

2022 PROGRESS REPORT

A 10-YEAR REVIEW OF CLEVELAND'S
PLAN FOR TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS





Like many cities across the United States, Cleveland faces significant challenges as we work to bounce back from the

COVID 19 pandemic. The pandemic has compounded existing issues like high poverty and low education outcomes for our children, and added new and more severe barriers around mental health and social emotional development, and public safety. As with any transition or change though, our work to come back from the pandemic can also bring with it an opportunity: to not just repair our old problems, but to rebuild our civic foundations stronger and more durable than before.

Fortunately, in Cleveland we have an existing foundation to build on. Since 2012, Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools has provided a roadmap for educational progress. Thanks to the hard work of our District and charter school leaders, educators, and community members, there was significant positive progress under this plan. Unfortunately, the pandemic interrupted that progress, creating new barriers and exacerbating the issues mentioned, but as we look at how to move forward, we believe now is the time to reinvigorate and double down on the Cleveland Plan.

Our community is also preparing to enter a new era with leadership changes across the region. That includes CMSD CEO Eric Gordon's announced departure. He has led the district through this historic

period of progress under the Cleveland Plan, and established a valuable foundation for schools and students. We can and must build on this legacy while identifying new solutions needed for this moment. I believe we can do this by listening to, empowering, and investing in our educators and families; by providing students with wrap-around supports that help them get ready to learn; and by identifying new and innovative learning experiences that provide what students need to prepare for the modern world and leverage the resources of our local community and business leaders to achieve it.

These goals are lofty, but they are not impossible to achieve. Every Clevelander deserves the highest quality educational experience. We have much to be proud of since 2012, but we must meet this moment with even greater energy and commitment to supporting all of our students to thrive today and in the future. We can work together to improve life outcomes for our children, and in doing so, create a brighter future for our entire region

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Justin M. Bibb".

Justin M. Bibb

Mayor, City of Cleveland

Chairperson, Cleveland Transformation Alliance



Cleveland's tenth year of collaboration on the Cleveland Plan for Transforming Schools falls at a time when many are still experiencing

the hardships of COVID-19. While the pandemic has impacted everyone, some have been negatively affected more deeply than others. According to the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) and the COVID Collaborative, more than one in 360 children have lost a parent or caregiver during the pandemic.¹

Multiply this trauma on top of the systemic inequities that many Cleveland area students face. It should not be a surprise that our community's ten years of forward momentum in educational outcomes reversed course during the 2020-2021 school year. For most students in Cleveland, this was a school year spent predominately in a virtual environment and outside of the traditional classroom.

In the following pages, you will see data reflecting the pandemic's impact and the first signs of recovery. Clevelanders are tenacious and generous. As the refreshed Cleveland Plan reflects, our schools cannot be solely responsible for our student's education. We must remember that each data point represents students and educators working hard to make progress. Our community must step up and step in to provide support.

The Plain Dealer recently reported on Cleveland's classroom experiences in Cleveland's Promise series, shadowing CMSD students whose families experience the trauma of housing insecurity, violence, drug addiction, bullying, language barriers, learning disabilities and mental health crises.² For those that do not engage with Cleveland's educational landscape each day, it provides a fair glimpse into the lives of many of our students and the situations they face..

Looking back at what we've accomplished provides a framework for the future. In light of CMSD CEO Eric Gordon's recent announcement that he will move on from the District at the end of the 2022-2023 school year, our community partnerships will remain vitally important to help reach the goals of having a high-quality school, District or charter, in every neighborhood, ensuring each student is making an informed school choice, ensuring each student can reach their highest potential in a joyful learning environment. All this while working to ensure educational equity for every child. Our children, and Cleveland's future, depend on the work we do together.

Sincerely,

Meghann Marnecheck

Executive Director

Cleveland Transformation Alliance

1. The State of the American Student: Fall 2022, A Guide to Pandemic Recovery and Reinvention. Center on Reinventing Public Education. <https://crpe.org/the-state-of-the-american-student/>.

2. Cleveland's Promise: An unprecedented approach to covering education. <https://www.cleveland.com/promise/2022/09/an-unprecedented-approach-to-covering-education-led-2-report-ers-to-spend-a-year-in-a-cleveland-classroom-today-the-storytelling-begins-clevelands-promise.html>.

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Since 2012, Cleveland Transformation Alliance’s annual Cleveland Plan Progress Report has served as a community benchmark, highlighting bold ideas and incremental progress toward then-Mayor Frank Jackson’s transformative vision for Cleveland’s public schools.

When CEO/Superintendent Eric Gordon took over leadership in 2011, several new and innovative Cleveland public schools and high-performing charter schools showed great promise. Still, too many students were being left out of that progress, a fiscal emergency was looming, and community trust was at an all-time low.

Acting out of urgency and hope, The Cleveland Plan set an ambitious goal of reinventing public education in Cleveland and serving as a model of innovation for the state of Ohio.

To ensure the Plan’s success, the legislation included forming the Cleveland Transformation Alliance; a unique public-private partnership to ensure fidelity to the Plan and a portfolio of high-performing district and charter schools in Cleveland. Led by a nonprofit board of representatives from the district and charter sectors, community, business, foundation, civic, and neighborhoods, the Cleveland Transformation Alliance was formed to reach four central goals:

- Ensure fidelity to the citywide education plan
- Assess the quality of all Cleveland schools
- Communicate to parents about quality school choices
- Monitor charter sector growth in Cleveland

“TO ENSURE EVERY CHILD IN CLEVELAND ATTENDS A HIGH-QUALITY SCHOOL AND EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD HAS MANY GREAT SCHOOLS FROM WHICH FAMILIES CAN CHOOSE.”

Vision of The Cleveland Plan for Transforming Schools, 2012

CLEVELAND HAS
NO GREATER ASSET
THAN ITS CHILDREN.

THEY ARE THE
ENTREPRENEURS,
ARTISTS AND
LEADERS WHO
WILL DEFINE OUR
CITY'S FUTURE.

From the Cleveland Plan Progress Report, 2015

Photo: Ashley Lemley, Jetpack Group LTD



THIS WORK BELONGS TO THE COMMUNITY

While the Alliance drives the process of accountability and collaboration for The Cleveland Plan, it is critical to emphasize that the Alliance is the convening stakeholder, not the authority, for the Cleveland Plan. Responsibility for implementation rests with the whole community.

