

Jefferson EDGE 2020

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Status Report 1: March, 2009

Prepared by JEDCO and GCR & Associates, Inc.

JEDCO
Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission



Public Education

In response to concerns about quality of life in Jefferson Parish and its impact upon the community's economic competitiveness, JEDCO initiated the Jefferson Edge 2020 Quality of Life initiative. This initiative has produced seven "strategic implementation plans" to date which include a series of action items to address particular quality of life issues. Implementing the action items requires the total cooperation and keen interest of all involved, including JEDCO, the Jefferson Parish government, numerous other entities, and frequently State and Federal agencies. In 2008, JEDCO retained GCR & Associates, Inc. to prepare semiannual reports outlining the status of each of these action items and overall progress toward implementation.

The following table summarizes the progress made toward each of the education (E) action items.

E = Education

Action ID #	Action Item	Progress as of March 2009		
		Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
E1	Increase the number of magnet and academically themed schools in accordance with a detailed magnet school facility and enrollment plan			
E2	Modify the federal consent decree to allow school children on the East Bank and West Bank to attend the magnet school of their choosing			
E3	Embark on a major capital campaign to renovate and replace Jefferson's public schools			
E4	Work with the State Legislature and the Louisiana Department of Education to increase the funding for JPPS from the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP)			
E5	Bring the Head Start Program under the purview of Jefferson Parish Public Schools			
E6	Expand public funding and support for alternative schools serving children with discipline problems			
E7	Work with the business community, trade unions, community colleges, the local Workforce Investment Board (WIB), and Louisiana Department of Labor to develop improved career-track curricula, with a particular focus on those students at risk of dropping out. Pre-Katrina programs, such as "Young Marine" program should be restored and new courses of study should be added			
E8	Implement the recommendations of the High School Redesign Commission			
E9	Engage the Jefferson Federation of Teachers (JFT) to expand continuing education programs for Jefferson Parish Public School teachers			
E10	Work with the State legislature and Louisiana Department of Education to expand and enhance the data that are collected from standardized tests			
E11	Work with the business community to offer special programs to JPPS teachers to augment recruiting efforts			
E12	Initiate an outreach campaign to increase parental involvement in the school system			
E13	Initiate a public outreach campaign targeted both to real estate agents and the general public			

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					Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
E1	Increase the number of magnet and academically themed schools in accordance with a detailed magnet school facility and enrollment plan	Board approval in 2008 – 2009; establish schools in 2009 - 2010	<p>The Jefferson Parish Public School System (JPPS) has made much progress addressing this initiative. On the Westbank, JPPS purchased the Blenk site and will reopen it as the Thomas Jefferson Magnet High School. The L.W. Ruppel Academy for Advanced Studies, a middle school, will be relocated to the former Thomas Jefferson Senior High School location. Two additional elementary magnet schools, the Marrero Academy for Advanced Studies and the Gretna #2 Academy for Advanced Studies are also scheduled to open. JPPS has proposed a magnet school expansion plan for the Eastbank, but the plan has not yet been approved by the federal judge.</p> <p>Additionally, JPPS is in the process of planning and/or performing major renovations or additions to the following schools: Ames and Washington Montessori Schools, and Clancy and Lincoln Elementary Schools for the Arts.</p>	Federal approval of Eastbank magnet school expansion plan in 2009; establish schools in 2009-2010			
E2	Modify the federal consent decree to allow school children on the East Bank and West Bank to attend the magnet school of their choosing	Obtain approval for revised consent decree in 2008	This issue is still under consideration by the federal judge presiding over the case.	Obtain approval for revised consent decree in 2009			
E3	Embark on a major capital campaign to renovate and replace Jefferson's public schools	Adopt plan and secure revenue source in 2008 –2009; implement capital campaign through 2025	The Administration and School Board have continued to discuss this issue, but no definitive action has been taken at this time.	Adopt plan and secure revenue source in 2009 – 2010; implement capital campaign through 2025			
E4	Work with the State Legislature and the Louisiana Department of Education to increase the funding for JPPS from the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP)	Audit completed, Recommendations made and adopted in 2009 - 2010	The Jefferson Parish School System (JPPS), in coordination with other Parish departments, have completed a comprehensive audit of the MFP funding formula and have been diligently pursuing numerous avenues to increase JPPS' allocation. At this time, the group is exploring the potential funding benefits for JPPS entering into cooperative endeavor agreements with local private and parochial schools.	Recommendations made and adopted in 2009-2010			

