

Jefferson EDGE 2020

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Status Report 2: October, 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 eight "strategic implementation plans" 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 October 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consent decree to allow school children on the East Bank and West Bank to attend the magnet school of their choosing	No longer applicable.		
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E5	Bring the Head Start Program under the purview of Jefferson Parish Public Schools	No longer applicable.		
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			

Public Education

Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Progress as of October 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	Board approval in 2008 – 2009; establish schools in 2009 - 2010	In October of 2009, JPPS submitted their East Bank magnet school plan to a federal judge to assert compliance with the federal consent decree. This plan will likely be approved before, or shortly after, the beginning of 2010. The primary feature of the plan is the conversion of Airline Park elementary into a magnet. If this plan is approved, both the East and West Banks will be home to two elementary magnets, one middle school magnet and one high school magnet. No other changes in magnet policy were approved by the board for submission. No other long range plan has been drafted outlining mid-term and long-term goals for a desired number of magnet schools with accompanying locations and enrollment targets.	Work with federal judge to ensure approval of East Bank magnet plan. In coordination with federal judge, begin to formulate a long-range magnet expansion plan. This plan will include the desired number of magnet schools at various grade levels, desired enrollment targets, approximate locations throughout the parish, and a preliminary operations 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	Obtain approval for revised consent decree in 2008	This modification is not currently being considered by the federal judge presiding over the case as it is not a component of the final plan that JPPS submitted for review under the consent decree. The current rule regarding magnet school attendance affects very few JPPS students. As the consent decree is likely to be lifted within 1-2 years, JPPS will soon be able to adopt its own magnet school attendance policy. In the meantime, this action item will be removed from the education action item list.	No further action needed. This item has been removed from the list due to the imminent end to the consent decree.	No longer applicable and removed from public education action items.		
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	This year, the JPPS School Board had debated the possibility of placing a \$200 million millage and bond issue on the ballot to be considered by Parish voters in March of 2010. Because of concerns about the economy, the Board decided to postpone the vote until October 22, 2011. The capital campaign is to be financed with an additional 3.45 mill property tax. The site of the Patrick F. Taylor Science and Technology Academy, a new magnet school to be located at the Churchill Technology and Business Park, has been cleared, and construction is scheduled to commence in early 2010.	Generate consensus in the business community and through Jefferson Parish in general in support of the proposed millage and bond issue. Begin an outreach and education campaign to inform community members of the school system's capital needs.			

Public Education

Progress as of October 2009							
Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
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	There has been substantial effort over the past several months to address the MFP funding formula but little in the way of progress. A number of potential alterations to the formula were rejected by the Department of Education as being unfeasible and/or not legally defensible if subject to a court challenge. However, at least three more potential solutions are being discussed and investigated.	Continue to investigate potential changes to the MFP. Seek an agreement from the Department of Education that would put those changes into place.			
E5	Bring the Head Start Program under the purview of Jefferson Parish Public Schools	Change in administration of Head Start by 2010 - 2011	Members of the education strike force conducted site visits of LA4 and Head Start facilities to evaluate the quality of each educational environment. Upon further consultation with the administration of Jefferson Parish Public Schools, the education strike force decided that this action item is no longer applicable and is no longer the desired course of action. It will be removed from the list of education action items.	No further action needed. This item has been removed from the list of education action items, based on recent research and communication with Jefferson Parish Public Schools.	No longer applicable and removed from public education action items.		
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	<p>There has been some progress in discussions but no definitive conclusion in expanding funding and support for alternative schools. The local BESE member and JPPS staff are working with the state Department of Education to bring a significant portion of the Department's discretionary federal stimulus funding and Race to the Top funding to Jefferson's Alternative Schools. The negotiations are in their initial stages, but early indications are positive. In years past, the DA's office, Parish government, and JPSO contributed \$100,000 apiece annually to support alternative schools. This funding has not been available for some time, but this and/or other locally generated funding may be a potential resource in future years.</p> <p>While expanding public funding for alternative schools remains a serious challenge in the current fiscal climate, the Jefferson Parish School Board has voted to allow the Jefferson Chamber to proceed with plans to establish a charter alternative school for students at high risk for becoming a dropout beginning in the 2010- 2011 school year. This charter represents new capacity in addition to existing facilities.</p>	<p>Finalize an agreement with the Department of Education for the use of external funding in support of alternative schools. Identify a long-term, recurring revenue source as well, including potentially the restoration of funding from the Parish government, DA's office, and JPSO.</p> <p>Monitor progress and test results at the new charter alternative school overseen by the Jefferson Chamber.</p>			