Decisions are guided by parent and family input, and public and private community partners are integral to building networks of connection and support for students and families. Educators and schools can not prepare students for success alone. Success requires collaboration and support from all sectors of the Cleveland Plan ecosystem.

TIMELINE

OCTOBER 2011



Higher Education Compact for Greater Cleveland launched.

FEBRUARY 2012



"Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson announces sweeping plan to improve education for Cleveland students."

— The Plain Dealer

JULY 2012



"Ohio Gov. John Kasich signs Cleveland schools plan into law."

— The Plain Dealer

NOVEMBER 2012



Voters approve a 15-mill school levy, the first in 16 years, and includes support for high-performing charter schools.

DECEMBER 2012



Cleveland Transformation Alliance is formally created.

MARCH 2014



PRE4CLE is launched as a collective impact initiative to expand access to high-quality preschool to all 3- and 4-year-old children in Cleveland.

NOVEMBER 2014



Voters pass a \$200 million capital bond to support the CMSD's Facilities Master Plan.

JULY 2015



Cleveland Plan Progress Report, showing the percentage of students in failing schools declined to 35 percent in 2013-14 from 43 percent in the previous year, and the high school graduation rate rose to 64 percent in 2012-13, an increase of eight percentage points since 2010-11.

JANUARY 2019



Launch of Say Yes Cleveland with a commitment to provide wraparound supports in Cleveland public schools and college tuition scholarships to Cleveland residents who graduate from public high schools.

MARCH 2020



Covid-19 shutdowns force education leaders to confront the inequalities in educational access and rethink the systems that shape student learning in Cleveland.

SEPTEMBER 2020



CMSD celebrates an 80 percent graduation rate. This marks a nearly two percentage point increase from the prior year, and up from approximately 52 percent in 2012 when the Cleveland Plan launched.

NOVEMBER 2020



CMSD passes Issue 68, which renewed the levy first passed in 2012, and added an additional 5 mills.

MAY 2021



Mayor Frank G. Jackson announces he will not seek re-election following the end of his current term.

OCTOBER 2021



The Alliance published the Refreshed Plan for Transforming Cleveland Schools: An Imperative Toward Educational Equity. *“The Cleveland Plan continues to be CMSD’s ‘North Star’ despite pandemic setbacks.”* — Ideastream Public Media

MARCH 2022



Launch of the Greater Cleveland Career Consortium to ensure every Cleveland graduate has a pathway to postsecondary education and training.

NOVEMBER 2021



Justin M. Bibb wins the election to become Cleveland’s 58th Mayor.

SEPTEMBER 2022



Eric Gordon, CEO & Superintendent of Cleveland Metropolitan School District, announces he will not pursue a contract renewal following the 2022-23 school year.

THE CLEVELAND PLAN REFRESH

In early spring 2021, Cleveland Transformation Alliance began a strategic planning and reflection process in preparation for the 10th anniversary of the original Cleveland Plan for Transforming Schools.

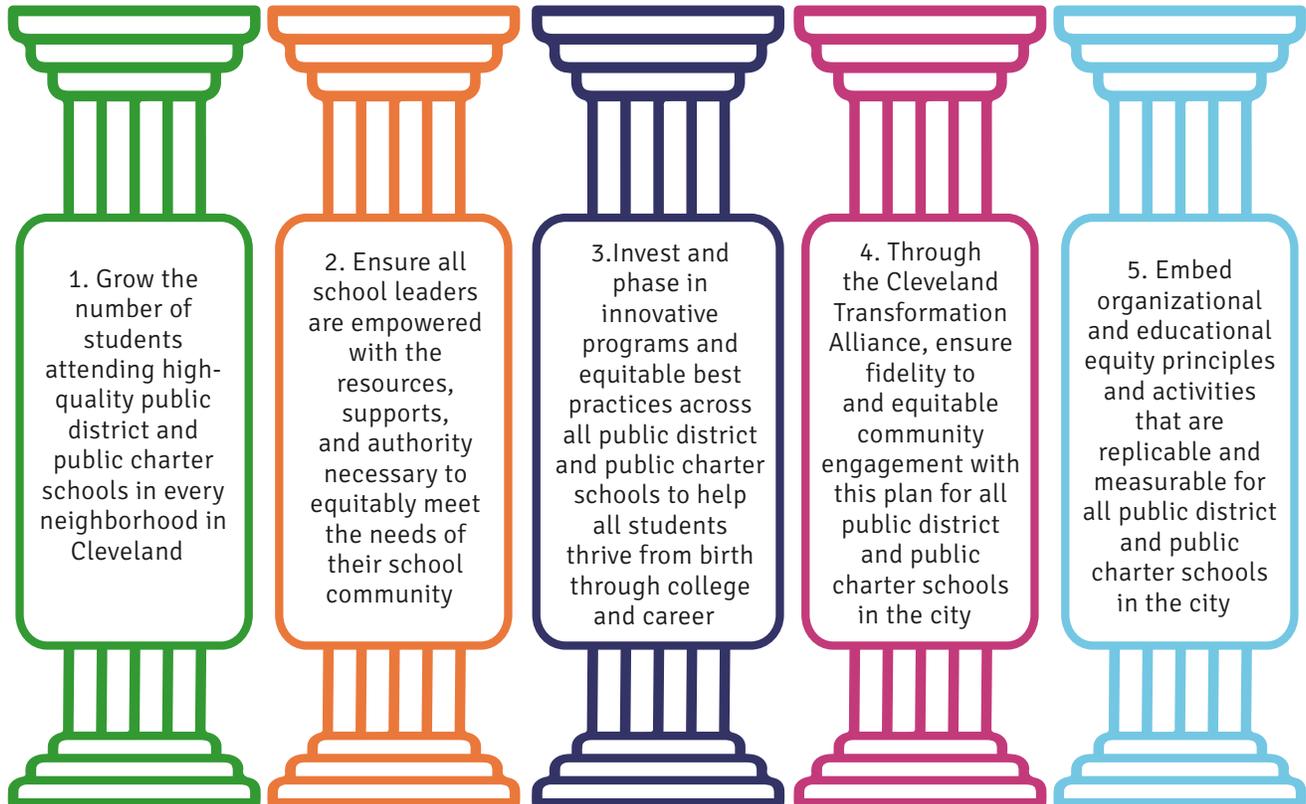
In collaboration with a broad mix of community stakeholders — parents and families, civic leaders, and education advocates — the Refreshed Cleveland Plan for Transforming Schools was published in October

2021, emphasizing the need for educational equity and joyful learning as central tenants of a commitment to transforming Cleveland’s public education landscape.

