



A Report to the Community on  
the Implementation and Impact of  
*Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools*  
A Five-year Perspective | Fall 2017



Cleveland  
Transformation  
Alliance

Quality Schools for All Children

OCTOBER 2017

## Dear Residents of Greater Cleveland:

In a testament to the shared vision of our city's stakeholders, the broad coalition of civic leaders that came together in 2012 to create *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools* remains deeply engaged in the work. That shared commitment is represented by the ongoing work of the Transformation Alliance to create and support a better future for Cleveland's children.

In this fourth report assessing the implementation and impact of the Cleveland Plan, we have found that our community has made substantial progress putting in place reforms that have altered—and will continue to alter—the future of our children and our community.

The clearest measurable progress can be seen with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District's steadily increasing graduation rate, up 20 percentage points from 2010. The district's transformation of our city's high school landscape is promising, as is the work of CMSD's partnering K-8 charter schools.

However, we cannot ignore the fact that too many other academic indicators for both district and charter schools lag behind what our children's peers around the state are achieving.

I believe the recommendations made by the Transformation Alliance in this report outline a path for further improvement that will ensure a quality education for all Cleveland students. Using these recommendations as a guide, I call on all stakeholders to continue and intensify their work toward our shared goals.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank Jackson'.

**HONORABLE FRANK G. JACKSON,**  
MAYOR, CITY OF CLEVELAND  
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
CLEVELAND TRANSFORMATION ALLIANCE

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## KEY FINDINGS

The goal of this report is to assess progress on the implementation and impact of *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools*, five years after our citywide plan to reinvent public education was written into state law.

First and foremost, we are encouraged that under the leadership of Cleveland Mayor Frank G. Jackson stakeholders remain engaged in our collective work to ensure all children in Cleveland attend quality schools and every neighborhood has a multitude of great schools from which families can choose. This ongoing commitment is unusual in the world of urban education reform, where improvement efforts often falter after only a few years.

The four sections of this key findings summary are aligned to the structure of the report.

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### REVISITING OUR 2016 RECOMMENDATIONS

First, we assess progress on recommendations made in our 2016 report to the community. The Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Breakthrough Schools, the Intergenerational Schools, and the Transformation Alliance report clear accomplishments aligned to the 2016 recommendations and the Cleveland Plan. One key area where more focus is needed: district-charter collaboration that makes a difference for Cleveland families and children. **See pages 4 and 5.**

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### LOOKING AHEAD: 2017 RECOMMENDATIONS

Five years into the Cleveland Plan, both the state and local education contexts have changed. Therefore, the Board of Directors of the Transformation Alliance believes it is time to update the goals and strategies of the Cleveland Plan. **See pages 6 and 7.**



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## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CLEVELAND PLAN

On pages 8 to 20, we examine progress our community has made in implementing changes in the four strategy areas of the Cleveland Plan. Progress has been made in many areas.

### **Grow the number of high-performing schools and close or replacing failing schools**

CMUSD's efforts to develop new high schools and restructure existing ones is among the most promising changes to Cleveland's education landscape. The district has seen limited progress on K-8 schools, which is where Cleveland's charter sector has shown some success. While the number of new charter schools opening each year has dropped, the percentage of those sponsored by or formally partnered with the district has increased. **See pages 10 to 13.**

### **Focus district's central office**

Work to overhaul CMUSD's central office is aligned to the goals of the Cleveland Plan to focus the district on support and autonomy for schools. However, it is not clear that school leaders are truly empowered to make decisions that should be made at the school level. **See pages 14 to 15.**

### **Invest in high-leverage reforms**

The Cleveland Plan identified fundamental building blocks for school improvement: high-quality preschool education, college and workforce readiness, increased learning time, talent recruitment and development, technology enhancement, and support for high-quality charter schools. We find signs of significant progress in this work, but it is too early to measure outcomes. **See pages 16 and 17.**

### **Create the Cleveland Transformation Alliance**

The Alliance has become a go-to resource for families and caregivers looking for information about school quality and options, and provides credible information about the progress our community is making toward Cleveland Plan goals. The Alliance must continue to deepen engagement with all audiences, primarily families and the schools and other institutions that serve them. **See pages 18 to 20.**

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## IMPACT OF THE CLEVELAND PLAN

See pages 22 through 34 for our analysis of the impact of the Cleveland Plan on student academic success. We find signs of progress as well as areas that need increased focus.

Signs of progress include CMUSD's stabilizing enrollment, its increasing graduation rate, and its improvement on the state's measure of K-3 literacy. The district's partnering charter schools posted stronger results on state tests than did Cleveland schools as a whole, and these schools are showing student year-to-year academic gains that rival those of schools statewide.

At the same time, however, the percentage of students meeting requirements for promotion to fourth grade at both CMUSD and its partnering charter schools remains well below the state average. Overall, CMUSD's poor test results and year-to-year academic growth are strong evidence that we need new strategies to address low-performing schools.

Despite the clear challenges, we are encouraged by our community's continued commitment to the Cleveland Plan. We know that our efforts will succeed only if all stakeholders keep working toward our shared goals to ensure a quality education for all Cleveland children.





# RECOMMENDATIONS

## REVIEW: 2016 RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2016, the Transformation Alliance made seven recommendations to accelerate the pace of improvement under *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools*. This review highlights some of the most important work completed during the past year.

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### DEVELOP AND REFINE STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS LOW-PERFORMING AND FAILING SCHOOLS

- Both the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and Breakthrough Schools report work to improve all schools, as recommended, and new state accountability measures seem to be pushing other charter school operators and sponsors to address low-performing schools.
- The Transformation Alliance has not yet developed a communications strategy to proactively disseminate information to the public about low-performing and failing schools.

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### STRENGTHEN CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

- CMSD reported several efforts related to instruction, including support for teachers to implement targeted reading strategies and summer school strategies to support K-3 literacy.
- Breakthrough Schools implemented new professional development for teachers with new technology that enables real-time coaching.
- The Intergenerational Schools have provided teachers with peer observation opportunities, and training to support student classroom behavior and strengthen student writing.

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## ATTRACT AND RETAIN EFFECTIVE HIGH-LEVEL LEADERSHIP

- CMSD worked with Cleveland State University to establish a paid internship for student teachers, hired an executive coach for department chiefs and senior leadership, and launched an equity and inclusion team to study workplace culture.
- Breakthrough expanded its leadership development programs for principals, teacher leaders, instructional coaches, and assistant principals.

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## DEEPEN COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE DISTRICT AND THE CHARTER SECTOR, AND WITHIN THE CHARTER SECTOR ITSELF

- The district now considers the role of charter schools in its portfolio planning process, and some charter schools use the same enrollment tool as the district, although none are integrated into CMSD's system.
- Although CMSD continues to lease and sell buildings to charter schools, there has been no movement on joint planning of new schools.
- The Intergenerational Schools have begun to discuss with CMSD participation in the social-emotional learning survey district students complete.
- The Cleveland Education Compact, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to facilitate increased collaboration between CMSD and charter schools in Cleveland, has worked to develop joint professional development and a student record-sharing process.

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## DEVELOP CONSISTENT BENCHMARKS TO GAUGE PROGRESS

- The Transformation Alliance has set a clear goal this year to update the goals and metrics of the Cleveland Plan.
- The Alliance has implemented a relative ranking of Cleveland schools for use in our School Quality Guide, and uses a separate analysis for this report.
- The Alliance has not developed consistent protocols and a process to gather information from both district and charter schools to avoid reliance solely on publicly available data.

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## SHARE CHARTER SCHOOL DATA AND INFORMATION IMPORTANT TO THE CLEVELAND COMMUNITY

- The Transformation Alliance has not shared charter school data and information with the community beyond the *School Quality Guide* and the annual report to the community on the implementation and impact of the Cleveland Plan.

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## ADVOCATE FOR SUPPORTIVE STATE POLICY

- CMSD successfully advocated to maintain Ohio's Resident Educator Program and provided significant input on the development of the state's plan to implement new federal education law.
- CMSD also led the successful effort to advocate for the continuation of the Transformation Alliance's state mandate, which had been set to expire in January 2018.
- Breakthrough successfully advocated for a new facilities grant for high-performing charter schools.

Based on our assessment of progress made toward the goals of *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools* since 2012, the Board of Directors of the Transformation Alliance makes the following recommendations on key priorities for the next several years.

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### OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATION

#### Update progress markers

The high-level goals of the Cleveland Plan remain — 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.

During the past five years, however, changes to the state's accountability system have undermined our ability to measure progress. At the same time, work to implement the strategies of the Cleveland Plan has begun to change the trajectory of education in our city.

Because of this new context, the Transformation Alliance must update the goals of the Cleveland Plan and find new ways to measure progress toward them.

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### STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cleveland Plan envisions four strategies to achieve our shared goals:

- Grow the number of high-performing district and charter schools and close and replace failing schools;
- Focus the district's central office on key support and governance, transferring authority and resources to schools;
- Invest in high-leverage system reforms from preschool to college and career; and,
- Create the Cleveland Transformation Alliance to ensure accountability for all public schools in the city.

#### Grow the number of high-performing schools and close or replacing failing schools

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District has dramatically transformed its high school portfolio, and the district's steadily increasing graduation rate is a clear sign of progress. The district should continue this work and prioritize postsecondary readiness, enrollment, and completion.

Progress at the K-8 level has been slow and uneven, although CMSD has focused significant resources on school improvement, closed some schools, and expanded stronger schools. On the charter side, many low-performing schools have closed or been taken over by operators that are showing better results, and promising new schools have opened.



Nevertheless, an essential challenge remains: Too many K-8 schools are under-enrolled and low-performing.

To address the urgent need to improve K-8 opportunities:

- Community and school leaders must develop a common understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the K-8 sector, focusing on demographic trends, asset mapping, and research that shows what works;
- CMSD should implement strategies that have worked at the high school level to repurpose, replace or eliminate low-performing schools. CMSD and the charter sector should work together to address low-performing schools and increase quality options in high-need neighborhoods; and,
- Charter schools must find new ways to hold themselves accountable for the quality of their schools. They must also collaborate more closely, sharing best practices and working toward sustainability.

### **Focus the district's central office**

The district must continue moving toward a system focused on school support. Success here is necessary to sustain long-term change.

Most importantly, CMSD must find the right balance between school oversight and autonomy. The district has put in place networks to support schools, and moved some decisions on budget and hiring to the school level. Now, school leaders must be empowered to make decisions they can best make.

