



NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES
Institute for Youth, Education, and Families

Opening Doors: New Municipal Initiatives to Put College Education Within Reach
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SANDEL: Hello and welcome to the National League of Cities' Institute for Youth Education and Families (YEF Institute) audioconference on "Opening Doors: New Municipal Initiatives to Put College Education Within Reach." Thank you all for joining us. We think this is a really important call that hopefully highlights how post-secondary can play a really important role in supporting healthy and thriving communities. Many municipal leaders have really recognized that greater access to and completion of post-secondary degrees and credentials can lead to safer and more economically vibrant communities. And recently, there has been an increased spotlight on post-secondary with increased attention at the federal level, and potentially new pots of money going to community colleges and higher education increasingly becoming a priority of foundations. Access has been an interest for a while, and now many foundations and philanthropies are targeting post-secondary completion. One example of this is the Gates Foundation, which has a new post-secondary success strategy targeting doubling the numbers of low-income young adults with a degree or credential that has labor market value by the age of 26. As part of this Gates Foundation post-secondary success strategy, the National League of Cities has worked with the Gates Foundation to launch an initiative called Communities Learning in Partnership (CLIP) and we're going to work with a set of communities to accelerate their efforts on post-secondary collaborations and partnerships among city leaders, community colleges, and other post-secondary institutions to implement strategies to increase

post-secondary attainment in low-income young adults. We've just selected the seven sites and we're going to begin working with them next month, and we really look forward to sharing the lessons learned from those communities in the future.

However, today we have some wonderful speakers who will share their efforts on increasing post-secondary access and success in their communities. We have Kingsport, Tennessee who will talk about their Education and Grow Initiatives and their Higher Education Center. From Boston, we'll talk about Success Boston, the college completion initiative. And from San Francisco, we'll talk about the San Francisco Promise. I'd like to introduce the speakers and then ask each of them to talk for a few minutes about their accomplishments, before we'll do a facilitated discussion and then open it up to questions. So from Kingsport, Tennessee, I'd like to welcome Morris Baker, the – I'm sorry, Morris, do you want to say hello?

BAKER: Sure. Hello.

SANDEL: And from Boston, from the city, I have Judith Kurland and Nahir Torres.

KURLAND: Hi.

TORRES: Hello.

SANDEL: And from San Francisco, I have Maureen Carew.

CAREW: Good morning.

SANDEL: Morris, would you like to take a few moments to talk to us about Kingsport, Tennessee's efforts?

BAKER: Sure can. Thanks, Kate for the invitation. We're tickled to be a part of it. Our education initiative really started in the late 1990s. Kingsport was a – just to give us a frame of reference – a planned industrial city that was chartered in 1917, and from that point until the mid to late '90s, we had pretty much relied on the manufacturing employment to be the economic driver in our city. We had a few companies that began downsizing in the mid '90s – some that had actually been in place since the founding of Kingsport began to shut their doors. And our largest employer, Eastman Chemical Company, who was then Tennessee's largest employer, began to talk about layoffs and downsizing. That prompted our mayor's office to host an economic summit that brought together some area leaders from government, business, and education to talk about some strategies we could do to actually turn the city around, and as a result of that, they came up with three main strategies. One was to increase the training and workforce development opportunities in the area, the second was to promote an entrepreneurial spirit, and third was to diversify our economic base. And what fleshed out of all that was that the foundation that all those rested on was education.

So shortly after the summit, the city actually stepped forward to fund a scholarship program that made educational – it made education affordable for any high school graduate that met the local community college's entrance requirements. That program became known as Educate and Grow, and I believe that the city started with just a \$50,000 investment.

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What's unique about that is that our local publisher of our newspaper, along with the community college president, sat down and said what would it take, with the financial aid that was currently available, to meet that shortfall where any student that came out of the local high schools that wanted to attend a community college could go tuition free? The next year, our county commission – our city is a part of Sullivan County. Our county commission funded a program countywide. So that started the education process in Kingsport of what we've done.

