

# CLEVELAND'S PLAN FOR TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS

## TOWARD EDUCATIONAL EQUITY



<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Then and Now .....	3
Plan Authors.....	4
Urgency of Equity .....	5
North Star .....	5
<b>A Refreshed Plan .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Quality Indicators.....	7
<b>Pillar 1.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Pillar 2.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Pillar 3.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Pillar 4.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Pillar 5.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Looking Ahead .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Glossary of Terms .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>14</b>
Appendix A — Cleveland’s Plan for Transforming Schools (2012) .....	14
Appendix B — Progress on The Cleveland Plan (2021) .....	29
Appendix C — Substitute House Bill 525 Summary of Provisions (2012) .....	31
Appendix D — Cleveland Plan Refresh Community Engagement Research Summary (August 2021) .....	34

## THEN AND NOW

Much has changed since 2012, when the original Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools laid new groundwork for improving PreK–12 public education. The Cleveland Plan, as it came to be known, was a response to a growing sense of urgency in the city that action was required to ensure every child in Cleveland attends a high quality school and every neighborhood has a multitude of great schools from which families can choose. It also stemmed from a belief that public education is fundamental to American democracy, bringing people together and promoting the common good. That is the power of public education.

The Cleveland Plan writers sought to bring the community together to set forth a vision and to create legislation addressing short- and long-term challenges. The vision was informed by the needs and context of a specific moment in time, but set the stage for the future.

Nearly a decade later, the Cleveland Plan's impact is apparent:

- Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) students made significant gains on important measures, including increasing high school graduation rates (nearly 30 percentage points in 10 years) and decreasing the need for remediation in post-secondary math and English. In fact, the CMSD is one of the fastest improving school districts in Ohio.
- The residents of Cleveland have shown confidence in the district's fiscal stewardship via unprecedented voter support for significant operating levies in 2012, 2016, and 2020.
- State policy changes elevated standards and accountability for all charter school sponsors and charter school buildings, resulting in more high-quality schools.
- The CMSD shifted to school-based budgeting, giving principals more control over specific aspects of governance and finance and providing more autonomy to principals to spend money in accordance with their school priorities.
- The district and charter community opted to close or redesign schools based on numerous factors including academic performance, enrollment demand, building condition, community need, and available teaching and learning models.



## Student Achievement

From **2013 to 2019**, Cleveland **nearly doubled** the number of young children enrolled in high-quality preschool.

K–3 Literacy rates have grown **4.4 percentage points**, placing the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) in the Top 15 percent in Ohio for literacy improvement **from 2014 to 2019**.

From **2012–13 to 2019–20**, the CMSD's high school graduation rate increased from **64% to 80.1%**.

From **2012–13 to 2019–20**, the percentage of CMSD graduates who needed remediation in post-secondary math or English dropped from **76% to 53%**.



## Enrollment

**2012–** **38,724** students in CMSD schools  
**2013** **14,637** students in charter schools

**2019–** **37,158** students in CMSD schools  
**2020** **14,817** students in charter schools



## Number of Schools

**2012–2013** **100** CMSD schools  
**49** charter schools

**2019–2020** **97** CMSD schools on 91 campuses  
**59** charter schools on 56 campuses

**2012–2020** **20** charter schools opened  
**10** closed



- District and charter schools came together with local nonprofits, businesses, and philanthropic organizations to implement exciting initiatives that support students throughout their educational experience, including [PRE4CLE](#), the [Higher Education Compact](#), and [Say Yes Cleveland](#).

Today, Cleveland is well positioned to continue this upward trend, and the urgency to keep improving education for our city's children continues. The COVID-19 pandemic only adds to that urgency, given the upheaval in education experienced in 2020 and 2021, which will present challenges and opportunities for students, families, and educators for years to come.

*"The Cleveland Plan called for dramatic changes to the way schools in Cleveland operate. It ensured that every child in our city has access to high-quality public education. This type of education promotes the common good, brings together children and families across different cultures, and serves all students, regardless of means, ability or circumstances. The beginning of any journey is momentous, but it is particularly meaningful when the efforts taken have the potential to transform lives. We have made progress. Yet, it is essential for current and future leaders to sustain the work, continue creating environments that foster students' abilities, and provide hope and opportunity on behalf of our student scholars and their families."*

— City of Cleveland Mayor Frank G. Jackson

This refresh and recommitment to the Cleveland Plan takes into account all that has changed since 2012. For example, how we define high-quality teaching and learning environments has evolved, with greater emphasis on meeting students and families where they are and thinking outside the traditional four walls of a classroom. There has been a new focus on ensuring that students have the resources they need to thrive outside the school building and school day, while making sure student experiences in the classroom are rich, robust, and expansive. As a society, we have a deeper appreciation for the role of community in supporting students in their journey from birth through adulthood, and weaving that sense of community and social responsibility into PreK–12 education.

The health and socioeconomic inequities revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial and social justice issues playing out in communities across the nation make clear that the Cleveland Plan must reflect a challenging present, a brighter future, and a continued commitment to change.

This refreshed Cleveland Plan digs deep into the practical realities of necessary change. The strategies and indicators that inform the updated five pillars, as detailed in the pages that follow, will help Cleveland deliver the best teaching and learning experience for our children as we look to the future.



## Building Autonomy in CMSD

CMSD principals now control approximately **73%** of their own budgets, up nearly **25 percent from 2013**.

## PLAN AUTHORS

The refresh of the Cleveland Plan was shepherded by the [Cleveland Transformation Alliance](#) (the Alliance), a public-private partnership conceived under by HB 525, the [2012 state legislation](#) implementing the original Cleveland Plan. The Alliance has four distinct roles: assess the quality of all district and charter schools in Cleveland, communicate to parents about quality school options, monitor charter sector growth in Cleveland, and ensure fidelity to the Cleveland Plan. As a community-based organization, the Alliance serves as a convener that helps move both policy and practice in public education.

The Alliance is guided by a [Board of Directors](#) made up of parents, educators, and business, philanthropic, and civic leaders from throughout Cleveland and across the state who contributed to the refresh of the Cleveland Plan. The Alliance also worked with community partners such as the Neighborhood Leadership Institute to get feedback from community members, families, and educators in public schools across the city.

While the Alliance drove the refresh process, it is critical to emphasize that the Alliance is is the convening stakeholder, not the authority, for the Cleveland Plan. **Responsibility for implementation rests with the full community.**



## THE URGENCY OF EQUITY

Cleveland has a rich, diverse fabric of people, families, and neighborhoods who represent different races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, national origins, religions, and abilities. This richness has the potential to power incredible educational experiences for our students, but only if systemic inequities are named and consciously addressed. That is why this refreshed Cleveland Plan addresses our city's<sup>2</sup> urgent educational needs with equity in mind. To that end, the Plan includes strategies in the first four pillars that address equity, and there is also a new fifth pillar focused explicitly on furthering educational equity.

**Educational equity means that every student gets the services, resources, connections, and learning opportunities they need to realize their full potential, regardless of who they are or where they live. Educational equity must be intentionally co-created and continually revisited by students, families, teachers, school staff, and members of the larger Cleveland community.**

Every partner must ensure that each strategy, idea, and practice is evaluated based on its alignment with this vision of educational equity. That effort already started, with two questions integrated into the Plan's creation:

1. Have representatives from stakeholder groups/communities who would be most affected been informed, meaningfully involved, and authentically represented in the development of this strategy? Is anyone missing? How can they be engaged?

### ed-u-ca-tion-al eq-ui-ty (noun)

1. Every student gets the services, resources, connections, and learning opportunities they need to realize their full potential, regardless of who they are or where they live.
2. Intentionally co-created and continually revisited by students, families, teachers, school staff, and members of the larger Cleveland community.

2. What adverse impacts or unintended consequences could result from this strategy? (e.g., which racial/ethnic or other groups could be negatively affected?)

It is up to our entire community to hold ourselves and one another accountable to the spirit and the letter of our collective definition of educational equity.

## NORTH STAR

With equity at the core, the Cleveland Plan is further guided by a North Star—a declaration of intent for the future. The refresh process was driven by the following North Star statement:

- All Cleveland public education students will have a high-quality, equitable education in schools that inspire joy in learning.
- All Cleveland students will have access to individualized opportunities that prepare them to participate in society and forge a meaningful path for themselves when they graduate.
- Families will actively participate in continuously improving and evolving their schools to fit their community's needs.

