



May 5, 2015

## **WELCOME...**

to our second *Great Schools for All* (GS4A) community education conference. Whether you have been involved in educational matters for a long time, or whether you are just now joining the conversation, we are grateful for your participation in today's event. We hope you will become our partner in progress as we seek to build consensus around action steps to reduce the concentration of poverty in the Rochester city schools.

Today's event builds on work begun in 2014 and earlier, based on national research, and further informed by a two-way exchange with community leaders from Raleigh/Wake County, N.C. funded by the Rochester Area Community Foundation (RACF). Eleven people traveled to Raleigh in April 2014 and interviewed over 75 community and school leaders to explore ways to break down the effects of concentration of poverty in public schools. Then in November 2014, five Raleigh leaders traveled north to participate in a day-long educational symposium with more than 125 participants from a broad cross-section of the greater Rochester community.

At the symposium in November, we asked participants to identify ways we might better integrate our schools and improve achievement levels, across district lines, while maintaining the current structure of city and suburban school districts in Monroe County. Based on the responses collected that day, GS4A established six work groups, populated by community volunteers who stepped forward and devoted an extraordinary amount of time and energy to establish objectives, review research, assess opportunities, and propose action steps.

Today we hear from those work groups, and you will have a chance to join the conversation and share your input.

We extend special thanks to the staff and members of **Mt. Olivet Baptist Church**, our hosts for today, and to the **Farash Foundation** and **RACF** for their financial support.

Finally, thanks to you for your commitment to ensuring every child has equal access to a great school.

**The GS4A Steering Committee**