### **Invest in high-leverage system reforms**

The Cleveland Plan identifies several fundamental building blocks that must be in place to ensure quality schools for all Cleveland children.

Of those, we recommend action focused on the following reforms:

- In early childhood education, continue to expand the number of high-quality preschool seats and advocate for a reliable funding system;
- In college and career readiness, work with schools to strengthen the college-going culture, increase readiness for postsecondary education, and address college-access barriers;
- Continue the focus on technology-enhanced learning to prepare students for the 21st-century economy; and,
- Expand the common enrollment system developed by the district to include charter schools. This effort is essential to the success of the portfolio approach that is at the heart of the Cleveland Plan: CMSD and the charter sector must work together to create a common system.

### **Create the Cleveland Transformation Alliance**

The Transformation Alliance has made significant progress establishing itself as a credible source of information for families and other stakeholders.

To help ensure the Transformation Alliance plays the role for which it was created, we must:

- Increase capacity to monitor the charter sector and create new opportunities for partnership with charter schools; and,
- Develop new strategies to help parents navigate the complex world of charter sector management and governance, while strengthening communication with families about both their school options and their role as advocates for their children.



# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CLEVELAND PLAN

## INTRODUCTION AND PROGRESS SNAPSHOT

Five years ago, a group of civic, education, philanthropic and business leaders developed *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools*, a citywide school-improvement initiative designed to reinvent public education in our city. In July 2012, Gov. John Kasich signed into law House Bill 525, which enabled the Cleveland Plan to take effect.

The Cleveland Plan's overarching goals are to ensure that every child in the city attends an excellent school and that every neighborhood has a multitude of great schools from which families can choose. It calls for the creation of a portfolio of high-quality schools operated by the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and partnering charter schools.

This report is designed to give the Cleveland community and other stakeholders a deeper understanding of the progress our schools are making.

This section of the report takes a close look at the extent to which our community has been able to implement the strategies in the four pillars of the Cleveland Plan.

Grow the number  
of high-performing  
district and charter  
schools in Cleveland,  
and close and replace  
failing schools.

Focus the district's  
central office on  
key support and  
governance roles and  
transfer authority and  
resources to schools.

### THE CLEVELAND PLAN

Create the Cleveland  
Transformation  
Alliance to ensure  
accountability for all  
public schools  
in the city.

Invest in high-  
leverage system  
reforms across  
all schools from  
preschool to college  
and career.

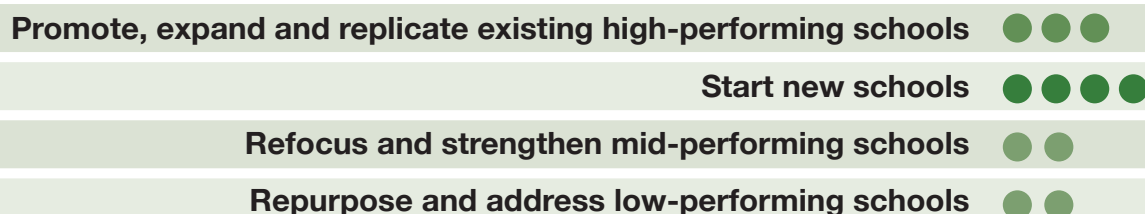
## CLEVELAND'S PLAN FOR TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS: A FIVE-YEAR SNAPSHOT OF PROGRESS

These ratings are based on a survey of the 29 members of the board of directors of the Transformation Alliance, who responded to questions about how they perceive progress under the Cleveland Plan. Board members represent a broad cross-section of Cleveland's civic leadership, the business and philanthropic communities, educators, and parents.

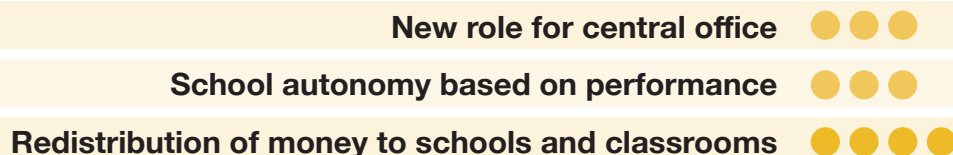
### Progress Level



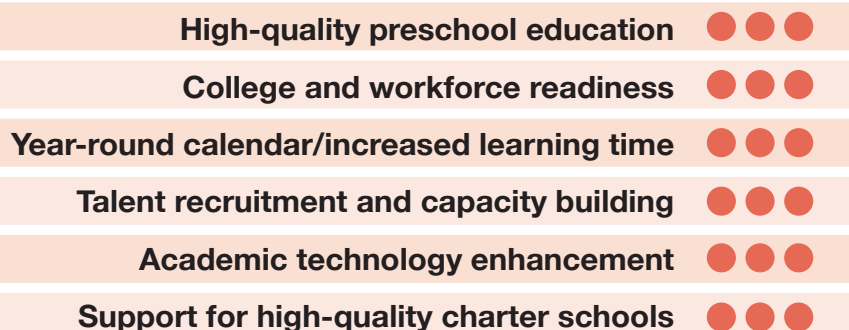
### GROW HIGH-PERFORMING SCHOOLS, CLOSE/REPLACE FAILING SCHOOLS



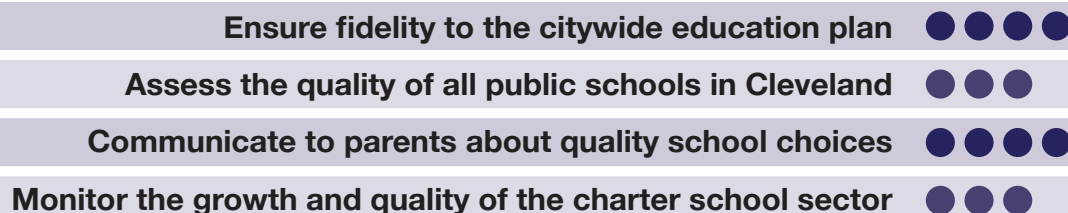
### FOCUS DISTRICT'S CENTRAL OFFICE



### INVEST IN HIGH-LEVERAGE SYSTEM REFORMS



### CREATE THE CLEVELAND TRANSFORMATION ALLIANCE





## IMPLEMENTATION: GROW HIGH-PERFORMING SCHOOLS, CLOSE/REPLACE FAILING SCHOOLS

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District and its partnering charter schools have made significant efforts to grow the number of high-performing schools in our city. Since 2012, the district has seen more progress at the high school level, opening new schools and phasing out low-performing schools, while the charter sector has seen some success with K-8 schools. Over the same period, both district and charter K-8 schools have closed for reasons including poor academic performance, declining enrollment, facility needs, and financial sustainability

### K-8 SCHOOLS

#### Cleveland Metropolitan School District

CMSD has not opened new K-8 schools since 2012, although enrollment has increased at some of its higher-performing schools. The district has paused its Investment Schools program, which in 2013-14 designated 18 K-8 low-performing schools for “immediate and dramatic” improvement, because it has shown mixed results. CMSD is using an internal evaluation and planning process to determine future intervention at most of these schools.

The district has designated eight Investment Schools as part of its new K-8 design process, which began at 14 schools in 2017. The initiative seeks to improve teaching and learning by convening educators, parents, caregivers, and community partners to design and implement new ways of providing a quality education.

Since 2012, CMSD has closed four K-8 schools for a combination of low-performance, declining enrollment, and facility needs: Buckeye-Woodland, McKinley, Paul Revere, and Watterson-Lake.

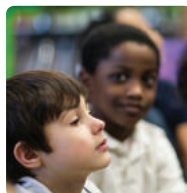
#### Charter sector

Cleveland’s charter sector has focused mostly at the K-8 level. The number of charter school startups in Cleveland has dropped since the 2011-12 school year, the year before the Cleveland Plan was signed into law. From a high of 10 startups that year, just two new charter schools have opened within CMSD boundaries each year since 2015-16.

The Cleveland Plan includes these four strategies to grow the number of high-performing schools in our city.



**Promote, expand, and replicate existing high-performing district and charter schools.**



**Start new schools, drawing on national models as well as innovative schools created locally.**



**Refocus and strengthen mid-performing schools with precise and customized interventions and investments.**



**Repurpose and address low-performing schools, including closing schools or turning them over to a capable charter operator.**



Of the 18 schools that have opened since 2012, eight are sponsored by or partnered with CMSD.

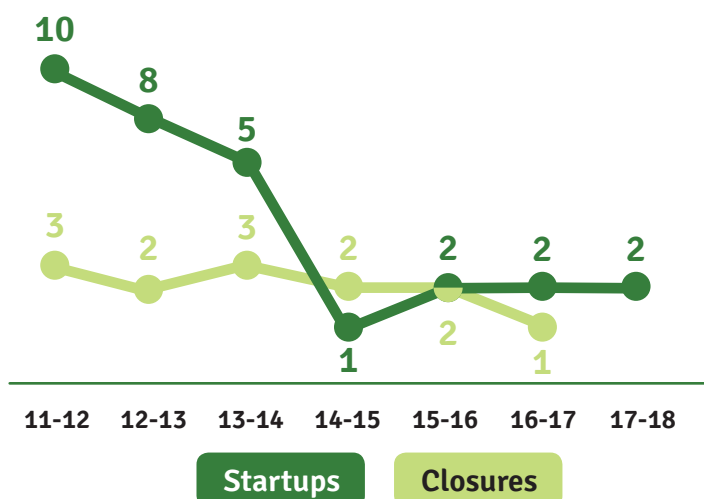
Support and intervention at charter schools are decentralized and generally mandated or overseen by sponsors or operators. Charter school sponsors publish annual reports that sometimes describe the intervention and support they provide to their schools.

Both academic performance and financial sustainability have driven closure in the charter sector over the past five years. A state closure law has shuttered schools for academic reasons, while sponsors have decided not to renew some contracts with charter schools they oversee. Since 2011, 13 charter schools in Cleveland have closed.

During this period, Cleveland's K-8 charter schools have generally received higher state ratings for student achievement and academic progress than district schools, with CMSD's partnering charter schools scoring better than Cleveland charter schools as a whole. For two of the past three years a district-charter comparison shows that a higher percentage of CMSD students have met fourth-grade promotion requirements.<sup>1</sup>

State data show that CMSD enrolls a higher percentage of both English language learners (19 percent for CMSD vs. 6 percent in charter schools) and students with special educational needs (22 percent in the district vs. 13 percent in charter schools). This difference in student populations served may account for some of the variation in academic performance.