Using the concept of a building foundation, the Refreshed Cleveland Plan updated the four original goals of the Cleveland Plan, adding a fifth pillar to embed educational equity as a priority for all public district and public charter schools in the city.

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

The first eight years of Cleveland Plan implementation (2012–2020) produced considerable progress: 2,000 more children were enrolled in high-quality preschools; CMSD’s graduation rate hit record highs; and CMSD–graduate college enrollment increased for the first time in five years.

COVID has had a profoundly negative impact on this progress and on Cleveland’s students, families, educators, early childhood centers, K–12 schools, and postsecondary institutions.

- Preschool enrollment dropped by 50 percent in 2021. Enrollment remains below pre-pandemic levels, with additional staffing and operations challenges across the early childhood care sector.
- In K–12, enrollment dropped, chronic absenteeism doubled, and academic performance plummeted and remains below pre-pandemic levels. Educators are leaving the profession in unprecedented numbers.
- The postsecondary education enrollment rate for CMSD’s classes of 2020 and 2021 dropped by 10 percentage points compared to the class of 2019. Persistence rates also decreased.

Additionally, our community continues to cope with the last two years’ devastating mental health impact and grief.

At every level of education — preschool, K–12, and higher education — students experienced significant disruption in their education journey: a potentially generation-shattering occurrence. The loss of formal and familiar learning environments and learning opportunities is profound. Children experienced the trauma of upended routines, rituals, and celebrations; of disrupted friendships and relationships; of hunger, homelessness, and job loss; of illness and death in their families. This trauma will not dissipate easily, and it extends to all the adults in our community.³

MOVING EDUCATION FORWARD POST PANDEMIC

- Ensure education institutions at all levels have the funding needed to continue operations and support students and educators;
- Invest in academic and mental health supports to address the loss of learning time and the psychological impact of the pandemic;
- Ensure access to reliable high-speed Internet, Internet-enabled devices, and digital literacy training for all students and families;
- Retain, promote, and expand the educational workforce to close staffing gaps; and
- Make postsecondary education an option for all students by ensuring college affordability through funding scholarships and securing increased federal and state support.⁵

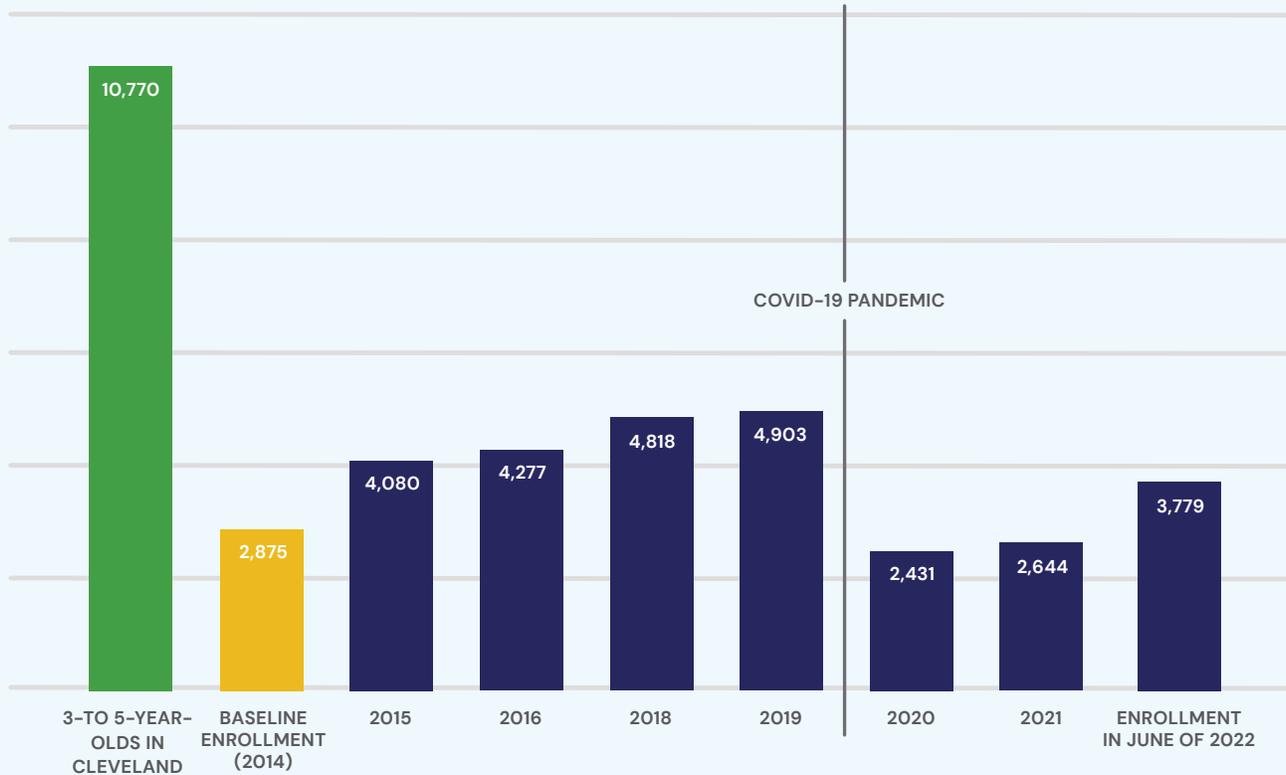
Many of the initiatives started in response to COVID have endured and are informing our ongoing priorities and practice. Early childhood advocates are focused on rebuilding a stronger, more equitable, and well-resourced system. In K–12, CMSD has adopted a new Vision for Learning that is designed to be more personalized, engage students more deeply, and give them more control of their learning.⁴ At the postsecondary level, institutions and community partners are working to ensure college students have the resources and support they need to persist and complete their degrees or certifications.

