

ABOUT THE BINGHAM FELLOWS

Bingham Fellows is the leadership-in-action arm of the Leadership Louisville Center. Created in 1988 through a \$500,000 endowment from the Mary and Barry Bingham Sr. Fund, the Fellows are social entrepreneurs who have the imagination and talent needed to gather critical resources and create social change. Now in its 21st year, the Bingham Fellows have had an impressive track record providing emerging issues with visibility and momentum.

The Fellows don't ponder what might be. They roll up their sleeves, shine a spotlight on an issue and put new ideas to work. In recent years, they've contributed to the development of a long-term vision for our community, enhanced environmental responsibility through initiatives at the grassroots and policy levels, worked to attract and retain talent with an internship program now managed by Greater Louisville Inc. and helped form the Kentucky Indiana Exchange, a regional leadership coalition. The impact of the Fellows goes back to the 1990s with the creation of The Housing Partnership, construction of the Presbyterian Community Center, growth of local farmers' markets and numerous other positive outcomes.

2012 BINGHAM FELLOWS

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ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY TO INSPIRE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The 2012 Bingham Fellows are implementing strategies to drive achievement by maximizing family and community involvement in each child's academic life.

Each year, the Leadership Louisville Center's Bingham Fellows program gathers a diverse group of community leaders to address a topic of great need in our community. From experts on the issue to leaders passionate about the topic, the Fellows come together as community trustees to reach for the greater good.

The work of the 2012 Bingham Fellows is focused on stepping up the community's investment in the next generation. Through experience and research, the class concluded that family, caregiver and community involvement are true drivers for student success. The Bingham Fellows were particularly compelled by the fact that family participation in education has been found to be twice as predictive of students' academic success as a family's socioeconomic status.¹

By impacting the quality of family and community involvement in each student's education, the Fellows' work has the potential to affect outcomes from early childhood through high school. Areas of impact include: positive attitudes and self-esteem, discipline problems, high school completion rates and participation in postsecondary education.

¹ Walberg, H.J. (1984). *Families as partners in educational productivity*. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 65, 397-400.

Photo credits: Jonathan Roberts, Jefferson County Public Schools

The 2012 Bingham Fellows include leaders with decades of experience and who represent our largest local universities, public and parochial school systems, government, the faith-based community, community-based organizations and local corporations with an interest in the economic implications of an educated workforce. Their diverse perspectives include an understanding of the needs of single parents and populations from all socio-economic backgrounds.



In January, the Bingham Fellows Class of 2012 began working toward the goal of 'creating a path to prosperity - engaging the community to inspire student achievement.' Their task was to take a leadership role in engaging parents, families and the business community in the education of our next generation. Throughout the program year, the Bingham Fellows worked closely with Jefferson County Public Schools to align their work with current initiatives of Superintendent Dr. Donna Hargens and her leadership team.

To accelerate their learning, they engaged with national and local experts in the area of education and family involvement, including the National Center for Family Literacy, Pritchard Committee

for Academic Excellence, Dr. Mavis Sanders, educator and author of *School, Family and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action* and Dr. Phil Schlechty of the Schlechty Center, an organization focused on transforming classrooms. Local leaders from the faith-based community, 55,000 Degrees initiative and education policy-makers and advocates from state and local government also provided insight to the class.

To broaden resources for family and caregiver involvement, the Bingham Fellows concluded that there isn't one single approach – solutions need to come from multiple angles and the whole community has a role to play. Their comprehensive approach is focused on the building blocks of school, community and families.



Building Blocks for Success

AaBb 2+2=4

School

PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP: For strong parent and community engagement, principal leadership within

each school is imperative. Principals create the sense of community within the school's walls as well as partnerships with parents and the broader community.

The **Great Principals Make Great Schools** project worked with JCPS staff to gather input about parental engagement directly from principals at JCPS elementary schools. The data was clear – from their perspective, parental engagement is critical and more work is needed to engage families and caregivers. Under development are two solutions to the needs expressed by principals: (1) professional development training in the area of family engagement, and (2) creating opportunities for sharing best practices with schools that have similar demographic and engagement challenges. Research data has also been shared with JCPS administration, new assistant superintendents and the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce for use in curriculum development of the Leadership Institute for School Principals.

Most importantly, because accountability and measurement have the ability to raise awareness and

focus, the Fellows are collaborating with the JCPS Data Management Department to include a Parental Engagement Index as a key metric for schools.

Community

STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY ALLIANCES: The principal survey also found that the links between

JCPS and community-based organizations (CBOs) are inconsistent. Because CBOs provide wrap-around services that extend beyond the scope and focus of public schools, intentional relationships between the two have the ability to transform schools.

To strengthen these relationships, the **Student Achievement Supports** project will work with JCPS to effectively engage and build partnerships with CBOs to improve academic outcomes for students. Using a single JCPS area, a pilot project will create a structure and process that easily links schools with support services for students and families. Over 50 organizations have been tapped to be part of the pilot and interest is growing. The pilot will use a formal rapid-change process to increase and strategically align the resources of CBOs with students and families facing critical social and psychological challenges.

Families

FAMILY & CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT: Involvement goes beyond joining the PTA and having bake sales. What

really impacts student achievement is how caregivers engage in learning activities and support at home. The earlier it begins, the more powerful the effect. Actions such as reading, helping with homework, showing interest in school work and positive interactions within schools can have great impact on student success.

STRONG BEGINNINGS — The *Jefferson County Nurturing Early Successful Transitions (NEST)* project seeks to ensure children have an emphasis on learning early in their lives and to provide parents and caregivers with a strong foundation as children's first educators. NEST is a pilot program to facilitate collaboration between JCPS and a small number of community-based early childcare centers, reaching about 200 children. Parents and caregivers in these centers will receive personalized education and information about learning activities at home, kindergarten readiness and the new JCPS guidelines for teaching and learning, including the Common Core standards and Common Kindergarten Entry Screener being implemented by the Kentucky Department of Education. The vehicles for providing this education – presentations, modeling exercises and a workbook based on the new kindergarten screener – will be explored with the early childhood personnel, JCPS and parents.

EMPOWERED PARENTS — To help inform and educate parents on the ways they can support their child's academic success, a coalition of key community stakeholders are developing the *Parent Education Network (PEN)*, a parent-led group who will work toward making families and caregivers more sophisticated consumers of education.

Stakeholders include community institutions that support parents, corporations and educators. With the resources available through these organizations, the PEN has the potential to empower parents who participate, help them develop a peer-network and create strategies that help themselves and other parents. With guidance and support, parents will have the ability to become increasingly involved in home learning activities and find opportunities to teach and be models for their children.

A CULTURE OF ACHIEVEMENT — When families and caregivers know better, they do better. A *Social Marketing* initiative will strive to create a new social norm for caregivers to take simple actions, know key milestones and build higher expectations for positive academic outcomes. Using local media outlets and social media, this initiative will reach families where they are and seek to educate the entire community. From the date of the first day of school to parent/teacher conferences and tips for how and when to review report cards, this information seeks to move the needle of parent and community involvement in a positive direction.

In addition, to increase pride and potential resources for public schools, support will be provided to JCPS for ongoing media relations efforts that highlight extraordinary student activities and academic outcomes.

"When students have the backing and support of their caregivers, any other barriers to education are easier to overcome." – Survey comment by JCPS Elementary Principal

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