#### CHARTER SCHOOL CLOSURES AND STARTUPS



<sup>1</sup> The Third Grade Reading Guarantee was introduced in 2015 as a new measure of academic performance rated by the state.

## HIGH SCHOOLS

### Cleveland Metropolitan School District

CMSD began redesigning high schools before *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools* started in 2012, opening nine new standalone high schools between 2006 and 2011. Since then, the Cleveland Plan has shifted CMSD's strategy to a focus on phasing out larger, low-performing high schools and replacing them with two or three smaller schools, allowing for better economies of scale and creating a campus feel. The district has created 16 new high schools since 2012, most sharing the campus of what had been a comprehensive high school, and is restructuring or redesigning seven others.

The work to develop new high schools and restructure existing ones is among the most comprehensive and promising aspects of the Cleveland Plan, with almost none of the district's 35 high schools left untouched.

Part of this work is the restructuring of CMSD's career-tech schools as career academies, with a focus on preparing students for high-demand

jobs and strengthening connections with communities and local businesses. Cleveland School of the Arts also is going through a major redesign.

Enrollment demand for the new high schools has largely been strong, although start-up enrollment is typically low. The highest-performing schools have seen rising enrollment.

### Charter sector

Of the 14 charter schools in Cleveland that served high school-age students over the past five years, only two—Horizon Science Academy Cleveland and Northeast Ohio College Preparatory School—are brick-and-mortar high schools. Both have formal partnership agreements with CMSD. Two other charter high schools provide an online education, while the remaining 10 are Dropout Prevention and Recovery Schools, created to serve students who have dropped out of high school or are at risk of dropping out. The state uses an alternative report card to measure results for the students served by these schools.





## CLEVELAND'S NEW HIGH SCHOOL PORTFOLIO: TRANSFORMATION SINCE 2012

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SMALL STAND-  
ALONE SCHOOLS  
CREATED

**Bard High School Early College West Campus** offers students the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and a two-year college degree, tuition free.

**Campus International High School**, located on the campus of Cleveland State University, is grounded in the International Baccalaureate model.

**Facing History New Tech High School** combines the Facing History and Ourselves curriculum with the teamwork approach of the New Tech Network.

**Cleveland High School for Digital Arts** partners with the Center for Arts Inspired Learning to offer a hands-on approach to learning centered on digital arts.

**Davis Aerospace and Maritime High School** partners with PHASTAR to provide instruction and experience from experts in the aviation, aerospace, maritime, and marine industries.

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SMALL SCHOOLS  
REPLACING  
COMPREHENSIVE  
HIGH SCHOOLS

**James F. Rhodes** now includes Rhodes College and Career Academy and the School of Environmental Studies, with the last class of the original high school set to graduate in 2020.

**John Adams** campus now includes John Adams College and Career Academy and Bard High School Early College East Campus, with the last class of the original high school set to graduate in 2020.

**Lincoln-West** now includes the School of Science and Health and the School of Global Studies, with the last class of the original high school set to graduate in 2019.

**John F. Kennedy** has become JFK E<sup>3</sup>agle and JFK PACT; the last class of the original high school graduated in 2017.

**John Marshall** has become three schools: Civic and Business Leadership, Engineering, and Information Technology; the last class of the original high school graduated in 2017.

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SCHOOLS  
REDESIGNED OR  
RESTRUCTED

**Cleveland School of the Arts** was redesigned and **Collinwood High School** became a New Tech School. Five schools, listed below, became the Academies of Cleveland, which focus on preparing students for high-demand jobs:

**Garrett Morgan High School, Jane Addams Business Careers Center, Martin Luther King Jr. Campus, Max S. Hayes High School, and Washington Park Environmental Studies**

## IMPLEMENTATION: FOCUS DISTRICT'S CENTRAL OFFICE

A primary goal of *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools* is to completely overhaul the Cleveland Metropolitan School District's central office, which had become bureaucratized, tightly controlling staffing, scheduling, curriculum, operations, and budgets for all schools.

Under the Cleveland Plan, central office restructuring has created separate departments for portfolio planning, talent recruitment and development, and information technology, starting to allow schools to make budget and program decisions, and redistributing money to schools and classrooms.

### NEW ROLE FOR CENTRAL OFFICE

A key goal of the Cleveland Plan is to shift the focus of CMSD's central office to ensuring the continuous improvement of all schools and the replacement or closure of the lowest-performing schools. Other essential roles include coordination of districtwide enrollment, provision of services and data to schools, assurance of compliance to state and federal mandates, support of a per-pupil funding mechanism, and creation of a strong talent pipeline.

#### The Portfolio Office

Centralized portfolio-based coordination helps the district to align academics, operations, and facilities planning with data on school performance, enrollment, and more.

#### Facilities Planning

Three years of work will finish in 2018, including seven K-8 schools currently under construction and two high schools starting in spring 2018. Two segments of the facilities plan remain.

#### HR & Talent Management

A new approach to hiring, training, and retaining educators allows school teams to manage the selection of teachers, while the Talent Office recruits and trains new hires across the district.

#### EMERGING SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS



#### Common Enrollment System

Online enrollment supports universal choice and helps families apply and enroll in any CMSD school, with the goal of including charters in the future.

#### Planning and Performance

A digital dashboard comparing district and individual school performance will help evaluate and monitor school goals, increase overall performance, and eliminate failing schools.

#### School Networks

Network leaders and support teams focus on providing targeted support to schools, such as talent, finance, special education, and curriculum.

Much essential work remains to be done as the promising new systems now in place continue to be developed and strengthened. During the next two years, CMSD will focus on ensuring the central office's new roles are deepened and aligned across departments.



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## SCHOOL AUTONOMY

While the Cleveland Plan calls for the district to provide schools with varying levels of autonomy based on performance, CMSD has chosen to increase the ability of all schools to make choices about academic programs, scheduling, and staffing.

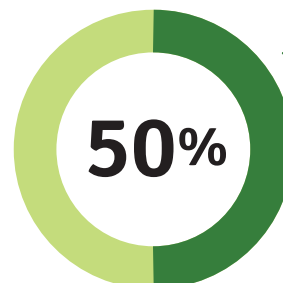
The district's new approach is to monitor services and implementation throughout the school year, producing a report card on each vendor designed to help school and district leaders choose programs. In addition, the district is providing schools with an online information technology service with the goal of making it easier for schools to get help implementing and using academic technology.

The key to continuing the progress that has been made in this area is for CMSD to keep working toward the right balance of supervision and support, to identify additional resources for schools, and to develop a menu of instructional services and resources from which schools can choose. Most importantly, the district must ensure that school autonomy does not just exist on paper, but that school leaders feel truly empowered to make decisions.

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## REDISTRIBUTION OF MONEY TO SCHOOLS AND CLASSROOMS

The Cleveland Plan calls for a weighted per-pupil funding system for all schools and the transfer of most spending control to schools based on enrollment and the needs of the student population. Over the past three years, principals have determined the budget for approximately 50 percent of available district resources, up from 1 percent in 2012-13, the first school year after the Cleveland Plan was signed into law.



Principals determine the budget for 50 percent of available district resources, up from 1 percent in 2012-13.

This budgetary control allows principals to make decisions aligned to the needs of their schools, and has increased school autonomy. Schools now can more easily make localized decisions, such as the ability to purchase smaller supplies and materials they need right away. CMSD plans to continue refining the formula with a focus on equity and flexibility.



## IMPLEMENTATION: INVEST IN HIGH-LEVERAGE REFORMS

*Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools* identified fundamental building blocks for school improvement: high-quality preschool education, college and workforce readiness, increased learning time, talent recruitment and development, academic technology enhancement, and support for high-quality charter schools.



### FUNDAMENTAL BUILDING BLOCKS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

**High-quality preschool:** In 2013, PRE4CLE created benchmarks for expansion, enrollment, and kindergarten readiness, working toward expanding citywide preschool access.<sup>1</sup>

**College and career readiness:** The Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland created citywide goals of college readiness, access, and persistence, working toward improving enrollment and graduation rates.<sup>2</sup>

**Increased learning time:** The district and a majority of charter schools reported increasing instruction time for all children to more than 1,000 hours per year by extending the school day and/or the school year.<sup>3</sup>

**Talent recruitment and development:** CMSD and a majority of charters reported changing their

approach to recruiting, training, and retaining high-quality educators, often using partnerships to achieve goals on planning time, professional development, and compensation that rewards high-performing teachers.<sup>3</sup>

**Academic technology enhancement:** The district and most charter respondents said they have increased their investments in classroom technology, including both hardware and software, and a focus on blended learning.<sup>3</sup>

**Support for high-quality charter schools:** The Cleveland Plan's portfolio approach focuses on building partnerships with high-performing Cleveland charter schools that serve the city's children. For a review of partnership efforts, see page 17.

<sup>1</sup> More detail on the progress toward Early Childhood Education goals is located on pages 24-25 of this report. For additional information visit [pre4cle.org](http://pre4cle.org).

<sup>2</sup> More detail on the progress toward College and Career Readiness is located on pages 32-34 of this report. For additional information visit [highereducationcompact.org](http://highereducationcompact.org).

<sup>3</sup> Information for this section was gathered through a survey distributed to all 66 charter schools located in Cleveland. Responses representing 41 schools were included in these results. CMSD provided one response reflecting the district-wide approach to these issues.

## DISTRICT-CHARTER COLLABORATION

Cleveland has done more than any other Ohio city to foster district-charter collaboration, which is essential to the Cleveland Plan's focus on creating a portfolio of high-performing schools, both district and charter.

### Revenue sharing

CMSD is the only Ohio district that shares local levy revenue with charter schools. One mill of the district's 15-mill operating levy, which first passed in 2012 and was renewed in 2016, goes to partnering charter schools on a per-student basis for children who live within district boundaries.

In 2016-17, 19 partnering charter schools received the funds, which total more than \$4 million a year. Charter school advocates support the effort, but note that per-student funding decreases as more schools partner with the district, and that the revenue does not solve funding inequities for local charter schools.

### Partnering charter schools

The term "partnering" includes schools sponsored by CMSD and those that have signed formal partnership agreements with the district.

During the 2016-17 school year, CMSD sponsored 11 charter schools, including six approved before the Cleveland Plan became law. The district has expanded its capacity as a sponsor since the state rated it "ineffective" in 2016, which prohibited it from approving new charter schools until the rating improves. Only five out of 65 sponsors statewide were rated highly enough to sponsor new schools.

In 2016-17, CMSD had formal partnerships with eight other charter schools. State law establishing the Cleveland Plan requires that the district and these schools "endorse each other's programs."