3. The Cleveland Foundation & The George Gund Foundation, Education Forward: The Impact of COVID-19 on Cleveland’s Education Landscape, May 2022, p. 3

4. <https://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/about-cmsd>

5. The Cleveland Foundation & The George Gund Foundation, Education Forward: The Impact of COVID-19 on Cleveland’s Education Landscape, May 2022, p. 30

ENROLLMENT IN HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL IN CLEVELAND



PRE4CLE is a collective impact initiative tasked with increasing the number of children enrolled in high-quality preschool to increase kindergarten readiness and school success. When the PRE4CLE initiative began in 2014, only 16 percent of children entering kindergarten in CMSD were fully prepared, as measured by Ohio’s Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). PRE4CLE is led by The Cleveland Early Childhood Compact, a public-private leadership body that includes the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Cuyahoga County, the City of Cleveland, Starting Point, Cleveland’s high-quality preschool providers, and a broad set of community partners committed to working together to expand high-quality preschool and strengthen kindergarten readiness in Cleveland.



Between 2014 and 2019, enrollment in high-quality preschool increased by 72 percent in the city of Cleveland, and kindergarten readiness in CMSD climbed steadily during that period. Over the past three years, however, the ongoing COVID-19 crisis has severely impacted the already-fragile early childhood system, creating widespread financial distress, staffing shortages, shuttered classrooms, and permanent closures among Cleveland’s preschool providers. While many sectors have rebounded from COVID-19, early childhood providers are still struggling, and the system has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels of operation.

According to data provided by Starting Point, as of June 2022 there were 3,779 children enrolled in high-quality preschool in Cleveland, a decrease of 1,040 children from pre-pandemic levels in December 2019. Much of that enrollment decrease is currently being driven by the chronically low wages of child care and Head Start teachers and staff, making workforce attraction and retention an ongoing challenge for early learning providers. PRE4CLE is working with local and statewide partners to advocate for the federal, state, and local resources and policy solutions needed to rebuild the early learning workforce.

Despite these challenges, more than two-thirds of children enrolled in preschool are in high-quality programs, and nearly half are in five-star rated programs in Ohio’s Step Up To Quality early learning rating system. The number of high-quality preschool providers continued to climb between 2020 and 2022, showing the dedication of Cleveland’s preschool programs to improve their quality despite the challenges of COVID-19.



WHAT IS HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL?

When we talk about high-quality preschool, we mean preschools that have earned a 3-, 4-, or 5-star rating in Ohio’s [Step Up To Quality](#) rating system.

High-quality programs offer:

- 1 ENVIRONMENTS** that are fun, welcoming, safe and caring
- 2 STAFF AND TEACHERS** who are well-trained and professional
- 3 RESEARCH-BASED CURRICULUM** with lesson plans for each day’s activities
- 4 EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES** to prepare your child for kindergarten
- 5 CREATIVE AND IMAGINATIVE PLAY** to inspire a lifelong love of learning
- 6 FEEDBACK** about your child’s learning and progress

Content provided by PRE4CLE.

ENROLLMENT

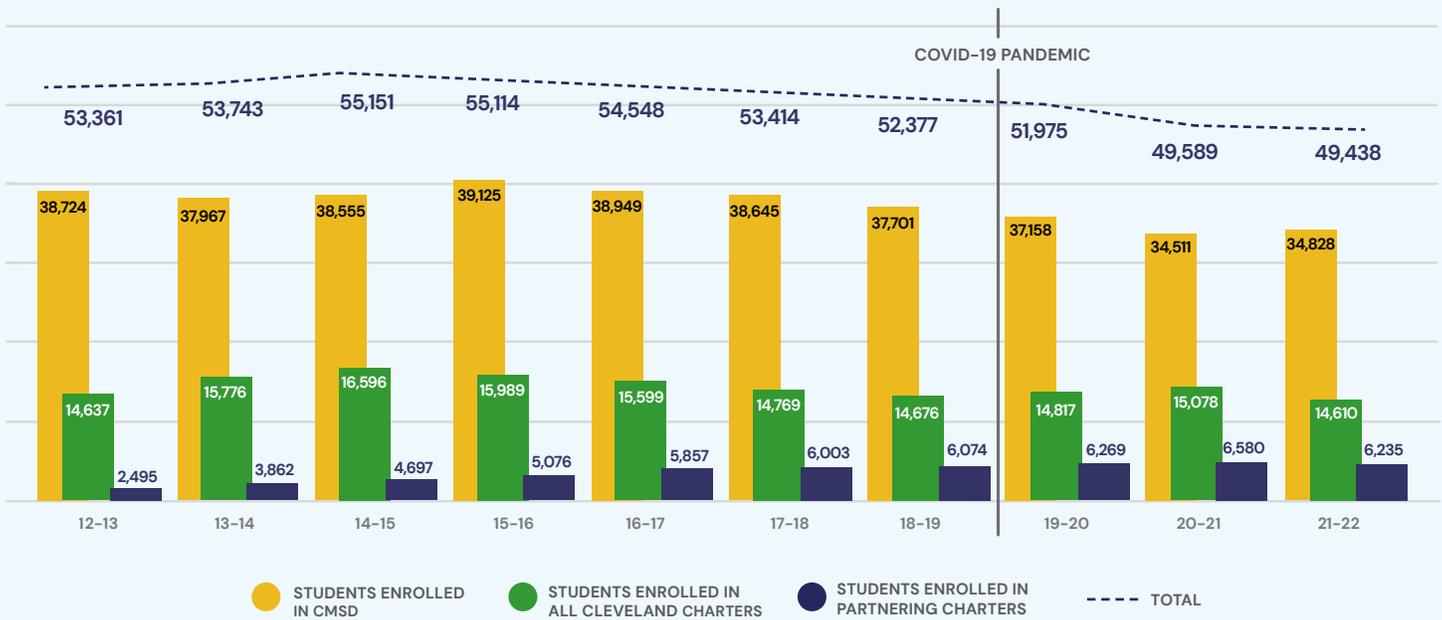
Since the launch of the Cleveland Plan, the number of approved partner charter schools that have demonstrated a commitment to high-quality education has increased from 7 to 16.