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E5	Bring the Head Start Program under the purview of Jefferson Parish Public Schools	Change in administration of Head Start by 2010 - 2011	In September 2008, the education committee, comprised of key members of the Jefferson Parish School System (JPPS), the Parish Government, and JEDCO, met with representatives from Jefferson Parish Head Start schools to discuss this initiative. Following this meeting, the education committee determined that comparisons be performed among the first year testing results of children who attended LA4 schools operated by JPPS, children who attended Head Start, and children who had no prior formal education before entering the first grade. The statistics are being compiled at this time. Additionally, throughout the remainder of 2008, several members of the committee visited various Head Start classrooms and found no discernable differences to LA4 classrooms other than Head Start classrooms were utilizing two teachers per classroom as compared to one teacher per LA4 classroom. The education committee is currently acquiring data to compare cost per student in each program. Once all data have been collected and analyzed, the education committee will determine whether this initiative should move forward.	Analyze data and based on results, make determination as to either move forward with the change in the administration of Head Start by 2010-2011, or to abandon this initiative				
E6	Expand public funding and support for alternative schools serving children with discipline problems	Adopt plan for expanded alternative education in 2008 -2009; establish new or expanded schools in 2009 - 2010	Historically, the Jefferson Parish alternative schools have been funded by contributions made by the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office, The District Attorney's Office, and the Jefferson Parish government. At this time, either these agencies have not been approached with a request to reinstitute the \$100,000/year funding previously committed. Scarcity of resources may be a limitation on their ability to contribute additional funds.	Determine additional funding sources. Adopt plan for expanded alternative education in 2009; establish new or expanded schools in 2009-2010				

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E7	Work with the business community, trade unions, community colleges, the local Workforce Investment Board (WIB), and Louisiana Department of Labor to develop improved career-track curricula, with a particular focus on those students at risk of dropping out. Pre-Katrina programs, such as "Young Marine" program should be restored and new courses of study should be added	Complete evaluation of existing programs in 2008 – 2009; initiate new programs in 2009 - 2010	<p>The JPPS has made significant progress in enhancing students' vocational education opportunities through collaborations with the following groups:</p> <p>Trade Unions - a pipe fitters program and a welding program has been established at Bonnabel, and is Northrop Grumman to set up a pre-apprenticeship program.</p> <p>Community Colleges - a dual enrollment matrix that allows students to earn college credit while in high school has been developed; state funds have been secured to pay for struggling students to participate in skills training in high wage and demand programs.</p> <p>Workforce Investment Board - The WIB has provided grant funds that will allow 100 students to attend skills classes this summer while receiving internship pay. Another grant is currently in development that will provide construction skills training.</p> <p>Business Community - Hotels, the food service industry, the LSU Ag Center, and several auto dealers have developed collaborative programs with JPPS</p> <p>Louisiana Department of Labor- The Louisiana Department of Labor is providing JPPS' struggling students with motivational guest speakers, career guidance, and the funding necessary for JPSS to purchase hard and soft skills training materials. Additionally, the Department and JPPS have formed a committee that meets regularly in order to develop an Early Warning Program to better identify struggling students.</p>				

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E8	Implement the recommendations of the High School Redesign Commission	Complete study by 2008 – 2009; evaluate and implement recommendations in 2009 - 2010	<p>The Jefferson Parish School System has implemented many of the initiatives recommended by the High School Redesign Committee including:</p> <p>EMPLoY Program - The Louisiana Department of Education has created the aggressive “Educational Mission to Prepare Louisiana’s Youth” (EMPLoY) program. Targeting “Options” students and modeled after the “Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG) program, “EMPLoY” offers literacy software training to students who are functioning below the 6th grade level. For students functioning at or above the 7th grade level, the program offers basic skills training toward the GED, soft skills training, dual enrollment in a technical college or Industry Based Certification training, paid work-based learning experiences, and one-on-one adult mentorship. Jefferson Parish is one of fourteen parishes participating in the “EMPLoY” program. The program is in the early stages of implementation.</p> <p>Ninth Grade High School Redesign Initiative Grant Program - Four schools (Helen Cox, West Jefferson, Higgins and Grace King) are currently participating in the ninth grade High School Redesign Initiative Grant Program. The purpose of the program is to better provide ninth grade students with the personal attention and support necessary to make the transition to high school and to remain in school thereafter.</p> <p>Smaller Learning Community - Bonnabel High School is currently in its third year of participating in the Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) Program. The SLCs attempt to improve student academic achievement in public high schools with enrollments of 1,000 students or more.</p> <p>Louisiana Virtual School – The Louisiana Virtual School (LVS) provides Louisiana high school students the opportunity of using the web, e-mail, and other resources while completing standards-based high school courses. LVS affords students the opportunity of taking a wide variety of classes that might not otherwise be available.</p>	Adopt building and zoning violation legislation in 2009			

