Investing in the Future

2025 Transformation Plan: A World Class System of Schools

June 2020

THE OPPORTUNITY TRUST

NORMANDY SCHOOLS
COLLABORATIVE

CONTENTS

■ **Executive Summary**
History and Significance
Charting a New Path Forward
Support Needed
Appendix

Executive Summary

Normandy's schools have persistently ranked among the lowest performing in the state and have had an outsized impact on America's understanding of public education given its prominence in national news coverage following the death of Michael Brown, who graduated from the district in 2014.

- Normandy Schools Collaborative serves 26 municipalities and 35,000 residents in some of the poorest communities in the country. Median income in NSC is half the national average annual job growth has been declining by 2% per year.
- Historically, the life outcomes of children growing up in these communities have included hardships, such as increased chances of incarceration and teenage pregnancy and lower chances of moving to lower poverty neighborhoods or up in the national income distribution.
- Research shows that better schooling is one of a few key determinants of upward mobility in America and by nearly every measure, NSC is falling far short of state and national standards, such that just 13% of NSC's college enrollees obtain a degree after six years, compared to 50% statewide.
- Normandy's challenges were chronicled by national media and have helped shape the conversation on racial inequality in American education.

The board, after many years of disruption and poor academic outcomes, undertook a systematic audit of the district's strengths and gaps to shape its future direction and named a new Superintendent to lead its transformation strategy.

- We know from examples across the country that all students can achieve at the highest levels, regardless of background. Students in Chicago, for example, learn 23% more each grade than the average student and nearly 50% more than students in Normandy.
- The board conducted a detailed organizational diagnostic highlighting critical gaps in Normandy's work from curriculum, instruction and assessment to talent to operations and finance, but also deep desire for support and change.
- Marcus Robinson, a proven education reform leader, was named by the board as NSC's next Superintendent and he established a 90 day plan that included adopting a new, comprehensive district improvement strategy and adequately resourcing it.
- The board and superintendent have created a comprehensive multiyear strategy to dramatically accelerate the pace of change in the district. It is anchored on five strategic priorities and names eight critical initiatives to begin in school year 2020-21.

The district's new improvement strategy will require $8M in funding over the next three years to meaningfully change outcomes for the district's students.

- $8M is needed over the next three years to fully fund the improvement strategy and an expected revenue shortfall in state and local funding sources puts greater need on other channels for capital.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary
■ **History and Significance**
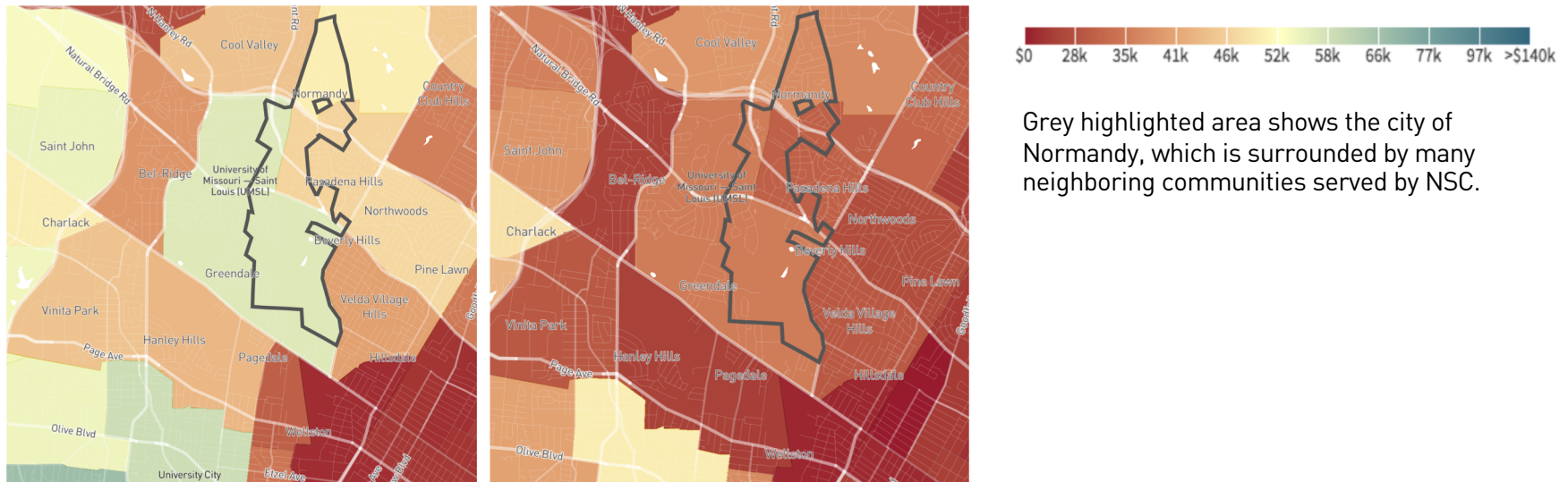Charting a New Path Forward
Support Needed
Appendix