This supports The Plan’s original vision to make the “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.”⁶

While Cleveland public schools saw an initial increase following the launch of the Cleveland Plan, decreased enrollment can be explained, in part, by the decline in school-age children and families living in Cleveland. The most significant decline took place following COVID-19, underscoring the urgency of recovery efforts.

DISTRICT, CHARTER AND PARTNERING CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT



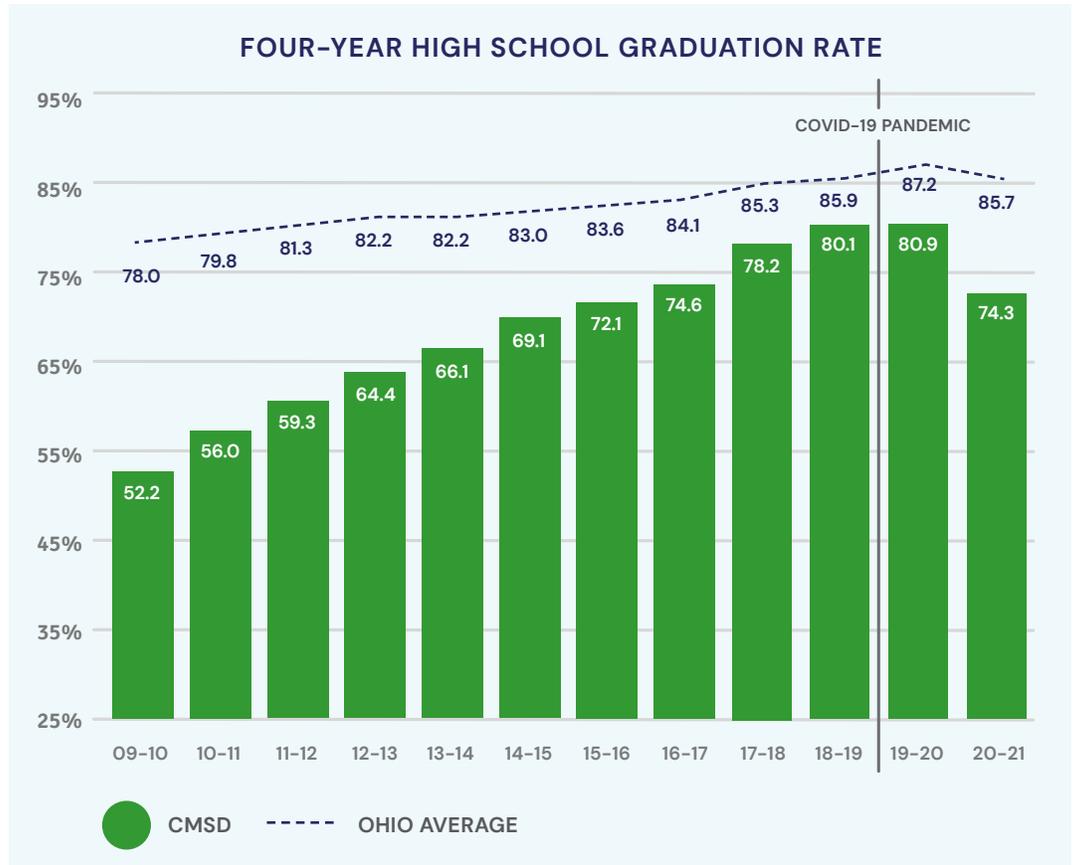
The following is a list of partnering charter schools during the 2021–2022 school year that have demonstrated a commitment to quality education standards set forth by the Charter Review Protocol established to monitor the growth and quality of charter schools within the boundaries of the Cleveland school district: Citizens Academy Southeast, Citizens Leadership Academy, Citizens Leadership Academy East, Cleveland College Preparatory

School, Hope Academy Northwest Campus, Horizon Science Academy Cleveland, The Intergenerational School, Lakeshore Intergenerational School, Menlo Park Academy, Near West Intergenerational School, Northeast Ohio College Preparatory School, Stepstone Academy, Village Preparatory School Cliffs, Village Preparatory School Willard, Village Preparatory School Woodland Hills, and Wings Academy.

GRADUATION

One of the most celebrated successes of the Cleveland Plan is the dramatic increase in high school graduation rates for CMSD students. Over the past decade, CMSD had nearly a 30 percentage point increase in high school graduation, from 2011 (52.2 percent) to 2021, this is a promising indicator that our collective efforts are working.

Consistent with national trends, Cleveland's 4-year graduation rate shows a sharp decline in the shadow of the pandemic's impact.

