A Strategy for Philanthropic Investment in Duval County Public Schools





Private Capital Helping Public Schools
Prepare All Students for College or Career

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## **Executive summary**

To compete in today's global economy, public and private sector leaders in Jacksonville have a growing need for a better-educated workforce. By 2018, experts estimate that more than 60% of the working population will need some postsecondary training in order to obtain employment.<sup>1</sup> High school graduation alone no longer provides a route to a job paying an adequate living wage for a family with children. Our schools must equip students for success in careers and college, so that they can contribute fully to a strong economy and a rich fabric for our Jacksonville community. To guarantee that our students are ready for college and careers, we have together established a philanthropic fund dedicated to improving our Duval County Public Schools.

This is an exciting moment in Jacksonville. Over the last several years, we have seen steady improvements in our students' educational outcomes. Our close-knit education community is already working on several initiatives to improve education in Jacksonville. A new superintendent and a new school board are together laying out a bold vision for our Duval County Public Schools (DCPS). And, a large, community effort that has engaged more than two thousand community members on how to improve our schools has recently been completed.

We want to accelerate this progress and take advantage of this unique moment to transform our education system over the next five years. To that end, we have established a philanthropic fund - Quality Education for All - to strengthen the school system. Based on an examination of national research and best practices, a study of work now under way here, and a review of what similar funds in other communities are doing, we believe that what Jacksonville most needs are A+ teachers and leaders in all our schools. The investments discussed in this strategic plan, combined with the investments underway or planned by DCPS itself, are designed to get us to that goal.

These investments are meant to substantially increase the number of high-quality teachers and leaders across the district in schools in all neighborhoods across Jacksonville. We know from compelling national research that having effective teachers and leaders in our schools will increase the number of Duval County Public School students going on to college and into successful careers. This is what's needed to make Jacksonville an economic powerhouse and a destination of choice for business leaders across the United States.

Quality Education for All has identified an initial five high potential key investments in DCPS over the next five years: (1) A New Teacher Fellowship to recruit, retain, and develop approximately 55 excellent teachers each year (complementing the district's planned investment in high-quality *existing* teachers and leaders); (2) Funding to support about 100 Teach for America (TFA) teachers each year, complementing the district's ongoing investment in the program and efforts to retain highly-qualified TFA teachers in Jacksonville schools beyond their minimum two-year commitment; (3) A new School Leadership Institute that will help great teachers each year become great Principals and Assistant Principals; (4) An Expert Teacher Recognition Program to reward and change the role of high-performing teachers; and (5) A new data system to provide real-time feedback on student progress, strengthen transparency and accountability across the system, ensure tiered access for researchers and the public, and complement the district's own investments in central office supports, governance, and policy. We have also set aside a portion of our funds towards innovation for additional investments that will come up over the course of our fund.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Projection of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018; Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce

We have already begun planning these investments, and will start to implement them in the 2014-2015 school year. The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida and the Jacksonville Public Education Fund will collaborate to manage Quality Education for All, building on both organizations' experience in Jacksonville education and their strong reputations for quality. Duval County Public Schools Superintendent Nikolai Vitti and his team have been critical contributors to our planning process. Dr. Vitti has endorsed our plan and has already committed to shifting substantial district funds to complement our fund's priorities.

We came together as a group of Jacksonville philanthropists, business and community leaders several months ago, inspired by the work already being done in our community and with an idea that we could accelerate and build upon those successes through our investment. Now we have the concrete plan in place to do just that. To implement this plan, we have set out to raise and spend \$50 million over the next five years and continue to build a high-capacity board that will govern the work. We will continue to fundraise towards our goal so that we can ensure our children graduate high school ready for a career or college.

