



Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland

BACKGROUND PAPER

SEPTEMBER 2011

“Education has the power to transform lives, our economy, our city, and our region.
Education will give our children choices in life, make our economy globally
competitive, and grow the population of Cleveland and the region.”

Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson
March 3, 2011, State of the City Address

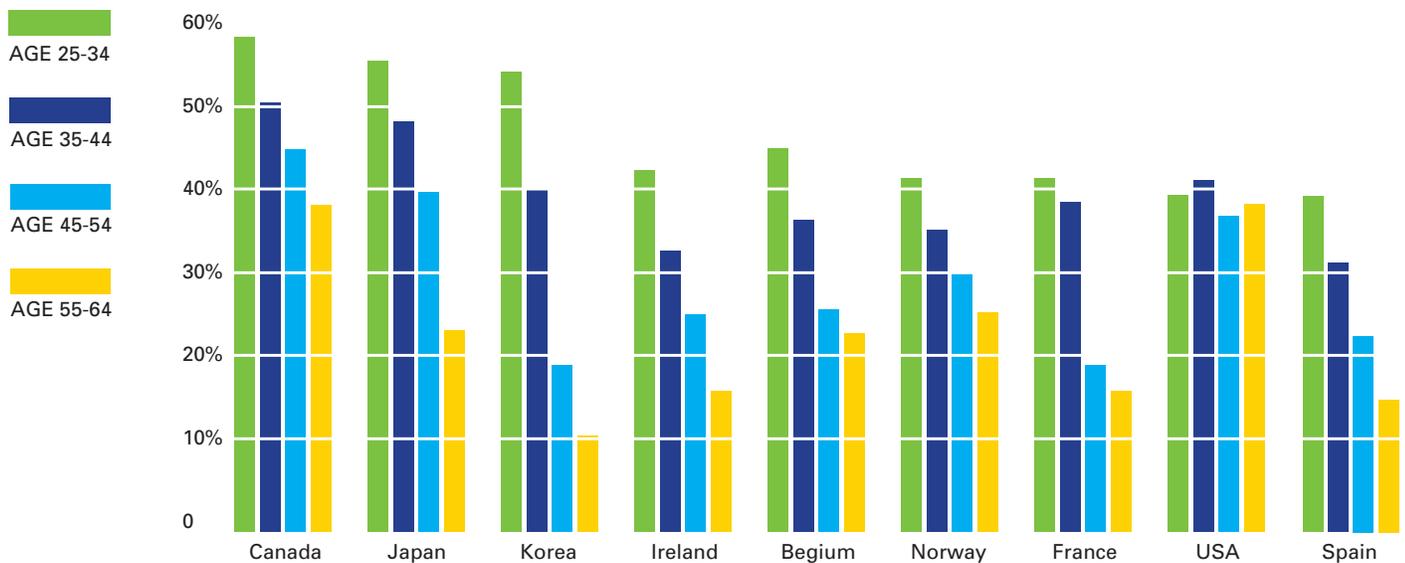
PART I: HIGHER EDUCATION – CRITICAL FOR SUCCESS

Higher educational attainment has never been more critical to the success of our citizens, our community, and our country. Given that nearly 60 percent of newly created jobs require some level of post secondary education, increasingly a college degree has become the economic divide between financial security and financial struggle. On average, the earnings of a college graduate are 1.8 times greater than those of a high school graduate, translating into roughly \$1.3 million in additional lifetime earnings (*Education Pays*, 2007, The College Board). Individuals who have participated in higher education also have lower probability of unemployment and poverty, more fulfilling work environments, better health, and longer lives.

At the societal level, educational attainment rates are a strong predictor of economic strength and prosperity. According to the CEOs for Cities Talent Dividend, a one percent increase in the college attainment rate in Northeast Ohio would boost the region’s economic output by \$2.8 billion annually. In addition, higher rates of education correlate to lower crime rates, greater community service and civic involvement, and a higher tax base.

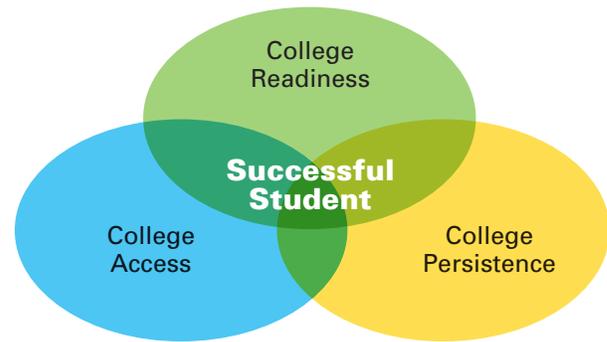
In the 1980s, the United States ranked first on educational rates, but it is losing significant ground. Table I provides data comparing higher education attainment rates by age group in the U.S. and countries that are part of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). All of the countries represented, except the U.S., have seen substantial growth in educational attainment rates among people ages 25 to 34. This has tremendous implications in a global economy, where the education of the workforce is a critical factor.