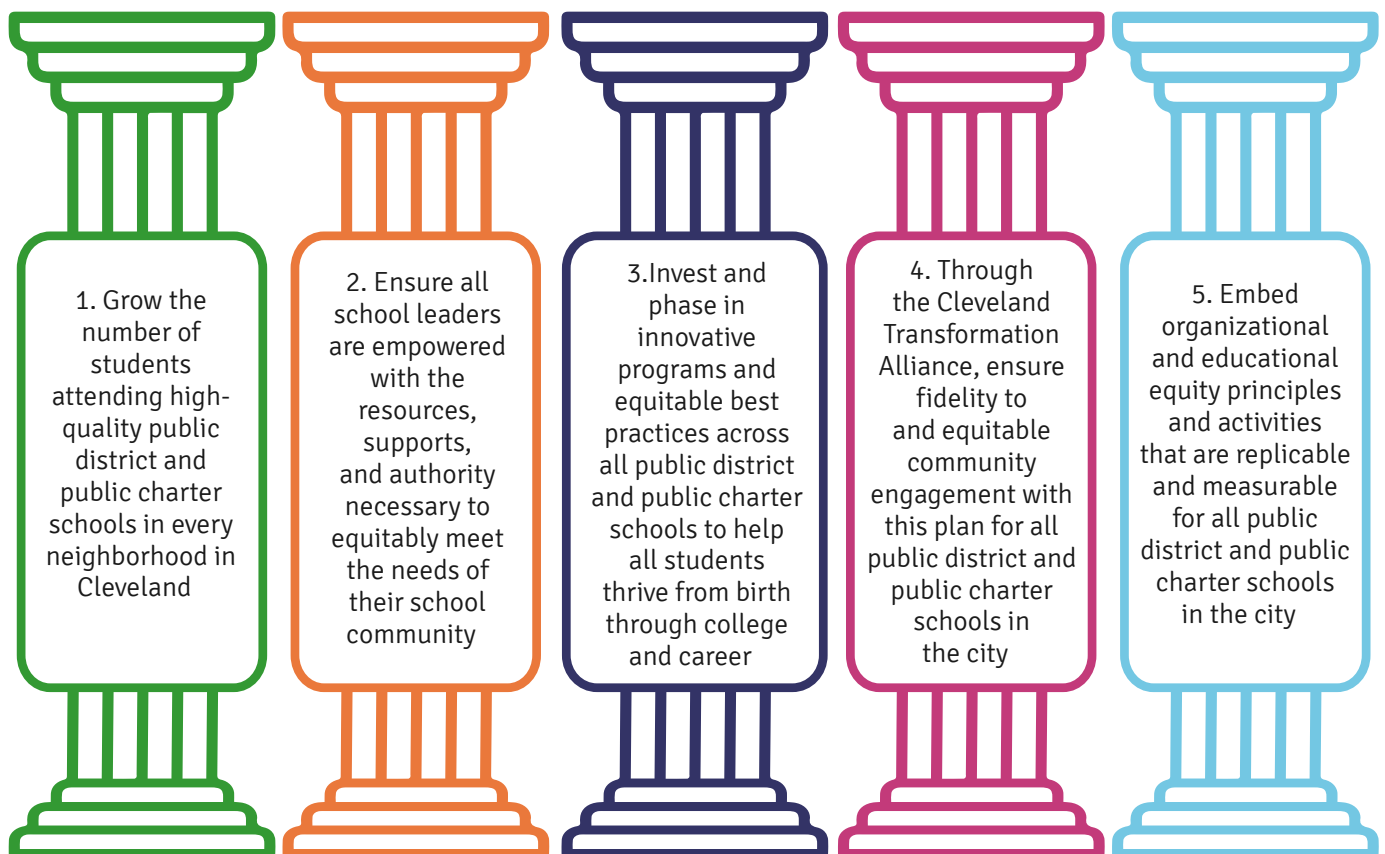


<sup>2</sup> In this Plan, the term “city” refers to Cleveland, Bratenahl, Newburgh Heights, Linndale, and portions of Garfield Heights and Brook Park, which are served by the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

A foundation sets the stage for the rest of the house, including the frame and the roof. The foundation for the Cleveland Plan is high-quality public education. The frame of the house is the pillars—or goals—while the roof represents the North Star and commitment to equity. The graphic below shows how the house comes together.

**All Cleveland public education students have a high-quality, equitable education in schools that inspire joy in learning.**

**There is educational equity:** Every student gets the services, resources, connections, and learning opportunities they need to realize their full potential, regardless of who they are or where they live. Educational equity must be intentionally co-created and continually revisited by members of the larger Cleveland community, including students, families, teachers, and school staff.



**Quality Education**

Each pillar is composed of strategies for action (detailed in the following pages) that are adaptable to every neighborhood, every teaching and learning environment, and every student.

## QUALITY INDICATORS

At the foundation of the Cleveland Plan is a shared definition of high quality that speaks to the specific needs of Cleveland families and students. This shared definition was created by the Alliance and multiple educational stakeholders including parents, teachers, community organizations, service providers, non-profits, businesses, and more. Together we arrived at the following set of indicators of a high-quality teaching and learning environment:

### Student Achievement and Progress

- Kindergarten readiness
- PreK-8 literacy and math
- 9th-grade completion rate
- High school graduation rate
- Progress in four learning domains (foundational skills, content, reasoning skills, & social-emotional learning)
- Preparation for success in life after high school (work, school, military, etc.)
- Students acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent, engaged, and responsible citizens throughout their lives

### Community Engagement

- Engagement staff, programs, and services are embedded (e.g., family engagement liaisons, multilingual engagement services, learning opportunities, social emotional supports, etc.)
- Availability of internships, mentorships, and volunteer opportunities for students, teachers, and families
- The meaningful number of quality engagements between educators and families
- The meaningful number of quality partnerships with community organizations

### School Culture and Environment

- Student attendance
- Student engagement in arts, music, and extracurricular activities
- The degree of “joy” in the student learning experience
- Retention of students, families, and high-quality educators
- How welcome and safe students and families feel in and around their school

### Instruction

- Access to high-quality early learning opportunities
- Availability of multiple ways for students to demonstrate knowledge/skills to advance from one grade to the next or achieve mastery of content
- Educators collaborate with one another and external partners to modify and build creative learning models that align with their students’ needs
- Educators relate, extend, and transfer knowledge (AKA deep instruction)
- Educators access and use comprehensive, high-quality data to inform instructional decision-making
- Capacity for effective literacy instruction among educators, students, and families across all grades, ages, and subjects

### Educators

- The educator’s students’ academic achievement
- The educator’s relationships with students (according to the students)
- The educator’s full engagement and satisfaction with their position/work
- Peer, student, and parent feedback about a student’s education is gathered in a systematic manner

### Technology

- Connected educators and educational settings (high-speed internet + devices + skill)
- Connected students (high-speed internet + devices + skill)
- Connected families and community (high-speed internet + skill)
- Students and educators have the technology and skillset to use various technological tools and platforms to support teaching and learning

### Finance

- Per-pupil expenditure meets student academic and social-emotional needs
- School leadership has the authority to make appropriate programmatic spending decisions while meeting enterprise-wide program and quality requirements

Naming the indicators is the first step to achieving the goals of the Cleveland Plan; Determining how these indicators will be measured is a separate process led by the Alliance in 2021-2022. The following pages provide detailed strategies for supporting the five pillars—goals that, if achieved, will provide a strong future for all students, in school and in life.





## Grow the number of students attending high-quality public district and public charter schools in every neighborhood in Cleveland.

Movement toward this goal first requires that everyone in the city understand and agree about what is meant by the term high-quality education—and that when those words are used, they refer to what children in Cleveland need specifically. Then, we need to identify teaching and learning models that fit our shared definition of high quality and make those models adaptable and available across the city. In addition, two reports examining enrollment, one by Case Western Reserve University looking at K-8 schools<sup>3</sup>, and another conducted by CMSD examining PreK-12<sup>4</sup>, concluded there are too many seats for the number of school-age children in Cleveland—an issue the entire community must address. As outlined in CMSD’s 2019 “Long Term School Plan” high numbers of open seats make it difficult “to maintain quality academic programs across the system without costly subsidies.” When schools are not fully enrolled, there must be an effort to fill these schools.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, evidence makes clear that students of color, who comprise most of Cleveland’s student body, are more likely to thrive if the people with whom they interact day in and day out—the principals, teachers, receptionists, cafeteria staff, librarians, and all other educators—can authentically relate to the students’ lived experiences. This requires a thoughtful and intentional approach to hiring, along with ensuring all educators have the information, training, curriculum, and support they need to maintain inclusive, affirming, culturally appropriate teaching and learning environments.

### Five strategies will support progress toward this goal:

1. Create a shared definition and measures for quality.
2. Promote, expand, and replicate high-quality teaching and learning environments.
3. Use school quality data to inform families of the opportunity to enroll in unfilled seats at high-quality schools city-wide.
4. Develop a city-wide plan to address the mismatch between too few students and too many seats in order to ensure all schools have enrollment levels that support vibrant and viable school programs.
5. Recruit, train, and retain a diverse pool of high-quality educators who are best suited to promote the long-term development and success of all students.



<sup>3</sup> Fischer, Salas Atwell, Henderson, & Chan. (2019). Needs Assessment for K-8 Schooling in Cleveland. Available online at [https://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/cms/lib/OH01915844/Centricity/domain/5454/ltp19/docs/K-8%20Report\\_August\\_2019.pdf](https://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/cms/lib/OH01915844/Centricity/domain/5454/ltp19/docs/K-8%20Report_August_2019.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Cleveland Metropolitan School District. (2019). Citywide Analysis: K-8 and High School Fact Base: Citywide. Available online at <https://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/cms/lib05/OH01915844/Centricity/domain/5454/ltp19/docs/CitywideAnalysisK-8andHSFactBase.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> For more about school enrollment in Cleveland, visit [clevelandmetroschools.org/qualityschools](https://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/qualityschools)





## Ensure all school leaders are empowered with the resources, supports, and authority necessary to equitably meet the needs of their school community.

Achieving this goal will mean that governance structures balance school autonomy with the pursuit of organizational goals in order to meet the needs of students and families while maintaining consistently high standards city-wide. “School leader” may mean something different in a charter school and a district school, but ultimately educational decision-makers must have the resources they need to create and sustain the most appropriate teaching and learning environment for the students and families they serve. They also need to be encouraged and supported in finding new ways of educating students that can go beyond the traditional “four walls” of school—perhaps more now than ever, we need innovative approaches to PreK-12 education to thrive during and after the global disruption of the pandemic. For example, district and charter schools had to connect each student with a technology device during the pandemic and ensure all families had internet access—an unexpected challenge. This kind of investment must be expanded and maintained so that students and families can access and use devices, internet services, and software programs that support PreK-12 learning and are instrumental to achieving success after school.

Educational equity is only possible if everyone understands and has the skills to foster an inclusive community. School leaders benefit from the time and support it takes to review and update policies, procedures, and practices so that equity and inclusion are embedded throughout, from communications to operations to finance.

