

# The One Newark Plan

## FEBRUARY UPDATE

### ONE NEWARK COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our administration has and will continue to focus on creating an environment where all Newark students are in excellent schools. In order to reach all students, charters and other educational partners must be aligned to one clear city-wide goal and our individual success must be defined by our collective success.

- Much like every city has a “master plan”, we knew we needed one for our schools. We got to work compiling achievement data, data about what families want and are demanding, enrollment trends, population trends, building quality information, charter growth, projections of building deterioration, and neighborhood revitalization plans.
- Through monthly stakeholder roundtables and School Advisory Board (SAB) meetings, we shared data as quickly as it was compiled.
- Last Spring, we gathered as a city to launch a bold idea: One Newark – a community-wide agenda to ensure all students are in excellent schools and thriving communities and are on the path to excel in college and 21st century careers.
- Once we felt we had plans that could solve seemingly impossible challenges and competing forces, we took them to those directly impacted first: principals, faculty and families.
- We briefed SAB members, principals, conducted family meetings, and hosted faculty meetings at 15 schools – we hosted nearly 100 meetings in the two weeks before the winter break. Concurrently, we worked to inform and invest other stakeholders on the specifics through our roundtables and one-on-ones.
- We trained community-based partners on how to use One Newark Enrolls and hosted family meetings at every school about the new enrollment system.
- We listened intently to the feedback we were getting and the following things became clear: we need to keep focused on solving the challenges, keep working to attain our goals, and make key adjustments based on the input we receive.

### CHARTER LAUNCH UPDATE

Charter launches transform schools previously operated as district schools into charter-operated schools. Many of our charter partners have a stronger track record of success compared to NPS – even when you compare across subgroups. **This plan does not add new charter seats** – it redirects charter growth plans to neighborhoods most in need of – and demanding – innovation. Currently, approximately 8,000 students are in public charter schools and 10,000 families are on waiting lists. In the South ward alone, 40% of families are applying for charters. As one example, many of families at Bragaw Avenue, which will become a TEAM Charter Launch, are on TEAM’s waiting list.

### SPECIFIC UPDATES

- **Madison Avenue:** Newark Legacy will operate grades PK-5 beginning fall 2014. All Madison families must submit a One Newark Enrolls application. Families will have preference to Newark Legacy at Madison or their top-ranked district or charter schools.

- **Alexander Street:** North Star Academy will operate grades K-4 beginning fall 2014. Alexander families with K-4<sup>th</sup> grade students must submit a One Newark Enrolls application. Families will have preference to North Star Alexander Elementary School or their other top-choice schools through One Newark Enrolls. Alexander families with 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders must submit a One Newark Enrolls application and will have preference to their top-ranked district or charter schools.
- **Bragaw Avenue:** TEAM will operate grades K-4 beginning in the fall. Bragaw families with K-4<sup>th</sup> grade students must submit a One Newark Enrolls application. Families will have preference to Life Academy at Bragaw or their other top-choice schools. Bragaw families with 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders must submit a One Newark Enrolls application and will have preference to their top-ranked district or charter schools.
- **Hawthorne Avenue:** BRICK will operate Hawthorne K-4 as a district school beginning fall 2014. Hawthorne families with K-4<sup>th</sup> grade students may continue at BRICK at Hawthorne or participate in One Newark Enrolls. Hawthorne families with 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders must submit a One Newark Enrolls application and will have preference to their top-ranked district or charter schools. TEAM will also operate a K-1 school at Hawthorne and will grow to scale over time – offering families two choices at Hawthorne.
- **Newton Street:** NPS will partner and collaborate with community-based organizations to re-purpose Newton Street into a community center with educational services. Newton families must submit a One Newark Enrolls application and will have preference to their top-ranked district or charter schools.

All partners have committed to:

- A common accountability system that is fair, transparent, and prioritizes student outcomes and limits student mobility;
- Equitable access to high quality school options for all students in every neighborhood through participation in One Newark Enrolls;
- Leading extensive community engagement with charter launch schools and preserving the original names of each school;
- Investing in building upgrades and renovations; and
- Deepening collaboration with NPS to ensure systematic sharing of effective practices across schools.

## HIGH SCHOOLS

We must unite to address declining enrollment and revive our comprehensive high schools. If we do not act, NPS will lose 2,000 out of 8,000 high school seats by 2016. Weequahic, West Side and Shabazz were built to serve 1,500 to 2,000 students each. Today, these schools collectively serve approximately 1,500 students. All trends indicate they will shrink to 400 students each next year. In the absence of bold solutions, two or three of our comprehensive high schools would have to close. We believe we must introduce innovative and attractive options that serve all students and fill buildings up to preserve these historic institutions.

