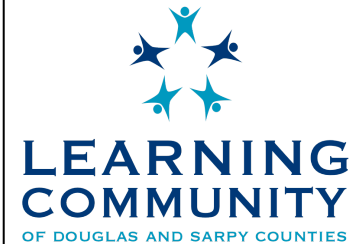
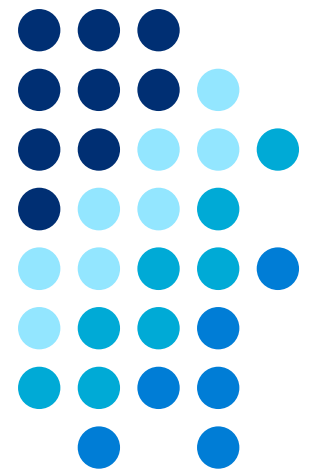


# The Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties

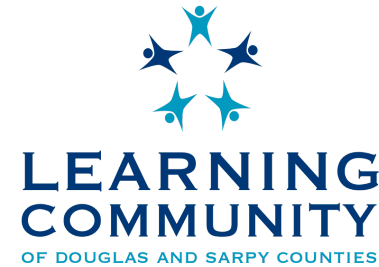


*Educational Excellence,  
Opportunity and Equity*

Status Update for  
One Nation Indivisible  
Monday, October 22, 2012



# This Morning



- **Brief Review**

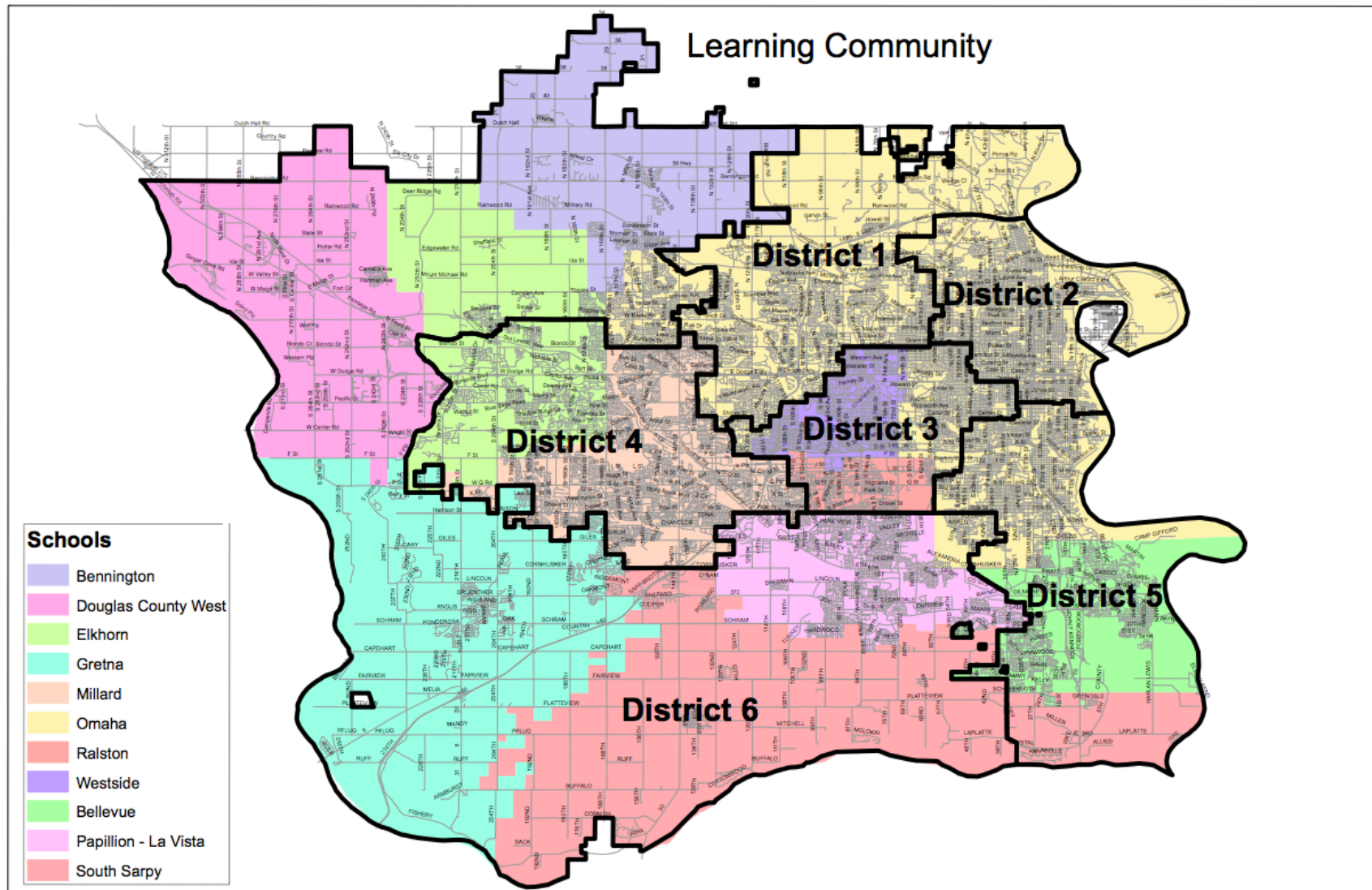
- What is the Learning Community?
- Why was the Learning Community created?
- How does the Learning Community operate?

