

The Right Relationships and Conditions to Achieve High Expectations

A report by

The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation

Presented to

The Youngstown Academic Distress Commission



Table of Contents

Introduction	Page 2
People’s Context understanding people’s starting point	Page 5
Road to Higher Expectations how people think and talk about their expectations for Youngstown and its schools	Page 10
Examining Commission Recommendations overview of insights from conversations about Academic Distress Commission efforts	Page 18
Recommendations basic principles and strategic recommendations for concrete action moving forward	Page 20
Communications and Media the approach to communications and media which underpinned this community engagement initiative	Page 25
Methodology engagement efforts and approaches	Page 27
Appendix	Page 30

Introduction

In March of this year, the Youngstown Academic Distress Commission approved an effort underwritten by The Raymond John Wean Foundation and Youngstown Foundation to have The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation engage the broader Youngstown community to uncover:

- people’s aspirations for the community;
- the choices and tradeoffs people are willing to make around key commission reforms;
- community conditions that must exist for people to step forward and embrace education reform efforts;
- what it will take to deepen and broaden community expectations and aspirations for achievement;
- strategic ways to further develop and deepen local capacity to engage the community;
- potential partners that people trust to take action on education.

This report presents the key findings from what we learned, the implications for moving forward, and, as the Academic Distress Commission said, “recommendations for high aspirations for students and ways to continue to develop community engagement.”

Three Central Themes

Three dominant themes emerged from this engagement effort – each of which goes directly to the goal of creating a culture of high expectations within the schools and community:

- **Community conditions matter.** People believe that both the schools and community must attend to key underlying conditions – trust, relationships, and confidence in people’s ability to act together – if progress is to be made on achieving higher expectations and achievement.
- **We must act.** The community believes it must step up and take action – not just the schools. Education is a community responsibility not just the school district’s.
- **People want a down-payment.** People are not looking for, and will not trust quick fixes, grand plans or silver bullets. They want a down-payment, small demonstrations of progress that indicate things are moving in the right direction.

Moreover, the Superintendent currently holds a good measure of trust and is in a position where he can and should act.

Bottom line: if there is consensus in Youngstown today, it is around people’s belief the schools and community must each act to build the underlying conditions of relationships, trust and confidence necessary to make a difference in the lives of children and the community at large, and that to do so requires small authentic steps that build momentum.

The Groups Engaged

The engagement effort took place over a four month period, from March to July, during which time the Institute engaged residents all across Youngstown. As illustrated in the included methodology (Section VI) we met or exceeded nearly every target for the number of people engaged, geographic distribution and conversations held. We held more conversations, conducted more interviews, engaged more stakeholders and spoke with more students and teachers than the already aggressive plan dictated. We spoke with people from the following neighborhoods:

- Brier Hill
- Northside
- Eastside
- Sharon Line
- Brownlee Woods
- Southside
- Westside
- Downtown/(YSU)

While the primary focus of this effort was to engage residents, we also held targeted conversations and in-depth interviews with the following groups:

- Faith leaders
- Business leaders
- Teachers
- Students
- Elected officials
- School officials
- YSU staff
- Non-profit leaders

Based on these efforts, we have identified in the report places where different groups voiced different priorities or views of education. But, perhaps surprisingly, overall we found remarkable similarities throughout the conversations within groups and across them.

Building Local Capacity

An important principle in the Academic Distress Commission’s requirements for the community engagement initiative was to build local capacity for organizations and individuals to carry out engagement work – not just in relationship to this effort but for future efforts. Toward this end, the Institute forged partnerships with local groups, including the Public Library of Youngstown

& Mahoning County, HandsOn Volunteer Network, Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative, Youngstown City Schools, ACTION, and The Raymond John Wean Foundation.

The Institute worked with the local partners to identify and train more than 30 conversation leaders and note-takers. Moreover, the partners helped to determine the neighborhoods for engagement as well as candidates for the stakeholder interviews. In just four months, the Institute created and provided:

- Two half-day, in-person training sessions led by Harwood coaches to prepare conversation leaders and note takers for their roles in Community Conversations and in Ask Youngstown Interviews;
- Ongoing support and training from Harwood certified coaches in theming the results of these conversations;
- Biweekly conference calls with Harwood staff or coaches so that our partners could debrief on what they are learning and problem-solve together;
- On-demand webinars focusing on holding conversations, note-taking and identifying key themes, which enabled our partners and conversation leaders to deepen their skills.
- Additional training for local interviewers in advance of the Stakeholder Interview and the Deeper Choice Conversations.

A Note About Race

During this effort, issues of race, racism, and discrimination bubbled to the surface. It is clear that these issues are a part of the people's context, and for many a critical lens through which they view the schools and community as a whole. Unfortunately, addressing other stated commission goals and the brevity of this process meant that there was not enough time to authentically delve deeper into these topics without raising false expectations about our ability to see these conversations through. To fully engage around race and racism requires a deeper set of conversations and a longer process. Moving forward, engagement around issues of race and racism, both interpersonal and structural, will be important. These conversations will need to be connected to previous and ongoing efforts.

People's Context

In seeking to raise expectations and student achievement, it is essential to understand people's starting points for how they view schools and the community, the obstacles to moving ahead productively, and what they see as signs of progress in the community to build upon. Reform efforts need to take this context into account – which means actively and explicitly building upon it. Efforts that fail to do this are likely to be seen as lacking currency and relevance to people.

❖ Schools are in constant flux

- 1. Parents, students, and teachers all paint a picture of Youngstown City Schools in a state of constant flux – which is harming reform efforts.***

People describe Youngstown schools as in a state of constant transition. Teachers in particular described jumping from one program or model to the next as a result of district and school leadership changes. This is made still more chaotic because it comes with frequent changes in curriculum, course assignments, even school assignments. Students echoed these concerns, as one explained, “There is too much flux... too much change. [We] need to know the routine will be the same the next day.” Teachers and students said without a greater degree of consistency and certainty, it will be hard for either of them to develop real and durable relationships and basic routines – which disrupts and undermines teaching and learning.

- 2. People see declining enrollment in Youngstown's public schools as an indictment of the health of the public schools.***

For many people, enrollment in the schools serves as barometer for the schools' health. The conversation participants believed many parents are taking their children out of Youngstown schools because they do not see the Youngstown schools as offering adequate educational opportunities in comparison to suburban schools and charters. They said that increasing enrollment would signal that things were starting to improve within the district. This is an important metric for the community.

❖ Trust is in short supply

- 1. There is a deep mistrust of leaders in the community.***

There are few leaders in Youngstown who individuals said they trust – and fewer still in whom people held shared trust. Importantly, the Youngstown School Board was singled out in this

regard. Some residents described the board members as using their positions merely as a stepping stone to achieve higher office, or as a way to secure contracts for friends and supporters. The school board was seen as a significant barrier to change in the community.

2. *The school superintendent is one leader who is trusted.*

One of the few individual leaders people did name as trusted – and who was trusted across different groups in the community – is Superintendent Hathorn. Some said they believe he is taking steps in the right direction and that they are willing to give him the benefit of the doubt, knowing that his reforms will take time to bear fruit.

❖ “Community responsibility” is essential

To move forward people must take greater responsibility for their lives, families, children, and the community as a whole.

As people talked about their concerns for Youngstown, they consistently returned to themes of *individual* responsibility and respect. This is not to say that people do not believe the institutions and systems must change; they do. But people said that the kind of community they want must have at its core much stronger individual actions and interactions. Right now, that is missing. This is a key example of where people believed the underlying conditions of “relationships, trust, and confidence” come into play.

So, for instance, while many people outside of Youngstown might see the community solely through the lens of its economic challenges, in these engagement conversations, such topics about the economy often came up only *after* discussions of more basic and fundamental concerns about the need for individuals to take more responsibility for their own actions. Here are just two examples of how people talk about this:

- People believed that taking responsibility means demonstrating respect for the neighborhood in which they live and for those around them. Vacant lots, crumbling sidewalks, un-mowed lawns were all seen as signs that people are not taking responsibility for their actions and their neighborhood. Without movement on these concerns, people’s sense of pride and belonging are undermined, which has implications for their willingness and desire to act on community concerns such as schools.
- Some people talked about Youngstown kids as being disrespectful and dangerous. This concern related to concerns that in too many cases, parents and the community are not holding up their end of the bargain to raise and guide kids; too many adults are absent from the lives of Youngstown’s children. People said that individual adults must assume

much greater responsibility for instilling respect and strong values in Youngstown's youth.

❖ Leverage four building blocks for progress

While there are very real challenges facing Youngstown, what is clear from these engagement efforts is that people have not given up on the community or on their schools. Through the conversations, people identified at least four strong building blocks upon which future community efforts can be built. What's more, these building blocks help to strengthen people's confidence that progress is possible. The four are:

- Residents hold a strong set of *shared* aspirations for the community.
- People have faith in one another, and their ability to act.
- People see clear signs of progress in the community which give them hope.
- Youngstown takes real pride in the example set by Youngstown Early College and the Visual Performing Arts (VPA) and Science, Technology, Engineering Math (STEM) programs at Chaney.

1. *People's shared aspirations are clear, and need to be the basis for moving ahead.*

We began all of our engagement efforts asking people about their aspirations for the community, and what we found is that people hold a clear set of *shared* aspirations that bind them together.

People want Youngstown to be a safe, clean and caring community where everyone is respected. People want to feel connected to their neighbors and to have a sense of pride in Youngstown.

It is worth noting that these shared aspirations are all rooted in notions of how people relate to one another, and how individuals take responsibility for their actions. Based on other Harwood work, we believe that any actions taken to strengthen expectations and student achievement must be rooted in these shared aspirations and that it be clear how those actions will help the community meet their aspirations.

2. *The people of Youngstown have faith in one another.*

While people said there are few leaders they trust in the community, they did have faith in their fellow citizens. People believed that residents have the potential to come together and take action on issues around education. Small groups of citizens, particularly those that explicitly demonstrate a willingness to put kids before "personal agendas," will gain people's trust.

Further evidence for the belief people have in one another comes from the Town Hall, when, we asked attendees what, if anything, gave them confidence in Youngstown. With near unanimity they said the resilience of the community and the decency of the people. These are powerful assets upon which to build.

3. *People see clear signs of progress in Youngstown.*

Even as people bemoaned the challenges that now beset Youngstown, they would identify clear signs of progress they saw throughout the community. Each of the examples below represents a clear pocket of change upon which the community can build, and around which the narrative in the community is starting to change.

- **Changes downtown are an important sign of Youngstown moving forward.** Downtown reinvestment and development were widely noted as signs of positive change. People pointed to new restaurants, more “nightlife,” and the fact that more residents are moving into condos and lofts.
- **OhWow!** People talked about OhWow! The Children’s Center for Science and Technology as a strong new anchor in downtown, and a resource for the city’s (and region’s) kids.
- **Beautification and investment in neighborhoods.** In keeping with people’s desire for a clean community, and one that they can have real pride in, city and neighborhood efforts at beautification and neighborhood development were seen as steps in the right direction in the community. While more is needed, people saw these actions as an important step forward.
- **Community Conversations.** People said the community conversations – which emerged from the YADC process – were yet another sign of real progress. This echoed other comments that reflected the power of seeing different groups in the community come together and work together as a sign that things were improving. Talking across traditional boundaries gives people in Youngstown confidence that things can improve.

