



**Louisville
Urban League**

*Empowering People.
Changing Lives.*

EDUCATION SUMMIT

"SETTING AN AGENDA FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE, K THRU 12"

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Submitted to:

**Jefferson County Public Schools,
Board of Education**

By:

**Louisville Urban League (LUL)
Youth Development and Education Department**

Prepared by:

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Co-sponsored by:



Louisville Urban League
2007 Education Summit
Community Engagement Report

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Executive Summary

Over 100 persons met at Central High School to participate in the 2007 Louisville Urban League Education Summit. After listening to an engaging and thought-provoking keynote address by Dr. Warren Simmons of the Annenburg Institute of School Reform, participants met in small groups to discuss issues facing the Jefferson County Public Schools. Each small group discussion resulted in a set of recommendations for the next district Superintendent.

The groups' recommendations were analyzed and grouped into the following categories, listed by importance based on the frequency with which recommendations occurred in each category.

- Community engagement and student family support
- Accountability Leadership
- Teacher quality
- School funding
- Student development
- Curriculum and academic programs

The most often named issue among all groups related to **community engagement and student family support**. The experience of JCPS as a closed, impersonal, and uninviting system that alienates student families was prominent. The discussions focused on ways to intervene in patterns and structures related to these experiences, notably the need for strong leadership by the district Superintendent to set a new course and hold every employee accountable to the new course, leadership that would connect in authentic and productive ways with the community and student families.

The Superintendent needs to lead the district so it moves beyond profiling students based on stereotypes and prejudices, especially as it relates to **Black males**. The absence of strong anti-racist leadership creates the conditions in which individual prejudices serve to limit the development of African American students, particularly Black male students. The small group discussions recommend that the new Superintendent assume a leadership role in turning this around, holding himself accountable to the African American community in this regard.

Several issues and recommendations surfaced that address **teacher quality**, the placement of quality teachers, professional development, cultural competency requirements and holding teachers accountable to professional standards as well as to standards of cultural competency.

Student development was a big issue, as it relates to student behavior and student success. Whether average, special or gifted, students need real access to academic challenges that

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push their perceived limits, unleashing potential. The role of prejudice and the lack of understanding the 21st century urban student in his/her cultural context was named as a barrier to student development.

Several groups had in-depth discussions on **curriculum and academic programs**. They focused on the need for culturally-specific content, global engagement, digital tool proficiencies, learning that is integrated across disciplines, hands-on engaged learning, and learning that connects content to how it is applied in the world of work. Making a stronger connection between after-school programs and in-school programs could produce learning for classroom teachers as well as serve to improve the after-school programs.

The complete listing of recommendations for the incoming Superintendent of Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) that emerged from the day of community dialogue are:

1. Superintendent needs to be in the community on a regular basis.
2. Change the way schools/district communicates with and relates to student families.
3. Increase the presence of African American males within the schools and district
4. Expect and achieve cultural competency at all levels.
5. Overhaul how dollars are allocated and administered for teacher professional development.
6. Provide student development training for teachers, students and student families together.
7. Provide continual teacher professional development in ways that result in real improvements.
8. Listen to students
9. Overhaul how schools are funded within the district.
10. Re-examine student discipline policies and practices
11. Provide students with full access to academic success paths
12. Expand community academic enhancement programs and strengthen the relationship between these programs and schools.
13. Create ways to increase parent/caregiver involvement, especially in under achieving schools.

This Community Engagement Report is presented to the JCPS Board of Education as a means to facilitate community input toward the goals of improving achievement for all students and “closing the achievement gap” that exist between African American students and their white counterparts. The Report provides a summary overview of the Education Summit and gives additional detail to substantiate the above list of recommendations.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, Education Steering Committee, constituents, collaborating partners, and the thousands of students, parents and families we serve, LUL strongly urges the JCPS Board and the new Superintendent to thoroughly review and respond to this Report.

Introduction

This report on the 2007 Education Summit is presented to the Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) Board of Education and its new District Superintendent, Dr. Sheldon Berman. The Summit was designed to elicit the community's concerns, priorities and perspectives with regard to public schools, specifically as it relates to the achievement gap¹ that exists between African American students and their white counterparts.

This report is organized to provide an organizational and historical context in which to understand the community's voice on education, a description of the event itself, the priority issues, recommendations and follow-up expectations and commitments.

Organizational Context: Louisville Urban League's Education Agenda

The Louisville Urban League (LUL) is a local leader and champion for educational reform working on behalf of the Louisville metropolitan community-at-large.

