



Valuing teachers key in Quality Education for All Fund's focused strategy

Business leaders, philanthropists, community organizations and district collaborate to guide investments to build strong pipeline of teachers and leaders in Duval County Public Schools

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JACKSONVILLE , Fla., April 10, 2014 —Rutledge Pearson Elementary School fifth grade teacher Wayman “Frank” Graham is among hundreds of high-performing teachers in Duval County Public Schools who may be eligible for up to \$20,000 annually in pay incentives, as a result of the Quality Education for All Fund (QEA), an initiative of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. The incentives will be paid for by the QEA Fund, a pool of private dollars aimed at attracting, recruiting, and retaining high-performing teachers and leaders, with specific emphasis on 36 of the highest-need Duval County schools. Raines, Ribault, and Jackson high schools, along with their 33 feeder pattern schools, make up the transformation region to be supported by the QEA collaboration.

In a press conference today at Rutledge Pearson Elementary, a transformation region school, QEA Fund Advisory Board Chairman Wayne Weaver, Duval County Public Schools Superintendent Nikolai P. Vitti and Duval County School Board members announced a portfolio of investments that span a broad range of human capital initiatives. In addition to the recruitment and retention pay incentives, the QEA Fund investments also include professional development offerings that train promising teachers to become the school leaders of tomorrow, and the recruitment of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) majors for a medical residency-style new teacher preparation program, among many other programs.

The goal of the QEA Fund’s donors is to raise \$50 million in private dollars and invest it over the next five years, with the support and investment of public dollars by Duval County Public Schools. More than two-thirds of the QEA Fund goal has been reached, allowing today’s announcement of nearly \$20 million in program support to go forward, with additional investments proposed.

For more than a year, business leaders, philanthropists and Duval County Public Schools’ leaders have been working together with The Community Foundation and the Jacksonville Public Education Fund to devise a portfolio of investments and a wide range of strategies to reduce the achievement gap through the jointly identified strategy of strengthening human capital.

Some of the investments will be district-wide, but most are focused on the district’s highest-need schools in the transformation region. The majority of the investments will be implemented over the next five years through a series of grants and in conjunction with complementary district measures, all with a track record of success in other cities across the United States.

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Prepare All Students for College or Career*





Grants that have been approved include:

- A Summer Principal Academy program, which sends teachers with leadership potential to Columbia University for two consecutive summers to earn their master's degree in education while apprenticing under principals with proven leadership during the school year.
- The Jacksonville Teacher Residency program that will recruit standout undergraduates majoring in Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM) to teach math and science at the secondary level while earning a masters' degree at University of North Florida.
- A contract with The New Teacher Project to conduct a review of all district human resources policies and practices.
- A performance pay incentive program that could provide up to \$20,000 annually for up to three years to highly effective reading, math, writing and science teachers who teach in transformation region schools or transfer to transformation region schools, and to mentor new teachers. The district will recruit and interview eligible teachers who wish to transfer. The program would also include performance pay incentives of up to \$20,000 for principals.
- Placement of Teach for America corps members in the transformation region with a focus on teaching math and science.

Upcoming proposed investments also include:

- An investment in new infrastructure to modernize the district's data systems.

Duval County Public Schools is also planning changes to ensure transformation region schools are prioritized:

- Principals at all 36 schools in the transformation region will report to a single region chief, who will report directly to the Superintendent.
- Each district department (such as budget, facilities and human resources) will designate a staff member as point person for the transformation region schools.
- An academic support team will focus only on the 36 schools for early learning, reading, math, science, writing, technology and social studies.

"Seeing our donors' vision for public education reform in Duval County begin to be implemented is a real milestone in this 10-year journey," said Nina Waters, President of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. "They have made an extraordinary investment in our schools and therefore, the future of our community."

Grantmaking decisions for the fund are made by the QEA Fund Advisory Board, which is made up of major donors to the fund. Dr. Vitti is an ex-officio member of the board.

"The QEA fund is an investment whose value extends beyond the incredible resources and offerings it affords us to build and improve our human capital strategies," said Dr. Nikolai P. Vitti,

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Superintendent of Duval County Public Schools. “QEA is a testament to the commitment that community leaders share for ensuring we deliver highly educated citizens to the Jacksonville community ... we are gaining public confidence and credibility that we do not take lightly and will always strive to improve and maintain.”

Operations of the Quality Education for All Fund are being managed by the [Jacksonville Public Education Fund](#) with financial and programmatic oversight by [The Community Foundation](#).

The human capital focus of Quality Education for All was based on more than a year of research that looked at local student achievement data, an assessment of local resources and programs, the community opinions voiced through the [ONE by ONE campaign](#) and the input of Duval County Public Schools leadership.

“Collaboration between philanthropists, community organizations and the school district has been accelerating in recent years, but this level of investment is unprecedented,” said Trey Csar, President of the Jacksonville Public Education Fund. “Together with increased citizen involvement, we believe Duval County is uniquely positioned to take a giant leap forward in ensuring that all students are prepared to succeed.”

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About The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida

Now celebrating its 50th anniversary, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida is Florida’s oldest and largest community foundation. The Foundation works to stimulate philanthropy to build a better community and has made grants in excess of \$279 million since 1964. Today, the Foundation has more than \$295 million in assets. For more information, visit www.jaxcf.org or call (904) 356-4483.

About Duval County Public Schools

Duval County Public Schools is one of the nation’s largest school districts, serving 125,000 students in over 160 schools. Its mission is to provide educational excellence in every school, for every classroom, to every student, every day. Learn more at www.duvalschools.org.

About the Jacksonville Public Education Fund

The Jacksonville Public Education Fund is an independent nonprofit organization that works to inform and mobilize the community to advocate for universally high-quality public schools for all children. For more information, visit www.jaxpef.org or call (904) 356-7757.