Two years of progress for public education

Nearly two and a half years ago, we led a group of community advocates in studying ways to improve public education in Duval County. We confronted many sobering realities. Only two-thirds of ninth-graders complete high school in four years. And reading proficiently remains a large barrier for many of our students.

Yet, as we looked deeper, we saw signs of hope. In repeated citywide surveys, citizens reaffirmed their belief that public education is our city’s most important issue. And cities across the country—from Chattanooga to Mobile to Boston—had created high-capacity Local Education Funds to assist their districts in dealing with their most intractable systemic challenges.

Following these models, the Jacksonville community committed nearly $3 million in 2009 to create its own Local Education Fund, and today, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund has already begun to transform the discussion about improving our schools. On our horizon are even greater possibilities. The work being done by this organization will bring our community together to advocate for better public education, and ultimately, bring us closer to our vision that every student graduate ready for college and the workforce.

We thank you for your ongoing support and look forward to another successful year.

Sincerely,

Gary Chartrand, Board Chair
Cindy Edelman, Board Vice-chair

Since its founding in 2009, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund has gained significant traction in our work to improve schools in Duval County. We are well positioned to play a strong leadership role in the coming year.

JPEF has begun to raise awareness and knowledge of critical education issues through high-impact research, analysis and communications. In 2010, JPEF and the School Board engaged Education Resource Strategies to examine how Duval County Public Schools can most effectively allocate its fiscal and human resources. JPEF also published the first in a regular series of policy briefs, focused on reading comprehension. We have also made strides toward engaging and empowering parents, teachers, business leaders and other stakeholders to demand great schools. JPEF held two public forums on teacher quality, attended by about 400 people. We also held public forums with school board and mayoral candidates, attended by more than 450 people.

Finally, JPEF advocated for research-based strategies for improving the graduation rate, such as the Schools for the Future Academy. Additionally, JPEF advocated for the creation of a high-level education advisor in the mayor’s office, a strategy that has been proven effective in other cities. We owe a debt of gratitude to our donors, partners and supporters, without whom our success would not be possible. We look forward to continuing to deliver on that potential this coming year.

Sincerely,

Trey Csar, President
OUR HISTORY, OUR FUTURE
An independent voice to unite a community

The Jacksonville Public Education Fund grew out of the strategic action and financial investment of The Community Foundation in Jacksonville and a cadre of philanthropists committed to public education reform.

The idea was born in 2008, three years after The Community Foundation launched Quality Education for All, a 10-year investment in improving the city’s education system, with a focus on increasing public engagement and reducing disparities in student outcomes. The Forum on Quality Education, a group of community leaders and education stakeholders convened by the Community Foundation to assess the education landscape and identify key areas for improvement, decided that the community needed a high-capacity local education fund dedicated to those goals, a group that could provide stability of vision across changes in administration and political climate.

The Jacksonville Public Education Fund came into being in less than 18 months, completing the transformation from the former Alliance for World Class Education in 2009.

Less than three years after its founding, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund is a high-functioning nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness and knowledge of critical education issues.

Our board of directors is composed of diverse and active community leaders who are committed to improving public education in order to ensure that all students graduate ready for college and the workforce. They take the long view—believing we must rise above the trees to see the forest.

In the next year, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund will continue to push for action through the upcoming ONE by ONE community engagement campaign, which seeks to empower the community to create a vision for public education in Jacksonville; drive the public agenda through the publication of additional policy briefs; and hold district and community leaders accountable for performance through the creation of a dashboard of school-based success indicators.

Despite the tremendous challenges that our education system has faced over the last few years, we believe that we can do better. As we bring our community together to advocate for change, we will see evidence that Quality Education for All is within reach.
THREE CORE STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS
Combining advocacy, community mobilization and data and policy research