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## Overall goals of the strategy

Today, only 67.7% of Duval County Public School students graduate high school.<sup>2</sup> The district in 2011 was ranked 50<sup>th</sup> out of the 67 Florida counties for overall student achievement<sup>3</sup> and of the 162 graded schools in our school district in 2012, 15% received a "D" or "F" school grade.<sup>4</sup> Employers are reluctant to bring new jobs to Jacksonville and unemployment here is too high – 16.7% for 20 to 24 year olds.

Duval County is not alone in this situation. Across the country, communities are working to improve the academic performance of their students, and make the necessary changes to public education systems in order to provide high quality education that is relevant to today's demands.

In Jacksonville, many community organizations have come together in recent years to work with Duval County Public Schools to improve the quality of public education. We have seen some positive progress and momentum. Our high school graduation rate has increased 16.2 percentage points over the past five years<sup>5</sup> and from 2007 to 2011 the percent of students college-ready in reading has increased by 19% and in math by 28%.<sup>6</sup> Jacksonville is home to two national top-10 high schools, Stanton College Preparatory and Paxon School for Advanced Studies,<sup>7</sup> and this past year, two Duval County Public

Students must be better prepared for college and careers:

#### In Jacksonville:

- Only 24% of Jacksonville citizens hold a college degree\*
- 63% of job openings will require some form of post-secondary qualification by 2018\*\*

#### Nationally:

- 42% of employers believe that new entrants to the workforce with only a high school diploma or GED equivalency are "deficient" in their skills and work readiness\*\*\*
- Only one in four high school seniors, at best, are college-ready

Sources: \*U.S. Census Bureau;

\*\* Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce:

\*\*\* Association for Career and Technical Education, Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills

School students were selected out of 30,000 applicants as Gates Millennium Scholarship recipients<sup>8</sup>.

To transform our community, we must build on and accelerate these recent successes.

Stronger schools will translate into economic progress for individuals, families and the whole region. Consider that if 2,000 of the 6,800 dropouts in 2011 in Northeast Florida had graduated high school and gone on to earn a postsecondary degree, the estimated effect on the local economy would be<sup>9</sup>:

- \$36 million in additional annual spending;
- \$3 million in additional annual vehicle sales;
- \$125 million in home sales at midpoint of students' careers;
- 350 new jobs created locally.

Given that high school graduation is no longer a sufficient credential for earning a living wage to support a family, all Duval County Public School students must graduate from our system ready to succeed in a career or in college. This means ensuring that our students graduate high school with the cognitive and academic skills, behaviors and habits, and contextual skills and awareness needed to excel in these post-high school pathways. In turn, we believe that this will make Jacksonville an economically and socially vibrant society.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>DCPS, Duval School Facts, 2013, computed using federal graduation rate formula (students who graduate on time (within four years) with a standard diploma)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> FLDOE School District rankings, 2011; based on points derived from FCAT scores

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> School Facts Jax

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Computed according to state graduation rate formula

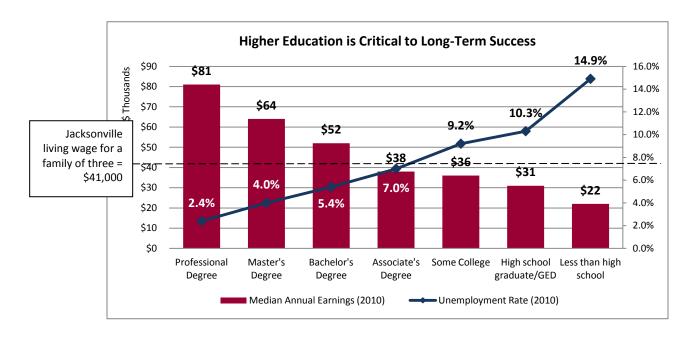
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> DCPS, Duval School Facts, 2013

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Newsweek's annual list of top schools, 2010

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Florida Times-Union, April 26, 2012, <a href="http://jacksonville.com/news/metro/2012-04-25/story/2-duval-students-named-gates-scholarship-honorees">http://jacksonville.com/news/metro/2012-04-25/story/2-duval-students-named-gates-scholarship-honorees</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Alliance for Excellent Education. *Economic Impact Report for Jacksonville MSA*. Projections as of 2/12

We have begun to see progress, but if we want to transform our community, we must set a goal that all students graduate from Duval County Public Schools ready to succeed in a career or in college. This is our plan for achieving that goal.