NSC serves 26 municipalities and 35,000 residents in some of the poorest communities in the country

- 28% of residents in NSC are living below the poverty level, double the national rate of 14% in 2018.
- In NSC, 61% of households with children under 18 are receiving SSI, cash public assistance income or food stamps, compared to 26% nationally.
- Nationally, African American college degree attainment is 21%, compared to 13% in NSC.
- Average unemployment in the 9 Census tracts wholly contained within NSC is 18%, more than 2x the rate of other areas in Missouri.
- Average annual job growth in these tracts has also been declining by an average of 2% per year.

Median Household Income (2015 USD)
1990   2012-16

| $0 | 28k | 35k | 41k | 46k | 52k | 58k | 66k | 77k | 97k | >$140k |

Grey highlighted area shows the city of Normandy, which is surrounded by many neighboring communities served by NSC.

5

Historically, life outcomes of children growing up in these communities have included hardship

Compared to children growing up elsewhere in America, children who were born in the nine Census tracts wholly contained in NSC between 1978 and 1983 (i.e., high school graduates of 1995 through 2000) were:

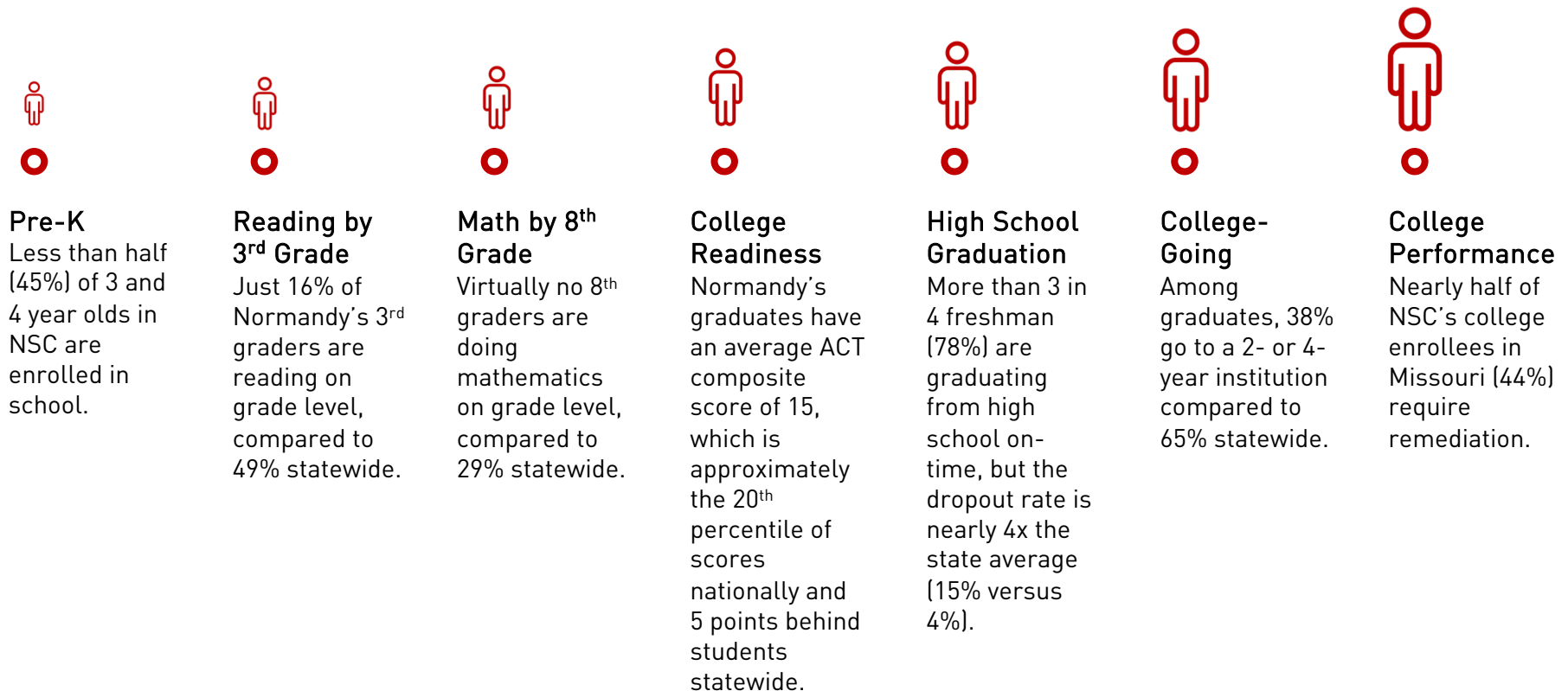|	
Incarceration	3x more likely to be incarcerated (4.5% versus 1.5%)
Economic Mobility	4x less likely to rise to the top 20% of the national household income distribution (5.4% versus 20.7%)
Moving out of Poverty	Half as likely to move into a higher income neighborhood (26% versus 47%)
Marriage	Half as likely to get married (17% versus 45%)
Teenage Pregnancy	More than 2x as likely to have a teen pregnancy (45% versus 19%)

