From Aspiration to ACHIEVEMENT

Five years of strengthening teaching and leadership in Duval County Public Schools through the Quality Education for All Fund

Private Capital Helping Public Schools Prepare All Students for College & Career

QEAFund.org | 904.356.4483
THE CATALYST TO SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

The Quality Education for All Fund focused its efforts on building and sustaining a pipeline of great teachers and leaders on 36 historically low-performing schools.

The Duval Transformation Office, where most of the Quality Education for All Fund resources were invested, consists of Raines, Ribault and Jackson high schools and the middle and elementary schools that feed into these schools. QEA invested in programs such as:

- An urban teacher residency program to develop science and math teachers
- Leadership development efforts to build a stronger pipeline of future principals
- Performance incentives for highly effective teachers and principals
- Modernizing and updating human resources and staffing policies
- Dedicated district regional staffing focused solely on the transformation schools
- A new data system to make student- and teacher-level data easier to access
- Reading interventionists to support increasing student literacy in these schools

36 QEA SCHOOLS | 1,166 TEACHERS | 17,776 STUDENTS | 98% QUALIFY FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH

From Aspiration to Achievement | 1
Letter from the Chairman

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT ALMOST FIVE YEARS HAVE PASSED since we embarked on the journey known as the Quality Education for All (QEA) Fund. As the Chairman of the Advisory Board for the QEA Fund, I have been privileged to a passionate and committed board and the evidence of your work, action, dedication and community partners in our collective quest to transform our local and future generations' future of our most vulnerable students. We have established and continue to make strides towards our goal of achieving sustainable outcomes. I believe that the QEA Fund investments have catalyzed within our schools has been significant as well as sustainable, and you too learning from the pages of this report, you will find the many ways in which the QEA Fund has been instrumental in the development of our schools. The QEA Fund has been the brick and mortar of the vision that through a collective and shared accountability and commitment to quality education for all students, we haveplanned the seeds that will continue to bear fruit for years to come and that, collectively, we have made great strides toward our ultimate quality education goal.

The Quality Education for All Fund is an initiative of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, providing financial and programmatic oversight, while recruiting and stewarding donors.

The QEA Fund set out to achieve ambitious goals from the very beginning. From the generous contributions and steadfast dedication of so many, the QEA Fund investments have catalyzed within our schools has been significant as well as sustainable, and as you read through the pages of this report, you will see the many ways in which the QEA Fund has been instrumental in the development of our schools. The QEA Fund has been the brick and mortar of the vision that through a collective and shared accountability and commitment to quality education for all students, we have planned the seeds that will continue to bear fruit for years to come and that, collectively, we have made great strides toward our ultimate quality education goal.

As the Chairman of the Advisory Board for the QEA Fund, I have been fortunate to a passionate and committed board and the evidence of your work, action, dedication and community partners in our collective quest to transform the lives and futures of our most vulnerable students. The change that the QEA Fund investments have made in our schools has been transformative. As we close this chapter of the QEA Fund's work, we have to note the progress that we have made.

The effectiveness of social and emotional learning within our schools has vastly improved, with the QEA Fund focused on building and sustaining a culture that is committed to providing mental health services to all students. The QEA Fund has been instrumental in the development of our schools. The QEA Fund has been the brick and mortar of the vision that through a collective and shared accountability and commitment to quality education for all students, we have planned the seeds that will continue to bear fruit for years to come and that, collectively, we have made great strides toward our ultimate quality education goal.

The QEA Fund has been a catalyst for change, providing financial and programmatic oversight, while recruiting and stewarding donors.

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THE STORY OF THE QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL FUND BEGAN LONG BEFORE 2013, when leading philanthropists in Jacksonville made the bold decision to take an aspirational step towards improving public education in their community. While the Fund represents the largest dollar investment in public education from private individuals in the history of the city, it is the result of over a decade of efforts that culminated with the granting of almost $40 million to improve public school teaching and leadership.

A start to public education reform in Jacksonville

In 2005, incited by test results showing less than half of Duval County Public School students proficient in reading and math, and an achievement gap that reflected widespread inequality in Duval County Public Schools, the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida decided to focus a significant portion of the foundation’s work and resources on public education—for the next 10 years.

Through the aptly named Quality Education For All initiative, the Community Foundation committed to invest $2 million over 10 years to improve public school graduation rates and reduce the achievement gap between black and white students. Funds were committed to a variety of causes, including new dropout prevention strategies and the creation of the Jacksonville Public Education Fund, a new, high-capacity local education fund in Duval County. The effort also catalyzed a number of local philanthropists to commit to education reform in their own giving strategies, resulting in the creation of organizations like Teach For America, which collected input from nearly 2,000 community members. Bridgespan also examined emerging initiatives in Charlotte, N.C., and reform efforts in major cities across the country.