#### **COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS**

Students are considered "college and career ready" when they are prepared to succeed in postsecondary education — whether in college or professional job training programs — without the need for remediation. Students demonstrate their readiness by mastering four essential sets of skills:

Cognitive Skills	Academic Skills	Behaviors and Habits	Contextual Skills and Awareness
Demonstrating the behaviors needed to participate in postsecondary education, including critical thinking and problem solving, reasoning, inquisitiveness, intellectual openness	Possessing the skills to be able to engage in college level work, including writing and research skills, and skills in English, math, science, social studies, world languages and the arts.	Exhibiting the behaviors and habits necessary to succeed, including self-monitoring and control, time management and attendance, study and test-taking skills, and the ability to work with	Having the ability to persevere, including motivation, goal setting and orientation toward college or career preparedness, ability to navigate systems, leadership.
and precision.		others.	

## **Investment categories**

In the spring of 2011, inspired by the community efforts to improve education in DCPS and the initial progress in student outcomes, a group of Jacksonville's major business leaders and philanthropists approached The Community Foundation to create a philanthropic fund to strengthen the school system.

This group worked together with assistance from The Bridgespan Group, a leading national consulting firm with expertise in education reform, to determine the best set of investments for this fund in light of what we knew about national best practices *and* Jacksonville's unique context. Together this group:

- Examined successful education improvement strategies in comparable cities, and best practices from other similar funds such as those in Charlotte, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Newark;
- Collected information on current student achievement in Jacksonville and compared it to student achievement data in similar districts around the country;
- Convened an Advisory Group consisting of the Superintendent, the Mayor's Education Commissioner, leaders from the Jacksonville Public Education Fund and United Way, and other community leaders;
- Conducted an extensive local engagement process, including: a review of conversations held by Jacksonville
   Public Education Fund as part of their ONE by ONE initiative with more than 2,000 teachers, leaders, students,
   and community members on how to improve education in Jacksonville; and more than 40 one-on-one
   interviews with key stakeholders in the Jacksonville education community including DCPS administrators, School
   Board members, funders, teachers' union Duval Teachers United (DTU), community leaders and nonprofit
   organizations working in schools
- Conducted a scan of all the existing efforts in support of DCPS in the community and at the district and state level

As we looked around the country at examples of success, we found six critical categories of investment for improving student achievement, all of which support effective teaching and learning:

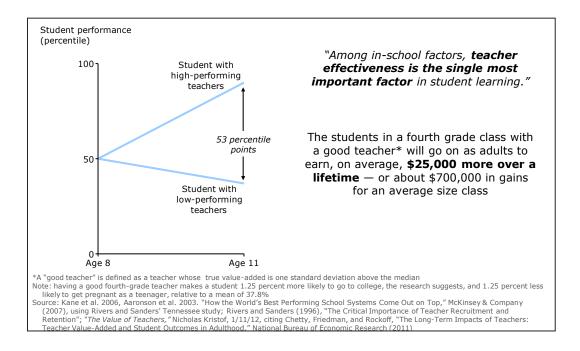
Effective teachers	Selecting and developing quality teachers and leaders through		
and leaders	recruitment, preparation, professional development, evaluation		
College-ready content	Teaching practices and tools that support high student performance		
	and career and college readiness — career- and college-ready aligned		
	standards, curriculum, assessments, and instruction		
Engaged students	High-quality schools that engage and inspire disadvantaged students		
	<ul> <li>E.g., early childhood programs, technology/innovation,</li> </ul>		
	charter and turnaround schools, mentorship		
Central office	Supports that increase access to models that are focused on effective		
	teaching and student supports		
	<ul> <li>E.g., data tracking systems, support services, efficient</li> </ul>		
	resource distribution		
Parent and community engagement	Parent and community engagement to promote effective teaching		
	practices and policies		
	<ul> <li>E.g., grassroots engagement, encouraging parents to act as</li> </ul>		
	advocates in the school		
Governance and	Promotion of policy change to support effective teaching practices		
education policy	<ul> <li>E.g., teacher evaluations and tenure policies</li> </ul>		

