



## Together for Tomorrow

Bridging Communities and Schools for Education Success

All across America, skilled principals, teachers and school staff are working with committed and involved parents to turn low-performing schools into models of educational excellence. Their work to achieve positive results for students can succeed only if communities rally around these schools. Community organizations, volunteers, families, and schools must all work together. Not surprisingly for many schools, the task of developing and sustaining partnerships frequently gets pushed to the bottom of substantial to-do lists. While the benefits of school-community partnerships are well established, partnership efforts often don't match up with the fundamental needs of the schools and students they intend to assist.

To advance community partnerships and citizen service that will support school improvement, the U.S. Department of Education, working with the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), is launching Together for Tomorrow (TFT). Through this effort, we are committed to changing the relationship between schools and community partners, both faith-based and secular, and helping these partners and stakeholders move from education outsiders to education insiders. The initiative will also promote a community culture where education improvement is viewed as everyone's responsibility.

**Together for Tomorrow will spotlight and foster partnerships among schools, families, national service programs, and community-based organizations in order to propel improvement of our lowest-performing schools.** Through partnership events, technical assistance, and a national challenge, TFT will:

- Foster local capacity to manage school-community partnerships;
- Focus community and family partnerships on boosting key measurable student outcomes – Attendance, Behavior, Course performance, and College access (the ABCs<sup>1</sup>) as a means to improve low-performing schools; and
- Celebrate and inspire community and family engagement in education and strengthen a community culture of education success.

Communities and schools that accept the challenge will garner national recognition for their efforts and become part of the Together for Tomorrow learning network, which includes demonstration sites that are already under way in six cities.<sup>2</sup> Together for Tomorrow will advance partnerships across a broad continuum: catalyzing new efforts, strengthening existing collaborations, and identifying high-quality initiatives and evidence-based practices to share with others.

Details on the Together for Tomorrow challenge and partnership events will be announced in the coming weeks. If you are interested in participating or would like more information, contact Michael Robbins, senior advisor for nonprofit partnerships at the U.S. Department of Education, at [edpartners@ed.gov](mailto:edpartners@ed.gov) or at (202) 401-1876.

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<sup>1</sup> The ABCs outcomes are adapted from the work of Robert Balfanz of Johns Hopkins University and Diplomas Now ([diplomasnow.org](http://diplomasnow.org)), a collaborative program involving Communities in Schools, City Year and Talent Development, and a recipient of an Investing in Innovation (i3) grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

<sup>2</sup> Demonstration sites are supported by CNCS with AmeriCorps VISTA members serving as full-time school-community partnership coordinators in Orlando, Fla.; New Orleans, La.; Memphis, Tenn.; Denver and Center, Colo.; and New Haven, Conn. Planning is also under way in Detroit, Mich. and Albuquerque, N.M.