Education Cabinet

City of Portland/Multnomah County



Annual Report 2009







Overview

In January 2009 amid a historic and record-breaking snowstorm, the Education Cabinet co-chaired by Portland Mayor Sam Adams and Multnomah County Chair Ted Wheeler gathered for the first time in Portland Building Room B. There they grappled with what they could collectively do to stem the high school drop out rate. With only 57% of high school youth graduating on time, community leaders realized that cross-sector collaboration was critical and that developing a strategy to address this problem was both a community and economic development priority. Seated at the table were CEO's from the business community, presidents of the local community colleges and universities, 6 school district superintendents, faith community leaders, foundation leaders, board chairs from Worksystems Inc and local non-profits and youth commissioners (were their youth at the first meeting?). This group agreed to focus on two concrete goals and the development of actions that could assist in reaching them. They were:

The work of the Education Cabinet was predicated upon the Portland Schools Foundation Connected by 25 research which received national attention for it's narrowing in on what indicators best predict who is most at-risk of dropping out of high school and highlighting that academic indicators (e.g. 8th grade benchmark scores) prove most predictive. For the first time we know, by name, who these students are and can target resources to them accordingly. This research was outlined within the broader context of understanding that students of color and low-income youth are overrepresented in the population of students most at-risk of not graduating on time. The research also found that students were more likely to drop out during the summer months making transitions from one grade to the next, critical times for intervention.

- increase the graduation rate by 50% and
- double the number of students matriculating into post-secondary education and training

Their purpose in addition to meeting these goals was to establish and fortify political will, community accountability, strategic alignment and system capacity.

To this end, the Education Cabinet adopted six strategies three of which were operationalized in 2009 and three more to be enacted in 2010. In addition, the Cabinet partnered with Worksystems, Inc., ECONorthwest, Portland Schools Foundation, United Way, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and the Multnomah County Commission on Children , Families and Community to tell the story of:

- ✓ What drop out prevention programs currently exist
- ✓ What the population of disconnected youth looks like
- \checkmark What resources to support high school aged youth currently exist
- ✓ Where resources and investments currently reside geographically and programmatically.

In these pages you'll find a review of the past year and a look into the year ahead as the Education Cabinet begins to lay the groundwork towards getting more youth on track to graduation and into post-secondary education. The commitment of key leaders and stakeholders to the continuation and implementation of these strategies speaks to the opportunity and conditions for success. This report outlines:

- Highlights of successes from 2009
- A summary of Education Cabinet reports that "tell the story" of who and where our disconnected youth and services are
- What we accomplished in 2009
- What we aim to accomplish in 2010
- How all of this contributes to our bottom line

Education Cabinet 2009 Highlights

Resources Raised

High level of collaboration and fundraising in tough economic climate

\$550,000 in in-kind to Ninth Grade Counts partners

Meyer Memorial Trust grant for \$20,000 for evaluation

\$50,000 invested by Worksystems to understand the current status and services available to disconnected youth in Portland and Multnomah County

\$2,125,710 in federal stimulus funds to fund SummerWorks in Multnomah County

Cross-Sector Coordination and Collaboration

Establishment of the 40 person Education Cabinet and the leadership role of the Mayor and Chair to convene cross-sector support for the educational needs of youth

Participation of Youth Commissioners at the Cabinet

Alignment of Mayor's office, Ninth Grade Counts, Worksystems to develop summer time academic and career exposure and employment opportunities for youth from 9th to 12th grade.

Youth Served and Programming Offered

800 incoming 9th graders in summer transition programs, all 6 districts

844 youth engaged in summer employment in Multnomah County

Incentives such as bus passes and stipends

Replication of "Transition Centers" to reconnect disconnected youth in east county due to partnership with the faith community "Season of Service" that yielded a \$100,000 donation

Increase in the number of students who are reconnecting to school and the workforce

Implementation of Ninth Grade Transition programs during the summer and fall in all six districts

Education Cabinet Reports Summary

Highlights of how we're capturing who our disconnected youth are and how they are being served.

Inventory

Summary

To better understand the network of services available to disconnected and at-risk youth ages 13 to 24, ECONorthwest constructed an "Inventory" of Multnomah and Washington County programs that serve dropouts and students at risk of dropping out. In order to present a focused snapshot of the target population, the inventory consists only of programs self-identifying as:

A dropout retention and recovery program that serves disconnected, out-of-school, overage, or under-credited youth re-entering the education system *OR*

A dropout prevention program that targets academically at-risk youth (e.g., missed academic benchmarks, over age or under credit, new to the school district)

Moving Forward

These data beg the question of what \$46 million in drop out prevention buys in terms of dropout reduction. In other words, how effective is the system at reaching atrisk youth and ensuring on-time graduation for program participants? Addressing this question is also critical to developing successful, long-term dropout reduction strategies.