In the past five years, Jacksonville has taken significant action in some of these categories. It has invested in improving rigor and college-ready content across the board (not just in the traditional college-prep and magnet schools); engaged students and helped them stay on-track to graduate through wrap-around supports like case management that can help at-risk students succeed; and built stronger parent and community support through the work of community-based organizations. The table below details some of the most important initiatives undertaken recently:

SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENTS IN DUVAL COUNTY PUBLIC EDUCATION (2008-2012) <sup>10</sup>			
Effective teachers and leaders	<ul> <li>Teach For America places 100 new teachers annually in Duval County         Public Schools for minimum of two years, creating a pool of 200 young,             talented teachers each year     </li> <li>DCPS provides professional development to build the skills of teachers         and leaders     </li> </ul>		
College Ready Content	<ul> <li>Duval County high school graduation requirements have long been the highest in Florida</li> <li>DCPS 2010 graduating class was Jacksonville's first to complete this rigorous college-ready curriculum (new requirements include Algebra II, an additional science and two years of a foreign language)</li> </ul>		
Engaged Students	<ul> <li>Mayor's Mentor Initiative - 500 new mentors to support at-risk students</li> <li>Take Stock in Children - mentors and college scholarships for low-income and at-risk students</li> <li>City Year - near-peer role models in challenged schools to support students and improve school climate</li> <li>Communities In Schools - on-site case management for students; brokers services such as tutoring and family counseling</li> <li>United Way's Achievers for Life - early identification of students at risk of dropping out; student and family supports</li> </ul>		
Central Office	DCPS & the Jacksonville Public Education Fund (JPEF) partnered to fund a study by Education Resource Strategies of the District's use of time, people and money to increase effectiveness and efficiency		
Parents & Community Engagement	<ul> <li>JPEF's ONE by ONE Campaign - engaged the entire community in demanding and supporting high quality public schools through 169 small-group conversations with more than 1,600 people</li> <li>Urban Education Symposium – annual convening focused on improving African-American males' achievement by engaging parents, students and community</li> </ul>		
Governance & Education Policy	<ul> <li>The Community Foundation's opinion polls on DCPS conducted in 2006 and 2011</li> </ul>		

 $<sup>^{\</sup>mbox{\scriptsize 10}}$  Additional detail on Jacksonville investments is available in the appendix materials

However, these investments have only scratched the surface of what is needed in our Jacksonville schools today. Furthermore, investments to date have been scarcest in the area where research tells us they are most important – strengthening the effectiveness of teachers and leaders, who are ultimately responsible for delivering academic instruction to our students. Education research convincingly shows that the quality of a teacher is far and away the most important in-school factor contributing to student achievement.<sup>11</sup>



Additionally, the quality of the school leader is very important and a key driver for developing other essential supports needed for school success. Research has found that having a great principal alone has a significant impact on student achievement, and, when paired with great teachers, that impact is compounded. School leaders also affect the quality of the teachers' experiences and studies have shown that teacher transition rates are highest in schools with the least effective principals.<sup>12</sup>

The primary private investment in human capital in Jacksonville in recent years has been through Teach for America, which places intensively prepared new teachers in the district's most challenged schools for a minimum two-year assignment. We will continue to invest in TFA over the next several years, but more investment is needed in recruiting, retaining and developing high-quality homegrown Jacksonville teachers and leaders.