The feedback was remarkably consistent. Nearly everyone agreed with research showing that improving teaching and leadership was vital to improving student achievement, and acknowledged it was the area where the least work had been done in Jacksonville, with the notable exception of the launch of Teach For America in 2008.

In the spring of 2011, as the Foundation began the second half of its decade-long commitment, the Duval County School Board, and were further refined to focus the philanthropic community on improving public schools.

Launching a historic effort

The Bridgespan Group dug deep into the education reform work that had begun to take root in Jacksonville, and convened a series of advisory committees and focus groups to ask for community insight into where significant investment was still needed. Those conversations included traditional leaders, such as then-Superintendent Ed Pratt-Dannals, as well as those who took in feedback from JPEF’s recently completed ONE by ONE campaigns, which collected a pool from nearly 2,000 members of the Jacksonville community. Bridgespan also examined emerging initiatives in Charlotte, N.C., and reform efforts in major cities across the country.

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About the same time, Superintendent Pratt-Dannals announced his retirement, and, with significant community input and support, the Duval County School Board selected a highly reform-minded superintendent in Dr. Nikolai Vitti in 2013, presenting an opportunity to not only see classroom and school-level human capital improvements, but sustainable system-level reforms at the district level.

As the next 10-year cycle began, the QEA Fund was re-launched to align with the over-arching strategic priorities set forth by Superintendent Vitti and the Duval County School Board, and were further refined to complement those priorities.

The results of this effort’s numerous investments, and stories of the people and schools impacted, are detailed on the following pages. Individually, they each represent a significant investment in one part of the human capital system that supports public education; collectively, they have laid seeds that will impact Jacksonville for decades to come.

Building on a deep understanding and opportunity

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<td>While several investments took place during the QEA tenure from 2013 to 2017, these three held the greatest significance.</td>
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Launching a historic effort

Shortly thereafter, the QEA Fund concept began to take shape, an unprecedented public-private partnership that would seek to invest up to $50 million to improve public education through three interrelated goals:

- To recruit more high-performing teachers to the classrooms that need them the most
- To retain the strongest teachers and leaders in Jacksonville’s lowest-income schools
- To build the district’s ability to effectively manage and think about talent system-wide
THE FIRST INVESTMENT OUT OF THE NEWLY-FORMED QEA FUND didn’t deal with recruiting teachers, but rather retaining and developing those teachers who wanted to expand their impact across an entire school. The Jacksonville School Leadership Fellowship, modeled after a similar program in Indianapolis, Indiana, began in 2013, and was designed to create a pipeline of well-trained school leaders by providing hands-on mentorship and intensive coursework, leading to a graduate degree in school leadership from one of the most noted universities in the country.

Candidates were selected through a rigorous application by Duval County Public Schools’ leadership, and began their fellowship by attending Columbia’s Summer Principals Academy, one of the nation’s top urban principal training programs. After a summer of classes, fellows returned to Jacksonville and served as an administrative resident under the guidance of a hand-picked and highly successful urban school principal. The following summer, they returned to Columbia’s New York City campus to complete their degree, after which they agreed to serve as assistant principals in a Duval Transformation Office school. To date, 15 people have been awarded fellowships, and nearly all who finished the program are serving as assistant principals.

Erica Christina Little Bartley, a fellow from 2013, was named principal of Rutledge Pearson Elementary School in 2017, the fellowship’s first school leader.

Chelsea Matthews is exactly the kind of school leader that young women would look up to. Smart, determined, sharp and full of energy, Matthews exudes energy and positivity that is infectious. While a teacher at Northwestern Middle School in 2010, she was one of the youngest but most successful teachers in her school. Her students consistently outperformed their peers on standardized tests and loved her energy and excitement. But she knew she could be having a greater impact. It was this motivation that led her to apply for, and ultimately be accepted into the Jacksonville School Leadership Fellowship in 2015.

When Matthews entered the 2014-15 school year as a recipient of the fellowship, she joined a growing number of high-performing teachers seeking to bring their instructional knowledge to an entire school building. Along with three other exceptional teachers, she began taking courses at Columbia University in New York City while simultaneously working under the guidance and mentorship of an excellent principal, Evan Daniels, at Andrew Jackson High School. Shadowing her school leader by day while completing the rigorous coursework requirements of Columbia in the evenings along with two consecutive summers tested her determination and focus.

“Being a full time student at Columbia University was not an easy task,” Matthews reflected. “Every lesson, lecture and course assignment is designed to condition you to think like a principal. Leaders naturally find a balance to meet one’s goal. Balance means sacrifice and we all sacrifice time for the things we identify as a priority, and quality education for all in Duval County is my personal priority.”

