Policy of the Year Nominee

PROMOTING ACTIVE LEARNING: THE BENEFITS OF FLIPPED CLASSROOMS
10 Ideas for Education 2014

National Director
Taylor Jo Isenberg

Operations Strategist
Lydia Bowers

Field Strategist
Joelle Gamble

Training Strategist
Etana Jacobi

Leadership Strategist
Winston Lofton

Associate Director of Networked Initiatives
Alan Smith

With special thanks to:

The Roosevelt Institute Communications Team:
Cathy Harding, Tim Price, Rachel Goldfarb, Dante Barry

Alumni Editors
Amy Baral, Angela Cammack, Tarsi Dunlop, Aaron Goldstein,
Kirsten Hill, Casey Maliszewski

Student Editors
Matt Clauson, Samantha Elliot, Madeleine McNally

The Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network
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New York, NY 10022

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Who We Are

Established in the wake of the 2004 election, the Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network was formed by college students across the country in order to engage our generation as powerful actors in the policy process. They envisioned a movement in which young people could fill the critical ideas gap in their communities, generating new solutions for the nation’s greatest challenges.

We believe in the value of a robust and active democracy, one in which all citizens have the opportunity to positively impact communities they love. By giving students a platform to elevate their ideas for local, regional, and national change, we contribute to that vision.

What You’re Holding

Now in its sixth year, the 10 Ideas series promotes the most promising student-generated ideas from across our network. This year’s journals, which include submissions from 20 different schools located from New York to Georgia to California, stand as a testament to the depth and breadth of these student ideas.

Entries in 10 Ideas are selected for publication on the basis that they are smart, rigorously researched, and feasible. Simply put, they’re darn good ideas.

How You Can Join

As you explore these ideas, we encourage you to take special note of the “Next Steps” sections. Here our authors have outlined how their ideas can move from the pages of this journal to implementation. We invite you to join our authors in the process.

Contact us on our website www.rooseveltcampusnetwork.org or by tweeting with us @Vivaroosevelt.

Thank you for reading and supporting student generated ideas.
Dear Readers,

December 2014 will mark ten years since a group of college students united behind a new model for engaging young people in the political process, a model that became the Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network. Deeply grounded in the belief that young people have more to offer than just showing up on Election Day, the Campus Network has continued to evolve and grow from its visionary beginning into the nation’s largest student policy organization, with a membership capable of shifting dialogue and effecting policy at the local, state, and national levels.

We believe that in the context of a stagnant public discourse and increasing disillusionment with a political system incapable of tackling our complex collective challenges, it is more important than ever to invest in a generation of leaders committed to active problem-solving and concrete change in the public sphere. As the Campus Network expands to more than 120 chapters in 38 states, we serve as a vehicle for fresh ideas, exciting talent, and real change.

In these pages you will find some of those ideas – from reforming western water rights to supporting green infrastructure through progressive toll taxes, students are envisioning and acting on better solutions. It’s indicative of our Network’s larger impact; in the past year, we’ve leveraged the effectiveness of our model to work with and inform dozens of other organizations on how to engage Millennials on critical issues, ranging from campaign finance to inequality to climate change. We’ve elevated a fresh, Millennial-driven vision for government in an otherwise stale public debate, and launched an initiative that taps into our generation’s unfettered thinking and ambition to reimagine the role of citizens in shaping fairer and more equitable local economies. Our members have continued to substantively engage in local processes to shape and shift the policy outcomes that directly impact their communities, from introducing new mapping systems to improve health outcomes in low-income neighborhoods to consulting local governments on flood prevention.

These ideas are just the starting place, because ideas are only powerful when acted upon. Yet this work is occurring in a dramatically shifting political and social context. The ways citizens engage their government,
participate locally, and advocate for their communities are changing every day. As a vibrant, evolving network driven by our active members nation-wide, we believe there is immense potential to capture these innovations and ensure better and more progressive ideas take hold. We believe that:

- Millennials are turning away from traditional institutions and are looking to build new ones as vehicles for social change. We believe there is an opportunity to channel this reform-mindedness into building a healthier, more inclusive system that’s responsive to citizen engagement and evidence-based solutions.

- To jump-start political engagement and combat disillusionment, the focus needs to be on pragmatic problem-solving and inter-sectional thinking across key issues. We can no longer tackle economic mobility separately from climate change.

- There is immense potential (and need) for scalable policy innovation at the local and state levels, and much of the most effective and important policy change in the coming decade will be local.

- With the shift from top-down institutions to networked approaches and collective problem-solving, it is more important than ever before to invest in the development of informed, engaged community leaders capable of driving engagement and action on ideas.

As you engage with the ideas, ambitions, and goals in these journals, I encourage you to dig in and explore how our country’s future leaders are taking the initiative to create the change they know we desperately need. You won’t be disappointed.