As a community, we also have failed to support the kind of central administration activities, governance, and education policies most likely to enable strong teachers and leaders to flourish. Historically, the central administration was focused on the efficiency and effectiveness of general operations, not on the practices – or the governance issues and policies – that most directly encourage high quality teaching and leadership. The good news is that our new district leadership plans to focus directly on how to support strong teachers and leaders, as we will discuss later in this document, and our new school board members are excited to support the central administration in doing this.

These three areas – teachers and leaders, central administration, and governance and policies – are the core of the school system. Student support initiatives and programs serving individual schools are very important, but in a district of

<sup>12</sup> See appendix for additional detail on research

<sup>11</sup> Goldhaber, D., Brewer D. J., and Anderson D. (1999). "A Threeway Error Components Analysis of Educational Productivity." Education Economics

more than 125,000 students in more than 180 schools, the effectiveness of individual programs will always be limited if the system itself is not strong and effective, and if there are not great teachers and leaders in every school.

By investing in recruiting, retaining, and empowering great leadership at every level – district, school and classroom – we have the opportunity to improve the effectiveness of every public and private dollar invested in our schools and our students.

# **Specific investments**

Based on an examination of what other funds and districts around the country are doing to recruit, retain and empower effective teachers and leaders, Quality Education for All, in collaboration with the Duval County leadership, identified a long list of potential investments. Using four criteria, we next examined which of these might be the best fit with the current state of Duval County Public Schools.

1. Alignment with district strategy and community priorities

Based on district and community priorities outlined by Superintendent Vitti's team, JPEF's ONE by ONE conversations involving more than 2,000 community members and interviews with community stakeholders and the advisory group

2. Potential for impact on student achievement

Based on an examination of where investments had been made in other districts and what effect they have had in those places

3. 5-year total cost of the investment

Based on examples from other districts and organizations around the country and conversations with DCPS and other Jacksonville nonprofits

4. Sequencing and sustainability of investments

Based on the capacity of the district, community and potential partners to begin and continue this work

Recent exciting events have influenced significantly the direction of Quality Education for All and the investments that we have selected. They have also increased our confidence that these investments will help Jacksonville reach the goal of career and college-readiness for all. In the past few months, four new school board members were elected; a new superintendent was hired; new presidents were selected for Jacksonville University, Florida State College and the Schultz Center for Teaching & Leadership; and the ONE by ONE community conversations (an initiative of the Jacksonville Public Education Fund) involving over 2,000 community members were completed, identifying a clear set of community priorities for education.

These changes have resulted in new strategic priorities and investments for the Jacksonville education community, which in turn has helped Quality Education for All to identify five specific investments that we plan to make over the next five years to ensure that we have effective teachers and leaders for all our students.

These specific investments mostly fall within the category of effective teachers and leaders. Although the central office and governance/education policy are priorities for this fund, conversations with Dr. Nikolai Vitti and his team have made it clear that the district will take the lead on investing in these areas at this point in time. However, over the course of the next five years, if we find that DCPS needs assistance in these areas, we have set aside funds as part of an 'innovation fund' (discussed in greater detail later in this document) that we can use for these purposes.