With support from the National Urban League and the General Electric Foundation, the Louisville Urban League has revised its Educational Leadership Agenda. Building on the five-year legacy of the National Urban League's Campaign for African American Achievement, the Louisville Urban League works to "close the achievement gap" in the following three ways:

1. Spread the gospel that "Achievement Matters." Help parents, students and community leaders fully understand the importance that our children need to achieve at high levels to thrive in the new economy.
2. Transform parents into sophisticated consumers and supporting partners of public education. Help parents and student families properly support the academic and social development of their children at home, in the community and in school; and,
3. Build consumer demand for quality public education. Hold educators and policymakers accountable to fulfilling their obligations to our children.

¹ Hereafter the term, "achievement gap," will be used to connote the gap that exists between African American student achievement and that of their white counterparts.

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LUL is a key strategic partner with Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), especially as the LUL provides community engagement activities designed to improve student achievement for all students. The LUL seeks active partnership with the JCPS Board of Education, the District Superintendent and the Jefferson County Public Schools to facilitate social change in support of public education and student achievement in Louisville.

Our current and planned activities:

- Continue to host the Education Summit annually, convening students, parents, educational leaders, business leaders, the faith community, community organizations, and other education stakeholders to deal with public education issues and concerns.
- Publish the annual Education Summit Report that gives voice to concerns of public education stakeholders.
- Pursue strategies and programs that accomplish two goals: 1) increase the capacity of student families to support their children's academic achievement and social development at home and in the community, and 2) increase parental and family engagement in school activities and the educational enterprise as a whole.
- Provide cultural competency professional development training to the faculty and staff of schools and the district. We hope to be a key partner in helping raise the competency levels of JCPS personnel in relating to African Americans and other minority community members.

Historical Context: LUL Education Summit Retrospective

Under Superintendent Stephen Daeschner's leadership, student achievement data was made public, and for the first time, the achievement gap was illuminated and became part of the public discourse. This data substantiated what the African American community experienced and knew anecdotally.

With this data in hand and the issue clearly defined, the Louisville Urban League held the first Education Summit in 2001. The purpose of the Summit was to convene educational stakeholders to understand and try to eliminate the achievement gap. To launch this effort, the first Summit focused on educating everyone regarding the achievement gap issue. Jefferson County is home to 50% of the state's African

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American student population. Therefore, the only way the State would see the achievement gap issue is to embrace the JCPS data.

The keynote speaker of the 2001 Education Summit was Dr. Gene Wilhoit, Kentucky Commissioner of Education. At this event, Dr. Wilhoit addressed the achievement gap problem and acknowledged that Jefferson County community is critical to understanding and eliminating the gap.

Following the 2001 Education Summit, many activities ensued that target efforts to decrease the achievement gap.

- Commissioner Wilhoit appointed the first State Achievement Gap Coordinator, Michael Dailey.
- After working to understand the achievement gap issues, the Louisville Metro business community in partnership with Metro Government, JCPS and other stakeholders launched the Every 1 Reads campaign in 2003. This program solidified partnerships and collaborations for education with the focus of getting every student to read at least at grade level by 2008. This project created allies and collaborations that have helped bring resources and concern to the achievement gap issue.
- JCPS expanded its community partnerships, focusing support on after-school programs and helping community programs participate in the Every 1 Reads program.
- In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act was enacted, shifting the focus from the achievement gap issue to school and district testing performance. Out of necessity, JCPS organized its efforts to ensure it would not lose federal funding. In retrospect, it appears that efforts to target the achievement gap were lost in the wake of the NCLB storm.
- In 2005, the General Electric Foundation awarded JCPS with a \$25 million grant to improve student achievement, especially in the areas of math and science. The grant is a boost to JCPS and the community holds great hopes that this initiative would reduce the gap for African American students, in math and science.

It's been seven years since the first Education Summit and the achievement gap persists. Over the years, LUL has and its Education Steering Committee have address

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the most important and/or critical issues facing JCPS as the primary focus of the Summit. Here is a list of topics addressed during previous Summits:

2001: Increasing the Academic Achievement of African American Students

*2002: Increasing the Academic Achievement of African-American Students:
"Putting a Plan into Action"*

2003: Engaging the Village in the Academic Achievement of African-American Youth

2004: Build Reading Skills: "Every 1 Reads"

2005: Opportunities and Challenges of "No Child Left Behind"

2006: GE Math and Science Curriculum Reform

2007: Setting an Agenda for Educational Excellence, K thru 12

The Education Summit plays an important role to the community and it is important to educators. Through the Summit, the LUL has learned that JCPS employees (teachers and staff) need a "safe place" to talk freely about schools and the district, a place where they can say what needs to be said without the fear of reprisals, a place where what they contribute might produce needed change. The Summit gives opportunity to dedicated educators, staff, parents and community leadership to share insight and voice opinions were not previously heard. As a result, the Summit conversations are rich and have engaged perspectives and knowledge taken from inside and outside the educational system.

