

**NextDetroit Transformation Team
Education Subcommittee Initial Report
March 9, 2006**



This report has been prepared for Mayor Kwame M. Kilpatrick by the Education Subcommittee of the NextDetroit Transformation Team. Participants in the development of this report include:

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EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The NextDetroit Transformation Team, including the Education Subcommittee, was launched by Mayor Kwame M. Kilpatrick in the winter of 2006 to recommend policy directives for the mayor and the city of Detroit to pursue throughout the mayor's second term in office. This report from the Education Subcommittee includes recommendations, analysis, and specific proposals to improve the state of education in the city of Detroit between 2006 and 2010.

MISSION

The Education subcommittee recommends Mayor Kilpatrick develop and pursue for the city of Detroit education initiatives informed by the following mission statement:

The city of Detroit will build and strengthen partnerships with local educational institutions to increase quality educational opportunities available to all students in all neighborhoods, which produce contributing citizens to the city and inspire young people to reach their highest potential.

The following strategies should be applied in support of this mission:

- Raise public awareness regarding work preparedness and the value of education
- Build, enhance, coordinate, and leverage relationships with key stakeholders
- Engage state government in the process of improving education in Detroit
- Research and apply nationally-recognized best practices in Detroit
- Advance the mayor as an active, visible leader for educational improvement

These strategies focus attention and energy on all public school students, including those who attend public academies. Improvements in the education of all Detroit students should be the goal of the mayor for widespread educational improvements to emerge.

CURRENT STATE ASSESSMENT

Providing quality educational opportunities in Detroit is challenging and necessary work pursued by a diverse array of community stakeholders, including the Detroit Public School district, private and chartered academies, and community and faith-based organizations. Academic performance among students, however, continues to trail expectations and provide a disincentive for families with young children from residing in the city. The current educational model, developed to educate an industrial workforce early in the twentieth century, is largely antiquated and requires a fresh infusion of nationally-recognized best practices to find renewed success. Globally competitive schools must develop in Detroit for the city and its residents to compete in the emerging

economy. An analysis of current educational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats is required.

There are many strengths in the Detroit educational model, despite public perceptions to the contrary. Highly-skilled and dedicated administrators and educators are common and widely dispersed within Detroit Public Schools, creating a supportive and nurturing environment for high quality educational programming. Extensive community involvement in the development of educational programming has resulted in numerous and award winning career and technical centers, themed schools, and other programs which provide a culturally sensitive and competent environment. Strong support for special education and athletic programming has also contributed to a diversified and complimentary learning environment, and Detroit schools have graduated many city leaders and other distinguished alumni. Partnerships with colleges and universities, businesses, labor unions, and community-serving organizations further supplement high quality educational programs and services. Most promisingly, elementary students in Detroit Public Schools meet or exceed statewide averages on the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) test, particularly in English and Language Arts.

Weaknesses that plague education in Detroit are largely the result of an outdated educational model, disrupting the connection between supportive learning environments and academic success. Schools have historically been configured to produce large numbers of graduates prepared for industrial-era jobs. Middle schools housing grades six through eight support this educational design, but students in these schools today test at lower levels than students in K-8 schools. Many Detroit schools remain too large, including several public high schools with more than 1,000 students. Compounding these challenges are extensive union contract work rules and perceived and real safety concerns among families and students. Additionally, many of the benefits of having highly skilled administrators and educators remain unrealized. Principals and teachers often have difficulty connecting with local parents and seniority rules often deter young educators from pursuing a career in Detroit schools. The fact that the majority of teachers are non-residents is also perceived as a concern among many parents. These weaknesses collectively impact an established and well-developed educational system, resulting in high drop out rates and a community where highly skilled educators often do not produce highly skilled students.

Opportunities to build upon current strengths to address existing weaknesses are many. Skilled administrators and educators can deploy new curriculum and work with community residents and organizations to prepare children for post-secondary studies and jobs in emerging industries, such as entertainment and health care-related employment. Partnerships with public, private, and nonprofit community stakeholders, which are already common, can be expanded to access additional resources and services for students and their families. These partners may also assist schools in identifying and applying national best practices in education and creating new models for use in Detroit. Excess building capacity provides a unique opportunity to decrease the student population of existing schools, creating small, themed, and personalized schools that are consistent with nationally recognized best practices in education. Realignment of student

populations into new and existing small schools provides an opportunity to demonstrate and evaluate varying levels of school autonomy, through site-based management, direct management, charter schools, or independent academies. Additionally, these schools will attract national foundation funding and shed perceptions about existing schools through re-branding opportunities.