Research shows that better schooling is one of a few key determinants of upward mobility in America

However, the quality of education in Normandy lags significantly behind other districts statewide.

Pre-K
Less than half (45%) of 3 and 4 year olds in NSC are enrolled in school.

Reading by 3rd Grade
Just 16% of Normandy's 3rd graders are reading on grade level, compared to 49% statewide.

Math by 8th Grade
Virtually no 8th graders are doing mathematics on grade level, compared to 29% statewide.

College Readiness
Normandy's graduates have an average ACT composite score of 15, which is approximately the 20th percentile of scores nationally and 5 points behind students statewide.

High School Graduation
More than 3 in 4 freshman (78%) are graduating from high school on-time, but the dropout rate is nearly 4x the state average (15% versus 4%).

College-Going
Among graduates, 38% go to a 2- or 4-year institution compared to 65% statewide.

College Performance
Nearly half of NSC's college enrollees in Missouri (44%) require remediation.

All together, just 13% of NSC's 2013 Missouri college enrollees had obtained a degree after six years, compared to 50% statewide.

The failure of Normandy's school system has been chronicled nationally in the wake of unrest in Ferguson

Despite Normandy's small size, it has an outsized impact on America's understanding of public education. Dramatic improvement in Normandy would not just create a new proof point locally for urban school reform, but can serve as a bellwether for improvement nationally.

The New York Times Magazine

The Continuing Reality of Segregated Schools

Normandy High School, Michael Brown's alma mater, is a part of the Normandy Schools Collaborative district, which remains unaccredited by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as of March 2015. Jahi Chikwendiu/The Washington Post, via Getty Images

By Nikole Hannah-Jones

July 31, 2015

This American Life · Archive · Recommended · How to Listen · About

Transcript

562: The Problem We All Live With - Part One

SLATE · News & Politics · Culture · Technology · Business · Human Interest · Search · Sign In

SCHOOLED

There's Another Racist Tragedy in St. Louis That Nobody Talks About

By LAURA MOSER · AUG 04, 2015 · 1:55 PM

St.Louis · DINING · CULTURE · NEWS · DESIGN · HEALTH · FAMILY · HISTORY · EVENTS

FEATURES /

How are Normandy Schools faring five years after the Ferguson protests?

The high school is still below state averages in English language arts, math, science, and social studies, but there are some bright spots.

BY ROSALIND EARLY · JULY 24, 2019 · 4:00 AM

School Segregation, the Continuing Tragedy of Ferguson

Michael Brown beat the odds by graduating from high school before his death — odds that remain stacked against black students in St. Louis and the rest of the country.

by Nikole Hannah-Jones, ProPublica
December 19, 2014

t74

News

Normandy High, By the Numbers: Inside Michael Brown's School, a Snapshot of Staggering Inequality

8

CONTENTS

Examples across the country prove that students can achieve at the highest levels regardless of background