Sponsorship and partnership allow the district to support charter schools with missions that align with the Cleveland Plan.

### Cleveland Education Compact

The Cleveland Education Compact, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, allows the district and local charter schools to explore issues its members can address together, including shared professional development, special education, policy advocacy, and record sharing.

### Assessment

A 2017 report by the Center on Reinventing Public Education placed Cleveland at the "basic" level of collaboration – moving in the right direction but not at the forefront nationally. One limiting factor is state policy, which makes it difficult to engage in efforts such as cross-sector planning of the location of new schools.



## IMPLEMENTATION: CREATE THE CLEVELAND TRANSFORMATION ALLIANCE

The Cleveland Transformation Alliance is a public-private partnership created through *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools* that brings together a broad group of stakeholders working to reinvent public education in our city. Since its creation in 2013, the Alliance has established a credible presence in the community through its publications and community outreach. In 2017, the Ohio General Assembly struck from state law the provision that would have ended the Alliance's mandate in January 2018, allowing the continuation of our critical work to oversee the Cleveland Plan and engage our community.

The Cleveland Plan outlines four roles for the Transformation Alliance:



**Ensure fidelity to the Cleveland Plan**

**Assess the quality of all district and charter schools in Cleveland**

**Communicate to parents about quality school choices**

**Monitor charter sector growth and quality**

---

### ENSURE FIDELITY TO THE CLEVELAND PLAN

This is the Transformation Alliance's fourth report to the community on the implementation and impact of the Cleveland Plan, which fulfills the Alliance's role to "monitor and ensure faithful execution of the plan for the benefit of all Cleveland's children," as envisioned by the Cleveland Plan.

The Alliance has not fulfilled other work roles outlined in the Cleveland Plan: to bring national education models to the city, spur school development with local partners, and help develop ways for the community to have a voice in the development of new schools.

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### ASSESS THE QUALITY OF ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN CLEVELAND

Since 2013, the Transformation Alliance has assessed all district and charter schools located within the boundaries of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. We have relied on three main sources of information to do this assessment.

**State ratings:** In 2017, the Alliance used test results to rank all schools in Cleveland, with the goal of providing information that families can use when choosing a school.

**School-provided information:** Each school is given the opportunity to tell prospective families what sets the school apart.

**Community reviews:** The Alliance has collected more than 5,500 reviews from students, family members, educators, and others with direct knowledge of the schools they rate.



## COMMUNICATE WITH FAMILIES ABOUT PUBLIC SCHOOL QUALITY AND OPTIONS

Since 2014, the Transformation Alliance has published three editions of the *School Quality Guide*, which provides objective information about each district and charter school in Cleveland. The Alliance's interactive website features the same information plus links to state report cards and school websites, the ability to make side-by-side school comparisons, and access to detailed community reviews.

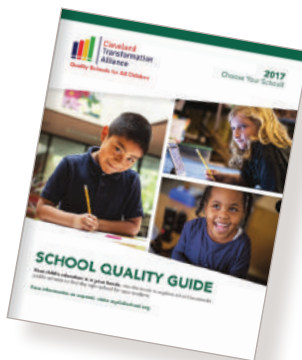
Outreach to families includes:

**Marketing campaigns:** Using broadcast, outdoor, and digital advertising;

**Community events:** Organized both by the Alliance and local partners;

**School Quality Guide and website:** Disseminated by mail, online and through partnering organizations; and,

**Direct outreach:** By staff and School Quality Ambassadors at community events.



Now finishing its third year, the School Quality Ambassador program was created to distribute Alliance resources, including the *School Quality Guide*, and to engage parents about school quality and options. Staff and ambassadors attend approximately 60 community events each summer.



### OUTREACH BY THE NUMBERS

# 50,000

SCHOOL QUALITY  
GUIDES DISTRIBUTED

# 23,302

VISITORS USED "CHOOSE  
YOUR SCHOOL" TOOL AT  
CLEVELANDTA.ORG SINCE  
ITS 2014 LAUNCH

# 5,533

SCHOOL REVIEWS BY  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS

# 164

OF CLEVELAND'S 171  
SCHOOLS REVIEWED BY  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS

# 50

PARTNERSHIPS HAVE  
EXPANDED ALLIANCE  
OUTREACH

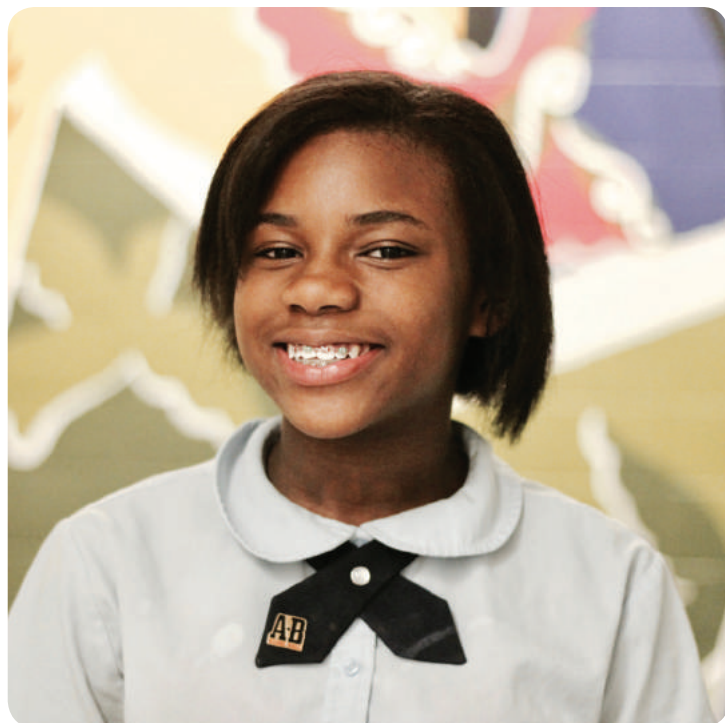


In 2017, more than 1,000 Cleveland students and families talked to principals and teachers from 55 Cleveland Schools at four neighborhood-based school quality fairs across the city.

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## MONITOR CHARTER SECTOR GROWTH AND QUALITY

By state law, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) must consider recommendations from the Transformation Alliance regarding the continued work of sponsors that oversee schools in Cleveland. In order to fulfill this mandate and ensure new and existing charter schools in Cleveland reflect quality educational standards, the Alliance has created a framework for evaluating sponsors seeking to open new schools in Cleveland. The Alliance has completed three sponsors reviews. In 2015, it recommended to ODE that the Buckeye Community Hope Foundation be allowed to continue its work as a sponsor in Cleveland. In 2017, it similarly endorsed the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, but recommended that ODE revoke the authority of the St. Aloysius Orphanage to sponsor schools in Cleveland.



In unnecessarily delaying its recommendations in 2017, however, the Alliance missed an opportunity to more forcefully call for the revocation of St. Aloysius's power to oversee Cleveland schools.

State law also requires that ODE consider recommendations from the Alliance regarding charter schools seeking direct sponsorship from the state. In 2016, the Alliance reviewed the status of one Cleveland charter school, Virtual Schoolhouse, Inc., recommending that ODE not accept its application for sponsorship. The state rejected the application, and the school closed at the end of the 2015-16 school year.

## POWER OF THE PLAN: BEHIND THE NUMBERS

Stories about how the Cleveland Plan is making a difference.

### IN BROADWAY-SLAVIC VILLAGE, SUPPORTING STUDENTS MEANS SUPPORTING THEIR FAMILIES

It was November, with the holidays on the way and two kids in school, and Carlotta Jackson was on the verge of eviction.

She was only a month behind on her rent, and had just started a new job. But her landlord's strict eviction policy threatened Jackson's desire to stay put and keep her children at Fullerton School, where they had been thriving.

Many Cleveland families end up in a similar predicament. During the 2014-15 school year, more than half of all students in Broadway's four K-8 schools moved at least once, often because their families could no longer afford rent or mortgage payments. Frequent moves cause stress for kids that can lead to academic setbacks and sometimes dropouts.

#### A network of support

Help came from the Broadway P-16, which convenes and supports organizations to make sure kids in the neighborhood receive a quality education—from preschool through college. That often means helping not just students, but their families too. This kind of support is a key part of *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools*.

Cleveland Housing Network, a key P-16 partner, offers targeted assistance to families of school-aged children in Broadway-Slavic Village. That includes short-term help with mortgage payments, rental assistance—and connections to a wider network of support.

Carlotta Jackson heard about CHN's program. Days later, CHN staff had checked Jackson's income and employment status and called her landlord for a reference. The agency paid off her \$500 back rent, and staff called her every month to make sure she was staying above water.

"We need to support kids all the way through school so they're prepared for college and then a good career," said Kurt Karukul, president of the Third Federal Foundation, which co-created, oversees and helps fund the P-16. "If we're going to turn Cleveland around, it's got to be through the schools."

Full story at [clevelandta.org/latest-news/power-plan-broadway-p-16](http://clevelandta.org/latest-news/power-plan-broadway-p-16).







# IMPACT OF THE CLEVELAND PLAN

The goal of this section is to provide an overview of the progress our schools have made since the start of the *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools* five years ago. To this end, we examine data on public school enrollment, early childhood education, student achievement, academic progress, high school graduation, and college and career readiness.

Because Ohio's accountability system has changed significantly in recent years, schools statewide have seen large decreases in test performance and large swings in academic growth. The 2016-17 school year marked the first time since 2013 the state had administered the same English Language Arts and math tests two years in a row.

Even taking into consideration the constant changes at the state level, however, the results highlighted in these pages are cause for both optimism and concern.

Looking ahead, we expect that a stable state accountability system will allow the Transformation Alliance to assess performance and progress in a way that helps stakeholders determine which strategies and reforms are improving schools and which are not. We also expect that stability will allow us to better help families find the schools that will best serve their children.

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In this report, data for the Third Grade Reading Guarantee, Performance Index, and Value Add are presented in five categories.