Public Education

						Progress as of October 2009		
Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress	
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>JPPS provides a variety of individual vocational training programs at a number of schools. However, with the exception of the dual enrollment program (described below), these offerings are not uniform and vary by individual school.</p> <p>The Option III program offers students across the school district the opportunity to engage in daily technical training through dual enrollment with the Louisiana Technical College on the East Bank, the Cuillier Career Center (Marrero) on the Westbank, and the Delgado system. The district has 870 students in "early start" enrollment entailing 38 different areas of study.</p> <p>In addition to those individual, school-by-school program described in the March, 2009 education status update, other programs include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Jobs for America program, offering services guiding recent graduates and recipients of GEDs to successful employment—currently in operation at L.W. Higgins, Ehret, and Bonnabel high schools; this program is being initiated at West Jefferson High School as well. 2. The apprentice welding program at Northrop Grumman 3. A pre-apprenticeship in Water/Waste Water Treatment at the City of Gretna Water Department will be initiated in January 2010, available to students from West Jefferson High School 4. A pipefitter's class is now offered at Bonnabel, and a barbering program has been added at the Cuillier Career Center 	Thoroughly examine the full range of vocational programs currently available and the success of the dual enrollment initiative. Coordinate with recommendations of the High School Redesign Commission (E8, described below) and workforce training efforts described in ED5 in the EDGE 2020 Economic Development plan to determine whether existing programs are adequate. Identify ways to provide quality vocational training to students throughout the JPPS system, not just to participants in programs at individual schools.				

Public Education

Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Progress as of October 2009		
					Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
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. A complete introduction to these initiatives is provided in the March, 2009 education status update. Some changes in the implementation and the extent of these programs have taken place since then. These are described below:</p> <p>EMPLoY Program - The “Educational Mission to Prepare Louisiana’s Youth” (EMPLoY) program offers one on one attention, basic hard and soft skills training, vocational training, and job opportunities to students who are struggling. In its initial stages of implementation as of the last status update, the EMPLoY program is now available to students district wide. Current enrollment in the program stands at 42 students, and the district has the capability to add more instructors as the program grows. Quarterly review by the state has been favorable thus far, and the program will be measured against certain benchmarks at the end of the school year.</p> <p>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. Originally available at four schools, it is now in operation in only Helen Cox and Grace King schools due to budget cuts. The program is currently funded at this level through ARRA (“Stimulus”) money. The money will enable the program to continue for 2 years. The program is expected to continue afterwards without additional grant money.</p> <p>Smaller Learning Community - Originally offered only at Bonabel High School, the Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) Program attempts to improve academic achievement in public high schools with enrollments of 1,000 students or more. The SLC program is now implemented in some capacity district-wide. The approach has received largely positive reviews from faculty, staff, and parents.</p>	Continue to monitor implementation to ensure that funding sources are adequate, that a substantial number of students participate in these programs, and that the programs remain viable. Monitor results of students in Redesign programs and establish performance benchmarks, including for example involving more students in the EMPLoY program.			

Public Education

							Progress as of October 2009		
Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress		
E8 (cont'd)			<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. This program is implemented district-wide.</p> <p>Credit Recovery - The Credit Recovery program is for skill remediation and credit recovery certain students who are functioning below their grade level or who are at risk of falling behind. This program has been implemented district-wide.</p> <p>Strengthen Career -Technical Endorsements - The Strengthen Career-Technical Endorsements (STC) program has been implemented district-wide.</p> <p>Dual Enrollment – JPPS' dual enrollment program (discussed above in ED7) has grown tremendously. From 121 students in the 2007-2008 school year, the dual enrollment program now has 820 participating students.</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	Currently, continuing education and professional development opportunities for Jefferson Parish Public Schools are administered on a school- by-school basis. While the Jefferson Federation of Teachers maintains active and on-going relationships with schools throughout the parish, the JFT continues to offer research based staff development services at the request of individual principals. The JFT has not yet been engaged in efforts to systematically expand continuing education programs throughout the school system. However, federal “race to the top” funds from the federal stimulus package could be used to support continuing education for JPPS teachers. The state’s application for these funds is currently pending.	In consultation with principals, develop standardized, system-wide offerings for continuing education for teachers. Engage JFT to articulate a strategy and an estimate of resources needed to extend this program to all JPPS teachers. Monitor progress in obtaining “race to the top” funds for continuing education for JPPS teachers.					

