**Building a College-Going Culture in
Battle Creek**
A Project 20/20 Leadership Meeting
March 28, 2012
Burnham Brook, 7:30 a.m.

Welcome and Opening Comments

Talia Champlin opened the meeting with introductions and an overview of the meeting agenda. The theme for the meeting was "Building a College-Going Culture in Battle Creek". Talia reminded attendees that Project 20/20 facilitates these important conversations among leaders and community members to move Battle Creek toward excellence. Talia then introduced Stephanie Boyd and Raheem Faulkner.

Presentations by John Severson, Raheem Faulkner and Selena Melvin

John Severson, Superintendent of Harper Creek Community Schools, discussed mentoring at-risk students. He currently mentors 37 students. Mentoring is all about relationships and connecting to the students. He is responsible for the success of every one of the students in the district. It's important for every student to graduate and have a purpose. While mentoring, he talks to students about their aspirations, dreams and the power of zero (50% grade is better than 0). It's important to model by example so that other administrators and teachers may see the impact of mentoring on students. Other principals are mentoring as well in both the high school and middle school.

Stephanie Boyd introduced Raheem Faulkner. Stephanie met Raheem at Willard Library where he has since become a part of the Boyd family. Raheem shared his story of transformation. He was going down the wrong path, a part of the system, but one day decided to wander into Willard Library where he met Stephanie. The Boyd's took him in, provided the support that Raheem needed and introduced Raheem to faith. With this support, his attitude and appearance changed. When that happened people started to treat him and see him differently. Raheem is now on track to graduate in June from Battle Creek Central High School. He also plans to attend college in the fall.

Selena Melvin, coordinator of the Battle Creek College Access Network (Battle Creek CAN), gave an overview of the programs and services they offer. College access is a local, state and national movement with offices located all over the State of Michigan and nationally. Locally, Battle Creek CAN (a program of the Battle Creek Community Foundation) seeks to create a college-going culture by nurturing and guiding students of all ages through high school graduation, and providing support and resources to make education after high school a reality. They provide the framework for many types of student support through partnerships, collaboration, and network building. All available supports for students and families (serving all students in the Battle Creek area) are gathered into one coordinated place, making it easier for students, families, and schools to locate resources. Battle Creek CAN provides services to students within the Battle Creek Promise Zone (1 of 10 in Michigan) which serves St. Philip Catholic Central, Battle Creek Academy and Battle Creek Public School. Battle Creek CAN also houses Legacy Scholars, which will celebrate its first graduating class this year. The scholarship

provides up to 62 credit hours at Kellogg Community College for students graduating from Battle Creek Central High School, Lakeview High School, and Calhoun Community High School. Legacy Scholars has developed new eligibility guidelines where students will be eligible for a percentage of the scholarship based upon the grade they enter the qualifying school district. Over 250 additional scholarships are also offered through the Battle Creek Community Foundation. Contact Selena via email at Selena.Melvin@battlecreekcan.org or phone at 269.719.8226 for more information about Battle Creek CAN.

To view the PowerPoint of the presentations, click on the following link: Building a College-Going Culture PowerPoint Presentation. Attendees were also invited to fill out a commitment card join in efforts to build a college-going culture. Click on the following link to view and fill out the commitment card: Battle Creek CAN Commitment Card. The card may be returned to Amanda Lankerd at Project 20/20 via email at bcproject2020@gmail.com or mailed to 310 WahWahTaySee Way, Battle Creek MI 49015.

Group Discussion and Input

Following the presentations, members were asked to participate in a small group discussion. The following two questions were posed: 1) What can we do as a community (individual, organization, business, etc.) to support and encourage our students to graduate from high school and move on to postsecondary education? and 2) How can we create a college-going culture in our community?

A discussion question was assigned to each table (each question was discussed by 4 tables). An individual from each discussion table shared one key point with the group (however, some shared more than one). All additional ideas are located at the end of this document.

Key Points Reported by Each Group

1) What can we do as a community (individual, organization, business, etc.) to support and encourage our students to graduate from high school and move on to postsecondary education?
   - Start early
   - Re-examine role of HS counselor (comfort) in helping kids
   - Share "stories" w/ peers about importance of education
   - Relationships/Expectations - see graphic at end of document

2) How can we create a college-going culture in our community?
   - Make it a vision from birth; grow at every level (child, parent, school, community); inject education at every point; each person/student/teacher/etc. must continually check their perceptions and prejudices
   - Mentors/caring adults, everybody's role
   - A formula for success = help kids define where/what they want to be + help them believe they can get there + show them how to get there + support their effort
   - Teach/show students and family why they should go to college

Closing Comments

Members were encouraged to attend the upcoming Project 20/20 Community Forum. On April 25, 2012 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m., Project 20/20 will partner with the Center for Michigan to host a community conversation on the future of K-12 education. The information will be used to inform local and state decision makers. Also, the 2012 meeting schedule is available at www.bcproject2020.com.

Members were asked to complete a survey, make a donation, become a fan of Project 20/20 on Facebook or follow our tweets, visit the Project 20/20 website at www.bcproject2020.com and invite others to join us.