Leadership in Detroit must be prepared to address threats to innovative educational initiatives and current opportunities to improve education in the city. Among the primary concerns are resident perceptions regarding diverse school management plans, a media that sometimes over simplifies complex issues, and socio-economic challenges that negatively impact many Detroit families and threaten the success of even the most supportive school environment. Additionally, new initiatives are threatened by weak state and local economies, which affect funding levels. New initiatives could further hurt student enrollments if families feel disengaged or threatened by the implementation process. These threats are continuous impediments to education in Detroit and should not deter city leadership from building on existing strengths and opportunities to address current weaknesses in the educational system.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

The Education Subcommittee has developed and recommends seven fiscally feasible proposals that Mayor Kilpatrick can immediately deploy to quickly produce some dramatic outcomes and help give Detroit a competitive edge in the global economy. These proposals are summarized below in the order they should be implemented to affect the greatest impact.

Ranking	Proposal Number	Proposal Name	Benefit/(Cost) 4 Year NPV	Complexity 1-low, 10-high
1	1	Education Summit	TBD	4
2	2	New Learning Opportunities	TBD	10
3	3	Public Safety Initiative	TBD	5
4	4	Public-Private Partnerships	TBD	7
5	5	Ready by 21 Campaign	TBD	6
6	6	Mentoring Recruitment	TBD	4
7	7	Public and Nonprofit Partnerships	TBD	5

No precise costs to the city are determinate at this time, because of the various levels of implementation which may be pursued by the mayor and his administration. However, minimizing costs was an important focus of the Education Subcommittee. All of the proposals provide opportunities to pursue financial and other resource support from the private sector, including business and philanthropic organizations.

GO TO MARKET STRATEGY

The Education Subcommittee recommends that Mayor Kilpatrick assume a bold and visionary leadership role to actively reform education in Detroit during the next twelve months. Mayor Kilpatrick is well-suited for this responsibility because of his:

- Experience as a teacher in Detroit Public Schools
- Political capital accrued through re-election
- Youth, energy, and willingness to innovate

The subcommittee recommends that the mayor engage in a private dialogue with the school board and Superintendent of Detroit Public Schools before releasing this report. He should discuss his desire for small, themed high schools with some autonomy and his plans for a public safety initiative (the Education subcommittee is aware of preliminary discussions between the city and Detroit Public Schools regarding public safety; the committee's public safety proposal builds on these discussions). He should also challenge the district to create fifty such high schools and request the active participation of Detroit Public Schools in the Education Summit. At the same time, he should stress to the board and Superintendent his willingness to seek alternative means of innovative high school creation, if the district is unwilling or unable to take appropriate action in a timely manner.*

After dialogue with the district, Mayor Kilpatrick should host a press conference to reaffirm his emphasis on improved education for the city's children and express his intent to transform the educational environment in Detroit. This press conference should also announce his plans to engage the community in dialogue and activism regarding how to make Detroit a place where children are particularly well-educated. Additionally, the mayor should use this opportunity to invite education stakeholders to an Education Summit he will host in the summer of 2006. The summit should be held approximately three months after the press conference to allow time for developing support among key stakeholders and leveraging of existing political dynamics.

The summit will bring together key stakeholders to discuss strategies for improving education in Detroit. Among the strategies discussed will be those proposed in this document. The mayor should inform stakeholders that he prefers these proposals and plans to implement them, but he would first like to hear what the community thinks about each proposal. Regional, state, and national experts should also be invited to share best practices and lessons learned with the summit. The environment created by this summit will foster open and frank discussion of education reform and help facilitate changes needed to improve educational opportunities in Detroit.

After the summit, the mayor should call on all education stakeholders to support the transformation strategies discussed at the summit. He should ask business and philanthropic organizations to provide financial support; he should ask municipal

* Please refer to attached Detroit Public Schools letter of exception.

departments and nonprofit organizations to find new ways to partner with public schools; he should ask municipal employees and public school alumni to mentor; and he should launch a Ready by 21 campaign to focus all stakeholders on the primary goal of his education reform efforts: ensuring that all Detroiters are ready to succeed in the global marketplace by the age of 21.

These actions should be inclusive and inviting of all education stakeholders, from local and regional interests to those at the state and federal level. Significant resources are needed to affect a positive education transformation in Detroit, so the mayor should reach out to any and all interested parties. The ensuing governor's race provides an important opportunity to bridge the political divide and seek assistance from both major candidates. An open and frank dialogue with all of Detroit's partners in education will provide the best and most wide-reaching outreach possible.