This graph shows learning growth rates for every public school district in the United States. Students in Chicago are learning 23% more each grade than the average student and nearly 50% more than students in Normandy.
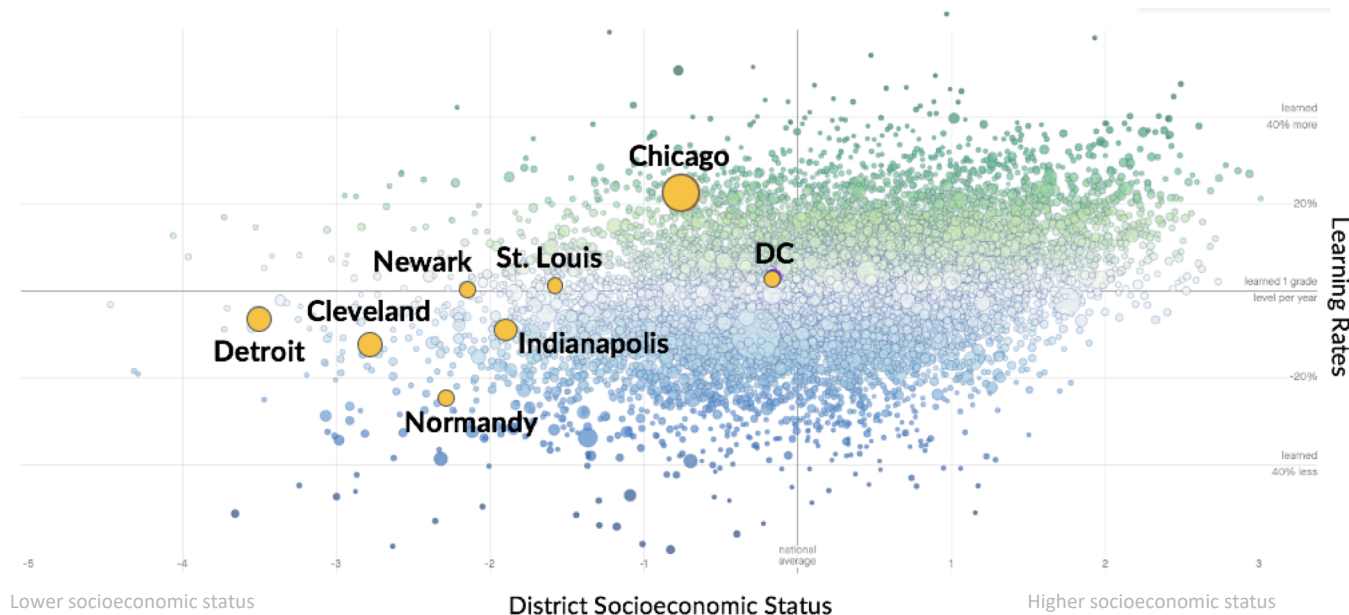
" We are balancing moving with urgency and ensuring we create space for our community to shape the path forward. Our plan to accelerate progress must first and foremost be informed by students, families, and teachers and we also want to ensure we are leveraging the research and insights from the most improved schools and districts. - Sara Foster, Normandy alumna and Board President "

The board conducted a detailed audit to identify strengths and gaps in all areas of the district's operations

Strengths and gaps were evaluated in six major areas of district operations, informed by a synthesis of research on school and district improvement.

Student Culture and Wellness	Curriculum, Instruction and Achievement	Family and Community Partnerships	Adult Culture and Learning	Talent Systems	Finance and Operations
1A. Culture conducive to learning	1A. Curriculum quality	1A. Family involvement	1A. Focus, depth of PD content	1A. Teacher skills and capabilities	1A. Resource availability
1B. Schoolwide routines and systems	1B. Curriculum implementation	1B. Family communication	1B. Use of student data	1B. Teacher recruitment	1B. Resource use
2A. Availability of services	2A. Rigorous expectations	1B. Enrollment and retention	1C. Observation and feedback	1C. Teacher retention	2A. Centralized supports
2B. Trauma-informed, culturally responsive appr.	2B. Teacher content knowledge	2A. Openness to partnership		2A. Leader skills and capabilities	2B. Organizational structure
2C. Social-emotional supports, environment	2C. Assessment strategy	2B. Partnership coordination			
	3A. Instructional differentiation				
	3B. Multi-tiered intervention strategy				
	4A. College/career readiness for graduates				

Legend:
- 🟩 Evidence is more positive than negative
- 🟧 Evidence is largely mixed
- 🟥 Evidence is more negative than positive
- ⬜ Insufficient evidence to evaluate

The Covid-19 emergency exacerbates existing needs, but also creates unprecedented opportunity for change

Pre-emergency dire academic need

"

In addition to being 2 grade levels behind average, students in Normandy grow less (0.74) than one grade level per year.

Measures of learned curriculum are low across virtually all comparisons because of fragmented implementation of low-quality curriculum, limited resources to support teachers with lesson planning and internalization, and an undifferentiated intervention strategy for the students farthest behind.

"

Normandy Schools Collaborative Strengths and Gaps Report
Attuned Education Partners
April 2020

Re-opening moderating factors

Learning Loss
Researchers estimate that students nationally may lose 30% of their learning gains in reading and 50% in math.

