
Success for Rochester City Students: Making a College Education Attainable

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Prepared for Rochester
Area Community Foundation



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Making a College Education Attainable for Rochester City School Students

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The Community Foundation seeks to use its participation in the Talent Dividend Prize to build on existing community efforts to improve public education within the City of Rochester. Among existing community goals is increasing high school graduation within the Rochester city schools. One strategy, among numerous others, is to make the goal of a successful college education attractive to and attainable for a greater portion of city school students.

On behalf of Rochester Education Foundation, we are grateful to the Community Foundation for its support of this vitally important issue. Rochester Education Foundation seeks to provide programs and resources to improve learning and success for all Rochester city public school students through partnerships with educators, businesses and the community. Increasing college access for city students is a shared goal.

Rochester Education Foundation is grateful to the many community members and practitioners who shared their time and expertise with us, including Rochester City School District leadership, high-level staff from the local colleges and universities, and program directors at dozens of not-for-profits organizations in Rochester.

We are, also, grateful to the community leaders who have focused on this issue in other parts of the country and were willing to share their successes — and challenges — with us: The Kalamazoo Promise, The Minneapolis Promise, The Pittsburgh Promise, On Point for College, Say Yes to Education and The Strive Partnership: Cincinnati, Covington, Newport.

We are indebted to all of these people and organizations.

Given the many efforts of all sizes supporting students in Rochester, we regret any omissions and apologize if we have inadvertently left your organization out of this report.

Pat Braus and Jane Lange, REF

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A target for educational reform in the City of Rochester, New York, has been the low high school graduation rate in the city's public schools, which has hovered around 50% for several years. However, student success in an increasingly competitive economic environment hinges even more critically on college attendance and graduation.

Students who graduate from college are more likely to have a job and make more money than those who do not. Nationally, in 2011, individuals with a bachelor's degree had an unemployment rate of 4.9% — compared to the 9.4% rate of individuals with a high school diploma. Individuals without a high school diploma had an unemployment rate of 14.1%. (http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm/)

College diplomas are increasingly important for student success in a global economy. Indeed, Vicki Phillips of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation said in 2011: "Sixty-four percent of new jobs will require postsecondary education." (PEN Conference, November 2011, Washington, DC).

But in Rochester, and nationally, low-income students face barriers to reaching college. Nationally, too few low-income students apply for, and graduate from, college. A recent study found that 54% of students from wealthy families received college degrees compared to 9% of students from low-income families. (CNN, Nov. 28, 2011, "College Graduation Rates: Income Really Matters" http://money.cnn.com/2011/11/21/news/economy/income_college/index.htm).

There is a general understanding that college is not for all students, and indeed that some students will prosper through other routes. But given a changed economy in Rochester, and nationwide, in which most available jobs require a college education, the need to maximize college-going opportunities among capable students is clear.

Advocates for Rochester students suggest that the current educational environment already has many of the elements required to provide support for students in their quest for college. There are trained counselors in every school, providing a wide range of support services. Colleges in Rochester have in recent years launched ambitious programs in city schools, providing valuable college information and preparation support to city students. Large and small not-for-profit organizations are providing mentoring programs, in-school college-preparation centers and college advocates. Many generous scholarships are available.

But these elements are provided in a manner that is inconsistent and not substantial enough to serve all students. Not-for-profit and college support programs are clumped in certain schools, and non-existent in others. "The approach has to change," noted Rochester City School District (RCSD) Superintendent Dr. Bolgen Vargas. "We are offering a fragmented approach when we need to provide a more rigorous systemic-oriented approach to students and families."

Many of those interviewed for this report describe a situation in which students need far more than the school system is able to offer. Efforts to support students must grapple with a community of students whose families have no experience with higher education.

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Superintendent Vargas notes that most parents of city students do not have any experience applying to, or attending college.

Advocates for students also describe a school system that does not begin early enough to prepare students for applying to college.

Limited information exists regarding how many city students go to college and graduate from college from year to year, creating barriers to tracking progress and setting goals for improvement. Although school systems in many national urban areas, including nearby Syracuse, New York, use software to determine student college-going outcomes, Rochester does not.

However, there is also hope and enthusiasm regarding the potential for change. Some of this is driven by advances in research and the tracking of students through technology, which have identified key elements of college-going success.

Some of this is also driven by the emergence of collaborative models in other similarly challenged communities that provide greater support for students and have shown that positive changes can be made. These include data-driven city-wide campaigns to increase college-going, and community-wide “Promise” programs offering free tuition to enable local students to attend local colleges. These national programs offer valuable models for Rochester to consider.

This research offers an overview of in-school and out of school services provided to Rochester students to prepare them for college. Additionally, this research offers descriptive information on efforts made by other United States cities to expand the pool of successful students attending and graduating from college.

Our primary findings are as follows:

1. RCSD needs to have and use data and data systems to determine how many city students submit college applications, attend college and graduate from college.
2. RCSD should provide more support and guidance in school so that students can reach their full potential for going to college.
3. The community should provide additional support for city students in the form of advisors, mentors, and other assistance to help students reach their full potential.
4. The Rochester community should create goals for a focused college-going campaign for city students. Rochester risks falling behind similar communities in educational attainment at a time when educational attainment is more important than ever for success.

Successful Rochester city school students exist at every high school, students who graduate high school, enter college and graduate college, often the first in their families to do so. But many students fail to enter college due to a variety of reasons. What occurs in RCSD public schools to support city students in their preparation for college, and what are the barriers to doing a better job?

SUCCESS AND CHALLENGES FOR RCSD STUDENTS

School Support

The RCSD focuses its college preparation support for students on high school students. RCSD counselors oversee the process. They are responsible for guiding students through the college application process as well as addressing the many other academic and social-emotional issues that students face during their academic career.

A counselor is responsible, by law, for providing “an annual review of each student’s educational progress and career plans, with such reviews to be conducted with each student individually or with small groups.” in city schools. The district’s average counselor-to-student ratio in secondary schools is 1 to 206. But ratios of counselor to students range from one counselor to 119 students at Vanguard Collegiate High School to one counselor to 285 students at Northeast College Preparatory High School at Douglass Campus.

The district follows guidelines provided by the College Board (and other sources) for College Preparation. RCSD efforts to prepare students include:

- Sophomore and Junior PSAT exam participation,
- Newsletters (at some schools),
- SAT preparation provided by private tutoring programs hired by the district,
- A website offering information about college readiness, including a grade-by-grade action plan,
- College Goal Sunday (event for students and families to provide support with financial aid applications and information about college),
- Group college tour(s),
- Scholarship information shared with students,
- Career and self-interest inventories,
- Partnerships with other agencies, including Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection, Upward Bound and College Prep Centers in certain schools through the University of Rochester,
- Visits from college representatives to high schools.

How well does this support system work? Student advocates suggest that it varies from school to school and counselor to counselor. But there is overall agreement that substantial challenges exist. These include concerns about how much time counselors have to work with individual students, how much support do parents and students receive related to financial aid prospects, and how many opportunities do they have to see and experience college?

How many students go to college from the city school district? Data for Rochester city students is limited in scope. It is self-reported by students at graduation rehearsals at the end of the school year. Students tell city school counselors at that time whether they are going to two-year or four-year colleges, the military or employment, their scholarship monies, and their potential college major.

Self-reported data is not as dependable as other types of data. The data provided and reviewed here is presented without being checked or confirmed by student college records.

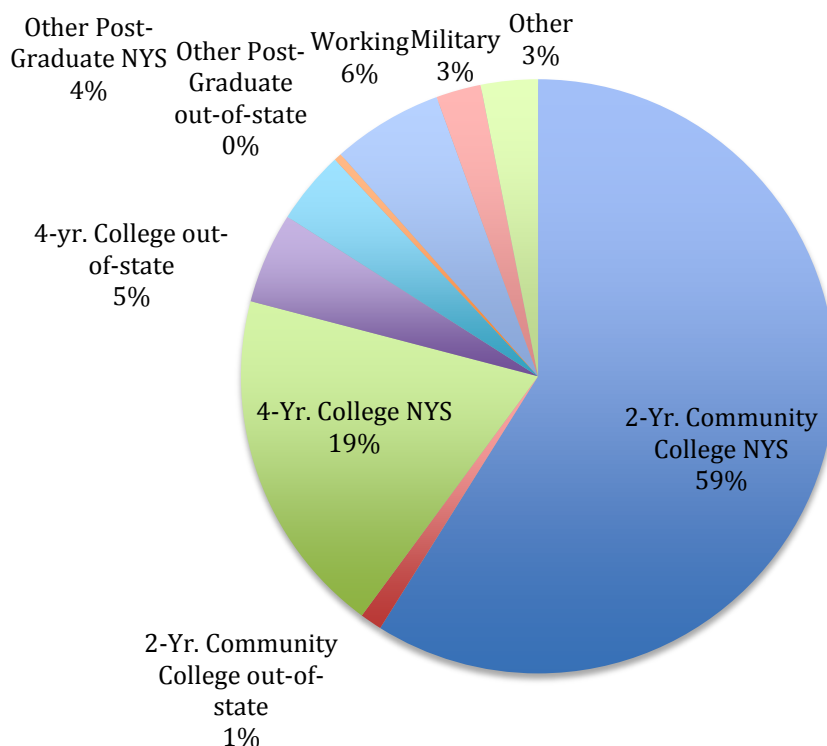
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Such confirmation is increasingly prevalent in other public school systems as data-based tools increase tracking abilities. Additionally, no distinction is made between full- and part-time attendance at two- or four-year schools, a significant distinction.