DETAILED PROPOSALS

EDUCATION SUMMIT

Description

The Education Subcommittee recommends that Mayor Kilpatrick host an Education Summit to discuss his plans for education reform and secure community support. This summit should engage a large and diverse array of education stakeholders, creating an investment in reform among those individuals and organizations most capable of producing educational change. Invitees should include local, regional, state and federal stakeholders, as well as national speakers.

Justification

There is a strong need for increased community involvement in the school system. Many individuals do not feel as if they have voice in the educational process. It is imperative that the mayor and the school system reach out to the community and welcome their help in solving some of the issues at hand. At the same time, the mayor requires public and financial support for his educational reform initiatives. An education summit will engage the individuals and organizations most able to affect educational reform in Detroit and give them an interest in the success of the mayor. Costs to the city should be minor, particularly if the mayor is able to secure the support of local business and philanthropic leaders. Benefits will include greater public awareness of the need for educational reform and greater investment in reform among key stakeholders.

Implementation

After holding a press conference to discuss his plans and opening a dialogue with leadership at Detroit Public Schools, Mayor Kilpatrick should host an Education Summit. The summit should be held no later than three months after the press conference, which itself should be held immediately after acceptance of these recommendations. Time between the press conference and the summit should be spent courting educational stakeholders to participate, including residents, the Detroit Public Schools, legislators, candidates for governor, and leaders in national best practices. The summit can be held at a public facility, such as Cobo Hall, to reduce costs to the city. Support from private interests should be pursued to minimize other costs. An agenda for the summit should be crafted to include dialogue around the seven recommendations of this report. The summit should conclude with the mayor announcing his intention to move forward with these recommendations. He should also request the support of all educational stakeholders in Detroit, including public, private, and nonprofit leaders.

NEW LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Description

The Education Subcommittee recommends that Mayor Kwame M. Kilpatrick pursue the creation of fifty small, themed, and personalized high schools in the city of Detroit. These schools would be public schools with some level of autonomy and less than 500 students per school. School governance strategies may include public charter, public contract, or site-based management approaches. These strategies involve varying levels of management at the school level.* Themed curriculum should include college, trade, and technical school preparation. The mayor should engage Detroit Public Schools to create these schools through new or existing schools, taking advantage of excess building capacity where available. If Detroit Public Schools is unable or unwilling to support the mayor in this initiative, he should consider alternative means of accomplishing his objective. This may include approaching the state legislature to request chartering authority.

Justification

National philanthropic organizations like the Gates Foundation are identifying and supporting small, public, unionized, relationship-based, college preparatory high schools in urban areas which graduate more than 90 percent of their students and send 90 percent or more of those graduates onto a university, community college, technical school, or skilled trade environment. There are many examples of similar schools in Detroit, but far more are needed to widely impact average educational attainment and revitalize the large and challenged public school system, which was developed for different needs, with different resources, at a different time in the history of the city of Detroit. The cost to develop new learning opportunities through small, themed high schools may be significant, though it can be lessened with the support of Detroit Public Schools, legislators in Lansing and Washington D.C., and the private sector. Benefits to the city will include stronger learning environments and greater post-secondary study among Detroit students.

Implementation

The mayor should pursue incremental development of these schools over a multi-year period, with initial efforts aimed at securing the support of the Detroit Public Schools. New schools should be opened and existing facilities converted to allow for the measurement and evaluation of various small school approaches in the city of Detroit. The Mayor should call on the school board and Superintendent to join him in creating fifty small high schools over the next three to four years as public schools within the current Detroit system. Other key stakeholders should also be engaged in initial discussions to ensure their ongoing support. If Detroit Public Schools is unable or unwilling to pursue these new learning opportunities, the mayor should pursue chartering authority from the state to create such schools himself.* Foundation resources should be

* Please refer to attached Detroit Public Schools letter of exception.

secured to establish a Leadership Training Academy where principals are trained to lead these small high schools. Union leadership should be an integral part of the planning throughout each stage of this transformation. Governor Granholm has launched a small school bond program to help districts who wish to start small schools renovate existing closed schools or modify larger traditional high schools into condominiums for smaller schools and her program should be leveraged to further this initiative.