NWEA

Trauma
Students and adults may experience fear, anxiety, stress, uncertainty, etc., through the course of new Covid cases, school closures, and changes to their daily routines.

CASEL

Economic Hardship
St. Louis County unemployment claims increased 18x from 1850 to 33000 from February to March.

Missouri Department of Labor

The board then recruited a proven leader to oversee the district's transformation

Marcus Robinson
Superintendent

" I developed my first confidence in my ability to learn in the Normandy School District. Every student deserves to be challenged by high expectations and the opportunity to rise and meet them. I went all the way to the Ivy League with the foundation I got in Normandy. Every student deserves the opportunity to have productive, progressive life choices after high school -- with access to college or a career.

We find ourselves at NSC at a unique moment, filled with urgency, because we are not yet doing right by kids. Our data and recent organizational diagnosis reveal a crisis for our students--the vast majority of whom we don't feel safe and engaged and are not adequately prepared to read, write or do math on grade level. We have urgent action to take to be prepared for a strong reentry to our schools. We must also ensure that we take full advantage of every moment to improve culture and core instruction for the 2020-21 school year. We don't have a minute to waste. "

Career highlights include:
- Chief Executive Officer, Memphis Education Fund
- Managing Partner, The Achievement Collective
- Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer, Tindley Accelerated Schools
- Ed.D., Education Leadership, Teachers College, Columbia University

Together, the board and Superintendent developed a transformation strategy anchored on five priorities

Mission

Normandy Schools Collaborative prepares global leaders for college, career and productive citizenship by empowering a community of confident learners and valuing the unique contributions of every student.

Strategic Priorities

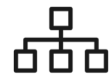| Engaging Environments	College-Ready Teaching & Learning	Top Talent	Impactful Partnerships	21st Century Learning Organization
Provide safe and engaging learning environments with robust social-emotional wellbeing and trauma-informed supports.	Reimagine academic programming, in part by adopting rigorous, relevant, and culturally-responsive curriculum and assessments for consistent use across the district.	Recruit, develop, hold accountable, and retain top talent by supporting social-emotional wellbeing, deepening content knowledge and instructional skill, and launching a value-based culture.	Strengthen family and community partnerships through tighter coordination and alignment to strategic priorities.	Build a world-class central office that is responsive, nimble, and sustainable.

Reopening this fall and the first years of the transformation strategy will be focused on a narrow set of the most important initiatives

Engaging Environments

Address broken school culture systems and add more resources to support attendance and intervention.
1.1 Establish a shared vision of excellence for student culture and codify a consistent behavior management system.
1.3 Design and launch attendance incentive and intervention programming.

College-Ready Teaching & Learning

Implement standards-aligned curriculum and ensure instructional continuity between schools and home
2.1 Adopt and implement standards-aligned and culturally-responsive early literacy (PK-8) curriculum and assessments with a strong focus on foundational literacy skills.
2.4 Design an academic model that ensures instructional continuity between remote and brick and mortar learning environments by adopting consistent technology-enabled platforms, software, and content.

Top Talent

Train teachers to effectively implement rigorous curriculum and improve adult culture
3.4 Launch a vertically-aligned professional development program that develops the content knowledge, instructional leadership skills of teachers, school leaders, and central office leaders and that aligns to new academic and SEL curriculum.
3.5 Improve adult culture by implementing adult SEL/wellness practices and by launching values-based programming and training the team in living the Normandy values.

Impactful Partnerships

Align partnerships with community organizations coherently around student needs
4.1 Develop and launch a systematic approach to effectively (re)align volunteers and partnerships to support students' attendance, academic and SEL needs.
4.2 Improve and expand district systems to ensure clear, consistent, and transparent two-way communications and to elevate family, community and alumni voice.