After that, Kingsport developed a facility in a downtown area called the Regional Center for Applied Technology. Kingsport was the largest city in Tennessee at that point in time that did not have direct access to a college campus, and so a 12,000 square foot facility was constructed in downtown Kingsport. And a neat thing about that is within two years, we had 1,000 students enrolled at RCAT, and that was a five year goal. To speed forward, around the spring of 2004, the community leaders began talking about a higher education center that would host multiple colleges and universities where folks could go on and get a four-year degree and post four-year degree, and so that started on track. In the middle of that process, the community college president came to the city and said, "Hey, if you'll fund an allied health building in the downtown area – about \$4.5 million – we'll move all of our allied health programs to the downtown region." So in a quick period of time, Kingsport went from having no direct access to higher education in the city limits to having three facilities that came up fairly quickly, the Regional Center for Applied Technology, the allied health building that was about a 42,000 square foot facility, and then recently we just opened a Center for Higher Education. That's a 54,000 square foot facility that hosts five colleges and universities: Northeast State, who is our community college, the University of Tennessee, Lincoln Memorial University, Carson-Newman, and King College. We had an economic impact study done by a local college, and found that just the Center for Higher Education, that last facility, could add up to \$1.9 million in the local economy in the first year alone, and by the third year could add \$7 million to the local economy. As a result of the city funding those three facilities, and they are city funded facilities, two corporations – one was Eastman Chemical Company that had downsized in the late '90s – and a local paper mill funded what's called the Regional Center for Applied Manufacturing. It's a 26,000 square foot facility that offers associate's of applied science degrees that actually feeds their population. So we went, in a ten-year time period, from having, like I said, no direct access in our city limits to having four facilities and we've got a fifth one that's going to be coming online next fall. And when that is done, it's estimated we'll have 3,000 to 4,000 students in our downtown area. So we have – we've seen a economic turnaround with the education initiative that's taken place and I'll talk a little bit later about some of the outcomes and the results of that being funded. So that's what we're doing in Kingsport, and just to give a frame of reference, Kingsport is located about 80 miles north of Ashville in the northeast part of Tennessee, and we are about 90 miles east of Knoxville, Tennessee. So that's our program, Kate.

SANDEL: Great. Thanks so much, Morris. Definitely impressive, and I look forward to hearing more about some of the outcomes and results.

BAKER: Sure.

SANDEL: Judith, would you like to tell us a little bit about Boston's efforts?

KURLAND: Sure. And it's interesting, and Morris, that was really interesting because the contrast between the two cities and the two circumstances couldn't perhaps be more marked. And so it's – this is a great example. Boston is a, you know, an old city, one of the oldest cities in the country. It's highly developed in terms of its public infrastructure. It is a university and college town. We probably have more colleges and universities per capita than any other city of comparable size in the country. We have a lot of private colleges, but we have a public college and university system including a public community college system.

Our economy is actually pretty well balanced now. In the, you know, in the last century, toward the first half of the last century, it was imbalanced and we lost a lot of those core industries around manufacturing. And so, our industry is really a knowledge economy. We have – we call them eds and meds – the educational institutions and all the spinoffs of those, not just the institutions themselves and the same thing with meds. We have a lot of academic medical centers, but we also have the biotechnology industry that's a spinoff of that, a strong financial economy, and a very, very strong creative economy in terms of new creativity in addition to the more traditional arts. We also have a very strong retail base. So that's a rather mixed economy that has been doing well. Boston is doing better than the rest of Massachusetts, which is still doing somewhat better than the nation. So I want to put that in a context to make something of a comparison.

On the other hand, we are, in some ways – you can look at our institutions, our private institutions, and say that this is a very rich city but with very, very many poor people. And Boston is very constrained compared to its peer cities in the amount of revenue that it can raise and how it can raise it. We are limited by the state. So looking at us from outside, you might think, well, we should be in great shape financially as a city, and we actually do well because we're well managed but we don't have the kinds of resources that other cities have. We didn't – until this financial crisis, we were not allowed to put a meals tax on, even though we're a big convention city and a visitor city. We don't have our own sales tax. We don't have any income tax or wage tax. We're very dependent on the property tax, and we have a lot of tax-exempt property in the city.

So having said that, when the mayor came in, he made one of his top priorities – and one that has been consistent throughout his tenure – to eliminate the achievement gap in education and to improve the Boston Public Schools – which, when he came in, were actually not very good at all. He had several approaches to that. One was to maintain an appointed school committee, which is what he advises every mayor to get if he can, so that he's responsible for the education system and can be held accountable for it, but also so that it's not acting independent of other city agencies. And secondly, that he wanted to first improve the schools, and very quickly said it's not just about the schools, it is about the pipeline, and so, he started building out the afterschool and the out-of-school programs. So he had an initiative called Two to Six, which stands for the hours 2:00 to 6:00 after school, the partnership for – the Afterschool Partnership, which brought in private funders, private agencies along with city government. He then created a standing public-private partnership called Boston After School and Beyond, which is a way to coordinate but also identify and use all of the afterschool and out-of-school activities regardless of who provides them and set standards. We started a K to 1 program so that, rather a K-1, which is kindergarten for four-year-olds. We have full day regular kindergarten and now full day K-1 kindergarten for four-year-olds. We started something called Back on Track to address the dropout problem, and something that is very big called Thrive in 5, which is a

citywide initiative – again, public-private partnerships to try to make sure that all the kids coming into the Boston Public Schools, or any school, actually, are prepared to succeed.

