



GS4A WORKING GROUPS BACKGROUND INFORMATION

POVERTY AND EDUCATION, AN OVERVIEW OF THE ISSUES WE ARE FACING:

- Rochester now has the highest rate of extreme poverty of any comparably sized city in the United States. Extreme poverty is defined as below 50% of the poverty level. Source: Benchmarking Rochester's Poverty 2015 The Community Foundation and ACT Rochester
- Rochester's poor are young. More than 50% of Rochester's children are poor, revealing the city's childhood poverty rate now ranks No. 1 among cities in comparably sized metro areas. Source: Benchmarking Rochester's Poverty 2015 The Community Foundation and ACT Rochester
- There are more than 25,000 children (under age 18) living in poverty in Rochester. However, this reality needs context. Since there are a significant number of poor in the youngest adult age cohort (18 to 24), the combined child/young adult group consists of more than 31,000 poor people, nearly as many poor as the remaining adult group (32,146). Source: Benchmarking Rochester's Poverty 2015 The Community Foundation and ACT Rochester
- Education matters. Not surprisingly, poverty rates in the City of Rochester go down as educational attainment goes up. Those with less than a high school diploma have a poverty rate of 44% as compared to those with a diploma and no college (25.7%), those with some college (23%), and those with bachelor's or advanced degrees (9.7%). Source: Benchmarking Rochester's Poverty 2015 The Community Foundation and ACT Rochester
- Over 80% of RCSD children receive free or reduced price meals. Source: ACT Rochester

“OUR EXTREME CONCENTRATION OF POVERTY THREATENS TO UNDERMINE VIRTUALLY ALL EFFORTS TO BUILD A MORE EQUITABLE AND VIABLE METROPOLITAN AREA.”

—Source: Benchmarking Rochester's Poverty 2015 The Community Foundation and ACT Rochester

- Dramatic disparities exist within our community, which generally reflect the demonstrated relationship between income status and educational performance. While our region's 82% on-time graduation rate, which includes the city rate, is above the statewide rate of 78%, RCSD achieved an on-time graduation rate of only 48% and the five-year graduation rate was 53% for the most recently recorded year (2013). Source: ACT Rochester
- Rochester's voluntary school desegregation program, Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Transfer Program, only affects 500-600 minority students, of the 29,000 total students currently enrolled. Source: Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Transfer Program
- The racial and socioeconomic disparity, and efforts to keep this disparity between Rochester City school district and its neighboring suburban school districts, are often clearly visible. Rochester is the least affluent school district in upstate New York. Source: UCLA Civil Rights Project report “New York State's Extreme School Segregation” March 2014
- A recent public poll on racial opinions in Monroe County also shows that a majority of residents (68%) somewhat to strongly agree that city children do not have the same access to quality education as suburban children, and 59% (53% of whites) favor programs to help minorities overcome past discrimination. Source: UCLA Civil Rights Project report “New York State's Extreme School Segregation” March 2014

**The terms “poverty” and “poor” refer to those living below the federal poverty level (family of 4 with \$23,850 annual income). The school level poverty standard used is based on federal eligibility for free or reduced-price meals.*

GS4A WORKING GROUPS COMMON VALUES AND ASSUMPTIONS:

- All children, regardless of socio-economic background, can learn.
- The Rochester City School District (RCSD) has a number of strengths; there are some successful school programs, and many successful students in RCSD schools. However, given the high concentrations of poverty, RCSD cannot remedy systemic problems like low graduation rates by itself. Solutions must involve the entire community, including cross-school-district initiatives.
- Monroe County cannot be economically and socially healthy without a strong City and City schools at its core. To the extent that we can attract or retain more middle-class students within City public schools, we help strengthen the City core, and ultimately the entire region.
- Based on extensive national research, any proposed school reconfiguration should have a broad socio-economic mix of students, with a target of no more than 40% low-income students per school, as measured by Free and Reduced Price Lunch status. Using the 40% low-income target in a school has yielded higher graduation rates and reading and math performances for low-income students without lowering performance for higher-income students.
- All students benefit from increased socioeconomic diversity in our schools. Socioeconomically diverse schools are essential for improved academic performance and for increased cross-cultural understanding.
- Achieving socioeconomic integration will require a variety of programs and strategies. No one approach (the expansion of the 50-year-old Urban-Suburban program, for example) will be sufficient to reach the goal of capping the poverty population in a school at 40% of the student body.

“TODAY, WE HAVE TWO EDUCATION SYSTEMS... ONE FOR THE RICH, AND ONE FOR THE POOR. AND IF YOU HAPPEN TO BE BORN IN THE WRONG ZIP CODE AND GO TO A FAILING SCHOOL, YOU WILL GET LEFT BEHIND AND NEVER CATCH UP. PUBLIC EDUCATION THAT WAS THE GREAT EQUALIZER IN THE SOCIETY HAS BECOME IN SOME COMMUNITIES THE GREAT DISCRIMINATOR.”

—Gov. Andrew Cuomo, January 1, 2015

- Studies have shown that additional funding alone will not be sufficient to overcome the catastrophic effects of socioeconomic imbalances in schools. Indeed, RCSD funding and expenditures per pupil are among the highest not only in NYS, but also in the U.S., and long-term academic progress results still are at unacceptable levels.
- There are four main reasons for structural or systemic change, which transcend city boundaries and mandate serious consideration of inter-district and/or regional solutions:
 - Without substantial improvements in educational outcomes for city school students, the economic competitiveness of the Rochester region will remain stagnant and urban revitalization will not occur.
 - The New York State Constitution guarantees that all children have a constitutional right to a sound basic education, consisting of a meaningful high school education that prepares students for higher education and/or readiness for the workplace.
 - As a moral imperative, our City and region should endeavor to provide justice and equity for all children.
 - Children who attend schools should be educated in a way that equips them to take their rightful place as responsible citizens in our national and global societies.
- In the near term, given current structural realities and likely community sentiment, the public school structures that will be the most effective will be voluntary school choice solutions.
- GS4A will support, promote and partner with other community groups working independently on related other strategies.