The LUL Education Steering Committee decided that the 2007 Education Summit should focus on reassessing the community's views on the current state of public education in Louisville. Educational leadership was the focus of this Summit because of the impending changes at both the Board and Superintendent levels, and the opportunity to set a new agenda for educational excellence.

Our Committee understood another storm was brewing on the horizon over the JCPS desegregation Supreme Court Decision and strategies that JCPS will follow to ensure equity and diversity among schools. We stand ready to work with the Board and the new Superintendent to ensure that all students achieve. We believe that the storm need not increase the achievement gap. We believe that working together, we can achieve cultural competency and decrease the achievement gap regardless of the Supreme Court ruling. We stand ready to partner with JCPS to blaze a new trail.

Introduction to Recommendations

On Saturday, February 24, 2007, over 100 persons met at Central High School to participate in the 2007 Louisville Urban League Education Summit - *Setting an agenda for educational excellence, K thru 12*. The purpose of the summit was to "facilitate community dialogue that will help create expectations and recommendations for the new Superintendent of Jefferson County Public Schools, related to improving the achievement of students, particularly African American students."

Through his keynote address, Dr. Warren Simmons, Executive Director of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, provided a context in which to conduct the small group dialogues that followed. Dr. Simmons reviewed the key findings taken from recent school reform research, highlighted the characteristics of successful school systems, and identified the essential components for successful change. (*See Attachment C for an overview of Dr. Simmons' presentation.*)

Following the keynote address, the audience divided into facilitated small group discussions. After an initial brainstorming session, each group was asked to identify the two most important critical issues. For each issue, they named positive things that are taking place in the district, strategies and activities that are working. Then they identified how each issue could be improved. The discussion ended with the group developing a set of recommendations to help the new Superintendent.

Data from these small group discussions were analyzed to find common themes and issues. The frequency with which issues and recommendations were named was taken as those views of greatest importance to the participants. Using the frequency of recommendations within common categories, the following priorities are suggested.

Recommendation Category	Freq
A. Community engagements and student family support	12
B. Accountability Leadership	8
C. Teacher quality	4
D. School funding	2
E. Student development	2
F. Curriculum and academic programs	2

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The small group recommendations are discussed in the following pages, organized into the categories noted above and embellished by insights gleaned from the various documents produced by the small groups.

The event concluded with a discussion with Dr. Simmons in which he responded to the challenges generated by the small group discussions. The audience conveyed to Dr. Simmons its genuine desire to invite him back and to solicit his help and the help of the Annenburg Institute as this community moves forward with improving student achievement.

Recommendations

1. The new Superintendent needs to be in the community on a regular basis.

The community needs and wants to know the Superintendent as a person, able to speak frankly and openly about their experience with the school district and their children's school teachers and staff. The Superintendent needs to listen and learn from the community and ask for their support and help to improve achievement for all students. The Superintendent needs to "know" the community and vice versa. The community cries out for authentic relationship with the Superintendent so the Superintendent sees the changes that are needed.

- ⇒ Seek out and listen to those who have little-to-no influence, those marginalized due to the absence of affluence, facility of language, and limited education.
- ⇒ Conduct regular "community conversations" similar to those conducted by Mayor Abramson.²
- ⇒ Use the information gained from community conversations to help shape the district's improvement plan.
- ⇒ Use the authentic relationships with the community to build community networks in support of school and district improvements.
- ⇒ Continue the dialogues throughout the year, every year, not just on progress but (but also) on problems. Engage the community in authentic problem-solving dialogues.

² Refer to <http://www.louisvilleky.gov/Neighborhoods/Calendar/MCC.htm>

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2. Change the way schools/district communicate with and relate to student families.

The small group discussions reflect the experience that district/school communication with student families, when it exists, is impersonal and often inaccessible. Communication is usually written on paper and sent home by the student. This method assumes that the communication is received, read and understood by the responsible person or persons and that these family members have the means to respond as requested. This is not the case in every student family due to financial and language limitations as well as complications of family life. The impersonal nature of communication compounded by the assumptions these communications make of JCPS family profile complicated by the diversity and socio-economic realities of many student families perpetuates a gap between school/district and student families.