Additional Ideas from Small Group Discussion

1) What can we do as a community (individual, organization, business, etc.) to support and encourage our students to graduate from high school and move on to postsecondary education?
   - Encourage reading or find something that youth are passionate about. Dig deep.
   - "Encourage": support system and develop trust, relationship (coach, mentor, parent, any adult or peers)
   - Communicate relevancy of education and financial resources to go on to post-secondary
   - Need equality/equity of K-12 education
   - Engage all parents and teach them how to make education (current or future) a priority. Thinking long-term. (youth want to feel valued)
   - Raise expectations of achievement. Surround youth with a culture of educational importance
   - Utilize resources which know the "future jobs"
   - Importance of language usage (instead of "are you going to college?" change to "what college are you going to?")
   - Focus on middle school transition ($7^{th} - 8^{th}$)
   - Peer mentorship network
   - Push youth to seriously think about their life/career post-graduation
   - Engage youth in this conversation!
   - We need to teach that exploration is ok – that "I don't know" is not enough
   - Not as much of an expectation
   - Other outlets
   - Overwhelming process – youth and parents
   - Change of perception
   - Significant need for assistance – middle class
   - Involve youth
   - Community action – based on college credits/courses
   - Include "alternative" schools
   - Trustworthy adults
   - Kids like Raheem share their success stories
   - Change of environment
   - Good support in schools

- Take community meetings to where the schools are to address issues
- College students speak to HS students
- Career options class in HS
- Job shadowing
- Mentorship
- Keep students in school
- Begin early with students
- Help parents/guardians with guidance, info (resources), support → parent network
- Relationships
- TOPS program (BCC)
- Community-wide "things" to help
- More engagement from businesses
- Respect for all career paths and behaviors
- Recognizing and supporting skills needed for life and the job
- Make HS an expectation (and graduation!)
- Encourage parents and community to be more ACTIVE/involved (don't taper off after elementary) – work alongside our kids!!!
- Lack of parent accountability
- Better integration of schools/CBOs and social service agencies/parents/courts/etc.
- Higher teacher expectations of students and parents
- TCC/wrap-around has been helpful
- Truancy plan has been successful
- Parents being able to help kids when they're struggling too (need to refer and ask for help)
- Grad coaches rock!!
- Connect education/learning to real world and future
- Teachers make connections to students
- Highlight successes (via marketing campaign – service clubs, billboards, modeling) to community/parents/kids (formally and informally)

2) How can we create a college-going culture in our community?
   - Start at pre-K
   - Work on early childhood development
   - Structure
   - Accountability
   - Expectation of responsibility
   - Vision – changes thru life, starts at birth/parents start
   - Make them feel valued
   - Intervention – it's never too late, you don't have to stay a "failure"
   - Child, family, school, community – all must be ready and look toward college
   - Exposure to college/life after high school
   - Listen to the child/create a safe environment so they will open-up
   - After school programs, not just math/science include arts/music
   - Educating the community about undocumented immigration, refugee status

- Community address the real barriers – transportation, prohibitive tuition, computers
- Mentors can play a key role, generally takes 5
- Advertise – awareness
- Younger kids – expectations
- Opportunity for all
- Believe
- $ is not the barrier
- Need to grow past industrial thinking
- Connect curriculum and careers – start at elementary
- Celebrate education
- Define "college-going" as further education and training beyond high school
- Support/encourage/inspire/motivate – instill confidence in the student at risk of not graduating and furthering their education – it's never too late but you need to start now! Doors are closing
- Teaching education – prep and ongoing professional development and enforce teacher accountability and counselors
- Support families that need to impress a college-going culture on their children
- Career Day! Create opportunities for real people in real jobs connecting with kids and defining pathways to success
- Give the kids a reason why
  - Job shadowing – create an understanding so they know why, share own experience, what it took to get there
- Additional training between post-secondary – how they connect, differences between colleges and post-secondary training
- Become more theoretical rather than experience, make the connections
- Work with strengths – all the money in the world doesn't make you happy in the job
- What are you good at??
  - "strength finder" at KCC
  - How many at 18 really know what they want
  - Talk about different degrees – BA, masters, etc.
- Get them out to experience
- Teach how to think, not memorize – analyze the situation
- Experience in younger years – don't wait for HS, start in elementary
  - Many parents don't have post-secondary and may not even have a GED
  - How do we help them with family goals?
  - Connect with the family – start with the parent, this is how you can help them navigate the system
- Help parents – help them dream; what do you want the future to look like for your child?
  - Start the dreaming process – banners, news articles
- Job fairs – talk about the jobs, not hiring employees (informational); go to five jobs with a punch card, skills (phone interviews, on-line)
- College talk – common language, never too late to dream
- Mentoring/coaching

Key point from question #1

<u>**Relationships/Expectations**</u>

Schools - Community

Parents - Teachers

Teachers - Students

Relationships

Students - Students

NPOs/CBOs/Social Services/businesses/schools

Relevance

Teachers for students

Parents for teachers

Education that is relevant

Expectations

Students for teachers

Parent for kids

Teachers for parents

Community for students

Students for students

100% graduation rates and higher ed for all and continued success

Community for parents