



ALL IN

PROVIDENCE EDUCATION SUMMIT

April 8, 2017 - Providence Career & Technical Academy

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OVERVIEW

The **All In: Providence Education Summit** brought together four hundred community members - including parents, students, educators, community and business leaders and youth serving organizations - to build and support a cohesive vision for education in Providence.

In addition to dynamic discussions throughout the day, the Summit included culturally diverse performances and foods. Attendees enjoyed a Dominican breakfast from Punta Cana Bistro, a performance from the Bolivian Dancers of Integración Cultural Latina, and the energizing call of West African drums from Sidy Maiga and his drummers.

This report is a collection of images, words, and ideas that were discussed and shared throughout the day, as well as the next steps planned to help Providence become the highest performing urban education system in the country.







Who Attended the All In: Providence Education Summit?

Many different voices and perspectives were present during the Summit. Our students (**15%**), educators and school administrators (**26%**), parents (**15%**), community leaders (**16%**), business leaders (**3%**), political leaders (**1%**), and higher education leaders (**7%**) were in the room. Both our youth and our seniors were active participants with 15% of the 400 attendees under 18 years old and 10% over 60 years old. Of all attendees, 26% identified as Latino, 11% as Black, and 5% as Asian. We will continue to strive for even more diversity at future gatherings to truly reflect the depth of all Providence communities.












CORE BELIEFS

The Summit Planning Team consisted of a diverse group of students, teachers and community leaders, all currently engaged in education and social justice work throughout Providence. The Team offered a set of Beliefs to help guide and ground conversations during the Summit:

-  **Students must be at the center.** To be “all in” requires a deep and holistic understanding of who Providence students are and a centering of their experiences, needs, and desires in conversations about the future of education.
-  **We must acknowledge and elevate our city’s diverse strengths.** There is rich, innovative work being done by young people, teachers, school and district leaders, youth organizations, parents, and others that we should celebrate and learn from, rather than assume we’re starting from a place of deficits with problems that need to be fixed.
-  **We must address both interpersonal and systemic forms of oppression.** Like every school district in this country, Providence is not free from systemic barriers like racism, xenophobia, and homophobia, which are perpetuated in mindsets, policies, and practices that impact students’ daily experiences inside and outside of school.
-  **We must take on an equity-based framework if we want to create lasting change.** Equity is not the same as equality. Equity is giving everyone what they need to be successful, whereas equality is treating everyone the same.

WAYS OF BEING

The Team also framed the day with the following norms to ensure that everyone could fully participate throughout the Summit.

-  Center young people. Let's make sure the voices, needs, and experiences of students are at the forefront of our conversations today.
-  Recognize our collective strengths and build on them.
-  All forms of communication are welcome.
-  Take space, make space. Make sure everyone has a chance to speak.
-  We will uplift our students, teachers, and parents, not blame them for systemic issues that have plagued school districts for a long time.
-  Be open and respect different opinions, experiences, and learning styles.
-  Respect everyone's identity and background: please don't assume anyone's race, ethnicity, gender identity, economic status, health, etc.
-  Call in, not call out. When someone behaves in a way that challenges your values, do your best to invite them into awareness rather than dismissing, shaming, or shunning them.
-  Be aware of both intent and impact. Listen and change your behavior if someone tells you it is causing harm.
-  No one knows everything. Together, we know a lot.
-  No quick fix. Today is the beginning of our work together.



OPENING EXHIBIT

Youth In Action's Social Identity Location Wall

Lining the hallways of the Providence Career and Technical Academy, this interactive exhibit was a space for attendees to begin critically engaging with topics for the day. High school students and staff from Youth In Action curated the walls with prompts, images, and data about education, equity, and social justice. Similar to an “analog Twitter,” attendees used post-it notes to “like” or respond to the content on the walls. Attendees were also given an opportunity to respond to simple prompts such as I Am, I Need, I Love, and My Vision For Our Schools Is.... to reflect upon their diverse experiences with our school system and what they were bringing into the conversation.