- ⇒ Go beyond the surface with student families and communities of support. Provide in-community education and training for student families on an ongoing basis that empowers them with the knowledge of the educational system, curriculum, what their children are experiencing, what to expect, the language of education, and establish how communication will occur and what is expected of the student family.
- ⇒ Work with communities and faith-based organizations to develop more effective ways to communicate with student families and/or to implement systems of support that ensure that student families get the information they need, understand it and know what to do to support their child's achievement and success.
- ⇒ Follow-up these efforts with regular home visits, through which one JCPS social worker supports and empowers the family to increase their support of their child's education and development as well as their engagement with the child's school, i.e. a case management approach rather than an incident management approach.
- ⇒ Completely reorganize the PTA in ways that will acknowledge that families work and that not all families have automobiles or the time or finances to transport themselves across the county to attend important meetings and events in schools attended by their children. Create a new PTA that brings the PTA to the families, a PTA that actively educates families about schooling and reaches out to all student families to find out what they can do to support their children and the school. Conduct meetings in the communities where families live.

The Louisville Urban League acknowledges that JCPS has no authority over the PTA. This recommendation will be delivered to the PTA directly.

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- ⇒ Provide mandated cultural training for teachers, school board members, central office staff and school staff. Conduct an assessment to identify and locate the greatest need for cultural competencies and target those areas with training from quality training professionals. Follow-up this training with ongoing systems of accountability to ensure that staff are putting cultural knowledge into practice.
- ⇒ Provide mentoring programs for student families.
- ⇒ Help develop a grassroots support system for parents, especially young families, to help support positive behavior among students.

3. Increase the presence of Black men within the schools and district

- ⇒ Encourage the Board of Education to actively recruit qualified Black men to serve as JCPD Superintendent.
- ⇒ Actively recruit qualified Black male teachers and administrators.
- ⇒ Implement and sustain mentoring programs that show Black men in a positive, professional and successful way.
- ⇒ Use faith-based organizations to assist in providing access to professional Black men to help students, teachers and staff interact with Black men as successful American citizens.

4. Expect and achieve cultural competency at all levels.

- ⇒ Advocate more for those who have less, not just the more affluent; send and practice the message that 'no one wins unless everyone wins.'
- ⇒ The Superintendent needs to lead the charge for accountability for him/herself and for each teacher, principal and staff person of every school.
- ⇒ Develop a contract and ask every teacher and staff person to sign it, holding them accountable for specific goals and improvements, including meeting professional standards of practice, cultural competencies, and active communication with students, student families.
- ⇒ Use lagging data as well as leading data, paint a realistic picture and invite the community into a problem-solving centered dialogue.

5. Overhaul how dollars are allocated and administered for teacher professional development.

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- ⇒ There is a perception that the district and schools have a large sum of funding for professional development and that these funds do not result in teacher improvement. Some voices suggested a different approach to professional development, including using some of these funds to develop student leadership and to work with teachers and student families together.
- ⇒ Use some of these funds to bring the best practices from community after-school programs to teachers and to the classroom. Some of these programs are excellent and are more successful and effective than what teachers are doing in the classroom.

6. Provide student development training for teachers, students and student families together.

- ⇒ Develop teachers, families and students on the different learning styles and how the different systems of intelligence are used in learning.
- ⇒ Hold students accountable for their own learning, but teach them about the different learning styles so they can hold themselves accountable.
- ⇒ Bring teachers and student families together to learn about student behavior and how to manage and influence student behavior.

7. Provide continual teacher professional development in ways that result in real improvements.

- ⇒ Professional development should be ongoing and take place on the job, in the classroom and not only as contained individual modules outside the classroom.
- ⇒ Avoid trend-based professional development. The professional development that is offered does not relate to the needs of classroom teachers suggesting a gap between the district's perception of teacher needs and the realities.

8. Listen to students

Students attended many of the small group discussions and their voices were heard. These students talked of the need for greater access to better technology and access to instruction that challenged them. The quality of food was an issue. Student experience is important to factor into school improvement and their voices need to be heard and taken seriously. By taking student voices seriously, the small groups also encouraged student development and leadership.

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Student knowledge and experience should be leveraged in the instructional process.

9. Overhaul how schools are funded within the district.

- ⇒ Schools should be funded based on need, not based on the number of students.
- ⇒ Schools in the greatest need should receive the funds they need to succeed.
- ⇒ Eliminate the practice that allows schools to hold back student transfers until after the headcount is provided for funding purposes.
- ⇒ The Superintendent needs to lead this charge and be a presence in schools to make sure that school administrators are following a practice that serves the needs of the school.
- ⇒ If additional funds are needed, the Superintendent and school administrators need to advocate for this, educate the community about these needs so the community can advocate.
- ⇒ Use the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) to determine funding allocation by school.