Having done this, we were actually pretty pleased with our graduation rate, which was about 78 percent of all – not our graduation rate, our college-going rate of our high school seniors. So about 78 percent of high school graduates in Boston were going on to college, and we were really quite happy about that. And then a few years ago, we started having conversations with the Private Industry Council and some researchers at Northeastern who pointed out that it did not look as though our college success rates were anything comparable to our college-going rate. And so, working with funding from the Boston Foundation – and Nahir is on the call – the Private Industry Council and Northeastern conducted research that looked at our college success rate, that is, college completion at either getting a two- or four-year degree within seven years of graduating from high school. And what we found shocked us and saddened us – only 35 percent of Boston Public School high school graduates from the class of 2000 completed those degrees within seven years, and that if you took out the exam schools, it dropped to 24 percent. So the mayor, working with many partners, the Boston Foundation, we have a lot of access agencies that had been working with our school kids to get them into school, which is one of the reasons we have such a high college-going rate – that we needed to work with them to do a better job about preparing them. So, we're saying getting ready, getting in, and getting through. That required us to bring together some partners with whom we had not worked really in an integrated way, and that was the colleges. We've done a lot of things with many of the colleges. We have lots of programs with individual colleges, but we had not tracked Boston Public School students that went to those colleges to see what happened to them and why they were dropping out, so we wanted to do that.

So the mayor created a task force which is made up of these college access agencies, the state Department of Higher Education, the colleges – some representatives of the colleges themselves – and funders, and said that if we wanted to really work together – and he set two very clear goals. One is to increase by 50 percent the college completion rate of the class of 2009, and to double the college graduation rate for college enrollees for the class of 2011. Setting those very concrete goals required these groups to then get together and really put together plans on what it meant to get ready, what it means to get in, and what it means to get through. And we will have completed, in a couple of weeks, the first year of the initiative. So we don't – we have process outcomes to report on and we have some new programs in place and we are monitoring others, and we've pulled together people, but since our first goal is the 50 percent increase for the class of 2009, I don't have absolute and ultimate results to point out. But we can talk more about what we have.

SANDEL: Thank you so, so much, Judith. I think that's a great example of talking about how students cannot just get to college, but through college. And I look forward to hearing a bit more about the process outcomes. But, why don't we – Maureen, would you like to share a bit about the San Francisco Promise?

CAREW: Sure, I'd love to. Thank you. So San Francisco Promise started about 18 months ago, and it was really – it came out of the mayor's office. We have an education mayor who has started a lot of different initiatives over the years. And the city itself, the population of the city, is very focused on education, thankfully, because the state is really not where it needs to be. So

the mayor has started such initiatives as First 5, which is preschool for all. The Department of Children, Youth, and Families is a city department that is really focused on children and funding education and CBOs (community-based organizations) that support children, you know, from birth to 24 years of age.

The San Francisco Promise fits nicely in there. It's a partnership with the mayor's office, San Francisco Unified School District, and San Francisco State University, which is our local public four-year university. We also partner with our local community college, and just this year started a program called Gateway to College which was for our dropout students – to reengage them in education going directly to the community college, and they are dually enrolled so they get high school credit and college credit. So there are a lot of initiatives in the city that are working on education.

San Francisco Promise really focuses on the middle grades – sixth, seventh, and eighth graders – and getting them prepared to succeed and get to and through college. San Francisco State has started with guaranteeing access to any of our graduates who meet their minimum requirements, and that is huge because if our graduates have a 2.0 and decent SAT scores – whatever the minimum requirements are – they would take the place of a student coming from LA who might have a 4.0, because it's really focused on our local school district and guaranteeing access for our students. And they also understand the importance of preparation, preparing our students properly. So we're talking about alignment, because our graduation requirements are not fully aligned with the admission requirements for local colleges. This past year, we just voted, our school board just voted to change those graduation requirements so they are directly aligned, and now, the preparation conversation is happening on the local level where the K-12 educators are talking with community college and our CSU – our California State University partners – to make sure that students get to college prepared. We have more than 50 percent, well over 50 percent of our graduates, our students who have successfully graduated from high school go into remediation classes in college. And that adds years to their – before they graduate from college, and it really has an impact on the persistence rates, because it takes so long for students to get out of college, and most of them are working part-time, that it really impedes their progress. So we're really working to get students more prepared.