After creating the necessary training capacity and training a small number of teachers in 2006 and 2007, ten small schools should open per year for five years. Each school should begin with no more than 125 ninth graders and add a new grade each year, in order to develop performance measurement data which will inform future educational direction in Detroit. Schools should have some level of autonomy – perhaps varying levels – and may include schools which are governed as:

- Site-based Management Schools
- Direct Management or Contract Schools
- Charter Schools

Neither money nor union work rules should serve as obstacles to this plan. Only visionary leadership, something the Mayor is well positioned to provide, is required.

PUBLIC SAFETY INITIATIVE

Description

The Education Subcommittee recommends that Mayor Kilpatrick seek to augment the resources currently provided by the Detroit Public Schools' Department of Public Safety. The Department of Public Safety provides service to the school district's 233 schools as well as other District-owned facilities and properties. Under the proposal, the Detroit Police Department would provide officers a full range of normal police services to assist the Department of Public Safety outside of schools and on high traffic walking routes. The Detroit Police Department will also provide services during DPS sanctioned extracurricular events such as basketball and football games as well as on-site homecoming events. Contract language would be drafted to address compensation, work rules, chain of command, etc.

Justification

Although the DPS Department of Public Safety has provided quality service to the school district, recent budget challenges have caused the department to endure significant staffing reductions which have negatively affected the level of service provided. Several high profile incidents have occurred inside and outside of Detroit schools in recent weeks.

Implementation

The implementation strategy would be developed after the Detroit Public Schools completes a comprehensive security plan and meets with the City of Detroit Police Department to analyze, outline, and develop specific strategies. The proposal would have to be submitted by the Superintendent to the Board of Education for approval. A contract would then have to be approved by Detroit City Council. If approved, implementation would occur within 45 days.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Description

The Education Subcommittee recommends that Mayor Kilpatrick launch a Public-Private partnership initiative to secure financial and other support for Detroit schools. This initiative should be modeled after a recent campaign by New York City Mayor Bloomberg, which secured more than \$300 million in commitments for New York City schools from business and philanthropic leaders in that city.

Justification

To address the challenges facing Detroit schools, leaders should secure new and additional resources. In New York City, this same realization convinced Mayor Michael Bloomberg and school Chancellor Joel Klein to pursue the support of private business and philanthropic leaders in education reform. Recently, the pair secured commitments of \$311 million in support from private sector partners. These funds proved highly beneficial because they did not come with the same spending requirements as public tax dollars. Private funding can support experiments in education and reforms that might otherwise prove impossible. New York City's private funds helped pay for small schools, a principal training center, library renovations, playground refurbishments, and reforms at troubled high schools.

Implementation

The mayor should seek out business and community leaders across the city, region, state, and nation. He should discuss with them his educational reform efforts and express the need for private support. Audiences which are especially valuable targets include successful Detroit school alumni, professional athletes, and successful businessmen and women.

READY BY 21 CAMPAIGN

Description

The Education Subcommittee recommends that Mayor Kilpatrick champion a Ready by 21 campaign to encourage public, private, and nonprofit education stakeholders to focus their work around ensuring that Detroiters have the skills and abilities necessary to succeed in college, the workplace, and life by the age of 21. A similar effort is supported nationally by the Forum for Youth Investment, which challenges change makers to foster innovative educational strategies among existing community stakeholders, rather than invent new programs and organizations. Local leaders, such as The Skillman Foundation, are connected to this national effort and will prove helpful resources in elevating the dialogue and action towards creating a community where youth are prepared for life by the age of 21.

Justification

Young people in Detroit require a variety of skills and abilities as they enter adulthood, especially due to the emerging economy. They must be ready for post-secondary education, ready for the workplace, and ready for other aspects of adult life which they may find challenging. It is important that youth acquire these skills early on, though they must acquire these skills by the time they reach the age of 21, less they risk a challenging entrée into adulthood. The Forum for Youth Investment has assembled a variety of best practice strategies and case studies targeted at fostering community-wide approaches that prepare youth for college, work, and life by early adulthood. These strategies have developed a foothold in Detroit through the work of organizations such as Mayor's Time and The Skillman Foundation, though they require a high profile champion to achieve greater recognition and impact.

Implementation

The mayor should establish a Ready by 21 campaign as a key component of his educational initiatives. Detailed implementation strategies should be developed with Mayor's Time and The Skillman Foundation to ensure widespread recognition and impact among education stakeholders. However, specific activities that the mayor should do immediately include: 1) promoting this campaign with public, private and nonprofit leaders wherever he travels; 2) identifying and enlisting key public champions for this campaign in the public, private and nonprofit sectors; 3) using this campaign to organize Education Summit participants so they can collaborate and promote innovations in education that meet the real needs of Detroit's students; and 4) broker public and nonprofit partnerships recommended in this report and align them with the overall goals of the Ready by 21 campaign.