10. Re-examine student discipline policies and practices

- ⇒ Re-examine the motivation for inappropriate behavior and seek a more productive intervention rather than following the norm of removing the student from the learning enterprise which sends the message that school is not important. A more comprehensive approach is needed and school personnel need to build their knowledge and skill regarding student development in today's student context.
- ⇒ When discipline is required, be sure to apply it with consistency and equity. The issue of who is disciplined and how they are being disciplined needs to be examined more systemically and comprehensively to ensure that students are treated fairly.

11. Provide students with full access to academic success paths

- ⇒ Special needs students are not provided access to the help they need to succeed. Inadequate funding, poorly prepared teachers and a system in which these teachers and students are marginalized serve to create a culture of limitations rather than a system of high expectations.

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- ⇒ Gifted students who are able to exceed the expectations of the classroom, need to be encouraged to excel beyond what is offered in the classroom. These students need to be in classes with other gifted students who will serve to push their individual performance in ways that students functioning at lower academic levels can't. Gifted students should not be held back but pushed to their limits.
- ⇒ Hold expectations for all students to excel and do not pass failure. Prepare students for the real world by helping them take responsibility for their own performance, know their own learning style and provide ways for students to learn with depth of understanding.
- ⇒ Provide more hands-on and real-world relevant learning.
- ⇒ Provide more inter-disciplinary programs. Encourage teachers to work across disciplines to provide integrated learning for students where learning subjects occurs from different disciplinary perspectives.
- ⇒ Provide opportunities for students throughout their K-12 career to network with adults outside of the classroom, so they can explore the world of work and how knowledge and training is applied in work as well as build networks that will support students moving toward college and beyond.

12. Expand community academic enhancement programs and strengthen the relationship between these programs and schools.

- ⇒ Build on the success of Every 1 Reads by implementing an Every 1 Counts initiative that uses the community partnerships and after-school programs to focus on math as well as reading.
- ⇒ Use these community programs as a way of building relationships with and putting support underneath student families, mentoring them, helping them learn and understand how to support their children's development.
- ⇒ Provide after-school programs for all schools and all students, not just those qualifying for free and reduced lunch.
- ⇒ Engage classroom teachers in after-school programs so they can learn how engaged hands-on learning is working in the community.

13. Create ways to increase parent/caregiver involvement, especially in under achieving schools.

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- ⇒ Encourage SBDM's and principals to actively seek intermediaries such as community organizations, churches and other groups who can help develop and sustain increased parental involvement in schools.
- ⇒ Create ways to improve parent/caregiver accessibility to PTA meeting, parent/teacher conferences, etc., as lack of transportation is a common barrier for economically disadvantaged households.
- ⇒ Seek ways to increase male parent/caregiver involvement in student achievement, as this is a severe problem with over 80% of African American students residing in single parent households.

Conclusion

LUL is committed to a continued partnership and on-going dialogue with JCPS as we strive toward the common goal of improve student achievement. Our vision is a public school district that provides a quality education and produces equality in the outcomes for all children, including African American, other minorities and the economically disadvantaged. There are many key roles for the entire community to play in order to realize this vision; and, we clearly see LUL's role in the following two (2) areas:

1. As a provider of quality, non-school hour services in areas of education, such as reading, mathematics, cultural enrichment, and college preparedness. This work is evidenced by our delivery of programs such as Rising 5th Graders, Street Academy, NCLB Supplemental Educational Services, and Read and Rise Parent Circles.
2. As a provider of collaborative leadership and community engagement in education. This work builds on LUL's success with the "Campaign for African American Achievement" and the on-going convening of our Education Steering Committee, and annual Education Summits, and commitment to collaboratives such as "Every 1 Reads" and the GE Math/Science Curriculum Reform.

Our interest is to do more in these areas, and we are committed a continued dialogue with JCPS to explore opportunities to be of greater service in areas such as parental involvement.

LUL has sincere appreciation for JCPS' work with us over the years; and, on behalf of our organization, our constituents and the entire community, we wish to say *thank you* to the Board and the administration for your continued support for our programs and your on-going commitment to partnering with us for the betterment of our community. We look forward to future collaboration.