4. *When it comes to education, people are proud of Youngstown Early College and Chaney VPA/STEM and the new buildings and technology*

When we asked people what they see as signs of progress within the city’s education system, nearly everyone cited the following:

- **Youngstown Early College** – This school is a symbol, for many, of the potential of the city’s children. The high standards, expectations, and results achieved by the school’s

students are a source of great pride. Teachers and parents talk about Early College giving younger students something to aspire to.

- **Chaney VPA/STEM** – Like Early College, VPA/STEM are symbols of the talents and potential of Youngstown students. Residents cited the quality of performances and artwork produced by Chaney students; others believed that focusing curriculum on math and science is an investment in the city’s future since they will prepare students for jobs in new industries.
- **New buildings and new technology** – In addition to Early College and STEM, residents said that the construction of new and “beautiful” school buildings and the availability of cutting-edge technology were all signs of real and tangible progress within the school system. People were particularly eager to note that the technology in the Youngstown classrooms is often more up-to-date than in the suburbs.

People's Context – In People's Words

"There is too much flux [in schools]... too much change. We need to know routine will be the same next day."

"We have no faith in our school board."

"It's going to take time. I like the new superintendent and his agenda. Flipped the system 180. Give it a shot. Give him a chance."

"I think adults don't set a good example in the way we behave – and then we blame our children for acting the way we model."

"I would like to live in a safe and caring community where people look after one another."

"I believe in the people of Youngstown. Youngstown has many caring people that are concerned about the community as a whole."

"I see in my fifth graders, those schools [Early College and VPA/STEM] serve as a motivation. They are a powerful motivation for many of the elementary children."

The Road to Higher Expectations

A critical component of the proposed reforms is to set higher expectations and aspirations for achievement and to determine the best actions that enable children to meet those standards. The Youngstown residents who took part in this engagement effort fundamentally agreed with key elements of Academic Distress Commission’s reforms – saying that setting and achieving high expectations is important, and that all kids – from all parts of Youngstown – are capable of high achievement. However, people quickly added that many students will need support to reach their potential. This section presents how people think and talk about their expectations for Youngstown schools and students – and what they believe must happen to hold higher expectations and achieve them.

1. *Expectations must be raised – but expectations are meaningless if we only talk about them.*

People said that in too many homes, neighborhoods and schools, the expectations for what students can achieve are simply too low. They now see high expectations as important for motivating students and setting the right bar. But they were quick to add that simply talking about higher expectations – without taking action – will undermine people’s confidence. More “empty talk” is the last thing Youngstown needs. Indeed, raising expectations will require action not just from schools, teachers, and parents, but the entire community as well.

2. *No matter the expectations, kids must have the right supports to have any chance of success.*

People said that to achieve high expectations, students (and often their families) need support. Much of this support must address the myriad challenges kids face outside the classroom – including basic needs such as shelter, food, and clothing. People talked about many children and families living in survival mode – where displacement, abuse, financial strain, trauma, and violence form the daily backdrop for their lives. Simply put, people believed that students can achieve, but only if they receive support in dealing with these challenges.

The remainder of this section lays out the 5 Areas of Action that people believe are essential to move down the road to higher expectations and achievement. Without addressing these conditions, it is unlikely that higher expectations will be set or met.

❖ Action 1: See kids differently

According to residents of Youngstown, the first order of business in seeking to raise expectations for kids is that the community must shift how they see kids and start to believe in their potential to achieve. Currently, deep negative narratives about Youngstown’s kids stand in the way, and they must be actively combated if progress is to be made. Without such efforts, higher expectations are likely to go unmet.

1. *There is a negative perception of Youngstown’s kids as being disrespectful and dangerous. Kids are well aware that they’re viewed this way.*

In conversations, some Youngstown residents said that Youngstown’s kids, in fact, are disrespectful and dangerous. They told stories of kids spitting on cars, starting fights, and littering. But many more people in these conversations were frustrated by the negative terms they heard used to describe local kids. Moreover, kids themselves were well aware of these stereotypes and labels, and some told us they feel like they’re all grouped together – seen as criminals or trouble makers. Such perceptions send signals to children that they are not worthy and have little potential, which undermines their own confidence and desire to achieve. One teacher said, when kids think of themselves as “bad” it “dismantles the child’s will to learn and they give up.”

2. *People believe the community must actively reject this negative view and start to believe in the potential of all children.*

We asked people how the community would need to see kids in order to make progress on higher expectations and student achievement. The words people shared paint a clear picture of how they believe Youngstown must see its kids:

- Worthy and deserving of respect and dignity
- Our future leaders
- People with potential
- Valuable, special, unique, as individuals, each has a gift
- Human beings

The alternate frame people proposed has important implications for how Youngstown’s youth are talked about and engaged, and the types of supports and initiatives that will enable them to reach their potential. Conversations and approaches must shift from being focused on deficits and complaints to assets and potential.

3. *People see many ways to shift the negative stereotype of Youngstown’s kids.*

Throughout the conversations, people volunteered suggestions for ways to focus on the abilities and achievements of youth, which included:

- Create opportunities for adults to talk *with* and interact with kids; not just talk about them.
- Highlight kids who are doing good things, especially beyond just athletics.
- Celebrate positive examples of youth from Youngstown Early College and VPA/STEM.
- Help kids identify their gift and passion – and recognize kids as capable of achieving them.
- Create places for kids to show their art work – to celebrate their gifts and talents.

Many of these suggestions connect with the need to celebrate and communicate success – which is touched upon later in the recommendations.

❖ Action 2 - Kids need more adults in their lives

The community engagement conversations underscored the challenge that many parents are struggling to adequately support their children. People asserted that parental responsibility is essential for moving ahead; but it will also take more than that – other adults in the community will need to be mobilized to fill gaps.

1. People say parents need to hold up their end of the bargain – but many will need support to do so.

People believed that parents need to be active, engaged, and involved with their children’s education, and that they need to model the value of education. But, according to these conversations, this is not possible for many parents right now. Many residents talk about parents, particularly younger parents, as not doing enough to support their kids, set a good example, and otherwise prepare them for success.

In this regard, people were quick to point out that many parents and families in Youngstown face serious challenges in supporting their kids. They said many parents feel “beaten down” by the challenges before them and operate in a day-to-day “survival mode.” In order to raise and meet higher expectations, people said these parents will need help with:

- Working and raising kids as a single parent
- Domestic violence
- Homelessness
- Drug abuse
- Hunger
- Parenting skills
- Academic skills
- Unemployment

2. *The community needs to step forward to fill gaps.*

Those we spoke with in Youngstown are clear: while parents must hold up their end of the bargain with their children, where they lack the support or skills to do so, the larger community must step forward. As one person said, “If the family cannot step up, the neighborhoods, the community needs to step up.”

There are two main ways people believe individuals in the community can step forward:

- **The need for many more mentors and coaches.** People said that mentors and coaches can help fill important gaps for children, and have a critical role to play in helping to reinforce the value of education. The stakeholders with whom we spoke were particularly clear on the need for other adults in the community to step forward in these roles.
- **The need for more adults to model positive behavior.** Throughout the conversations, people talked about the need for more adults in the community to set a strong example for kids. These adults might be neighbors, shop owners, and others. Here, people talked less about being mentors or coaches, or other efforts that require dedicated time, but rather discussed how adults in their daily lives need to demonstrate and model positive behaviors of respect, genuine relationships, and dealing with conflict, among others. To do this, adults will need to be made aware of how they can contribute. This is an effort that local groups and organizations can undertake, rather than the schools themselves.

❖ Action 3 - Set new standards for teachers

People see the quality of Youngstown’s teachers as being mixed. Some teachers were described as dedicated, capable, and caring, while others were seen as disrespectful of parents and teaching down to students. Against this backdrop, we asked Youngstown residents what makes for a good teacher.

People want three actions taken, each of which addresses the need for stronger relationships between teachers and students:

1. *Teachers need a stronger commitment to the child.*

People have no doubt that teachers need to know their subject area, but equally important to them was that teachers care about and believe in their students; that they need to be deeply passionate about teaching; and that they need to demonstrate affection for children. Both *residents and teachers* focused immediately on these personal, relational traits when describing what makes a good teacher.

2. Teachers need much better cultural competence.

People said that teachers need to understand the culture and home situation of their students, and that the curriculum needs to reflect the diversity of the community. Cultural competency was seen as essential for being able to engage students and help them to achieve their full potential.

3. Teachers must engage and educate students as individuals.

Residents said that students have different learning styles and interests and thus need to be treated more individually within the classroom and in their schools. People believed that the focus on standardized testing has hindered teachers' abilities to work with kids as individuals or to provide varied instruction. Residents said that smaller class size, or teachers' aides, might make it possible for students to get more individual attention.

It is important to note that when we talked with teachers they identified these same qualities as essential for being a good teacher.

❖ Action 4 – Re-set community-school relationship

Currently, the community-school relationship is seen as largely broken, and people believe that it must be re-set in order to raise expectations and student achievement.

1. People see the relationship between Youngstown and the schools as negative, strained.

People spoke about the connection between the Youngstown community and the schools in stark terms. The most common word people used to describe the relationship was “non-existent.” People consistently talked about the schools as being “closed-off,” “cold,” and “unwelcoming.” Some said they felt shut out or even “locked-out.” One resident explained, people are “welcomed to the extent that they [the school] want you to participate.” Another person told us: “Look where we are. Academic emergency. That sums it up. Not good at all. We don't have community involvement in the schools – parent boosters, etc. They have locked us out!”

2. People want a genuine relationship with the schools.

People hold a very clear sense of the connection they want with the schools. Simply put, they want a real relationship – instead of a series of transactional exchanges. People said the relationship must be more transparent, open, and welcoming.

To build the relationship people want, they see four areas where action should be taken:

- **Create active, transparent two-way communication.** People said they want a different kind of communications from the schools. First, they want the schools to engage parents and the wider community starting early in the school year. Second, they want these communications to encourage parental engagement, celebrate school and student successes, and proactively let the community know where the school needs help. Third, people want the schools to communicate using a variety of means from social media, emails, newsletters, newspapers or mailings.
- **Lower barriers to engagement.** Residents said that it was important that they become more involved with schools to help strengthen them and enable students to achieve at higher levels. Thus, they want more ways to truly engage with the schools, whether through increasing the number of PTA/PTOs, or making it easier and more welcoming to volunteer in the school. Several people said the presence of metal detectors and security guards as well as parking challenges can make schools feel cold, unwelcoming, dangerous, and difficult. It is worth noting that the teachers we talked with also wanted schools to be more open to the community to help build a stronger relationship, so people could see their good work and know about the successes.
- **Transform school board engagement with the community.** People felt strongly that the school board is not transparent in its dealings with the community, and that there is little room for real engagement with the board. Moving forward, people were clear about what they want to see: real demonstrations of accountability to the community by the board.
- **Partner with faith groups to expand the reach of school-community communications.** People said that the faith community should serve as an important connector between schools and the community. Both residents and faith leaders remarked that schools should leverage partnerships with churches (and others) to communicate with the wider community.