Happy Reading,

Taylor Jo Isenberg,
National Director
Congratulations to

**Eric Henshall**

*author of Promoting Active Learning: The Benefits of Flipped Classrooms*

_Nominee for_

_Policy Of The Year_

A jury of Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network members, staff and alumni elevate one piece from each journal as a nominee for Policy Of The Year based off the quality of idea, rigor of research and ability to be implemented effectively. The cover design of this journal is themed to portray the above idea in visual form.
Table of Contents

8 Promoting Access to Music Education in Pennsylvania
   Michael Donnay

11 Curbing Local Human Sex Trafficking
   Through Sex Education
   Sarah M. Estrela

15 Creating Universal College Savings Accounts for Humboldt County Kindergarten Students
   Raúl Gardea

17 School-Community Partnerships:
   Alliances Combating STEM Apathy
   Cayley Heller

21 Promoting Active Learning:
   The Benefits of Flipped Classrooms
   Eric Henshall

23 Why Summer Matters in Keeping Kids Smart
   Shaun Kleber

26 One State, One Rate:
   In-State Tuition for Undocumented Students
   Dory MacMillan

29 Mental Health First Aid in Pennsylvania Public Schools
   Emily Cerciello and Muad Hrezi

32 Establishing Equal Access to Educational Opportunities in Wake County
   Hassan Nasif, Jason Guo, Joe Swanson, Sinthu Ramalingam, Kelsey Mullin, Samantha Geary, and Katie Draper

34 Fostering Lifelong Wellness Through Nutrition Education
   Merelis Ortiz
Promoting Access to Music Education in Pennsylvania
Michael Donnay, Georgetown University

To expand access to quality music education, Pennsylvania should group its public school districts into clusters to share resources for music education.

Despite overwhelming evidence that music education improves both standardized test scores and mastery in subjects such as mathematics, historically arts education and, more specifically, music programs are among the first to be cut during a budget crisis. Due to the recent recession, many states have provided less support for public education, and consequently funding for music in public schools has decreased as well. For instance, the School District of Philadelphia recently cut music programs for all 131,362 of its students.

A promising mechanism for providing music education at a low cost has been developed in Haverford Township School District, in Haverford, Pa., where the district pays for two full-time instructors who rotate throughout the district during the week. This solution cuts down on the number of staff members required without compromising music education. Under such a system, once a week all of the instrumental students are bused to the high school where they rehearse as a group with their instructors. These systems at the elementary level help foster award-winning high school music ensembles, as well as SAT scores that are 100 points higher than the state average.

ANALYSIS
Pennsylvania can build off of Haverford’s model for music education by organizing school districts into clusters and establishing a framework.
for inter-district collaboration around music education. These clusters would pool resources across districts, thereby allowing districts to feasibly split costs. By clustering districts, resources can be drawn from multiple revenue streams, easing the burden on individual school districts while simultaneously increasing access to music education. Clusters would share music teachers—whose salaries in Pennsylvania run about $65,000—and instruments, which often cost hundreds of dollars each. In a cluster of only two districts sharing 14 teachers each district would save $455,000 a year in salary alone. Haverford’s model is based on student enrollment, not the number of schools in the district; consequently, it can scale to fit any size of cluster. Within these inter-district clusters teachers would rotate among districts during the week, with instruments being distributed based on need. As long as districts properly coordinate, there should be no issue with sharing larger instruments or undue stress on instructors. This model would allow school districts to reap the benefits of music education at reduced cost.

This program will benefit the thousands of Pennsylvania public school students currently facing cuts to their musical education. By lowering the overall cost of music programs, districts will be able to expand their music offerings without increasing spending. District superintendents, school principals, and current music teachers will be the primary implementers of this program. Due to the inter-district nature of this policy, it cannot succeed without a framework provided by the state Department of Education. It is crucial that the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) collaborate closely with government officials to develop such a framework.

ENDNOTES

TALKING POINTS
• Students who receive a quality music education score higher in math and reading comprehension.2
• By allowing districts to share the cost of their music programs, more Pennsylvania students will be exposed to a quality music education at a lower cost to individual districts.
Next Steps

Once the Department of Education has laid out a framework for cooperation, school districts themselves will have to work out logistics. Working with the PMEA and districts that have quality music programs, participating districts will need to map out the details of collaboration. Questions to be considered include: What kind of schedule will be required? How will districts communicate about workloads and responsibilities? How will the teachers be paid? How will instruments be stored and shared among students? The Department of Education will facilitate conversations among districts as they work out these issues, allowing districts to share best practices. These ongoing conversations will guide the program as it moves forward.
Curbing Local Human Sex Trafficking Through Sex Education
Sarah M. Estrela, Wheaton College (MA)

To help eradicate human sex trafficking in the United States, pre-existing school-based sex education programs should be expanded to include information on the warning signs and dangers of sex trafficking.

Human sex trafficking, known as modern-day slavery, is a much larger issue in the US than most Americans realize. Unfortunately, 83 percent of sex trafficking victims identified in the US are US citizens—not foreigners, as widely believed—who have been forced into a form of slavery.\(^1\) Though its definition is not universally agreed upon, US federal law defines sex trafficking as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age.”\(^2\) Further, this crime does not discriminate in any way; victims can be of any age, race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation or religious belief.\(^3\)

Sex trafficking predominantly affects the most vulnerable members of society: women and children.\(^4\) Traffickers approach children in a variety of settings, but one of their prime targets is after school.\(^5\) The US Department of Homeland Security estimates that as many as 100,000 to 300,000 American children are at risk of being trafficked for commercial sex.\(^6\) Most targeted children become victims around the start of puberty.\(^7\)

Public schools have pre-existing mechanisms for sex education, so one way to combat sex trafficking could be to expand these programs to include information on the warning signs and dangers of sex trafficking. This could help prevent children from becoming targets of traffickers.

