

Overview of City Innovations Featured in This Report

#1 Measure What Matters

Miami-Dade County Public Schools uses data to improve academic performance and graduation rates

Key elements:

- Over the past decade, [Miami-Dade County Public Schools](#) (M-DCPS) has developed a single coherent system for tracking progress and investing in continuous improvement.
- Strategic plans at all levels (district, individual school, departments within each school) are linked to scorecards for each administrator, district leader, and principal. These scorecards, which summarize both academic and operational performance data, are the centerpiece of regular “data chats,” at which administrators, principals, teachers, and students set goals and map strategies to achieve them.
- To ensure data is shared and used, teachers and administrators receive training on how to use the district’s comprehensive data warehouse; parents and students can access relevant portions of the data through a web portal.

Results to date:

- Over the last several years, M-DCPS ranked among the top districts in Florida in improving test scores among Hispanic and black students.
- Graduation rates for Hispanic and black students increased faster in Miami-Dade than in other urban districts nationally, increasing 14 percentage points from 2006 to 2009.
- In 2012, the district won the prestigious Broad Prize for Urban Education, which recognized Miami-Dade as the largest urban area making the greatest progress in raising student achievement.

Denver Public Schools uses data to drive continuous improvement

Key elements:

- [Denver Public Schools](#) (DPS) implemented a portfolio strategy in 2005, creating a laboratory to intentionally test different models and spread best practices throughout the district.
- The district gives schools significant autonomy to make decisions on staffing, curriculum, instructional methods, technology, and many other aspects of operations.
- The district’s central office evaluates all schools on the district’s School Performance Framework to determine which models work best and when to turn around, replace, phase out, or close down models that are not getting results.

Results to date:

- Since the launch of the portfolio strategy, DPS students have shown more academic growth on state assessments than their peers across the state, more than in any other large school district in Colorado. District proficiency rates have risen in reading (14 percent), writing (12 percent), math (23 percent), and science (14 percent). By comparison, statewide reading scores increased just 2 percent and math scores 5 percent, while statewide writing and science scores each decreased by 1 percent.

New York City uses data to tackle chronic school absenteeism**Key elements:**

- Launched in 2010, the [Mayor's Interagency Task Force on Truancy, Chronic Absenteeism and School Engagement](#) brings together a dozen city agencies, over 20 community-based organizations, and several public-private partnerships.
- The Task Force aims to reduce chronic student absenteeism (missing 10 percent or more of school days), a key cause of poor academic performance and high drop-out rates.
- Innovative data sharing agreements have enabled the Task Force to collect, analyze, and act on real-time attendance, behavior, and coursework data, targeting interventions where they are needed most.
- The Task Force is piloting a number of initiatives, including new models for connecting schools to local resources and strengthening parent and student engagement.

Results to date:

- Early evaluation results are positive. For example, students who participated in one of the interventions, Success Mentors, gained over 80,000 days of additional school during the 2012-2013 year, as compared to students who did not participate.

#2 Build the Evidence Base**New York City's Center for Economic Opportunity identifies and scales what works to fight poverty****Key elements:**

- Launched by Mayor Bloomberg in 2006, the [Center for Economic Opportunity](#) (CEO) is a special unit within the Mayor's Office focusing on fighting the cycle of poverty and driving systemic change across city agencies toward better results.
- CEO designs, pilots, and oversees rigorous evaluations of each program to determine their effectiveness in reducing poverty, encouraging savings, and empowering low-income workers to advance in their careers. The unit has developed, implemented, and evaluated more than 50 programs in partnership with 28 city agencies and nearly 200 community-based organizations.

- CEO has dedicated more than 5 percent of its \$100 million budget to evaluation in order to understand and act on evidence of what works, selectively scaling programs with the strongest results and discontinuing programs that do not work.

Results to date:

- CEO has facilitated more than 30,000 job placements and 10,000 paid internships, and supported the enrollment of over 10,000 people in college or occupational training.
- CEO has helped individuals access over \$100 million in additional tax credits.
- Through the federal government’s Social Innovation Fund, CEO has also raised \$85 million from public and private sources to replicate five of its most successful programs around the country.