Throughout this report, you will see some of the powerful responses that accumulated throughout the day.



A SHARED VISION FOR OUR SCHOOLS

We posed the question to every single attendee:

If you were to start from scratch and build a learning environment that meets the needs of every young person, what would it look like?

We offered an opportunity for people to respond through writing, hashtags, drawing, and performance. Here are some of the responses we heard and saw:



“Successful learning depends upon all participants understanding the developmental, metacognitive, and individual proclivities of learners. It depends equally on the learning environment reflecting the experiences and values of the larger community.”

“Respect student voices.”

“Emotional intelligence is the key to success. The ability to communicate effectively, identify and talk about feelings and needs; to be self-assured/ aware/ esteem/confidence/efficacy/regulatory and build and maintain healthy relationships with family, friends, peers, etc. These skills build healthier, more successful people who are able to grow, learn, and make change for themselves and their communities. The vision is for these skills to be taught in and outside of the classroom and throughout school cultures with content and conversation. We need more health education classes and programs that cover relationship education and social/emotional learning.”

“ We need students to participate in and give input and feedback on their classroom learning in the same way they are doing here at this Summit! The students know how to make their learning experience better, but they don't get asked.”

“Use community resources to switch up the pace.”

“ Make learning relevant.”

“Create a culture of 360 degree evaluation and feedback loops.”

“Student-Centered Learning -
“Follow a student’s ‘spark.’”





Over the course of the day, participants developed hashtags to convey their vision for education.

- #movementisnotabehaviorproblem
- #buildingsthatreflectstudentpassion
- #schoolswherestudentwanttolearn
- #affirmingstudentidentities
- #contentthatreflectsmultiplenarratives
- #relationshipbuilding
- #studentagency
- #inclusivepedagogy
- #educatorslivinginthecity
- #studentsaseducators
- #studentsaschangemakers
- #studentvoicescentered
- #studentsasadvocates
- #ethnicstudies
- #teacherasstudent