An informed, engaged community that demands high-quality public schools is essential to our success as a city. The Jacksonville Public Education Fund sees its work through the lens of three core strategies: advocacy, community mobilization and data and policy research. We are committed to increasing our collective knowledge of important education issues. That’s why informing the community is a common element in all three strategies—and a key component to our success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT WE DO:</th>
<th>COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION</th>
<th>DATA &amp; POLICY RESEARCH</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advocate for the implementation of the best available research-based practices and policies in support of higher achievement for all students at the district and state level.</td>
<td>Inform, empower and mobilize the community in support of high-quality public education.</td>
<td>Conduct high-quality research and analysis on best practices and student achievement in Duval County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The city needs a strong and independent voice for innovation and best practices. The Jacksonville Public Education Fund is that voice, and has convened organizations throughout the city to collaborate on initiatives that improve student outcomes.</td>
<td>The Jacksonville Public Education Fund works to put the public back in public education. That means engaging and training as many people as possible in our city to become outspoken advocates for high-quality schools, and holding a core belief that higher participation among parents, students, business leaders and other individuals in the democratic process will lead to better public schools.</td>
<td>The Jacksonville Public Education Fund produces research trusted by policy makers, members of the media and advocates alike. The research improves the discussion of important current issues facing Duval County Public Schools by providing a fact-based foundation for the conversation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples include the Learning to Finish Collaborative, a partnership that has yielded positive outcomes for at-risk students; and the EDDY Awards elevate the role of Duval County’s best teachers.</td>
<td>The ONE by ONE campaign will engage thousands of Jacksonville residents in deep conversation about public schools. JPEF also organizes public forums for school board and mayoral candidates.</td>
<td>In Brief, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund’s series of thrice-yearly briefing papers, includes policy analysis and original research. JPEF also invests in outside research, such as a co-funding with DCPS a broad-based report on district operations by Education Resource Strategies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IN BRIEF
The Jacksonville Public Education Fund hired its first Director of Data and Policy in 2011 and began conducting in-house research on best practices and student achievement in the Duval County Public Schools. The resulting policy paper series, called In Brief, will be published three times per year and will be timed to coincide with important current issues in education.

The first In Brief, published in June 2011, focused on reading achievement and looked at a cohort of students over 10 years. The report showed that more than half of all students considered by the state’s FCAT scores to be “on grade level” in third grade fall below that standard by tenth grade, and that early intervention was necessary in order to get students back on track.

Timed to coincide with the launch of Read It Forward Jax, the district’s new reading initiative, the first issue of In Brief garnered substantial attention in the media. The report had considerable penetration among educators, and was used in professional development activities over the summer by teen and children’s librarians at the Jacksonville Public Library.

EDUCATION RESOURCE STRATEGIES
With decreasing revenue and resources, Duval County Public Schools has been increasingly asked to compare itself to other urban districts. In 2010, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund identified Education Resource Strategies (ERS) as a firm that could pinpoint ways for the district to more effectively allocate its time, people and financial resources. With the support of Superintendent Ed Pratt-Dannals, JPEF successfully advocated for the Duval County School Board to work with ERS.

The year-long process included an intensive review of the district’s budget, class schedules and teacher assignments, recoding expenditures to allow for apples-to-apples comparisons to other cities and against documented best practices. ERS has engaged in a series of monthly working sessions with the district’s top leadership to develop action plans and will release a final report to the School Board and community in September 2011. JPEF committed $200,000, approximately a third of the cost of the ERS contract, representing a significant co-investment and partnership with the district.

DATA DASHBOARD
What good is data if people don’t use it?

That’s the idea behind the planned JPEF Data Dashboard, which will bring a wide variety of local education indicators to the public in a user-friendly online format. The Data Dashboard is projected to go online in early 2012.
ADVOCACY

Collaboration on issues that improve student outcomes

INTRODUCING BEST PRACTICES: LEARNING TO FINISH

In September 2009, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund began coordinating the Learning To Finish collaborative, a group of more than 20 organizations working to improve the graduation rate in Duval County.

Five lead partner organizations—Duval County Public Schools, The Community Foundation in Jacksonville, The Jacksonville Children’s Commission, United Way of Northeast Florida and JPEF—identified three key areas of focus. They are: quantifying the number of off-track students and the options available to them, identifying best practices, and aligning resources to be even more effective. With funding from the Community Foundation, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund, the Consortium of Florida Education Foundations and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the partners consulted national experts and visited districts making strides in creating both “Early Warning Response Systems” and “Multiple Pathways to Graduation.” Eight Duval County public schools now have their own EWRS models, aligning the United Way’s Achievers for Life program, the Jacksonville Children’s Commission’s Team Up, and Duval County Public Schools’ learning recovery, as well as small grants from JPEF.

