each student. A whole-child approach includes supporting the lifespan of a child, from prenatal to college/career, and tailoring solutions to different stages of development.

**IV. *Engage community-based and cultural/language-based organizations to achieve outcomes for Seattle’s students.***

Collaboration among the City, School District and community partners is required to meet the diverse range of needs of Seattle students. Meeting the needs of Seattle students is a responsibility shared by us all. A community-wide approach is necessary to close achievement gaps; this approach has proven effective in Seattle schools demonstrating the most progress. It is essential that community based organizations, particularly organizations centered in communities of color with deep cultural and language knowledge, are engaged as partners in planning and implementing these strategies and are fairly compensated for doing so.

**V. *Focus on systemic change through implementation of the recommendation strategies.***

While programs and supports are central to improving education, addressing the root causes of education disparities such as racism (individual, institutional, and structural), biases and economic inequality, requires bold moves around systems change, accountability, and shifts in power. This includes building leadership in communities of color to drive change in dismantling existing inequitable structures. Systems change must be integral in each and every strategy, prioritizing strategies that address institutional racism.

## MOVING FORWARD: IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

Mayor Murray set the following immediate priorities for his administration in carrying out the recommendations of the Advisory Group:

- 1. Develop and strengthen partnerships that focus on eliminating the opportunity gap**
  - a. Create and sustain a place for the City, Seattle Public Schools, philanthropy, community, family, and business partners to elevate, support, and be accountable to creating equity for students of color.
  - b. Through the Youth Opportunity Cabinet, examine how the City can better align its youth investments to have the greatest positive impact.
  - c. Support and advocate for best practices that support the success of students of color.
  - d. Engage philanthropy in supporting our school and community in strategies that are impactful and well-supported.
  - e. Engage the Seattle business community in expanding access to college and career success for students of color.
  
- 2. Expand access to high-quality Summer Learning and Before/After School Care**
  
- 3. Provide School-based Mentorship**
  
- 4. Support School Climate and Discipline**
  - a. Speak up for improved discipline and school climate systems that are culturally appropriate and are born from a “whole-child” approach.
  - b. Support staffing and professional development of students support systems.
  
- 5. College and Career Planning, and Post-Secondary Access**
  - a. Expand college and career planning in middle and high school grades
  - b. Provide more experiential learning opportunities
  - c. Reduce financial barriers to post-secondary access.

## MOVING FORWARD: INITIAL INVESTMENTS

The 2017 budget saw a number of early investments in implementing the Education Advisory Group's Recommendation. Mayor Murray's 2017 City budget included several recommendations from the Education Summit Advisory Group that were all adopted in the final budget. They included:

1. Expanding the effective My Brother's Keeper mentoring program for African American/Black male students from Aki Kurose Middle School to four additional middle schools.
2. Expanding the Families and Education Levy innovation school model, which has been successful at addressing disparities in middle schools around attendance, behavior and curricula, to a high school on a pilot basis.
3. Broadening the City's Summer Learning Program to serve an additional 200 students, with an emphasis on programs offering culturally specific or gender specific curriculum.
4. Investing in "summer melt" programs to ensure students who graduate from high school remain engaged during the summer and successfully enroll in college.

In addition, the City Council made further investments to the City budget consistent with the Advisory Group recommendations:

1. Expanding the Parent-Child Home Program visitation program to more Seattle families.
2. Expanding a Seattle Public Schools partnership for an elementary summer literacy program.
3. Providing executive function training in Middle Schools.
4. Funding the non-tuition expenses of the Seattle Colleges 13<sup>th</sup> Year Scholarship Program to make precious tuition funds go further.

## MOVING FORWARD: NEXT INVESTMENTS

Building on the initial investments in the Education Action Plan, the City will implement the next investments as new revenue sources become available, partnerships are developed with other funders, or existing revenues can be reallocated.

Specific recommendations proposed for implementation include:

- **Promoting Family Engagement and Collaboration**

Expand opportunities that increase parents’ ability to support their child’s learning and increase educators’ ability to authentically engage parents. Add funds to schools for parent engagement activities and parent advocates.

**Why it Matters:** Students do better in school when their parents are engaged in their education. Research indicates that engaging families is the biggest challenge that teachers face and that in their work overall, they feel the least prepared to engage families in supporting their children’s education.<sup>2</sup> The largest predictor of whether families will be involved at home and school are specific school/teacher programs that encourage family engagement.

- **Enhancing Before and After School Opportunities**

Increase wraparound programs that occur outside of regular school hours including STEM learning opportunities, partnerships with Seattle Parks and increasing funding to community based organizations.