Data from RCSD's graduating seniors suggests a range of student post-graduate plans. In 2010, 1,677 RCSD students received diplomas:

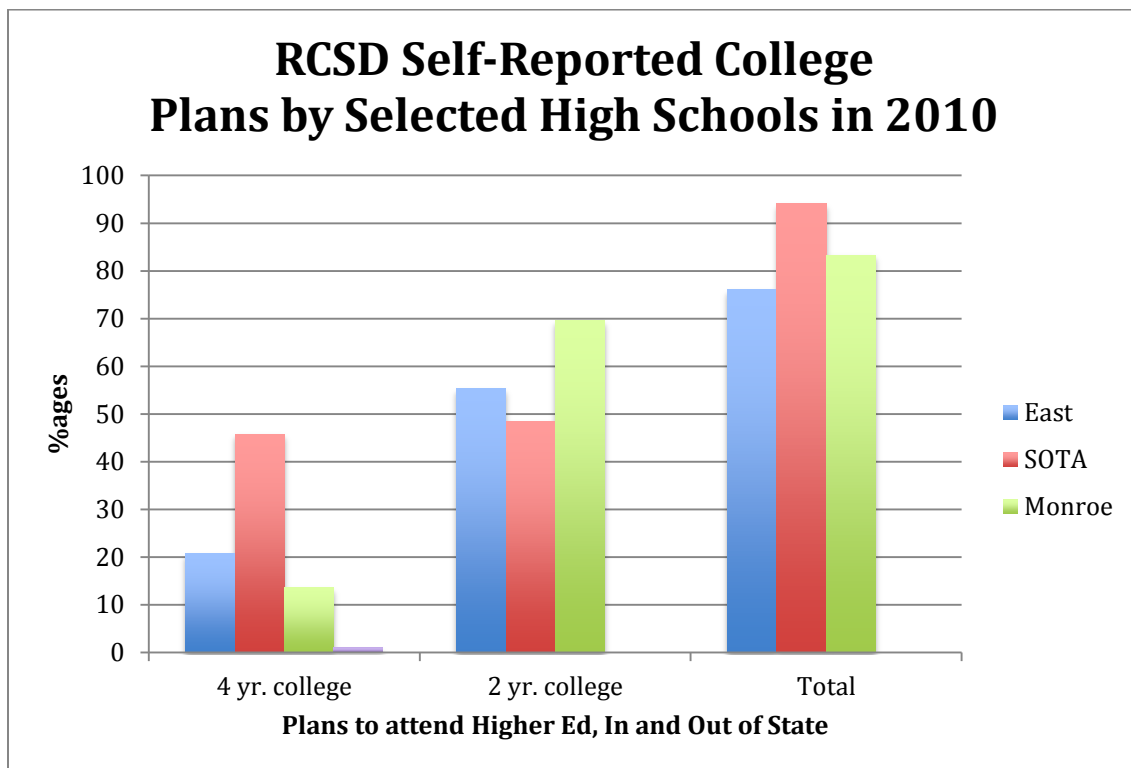
- Most students said they would be attending community college, with 58.9% (988) saying they would attend a two-year college in New York State, and 1.2% (20) reporting that they would attend a community college out of state.
- About one in four students said they would be attending a four-year college, with 19% (318) reporting plans to attend college in New York State, and 4.9% (83) planning to attend college out of state.
- A total of 4% (67) said they would be doing other post-graduate studies in New York State and 0.4% (7) said they would be doing other studies out of state.
- A total of 6% (101) said they would be working.
- A total of 2.4% (41) said they would be entering military service.
- The remaining 3.1% (52) said they had other plans.

RCSD Graduating Students Self-Reported After High School Plans 2010



Data from three city schools suggests a large variation in college plans. Data from East High School in 2010 found that 20.7% were planning to attend a four-year school in or out of New York State, and 55.3% were planning to attend a two-year college in or out of New York State. Monroe High School data shows that 13.7% planned to attend a four-year college in or out of New York State, while 69.6% planned to attend a two-year college in or

out of state. In contrast, at School of the Arts, a total of 45.8% of students planned to attend a four-year college in or out of New York State, and 48.4% of students planned to attend a two-year college in or out of New York State.



It is important to consider that only approximately 50% of RCSD students graduate. If all students — including students who do not graduate in four years — were considered, then only one in eight city students would be planning to go to a four-year college. Similarly, instead of 60% planning to attend a two-year college, it would be 30%.

How do Rochester students compare to other students in New York State? Not well. In 2010, 46.7% of the state's public high school graduates entered a four-year college, and 32.6% entered a two-year college. In non-public high schools, 77.7% of graduates entered a four-year college, and 13% entered a two-year college (www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/statistics/hsgrads/2010/table1.pdf).

Looking forward, RCSD Director of School Counseling Dr. Andrea Lemos suggests three key focus areas:

- Greater coordination of, access to, and consistency of resources, supports, and systems across schools, especially related to college and career readiness.
- Increased awareness of the role and responsibility of the counselor (in partnership with students, families, community partners, etc.) in supporting students in academic, college and career, and personal/social/emotional domains including supporting earlier intervention in these areas and earlier information to students about college and career planning and readiness.
- Increased connections with families and additional mentoring support (positive connections with trusted adults).

Challenges

The topic of college readiness is a dynamic area of research, given the many challenges facing students in urban areas like Rochester. Scholars at Stanford and Brown Universities have identified a College Readiness Indicator System with three key areas of college readiness (http://jgc.stanford.edu/our_work/cris.html). These are:

- Academic Preparedness,
- College Knowledge and
- Academic Tenacity.

Interviews with student advocates in Rochester suggest that students in the RCSD face significant challenges in all three of these key areas.

Academic Preparedness is a significant challenge for city students in Rochester. This can lead to students not having the academic tenacity to stick with college. Dr. Bonnie Rubenstein, who recently retired as RCSD Director of School Counseling, noted that student academic limitations are a big concern for district educators. “The biggest concern, we’re sending kids to college and they’re not ready... We can get them in (to college). They want kids who have survived the urban experience.” But once students get to college, they often struggle to stay in. “The attrition rate is horrible.”

Reading proficiency is a significant concern, with only 23% of third graders scoring at a passing level on English Language standardized tests in 2012. This is meaningful, because researchers say that students who are not proficient readers by the end of third grade are far less likely to graduate high school than those who can read well at that time. In the city schools, only 19% of 8th graders had passing rates in 8th grade English Language exams. (Grade 3 English Language Arts, RACF, August 2012/ACT Rochester). These dismal figures mean that city students are more likely than others students to be at a disadvantage when writing and reading college application forms, and writing essays as part of their college application forms. They will also face significant reading and writing challenges when they enter college.

College knowledge is also deficient. One reason is because of the low level of educational attainment among Rochester city school parents, with 43% of parents enrolling students in RCSD kindergarten reporting that they did not initially finish high school, according to trend data consistent since the late 1990s. “Most of the parents don’t have any direct experience themselves with pursuing higher education,” said Andrew MacGowan, project administrator, division of internal operations at RCSD.

Researchers suggest that parents often play a key role in helping students become college ready. Because of this, city students enter a world of complex rules and knowledge at a disadvantage compared to students with parents who are college-educated.

The college admissions process is a challenging one for any high school student, even those whose parents graduated from college. One measure of this is the preponderance of products such as private counselors charging as much as \$300 per hour to assist students in their SAT preparation, and private services that help students apply to college (*New York Times*: A Hamptons Summer: Beach, Horses and SAT Prep, Jenny Anderson, Aug. 13, 2012

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and <http://theivycoach.com/the-ivy-coach-blog/college-admissions/college-admissions-faq/>).

While more affluent families routinely offer their high-school sophomores or juniors tours of college campuses, low-income families are unlikely to do so. Families where parents have not graduated from college also are extremely unlikely to have legacy relationships with colleges, through which the children of donor-graduates may have early knowledge of college campuses from family, and at some schools have an admissions advantage. (<http://chronicle.com/article/10-Myths-About-Legacy/124561/>). This puts low-income students at a disadvantage.

Financial issues are immense for low-income families, and 9 out of 10 Rochester city school students are at or near the poverty level. On the most practical level, college advocates report that many low-income families are leery about filling out financial-aid forms. James Daniels, program manager, college preparation for the Center for Youth, noted: “We have the hardest struggle dealing with parents. They don’t want to supply information for financial aid.”

Additionally, experts report that many low-income families do not know that the large price tag for college is often reduced or waived for promising low-income students. Nor are they educated about the dangers of accumulating educational loan debt. Annette Rouse of The Urban League noted that one student accumulated more than \$100,000 in debt at a college out of state, when she also had been admitted to a much less costly school in state. Ms. Rouse noted that she wished the student had been better advised.

RCSD Superintendent Dr. Bolgen Vargas said that RCSD students, whose parents typically did not attend college, need a higher level of support than other students. “If you are going to break the cycle, you need to bring it to their attention and support them.”

Lillian Colon, a Hillside Family Service Assistant at Ibero-American Action League, visits families of the students she mentors from her base at Monroe High School. She is one of only a few such advisors in the city schools. She notes: “Every family needs that — someone to talk to and say, ‘You can accomplish your dreams as a parent.’”

Latino students face additional disadvantages because of language barriers and the likelihood of families moving frequently during the student’s academic life. Latinos in the city school district had a 38% graduation rate in 2008 — far under the district’s 51% rate that year. (School Experiences of Latina, Warner School, 2008).

With so many students needing so much support, city school counselors find their services in great demand. However, the number of counselors in Rochester city schools has been cut in recent years. When counselor numbers are cut, counselors are often moved to different schools, breaking up prior relationships they may have had with students. This does not help foster student support. Having so many students per counselor creates a difficult situation given the many needs low-income students have to get adequate college-going support. One national report noted that:

The current structure of middle and high schools is inadequate to prepare minority, low-income, and first-generation students to attend college and to change that condition will

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require significantly transforming high schools.

(<http://www.nacacnet.org/research/PublicationsResources/Marketplace/Documents/Counseling-In-AmericanHS.pdf>)

Counselors in Rochester have multiple duties, including many which have nothing to do with college preparation. Rochester youth advocates suggest that counselors are often too busy to provide the substantial level of support needed by students. “A lot of time counselors are so bogged down by scheduling that (college counseling) is not their focus,” said one advocate who works with city students. “When they’re being utilized for hall sweeps, the cafeteria — they don’t have the time to do this.”

There is also concern about when city schools begin addressing college readiness, with some schools beginning as early as 9th grade, and others not addressing the topic until 11th grade. Experts suggest that students must consider college early so they can plan their course work and acquire the essential knowledge needed to apply to college. “Mentoring has to start early. Even 9th to 11th grade is too late,” said Rod Green, former Executive Director, Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection. One study that called for beginning college readiness in middle school, noted that while most students planned a “post-secondary” education, a majority of students were not encouraged to take the necessary college preparatory courses. This is a problem, reported the ACT Policy Report “College Readiness Begins in Middle School.”

The array of programs offered to Rochester city students suggests a willingness in the community to address the challenges faced by urban youth considering higher education. The next section explores the scope of local programs offering college-going support to Rochester students.

LOCAL COLLEGE PREPARATION AND ACCESS PROGRAMS

(IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER BY POPULATION SERVED AND TYPE)

SECTION 1: COMMUNITY-WIDE PROGRAMS

These are programs offered to all Rochester City School District students. These programs also provide services to Rochester students in non-RCSD schools and students from other districts.

The College at Brockport CMST summer course and field trips for students

Contact: Osman Yasar, 585-395-2595, oyasar@brockport.edu

Program Description and Goals: The Computational Math, Science, and Technology (C-MST) Institute at Brockport trains RCSD and Brighton teachers in the use of C-MST pedagogy in mathematics, science, and technology. This program offers a one-week summer course at the College to introduce at-risk high school students to computer science and college life.

High and Highlights: Begun in 2003.

Rochester students served: 20 students per year.

Hillside Family of Agencies Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection

1 Mustard Street, Rochester, NY 14609

Contact: Don Armstrong, darmstro@hillside.com

Program Description and Goals: This program has a significant presence in the RCSD, providing skills development and job training for students at every high school. The program also provides one-on-one mentoring services for at-risk youth. It works to keep students in school with the goal of graduation, post-secondary preparation and connection to the world of work.