SUMMER LEARNING WORKING GROUP

WORK GROUP CONVENERS AND MEMBERS:

Conveners: Lois Giess

Steering Committee Liaisons: Diane Larter, Beth Laidlaw, Sue Maddock

Group Members: Jennifer Muniga, Jacque Cady, Robin Dettman, Brady Ferguson, Mairead Hartman, Rebecca Lavender

MISSION AND DETAILS:

The Summer Learning Work Group was tasked with exploring ways to better integrate summer learning programs and develop additional programs.

BACKGROUND, VALUES, ASSUMPTIONS, AND PARAMETERS:

- Summer Learning is essential to retaining learning progress from one grade to the next

- Attendance is an issue for summer learning. Programs with a social worker making sustained contact with parents have better attendance rates.

- There are many lists of criteria of quality programming – The United Way has a list of 20 minimum requirements for such programming. Key components of a Comprehensive Summer Learning Program include:
 - Instruction
 - Exercise
 - Parent interaction
 - Enrichment opportunities
 - Pre and post Assessments
 - Social worker case management

- We have an urgent need to scale up good programs to provide seats for summer learning.

- Scaling up **and** socioeconomically integrating programs require cross-district cooperation and time.

- Time is critical as summer learning is most beneficial for learners in primary school.

RESEARCH PROCESS, METHOD(S) AND/OR RESOURCES:

We identified existing summer learning programs and analyzed criteria for those deemed to be successful.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. Several successful summer learning programs exist in our community but serve relatively few of the 12,500 students enrolled in summer learning through RCSD. Programs we researched include:
 - Cameron Community Ministries serves 80.
 - RCSD Summer Scholars serves 700.
 - Rochester Public Library serves 300 as compared to the hundreds who participate in its branch summer reading programs.
 - SummerLEAP (Horizon) serves 910.
 - YMCA serves 68 as compared to the hundreds who sign up for YMCA summer fun camps.

2. Each program carries the additional burden of being free to RCSD students and providing food, clothing and other supplies, and transportation.

3. Because all of the comprehensive summer learning programs serve primarily students in the City School District, none of these programs is geared toward socioeconomic integration.

- We have an urgent need to scale up good programs to provide seats for summer learning.
- Scaling up and socioeconomically integrating programs require cross-district cooperation and time.
- Time is critical as summer learning is most beneficial for learners in primary school.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Support development of socioeconomically integrated comprehensive summer learning programs in cooperation with suburban school districts. Pilot: Summer 2015
2. Establish GS4A summer learning grant to fund proposals to integrate any existing summer program for 2016.
3. Challenge area churches to build integrated children's experiences between city churches and affiliated suburban churches. Pilot: 2015.

BACKGROUND RESOURCES:

Summer Programs funded (fully or partially) by the United Way for summer 2015 (not all are comprehensive summer learning programs).

- Baden at the Clinton Baden Community Center
- Boy Scouts at 2 residential camps
- Boys & Girls Club at their Genesee St. site
- Charles Settlement House at their Parkway site
- Community Place at Dr. Freddie Thomas campus
- EnCompass 3D at the Discovery Charter School site
- Girl Scouts at their Camp Pinewood site
- Holy Childhood in Henrietta
- Horizons at Harley
- Horizons at MCC
- Horizons at Warner/UR
- Urban League at their N Clinton Ave site
- Y Readers
- Young Women's College Prep at Nazareth College

Comprehensive Summer Learning Programs we identified in Monroe County:

Cameron Community Ministries:

A free grant-funded 6-week summer program for which both parent and child sign contracts of agreement for continued participation. The program is built on the foundation of a successful after school program. Each week's theme brings together reading and enrichment experiences. Children take weekly field trips out of the neighborhood. Pre and post measures are taken. The program's summer capacity is 80 children (40 in the morning and 40 in the afternoon). It is located in Cameron St. off Lyell Avenue on a property that also serves meals daily and has a large playground.

RCSD Summer Scholars Program:

Wallace Foundation provided 100% support for the first two years. The grant is overseen by RACF. Going into the third year (2015) the Wallace foundation will provide 60% of funding. In 2014, the foundation will provide 30% funding. 2014's program served 700 children (out of 1400 applicants) and was housed on the School of the Arts (SOTA) campus. 2015's program will serve rising 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders. The

program director described the curriculum in which successful academics and enrichment are built around a specific theme (sleuths). The program has academics in the morning and enrichment in the afternoon as well as a swimming component. Learning is multidimensional—often occurring in locations outside of the classroom. In the first two years, the Wallace foundation funds (in the past) covered professional development, books, enrichment expenses, social worker, behavior specialist, and food backpacks. Attendance is an issue. Students have seen gains in math but not sufficient gains in reading. The program will continue through 2016.

Rochester Public Library's Summer Reading Camps—Branch Libraries (2nd year)

RCSD paid \$54,000 for camps at 6 branches (2-hr structured program, daily for 6 weeks). The library's challenge was to provide certified Common Core instruction. Camps included certified teaching instruction, materials and supplies, and purchase of books on the summer reading list. K-3 focused on classification and reading, 4-6 created a project to present to younger participants. Pictorial audit trail showed progress. Just over 300 students attended with the cost per "consistently attending" student at \$593/student. RCSD liaison for the program is Nydia Padilla. Foodlink provided boxed meals. The program partnered with Encompass Resources for Learning which has several programs in the community, including programs at #33, #39, #19, and Discovery Charter school. (www.encompassresources.org). 12-15 students per site, could expand to 30 students per site. Trained staff match activities to libraries summer reading theme and conducted pre and post measures. A small sample of students showed gains in academic and social/emotional measures. It has been difficult to share data with RCSD (many tools, difficult to align, confidentiality issues). Participants tend to be frequent library patrons. Attendance was inconsistent. The librarians at two branches recruited participants. This year Neighborhood Service Center staff will help recruit families. Most participants are from lower income families. Program open to RCSD students first, then to Charter students and home schoolers. Tonya, at MCLS would be the person to ask about Urban-Suburban exchanges. Highland and Sully branches are co-located with city rec centers. Avenue D. Rec center connects with the Lincoln library. All branches of the library (city and county) participate in the voluntary summer reading program which tracks number of books and minutes read.