**Why it Matters:** This funding would provide struggling students with additional academic time to catch up with their peers, a safe place to be, and high-quality enrichment experiences. Some enrichment activities like STEM learning opportunities and field trips provide hands on learning that parents may not have the time, knowledge or resources to provide on their own. According to the Afterschool Alliance, students who regularly participate in quality afterschool programs “make better grades, improve work habits & grades, and have higher graduation rates.”

- **Expanding School-Based Mentoring**

Match a caring adult with every child who is struggling to keep up with school requirements. Increase funding for successful programs like My Brother’s Keeper to additional middle schools and ensure all students have the support they need to succeed.

**Why it Matters:** Schools struggle to squeeze academic, as well as social and emotional skill building, into a six-hour day. Some students find that they are having a difficult time keeping up with all that is expected of them. School-based mentoring programs allow mentors and students

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<sup>2</sup> (Markow, D., Macia, L., & Lee, H. (2012). *The MetLife survey of the American teacher: Challenges for School Leadership*. New York, N.Y: MetLife)



to focus on academic-related activities such as homework help, tutoring, and reading while also building relationships and improving social skills.

- **Reducing Disproportionality in Discipline**

Build a positive school culture and support student social-emotional development. This will include coordinated parent, student and teacher outreach so that students having issues at schools can receive personalized case management. Funding will also be made available to train teachers and staff on how to reduce discipline disparities.

**Why it Matters:** During the 2014-15 school year, the suspension and expulsion rate for African American/Black students was more than five times higher than for White students in Seattle Public Schools. Adopting a new set of practices will reduce the need for discipline and reduce the harm that comes from suspending students from the classroom. Studies show that a positive school culture and climate can lead to decreased absenteeism, suspensions, substance abuse, and bullying, and increases in students' academic achievement, motivation to learn and psychological well-being.

- **Increasing Innovation School Investments**

Develop a tiered approach to intervention with students who are performing below grade-level to equalize the playing field. This funding will expand the number of middle and high schools getting flexible funds – a model that asks the school to creatively meet the needs of their students. Programs can include: social/emotional support, college and career planning, experiential learning, more rigorous curricula and culturally relevant curricula.

**Why it Matters:** Through the Families and Education Levy, Seattle has pioneered a new approach to school investments called the Innovation School model. This model has been extremely successful in providing schools the flexibility to strategically allocate resources, develop new academic interventions, and use data to serve the most struggling students. Several Innovation Schools have moved from having high numbers of students not meeting state standards to now being recognized as outperforming schools with similar demographics. This investment would expand the Innovation School model to additional middle and high schools.

- **Growing Summer Learning Programs**

Provide struggling students with additional academic time to catch up with their peers, free and nutritious meals, and high quality enrichment experiences. Programs funded should include cultural or gender specific programming for summer enrichment activities.

**Why it Matters:** For low-income students and students of color, summer can be an uncertain time with limited access to affordable and nutritious meals, safe neighborhood spaces, and high-quality learning experiences. Over the summer, students lose academic skills and knowledge if not engaged in high-quality and enriching experiences--a phenomenon known as summer learning loss or summer slide. As a result, students can fall further behind, contributing to achievement and opportunity gaps between low-income students and their more affluent peers.

- **Adding Workplace-Based Learning Programs**

Foster post-secondary success and workplace preparedness by providing stipends for students to experience career opportunities.

**Why it Matters:** When students have opportunities to have hands-on, real life work experiences, it increases student engagement and interest in postsecondary opportunities. According to a Harvard University report, work-linked learning exposes students to various careers and allow students to gain critical professional skills needed to participate in our growing economy.<sup>3</sup>

- **Supporting Educator Workforce Diversity**

Create opportunities for instructional assistants to earn their teaching certificates. Funding will provide more support for diverse assistants to gain credentials needed to join the teaching corps, facilitating an easier pipeline process.

**Why it Matters:** Research shows that all students benefit from a diverse teacher workforce. This effect is even more distinct when we talk about students of color. Research has shown that having even one African American/Black teacher can have a profound effect on keeping African American/Black students in school.<sup>4</sup> However, in Seattle, much like the rest of the state, our teacher workforce does not reflect the diverse student population it serves. A review of the workforce data over 25 years shows that the gap between underrepresented minority students and teachers is growing statewide.<sup>5</sup>

- **Expanding Birth to 5 Year Investments**

Expand programs to care for and prepare children with social and academic skills, setting them up for academic success in school.