**Public schools statewide**

**All district and charter schools in the state of Ohio**

**All public schools in Cleveland**

**All district and charter schools within CMSD's boundaries**

**CMSD schools**

**Cleveland Metropolitan School District schools**

**All Cleveland charter schools**

**Charter schools within CMSD's boundaries**

**CMSD's partnering charter schools**

**The 19 schools sponsored by or formally partnered with CMSD**

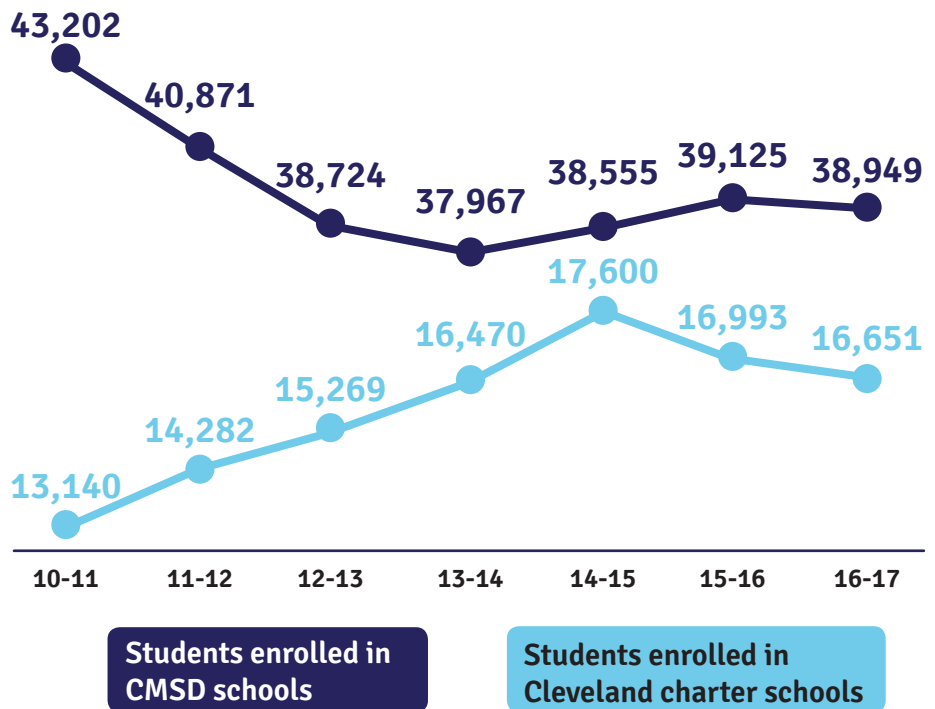


## CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT

During the 2016-17 school year, enrollment for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District remained flat at 38,949 students, including non-CMSD residents. This suggests continuing stability after a steep, decades-long decline that ended in 2014-15.

The number of non-CMSD resident students enrolled in district schools has increased since the 2013-14 school year, the first year the state included these numbers on school report cards. In 2016-17, 2,886 students enrolled from out of the district, up from 1,403 in 2013-14. The reason for this increase is unclear, and deserves further analysis.

DISTRICT AND CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT



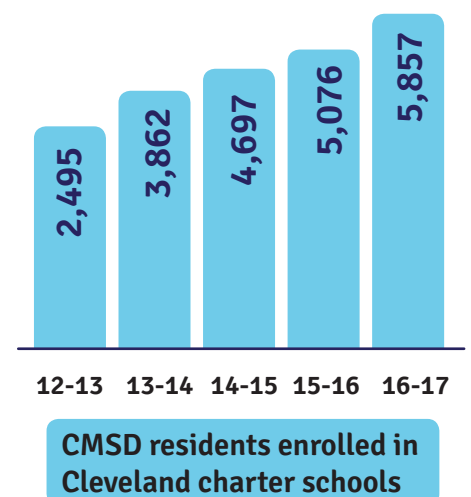
## CHARTER SCHOOLS

Charter schools located within CMSD boundaries enrolled 16,651 students in 2016-17, including non-CMSD residents. This represents a decline from the peak of 17,600 in 2014-15.<sup>1</sup>

Over the same period, the number of CMSD residents enrolled in charter schools located anywhere in the state has declined as well, to 16,224 in 2016-17 from a high of 18,324 in 2013-14. Since the 2011-12 school year, 13 Cleveland charter schools have closed and 30 have opened.<sup>2</sup>

The number of charter schools sponsored by or formally partnered with CMSD increased to 19 in 2016-17, from 11 in 2013, the year partnerships began. The rising number of schools boosted enrollment in partnering charter schools to 5,857.

ENROLLMENT GROWTH,  
CMSD PARTNERING CHARTERS



<sup>1</sup> Charter data do not include Ohio Connections Academy, an online charter school located in Cleveland that enrolled more than 3,000 students in 2016-17, only 115 of whom lived in Cleveland.

<sup>2</sup> See chart that shows charter school openings and closures on page 11.

## IMPACT: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

### CLEVELAND PRESCHOOL BY THE NUMBERS

**11,800**

3- TO 5-YEAR-  
OLDS (NOT YET IN  
KINDERGARTEN)

**7,108**

CHILDREN ENROLLED  
IN PRESCHOOL

**4,227**

IN HIGH-QUALITY  
PRESCHOOL

**2,218**

IN UNRATED  
PRESCHOOL

**613**

IN LOWER-QUALITY  
PRESCHOOL

PRE4CLE is Cleveland's plan to ensure all 3- and 4-year-old children in the city are enrolled in a high-quality preschool and are prepared for kindergarten. Our community has made significant progress in key areas since PRE4CLE began in 2013.<sup>1</sup>

### PROGRESS ON ENROLLMENT

By December 2016, 36 percent of preschool-aged children in Cleveland were enrolled in high-quality preschools, up from 23 percent in 2013. This translates to an additional 1,420 children enrolled in high-quality seats, significant progress over a four-year period even though it is short of the PRE4CLE goal of 2,000 additional children.<sup>2</sup>

Much of this progress can be attributed to PRE4CLE's enrollment campaign, which has used traditional and digital media marketing, direct mail, preschool open houses, and face-to-face recruitment.

### PROGRESS ON AVAILABILITY

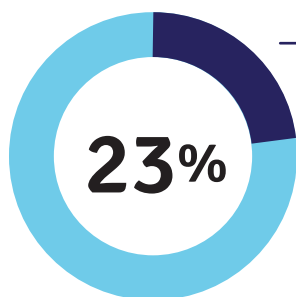
Since PRE4CLE began, 2,358 high-quality preschool seats have been added citywide. PRE4CLE has used two targeted strategies to support the creation of high-quality seats. First, PRE4CLE provided classroom start-up grants, funded by Cuyahoga County, that resulted in nine new classrooms at existing high-quality providers. PRE4CLE also worked with Starting Point to provide professional development, technical assistance, and materials to lower-quality or unrated preschools to help them achieve a high-quality rating from the state.

At the neighborhood level, 22 of Cleveland's 33 neighborhoods have seen an increase in the availability of high-quality seats since 2014. In addition, 16 neighborhoods now have enough high-quality seats to serve at least 50 percent of their preschool population—up from 11 neighborhoods when PRE4CLE began. This progress far exceeds the initial PRE4CLE goal to increase availability in two Cleveland neighborhoods.

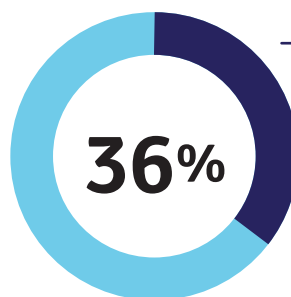
<sup>1</sup> The data in this section have been provided by PRE4CLE.

<sup>2</sup> Expansion includes new high-quality seats created and existing seats newly rated as high-quality. PRE4CLE considers a preschool high-quality if it receives a rating of 3 to 5 stars under the state's Step Up to Quality system.

## PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL



23 percent of 3- to 5-year-old Cleveland children enrolled in 2013



36 percent of 3- to 5-year-old Cleveland children enrolled in 2016

## PROGRESS ON READINESS

In fall of 2015, 38 percent of children enrolled in PRE4CLE classrooms scored above the Cuyahoga County mean on the language and literacy portion of the state's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, up from 32 percent on the most comparable KRA in 2013. The KRA is administered as children enter kindergarten.

In 2016, 46 percent of children in PRE4CLE classrooms showed meaningful improvement on the Bracken School Readiness Assessment, close to the PRE4CLE goal that half of participating children would show such improvement. The Bracken is given at the beginning and end of a child's preschool experience.

PRE4CLE has begun to analyze readiness based on all four early learning domains represented in the KRA, as well as an "on-track" and "off-track" designation for literacy. This approach is designed to allow PRE4CLE to understand whether or not Cleveland children are meeting the readiness goal set for all Ohio children.

## NEW BENCHMARKS

PRE4CLE has set new benchmarks for the coming years, and will continue work to increase the number of Cleveland children enrolled in high-quality preschool seats in Cleveland, the number of high-quality seats across the city, and the number of Cleveland children who are ready for kindergarten.

More information on PRE4CLE and the benchmarks the plan has set for the coming years are available at [pre4cle.org](http://pre4cle.org).



# IMPACT: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

## THIRD GRADE READING GUARANTEE

Ohio implemented its Third Grade Reading Guarantee four years ago to identify students from kindergarten through third grade who are behind in reading. It tracks the percentage of children meeting requirements for promotion to fourth grade because students unable to read well by third grade will not be ready to learn.

Overall, a substantially lower percentage of students attending Cleveland's public schools, both district and charter, are meeting the requirements compared to the statewide average, which has increased slightly each year since the Guarantee went into effect.

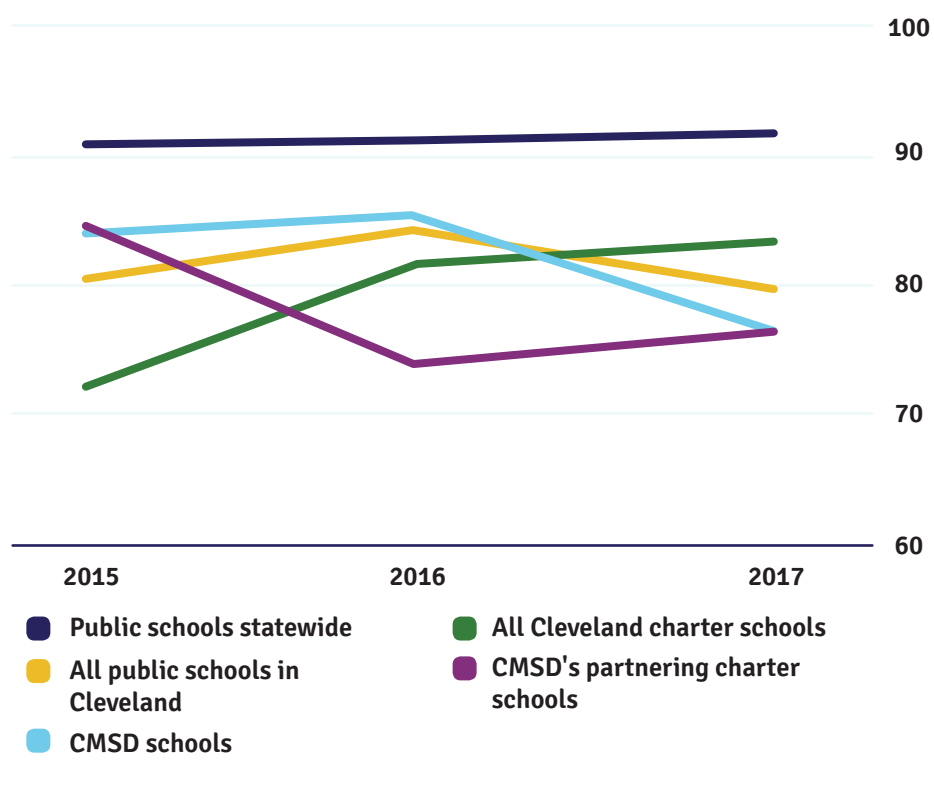
In 2017, the average for students attending the Cleveland Metropolitan School District dropped after increasing last year, while the average for all Cleveland charters rose for the second year in a row. CMSD's charter school partners improved this year after dropping last year. The district and its charter school partners posted nearly identical averages this year, 78.5 percent and 78.2 percent, respectively.