SummerLEAP (Horizon):

SummerLEAP is a 6 week program serving 910 students in 9 locations (Harley School, Allendale Columbia, Brockport, MCC, Geneseo, Encompass, and Nazareth). Most serve K-6th graders and include academics, enrichment, transportation, and social worker support. The program is funded by RCSD, NYS, foundations, and individuals. It serves 51 schools and students are chosen because of low income, reading below grade level, teacher nomination and/or having a sibling in the program. It has a waitlist. The Greater Rochester Learning Organization is a grant-funded partnership supporting SummerLEAP programs among select schools that matches teacher-nominated-students (not quite meeting state standards) with teachers for six weeks in the summer. 90% graduation rate among participants. The program is free and has academic, enrichment, and exercise components; is housed in six locations; each location staffed by 3 educators serving 15 students. A social worker serves each family. The program is chaired by Conger Gable, who, along with Mary Jo Gable has led this effort for several years. The program includes analytics establishing its efficacy.

YMCA Achieve Summer Learning Program:

The YMCA serves 13 facilities in Monroe County and beyond. The Summer Enrichment program operates out of the Carlson Y on Main St. in Rochester and serves rising 1st and 2nd graders from Schools #8 and #33. In 2014 the program served 34 students recommended by teachers. In 2015, the program will serve 68 students. The program consists of four academic blocks in the morning and enrichment in the afternoon. 2014 theme was exploring how to get supplies to disaster relief stations and involved building rockets. It hires teachers (mostly from the schools it serves) to provide instruction and Y personnel and community partners for enrichment (swim, cook, field trips to other Ys). The YMCA will not turn away families. Academic retention is assessed using the STAR method and boasts a 3% gain (largest in the nation). The program does not provide transportation and tries to work with school personnel to devise transportation. The YMCA already provides after school care for schools #8 and #33. The Y also provides after school care at schools 10, 17, 23, 44, 48 and Lewis Street. The YMCA is looking to expand in

afterschool locations.

RCSD Traditional Summer School:

10,000 children in some kind of summer school in RCSD buildings.

Upward Bound:

Brady Ferguson works with the Upward Bound program located at U of R's Kearns Center. The students in this pre-college program are low income and will be the first generation in their families to earn a Bachelor's degree or higher; they attend one of our target high schools, which are East, Monroe, Franklin, and Wilson. Currently, there are approximately 150 students who have applied and been enrolled in our college readiness program. A major component is a six-week summer program at the U of R, during which students take classes, do research, and go on trips to visit colleges. MCC also has an Upward Bound program, which is open to students at several RCSD high schools. Another programs serving RCSD high school students is the Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection (four weeks).

Fee-based Summer Learning Programs are available at:

Allendale Columbia, Generations, Harley School, City of Rochester ArtSmart Camp, City of Rochester Sports Camp, Upward Bound, Mathnasium, Doodle Bugs, Greece Community Education, MCC College for Kids, Nazareth Summer Science Camp, RIT Summer Academy, RIT Lil Kids on Campus, RMCS Summer Fun, Sylvan Summer Camps, Toddler's Workshop, RCN Summer, Cobblestone Camp, Friendship Children's Center.

URBAN-SUBURBAN INTERDISTRICT PROGRAM WORKING GROUP

WORK GROUP CONVENERS AND MEMBERS:

Conveners: Jeffrey Crane and Lesli C. Myers

Steering Committee Liaisons: Rosemarie Horavath, Corni Labrum, Beth Laidlaw

Group Members: Quinisha Anderson, Cindy Buttersworth, Kara Finnigan, Rene Lipshults, Dick Mace, Rochelle Ruffer, Ellen Santora, and Aggie Seneway.

MISSION AND DETAILS:

The Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Transfer Program opened in 1965 and now places more than 500 minority city students in schools in the seven participating suburban districts. This group is looking at ways to expand the program to more districts, increase student participation, and consider ways to draw suburban students to city schools.

The Urban-Suburban work group met twice to determine its recommendations/next steps. Although the group only met twice, there was significant activity that occurred over the past sixty days (attendance at governance meetings and support of Urban-Suburban horizon district participation).

BACKGROUND, VALUES, ASSUMPTIONS, AND PARAMETERS:

The Urban-Suburban GS4A work group is unique in that there are several well-established groups and governance structures currently in place (e.g. Urban-Suburban Governance Board, Urban-Suburban Staff Members, Urban-Suburban Parent Group, and Urban-Suburban Alumni Group). Therefore, the group was careful not to interfere with or interrupt current processes and practices.

Further, during the 2014-2015 school year, the program gained momentum with the possibility of adding additional districts to the current seven participating districts (Brighton, Brockport, Fairport, Penfield, Pittsford, West Irondequoit, and Wheatland-Chili). Four school districts will commence having the Urban-Suburban Program during the 2015-2016 school year (East Irondequoit, East Rochester, Hilton, and Spencerport).