15

CONTENTS

Executive Summary
History and Significance
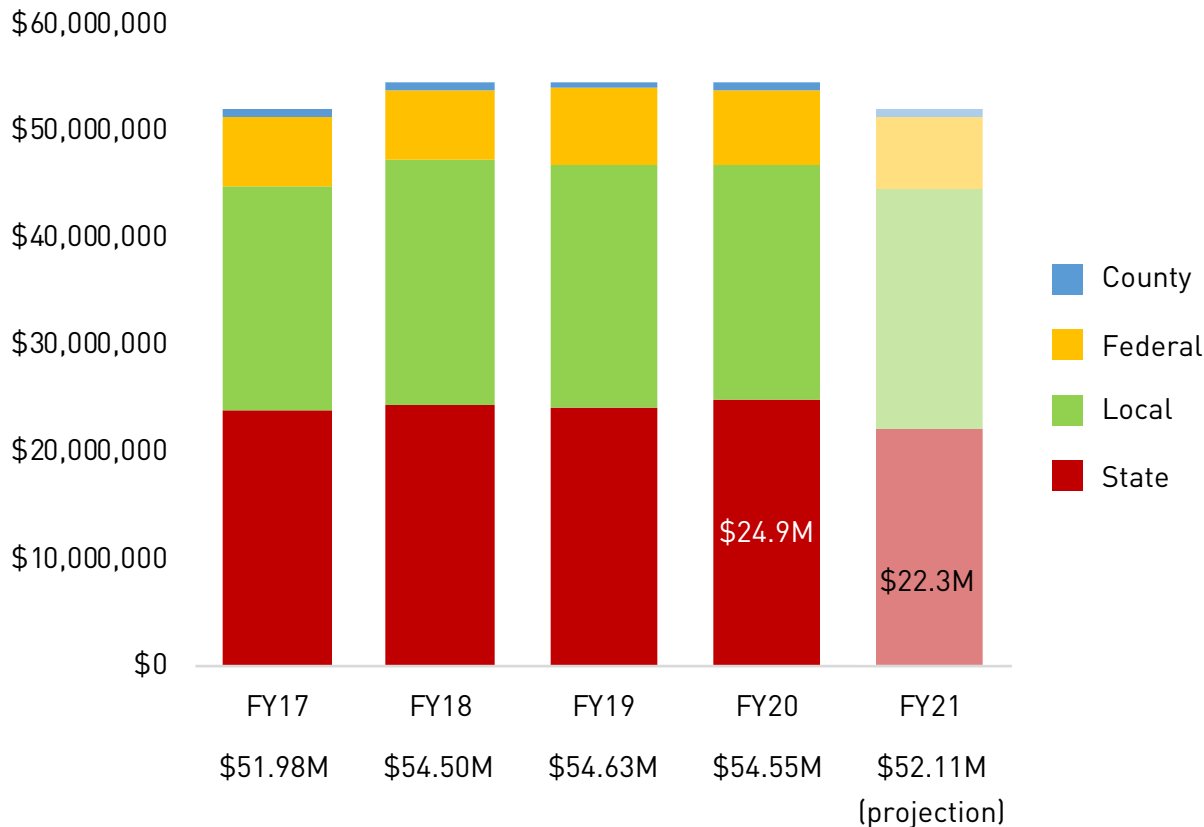Charting a New Path Forward
■ **Support Needed**
Appendix

An expected revenue reduction in state funding of at least $2.6M puts greater need on other channels for capital

Normandy anticipates at least a 10% reduction in its state funding source in FY21 and possibly beyond due to reduced revenue generated from sales tax (Prop C funds), the gaming industry (Classroom Trust Fund), and state general funds (Basic Formula payments). NSC has already lost $1.3M in state revenue during May, June and July of FY20.

Revenue Forecast by Source

$60,000,000	
$50,000,000	
$40,000,000	
$30,000,000	
$20,000,000	
$10,000,000	
$0	

Legend:
- County
- Federal
- Local
- State

FY20: $24.9M
FY21: $22.3M

FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21
$51.98M	$54.50M	$54.63M	$54.55M	$52.11M (projection)

Accounting for the revenue shortfall and new investments needed to support the 2025 plan, NSC will need $8M in philanthropic contributions over the next three years

Support will both attenuate the impact of the anticipated budget shortfall on planned expenses reallocated to the new strategy, as well as finance critical new investments the strategy demands in FY21-FY23.

Strategic Priority	FY21 Reallocated Expenses (millions)	% of Reallocated Expenses	FY21-23 New Investments (millions)	
Engaging Environments	$21.3	39%	$1.5	Vision of excellence, SEL curriculum adoption, safety improvements, deanship positions, Covid-19 safety
College-Ready Teaching & Learning	$27.3	50%	$1.8	Academic advising, K-12 ELA and math curriculum piloting and adoption, literacy trainings
Top Talent	$2.5	5%	$0.7	Professional development and leader coaching, tuition reimbursements
Impactful Partnerships	$0.9	2%	$1	Community partnerships director and student engagement
21st Century Learning Organization	$2.7	5%	$0.06	Central office redesign, progress monitoring supports
	$54.7M ($2.6M short)	100%	+$5.1M	= $7.7M in total support requested

CONTENTS

Executive Summary
History and Significance
Charting a New Path Forward
Support Needed
■ **Appendix**

Student Culture and Wellness Gaps

Unclear expectations, a lack of shared routines, ineffective implementation, and not enough attention to the holistic needs of students are undermining the learning environment, resulting in high rates of suspension and student absenteeism and unsustainable conditions for effective instruction.

