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**YOUNGSTOWN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**ACADEMIC DISTRESS COMMISSION**

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**Youngstown City Schools Academic Recovery Plan Update**

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**Youngstown Academic Distress Commission**  
**Submitted: October 18, 2012**

**Approved by the Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction: October 22, 2012**

To achieve the goal of increasing academic achievement throughout the Youngstown educational community and most importantly to achieve the goal of expecting and inspiring each and every student to achieve his or her full potential, the YCSD will become a Demonstration Site for the Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations (QISA). In partnership with QISA, during the 2012-13 school year, schools selected by the YCSD superintendent will work to implement QISA's Aspirations Framework. The Framework seeks to raise the level of student voice, foster the conditions that promote student and staff aspirations, and develop an aspirations action plan for each building, student and staff member.

My Voice/Aspirations in YCSD will occur in three (3) phases:

Phase I schools initiated work in August 2012 and include the following:

- P.C. Bunn Elementary School
- McGuffey Elementary School
- Taft Elementary School
- Williamson Elementary School
- P. Ross Berry Middle School
- Volney-Rogers Middle School
- Wilson Middle School

The following Phase II schools will initiate work in January 2013:

- Harding Elementary School
- Martin Luther King Elementary School
- Kirkmere Elementary School
- East High School

QISA is anticipated to continue the work with the YCSD through the 2014-15 school year, to ensure that the Guiding Principles of Self-Worth, Engagement, Purpose become a systemic part of the educational culture of the YCSD Community. Accordingly, the remaining schools are in Phase III and will initiate work in August 2013:

- Chaney High School
- Rayen Early College
- UPLC

In response to YCSD's desire to involve parents and the community in raising students' aspirations, QISA will work with Phase I elementary schools to implement QISA's Aspirations Advocate school-based mentoring program. QISA will invite parents and community members to be trained in the Aspirations Framework in order to support students' self-worth, engagement, and sense of purpose in school.

Since Aspirations is a Framework and NOT a prescribed program, success of Aspirations is best measured by the consistent, intentional and reflective work of the Staff and Student Aspirations Teams in each building. Effective Aspirations implementation will close the expectation, relationship and participation gaps students often experience in school that in turn affects the achievement gap. While it is difficult to measure individual levels of internalizing Aspirations, evidence of Aspirations is demonstrated by adult behavioral change, student behavioral change, and in the positive

My Voice and iKnow My Class trend data over time.

### Evaluation

QISA will follow a 30-60-90 plan to evaluate the effectiveness of these efforts, adjusting implementation every 30 days, and reporting to the ADC every 90 days. Evaluation and reporting will include, but are not limited to:

- Documentation of participation in all scheduled meetings and activities by the Staff and Student Aspirations Teams (this will include YCSD staff participation in regional My Voice conferences);
- Sampling specific practices that have changed due to Aspirations work (e.g., use of more engaging teaching strategies, student involvement in assessment, career conversations, etc.);
- Collecting attendance records, including absenteeism and tardiness;
- Monitoring discipline referrals, in-school suspensions, and other student behavior outcomes;
- Reporting on district testing data;
- Recording students' post-secondary attainments, including college acceptance, military enlistment, trade school enrollment, work, etc.;
- Tracking percentage of letter grades (i.e. percentage of grades that are A, B, etc.).

In addition to these efforts, Year One of Aspirations work will include the deployment of My Voice surveys for all students in grades 3-12\* and all staff. This will establish baseline numbers upon which to develop action plans and against which to measure future success. My Voice Focus Groups will also be conducted in all schools as a way of collecting qualitative data that will help inform the direction of Aspirations work in YCSD.

Due to the efforts of the YCSD to provide Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and increase the cultural competency and literacy of all Youngstown students and staff, QISA will disaggregate My Voice data by race/ethnicity as well as gender in order to gain a deeper understanding of student perceptions of the learning environment through this important lens. The QISA team will work together with educators to understand how culturally different experiences of self-worth, engagement, and purpose affect the learning environment.

Finally, at the classroom level starting in January, teachers in grades 3-12 will have the opportunity to measure the level of student engagement in their classes by using QISA's iKnow My Class formative assessment tool. The data generated by iKnow will be used by individual classroom teachers to improve their teaching practice. Additionally, iKnow data will be aggregated to gauge student engagement on a regular basis in order to show positive growth in an ever more motivated student body.

### Funding

The cost of this initiative is \$287,000 annually for three years. The first year (2012-2013 SY) of funding is provided by the Ohio Department of Education through Race to the Top.

Although Youngstown City Schools is not a participating RttT LEA, the Ohio Department of Education can support the use of RttT funding for FY13 in the YCSD as an involved RttT LEA to implement My Voice/Aspirations as an intensive, turnaround demonstration site.

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\* Research has shown that students in grades PK-2 do not provide accurate information in survey format. QISA will work with staff to gather the voice of Youngstown's youngest students in oral form.