RESEARCH PROCESS, METHOD(S) AND/OR RESOURCES:

Because both conveners are members of the Governance Board, the Urban-Suburban work group had access to both quantitative and qualitative data (enrollment numbers, program history, application process, implementation, etc.). This enabled the group to make informed decisions relative to recommendations and next steps. Both conveners spent a significant amount of time ensuring that work group members were aware of the long-standing history and multifaceted aspects of the program.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. The following seven districts participate in the program:
 - West Irondequoit, 1965
 - Brighton, 1967
 - Brockport, 1967
 - Pittsford, 1968
 - Penfield, 1968
 - Wheatland-Chili, 1968
 - Fairport, 2003
2. While there are more opportunities for urban students to participate in suburban schools, there are limited opportunities for suburban students to attend urban schools.
3. A participating district can exit the program at any time, however every suburban district that has initiated the Urban-Suburban program has chosen to remain in the program.

4. Students and families are interviewed before acceptance into the program and parent participation as a partner in the education of their Urban-Suburban child is a requirement.
5. In 2012, 40% of the students attending schools granting a post-secondary degree are minorities.
6. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, minorities currently represent 33% of the U.S. population. By 2042, minorities are projected to become the majority. By 2050, minorities will represent 54% of the U.S. population.
7. The program is funded through the New York State Education Department.
8. State aid follows the students from the Rochester City School District to the receiving district.
9. The Urban-Suburban program generates revenue for the participating district.
10. Parental involvement is the cornerstone of the success of the program (generational participation).
11. The scholarship program is fully funded by parents through fundraisers.
12. Post-Graduation Data:
 - 488 to 2 or 4 year colleges (96%)
 - 14 to workforce and trade schools (3%)
 - 5 to the military (1%)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The recommendations from the Urban-Suburban work group centered on the following three goals:

1. Look at ways to expand the program to more districts.
2. Increase student participation.
3. Consider ways to draw suburban students to city schools.

Recommendation #1: Create documents and presentations that articulate the “value added” elements of the Urban-Suburban Program (goals 1 & 2).

- Collect and warehouse the “lessons learned” from legacy districts as well as new districts.
- Create fact and data sheets.
- Develop Urban-Suburban PowerPoint presentations.
- Determine best practices.
- Develop a “speakers bureau” of Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, and Principals and identify the areas of expertise (e.g. implementation, student supports, etc.).

Recommendation #2: Create varied mediums to market and educate families about the Urban-Suburban Program (goals 1, 2, & 3).

- Develop a brochure which poses questions and answers about the Urban-Suburban program.
 - Modify to reach different populations, based on language, socio-economic circumstances
 - Distribute to city and suburban locations:
 - Accessible places for urban parents, such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters, settlement houses, health centers, Cameron, Baden Street, stores, racks on buses, recreation centers.
 - Suburban locations such as pediatricians’ offices, Y’s, health clubs, dental offices, Wegmans, Tops.
- Utilize existing groups, such as the alumni and parent groups to promote the program and furnish first-hand information to interested groups/parties.

Recommendation #3: The Rochester City School District has the potential to be known as the lighthouse school

district offering programs that provide students the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills to be successful contributing members of their home and international community (goal 3).

- The RCSD would identify the varied programs of excellence and expand them with the goal to increase enrollment of both RCSD students and attract suburban students as well.

Implementation

The GS4A leadership would approach the RCSD to implement a plan for identifying and growing those programs. This would include those emerging programs as well as existing programs of excellence.

- After identification, the RCSD would develop a program to market and increase awareness and knowledge of those programs. This has been done successfully in the past for the introduction of magnet schools.

BACKGROUND RESOURCES:

**All URLs in this PDF are hyperlinked, meaning you can click on the address to launch information online.*

History and Mission

<http://www.monroe.edu/UrbanSuburban.cfm?subpage=1161>

Interview of Brockport Central School District with Superintendent Lesli Myers and Urban-Suburban student Ahjane Butler and mom Tammy Butler.

<http://www.foxrochester.com/news/features/good-day-rochester/stories/urbansuburban-profile-brockport-1804.shtml#.VMewDk3wsdU>

Interview of Wheatland Central School District with Superintendent Deb Leh and Wheatland resident Elizabeth Murray and daughter Olivia.

<http://www.foxrochester.com/news/features/good-day-rochester/stories/urbansuburban-profile-wheatlandchili-pt-1-1671.shtml#.VKLJgpCePA>

http://www.foxrochester.com/news/features/good-day-rochester/stories/urbansuburban-profile-brockport-1804.shtml#.VMf7TU3wuM_

Good Day Rochester interview with Bob Clark and Maxine Bostick:

<http://foxrochester.com/news/features/good-day-rochester/stories/urbansuburban-discussion-fairport-principal-2193.shtml#.VRv0VU3wtD8>

Good Day Rochester interview with Summer McCullough and Princess Clark:

<http://foxrochester.com/news/features/good-day-rochester/stories/urbansuburban-discussion-fairport-students-2194.shtml#.VRv0xU3wtD8>

The Urban-Suburban Program is Turning 50!

http://www.monroe.edu/popup_info.cfm?story=275

Democrat and Chronicle Jan 17, 2015-Q&A

<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2015/01/17/urban-suburban-program-rochester/21921257/>

COUNTY WIDE MAGNET SCHOOLS WORKING GROUP

WORK GROUP CONVENERS AND MEMBERS:

Co-Conveners: Erica Bryant and Dan Delehanty

Steering Committee Liaisons: Marilyn DeLucia and Don Pryor

Members: Andy Aligne, Ahlia Kitwana, Nancy Kraus, Ron Kraus, Jay Ross, Jeff Sciortino

MISSION AND DETAILS:

Our mission was to review relevant research and experience on magnet schools across the country; to assess implications and opportunities for creating countywide magnet programs in Monroe County, along with potential barriers and ways to address them; and to develop potential action steps and timelines to advance the creation of inter-district and countywide magnet schools and related approaches to help reduce the effects of the concentration of poverty in Rochester schools and expand the socioeconomic diversity of students throughout the county.