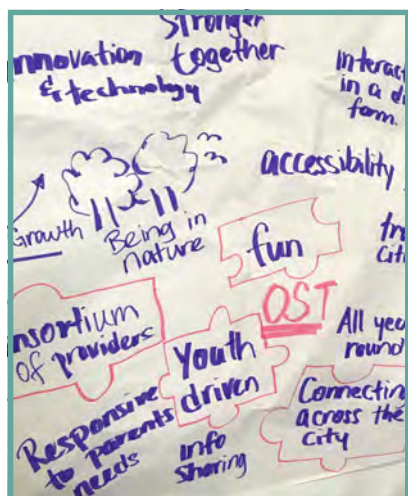


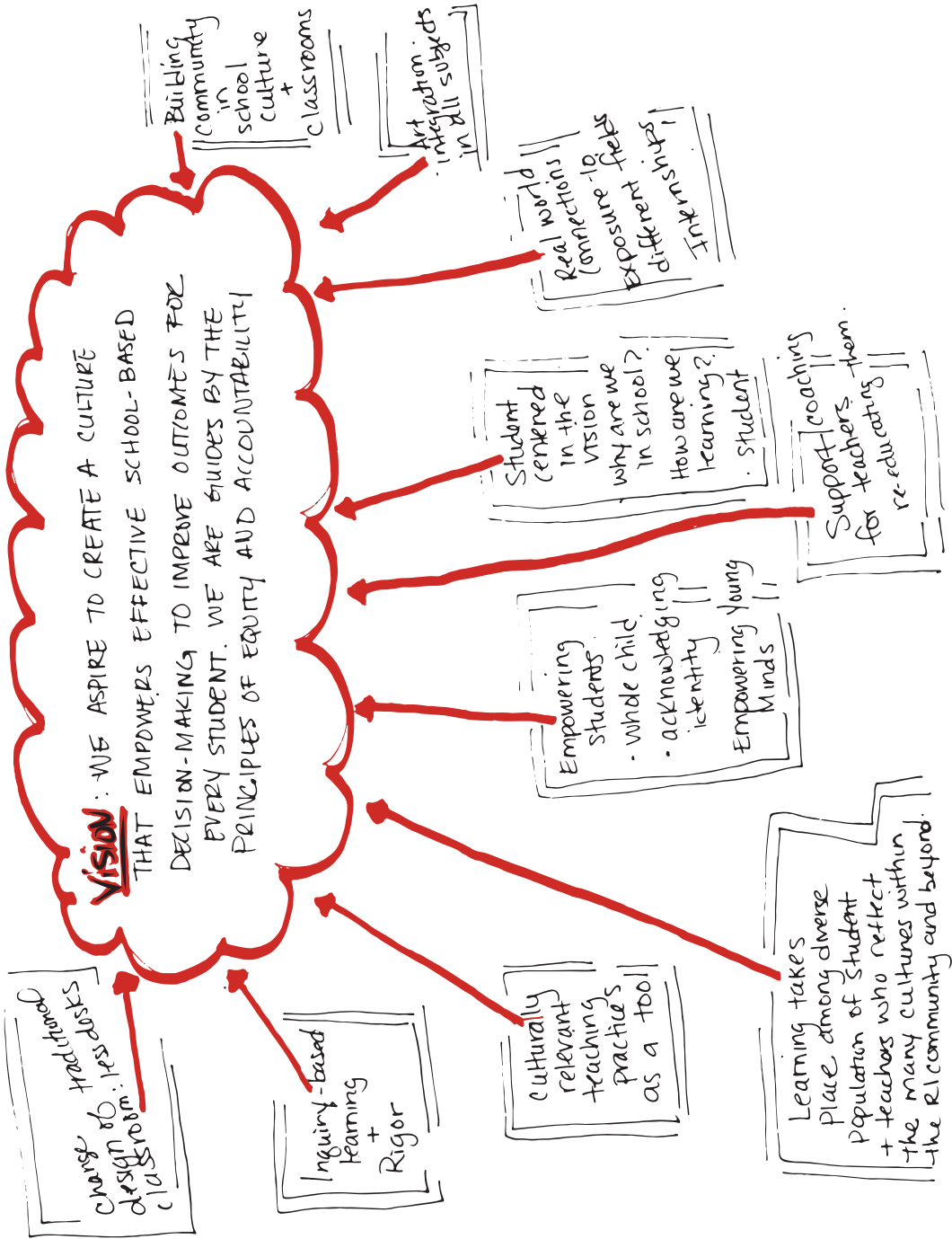
My vision for our schools is...

- Strong youth/adult relationships that empower and support student achievement
- Better school equipment
- Stronger connections between schools and organizations
- Healthier adult-to-adult relationships that support collaborative cultures that support student achievement
- To see more middle schools with an 18 to 20 student ratio
- Resources for struggling families

We need...

- To reform the entire education system
- New education buildings
- Teachers and schools that affirm and value the identities of students
- On-going college counseling training for guidance counselors
- Smaller class sizes
- Comprehensive sex education for our students
- Free summer learning for all students that utilizes the arts and media abundant in our state
- Diverse school staff
- Ethnic studies
- Parent education
- Community building
- Adequate resources/technology
- Students facilitating professional development
- Crediting/valuing soft skills and leadership
- More experiential learning
- Different ways of assessing learning





TAKING ACTION TOGETHER: BREAK OUT SESSIONS

Summit attendees each chose one of five breakout sessions to engage in discussion around specific focus areas. The topics were identified through community meetings and conversations with student, school, and community leaders leading up to the Summit. Each breakout session brought together diverse groups of stakeholders from different neighborhoods and schools, to action plan together for both short-term and long-term changes.



Conversations were framed by mini-panels of experts that laid out their perspectives and the work already happening at both the community and school levels around each area. All sessions were centered on equity, opportunities to make a collective impact, and the resources needed to grow the work collaboratively.