- **Update**

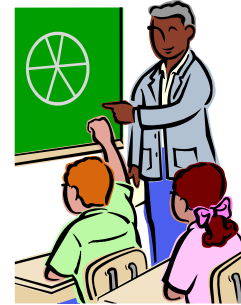
- What has the Learning Community done?
- What does the future hold?

- **Q &A**

# Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties



# A Learning Community of ~111,000 Students



- We comprise approximately 38% of all public school students in Nebraska
- ~41.7% of our students are on Free or Reduced-price Lunch (compared to 41.2% state-wide)
- We have almost 40% of the English Language Learners in the state
- Almost 100 languages are spoken throughout the 11 member school districts
- Challenges include growing poverty, absenteeism, homelessness, mobility

*How do we help each child succeed?*

*How do we close the achievement gaps that currently exist?*

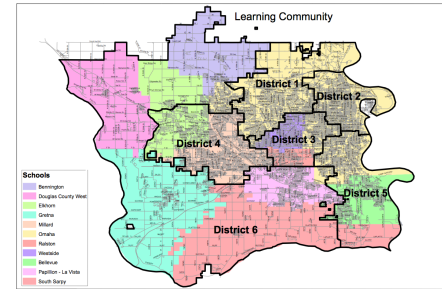
# Why A Learning Community



By coming together, we can better:

- Provide for a **more equitable distribution of resources** to students with greatest needs (using poverty as an indicator of need)
- Create **more socioeconomically diverse learning environments** as a strategy for improving student achievement
- Ensure **access to extended learning opportunities and family support programs** for elementary students and their families challenged by poverty, limited English-speaking skills and high mobility

# Learning Community Mission



*To bring together the strengths within our community to create a collaborative environment that promotes academic excellence, the development of educational opportunity and resource equity that maximizes the potential of every child.*

# Governance & Accountability



- 22-member **Learning Community Coordinating Council** is second largest public body in the State
- 18 voting members - two elected and one School Board appointee for each of the **six Achievement Subcouncils**
- 4 non-voting members - appointed by otherwise non-represented school districts (2 seats unfilled)
- Work done through Task Forces and Subcommittees
- Eleven **Superintendents are Advisory Committee**
- **Evaluation Collaborative** advises on data & evaluation
- **Annual report to the Legislature** - December 1st