- Schoolwide systems to manage student behavior and support positive student culture have not yet been developed or consistently implemented, as evidenced by stakeholders' reported experiences and disciplinary incident rates six times the state average.

- NSC is missing opportunities to mitigate the effects of trauma and promote the social and emotional development of students, which has resulted in weak measures of school culture and stakeholder concern over physical and emotional safety.

Source: Normandy Schools Collaborative Strengths and Gaps Report, 2020.

Curriculum, Instruction and Achievement Gaps

Measures of learned curriculum are low across virtually all comparisons because of fragmented implementation of low-quality curriculum, limited resources to support teachers with lesson planning and internalization, and an undifferentiated intervention strategy for the students farthest behind.

- NSC is not consistently implementing high-quality and culturally-responsive curricula to ensure students have equitable access to grade level standards and content, as evidenced by student achievement that is 2 grade levels behind the national average and students losing ground year-to-year.
- NSC lacks a systematic approach to developing teachers' understanding of college and career ready standards and the instructional and assessment systems needed to ensure students fulfill them, resulting in widening achievement gaps and teachers not supported to grow in their practice.
- Students who struggle academically encounter an uncoordinated intervention strategy.
- Larger numbers of graduates are leaving NSC less prepared for college and career.

Community and Family Partnerships Gaps

Opportunities for family and community involvement are many, but stakeholders feel they could be strengthened through greater communication and coordination; also, given that many residents choose other school options, the impact of these efforts may be limited.

- Stakeholders report satisfaction with efforts to involve families, but they could be strengthened through greater communication and efforts to attract new families.

- Partnerships are present throughout NSC, but their impact isn't clearly measured and they could benefit from greater alignment.

Adult Culture and Learning Gaps

Systems to develop teachers' deep content knowledge are lacking, thereby compromising their ability to effectively address instructional and social-emotional gaps. Teachers do not appear to be developing in their practice significantly enough to drive student achievement.

- Teachers are insufficiently supported with opportunities for structured collaboration or job-embedded professional development, with only 3 of 7 schools presenting evidence of teacher observation and feedback.

Source: Normandy Schools Collaborative Strengths and Gaps Report, 2020.

Talent Systems Gaps

High rates of teacher attrition create disruption at schools and, while those who stay are more likely to be effective than those who leave, the vast majority of all teachers fail to increase student achievement. This dynamic is reinforced by an insufficient teacher pipeline and selection system that replaces exiters with ineffective new teachers.

- Few current teachers are effective in raising student achievement and while they leave the system at remarkably high rates, their replacements have an even higher probability of being ineffective in their first year.

- The higher up the management chain, the less likely stakeholders are to believe that staff are held to high expectations and have the capabilities they need to fulfill their roles.

Source: Normandy Schools Collaborative Strengths and Gaps Report, 2020.

Finance and Operations Gaps

On a per pupil basis, NSC is spending more than most districts in Missouri; however, its budget is in deficit, a revenue shortfall is on the horizon, and stakeholders already report insufficient resources. This suggests the need for cost effectiveness evaluation, revenue diversification and potential improvements to the district's organizational structure.

- A budget deficit and forecasted revenue shortfall will continue to limit resources available for improvement.

- Parts of the NSC organizational structure and infrastructure could be improved to facilitate school support.

Source: Normandy Schools Collaborative Strengths and Gaps Report, 2020.

Priority 1: Engaging Environments

Importance

Learning environments that are safe and socially-emotionally supportive are foundational for student success. In NSC, unclear expectations, a lack of shared routines, ineffective implementation, and not enough attention to the holistic needs of students are undermining the learning environment, resulting in high rates of suspension and student absenteeism and unsustainable conditions for effective instruction.

Initiative		SY20-21 Phase
1.1	Establish a shared vision of excellence for student culture and codify a consistent behavior management system.	Implement
1.2	Adopt and implement evidence-based trauma-informed and social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum and practices across all schools.	Research and design
1.3	Design and launch attendance incentive and intervention programming.	Implement
1.4	Design and implement a consistent MTSS process to track and measure student progress and provide targeted interventions.	Research and design

Priority 2: College-Ready Teaching and Learning

Importance

Implementation of high quality curriculum is a key accelerator of student success.   Unfortunately, NSC has fragmented implementation of low-quality curriculum, limited resources to support teachers with lesson planning and internalization, and an undifferentiated intervention strategy for the students farthest behind. As a result, instruction largely does not expose students to grade-level content or high-quality curriculum.

