Our children. Their future. Our commitment.
The Map That Started It All…
The Chetty Study

The Harvard/UC Berkeley study ranked Charlotte 50th of 50 cities and Mecklenburg County 99th of 100 counties.

Note: Lighter color equals more upward mobility. Download statistics for your area at www.equality-of-opportunity.org.
Five factors most predictive of upward mobility

- Segregation
- Income Inequality
- School Quality
- Social Capital
- Family Structure
We are segregated by income.
We agreed on the ultimate goal:

Young people—regardless of race or zip code—feel they belong, have big dreams, and find the opportunities to achieve those dreams.
From: Cradle to Career
To: Prenatal to Career

Prenatal support & decisions
- Birth
- Kindergarten
- 3rd grade
- 8th grade
- 12th grade
- College - Career
Opportunity “System” Strategy
Key Issues

- Char-Meck’s unique segregation pattern
  - Grounded in intentional decisions
- Commuting patterns mask reality
- Infiltrates all areas: schools, housing, food, transportation, digital access, etc.
Selected Recommendations

- Encourages new strategies for mixed income housing
- Increased private sector support for rental subsidies
- De-concentration of high-poverty schools
- Overhaul of transportation routes
- Ensure digital access, devices & literacy
- Expanded use of racial equity lens
Key issues

- **THE priority determinant: ROI clear**
- Child care waitlist of 3,000+
- Annual cost avg. $9-11K per child/per year
- Workforce highly transient & underpaid
- Families often lack understanding of importance
Selected Recommendations

• Support parents as first teacher
• Goal of universal access to care age birth to 5
• Strengthen early childhood workforce
• Look at pay & professional development
• Brain development awareness campaign
• Expand Read Charlotte systems approach
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**Example**

- Support CELC funded work group
- First step: eliminate the ~3,000 child wait list
- Identifies financing options including sales & property taxes
Key issues

- Research supports stable households & delayed pregnancy
- Families in poverty challenged to balance work, children, housing, other basic needs
- 34k unit shortage of affordable housing
- Cumulative impact leads to toxic stress
Selected Recommendations

• Identifies strategies to aggressively address lack of affordable housing
• Increase access to mental health services
• Educate on benefits of two parents & delaying pregnancy; provide access to effective methods
• Create pathways to living wages
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Example
• Increase bond referendum from $15M to up to $50M every two years
• Prioritize housing when disposing of public property
• Create a private investment fund
• Convene developers to explore options such as tax abatement, overlay districts, etc.
Key Issues

• Disconnect between employer needs & K-12 curriculum/understanding/skills

• Historically, not a priority for Chamber or Regional Partnership

• Business sector concerns about CMS capacity to scale

• Lack of career pathways information

• Negative stigma of vocational education & certifications

• Lack of counselors + inadequate understanding of college/career information

• Importance of understanding alternatives to traditional four year college path

• Real + perceived barriers to attending & completing college
Selected Recommendations

• Ensure ALL students have access to a range of career & college pathway opportunities
  • Expand/improve career academies
  • Provide funding for student certifications
  • Partner with businesses/Chamber to raise awareness
  • Increase # of students in college prep courses

• Improve student/parent information & guidance:
  • Early exposure to college & career options
  • Increase number & quality of counselors
  • Leverage nonprofit & business resources
  • Expand support for 1st gen & low income college students
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Example
Build CMS & business partnership to increase workplace based learning capacity:
• 1,000 slots by 2018
• 4,000 by 2020
• Ultimate goal: 10K+
Key issues

• Networks & relationships have economic value

• Lack of strong/diverse connections undermines other efforts

• Helps transform “dreams” to tangible pathways

• Students: We want “Life Navigators”

• Many in the community: “We want to feel respected and valued”
Selected Recommendations

- Implement “life navigator” concept starting no later than 7th grade
- Develop volunteer army to connect children/families
- Tangibly demonstrate a “culture of caring”
- Encourage use of economic opportunity lens for key decisions & investments
If every house of faith, elected official, civic group, employer, foundation, institution or organization asked this one simple question before making significant decisions—
“How will this decision impact the opportunity trajectory of our children, youth and families?”—the actions taken as a result would tangibly impact all children, youth, and families.
Leading on Opportunity

www.leadingonopportunity.org

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