Learning To Finish has supported the Children’s Commission redesign of Team Up to be more effective and the schools have added their community-based organization partners to their leadership teams. Recent results show that the EWRS students made stronger gains in reading and math FCAT scores than their non-EWRS counterparts and felt stronger connections to their schools and teachers. For principals and administrators, the system provides a strategic tool for focusing on the students who need the most help. At the district level, LTF has supported the school district in redesigning its structure for off-track students, creating a new Office of Multiple Pathways and Support Services. The office now has a five-year strategic plan that is data driven and outcomes focused. Ineffective programs have been replaced or eliminated, and harmful policies, such as withdrawing students for non-attendance, have been changed. As a result, the number of over-age students is decreasing and the graduation rate is on the rise.

“[Learning to Finish] made me feel like I can actually get in to one of those big colleges ... it didn’t only help us with school, it helped us with daily life.”

– Terry Parker High School student

ENCOURAGING NEW LEADERSHIP: MAYOR’S EDUCATION COMMISSIONER

As the mayoral election of 2011 began to take shape, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund introduced an idea that has been a success in cities from Philadelphia to Denver: A high-level education advisor to the Mayor of Jacksonville. JPEF prepared research on how the position was best used in other cities, and wrote a white paper with a proposed job description. The concept was championed by now-Mayor Alvin Brown. Less than a month after Brown took office, he named Dr. Donald Horner as the city’s first Education Commissioner.

SPEARHEADING INNOVATION: SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE

Knowing that at-risk students need every option available to get to graduation, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund became the catalyst for a new concept called Schools for the Future. In August 2011, the very first Schools for the Future Academy opened at The Bridge of Northeast Florida in partnership with Duval County Public Schools for students who are two or more years over age for grade level.

The school is a marriage of academic innovation and youth development strategies designed to fully engage students in a performance-based approach. A data-driven tracking system and powerful blend of face-to-face and technology-enabled educational strategies will remediate, then accelerate, students to achieve graduation within four to five years. From its first day of orientation, the school will be intensively documented and its outcomes measured by researchers. The project is made possible by grants from the Jacksonville Public Education Fund, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, as well as private donations. Duval County Public Schools is providing per-student funding for the school and partnering in all aspects of implementation.
THE EDDY AWARDS: CELEBRATING AND LEARNING FROM OUR BEST TEACHERS

The EDDY Awards, an annual event to celebrate Duval County’s leading teachers, is a time-honored tradition with a new mission to elevate the role of Jacksonville’s best teachers.

In the last two years, the event, which is a joint venture between the Jacksonville Public Education Fund and the Schultz Center for Teaching and Leadership, has evolved beyond an awards ceremony to build a network of exemplary teachers who are leaders in the community and who work to improve our schools, student performance and the teaching profession.

Changes include the introduction of the Wells Fargo Excellence In Teaching Seminar Series, which will allow three outstanding Teachers of the Year to share best practices and demonstrate live classroom instruction. The online series is accessible to all 8,000 teachers in our county. The Teacher of the Year now holds a seat on the Jacksonville Public Education Fund board of directors. And in 2011, the event landed its first-ever title sponsor and was renamed the Florida Blue Duval County Teacher of the Year.

In 2011, nearly 20 Teachers of the Year participated in the two-day Mentoring Impact Symposium, which provides an opportunity for teachers with three or more years experience to serve as mentors for their colleagues. Increased media exposure of the EDDYs and the teachers’ stories in The Florida Times-Union, WJCT radio and Action News television will better inform the community of great educators in our city. And, in addition to the individual cash awards, Rotary Clubs of Duval County established five funds at the Jacksonville Public Education Fund for each of the finalists to use for a project at their school.

Youmone Berrien is named 2011 Teacher of the Year.

the EDDY AWARDS
a celebration of teaching

TEACHING: NATIONAL EXPERTS VISIT JACKSONVILLE

With a growing national movement to reframe the way teachers are evaluated and compensated, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund has moved quickly to build understanding of these issues.