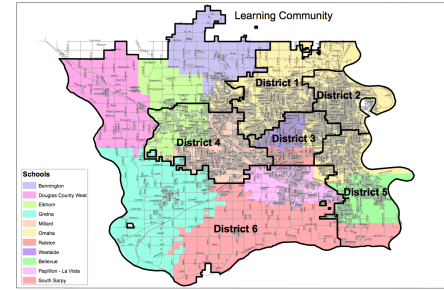
# Accomplishments



- Created a shared tax base through a **Common Levy**
- Developed a socioeconomic **Diversity Plan**
  - To increase socio-economic diversity in every school building across the Learning Community
- Began establishing **Elementary Learning Centers**
  - Programs for children & families in high poverty areas
  - Primarily in Subdistricts 2 & 5, but added projects in other four subdistricts in 2011
- Approved school districts' annual **Poverty and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plans**



# Common Property Tax Levy



- **Operations Fund:** Up to \$.95 per \$100 of assessed property valuation
  - Distributed back to districts according to needs-based state aid formula
  - Districts can assess an additional amount up to \$1.05
  - Set at **\$.95** each of the last 4 years
- **Special Building Fund:** Up to \$.02 per \$100 of assessed property valuation
  - Distributed back to districts based upon number of students
  - In FY 2009-10, set at \$.01; **\$.00** in FY 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13

*This is the only aspect of the Learning Community law that is subject of Sarpy County taxpayer lawsuit*

# Diversity Plan

## Open Enrollment



- **Goal:** to annually increase socioeconomic diversity at each grade level in each school building
- **Open Enrollment** offers students and families greater **CHOICES**
  - Any student in the Learning Community can attend a school in any of the 11 districts, subject to capacity and diversification priorities
  - Movement is **VOLUNTARY**
- **Maximum Capacity** of buildings set by school districts based on criteria and procedures established by Learning Community
- **Transportation** required to be provided by districts under specified circumstances

*New Open Enrollment website at:*

[www.learningcommunityds.org/open-enrollment/](http://www.learningcommunityds.org/open-enrollment/)

# Open Enrollment 2010-2011 School Year



- Great variation in socioeconomic diversity exists across six subdistricts
- Most schools have had capacity to accept students
- 3,213 students applied; 2,246 were accepted
- Of those accepted, 1,015 had potential to increase socioeconomic diversity
- Wide gaps in State Assessment performance persist between FRL and non-FRL students
- It is still too early to determine the impact of open enrollment on student academic achievement

# Diversity Plan

## Focus School/Program



- Any one district or a collaboration of multiple districts may propose a focus school or program designed to attract students from diverse backgrounds
- Differs from a magnet school because there is no attendance area
- Focus school/program designation qualifies district(s) for adjustment in state aid formula
- Capital funding is available through tax levy up to \$.02
- OPS' s **Wilson Focus School, and Lewis & Clark and Burke Focus Programs** are Learning Community' s first approved Focus School and Program.

# Elementary Learning Centers (ELC)



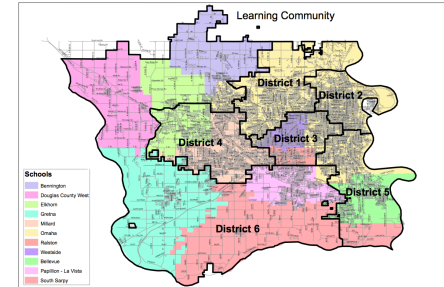
- **Visionary Resource Centers** for enhancing the academic success of elementary students, particularly those students challenged by poverty, limited English skills, and mobility
- **Subcouncils** focus on unique needs in their areas
- **Community Collaboration** - to address academic and family support needs of children and their families
- **ELC Funding**
  - Levy up to **\$.01** for ELC programs (~\$4.5 million)
  - Levy up to \$.02 for ELC sites - \$.005 in FY2009-2010; \$.008 in FY2010-2011; **\$.00** in FY2011-12 and FY2012-13