❖ Action 5 – Leverage effective partnerships

Throughout this report, partnerships between the schools and community groups have been identified as a pivotal means by which to set higher expectations and strengthen student achievement. These findings are echoed by Kronley and Associates research into school-community partnerships – which found that there is strong belief in the need for and potential of partnerships. This section focuses on the importance of two particular partnerships.

1. In places, school partnerships are getting better —and people want this to grow.

Despite the deeply strained relationship between Youngstown residents and their schools, people said that the schools are starting to forge better partnerships with different groups in the community. People observed that there seem to be more effective partnerships than in the past, including those with business groups. One library employee noted that in years-past, she called offering to partner with the schools but could not get her call returned – whereas this year the city schools actively reached out to her.

2. People said the business community is a particularly critical partner for the schools.

People consistently said schools must find a way to partner in particular with businesses and business leaders. They see the business community as being especially important in helping to create the support and conditions necessary for kids to reach high expectations.

People see businesses playing two key roles:

- **Teaching life skills and modeling responsibility.** People see school-business partnerships as a key way for students to develop necessary life skills that they often lack – such as respect, responsibility and how to carry oneself at work. People also suggested that through internships with businesses, students would gain greater respect for the community and stronger work skills to draw upon after high school.
- **Identifying gaps in school curricula.** The business community, people said, can also help to identify potential gaps in the curriculum around math, science and computing so that the schools can better prepare students for careers and higher education after high school.

3. Communities of faith are powerful partners, too, and should play a key role.

As already noted in this report, both residents and faith leaders talked about the need for houses of worship to play a more vital role as a partner with the schools. People said that schools should work to leverage partnerships with churches to communicate with parents and the wider community. Others, particularly clergy, also talked about the need for churches to become centers of the community – finding ways to support parents, students and the schools.

The Road to Higher Expectations – In People’s Words

“Raising standards is good, but if they don’t have the tools to hit those standards, then standards are meaningless.”

“We are not just rude and ignorant kids!”

“There are no children that live on my street that I would even approach to speak to out of fear.”

“Parents need to be committed, no one’s gonna raise my children except me— services need to be present to offer support with homework, technology, whatever it takes.”

“Education needs to be modeled and embraced by everyone in the community.”

“It starts with us. People will need to step up for the parents who won’t.”

“I see too many teachers tied to contract, rather than teaching or calling.”

“We need to strive to understand the cultures and values of the students we teach.”

“Communication is a high priority and it’s imperative that schools communicate what they need.”

“The Youngstown City Schools are a closed system...It’s not welcoming.”

Examining Commission Recommendations

The Youngstown residents who participated in these conversations generally supported the key elements of Academic Distress Commission’s reforms. While people’s comments with regard to these reforms are addressed throughout this report, here is an overview of insights and themes.

1. *“All students are capable and will perform at high levels with sufficient supports for success.”*

People said that all kids from all parts of Youngstown are indeed capable of high achievement. They believe in the potential of Youngstown’s youth. But, people were quick to add that many students will need support to reach their potential and that much of this support must address the myriad challenges kids face outside the classroom. These challenges include non-academic areas and involve meeting basic needs like shelter, food, and clothing and a loving adult – all factors that are well beyond what any school can provide alone. People also talked about kids and families living in survival mode – where displacement, abuse, financial strain, trauma, and violence form the daily backdrop for students.

2. *Schools should set a goal of ensuring they “graduate 100% of their students college and career ready.”*

According to the conversation participants, “graduating 100% of students college and career ready” is a distant and lofty goal. Nearly everyone agreed with the idea of working toward this goal, but they said Youngstown is a very long way from reaching it. So while laudable, the goal was seen as unrealistic in the near term.

Moreover, people stressed that it is important to recognize that college is not for everyone. It is critical that in setting high expectations that the district (and the larger community) not marginalize or stigmatize non-college career paths – and, in fact, celebrate them. Most people felt that changing the wording from college AND career to college OR career would make it more appropriate.

3. *“We need more individual schools and programs like Early College and STEM in Youngstown.”*

People consistently pointed, on their own, to Early College and STEM as examples of what works in Youngstown education. People take great pride in these schools and believe they set high expectations for students – and that they meet those expectations. These schools serve as symbols of what is possible in Youngstown, reminding people that Youngstown students can

achieve at high levels. These schools also stand-out because they enable students to pursue individual interests and skills.

Still, it should be noted, some Youngstown residents are concerned that these programs may be less effective if they grow too large and become “watered down.” Others wonder whether these schools will leave behind those students who do not get in, which is an important concern that must be addressed by the District.

Examining Commission Recommendations – In People’s Words

“The things the kids have done this year in the STEM program and performing arts tell me the kids can do it [achieve high expectations].”

“We can do better and teachers need to raise those expectations.”

“Can’t improve education unless home life issues are addressed – hunger, family violence, lack of parental respect for education.”

“Career AND college ready – problem is the conjunction. Should be career OR college ready. One or the other is feasible and appropriate.”

“The stigma associated with trade schools needs to be erased. College is not an option for a lot of students.”

“All schools should have the expectations we have at Early College, and STEM.”

Recommendations

In this section, we identify a set of actions intended to achieve three overall objectives:

- Create a stronger dynamic of change in the community;
- Deepen people’s confidence that change is possible;
- Address the core underlying conditions of building stronger relationships, trust, and confidence in order to raise expectations and student achievement.

Below we lay out a set of principles that we believe should guide all actions moving forward. These principles are based both on what we learned in Youngstown and on the Harwood Institute’s 25-years of experience of working in communities and seeking to foster authentic hope in the lives of people.

#1: Partner with business for student placements.

The business community represents a clear target for expanded partnerships.

- **Match kids up to their own passions and interests.** This will require first helping kids identify their passions and interests and then to find the right match. This will be pivotal to motivating kids to engage and achieve.
- **Start small.** Overly complicated and large efforts are likely to fail at first. Instead identify a few places where work can get started. Invest there, build momentum, and share results.
- **Focus on life skills and “work skills.”** Establish clear arrangements with businesses to help students focus on and develop skills such as respect, responsibility, and how to carry oneself at work. This can help address one of the priorities cited in the Kronley report - focusing on helping kids to graduate “career” ready.
- **Create support system for students.** Ensure kids can continue their development and growth after their placements by connecting kids with mentors, or by creating opportunities for students to learn from each other’s work experiences.
- **Expand to other sectors after success.** Leverage successes with businesses to connect with other sectors – but only after efforts are sustainable with businesses.

- **Identify a point person for school-community partnerships.** While the district has many partnerships, to move forward strategically the district needs to identify a person to drive school-community partnerships. This person does not necessarily need to be managed or employed by the district.

#2: Mobilize adults to engage with youth.

Mobilizing adults to engage with kids is important for kids *and* adults in the community. Mentoring, volunteering, coaching, and other ways of connecting with kids present ways to bring more adults into kids' lives, shift the narrative about kids, and demonstrate that people are coming out from their homes and into the community. This goes to the heart of setting higher expectations, as it says that change is possible.

- **Partner with existing organizations** to mobilize adults. This effort need not be another burden placed on the schools. Such partnerships can, and likely should, be orchestrated by existing community organizations and groups.
- **Make efforts intergenerational.** Involving different generations helps to unravel the negative narrative, passes along key values, enables kids to gain greater connection to the community and its history, and is an opportunity to model responsibility.
- **Ensure people are working toward community aspirations and in a common direction.** Given people's aspirations for a clean community with a sense of pride, efforts might focus on cleaning the school grounds, on reducing blight in the adjacent neighborhood, or, to help create a more caring and connected community, students might join adults as they check in on elderly neighbors. The key is for efforts not simply to put adults and kids together – but to ensure efforts are moving the community toward achieving its aspirations.
- **Get people working, together.** It is important that people not simply be plugged into programs or treated as “foot soldiers” for an organization. People want to come together and work with one another to act on problems. This is essential to build relationships, trust, and confidence.

#3: Focus on building a stronger school-community relationship.

The relationship between Youngstown and its schools did not devolve overnight, and efforts to rebuild trust will take time. Indeed, no one action or single project will rebuild the relationship; there is no silver bullet. The key is to create a new dynamic where people can see changes in multiple areas and along several vectors. Here are some places to get started:

- **Be more open – literally.** Make it easier for people to come into the schools. For example, encourage community groups to hold meetings in the school, simplify sign-in forms or reserve short-term parking spaces for volunteers who are in the schools during the day.
- **Get out into the community.** Look for ways for school staff, teachers, and administrators to engage with the broader community – not just with parents, and not just within the school. Staff are undoubtedly members of numerous community groups – encourage them to invite school leaders to meet with those groups. Getting into the community can be as simple as having the principal or teachers out front in the morning to talk with parents as they drop off their kids, or at the gates before football games and recitals.
- **Prioritize partnership follow up.** Focus on timely response to partnership requests – while immediate action may not be possible, strive to return calls and requests quickly. Even if further no partnership emerges, it helps to combat the perception of the schools as closed off.
- **Celebrate volunteers and partners.** Help individuals and partners that work or volunteer in the school feel welcome and part of the school. Frequent volunteers could get a name tag or badge indicating this – so security guards, teachers and staff can recognize and thank them.
- **Early and ongoing communications.** Communicate with the wider community early in the year –and throughout the year. Ongoing communications, particularly those that encourage parental engagement, celebrate school and student successes, and proactively let the community know where the school needs help, are essential. Use multiple methods to communicate including social media, emails, newsletters, newspapers or mailings.

#4 Tell a different story.

The stories we tell, to ourselves and one another, shape, even determine how we see ourselves, our community, and what’s possible. They send signals to others about the kind of community we believe is possible, about the actions we hold valuable. A different story must be told about Youngstown and its kids if there is to be progress on setting and achieving higher expectations. It is critical to note that this does not mean ramping up traditional “public relations” efforts. The community does not need to be “sold” on its students or future, it needs to see real examples and gain a sense of momentum that comes from people stepping forward. False hype and over-the-top heroes will only breed cynicism.

- **Root communications in people’s aspirations** – and not problems. Stories need to focus on people’s aspirations for the community and our efforts to achieve those, rather than reciting a litany of problems or demonizing different groups.
- **Help people see how efforts will help the community reach those aspirations.** Give people a sense of coherence – connect efforts to larger aspirations, so people can see different pieces fit together.
- **Highlight youth who are doing well.** People need to see examples. But beware: hype, spin or overly sensationalized stories will backfire. These must be authentic stories.
- **Start with small examples** – people know that change will take time. Changing the narrative comes from creating a dynamic where people hear, identify and repeat small stories of change and hope.
- **Connect stories of change to progress being made in the community** People see progress in the examples of STEM and Early College, downtown development and people coming together across barriers. These are key stories. People need to see stories of progress both in the schools and in the community. Build upon the successes that people already see. Help draw connections between new efforts and those in which people already have pride and belief.