Public Education

Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Progress as of October 2009		
					Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
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	<p>The local BESE member and JPPS staff are working with the state Department of Education as it participates in an initiative that would set national standards for evaluating schools. This federal initiative would enhance the data that are collected from standardized tests, including how well students are mastering “21st Century” academic skills. At the same time, BESE’s Accountability Commission continues to research a model for supplementing the LEAP and iLEAP tests by providing longitudinal assessments of student performance. This approach, called the “value added assessment model” would also take into account socio-economic status and improvements in scores in assessing performance.</p> <p>Relative to non-public schools, there is an interest in collecting and publishing standardized test data. Given the shift to new testing standards (value added model and federal Department of Education standards), any effort to collect additional data from non-public schools will likely follow the adoption of the new testing standards.</p>	Monitor progress in implementing federal Department of Education standards and “value added assessment model.” Following the implementation of new standards, push for the inclusion of non-public schools’ test results.			
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	<p>The Jefferson Chamber of Commerce and the Jefferson Parish School System have obtained a number of corporate commitments to establish incentives and special bargains that will help to attract and retain quality teachers. Recent commitments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a discount on the rental of moving trucks for JPPS, provided by Avis/Budget Rental Trucks • favorable financing to JPPS first time homebuyers, provided by First NBC Bank via Dryades Mortgage • a special home collateral/ financing program and relocation packet for K-12 teachers, provided by Latter & Blum and entitled the “Essential Advantage” <p>Additionally, a preliminary relationship with a local homebuilder has been established, and the details of the agreement are currently being developed.</p>	Finalize incentive program with local homebuilder. Determine whether there is a need and the potential for additional agreements with local businesses and lending institutions.			

Public Education

Progress as of October 2009							
Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
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	<p>In addition to the long-standing efforts of, and increased coordination between, Parental Advisory Committees (PAC), a number of recent initiatives have been launched to improve parental involvement in the school system.</p> <p>A recently launched literacy initiative has directed an outreach campaign to parents of students from kindergarten to 12th grade. Brochures distributed to parents included strategies for enhancing literacy at home from the parent/guardian perspective. In addition, parents and guardians of 4th through 11th graders received assessments of their child's reading proficiency.</p> <p>JPPS communicates with parents through other pre-existing methods including the system's website, the "Education Extra" TV show, e-newsletters, PTOs and open houses.</p> <p>A new initiative, the ParentPortal, will be accessible t his semester. The website will allow parents and guardians to track their child's progress in school, including quantitative metrics such as attendance, grades and standardized test results as well as each student's Individual Learning Plan (ILP), class scheduling options and career guidance.</p>	Launch the ParentPortal program; create benchmarks and monitor the progress of other parental outreach avenues. Determine whether additional media and additional forms of outreach are needed.			

Public Education

						Progress as of October 2009		
Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress	
E13	Initiate a public outreach campaign targeted both to real estate agents and the general public	Unveil website and issue newsletter in 2008 - 2009	<p>JEDCO is spearheading the production of a custom publication, "Jefferson Life Magazine", which highlights a different quality of life initiative every issue. "Jefferson Life Magazine" is mailed to select households and is available at multiple pick-up points around Jefferson Parish. The cover story of the next issue (to be published near the end of the calendar year 2009) will be about public education in Jefferson. While this represents a major opportunity for publicity about the public school system, this action item is not marked as complete because continued public outreach on this topic is essential throughout the life of the Jefferson EDGE initiative. As discussed in the previous status update from March, 2009, JPPS conducted one internal and two external focus group sessions to enhance the JPPS website and to create electronic materials, including a website and newsletter, that can be utilized by realtors. However, specific messaging and concrete outcomes have not yet been developed from these focus group sessions.</p> <p>JPPS is currently producing jump drives to distribute to local real estate agents. These portable memory devices will contain school locator software, providing data on area schools, links to additional information, and promotional videos. JPPS plans to distribute these drives to realtor offices and associations in the beginning of 2010.</p>	<p>Issue Jefferson Life magazine issue with education as the cover story. Continue to explore multiple avenues and formats for informing residents about the quality of public education in Jefferson. Distribute jump drives to area realtors.</p> <p>Identify potential partners within the metro area residential real estate community to continue coordinated "messaging" efforts initiated by spring 2009 focus groups.</p> <p>Establish regular communications tailored to real-estate professionals in the metro area, highlighting successes and new educational programs.</p>				