Additionally, the mayor can promote a set of core messages for the Ready by 21 campaign among leadership organizations in Detroit to:

- Improve and coordinate systems and services to better educate children
- Align policies and resources so that they have the most impact on students
- Engage youth, families, and caring adults to participate in a meaningful way with students, including through the mentoring initiative outlined in this report
- Increase public will and demand to provide more and better supports to prepare Detroit's youth to be ready for work, ready for college, and ready for life by 21

MENTORING RECRUITMENT

Description

The Education Subcommittee recommends that Mayor Kilpatrick launch an initiative to secure mentors for Detroit school students from among the ranks of municipal employees and Detroit school alumni. Approximately 3,200 mentoring relationships should be facilitated through this initiative.

Justification

As a community we have known for many years that a caring, nurturing and supportive adult can make the difference in determining the academic success of a student. This knowledge has motivated the creation of numerous mentoring programs in Detroit, involving the active support of the business and non-profit communities. One likely model for this initiative is the Student Motivational Program, created by the Director of the Office of Guidance and Counseling for Detroit Public Schools approximately 20 years ago. That program targeted primarily Detroiters, many of whom were alumni of Detroit Public Schools, to commit to spend one hour each week with a designated student. In turn, school counselors identified students who appeared to be in greatest need of mentoring and then referred them to the program. This program experienced good success until it was ended by the school district because of the reduced availability of human and financial resources. However, even after the program ended, many of the mentors continued their relationship with their mentees because of the bond that had been formed during the program.

Implementation

Since most city employees are alumni of Detroit Public Schools, they could be encouraged to participate with an existing mentoring program such as Big Brothers or the Girl Scouts, and perhaps even target their support for a student attending the same school that the mentor attended as a student. These employees could be “uniformed” with a T-shirt or sweatshirt, which identifies them as a member of the team of city employees and alumni which the mayor had mobilized to make a difference in this area. On at least an annual basis, the mayor could recognize the contributions of these mentors through a recognition event, such as a picnic, breakfast or luncheon.

PUBLIC AND NONPROFIT PARTNERSHIPS

Description

The Education Subcommittee recommends Mayor Kwame M. Kilpatrick broker and coordinate partnerships between municipal departments, nonprofit organizations, and schools in the city of Detroit to provide new and enhanced programs and services to schools, families, and children. Partnerships should develop and implement innovative strategies for serving the educational needs of Detroit and Detroiters and may develop into collaborations focused on service delivery, support, and other important aspects of public education. Potential partners include city departments, social service agencies, health care institutions, and faith and community-based organizations.

Justification

The challenge of educating youth in Detroit is magnified by a large, diverse, and disadvantaged student body, which requires extensive resource and service delivery networks to effectively advance. Community leaders initially addressed this challenge during periods of great economic prosperity, through the creation of an extensive and often envied public school network. However, subsequent changes to the social and economic structure of the community have decreased available resources and increased student need, limiting the community's ability to effectively educate and improve the lives of Detroit students. Additional resources and services are required to reinvigorate educational programming and return Detroit students to the forefront of a globally competitive educational system. Though many of the resources Detroit boasted at the height of prosperity have disappeared, strong municipal, nonprofit, and community organizations continue to serve the city in numerous and diverse capacities. These organizations have unique resources and provide programs and services that address many of the challenges facing schools, families, and children in Detroit. More coordination between schools and community-serving agencies should be facilitated to align resources with needs and create the efficient and effective redress of challenges to local education. The mayor of Detroit is ideally situated to foster these partnerships, through his role as civic leader, his relationship to municipal and community organizations, and his separation from the politics of public education.

Implementation

Mayor Kilpatrick should begin developing partnerships between city schools and community-serving organizations by completing an analysis of municipal department services and activities which may offer additional benefits in partnership with schools. The mayor should also identify and begin courting those nonprofit and community groups that would offer similar benefits through partnerships with schools. Special attention should be placed on courting faith-based and community groups. Finally, the mayor should work with leaders of municipal departments, community-serving organizations, and Detroit schools to facilitate additional partnerships which serve the common good and address challenges to the educational attainment of Detroit students.