A Roadmap for Success

- **The key is to create a sense of possibility** – not guarantees or grand plans, or overblown expectations. People are looking for a sense that things can move forward.
- **“Belief” is at issue** – People’s belief in the schools and in the community’s ability to get things done together is at stake. Thus, authenticity is a key watchword here. Hype will breed false hope and backfire. Merely talking about “impact” will not do, either. People need to see “how” schools, teachers, parents and others are coming together to make a difference.
- **Be clear on short-term vs. long-term actions.** It is critical to focus on several key short term efforts to generate real wins, even as a longer-term agenda is pursued. It is essential to target enough short-term efforts that produce noticeable change, even if it is “small change.”
- **More people will step forward as they see real progress.** The expectation should not be that the entire community is ready to engage and mobilize. Rather, from a change perspective, it is important to start with those individuals and groups that are ready and build from there. Seeing authentic signs of progress will enable others to step forward over time.
- **Change efforts cannot merely be about implementing programs and initiatives.** Instead, they must be viewed and implemented from the perspective of a community-based strategy that helps to produce the underlying conditions discussed throughout this report – relationships, trust, and confidence – while creating new supports for children and their families. Programs without these conditions will fail to meet people’s core desires.
- **Actions should lead to people achieving their aspirations.** A basic test for taking action is whether it will help people meet the aspirations they set for Youngstown. After all, it is not programs or initiatives people care so much about, but rather whether their lives and the community have certain qualities.

Communications and Media

As indicated in our proposal to the Commission, ongoing and focused communications played a critical role in this community engagement effort. All communications efforts were built around the values that undergird this work: authenticity, accountability and transparency, which meant:

- Throughout, we wanted to rely upon local residents and groups to be the messengers to spread the word about this effort and its meaning.
- We looked for ways to “go beyond the usual suspects” and communicate with, engage with and share information with an ever-widening group of people and organizations.
- We wanted to learn with the community – not simply unveil all the findings in one final event. This meant that as our database grew and as the effort expanded, invitations progressively held more information and helped bring people “up-to-speed.” Each communication or engagement effort was explicitly informed by and built upon those that went before.
- We sought to set realistic expectations for the scope and potential impact of efforts.

To meet these goals:

- The Institute shared key themes and insights with our local partners to enable them to spread this within their network, and reflect back what we were learning.
- As we engaged new people or partners we expanded our invitations and updates. This meant that over the course of the effort, groups as varied as the Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative, United Way of Youngstown and Mahoning Valley and the Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County, League of Women Voters and Raymond John Wean Foundation sent out emails to their respective databases highlighting events, providing information or inviting people to participate.
- We encouraged partners and others to tailor messages to their networks and have people “pass it along.” Rather than trying to control communications from a single source, we worked with partners to communicate in a way that worked for their network or members. As a result, invitations and information spread organically to people outside our network – bringing new groups and people to events.

- In addition to working with local partners, we supplemented our communications effort with a robust media strategy – to bolster recruitment for events, provide a sense of momentum, demonstrate that people were stepping forward to act, and highlight the efforts of local partners. As a result of these efforts, stories appeared in The Vindicator and Tribune Chronicle as well as numerous broadcast segments on WKBN, WYTV, and WFMJ.

A complete catalogue of these media efforts and outcomes can be found in the attached appendix.

Methodology

	Description	Materials and Training	Local Partners	Engagement
Ask Youngstown Interviews (194 Interviews)	194 “Ask Youngstown” interviews to surface people’s aspirations and build momentum for larger engagement efforts.	Created Youngstown specific materials and trained 31 people to conduct these interviews.	Worked with 12 local groups to use these questions across the community. We further leveraged these by working with groups to post these through social media.	8 neighborhoods (Brier Hill, Northside, Eastside, Sharon Line, Brownlee Woods, Southside, Westside, Downtown/YSU) Churches Teachers Students
Community Conversations (17 conversations, with 208 people)	Using 31 Harwood-trained Conversation Leaders and Note takers, Youngstown residents participated in 15 90-minute Community Conversations	Created Youngstown specific workbook/ conversation guide to provide everything necessary to hold a Community Conversation. Harwood staff led two half-day Conversation Leader and Note Taker trainings.	Worked with 19 local groups to help host or recruit for conversations. 14 groups hosted. 15 groups recruit for the conversations.	8 neighborhoods (Brier Hill, Northside, Eastside, Sharon Line, Brownlee Woods, Southside, Westside, Downtown/YSU) Teachers Students (4) Faith groups 3 Harwood led conversations (Northside, Eastside and Southside)*.
Stakeholder Interviews (22 interviews)	Locally trained interviewers engaged with 22 stakeholders around initial findings and deeper choices facing the community.	Created a Youngstown-specific interview guide and support materials. Held an hour long training session with interviewers to prepare them to conduct the interviews.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected officials • Business leaders • School officials • Faith leaders • YSU • Non-profit leaders**
Deeper Choice Conversations (9 conversations with 103 people)	9 Deeper Choice Conversations bringing together people from across Youngstown to discuss choices and tradeoffs facing residents and ways to move forward	Created Youngstown specific guide for the Deeper Conversations and conducted two hour long training sessions for Conversation Leaders and Note Takers. Trainings supplemented with one-on-one support for conversation leaders	Worked with 8 local partners and advertised in the Youngstown Vindicator, as well as contacting all previous participants in Community Conversations and Ask Youngstown.	Conversations in 6 locations across the community 3 of the conversations conducted by Harwood-staff, with recruited participants from diverse racial, geographic, age backgrounds
Town Hall (137 in attendance)	Community-wide event to share findings, gather feedback and discuss ways for people to step forward and take action.	Created training materials and a conversation guide for volunteers at Town Hall.	Worked with 15 local partners to recruit for event. Also took out ads in the Youngstown Vindicator and the Warren Chronicle Tribune.	From across the community, and even beyond Youngstown 137 people attended the Town Hall.

*Note We made several attempts to hold a Harwood-led conversation with residents on the Westside. One was cancelled due to lack of RSVPs. For a 2nd attempt, we engaged with local groups, churches, distributed hundreds of invitations at a local event and again no residents showed up for the conversation. To supplement we did extra Ask Youngstown conversations in this area – finding similar aspirations and concerns to those of other neighborhoods.

**Despite numerous attempts to speak with union leadership from Youngstown City Schools, we were unable to conduct an interview with stakeholders there

Appendix

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING

Youngstown Education



MEDIA PLACEMENTS

The Vindicator

Sessions to discuss education, future

Staff report

YOUNGSTOWN

As part of an initiative funded by the Wean Foundation and the Youngstown Foundation to determine the aspirations and concerns associated with the future of education in the city, a group of leaders is inviting residents discussions today and Thursday.

Today's sessions, beginning at 6 p.m., are at the Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County's main branch on Wick Avenue and at the West Branch on Mahoning Avenue.

Thursday's sessions, also beginning at 6 p.m., are at

the East Branch on Early Road and the Newport Branch on Market Street.

The purpose of these discussions will be to explore how people think about various choices and trade-offs around education and the community, determine under what conditions people will step forward to act and uncover the conditions in the community that need to change in order for people to come together and work toward the common good.

Those attending the sessions, dubbed Deeper Conversations, will be broken up into small groups of 10 to 20 people for a discussion led by a locally trained conversation leader.

Previous efforts leading up to this Deeper Conversations phase of gathering input have included "Ask Youngstown" interviews and Community Conversations.

The interviews were brief four-question "man-on-the-street" interactions that took place in various Youngstown neighborhoods and with faith and business groups to explore steps they believe would create impact on education issues.

The conversations were 90-minutes long and took place in six neighborhoods in the community with teachers, students, faith groups and members of the business community to talk

about the challenges and barriers to moving forward as a community in general, and on education in particular.

The Deeper Conversations phase will be followed by a communitywide town hall June 18 at Stambaugh Auditorium.

The purpose of this event will be to share the insights that have been gathered through previous efforts with the entire community, which will be included in the final report presented to the Academic Distress Commission to highlight the suggested ways to move forward with improving education in Youngstown.

"The purpose of these discussions will be to explore how people think about various choices and trade-offs around education and the community, determine under what conditions people will step forward to act and uncover the conditions in the community that need to change in order for people to come together and work toward the common good."

Tuesday, June 5, 2012

The Vindicator

“Andrew Smith, physics major at Youngstown State University, said education is important to building culture and enriching communities. He came to lend his voice and borrow others’ because he said he didn’t have the answers to such a complex problem.”

Tuesday, June 6, 2012

At Wean Foundation forum, residents discuss education

By CHRIS COTELESSE
TheNewsOutlet.org

YOUNGSTOWN

Four plastic folding tables form a square in the basement of the main branch of the Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County on Wick Avenue.

A man in overalls and a straw hat sits next to a man in a necktie. With 18 other concerned citizens, they discuss education.

The Raymond John Wean Foundation funded an initiative to rally communities behind the issue.

Carlton Sears, director of the public-library system, calls it “authentic engagement.”

“It’s not coming at people with an issue that’s predetermined,” he said of Tuesday’s session. “It’s coming and letting them self-define how to move forward.”

Sears has been working with the foundation and the Harwood Institute, a community-advocacy group based in Maryland, since March. The partner-

“COMMUNITY IS THE ANSWER FIRST. THEN GOVERNMENT CAN STEP IN TO GIVE THEM A HAND.”

JIM COONEY,
Harwood Institute

ship has hosted several conversations in Youngstown to determine a better way of educating the city’s students.

Their efforts will culminate June 18 with a town-hall meeting in Stambaugh Auditorium on issues that impact the education process.

Once they’ve compiled the information into a report, they will present it to the Youngstown Academic Distress Commission and the school district’s superintendent.

Sears said engaging the community is the first step toward tangible progress, but it isn’t easy.

“How do you move forward when people say, ‘I want more consistency,’ and people say that but at

the same time they recognize there has to be change?” Sears said.

Andrew Smith, physics major at Youngstown State University, said education is important to building culture and enriching communities. He came to lend his voice and borrow others’ because he said he didn’t have the answers to such a complex problem.

He said he is hopeful that discussions such as these can address education in a new way.

Sessions also are set at 6 p.m. Thursday at the East Side branch library on Early Road and the Newport branch on Market Street.

Jim Cooney, communications manager for the Harwood Institute, said the discussion is more powerful from the bottom up.

“Community is the answer first,” Cooney said. “Then government can step in to give them a hand.”

TheNewsOutlet is a joint media venture by student and professional journalists and is a collaboration of Youngstown State University, WYSU Radio and The Vindicator.

The Vindicator

Residents clear about education needs

By DENISE DICK
denise_dick@windy.com

YOUNGSTOWN

Residents of the city are clear about what needs to happen to improve the schools.

The next step is devising a plan to get there.

More than 115 people attended an education town-hall meeting Monday at Stambaugh Auditorium where the representatives of the Harwood Institute for Public

Innovation of Bethesda, Md., discussed the findings of a community-engagement effort launched last February.