HW-SC program coordinators help juniors and seniors prepare for college. Their activities include college tours, SAT and ACT preparation, and vocational tours. Additionally, program coordinators offer seniors transition workshops, helping students fill in college applications, write college essays and obtain high school transcripts for college. Part of the Hillside program involves seeking partnerships, which enable students to receive scholarships and incentives for post-secondary education. Hillside uses the National Student Clearinghouse to obtain data to document their participants' college enrollment. HW-SC navigators provide services for HW-SC graduates who enroll at MCC. Located at the MCC Brighton campus, navigators help students assimilate into college life, learn about resources that help them stay in college and meet their educational goals.

Program History and Highlights: The program was founded in 1987 in response to a Call for Action from the Urban League of Rochester and the Council for Educational Development to reduce the city's dropout rate. Since then, the Rochester program has been reproduced in Syracuse, Buffalo and Prince George's County, Maryland. The program reports a 15% higher graduation rate for students enrolled as 9th graders in 2006 vs. students not enrolled in program. Launched initially as Wegmans Work Scholarship Connection, it transitioned over to Hillside Family of Agencies in 1996 and became Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection.

Rochester students served: 2,400

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Ibero Latino Family Day

911 East Main St., Rochester, NY 14605

Contact: Jayme Bermudez, jayme.bermudez@iaal.org

Program Description and Goals: Partnership with MCC in April 2012 brought 90 participants to MCC, including city families and suburban families. Families experienced fun activities, a scavenger hunt, and received information about requirements for admission to MCC and courses offered by the college.

Program Highlights and History: New program. Thirty-three of the 38 participants who completed evaluations said they were more familiar with college as a result of the event.

Rochester students served: 100 families

MCC Upward Bound

Monroe Community College, Damon City Campus, 228 East Main St., Rochester, NY 14604

Contact: Kathleen Schiefen, Dean, Academic Services, Damon City Campus,
kschiefen@monroecc.edu

Program Description and Goals: The Federal TRIO Upward Bound Program at MCC helps RCSD student grades 9 through 12 with high school academics as well as the college admission, enrollment, and financial aid processes. The program is designed with the U.S. Department of Education's goal of generating the skills and motivation necessary for low-income, first-generation students to complete high school and to enter and succeed in college. Currently more than 80% of program participants are potential first-generation college students who need academic support in order to be successful beyond high school; the remaining participants are either low-income, first-generation, or have a high risk of academic failure as defined by TRIO program regulations.

History and Highlights: TRIO Upward Bound has operated at MCC's Damon City Campus for 13 years. The average program retention of participants is 80%; average graduation rate of participants is 80%; average college going rate of participants is 76%; there are 5 valedictorians; college completion: approximately 12 Associate degrees, 17 Baccalaureate degrees, 4 Masters degrees; 8 Certifications including LPN and CDL licenses; five of the program's alumni are either on active duty or recently served in the Armed Forces.

Rochester students served: The program is currently funded to serve 60 students per year. To date it has served approximately 200 students; more than 80% of them first generation and low income.

MCC Dual Enrollment

School to College Alliances, Brighton Campus, Monroe Community College, Learning Centers, Building 11, Room 261C, Rochester, NY 14623

Contact: Mary Rizzo, Coordinator, Dual Enrollment Program, MCC, mrizzo@monroecc.edu

Program Description and Goals: Dual Enrollment allows high school students to enroll in college classes while still in high school. The courses count both for credits needed to complete high school as well as college credit. The courses are offered at the high school and taught by high school teachers, who have been certified by MCC and are mentored by MCC faculty.

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History and Highlights: Begun in 1995, as an outgrowth of the Tech Prep Program, the program's goal is to help prepare students for college by providing the rigor and experiences consistent with college-level coursework while still in high school. According to national research findings, students who take dual enrollment courses are more likely to graduate from high school, enroll, and persist in college (Oregon University, 2010).

Rochester students served: Approximately 4,200 total students from urban/suburban districts, public and private schools and BOCES per year. Students are predominantly from Monroe County but also from surrounding counties. Dual Enrollment classes are offered at the following city schools/campuses: East High School, Monroe High School, Edison Campus, Wilson High School, and Charlotte High School to approximately 200 students/year. They are also offered at charter schools within the city.

MCC STEP (Science and Technology Entry Program)

MCC Damon City Campus, 228 E. Main St., Suite 5222, Rochester, NY 14604

Contact: Joann Santos, Director of STEP, jsantos@monroecc.edu

Program Description and Goals: MCC's STEP, funded through a legislative grant provided through the New York State Education Department, seeks to increase the number of historically underrepresented or economically disadvantaged individuals in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and the Licensed Professions (referred to as STEM-L fields). STEP scholars are academically strong students in grades 7 through 12 who have demonstrated an interest and commitment to pursue post-secondary education in a STEM-L field. A comprehensive academic program, STEP programming includes academic enrichment activities, college and career advisement and guidance, networking, personal development, experiential experiences in STEM-L, college and business tours, poster sessions and mentoring.

History and Highlights: For the 2011-2012 school year, 44 students were enrolled in MCC STEP. These scholars participated in local science and math bowls, RIT Imagine, and Day of Service at the STEM School. Beginning with the 2012-2013 year, STEP will transition to a "push-in" program at city and/or suburban middle and high schools.

Rochester student served: Currently, STEP is at the Rochester Academy Charter School and is anticipating an enrollment of about 150 students in grades 7-12. MCC also plans to begin STEP programs at East High School and Monroe High School in the 2012-13 academic year.

RIT STEP (Science and Technology Entry Program)

Rochester Institute of Technology, Office of K-12 Programs-1333 Bldg. 13, 24 Lomb Memorial Drive, Rochester, NY 14623

Contact: Michelle Allevato, STEP Director, mmak12@rit.edu

Program Description and Goals: The RIT Science and Technology Entry Program, or STEP, is a state-funded grant program that provides academic enrichment and college and career exploration to students in grades 9-12. Through activities such as hands-on workshops, tutoring, mentoring, college & career exploration, field trips, summer camps, a Saturday academy at RIT, and leadership training, STEP exposes students to a variety of careers in science, technology, math, health-related fields, and licensed

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professions. The purpose of STEP is to prepare historically underrepresented or economically disadvantaged secondary school students for entry into postsecondary degree programs in scientific, technical, mathematics, engineering, health-related fields, and the licensed professions.

History and Highlights: RIT has administered the STEP program for the past 10 years, currently serving 300 students with approximately 120 from the RCSD. The program staff are currently working in all of the Edison high schools (Rochester STEM High School, Robert Brown High School of Construction and Design, Edison Senior High School).

Rochester students served: Currently, the RIT STEP program serves 9th–12th grade students at the three RCSD schools at the Edison Tech complex (104 students), 7th–12th grade students at the Rush-Henrietta School District, and 7th–11th grade students at Greece Olympia High School. The June 2012 graduation rate for Edison Tech students was 90%, with 27 out of 30 students graduating.

Urban League of Rochester Black Scholars Early Recognition Program

Urban League of Rochester, 265 North Clinton Ave., Rochester, NY 14605

Contact: Shelia J. James, Vice President of Program Planning, Research & Evaluation, sjames@ulr.org

Program Description and Goals: This program provides recognition, assistance and incentives to students in the Greater Rochester metropolitan area (the City of Rochester and six surrounding counties) who achieve a cumulative GPA of “B” or better in high school. Workshops are held every spring and fall to prepare students and their parents for the college selection process, admissions testing, completion of college applications, financial aid paperwork, and “college survival.” The program identifies promising students based on 9th-grade academic performance, then invites them to participate in workshops on a broad range of topics related to preparation for college. Every event includes a parent workshop. Students who graduate from high school with a “B” average or better are honored at an annual Salute to Black Scholars Dinner. Black Scholars are eligible to apply for Urban League scholarships provided by companies, organizations and colleges. Each fall an Early Recognition Ceremony is held to recognize and encourage students in grades 9 through 12 who are on track to become Urban League Black Scholars by the end of their senior year.

History and Highlights: The Urban League’s Black Scholars program was established in 1980. To date, approximately 8,000 graduating seniors have been recognized as Black Scholars. In 1985, the Early Recognition component of the Black Scholars program was started to recognize and encourage academic achievement among students beginning in their freshmen year of high school.

Rochester Students Served: About 1,500 students from the six-county area participate in the program during their high school years. In June 2012, 289 graduating seniors were recognized as Black Scholars. A total of 34% of these students attended RCSD schools.

Urban League Afterschool Academy

Urban League of Rochester, 265 North Clinton Ave., Rochester, NY 14605

Contact: Shelia J. James, Vice President of Program Planning, Research & Evaluation, sjames@ulr.org

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Program Description and Goals: Afterschool Academy is a selective academic achievement program with two core components: **Project Achieve** for 7th and 8th graders and **Project Excel** for 9th through 12th graders. Students enrolled in one of the core programs also have the option of enrolling in one or more of three specialty programs: Project Ready, Project Ready STEM, and Project Arts. **Project Ready** provides intensive college preparation services to African American male students in grades 8 through 12. **Project Ready STEM** provides academic support for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math related class work and exposes students to careers in STEM. **Project Arts** offers females in grades 8 through 12 an opportunity to explore the Arts (i.e. dance, drama, creative writing, voice, music, and fine arts). Each component provides academic support, social development, cultural and global awareness, recreational activities and other support services. The goals of the Academy are to promote school retention, academic accomplishment, college preparation, social development and cultural awareness.

History and Highlights: Projects Excel and Achieve started in 2008, while Project Ready was launched in 2006. Project Ready STEM started in the fall of 2010 and Project Arts is a new program for the 2012–2013 school year. Annually, more than 95% of students in Projects Excel and Achieve are promoted to the next grade level. All graduating seniors enrolled in Project Ready have enrolled in college (11 students in 2012).

Rochester Students Served: Projects Achieve and Excel serve over 100 students per year, with RCSD students making up 57% of the students. On average Project Ready serves 30 students from the metropolitan area per year, and approximately one third of the students attend RCSD schools. Project Ready STEM serves about 30 students per year and close to two-thirds are RCSD students.

University of Rochester Upward Bound: Upward Bound Classic, Upward Bound Math/Science

David T. Kearns Center for Leadership and Diversity in Arts, Sciences and Engineering, University of Rochester, 717 Hylan Building, PO Box 270415, Rochester, NY 14627-0415

Contact: Anthony Plonczynski, Associate Director, Pre-College Programs,
aplonczynski@admin.rochester.edu

Program Description and Goals: The U.S. Department of Education TRIO-funded Upward Bound programs are year-round programs at the University of Rochester. Each comprehensive program supports and challenges high school students. It helps them make a successful transition from high school to college. The Math/Science program specifically focuses on the prospect of students majoring in areas of math or science. It is designed to help low-income and/or first generation RCSD students become the first members of their families to attend college.

History and Highlights: 96% of Upward Bound students are enrolled and admitted into college.

Rochester students served: 65- 75 Rochester students served per year, per program.

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SECTION 2: PROGRAMS SERVING MULTIPLE CITY SCHOOLS

These are programs offered in multiple RCSD schools.