San Francisco Promise also has a scholarship component to it, which we have raised \$2 million to support students so that they can have access, if they don't have access to financial aid. Or, in addition to the traditional aid, they will have some scholarship support. And we need to build that up over the next few years, but it's really – what we've found is it's not about money. It's really about preparing students. So our San Francisco Promise – there are Promise programs across the country focused on scholarship programs for students, but ours really focuses on the middle grades and high schools in providing supports for students so that they can be successful in college.

Some of our early indicators – last year we had a 50 percent increase in applications to San Francisco State, and that's from 1,000 students applying to 1,500 students applying, so it was a huge increase. And again, that was really about getting the word out that our students do have access to San Francisco State. We also implemented the PSAT for all 10th graders and the ACT Explore for all eighth graders, which may seem early to start giving them exams for college, but it's really geared toward eighth graders and it has a nice career component to it so that students can really explore their careers and build relevance and figure out which

high school – we have 18 high schools in the city that students can choose from, and many of them specialize in different areas and have pathways. So our program is really focused on increasing awareness to college and realizing that all of our students have access. As Boston, you mentioned, we have an achievement gap that we're really trying to close, and we're trying to get more students not only in college – because we do have a fairly high matriculation rate into college – but persistence rates, getting them a certificate or a transfer to a four-year university or graduating from a four-year university within six years.

SANDEL: Great, another good example of looking at access and completion, both sides of that coin. And all of you mentioned some of the early indicators and outcomes that you've found. And I'd love to hear a little bit more about some of those outcomes and how you are tracking your success. I don't know. Morris, would you like to start us off?

BAKER: Sure. Sure can. Since the late '90s, we've had some, I guess some indicators that point – that something's going on right in Kingsport. Since that point in time, we've had an increase in the educational attainment rate for the population 25 years and over. We have seen about a 21 percent decrease in those with less than a high school – less than a ninth grade education, I'm sorry. We've seen about a 14 percent decrease in those with no diploma. We've seen a 23 percent increase in the high school graduation rate and that includes a GED. We've seen about a 27 percent increase in those with an associate's degree, and about a 20 percent increase with those with a bachelor's degree. Because when they had the economic summit, a proactive education policy was viewed as a critical key and sparking an economic turnaround, we've also got some metrics around the economy and that's a fairly good gauge of success. Kingsport was fortunate back in September to receive a Harvard Innovation in Government Award from the John F. Kennedy School of Government. And at the time of our application, we had recorded about \$165 million in new construction during 2007. That was a city record. That doubled – it was about \$88 million the year before. And we had close to \$15 million in downtown private investment alone. It doesn't sound like a lot for probably a city like Boston or San Francisco, but we're a town of about 45,000 people. So for us, that was pretty significant.

And also, just recently CNN Money released a report that said Kingsport had enjoyed the greatest rate of small business creation in the country prior to the onset of the recession. So I think one of our goals at the economic summit was to promote an entrepreneurial spirit, and that had happened. And I'd guess one of the biggest is, since the late '90s, Kingsport experienced a loss of about 10,500 manufacturing jobs. And since that point in time, we have gained those jobs back through a diversified economy. The manufacturing jobs were replaced with healthcare jobs, leisure and hospitality jobs, construction jobs, financial jobs, information jobs, and we saw our median family income rise nearly 20 percent during that time period as well. So I guess, you know, the educational attainment rate is what we're striving for. But, on the same hand, the economic indicators – we recognized that to be competitive economically, we had to be competitive educationally. So that's the outcomes that we've looked at to kind of see the turnaround that we've had in about a 10 year time period.

SANDEL: That's great. Thanks so much. Judith or Nahir, would you like to share about Boston?

TORRES: Sure, I'd be happy to share. This is Nahir. We are looking at a few intermediate and long term indicators for students participating in the pilot of our program. So things that we're looking at are indicators of persistence like transition from first to second semester and from second semester to second year, the number of students that are maintaining a GPA of 2.0 or higher, and advancing from remedial to credit bearing courses. We're also looking at the percent who are on track to earn a degree based on 12 credits per semester. And we're looking at things that are not just academic – so the percent of students who are connecting with campus support programs and utilize campus support services, because one of the goals is to really build the capacity of our students to really navigate the higher ed community more effectively. So, those are some of the intermediate benchmarks that we're looking at towards our goals of doubling the graduation rate.

SANDEL: And is the foundation housing that information?

TORRES: I'm sorry?

SANDEL: Is the foundation housing that information, or who's sort of housing the data?

TORRES: We're actually working with one of our nonprofit partners, Access. So they have created a student tracking system which all of our nonprofit partners are inputting data into. We also are working with the Center for Labor Market Studies and the Boston Private Industry Council on a follow up study to the previous study to look at the persistence rates of classes subsequent to the class of 2000, as well as the eight to nine year persistence rates of the class of 2000 to also inform our interventions in this initiative.