TABLE 1
Percent of Adults with Associate Degrees or Higher by Age Group, Leading OECD Countries and the U.S. (2006)



Improving higher education attainment is crucial to the future of our nation, state, and community. However only 33.5 percent of Ohioans hold a bachelor’s degree, compared with a national average of 37.4 percent. In Cleveland, the numbers paint an even more sobering picture: only 8 percent of Cleveland residents hold a bachelor’s degree and just 6 percent hold an associate degree.

Research suggests that there are three sets of factors that influence college enrollment and college success, particularly for low income, first generation college students.



College Readiness

Does the student have the content knowledge, critical thinking and research skills, and academic habits to successfully complete college work without remediation?

A significant percentage of students show up for college unprepared for the rigor and amount of work required. According to the Ohio Board of Regents, 39 percent of students under the age of 20 had taken either remedial English or remedial math courses statewide in 2010. Comparatively, at local institutions in 2010, 47 percent of students at Cleveland State University and 52 percent of students at Cuyahoga Community College had taken remedial English or math.

College Access

Does the student have the awareness, opportunity, support, and financing necessary to select and attend a college that is the “right fit?”

Support from multiple sectors – family, school, and community – is critical to helping students pursue and select the right college. School-based support is particularly important for low-income students whose family members typically have not attended college. Yet in Ohio, the average student-to-counselor ratio is 500 to 1, twice the ratio recommended by the Association of School Counselors (250 to 1). In addition, the Advisory Committee on Student Finance estimates that, between 2000 and 2010, 1.4 million to 2.4 million students from low- and middle-income families who qualify for college will not complete a bachelor’s degree because of financial barriers.

College Persistence

Does the student have the academic and self-management skills, resilience, resources, and institutional support to successfully navigate and persevere through college?

While the percentage of Cleveland students who enter college immediately after high school has increased significantly in the last five years from 33 percent to 46 percent, the overall persistence and completion rates are alarming. Data from the National Student Clearinghouse indicate that one-third of Cleveland students who entered college in 2009 did not return the next year. In addition, there is a significant college attainment gap in Ohio. In the case of public and private four-year colleges, the average graduation rate – after six years – is 58 percent for white students, 47 percent for Hispanic students, and 33 percent for African American students. A similar pattern exists for Ohio’s public two-year colleges. The graduation rate – after three years – is 14 percent for white students, 7 percent for Hispanic students, and a mere 4 percent for African American students.

PART II: DEVELOPING A COORDINATED COMMUNITY PLAN

Last year, Mayor Frank Jackson convened a meeting of presidents of local colleges and universities, along with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD), to explore how to increase the number of Cleveland students who attend and successfully complete college. As these discussions progressed, the mayor recognized that there were a number of other efforts underway addressing some of the same issues:

- CMSD had launched its Cleveland Goes to College Program focused on increasing college readiness and college awareness at all grade levels, particularly in middle and high school
- College Now (formally known as the Cleveland Scholarship Program), the region's largest college access program, had targeted community collaborations as a central focus of its new strategic plan
- A number of foundation-facilitated, neighborhood-based initiatives focused, in part, on educational attainment, had emerged in Central (Sisters of Charity Foundation), Buckeye Woodland (Saint Luke's Foundation), Slavic Village (Third Federal), and Greater University Circle (Cleveland Foundation)
- In late 2009, the Northeast Ohio Council on Higher Education launched a regional initiative, named the Talent Dividend, to increase degree attainment. The initiative emphasizes the economic benefits of increasing degree holders in a particular metropolitan statistical area. The Talent Dividend is currently competing with 57 other cities to win the \$1 million prize sponsored by CEOs for Cities
- A group of civic/business and nonprofit organizations, convened by the Cleveland and George Gund foundations, had explored the feasibility of starting a Cleveland Promise scholarship program in Cleveland
- A Living Cities' Career and College Access and Success Working Group had united leaders from the public schools, higher education, the city, and the state to articulate a set of actions for building an education pipeline

Mayor Jackson invited the organizations engaged in these independent efforts to join together in a working group called the Education Forum (the Forum). He charged the Forum with recommending a shared community strategy and infrastructure to increase college readiness, access, and persistence among Cleveland students. Moreover, the mayor underscored the benefits of having a coordinated plan of action which maximized the use of resources. As the process unfolded, a number of other organizations joined the Forum, including the education liaison for the newly elected County Executive Ed Fitzgerald, who had signaled that raising educational attainment levels was a key priority of the new county government.

The Forum, facilitated by Monyka Price (the mayor's chief for education), Amy Morgenstern (a well respected consultant), and Maggie McGrath (program associate at the Cleveland Foundation), has worked diligently over the past nine months to address the mayor's charge. Specifically the group has:

- Identified and reviewed research and best practices related to defining and measuring college readiness, college access, and college persistence
- Collected and analyzed data related to trends in college readiness, access, and persistence rates for CMSD students. This included specific longitudinal student data from the National Student Clearinghouse, the school district, Cleveland State University, Cuyahoga Community College, and College Now. In addition, the group looked at data related to policy and context, including student demographics, college selection patterns, costs of college, and availability of financial aid
- Developed a "college success dashboard" that everyone would use to track indicators correlated to each of the specific components of college success: college readiness, college access, and college persistence (see Attachment 1)
- Explored how other communities are organizing to maximize impact, drawing heavily on the article "Collective Impact" (Kania & Kramer, Winter 2011, *Stanford Social Innovation Review*) which identifies five conditions of collective success: common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and a backbone support organization

PART III: MOVING FROM IDEAS TO COLLECTIVE ACTION

Based on this research and data analysis, and the Forum's applied knowledge, the group presented the following set of recommendations to Mayor Jackson in July, 2011, to create a community coordinated plan and infrastructure to increase educational attainment levels in Cleveland.