### Urban district comparison

The percentage of third-graders meeting fourth-grade promotion requirements ranked CMSD seventh out of Ohio's eight urban districts in 2017, the same as in 2015. On a separate measure of how well schools help struggling readers, CMSD ranked third in 2017, up from seventh in 2015.



### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MEETING FOURTH-GRADE PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS





## PERFORMANCE INDEX

Ohio's Performance Index (PI) measures how students perform on state tests. Schools receive more points for higher student scores, with 120 the highest score possible.

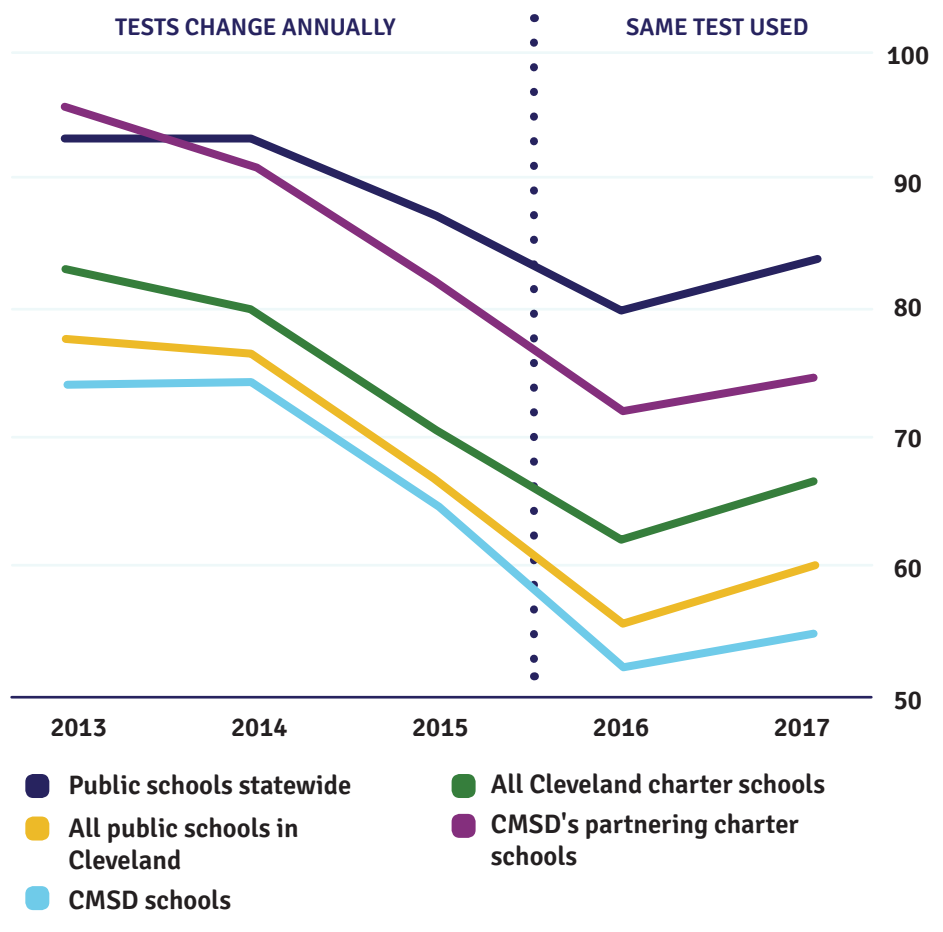
PI dropped statewide when Ohio put in place new standards for learning and used new tests for English Language Arts and math three years in a row—2014, 2015 and 2016. Scores increased across the state in 2017, the first year the same test was used in these subjects two years in a row.

Scores for all five categories increased this year, although they remained substantially below 2013 and 2014.

The 2017 statewide score is 10 points lower than in 2013, while the average for all Cleveland schools is 18 points lower. The Cleveland Metropolitan School District's 2017 average is the lowest of the five categories, at 56.2; all Cleveland charter schools averaged 67.1 and CMSD's partnering charters averaged 73.8.

Cleveland charter schools posted the biggest increase from 2016 to 2017, at 4.2 points, while CMSD posted a 3.9 point increase and the district's partnering charter schools saw a 2 point gain. The statewide gain was 3.1 points.

## CLEVELAND SCHOOLS VS. STATEWIDE AVERAGE



### Urban district comparison

CMSD's PI score for 2017 put it in sixth place among Ohio's eight urban districts, up from last place in 2013.



## IMPACT: ACADEMIC PROGRESS

### VALUE-ADDED

Ohio's Value-Added (VA) Student Growth Measure is designed to assess how much academic progress students have made over the course of the school year.

Scores between -1.0 and 1.0 are supposed to indicate that students have shown one year of academic growth over the course of the year; scores above 1.0 suggest more than a year's growth, while scores below -1.0 suggest less than a year's growth.

As with Performance Index, noted on the previous page, changes to the state's accountability system have resulted in a statewide drop in VA scores.

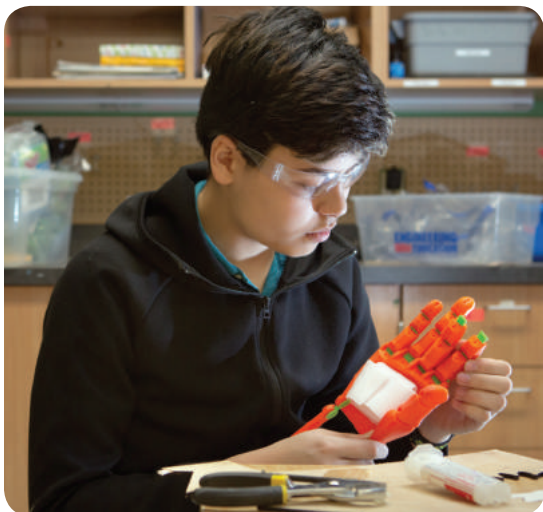
Large swings in VA scores at the individual school level have called into question the reliability of the data. Despite these concerns, shared by educators around the state, this analysis provides a sense of how Cleveland schools are doing in comparison to the state as a whole.

Ohio's average VA remains lower than 2013 and stayed relatively flat in 2017. During that time period, Cleveland's overall average dropped dramatically, declining most steeply in 2016 with another slight decrease in 2017.

Scores dropped for other categories as well. CMSD's score climbed slightly in 2015, plummeted in 2016, and stayed flat this year. Cleveland charter schools had their biggest decrease in 2015, climbed sharply in 2016 then dropped again this year. CMSD's partnering charter schools started well above the other schools in 2013, but dropped steadily to just above the state average in 2016 and slightly below it this year.

#### Urban district comparison

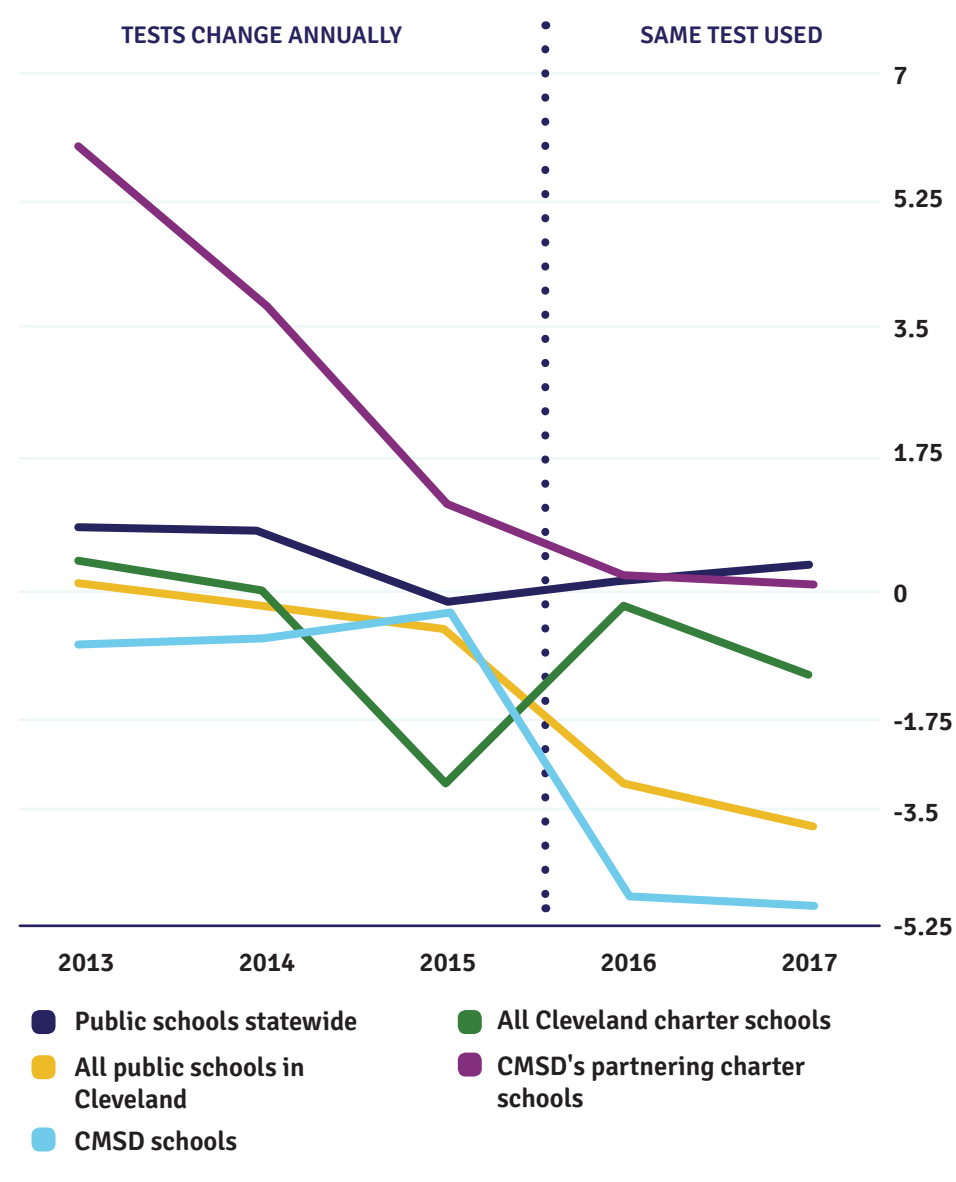
CMSD's 2017 VA score ranked it in seventh place among Ohio's eight urban districts, the same as in 2013.