KURLAND: I think your question, though, raises an interesting point. I mean, in our doing this – I'm very interested actually in Morris' description because the colleges with whom we work – Boston has many private colleges and we also have the public colleges. But the goals and the incentives for the public community colleges have never been college graduation, and they haven't been a lot of these indicators that Nahir just talked about. So for instance, they did not concern themselves particularly with moving from remedial courses to credit-giving courses. Their goals and their incentives were all about access and not about completion. So we're trying to change the culture, we're trying to actually change some of the incentives, and part of this is about reporting. And so, one of our first goals was to have them agree to report on the progress and success of Boston public school students. We do not control that. These are state institutions, not local institutions. So that's one of the hardest things we've had to do, truthfully.

The other thing that I wanted to add to what was described in terms of some of our intermediate things, since we think college completion is not just about what happens to them after they get into college, we also have measurements for the school system to improve on getting kids ready. So some of the indicators we have there is to increase a program that we started a few years ago called Credit Recovery so that those kids that, in the summer after their senior year, still don't have enough credits to graduate – we've instituted these programs where they could get these few credits and graduate by the end of the summer and therefore be college ready. We want to increase the number of AP (advanced placement) classes available to kids in

the Boston Public Schools. We want to make sure that the kids taking AP classes do better. So we have a number of “getting ready” goals that we're measuring as we go forward. The number of kids that are connected with our Access agencies, although that has historically been pretty high, we want to increase that. We want to – we have a goal of raising the average SAT combined score. So we have measurements both for the getting ready – not both for, for all of the getting ready, the getting in, and the getting through.

SANDEL: Great. Maureen, would you like to talk about either some additional early indicators from San Francisco or how you're planning to track progress?

CAREW: Sure. And I'd like to comment on what Judith said. I think the conversation with our partners in higher ed – I think we're finding the same thing. They were not really looking at persistence rates and who is graduating, but more about the number of students they were serving, you know, in their first year. So it's really exciting to really start to change that conversation to see how could we better support students once they get into higher ed? You know, we're working really hard on this 21st Century curriculum, and it's engaging and it's relevant to students. And we're working on smaller classes and smaller learning communities, which we think are really valuable to keep students engaged. And then, we send them off to college, and a lot of colleges are still, you know, lecture type situations where students aren't used to that, you know, they're used to really engaging curriculum. So just opening up the conversation about what it means for a student to successfully graduate from high school and be prepared right upon graduation to enter into a college level class – the learnings that are taking place with that are just incredible, and I think that, you know, the change is coming, but we haven't had this opportunity really to have those conversations until the mayor, you know, built this partnership, really. And now that we're all at the same table, the city agencies are becoming aligned in saying, "How can we better support students so that they're staying in school?"

And we will have early indicators as far as how many of our students are going into college level classes as opposed to remedial classes. But, our high school teachers are actually looking at not how can I get this kid through high school, but how can I really prepare them to succeed in college? And it's no longer a question of, you know, is college for everyone? Does everyone need it? Everyone does need it in this day and age. And, you know, we have really strong trades here in San Francisco, but you still need a college level math class and you need to be able to read at a high level to do that work. So I think it's – we're really on the same page and we are excited to look at those indicators that both you and Morris talked about as far as how we're serving students not only to get into college but, you know, to stay and succeed and become a part of our thriving community.

SANDEL: Great. I think both you and Judith really touched on the enormous undertaking institutional change can be, not only changing the colleges' view of persistence, but also K-12's view of not graduation from high school, but success in college. And I'd love to talk more about that, but I also want to allow for our listeners to have an opportunity to ask questions of our panelists. So Debbie, the operator, I don't know if you want to provide some information for our callers on how they can ask a question?

OPERATOR: If anyone would like to ask a question, you can hit star-one on your telephone keypad, star-one, and I'll access your line.

SANDEL: And also if someone would prefer to submit a question via email, you can send it to Michael Karpman at karpman, K-A-R-P-M-A-N, at nlc.org. Do we have any questions in the queue?

OPERATOR: There are no questions in the queue at this time.

BAKER: Kate, could I follow up on something that I think Judith had mentioned earlier?

SANDEL: I'd love you to. Please.