**Why it Matters:** A recent study of two universal preschool programs by the Center for American Progress found that: “High-quality [Universal Preschool] would reduce the achievement gap at kindergarten entry in math 45 percent for African American children and 78 percent for Hispanic children, while essentially closing the entire gap in reading for both groups.”<sup>6</sup> Closer to home, a recent evaluation of the Parent Child Home Program (PCHP) in King County found that kids who participated were more likely to be ready for kindergarten, have improved reading/math scores and increased English language proficiency than kids who did not participate.<sup>7</sup>

- **13<sup>th</sup> Year Investment**

The 13<sup>th</sup> Year Promise Scholarship provides scholarship and payment assistance – along with college readiness classes – to graduates, particularly those from underrepresented groups (e.g.

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<sup>3</sup> Symonds W.C., Schwartz R.B., & Ferguson R., (2011). “Pathways to Prosperity: Meeting the Challenge of Preparing Young Americans for the 21st Century.” Report issued by the Pathways to Prosperity Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

<sup>4</sup> Gershenson, S., Hart, C.M., & et al (2017). The Long-Run Impacts of Same Race Teachers. IZA Institute of Labor Economics.

<sup>5</sup> Goldhaber, D., Theobald, R., Tien, C. (2015). Educator and Student Diversity in Washington State: Gaps and Historical Trends. Center for Education Data and Research.

<sup>6</sup> Barnett, S.W., Friedman-Krass, A., & Nores, M. (2016) “How Much Can High-Quality Universal Pre-K Reduce Achievement Gaps?”

<sup>7</sup> “PCHP Washington Longitudinal Study Results”; ORS Impact; February 2016.

student of color, low-income, and first-generation college students from select Seattle Public High Schools for the first year attending any of the Seattle Colleges. The new funding will seed creation of an endowment to help expand the program, managed by the Seattle Colleges.

**Why it Matters:** According to a study by Georgetown University, by 2020, 70% of all jobs in Washington state will require some postsecondary education.<sup>8</sup> Currently, while half of all people from high-income families have a bachelor's degree by age 25, just 1 in 10 people from low-income families do. A primary driver of educational inequality is the high cost of postsecondary education.

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<sup>8</sup> Carnevale, A.P., Smith, N. & Strohl, J. (2013). "Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020". Georgetown University: Center on Education and the Workforce.

## ALIGNMENT WITH YOUTH OPPORTUNITY INITIATIVE

In 2016, Mayor Murray established the Youth Opportunity Cabinet to ensure coordination and alignment across the numerous City departments that serve and invest in our young people every day. The Youth Opportunity Cabinet aims to:

1. Support the Mayor’s Youth Opportunity Initiative which is focused on ensuring that all youth and young adults in Seattle between the ages of 14 and 24 years have access to the resources needed to successfully transition to adulthood.
2. Support the Mayor’s priorities of addressing “opportunity youth”, namely youth and young adults who are most often disconnected from family, school and community, and who too often experience negative life outcomes because of racism.
3. Strategically align City department and resources to ensure all youth and young adults in Seattle between the ages of 14 and 24 years have access to the resources needed to successful transition to adulthood. Specifically, this alignment focuses on five areas: education, employment, justice, health, and positive connections.
4. Provide a forum for the departments directly responsible for investments and resources related to “opportunity youth” to resolve cross-cutting planning policy issues, share lessons learned, and ensure the city is supporting innovative and best practices.
5. Provide a more uniform and consistent approach to the planning, design and delivery of investments for “opportunity youth” with the goal of accelerating results on the City’s investments for “opportunity youth.”

The Cabinet’s 2017 Work Plan includes:

- Coordinating with schools to increase preparation for and access to jobs
- Strengthening the quality of the summer youth employment program for both youth and employers
- Expanding the Youth Opportunity Fund (i.e. flexible grants for positive youth development activities)
- Developing and delivering peer-led health education and prevention specifically around suicide
- Expanding mentoring opportunities for youth of color

Att A – Seattle Education Action Plan  
V3

The Youth Opportunity Cabinet will help ensure the City resources are aligned to support the goals and programs of the Seattle Education Action Plan.

## ALIGNING WITH OUR BEST: SEATTLE'S COMMITMENT TO YOUNG BLACK MEN

While City-funded education programs have strived to meet the guidelines recommended by our community partners, significant work remains to be done. As we become increasingly aware of the need to engage more strongly with our community partners, new initiatives are being developed to strengthen our partnerships and to overcome the legacy of institutionalized racism.

