

SEATTLE YOUTH & FAMILIES INITIATIVE

Mayor McGinn announced the Youth and Families Initiative during his inaugural address in response to input that he received during his campaign and the transition period that followed. Its goal is to identify the most pressing challenges that youth and families in Seattle face and collectively mobilize towards solutions so that 100 percent of kids graduate from high school ready for work or college.

In order to identify those challenges we turned to the community--between February and May of 2010 we held a total of 137 large and small community meetings across the city, and over 3,000 people came out to discuss the issues and share their priorities with us.¹ The public input process culminated in the Kids and Families Congress on June 5th at Seattle Center, at which elected representatives from the community meetings came back together to narrow down over 1,200 identified priorities into the top 35 for City government to focus on.²

The issues at the Kids and Families Congress were sorted into 6 broad categories--Education, Health, Neighborhood Safety, Race and Social Justice, Youth Development, and Strong Neighborhoods--and following the Congress the City formed 6 action teams, one for each issue area.

In addition, the Mayor used the priorities from the Youth and Families Initiative as a guide when making his final decisions on the proposed 2011-2012 budget which he transmitted to the City Council on Monday, September 27th.³ He's also in the process of creating a Youth and Families Budget within the City, organized around the Road Map to Success⁴, which will determine where and how City government spends money that affects youth and families. The Road Map is aligned with the Seattle Public School District's strategic plan.⁵

Policy work by the City is only part of the equation, though--meaningful changes for youth and families in Seattle will only be possible if community members who care passionately about these issues are also able to be part of the solution. Here are some of the ways in which we're working to keep you engaged going forward:

1. Through [Engage Seattle](#)⁶, a plan that's focused on making it easier to connect with local government and with other Seattle residents to create meaningful change in your own community. Engage Seattle has three main goals:
 - a. **Improving access to government** by putting information about when City representatives are going to be holding events in your neighborhood all in one place (seattle.gov/engage/access.htm).
 - b. **Leveraging volunteer service** by using targeted volunteer service to address some of the priorities from the Kids and Families Congress (seattle.gov/engage/service.htm).
 - c. **Developing emerging leaders** in order to help ensure that anyone who wants to make change in their community has the tools necessary to be able to do so (seattle.gov/engage/organizing.htm).

2. We also heard loud and clear that many of you are interested in being able to communicate with each other on an ongoing basis, so we're in the process of creating a social networking site that will allow you to do just that. It should be up very shortly.

¹ To see the priorities that were identified from each meeting, go to youthandfamilies.seattle.gov/results and look under "TOP PRIORITIES, BROKEN DOWN BY MEETING."

² To see the results from the Kids and Families Congress, go to youthandfamilies.seattle.gov/results and look under "KIDS AND FAMILIES CONGRESS."

³ To see the full budget broken down by department, go to seattle.gov/financedepartment/11proposedbudget.

⁴ Go to youthandfamilies.seattle.gov/results and click on "Road Map" to see the full version of Seattle's Road Map to Success.

⁵ Available online at seattleschools.org/area/strategicplan/strat_plan_final_070908.pdf.

⁶ Online at engage.seattle.gov or seattle.gov/engage.