Initiative		SY20-21 Phase
2.1	Adopt and implement standards-aligned and culturally-responsive early literacy (PK-8) curriculum and assessments with a strong focus on foundational literacy skills.	Implement, K-8
2.2	Adopt and implement standards-aligned and culturally-responsive ELA curriculum (9-12) and assessments.	Research and design
2.3	Adopt and implement standards-aligned and culturally-responsive math curriculum and assessments (PK-12).	Pilot AF Navigator in select 1-8 schools
2.4	Design an academic model that ensures instructional continuity between remote and brick and mortar learning environments by adopting consistent technology-enabled platforms, software, and content.	Implement
2.5	Redesign high school programming to include concurrent enrollment and career pathways, and to reflect the diverse and rigorous offerings required to fulfill the district's Portrait of a Graduate	Research and design
2.6	Adopt tier 2 and 3 intervention curriculum and programming to align with adoption cycle of tier 1 resources.	Research and design
2.7	Pilot innovative program designs in select classrooms and schools.	Pilot in select classroom & schools

Priority 3: Top Talent

Importance

High rates of teacher attrition create disruption at schools and, while those who stay are more likely to be effective than those who leave, the vast majority of all teachers fail to increase student achievement. This dynamic is reinforced by an insufficient teacher pipeline and selection system that replaces exiters with ineffective new teachers.

Initiative		SY20-21 Phase
3.1	Design and launch a comprehensive recruitment strategy to attract diverse candidates, with a particular focus on filling hard to serve roles and leveraging partnership with local and national universities.	Research and design
3.2	Develop competency frameworks and aligned coaching and evaluation systems for teachers, school leaders, and central office leaders.	Research and design
3.3	Implement the collaborative plan time and common resources needed to support high-quality and consistent unit and lessons plan internalization, student work analysis and data driven instructional practices.	Pilot in context of ELA curriculum roll out
3.4	Launch a vertically-aligned professional development program that develops the content knowledge, instructional leadership skills of teachers, school leaders, and central office leaders and that aligns to new academic and SEL curriculum.	Implement
3.5	Improve adult culture by implementing adult SEL/wellness practices and by launching values-based programming and training the team in living the Normandy values.	Implement valued-based culture

Priority 4: Impactful Partnerships

Importance
Efforts to involve families and community partners are abundant in the district, but are in need of greater alignment and coordination.

Initiative		SY20-21 Phase
4.1	Develop and launch a systematic approach to effectively (re)align volunteers and partnerships to support students' attendance, academic and SEL needs.	Implement
4.2	Improve and expand district systems to ensure clear, consistent, and transparent two-way communications and to elevate family, community and alumni voice.	Implement
4.3	Recruit new families and retain existing families at key transition points through targeted campaigns.	Research and design

Priority 5: 21st Century Learning Organization

Importance

The district's vision and strategy have fallen short of leading NSC to achieve concrete, ambitious, and inspiring goals. Many of the district's current practices are unaligned and inconsistent with research and best practice, so even if executed well, are not likely to produce strong results for students.

Initiative		SY20-21 Phase
5.1	Design and launch a school performance framework and utilize data to make decisions about school supports, interventions, and actions.	Research and design
5.2	Prioritize people, time, and money to support the improvement of NSC' schools in an equitable manner.	Research and design
5.3	Improve the transparency of budget and financial reporting processes to ensure investments produce the greatest outcomes for students.	Research and design
5.4	Publish guidance on school autonomy that clarifies decision-making rights, promotes best practice, and incentivizes innovation.	Research and design

The strategy is supported by new organizational values and a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism

Values

Excellence	We strive relentlessly for excellence and take personal accountability for our actions and their impact. We maintain high expectations for all students to achieve at high levels.
Dignity	We walk our talk, acting with integrity and honesty.
Collaboration	We build respectful and restorative relationships that enable us to partner effectively across lines of difference.
Tenacity	We reflect deeply and with curiosity, learn continuously, and persist to meet our goals and conquer our challenges.
Care	We attend to the needs of the whole person, celebrating and loving ourselves and one another as healthy and happy members of the community.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Commitment

We are committed to interrupting cycles of oppression by investing in strategies that ensure all students achieve at high levels.

Contact

Marcus Robinson, Superintendent
Normandy Schools Collaborative
mrobinson@normandysc.org

Eric Scroggins, CEO
The Opportunity Trust
eric@theopportunitytrust.org