Lastly, it is very hard to solve a problem you cannot measure. This is where data comes into play: Decision-makers need to have a

### Five strategies will support progress toward this goal:

1. Give school leaders the ability and financial resources to structure leadership, budgets, staffing, scheduling, and curriculum in support of their school’s specific model/program.
2. Support school leaders in identifying and implementing innovative models and programs that reflect the needs of their unique school community.
3. Support school leaders in using technology that facilitates high-quality teaching and learning.
4. Support school leaders in identifying, adapting, and implementing equity-focused management and organizational skills.
5. Support school leaders in collecting, analyzing, and using disaggregated data about student discipline, academic achievement, and social-emotional proficiency to address inequitable opportunities and outcomes.

full picture of what is going on in their schools in order to address weaknesses. Capturing and using data that is disaggregated by race, income, English Language status, and other relevant factors allows leaders to identify inequities and take action.





## Invest and phase in innovative programs and equitable best practices across all public district and public charter schools to help all students thrive from birth through college and career.

Achieving this goal will mean that the Cleveland community and all of Cleveland's public schools are investing in and leveraging key programs and practices that support students' growth and development over time.

The strategies in this pillar reflect decades of research on high-quality education and equity. For example, high-quality early learning continues to reap benefits for the lifetime of an individual beyond the early years and remains a critical strategy in this refreshed plan. In addition, young people need tailored support to become the whole humans they are meant to be. Schools play a role at every step of the way, from helping students understand their academic and professional strengths and interests, to navigating and overcoming trauma, to setting them up for success as adults. This is particularly important from an equity lens, given the systemic racism and historical and modern discrimination experienced by many Cleveland children and families.

### Six strategies will support progress toward this goal:

1. Expand the availability of and enrollment in affordable high-quality preschool and early education (birth through age 5) in every neighborhood.
2. Provide services, staff, and/or programs that support students' and educators' social-emotional development, mental health, and well-being.
3. Expand the availability of and enrollment in affordable high-quality before-school, afterschool, expanded learning, and summer programs.
4. Prepare students to be engaged and responsible global citizens throughout their lives.
5. Prepare students to embark on a meaningful journey to a career pathway after school, whether that entails higher education, military service, immediate employment, or a combination of these.
6. Provide students with opportunities to learn with employers and the wider community, including through internships, externships, capstones, exchange programs, service-learning projects, and public demonstrations of learning.







## Through the Cleveland Transformation Alliance, ensure fidelity to and equitable community engagement with this Plan for all public district and public charter schools in the city.

Achieving this goal will mean the Alliance continues to be a credible convener of individuals and organizations dedicated to achieving high-quality public education in Cleveland. It will remain a trusted resource for information about high-quality education that promotes transparency and meaningful public engagement.

The original Cleveland Plan gave the Mayor of Cleveland the authority to create the Cleveland Transformation Alliance and ensure an ongoing, local, collaborative focus on PreK–12 education in our city. The Alliance will maintain its commitment to authentically engaging the community it serves and giving voice to those who have not always been heard. Additionally, the expanding number of engaged stakeholders charged with implementing the Cleveland Plan will continue to advocate on behalf of Cleveland students and families. The strategies in this pillar help operationalize principles of educational equity through inclusive and intentional data analysis, communication, policy advocacy, and community engagement.

### Six strategies will support progress toward this goal:

1. Monitor and publish and widely distribute an annual report on the quality of all of Cleveland's schools (district and charter) that includes data that is disaggregated by race, income, English Language status, and other relevant factors.
2. Implement ongoing, consistent, and two-way communication and engagement with students, families, educators, and other stakeholders about high-quality education and the Cleveland Plan.
3. Raise awareness about available high-quality teaching and learning options in the city and how to access them.
4. Revisit and refine the Cleveland Plan periodically, with stakeholder input and innovative best practices, to reflect economic, technological, and political changes within the education field and the city of Cleveland.
5. Participate in local, state, and federal advocacy efforts that support the policy and funding needed to implement the Cleveland Plan.
6. Identify and actively engage a broad array of partners to support and successfully implement the Cleveland Plan.





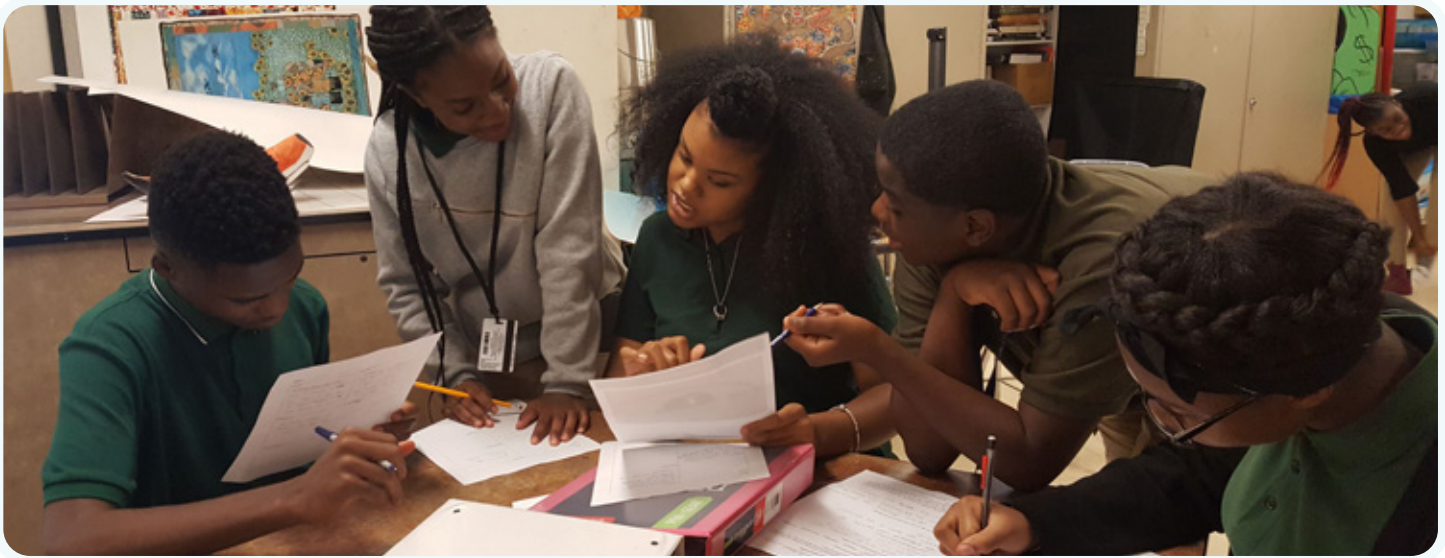
## Embed organizational and educational equity principles and activities that are replicable and measurable for all public district and public charter schools in the city.

Achieving this goal means bringing to life the vision of educational equity laid out on page 7 of the Cleveland Plan: Ensuring that as a community, every student is getting the services, resources, connections, and learning opportunities they need to realize their full potential, regardless of who they are or where they live.

As a community, we must consistently assess the degree to which our educational practices and approaches align with this vision. This will not happen overnight—eliminating current inequities and preventing further harm is an ongoing process, informed by the voices and experiences of those most affected. This type of thoughtful evaluation process will identify opportunities for improvement as well as best practices that can be adapted and used elsewhere.

### Four strategies will support progress toward this goal:

1. Measure the alignment of educational practices and approaches with the Plan's definition of educational equity.
2. Help advance, through technical assistance and professional development, principles of educational equity among school leaders.
3. Identify and expand community engagement programs that successfully reach the most at-risk or historically marginalized populations.
4. Identify and expand teaching and learning models that reduce, eliminate, and prevent discrimination and inequities.



## LOOKING AHEAD

The Cleveland Plan is a living, breathing document that guides strategy and decision-making in multiple educational institutions in our community. Now and in the future, the focus is on doing what is best and right for ALL public-school students in our city.

*Acknowledgements: The Cleveland Transformation Alliance is grateful for the support of its Board of Directors, as well as its contracted partners the Neighborhood Leadership Institute and Advocacy & Communication Solutions, LLC, in bringing this Plan together.*



- **School:** In the Cleveland Plan, refers to a teaching and learning environment, which depending on curriculum, may or may not be in a physical school building.
- **Community school:** Community schools, which are often called charter schools nationally and in other states, are public schools created in Ohio law; are independent of any school district; and are part of the state's education program. Community schools are public schools of choice and are state and federally funded.
- **Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) school:** Cleveland's public school district. CMSD is supported by a combination of federal, state, and local public funds. In addition to the city of Cleveland, CMSD serves Bratenahl, Newburgh Heights, Linndale, and portions of Garfield Heights and Brook Park.
- **Teaching and learning environment:** This phrase refers to diverse physical locations, contexts, and cultures in which students learn.  
(Source: Great Schools Partnership)
- **Educators:** Teachers, school administrators, and all staff who work in a school and in other education-related facilities (from the librarian to the cafeteria staff to the custodian and beyond).
- **Foundational skills:** For PreK–12 students, this includes students' understanding and working knowledge of concepts of print, the alphabetic principle, and other basic conventions of the English writing system.  
(Source: Ohio Department of Education)
- **Social-emotional learning:** The process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.  
(Source: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning)

**APPENDIX A**

**CLEVELAND'S PLAN FOR  
TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS (2012)**

# CLEVELAND'S PLAN FOR TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS

---

reinventing public education in our city and serving as a model of innovation for the state of Ohio

**Abridged from the original document submitted to  
Ohio Governor, John R. Kasich on February 2, 2012 from  
Mayor of the City of Cleveland, Frank G. Jackson  
With House Bill 525 legislation summary**

## PART I: INTRODUCTION

The Mayor of the City of Cleveland is committed to a plan that will reinvent public education in our city and serve as a model of innovation for the state of Ohio. Our goal is to ensure every child in Cleveland attends a high quality school and that every neighborhood has a multitude of great schools from which families can choose. To do this, Cleveland must transition from a traditional, single-source school district to a new system of district and charter schools that are held to the highest standards and work in partnership to create dramatic student achievement gains for every child. The plan is built upon growing the number of excellent schools in Cleveland, regardless of provider, and giving these schools autonomy over staff and budgets in exchange for high accountability for performance. We will create an environment that empowers and values principals and teachers as professionals and makes certain that our students are held to the highest expectations. Our efforts are grounded in two equally compelling dynamics:

**F**irst, we are driven by a fierce sense of urgency. Public education has been shackled by so much—by legal restrictions, bureaucracy, work rules, traditions and the influence of our shared experience growing up in an America not yet attuned to the intensity of global competition. We can no longer tolerate these restraints. The reinvention of education in Cleveland demands a giant leap of imagination, as we know that students in Cleveland are not building the knowledge, skills and attributes that position them to be successful and competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy. Public trust and confidence in the schools over decades have almost evaporated, evidenced most dramatically by the district's steep drop in enrollment. And an untenable financial situation is forcing draconian cuts in services that result in more and more students and families leaving the district and the city.