KEY FACTS
- The average age a child is trafficked into the commercial sex trade is 11 to 14 years old.\(^19\)
- As many as 100,000 to 300,000 children are estimated to be at risk of being trafficked in the US each year.\(^20\)
trafficking across the US is the inclusion of information about sex trafficking within these curricula. There are currently two main types of sex education offered to public school children: comprehensive and abstinence-only. Comprehensive sex education teaches children about pregnancy, contraception, STI prevention techniques, domestic violence, and sexual assault. Abstinence-only sex education stresses the importance of waiting to engage in sexual activity until marriage. The type of education students receive is dependent upon the legislation of the state in which they reside. Twenty-two states, as well as the District of Columbia, require that public schools teach their students about sex education. Unfortunately, sex trafficking is currently excluded from both these curricula.

Non-profit organizations such as the Polaris Project and government initiatives like the Blue Campaign already actively educate school administrators and teachers to raise awareness, but extending this information to students and their families could make a significant difference in reducing sex trafficking.

ANALYSIS

According to the US Department of Education, human trafficking is “one of the fastest growing criminal industries in the world, with traffickers generating billions of dollars in profits each year.” However, inexpensive resources, effective education, and the collaborative efforts of the community can help cripple it. Over $75 million in federal funds have already been allocated toward comprehensive sex education under the Obama administration, and an additional $24.5 million have been allocated to domestic anti-trafficking agencies under the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008. In 2012, the Polaris Project operated on a budget of almost $7.3 million, with almost $2.9 million to spare. The available budget and the expenses of current sex traf-
ficking prevention programs demonstrate that this policy is both feasible and highly affordable. Since this is a relatively low-cost initiative, enough funding and resources can be secured through federal grants, fundraising, and careful budgeting. The sex trafficking industry relies heavily on its victims and is pervasive due to its overwhelming $32 billion annual worth. Thus, reducing the number of potential victims is crucial to crippling local sex trafficking circuits. Educating children, families, and members of the community will make this business unsustainable and easier to eradicate.

This policy can be feasibly executed because of the work of existing organizations committed to eradicating human trafficking. By incorporating the exhaustive research and detailed information these organizations possess into the proposed sex education curricula, children will be equipped with the most effective ways to prevent themselves from becoming victims. Non-profit organizations that oppose human trafficking have already developed workshops and seminars geared toward educating those who know little about the issue but want to be informed. Additionally, the Department of Homeland Security’s initiative, the Blue Campaign, also works alongside school administrators and local authorities to provide comprehensive information on how to protect children from sex traffickers.

STAKEHOLDERS/AUDIENCE:
While this policy primarily benefits the children who will be educated, a positive impact will inevitably be made on communities nationwide. Families whose children are equipped with this knowledge will be preserved, communities will become significantly safer, and current victims may even be provided the help they need. While this policy would have to be passed on a state level, its implementation would also require the cooperation and collective efforts of local governments, local school administrations, representatives from NGOs that specialize in the opposition of human trafficking, and researchers committed to this cause.

ENDNOTES
Next Steps

The first step in implementing this policy is to develop a sex trafficking curriculum suitable for all levels of public school education. To accomplish this, the cooperation of existing non-profit organizations and government agencies is necessary. Their research, resources, and staff will help shape effective curricula that address specific sex trafficking issues in their local communities. Once a curriculum is developed, states will need to seek funding for the execution of such programs. The US Department of Justice, as well as many other agencies, issue annual grants to programs working to eradicate sex trafficking.

To ensure the long-term effectiveness of this program, its progress should be measured and recorded. Tracking the number of children participating in these programs in relation to the number of those trafficked in a given community will help all parties involved target potential problems and generate new ideas. This curriculum should be revised annually to ensure that curricula include the most updated information.
Creating Universal College Savings Accounts for Humboldt County Kindergarten Students
Raúl Gardea, Humboldt State University

To encourage parents to start saving early for their children’s higher education, Humboldt County should automatically open savings accounts for all incoming kindergarten students.

A college education remains a near-universal aspiration for most families. Among parents of children ages 17 or younger, 94 percent say they expect their children to attend college.¹ Yet, as tuition costs continue to rise, parents will have to shoulder the increasing expense of higher education. This is exacerbated in California by the recent increase in childhood poverty.² In Humboldt County alone, the number of children living below the poverty line is 21.4 percent.³

Research shows that children with savings are seven times more likely to attend college than those without.⁴ In 2010, the city of San Francisco introduced the Kindergarten to College (K2C) program, which opened savings accounts for 1,000 incoming kindergarten students. The city provided initial seed money and then devised incentives such as matching contributions to promote steady saving habits. These incentives were made possible through public-private partnerships and contributions from community organizations, businesses, financial institutions, and individuals.

As Humboldt County transitions from a natural resources-based economy to a service-based economy, it is imperative that families start planning for the future. Although specific details need to be identified at the local level for successful implementation in a rural community

KEY FACTS
• San Francisco’s Kindergarten to College program provides a case study about implementing such an account structure.⁷
• Automatic enrollment in social programs helps increase their adoption, a key difference between this local initiative and more common college savings accounts.⁸
such as Humboldt County, K2C provides a framework to incentivize higher education saving in underprivileged communities.