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E8 cont'd			<p>Credit Recovery - JPPS has received the Credit Recovery Grant for skill remediation and credit recovery for 9th graders who are in danger of failing or who have previously failed, and for 12th graders who require immediate remediation to pass all components of the Graduation Exit Exam (GEE).</p> <p>Strengthen Career-Technical Endorsements - The Strengthen Career-Technical Endorsements (STC) staff is involved in continued discussions with Jefferson Parish High School staff in order to realign the career technical offerings</p> <p>Dual Enrollment – JPPS’ dual enrollment programs with 2-year and 4-year institutions of higher education are being utilized by more students. Whereas during the 2007-08 school year 121 students were registered in the dual enrollment programs, the figure climbed to 629 students during the 2008-09 school year.</p>					
E9	Engage the Jefferson Federation of Teachers (JFT) to expand continuing education programs for Jefferson Parish Public School teachers	Complete analysis by conclusion of 2008 –2009 school year; begin implementation of expanded continuing ed. Programs by end of 2009 – 2010 school year	The JPPS and the JFT have been working together to expand teachers’ continuing education options. William Hart Elementary School was recently awarded the 2009 Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) grant through the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET).	Complete analysis by conclusion of 2008 –2009 school year; begin implementation of expanded continuing ed. programs by end of 2009 – 2010 school year				

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E10	Work with the State legislature and Louisiana Department of Education to expand and enhance the data that are collected from standardized tests	Collect expanded data sets by 2009 – 2010 school year; publish results during same school year	BESE's Accountability Commission is researching an initiative that could significantly increase and improve information gleaned from the current grading system for yearly standardized testing (LEAP and iLEAP). Whereas the current grading model essentially offers only a “snap shot” of students’ performance on any standardized test, the new approach, the value added assessment model, would enact a longitudinal tracking of students’ performance from one year to the next thus providing a way to track how students are progressing from one year to another. Also, the “value added assessment model” revision would assign School Performance Scores based on students’ testing score improvements and would take into account the socio-economic status of those taking the test.	Collect expanded data sets by 2009 – 2010 school year; publish results during same school year			
E11	Work with the business community to offer special programs to JPPS teachers to augment recruiting efforts	Design programs and secure commitments in 2008 – 2009; initiate programs in 2009	The Jefferson Chamber of Commerce, JEDCO, and the Jefferson Parish School System have been exploring numerous inducements designed to attract and retain Jefferson Parish teachers. Examples include: favorable mortgage terms, mortgage subsidies, stipends for newly relocated teachers, retention bonuses, performance pay for increased student involvement, training and professional development stipends, targeted scholarships for teachers majoring in critical needs subjects, discounted day care services, and discounted terms for “big ticket” items such as automobiles and major appliances. Although many members of the business community have been receptive to a number of the proposed incentives, no commitments have been secured at this time.	Secure commitments and initiate programs in 2009			

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E12	Initiate an outreach campaign to increase parental involvement in the school system	Complete program design in 2008 – 2009 school year; aim to implement in 2009 – 2010 school year	Two very active Parental Advisory Committees (PAC), one on the Eastbank and the other on the Westbank, have operated within the Jefferson Parish School System (JPPS) for years. Comprised of parent representatives and alternates from each Parish school, the PACs act as liaisons between the community and the School System. What is new, however, is the level of collaboration now present between the East and Westbank PACS and the attempt to unite parents on both sides of the River.	Complete program design in 2008 – 2009 school year; aim to implement in 2009 – 2010 school year			
E13	Initiate a public outreach campaign targeted both to real estate agents and the general public	Unveil website and issue newsletter in 2008 - 2009	The Jefferson Parish School System (JPPS) has made significant progress in its public outreach campaign. In order to acquire feedback and to ultimately create a more effective public education “message”, JPPS recently conducted one internal and two external focus group sessions. Once the focus groups’ responses are compiled, JPPS will use this information to enhance the JPPS website and to create electronic materials including a website and newsletter that can be utilized by realtors as they meet with potential Jefferson Parish homeowners. Both projects are scheduled for completion by April 2009.	Unveil website and issue newsletter by April 2009			