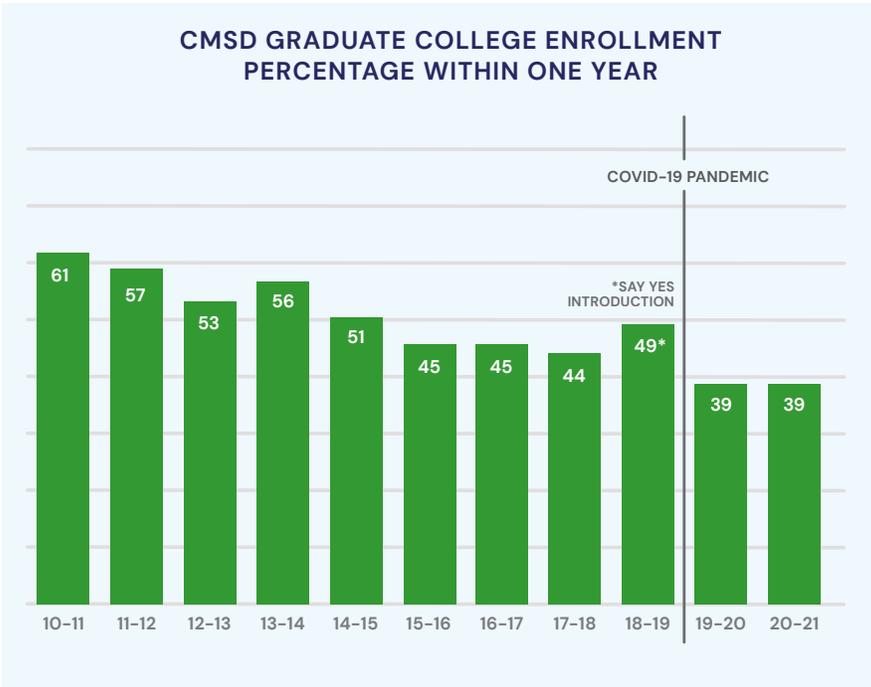
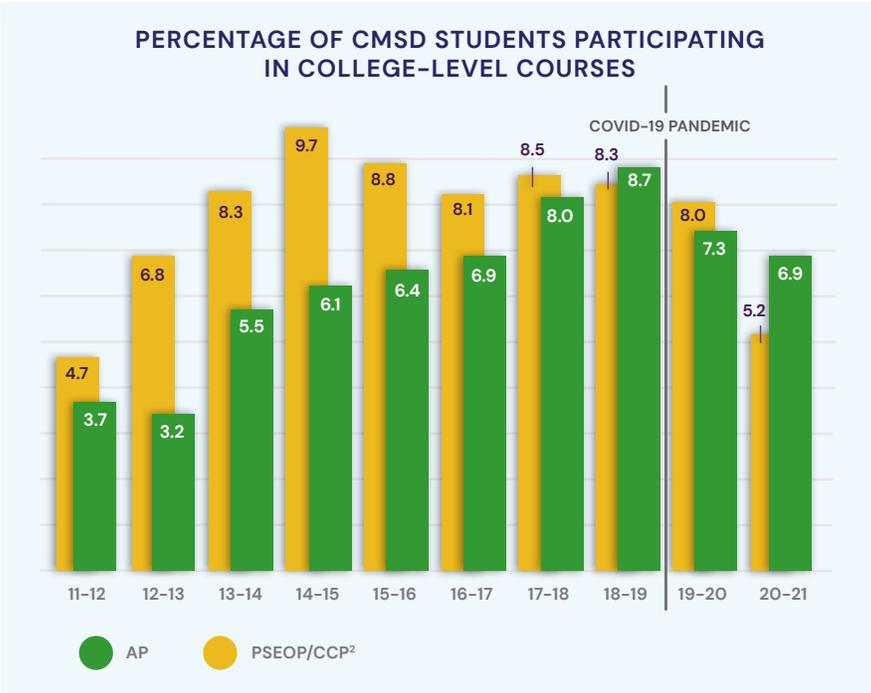


Anecdotally, we know that some Cleveland students did not complete graduation requirements after joining the workforce. The reasons students drop out of high school are varied and multi-faceted, so our response needs to be equally individualized.

The support networks and wraparound services of Say Yes Cleveland and the PACE program are designed to remove barriers to success and emphasize individualized learning pathways shown to increase student engagement and retention. In response to input from Cleveland families, CMSD and its partners are also investing in pathways to graduation that focus on student areas of interest and workforce readiness programs that don't require a college degree but some other postsecondary certification or training.

The Higher Education Compact was convened by Mayor Frank Jackson in 2011 to bring together the City of Cleveland, CMSD, 15 regional colleges and universities, foundations, businesses, and nonprofit organizations to do what it takes to remove obstacles that prevent Cleveland youth from going to and succeeding in college. For the past decade, Compact partners have set goals, developed metrics, and aligned their work to increase the college readiness, access, and persistence of CMSD students.

College readiness indicators have varied over the past decade. On a positive note, during that period the percentage of CMSD graduates needing remediation in math or English declined significantly, from 76 percent in 2011 to 27 percent in 2020. However, CMSD student college readiness scores on the ACT and SAT have been stagnant, starting at 13 percent in 2011 and only reaching 14 percent in 2021. Like other areas of the education sector, many postsecondary education indicators have been hit hard by the pandemic. For example, previous increases in CMSD participation in Advanced Placement courses and Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEOP) or College Credit Plus—key college readiness indicators—have declined in the last two years.⁷



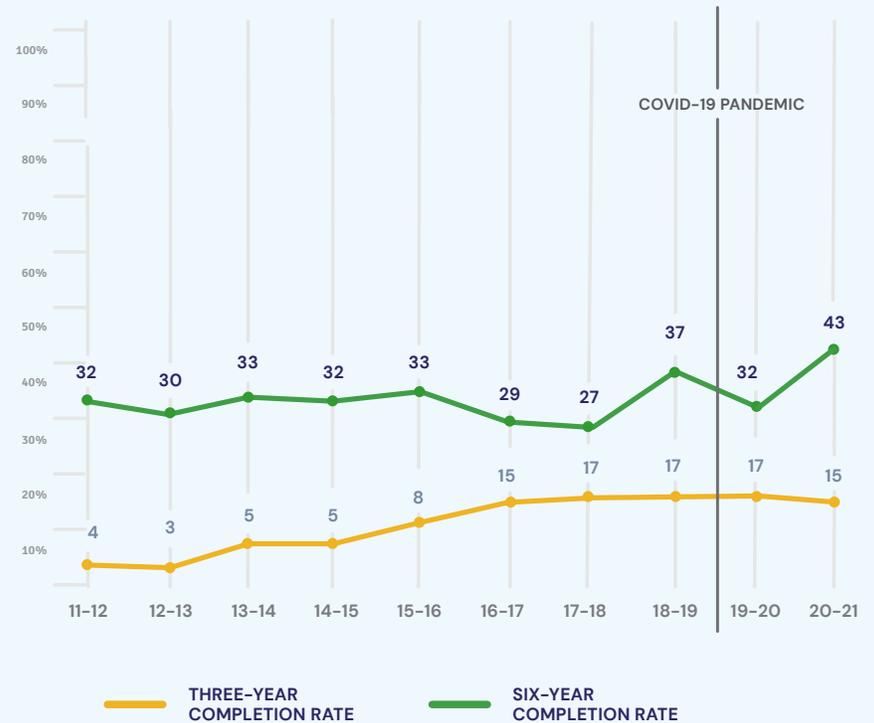
This was also the case for post-secondary enrollment. The first year of Say Yes Cleveland (CMSD Class of 2019) demonstrated the potential power of scholarships as college enrollment rates increased by five percentage points to 49 percent—an increase that was wiped out by the pandemic. During the first two years of COVID, the post-secondary enrollment rate for the CMSD Classes of 2020 and 2021 was 39 percent, down 10 percentage points from the 2019 rate.⁷

Additionally, this past year, there was a large drop in the percentage of students completing at least one college application (from 68 percent in the Class of 2020 to 49 percent in the Class of 2021). The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion rate similarly dropped from 63 percent to 55 percent, indicating a critical need to energize and engage students in the process of planning for life after graduation.⁷ The combined efforts of

Say Yes Cleveland, College Now Greater Cleveland, and the newly established PACE program at CMSD should combine to meet this need.

