

Looking At The ISSUES

Stark
Education
Partnership
inc.

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Focus on Finding Solutions *Public Opinion II: Voices & Choices*

The Fund for Our Economic Future, defines its mission at its website (<http://www.futurefundneo.org/page9066.cfm>) as: "The Fund for Our Economic Future is a multi-year ad-hoc coalition of organized philanthropy in Northeast Ohio formed to encourage and advance a common and focused regional economic development agenda, in collaboration with others, which can lead to long-term economic transformation in ways that recognize the importance of core cities, inclusion/diversity, and quality of life. This will be accomplished by convening key stake holders, educating and engaging the public, tracking overall progress and backing key initiatives with grants."

Voices and Choices is an extensive civic engagement project supported by The Fund for our Future. More than 900 people from Northeast Ohio met at The University of Akron on September 16, 2006 to discuss how to solve previously identified challenges. The top ranking solutions were:

1. Advocate for the state of Ohio to shift how it funds public schools to ensure that all schools have adequate resources.
2. Invest in internship and mentoring programs to provide students with work experience that is focused on the needs of businesses.
3. Advocate for the State of Ohio to increase funding for higher education so that tuitions can be lowered and scholarships made available for those with the greatest needs.



Looking At The Week

Dropout Recovery Program

Dr. Joe Rochford outlined an evaluation plan on Monday for the JAG Out-of-School Dropout Recovery Program, teaming Stark State, CHOICES high school and Canton's Jobs for Ohio's Graduates. The program is one of three national pilots funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. The Stark Education Partnership will serve as the outside evaluator.

4. Advocate for the State of Ohio to develop a health care system that provides health care coverage for all to reduce burden on businesses.
5. Invest in establishing a region-wide association of local and regional planning agencies to coordinate regional planning, collaborate on the creation of a common U.S. Census definition of the Northeast Ohio region, and enhance our capacity to understand and influence our collective future.
6. Invest in creating a region-wide land use and development plan to address patterns of growth and decline at a regional level and to provide a framework for long-term development of the region.
7. Invest in programs that enable high school students to take college-level courses at no cost to the student and with special emphasis on potential first-generation college students.
8. Expand and create organizations (called incubators) that support the growth of small businesses in the region through advice from experts, networking opportunities and other support programs.

Good News!

Corresponding to solution seven listed above, as well as the KnowledgeWorks Opinion Poll showing nearly 90% of people support dual credit (as reported in last week's *Issues*) – Governor Bob Taft announced on October 31st (<http://governor.ohio.gov/releases/103106HB115Funds.htm>) that the Stark County Educational Service Center has been awarded a grant of \$225,000 as one of 16 partnerships involving educational service centers, institutions of higher education and school districts representing all regions of the state. The grants will allow students throughout Ohio the opportunity to earn dual high school and college credit free of charge while still in high school. The Stark grant covers Columbiana and Wayne Counties as well. District representatives and all Stark higher education institutions and the University of Akron participated in writing the grant. The funding is a result of HB 115 which was signed into law in June.

Korczak Teaching Awards

The national 2006 Korczak Teaching Awards for outstanding Holocaust educators were presented to seven teachers – six of them from Stark County! *Congratulations* to Kelli Green–Edison Jr. High (Perry Local), Linda Cohen and Patty Lovell–Glen Oak High School (Plain Local), Terrie Baumgartner–Tuslaw Middle School (Tuslaw Local), and Donna Mertes and Susan Schmader– Our Lady of Peace School (Diocese of Youngstown).

Awards were presented during the Annual Gala Dinner at The Pierre in New York City. *Pictured below left to right: Terrie Baumgartner, Donna Mertes, Kelli Green, and Linda Cohen.*