The College at Brockport, SUNY, The Talent Search Program

McNair Program, SUNY College at Brockport, 350 New Campus Drive, Brockport, NY 14420-2943

Contact: Barbara Thompson, Project Director, CSTEP/McNair, bthompso@brockport.edu

Program Description and Goals: This program identifies and assists individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in higher education. It provides academic, career, and financial counseling to its participants and encourages them to graduate from high school and continue on to and complete their postsecondary education. Each RCSD high school where the program exists has a Talent Search Outreach Coordinator who provides tutorial services, career exploration, aptitude assessments, counseling, mentoring programs, workshops, information on postsecondary institutions, and education or counseling services designed to improve the financial and economic literacy of students.

History and Highlights: This program was first funded in September 2011 and will continue through 2016.

Rochester students served: In 2011-12, the program served students at Douglass, Marshall, Jefferson and Franklin. In 2012-13, the program is at Northeast and Northwest College Preps at Douglass, Marshall (All City), Wilson and Monroe. Each Outreach Coordinator works with 165 students a year so the Brockport program serves 660 students.

Ibero-American Action League, Inc., Bry Mentor Program

Ibero-American Action League, 911 East Main St., Rochester, NY 14605

Contact: Jayme Bermudez, jayme.bermudez@iaal.org

Program Description and Goals: This program provides mentors for students at four city high schools, offering case management, crisis intervention, referrals and long-term mentoring involving students, their families and their teachers. In 2012, the program had mentors at East, Edison, and Monroe High Schools, and at the Franklin Educational Center. Students in need of additional school support are paired with mentors.

History and Highlights: The program is more than a decade old. Mentors get to know students and make home visits to families. Students participating in the program also receive support for investigating college, applying to college and visiting colleges. Mentors also facilitate workshops for the community on communications and filling out financial aid forms. The program is supported by the United Way and the RCSD.

Rochester students served: 150 at Monroe and Edison

MCC Liberty Partnerships

Monroe Community College, Damon City Campus, 228 East Main St., Rochester, NY 14604

Contact: Kathleen Schiefen, Dean, Academic Services, Damon City Campus, kschiefen@monroecc.edu

Program Description and Goals: Liberty Partnerships (LPP), a program funded by the NYS

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Department of Education, provides academic and personal support services to at-risk RCSD youth in grades 7-12. Its goal is to ensure that program participants graduate from high school and enter post-secondary education and/or the workforce as highly competent young adults. LPP offers academic enrichment, tutoring, college and career exploration, life skills strategies, counseling, community service opportunities, social and cultural experiences, as well as activities for parents. LPP recruits from 6 RCSD target campuses. The targets are East, the schools at Edison, Northeast and Northwest College Prep, Wilson Commencement, and World of Inquiry. A part-time on-site advisor is assigned to each target school to provide case management and academic support. After-school tutoring is held at the Damon City Campus — the downtown campus of Monroe Community College.

History and Highlights: LPP has provided academic and personal support services to RCSD students in grades 7-12 for the past 23 years.

Rochester students served: LPP has served an average of 200 students per year.

National Council of Jewish Women “Consider College”

P.O. Box 92444, Rochester, NY 14692

Contact: Mollie Traub, mtraub@rochester.rr.com

Program Description and Goals: Consider College is an academic and career-mentoring project of the National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Rochester section. Its goal is to provide selected Rochester City School District students with the support necessary to acquire a positive attitude and confidence as learners so they realize that in the future all doors and possibilities are open to them to pursue higher education.

History and Highlights: Program highlights include annual local college campus visits as well as a job-shadowing day and visits to local arts and cultural events and institutions.

Rochester students served: 40 in total, male and female.

University of Rochester Kearns Center College Prep Centers: College Prep Center at East High School, College Prep Center at Franklin Educational Campus

Pre-College Programs, David T. Kearns Center for Leadership and Diversity in Arts, Sciences and Engineering, University of Rochester, 717 Hylan Building, PO Box 270415, Rochester, NY 14627-0415

Contact: Anthony Plonczynski, Coordinator, College Prep Center, The David T. Kearns Center for Leadership and Diversity in Arts, Sciences and Engineering, aplonczynski@admin.rochester.edu

Program Description and Goals: This program provides privately-funded college preparatory drop-in centers for 7th to 12th graders at East High School and the Franklin Educational Campus. There is also a pilot program currently being offered at Wilson Commencement High School. The program is seeking to expand during the 2012-2013 year to the All-City High School, Monroe High School and the Edison Educational Campus. The centers are made possible with support from JPMorgan Chase Foundation (at East High School), the Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation (The Franklin Educational Campus) and the Rochester AmeriCorps program. The program supplements school counselors, providing support and outreach to students and families during and after school hours. The school counselors still oversee the college process for students. The program

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aims to encourage a culture of “college-going” so that students are comfortable with their ability to navigate the college search process. The goal is 100% college readiness for city high school students.

History and Highlights: The program was launched as a pilot program in March 2010 at East High School by the David T. Kearns Center for Leadership and Diversity in Arts, Sciences and Engineering, and the University of Rochester Undergraduate Enrollment Office.

Rochester students served: Program is new; statistics only available for 2011-2012 school year. In that year, 449 students were served at East HS, one-on-one, including 61% (115 students) of the graduating senior class receiving one-on-one services and 100% (189 students) receiving services through workshops, interventions, one-on-one or drop in services.

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SECTION 3: PROGRAMS SERVING SINGLE CITY SCHOOLS

These are programs offered at a single RCSD school.

American Association of University Women's Women Helping Girls

AAUW, 494 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607-1911

Contact: Skye Bird, womenhelpinggirls@gmail.com

Program Description and Goals: WHG, a project of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), targets girls from 12 to 18 years old in the RCSD. WHG is based on the mentoring concept, with program elements added. The program is designed to broaden the horizons of girls living in areas of high poverty and to encourage them to remain in school, gain confidence and see a future where success and self-reliance are attainable. Character building opportunities and building positive relationships with others are key components of the WHG program.

History and Highlights: WHG was launched 20 years ago at the urging of five AAUW members who were also RCSD administrators and teachers. Since its inception, WHG has touched the lives of more than 425 young women. Each year, twenty 7th graders join the program. Currently, 61 girls from grades 7 to 12 are active participants along with 58 mentors. A unique feature of WHG is that the mentor pairs stay together until the girls graduate. The group notes that the program, which pairs a caring professional or retired woman with a teen girl in a mentoring relationship, can turn young lives in a new direction. During the past 7 years, 95% of the participants who were seniors in high school graduated. Of those, 62 girls, 89% (55) went on to college.

Rochester students served per year: Approximately 60 girls, grades 7– 12. For the past seven years, the program has focused on girls attending the Wilson Foundation Academy and the Wilson Commencement Academy.

Center for Youth College Prep Program

Center for Youth, 905 Monroe Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620

Contact: Joyce Mixson, j.mixson@centerforyouth.net

Program Description and Goals: College Prep seeks to recruit students and help them develop their potential to succeed in high school, college and beyond. Its goal is to increase awareness of college availability among African Americans and Hispanics, increase applications to all forms of higher education and introduce students to historically Black Colleges and universities. The program meets students where they are, offers mentoring and counseling and shows students their value as individuals.

History and Highlights: This program started in October 2010.

Rochester students served: 80 (East High School only)

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Ibero-Hillside Partnership

Ibero, 911 East Main St., Rochester, NY 14605

Contact: Angie Santiago, angie.santiago@iaal.org

Program Description and Goals: The Ibero-Hillside Work Scholarship Connection partnership is a collaboration that provides additional support to Monroe High School families. The Family Support Advocate works with families to reach stability at the home so that students are able to thrive in school. The Family Support Advocate visits families and connects them with resources needed, which might include translation, making appointments for them and more. Advocate supports families in college readiness process. The goal is help parents become more involved in their children's school lives.

History and Highlights: Family assistance and support is provided to 30 students and their families at Monroe High School.

Rochester students served: 30 families.

MCC East High School Readiness Pilot Project

Interdisciplinary Programs, Brighton Campus, Monroe Community College, Learning Centers, Building 11, Room 261C, Rochester, NY 14623

Contact: Kate Smith, Interim Dean, Interdisciplinary Programs, ksmith@monroecc.edu

Program Description and Goals: A JP Morgan Chase Foundation grant-driven pilot project that aims to have participants performing at the college level once they graduate from high school and enter college. Eighty English-speaking juniors (2011-2012) at East High School were targeted for testing with the college placement exam, the Accuplacer, during the midterm exam period (January 2012). From that tested group, a cohort group of 30 were chosen to participate in an afterschool coaching/tutoring program that ran from early March to May and that will include a follow up semester September to December. In December 2012 all participants will be retested with the Accuplacer exam to determine college readiness.

History and Highlights: Pilot project initiated 2011. The initial tutoring program took place afterschool at East High School. In the fall of 2012, it will be moved to the Monroe Community College Damon Campus.

Rochester students served: To date, there are 17 active students.

MCC and St. John Fisher College at Rochester Early College International High School Program

Monroe Community College, Damon City Campus, 228 East Main St., Rochester, NY 14604

Contact: Kathleen Schiefen, Dean, Academic Services, Damon City Campus, kschiefen@monroecc.edu

Program Description and Goals: This partnership with MCC and St. John Fisher College provides RCSD high school students at the Rochester Early College International High School with MCC dual credit, concurrent enrollment, and college enrichment experiences. The goal is to have students graduate from high school with a minimum of 20 transferrable robust college credits, ready for the academic rigor of college. MCC professors serve on the Early College International HS school-based planning team. The dual credit teachers are

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high school teachers that have been certified to teach as adjuncts by the college (because they hold appropriate academic qualifications for a particular subject.) The concurrent enrollment courses are taught by MCC faculty at one of the MCC locations.

History and Highlights: Modeled after a Buffalo program, this partnership involves MCC and St. John Fisher College. It began in September 2010.

Rochester students served: 2010-11: 97 freshmen students enrolled; 2011-12: 197. Approximately 100 students are accepted in each freshmen class. The program had 290 students in December 2012. Organizers expect it to be at maximum capacity in Fall 2013 with 400 students or 100 per grade.

RIT - Charlotte High School Initiative

Rochester Institute of Technology, One Lomb Memorial Drive, Rochester, NY 14623-5603

Contact: Eulas Boyd, Senior VP for Enrollment Management, egbavp@rit.edu

Program Description and Goals: Funded through a RCSD School Improvement Grant from the U.S. Department of Education, this program partners RIT professors with teachers in the National Academy Foundation Academies at Charlotte High School to help prepare students for going into the fields of finance or hospitality and tourism. The program includes a 3-week summer academy at RIT.

History and Highlights: The program began with 8th grade students at Charlotte in early 2012. In addition to academic work, it involves field trips to places like Frontier Field and hotels where they are given behind the scene tours that include educational talks describing operating principles for the businesses.

Rochester students served: 30 students in winter, spring and summer of 2012. During the 2012-2013 school year, the program is focusing on the entire 9th grade class at Charlotte.

RocCity Scholars Program

Contact: Lynn Rosen (RocCityScholars.com)

Program Description and Goals: This after-school, community-based program serves East High School students through academic enhancement and social enrichment. The goal is student completion of a baccalaureate degree. The program collaborates with Rochester cultural arts organizations to engage students in critical analysis.