We met as a group on a weekly basis, nine times during March and April.

BACKGROUND, VALUES, ASSUMPTIONS, AND PARAMETERS:

The proposals are designed to increase diversity and reduce socioeconomic segregation and concentration of poverty in our schools.

The proposed magnet schools would draw students on a voluntary basis from across city and suburban school district lines.

The creation of new or expanded magnet schools would offer special focus opportunities that would not be available within most individual districts and that would be so exciting and unique that both city and suburban students would want to be included.

Magnet programs would include elementary, middle and high schools.

Other criteria and parameters for magnet schools may also need to be established.

RESEARCH PROCESS, METHOD(S) AND/OR RESOURCES:

We reviewed the experience of the Raleigh travel group; reviewed data about Raleigh/Wake County magnet schools; reviewed relevant literature and research articles; reviewed magnet school models in such areas as Hartford, CT, Omaha, NE, Montgomery County, MD, and Minneapolis, MN; brainstormed our ideas about magnet programs; reviewed potential magnet programs within RCSD; learned about the Regional Academy model and related legislation; and members of the work group met with various district superintendents, regents and a charter school leader.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. Strengthen, Replicate, Promote Existing Magnet Schools

- Over the next three years, work with RCSD to strengthen, open and promote existing City magnet schools to increasing numbers of higher socioeconomic status students throughout Monroe County, including residents of the city currently enrolled in non-public schools. The goal would be to expand socioeconomic diversity in these schools, while retaining existing low-income students. This may mean in some cases expanding the total number of students in each school, adding designated numbers of slots for higher SES students, and/or could mean replicating/adding an additional school based on the initial model. Such schools that would potentially attract significant numbers of diverse students could include, for example, School of the Arts, School Without Walls, Edison P-TECH program, Montessori, World of Inquiry

expeditionary learning, International Baccalaureate program at Wilson Magnet School, etc.

2. Build on Current Proposals

- Create a process and set of “Great Schools for All Regional Magnet Guidelines” to evaluate proposals for current and future magnet schools.
- Support creation of the proposed Regional Academy, in conjunction with Nazareth College. Review current proposed legislation and propose modifications as necessary to conform to GS4A parameters, including expansion of legislation to incorporate additional magnets in the future. Seek immediate approval and implementation within the next 1 to 2 years.
- Work with the Rochester City School District and partnering suburban districts as part of a \$3.75 million planning grant to help develop, support, develop interest in, and implement plans for three potential model magnet schools in the city. The tentative focus is on Edison, School #12 and School #50 within the RCSD, with suburban partners already identified. Planning grant applications have been submitted by RCSD to the State; assuming approval, we should offer to work with the District to help incorporate GS4A principles and flesh out and implement these proposals within the next 2 years.
- Engage in conversations within the next year with the Monroe County School Boards Association to develop a plan to implement their proposal from several years ago to develop informal inter-district programs to break down student segregation, in addition to the development of magnet schools.

3. Create New Magnet Schools

- Establish a goal of creating 10 new urban-suburban magnet schools within the next 5 to 7 years, located in city and suburban locations to draw students from districts throughout the county at elementary, middle and high school levels. Magnets to be based on models that have been proven successful in other locations nationwide. Consideration would be given to magnets with themes/areas of focus with broad appeal such as STEM/STEAM, arts, language immersion, leadership academies, Montessori programs, middle skills, Albany P-TECH model, etc. See additional examples of possible innovative magnet programs listed in the Appendix to this document.
- Engage local higher education community, such as MCC, RIT, SUNY Brockport, St. John Fisher, Geneseo in creating model magnet schools similar to the roles Nazareth and U of R are playing with regard to the proposed Regional Academy and East High School. One of these might involve the creation of a lab school as the magnet.
- Engage the business community to solicit their input concerning the skills they are not currently finding in sufficient numbers and that they believe will be necessary to be successful in future years. Use this input to better align schools with what businesses will need in future employees.
- Establish a process involving city and suburban and BOCES district leaders, the business community, and including parent and student surveys, to determine the types and focus/themes of magnet schools that would be most in demand. Create a process for encouraging and soliciting new magnet schools proposals.
- Using the “Great Schools for All Regional Magnet Guidelines” referenced in Strategy 2, encourage independent groups to partner with Great Schools for All to establish innovative new magnet programs.

4. Regional Charter School Options

- Examine existing charter school legislation and propose modifications within the next year to require new and existing charter schools to mandate overall school enrollment patterns consistent with the 40% low-income goal. As one example, Genesee Community Charter School focuses on creating such a diverse student body.
- Partner with existing Charter Schools and Charter organizers that conform to the “Great Schools for All Regional Magnet Guidelines”.

5. Turn Around Existing Schools

- Discuss the possibility of creating slots for suburban students at the new East High under the leadership of the University of Rochester’s Warner School.
- Consider working with RCSD (and suburban districts at some point in the process) to identify and strengthen existing low-performing city schools in need of transformation. Develop redesign/”turnaround” strategies that would not only strengthen the existing schools, but might also help morph them into special-focus magnet schools that would entice suburban students to want to enroll to create more diverse schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Work with the regional/governance, Urban-Suburban and legislative GS4A work groups to develop governance, finance and transportation models and legislation to support these proposals.
2. Develop strategies to market magnet opportunities in city and suburban districts, engaging faith communities, the business community and other resources.
3. Explore magnet school funding options, such as state and federal funds, foundation and other philanthropic supports. Funding sources might include turnaround/school improvement grants (SIGs), which may allow funding for desegregation efforts; federal magnet school grants; federal "Invest in Innovation" grants; funding through Rochester/ Monroe County anti-poverty initiative; regional economic development competitive grants; etc.