The effort, funded by the Raymond John Wean Foundation and the Youngstown Foundation, included 175 one-on-one interviews, 25 community conversations across eight city neighborhoods and 37 interviews with education, faith, business, media, neighborhood and nonprofit leaders.



I HEARD WHAT YOU SAID, AND I'M GOING TO WORK ON IT."

CONNIE HATHORN,
superintendent

"You have very clear aspirations for this community, and they cut across all areas of the city," said Richard Harwood of the institute.

Those include a belief that all

children should be treated with respect and dignity and are worthy of learning, a need for teachers who not only know their subject area but who treat children with compassion, and the need for a different relationship with the schools.

People also talked about a need to celebrate the community's successes, he said.

"What makes it [the city] special is the clarity," Harwood said.

Those who attended Monday's meeting were asked to rate the schools and community on one of three topics: a more open relationship between schools and communities, celebrating successes and high expectations for students and their ability to achieve, and whether adults take personal responsibility for their actions and set the example for their children.

See EDUCATION, A4

EDUCATION

Continued from A1

Most at the meeting rated the community's progress on the topics as either "starting to improve" or "lip service."

"I heard what you said, and I'm going to work on it," Superintendent Connie Hathorn told the crowd.

He acknowledged that teachers, employees and the community at large have to have a change of heart



Hathorn

regarding what they believe students can accomplish.

"These kids can achieve," Hathorn

said.

Harwood plans to meet with Hathorn to review the institute's findings as well as deliver a report to the schools Academic Distress Commission at its Aug. 16 meeting.

Community engagement was one of the elements of the commission's Academic Recovery Plan for the school district. The five-member commission, appointed by the state, was established in 2010 after the district earned an academic emergency designation, the lowest rank, on the state report card and failed to make adequate yearly progress for four or more consecutive years.

Last year, the district moved up one rating to aca-

demically watch on the report card.

The commission has broad authority regarding district operations that pertain to academics.

In order for the commission to dissolve and for the district to return to local control, the district must earn at least a continuous improvement report card designation for two consecutive years.

Continuous improvement is one step above academic watch.

"Residents in the city are clear about what needs to happen to improve the schools. The next step is devising a plan to get there."

Tuesday, June 19, 2012

ONLINE STORY

Vindy.com
The Valley's Homepage

FREE PHONES
Free Shipping

THE BEST FREE PHONES
ARE ON THE BEST NETWORK.
See All Deals

News Opinion Sports Entertainment Classifieds Records Discussions Community Contact Marketplace

Boardman Canfield Austintown Poland

Search

JOBS HOMES WHEELS CLASSIFIEDS

Login Digital Edition Print Edition

« News Home

Meeting on improving Youngstown schools is Monday

Comment Email Print

Tweet 0 +1 0 Recommend

Published: Fri, June 15, 2012 @ 10:39 a.m.

Meeting on improving Youngstown schools is Monday

Youngstown

A town hall meeting regarding the improving the city schools is set for 6:30 p.m. Monday at Stambaugh Auditorium.

The public meeting will include discussion from officials of the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation about what they have learned during the course of previous gatherings and interviews. The officials also will share insights gained and engage those at the meeting in a final discussion that will lead to a report that will be presented to the Academic Distress Commission.

Goals of the town hall meeting will be to:

- Demonstrate accountability — by publicly reflecting to the wider community what has been learned through previous efforts and how the insights add up.
- Test the choices and trade-offs that fit with the aspirations expressed.
- Bring people from across the community and across different organizations together to recognize their shared aspirations for Youngstown schools.
- Build public momentum for the efforts and approaches to be included in the final report — so that there is greater public will for action moving into the fall.

NCST
NEW CASTLE SCHOOL OF TRADES

Our Program
The Tech
NECES
7

CLICK HERE WWW.NCSTRADES.EDU

Most Commented Most Emailed Popular

What you should know about the ruling upholding the Affordable Care Act (70)

Poland man who introduced Obama violated 'trade secrets,' owes company (65)

Romney stand-ins stump ahead of Obama's visit today (65)

President Obama expected to make campaign stop in Mahoning County (56)

BREAKING NEWS: President Obama to visit the Valley on Friday (42)

search

VINDYHOMES

Cortland
Residential
3 bedroom, 1 bath
\$51000

Columbiana
Commercial
bedroom, bath
\$1850000

Browse | Find an Agent | Open Houses

- Advertisement -



“The public meeting will include discussion from officials of the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation about what they have learned during the course of previous gatherings and interviews. The officials also will share insights gained and engage those at the meeting in a final discussion that will lead to a report that will be presented to the Academic Distress Commission.”

Friday, June 15, 2012

ONLINE STORY



WKBN 27 firstNews

Search This Site

Home News Weather Sports Video Business Entertainment Links Comics Share News Coverage July 4th Events

Local News Ohio News PA News National World Front News 13th Morning News Features Community News Staff Health News

Home News Local News

Weather **Clearing News**

Heat Advisory expires at 8:00 PM on 7/7, issued at 3:43 PM Carlton, PA | Clark, PA | Clarks Mills, PA | Farrell, PA

Group Brainstorms Ideas on Improving City Schools

More Local Stories

- Search Underway for Suspects in Reported Triple Homicide
- UPAID: No Major Injuries in Stern Crash on I-19
- Update: Obama Speaks at Occombe Elementary
- UPAID: Waukesha Coach Leaves One Injured
- UPAID: Detroit Officials Continue to Mop Up Over
- UPAID: City Building Inspectors Will

365 DAY RETURN POLICY

Zappos SHOP TODAY

myWEATHER.com

RIGHT NOW

Temperature	91°
Dew Point	72°
Humidity	54%
Barometer	30.00" F
Wind	CM 0 mph
Heat Index	99°

News Poll

Are you worried about losing your internet service on Monday? (more)

- Yes
- No, because I can access the internet on my smart phone
- No, because I can access the internet on my iPad
- I do not have internet service

Vote Now

hth hth Pool Care

“Among the many members of the committee was life-long resident Jerry Mahone. Both he and his son are graduates of Youngstown City Schools and soon, his grandchildren will be as well. Mahone wanted a seat at the roundtable community conversation to discuss how to improve the Youngstown school system for the future.”

Tuesday, June 5, 2012



ONLINE STORY



“Sears has been working with the foundation and the Harwood Institute, a community-advocacy group based in Maryland, since March. The partnership has hosted several conversations in Youngstown to determine a better way of educating the city’s students.”

Tuesday, June 6, 2012

The screenshot shows a news article on the Vindy.com website. The article is titled "At Wean Foundation forum, residents discuss education in Youngstown" and is dated Wednesday, June 6, 2012, at 12:05 a.m. The author is identified as Chris Covalesse from TheOveaOutlet.org. The article discusses a forum held at the Youngstown Public Library where community members and officials discussed ways to improve education in the city. Key points from the article include: a town-hall meeting in June, the formation of a community-advocacy group, and the involvement of Sears and the Harwood Institute. The article also mentions that the forum was held at the East Side branch library on Early Road and that the discussion is seen as a positive step for the community.



ONLINE STORY

The screenshot shows the WKBN 27 firstNews website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Home', 'News', 'Weather', 'Sports', 'Video', 'Business', 'Entertainment', 'Lifestyle', 'Contests', 'State News', and 'Closings'. Below this is a search bar and social media icons. A prominent banner for 'CHERRY BERRY CHILLER' by McDonald's is visible. The main content area features a headline: 'Solutions Sought for Youngstown Schools'. Below the headline is a video player and a 'More Local Stories' sidebar with several news items. At the bottom, there's a 'myWEATHER.com' widget showing current weather conditions for the valley.

WKBN 27 firstNews

Sign in | Help | Feedback

Search This Site

new **CHERRY BERRY CHILLER** Made with 100% Fruit Juice with natural flavors. I'm lovin' it!

Home News Weather Sports Video Business Entertainment Lifestyle Contests State News Closings July 4th Events

About Economy Environment Living with the Gas Rush News State News

Home - News - Local News

Weather Drinking News

Heat Advisory expires at 8:00 PM on 7/7, issued at 3:43 PM Columbiana, OH | East Liverpool, OH | East Palestine, OH | East

Solutions Sought for Youngstown Schools

Video Images

More Local Stories

- Headwrite Welcomes Obama to the Valley: President Barack Obama made a campaign stop in the Valley, Friday to speak of the successes and ongoing work in progress of his last four years of presidency. 1 hour 2 minutes ago
- UPDAt: Relative Identifies Newton Falls Murder Victim: Three were shot to death, and at least one child was left unharmed after the shooting at a home in Newton Falls. A relative has identified the victim involved. 40 minutes ago
- UPDAt: No Major Injuries in Semi-Crash on I-76: It happened at about noon Friday just north of Walker Hill overpass.
- Update: Obama Tours Valley, Focuses on Economy: 1:27
- Hot... Hot... Hot... How Hot Was It?: 1:27
- UPDAt: Motorcade Crash Leaves One Injured: Youngstown Council Considering Charter Decision: 1:27
- SP: Patrol Officers Continue to Huddle Over Ruling: 1:27

AdChoices by

70 SINGLE GAME TICKETS STARTING AT \$10 GET TICKETS

national.com

Now Today Tonight 7 Day

myWEATHER.com valley

RIGHT NOW

Temperature	94°
Dew Point	72°
Humidity	49%
Barometer	29.98" Hg
Wind	W 9 mph
Heat Index	103°

A town hall meeting at Stambaugh Auditorium on Monday evening kept the community talking about ways to strengthen education in the city of Youngstown.

Community input and involvement are key to Youngstown City Schools' emergence from academic emergency to academic watch, but school leaders and community members know there's still a long way to go to raise expectations for education in Youngstown to higher levels.

"A lot of these kids don't have the same opportunities that we had, and I think it's important that this school district address that issue," said Youngstown resident Kathy Barnes.

Monday's town hall meeting broke down the discussion to three main issues: How to develop better, more open relationships between school officials and the community, having high expectations for all children and their ability to achieve, and celebrating student success stories.

"When we identify success stories, they tell us we have the ability to do more, and do better, and to keep on moving," said Richard Harwood, president of the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation.

The Harwood Institute, the Wean Foundation, the Youngstown Foundation and several local organizations have spent the past few months conducting hundreds of interviews and community discussions.

Officials have been collecting data and asking questions of people in the community for the past several months. They have held 175 one-on-one "man on the street" interviews around town, followed by 25 in-depth community conversations across eight different neighborhoods. Those conversations have been with community leaders, business leaders, faith-based leaders, residents and former and current educators.

"And what we're finding across this community is that people want to re-engage and reconnect, and find ways to ensure that every single child in this community has a chance to succeed," Harwood said.

Harwood will sit down with Youngstown Superintendent Dr. Connie Hathorn in July to present the study's findings and feedback.

"And I will make a report to the commission, we'll take it from there, and we will listen to them, because it's going to take a team effort to move the district forward," Hathorn said.



"Community input and involvement are key to Youngstown City Schools' emergence from academic emergency to academic watch, but school leaders and community members know there's still a long way to go to raise expectations for education in Youngstown to higher levels."