History and Highlights: The RocCity Scholars Program is based on the successful Rosen Scholars Program in New York City.

Rochester students served: Not available at this time.

St. John Fisher College Fisher Jefferson Partnership

St. John Fisher College, 3690 East Avenue, Library 105, Rochester, NY 14618

Contact: Tara Preteroti, tpreteroti@sjfc.edu

Program Description and Goals: This partnership between St. John Fisher College and students from the former Jefferson High School provides activities including tutoring, mentoring, Science-Technology Club, leadership development, a three-day summer

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leadership program, and cultural enrichment programs and workshops. The goal is to make students aware of the role a college education can play in preparing them for whatever they choose to do with their lives.

History and Highlights: The partnership began in the fall of 1987 with 30 8th graders at Thomas Jefferson High School. The students continued with the program throughout their high school careers. Since Jefferson High School closed as a high school in 2012, the program has followed the students to other schools in the district.

Rochester students served: The program is now working with about 120 students, mostly juniors and seniors. Because of the closure of Jefferson High School, St. John Fisher is working to identify one or two other city schools where they can begin the program again.

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SECTION 4: SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

Ibero-American Action League Hispanic Scholarship Endowment Fund

911 East Main St., Rochester, NY 14605

Contact: Zory Martinez, zory@iaal.org

Program Description and Goals: Scholarship program for students of Hispanic origin.

History and Highlights: Founded in 1985 to support the educational endeavors of Hispanic youth, the Fund has given scholarships to more than 3,000 students. Awards are \$2,000 payable in installments over four years. Applicants must have a B average or better, be of Hispanic origin with at least one Hispanic parent, and live in Genesee, Livingston, Ontario, Monroe or Wayne counties.

Rochester city students served: 14 in 2011.

Rochester Area Community Foundation Scholarships

500 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607

Contact: Lori Banning, lbanning@racf.org

Program Description and Goals: To provide scholarships to youth in the eight-county region served by the Community Foundation (www.racf.org/Scholarships).

History and Highlights: During the 2011-2012 fiscal year, \$629,694 in scholarships was awarded to help area students.

Rochester Education Foundation Last-Dollar Grant Pilot Program

250 Mill Street, Rochester, NY 14614

Contact: Patricia Braus, pbraus@rochestereducation.org

Program Description and Goals: Funded by the Monroe High School Class of 1960, program provides last-dollar grants of \$500 for four years of college to students enrolled in accredited colleges. The program creates a link between graduates of the school from the Class of 1960 and the high school, and provides much-needed resources for current students.

History and Highlights: Created as an unorthodox way for the Class of 1960 to show their appreciation of their high school, and to support a new generation of students.

Rochester students served: Pilot class of three; will provide resources at least over the next six years for additional students.

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Urban League Black Scholars Endowment Fund

265 North Clinton Ave., Rochester, NY 14605

Contact: Shelia J. James, Vice President of Program Planning, Research & Evaluation, sjames@ulr.org

Program Description and Goals: This fund provides assistance to help college students, who have exhausted all other sources of financial aid, remain in school.

History and Highlights: The Urban League's Black Scholars program was established in 1980. In 1987, the Urban League launched a major campaign to raise \$1 million for a permanent scholarship fund. The Black Scholars Endowment Fund reached and exceeded its \$1 million goal in early 1992. To date, approximately 8,000 graduating seniors have been recognized as Black Scholars.

Rochester Students Served: At the June 2012 Salute to Black Scholars Dinner approximately 120 scholarships were awarded by 38 organizations. Approximately \$2.5 million in college scholarships are awarded annually to students throughout the City of Rochester and the six surrounding counties.

SECTION 5: SCHOLARSHIPS AND PROGRAMS TO A SINGLE COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

Rochester Institute of Technology Rochester City Scholars Program

Rochester Institute of Technology Multicultural Center for Academic Success (MCAS), Student Alumni Union, 138 Lomb Memorial Dr., Rochester, NY 14623-5604

Contact: Candice Baldwin, Director for the Multicultural Center, cpbmcs@rit.edu

Program description and goals: The RIT Rochester City Scholars program offers full-tuition scholarships for entering full-time freshmen from the RCSD. The scholarship program is available to all students who live in the city and attended an approved high school within the RCSD for the last three years of high school. The student's total family income (including taxed and untaxed income) must not exceed \$60,000. Admitted students who are eligible for the program are eligible for full tuition covered through a combination of federal, state, and institutional grants and scholarships. The goal of the program is to remove the biggest barrier to attending college — tuition. Students are expected to participate in a fully-funded, on-campus enrichment program that begins in the summer prior to the start of the fall term. They are also assigned an advisor and supported throughout their academic career by the RIT Multicultural Center for Academic Success.

History and highlights: The initiative began with the fall 2010 semester.

Rochester students reached: 25 students have received scholarships each of these first three years.

St. John Fisher College Fannie and Sam Constantino First Generation Scholarship Program

3690 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14618

Contact: Tyler Wheelock, twheelock@sjfc.edu

Program Description and Goals: This program provides financial assistance to up to 24 high school students each year who exhibit a high degree of motivation and academic potential and whose parents did not graduate from college. These recipients receive yearly awards ranging from \$5,000 to one-half of tuition and on-campus room and board, depending on demonstrated financial need. Students do at least 30 hours of community service in the Rochester area, with half involving tutoring and mentoring.

History and Highlights: The First Generation Scholarships has been in existence for 14 years. Students in the program have given about 100,000 hours of community service through the program throughout its history.

Rochester students reached: 24 students per year; 150 – 200 per year through academic mentoring. A total of 89 students are in the program during the 2012-2013 school year.

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University of Rochester “Rochester Promise” Scholarships

Office of Admissions, P.O. Box 270251, Rochester, NY 14627-0251

Contact: Pat Toporzycki, patricia.toporzycki@rochester.edu

Program description and Goals: The Rochester Promise initiative offers a \$25,000 tuition benefit annually to students who earned their high school diploma in the RCSD and are admitted to the University of Rochester. To be eligible for the award, students must have attended a district high school for the entirety of their junior and senior years and be admitted to the University for the fall of 2008 or thereafter. "This initiative will make it possible for many more promising young students to aspire to the highest quality education they can achieve," said University President Joel Seligman. The benefit is a University-funded scholarship, for graduates of Rochester public high schools who have proven they can make the grade by meeting admissions requirements at the University. Recipients may also apply for financial aid based on need and merit from other sources.

History and Highlights: First available to applicants in the 2008-2009 school year.

Rochester students served: A total of 21 students have enrolled through the program since 2008, and it has been offered to 47 in total. Some of those who did not accept the scholarships received aid through other university programs for which they were qualified, including being the child of a university employee or eligibility for the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) at the university. The university's goal is to serve at least 40 students a year, who might otherwise have considered a degree from the University of Rochester as out of their financial reach.

University of Rochester Wilson IB Scholarship

Office of Admissions, P.O. Box 270251, Rochester, NY 14627-0251

Contact: Davin Sweeney, IB Coordinator, davin.sweeney@rochester.edu

Program Description and Goals: This is a scholarship providing full tuition to students who have successfully completed the International Baccalaureate diploma at Wilson Magnet High School.

History and Highlights: Established in 2004, the scholarship represents an historic partnership between the University of Rochester and the RCSD, celebrating the achievements of one of the world's most demanding high school curricula.

Rochester students served: Currently, there are 13 Wilson IB scholarship students on campus. The program has graduated 8 to date.

NATIONAL COLLEGE PREPARATION PROGRAMS

As *USA Today* reported, “The night the Kalamazoo Promise was unveiled was pure magic. People cheered, hugged and wept at the November 2005 school board meeting...” (*USA Today*, 7-1-2008, “Promise Energizes Hurting Michigan Community” by Mary Beth Marklein).

The superintendent told the community that anonymous donors would guarantee that all qualified public high school graduates in the community would receive free college tuition.

Perhaps what is truly magical is that the program has made a profound positive difference for thousands of students and for the economy of Kalamazoo, Michigan. Additionally it has served as a model for programs around the United States.

The Kalamazoo Promise is one of many United States programs providing coordination and resources to assist students in their ability to prepare for college. A recent report noted that mayors and community leaders in Memphis, Boston, Louisville, San Francisco and other cities have established community approaches to increase the number of local students attending and graduating from college. “There is growing recognition of the important role that community-based organizations...can play in supporting young people’s postsecondary aspirations and success.” (The Role of Community-Based Organizations in the College Access and Success Movement,” Ann Coles, Research to Practice Brief, Institute for Higher Education Policy, October 2012).

Many of these national programs are called “Promise” programs, modeled after the Kalamazoo Promise. This includes 23 identified by The Upjohn Institute for Employment Research in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

This report will examine six programs providing college and career support for students in urban areas. While programs vary, most share some unifying factors. These include:

- Community engagement and investment in a shared goal and vision of increasing the number of students attending and graduating from college,
- Focus on economic development, with a goal of making urban areas more desirable and successful communities for all families,
- Establishment of measurable parameters, which can be evaluated to indicate the value of the program,
- Compilation and tracking of key indicators including number of college applications, college enrollment and number of financial aid forms filled out by each student,
- Independent and continuing evaluation,
- Frequent reporting to the community on progress and challenges.

Above all, the use of the word “promise” in so many programs reflects the belief that there is unmet promise among young people, which can and should be cultivated and encouraged for the long-term success of our communities.

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THE KALAMAZOO PROMISE

125 West Exchange Place, Kalamazoo, MI 49007

262-337-0037; bjorth@kalamazoopromise.com

The program was created in 2005, and funded by anonymous donors. Its goals were to increase high school and college graduation rates, increase college application and admission rates, and boost the economy of Kalamazoo by attracting additional families, additional businesses and a more skilled workforce. Every graduate of Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS) is eligible for a Promise scholarship, which enables students who have enrolled in the schools K-12 to receive 100% of their tuition and fees at a Michigan public college. Students who join the district after elementary school receive less scholarship support as percentage of college expenses, but are still eligible for the program. Students may receive support from the program any time within ten years of graduation. The Promise will continue in perpetuity, allowing potential residents of the community to count on this benefit in the future.

More than \$30 million has been spent on college tuition for KPS graduates. The program has made KPS more desirable, replacing a decline in school enrollment with growing KPS student enrollment, for an increase of 17% more students in the district since the program was announced. The district had 12,216 students in the 2011-2012 school year.

The added students have resulted in additional state funding. There also has been a reduction in dropout or exit rates. Additionally, there have been “steady and noteworthy improvements in student achievement as measured by state assessments,” according to an evaluation of the program (“Kalamazoo Promise”, Gary Miron, Jeffrey N. Jones, and Allison J. Kelaher-Young, *Kappan Magazine*, December 2010-January 2011)

Furthermore, the federally-funded evaluation suggests that the program has “been a catalyst for systemic reform, bringing together educators, students, their parents and the broader community to focus on a common goal: success for all students – not just in high school but through the college years.” (Miron, et. al.) Having the college incentive encouraged the community to make schools better. For example, Miron reported that “parents said they were more focused on their children’s school work and were enforcing more social and academic discipline at home.” Educators said they were more motivated and supported to train students to be successful.