BACKGROUND RESOURCES:

**All URLs in this PDF are hyperlinked, meaning you can click on the address to launch information online.*

We reviewed a number of the same articles and materials reviewed by the Regional Planning Work Group. These included the following citations from that group: Finnigan, Holme et al; Holme and Diem; Holme and Finnigan; Holme, Dean and Mansfield; and Wells, Baldrige et al.

Kara Finnigan, "Inter-District Choice as Policy Option

Other references included several articles by Richard Kahlenberg, including "Turnaround Schools That Work: Moving Beyond Separate but Equal," e.g.,

<https://tcf.org/assets/downloads/tcf-turnaround.pdf>

<http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2009/0909.kahlenberg.html>

<http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/Kahlenberg.pdf>

Childress, Doyle and Thomas, "Leading for Equity: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Montgomery County Public Schools," Cambridge MA: Harvard Education Press, 2009

Regional Academy Draft Legislation (not available on line)

Websites:

Education Week: <http://www.edweek.org/ew/index.html>

U.S. Department of Education: <http://www.ed.gov>

NYS Department of Education: <http://www.nysed.gov>

ERIC: <http://eric.ed.gov>

School District Websites:

Rochester RCSD: <http://www.rcsdk12.org/site/default.aspx?PageID=1>

Montgomery County, MD: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org>

Omaha NE Public Schools: <http://district.ops.org>

Hartford CT Public Schools: <http://www.hartfordschools.org>

Wake County, N.C.: <http://www.wcpss.net/site/default.aspx?PageID=1>

Wake County/Raleigh Magnet Schools: <http://www.wcpss.net/Page/113>

Appendix: Examples of Additional Potential Regional Magnet School Ideas

In addition to magnet school themes/areas of focus listed in our proposed action steps, the following additional ideas are offered for consideration:

- A STEM/STEAM school that is project based. Let the student take things apart to see how they work. Let them build robots and bridges. Let them design Apps and websites.
- An entrepreneurial based school, where students learn how to fund and build businesses. Maybe some students want to go beyond selling juleps (frozen koolaid) and lemonade. This school could go a little

further and service neighborhood residents with assistance on building and/ or expanding their own businesses and finding funding.

- Edison has a whole greenhouse that isn't being used. Kids are interested in growing things, the neighborhood kids come to my Mom's community garden and help water and weed the garden for free. Maybe there could be an agricultural or culinary spin on a school. This may be expanding on something that already exists.
- Rochester Writers Workshop (like Iowa), or a school focused on creative writing that also has a focus on social and new media. Maybe produce vlogs, podcasts or webseries or host an annual poetry slam. Or learn how to publish an ebook, or how to produce an illustrated children's book.
- A school that offers internships and co-ops like RIT.
- A school with a social entrepreneurship and community development or civics focus. Where students would work to solve social problems in their community and the world.

REGIONAL PLANNING WORKING GROUP

WORK GROUP CONVENERS AND MEMBERS:

Co-Conveners: Karen Pryor and Jenna Tomasello

Steering Committee Liaisons: Jeff Linn and John Thomas

Members: Mark Foerster, Kathy Lewis, Dan Ross and Beth Sieber

MISSION AND DETAILS:

Our mission was to review relevant research on cross-district, regional collaboration. We worked to assess opportunities for and barriers to success in Rochester/Monroe County, and propose several recommendations/action steps that could be initiated within the next year.

Over the course of approximately sixty days, we met bi-weekly for the month of March, and weekly during the month of April.

BACKGROUND, VALUES, ASSUMPTIONS, AND PARAMETERS:

The New York State Constitution, as interpreted by the New York Court of Appeals in the Levittown, CFE, and Paynter court cases, has allowed the State to meet its obligation by providing funding for “minimally acceptable” educational facilities, equipment, and resources. The Court has determined that if the State provides “adequate funding,” it has been deemed to satisfy its constitutional promise to provide a “sound basic education,” even though student performance remains substandard. This is not satisfactory in today’s complex global society.

Although consolidations or mergers of the RCSD with suburban school districts may create economies of scale and achieve desired socioeconomic integration, it is likely that there is a lack of support for such consolidations or mergers in Monroe County. In the absence of intentional, legal (“de jure”) segregation by suburban school districts, it is highly unlikely that a court would order any such mergers or consolidations to take place. This is despite the fact that segregation is likely the result of public housing and transportation policies.

In this context, the public school structures that will be the most effective will be those that draw students on a voluntary basis from across city and suburban school districts (that is, would be voluntary school choice solutions). Educational and financial incentives should be put in place to achieve this result.

RESEARCH PROCESS, METHOD(S) AND/OR RESOURCES:

We began our charge by reexamining the four policy options Kara Finnigan presented in her keynote at the GS4A Educational Symposium on November 10, 2014:

1. Improve current schools.
2. Adopt place-based approaches, such as wrap-around services.
3. Strengthen cross-district collaboration to enable student movement across boundaries.
4. Create countywide/regional strategies to address issues like educational equity. This may maintain existing district boundaries and autonomy, but transcend those boundaries to develop solutions at a countywide level.