Now in her third year as an assistant principal and second year at the Young Women’s Leadership Academy, Matthews has had the opportunity to use the lessons she learned from Daniels, as well as implement a few of her own. She looks forward to one day being principal of her own school and helping teachers bring students to their full academic potential.

The most rewarding part of being an assistant principal is the priceless moments you witness when students that struggle in math become proficient. The moment when a teacher with the highest proficiency and growth data in a building fights to earn their certification one year just to return the next to reign as Teacher of the Year. That’s the true definition of relentless. – Chelsea Matthews

Chelsea Matthews
Assistant Principal

$898,259 | TOTAL INVESTMENT
$11,684 | Jacksonville School Leadership Fellowship
$177,415 | 15 Number of Fellows
$228,828 | 7 Number of Assistant Principals
$364,271 | 1 Number of Principals
$128,308 | 2013:
$254,776 | 2014:
$229,828 | 2015:
$173,659 | 2016:
$111,688 | 2017:
$898,259 | 2018:
**EARLY IN THE HISTORY OF THE QEA FUND, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund released research highlighting that Duval County lost 50 percent of its teachers in the first five years of their careers, a problem particularly acute with hard-to-find math and science teachers. Yet, there were efforts across the country, called urban teacher residencies, seeking significantly stronger five-year retention rates of up to 85 percent.**

With JTP and Duval County Public Schools leadership, the QEA Fund began to explore the creation of a program that would come to be known as the Jacksonville Teacher Residency, targeted at college graduates with math and science degrees who were open to considering teaching as a career. Through a partnership with the University of North Florida, JTR residents spend a year taking graduate-level education classes while working as a “resident” under a skilled math or science teacher mentor, similar to how a medical resident works under an attending physician. Residents earn a living stipend during their residency year and take out a student loan to pay for their graduate education. After they successfully complete the program, JTR residents become teachers of record in one of Duval County’s lowest-income schools for at least three years. Residents Retained Since 2013-2018: 30

**In addition to creating a pipeline of well-prepared science and math teachers and informing new strategies at the UNF College of Education, the JTR program has continued to attract additional sources of funding. Since 2014, JTR has secured more than $1.19 million in funds from a variety of philanthropic sources, including the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, National Center for Teacher Residencies, National Science Foundation and Noyce Foundation.**

While the program has continued to demonstrate its effectiveness in developing and retaining high-quality math and science teachers, the Duval County School Board declined to renew funding to support the graduate-level program in future years. Despite this, JTR staff have continued to pursue outside philanthropic funding, and hope to be able to continue operating the residency for years to come.

**INVESTMENT TWO: JACKSONVILLE TEACHER RESIDENCY**

| 2013-2018 | New teacher training program for participants with undergraduate science and math degrees. They spent one year earning a full-time matriculation at the University of North Florida and one year of residency for aspiring teachers. Grantees: Individual Residents, University of North Florida and National Center for Teacher Residencies.

**SNAPSHOT**

**Resident Retained Since**

30 Residents Since 2013

85.7% Residents Retained Since Beginning As Teachers

5 National Conference Presentations

$2,403,887 TOTAL INVESTMENT | Jacksonville Teacher Residency

$231,121 Jacksonville Teacher Residency

$545,754 Graduate Classes at UNF

$663,551 Resident Mentor, Teacher Mentor

$792,361 One Year

$559,486 Three or More Years Teaching in a Low-Income School

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**GEORGE TUEBER, JTR GRADUATE**

For the first most difficult years of teaching. They are counselors through the first five years in the classroom. “It’s my way of helping to retain teachers because we have seen this cycle of people entering education and exiting so quickly,” Gomez said. “I know how difficult it was for me, and my mentor stuck by me. I am glad to do this for others.”

**SHAWN GOMEZ, JTR MENTOR**

Shawn Gomez is one of the dynamic JTR mentors who has served as a mentor for residents in each of the four JTR cohorts. Shawn has been a teacher in Duval County Public Schools for 21 years. Teacher of the Year twice at two different schools and was interested in becoming a mentor for JTR because of the opportunity to help shape and mold a new generation of teachers. She also remembers how crucial her mentor was to her success as a teacher. “My mentor, Mrs. Deborah Powell, was more than a mentor. She was a friend and a confidante,” Gomez said. “I was not the student that I talked with, it was the nuances of teaching. Mrs. Powell helped me to develop as a teacher through her mentorship.”

She has continued to mentor each year because she knows how often new teachers leave the profession within their first few years in the classroom. “It’s my way of helping to retain teachers because we have seen this cycle of people entering education and exiting so quickly,” Gomez said. “I know how difficult it was for me, and my mentor stuck by me. I am glad to do this for others.”

