



nashvillenext

## Education & Youth

### driving forces report

This report addresses key forces and decisions shaping the future of education and youth in Nashville. Note that NashvilleNext is not a plan for Metro Nashville Public Schools. Instead, NashvilleNext considers the broader context that MNPS works within, from neighborhoods to support for families and caregivers. The contents of this report were developed by NashvilleNext planning staff working with the Education & Youth Resource Team (members at right) during 2013.

### About Driving Forces

Each NashvilleNext Resource Team began its work by identifying a set of Driving Forces — key decisions or outside factors shaping Nashville's future. Each Team considered trends currently affecting Nashville, as well as how different trends and forces interact to affect the future.

This exercise served three primary purposes:

- » Identify key trends & understand how different trends interact
- » Bring different perspectives into the process and understand how they interact
- » Introduce team members to one another prior to beginning the process of making recommendations.

This report contains no direct policy guidance or recommendations. However, its contents did shape the Goals & Policies developed by this Resource Team in early 2014 (available for review by the public in mid-2014).

It is presented here as a record of the process.

### See more

See the Driving Forces identified by other Resources Team

- » <http://www.nashville.gov/Government/NashvilleNext/NashvilleNext-Resource-Teams.aspx>

Once available for review, the draft Goals & Policies for all of the Resource Teams will also be available on that page.

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## Parts of the Driving Forces

Each Resource Team's work is presented in three parts that together make up the Driving Forces for their element:

- » **Loops:** A high-level summary of the topics and trends discussed by the Resource Team. The loops are the most straightforward way to understand what's involved in each element.
- » **Forces:** A more detailed listing of the forces considered by each Resource Team.
- » **Influence Diagram:** A complex picture representing how the Forces interact. Forces are linked to one another when changes in one Forces are directly or inversely related to one another.

### Loops

#### ACHIEVEMENT

The Achievement Loop centers on Academic Achievement, preparing students for lifelong workplace opportunities and strong civic participation. It takes in the following:

- » Family empowerment / Support for children
- » Whole child well-being
- » Youth empowerment
- » Quality education

#### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Community Engagement Loop centers on the concept of involving the larger Nashville/Davidson County community – the business community, neighborhoods, faith communities, non-profits and institutions – in supporting families and children/youth achievement to benefit children, families and the larger community. It takes in the following:

- » Accessible / affordable childcare and pre-K
- » Affordable after school programs / extracurricular activities
- » Community-based services
- » Homelessness
- » Mentors and models
- » Quality education
- » Social capital
- » Technology in schools and community

#### FAMILY / CAREGIVER SUPPORT

This loop is centered on Family Empowerment / Support for children, which is the ability of families to provide support – emotional, financial, in education, etc. – to their children. The concept of Family Empowerment / Support for children recognizes realities such as family's time availability and that stress contributes to family's challenges in supporting their children. It also recognizes the expanding and evolving definition of "family" that may include single-parent homes, families with unmarried parents, grandparents raising children, and multi-generational homes. The nature and level of family support and empowerment will mean different things to meet the needs of different children. The Family / Caregiver Support Loop takes in the following concepts:

- » Accessible / affordable childcare and pre-k
- » Affordable after school programs / extracurricular activities
- » Community-based services
- » Homelessness
- » Jobs / wealth
- » Mobility
- » Social capital

#### GENUINE ACCESS

The Genuine Access Loop centers on the concept of the same name – a term that refers to equitable, meaningful, and realistic access to opportunities and resources. This loop takes in the following:

- » Access to health care
- » Accessible / affordable childcare and pre-k
- » Affordable after school programs / extracurricular activities
- » Community-Based Services
- » Mentors and models
- » Mobility
- » Quality education
- » Technology in schools and community
- » Youth empowerment



## STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS

The Strong Neighborhoods Loop centers on the concept of neighborhoods that support high levels of community and civic engagement whose residents work together to ensure safety in the neighborhood and opportunities for those in the neighborhood. These neighborhoods should foster the strength of their residents and maximize genuine access to needed resources, providing social capital. This loop takes in the following:

- » Access to health care
- » Active living
- » Affordable housing in diverse neighborhoods
- » Health
- » Healthy food
- » Mobility
- » Parks and open space
- » Violence in public places

