A New Narrative for Public Education

2013 Impact Report
As advocates for public education, we talk a lot about preparing Jacksonville’s children to succeed in the future. But what does it mean to build the workforce of the 21st Century? What will it take to ensure this city’s prosperity in the years to come?

These are questions that the Jacksonville Public Education Fund works to answer every day. There’s no silver bullet. Instead, there is the long-term work of advocating for policies and practices that will make our education system strong.

Have you ever taken on the job of remodeling a room or even a whole house? It’s a lot like improving our education system. It takes careful consideration, study and planning. It requires identifying what parts are working well, and what parts need to be modernized and updated. And when it comes to what needs to be changed, it means implementing the most efficient and effective solutions.

First and foremost, however, the foundation of the house must be strong. That’s why the bedrock of the Jacksonville Public Education Fund’s work is to build a community that insists on a system of universally high-quality public schools for all children.

We believe that this foundation of civic engagement is stronger than ever before. We are excited to share this report on some of the truly transformative events that have recently occurred, setting the stage for a new narrative about public education in Duval County. We take the long view, because the work to support public education is not for the impatient. From here, the horizon looks very bright.

Sincerely,
Cindy Edelman, Chair, Board of Directors
Trey Csar, President
VISION

THE JACKSONVILLE PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND’S WORK FOCUSES ON MAKING IMPACT AROUND FOUR KEY LEVERS OF CHANGE THAT WILL RESULT IN A COMMUNITY THAT INSISTS ON A SYSTEM OF UNIVERSALLY HIGH-QUALITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR ALL CHILDREN IN DUVAL COUNTY.

MISSION
Inform and mobilize the community to advocate for universally high-quality public schools for all children.

LEVERS OF CHANGE

INFORMED & ENGAGED COMMUNITY MEMBERS
VISIONARY LEADERSHIP
ALIGNED ORGANIZATIONS
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

WE HAVE AN IMPACT ON THESE LEVERS IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS:

- Data & Research
- Community Mobilization
- Advocacy & Communications
- Investment

CORE VALUES

Student Centered.
Data-Driven & Transparent.
Collaborative.
Inclusive & Respectful.
Long-Term Commitment.
Community Focused.

INFORMED & ENGAGED COMMUNITY MEMBERS

THERE’S A LOT OF DATA OUT THERE ON PUBLIC EDUCATION. GETTING IT IS ONE THING — MAKING SENSE OF IT IS ANOTHER. THE JACKSONVILLE PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND AIDS TO MAKE THE COMPLEX ISSUES FACING PUBLIC SCHOOLS EASY TO UNDERSTAND SO THAT ADVOCATES CAN TAKE ACTION ON WHAT’S IMPORTANT.

Getting this information into the hands of the right people is key, too. Keeping public education at the top of the public agenda means working with elected officials, policy makers and media to build knowledge and awareness about progress and opportunities for improvement in public education.

SCHOOL FACTS JAX: Making school information easy to use

Responding to community demand for easier ways to learn about public school performance, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund officially launched School Facts Jax in December 2012. Powered by a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation’s Community Information Challenge that was matched by The Community Foundation in Jacksonville and several other generous local investors, School Facts Jax makes it easy for anyone to find and understand comprehensive academic performance information at the regional, district or individual school level. Monthly updates add interactive online graphics that broaden the lens on public education.

MISSION

Inform and mobilize the community to advocate for universally high-quality public schools for all children.

“Very few communities across this country have the level of engagement and commitment to public education as Duval County. The Jacksonville Public Education Fund has been a strong advocate of efforts that mobilize and inspire the community to support programs and initiatives aligned to our mission of providing educational excellence in every school, in every classroom, for every student, every day.”

— Dr. Nikolai P. Vitti,
Superintendent, Duval County Public Schools
The opportunities — gatherings like issue forums and ONE by ONE conversations — give citizens a space and a place to learn. Tools — such as research briefs and electronic advocacy alerts — put the power to take informed action in everyone’s hands.

Our commitment to a two-way conversation always means providing the facts while also drawing on the wisdom of parents, students, teachers and citizens in every corner of Duval County.

ONE BY ONE: From Conversation To Action

Launched in the fall of 2011 with the exhibit lifting the faces and stories of 20 current and former public school students, the campaign quickly caught fire as it moved throughout the community, more than doubling the original goals set for it. The exhibit traveled to 16 venues and had more than 75,000 viewers. Nearly 2,000 people participated in two-hour, small group conversations about their aspirations for public schools in Duval County. In January 2013, more than 170 diverse delegates nominated by conversation participants gathered for a convention, resulting in a Community Agreement with the community’s top priorities for public schools.