In May 2011, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund and the United Way of Northeast Florida co-hosted “New Frontiers in Teacher Evaluation,” a forum featuring national speakers on the issues of performance pay for teachers and “value-added” models for evaluating teachers based on student achievement. The forum, which featured Rick Hess of the American Enterprise Institute, brought a better understanding of this new movement in education reform to education stakeholders.

In June 2011, JPEF brought Barnett Berry, President of the Center for Teaching Quality, to Jacksonville to meet with teachers and education thought leaders. He presented the New Millennium Initiative (NMI), a program that empowers the next generation of educators to become policy makers and helps teachers who don’t want to leave the classroom find new career pathways.

In 2011, Youmone Berrien is named 2011 Teacher of the Year.
COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION
Engaging and activating our residents to action

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION: STRENGTHENING THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS
In 2010, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund saw the need for more opportunities for civic engagement with the upcoming election. With three Duval County School Board races on the ballot—important elections but often lost in the heavy media focus on congressional elections—the public needed a chance to hear from the candidates in a debate.

“Just as the colonial settlers recognized the inextricable link between education and civic society, so too must Americans in 2011 engage with public schools to ensure that they can meet the demands society now places on them.”

—An Appeal to All Americans:
The National Commission on Civic Investment in Public Education

With its new Community Engagement Manager on board, JPEF hosted both primary and runoff forums in each district with an open race. The debates were attended by hundreds across Jacksonville, leading to increased civic involvement in the races. The following year, in February 2011, JPEF partnered with Duval County Public Schools, WJCT, OneJax and the Jacksonville Kids Coalition to co-sponsor a forum for mayoral candidates, many of whom were pledging to get involved in education matters. The forum was youth-led, hosted and moderated by four DCPS high school students who posed questions. After the question-and-answer series, the forum opened the floor to questions from the audience, which was composed of hundreds of students.

SPEAKING OUT: RALLYING AGAINST SPENDING CUTS
In February 2011, a steep budget shortfall in Tallahassee threatened to slash funding for the public school system. The Jacksonville Public Education Fund joined an effort led by Save Duval Schools to build awareness of the problem and rally the community against the cuts. Attended by hundreds, the rally represented the community’s first real understanding that school funding was endangered beyond what most thought possible.

SPREADING KNOWLEDGE: COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC
Recognizing the importance of a well-informed community, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund has made communications a key priority.

Through events, media outreach, and electronic resources, we seek to find many channels to make available the best information and key data points about education. The Fall 2010 Beyond the Movie discussion forum, attended by more than 250 people, brought about deep conversation sparked by the movie “Waiting for Superman.” Timely and thoughtful op-ed submissions in the newspaper as well as relevant interviews in broadcast and print media deepen the community’s understanding of important education issues. Active social media and web-based outreach brings information directly to the public.
ONE BY ONE: BRINGING OUR CITY TOGETHER

Duval County is at a critical moment for improving public education. Recent polls have shown that 41 percent of Duval County residents rate education as the top issue facing our city’s future. And economic studies show that reducing our dropout rate by half would add an estimated $65 million to the regional economy annually.

The issue has rarely felt so urgent, yet the community is fragmented and many are unsure how to help. Most people realize that no meaningful change can happen until the entire city rallies behind a common vision.

Recognizing this, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund will launch the ONE by ONE campaign in Fall 2011 to unite our city behind a shared mission to ensure that all students graduate from high school ready for college and the workforce. The ONE by ONE campaign is modeled after similar initiatives that have seen great success in places such as Mobile, Alabama, and Collier County, Florida.

The effort starts with ONE in THREE, a powerful multimedia art exhibit that lifts the stories of 20 current and former public school students, and takes its name from the sobering reality that one in three students in Duval County does not graduate from high school on time or at all. Beginning at The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens in September 2011, the exhibit will then travel Jacksonville, one neighborhood at a time, starting in January 2012.

As the exhibit moves around the city, the stories of these students will awaken the community to the fact that we can only solve this problem face to face, voice by voice, and ONE by ONE.

Coordinated by a volunteer-led Community Advisory Team, the ONE by ONE campaign will include at least 75 small community conversations—as well as large-format town hall meetings—in homes, businesses and places of worship throughout our city to chart a course for education in Jacksonville.