Second, we are driven by an informed sense of hope, as Cleveland has already started this journey to transformation. The last several years have shown investments in new and redesigned schools, partnerships between the district and high-performing charter schools, differentiated investments in schools, and more. Cleveland has innovative options that are achieving noteworthy results: Campus International, a high demand K-3 school housed on Cleveland State University's campus; MC<sup>2</sup>STEM high school, where first and second year students attend school full time at the Great Lakes Science Center and General Electric's Nela Park; and Near West Intergenerational School, where young students learn alongside elders within a mastery-based curriculum. But the future must include many different kinds of schools [see sidebar] that inspire the public and give children and their parents choices

### *Imagine...*

A Global Language Academy that immerses students in the languages and cultures that are shaping the world – particularly Chinese and Arabic. The curriculum would include study abroad opportunities for students and teachers and live-feed interactive learning with students from other countries. Partnerships with local nationality groups and with Global Cleveland would be important tools to infuse real-world content into the curriculum.

An Environmental Science School that deliberately connects students to the lake, the Metroparks and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Students will work alongside scientists and naturalists on pressing environmental issues that affect the health and welfare of our community.

Early Childhood Academies in every neighborhood that use a year-round preschool to third grade loop to guarantee that children enter fourth grade at or above grade level to prevent the need for remediation. Along with a strong academic focus, special attention would be paid to ensure social/emotional readiness.



from among an array of innovative options. Our schools must run beyond the agrarian school calendar of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, beyond printed textbooks and beyond the physical walls of today's classrooms. Fundamentally, schools in Cleveland must break the one-size-fits-all premise of today's education system.

This plan is more than an operational overhaul. If we do not forge a dramatically different path now, the future of quality public education of any kind in Cleveland is in serious jeopardy. Cleveland's leadership is committed to work toward this new vision of education that will inspire and convince the public that our city and our schools are worthy of the investment of their children and dollars.

## PART II: THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW

Public education in Cleveland is at a crossroads. **On the one hand, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) has undertaken significant reform efforts, particularly in the past five years, generating positive results for some students.** Additionally, a group of high-performing charter schools have joined these reform efforts and developed more robust partnerships with the district.

In 2006, the CMSD began to open new schools that provided some autonomy at the site level in exchange for accountability. These schools were intended to test new models of education and demonstrate that high quality schools could attract and retain students and families in Cleveland. A total of 13 new district schools have opened in the last five years and are steadily building enrollment and demonstrating high performance.

In spring 2010, the CMSD adopted its Academic Transformation Plan, a comprehensive approach to central office redesign and school-by-school improvement. This plan is a significant step forward for the community. Over the past two years, district leadership has worked diligently to implement critical aspects of the plan, including restructuring central office to cut costs and better support schools, implementing a more customized approach to managing schools, and expanding the number of new and redesigned schools. This expansion included partnerships with a number of high-performing charter schools in Cleveland, marking an important shift in conversation to *excellence* regardless of the type of school. These efforts have produced some noteworthy results:

- ◆ The number of excellent and effective district and charter schools in Cleveland has grown from 14 in 2006 to 37 in 2011. Currently, these schools enroll more than 11,400 students.

### *Imagine...*

An Urban Cooperative School that offers a holistic live-learn-work environment. Part of a surplus school building would be converted to living units for students, parents and teachers, with the entire operation managed by the cooperative. This school would serve some children and families whose circumstances defeat the best efforts of teachers in traditional schools.

A Residential Boarding School where students would live and learn five or seven days per week with adult supervisors/teachers also living on campus.

Career Technical Academies in several areas of the city where high school students are immersed in careers through internships and mentoring and use credit flexibility and blended technologies to ensure college and career relevance and readiness.

An English Immersion School that targets Spanish-speaking and other students to dramatically accelerate their mastery of English. This could include an option for students to partake in a local "exchange" program, where they spend a semester in an English-speaking home in or around Cleveland.

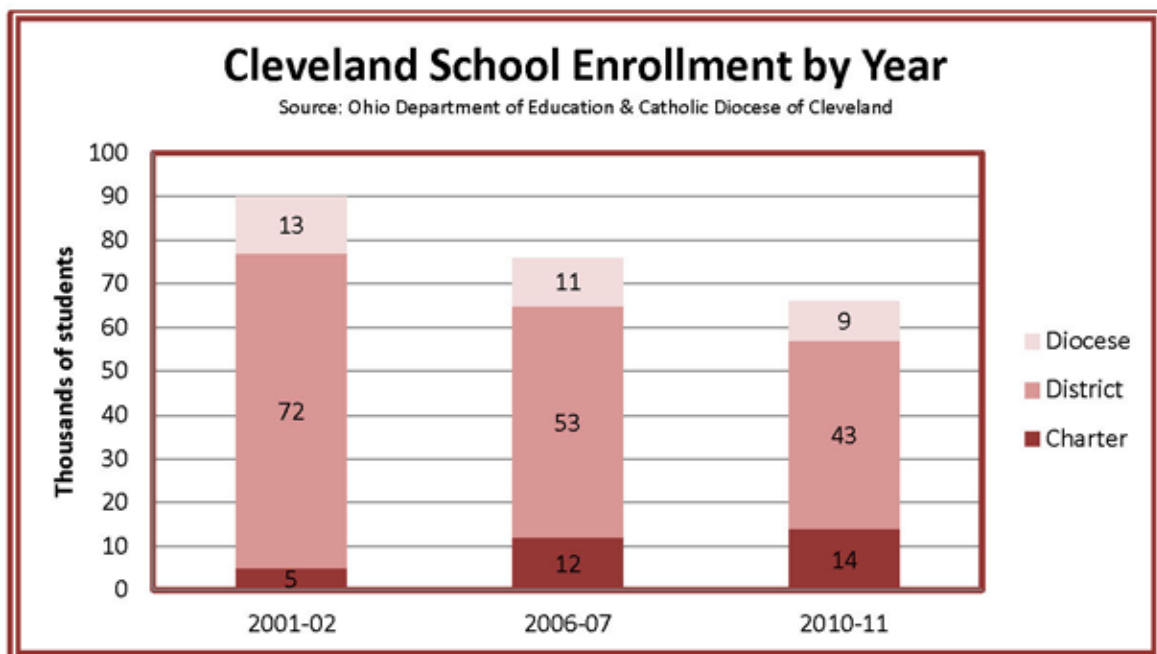
- ◆ A more diverse set of options are offered by the CMSD than ever before, including 13 new schools opened since 2006: Cleveland School of Science and Medicine, Cleveland School of Architecture and Design, Early College, MC<sup>2</sup>STEM, Design Lab, Ginn Academy, two New Tech high schools, four single-sex elementary schools and Campus International at Cleveland State University, as well as a redesigned Max Hayes.
- ◆ The CMSD is the only district in the state that has a robust partnership with high-performing charter schools based upon the rigorous National Association of Charter School Authorizers' standards. Six charter schools are sponsored by the CMSD, one of which is co-located with a district high school and another located in a building purchased from the district.
- ◆ The CMSD is one of only a few districts in the country chosen to pilot the common core state standards (the new college and career ready standards adopted by Ohio and 39 other states) with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. CMSD teachers in grades K–2 have been trained and are implementing the new standards, while teachers in grades 3–5 are preparing for implementation of these new standards in fall 2012.
- ◆ In partnership with the Cleveland Teachers Union, the CMSD is implementing a new teacher development and evaluation system based on professional standards for the field as well as student performance. Twenty-three schools are using this new system currently and all schools will move to this system in 2012–13. Additionally, the Cleveland Teachers Union and the district have agreed to begin the development of a differentiated compensation system aligned to the teacher development and evaluation work.
- ◆ Improved school safety and learning conditions in the CMSD have led to a 36 percent decrease in serious safety incidents, a 15 percent reduction in student suspensions, a measurable increase on students' reported perceptions of safety and student support, and an increase in student attendance over the past four years.