Following the convention, the ONE by ONE Community Agreement received more than 2,300 ratifications and the Duval County School Board voted unanimously to adopt a new strategic plan that incorporated the priorities, representing unprecedented community-district alignment and greater momentum for improving public schools among a newly-energized public.

In the words of ONE by ONE featured student and delegate Travis Pinckney, “a new narrative is being written about Duval County Public Schools, and everyone in our community has the chance to be a co-author.”

ONE BY ONE HAS BECOME A CORNERSTONE INITIATIVE FOR THE JACKSONVILLE PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND, BUILT ON THE BELIEF THAT CHANGE IS NOT POSSIBLE WITHOUT A UNIFIED CITIZENRY ACTING IN CONCERT WITH THE SCHOOL DISTRICT.
INVESTING IN SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADERS

To help school district administrators most effectively lead education improvement efforts, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund identifies and funds opportunities for professional growth. One example: The Harvard Strategic Data Project, a two-year program for data strategists that includes access to Harvard fellowship training and a network of cutting-edge data tracking and analysis projects. Three fellows, one from the Jacksonville Public Education Fund and two from Duval County Public Schools, will partner to bring high-level, national models of data analysis to Duval County.

A WATERSHED YEAR FOR NEW LEADERSHIP

As the ONE by ONE campaign built momentum throughout Duval County, the key issue of leadership emerged. Facing a superintendent transition and four open seats on the Duval County School Board, the community faced an inflection point: What kind of leaders were needed to move public schools forward? The Jacksonville Public Education Fund elicited citizen feedback on the qualities they desired in a new superintendent, and published a white paper on best practices in superintendent searches. At the same time, we worked with a diverse coalition of community organizations to inform voters through candidate questionnaires, candidate forums and increasing the amount of media coverage devoted to the school board races during a busy presidential election year, all leading to increased voter turnout.

THE EDDY AWARDS: Celebrating and learning from our best educators

The EDDY Awards have grown from a single event recognizing the teacher of the year into a year-long initiative to elevate the role of educators in the community and to showcase teacher best practices.

In March 2013, Apryl Shackelford was named the 2013 Florida Blue Duval County Teacher of the Year at the EDDY Awards, which is a joint venture of the Jacksonville Public Education Fund and the Schultz Center for Teaching and Leadership. Shackelford went on to become a top five finalist for the state title. She, along with previous teachers of the year, empowered with resources and leadership responsibilities such as serving on the Jacksonville Public Education Fund Board of Directors, have formed their own teacher-leader coalition and participated in various events and leadership positions throughout the education sector in Duval County and beyond.

Creating a pipeline of future leaders

The Jacksonville Public Education Fund is working to identify and develop emerging leaders, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to become strong advocates for public education. Whether by identifying talented ONE by ONE volunteer facilitators or exceptional teachers, we know that it’s key to extend a hand to bring up the next generation of extraordinary leaders for Jacksonville.

Members of our Community Advisory Team are emerging grassroots leaders from throughout Duval County.
A combined five priorities compose the joint goals established by the community and district:

- **Educate the Whole Child**
- **Develop Great Educators and Leaders**
- **Family, Caregiver and Community Involvement**
- **Ensure Efficient, Effective and Equitable Use of Resources**
- **Policy and Political Reform**

Around all of these priorities are organizations working together around shared goals. The Any Given Child arts initiative, the district’s Parent Academy that involves various community groups and the Quality Education for All Fund are just a few examples of the many ways that community organizations are working more closely in concert with the schools to improve student outcomes.

LIKE AN ORCHESTRA, THE PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM IS COMPOSED OF MANY DIFFERENT PLAYERS, ALL WITH A DISTINCT ROLE TO PLAY. WHEN WELL ORGANIZED AND ON THE SAME PAGE, THE ORCHESTRA CAN PLAY TOGETHER IN HARMONY, CREATING BEAUTIFUL MUSIC TOGETHER.

The Jacksonville Public Education Fund partners closely with Duval County Public Schools as well as with dozens of community organizations because we believe that collaboration is an essential component of positive change. When we all work in alignment around shared goals, we can achieve so much more.

Building consensus for change

When the Duval County School Board approved a new strategic plan, it represented not only a path forward for public schools but also a new roadmap for the many partner organizations working to improve the lives of children in our community. Through the ONE by ONE process, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund advocated for aligned district and community priorities, which in turn set the stage for greater organizational collaboration around the defined goals.

THE POWER OF COLLABORATION

WE INTENTIONALLY INVOLVE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DISTRICT AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS IN PLANNING OUR INITIATIVES, BECAUSE WE KNOW COLLABORATION IS ESSENTIAL TO TACKLING TOUGH CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVING BIG GOALS. WE ALSO PARTICIPATE IN SEVERAL OTHER COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS TO SUPPORT THE GOAL OF ALIGNMENT.