The following pages contain a report-out from each of the sessions:

1. Improving Facilities District Wide
2. Cultivating Culturally Responsive Learning
3. Strengthening Diversity and Inclusion
4. Improving Outcomes for English Language Learners
5. Leveraging Community Partnerships In Schools

Each section of this report contains an overview of key themes, as well as short-term and long-term ideas that emerged through the conversations. The “Ideas Already in Practice” sections provide context by describing the work already happening in these areas across the City and District. The overall goal is to build off these strategies to create opportunities for collaboration and co-creation with the community, in order to incorporate the dynamic recommendations that emerged from the Summit over the next several months.



IMPROVING FACILITIES DISTRICT WIDE

This session focused on the critical issue of our schools' physical infrastructure. Many Providence students and school based staff have experienced firsthand the challenge of learning and teaching in buildings in need of serious repair. This working group focused on how to plan strategically for the future to ensure our facilities are safe, up-to-date, and designed to maximize student learning. The group brainstormed short-term and long-term opportunities to achieve these goals with greater community engagement and transparency.

KEY THEME: Our school facilities communicate a value statement to our students. We need a city-wide assessment of all public schools so that facilities accommodate and encourage 21st century learning.

SHORT TERM IDEAS:

- 🌐 Strengthen community awareness and build upon pre-existing advocacy around facilities
 - Partner with the Fix Our Schools Now coalition to host public forums
 - Consider creating individual Building Advisory Committees for long-term stewardship that engages youth, school-based leaders, and community members
 - Bring key stakeholders at state and federal level into schools
- 🌐 Complete a comprehensive needs assessment of facilities
- 🌐 Develop 5 year capital plan to include a financing model that prioritizes critical health and safety issues
- 🌐 Ensure that we are holding architects and contractors accountable for the work that is being done
- 🌐 Implement the systematic release of a public facilities report annually to report upon progress



LONG TERM IDEAS:

- 🌐 Determine a long-term funding strategy
 - Advocate at the State level for sustainable long-term public funding similar to Rhode Works model
 - Determine opportunities for new avenues for loans and earned income
 - Look into corporate, private, public funding mechanisms
- 🌐 Explore ways in which physical environments facilitate different kinds of teaching and learning in order to support the different ways that students learn

IDEAS ALREADY IN PRACTICE

- 🌐 The City continues to make infrastructure investments in our schools with \$8 million in work scheduled through the summer of 2017. The City is planning to invest an additional \$15 million in bond funding to continue our infrastructure investments through 2018.
- 🌐 Mayor Jorge Elorza has committed to launching a 5 year capital planning process that will include robust stakeholder engagement to ensure that students, families, teachers and administrators are able to shape the plan.
- 🌐 The City currently contracts with Aramark to maintain school facilities. They utilize an electronic work order system to track, prioritize, and execute maintenance work. PPSD also groups work across schools - for example, roofing projects, technology needs, fire code improvements - as a collective bid in order to save costs.
- 🌐 Going forward, the City and District will release an annual report that documents school facilities improvements and increases transparency in the community.



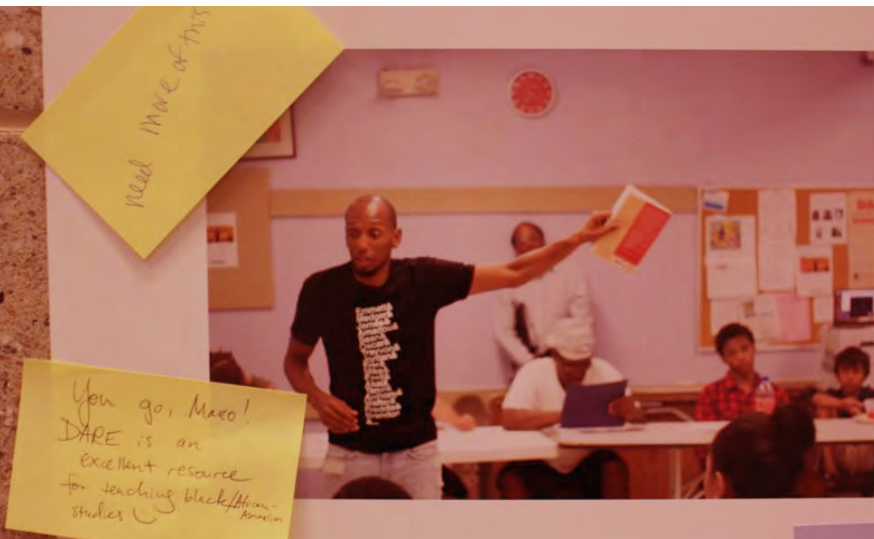
CULTIVATING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEARNING

