

## **HELPING MUNICIPAL LEADERS EXPAND OPTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES FOR HIGH SCHOOL**

**A Project of the Institute for Youth, Education, and Families  
National League of Cities**



**Supported by the  
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

### **What is the *Helping Municipal Leaders Expand Options and Alternatives for High School* project?**

By increasing the portfolio of educational options and alternatives available to high school students, the goal of the project is to foster strong high school learning communities that prepare all students for college, work, and citizenship. The centerpiece of the project's activities is an intensive, 24-month technical assistance effort to help selected cities develop and implement strategies for expanding options and alternatives for high school within their communities.

There are three objectives for this project:

- Provide support to cities to deepen and enhance the involvement of municipal leaders around expanded options and alternatives for high schools;
- Broaden awareness among municipal officials of the diverse roles they can play to stimulate and support an array of high school options and alternatives;
- Develop a range of publications and related materials to assist municipal leaders as they seek to improve high school education in their communities.

### **How will the high school technical assistance project be organized?**

The mayor from each selected city has designated a lead staff and assembled teams that include community stakeholders. YEF Institute staff will work directly with teams from each participating city to assist them as they develop and implement local plans. The city teams also will convene at least two times during the course of the project to promote cross-site exchanges of information and lessons learned, as well as insights and strategies for progress across the groups to ensure that they consider the full range of ways in which expanded options and alternatives can be supported and enhanced.

In working with city teams, NLC will seek to expose municipal leaders to a broad menu of strategies and models for their involvement in expanded high school options and alternatives.

### **What are the areas of the technical assistance that the YEF Institute can provide?**

- Vision Statement—assisting the city team in developing a common goal for expanded options and alternatives in the community.
- Action Plan—working with the city team to transform the vision into reality.
- Needs Assessment—providing tools so the city team can gauge the needs of the community.
- Use of Data—identifying examples of data that can assist in determining needs and how to evaluate programs for effectiveness.
- Supporting an Infrastructure—identifying strategies the city can use to support a high school system that encompasses an array of options and alternatives.

- Collaboration and Partnerships—unifying the various stakeholders around a common vision and maintaining this focus.
- Public Engagement—working with and engaging the public on the importance of innovation and reform in high school education.
- Funding—providing information to city teams so they can develop a strategy to sustain innovative options and alternatives for high school.
- Accountability and Evaluation—measuring success in programs is critical to maintaining public support and program funding.
- Best Practices—determining what is working and why it is working so these lessons can be applied to other cities.

**What does NLC expect from selected cities?**

- Strong commitment from the Mayor, other local elected officials, and the school leadership to the project.
- Demonstrated capacity within the Mayor’s office to support and sustain a leadership role in high school improvement efforts.
- Willingness on the part of the city’s team to work toward a common vision and goals.
- Commitment of the city team to collaborate on the shared goals.
- Implementation plan of action to achieve these goals.

**Contact**

Rob Wexler, Senior Fellow at the YEF Institute, is the project contact and is available at National League of Cities, 1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004, by e-mail [wexler@nlc.org](mailto:wexler@nlc.org), or by phone: 202-626-3160. Audrey M. Hutchinson is the Program Director for Education and Afterschool Initiatives at the YEF Institute.