**“My heart felt at home doing work that positively impacted children, and the Jacksonville Teacher Residency gave me the direction and support I needed to make the change.” George Tueber**

Teuber was a part of the first cohort of the Jacksonville Teacher Residency in 2014. This unique urban teacher preparation program is the first and only of its kind in the state of Florida. Teuber, who is in his third year of teaching Biology at Jean Ribault High School, attributes the Jacksonville Teacher Residency to the intense preparation residents receive in advance of them stepping into a classroom, as well as the coaching and support they receive during their first years in the classroom. “The JTR directors are teachers in their own right. They are advocates for our best interests. They are counselors through the first most difficult years of teaching. They are friends in time of need.” Although his three-year commitment to teaching in QEA school will be completed at the end of the 2017-18 school year, George has no intentions of leaving the field, or urban schools.

“Teaching is my life. I don’t know where my path with take me, but I know when I get there I will be teaching,” he said. “I am committed because I believe that teaching has made my life worth more than I had ever expected. I live for my children and the wonder I inspire in them in the classroom.”

**“As I advanced toward my goals of being a surgeon, I started to become aware that I was seeking a profession for the wrong reasons. I wanted prestige, money, and status, but the profession itself didn’t appeal to me.” Shawn Gomez**

Shawn Gomez said. “It was not the content that I struggled with, it was the nuances of teaching. Mrs. Powell helped me to develop as a teacher through her mentorship.”

Five years ago, George Tueber was on his way to becoming a surgeon. The South Florida native had excelled in the sciences since he was a young child, and his trajectory was set for the highly esteemed medical specialty. With two master’s degrees and a bachelor’s degree in biology, there was little that could stop Tueber from making his lifelong dream a reality, except what he would call “thinking intervention.”

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INVESTMENT THREE: 

IN THE ORIGINAL BRIDGESPAN GROUP RESEARCH THAT LED TO THE CREATION OF THE QEA FUND, improving the strategic and functional capabilities of the central office to support school and district leaders was noted, though the development of a new data system was the only specific investment identified in the report.

Though the new data system, OneView, would eventually be supported by the QEA Fund (see page 14), the Advisory Board first invested in an audit of the district’s human resource policies, comparing them against emerging best practices in other parts of the country. TNTP (formerly The New Teacher Project) was selected to conduct the audit.

TNTP found that schools serving the most high-need students were disproportionately disadvantaged by ineffective recruitment and staffing. TNTP also found that instruction in classrooms districtwide had not yet fully embraced nor implemented the important instructional shifts necessary to teach to the rigor of the recently-adopted Florida Standards.

Going deeper to improve instruction

With these initial findings, the QEA Fund’s investment, combined with the direction of then-Superintendent Nikolai Vitti, enabled TNTP to conduct a deeper look at instruction—their first instructional diagnostic conducted in Florida—which included numerous classroom observations, reviews of student work, focus groups and interviews with teachers and leaders within schools and Duval district leadership.

The diagnostic was eye-opening, as it showed numerous areas for improvement in professional development, materials and curriculum and how to align internal systems to better support implementation of the Standards and to reach the level of rigor and improvement in student learning outcomes that the whole community sought.

An example for others to follow across Florida

The QEA Fund’s investment in the diagnostic process and ongoing technical support from TNTP in Duval also caught the eye of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, who then funded five additional districts across the state to undergo a similar diagnostic process. Within two years, a dozen school districts had undertaken diagnostics to assess how well the Florida Standards are being taught in their schools, and how they can better work to develop and support their teachers and leaders with more effective professional development, access to high-quality curriculum and materials aligned to the Standards, and a clear vision for what excellent instruction is, and how to monitor the attainment of this strategic vision with the effective use of data.

Implementation networks amongst these leading districts have also been formed; creating the opportunity for districts to have access to technical expertise as they pursue their instructional goals and also provide districts the opportunity to learn from each other. The relatively young work of these networks is already showing incredible promise in its impacts on student achievement. Pasco County alone saw a reduction in the number of its most struggling schools, subject to state intervention and monitoring, go from 22 down to three in one academic year.

While the QEA Fund is currently winding down, JPEF is now working, through a targeted statewide project, on how to share learnings from this work with funders and districts across the state. The QEA Fund’s success is a notable example of how local funders, focusing on local issues, can innovate and begin work that, with intentionality and collaboration with other funders, can spread across the state to positively impact even greater numbers of our most vulnerable students and give them the power of a high-quality education.
In recent years, Teach for America’s model on a national level has begun to adapt to the changing context of public education. The number of new teachers coming into the profession through both traditional and alternative preparation programs has declined, but TFA has adapted by placing greater emphasis on alumni teachers staying within the city of Jacksonville and taking on critical leadership roles.