In this group, we focused on strides and remaining opportunities for the District to cultivate culturally responsive learning environments for our youth. This includes the incorporation of culturally relevant curriculum into our K-12 classrooms and the development of restorative practices in our schools. We brainstormed opportunities to strengthen personalized learning that meets the needs of our multicultural student body. We also discussed professional development for all staff to ensure that cultural competency is a key part of training for all who work with youth.




KEY THEME: Our schools are diverse, but that has not necessarily permeated into the learning environment. We need school culture and curriculum that center and value the diverse social and cultural identities of Providence.

SHORT TERM IDEAS:




- Facilitate open dialogue across the District about race and equity
 - Analyze school data through a racial equity lens (suspension, attendance, etc.)
 - Utilize community organizations and partners to facilitate workshops within schools and the PPSD Central Office to facilitate understanding and dialogue
 - Encourage student projects that embed art and advocacy for youth to explore these issues



LONG TERM IDEAS

-  Make system-wide changes around how behavior is monitored and disciplined to improve school culture and student engagement
 - Explore and implement best practices in restorative discipline, mindfulness curricula, and other methods to address behavior in ways that promote student belonging and accountability
-  Update K-12 curriculum for multidimensional account of history and social issues; including social studies, ethnic studies, the arts, and humanities
-  Implement a systemic professional development plan for all teachers, staff, and administrators on racial and cultural identity
 - Advocate for more staff time allocated to professional development in collective bargaining agreements
 - Explore additional funding sources to design and implement this
 - Utilize Teachers Institute as an opportunity to institutionalize this training
 - Ensure that there are ongoing opportunities throughout the year for training, self-reflection, and support in this area
 - Look to the Undoing Racism workshop as a potential model for training
 - Consider opportunities for students to play a role in leading professional development

IDEAS ALREADY IN PRACTICE

-  A key part of the District's commitment to personalization of student learning includes building curricula that speaks to our multicultural student body. In 2016, the District launched a new ethnic studies course in 5 different schools, which was developed by teachers, students, and the community members. In the FY18 budget, the District has proposed that the Director of Curriculum & Instruction lead work in ensuring that the K-12 curriculum is culturally responsive and relevant.
-  The Mayor has also proposed an increase in funds through this year's budget for increased staff and leadership in all Providence middle schools, with a specific focus on strengthening school culture and climate.
-  The District is considering multiple opportunities to expand upon the Undoing Racism workshops attended this year by several key Central Office leaders. At the school level, the School Leadership Academy, a professional development series for PPSD Principals, will now include racial equity workshops as a part of its menu this year.

STRENGTHENING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

In order to build learning environments that are culturally responsive, it is essential to build a strong pipeline for educators of color. In this session, we discussed best practices to cultivate diverse talent and leadership that reflects the diversity of Providence students.

KEY THEME: Research shows that students of all races prefer diversity among their teachers, and many students have shown boosts in academic achievement as a result.¹ The District must create new ways to attract and retain school-based staff and faculty who reflect the demographics of our multicultural student body.