	CATEGORY	SPECIFIC INVESTMENT	DESCRIPTION
	Recruitment	Teach For America	Provide support for about 100 TFA teachers each year from around the country  • This complements the District's existing investment in the program and planned efforts to retain highly-qualified TFA teachers in Jacksonville schools beyond their minimum two-year commitment.
Effective teachers and leaders		New Teacher Fellowship	Create a DCPS-led program to recruit, retain, and develop approximately 55 homegrown excellent teachers each year from the region, complementing the investment in Teach For America's national recruitment efforts.  • This complements the District's planned investment in existing teachers and leaders through professional development tied to teachers' day-to-day practices in school and their own students' needs ("job-embedded professional development") and an increase in the number of reading and math coaches across the District.
Effective te	Retention and development	Principal/Assistant Principal Leadership Institute	Create an alternative pathway to building an administrator pipeline. Equip about 4 "high-flyer" new teachers each year with the most effective and research-based leadership and instructional strategies to become great principals and assistant principals (e.g., through Columbia's Summer Principals Academy).  • This complements the District's planned investment in existing leaders.
		Expert Teacher Recognition Program	Create differential compensation structures to reward and retain high-performing teachers.  • This complements the District's planned investment in creating clear roles for these teachers to provide professional development to their peers.
Central office	Strategic and functional capabilities	New Data System	Create a robust data management system to provide greater transparency and accountability for students, teachers, administrators and parents, ensure appropriately tiered access for researchers and the public, and give access to real time data allowing for immediate remediation or acceleration.  Additionally, this information will serve as a means to identify the strongest instructional staff members who can then serve as mentors to be placed on a track for leadership opportunities.  • This complements the District's plans to restructure the central office to ensure a customer focus and support effective teaching and learning and reduce administrative staff and align with the new direction of the school board.

In addition to the district's strategic priorities outlined in their new strategic plan, these investments align with the views expressed by community members in the ONE by ONE conversations, which have led to a Community Agreement that has ensuring "great teachers and leaders" as one of its four priorities.

Based on evidence from other school districts, we believe that these investments can have a big impact on student achievement. Planning has already begun, and major investments will start in the 2014-2015 academic year.

We have also set aside an "Innovation Fund" to provide capital for other promising opportunities to support effective teachers and leaders that align with the District's strategic plan which may arise over the next five years. Finally, we have also set aside 10% of the funds raised as an endowment to ensure some guaranteed long-term support for innovation from our fund in perpetuity.

## Staffing and governance of the fund

Quality Education for All will be guided by a governing board of 12-15 major donors and community leaders. The Superintendent of DCPS will serve as a non-voting member. The governing board will provide oversight and guidance on the use of funds, and monitor the success of the fund's activities.

Management of the fund will be led by a partnership between The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida and the Jacksonville Public Education Fund. The Community Foundation will have financial management and oversight of the fund. The Jacksonville Public Education Fund will take on the day-to-day management of the fund, negotiating, executing and evaluating the grants made by the fund, conducting community outreach, and providing research and data analysis on the results of the fund's investment. The Community Foundation will continue to serve in an ongoing, strong advisory role for Quality Education for All.

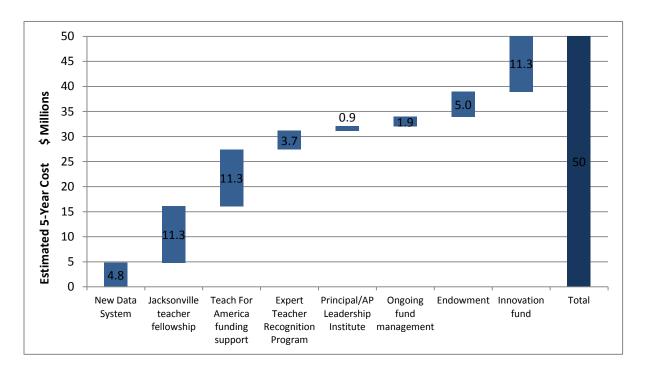
# Relationship between the fund and the school district

When we look at examples of other such initiatives in support of public education around the country,<sup>13</sup> it is clear that success requires a close relationship between the fund and the school district so that investments complement the district's work and goals. We will ensure this strong, collaborative relationship in Jacksonville. In addition to being a non-voting member of the governing board, the superintendent will participate in developing new ideas for the use of the fund. Additionally, the district has already committed to shifting substantial District funds to complement our fund's priorities. We are excited by the relationship that we have already built over the past six months and look forward to continuing to work together toward the goal of quality education.