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Attachments

- G. Summit Agenda
- H. About the Keynote Speaker
- I. Dr. Simmons' PowerPoint Presentation
- J. Summit Participants
- K. Summit Volunteers
- L. Education Steering Committee Members

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2007 Education Summit Program Agenda

Registration and Continental Breakfast	8:45-9:25
• Special presentation by Rising 5th Graders Program - in courtyard area	
Invocation and Welcome Remarks.....	9:25-9:40
• Kevin Fields, Vice President of Programs, Louisville Urban League, Facilitator	
• Ben Richmond, President/CEO, Louisville Urban League	
• Dr. Daniel Withers, Principal, Central High School	
• Congressman John Yarmuth, Kentucky's 3rd District	
• Michael Dailey, Director of Education, Quality & Diversity, Kentucky Department of Education	
• Joseph Hardesty, Chairman, JCPD Board of Education	
• Pat Todd, Executive Director, Student Assignment, Health, Safety, Jefferson County Public Schools	
Keynote	9:40-10:15
• Introduction of Speaker: Dr. John W. Huggins, Louisville Urban League Education Steering Committee/GLASBE	
• Keynote speaker: Dr. Warren Simmons, Annenberg Institute of School Reform at Brown University	
Community Dialogue	10:20-11:35
• Introduction by Judy A. Jones, Director of Youth Development and Education, Louisville Urban League	
• Moderated by Bonnie Lash-Freeman, Special Projects/Training Director, National Center for Family Literacy	
• Break into small group discussion co-facilitated by a group leader asking standard questions	
1. What do you think are the two (2) most important issues the next Superintendent will need to give immediate attention to?	
2. What are we doing now with regard to these two (2) issues that is working and what do you think needs to take place to improve each situation?	
3. Imagine you are talking with the new Superintendent. What would you say to help him/her understand the two issues you have identified and what would be your recommendations for improvement? What part of your recommendations requires the district's leadership, and what will you ask the community to do in support of the leadership.	
• Re-convene as one large group to hear group reports	
Community Dialogue Group Reports	11:45-12:45
• Presented by Bonnie Lash-Freeman	
• Reaction from Dr. Warren Simmons	
Closing Remarks	12:45-12:55
Lunch provided	1:00-1:30

About the Keynote Speaker



Executive Director, Warren Simmons

Warren Simmons directs the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University. The Institute was established in 1993 to generate, share, and act on knowledge that improves conditions and outcomes in American schools, particularly in urban areas and in schools serving disadvantaged students. The Institute pursues its mission through four circles of work: Leadership, Opportunity and Accountability, District Redesign, and Community-Centered Education Reform. In each of these areas, the Institute conducts applied research, develops tools and products, and offers technical support designed to build capacity of urban schools and school systems.

Prior to joining the Institute in 1998, Dr. Simmons headed the Philadelphia Education Fund, a nonprofit organization that played a key role in helping the School District of Philadelphia fund, develop, and implement new academic standards, content-based professional development, standards-based curriculum resources, and comprehensive school reform as part of the district's *Children Achieving* reform agenda during David Hornbeck's tenure as the Superintendent.

Over his twenty-five year career in education, Dr. Simmons has worked on urban education issues from several vantage points. As a grant maker at the National Institute of Education and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, he developed and funded initiatives on youth and adult literacy, community development, and urban school reform. As Director of Equity Initiatives for the New Standards Project, a coalition of 17 states and 6 school districts, he led teams of researchers and practitioners who designed a performance-based assessment system to advance curricular and instructional reforms. His local experience includes serving as special assistant to the Superintendent of schools in Prince George's County, Maryland, where he designed and implemented reforms that improved the achievement of disadvantaged students; these included the Comer School Development Project, the College Board's Equity 2000 Project, and the school system's multicultural education and Black male achievement initiatives.

Dr. Simmons received his B.A. in psychology from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, and earned a doctorate in psychology from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. He serves on boards and advisory groups of numerous education reform organizations including the Public Education Network, the Merck Institute, the National Center on Education and the Economy, PLATO Learning, Inc. and the Rhode Island Children's Crusade.