<u>Disconnected Youth Data</u> <u>Report</u>

This report will highlight what the state of "disconnected youth" in our region is and give the community some baseline information about how many youth are unemployed, not in school, homeless, in juvenile detention, etc.

Moving Forward

This report will be presented at the April 2010 Education Summit and will be used as a means to catalyze community dialogue on the needs of our youth; review where we've been and how far we've come; outline tangible ways we are making progress, and target strategic investments that will yield high results.

Asset Map

What the Data Report says in words, the asset map will say in maps and graphics. This map will tell the story of where, according to demographic indicators, our high need youth population (14-24) reside and their proximity, access to and density around youth resources (structural and programmatic) that target their age group



Education Cabinet Strategies Summary

Identification strategy

Summary

This strategy was designed to identify who, by name, was most at-risk of dropping out of school

based on the Connected by 25 indicators. With six Multnomah County districts as the focus, this strategy also worked to align indicators and collection methods across districts. School counselors used these lists to refer youth to summer programming, particularly programs targeted at supporting the 8th to 9th grade transition.

Below are descriptions of the summer strategies targeting this population of youth. In an effort to align and create more efficiency in the summer youth continuum, all programs formally known as Youth Corps were merged under a new brand called "Summer Youth Connect."

Identification Results

2,283 current 9th graders in Multnomah County were identified as "Academic Priority" or not on-track to graduate

Districts reached agreement on what indicators to use to identify 8th graders transitioning into 9th grade who are most at-risk of not graduating on time

Ninth Grade Counts

Ninth Grade Counts Results

773 students served in **22** distinct summer transition programs

6 school districts actively participated

Endorsed by the **Education Cabinet** and linked to Youth Corps – Exploration Strategy

A common focus on **high school**, **college & career readiness** for atrisk students

36 full-time AmeriCorps/VISTA members offering support at provider sites28 Masters students from Marylhurst doing Academic support and tutoring

Total value of in-kind support to programs: \$556,972

Summary

This is an eighth to ninth grade transition initiative coordinated by the Portland Schools Foundation that is focused on providing academic enrichment during the summer months for "Academic Priority" students. This is predicated on the research that students fall most behind during this period of time.

Ninth Grade Counts Moving Forward

The vision for this work moving forward is:

- Each district directly sponsor a summer program
- Administrators/ teachers/ counselors do recruitment of identified kids (use guidebook)
- Double the number of students reached so at least 1,000 students have summer transition supports
- 20+ summer AmeriCorps placed along with Marylhurst students

Youth Corps

Summary

Youth Corps summer program targeted "Academic Priority" students and provided career and college exposure and workplace opportunities during the summer months. This program was broken out into distinct grade appropriate

programs that increased in intensity through the high school progression. The freshman and sophomore Youth Corps programs were operated by the Mayor's office while the summer program targeting Juniors and Seniors was managed and operated by Worksystems Inc. In 2009, the two entities were aligned into one continuum to enhance and strengthen the scope of summer

workforce opportunities and post-secondary exposure, for academically at-risk youth during the summer months.

"Youth Corps" Moving Forward

This program was redesigned for Summer 2010. Participants will be academic priority students transitioning to 10th grade. The focus will be credit recovery, career and college exploration and early stage career planning. This program will be funded by the City of Portland and administered by Worksystems. The new name is Career + College Connect, or C3. C3 program goals:

- Cultivate soft skills required in the workplace
- Increase knowledge of career opportunities in specific industries and begin to set career goals
- Increase understanding of the relevance of education
- Recover high school credits and increase the percentage of academic priority students who successfully transition to 10th grade

SummerWorks

Summary

In 2009 Worksystems Inc. launched SummerWorks to provide low-income, at-risk youth with meaningful work experiences within the Portland Metropolitan Area. In Multnomah County, SummerWorks was available to eligible 11th and 12th graders as part of the Summer Youth Connect continuum. Through participation in SummerWorks youth earned a paycheck, learned

SummerWorks Results

844 youth served in Multnomah County of which,

64% were youth of color

280 employers from the region

8 community partners delivered SummerWorks in Multnomah County

95% of youth showed a gain in soft skills

94% of youth completed their work experience

94% of worksites satisfied with their young workers

94% of young people liked their jobs, showed up on time and increased their skills