With a focus on the latter two, we broke out into two sub-groups – one that researched selected, currently existing cross-district collaborative strategies across the country and another that researched strategies and other possibilities within N.Y. – and began working on following tasks:

- Review select inter-district programs in the U.S. Policy Option #3
- Review legal/regulatory landscape in NYS. Policy Option #3
- Identify successful strategies/characteristics to use in Rochester/Monroe County. Policy Option #3

- Recommend a feasible local structure or strategy to enable cross-district education. Policy Option #3
- Explore options to enable/facilitate comprehensive regional planning for education. Policy Option #4

One sub-group focused primarily on cross-district strategies in Hartford, CT, Minneapolis, MN, Montgomery County, MD, Omaha, NE, and Raleigh, NC, while a second sub-group examined Tech Valley High, a small regional high school in the Albany Capital Region, NY BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services), the CGR Report A Proposed Model for a County Federation of School Districts (1971), and other information related to the legal and political landscape in Rochester and NY broadly.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. A significant incentivizing or causal event is usually necessary to stimulate change. In all but two of the cities we studied the incentive or causal event for change toward regional solutions was either a court order or threat of a court order, or threatened annexation. The two exceptions are the NYS BOCES legislation and Tech Valley High School of the Capital Region (NYS).
2. Stakeholder buy-in, community consensus, and political will are paramount to achieving an alignment of interests. There are a number of groups that, absent a court order, have near “veto power,” including urban and suburban communities, school leaders, elected officials, etc. Convincing them and keeping them on board will require systemic, concerted effort.
3. Magnet schools are essential to a voluntary program. As opposed to a court-ordered or mandatory program, we need a mix of voluntary, robust, and attractive elementary, middle and high schools located throughout Monroe County to attract families.
4. Socioeconomic goals must be explicit. The mix and location of programs must be designed and monitored to ensure that no school has more than 40% of its students eligible for free/reduced price lunch.
5. A balance between local control and regional collaboration is critical. As a long-term strategy, a model of “federated regionalism” that strikes a balance between local control and regional collaboration should be explored.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Within the next year, propose NYS legislation authorizing creation of regional magnet schools under the umbrella of an organization that could be called the “Great Schools Academy”
 - The Great Schools Academy would include elementary, middle, and high schools throughout Rochester and Monroe County, whose enrollment shall be designed to reflect a desired goal of socioeconomic integration (e.g. 40%).
 - The Great Schools Academy could be a subsidiary of Monroe BOCES 1 and/or Monroe 2/Orleans BOCES, or be created as an organization that has “BOCES-like” features. We believe this to be the appropriate vehicle for the establishment of the Great Schools Academy governance organization and regional magnet schools because BOCES platforms are already well-established precedents and excellent examples for effective regional cooperation in NYS.
 - BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) is established by NYS education law to offer suburban and rural districts opportunities to experience economies of scale and collaborate on educational programming.
 - Member school districts share administrative costs and purchase services as needed.
 - New York’s “Big 5” cities, of which Rochester is one, are excluded from membership, although they may in certain circumstances purchase services from BOCES.
 - Monroe County is currently served by two BOCES.
 - Tech Valley High School in the Capital District is an example of a regional magnet school which is a “subsidiary” of two Albany region BOCES.

- RCSD would be authorized to participate as a member district or purchaser of educational services.
- The Great Schools Academy would be governed by a board representing participating school districts.
- Financial support and transportation would be provided through the home district, tied to student participation.

In order to move ahead toward achievement of recommendation #1, we identified several actions steps to be taken within the next year:

- Visit Tech Valley HS of Albany Capital Region.
- Assemble a GS4A task force and/or fund consultant to explore implementation details, including financing and transportation issues.
- Work with the local and state representatives (Board of Regents, state legislators, others) to craft and advocate for legislation to establish the Great Schools Academy.
- Continue developing buy-in of key constituencies to assure their support.
- Formulate a proactive campaign to educate families of benefits of attending diverse schools.
- Evaluate brand options for academy and school names.

2. Over time, strive to move beyond inter-district collaboration to a more comprehensive “federated regionalism” governance structure.

- With regard specifically to schools, we suggest seeking funding to reconsider and update the 1971 CGR report entitled A Proposed Model for a County Federation of School Districts.
- Because our socioeconomic environment is the result of public policy decisions in many areas such as housing, transportation, tax policy, etc., it is also important to consider more broadly multiple means of addressing the concentration of poverty. GS4A should collaborate with existing regional planning groups to address these issues, e.g., fair-share affordable housing, transportation, pre-K/child care, equitable internet access, anti-racism training, incentive zoning, job retraining, regional tax base sharing, etc.

BACKGROUND RESOURCES:

**All URLs in this PDF are hyperlinked, meaning you can click on the address to launch information online.*

Full Regional Planning Working Group report: <http://gs4a.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Final-RegPlan-Report-5.4.15.pdf>

Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) Schools website <http://www.crecschools.org/about/>

Finnigan, K. S., Holme, J. J., Orfield, M., Luce, T., Diem, S., Mattheis, A., & Hylton, N. D. (2014). Regional educational policy analysis: Rochester, Omaha and Minneapolis’ inter-district arrangements. *Educational Policy*, 1-35. doi: 10.1177/0895904813518102

Greater Hartford Regional School Choice Office website: <http://www.choiceeducation.org/>

Holme, J. J. & Diem, S. (2015). Regional governance in education: A case study of the Metro Area Learning Community in Omaha, Nebraska. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 90(1).156-177. doi:10.1080/0161956X.2015.988546

Holme, J. J., & Finnigan, K. S. (2013). School diversity, school district fragmentation and metropolitan policy. *Teachers College Record*, 115(11), 1-29. Retrieved from: http://tq7xh3ee6l.search.serialssolutions.com.ezp.lib.rochester.edu/find?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info:ofi/enc:UTF8&rft_id=info:sid/summon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=School%20Diversity,%20School%20District%20Fragmentation%20and%20Metropolitan%20Policy&rft.jtitle=Teachers%20College%20Record&rft.au=Jennifer%20Jellison%20Holme&rft.au=Kara%20S%20Finnigan&rft.date=2013-1101&rft.pub=Blackwell%20Publishing%20Ltd&rft.issn=0161-4681&rft.eissn=14679620&rft.volume=115&rft.issue=11&rft.spage=1&rft.externalDocID=3049507991¶mdict=en-US

Holme, J. J., Diem, S., & Mansfield, K. C. (2009). Using regional coalitions to address socioeconomic isolation: a case study of the Omaha metropolitan agreement. Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and