Tuesday, June 18, 2012

ONLINE STORY



“Part of the academic-recovery plan for the city schools adopted by the academic distress commission and approved by Stan Heffner, state superintendent of public instruction, calls for a community-engagement process “focused on increasing community expectations and aspirations by all students.”

Tuesday, May 1, 2012

The screenshot shows the Vindy.com website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for News, Opinion, Sports, Entertainment, Classifieds, Records, Discussions, Community, and Contact. A search bar is located below the navigation. The main content area features a news article titled "Community input sought to help academic success for Youngstown schools". The article text discusses a town-hall meeting and a community-engagement process for city schools. To the right of the article is a sidebar with a calendar for August 2012, listing events such as "August 15 Redline", "August 22 High Energy Hits", and "August 29 Easy Street". Below the calendar is a "Most Commented" section with a list of articles and their comment counts.

Vindy.com
The Valley's Homepage

2012 GRAND CARAVAN CREW
UP TO \$4,000
Consumer Cash * = \$2,000 • Ally/Chase Bonus Cash * = \$1,250 • Retail Trade Allowance * = \$750
BUILD & PRICE
VIEW INCENTIVES

News Opinion Sports Entertainment Classifieds Records Discussions Community Contact Marketplace

Place Ad Browse Classifieds vindy JOBS Post a Job vindy WHEELS Post a Car Vindy Homes

Search

JOBS HOMES WHEELS CLASSIFIEDS

Login Digital Edition Print Edition

Advertisement

August 2012
August 15 Redline
August 22 High Energy Hits
August 22 Evil Ways
August 29 Santana Tribute
August 29 Easy Street
An Evening of Favorites

« News Home

Community input sought to help academic success for Youngstown schools

Comment Email Print

Tweet 0 +1 0 Recommend

Published: Tue, May 1, 2012 @ 11:55 a.m.

YOUNGSTOWN — Conversations with smaller groups are ongoing to gather opinions about the community's aspirations for the city schools.

A town-hall meeting will be scheduled for late next month.

Part of the academic-recovery plan for the city schools adopted by the academic distress commission and approved by Stan Heffner, state superintendent of public instruction, calls for a community-engagement process "focused on increasing community expectations and aspirations by all students."

The Raymond John Wean Foundation is paying for that process, which is being done by the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, based in Bethesda, Md.

"I've been encouraged by the reports so far," said Jeff Glebocki, president of the Wean Foundation.

For the complete story, read Wednesday's Vindicator and Vindy.com

Most Commented Most Emailed Popular

- What you should know about the ruling upholding the Affordable Care Act (70)
- Poland man who introduced Obama violated 'trade secrets,' owes company (65)
- Romney stand-ins stump ahead of Obama's visit today (65)
- President Obama expected to make campaign stop in Mahoning County (56)
- BREAKING NEWS: President Obama to visit the Valley on Friday (42)

search

ONLINE STORY



“Community input and involvement are key to Youngstown City Schools' emergence from academic emergency to academic watch, but school leaders and community members know there's still a long way to go to raise expectations for education in Youngstown to higher levels.”

Tuesday, June 18, 2012

The screenshot shows a news website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with '33 abc wytv NEWS' logo, a search bar, and social media icons. Below the navigation bar, there's a 'TICKETS \$10' banner for 'nationals.com'. The main content area features a video player for 'Solutions Sought for Youngstown Schools' with a 'LIVE' indicator. To the right of the video player is a 'Most Popular' section with several news items, including 'Interstate 90 Recopens After Fatal Crash' and 'UPDATE: Relative Identifies Newton Falls Murder Victims'. Below the video player, there's a 'Weather.com' widget showing current weather conditions: Temperature 94°, Dew Point 72°, Humidity 49%, Barometer 29.98" Hg, Wind W 9 mph, Heat Index 103°. At the bottom right, there's another 'TICKETS \$10' banner for 'nationals.com'. The article text below the video player discusses a town hall meeting at Stambaugh Auditorium on Monday evening, where the community talked about ways to strengthen education in the city of Youngstown. It mentions the emergence of Youngstown City Schools from academic emergency to academic watch, and the role of school leaders and community members in raising expectations for education.

ONLINE STORY

Vindy.com
The Valley's Homepage

SUMMER SALE
Free Shipping

4G GALAXY NEXUS by Samsung
\$149.99 (with activation req.)
Learn More

News | Opinion | Sports | Entertainment | Classifieds | Records | Discussion | Community | Contact | Neighbors | Marketplace

Search

JOBS MOVIES WHEELS CLASSIFIEDS

News Home

Sessions to discuss education, future

Comment | Email | Print

Twitter Facebook

Published: Tue, June 5, 2012 @ 12:00 a.m.

Staff report

Youngstown

As part of an initiative funded by the Wean Foundation and the Youngstown Foundation to determine the aspirations and concerns associated with the future of education in the city, a group of leaders is inviting residents discussions today and Thursday.

Today's sessions, beginning at 6 p.m., are at the Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County's main branch on Wick Avenue and at the West Branch on Mahoning Avenue.

Thursday's sessions, also beginning at 6 p.m., are at the East Branch on Early Road and the Newport Branch on Market Street.

The purpose of these discussions will be to explore how people think about various choices and trade-offs around education and the community, determine under what conditions people will step forward to act and uncover the conditions in the community that need to change in order for people to come together and work toward the common good.

Those attending the sessions, dubbed Deeper Conversations, will be broken up into small groups of 10 to 20 people for a discussion led by a locally trained conversation leader.

Previous efforts leading up to this Deeper Conversations phase of gathering input have included "Ask Youngstown" interviews and Community Conversations.

The interviews were brief four-question "man-on-the-street" interactions that took place in various Youngstown neighborhoods and with faith and business groups to explore steps they believe would create impact on education issues.

The conversations were 90-minutes long and took place in six neighborhoods in the community with teachers, students, faith groups and members of the business community to talk about the challenges and barriers to moving forward as a community in general, and on education in particular.

The Deeper Conversations phase will be followed by a communitywide town hall June 18 at Stambaugh Auditorium.

The purpose of this event will be to share the insights that have been gathered through previous efforts with the entire community, which will be included in the final report presented to the Academic Distress Commission to highlight the suggested ways to move forward with improving education in Youngstown.

SCRAPPERS BASEBALL BRAWL III

POST-GAME WRESTLING WITH HADDOY, CARLITO, REINO, DREAMER

JULY 29TH - GAME 5:05 PM
TICKETS ARE ON SALE NOW!

Most Commented | Most Emailed | Popular

What you should know about the ruling upholding the (39)

Affordable Care Act (39)

President Obama expected to make campaign stop (36)

In Mahoning County (42)

BREAKING NEWS: President Obama to visit the (42)

Valley on Friday (36)

All Grand hot dog shop, some relish health ruling (36)

Obama to visit Poland Friday (21)

VINDY HOMES

Cortland
3 bedroom, 2 bath
\$110,000

Columbiana
Commercial
bedroom, bath
\$120,000

Browse | Find an Agent | Open Houses



The purpose of this event will be to share the insights that have been gathered through previous efforts with the entire community, which will be included in the final report presented to the Academic Distress Commission to highlight the suggested ways to move forward with improving education in Youngstown.

Tuesday, June 5, 2012

ONLINE STORY

Trib TODAY.com
The Valley's First Online Newspaper

Premier Photo Booth Rentals
Premier Service in Northern VA, Starting at \$575/3hr,
Serving Weddings, Corporate Events, Parties & more
[Learn More >>](#)

News Opinion Sports Society Classified Special Sections Features Extras Jobs CU Forums Blogs
Contact Us

BREAKING NEWS >> Fri 4 pm: Shooting suspect located in Falls cemetery

What's Trending >> 2) How interested are you in the pr...
News, Blogs & Events

Community News / News / Community News /
Witch hazel still fascinatin... Penny project unites school...
Warren, OH 96°F Extended Forecast [Find Another Location](#)
Data provided by The Weather Channel ®

Garfield group to meet today
June 18, 2012
Tribune Chronicle | TribToday.com
[Save](#) | [Post a comment](#) | [SHARE](#) | [99](#) | [99](#)

ASSOCIATION TO MEET: The Garfield Neighborhood Association will meet at 7 p.m. today at the Knights of Columbus Hall, corner of East Market Street and Genesee. Discussion will center on current projects, new business and any announcements as appropriate. There is no scheduled meeting in July. The next meeting will be Aug. 20.

DOG SHOW SET: The Champion community Fun Dog Show will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday in the parking lot of Champion Presbyterian Church, 4997 Mahoning Ave. N.W. There will be a dog-winner look-alike contest, as well as best costume, most unusual mixed breed, cutest puppy and best trick. Prizes will be awarded. Food and concessions will be available. For information, call 330-847-9614 or visit www.cpcfundogshow.com

ACTION DAY PLANNED: The Trumbull Community Action Program will hold a Community Action Day from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday at the main location, 1230 Palmyra Road S.W., Warren. Several activities will take place, including the opening of the new senior center, which offers a recreational area for seniors to socialize. For information, call Nick at 330-393-2507.

FOUNDATION HOLDS TOWN MEETING: The Raymond John Wean Foundation Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation will host a town hall event at 6:30 p.m. today at Stambaugh Auditorium to share thoughts about recent findings concerning education in Youngstown. Doors open at 6 p.m.

TODAY
First Things First, 6 p.m., Sahara Club II, 2345 Youngstown Road, Warren, literature discussion.
Cortland Area Kiwanis, 5 p.m., Real Deal Coffee Cafe.
Someplace Safe, 1540 Tod Ave., Warren, 330-393-1565.
Howland Rotary Club, noon, Shepherd of the Valley, North River Road.
Youngstown Executive Toastmasters, 6:45 p.m., Shepherd of the Valley, 301 Western Reserve Road, Boardman. For more information, www.speakingclub.org.
NAR-ANON Family Group, 7 p.m., Serenity Place, 29 E. Broad St., Newton Falls. Call Teri at 330-646-4480 or Patty at 330-307-3002.
Niles American Legion Post 106, 6:30 p.m., post home, North Main Street, 330-652-1323.
VFW 9678, meeting 7 p.m., West High Street, Middlefield. Call Gary at 440-321-0808.
Kinship Association Support Meeting, 9:30 a.m., YWCA in Warren, second floor, 330-675-2617.