ANALYSIS
This savings account structure should guarantee eligibility for any kindergarten student enrolled in a public school. It would be universal and automatically opened upon enrollment. Parents have the ability to opt-out. Research shows that the adoption of social programs is increased by default or automatic enrollment. Students eligible for subsidized lunches—a common metric for identifying low-income households—should receive a larger initial deposit. First-generation and lower-income families may lack documentation or sufficient financial literacy thus creating new barriers that might complicate applying for loans and scholarships. Therefore, any prospective administrative barriers must be minimized.

Establishing a sound and sustainable endowment for this program is crucial for its long-term solvency. A potential strategy might be the development of a Pay for Success Bond. These bonds are public-private partnerships where investors provide capital for public programs and are repaid upon achieving a mutually agreed-on social outcome. This would place the brunt of risk on private investors and ease taxpayer concerns over the funding of new initiatives with scant public funds.

ENDNOTES

TALKING POINTS
• Among parents of children ages 17 or younger, 94 percent say they expect their child (or children) to attend college but only 53 percent of these parents say they are already saving.
• The increase of childhood poverty coupled with a rapidly transitioning economy means it is imperative that students are well prepared with the skills to compete in the future Humboldt workforce.
Next Steps

While this program must be adapted to the needs of Humboldt County, models like San Francisco’s K2C are an invaluable reference. There are several components already in place that could be revamped to accommodate this program. Savings accounts like Umpqua Bank’s Learn 2 Earn can be expanded to offer universal access. The Decade of Difference community development initiative could seamlessly integrate this program as a classroom tool for teaching financial literacy—one of its stated goals. Local education and economic development non-profit organizations could help define the scope of such an initiative. The California Center for Rural Policy at Humboldt State University could assist in identifying target schools and conducting scientific surveys with parent focus groups. Local banks and credit unions could help design the incentives to promote steady saving.

Obtaining support from teachers, administrators, community leaders in the public and private sector, and parents will be crucial in designing and implementing a program to meet the specific needs of a rural economy.

School-Community Partnerships: Alliances Combating STEM Apathy

Cayley Heller, Cornell University

To keep students engaged in STEM fields and to better prepare them for STEM-based careers, school districts should partner with community organizations to create project-based learning and internship opportunities.

It has been more than 30 years since the publication of A Nation at Risk sparked a push to move past “mediocrity” in our education system, particularly in STEM. Yet, even after a series of reforms, STEM education still has much to be improved.
According to the National Science Foundation, students in the US are decreasingly choosing STEM majors, while the demand for them in the labor market is ever-increasing. Even with choice aside, a mere 30 percent of high school graduates are ready to tackle science at the college level.

Those examining disengagement with STEM fields, particularly among women, cite two main factors underlying the decision to pursue a STEM major: a) personal capabilities and preparedness and b) an interest in the discipline. Jan Cuny, Program Director for the National Science Foundation’s Computing Education for the 21st Century, asserts this lack of engagement among girls comes from popular misconceptions about STEM fields. That they are “too hard,” “geeky,” “require a single-minded 24/7 focus,” or that the fields “provide little benefit to society.”

There have been numerous recommendations aimed at improving STEM education, including producing more and better STEM teachers and increasing the rigor of the curriculum. However, many of the suggestions address only one facet of the problem. City governments should invest in fostering school-community partnerships for project-based learning and internship opportunities, which would work best to address all sides of the problem. Providing real-life problems and resources would create a more rigorous environment. Moreover, increasing the level of interactivity, practicality, and applicability will also increase engagement and retain students in the field, particularly those traditionally under-represented such as females and minorities.

ANALYSIS
Surveys suggest that opportunities for practical learning experiences are correlated with higher school retention rates and higher paying wages for students when they eventually graduate. A Brandeis University study suggests that students

KEY FACTS
• Five percent of American graduates majored in engineering, as compared to 12 percent of European graduates and 20 percent of Asian students.

• Women in the US earn, on average, 77 cents for every dollar a man earns. Getting more women in STEM careers has been shown to help reduce inequality of pay.

• There will be a predicted 1.2 million US job openings in STEM fields by 2018, with a lack of qualified candidates.
who participate in hands-on STEM learning experiences are nearly twice as likely to major in a science or engineering field.\textsuperscript{6}

One of the core arguments against the movement towards project-based learning is that it makes it more difficult to comply with state standards and evaluate student progress and learning. Existing programs, such as MC2 (Metropolitan Cleveland Consortium) STEM High School, have created new programming that complies with state standards and found that businesses have suggestions for curriculum relevant to both careers and state standards. It is also important to note that current standards and means of evaluation are not necessarily all-encompassing, and the movement towards more project-based learning might open up alternative forms of evaluation.

ENDNOTES
6 “New Partnership with Local Westbury Schools.”
7 “New Partnership with Local Westbury Schools.”
11 “New Partnership with Local Westbury Schools.”
Next Steps

In order to cultivate stronger, more engaging STEM education, there are a number of measures that must be taken. It is vital that relationships are cultivated between schools and local higher education institutions, museums, research centers, nonprofits, and businesses. The partnership between the Westbury Union Free School District and AAR Aircraft Component Services is a prime example, with the relationship benefiting disadvantaged students through exposure to STEM fields and benefiting AAR with possible future employees. Another example is P-TECH in Brooklyn, which, through an alliance between New York Public Schools and IBM, allows students to pursue an Associate’s degree in a STEM field and graduate with direct connections to IBM jobs. The opening of P-TECH-inspired schools in Chicago has proven the model to be replicable.