Justice. Cambridge, MA. Retrieved from:

http://www.charleshamiltonhouston.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/OmahaMetroAgreement_Smaller.pdf

Monroe County Educational Planning Committee. (1971). A proposed model for a county federation of school districts. Center for Governmental Research. Rochester, NY. (not available online)

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) website <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/>

NYS Charter School Act of 1998: <http://www.nyccharterschools.org/sites/default/files/resources/>

NYSCharterSchoolsActof1998_with2014amendments.pdf

NYSED Ed Management Services BOCES Primer: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/mgtserv/boces/primer.html>

Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties Website: <http://www.learningcommunityds.org/>

Reference Manual Appendix 7: BOCES: http://www.p12.nysed.gov/mgtserv/accounting/referencemanual/2014ReferenceManual/RefMan_2014_Appendix7_BOCES.pdf

Regional Academy Legislation: (not available online)

Rochester City School District (RCSD) District Profile website: <http://www.rcsdk12.org/domain/8>

Tech Valley High School legislation:

<https://nysosc9.osc.state.ny.us/product/mbrdoc.nsf/0f9d113765ae06b58525666700653b6d/94cbb67e8cb8525a852570bb004c3aa3?OpenDocument>

Tech Valley High School website: <http://techvalleyhigh.org/>

Wells, A. S., Baldrige, B. J., Duran, J., Grzesikowski, C., Lofton, R., Roda, A., Warner, M. & White, T. (2009). Boundary crossing for diversity, equity and achievement: Interdistrict school desegregation and educational opportunity. Cambridge, MA: Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard Law School. Retrieved from http://www.tc.columbia.edu/i/a/document/11666_Wells_Final_wBleeds.pdf

West Metro Education Program (WMEP) website: <https://sites.google.com/a/wmep.k12.mn.us/wmep6069/>

LEGISLATIVE WORKING GROUP

WORK GROUP CONVENERS AND MEMBERS:

Convener: Mark Hare

Members: Larry Marx, Kara Finnigan, Bryan Hetherington, Jonathan Feldman, Don Pryor, Tom Frey, Jenna Tomasello, Mark Hare

MISSION AND DETAILS:

To develop a comprehensive legislative proposal to support a variety of approaches to achieving socioeconomic integration of schools in Monroe County. This group, which predates our November 2014 conference, began meeting in September 2014.

BACKGROUND, VALUES, ASSUMPTIONS, AND PARAMETERS:

Every strategy to reach socioeconomic integration must be voluntary (on the part of school districts and families) since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1974 that busing students across district lines to achieve racial balance is unconstitutional.

RESEARCH PROCESS, METHOD(S) AND/OR RESOURCES:

A series of meetings and inquiries were held to assess support for an interest in strategies to deconcentrate poverty. Those meetings have included representatives from the Assembly Ways and Means staff and from the state Education Department, with city and suburban school administrators, and members of the NYS Board of Regents.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Review and assess recommendations from the 60-day work groups to identify educational strategies that could advance the goal of socioeconomic integration of city/suburban schools. These strategies will likely include, but not necessarily be limited to, countywide magnet schools, an expansion/retooling of Urban Suburban, interdistrict partnerships to permits sharing of staff and resources and exchanges between two or more schools, the redevelopment of select city schools with programming designed to appeal to suburban families.
2. Address the concerns of city and suburban school officials regarding the cost of these interdistrict initiatives and identifying state and federal funds that can protect districts from financial loss during a transition to socioeconomic integration.
3. Identify a governing structure that can facilitate interdistrict agreements, assess proposed interdistrict programs, evaluate those programs and manage human resources across district lines.
4. Prepare a formal proposal by Sept. 15, 2015. This proposal will be shared broadly in the community and we will work to have it acted on by the state Legislature and Board of Regents early in 2016.

OUTREACH AND DIVERSITY WORKING GROUP

WORK GROUP CONVENERS AND MEMBERS:

Convener: Brian Bailey

Steering Committee Liaisons: Michael Ford, Lynette Sparks, John Wilkinson

Members: Margaret Burns, Marc Lavender, Jane Shuffelton, Andy Swinburne, Karen Thomas

MISSION AND DETAILS:

Our mission was to develop ways to carry the GS4A message to a wider community, to engage and broaden a diverse group of people to join the movement to de-concentrate poverty in schools, and to involve everyone who has a heart for or is impacted by the effects of concentrated poverty in schools.

BACKGROUND, VALUES, ASSUMPTIONS, AND PARAMETERS:

We need a holistic approach drawn from multiple perspectives in order to change the response to concentrated poverty in schools.

RESEARCH PROCESS, METHOD(S) AND/OR RESOURCES:

We analyzed an inventory of stakeholders present at the November 2014 GS4A symposium. We listened to feedback from participants at the November symposium regarding who is not “at the table.” We then created an expanded list of people and organizations whose involvement we wish to grow:

- Education
- Health care
- Business
- Faith-based groups
- Media
- Non-profits
- Government
- Social justice groups
- Racial and ethnic organizations
- Parent-student organizations
- Youth groups.

We reached out to groups and individuals we were able to identify.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. The number and range of individuals and groups, both urban and suburban, yet to be reached is large.
2. In order to connect with these constituencies, we will need to build on and enhance personal relationships to bring the broadest possible range of diverse individuals and organizations into the conversation about de-concentrating poverty in schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Ask participants and like-minded supporters to join our efforts to reach out and diversify the GS4A coalition:
 - Help us determine how to build interest in de-concentrating poverty in schools.
 - Learn about the research on concentrated poverty in schools, and share that information with people in their spheres of influence.
 - Help us build the movement with a focus on families impacted most by concentrated poverty in schools.
 - Help us identify and overcome obstacles to growing the GS4A movement.
 - Direct people to our website – www.gs4a.org
 - Seek invitations to speak to community organizations.
 - Invite others to join future work groups.