Dr. Simmons' PowerPoint Presentation



Urban Education Reform Challenges for the 21st Century

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"Setting an Agenda for educational excellence, K thru 12"*

Warren Simmons, Executive Director
Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University

Warren Simmons

Annenberg Institute for School Reform



- Established in 1993 with a \$50 million gift from Ambassador Annenberg.
- Mission: Generate, share, and act on knowledge that will improve practice and outcomes in urban schools.
- Core Initiatives:
 - District Redesign and Leadership
 - Opportunity and Accountability
 - Community Involvement
 - Support for Multi-Site Urban Education
 - Reform Initiatives

Warren Simmons



Some of Louisville's Challenges

- Sustaining improvement overall
- Accelerating progress in narrowing achievement gaps
- Addressing disproportionate suspension and drop-out rates for African Americans
- Recruiting high quality teachers and school leaders; particularly African Americans and other underrepresented groups
- Turning around failing schools
- Enhancing culturally responsive teaching and learning

Warren Simmons



NAEP: Percent Below Basic

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2005</u>
<u>African American</u>		
• 4 th grade reading	65%	58%
• 8 th grade reading	45%	48%
• 4 th grade math	64%	40%
• 8 th grade math	69%	58%

Warren Simmons



Percent Below Basic

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2005</u>
<u>Hispanic</u>		
• 4 th grade reading	63%	54%
• 8 th grade reading		44%
• 4 th grade math	58%	32%
• 8 th grade math	59%	48%

Warren Simmons



Percent Below Basic

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2005</u>
<u>White</u>		
• 4 th grade reading	30%	24%
• 8 th grade reading	16%	18%
• 4 th grade math	22%	10%
• 8 th grade math	24%	20%

Warren Simmons



Addressing the Challenge

Attention to School and District Reform

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Shift from School to District Reform: Why A System of Schools?

- Ensure that good schools exist for all children.
- Make sure that all students learn what they need to fulfill individual aspirations, spur economic growth, and advance democracy (equity in results for students).
- Allocate public funds and other resources equitably.
- Protect children and communities against “bad” schools.
- NCLB

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Major Directions in District Reform

- Alignment of curriculum, instruction, & assessment
- Small schools and small learning communities
- Content-based coaching
- Evidence-based practice
- Extended learning opportunities
- Community engagement
- Culturally responsive pedagogy
- Charter schools
- Rethinking supports for English language learners and new immigrant populations

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Why Do Most District Efforts Fall Short?

- Many initiatives, often poorly coordinated.
- Fads or trends dominate evidence.
- Weak mechanisms for organizational learning.
- Weak implementation support.
- Lack of attention to content.
- Lack of continuity and persistence.
- Conflicting and unclear goals.
- Improvement as a Zero/Sum enterprise.

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Becoming a Smart District (3 Essential Functions)

- 1. Provide Schools, Students, and Teachers with Needed Supports and Timely Interventions**
 - Acknowledges that strengths and needs vary; so must resources, supports, and strategies
 - Maintains clear, high, and consistent expectations for all schools and students

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Becoming a Smart District (Essential Functions)

2. Ensures that Schools Have the Power and the Resources to Make Good Decisions
 - Distributes resources equitably (human, fiscal and community)
 - Provides resources based on the needs of schools, students and teachers with standards for achievement held constant

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Becoming a Smart District (Essential Functions)

3. Makes Decisions and Holds People throughout the System Accountable by Using Indicators of School and District Performance and Practices

- Includes multiple organizations, agencies, and individuals, not just students and schools
- Uses leading as well as lagging indicators

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New Context for Change

- Reaching Proficiency
- Preparing Students for the Creative Economy:
*Wealth-creation in an economy of ideas is derived far less than we imagine from the technological hardware and infrastructure, since eventually most nations, such as China will make investments in large-scale infrastructure technologies. Rather, it is dependent upon the capacity of a nation to continually create content, or new forms of widely distributed expression, for which they will need to invest in creative human capital throughout the economy and not merely in gadgets and hardware (p. 14).
Venturelli (2005)*

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Richer Understanding of Proficiency

- Construct knowledge and express what they have learned orally and in writing;
- Engage in disciplined inquiry drawing on their own prior knowledge and wide range of other sources;
- Apply (produce products, communicate ideas, solve problems) what they have learned to tackle problems and engage in activities that have value beyond school.
- Ability to be both self-directed and to work collaboratively.
- Premium placed on creativity, collaboration, interdisciplinary work, communication, cultural literacy, and technology

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Also Need Smart Education Systems



- Provides broad range of differentiated supports to students and families;
- Skilled at fostering and sustaining alliances/partnerships among district, other city agencies, cultural and civic institutions, higher education, faith institutions, community groups and businesses;
- Effective at attracting partners to augment its capacities;
- Capable of collecting, using and sharing evidence to foster equity and continuous improvement;
- Support development of core academic skills and broader competencies (motivation, citizenship, teamwork, technological literacy, cultural literacy, community service, etc.)

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Organizational Conditions for Large-Scale Improvement

Organization supports practice of skills and knowledge in the classroom.