LO.S.S., Loving Outreach Surviving Suicide, 5:30 to 7 p.m., Valley Counseling, 150 E. Market St. Warren.
Newton Falls VFW Ladies Auxiliary 3332, 7 p.m., Post Home, 433 Arlington Road, Newton Falls.
Overeaters Anonymous, 6:30 p.m., basement of First Presbyterian Church, 256 Mahoning Ave. N.W., Warren.
Monday Night Serenity Hall AA, 7:30 p.m., Badger Hall, First Presbyterian Church, 256 Mahoning Ave. N.W., Warren.
TOPS Ohio 1353, Leavittsburg, weigh-in 6 p.m., meeting 7 p.m., Leavittsburg Church of God, 610 S. Leavitt Road, Leavittsburg. Call 330-898-0357. New members welcome.
TOPS Ohio 698, Girard, weigh-in 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., meeting 6:30 p.m., First Christian Church, 140 E. Broadway Ave., Girard. Call 330-545-4770 or 330-534-2618. New members welcome. First meeting free.
TOPS Ohio 1694, Champion, weigh-in 6:30 p.m., meeting 7 p.m., St. John Lutheran Church, 5734 Mahoning Ave. N.W., Champion. Call 330-652-2368.
Common Bond, grief support group meeting, 10:30 am to noon, Vienna United Methodist Church, 4265 Warren Sharon Road. Sponsored by Herron Funeral Home and Hospice of the Valley, 330-399-6650.
Christians in Deliverance, 7 p.m., Agape Assembly Church, 426 Nevada St. S.W., Warren.
The Weigh Inn, weigh-in 5 to 6 p.m., meeting 6:15 p.m., Niles Senior Center, 14 E. State St., Niles, 330-652-9068.

© Copyright 2012 Tribune Chronicle | TribToday.com. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

[Save](#) | [Post a comment](#) |



“The Raymond John Wean Foundation Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation will host a town hall event at 6:30 p.m. today at Stambaugh Auditorium to share thoughts about recent findings concerning education in Youngstown. Doors open at 6 p.m.”

Tuesday, June 18, 2012

ONLINE STORY

Vindy.com
The Valley's Homepage

Incredible care. Incredibly close. HUMILITY OF MARY HEALTH PARTNERS

News | Opinion | Sports | Entertainment | Classifieds | Records | Discussions | Community | Contact | Marketplace

Local & Regional | YSU Sports | National Sports Coverage | Jason Klatrak Coverage | Golf | Fantasy | Penguin Insider

Search

JOBS | HOMES | WHEELS | CLASSIFIEDS

Login | Digital Edition | Print Edition

Change in education coming

Comment | Email | Print

Twitter | Facebook | Recommend

Published: Sun, June 17, 2012 @ 12:00 a.m.

By Jan Strasfeld and Jeffrey M. GLEBOCKI

Special to The Vindicator

The philosopher Aristotle once wrote, "All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth." It is time to take this worldly view and focus our thoughts locally on Youngstown. Are we willing to gamble the fate of our country on the education our children are currently receiving in the public schools? Is the Youngstown community doing enough to prepare our youth to lead us into the future?

To both of these questions, our answer is "no." Low rates of academic performance, graduation and post-secondary enrollment tell us our children are not receiving the education nor the support they need to one day nurture the growth of society. We all share culpability in this shortfall, whether we are parents, teachers, businesses, civic leaders, voters or others in the community.

Change is happening, though.

Aspirations

Over the past few weeks, you may have observed people around Youngstown reaching out to one another, trying to find commonalities in their views of the public schools, their aspirations for the Youngstown community, and steps that could be taken to address the problems surrounding the education of our youth. Spearheaded by The Raymond John Wean Foundation and The Youngstown Foundation, these conversations validate our residents' determination to combat the issues facing our community.

The Harwood Institute, a Maryland-based nonprofit that focuses on community engagement, has been retained to direct these efforts and assist with the formulation of a long-term plan. To date, this process has involved numerous one-on-one interviews, 90-minute group conversations with faith leaders, business owners, teachers, students, parents, neighborhood leaders and volunteers as well as "deeper choice conversations" at local Youngstown libraries – all identifying aspirations for the city and the education of youth.

Monday meeting

These concepts will be unveiled at a town hall meeting at 6:30 p.m. Monday at Stambaugh Auditorium. At this session, Rich Harwood, founder of the Harwood Institute, along with civic leaders from Youngstown, will delve into the issues that are holding Youngstown back, including feelings of mutual respect between parents and teachers, as well as the shared responsibility we all have in educating today's youth. The floor will then be opened for discussion as to how we, as a community, can move forward. All are welcome to attend. The resolutions created during the town hall will be presented to the Youngstown City School District and the Academic Distress Commission in August with hopes that this effort will encourage changes in next year's public-school agenda.

During one of our conversations, a seventh-grade student said, "As a community we don't get together. Too many parents don't care. People don't care, and then complain, but don't do anything about it! Everyone wants to be the victim; nobody wants to stand up and be a leader."

If youth can understand our shortcomings, why can't we?

Jan Strasfeld is executive director of the Youngstown Foundation; Jeffrey M. Glebocki is president of the Raymond John Wean Foundation.

NCST

NEW CASTLE SCHOOL OF TRADES

Get your Class-A CDL Fulltime, and weekend classes available!

VINDY HOMES

Cortland Residential 3 bedroom, 1 bath \$61000

Columbiana Commercial Bedroom, bath \$1650000

Browse | Find an Agent | Open Houses

Vindy.com
The Valley's Homepage

"Over the past few weeks, you may have observed people around Youngstown reaching out to one another, trying to find commonalities in their views of the public schools, their aspirations for the Youngstown community, and steps that could be taken to address the problems surrounding the education of our youth."

Tuesday, June 17, 2012

BROADCAST STORY

“Topics ranged from violence and poor parenting to curriculum and community support.”



11 p.m. broadcast
Thursday, June 7, 2012

BROADCAST STORY

“The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation will take this feedback and suggestions generated during a community-wide Town Hall meeting at Stambaugh Auditorium later this month and roll it all into a final report for the Youngstown school’s Academic Distress Commission.”



11 p.m. broadcast
Thursday, June 7, 2012

BROADCAST STORY

“People have very strong aspirations for this community, about a community that is respectful, that treats all kids well, but that they don’t believe is happening right now.”



11 p.m. broadcast
Monday, June 18, 2012



BROADCAST STORY

“The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation was charged with providing some information through a study here for the Academic Distress Commission , so they have been collecting data and asking questions to people in the community for several months now.”



6 p.m. broadcast
Monday, June 18, 2012

BROADCAST STORY

“Different member of the community, the faith-based organizations, current and former educators and administrators all coming together with that one goal in mind, how can we improve education, also, how can we improve the relationship between Youngstown city schools and the overall community.”



6 p.m. broadcast
Monday, June 18, 2012



BROADCAST STORY

“The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, along with the Wean Foundation, Youngstown Foundation, and several local organizations have spent the past few months conducting hundreds of interviews and community discussions.”



11 p.m. broadcast
Monday, June 18, 2012



BROADCAST STORY

During the campaign, the efforts for Youngstown's public school were frequently discussed on the following radio stations:



SOCIAL MEDIA



Defend Youngstown
May 22 · 19

'ASK YOUNGSTOWN' (CITY SCHOOLS):

Q4 of 4: What are some things that need to happen to create the type of change you want to see take place in the local school system as well as the community as a whole?

Like · Comment · Share

3 6

3 people like this.

Jeremy Haddie The schools need to make the students a priority. By this I mean that they need to weed out the students that are not there to learn and place them in a more strict environment. The teachers need to regain control of the classrooms, and the administrators need to put their egos on hold. Parents need to be held accountable for their children's actions and or lack thereof. The children need a consistent atmosphere where they can grow and develop. They need structure they can depend on, and currently it does not exist. The community as a whole needs to elect strong officials that will back up their words instead of giving lip service in order to just get elected. For too long this area has voted like blind sheep for the democratic party without asking what's in it for us. It has gotten to the point where most positions go unopposed in the election, and that needs to stop. The political system in this area is predetermined well before it ever gets to the polls. If we decide to stay in the city of Youngstown, I will be running for mayor as the Republican candidate. More people within the community need to step up and make a stand for what they believe in. They must unite, and tell the world that what we are living in is unacceptable. We deserve better. The city and the schools must work together to bring back the community. It is going to take a joint effort, but it can be done. People need to put their personal agendas on the back burner, and work for the whole of the community.
May 22 at 9:49am · Like · x3 1

Valerie Ziaeh Mirante All politicians, fire, police, nurses and Dr. Teachers and city workers need to have their children in the city school system and there needs to be parental involvement daily at the schools. Worry more about showing them the way adults should act and that they are our future! I have so much more I can add to this!
May 22 at 10:55am via mobile · Like

Valerie Ziaeh Mirante To Mr. Haddie "If we decide to stay in the city" is something I hear a lot from friends, family and those that can help. Please stay in the city and help to make it a better place for all!
May 22 at 10:57am via mobile · Like · x3 2

Marie Meeks I'd like to see schools provide information for parents to get parents more involved in their children's lives. Schools don't raise children, parents do.
May 22 at 11:43am via mobile · Like

Derrick McDowell Strict behavioral policy. But to enact that means losing student enrollment and funding!
May 22 at 11:48am · Like

Jeremy Haddie First Valerie it is Haddie not Hassie, second, you hear "if we decide to stay in the city" a lot because the there is no accountability in the city. Those of us with small children are more concerned for their safety than anything else. I am not going to risk the safety of my daughter to fulfill my personal desire to help save this city if it does not want to be saved. Thirdly, because we have small children and the city schools are failing so miserably there is no way we would allow our children to attend the city schools in the current condition that they are in. Our goal as parents is to provide our children with the best opportunities available for them to succeed. I work in the city school system, and I for one will tell you that there is no way I will send her into the system that I am so proudly a product of. The schools have lost their way. Finally, sure with strict behavioral policies the schools will lose enrollment and funding (which I doubt but choose to humor because as soon as they become a problem in their new school they will be sent back) there is a state minimum that the schools are guaranteed to receive so funding should never become an issue. Besides, wasn't it the plan of the city and the schools to downsize anyways????? What they got their wish, they can see the error in that logic!(I hope)
May 22 at 5:30pm · Like · x3 1



Library Mahoning County
April 26 · 19

#AskYoungstown- First Question: What kind of community do you want to live in? (Community is whatever that means to you.)

Like · Comment · Share

1

Jonathan Cannon, Aaron Leavy and 4 others like this.