The program has not solved all the challenges in urban education, however. Although 90% of students eligible for The Promise have enrolled in college, more than half of Promise students who enrolled in community college dropped out before earning degrees. (“The Kalamazoo Promise scholarship yields successes, challenges after 6 years” by Julie Mack, blog.m.live.com/kzgazette, Nov. 28, 2011). Additionally, about 10% of students eligible for The Promise have not attended any college. Finally, the Promise has not increased the high school graduation rate for the district, according to Mack. The graduation rate was 64% for the Class of 2011. School officials report that they must continue to work on academic readiness and achievement.

However, more than 2,300 graduates of KPS schools have received scholarships since the program launch in 2005. The Promise makes students more likely to go to college, with 90%

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of the students eligible for The Promise since 2006 attending at least one semester of college, compared to 71% of Michigan High School graduates. (Mack).

The college-going culture in Kalamazoo is known locally and throughout the United States, thanks to the Kalamazoo Promise.

THE MINNEAPOLIS PROMISE

Achieve Minneapolis, 111 Third Ave. South, Suite 5, Minneapolis, MN 55401
612-455-1531; info@achieveminnneapolis.org

The goal of this three-part program is to eliminate barriers preventing students from going to college. Since the launch of the program in 2004, the school district has recorded higher high-school graduation rates and college-going rates. The program's three parts are:

- Career and College Centers supported by private funding and offered at every Minneapolis High School,
- A City summer jobs program offered in concert with a work-readiness training program certified by the Chamber of Commerce,
- Free college tuition to Minneapolis high school graduates at Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC), Metro State University, the University of Minnesota, and Augsburg College.

The program has operated with the strong support of the mayor, local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce.

The Career and College Centers were launched in 2005 at the impetus of a local business leader, Win Wallin, former CEO of Medtronics. He gathered together Achieve Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Public School System, The Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce and many business leaders to develop a plan to better support Minneapolis students.

Mr. Wallin was inspired to act at a time when the college-going rate was unacceptably low to community leaders, and budget cuts had left a ratio of counselors to students at 1 to 600. At the time, there was "a patchwork of community-based interventions," according to Achieve Minneapolis, a nonprofit partner of the Minneapolis public school system (<http://www.achievempls.org/career-college-centers/ccs-impact>).

The situation did not offer enough support to students:

Career and college advising was offered on a limited basis to eligible students, but no funding or infrastructure existed to provide the comprehensive guidance young people need to plan their futures. (Achieve Minneapolis).

"Ten years ago, the business community was frustrated with career and college readiness," said Pamela Costin, CEO of Achieve Minneapolis.

Since the program was started, district-wide graduation rates have increased from 53% to 78%, and college enrollment has risen from 48% to 63%. Additionally, the rate of students taking the ACT test to qualify for applying to college has risen from 50% to 79% (Achieve Minneapolis).

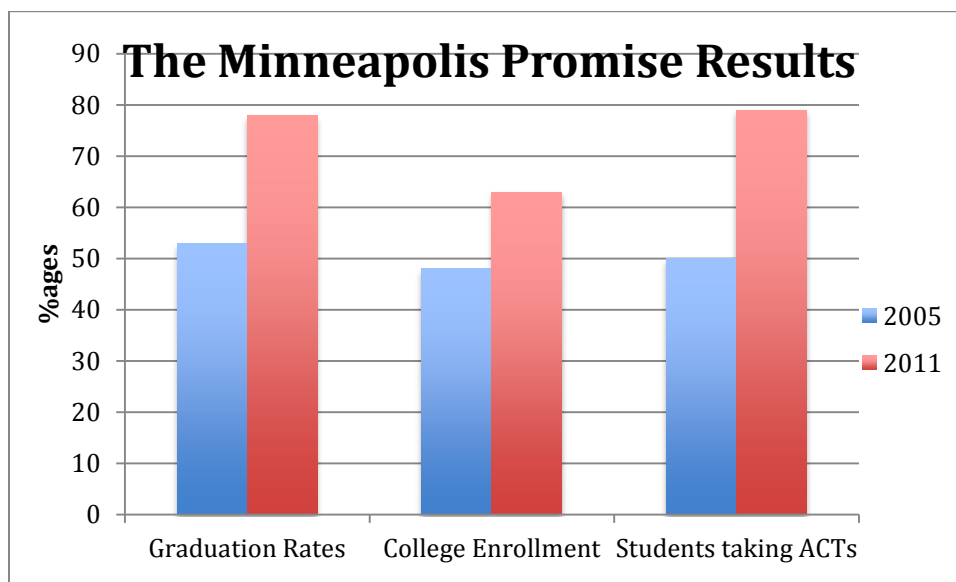
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The program Centers are staffed by a full-time coordinator whose salary is paid by private funds; and feature a bank of 30 computers and volunteers. The Centers work with students on their individual “My Life” plans for moving forward with career and college. Each student in the district has an annual career assessment beginning in sixth grade and continuing through high school.

The Centers host “Real Life Connections,” which are workshops with hundreds of business and community volunteers who discuss their careers and offer other insights. The Centers host visits from college representatives, and organize trips to visit colleges. Students receive assistance in college searches and financial aid.

Additionally, the program uses Naviance software, which offers college information to students and helps the Centers track the number of student college applications filed, the number of financial aid forms completed, and other key data.

Students made 67,000 visits to the Centers in 2010-2011. There were more than 13,000 one-on-one meetings with students that year. Volunteers at the Centers in the 2010-2011 school year logged more than 3,500 hours. The Minneapolis School District is similar in size to Rochester, with 33,476 students enrolled in 2011.



The Step-Up Program: The program was launched in 2004 to support students and to encourage the creation of a better-prepared workforce for the companies of Minneapolis. Over 14,000 young people have received internships through the program since 2004. (http://www.minneapolismn.gov/promise/promise_fastfacts)

According to Achieve Minneapolis, 70% of former interns are currently in college, and 33% returned to work with their Step-Up employers.

Additionally, young people are matched with local business and not-for-profit organizations in paid internships. (<http://www.achievempls.org/step-achieve-summer-jobs/program-impact>)

Making A College Education Attainable for Rochester City Students

The mayor of Minneapolis goes to every ninth-grade class in the city to talk about planning for the future. Five staff members at Achieve Minneapolis are charged with working on the program — focused on everything from the job application process and job placements to work-readiness training, summer internships and alumni connections.

Scholarship Programs: Started in 2006, this program offers the incentive of free tuition for students graduating from the Minneapolis public schools.

The community tracks the number of students taking advantage of this offer, and keeps a running tally to encourage students, publicize the generosity of local colleges and universities, and spur the community to do more. More than 1,000 students to date have taken advantage of this scholarship offer, including 686 Minneapolis high school graduates who have attended the University of Minnesota through the program.

Unlike the Kalamazoo Promise, The Minneapolis Promise does not depend on anonymous funders. The major funders of each part of this program are publicly acknowledged and many of them appear to be vocal boosters of the program. Promotional material makes a clear link between economic prosperity for Minneapolis and successful career and college training of its youth.

While the three-part Minneapolis program is touted nationally as a successful program with measurable results, Ms. Costin notes that continued improvement remains a challenge.

Still, Ms. Costin praises the organized nature of the program. “The reason it works here is the partnerships. It requires the business community, the city and the school district to say ‘This is important.’ It requires significant private investment. I believe strongly in building a system, not just supporting programs.”

THE PITTSBURGH PROMISE

1901 Centre Ave., Suite 204, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

info@pittsburghpromise.org

This program offers a blanket promise to all graduates of Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) who live in the city of Pittsburgh: If you graduate from high school with a 2.5 average or higher and have an attendance record of 90%, you will earn up to a \$40,000 per year scholarship to attend any accredited institution in the state of Pennsylvania. To maintain the scholarship for four years, students must maintain a 2.0 GPA and a full class load. There is a sliding percentage that rewards students the longer that they have attended Pittsburgh public schools.

The program was launched in December 2006, and has confounded expectations for fundraising in a Rust Belt city in a weak economy. A total of \$160 million has been raised in the first four years of the fund, with a goal of \$250 million. Funders are a broad and extensive range of businesses, foundations and other donors throughout the Pittsburgh community. The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center is the primary funder with a challenge grant of up to \$100 million — \$10 million per year for up to 10 years.

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The Promise is not limited to college support. The Promise is billed as a promise to Pittsburgh residents to offer the following:

- To mitigate and reverse the population declines in the city of Pittsburgh and the enrollment declines in PPS.
- To grow the high school completion rates, college readiness, and post-high school success of all students in PPS.
- To deploy a well-prepared and energized workforce and an eager core of community volunteers. (Fulfilling the Pittsburgh Promise, Gabriella C. Gonzelez et. al., Rand Corporation 2011).

When Pittsburgh launched the program, the city had experienced decades of declining population and declining enrollment in Pittsburgh Schools. The district had 32% fewer students in 2007-2008 than it did in 2000-2001. There were significant concerns about the availability of a qualified workforce in the future.

Creation of the program, coupled with dire academic concerns in the school system, generated support for substantial changes within the schools to make students “promise ready.” These included goals to increase the enrollment of students in AP programs, to increase the number of students graduating with International Baccalaureate diplomas, and many other efforts including school reorganizations.

Early results were documented by the Rand Corporation in 2011. The Rand study does not show an increase in district enrollment to date. However, the Promise program is one of three key reasons that new families mention when enrolling students. Focus groups also found that students said they were less likely to miss days of school and less likely to drop out of school because of the program. The report noted: “ More than three-quarters of the participants in our groups responded on the questionnaire that ‘The Promise had made it more likely that I will go to college or other school after graduation,’ regardless of Promise-eligibility or grade level.” (p. 68) Are more students going to college? Rates have increased slightly, but not dramatically, according to the study.

The Rand Corporation notes that this is early in the project. Indeed, the Class of 2012 is the first class to receive the full \$40,000 amount — prior to 2012, students were receiving up to \$20,000 for the four years. Additional studies will explore the results of the Pittsburgh Promise.

ON POINT FOR COLLEGE, SYRACUSE

1654 Onondaga St., Syracuse, NY 13204

info@onpointforcollege.org

Launched as a grass-roots effort by executive director Ginny Donohue, this 10-year-old program has helped more than 2,000 first-generation young people “get into college, stay there, and succeed afterwards.” The National College Access Network has recognized the organization as one of the best in the country.

It is significantly different than the school-based programs described above. The program is primarily people-driven, using mentors, drivers and tutors — along with a paid staff — to

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guide young people to college. Currently there are 19 employees and 160 volunteers in the program.

The organization serves young people who are the first in their families to go to college, including GED recipients and older high school graduates. It offers counseling to students, college application support, college visits, transportation to college, transportation home and back once students are enrolled in college, and much more.

The results? The program has enrolled 2012 students in over 190 colleges, with 633 earning college degrees. Currently there are more than 4,100 young people actively participating in the program.