SHORT TERM IDEAS:

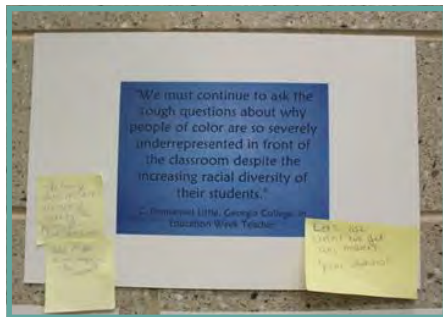
- 🌐 Build a professional environment that values diversity, where youth and staff are encouraged to express their full selves and identities
 - Encourage staff to talk about what “culture” and “identity” means with students
 - Create intentional opportunities for schools to celebrate diversity with the broader community, such as culture nights co-planned by students and staff
- 🌐 Explore opportunities for peer mentorship and support by pairing up new teachers with more experienced ones
- 🌐 Prioritize local hires that reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the PPSD student body

¹<https://www.nyu.edu/about/news-publications/news/2016/october/students-of-all-races-prefer-teachers-of-color--finds-nyu-steinh.html>



LONG TERM IDEAS:

- ➊ Advocate at State level for certification requirements that are more inclusive of non-traditional pathways to teaching, including:
 - Internal residency programs and two year emergency certifications
 - More flexible reciprocity with other state teaching certifications
- ➋ Develop pipeline programs for young people to gain experience in the classroom and enter clear pathways to certification and teaching full-time
 - Explore models that cultivate diverse pipelines of new teachers, including alumni of PPSD schools
 - Expand internship and job opportunities for young people to explore the field of teaching
- ➌ Investigate and develop long-term retention strategies for teachers of color and teachers that live locally, including funding sources for incentives
- ➍ Work with higher education institutions to ensure certification programs include cultural competency
- ➎ Advocate at State level for promotional efforts to uplift profession of teaching



IDEAS ALREADY IN PRACTICE:

- ➊ The Providence Public School District Strategic Plan includes the creation of a targeted recruitment strategy and plan with a focus on diversity. This past year, the District created and hired the new position of the Equal Employment Opportunity & Recruitment Officer to spearhead this work.
- ➋ This summer, the District and the City are funding summer learning programs that employ PPSD high school youth to teach younger students. This program will equip high school students interested in the profession with hands-on teaching experience and training.



IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

This session explored ways to better support our growing ELL student population to ensure they are prepared to succeed in school. Participants discussed best practices and methods for teaching ELL students, the need for more avenues for ELL certification for teachers, and the importance of special supports for those who have recently arrived in the United States.







KEY THEME: Linguistic diversity is an immeasurable asset to our city. Our ELL students need a personalized learning experience that allows them to learn at their own pace, grow confident in the classroom, and develop the skills necessary to thrive in school and life.




SHORT TERM IDEAS:

- 🌐 Hold regular meetings for ELL students and families to share their perspective and provide feedback to the schools
 - Decrease barriers to access and participation by including translation, childcare, dinner, etc.
- 🌐 Explore funding opportunities to make sure there is adequate interpretation (spoken) and translation (written) for families and students to enhance communication at the school level
 - Consider creating ELL sites at schools in order to coordinate volunteer support
 - Cultivate bilingual staff to become involved in supporting communication with families
- 🌐 Work closely with local organizations that support students with families who have recently immigrated or are in need of legal services in order to build wrap-around supports and clear pathways for referral
 - Organize professional development and training for teachers and counselors on the intersections of immigration and education to better support and build trust with students and families

LONG TERM IDEAS:

-  Promote the City's linguistic diversity as an asset for students and the community
 - Expand dual language programming and other opportunities for bilingual learning
 - Include the importance of linguistic diversity in cultural competence training
 - Contextualize this in light of the global workforce demand
-  Ensure that newcomer students are receiving a personalized experience in the classroom
 - Create an evaluation program for every student and monitor their customized learning plan
 - Ensure newcomers can access extended graduation time without penalty if needed
-  Advocate for a dedicated State funding stream that funds the education and wrap-around supports needed to support ELL students
-  Work closely with higher education institutions to explore new avenues for ELL certification for pre-existing teachers and school leaders, and include cultural competency as part of this training

IDEAS ALREADY IN PRACTICE:

-  The District launched a Newcomer Academy this Spring, currently enrolling 62 students, as a specialized school environment for new students arriving to the United States as refugees. The Academy provides small class sizes and individualized attention for each student, and is working closely with Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island for translation services, case management, and other forms of wrap-around support to successfully onboard students and their families into the District and Providence.
-  The District has an initial proposal under review in conjunction with Roger Williams University to create alternative ELL certification pathways for current teachers to better support our growing ELL population.
-  The City and District continue to advocate at the State level for a permanent funding stream to support English Language Learners.