**On the other hand, the pace of change is not fast enough, nor deep enough to overcome the challenges facing the district.** These challenges span academics, finances, operations and enrollment and threaten the very existence of public education in the city:

- ◆ *Academics:* Despite progress, the quality of education in schools remains unacceptable and the pace of improvement inadequate. In the 2010–11 school year, 55 percent of Cleveland schools (district and charter) were in academic watch or academic emergency. In fact, one-third of Cleveland neighborhoods have only failing schools. On the 2011 Ohio Achievement Assessments, just 43 percent of fifth grade CMSD students tested proficient in reading and 30 percent tested proficient in mathematics. National and international comparisons are worse, which is particularly alarming in terms of Ohio's impending shift to the new and much more rigorous common core standards. Most telling of all, for every 100 students entering ninth grade in Cleveland, 63 will graduate high school, 34 of those graduates will enroll in college, and just seven will graduate with a bachelor's degree.
- ◆ *Finances:* The CMSD risks insolvency. It faces a \$64.9 million budget deficit in 2012–13: more than ten percent of the current fiscal year's operating budget. The budget deficit in 2013–14 is projected to be an additional \$40 million. This situation persists despite cost reductions of over \$100 million over the past two years, including 23

school closings, layoffs of hundreds of employees, compensation and benefit reductions and the sale of district buildings. This deteriorating financial position reflects structural issues that have developed over the past 40 years: automatic step/scale increases in salaries, rising health care costs, declining enrollment, diminishing tax collections and the lack of a new operating levy since 1996. Community driven priorities—preschool, transportation, arts, music and sports—are at risk, as are new school start-ups and support. For the district’s charter partners, lack of access to full public funding results in high-performing charter schools supplementing general operations with philanthropic support, an unsustainable position in the long run.

- ◆ *Operations:* The CMSD is mired in bureaucratic, outdated and cumbersome work rules. State laws, management/union contracts, arbitration rulings, past practices and traditions developed over decades have resulted in layers of rules that hamper progress and require uniformity within and throughout the system. The district lacks sufficient flexibility with regard to staffing, funding, resource allocation, management decisions, scheduling, school calendar, and overall school autonomy. One result is that principals have very little say in how their schools operate, how resources are allocated and who is on their team.
- ◆ *Enrollment:* The most telling manifestation of the challenges facing the district is declining enrollment. More than 30,000 students have left the CMSD over ten years. This enrollment decline is a combination of decreasing city population, declining birth rates and parents opting out of the public school district and entering charter schools. Regardless of reason, the fact is that public education in Cleveland has lost both public confidence and market share. Unfortunately, as Cleveland parents pick alternative schools for their children, some are selecting schools that are consistently low performing, while space in high-performing schools goes unused. Despite this, the CMSD remains the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest school district in Ohio, with some 66,000 children grades K–12 within its jurisdiction and approximately 43,000 students in its schools.





### PART III: CLEVELAND'S PLAN

With our goal of ensuring every child in the city attends an excellent school and every neighborhood has a multitude of great schools from which families can choose, Cleveland seeks to reinvent our public education system. Our plan is based on an emerging national model that profoundly changes the role of the school district. This approach, or *portfolio strategy*, is showing promising results in cities such as Baltimore, Denver, Hartford, New York and others. In fact, Cleveland is one of 23 school districts involved in the Portfolio School District Network, facilitated by the Center for Reinventing Public Education. The Center has identified seven tenets of autonomy and accountability [see sidebar] it views as essential to the portfolio strategy.

Cleveland wants to transition from a traditional, single-source school district to a new system of district and charter schools that are held to the highest standards of performance and work in partnership to create dramatic student achievement gains for every child. Our main premise is that excellent schools, led by exemplary principals and staffed by talented teachers, should have full autonomy over human and financial resources in exchange for high quality and accountability for performance. This approach will open the system to new ideas, talents, management philosophies and community assets so that our students can make the kind of breakthroughs in performance required to compete in, and contribute to, the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy.

In order to provide powerful educational experiences and achieve dramatic results for our students, we acknowledge that we must do away with traditional approaches and long-held arrangements that have hardened into place over decades. We also need to move from talk of reform to substantive and tenacious action. We realize that we must honestly confront what it will take to move our students to where they need to be, while simultaneously redefining what, how and from whom our students learn. We recognize, also, that this work must occur within the larger context of students' too-often troubled environments. But these challenges cannot be used as excuses; excuses do not change outcomes. Rather, it is because our students face these challenges that we must create a transformed system that will look and feel very different from what we have today.

In the development of our plan, we acknowledge the Center for Reinventing Public Education's research and analysis, as well as the district/charter compact work funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the recently released report by Mind Trust and Public Impact, *Creating Opportunity Schools*, on transforming Indianapolis Public Schools. Our plan for Cleveland has four interwoven and research-based strategies, most of which will require the Governor's and General Assembly's support:

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF PORTFOLIO DISTRICTS

Citywide choices and  
options for all families

School autonomy

Pupil-based funding

Diverse support providers

Talent-seeking strategy

Extensive public  
engagement

Performance-based  
accountability for all schools





---

### **GROW THE NUMBER OF HIGH-PERFORMING DISTRICT AND CHARTER SCHOOLS IN CLEVELAND AND CLOSE AND REPLACE FAILING SCHOOLS**

Cleveland has a deep interest in providing every child in the city an excellent education and also has an obligation to ensure that every neighborhood has great schools. But as our past performance suggests, getting there is not easy. Building on and accelerating our work to date, Cleveland's plan is fundamentally built on aggressively growing the number of high-performing schools while phasing out those that are not. Cleveland will define and support excellence under the moniker of "Transformation Schools" with four strategies to ensure that every child in Cleveland is attracted to and retained in an excellent school:

**Promote, expand, and replicate existing high-performing district and charter schools.** Great public schools in Cleveland (district and charter) that meet high performance and accountability standards can become Transformation Schools starting in the 2012–13 school year. Currently just 24 percent of public schools in Cleveland meet this standard. They must continue to perform at high levels and serve Cleveland's children to keep this designation. Transformation Schools operated by the district will be given full autonomy over school budgets, staff selection and assignment, academic and student support programs, school calendar and schedules in exchange for high accountability standards. Transformation Schools operated by charter schools or charter management organizations will enter into agreements with the district that specify expectations and required outcomes in exchange for financial and other resources. As many of these schools are not fully enrolled, a priority will be to fill these schools to capacity and then increase the number of students they serve. We will also replicate those schools that demonstrate success.

**Start new schools.** We will bring the best national education models to Cleveland and also invent our own schools that are unique to our city. Any new school that the CMSD authorizes and supports—district or charter—must demonstrate how its students will be prepared for the new realities of globalization and technology, the need for 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge and skills, and a diverse, multicultural and multidisciplinary world. We will encourage local community partners to co-create new and innovative school models, and also

provide Cleveland teachers the opportunity to design new or adapt proven school models. New schools will be geographically dispersed and will offer a broad range of academic choices for students and parents.

**Refocus and strengthen mid-performing schools.** Currently, 21 percent of Cleveland schools meet minimum state standards, have some critical academic and social conditions in place and demonstrate potential for success. The CMSD will employ precise, customized and differentiated interventions and investments based on the strengths and weaknesses of individual schools to move these schools to meet the standards of Transformation Schools. This may include intensive student tutoring and formative assessments, model lessons and technology curriculum integration, as well as staffing and calendar changes. As warranted, these schools will be granted some levels of autonomy.

**Repurpose and address low-performing schools.** Currently, 55 percent of Cleveland schools are failing to meet even minimum state standards. Each year, the CMSD will target the lowest 10–15 percent of these schools for immediate and dramatic action, including closure and reassignment of students to better schools, closure and start-up of a new school, phase in of a new program and phase out of the old, or turning the school over to a capable charter operator. The CMSD will assign the remaining low-performing schools to a small cadre of turnaround directors. These directors will be charged with establishing turnaround goals, strategies and timelines for each school. Where significant and rapid improvement is not achieved, the director will recommend schools for one of the immediate interventions described above.

The growth of high-performing district and charter schools in Cleveland and the closing and replacing of low-performing schools will be based on a consistent standard of quality. The network of Transformation Schools will be used to help incubate new school models and provide professional development and training venues for other schools.

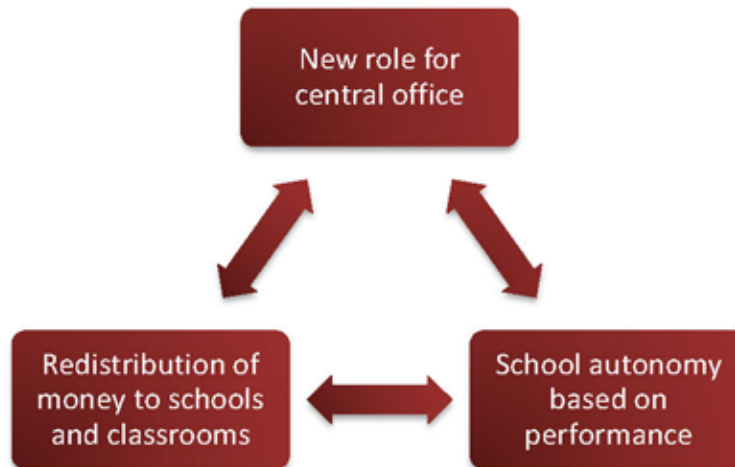
---

#### **FOCUS DISTRICT’S CENTRAL OFFICE ON KEY SUPPORT AND GOVERNANCE ROLES AND TRANSFER AUTHORITY AND RESOURCES TO SCHOOLS**

Over the past fifty years, the CMSD has evolved into a highly bureaucratized, standardized and tightly controlled organization that manages staffing, scheduling, curriculum, operations and budgets from central office, far removed from the day-to-day operations of schools. This is the result of a combination of state and federal regulations, management/union contracts and institutional customs, all of which constrain flexibility, innovation, strategic resource allocation and rapid responsiveness to changes in community needs and educational trends.