Targeted approaches to alumni retention, including the Halverson Alumni Fellowship and Teach Beyond Two, have led to a rise in third year teaching ratio for Teach for America alumni, with 40 percent of second-year corps members in 2017 teaching for at least a third year. TFA has also created a program called Attract Jax to bring third-year alumni back to Jacksonville, leading to a strong and growing alumni base. In addition to those still teaching, TFA alumni are serving as nonprofit leaders in Jacksonville, six were staffed in administrative roles with Duval County Public Schools and 44 were academic coaches, assistant principals, or principals.

Despite these strong results, the Duval County School Board, during a meeting a couple days later, announced reorganization and reduction plans to better align with budget shortfalls and address the continued decline in enrollment. Despite these strong results, despite theDuval County School Board, during a meeting a couple days later, announced reorganization and reduction plans to better align with budget shortfalls and address the continued decline in enrollment. Despite these strong results, Teach for America Jacksonville must adapt to the changing context of public education.

Jacksonville is the city that is going to close the achievement gap first, and it’s ultimately why I moved here.

Attract Jax

In 2014, Teach for America Jacksonville launched Attract Jax, a program aimed at recruiting high-quality talent in Jacksonville. Attract Jax is a high-touch, personalized opportunity for TFA alumni from across the country to come to Jacksonville for 3-4 days to get to know the local employment landscape in their desired field. Through this program, participants have the opportunity to meet with hiring managers and community members with the goal of assisting them in securing employment in this community. To date, 34 TFA alumni have participated in Attract Jax and just over half of those participated accepted employment in Jacksonville. The majority of people were placed as educators, school leaders or leaders in education focused nonprofit organizations.

Alison Cook (pictured): “The collaboration between the superintendent, the nonprofit community, Teach for America, traditional public schools, charter schools, and the community made me want to be a part of this movement in Jacksonville. Seeing the communication and support between all of the stakeholders made me want to move across the country to a place where I knew no one to see if this collaboration could lead to actual change.”

The Halverson Fellowship

The Halverson Fellowship has provided me with a platform on which I can advocate for students and their families. This year I am completing a project focused on restorative justice, researching strategies that empower students to resolve conflict and repair relationships in effort to improve school culture and reduce bullying and punitive discipline.
nearly a decade of teaching experience. incentivized teachers had an average of value-added model (VAM) scores, bonuses. In addition to having high teachers and 20 principals received and since 2014, more than 400 the largest teaching incentive ever performing teachers and principals Through the incentive program, high- performing teachers and principals could earn up to $20,000 per year in additional compensation for up to three years, so long as the performance of their students remained strong. It was the largest teaching incentive ever offered in Duval County Public Schools and since 2014, more than 400 teachers and 20 principals received bonuses. In addition to having high value-added model (VAM) scores incentivized teachers had an average of nearly a decade of teaching experience.

Key learnings

While the American Institute for Research’s formal evaluation of the QEA Fund’s performance incentives program will not be final until early 2018, initial results have been positive and some key learnings have emerged from the investment:

Financial incentives can bring strong teachers to high-needs schools, but keeping great teachers who are already in those schools is easier and more effective. The incentives were designed to increase the number of teachers with high value-added model (VAM) scores in DTO schools, and to keep them there for at least three years. Even with such large financial incentives, significantly more teachers who were already teaching in DTO schools than those who were teaching elsewhere participated in the program, and retained teachers were much significantly more likely to re-qualify for incentives than those who were new to DTO schools. Furthermore, teachers who had been teaching in those schools prior to the incentives said they were much more likely to stay after the incentive payments ended than those who moved to DTO schools.

Non-financial supports need to accompany financial incentives, particularly for teachers coming from other schools. Early in the incentives program, participating teachers, particularly those coming from non-DTO schools, said they needed additional supports to be successful, particularly training relating to the cultural and social context of their new students and schools. Professional development improvements were made by DCPS, but the importance of strong supports and training in curriculum, behavior management and wraparound services remained clear throughout the program if teachers were to be successful.

Supporting high-quality teachers can have positive effects on student- and school-level achievement. Similar to other large-scale incentive efforts across the country, the incentives program showed consistently positive, but not statistically significant, impacts on student achievement. Results were particularly strong in the first year of implementation, with DTO schools improving more in math, reading and science achievement than other schools in Duval County. Results from individual schools, however, varied significantly, pointing to the impact of the unique leadership, staff and community context surrounding a school on its success.

An uncertain future

In the spring of 2017, despite the incentive program showing strong results, the Duval County School Board debated on the continuation of the incentive program as it had been structured during QEA. It did, however, retain the incentives for the 2017-18 school year. While the structure of that incentive program has not yet been created and approved, DCPS officials expect to use the learnings from QEA in developing any new program.