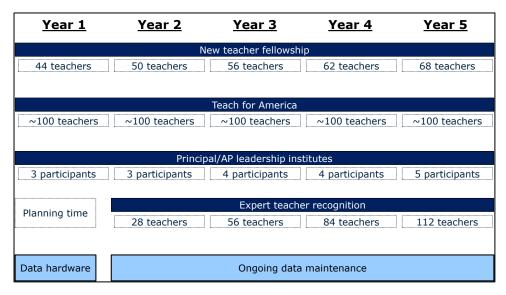
 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 13}\,{\rm See}$  appendix for further detail on these other funds

# Grantmaking plan and overall timeline

These investments will require raising a fund of at least \$50 million over five years. Based on in-depth research into how other districts and organizations have structured similar investments, we have developed the following chart to show the breakdown of the \$50 million by initiative over five years:



While planning will start immediately, and select investments may begin in the 2013-14 year, the majority of investments will begin in the 2014-15 school year. These investments will be phased in, with programs reaching their full capacity by year five. Costs in 2014-15 will be higher than 2015-16 due to the cost of the hardware for the new data system. Costs will then increase steadily from 2015-16 through 2018-19.<sup>14</sup>



 $<sup>^{14}</sup>$  See Appendix for a more detailed explanation of the financial requirements of the CE fund

Quality Education for All (including the innovation fund) will be spent down over the next five years with a small portion set aside as an ongoing endowment. As we approach the end of the five-year life cycle of this fund, we will assess our progress towards our goal of career and college readiness and determine whether we will attempt to raise a second fund.

### Potential risks and mitigation strategies

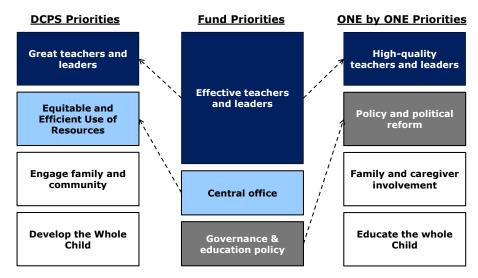
The experiences of similar funds in other districts have shown us that circumstances can change and investments may require refinement. Therefore, we will be flexible in our approach over the next five years while remaining true to our goals and focus, using this plan as a guide for our future decisions. We have created a clear set of metrics<sup>15</sup> that will allow us to track our progress and have invested in a staff member dedicated to evaluation as well as some additional external evaluation support so that we can continuously monitor our progress, track our success and thereby adjust as needed.

Additionally, although we do not expect this to happen, our district's leadership may change during the next five years. To mitigate this risk, we have spent significant time and resources building a broad base of support for our plan among a wide range of community members and organizations and will work with all levels of DCPS leadership in implementation. We have also selected investments that we believe are so central to the mission of DCPS that they can continue to be implemented even with a change in district leadership.

#### Conclusion

In the ONE by ONE conversations, one community participant expressed the hope that "no matter what part of town you're born in, when you graduate you have an equal shot." This is our hope, too. The strategy outlined here is not for a pilot project or an incremental approach. It is intended to improve students' educational outcomes in every school in every part of our community.

We believe that this plan will ensure A+ talent across our Duval County Public School system. To support the work, we



seek to raise \$50 million or more from private donors, with a significant match from the district of repurposed district dollars for complementary initiatives. We believe that together, through this public-private partnership, we can make Jacksonville into an economically and socially vibrant society in which all of our public school students have an equal shot at college, career and success. Our vision for Jacksonville is aligned with the district and with the community.

Through this unprecedented collaboration, we can prepare all of our city's children for the future.

<sup>15</sup> See appendix for additional detail

### **Participants in Our Process**

#### Quality Education for All (QEA) Steering Committee

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We also wish to thank the many people who participated in one-on-one interviews with The Bridgespan Group and the more than 2,000 individuals who participated via ONE by ONE.

Quality Education for All extends gratitude to those whose support enabled creation of the investment plan:

David A. Stein Family Foundation
The Chartrand Foundation
THE PLAYERS

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida





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