Building Capacity & Making Connections for the Future Workforce

The Fifth Annual Report to Mayor Michael A. Nutter
The Philadelphia Council for College and Career Success works to ensure that Philadelphia’s youth become productive citizens who are ready to participate fully in our region’s workforce and the life of the city. To that end, the mission of the Philadelphia Council for College and Career Success is to provide leadership and advocacy in support of the Mayor’s education goals:

1. Increase the graduation rate to 80% (cut the dropout rate in half) by 2014 and
2. Double the baccalaureate attainment rate of Philadelphians by 2017.

Specifically, the Council is charged with envisioning and developing citywide partnerships, strategies, and infrastructures to support youth attainment of 21st-century skills and postsecondary education. This is accomplished through the alignment of priorities and resources across various youth development, education, and youth social-services efforts. Some key areas of Council focus include:

- Creating a citywide system for dropout prevention and re-engagement of disconnected students
- Aligning and monitoring the city’s diverse youth-related funding streams, including youth funds and activities authorized by the Workforce Investment Act
- Aligning the various resources that support a college-going culture, specifically enhancing the connections and transitions between high school and college
- Expanding and improving youth workforce-development efforts in the city
- Influencing the design of an enhanced career and technical-education system

Additionally, the Council functions as the federally-mandated Perkins Participatory Planning Committee, through which it examines and oversees all Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming across the School District of Philadelphia.
As members of the Philadelphia Council for College and Career Success, we are pleased to submit this fifth annual report to Mayor Michael Nutter on progress made toward achieving the City of Philadelphia’s ambitious education and youth workforce goals. Mayor Nutter appointed the Council in 2009 and charged it with undertaking systemic approaches that prepare young Philadelphia Phils for success in school and in careers.

Preparing the workforce of the future begins with the work of today. This means that all of us - here in Philadelphia and across the country – must commit ourselves to providing education and career development opportunities that will prepare our youth and young adults to meet tomorrow’s challenges. This need to act grows more urgent each day. In fact, employment rates for youth and young adults – particularly those without degrees and credentials – continue to lag well behind those for older, more experienced workers. At the same time, employers report that they continue to face shortages of qualified workers across a range of occupations. This trend is likely to continue, and some projections suggest that over the next 10 to 15 years, we will need a workforce that’s more educated and skilled than ever before.

The data portrayed in this year’s report demonstrates that Philadelphia’s commitment to cross-sector, collaborative action is continuing to produce results. We understand that we have much more work to do, but the information that follows shows that we are moving in the right direction. For example, in 2013:

- The four skill domain areas are: Flexibility/Adaptability, Initiative/Self-Direction, and Possession of an Understanding of the Value of Key 21st-century skills, which are developed through work-based learning, internships, and work-based training
- 21st-Century Skills: WorkReady: WorkReady is a pre-employment program designed to train low-skilled adults to enter the workforce with the critical and essential skills that employers are seeking. WorkReady is delivered through community-based organizations and Workforce Investment Area (WIA) providers.

WorkReady* thanks to local and national support. WorkReady uses the highest level of oversight to monitor the private sector since the launch of the initiative in 2010. The Philadelphia Department of Human Services (DHS) committed $1M, which was directed towards creating over 500 summer employment opportunities. In 2013, Project U-Turn also committed an additional $1.5M to fund year-round opportunities.

The Aspen Institute Forum for Community College Excellence committed $400,000 in 2013 to Project U-Turn. This grant will allow the initiative to take deeper into the needs of Philadelphia’s opportunity youth and to expand its capacity to more fully address those needs.

Shaping the Future – Ours & Theirs

The needs of our future workforce are complex, and young people will require increasingly sophisticated skills in order to succeed. As Council members, we pledge to continue creating opportunities for young people to earn academic and occupational credentials, and to participate in high-quality experiences that prepare them for workforce success.

Our future – and theirs – depends on it.

Definitions of Key Terms

21st-Century Skills: WorkReady programs are designed to ensure that upon completion young people will have developed, are able to articulate, and possess an understanding of the value of key 21st-century skills, which are developed through work-based learning and project-based learning. The four skill domain areas are: Flexibility/Adaptability, Initiative/Self-Direction, and Possession of an Understanding of the Value of Key 21st-century skills, which are developed through work-based learning, internships, and work-based training.

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Project U-Turn: Philadelphia’s collaborative approach to youth transition and re-engagement.

Job (Workforce Investment Act): Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Act youth programs are evaluated against a set of Federal requirements. WIA youth programs are evaluated against the WIA performance measures, which include placement in education and employment; attainment of a degree or credential; and gains in literacy and numeracy. Specific levels of performance for WIA (Workforce Investment Act) programs.

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Envision the Future

The United States economy is anticipated to grow from 140 million to 165 million jobs by 2020. Moreover, there will be 55 million jobs opening through 2020. These jobs will require a generation of young people that are equipped not only with educational and workforce experiences, but also key transferable skills such as the ability to collaborate, a dedication to life-long learning, and the ability to analyze and navigate information and trends. We are honored to serve the city and its young people. Our experiences as Council members have convinced us that when adults work together, young people benefit. By forging partnerships among public, private, and non-profit sectors, we can increase the likelihood that our youth and young adults will become highly-skilled and productive citizens who will participate in and help to lead the region’s future economy.

Get Involved:

To learn more about the Council and its initiatives, contact:

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You have to set goals on where you want to be in your career and take the necessary steps to get there. I’m glad that, at Jefferson, they took the time to teach me what educational steps I need to take, so that when I start school, I know where I’m going and how to get there.

Sidney
WorkReady Participant, 2013

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