The goal of the conversations is not simply to talk. Throughout 2012, the conversations will be documented, and the themes and ideas discussed will be collated and recorded online. From them, a vision for education that truly represents our entire city will emerge through a community agreement. That vision will serve as a road map for the community to advocate for an action plan.

The thousands of people who participate in the process will ensure their elected officials support the goals, and work side by side with them to ensure they have the necessary resources and support to enact change. The Jacksonville Public Education Fund will be responsible for coordinating that action—holding to account not only public officials but also the people who elect them.

“It takes every race, color, creed in the community to cause a combustion of change.”

– Travis Pinckney, ONE in THREE student

The photo credits are as follows:

ONE in THREE Photography by Ingrid Damiani
Exhibit space photography by Brunet-Garcia Advertising
A LETTER FROM THE BOARD

A CALL TO ACTION:
We cannot fail in educating our children

Our community—and our state—is at a critical decision point.

We must address priorities and whether students—and the education that is so critical to their future—should be held above all else, or whether we are willing to accept a mediocre workforce and the economic consequences that come from underinvesting in our kids.

The time is now; we cannot wait. As a community organization dedicated to improving education, with a diverse board membership that spans race, gender and political stripes, we implore you to pick up the phone or write a letter to your representatives.

For contact information for the Duval Legislative Delegation and talking points about the budget, please visit our website at www.jaxpef.org.

If we do not make our voices heard in Tallahassee soon, we cannot blame our local school board for the impossible choices they will be forced to make.

We will only have our own inaction and complacency to blame.

The Jacksonville Public Education Fund Board of Directors. Excerpt from a guest column against state budget cuts.

Published in The Florida Times Union, March 20, 2011.

OUR FUTURE
Putting the public back in public education

This is only just the beginning for the Jacksonville Public Education Fund. Our eyes are on the horizon toward a vision where an engaged and politically vocal Jacksonville community demands that high-performing public schools be available to every child in Duval County—regardless of race, income and neighborhood—and that public schools provide the rigorous instruction needed for student success in college and careers in the 21st century’s global economy.

This young organization has accomplished much in its first two years. But it has the potential to have an even greater impact in its next two—not just on schools and children, but also on the community as a whole.

The Jacksonville Public Education Fund has set out a plan of how we will contribute toward creating and sustaining a system of high-performing schools. To recap, we will raise the community’s knowledge and awareness of critical education issues, engage and empower parents, teachers and other community members, and advocate for research-based school improvement strategies.

Our work cannot happen without the key partnerships that the Jacksonville Public Education Fund works diligently to foster. We aim to empower and collaborate with other youth-serving agencies, government entities and a broad swath of individuals from the community. We recognize the need to get everyone on the bus in order to create the school system we all want.

It is an exciting time for education in Jacksonville, and the Jacksonville Public Education Fund is uniquely prepared to be a catalyst for change in our school system. Through the strategies it set forward, this organization will work to renew the sacred social compact of public education: The public must be actively involved in its public schools and, when it is, the improved public school system that results will benefit every sector of our community.

Through its work in helping to make this happen, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund will provide a return on investment, both in measurable results and in a restored sense of possibility in our community.

Together, we will transform the future.
FINANCIALS
An accounting of Fiscal Year 2011

The Jacksonville Public Education Fund gratefully acknowledges the investors whose vision and dedication make this organization successful.

The financial statements provided here are unaudited. The annual audited financial report will be complete in October 2011 and posted to www.jaxpef.org as soon as it is available.

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<th>FISCAL YEAR 2011 REVENUE</th>
<th>FISCAL YEAR 2011 EXPENSES</th>
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All figures inclusive of the EDDY Awards.

**JACKSONVILLE PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND STAFF:**
Trey Csar, President
Pam Paul, Vice President, Program & Strategic Partnerships
Deirdre Conner, Manager, Communications
Amber Jubinsky, Manager, Finance & Development
Jason Rose, Director, Data & Policy
Rachael Tutwiler, Manager, Community Engagement
Carly Yetzer, Associate, Operations

**FISCAL YEAR 2011 SUPPORTERS AND DONORS**

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WJCT/Corporation for Public Broadcasting