Project Oracle establishes itself as London’s “children’s and youth evidence hub”

Key elements:

- Launched in early 2013, this cross-sector partnership brings together a number of partners, including the Greater London Authority, the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime, the UK’s Economic and Social Research Council, the nonprofit Nesta, and London Metropolitan University. The Social Innovation Partnership, a social sector enterprise, coordinates the effort.
- [Project Oracle](#) provides research capacity and training to nonprofits to help them develop their evidence base, and synthesizes evaluation results across a range of organizations and interventions.
- Project Oracle trains public officials in the use of evidence in contracting for services.

Results to date:

- In less than a year of full operation, 120 youth agencies have self-assessed the strength of their evidence base or been trained in evaluating program impact. Fifty-four agencies have submitted completed evaluations in an “evidence competition” to gain recognition for their work.

#3 Invest in What Works

San Antonio’s new pre-K initiative seeks to use evidence every step of the way

Key elements:

- Convened by Mayor Julián Castro in 2011, a blue ribbon task force of business leaders, school superintendents, and other education professionals identified investment in high-quality pre-kindergarten as a key priority.
- Voters passed a \$28 million tax increase to fund the initiative over eight years.
- Initiative leaders conducted a national bidding process to choose curricula and selected two evidence-based models for implementation.

- To ensure providers implement their models with fidelity and deliver impact, San Antonio will spend almost \$1 million to conduct ongoing evaluations. The city plans to use the results to make funding decisions—deciding whether to continue programs on the basis of their outcomes.
- [The program](#) was launched in the fall of 2013; when fully implemented, 3,700 four-year-olds will be educated annually and 22,400 will be served over an eight-year period.

Results to date:

- Too early to be determined.

Providence intervenes at the community level to get better outcomes for youth

Key elements:

- Led by the [Providence Children and Youth Cabinet](#), with funding from the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#), [Evidence2Success](#) is part of a larger effort to support healthy youth development from cradle to career.
- This effort is modeled after Communities That Care, a coalition-based intervention strategy that has proven highly effective in rigorous evaluations and cost-benefit analyses.
- Evidence2Success has started assessing local data to identify community risk factors and needs. The next step will be to use a national database of evidence-based programs—called Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development—to select and replicate programs proven to address these needs.

Results to date:

- Too early to be determined.

Baltimore’s B’More for Healthy Babies uses evidence-based programs to reduce infant mortality

Key elements:

- The Baltimore City Health Department and the Family League of Baltimore, a nonprofit organization, launched [B’More for Healthy Babies](#) in 2009, offering a comprehensive range of services for pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children to improve long-term health outcomes.
- In 2012, B’More for Healthy Babies led a citywide transition to evidence-based home visiting practices, becoming the first jurisdiction in the country to do so.
- Baltimore shifted funding from an array of home visiting providers and practices to two models with the most evidence of success, and implemented a triage index, targeting interventions where they are likely to have the most positive impact.
- The effort has been buoyed by federal funding through the Affordable Care Act’s Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, which

has provided \$1.5 billion over five years to support quality programming for pregnant women and young children.

Results to date:

- The implementation of B'More for Healthy Babies has coincided with a sharp decrease in infant mortality in Baltimore City. In 2012, the city reached the lowest infant mortality rate the city has ever recorded. The disparity between white and black infant mortality rates also decreased significantly.

#4 Budget for What Works

A new way of budgeting in Baltimore dramatically changes how funding decisions are made

Key elements:

- Baltimore City launched its [Outcome Budgeting](#) process in 2009, budgeting by priority outcomes (like better schools and safer streets) rather than by departments.
- For each outcome, the city created Results Teams of department officials, technical experts, budget analysts, and residents.
- The goal is to strategically direct more resources to the programs and services that are most effective at achieving the city's outcome goals, and to de-fund programs that are underperforming.

Results to date:

- Even in a time of serious budget shortfalls, Baltimore has moved away from across-the-board reductions and has been able to increase funding for programs that have demonstrated results, eliminated services that did not, and allocated resources to an Innovation Fund.

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