Along with this Education Action Plan, Mayor Murray has launched **Our Best: Seattle's Commitment to Young Black Men**

Our Best is the City of Seattle's first ever initiative focusing specifically on improving life outcomes for young Black men. The initiative represents a focused investment by the City that aims to address the disproportionate impact of institutional racism on Black people, and particularly young Black men. Ensuring that all Seattle residents have access to opportunity requires focused approaches to dismantling racial disparities, removing barriers and transforming systems that have hurt our most marginalized communities. By investing in a staff position and structure around Our Best, we seek to ensure the Our Best mission becomes embedded in our City's DNA and becomes a lasting model.

Rooted in the key pillars of the Youth Opportunity Initiative, Our Best is an explicit commitment to programmatic and systems changes to ensure young Black men have access to opportunity. Specific goals include:

- Close opportunity gaps in Seattle Public Schools by increasing the percentage of Black male high school graduates and increasing postsecondary attainment.
- Advance economic mobility by increasing the number of Black males gaining access to and engaging in meaningful employment opportunities.
- Increase the percentage of young Black men experiencing good health.
- Reduce the percentage young Black men entering the criminal justice system.
- Close mentoring gaps for young Black men and boys by recruiting more Black men to serve as their mentors.

With the launch of Our Best, the City is committing to:

- A robust new mentoring, recruiting, and training campaign for Black men. In Seattle, there are not enough Black male mentors, leaving many mentor programs ill-equipped to support young Black men in culturally responsive ways. Our goal with this new commitment of the Our Best program is to double the number of Black male mentors.
- Convening the Our Best Advisory Council to advise the Mayor and City leaders on a long-term strategy to support young Black male achievement.

- Creating a new Special Advisor to the Mayor focused on Black male achievement to work full time across departments, with the Advisory Council and with the many community leaders who have already been working in this area.

## ALIGNMENT WITH THE FAMILIES AND EDUCATION AND SEATTLE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM LEVIES

The Families and Education Levy, reauthorized by voters in 2011, currently funds some of the recommendations of the Advisory Group. Investments in Early Learning, Family Support, Innovation Schools, Health, Summer Learning and Sports align well with the Education Advisory Group's recommendations. Similarly, the Seattle Preschool Program Levy, approved in 2014, invests in improving children's readiness for school. Specific recommendations funded by these two Levies include:

- Expand Innovation Schools
- Expand Summer Learning
- Increase Early Learning
- Increase Mentoring
- Enhance Before/After School Programs
- Increase Diversity in the Educator Workforce
- Reduce Disproportionate Discipline
- Expand Health Centers
- Improve Transportation
- Help Homeless Students
- Increase Family Engagement
- Enhance Family Support
- Support College/Career Planning

These Levies expire at the end of 2018. Renewal proposals will be developed during 2017 for submittal to the City Council for consideration. The Levy proposals will be informed by:

1. The extent to which they have been successful in addressing opportunity gaps;
2. The evidence that supports continuing the current investments;
3. The recommendations of the Education Advisory Group.

As these recommendations are incorporated into a proposal for review by the Council and community partners, the Advisory Group's implementation guidelines and priorities will provide valuable direction.



## FORMALIZING AN ONGOING PARTNERSHIP

A cross-sector partnership/collaboration between the City, District, business, philanthropy, education stakeholders, students, parents and community based organizations will be formed to facilitate implementation of Education Advisory Group recommendations. A carefully researched and designed partnership will build upon the strengthened relationship between the City of Seattle, the Seattle Public Schools and education stakeholders in closing education opportunity gaps. The City and District, in collaboration with key partners, will jointly engage in a process to develop a partnership framework, learning from the best and promising practices of other jurisdictions engaged in improving public education and closing opportunity gaps.

The charge of the group will include:

- Researching best practices on collective impact collaboration models in education;
- Coordinating learning/listening site visits to explore other jurisdictions’ best practices and successfully implemented collaboration models;
- Developing a strategic plan that provides rationale, structure, scope and grounding for the work/partnership;
- Setting clearly defined roles and responsibilities for those involved in the work; and
- Adopting an outcomes-based framework with measurable goals and defined systems and structures.

## FUNDING THE ACTION PLAN

The ultimate goal is to fund these priorities – and other recommendations from the Education Advisory Group – from a variety of sources, including: new revenue sources; re-aligning existing youth and education funding; new partnerships with higher education and business; and new funding and opportunities from philanthropy. Already the work of the Education Advisory Group has yielded early private sector commitments to support implementation recommendations, including commitments of support from:

- Casey Family Foundation
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Raikes Foundation
- Seattle Foundation
- Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce
- Vulcan Foundation

The City already has invested more than \$2 million towards implementation of the recommendations in the 2017 budget. The City will continue to collaborate with community partners to identify other opportunities to support and grow these programs.