BAKER: In Kingsport, we have worked, I guess for the past 10 years, on higher education and we're beginning to see, I guess, some things occur as a result of that. But, the one thing that we are in the process right now of examining, of looking at more in-depth, is the preparedness issue. Kingsport has long been recognized in Tennessee as a leader in the K-12 system, and that's resulted from measuring opportunity and accomplishments of top achievers. But recently Department of Education published a national assessment of educational progress, and the scores that were released showed that Tennessee placed 44th in fourth grade mathematics and 42nd in eighth grade mathematics. We may be one of the leaders of Tennessee, but Tennessee is by far not one of the leaders in the nation.

Also, our local community college has told us that – and I think this is in line with national numbers as well – it says that about 70 percent of the students that enter Northeast State Community College are requiring remedial and developmental education in reading, sentence skills, and math prior to entering the college level courses. What is staggering is of those students, of that 70 percent, only 6 are going on to – only 6 percent are going on to complete an associate's degree. While we've done quite a bit with educational attainment, Sullivan County – we're a population of about 45,000, and in a 25 mile radius we have about 350,000 people. In Sullivan County, the population is about 153,000, and 18 percent of those residents who are aged 25 and older, 18 percent do not have a high school diploma or a GED. In fact, at our last board of mayor and aldermen meeting, the city agreed to pay the GED testing tuition rate of \$65 for any city resident that wanted to take a GED.

So I guess what I'm saying is we've focused on the economic indicators. We've focused on the educational attainment with higher ed. We are just now beginning to look at what are some measurements for the secondary school, the K-12. So we're in the process right now of beginning to examine that and see, you know, what do we need to do to have those kids – not 70 percent having to take remedial classes. Drop that statistic, then when kids hit college, they're ready to go. So I just wanted to make that comment.

SANDEL: Thanks. Thanks so much. Do we have a question in the queue, or can I follow up?

OPERATOR: There are no questions.

SANDEL: Great. Because I think, Morris, you paint some really stark statistics, and I would imagine sometimes those extreme gaps that you all have identified as well as some of these institutional changes are potential barriers. What have you found, in trying to start these initiatives in your community, to be the major barriers, the largest barriers in trying to address college access and post-secondary completion?

BAKER: For us, for Kingsport, it's the high school graduates being ready. But one of the things I think that – and I've heard the other two speakers say the same thing – the initiative that's taking place in Kingsport has come out of the mayor's office. In a 10 year time period, we've had two different mayors. We've had multiple boards of aldermen. We've had two city managers. We've had two community colleges presidents. But, we've had some common folks throughout. Our local newspaper publisher has been a huge champion of the education initiatives in Kingsport. The two mayors that we've had have worked both together, and the two community college presidents that we've had had done the very same thing. So I guess what I'm – what's interesting for us is this has been a true community-led initiative where the community has said we want to see education raised. And it's just now beginning to translate into the K-12 to say, you know, we recognize that we're doing some great things, but there are some great things that we still can do.

So you know, one of the barriers, I think, for us has been perception. You know, being viewed as a leader in the state in K-12 is great, but also recognizing we're nowhere near being a leader in the nation, which means, you know, we're maybe the best of the rest. We don't want to be in that category. We want to be in that top echelon of being able to produce quality students that when they hit college, success is one of those things that's going to be guaranteed. So I guess that's the barrier that we have hit is the perception in the community. K-12 is good, but we're not where we need to be at.

SANDEL: And how have you overcome that perception barrier?

BAKER: I think one of the ways that we're working on that is it being a mayor's office led initiative. You know, if it's the education system, I think, just speaking frankly, there's an agenda there. If it is the community college, there's an agenda there. If it's business and industry, there's an agenda there. The mayor's office can help bridge that gap to keep that moving forward, coupled with the local newspaper publisher who, I can't stress enough, has been a huge advocate. So when you have the mayor's office and the newspaper publisher joining hands on an issue – it's a rarity in many cases, you know? But in our case, it's been a huge success.

SANDEL: Yeah, that's great to hear that you sort of found an ally outside of the city who can help overcome other transitions to keep the agenda alive.

BAKER: Right.

SANDEL: In Boston or San Francisco?

KURLAND: Yeah. I have – this is so wonderful for us, because the contrasts are remarkable, although there is one similarity which is this could only have come out of the mayor's office. It

couldn't come out of anyplace else, because he has the convening authority and he has the credibility to bring together the various parties. I think we have a totally opposite perception problem, which is that we have a lot of great successes in the Boston Public Schools. We have a lot of great examples of successful education. And the perception, which is often pushed a lot by our local media, is that the schools are terrible and that they're failing, and they even use words like that when, by an awful lot of indicators, we're doing very, very well.