LEVERAGING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS IN SCHOOLS

This session focused on the ways in which community partners can support student learning and social-emotional development, both inside and outside of the classroom. This group brainstormed collectively about how community resources can be more effectively leveraged to maximize opportunities for youth to be engaged in and out of school, and to complement the work of the District.

KEY THEME: Schools cannot do this work alone. We need to strategically leverage community resources to fully support student learning, growth, and well-being - both inside and outside the classroom.

SHORT TERM IDEAS:

- 🌐 Engage in an asset-mapping process to establish a common understanding of the community resources and providers within Providence that support young people and families
- 🌐 Gauge interest in who wants to be a part of a collective initiative through a survey



LONG TERM IDEAS:

- 🌐 Develop a clear, transparent framework for partnership with the District, informed by diverse community organizations and school-based leadership teams
 - Ensure District is not solely getting input from organizational leaders and partners, but also the students and families that would be accessing these programs
 - Make sure “high quality” partners are defined and the criteria is transparent
 - Ground partnerships with common objectives, metrics, and indicators to ensure alignment of goals with the District and RIDE’s Strategic Plan
 - Balance school autonomy with streamlined, transparent vetting processes and alignment through the Central Office
- 🌐 Create opportunities for youth-serving organizations to come together to discuss the intersections of their work, and better understand the gaps in the current landscape
- 🌐 Build and publish a cohesive web platform that shows available programs at Providence schools and community centers that students, parents, teachers, and organizations can all access

IDEAS ALREADY IN PRACTICE:

- As part of the Strategic Plan, the District is committed to increasing out-of-school time opportunities and to maximize effective partnerships through strategic resource allocation.
- This year, the District and City doubled investment in free summer learning programs for Providence youth. Historically, summer learning partners in the community would propose targets; design their own program content, length and evaluation; and make specific requests for funding for summer programs. This year, the District and City established a proactive approach in setting expectations, guidelines, and enrollment targets for summer learning through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process. All summer learning programs will be using common metrics to ensure that the investments are truly beneficial for our young people.
- As a whole, the District is moving towards performance-based contracts, in order to ensure that partnerships are grounded in clear, measurable goals that have a positive impact on our young people and schools.
- The City has doubled its summer jobs for Providence youth aged 14-24 this year, placing nearly 1200 youth in jobs throughout 25 community organizations and 7 City departments. This was made possible by expansion of the City's Parks and Recreation jobs program, funding from the Governor's Workforce Board for job placements and internships, and a \$1,000,000 allocation to summer work experiences in the FY18 budget by Mayor Elorza. For this new \$1,000,000 fund, the City issued an RFP to set clear expectations and priorities, including a focus on job opportunities devoted to building positive change in our communities.



WHAT'S NEXT?

We are grateful that you have lent your voices, passion, and energy to this work. Momentum continues to grow around these key priority areas. The City and Providence Public School District are proud to celebrate the strides underway, with an eye toward how our students, families, school staff, advocates, and community leaders can continue to shape our next steps.

Since the Summit, we have continued to strategically prioritize the opportunities that have emerged as a result of this work. By aligning your ideas with the District's Strategic Plan and new resource opportunities through the FY 2018 budget, we are identifying the strongest opportunities for continued action planning with the community. As the District and City embark on efforts in these different areas - such as school facilities capital planning and improving the climate of our middle schools - we invite you to remain engaged. Stay tuned as we roll out community conversations and planning sessions in the coming months to help achieve these goals together!



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSOR:

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AND OUR KEY PLANNING PARTNERS:

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