\$1,500 average amount of wages earned by youth

Youth Corps Results:

135 visits to 58 businesses and 18 postsecondary institutions; **54** volunteer coaches accompanied students on visits

Monthly Tri-Met passes, stipends and incentives for students

Commitment and leadership from City and County bureaus to receive and work with interns

Youth Corps "Year One" focused on career and college exposure opportunities for incoming ninth graders

Youth Corps"Year 2" program was piloted for tenth graders. This merged summer school and credit recovery with internships in city and county bureaus.

soft skills critical to keep a job and had the opportunity to see the importance of education and staying in school for their long term career prospects. In 2009 SummerWorks served 1,276 youth with \$3.4 million in one-time stimulus funds.

SummerWorks Moving Forward

Worksystems is committed to operating SummerWorks and is working with public and private sector champions to develop a mutual investment model to achieve funding stability. In 2010 the City of Portland is covering the cost of wages for work experiences in City bureaus and Worksystems is in conversation with other public jurisdictions for their partnership. The Cabinet continues to hope for the passage of the federal Jobs Bill which could allow for another large scale program in 2010.

Scholarship Strategy

Summary

Adopted in early 2009, the scholarship has the goal that youth beginning in the class of 2011, who are participants of Summer Youth Connect Programs, can attend at least two years of community college for free. This program was developed through leadership from the Mayor and Presidents of Portland Community College and Mount Hood Community College as a means of

increasing access to post-secondary education for low-income youth.

Moving Forward

The vision of the scholarships strategy is not only to increase access to post-secondary, but to increase graduation from college and improve the pipeline into living wage jobs. The scholarship strategy is an economic development strategy that focuses on developing local talent and supporting those students who might otherwise never go to college. In the year ahead, in addition to setting up the scholarship fund, there is a desire to:

- Develop partnerships to support completion of FASFA applications in conjunction with Tax Preparation
- Increase participation and expand

Out of School Strategy

Summary

The out-of-school strategy is focused on leveraging the existing SUN Service System and its community school model, in particular, as a vehicle to providing a comprehensive array of supports at all high need high schools. This will allow partners to build off of current investments and success while better connecting and aligning strategic partners towards success for all high school youth. This strategy is predicated upon evidence that out-of-school opportunities and supports are essential to creating equity for youth attending high-need and struggling high schools.



OST Moving Forward

- Enhance existing SUN Community School high school sites to ensure the core level of service needed
- Expand SUN to additional high schools
- Partner with faith community, higher education, and businesses to support enhancement of services
- Align resources to increase capacity of and placement of volunteers, including AmeriCorps members, interns and student teachers

Caring Adult Strategy

Summary

Predicated upon the belief that a "caring adult" can have a life changing, life-altering impact on the life of a young person, this strategy seeks to increase the percentage of caring adults in the lives of youth most at-risk of graduating from high school. It does this in three ways:

- a) Increase family engagement
- b) Increase the amount of support high school students have from caring adults throughout the community.
- c) Increase visibility and capacity of caring adults in schools.

What impact does all of this have on our bottom line?

This year was spent

- Bringing attention to the issue
- Collecting data on the disconnected/disconnecting youth population and the current programs that serve them
- Researching the most effective intervention and prevention strategies
- Prioritizing strategies that the Education Cabinet could oversee implementation of
- Taking action to implement initial strategies to support youth in Summer 2009

Now we are beginning to operationalize a full set of strategies and as a result, ameliorate the systems that serve these youth so that fewer and fewer students get off track and those that do have supports in place. In the coming year, we will begin to measure not only *who* is served, but *who* is on track to graduate high school on time.

"Caring Adult Strategy" Moving Forward

- ✓ Meet with families throughout the county and hold listening sessions
- ✓ Hold parent leadership conference Fall 2010
- ✓ Develop partnerships to provide financial literacy support to parents
- ✓ Create increased capacity for volunteer coordination & support at schools
- ✓ Develop & implement new partnerships with higher education, faith communities and businesses
- ✓ Apply for Cities of Service Grant for staffing of a Chief Service Officer to help with volunteer recruitment
- ✓ Develop and launch social marketing campaign
- ✓ Identify resources for centralized contact and referral point
- ✓ Develop tools to assess common interests & help match mentors to students.
- ✓ Explore initiation of a database maintained by providers and schools, where the community can identify long-term volunteer opportunities