People also forget that this is a city 74 percent of whose school children are eligible for free or reduced lunch. And so, when I say that people look around and they see these, you know, great buildings and they, you know – the size of the city doubles during the day of people coming in to work at our hospitals, our academic medical centers, our financial institutions, our commercial – and people forget that the kids that go to the Boston Public Schools tend to be rather poor. We're a gateway city and many of them come from families where English is not the first language, and most of the kids that go to the Boston Public Schools do not have a parent who has ever had any college, and many of them don't have high school graduation. So that they're – we're dealing with a very impoverished school population that don't necessarily have the kind of access and experience about college going that we would hope that they would have. So that's one of the barriers is that the perceptions are very different.

Two, we – there has not been the investment in public higher education in Massachusetts that you would think a state that prizes education would have. So at one time, we were 49th in the nation of all the states investing in public higher education. We're a little better now. I think we might be 46th. But because of the strength of our private institutions, there has not been that investment in public higher education. So the avenue that's available to most poor kids, which is the community college system, is underinvested in, I would argue.

But then that third is something that I mentioned earlier, that we – the community colleges in Boston in particular have one of the lowest college success rates of any of the community colleges in the state, and they have not seen that as their responsibility. They've seen access as their responsibility. In terms of overcoming those barriers, we have wonderful partners among many of the institutions. And the University of Massachusetts in Boston, which is a four-year public college – their chancellor is a great champion of what we're doing here. We have, the Boston Foundation has really stepped up to the plate and is funding the Access agencies in doing this, and is a partner with us. A lot of the private institutions are very committed to having us succeed here, and are sharing their data and their researchers. We have a research team that is made up of representatives of a number of these institutions. So I think, in overcoming the barriers, we have a lot of great partners. But, I don't think that we've overcome the perception problem, and I don't--and we certainly have not yet overcome this community college culture that doesn't really think it owns the solution.

CAREW: Kate, I'd like to...

SANDEL: Yeah, please.

CAREW: Sorry, I'd like to echo some of what Judith and Morris said, actually, about, you know, the mayor being such an integral part of this partnership, and really the chancellor of the local college is on board and the superintendent is on board. But, you know, it's really – it changes the conversation a little bit when the whole city has kind of the same vision for their

youth, and I think that's what has been so helpful with the initiatives. Like you said, we're looking at systemic change, but also experiential change on the student level. So we're working on both sides of the spectrum and working with, you know, with higher ed around alignment and preparing students to succeed. But, when city agencies are all kind of focusing on how can we support this effort, I think that that makes a big difference in how well this program is going to succeed. You know, it's early, it's only been 18 months. But we do have some big things to tackle, but I think that, so we haven't – what I have seen is not barriers, necessarily but, there have been challenges and there are challenges that we're continuing to work through. We're, you know, rated one of the, the top urban school district in California. But what we're not looking at is our achievement gap and, you know, the fact that we have a pretty high college going rate for our white and Asian students and a very low one for our Latino and African American students. And finally the conversation is happening that that's not okay and how can we change that, and what do we need to do to support those students and break down the institutional racism that has been going on, you know, nationwide, but in our city. So I don't see it as barriers, I see it as some really big challenges. But, you know, nothing is going to stop this momentum, I don't think, because so many – you know, the leadership is really on board and has been great about getting the business community and the school district and the higher ed folks in the community at large, you know, on board with this.

SANDEL: Great.

TORRES: Oh, pardon. Could I just follow up on something Maureen said and Judith? This is Nahir. Pardon.

SANDEL: Please.

TORRES: Oh, sorry. Thank you. I just wanted to echo, I think we're also looking at Boston addressing the achievement gap, and a big piece of the mayor's leadership in really bringing these three strands together is helping us really create systems change and creating the connective tissue that's necessary to enable both the nonprofit community, the higher ed community, and the district to really work differently together. And I would echo Judith that that, I think, would not be possible without that leadership.

SANDEL: That's great, and very impressive to be addressing systemic change. In thinking about the work that you're doing, how are you funding your work? Is it a blend of public and private dollars?

BAKER: In Kingsport, it has been – the city has funded, in large majority, the facilities. We've had some state and federal grants that assisted, and the city has stepped up to start the Educate and Grow scholarship program. Our community college, we're going to – we've got four facilities right now in the downtown area. We'll have the fifth one. And our community college is going to be the managing partner of all of those. So they have actually managed to move some of their resources to help provide some of the, well, to help to manage the facilities downtown. So it's been a combination for us.