## SPECIFIC UPDATES

### *A Citywide Safety Net for At-Risk and Disconnected Youth*

Since 2010-11, over 7,500 students dropped out or disconnected from Newark Public Schools between the ages of 14 and 21. Of the students with available data, 48% (2,821) were two or more years off track when they dropped out and approximately 28% (1,639) were between one and two years off track. Since approximately one-third of tenth through twelfth grade students are one year or more behind in credits, there is an opportunity to surround them with supports before they disconnect.

- **The Reengagement Center (REC):** The REC will continue to recover, assess, and transfer students to district high schools, including acceleration academies, as well as NLA.
- **Acceleration Academies:** District schools will also offer students the intense academic and social emotional supports to help them be successful. As described in the next section, acceleration academies at comprehensive high schools will help students catch up before they decide to drop out.
- **Disconnected Youth Community Collaboratives:** NPS will partner with community-based organizations, national partners, and the Newark Workforce Investment Board to reengage students who have disconnected/dropped out of school and are looking to earn a high school diploma and enter the workforce or college. Newton Street will be the first collaborative site.

Each year, NPS spends over \$4M in rent downtown. Simultaneously, the central office has engaged in conversation about being in closer proximity to our students. Specifically, we want to ensure we are supporting our students with the most needs.

Therefore in fall 2014, NPS will move to the building that is currently Newark Vocational High School and share a campus with adults and young people in need of the greatest academic support. One Newark Central will serve as the enrollment hub and reengagement center for disconnected youth and adult learners, the site for young people in need of short-term behavioral supports, and NPS' central office. It will contain:

- **Newark Leadership Academy (NLA):** Newark Leadership Academy remains committed to students who are at risk of aging out of high school before graduation. The school is focused on ramping up to serve more students in construction and health career pathways. Because NPS is committed to students even after they age out, NLA will work with community partners to offer GED and workforce connections for adult learners.
- Services for adults who have been out of school and need support much like those previously provided by **Newark Evening High School**.
- **Newark Public Schools Central Office:** Central teams, in addition to their core responsibilities, are excited to mentor, engage, and share space with our learners in need of the most support.

### *Weequahic, Malcolm X. Shabazz, and West Side*

- **Weequahic Campus:** Weequahic High School, Eagle Academy, and Girls' Academy of Newark will share a campus beginning in 2014-2015.
  - Current Weequahic High School students may continue at the school or participate in One Newark Enrolls. Weequahic High School will enroll a ninth grade cohort for 2014-2015 and 2015-2016.
  - NPS will work in partnership with the Weequahic leadership and alumni association to set enrollment and quality benchmarks for two years.

- Eagle Academy will serve grades 6-8 in 2014-2015, and will grow by one grade each subsequent year.
- Girls' Academy of Newark will serve grades 6-8 in 2014-2015, and will grow by one grade each subsequent year.
- **Malcolm X. Shabazz Campus:** Malcolm X. Shabazz High School will continue the redesign process as a campus of athletic academies and provide an acceleration academy for students who need personalized supports to get back on track toward graduation.
  - Services from Newark Bridges High School will continue at Malcolm X. Shabazz as the foundation of the acceleration academy.
  - NPS will work in partnership with the Malcolm X. Shabazz leadership and alumni association to set enrollment and quality benchmarks for two years.
- **West Side Campus:** The West Side Campus will be transformed into an early college and careers campus comprised of two small schools and an acceleration academy.
  - Current West Side students may continue at the West Campus or participate in One Newark Enrolls.
  - Newark Early College will be re-sited to the West Side Campus and serve students in grades 7-12 starting in fall 2014.
  - Newark Vocational High School career and technology offerings will continue at the West Side Campus over the next three years. Over time, new innovative career and technical education sequences will be added. Current Newark Vocational High School students may continue at West Side or make other choices through One Newark Enrolls.
  - The West Side Campus will also house an acceleration academy (as part of Newark Early College) for students who need personalized supports to get back on track toward graduation. Students will be referred to that program based on their progress toward graduation.

## NEXT STEPS: ONE NEWARK ENROLLS AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

The good news: our outreach is working! 5,800 families have already completed an application. Over 2,500 families have participated in the school fairs held throughout January. The One Newark Enrolls application will be extended until February 28, 2014, to ensure all students and their families fully understand their options under the One Newark Plan.

Beginning this week, Central Office and community partners will begin extensive community engagement at the Charter Launches and comprehensive high school campuses to ensure students and their families fully understand their enrollment options.

- Individual counseling sessions will take place with students and families at Newark Early College, Newark Vocational, and West Side HS to ensure families are aware of their options and are prepared to make the best school choice for their child.
- Every student and family at Newark Bridges will participate in an individualized placement conference to determine whether the Shabazz campus or another school is the best school/campus to meet his/her needs.
- Charter Launch partners and NPS will hold family meetings at Alexander Street, Madison Avenue, Newton Street, Bragaw Avenue, and Hawthorne Avenue. In addition, NPS will host One Newark Enrolls trainings at each school site for families.