## VALUING ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH

This loop brings together several concepts in the Influence Diagram to address those critical moments, circumstances, or events where the lives of children and youth can be upended and the paths to their future dreams and potential cut short. The emphasis of this loop is on recognizing these situations and taking decisive action to create positive pathways for these children and youth. Accomplishing this will involve supporting them and their families and guiding them back into safe and healthy homes and educational settings. This loop also seeks to empower children and youth by fostering autonomy, decision making, competence and responsibility and providing them with resources they need to become well-rounded adults who have the confidence and ability to participate fully in their civic and personal lives. The Valuing all Children and Youth Loop takes in the following:

- » Affordable after school programs / extracurricular activities
- » Child stress
- » Delinquency

- » Drop-outs
- » Homelessness
- » Mentors and models
- » Quality education
- » Violence at home
- » Violence in public places

## Forces

### Academic Achievement

Prepare students for lifelong workplace opportunities and strong civic participation.

### Access to Health Care

The availability of health care options (insurance, doctors, clinics, medication, etc.) that is affordable and physically accessible to all children, youth and their families.

### Accessible / Affordable Child Care / Pre-Kindergarten

The availability of quality child care options in a variety of forms (family, in-home care, day care, care for special needs children, pre-school, pre-kindergarten) that are affordable and genuinely accessible to all families.

### Active Living

Engaging in a lifestyle that incorporates physical activity into daily routines ranging from dedicated time for play or exercise to simply adding more walking or bicycling to the day's activities.

### Affordable After School Programs/ Extracurricular Activities

Programming offered by a myriad of groups that engage children and youth after school hours in activities that provide students with opportunities to learn and grow.



### **Affordable Housing in Diverse Neighborhoods**

The availability of housing that is affordable and is found in a variety of neighborhoods that are economically, racially, and ethnically diverse. While “affordable housing” is defined as housing that costs less than 30% of a family’s gross income, the cost of transportation and utilities should also be taken into account. A broader definition of affordability combines both housing and transportation costs, and sets the benchmark at no more than 45 percent of household income be spent on housing and transportation costs. (Source: <http://www.htaindex.org/about.php>). The importance of diverse neighborhoods is related to social capital. See definition below.

### **Child Stress**

Child stress involves mental tension caused by fear, insecurity, and worry. This includes toxic stress, which is the strong, unrelieved activation of the body’s stress management system in the absence of protective adult support. Toxic stress includes stressors related to family financial challenges, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and such problems as being moved from one foster family to another. This deprives children of the structure they need to feel secure and loved in order for them to succeed.

### **Community Based Services**

Provide a wide variety of community based services to support families and children. These could occur at the school site or community and civic buildings and could include translation services, social services, non-profit or assistance, and financial literacy.

### **Community Engagement**

Involving the larger Nashville/Davidson County community – the business community, neighborhoods, faith communities, non-profits and institutions – in supporting families and children/youth achievement to benefit children, families and the larger community.

### **Delinquency**

In youth, actions ranging from anti-social behavior to criminal acts committed by a juvenile.

### **Drop Outs**

Youth who leave the K-12 educational system prior to graduation. The graduation rates for school-age children gradually improved from the 2003 – 2004 academic year, when the graduation rate was only 58.2%. The graduation rate peaked at 82.9% in the 2009 – 2010 academic year, dropped to 76.2% in the 2010 – 2011 academic year, and rose to 78.4% in the 2011 – 2012 academic year. (Source: Education White Paper, Smrekar, McQueen, and Knudson)

### **Family Empowerment / Support for Children**

The ability of families to provide support – emotional, financial, in education, etc. – to their children. Recognizes the reality of family’s time availability and that stress contributes to family’s challenges in supporting their children. Provide parents with needed education to be empowered to support their children and have meaningful involvement in and genuine access to the political process. Recognize that the definition of “family” is expanding and evolving. A family may include single-parent homes, families with unmarried parents, grandparents raising children, and multi-generational homes. Recognize that the nature and level of family support and empowerment will mean different things to meet the needs different children.

### **Genuine Access**

Genuine access is a term that refers to equitable, meaningful, and realistic access to opportunities and resources.

### **Health**

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence



of disease or infirmity. (World Health Organization definition.)

### **Healthy Food**

Food that meets the child's daily nutritional needs. A large percentage of economically disadvantaged citizens live in areas where healthy food is not readily available, which contributes to higher rates of obesity and health problems. (Source: Children and Youth White Paper, Wendy Tucker, author)

### **Homelessness**

Provide institutional and family support to meet the needs of homeless children. Find solutions that eliminate homelessness.