KURLAND: In Boston, in the “getting ready,” which is primarily at the public school level, most of that funding comes out of the Boston public school budget. These are tough times for all of us, as you know. But actually thanks to some of the stimulus money, we've been able to make some of these investments. We're also – we've done a fairly decent job on competitive grants in getting outside funding for a lot of this. But some of this is just core funding from the Boston School Department. The Boston Foundation has also funded a full-time person at the Boston Public Schools to coordinate this work for us. It would have been hard to, as you know, if they are laying off people in the schools, to bring in somebody that could be perceived as being an administrator. So it was very generous of the Boston Foundation to fund that. They've also provided funding to the Access agencies that work with our schools and with our schoolchildren as part of our initiative. They've committed \$1 million to doing that, and are making some funds available to the coordination for the college investment. So the Boston Foundation has been a big supporter of what's going on here, and a co-convenor with us. The colleges are making some investments themselves, but that's primarily the private colleges that are making some investments themselves. And we do have a combined effort of the city and a number of funders to look at this pipeline issue and to see how we make investments jointly and look for new money to make investments in the city. And the Success Boston is one of those targeted areas of investment.

SANDEL: Great. Maureen?

CAREW: In San Francisco, we have some funding that comes from the school district and some from the college, but the lion's share comes from the mayor's office, and not only in funding the program and some of the initiatives, but also in kind of directing the city funding initiatives, which is huge. And then, the college has raised some funds for the scholarship. But we do need to figure out how we can supplement this funding strategy and diversify it a little bit so that, you know, the mayor's office is not continuing to fund the lion's share of it.

SANDEL: Before I ask another question, let me check in with the operator to see if there are any questions coming in from the listeners.

OPERATOR: There are no questions in queue. But, just a reminder, if anyone does have a question you can hit star-one on your telephone keypad. There are no questions.

SANDEL: Great. So, if another city was wanting to do more in post-secondary, what do you think is working so well for you locally that you wish more cities and colleges would try? Or what might be a good piece of advice for another city who's wanting to start their work?

TORRES: I think – this is Nahir from the Boston Foundation. I would say one of the things that really helped us is really building from a base of data. The work of the Center for Labor Market Studies and the Boston Private Industry Council really helped surface the issue at hand here in Boston, and really helped inform us about what kind of intervention we would want to undertake. And so I think building from a base of data is really a starting ground. And certainly not working in silos, but starting from a philosophy of collaboration and partnership, I think, really is key.

SANDEL: And actually, before someone else, Nahir, you mentioned some of the systemic change in essentially overcoming those silos. What – how were you successfully able to break down some of those silos to get some of those big partners working together?

TORRES: Well, as Judith mentioned, I think really the work of the mayor to really convene the three sectors together and bring us together on under the common goal of increasing the rate of college graduation among BPS students really helped to unify us towards that same shared goal in moving us from a conversation of college access to college success. And I think shifting that conversation has helped each sector really look at the work it's doing and how to realign that work towards that end goal.

SANDEL: Okay. Great.

CAREW: And in San Francisco, I think I echo what Nahir said. Data is so important because it kind of depersonalizes it. This is not a K-12 problem. It's not a post-secondary problem, either. It's a citywide problem, you know? And so, if we come at – and, you know, the whole silo thing is crazy. But we have to talk to one another and we have to find out what's working and how we can support one another so that every sector can succeed. And ultimately, our youth, you know, who are at the crux of this, are going to have more opportunities if we work together rather than in silos. So I think the collaboration and the learning, you know, like I mentioned before, has been tremendous. And that's probably, you know, the mayor coming together and bringing all these different parties together is really crucial for that to happen, at least in our city, to help break down those silos. But that's what I would say. The collaboration itself is what I encourage people, you know, different cities to take on rather than working alone.

BAKER: I'll agree with both of you guys, because I know for us, you know, when we had our largest employer, and the state of Tennessee's largest employer at the time – we're a city of 45,000. We had about 15,000 that were employed at that one place. And when they step up and say, look, we're going to lay off and we're unsure about the future – I believe their CEO even at a breakfast for local leaders explained, “We're concerned that the folks we're going to have retiring, that there are going to be people here in the area that's going to be able to fill those positions with the skills that are needed” – It was one of those, I guess, sink or swim moments for us. But, it took – I think it took our mayor's office to step up and host an initial economic summit and, throughout a 10 year time period, has kept the same task on hand of let's make sure education is priority. So you know, the collaboration effort, but definitely coming from the mayor's office was the big unifying point for Kingsport.

SANDEL: Great. I think these three cities are fantastic examples of what municipal leadership can accomplish in addressing post-secondary access and success. And I really want to thank our speakers for taking the time to talk with us today. Thank you, Judith Kurland, Nahir Torres, Morris Baker, and Maureen Carew. I also want to thank all of our listeners for listening today and learning more about post-secondary success and access, and encourage you to take part in future audioconferences, including one next month on November 19th on city strategies to support homeless youth. So thank you all so much, and have a great day.