LEARNING TO FINISH: Strengthening partnerships to increase the graduation rate through program and policy change

The improvement in Duval County’s graduation rate was, in part, a result of a strategic and coordinated effort by Duval County Public Schools and a partnership of community organizations dedicated to identifying and intervening on behalf of at-risk students. The Learning to Finish collaborative, which began before the Jacksonville Public Education Fund was born, and which we later facilitated, conducted research to fully understand the extent of the dropout crisis and learned about best practice solutions. Then, based on that learning, it set into motion two primary strategies: growing and aligning community-funded student supports and reforming district policies and practices that affected the student graduation rate.

As a result, the community and district focused like never before on students at risk of not graduating. Today, the Learning to Finish partnership has brought about lasting systemic change through the creation of early warning systems and multiple pathways to graduation. And it has set the stage for deeper collaboration to continue to improve public education in Duval County. And the key partners, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida and the United Way of Northeast Florida, continue to collaborate.
EVERYONE IN OUR COMMUNITY SHOULD HAVE THE CHANCE TO CONTRIBUTE PERSONALLY TO MAKING OUR PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM BETTER. THAT’S WHY THE JACKSONVILLE PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND WORKS TO IDENTIFY AND CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRIVATE INVESTMENTS OF VARIED AMOUNTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS.

INVESTING IN INNOVATION:
A new model for students at highest risk

Through researching, advocating and providing seed funding for innovative policies and practices that drive student achievement, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund works to create the systemic change needed to prepare all students with the skills they need for the future.

One of the first advocacy and investment projects taken on by the Jacksonville Public Education Fund was the introduction of and investment in a new model for students that the Learning to Finish collaborative found were most at risk of dropping out — those who have been held back two or more years.

The initial $150,000 investment in research, planning and start-up funding for Schools for the Future Academy, located at the Bridge of Northeast Florida, led to the school opening in 2011.

In summer 2013, the Duval County School Board voted to expand services to students who are overage for their grade based on the successful model developed at Schools for the Future Academy, directing nearly $12 million in district funding to take the model to scale.

INTRODUCING POWERUP JAX:
Fueling classroom innovation

Teachers might just be the most creative people we know. Now, Duval County public school teachers have a chance to innovate in their own classrooms — thanks to a new giving portal called PowerUP Jax. It’s a website where community members can invest — whether it’s $5 or $500 — in creative classroom projects designed by teachers throughout Duval County. Sponsored by the Community First Cares Foundation, PowerUP Jax connects citizens with classrooms to empower teachers and foster greater community involvement in our schools.

The Jacksonville Public Education Fund has earned the respect of the major public education stakeholders, and has both the deep knowledge base and the organizational capacity to execute the work envisioned by the Quality Education for All steering committee. We are entrusting The Jacksonville Public Education Fund with this work because of its depth of experience with research, advocacy and collaboration, underpinned by a deep passion for high quality public schools for every child in our system.

— Nina Waters, President of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida
In 2008, a small group of venture philanthropists, inspired by the opportunity to create change in Duval County’s public education system, invested in the creation of the Jacksonville Public Education Fund. Five years later, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund has been the catalyst for a movement in public education. With new leadership and an energized citizenry rallying around a common vision, we have charted a course to move from vision to reality. Our investors are committed long-term to the work of the Jacksonville Public Education Fund because they understand that the future prosperity of our entire community is built on the success of each of our city’s students. We are honored to recognize our investors.

SUSTAINING INVESTORS

Cynthia G. Edelman Family Foundation
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ANNUAL INVESTORS

$50,000 – $100,000
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
School District Education Foundation Matching Grant Program
EverBank

$10,000 – $49,999
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The Prudential Foundation
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James Swanson

$1,999 – $9,999
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Jodie and Eric Leach
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Wells Fargo Educational Matching Gift Program

Become a sustaining investor and make a commitment to the future of our city and the future of its students. Contact Trey Csar at trey@jaxpef.org or (904) 356-7757 for more information.

EDDY Awards sponsors listed on page 8.
16% MORE GRADUATES
Percentage point increase in the graduation rate, 2009-2013

2400
Online advocacy actions taken by constituents in 2013

13
Thirteen volunteers spoke at official government meetings in 2013

62
Community partners in 2013

54 -to- 1
Return on Investment
The return on investment when the Jacksonville Public Education Fund leveraged $600,000 in private philanthropic support to help Duval County Public Schools access $32.6 million in technology for low-income students.

77,000
School Facts Jax
Pageviews since its launch in December 2012

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