The program recently received state support to open new offices in two other New York State cities. Utica was recently named one of the communities.

SAY YES TO EDUCATION

109 Otisco St., 2nd Floor, Syracuse, NY 13244
315-443-4260; info@sayyessyracuse.org

This is a whole-district school reform program focused on increasing high school and college graduate rates. It is considered a collaborative effort, involving a national not-for-profit organization (Say Yes to Education, Inc.), and a wide variety of key Syracuse institutions, including the school district, the city, Syracuse University, the Onondaga County and a research group. The program also launched recently in Buffalo.

The program offers free college tuition to students meeting program requirements, and an array of social and academic supports throughout the community. It is funded by private donations, and has significant financial support from the school district, the city and the county. The nine-person staff is funded by a combination of the national organization and Syracuse University, according to Pat Driscoll, director of operations.

Say Yes to Education was founded in Philadelphia in 1987 by George Belmont, a Hartford money manager. He promised to fund the college educations of the 112 6th graders at Philadelphia's Belmont School. The results of that promise — and the expansion of the program to other schools — lead the organization to launch the Syracuse collaborative. This is the first such all-district collaborative for the organization, but Buffalo launched its own collaborative with the group in December 2011.

Prior to the Syracuse partnership, the group targeted small groups of 300 students or less. Syracuse has 22,000 students. The Say Yes group notes that the high school graduation rate is 75% among its students in schools in places such as Philadelphia, Harlem and Cambridge. The group notes that program participants perform better academically and are less likely to drop out of college.

A four-year rollout process in Syracuse began in 2008, and now includes the entire school district. Students who graduate from Syracuse city schools and meet residency, graduation and admission requirements receive free college tuition at any of nearly 100 colleges and universities.

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The program offers a wide range of academic and college-going support services, including a student summer employment program, tutoring and SAT prep services, college tours, summer success academy, and financial counseling in association with the college application process. Local law firms also are becoming involved in the Say Yes collaborative, and have opened Say Yes Legal Clinics offering legal advice to Syracuse families. More than 100 volunteers have become engaged with the process. The Syracuse school system tracks financial aid form completion and college application submission using Naviance software.

More than \$43 million has been raised to support the project, according to the organization's website. Additionally, more than \$2.5 million Say Yes scholarships have been given to students over the past three years. Students attending city schools from 10th grade through 12th are eligible for the scholarships, which pay for college tuition after other financial aid and scholarships are recorded. Opportunity grants can be used for housing and books. The organization website also notes that the value of Syracuse homes has increased 3.5% since 2009, although the complexity of shifting values due to the housing crisis may also be a factor.

While the program has been in Syracuse for four years, graduation rates have not improved, with 45.9% of students graduating in 2010. This has lead some critics to suggest the program 'shows little in the way of progress.' (Say Yes, Say Maybe: Promises versus progress in Educational Program," CYN Central, Feb 2, 2012 <http://www.cnycentral.com/news/story.aspx?id=714962#.UFd5IkKgafR>).

However, Mr. Driscoll says the program is already making a difference. He says: "Many families want their students to go to college because of the availability of the Say Yes scholarship." Mr. Driscoll notes that nearly 2,000 students have enrolled in college through the program.

Mr. Driscoll notes that having the county work with the school district through Say Yes to Education is a worthy investment in a future Syracuse. "As our county executive has shared with some of our legislators...Would you like to spend more money on building a larger correctional facility... or would you like to invest in education?"

THE STRIVE PARTNERSHIP: CINCINNATI, COVINGTON, NEWPORT

www.strivepartnership.org

513-929-1145; info@strivetgether.org

The STRIVE partnership is a data-driven effort launched in 2006 as a community initiative to address persistent educational problems affecting students in the Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky areas. The program's success has driven other communities, including Rochester, to launch their own STRIVE initiatives with guidance from the National Cradle to Career Network.

The STRIVE approach involves community partners working together to identify goals, to determine ways to collect data tracking those goals, then to rigorously track the goals. Regular reports to the community document the progress or lack of progress to reaching the goals.

Making A College Education Attainable for Rochester City Students

The 2011 report from STRIVE noted that the goals of the initiative are to make sure that every child is prepared for school, is supported inside and outside of school, succeeds academically, enrolls in some form of post-secondary education and graduates and enters a career. Organizers say the key is “aligning advocacy and funding efforts across the Partnership along with promoting the effective use of data.” The report notes that out of the 34 measures of student achievement tracked by the group, “81 percent are trending in the right direction,” compared to 68% two years ago.

In the college preparation realm, STRIVE tracks graduation rates, which most districts track by law. But the project also tracks a series of indicators, which many public school districts have not traditionally tracked, including the college enrollment figure for each graduating class, the ACT Composite score, the college retention rate, the college completion rate (6-year graduation rate), and postsecondary enrollment.

To improve these rates, the partnership reviewed student data in the school districts involved. Analysis found five key success indicators. They found the following:

Students are over 80% more likely to enroll in college when they: 1. Pass all portions of the Ohio Graduation Test; 2. Graduate from high school; 3. Apply for Financial aid/scholarships; 4. Submit applications to colleges; and 5. Take appropriate college entrance exams.

The indicators identified and the data collected tell a story of some successes and some continuing challenges. For example, the 2011 annual report noted that in Cincinnati Public Schools, college enrollment has increased 7% since the baseline year, with a current target of 70% of students enrolling in college. A total of 65% is their current percent or average. However, the same report noted that the percent of students enrolling in college had gone down 3% from the most recent year.

How does Cincinnati collect this college enrollment data, which Rochester does not have? The STRIVE website reports that the district uses data from the National Student Clearinghouse, “a third-party data warehouse that collects enrollment data from over 90 percent of colleges in the U.S.”

While the STRIVE data makes clear that all problems have not been solved by the initiative, the detail-rich reports portray a community with a firm focus and strategy for addressing the challenge of ensuring that all students have opportunities to excel after high school.

FINDINGS

These six programs provide a brief overview of college preparation programs currently available and evolving in American cities. The significant evaluation material available from the Kalamazoo, Minneapolis and Pittsburgh programs offers substantial benefit to communities considering new programs of their own.

This report tells us that Rochester has many committed, determined advocates working to advance college-going opportunities for city youth. But there are far too many missed opportunities.

What can we do to address this challenge?

1. RCSD needs to have and use data and data systems to determine how many city students submit college applications, attend college and graduate from college.

Rochester is behind other comparable cities and communities in its ability to track city student college application rates, college enrollment rates, financial-aid form completion, and other key indicators associated with student college enrollment. Such tracking is currently done in school districts ranging from Rochester's suburban district, Fairport, to Syracuse, Baltimore and Minneapolis.

The past few years have seen terrific new college-offered opportunities — including the RIT Rochester City Scholars scholarship for all Rochester city school students that qualify, the University of Rochester “Rochester Promise” scholarship for qualified city students and the Kearns Center College Prep Centers sponsored by the University of Rochester. But there is no citywide tally of what difference these options have made in the overall student college enrollment picture.

Because of the lack of data, programs such as Hillside Work-Scholarship pay separately to track college enrollment of its graduates, purchasing membership in the National Student Clearinghouse. Offering data as a community through the school system makes far more sense for programs such as Hillside and all of the others providing college-going support.

Such data would make a positive difference for partners, said Kimberley Collins, assistant vice president, academic services at Monroe Community College and a board member of REF. “Coordination is key...We need to give all data to a central database and have full-time or at least part-time staff with authority to ask for the data.” Having such data available will enable all partner programs to judge and be judged on the outcome of their efforts.

2. Rochester should provide more support and guidance in schools so that students can reach their full potential for going to college.

There is a woeful lack of consistency from school to school, with programs disproportionately represented at some schools instead of others. East High School, for example, has college access programs offered by the University of Rochester, Hillside, Center for Youth and Monroe Community College, in addition to the RocCity Scholars

program. Students at Rochester International Academy and Monroe High School, for example, have far less community-sponsored college-going program support.

Advocates interviewed for this report suggest that far more needs to be done to enable students to begin planning for college early in their academic careers, to provide greater information about college options, to inform families about the challenge of completing financial aid forms, and to provide greater information about the actual college admissions process.

As East High School student Imani Monroe noted: “Students just aren’t aware of what they need to do to get into college. There’s a need to raise awareness.”

3. The community should provide additional support for city students in the form of advisors, mentors and other assistance to help students reach their full college-going potential.

National programs highlighted in this report are distinguished for the reach of their efforts, engaging entire communities in supporting college-going youth. Locally, advocates for city youth suggest uniformly that they are not reaching as many young people as they could with their various types of support.

Many of Rochester’s programs are relatively new. The University of Rochester College Prep Centers are less than two years old. The MCC East High Readiness Program began in 2011 as did the College at Brockport Educational Talent Search Program. But all programs, young or old, in the Rochester community are hampered by the lack of outcomes data determining whether their participants are, indeed, effectively enrolling in college and completing college.

The many programs offered locally offer a strong foundation for what could become a powerful local drive to support and expand the number of city students graduating from college.

4. The Rochester community should create goals for a focused college-going campaign for city students. Rochester risks falling behind similar communities in educational attainment at a time when educational attainment is more important than ever for success.

The success of many national programs such as the Minneapolis Promise and the Strive Partnership depends on using proven strategies to support students. This includes using data to track the number of students taking the ACT or SAT test (a key indicator of who will apply to college); the number of students filling out financial aid forms (another key indicator); and the number of students filing applications for college. Each of these indicators provides a snapshot of how many students will be accepted to college, as well as an opportunity for expanding that number.

Proven strategies also include providing information to students and their families about college. Throughout the country programs are offering support to students and their families in filling out financial aid forms, visiting colleges, speaking to college representatives and helping students with college application challenges such as writing the personal essay. Some of these activities are offered in Rochester, but advocates

suggest there is a need for more.

The most exciting component of national “Promise” programs has been the guarantee of a full scholarship to college, offered to students in Kalamazoo and elsewhere. These promises are not cure-alls. Indeed, even with the “Promise” program, Kalamazoo has found that it has not been able to cut its student drop-out rate. But the existence of such programs creates and sustains a well-documented path to success for students, regardless of income.

With the addition of Say Yes programs in Syracuse and Buffalo, Rochester is sandwiched-in by two communities whose students have been given the promise of a college education, and a well-defined pathway.

The promising national models cited here are but a sampling of the programs available nationwide. Regionally, Buffalo, Syracuse, Yonkers, New York and other cities have far more significant college preparation programs than Rochester.

As Rochester works to improve educational outcomes, it is reasonable to ask whether the community is hampered by not having a community-wide program supporting college-going youth similar to those in Kalamazoo, Minneapolis, and the other communities mentioned in this report. The abundance of these programs nationally does not mean that such programs are essential for growing urban economies. But the successful elements of these programs suggest that there are significant opportunities for Rochester to use college-going programs to spur higher graduation rates and enhance success for urban youth.

It is also worth noting that Pittsburgh and Kalamazoo are two communities in which their college-going programs are also considered an economic development model for their cities. With college costs rising, parents are encouraged in those communities to weigh the benefits of knowing that city school graduates are guaranteed free or reduced tuition at quality colleges.