MC2 serves as another excellent model. MC2 provides access to internships and project-based learning opportunities, allowing students the chance to see what STEM careers are like and to gain experience that might help them choose a future path. The hands-on experience gets students out of the textbook rut, engaging them more in their studies. This can help students understand the relevance of what they are learning and see the link between their education and future, all while complying with Ohio Academic Content Standards.

City governments and local educational agencies can encourage organizations to participate for goodwill and can also subsidize internships and programs that are created as part of co-operative education partnerships with local districts. Organizations like PENCIL should be used to facilitate school-business partnerships and student fellowships in STEM fields. The partnerships should begin with high school programming, where the benefits are most directly visible to the partners. Once the partnerships are grounded, programs can be expanded to include elementary and middle schools.

Using existing models for programs and partnerships, city governments should incentivize connections between businesses and public education institutions. A model should be built to share curriculums and tested programs, to assist teachers and faculty, and to facilitate the transition in the classroom.
Promoting Active Learning: The Benefits of Flipped Classrooms
Eric Henshall, Georgetown University

Public high schools in Washington, D.C., should promote flipped classrooms, in which students view online lectures as homework and devote class time to guided problem solving and group work.

Despite its prevalence in high schools and universities across the country, the lecture is an ineffective method of instruction. Students are only able to focus actively for 15 to 20 minutes, so a large portion of the lecture is not a productive use of students’ time.¹

District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) is often seen as the epitome of failing schools in America, a view that is supported by many criteria for academic success.² With a graduation rate of 58 percent and less than half of its students scoring proficient or higher on standardized tests, DCPS high schools are excellent candidates to switch to flipped learning, a program that has been shown to increase test scores and graduation rates.³

Analysis
Flipped classrooms can be effective when they promote active learning, which is more effective than passive learning.⁴ In a flipped classroom, the teacher facilitates group work and problem solving, allowing students to work at their own pace and review lectures at home. This teaching style avoids a “one-size-fits-all” approach to education, allowing teachers to adapt their instructional styles to meet the needs of their students.⁵ Clintondale High School demonstrates that flipped classrooms can also lead to more students staying in school and attending

Key Facts
• Sixty-six percent of teachers using flipped classrooms reported increases in standardized test scores.¹⁰
• After implementing flipped learning, Clintondale High School’s math failure rate dropped from 44 percent to 13 percent, while disciplinary incidents fell 74 percent in two years.¹¹
college. Clintondale’s college attendance and graduation rates rose to 80 percent and more than 90 percent, respectively, after flipping all its classes.6

Flipped classrooms improve student performance at little cost because they do not require any additional resources beyond a laptop, which DCPS already supplies to teachers, and a computer lab for students.7 DCPS should provide workshops and information for instructors to assist them in transitioning from the traditional teaching model. The expenses would be negligible because organizations such as the Flipped Learning Network already offer webinars and other resources at no cost.8

Despite promising results, flipped classrooms may be unfeasible in places where many students do not have regular access to the internet, especially in rural communities. Schools should ensure that they provide computer labs and time in the day for students who do not have access to the internet at home to view online lectures; however, such a system could be costly and less effective if most students need to use school computers daily. Despite their initial costs, computer labs have few recurring costs and thus flipped classrooms remain relatively cost-effective. While flipped learning is not a panacea for failing schools, it is a simple and efficient way to improve student performance that all schools should consider.

ENDNOTES
5. Ibid., 8

TALKING POINTS
• Research demonstrates that active learning is more effective than passive learning.4

• Teachers in flipped classrooms report improvement in test scores.10

• Flipped learning addresses failing schools and dropouts with little additional cost.
Next Steps

Teachers can immediately switch to flipped learning by using resources such as Khan Academy, a non-profit organization that provides free educational videos online, or recording their own lectures to customize their curriculum. DCPS should initiate a pilot program in select high schools by implementing flipped classrooms in math, science, and history classes. Flipping these particular subjects has clear benefits in each class: math classes will have more time to solve problems, science classes can allow for additional laboratory experiments, and history classes will be able to devote additional time to class discussions. Teachers and administrators can monitor the progress of students in these flipped classes, and if successful, DCPS should offer students the option of attending flipped classes in all core subjects at every public high school. Additionally, due to the lack of rigorous scientific studies on flipped classrooms, DCPS should commission a study on their effectiveness to provide further details on the program’s benefits.

Why Summer Matters in Keeping Kids Smart
Shaun Kleber – University of Georgia

The Clarke County School District in Athens, Georgia, should provide monthly bus transportation during the summer for low-income students to local libraries, enabling them to access books they would otherwise lack.
Summer learning loss is the phenomenon of children losing knowledge during the summer vacation. Low-income students suffer most, specifically in reading achievement, due to their lack of access to enrichment opportunities and resources. The problem is especially severe in Athens-Clarke County, Georgia, because of the high poverty rate. Summer learning loss also creates an ever-expanding achievement gap between low- and higher-income students that presents myriad problems as students progress through school, including higher dropout rates for low-income students.

A nonprofit organization called Books for Keeps provides 12 books to each student at the seven elementary schools in the Clarke County School District (CCSD) with the highest poverty rates, but that still leaves 3,723 elementary school students—2,541 of whom qualify for free or reduced-price lunches—without books through this program.