## Changes to Ohio's learning standards and tests

In 2010, the Ohio Board of Education put in place new academic standards for math, English, science and social studies. These standards lay out what students are expected to learn each year. Ohio's New Learning standards, designed to be more challenging than previous standards, incorporated Common Core standards developed jointly by groups representing more than 40 states.

### VALUE-ADDED: CLEVELAND SCHOOLS VS. STATEWIDE AVERAGE



## 2013-14

The state uses new Ohio-specific tests based on the new standards.

## 2014-15

Ohio uses tests developed by the national Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).

## 2015-16

Responding to a backlash against PARCC, Ohio discards the 2014-15 tests and uses new ones developed by the American Institutes for Research.

## 2016-17

For the first time since 2013, Ohio uses the same tests it used the previous school year.



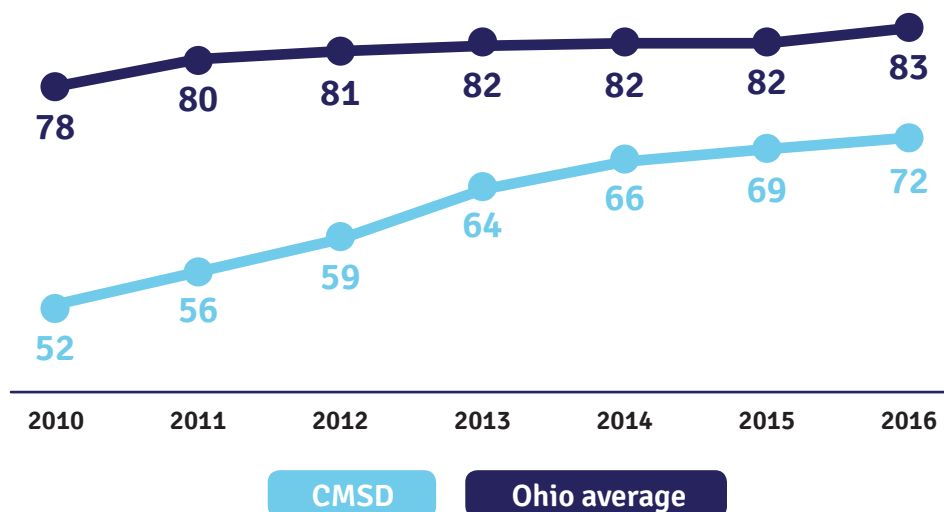
# IMPACT: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

## HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

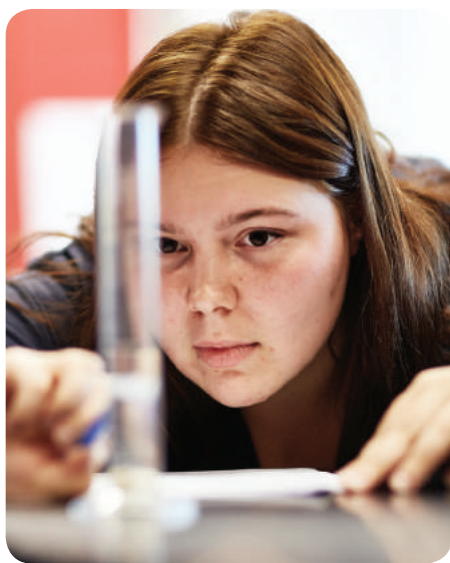
In one of the clearest signs of progress under *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools*, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District's four-year high school graduation rate has continued its steady rise, to 72 percent for the class of 2016 from 52 percent in 2010.

This increase of 20 percentage points in six years means CMSD's four-year graduation rate has been rising faster than that of any of the other seven large urban districts in Ohio. During the same period, CMSD has narrowed the gap between its four-year rate and the state average by 14 percentage points.

### FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE PERCENTAGE



As promising as this progress is, the remaining 11-point gap between the district and the state average continues to be a cause for concern. In today's economy, a high school diploma is a minimum requirement for most jobs that pay a living wage and for access to postsecondary training and education.



## CHARTER SCHOOLS

Only two traditional brick-and-mortar charter high schools located within CMSD boundaries reported multiple years of graduation data.

Horizon Science Academy of Cleveland saw a slight decrease in its four-year graduation rate for the class of 2016, to 86 percent from a high of 88 percent in 2015. Nevertheless, the 2016 rate represents a 22 percentage point increase from the 64 percent of students who graduated from the school in 2010.

Northeast Ohio College Preparatory School graduated 79 percent of its 2016 class in four years, up from 67 percent in 2015, the first year the school reported graduation data.

## POWER OF THE PLAN: BEHIND THE NUMBERS

Stories about how the Cleveland Plan is making a difference.

### TWO YEARS IN, STONEBROOK MONTESSORI RECEIVES COMMUNITY EMBRACE

Stonebrook Montessori's marketing plan for the 2017-18 school year is unorthodox yet devastatingly simple: Give every student a T-shirt.

"That'll be about all we need to do," says Erica Adams, community engagement and admissions coordinator, with a laugh. "Whenever we ask people how they hear about us, we hear, 'Oh, my cousin goes here,' or 'I know a friend.' It's all word of mouth."

Now in its third year, the school has a wait list for each age level, a sign that families are hearing good things about the school and that community trust is building.

"Families are understanding the Montessori philosophy better, students are becoming more settled, and we're learning how to meet the needs of this particular community," Adams says.

When Stonebrook opened in 2015, it embodied the ideals of *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools*—the public-private effort to ensure every child in Cleveland attends a quality school.

It was a new charter school, but operating under a proven educational model — an important consideration in a city where new schools have opened with big promises but failed to deliver.

Stonebrook is sponsored by the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, meaning it shares a portion of the operating levy that funds the Cleveland Plan and collaborates with the district to share enrollment data and best practices.

Adams believes Stonebrook's mix of freedom and structure, and its responsiveness to individual students' needs, may be the main reason families are embracing the school.

Now, she and Principal Jacqui Miller routinely hear gratitude from even the most skeptical parents. Gestures such as those make Miller feel the school is on the right track.

"We're doing the work now, seeing the results," she says. "We're establishing something and paying attention to the feedback. We're saying, 'Please help us do better. We'll hear that and follow through.'"

"Two years ago, I was hopeful," she says. "Today, that hope is more optimism."

Full story at [clevelandta.org/latest-news/glenville-charter-school-receives-embrace](http://clevelandta.org/latest-news/glenville-charter-school-receives-embrace).



## IMPACT: COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

The Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland leads work to increase college readiness, access, and persistence for Cleveland Metropolitan School District students.

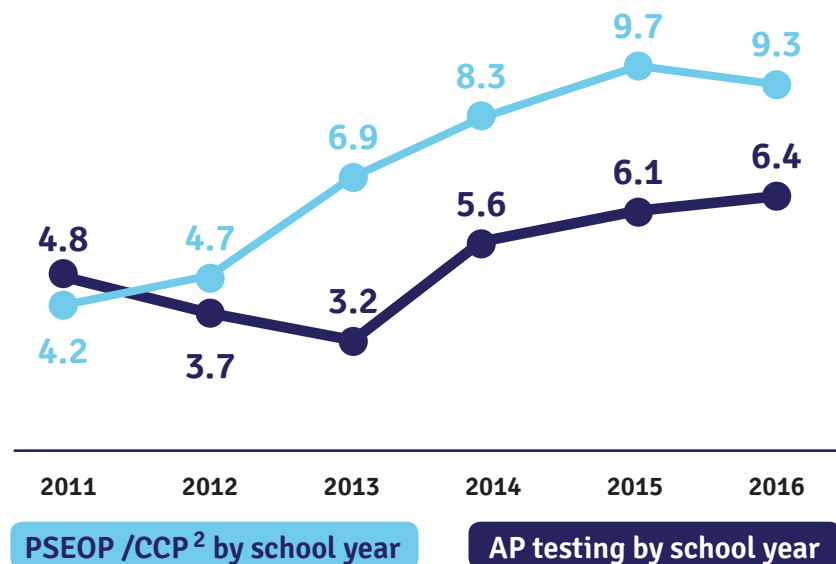
The findings in this section are drawn from the the Higher Education Compact's 2016 report to the community, which showed that CMSD graduates are better prepared for postsecondary success and more likely to earn degrees at two- and four-year colleges. A drop in postsecondary enrollment is cause for concern and action, the report found.<sup>1</sup>

### READINESS

Readiness indicators at district high schools are improving. More students are on track to graduate, are maintaining a GPA of 3.0 or higher, and are taking Advanced Placement (AP) tests or college-level courses.

To better prepare students, CMSD is working to broaden access and achievement in AP coursework and to increase participation in College Credit Plus (CCP), which allows students to take college courses for credit.

#### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING



ACT scores are up, along with the percentage of CMSD graduates taking the test. The percentage of CMSD graduates needing to take remediation courses after high school has dropped to 62 percent for the class of 2015, the lowest level reported since 2011.



<sup>1</sup> More detail can be found in the Higher Education Compact's 2016 report to the community at <http://bit.ly/2segYi4>.

