



Education: stronger partnerships toward better results

What's working

The Minneapolis Promise is a successful partnership that eliminates barriers for youths going to college.

- The number of students taking advantage of the opportunity for free tuition for college or technical school is growing.

We're providing valuable work experience and career exposure to young people.

- The STEP-UP summer jobs initiative provided 1,900 jobs for young people in 2008.
- The Public Works Department has expanded partnerships with the schools and is getting information about public works careers to a diverse group of kids.
- Students are being exposed to engineering and technical fields. Patrick Henry High School has students learning engineering at a first-year college level.
- Female and minority students have the opportunity to visit labs and architecture and engineering firms. When they see professionals who look like them, they can visualize that future for themselves.
- All high schools have College & Career Resource Centers.

Our partnerships are improving relationships between kids and police while increasing safety.

- The Minneapolis Police Department is back in the Minneapolis Public Schools.
- The partnership among the Minneapolis Police Department, Safe Routes to School, crime prevention specialists and neighborhood organizations is making it safer for kids to get to and from school.

What isn't working

The school district's internal culture can be a barrier.

- People say that the Minneapolis Public Schools is not open to partnerships.
- The school district needs to do a better job of articulating how people can help. Otherwise, people bring things to the district that get us off our focus and, when we don't take them up on their offer, they see this as a rejection of their overture.
- Schools don't do a good job of attracting, using and retaining volunteers.

- Diversion programs are using partnerships with faith, community and neighborhood organizations to keep kids out of jail.

We're willing to partner with other entities.

- The school board and City Council are developing a common vision — we're not at odds with one another.
- People in City government understand that educational success is where the hope for the future lies, and the school district remains invested in the City's strategic plan.
- The school district is excited about the potential for more collaboration with police. We hope to redefine the relationship between safety and young people.
- People in the business community are invested in education — they know we have to get this right.
- The school district and the Park and Recreation Board are offering joint after-school programs that include math, science and reading along with physical activities.
- The Youth Coordinating Board is regaining its effectiveness.
- Achieve Minneapolis is galvanizing community resources.

The school referendum won public support.

- Civic leaders talked about the importance of education and advocated for the referendum.
- Individual voters decided to tax themselves for kids they don't know, in fact, for kids who might even frighten them. It is a commitment to the future that speaks volumes: ordinary people made a commitment to kids by investing in education.

It's hard to find resources.

- There are a lot of resources out there for young people, but there's not a good portal for kids and families to know where these resources are.
- Truancy is a top priority of the Police Department, but it's hard to find organizations that can help us with the truancy issue.
- We aren't catching dropouts early.
- After winter break, high school kids get cold feet about their futures. There aren't enough adults to mentor them over that chasm and help them complete a college application.

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What isn't working *continued from previous page*

There aren't enough jobs for young people.

- Students are begging for jobs. There's a huge need for work readiness skills. Kids need jobs to prepare for college and life.

Out-of-school activities aren't accessible.

- Accessibility and transportation are huge issues. Activity buses don't run on weekends. Kids can't get to the downtown public library.
- Kids are worried about their safety in getting to activities.
- Finding out about activities is a problem.
- Cost is sometimes an issue.
- It's hard for parents to coordinate after-school

activities for their kids when school-ending hours vary from school to school.

Economic pressures and family problems reduce opportunities for kids.

- There are smart kids who want to go to college but economic or family circumstances stand in the way.
- Kids want after-school tutoring but they can't go because they have to be home to take care of their little brother or sister. Or, they have to go to work to help pay for food. Kids have to be surrogate parents.
- We have kids who haven't eaten.

What should be done next

Make more jobs and internships available.

- Make the STEP-UP program year-round so there are after-school and weekend jobs.
- Be more flexible about internships and work-based learning opportunities. If a company can no longer afford to offer a paid internship, re-engineer the program as an unpaid internship or find a way for interns to get school credit.

Rethink education.

- Think outside of traditional education boxes and offer classes that offer both an immediate job skill and a vision for a future career. For example, a first responder class offered in high school would develop an immediate job skill and provide a gateway to a future health care career. A welding class can be a gateway to an engineering career. Make it clear to kids that they can get jobs and still continue their education.
- Rethink high school so it can be a more flexible and sophisticated model.
- Make school-ending hours the same from school to school so siblings can participate in after-school programs.

Look for ways to recruit more adults as school volunteers and use them more effectively.

- The school district should provide a clear list of what kind of help is needed.

- City government should help recruit and mobilize school volunteers.
- Implement a "one-call center" for Achieve Minneapolis to improve coordination of career days, work site visits, etc.
- Recruit retirees and older community members on a massive level to help in schools. Allow them to earn a stipend to pay part of their property taxes in exchange for their service.
- Recruit mentors who could spend time with kids who are struggling.
- Recruit volunteers to catch dropouts earlier. During the first week of school, hundreds of adults could knock on doors to find kids who aren't in school and show them we care about their future.
- Recruit adults to work with high school kids to help them finish college or technical school applications.

Improve coordination among agencies.

- Recognize that we can't do it alone. Streamline programs, coordinate efforts and offer more joint programs. Complement one another's programs rather than duplicating efforts.
- Align our policies and vision.
- Lobby the legislature for money for after-school activities so we can take advantage of the McKnight Foundation's matching funds.

"The support for the school referendum was an act of heroism on the part of policymakers and the business community."

- Public Schools administrator
