



2012 PROGRESS REPORT

EDUCATION

Our office has had two primary goals for Portland youth: that 50% more of them would graduate on time, and twice as many would go on to post-secondary education. We wanted to impact the lives of Portland's most valuable asset.

Last year the graduation rate for our combined six-district footprint jumped 5.5% (from 56.8% to 62.3%). This happened because of the collective will of several leaders, including the mayor, who believed change was possible.

Over the last four years, Mayor Adams executed on three strategies to help make this change happen: [Cradle to Career](#), [Summer Youth Connect](#) and [Future Connect](#).

The largest, most comprehensive strategy that has come together is the [Cradle to Career](#) effort. Led by Mayor Adams, two groups merged to form a [backbone organization](#) that could instigate [collective impact](#) through strategic focus on equity, [data](#) and accountability. Now, hundreds of business, thought, and community leaders are working collaboratively to get our youth over the finish line!

[Summer Youth Connect](#) was implemented three years ago in partnership with [Worksystems Inc](#) and [All Hands Raised](#) and several non-profits to begin a community-wide strategy of providing a continuum of supports to youth over the summertime.

Youth who, thanks to data collection and research, we are able to pinpoint as off-track and lead them toward success. These supports focused on job shadowing, service learning, and internships. Youth not engaged over the summertime can fall more than one grade level behind.

We've served over 2,000 youth annually with this strategy and we're seeing early returns that [these youth are more likely to stay in school](#) and feel good about their futures. We knew that providing the opportunity alone wasn't enough, however, because youth need a way to get to and from home, school and work. That's why [Youth Pass](#) was essential. Youth Pass provides free bus passes to Portland Public School high school students who are not covered by yellow bus service. It ensured every student, regardless of what circumstance they come from, can have free access to school and after-school activities. This access is crucial to graduating on-time. Through a collaboration between this office, TriMet and the Portland Public Schools, we were able to continue offering Youth Pass, despite threatening budget cuts.

The cornerstone of our education programming is [Future Connect](#), the post-secondary access strategy that recognizes economic development happens through an educated and trained workforce. Future Connect seeks to build a pipeline of homegrown talent that can contribute to the livability and prosperity of our region.

We partnered with business and higher education to make this vision a reality. Three components comprise the Future Connect Strategy—the [scholarship](#), the [VISTAs](#) and the [Speaker's Bureau](#).

We've invested \$500,000 annually in scholarships for youth that are tethered to mentoring supports. Youth receiving the Future Connect Scholarship can pursue education at [Portland Community College](#), [Mt. Hood Community College](#), and [Clackamas Community College](#). Students who choose to, can also continue on with a four-year degree and scholarship at [Lewis and Clark](#), and [Portland State University](#). This investment has yielded an additional \$914,383 in scholarships for youth. Early results show that Future Connect scholars stay in school at over three times the rate of other students with similar characteristics. And 83% of these youth are first generation college students. They are engaging the tide of opportunity for future generations. Future Connect Scholarships are working!

We've also invested resources at our local community centers via the [Americorps VISTA](#) program, which provides information to teens and families about what it takes to go to college or a trade school. Thanks to this partnership, in six months alone we've leveraged \$254,472.26 in real and in-kind donations. We've given 5,346 volunteer hours, and touched the lives of 955 Students. In addition, Portlanders now have an inventory of programs that serve youth ages 14-20. Finally, the Speaker's Bureau has evolved into Biz Connect, a partnership with

business and schools that provide year-round opportunities for youth at Benson and Grant High schools. Over 50 businesses have gotten involved in this effort because of Mayor Adams' support. The quest to build our homegrown talent is being realized, and youth are beginning to have access to all of the great career paths Portland has to offer.

Thanks to Mayor Adam's leadership on education and youth issues, Portland was ranked one of the [best communities for youth](#) for the second year in a row. Youth are not only graduating from high school at higher rates, but over 300 more youth are getting the chance to go to college. And youth are leading with solutions to issues of [youth violence and bullying](#) for the first time. When schools were faced with unprecedented budget cuts, City Council stepped to allocate \$6 million dollars to Portland schools so teachers' jobs could be saved, and class size wouldn't swell even further.

There is still work to be done and the road will not be easy—but because of the belief that change can happen, and every person has a role to play and a hand to raise in making it happen, the road to better opportunities for our kids has begun.

Want to get involved? Here are a few ways how:

[Future Connect](#)
[Multnomah Youth Commission](#)
[Summer Youth Connect](#)
[My School App](#)