In Cleveland’s proposed new portfolio system, the roles and responsibilities of central office will be significantly focused so it becomes a flatter, more nimble, and more strategic professional organization that employs a differentiated management system and drives resources to the school building. These changes will require a fundamental shift in mindset, roles and capacity across the organization. There are three components of this strategy: a new role for central office, school autonomy based on performance, and redistribution of money to schools and classrooms:





**New role for central office.** The CMSD's central office will oversee the continuous improvement process, provide system coordination and offer targeted services to schools:

- ◆ *Continuous improvement process:* The new, primary role of CMSD's central office will be to manage the portfolio of schools to ensure that all children in Cleveland have access to an excellent school. The district will focus on rapidly growing the number of Transformation Schools and promptly closing and replacing low-performing district schools. The district will authorize the creation of new district and district sponsored/contracted charter schools, monitor and evaluate schools annually and hold all schools accountable for success. The CMSD will also promote a culture of innovation and pilot new educational practices, models and organization.
- ◆ *System coordination:* The CMSD will be responsible for coordinating several essential functions that add value for schools, promote the interests of children and protect the integrity of the organization. These functions will include: a fair and informative citywide enrollment process, collection and dissemination of data, appropriate communications with the public, creating a robust talent pipeline, incubation and attraction of new schools, and compliance with state and federal regulations.
- ◆ *Service provision:* The CMSD will provide targeted services that are essential to the smooth operation of the system and allow schools to focus on educating their students. These functions will include administering local tax revenues, allocating per-pupil funds to schools, managing facilities, and handling accounting and payroll, as well as maintaining critical functions related to special education identification and services. The district may offer other services to schools on a fee basis, like professional development, etc. Finally, the district office will continue to supervise mid- and low-performing schools until they meet the standards to become Transformation Schools or until they are closed and replaced.

**School autonomy based on performance.** Under this proposed portfolio system, schools will be given varying levels of autonomy depending upon their level of performance. Transformation Schools will have the greatest level of autonomy over school budgets, staff

selection and assignment, academic and student support programs, school calendar and schedules and will be accountable for delivering an excellent education. The CMSD's central office will monitor performance annually but will have no day-to-day management authority over these schools. Mid-performing schools will have some control over staffing and budget but will create improvement plans that are approved and monitored regularly by the district. Finally, low-performing schools will be guided by aggressive intervention plans that will require flexibility in staff and resource decisions. Of course, all schools will have to abide by certain state and federal requirements, such as state testing, non-discriminatory enrollment policies, meeting health and safety standards, and providing education to students with disabilities and English language learners.

**Redistribution of money to schools and classrooms.** The CMSD is committed to shifting to a weighted per-pupil funding system for all schools. This entails analyzing cost-per-graduate versus cost-per-student when determining investments and transferring a majority of spending control to schools based on the number and needs of the students they enroll. District Transformation Schools will largely be able to spend the funds they receive as they see fit to advance student learning and manage and operate a successful school. This will include spending authorization for staff, classroom instruction, student enrichment, supplies and other resources that are not confined by regulatory structures, much like charter schools operate today. While mid- and low-performing schools will also move to a per-pupil funding model, their use of funds will be more prescriptive as described in the above interventions.

The district will also identify ways to authorize the transfer of some locally generated tax revenues to charter-operated Transformation Schools that are sponsored by or have agreements with the district. This shift in funding to schools will incentivize schools to maintain excellence and grow enrollment; more pupils means more dollars. Schools will have to attract and retain students, which will require an intense focus on customer service, school safety, enrichment offerings and academic performance.

---

## **INVEST AND PHASE IN HIGH-LEVERAGE SYSTEM REFORMS ACROSS ALL SCHOOLS FROM PRESCHOOL TO COLLEGE AND CAREER**

Beyond the investments in this new, performance-based system of schools, we have identified several fundamental building blocks upon which this plan must be built: high quality preschool education, college and workforce readiness, year-round calendar, talent recruitment and capacity building, academic technology enhancement, and support for high-quality charter schools.





**High-quality preschool education.** Research consistently demonstrates that high-quality preschool programs that promote academic, social, emotional and physical readiness have an exponential return on investment. In Cleveland, about 50 percent of the district's kindergarten students were enrolled in district preschools as 4-year-olds, with evidence of enormous gains in kindergarten readiness after program completion. Plans call for expanding preschool to all 4-year-old children across the city through school-based programs and community-based partners in the near future, with a goal of eventually expanding to 3-year-old children as well.

**College and workforce readiness.** Through its commitment to the Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland, the district and its charter partners will invest in college readiness, access and persistence for all its students, with the goal of improving Cleveland college enrollment and graduation rates. This will include increasing the number of high school students enrolled in post-secondary coursework and partnering with local employers to train and connect students with open positions that will provide immediate and long-term employment opportunities.

**Year-round calendar.** The traditional school year—less than six hours of instruction each day for just 180 days a year—is not enough time to close achievement gaps and build the knowledge, skills and attributes that position our students to be successful and competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy. Learning time for students will be increased in all schools, and Transformation Schools will be given authority to alter the school calendar and classroom schedules to meet their individual demands. We will invest in year-round options and flexible school start/stop times, and build in planning and reflection time for principals and teachers.

**Talent recruitment and capacity building.** Cleveland will supplement its current highest performing educators with a newly recruited corps of exemplary principals and teachers to lead and teach in district and charter schools. Partnerships with Teach for America and the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, among others, will be coupled with rigorous development of internal talent to identify educators who can positively change the trajectory of children's lives. With our district-sponsored charter schools, we will explore the expansion of the Cleveland Urban Teacher Residency program, partnering with local universities to provide urban teaching preparation experiences for their students.

**Academic technology enhancement.** Cleveland will expand its investments in academic technologies, including software, hardware and the staff training to make it successful. Not only does our students' success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge economy require technology savvy, but advances in computer-aided and web-based instruction can strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching. Specifically, this plan calls for the advancement of computer-assisted instruction, including the exploration of blended classroom models.

**Support for high-quality charter schools.** The plan focuses on building partnerships with high-performing charter schools in Cleveland that serve Cleveland's children. In the long run, charter schools' existence and expansion will require additional state and local resources. As a first step, we support a Cleveland pilot of "Invest in the Best," which seeks additional funding for the highest performing charter schools.

---

## CREATE THE CLEVELAND TRANSFORMATION ALLIANCE TO ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE CITY

Currently, there is no “one” organization that is responsible for the quality of all public school students in Cleveland. Approximately 70 percent of public school students attend district schools under the governance of the Cleveland Board of Education. Another 30 percent attend charter schools, each with its own governing board and authorizer. Currently, there are ten authorizers in the county that sponsor schools in Cleveland. This dispersed authority can be a strength. It ensures that no single entity holds a monopoly over schools, encourages entrepreneurship, fosters the development of new models and can limit bureaucracy. But it also has limitations. Most notably, the public, and our parents in particular, lack consistent, useful information about the quality of schools in Cleveland.

To address this challenge, we will create the Cleveland Transformation Alliance, a public-private partnership charged with ensuring the growth of a portfolio of high-performing district and charter schools in Cleveland. The composition of the Alliance will include representatives from the district, the charter sector and the community (business, foundation, civic and neighborhood, among others). The majority of the Alliance membership will come from outside the district to ensure external support for and participation in the plan. It will be supported through a combination of private and public funds. The Alliance will not replace the existing authority of the Cleveland Board of Education or the boards of independent charter schools, but rather assume the following unique roles: ensure fidelity to the citywide education plan, assess the quality of all Cleveland schools, communicate to parents about quality school choices and serve as a watchdog for charter sector growth in Cleveland:

**Ensure fidelity to the citywide education plan:** The Alliance will ensure that all components of the plan are implemented based on an agreed upon timeline and measures of success. In particular, the Alliance will work with the CMSD and partnering charter schools to develop a multi-year plan to ensure that Cleveland is developing a diverse set of educational options for students and families across the city. The Alliance will have a particular focus on bringing the best national education models to Cleveland and spurring models unique to our city with local community partners. The Alliance will also develop venues for the community and institutions to have a voice in the development of new schools. The Alliance will monitor and ensure faithful execution of the plan for the benefit of all of Cleveland’s children. Should conflicts arise among any of the Alliance partners, the Alliance will serve as the mediator and provide written recommendations to be considered by the parties in the resolution of these conflicts.