Just off Commonwealth Avenue on Jacksonville’s Westside sits Reynolds Lane Elementary, a school whose face was changed by the QEA Fund’s performance incentive program. Two of those faces are those of Marianne Simon, the school’s principal, and Katherine Adenholt, a math coach she recruited to the school. Since Simon has been leading the once struggling school, the school grade has improved from an F to a C and student proficiency in both math and English language arts has increased. Simon says the incentives played a large role in helping her recruit talented teachers to the school. About 40% of the teaching staff at Reynolds Lane received some level of incentive during the course of the QEA Fund initiative. “I had the two teachers from my previous school come with me to recruitment events to help entice teachers who would not normally choose that side of town,” Simon said. “We got two really great, successful teachers with that strategy and they have remained at Reynolds Lane.” Adenholt, a ten-year teaching veteran, works with small groups of students who need additional support as a math coach. She sees students in grades K-6 every day and her ability to move them forward in mathematics qualified her for a QEA performance incentive in the 2014-2015 school year. Prior to being recruited to Reynolds Lane elementary school, Adenholt was a teacher at Woodland Acres and Waterleaf elementary schools, in higher-income areas of Jacksonville. “After two years at Waterleaf, I had a desire to return to an urban school and continue the type of work required in a high needs school,” she said. “This is also the QEA initiative started and I was offered the recruitment incentive. When I spoke with Ms. Simon about this opportunity, she offered to take me with her to Reynolds Lane as her math coach.” While the performance incentive and stellar leadership of Simon brought her to Reynolds Lane, Adenholt made the decision to stay in the low-income school after the incentive program ended. Her reasons for staying go far beyond dollars and strong leadership. Reynolds Lane has become home. Although she is no longer receiving performance incentives, Adenholt is committed to her coaching position and determined to see the school reach its full potential.
AS ANYONE IN BUSINESS KNOWS, making good decisions requires having good data on which to base those decisions. In education generally, and in Duval County prior to the work of the QEA Fund, Duval County Public Schools’ data infrastructure was largely undeveloped, leaving teachers, principals and other district administrators relying on outdated, separated, and heavily paper-based systems, not to mention making it difficult to share key information with parents, community partners and students themselves. At the recommendation of former Superintendent Nikolai Vitti, the QEA Fund invested $5 million between 2014 and 2017, which with an additional $1.6 million in district funds, led to the creation of a system to address many of these issues.

As a technology investment, the system that was developed, called OneView, impacted the district as a whole, reaching beyond the original 36 Duval Transformation Office schools. Vitti and the Duval County School Board was also able to match to garner $50 million to support student technology upgrades across the district through a federal no-interest bond program called QZAB.

Since the QEA Fund’s investment, Duval County Public Schools has spent more than $1 million in ongoing improvements and enhancements, as well as, during the 2017-18 school year, giving key community-based organizations access to real-time data for the students they serve.

INVESTMENT SIX:
ONEVIEW

INVESTMENT SEVEN:
NEW LEADERS

In 2015, responding to district concerns about low reading proficiency in the Duval Transformation Office schools, the QEA Fund agreed to invest nearly $2 million in hiring 34 reading interventionists in grades K-2, 3-5, and 6-8 in Duval Transformation Office schools to grow literacy and reading proficiency. Grantee: Duval County Public Schools

INVESTMENT EIGHT:
READING INTERVENTIONISTS

GREAT TEACHING DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY TRANSLATE INTO GREAT LEADERSHIP, yet teachers are often thrust into leadership roles without specialized training. Through the QEA Fund’s nearly $1 million investment in New Leaders, Duval County Public Schools built a training program for assistant principals to prepare them for school leadership roles. Over the course of the two-year-long program cohorts, nearly 50 participants grew measurably in key leadership practices, such as using data to strengthen instruction, managing difficult conversations, and delivering effective feedback. This ensures that participants are capable of accelerating student learning, whether they seek to advance in their careers or want to become more effective in their current leadership roles.

As leaders often move around the district throughout the course of their careers, the QEA Fund’s New Leaders investment is another example of the Fund’s district-wide impact, and was funded by the Duval County School Board to continue in 2017-18, continuing the district’s focus on building a pipeline of diverse leaders for the future.

In 2015-16, Duval County Public Schools stepped up and expanded the funding for reading interventionists the following year; this is another example of how the infusion of private QEA dollars was instrumental in pilot an experiment that led the public entity to embrace, even more, nearly 90 percent of students seen by an interventionist making significant growth in reading.

Based on the early success of this investment in 2015-16, Duval County Public Schools stepped up and expanded the funding for reading interventionists in grades K-2, where two-thirds of the district’s low-performing students made a more than a year’s worth of progress in reading. In some schools, such as Biscayne and Carter G. Woodson Elementary, the success was even more profound, with nearly 90 percent of students served by an interventionist making significant growth in reading.