ANALYSIS
Providing effective summer enrichment programs can cost more than $2,000 per child, and the proposed policy would cost far less while being equally or more effective. The deputy superintendent of CCSD said the district would be willing to provide buses for this program, but would be unable to absorb the cost. The base price to use a bus is $225, and the price goes up for each stop. If all students at the target schools were to participate in this program, it would cost more than $11,700 each day, depending on how many stops were necessary.

However, a more reasonable estimate is that fewer students would participate, and the base cost would be significantly lower than that. For this relatively modest price, the proposed policy could solve—or at least significantly reduce—the problem of summer learning loss.

KEY FACTS
• The average American middle-income child has access to 12 books over the summer, compared to about one book for every 355 low-income children.
• The childhood poverty rate for children in Athens-Clarke County is 25.2 percent, compared to the Georgia average of 16.7 percent. It is the fifth poorest county in the country.
• Reading 12 books during the summer has been shown to be as effective as summer school in raising reading scores, and the effect is large enough to offset summer learning loss.
**ENDNOTES**


11 “Poverty Data.” Prosperous Athens.

12 Allington. “Addressing Summer Reading Setback Among Economically Disadvantaged Elementary Students.”


**TALKING POINTS**

- Summer learning loss creates an achievement gap that can leave low-income students years behind their peers.

- Summer learning loss is most severe among low-income students because they lack equal access to enrichment resources and opportunities.

- Providing low-income students transportation to libraries is a cost-effective way to ensure equal access to books.

**NEXT STEPS**

CCSD should seek outside funding for bus transportation. Dollar General, Target, and other companies, as well as the US Department of Education offer grants for programs aimed at helping struggling readers develop literacy skills. The primary option for sustainable funding should come from the school district, but their tight budget has made them unable to put any funds toward this program currently. If it proves to be effective, however, it is possible the district would allocate funds in the future. The total amount needed would depend on the number of students participating. The district should survey parents and students to gauge potential participation and then determine where each participant lives to design the bus routes in such a way as to minimize costs.
One State, One Rate: In-State Tuition for Undocumented Students
Dory MacMillan, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Undocumented students1 who graduate from North Carolina high schools should be eligible for in-state tuition at North Carolina’s public colleges.

Each year, 1,500 undocumented students graduate from high schools in North Carolina with the dream of attending college.2 Plyler v. Doe guarantees these students the right to attend public K-12 schools3; undocumented students, however, are not guaranteed the right to attend a public college and they face many financial obstacles to make their college dreams a reality.

North Carolina’s public colleges admit undocumented students, but these students do not receive the substantial financial benefits that come with attending a public college. Federal law prohibits them from obtaining federal financial aid4 and North Carolina’s policies prohibit them from obtaining state financial aid.5 Most importantly, North Carolina’s policies require them to pay the higher out-of-state tuition rate.6

ANALYSIS
Requiring undocumented students to pay out-of-state tuition is unfair. First, North Carolina’s in-state tuition rate, which averages $7,694 per year, is much less than North Carolina’s out-of-state tuition rate, which averages $28,446 per year.7 This higher out-of-state tuition rate makes it financially difficult for undocumented students to afford higher education. Second, undocumented students should not suffer because their parents illegally brought them to the US.

TALKING POINTS
• Eighteen states allow undocumented students to pay the in-state tuition rate for public colleges.13

• “One State, One Rate” makes undocumented students in North Carolina eligible for in-state tuition rates if they have (1) graduated from a North Carolina high school; (2) attended school in the United States for at least 6 years; and (3) signed an affidavit that they are seeking legal resident status.
Third, undocumented students who have been raised in the US have been legally educated in this country. Lastly, undocumented students are more likely to drop out of high school and become dependent on government support if their college opportunities are limited.

Board of Governors Policy 700.1.4 states that undocumented students are to be considered out-of-State students for the purpose of “calculating the 18 percent cap” on freshman from outside of North Carolina. Receiving acceptance from the university system colleges out of state is more difficult because a smaller percentage is accepted; thus, undocumented students, despite growing up in North Carolina, are faced with greater obstacles in gaining admission. Similarly, the State board of Community Colleges Code 1D SBCCC 400.2 (b) mandates that undocumented students are considered out-of-state students (even if they were raised in North Carolina) for tuition purposes.

It is much more expensive to pay out-of-state tuition rates, which is another deterrent for undocumented students seeking to advance their education.8

**STAKEHOLDERS:**
The most important stakeholders are undocumented students in North Carolina. “One State, One Rate” benefits undocumented students by allowing them to pay North Carolina’s lower in-state tuition rate. This policy does not, however, alter their legal status or make them eligible for federal financial aid.

North Carolina citizens are also stakeholders. Various studies indicate that “households headed by a person with a bachelor’s degree earn approximately $1.6 billion more in a 60 year period than families headed by an individual with only a high school diploma.”9

**KEY FACTS**
- Approximately 1,500 undocumented students graduate from North Carolina high schools each year.10
- Current North Carolina policies require undocumented students to pay the higher out-of-state tuition rate at public colleges.
- High school dropouts cost states $316 billion in lost wages.12 By allowing undocumented students to pay in-state tuition, fewer undocumented students will drop out of high school.
Policy makers in the North Carolina state legislature, the Board of Governors, and the State Board of Community Colleges are the stakeholders who will institute the changes required by this policy.

**ENDNOTES**

1 For the purposes of this piece, “undocumented students” are defined as North Carolina students living in the US without legal residency status.
5 North Carolina Community Colleges. 1D SBCCC 400.2. “Admission to Colleges,” revised 2012.
8 Board of Governors’ Policy 700.1.4.