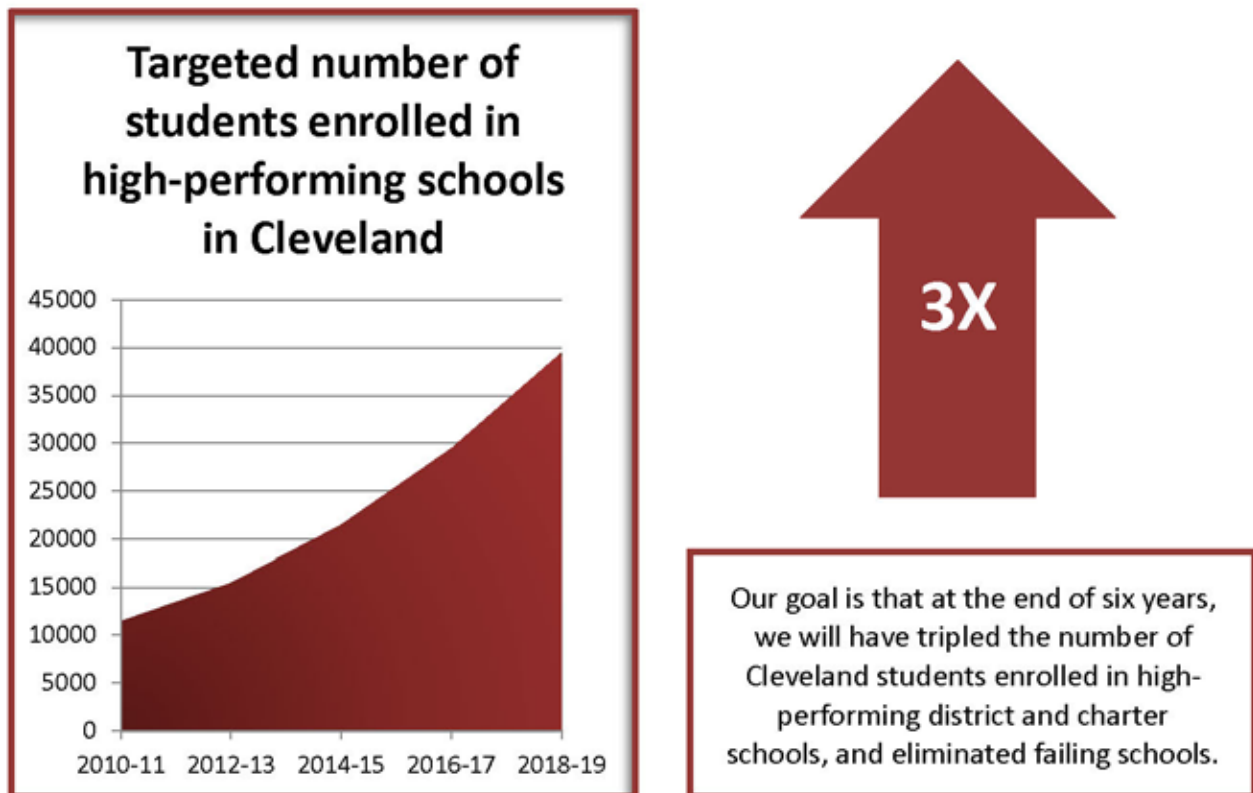
**Assess the quality of all public schools in Cleveland:** The Alliance will work with the CMSD and partnering charter schools to adopt a quality framework to consistently evaluate the performance of all public schools in Cleveland. This framework will be evidence-based, comprehensive and look objectively at academic, financial and operational performance, as well as student, parent and teacher satisfaction. All public district and charter schools in Cleveland will be annually assessed using this framework. Once collected and analyzed, the Alliance will work with the state to ensure that all schools are held accountable for performance, and recommend speedy closure as necessary.

**Communicate to parents about quality school choices:** The Alliance will be responsible for communication with the public (in particular students and their families) about the quality of public schools in Cleveland. The Alliance will produce an annual report summarizing the results of the school quality reviews and will mount an aggressive marketing campaign during open enrollment to provide students and families with the information they need to make good educational choices.

**Watchdog charter sector growth:** Currently, Cleveland has no ability to influence the quality of charter schools that open within city limits nor whether failing schools close. As a first step, the Alliance will promote standards developed by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers as it relates to the authorization of new charter schools and timely closure of failing charters. In order to open a charter school in the City of Cleveland, the Alliance will request that the state require “sign off” by the Alliance in addition to sponsorship by an authorized entity as currently defined in state law. To ensure fairness and transparency, an appeals process to the Ohio Department of Education will be defined should the Alliance deny approval to a charter school that meets the defined standards.

\* \* \*

Cleveland’s success will be apparent when every child in the city attends an excellent school and every neighborhood has a multitude of great schools from which families can choose. We believe that our strategy will aggressively grow the number of high-performing schools and students served by those schools. We have high aspirations:





## CLEVELAND PLAN LEGISLATION SUMMARY

The Cleveland Plan identified a range of policy conditions necessary to ensure successful implementation of the plan. Following extensive dialogue with the Cleveland Teachers Union, legislation was drafted and ultimately signed into law through House Bill 525 on July 2, 2012. This landmark legislation includes three broad areas of impact:

---

### DISTRICT AUTONOMY AND FLEXIBILITY

- Enables the CEO to take corrective action to improve the district's lowest-performing schools; allows the CEO to go beyond existing collective bargaining agreements; and provides a role for affected unions to provide input on the CEO's plan.
- Provides the CEO with authority to determine the school calendar and school day.
- Allows the district to apply for exemptions from specific statutory provisions or rules under the innovative education pilot program.
- Permits the district to direct any monies received from the sale of property into the district's general fund (with a few exceptions).

### EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

- Requires the district, the teachers' union and principal association to develop a new performance-based evaluation and compensation system.
- Establishes building-level hiring committees comprised of the principal, union representation and others based on factors including performance and expertise.
- Eliminates seniority as the sole or primary factor in personnel decisions, including layoffs and recalls.
- Allows the district to terminate teachers who are rated "ineffective" for two successive years.
- Provides the district significant flexibility in determining teacher and principal contract terms and duration.

### CHARTER QUALITY AND COLLABORATION

- Establishes a Transformation Alliance to ensure fidelity to the plan, to recommend to ODE what charter school sponsors can open schools in Cleveland, to provide input in the development of new district schools and partnering community schools, and to report annually on the performance of all public schools in Cleveland.
- Authorizes the school district to share a portion of levy proceeds with high-performing charter schools who partner with the district.
- Authorizes the school district to include the academic performance and enrollment data of students enrolled in partnering charter schools on the district's report card.

---

Cleveland's plan to reinvent public education in our city is widely supported by the community—educators, civic leaders, elected officials, business, philanthropy, community organizations, religious organizations, parents and students. In November, a substantial majority of Cleveland voters demonstrated their commitment to the plan. Fifty-seven percent approved Issue 107, an unprecedented 15 mill, 4-year levy expected to generate between \$64 and \$70 million per year for the school district, with one mill set aside for partnering charter schools.



**APPENDIX B**

**PROGRESS ON THE  
CLEVELAND PLAN (2021)**

## CLEVELAND PLAN PROGRESS SNAPSHOT (2021)

Table 1 below summarizes findings from an informal review of data and research related to the original Cleveland Plan's 17 strategies conducted by Advocacy & Communication Solutions in April 2021. This is not intended to serve as a comprehensive analysis but rather to provide a high-level view of changes since 2012. In the table, Significant Action is defined as "Significant progress has been made toward the goals outlined in the Plan" while "Some Action" indicates that "some progress has been made toward the goals outlined in the Plan." For some strategies, consistent and/or longitudinal data was not. View more details from this effort at [https://mycleschool.org/download\\_type/public-records/](https://mycleschool.org/download_type/public-records/).

TABLE 1: Progress Snapshot 2021

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT BY PILLAR AND STRATEGY	SIGNIFICANT ACTION	SOME ACTION
<b>GROW THE NUMBER OF HIGH-PERFORMING DISTRICT AND CHARTER SCHOOLS IN CLEVELAND AND CLOSE AND REPLACE FAILING SCHOOLS</b>		
Promote, expand, and replicate existing high-performing district and charter schools		X
Start new schools	X	
Refocus and strengthen mid-performing schools		X
Repurpose and address low performing schools		X
<b>FOCUS DISTRICT'S CENTRAL OFFICE ON KEY SUPPORT AND GOVERNANCE ROLES AND TRANSFER AUTHORITY AND RESOURCES TO SCHOOLS</b>		
New role for central office	X	
School autonomy based on performance	X	
Redistribution of money to schools and classrooms	X	
<b>INVEST AND PHASE IN HIGH-LEVERAGE SYSTEM REFORMS ACROSS ALL SCHOOLS FROM PRESCHOOL TO COLLEGE AND CAREER</b>		
High quality preschool education	X	
College and workforce readiness	X	
Year-round calendar		X
Talent recruitment and capacity building	X	
Academic technology enhancement	X	
Support for high-quality charter schools	X	
<b>CREATE THE CLEVELAND TRANSFORMATION ALLIANCE TO ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE CITY</b>		
Ensure fidelity to the citywide education plan	X	
Assess the quality of all public schools in Cleveland	X	
Communicate to parents about quality school choices		X
Watchdog charter sector growth	X	

## **APPENDIX C**

# **SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 525 SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS (2012)**



**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 525**  
**Summary of Provisions**  
**June 15, 2012**

**Sec. 3302.03 – Community School Enrollment Data**

- Permits a municipal school district to have the enrollment data from sponsored or partnered community schools counted in the district's report card. Current law permits only the inclusion of academic data.

**Sec. 3311.74 – Parental Involvement**

- Requires parents of students in the district to attend one annual parent-teacher conference or similar event.

**Sec. 3311.74 – CEO Authority on Low Performing Schools**

- Enables the CEO of municipal school district to take corrective action on the district's lowest performing schools. CEO determines corrective action plan.
- Corrective action plan may include (but is not limited to) relocation of academic and financial resources, reassignment of staff, redesign of programs, etc.
- Lays out process which involves a recommendation from a "corrective action team" which includes representatives from the affected labor organizations. If the CEO disagrees with all or part of the recommendations, the CEO is permitted to implement in manner the CEO determines to be in the best interest of students.
- Content of a corrective action plan prevails over subsequent collective bargaining agreements.

**Sec. 3311.741 – Accountability**

- Requires the district to create performance measures of student achievement, progress, and college and career-readiness.
- The district will set annual improvement goals for performance measures and report annually to state officials on progress.
- In 2017, the state superintendent will evaluate the school district's performance on the measures approved under this section and issue a report to the governor and general assembly.

**Sec. 3311.742 – Student Advisory Committees**

- Requires the district and partnering community schools establish student advisory committees for schools with grades 9-12. These committees would be charged with making non-binding recommendations to school administrators and teachers in key areas impacting academic achievement.

**Sec. 3311.751 – Facilities**

- Proceeds from the sale of district facilities may be deposited into the municipal district general fund and spent to support operations if:
  - The facility is ten, or more, years old
  - There is no outstanding bond debt associated with the facility
  - The use of funds for operations does not violate existing agreements between the district and the municipal school district

**Sec. 3311.76 – Waiver Authority**

- The district may request to have specific administrative rules or statutes waived by the state superintendent of public instruction.
- The waiver authority is similar that of the Innovative Education Pilot Program.

