

# Stakeholder Group Summit Outcomes and Plans

## Government Stakeholder Group

Megan Henderson, Stakeholder Leader

### Pre-Summit Stakeholder Group Assumption Targets and Proposed Activities

Will address assumptions 1–8

- Encourage city councils and economic development organizations to provide incentives for “gold star” rated childcare providers
- Develop a legislative agenda with summit findings and issues
- Encourage regional cities to utilize public facilities for program and service outlets that foster stakeholder group activities
- Broker the services of economic developers toward low-cost/no-cost vocational exposure and training programs

### Summit Report in Brief

Who attended?

*Attendees included representatives from the Waco City Council, Waco ISD School Board, West ISD, Crawford ISD School Board, the African-American Chamber of Commerce, Texas State Technical College, the Heart of Texas Workforce Board, the City of McGregor, Hewitt City Manager, the City of Waco, the City of Robinson/Blue Bell, the economic development corporation board, the Waco city manager, Workforce Solutions, the education service region, McLennan County, an elementary education teacher, and the offices of state and federal officials.*

What the stakeholder group considered

*We considered that a tremendous impact could be realized if we identified and publicized the existing resources. We discussed the need for swift improvement in what we now do to assist students in being successful.*

*We considered the need to strengthen the childcare businesses both as businesses and as providers of educational content and to send an explicit and unified message that those programs should be delivered in an innovative way.*

What will be our success?

*We would consider success to be ensuring that by the age of two every child owns at least one book; that policymakers consider their decisions based upon the question, “how will this help children?”; and that financial disadvantages early in life are not insurmountable obstacles to success in later life.*

# Stakeholder Group Summit Outcomes and Plans

## Discussion

The Government Stakeholder Group discussed issues of overall education, noting that improvement and assistance are needed at many levels. Noting the economic development issues surrounding a well-educated population (workforce, competitiveness, employment, etc.), the group worked through areas of teacher development, the quality and availability of childcare facilities, curriculum alignment between levels of education, and transportation.

*“Over and over and over again in this community we see when a challenge needs to be met people in this community step up...I think what’s going to happen, when we find out about the challenges that a lot of students face in this area, action is going to take place.”*

– Joe Nesbitt, President  
Central National Bank

In a frank discussion of both limited community resources and the limited ability of local decision makers to impact education policy, the group concluded that help would be needed from the state as well as local policymakers. The group addressed ways to pass along the importance and outcomes of the summit to state legislators and discussed various means to ensure a clear message.

Considering the importance and the role of childcare service providers, the group discussed existing resources and models as well as what might be needed to improve the overall quality of childcare. Members expressed the need for information concerning the number of children now in daycare. The group saw the needed investment in childcare services improvement as an investment

in systemic change, actually increasing cost savings many years later with the reduced need for remediation or other interventions.

The group cited a few of the literacy programs already in existence and discussed methods of increasing the number of programs and enlarging them with more volunteers. The participants also felt that making an economic development investment in youth through programs such as summer employment opportunities was well worth doing.

The stakeholders discussed the need to make sure students and parents are aware of the wide-ranging options available to them from training programs to associate degrees to college degrees and that one option does not fit all students. There was acknowledgement of the difficulty of making diverse parents and students feel empowered to choose from a wealth of academic and training options, and that overcoming this barrier is a mission policymakers must share.

## First-Year Action Items and Assumption Targets

- Reach state policymakers with summit results and information
- Reach local policymakers (city councils, school boards) with examples of how they could appropriately take action in support of summit assumptions and ask them to consider doing so
- Ask McLennan County commissioners to declare an education month, during which many of these contacts could be made

## Long-Range Proposals

- Form a partnership with local schools to develop curriculum that, if voluntarily adopted and presented by childcare providers, would ready children for achievement in kindergarten
- For educational institutions and economic development agencies to collaborate in ways to train young people in high-demand vocations at low or no cost to the students
- For economic development agencies to offer space or other incentives to assist program graduates in establishing independent businesses, thereby keeping them in the community
- To provide a model or models for partnerships between schools, cities, and other agencies to share space, thereby making library and/or computer facilities available to the public where current access to such facilities is poor