# ELC Programs Since Summer 2010



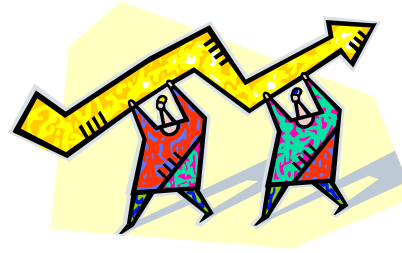
- Nearly **\$5 million** invested in programs across all six subdistricts
- **Subcouncils 2 and 5** designated for full Elementary Learning Centers
- **Over 3,000** students served in 2010-11; **over 8,000** served in 2011-12
- **Extended learning programs** - after school, spring break, summer school; closely tied to classroom learning; early literacy a priority
- **Jumpstart programs** - to ready kids for kindergarten
- **Family support liaisons** - helping families address issues that interfere with student success
- **Family literacy program** at Learning Community Center of S. Omaha
- **UNMC Connections** maternal education project in North Omaha
- Developmental **evaluation** approach is designed to make each program more effective

# New Developments



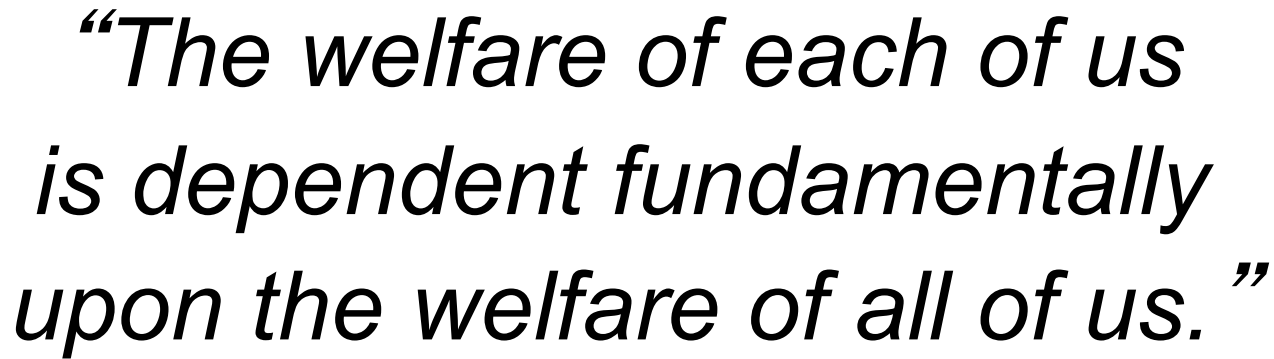
- Nebraska Supreme Court upholds constitutionality of the common levy
- Redistricting in response to 2010 census
- New Superintendents and School Board members
- 2012 elections

# Looking Ahead



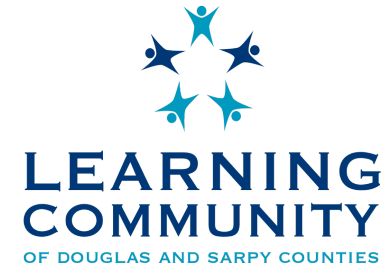
- **Seize this unprecedented opportunity**
  - What interests do we share?
  - How do we cultivate our collective capacity to bring about change?
- **Produce improved results for kids through collaboration**
  - Clarifying joint goals and objectives
  - Developing identifiable measures of success
- **Gain the public's confidence**
  - Keeping the public informed
  - Making evidence-based decisions
  - Engaging stakeholders in designing and planning
- **Bring innovation and best practices to light**
  - Applying what works
  - Being willing to learn from each other





- Theodore Roosevelt

# Questions?



***Contact us:***

## ***Learning Community of Douglas & Sarpy Counties***

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Phone: 402.964.2801

Website: [www.learningcommunityds.org](http://www.learningcommunityds.org)