In 2015-16: Funded the creation of reading interventionist roles in grades K-2 and 4-6 in Duval Transformation Office schools to grow literacy and reading proficiency. Grantee: Duval County Public Schools


2016

2017

$5,000,000
TOTAL INVESTMENT
$1 Million
IN ONEVIEW
$1 Million

50,000
Public Accounts

8,275
Support Staff Accounts

$50 Million
Leveraged in a No-Interest Bond

2014-2017: Developed new data portal system and common performance dashboards for teachers, administrators, and community partners. Also created real-time access to assignments and course grades for students and parents. Grantee: Duval County Public Schools

$1,903,533
TOTAL INVESTMENT
$1,903,533

K-2 Students Meeting Growth Target: 66% 

With Interventionist 57% 

Duval Transformation Office (DTO) Schools Overall 62% 

Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) Overall

SNAPSHOT

SNAPSHOT

PROFICIENCY
K-2 Students Meeting Growth Target

GROWTH TARGET:
K-2 Students Meeting Growth Target

2016

2017

66%
With Interventionist

57%

62%

62%
**Letter from the Former Superintendent**

**WHEN I LOOK BACK ON NEARLY FIVE YEARS OF TOUGH REFORM IN JACKSONVILLE, there are countless achievements that I am proud of.**

When I started in 2013, the district ranked at or near the bottom in almost every measure when compared to the other large seven public school districts in the state of Florida. We had several low-performing schools with few district-wide and comprehensive human capital systems to sustain and improve their performance. I came into my role with extensive experience transforming schools at the district level in Miami-Dade County, and at the state and system level at the Florida Department of Education.

In Duval County, I found a challenge that was unique in its own way, and an opportunity for change that I knew, if tapped into, could change the lives of hundreds of students in the community. That opportunity came in many forms but none as strong and impactful as that between the district and the donors of the Quality Education for All Fund. (Nikolai P. Vilij, E.D.D., Former Superintendent, Duval County Public Schools, 2013-2017)

Over the four years of its implementation, the QEA Fund tackled human capital barriers that plague urban districts across the country, and funded initiatives and programs that would overcome these barriers in a sustainable way. Performance incentives were able to keep stronger teachers and leaders in QEA schools and recruit those with a passion for urban education into those schools as well. The Jacksonville Teacher Residency program launched and created a new pipeline for science and math teachers trained to teach in urban settings, and influenced the way in which the University of North Florida College of Education approaches training those teachers. The next generation of school leaders was trained and mentored through the Jacksonville School Leadership Fellowship, and Teach for America continued to place corps members in struggling schools. The return on these investments has been tremendous; QEA schools have been without an “F” grade for the past two years, and nearly all QEA schools in the state have improved.

Dr. Nikolai P. Vilij, E.D.D.

**Achievement**

N. a thing done successfully, typically by effort, courage, or skill.

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**Partnership is difficult, and requires continual trust-building and communication.**

While the QEA Fund focused on a version of each of the original five investments highlighted in the original Blueprint report, the plan was revised and adjusted to respond to evolving conditions.

**Major change takes time.** While we have already seen positive impacts for students throughout the course of the Fund, such as increases in school grades, academic proficiency and graduation rates, many of the QEA Fund investments, such as those in training and development for future teachers and leaders, won’t come to fruition for many years.

**The work is not done.** No matter the improvements made by Duval Transformation Office Schools through the QEA Fund’s investments, low-income schools like these 36 will continue to need help in recruiting, training and developing great teachers and leaders.

From the outset, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida understood that a high capacity, independent organization would be needed to focus on local public education after the five-year QEA Fund was completed. By creating the Jacksonville Public Education Fund (JPF) in 2009 and building its capacity to oversee the QEA Fund investments, The Community Foundation set in motion a long-term, sustainable organization that could take the lessons learned from the QEA Fund work into the future.

Working alongside the QEA Advisory Board, The Community Foundation and the Duval County School District, JPF gained the programmatic and philanthropic expertise to be a respected, independent advocate for public education in Duval County. To that end, JPF has ramped its strategic focus to center on human capital efforts in public schools and plans to use the valuable insight it gained during the QEA Fund work to continue its pursuit of the best and most effective ways to grow and support excellent teachers and principals. The QEA Fund donors also wanted to ensure that there would be some ongoing financial support for public education reform, even after the Fund’s five-year timespan elapsed.

They created a dedicated education endowment at The Community Foundation, which will allow continued annual investment in public education reform, ensuring that there would be some ongoing financial support for public education reform, even after the Fund’s five-year timespan elapsed.