Recommendation 1

Launch the Higher Education Compact for Greater Cleveland

The Mayor should create the Higher Education Compact for Greater Cleveland (the Compact), comprised of key institutions, that have agreed to work together to increase the number of Cleveland students who are ready for, have access to, and persist in college. Participating institutions would agree to share data, collaborate across institutions and implement organization-specific action plans focused on improving educational attainment rates in Cleveland. Initially, the Compact would focus on CMSD students, but in the next year will seek to include other communities and non-public schools.

Recommendation 2

Adopt the Dashboard to Measure Progress

The Compact would adopt the "college success dashboard" to track progress on indicators that correlate to college readiness, college access, and college persistence (see Attachment 1). This dashboard would be updated and released each fall beginning in 2011. In addition, the Compact would sponsor an annual spring summit that looks at current trends, policies, and best practices to inform overall strategy and individual institutional plans going forward.

Recommendation 3

Create an Efficient & Effective Organizational Structure

The Compact would adopt a lean organizational structure that leverages and aligns existing institutional human, technological, and financial resources (see Attachment 2). It would be governed by a partnership council consisting of senior leaders from the participating entities who have committed their organizations to specific action plans. Each council member would appoint a representative from his or her organization to serve on a steering committee that would monitor progress, guide overall direction, and facilitate communications across the organizations. Special work teams would be appointed to work on specific issues as needed. In addition, a staff lead will be hired to coordinate the work of the Compact.

Recommendation 4

Continue Planning Process In Three Key Areas

- First, to further support student success, a financial/scholarship component should be developed to deepen the community's support of its students. A city-county task force should be appointed to develop this scholarship program. The task force will make recommendations regarding the potential program's goal(s), scope, eligibility requirements, award amount/conditions, and administrative and governance structure.
- Second, an outreach/expansion work team should be formed to focus on three tasks: (1) develop strategies to increase community awareness about the importance of college attainment; (2) leverage the neighborhood-based work, and (3) articulate the process for including new partners and communities (i.e. first ring suburbs, independent schools, etc.).
- Third, a data management/analysis work team would be appointed to ensure that dashboard-related data is gathered in a timely manner, to identify important trends, and to make recommendations for the ongoing collection and management of the data after the first year.

ATTACHMENT 1 PROPOSED DASHBOARD INDICATORS

Educational Pipeline

- High School graduation rate
- Percentage of high school graduates who enter college
- Percentage of first year college students who persist to year 2
- Percentage of students who graduate college (3 yr. and 6 yr. rate)

Readiness

- Percentage of students passing core coursework with a “C” or better
- Percentage of students participating in Advanced Placement Testing
- Percentage of students earning 3, 4, or 5 on Advanced Placement Tests
- Percentage of students with a “21” or higher on the ACT
- Percentage of students graduating with a 3.0 GPA or higher
- Percentage of high school graduates earning 6+ college credits
- Percentage of high school graduates needing remediation in math or English

Access

- Percentage of students using Naviance Succeed Career and College Planning Software
- Average number of times students take the ACT
- Percentage of students completing at least one college application by February 15
- Average number of completed college applications per student (of those that completed one)
- Approved FAFSA completion rates before February 15

Persistence

- Percentage of students completing remedial coursework within one year
- Percentage of students persisting in college (year 1 to year 2)
- Ratio of credit attempted to credits earned (year 1 to year 2 and cumulative)
- Percentage of students transferring from 2-year to 4-year institutions
- Percentage of students graduating (2-year and 4-year rates)
- Percentage of students graduating (3-year and 6-year rates)

ATTACHMENT 2 PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Partnership Council

<i>Description</i>	<i>Roles / Responsibilities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convened by the Mayor • Meets 3 to 4 times a year • Includes top leaders from partner organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved strategic goals / annual plan • Reports annual progress to the community using dashboard • Commits individual organizations to a set of specific actions

Steering Committee

<i>Description</i>	<i>Roles / Responsibilities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed by Partnership Council • Represents partner organizations • Meets monthly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide overall strategic direction and work teams • Hold parties accountable / monitor progress • Ensure resources are in place / budgeted wisely • Hire, support, and evaluate Initiative Staff Lead • Plan/sponsor annual “emerging trends” forum

Organization of Work

<i>Partner Organizations</i>	<i>Staffing / Support</i>	<i>Work Teams</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary focus of work • Identify / implement specific set of actions to impact outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing Lead located in partner organization • Data management organization • Fiscal Agent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarship Program • Data/emerging trends analysis • Outreach