### **Jobs/Wealth**

Adult family members' access to jobs, career advancement and/or continuing education and the assumption that this leads to greater wealth, which benefits the family. Includes access to financial institutions. In Nashville/Davidson County, one in five adults and one in three children live in poverty (2010 Census). Meanwhile, 72% of MNPS students receive free and reduced lunch. Poverty and homelessness are closely linked. In FY 2011/2012, MNPS reported that 2,495 school children were registered as being homeless at one point during the fiscal year.

### **Mentors and Models**

Programs for youth that involve adults as mentors or models for growth and achievement. One in three MNPS students feel that they do not have an adult that they can talk to (2007 Survey, cited in the Children & Youth Background Report).

### **Mobility**

Provide genuine and equitable access to a broad range of mobility options such as public transportation, walking, bicycling, and car-pooling.

### **Parks and Open Space**

Parks, nature preserves and other outdoor areas for children, youth, and families to gather and play.

### **Post K-12 Success**

Youth that graduate from high school or obtain their GED and achieve success in the workforce or with advanced education or through the military.

### **Quality Education**

Provide children and youth with a safe, effective, and welcoming learning environment. Provide strong institutional support, resources and materials, and curricula for students and teachers. Ensure that teachers are qualified and motivated. Provide needed budgetary resources to foster high academic achievement. Provide needed accessible and equitable educational support to all K-12 students. Plan for changes in how quality educational opportunities may be provided in the future and for how school campuses may be used differently in the future.

### **Safe Foster Homes**

Provide safe and stable foster homes and support for youth who are aging out of foster homes.

### **Social Capital**

The idea that social networks have value, "social capital," which can be used to produce social or economic benefits between individuals. If a group – say a neighborhood or a faith community – has numerous individuals with business or educational connections, then others in that group benefit from knowing people with connections. Conversely, a family who lives in a neighborhood where the other residents have few social, business or educational connections or models will not benefit from social capital.



### Strong Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods that support high levels of community and civic engagement whose residents work together to ensure safety in the neighborhood and opportunities for those in the neighborhood. Strong neighborhoods should foster the strength of their residents and maximize genuine access to needed resources. Both these things will provide social capital.

### Technology in Schools / Community

Provide genuine and equitable access to technology in schools and the community to address the digital divide. The term digital divide refers to economic inequality between groups in terms of access to, use of, or knowledge of information and communication technologies, such as inequalities between individuals, households, and demographic groups. (Source: Wikipedia)

### Violence at Home

Violence including domestic violence among the family members supporting the child and/or child abuse where the child or siblings are physically, emotionally or mentally harmed.

### Violence in Public Places

Addressing safety in the neighborhood, schools, parks and other places where children and youth gather. In a 2010 Children and Youth Master Plan Community Survey, over 15% of Nashville youth reported feeling unsafe in a public location. The most common reasons were feeling unsafe were violence and gang activity.

### Whole-Child Well-Being

Provide children and youth with genuine access to opportunity-filled lives. Provide institutional support for student's educational attainment. Provide them with meaningful choices for post-K-12 education or workforce training opportunities. Foster children and youth's growth and development so that they will be educated, informed, and emotionally healthy.

### Youth Empowerment

Empower youth to decide the course of their education, activities, employment and other aspects of life and act upon their decisions. Foster autonomy, decision making, competence and responsibility. Provide resources to youth so that they will become well-rounded adults who have the confidence and ability to participate fully in their civic and personal lives.

## Influence Diagram

The influence diagram on the next page shows how the above Forces interact. This is presented as the effects of changes each Force. As one Force changes (increases or decreases), what other Forces also change (either in the same way as the first Force (direct relationship) or opposite to the first Force (inverse relationship)).

-  **Direct relationship** (More X leads to *more* Y)
-  **Inverse relationship** (More X leads to *less* Y)
-  **Metro tax base** (takes contributions *from*)
-  **Metro tax base** (contributes *to*)
-  **Children are reclaimed**
-  **Children are lost**

# Influence diagram

- Direct relationship (More X leads to more Y)
- Inverse relationship (More X leads to less Y)
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- Children are reclaimed
- Children are lost