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**When David Stein and Gary Chartrand Envisioned the “Big Bet” that Would Later Become the Quality Education for All Fund, they knew one thing from their experience as successful businessmen and education philanthropists: people matter. Regardless of the difficulty, a great teacher, supported by a great leader, could make great changes for the student in his or her classroom.**

There were a lot of questions and no guarantees as the QEA Fund got off the ground. Five years later, one thing is clear: investing in improving teaching and strengthening school leadership can improve outcomes for students. Though significant changes in standards and testing emerged during the course of the fund, in just two years, from 2015 to the end of 2016, the number of low-performing D and F schools in the Duval Transformation Region fell from 21 to 6, and no schools had an F grade for the first time in a decade.

**The donors who came together to create the QEA Fund have learned a lot along the way about the role that philanthropy can and must continue to play to catalyze community attention and resources on important issues in education:**

In this way, the invaluable work of the QEA Fund will continue, with the sustainable and necessary effort towards the day when every student in Jacksonville, particularly low-income students and students of color, have access to excellent teaching in every one of Jacksonville’s schools.

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**When I look back on nearly five years of tough reform in Jacksonville, there are countless achievements that I am proud of.**

When I started in 2013, the district ranked at or near the bottom in almost every measure when compared to the other large seven public school districts in the state of Florida. We had several low-performing schools with few district-wide and comprehensive human capital systems to sustain and improve their performance. I came into my role with extensive experience transforming schools at the district level in Miami-Dade County, and at the state and system level at the Florida Department of Education.

In Duval County, I found a challenge that was unique in its own way, and an opportunity for change that I knew, if tapped into, could change the lives of hundreds of students in the community. That opportunity came in many forms but none as strong and impactful as that between the district and the donors of the Quality Education for All Fund. (Nikolai P. Vilij, E.D.D., Former Superintendent, Duval County Public Schools, 2013-2017)
The donors who came together to create the QEA Fund in 2017, the number of low-income students and students of color, have access to excellent educational opportunities. Over the past five years, the QEA Fund has invested in Duval County public schools, helping to improve student outcomes and graduation rates. Many of the QEA Fund investments, such as those in training and leadership development, have led to significant improvements in student performance. The work is not done. Major change takes time. No matter the improvements made by Duval Transformation Schools and Graduation Rate from 2011 to 2016

QEA SCHOOL GRADES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>Percent point increase from 2015 to 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QEA SCHOOL FSA PASS RATES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>Percent point increase from 2015 to 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social St/His</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The QEA Fund was always intended to catalyze additional grantmaking from other philanthropic and public sources, particularly to replace some of the lost revenue from the Duval Transformation Office schools. In this respect, the QEA Fund was a great success, being a part of garnering nearly $57 million in additional investments, as well as nearly $9 billion in salaries and materials and external investment in Duval County Public Schools.
$5,000,000 and above
Gary and Nancy Chartrand
Dan and Cindy Edelman
PGA Tour, Inc. on behalf of THE PLAYERS Championship
David and Linda Stein
J. Wayne and Delores Barr Weaver

$1,000,000-$4,999,999
DuBow Family | Preston H. Haskell | The Petway Family Foundation, Inc.
Gilchrist B. Berg | Florida Blue | David and Ann Hicks | Jack and Mary Jane Uible

$500,000-$999,999
Edward L. (Ted) Baker | John Baker | FIS Foundations, Inc. / FNF Capital, Inc. / Black Knight Financial Services
Robert and Margaret Hill | Robert and Monica Jacoby | Jay and Deanie Stein

$100,000-$499,999
The Newton CLT III – 1997 | Bobby and Polly Stein | Hap and Brooke Stein | Joannine Walthouse Newton
James H. Winston | Zimmerman Family Foundation | Anonymous

$25,000-$99,999
Bank of America | Everbank | Cris and Jerry Hayes

$5,000-$24,999
Caroline O. Brinton | Drs. Sol and Leslie Brotman | Fletcher Management/Jerome Fletcher | Alex Graham
Drs. Michael and Sue Nelson | Billy J. Walker | Jim and Ellen Wise

$4,999 and below
Dr. Mark Coker | Dr. and Mrs. Stephen Cochran | Dr. Steve Cofie and Bobette Klassen | Dr. Ron and Susan Gliroff | Dr. Robert Herman
Dr. Luke and Marisa Henderson | David W. Knall | Helen Lane | The Lord’s Foundation | John F. Lowery, Jr.
Drs. Christopher and Janice Scuderi | Dr. Guy Selander | Dr. and Mrs. Barry F. Selman | Southeastern Council of Foundations
Drs. Tara Wall and Stilke Bugge | Mary and Frank Walton Advised Fund
If you want your child to get the best education possible, it is actually more important to get him assigned to a great teacher than to a great school. — Bill Gates