**Next Steps**

Board of Governors Policy 700.1.4 and the State Board of Community Colleges Code 1D SBCCC 400.2(b) need to be repealed and replaced with “One State, One Rate.”

First, organizers need support from politicians and grassroots advocacy organizations. Organizers could team up with local DREAM Act advocacy organizations, such as Action NC, and NC DREAM Team. Second, organizers should consider how other states passed their in-state tuition policies for undocumented students, learn from those states’ mistakes, and build on the advocacy strategies and policies that worked.

With the proper planning, advocacy, and grassroots support, “One State, One Rate” can become a reality for undocumented students in North Carolina. Under this policy, undocumented students would be eligible for the in-state tuition rate at North Carolina’s public colleges if they have: (1) graduated from an accredited North Carolina high school; (2) attended primary or secondary school in the US for at least six years before applying to college; and (3) signed an affidavit that they have either applied for legal resident status or will do so.
Mental Health First Aid in Pennsylvania Public Schools
Emily Cerciello & Muad Hrezi - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Public school teachers in Pennsylvania should receive Continuing Professional Education credit for completing the Mental Health First Aid program to promote early detection and treatment of mental illness.

Every day, children and adolescents living with mental illness struggle to access basic treatment resources. Currently, one in five youth meets criteria for a mental disorder but only half of affected children received treatment in the last year. Common mental disorders, including anxiety, mood, behavioral, and substance use disorders, often emerge in childhood and adolescence. There exists an average 8 to 10 year gap between onset of symptoms and treatment interventions, which is costly for both taxpayers and the health care system.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an interactive 8-hour training program that aims to help the public identify, understand, and react to signs of mental illness, or reduce the harm that an individual may cause to themselves or others when having a mental health crisis. MHFA strives to increase knowledge and confidence, reduce stigma, and improve the effectiveness of a community in connecting individuals with unmet mental health needs to treatment resources.

MHFA shows great promise for educators. At a Canadian University, educator training in Mental Health First Aid resulted in a knowledge increase of between 18 and 32 percentage points in every category of mental illness, and a 30 percent increase in confidence to react to a mental health crisis. A course for high school teachers

KEY FACTS
• In Pennsylvania, 118,000 educators serve 1.8 million public school students daily.17,18
• One in five youth currently meets criteria for a mental disorder.19
• Half of mental illnesses in children remain untreated each year.20
• The economic cost of untreated mental illness is more than $100 billion annually.21
in Australia increased teachers’ knowledge, reduced stigma, and increased confidence in providing help to students.\(^8\)

**ANALYSIS**

Public school teachers in Pennsylvania should receive Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credit for completing the *Mental Health First Aid* program. Act 48 of 1999 requires all Pennsylvania educators with public school certification to complete 180 hours of CPE every five years to remain certified.\(^9\) Educators can meet these hours by pursuing collegiate study, completing approved CPE courses, or attending relevant trainings and conferences.\(^10\) Included are courses or noncredit activities in the areas of student health and safe and supportive schools,\(^11\) under which MHFA would qualify.

If MHFA training reaches just 5 percent of Pennsylvania educators, the program will affect 90,000 students.\(^12\) Approximately 360,000 Pennsylvania students experience some form of mental illness, with an estimated half of these cases remaining untreated.\(^13\) Currently, MHFA training is provided free of charge by several community organizations in southeastern Pennsylvania.\(^14\) MHFA is a practical and economical solution for Pennsylvania youth, as every $1 invested in mental health treatment saves $3 to $8 in reduced criminal activity and hospitalizations.\(^15\) Amid a $55 million cut to Pennsylvania’s mental health programs in 2012\(^16\) and continued cost pressures in 2013, investing in early identification and treatment can save money for the state while improving outcomes for vulnerable public school students.

**ENDNOTES**


First, the Pennsylvania Department of Education must recognize MHFA as an approved CPE course to incentivize educator attendance. Second, the number of MHFA trainings and enrollment capacities for trainings must increase. To lay the foundation for sustainable success, implementation must begin at the grassroots level, with mental health advocates and educators contacting legislators and the Department of Education to recognize the Mental Health First Aid program as an approved CPE option.
Establishing Equal Access to Educational Opportunities in Wake County
Hassan Nasif, Jason Guo, Joe Swanson, Sinthu Ramalingam, Kelsey Mullin, Samantha Geary, and Katie Draper, Wake Forest University

To afford equal access to education for high school students in Wake County, the Wake County Public School System should establish a career center accessible to all high school students that provides access to both upper level and career-technical courses.

In 2000, the Wake County Board approved a school assignment plan that aimed to create greater socio-economic diversity. However, by 2010, the Wake County Board of Education voted to end this plan reverting back to neighborhood school assignment plans. Unfortunately, these new enrollment programs have concentrated students of low socioeconomic backgrounds at particular schools, which lead to a lack of resources at these schools as well as a reduction of classes offered. For example, Green Hope High School is relatively affluent, with only 5.8 percent of students qualified for free and reduced meals. Knightdale High School is less affluent, with 53.6 percent of students qualified for free and reduced meals. During the 2011/2012 school year, 12 percent of students at Green Hope High School were in Advanced College Prep Courses, but only 4 percent of students were in these classes at Knightdale High School.