Rochester is a community in which leadership and creative ideas have encouraged local and national change. Many of the local programs documented in this report are good programs. But national models suggest that creating a community approach to college access has the potential to yield higher numbers of high school graduates and enrolled college students. These goals are essential if Rochester youth are to become the successful leaders of a thriving, future Rochester. Rochester should be able to use the building blocks of its already existing programs to make college access a reality for all city students who have the desire and capacity to become college graduates.

ADDENDUM

Focus Group Meeting Attendance and Comments

May 30, 2012

Rochester Area Community Foundation, 500 East Avenue, Rochester, NY

Attendance:

Patricia Braus, Executive Director, Rochester Education Foundation
Kimberley Collins, Assistant VP, Academic Services, Monroe Community College
James Daniels, Program Manager, College Prep, Center for Youth
Ed Doherty, VP, Community Programs, Rochester Area Community Foundation
Rod Green, Executive Director, Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection
Jane Lange, Assistant Director, Rochester Education Foundation
Chandra V. McKenzie, Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs, RIT
Nydia Padilla-Rodriguez, Director of Community Partnerships, RCSD
Anthony Plonczynski, Associate Director, Pre-College Programs, The David T. Kearns Center for Leadership and Diversity in Arts, Sciences and Engineering, U of R
Lynn Rosen, President, Board of Directors, RocCity Scholars
Dr. Bonnie Rubenstein, Director of Counseling, RCSD
Jody Siegle, Executive Director, Monroe County School Boards Association
Mollie Traub, Coordinator, Consider College
Tyler Wheelock, Scholarship Programs Assistant, St. John Fisher College
Joe Williams, Associate Director/HELP/Excel Dept., Nazareth College

Brief Summary of Comments

Ed Doherty, Vice President, the Community Foundation, welcomed everyone.

Pat Braus, Executive Director, Rochester Education Foundation, asked everyone to introduce themselves briefly, offered introductory remarks and then opened the meeting to comments, according to the agenda.

Agenda Item 1: What more could this community do to help all city students aspire to, prepare for and apply to college?

Mollie Traub (Consider College): Person to person mentoring of tremendous value; 1 time per week is very important, outside of school. That's what Consider College does, starting early and especially in the student's last year in high school.

Rod Green (Hillside Work-Scholarship): Mentoring has to start early, even 9th to 11th grade is too late. Need robust programming for kids from kindergarten. It's never too early to expose kids. No indictment of the schools but in a lot of cases, city students just cannot handle the rigors of college because of their preparation.

Also, it's important to remember that a 4-year college is not for everyone. There are multiple pathways post secondary school.

Bonnie Rubenstein (RCSD Counseling): The Superintendent is on to something with his focus on reading in lower grades. The students have to have the basic foundation. They need to work on ELA and mathematics.

Students don't understand the language of access. They don't understand about GPAs and 9th grade importance, or even what a "meal plan" is. They need to take the PSATs early and study the SAT work of the day, but there needs to be deeper introductions on a lot of different levels.

Teacher ed. Needs to talk to students about issues of access.

Back to mentoring, research on at-risk kids shows that those who make it had someone that cared about them, often a counselor, but it's finding the right fit.

Jody Siegle (Monroe County School Boards): She's working on a timeframe for content by the end of 2013. Building on what everyone said, consistently in research, young people need caring adults in their lives for a long period of time. Pre-school models, the nurse care partnership and HWSC show that these things work, having people notice a child. Kids start dropping out long before they drop out. There are lots of good models, but no silver bullets. How do you find sufficient adults?

Anthony Plonczynski (U of R): I have serious concerns moving forward. Silos of work are happening. There's a web but no connectors. This is the 800-pound gorilla in the room. Our students, where they currently are, have value, have capital and ability to overcome obstacles. They need caring and understanding adults. More bodies are needed. The Superintendent is heading that way. Higher ed and K-12 do not speak to each other. What are you going to do to help? Need a holistic promise.

Kimberley Collins (MCC): Need coordination of information. ROC the Future for 3rd grade reading wanted to see this early on. Coordination is the key of other Strive communities. FIRPA, Federal Educational Rights..., it is possible to link every student through technology.

Tyler Wheelock (St. John Fisher): Visits to college are important for 6th/7th graders.

James Daniels (Nazareth): We need to think about parents, also. We have the hardest struggle dealing with parents. They don't want to supply information for financial aid. Why should they? We have a newsletter which we e-mail to parents. ¼ of the kids that he sees are first time high school graduates in their families.

Nydia Padilla (RCSD): Don't cut programs that are working. Replicate programs that work.

Molly Traub: Job shadowing is another key component of any program. Many students have no computer or internet access. Should we be working on the digital divide?

Anthony Plonczynski: Human interaction is most important but helping students to navigate technology is also important. Students don't know how to navigate the College Access website.

We need to hold students accountable; meeting them where they are.

Rosen (RocCity Scholars): We can't rely on grades because they're highly inflated. Strong suggest using the California Achievement test. Before sending students off to college, you should compare college curriculums to high school courses.

Agenda Item 2: What are national and potential models for Rochester as a community to help City students prepare and apply to college?

Green: This is an inherited problem other generations had. What is actionable and that we can evaluate? HWSC manages a school in Buffalo, Lafayette High School, which was the lowest performing high school in the state. What would it be like if you had a higher ed institution take over a high school? RIT take over the STEM school for a year. Can you follow a 9th grade cohort of students through college? Use as a model?

Plonczynski: 1. Promise grants were not awarded because of infighting in this community. They were awarded to cities that were working together. 2. The Lumina Foundation is a strong advocate for college preparation and attendance. The Council for Opportunity in Education, Erie, PA and Kentucky Continuum of Care are good examples of good partnerships.

Rubenstein: Research shows that kids who take AP courses in high school are better off in college, and less likely to drop out of college.

Rosen: There is no access to AP courses through Skype. It's a barrier to students.

Collins: National data shows that students who receive 24 credits will graduate from college. If they see themselves as college students, that is good.

Padilla: Concerned about the inflation of grades, and 2. HEOP and EOP is a good program for the economically disadvantaged. Graduate rates are 72% for students in these programs. They receive intensive counseling on a weekly basis. There is lots of one on one interaction.

It would be good to have more informational programs at schools on financial aide.

Second Focus Group Meeting Attendance and Comments

January 15, 2013

Rochester Museum & Science Center, Rochester, NY

Attendance:

Laura Albert, AmeriCorps/Upward Bound, U of R
Michelle Allevato, Director, Science & Technology Program, RIT
Amanda Anderson, Liberty Partnerships, MCC
Don Armstrong, Executive Director, Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection
Teadie Becker, AmeriCorps, RCSD
Skye Bird, Women Helping Girls, AAUW
Patricia Braus, Executive Director, Rochester Education Foundation
Kimberley Collins, Assistant VP, Academic Services, Monroe Community College
Carrie DeVoria, Center for Youth
Ed Doherty, VP, Community Programs, Rochester Area Community Foundation
Shawanda Evans, Hillside-Work Scholarship
Alice Gray, Upward Bound, MCC
Stuart Hencke, AmeriCorps, REF
Shelia James, VP or Program Planning & Research, Urban League of Rochester
Jane Lange, Assistant Director, Rochester Education Foundation
Dr. Andrea Lemos, Director of Counseling, RCSD
Chandra V. McKenzie, Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs, RIT
Imani Monroe, Student, Teaching and Learning Institute at East High School
Eric Morris, East High School
Nydia Padilla-Rodriguez, Director of Community Partnerships, RCSD
Anthony Plonczynski, Associate Director, Pre-College Programs, The David T. Kearns Center for Leadership and Diversity in Arts, Sciences and Engineering, U of R
Tara Preteroti, EEO, St. John Fisher College
Victoria Romero, RIT Multicultural Center, RIT
Shayon Ross, Student, Teaching and Learning Institute at East High School
Jody Siegle, Executive Director, Monroe County School Boards Assn.
Janelle Snow, AmeriCorps Member, Center for Youth

Brief Summary of Comments

Pat Braus welcomed group and presented initial findings.

Discussion focused on what's next. Many participants signed up to form a local College Access Network. Discussion questions presented were as follows:

- ▶ **Do you agree with these recommendations?**
- ▶ **What else is needed locally?**
- ▶ **What do your programs need to be more successful?**
- ▶ **Would you be interested in forming a local College Access Network?**
- ▶ **What can we do to create new opportunities for our city students?**

Nydia Padilla (RCSD): We have excellent community involvement, why aren't we getting the results? We need to address early childhood reading to create culture of learning and develop skills. Also what to do with the current generation who we can't build from scratch? We need to find out graduation rate and see who is going to college, who is graduating from college.

Michelle Allevato (RIT): We see great potential in students but kids are behind when they get to high school. I have always felt welcomed in the schools but I keep running up against institutional problems. Doesn't feel as if there are liaisons in the schools for outside groups to coordinate through. Opportunities are not taken advantage of in the community.

Ed Doherty (Rochester Area Community Foundation): The challenge is to have a community-wide network of people who will continue to focus on this. The biggest difficulty is competition for school improvement from other groups.

Andrea Lemos (RCSD Counseling): We need greater understanding of what is actually happening and it needs to connect more to what counselors are doing. We need a more systemic way of doing things.

Eric Morris (East HS): Everyone needs to know what efforts are being undertaken and what supports are there. There is a serious disconnect in understanding the role of counselors. We need to have a focused effort, not just throw programs against the wall and see what sticks. Need a systematic approach. We need to look at helping students who don't want to go to college.

Shayon Ross (East High School student): We need to start early, a lot of students don't even care about going to college

Kimberley Collins, MCC: Coordination is key. All the other programs discussed in the presentation have full time staff with access to a wealth of data. We need to give all data to a central database and have fulltime or at least part-time staff with authority to ask for the data.

Chandra V. MacKenzie (RIT). Suggested critical goals in developing a college network:

- Facilitating easier ways of getting data.
- Need to have a single vision citywide to guard against duplication of efforts that cause problems in the schools

Laura Albert (UR): I see duplication, different groups serving all the same students. We need to figure out how to engage the other students who aren't involved. We need to get parent engagement

Skye Bird, Women Helping Girls: Don't get lost in the data, need to look at the fundamentals behind it. We work hard educating parents about college applications, filling out financial aid, etc.

Eric (East & Nazareth): Warned against assuming that more programs means better programs. Just because you have twice the programs at EHS as MHS doesn't mean you have double the results

Padilla: We need to stop the programs that don't work. We need to show results.

Imani Monroe (EHS Student) Students just aren't aware of what they need to do to get in to college. There's a need to raise awareness.

Jody Siegle (Monroe County School Boards): In the suburbs, the assumption is that all students will go to college. There is a lower counselor to student ratio, lots of information meeting and more knowledge within the community. The tracking of students is very close. We need to move toward that.

Don Armstrong (Hillside Work-Scholarship): We need to question the students, start younger, encourage critical thinking and bring awareness. Great to have students at the meeting this morning.