**Sec. 3311.77 – Contract Flexibility**

- Enables district flexibility in the duration of a teacher contract offer.

**Sec. 3311.78 – Differentiated Salary Schedule**

- Requires a municipal school district adopt differentiated salary schedules based on performance, specialized training, and experience.

**Sec. 3311.79 – Teacher Assignment**

- Requires a municipal school district to fill teaching positions using building level hiring teams who provide a recommendation to the district CEO. Hiring teams will include the principal and teachers.

- Hiring team must consider several factors including the results of performance evaluations and whether an applicant has recently taught the subject area needed.
- CEO has authority to fill positions where there are no recommendations or in positions remaining vacant following the process above.

#### **Sec. 3311.80 – Teacher Evaluation**

- Expands timelines to ensure teacher evaluations inform municipal district decision-making.
- Requires trained evaluators.

#### **Sec. 3311.81 – Non-Renewal/ Continuing Contract Eligibility**

- Lengthens timelines allowing a municipal district additional years to consider whether to grant an eligible teacher a continuing contract or be forced to non-renew.

#### **Sec. 3311.82 – Termination**

- Expands the definition of good and just cause for termination/discipline to include a composite evaluation rating of “ineffective” for two consecutive years. Allows for removing poor performers regardless of contract status.

#### **Sec. 3311.83 – Reduction in Force**

- Requires municipal district to suspend the contracts of teachers based on performance evaluations ratings, beginning with “ineffective” teachers followed by “developing” teachers.
- Within each rating (e.g. “ineffective”) limited teacher contracts would be suspended before continuing teaching contracts.
- Modifies recall to operate first on performance and then based on the contract status within each rating classification (reverse of RIF).
- Allows specialized training or experience to be considered in RIF order.

#### **Sec. 3311.84 – Principal Evaluations**

- Establishes principal evaluation process and indicates that failure to meet academic performance standards is considered good and just cause for termination.

#### **Sec. 3311.85 – School Calendar**

- Provides authority to the CEO of a municipal school district to determine the school calendar, school day, etc.

#### **Sec. 3311.86 – Transformation Alliance**

- Permits the establishment of a municipal transformation alliance (Alliance). Alliance membership will include representatives from the district, partnering community schools, members of the community, business leaders, and foundation leaders.
- The alliance will conduct open meetings, be subject to public records law, and will adopt a conflict of interest policy.
- The Alliance will:
  - Make recommendations to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) with respect to the approval of sponsors intending to authorize new charter schools in the district.
  - Work with ODE and an Ohio charter school sponsor organization to develop criteria that must be followed by sponsors looking to authorize new schools in the district and to develop criteria to annually assess efficacy of district and charter schools.
  - Report annually on the performance of all district and charter schools in Cleveland.
  - Confirm and monitor the implementation of the transformation alliance education plan.
  - Suggest national models and provide input on the development of new schools (district & charter).
- The Alliance authority will sunset on January 1, 2018.

#### **Sec. 5705.21 – Sharing of Local Property Tax**

- Authorizes the municipal school district to place a local property tax levy on the ballot that would indicate X mills would be for the district and Y mills would go to high performing community schools partnered or sponsored by the district.

**APPENDIX D**

**CLEVELAND PLAN REFRESH  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
RESEARCH SUMMARY  
(AUGUST 2021)**



## COMMUNITY SURVEY

During the summer of 2021 the Cleveland Transformation Alliance contracted with Neighborhood Leadership Institute (NLI) to survey community members about what they believe high-quality education in Cleveland should be and how an organization devoted to ensuring equitable access to high-quality education supports all residents in achieving that access. Data collection began on June 22, 2021 and concluded on August 16, 2021.

Surveys were collected via an online survey and a hard copy survey. Extensive outreach was conducted in order to reach:

- Current participants and alumni of Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland
- Current participants in NLI's Schools as Neighborhood Resources and Summer Tennis Programs
- NLI's Infant Vitality initiatives participants
- Former and current volunteers of the True2U Mentoring program
- Teach for America
- Breakthrough Schools
- Cleveland City Council
- The Ohio House of Representatives
- Additional volunteers & organizations
- General organizational contacts

The survey contained 26 questions. Questions were designed to try to determine what respondents feel is important to ensure high-quality education in Cleveland and what an organization that is committed to ensuring access to that high-quality education should do. Demographic questions were also included. In total, 285 surveys were submitted.

The analysis of the survey data demonstrated some clear trends in what community members view as quality education. Across multiple questions, similar themes emerged regarding the aspects of education that the community feels are important. Survey respondents highlighted the importance of:

- Future-focused learning
- Preparing students holistically (students are set up for success professionally, personally, socially, and financially)
- Teaching financial literacy
- Achieving thorough proficiency in core subjects
- Engaging families in their child's education
- Social and emotional learning (helping students gain a deep understanding of how to manage themselves and communicate and relate to others. Self-awareness and self-management skills such as decision-making, goal-setting, organization, and time-management are taught and encouraged)
- Schools as safe, joyful, and caring environments

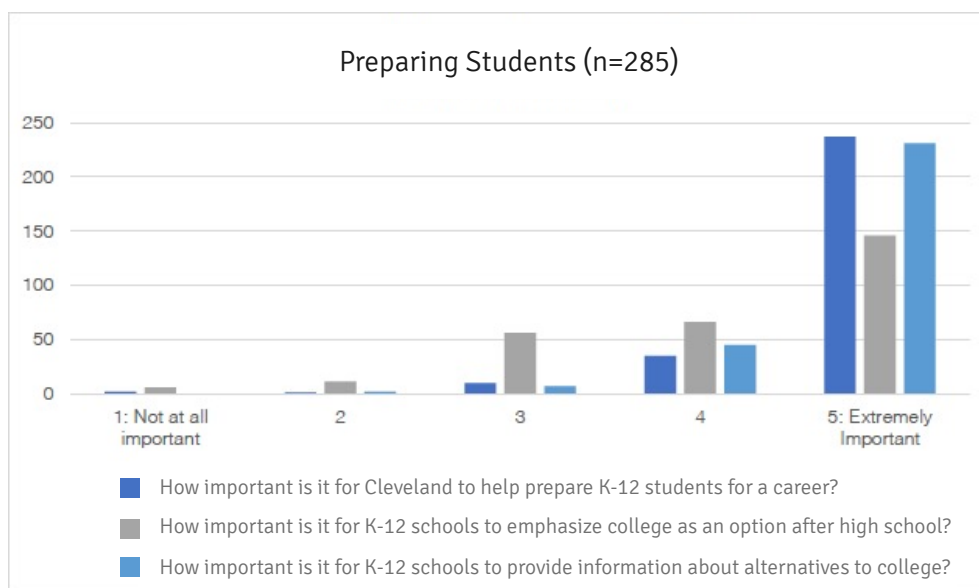


### Key Respondent Facts

- **72%** identified as **women**
- **53%** identified as **Black or African American**; **28%** as **white**, **7.4%** as **Latinx**, **4.6%** as **multiracial**, and **2%** as **American Indian, Alaska Native, or Asian**
- **22%** were **under age 35**; **50%** were **between 35 and 54**; and **27.5%** were **55+**
- **47%** were **alumni of CMSD or a Cleveland charter school**
- **42.5%** had **school-age children** in their home
  - **21%** of these children currently attend CMSD or a charter school in Cleveland
  - **19%** have in the past
- **36%** had **incomes and family sizes that qualify them as economically insecure**, with a significant number of these families also qualifying for free or reduced lunch
- **26%** had a **Bachelor degree**; **37%** had a **graduate degree**
- **9.6%** were **educators**, or **retired from a profession**

A quality education makes family engagement a priority—this involves not only engaging families in their child’s education and educational decisions, but also working to support families with whatever needs they have in order to eliminate any barriers the family faces that may impede the education of their child.

In addition, respondents were asked a series of questions to understand the importance they place on the role of K-12 education in preparing students for their life after high school, including preparing for a career (see graph at right), emphasizing college, and providing information about alternatives to college. Respondents agreed all three are important, with a strong emphasis on preparing for a career.



## FEEDBACK SESSIONS

To collect additional qualitative feedback about educational quality in Cleveland and the goals and strategies of the Cleveland Plan, Advocacy & Communication Solutions facilitated seven virtual feedback sessions with 10 individuals representing education sector partners (Say Yes Cleveland, College Now, Higher Education Compact, Starting Point, and PRE4CLE) and 27 educators from Cleveland Metropolitan School District and charter schools (including principals, administrators, teachers, intervention specialists, a paraprofessional, an occupational therapist, and a school psychologist).

During these 90–120-minute sessions, participants first answered the question, “What does a good or successful PreK-12 education experience look like to you?” Key themes included:

- Inclusive environment
- Fully and equitably resourced (everyone has what they need to teach and learn, regardless of where they are)
- Engaged families who have what they need
- Collaboration among educators, between educators and students/families, and between schools and community organizations
- Prepares students for life after school (college and/or career)
- Academically rigorous
- Offers multiple ways of learning
- Well-trained staff—including anti-racist, anti-bias, culturally competent practices
- Uses a growth mindset (students and educators)
- Uses technology effectively
- Support social-emotional learning
- Students are motivated and excited to learn/come to school
- Robust afterschool and weekend learning options

These themes are represented in the quality indicators listed in the refreshed plan, and consistent with responses to the community survey. Next, participants reacted to draft content for the Cleveland Plan pillars (goals) and strategies. Overall, respondents believe that the pillars were directionally correct, appreciated the emphasis on equity in the refreshed plan, and suggested minor edits to the language of some strategies to clarify intent.