Experts, mentors or coaches provided to help educators adapt and deploy new skills and knowledge in classrooms and schools.

Clear and consistent messages provided to teachers, administrators, students, parents, and community about high priority goals.

Resources aligned with high priority goals.

Reciprocal Accountability.

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Conditions for Large-Scale Improvement

Main job of district and school administrators is to support improvement of teacher practice and student learning.

Judgments about teacher and student performance should be linked to assessments of whether conditions for improvement have been met (Opportunity to Learn or Leading Indicators).

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Local Infrastructure

- Skunkworks or Innovation Incubators
- Action or Problem-Centered Research
- Cross-Sector Leadership Development
- Vision-Driven, Accountable and Results-Oriented Governance Structures
- Adequate and Equitable Funding
- Community-Linked School Networks
- Reform Support Organizations
- Sustained Engagement and Strategic Planning and Action involving Multiple Partners

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Louisville Urban League
2007 Education Summit
Community Engagement Report

Summit Participants

	NAME	ORGANIZATION
	Beverly Coleman	Norton
	Allene Gold	Early Childhood JCPS
	Annie Watson	concerned citizen
	Peabody	JCPS
	Mildred Payne	JCPS
	Rich Gimmel	LUL Board
	Fran Thomas	LUL
	Antonia Lindauer	Congressman Yarmuth's Office
	Tanya Neal	concerned citizen
	CP Moore	concerned citizen
	Myla Abernathy	student
	Grace Wickham	concerned citizen
	Kathy Schroerlucke	LUL
	Theodore Scott	JCPS
	Mark Hartman	concerned citizen
	Jackie Pumphrey	
	Brenda Fitzpatrick	NW AHEC
	Ralph Fitzpatrick	U of L
	Ann Elmore	JCPS Board of Education
	Sharon Davis	JCPS
	Wayne Davis	JCPS
	Alice Houston	concerned citizen
	Karen Anderson	concerned citizen
	Walter Bedford	concerned citizen
	Dorcas James	Early Childhood JCPS
	Walter Hutchins	
	Bill Gatewood	PCC
	Mahrid Ndife	JCPS
	Amanda Allen	
	Jonathan Debow	student
	Joseph Debow	concerned citizen
	Quinton Williams	student
	Jonene Shakir	Peace Education
	Ramzi Sabree	Morehouse College
	Amber Calhoun	student
	Edith Yarbrough	concerned citizen
	Larry McDonald	Lincoln Foundation
	Sade Jackson	concerned citizen
	Hubert Scott	concerned citizen
	Lauvina Moore	
	Rev. Smith	Hill Street Missionary Baptist
	Joann James	concerned citizen
	Nancy Demontra	
	Margaret Kinder	
	Mary Scott	
	Audwin Helton	concerned citizen
	Raoul Cunningham	NAACP
	Mikea Bright	LCCC

Louisville Urban League
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Community Engagement Report

Summit Volunteers

Angela Allen	Ladria Hinton	Teresa Payton
Darrell Aniton	Monique Hinton	Antronette Pitts
Deborah Basemore	John Huggins	Dr. Geneva Price
Stacy DeBose-Brown	Tioka Ivory	Betty Runner
Darcy Berman	Dreema Jackson	Maria Schrenger
Spencer Bouldin	Linda Johnson	Synthia Shelby
Barbara Boyd	Mary Kennedy	Janet Shobe
Aukram Burton	Vicky Layne	Elizabeth Stith
Billy Caldwell	Judy Lippman	Sue Terdan
John Carter	Alayna Middleton	Yvonne Webb
Anita Donaldson	Mary Miller	Royce Whitman
Fran Eilers	Yolanda Miles	Aubrey Williams
Pat Ellis	Bernard Minnis	Carl Williams
Candace Foster	Brenda Monks-Adamson	Jerry Wright
Kevin Garner	Mari Mujica	
Karen Hawkins	Zambia Nkrumah	

Education Steering Committee Members

Kevin Fields, Convener

Dr. John Huggins

Dr. Bernard Minnis

Bonnie Lash-Freeman

Carol Edelen

Fran Thomas

Teresa Jarrett

Vicki Shoulders

Michelle Yeager

Aukram Burton

Darrell Aniton

Michael Dailey

Pat Todd

Deborah Stallworth

Judy Lippmann

Zambia Nkrumah

Cheryl Shepherd

John H. Carter, Jr.

Margaret Wright

Clay Calloway

Deidra Lee

Judy A. Jones

Imani Muhammad

Ben Richmond