<sup>2</sup> Postsecondary Enrollment Options/College Credit Plus Program



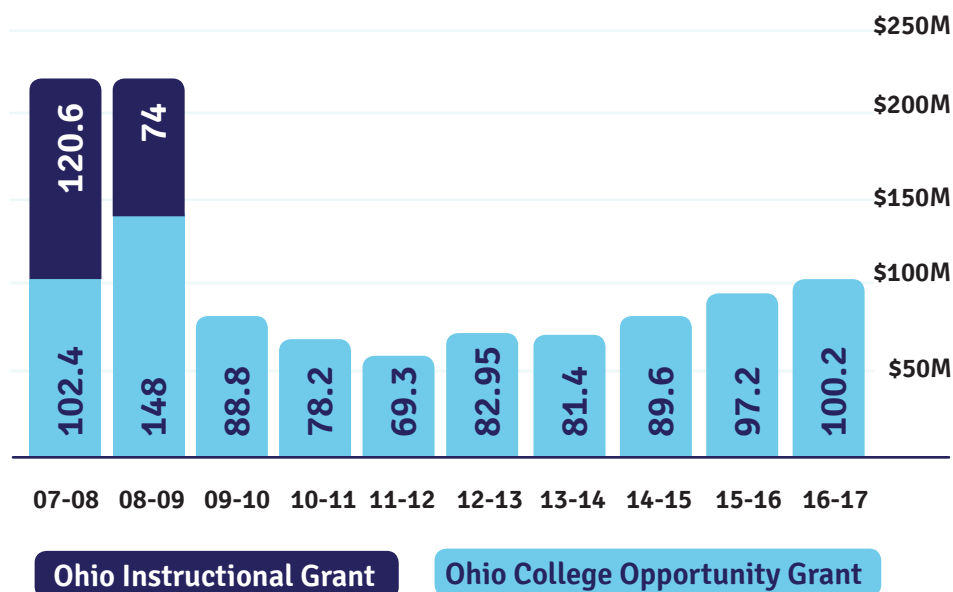
## ACCESS

Despite significant initiatives by CMSD and its Higher Education Compact partners to help high school students through the college application process, access trends remain disappointing.

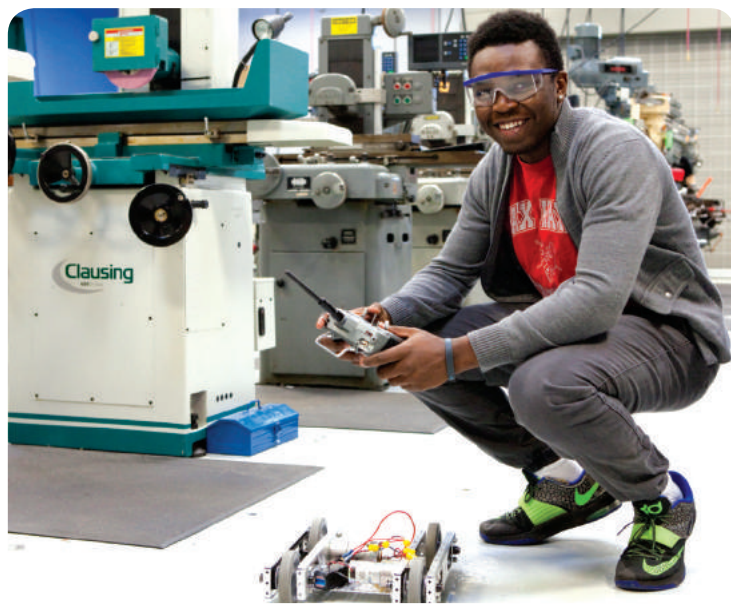
Only 51 percent of CMSD's class of 2015 enrolled in college within a year of graduation, well short of the Compact's goal of 66 percent by 2017.

A likely cause of this missed goal: Ohio's dramatic reduction—from \$223 million in 2007-08 to just \$100 million in 2016-17—in direct grant aid for students, which is the single-biggest driver of postsecondary enrollment.

### OHIO NEED-BASED AID



Under current aid levels, it would cost an Ohio family earning \$48,000 per year up to 38 percent of their annual income to send one child to a two-year community college and up to 81 percent for a four-year public university.



PERSISTENCE

The Higher Education Compact has two persistence goals: to increase the six-year completion rate for CMSD graduates at four-year institutions from 28 percent to 47 percent by 2017 and to increase the three-year completion rate at Cuyahoga Community College to 7 percent.

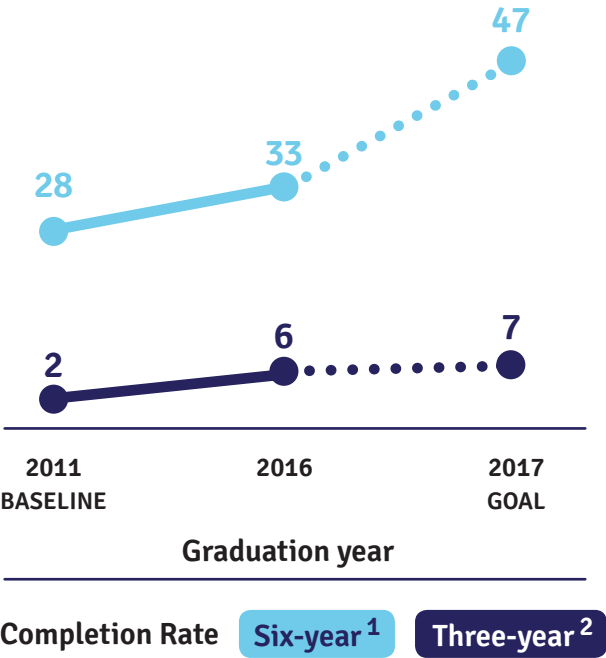
Four-year institutions

On-time completion rates at four-year institutions participating in the Compact have increased 16 percentage points compared to the class of 2005, the first year measured by the Compact. The six-year completion rate has also improved—to 33 percent for the class of 2010—although the community is not on track to meet its six-year goal of 47 percent in 2017.

Two-year institutions

The community is on track to meet the Compact’s 2017 goal: that 7 percent of CMSD graduates complete their studies at Cuyahoga Community College within three years of finishing high school.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS GRADUATING



SAY YES TO EDUCATION

Leadership from Cleveland’s civic, nonprofit, philanthropic, and private sectors is currently making the case for our city to be selected as the fourth Say Yes to Education community. A national nonprofit, Say Yes to Education works with communities to use postsecondary tuition scholarships as a catalyst in the creation and alignment of personalized academic and non-academic services to ensure each student progresses along the pathway to career success.

Say Yes to Education’s approach could help our community meet the long-term goals of *Cleveland’s Plan for Transforming Schools*. Say Yes could help increase the rate of Cleveland students entering post-secondary institutions, building on the momentum generated by our city’s rising graduation rate. Planning and fundraising efforts to meet Say Yes pre-launch requirements will continue over the next year before its board can fully consider Cleveland as a community-wide affiliate.

<sup>1</sup> CMSD graduate six-year college completion rate from Higher Education Compact four-year institutions  
<sup>2</sup> CMSD graduate three-year college completion rate from Higher Education Compact two-year institutions

## POWER OF THE PLAN: BEHIND THE NUMBERS

Stories about how the Cleveland Plan is making a difference.

### DEVELOPING EMPATHY AND COMMUNITY FROM HALF A WORLD AWAY

The lights go down in an auditorium at Facing History New Tech High School as a screen flickers to life with a film that follows students in the first girls' school in an Afghan town.

Some of the girls' situations elicit murmurs of sympathy or tuts of disapproval from the audience, but the severity of the Afghan girls' lives casts a hush over the students. One girl's father is trying to force her to marry his young bride's 70-year-old father. Another speaks of her fear that war-related violence may force the school to close.

The mood is quieter, more contemplative, as the film ends and the kids return to their classrooms. In one room, a dozen students sit in a circle as two teachers ask what light the film shed on their own experiences.

"I really liked it," says Halima, a ninth-grader. "It was relatable but also not—to be in those situations all the time." She says the movie made her think about her parents, who came to Cleveland as refugees from the war in Somalia when she was a little girl.

Conflict limited her parents' academic opportunities. "My mom didn't have an education, and my dad had only a religious one," Halima says.

Those insights are the point of showing the film, says teacher Shante Woods. "We want them to watch this film and think about how they relate to each other, how we can support each other and build community even though we come from different backgrounds."

Empathy and community are among the core values of Facing History and Ourselves, the national organization that partners with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District to support programs and curriculum at the Old Brooklyn high school. Facing History partners with four other district and charter schools in CMSD, as well as five private schools in the Cleveland area.

Full story at [clevelandta.org/latest-news/building-supportive-culture-facing-history-new-tech](https://clevelandta.org/latest-news/building-supportive-culture-facing-history-new-tech).





A young boy with a prosthetic arm is smiling in a classroom. He is wearing a white polo shirt. The background is a blurred classroom setting with various educational materials and toys.

## CONCLUSION

It is clear from our five-year assessment of *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools* that the trajectory of education in our city has begun to change. Perhaps most importantly, given the short-lived efforts often seen in urban school reform, we are very encouraged that stakeholders remain committed to and engaged in our work together. We also find promising progress in several key areas:

- The Cleveland Metropolitan School District's graduation rate is the fastest growing among Ohio's urban districts, rising 20 percentage points since 2010;
- CMSD has shown stronger improvement than Ohio's other urban districts in K-3 literacy;
- CMSD's partnering charter schools have generally outperformed Cleveland schools on two key measures – test performance and academic growth – staying close to statewide averages;
- The level of collaboration between CMSD and Cleveland charter schools is unique in Ohio, and lays the groundwork for deeper work together in the future;
- Cleveland's high school landscape has been transformed since 2012, with many schools created, redesigned, or restructured, and low-performing schools being phased out;
- Cleveland's charter sector has focused its most successful work at the K-8 level, with 11 new CMSD partnering charter schools since 2012;
- The Transformation Alliance has established itself as a credible, go-to source of information about schools and the Cleveland Plan for families, residents, and stakeholders.

This progress is encouraging, and we believe that the ongoing transformation of our schools will show stronger results in the coming years. However, we cannot rest until we ensure a quality education for every child in Cleveland.

The results we are seeing on state tests, while improving in some areas, show that Cleveland students still lag behind their peers around the state. With our children's futures in mind, our community must work within and across sectors,

and find new ways to reach Cleveland families who can most benefit from the improvements we are seeing in our schools.

Our recommendations, designed to intensify our efforts and continue the progress we have begun to see since 2012, include updating the goals of the Cleveland Plan, finding new ways to measure progress, and revisiting and strengthening the strategies that have been driving the work to reinvent public education in our city.



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For more information on the Cleveland Transformation Alliance and *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools*, visit **[clevelandta.org](http://clevelandta.org)**