Despite these challenges, it is worth celebrating the six-year college completion rate for CMSD students at four-year institutions. This persistence data shows the highest college graduation rate since the Compact began in 2011, jumping from 32 percent for students who graduated in 2014 to 43 percent for the Class of 2015.⁷ This translates directly into higher earning potential for Cleveland graduates, and more importantly, it is a strong indicator that interventions put in place on post-secondary campuses, and the work of our partners, is working for CMSD graduates.

PERCENTAGE OF CMSD STUDENTS GRADUATING FROM TWO- AND FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES²



SAY YES CLEVELAND



Since Say Yes Cleveland launched in 2019, it has quickly expanded to provide Cleveland’s students and their families with support services throughout their academic careers, and tuition scholarships to all eligible graduates after high school.

Say Yes Cleveland is currently in its fourth year, and now offers support services, including a Family Support Specialist, to all 104 CMSD and partner charter schools.

Say Yes Family Support Specialists change lives every day, providing support, interventions, and referrals to help ensure that each student is healthy, safe, engaged, and challenged. The impact they have had already is remarkable: during just the last school year, the Family Support Specialists made 10,194 individual referrals for and logged more than 61,000 case notes about individual students and families. On a daily basis, the

Family Support Specialists are involved in situations as varied as: securing, and sometimes delivering, food assistance to families in need; getting a tutor for a student struggling with a subject; arranging for a free eye exam and free glasses for a child who can’t see the blackboard; finding emergency housing for a whole family in crisis; or connecting partners at Legal Aid and the Bar Association to families fighting eviction.

Say Yes Cleveland scholarships have been similarly impactful. During the Spring 2022 semester, 1,332 students were enrolled in college or career training through the Say Yes Cleveland scholarship program, all from just the last three CMSD graduating classes. The Scholarship Fund has paid out over \$5 million for tuition scholarships since 2019. Seventy-six students have graduated, including 18 who have already earned a bachelor’s degree.

7. Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland, highereducationcompact.org

CAREER AWARENESS & READINESS

Building on the Cleveland Plan accomplishments over the past decade, its partners have begun to focus more directly on how to prepare students for family-sustaining wage careers in high-growth, high-demand industries. This includes a range of strategies and the development of a public/private ecosystem to support age-appropriate curriculum and exposure to career planning in grades 6-12.

BEYOND BREAKTHROUGH: ALUMNI SUCCESS NETWORK



Beginning with a pilot program for the 2022-23 school year, Breakthrough Public Schools' commitment to investing in student success will go beyond K-8 into high school and postsecondary planning. Working with a network of alums and community partners, they are investing in programs such as an 8th Grade Transition to High School Camp, a Skills Badging Program, and College Vocational/Technical Scorecards — designed to help students identify and pursue their dreams. Beyond Breakthrough will stay connected to students beyond 8th grade and empower them with a network of support that extends throughout Northeast Ohio.

PICKING UP THE PACE: PLANNING AND CAREER EXPLORATION



Two thousand students graduate annually from CMSD, but only half are engaged in a postsecondary program. Historically, this would leave 1,000 graduates each year without a solid plan for their future beyond high school.

With the 2021 launch of the PACE (Planning and Career Exploration) program, all CMSD students can now graduate high school with a student-centered career pathway, specific to their goals and interests.

PACE is a collaborative approach to developing student-led career pathways for grades 6-12 that will prepare all graduates for professional success. Partners in this process include students and caregivers, higher education institutions, nonprofit organizations, the public sector, local employers, and industry. CMSD provides students with the knowledge, skills, experiences, and confidence to uncover the careers they want to pursue via quality in-school lessons, career advising, and relevant out-of-school experiences.

BUILDING A DIVERSE, EQUITABLE WORKFORCE



In 2022, the Greater Cleveland Career Consortium (GCCC), a group of public, private, education, and non-profit organizations, was formed. This collective impact organization works together to help every student in the region design a career plan that aligns with their interests and skills.

The GCCC partners with school districts to include self-awareness and career-based learning opportunities for all students during the school day and connect employers with local school districts, students, and families to help build our regional workforce.

GCCC's mission is to align and activate students and families, local public, private, education, and other nonprofit partners to grow and sustain a diverse and equitable talent pipeline in our region.