Jennie Andrews Campbell An economically secure, clean, safe and socially productive community.
April 26 at 10:34am · Like

V Gina Lamarca Safe, where we can all work together to be a productive community. I think we're getting there!
April 26 at 11:07am via mobile · Like

Aaron Leavy When you think of a productive community - what does that look like?
April 26 at 1:36pm · Like

Library Mahoning County Productive to me is when people's talents and abilities are fully realized.
April 26 at 2:00pm · Like

Jennie Andrews Campbell Great answer. But, I would add that the talents and abilities are fully realized and put into practice.
April 26 at 2:02pm · Like

Frank Krygowski One where people have more chances for interaction in daily life. A key would be getting people out of their cars and out of their houses.
April 26 at 2:07pm · Like

Zara Rowlands I want a community where people care about each other, pay attention to each other and spend less time moving people down while they text and drone on their phones. I'd like a community where parents set the example that reading is worthwhile.
April 26 at 3:32pm · Like · x3 2

Joyce Bishop D'Amico I agree with Frank and Zara-where people spend more time worrying about how they can help others than what others can do for them. People need to get back to basics and to serve their communities, which will make everyone stronger for it!
April 26 at 3:50pm · Like

Shereese Hickson One where neighbors care and look out for one another, peaceful, clean and crime free
April 26 at 4:31pm via mobile · Like

Aaron Leavy It'd be great to see these questions spread in Youngstown and other communities. If you post them to your facebook or twitter accounts can you tag them as #AskYoungstown, that way folks can make sense of what's being said across the community.
April 26 at 5:10pm · Like

Elaine Turner Sears One that is connected to its past and the people and circumstances that made it what it is today, one that is actively involved in its present, working together to solve its problems and trying to find and use the areas of common ground instead of warring the areas of differences to create and maintain separateness; one that has a long-range vision for the future, and keeps it in mind when it is making decisions today...and most of all, one that thinks in terms of "We" instead of "I".
April 26 at 5:45pm · Like · x3 1

Carole Eckes McWilson A community where there is truly "liberty and justice" for all...which includes an equal education, regardless of race, culture, social or economic status. That being the case, crime and poverty would not be primary headlines.
April 26 at 7:16pm · Like

Adelle Gilmartin I agree what Zara said
April 28 at 12:44pm · Like



Defend Youngstown
May 13 · 19

'ASK YOUNGSTOWN' (CITY SCHOOL SYSTEM): The Harwood Institute is participating in an exercise per the request of the Youngstown Board of Education called 'Ask Youngstown'. It is designed to find out the community's aspirations for public education in the city. We will be asking four (4) questions over the next few days on DY. Let's start a great discussion to find ways to better the situation. Here's your first question:

Q1: What kind of community do you want to live in (not what is wrong...what do you want)?

Like · Comment · Share

1

Michelle Shirilla A community would be nice for starters, shopping areas in each, and walkable neighborhoods that are safe
May 13 at 10:10pm · Like

Jeremy Haddie How about a community where the parents are held accountable for the actions of their children, an enforceable curfew, and a police presence that will actually deter crime. The schools also need to be held accountable within the community as well. Failure should not be acceptable on behalf of the students nor the administration/faculty. There are many areas within the community which need improvement however this is where, in my opinion, it needs to start.
May 13 at 10:21pm · Like · x3 1

Jeremy Haddie We also need a community where its residents are free from intimidation, and not afraid to testify to what they see on the streets. Criminals need to be looked up, and held accountable for their actions, not given steps on the wrist for heinous crimes against the community.
May 13 at 10:23pm · Like · x3 1

Carlton Sears Why do you think improvement in the community needs to start here?
May 14 at 8:55am · Like

Jeremy Haddie In my opinion, unless the community is held accountable there will be no room for growth. Businesses will not want to come to an area that has a high crime rate, nor will people want to invest in a community and purchase a home if they do not feel safe. I live on the South Side of Youngstown. I was born and raised here, and the neighborhoods have been drastically deteriorating. I have long been a proponent of rebuilding the downtown as a priority. My view is that if we are to rebuild Youngstown, we need to work from the surrounding areas and work our way in. Everything downtown, in my opinion, is catered to the college crowd. This was good when I attended YSU, however the city does nothing to keep the college crowd in the community. Most job growth has been focused on manual labor jobs, forcing the new graduates to relocate. The population of Youngstown is dwindling. At one time the city boasted a population of over 160k, and now we have a population of less than half that.
May 14 at 12:47pm · Like

Jeremy Haddie Working for the city schools, and living in the neighborhood I grew up in, I see first hand the lack of accountability. People are given excuses instead of answers. I see a lack of parental involvement in the children's home, and school life. Parents do not set boundaries for their children nor do they discipline their children, and it shows in the classroom. The sense of living in the city of Youngstown has disappeared. The community in my opinion has turned against law enforcement as well, in my opinion. The police officers regularly bust their bellinos to protect our citizens yet when they are called out nobody ever sees anything, or is willing to testify. The community sees their hands, then places the blame on them for the sub par living conditions. Instead of looking at what the community can do to improve the quality of life in the area, they place blame. The police in Youngstown in my opinion, are under staffed, under paid, and over worked. The city needs to make drastic cuts and sacrifices to ensure that our police force is up to speed. There needs to be a priority list and the YPD needs to be on top of that list.
May 14 at 1:01pm · Like

Jeremy Haddie stupid auto correct, it should read "I have long been an opponent of rebuilding the downtown as a priority."
May 14 at 8:43pm · Like

Jeremy Haddie at least I hope it was auto correct and not a slip up on my part hahaha
May 14 at 8:44pm · Like

A number of conversations were virtually held on the Facebook and Twitter accounts of the Youngstown organizations participating in the effort.



ADVERTISEMENTS

DEEPER CONVERSATIONS

IF YOU CARE...



WE NEED
YOUR INPUT

If you care about our children's future and Youngstown City Schools, please join us for a deeper conversation about improving education in Youngstown.

If you're a parent, a teacher, an administrator, or simply a citizen who cares about the Valley's future — we want to hear what you have to say about education. Join us for an in-depth discussion facilitated by a trained conversation leader.

June 5

- Main Library
(small & large meeting rooms)
305 Wick Ave.
- West Branch Library
2815 Mahoning Ave.

June 7

- East Library
430 Early Rd.
- Newport Branch Library
3730 Market St.

All sessions begin at 6:00 p.m. and will last 90 minutes.
No advance registration is necessary.

Funded by the Wean Foundation and the Youngstown Foundation

**Advertisement for
Deeper Conversations**

**Vindicator
Monday, June 4, 2012**

**Tribune Chronicle
Monday, June 4, 2012**

TOWN HALL

Advertisement for
Town Hall

Vindicator
Friday, June 15, 2012
Saturday, June 16, 2012
Sunday, June 17, 2012

SHOW YOU CARE...



JOIN US FOR A TOWN HALL MEETING ABOUT EDUCATION IN YOUNGSTOWN

For the last several months, we have engaged in many different conversations with parents, teachers, administrators, public officials, faith and business leaders, and concerned citizens about education in Youngstown.

The insights gathered from these diverse efforts will be presented to the public at a Town Hall Meeting. Come join us for a conversation on the next steps we must take as a community, which will be reflected in the final report prepared for the Academic Distress Commission.

Monday, June 18 • 6:30 p.m.
Stambaugh Auditorium


Refreshments will be served.

Funded by the Wean Foundation and the Youngstown Foundation

MARKETING COLLATERAL

PRE-EVENT PIECES

WE KNOW YOU CARE



**JOIN US FOR A
TOWN HALL
MEETING ABOUT
EDUCATION IN
YOUNGSTOWN**

Listen to the results gathered over the past few weeks about the aspirations our community has for Youngstown and its public schools, and join the conversation to figure out how we can move forward together.

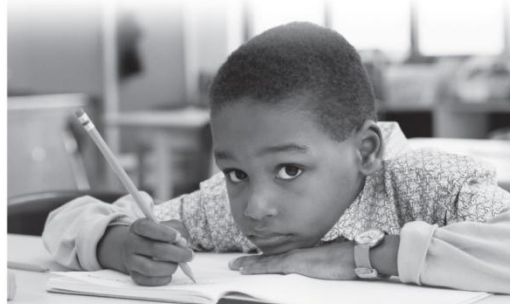
**Stambaugh Auditorium
Monday, June 18 6:30 p.m.
(doors open at 6:00 p.m.)**

Refreshments will be served

Bookmark
Handed out prior to the Town Hall

Flyer
Handed out prior to the Town Hall

SHOW YOU CARE...



**JOIN US FOR A
TOWN HALL MEETING
ABOUT EDUCATION
IN YOUNGSTOWN**

For the last several months, we have engaged in many different conversations with parents, teachers, administrators, public officials, faith and business leaders, and concerned citizens about education in Youngstown.

The insights gathered from these diverse efforts will be presented to the public at a Town Hall Meeting. Come join us for a conversation on the next steps we must take as a community, which will be reflected in the final report prepared for the Academic Distress Commission.

Monday, June 18 • 6:30 p.m.
Stambaugh Auditorium

Refreshments will be served.

Funded by the Wean Foundation and the Youngstown Foundation

EVENT HANDOUT

The Harwood Institute is grateful for the opportunity to work with the great organizations in Youngstown listed below. Also, the results and findings from the conversations would not be so robust if not for the help received from the hundreds of individuals in Youngstown who participated in the conversations. For that, Harwood extends its deepest gratitude to all citizens and organizations who have been involved.



ABOUT THE HARWOOD INSTITUTE

The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that seeks nothing less than to spark fundamental change and authentic hope in American public life.

Founded more than twenty years ago, The Harwood Institute is a leading change organization, recognized nationally for a unique approach to breaking down barriers and empowering people to improve their communities.

Since its inception in 1989, the Harwood Institute has worked with communities, organizations and individuals across the country on how they can turn outward and engage with their communities in new ways. Harwood principles have been successfully applied in the public, private, academic, and non-profit sectors, including, public libraries and school systems, newspapers and public broadcasting, United Ways and other community-based organizations.



HOW WE GOT HERE

In February 2012, The Raymond John Wean Foundation and Youngstown Foundation sought an ad hoc group of faith, business, education and neighborhood leaders who would step forward to help engage the community around its aspirations for Youngstown and how to strengthen education. To develop the plan alongside this group, the foundations looked to The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation to bring more than 25 years of experience and expertise in creating change within communities.

In addition to the initial core group faith, business, education and neighborhood leaders, many more people have stepped forward to help lead conversations, engage with neighbors and share their aspirations for this community.

The results come from:

- 175 One-on-one, man-on-the-street interviews
- 25 Community Conversations across 8 neighborhoods (Brier Hill, Northside, Eastside, Sharon Line, Brownlee Woods, Southside, Westside and Downtown/YSU)
- 37 Interviews with education, faith, business, media, neighborhood and non-profit leaders

We are not only using this Town Hall setting as a time to talk with one another about what we have heard, but to also find out more from you and what you think this means for Youngstown. We hope you are an active participant in these conversations tonight, and look forward to continuing this work together.

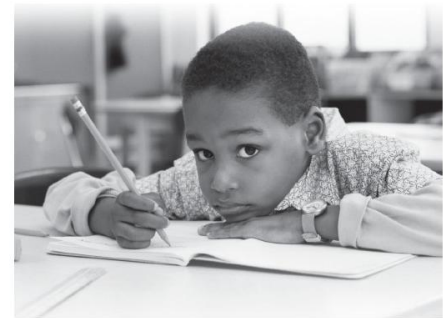
As our next step, the final report will be shared with the Youngstown City Schools Superintendent and the Academic Distress Commission. Just as importantly, the Institute has looked to build upon Youngstown's deep capacity to lead positive changes such as this. *The goal is to not only understand Youngstown's aspirations for public education but to also strengthen its capacity to act on those aspirations.*

My Aspirations for Youngstown

My Pledge to Youngstown

If you would like to stay connected with the work taking place in Youngstown, please email youngstowneducation@theharwoodinstitute.org.

Youngstown Education Town Hall



Stambaugh Auditorium | June 18, 2012



Bi-Fold Brochure
Handed out during Town Hall Event