The most effective solution to this problem is installing a conveniently located center that provides Advanced Placement (AP) and Career-Technical classes to students regardless of their assigned high schools. This allows students to take courses that are otherwise not acces-

KEY FACTS
- With more than 1,000 students taking AP courses, about 750 enrolled in CTE courses, and 150 students in specialty courses, the Forsyth County Career Center has not catered to a single profile or specific educational track.
- In the 2012 round of AP examinations, students at the Forsyth County Career Center exceeded both state and national averages in the percentage of students achieving a score of 3 or more in 29 of the 31 exams offered.
TALKING POINTS

If Wake County were to establish an initial career center, it would be a long-term investment for its school system, which would result in higher student achievement and countywide improvements in the quality of education for students from lower income areas.

A career center would bring students from different communities together, creating a diverse environment based on students’ goals rather than their home addresses.

Forsyth County in North Carolina has used this system very successfully for more than 30 years. Forsyth County shares Wake County’s challenge of providing equal opportunity to a community highly segregated by race and income level. Though Forsyth County only boasts a student population of 53,367 students compared to Wake County’s 144,173 student, Forsyth County still had to overcome the difficulty of equally serving a wide range of socio-economic demographics.\(^6\)\(^7\) The Career Center in Forsyth County serves as a model for the center to be established in Wake County.

ANALYSIS

Under the Forsyth County Career Center model, students who choose to take a course at the center become part of two high school communities, attending class both at their assigned school and at the Career Center.

The biggest obstacles for a career center in Wake County would be funding for transportation, construction, and establishing a relationship between public schools and the Career Center. In Forsyth County, buses are available from every high school to and from the Career Center, which is fully funded by the county.\(^8\) Wake County should also cover transportation costs. The school board would also need to clarify the nature of the connection between the Career Center and the schools.

The Career Center would benefit most, if not every, student attending Wake County Public Schools since students would have a larger selection of courses that would help prepare them for various futures. The Career Center would
To improve children’s health outcomes, such as reducing obesity rates, K-12 schools should implement nutrition education programs that bring awareness to students on how to live a healthier lifestyle.
Over the past few decades, children and adolescents have increased their consumption of fast foods that are high in trans-fat and are nutritionally deficient. Schools inevitably influence a child’s eating habits with the meals they serve and the information they provide. In 2010, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act was signed into law with the following intentions: to improve nutrition standards in schools, reduce food insecurity, and establish standards for wellness policies. The law did not directly address the role of nutrition awareness and the necessity of its presence in schools when trying to improve health outcomes for kids. In 2007, the National Farm to School Network was launched, which introduced the food justice movement to schools by offering agriculture, health, and nutrition education opportunities. Although the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has given a variety of grants to help initiate programs, there are still many schools that do not embrace programs such as Farm to School.

ANALYSIS
Nutrition education programs should be essential in schools as preventive care to encourage students to make healthy food choices early on in life. This would help them avoid future health complications and, in the long run, costly medical expenses. As demonstrated in California, for every dollar spent on this type of education, between $3.67 and $8.34 is saved in health care expenses. A study done by the Partnership for America’s Economic Success revealed that overweight and obese children accounted for $25,688 in excess spending per year for every 1,000 kids ages 5 to 18. If people begin to establish healthy habits at an early age, then there will be fewer people that develop health complications. Thus, the government would not have to spend $7.3 billion on health expenditures for illnesses that can be prevented.

KEY FACTS
- According to the USDA, one in three adolescents and children are overweight or obese.
- The US government’s goal is to reduce the childhood obesity rate to 5 percent by 2030.
- Schools shape a large part of a child’s nutrition environment by the food they provide and what knowledge they teach, directly affecting a child’s eating habits and food choices.
ENDNOTES


TALKING POINTS

• Investing in nutrition education programs helps combat rising health costs, as children become more conscious of their eating habits and food choices, opting for more nutritious foods.

• The USDA provides grants of up to $5 million and states provide grants schools can apply for, which can be utilized to fund nutrition education teams, responsible for initiating nutrition education programs.11
Next Steps

Schools can use Farm to School as a model for their preventive care and services. This program connects schools (grades K-12) to agriculture, health, and nutrition education opportunities by serving local and healthy foods, building school gardens, developing composting programs, and offering farm tours to students. These opportunities would inform students about where their food comes from. Yet, many school food service directors that may be interested in Farm to School currently lack the time and resources necessary to adopt new options and strategies.

The USDA, state departments of agriculture, and non-profit organizations should collaborate with schools to support training for parents, faculty and staff interested in implementing nutrition education programs. The trained faculty would help implement food-related curricula, make sure that their students are going on farm field trips, build school gardens, take cooking lessons, and eat locally grown products in their meals.

Training would include learning about nutrition, the responsibilities of trained faculty such as helping streamline school expenditures where possible, and ways to communicate with community stakeholders who want to get involved. Meetings would be organized involving teachers, parents, school administrators, community members, and food justice organizations that would aim to strategize and discuss what is best for the community, and how they can collectively move forward. Nutrition education leaders would build a team that assists with organizing events, researching, and writing proposals for state and federal grants, such as the Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Grant Program. These grants could cover startup costs, equipment, and the resources necessary to make the initiative more feasible. Students at local colleges and universities could also play a role by helping conduct research, analyzing and assisting developing programs, and overseeing the progress made towards lowering the percentage of obesity in the community.