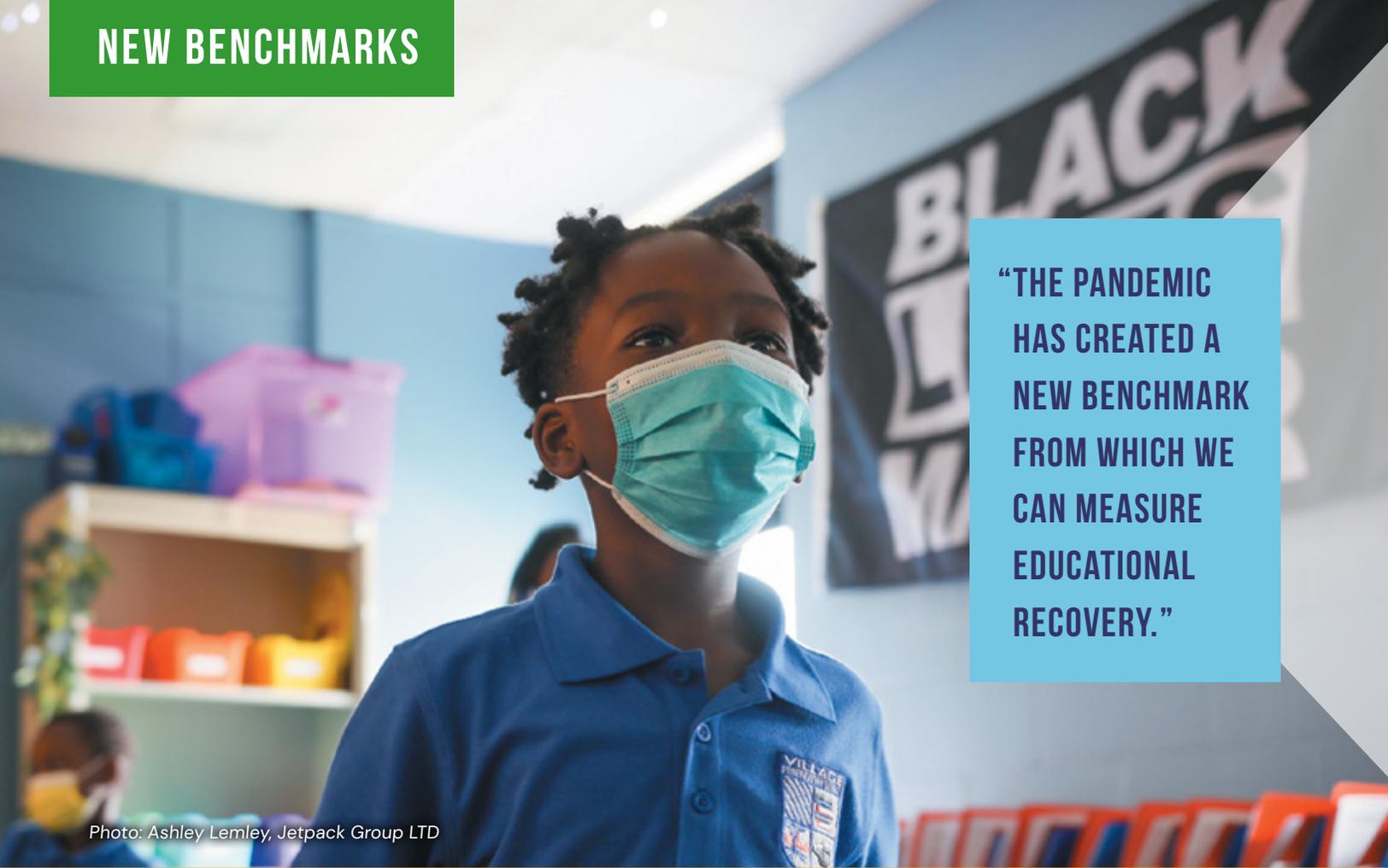


Photo: Ashley Lemley, Jetpack Group LTD

“THE PANDEMIC HAS CREATED A NEW BENCHMARK FROM WHICH WE CAN MEASURE EDUCATIONAL RECOVERY.”

In the time since the Cleveland Plan inception, the Ohio Department of Education standards for measuring educational success have changed three times. This has created substantial challenges for educators trying to meet those standards and confusion for community members. State report cards are intended to give parents, caregivers, and community members information about how districts and schools perform.

Despite three changes to the state report card system in the past decade, the Cleveland Plan’s Progress Report measures have remained consistent. The trends represented in the charts on the preceding pages reflect the consistent and steady progress that had been made and accelerated progress when PRE4CLE and Say Yes Cleveland were established.

To provide caregivers with a more holistic set of criteria to research and compare schools, the Transformation Alliance launched the MyCleSchool.org School Finder Tool in 2016, featuring individual school profiles and community ratings. In addition to state report card results, the site also provides clear metrics

that Cleveland parents rate as important such as transportation information, school diversity, and the ability to perform neighborhood-based searches, while highlighting schools’ third-grade reading guarantee and graduation rates.

Beginning with the 2021 report card, the Ohio Department of Education began a phased transition to what they hope will be a more equitable rating system based on a number of stars in six different categories: achievement, progress, early literacy, gap closing, graduation and college/career/workforce or military readiness. In response to the changing ODE report card measurements, The Alliance is working with Cleveland public school families to reimagine the MyCleSchool.org website as a tool that provides clear information to help families compare schools and choose their best fit school. The development of the new website and School Finder Tool is supported by research conducted over the past 2-3 years, including usability testing with family/caregiver focus groups.



BEYOND RECOVERY

From 2012 to 2022, the Cleveland Plan partners made significant progress toward their commitment to ensuring that every child in Cleveland has access to high-quality education from early childhood through high school graduation. With the recent additions of innovative postsecondary supports and career planning initiatives, all Cleveland students can access career pathways that lead to family-sustaining future income. In addition, the community support evidenced by school levy approvals in 2012, 2014, and 2020 indicate trust in Cleveland’s public school system has been substantially restored.

COVID-19 interrupted this momentum, but students are already making gains in growth and performance indicators. Cleveland schools are slowly recovering, but “getting back to normal” is not an adequate measure of success. To quote Mayor Justin Bibb, “Cleveland kids can’t wait.”⁸

In 2021, the Transformation Alliance committed to a refreshed Cleveland Plan for Transforming Schools emphasizing the imperative of Educational Equity — a community-wide commitment to eliminating the systemic barriers to success associated with poverty and racial identity. As part of this effort, Mayor Bibb made substantial investments during his first year of leadership to eliminate the digital divide, connect families with resources, and decrease violence in our community. His administration recently released a

report in response to an extensive listening tour in the summer of 2022 outlining five educational priorities aligned with the Cleveland Plan.

Cleveland’s early learning initiatives and advocacy work are especially promising. Evidence shows that students in this age group are the quickest to catch up (and stay ahead) when they have access to quality learning opportunities. It is also encouraging that a broad spectrum of community leaders, youth-focused nonprofits, and business partners enthusiastically support investments in student-centered career exploration for grades 6–12 through True2U and PACE.

For Cleveland’s college-bound students, the supports are solidly in place to navigate the college application process and ease the financial burden of higher education. We are ready for action at every level but must ensure that every child has equitable access to this vast support network.

For the Cleveland Transformation Alliance board of directors and staff, educational equity is prioritized through data-driven decision-making, transparency, and family-focused program development. Success beyond pandemic recovery means that every Cleveland student can access the right resources, connections, and learning opportunities to realize their full potential, regardless of their racial identity, family make-up, income, or zip code.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Honorable Justin M. Bibb, Chair
City of Cleveland

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Cleveland Teachers Union

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