

2016 Collective Impact Summit Report

January 2017



Founder's Foreword



As a native New Yorker, I am acutely aware of how fortunate my experience has been compared to that of the vast majority of public school students who look like me. I had the great privilege of attending one of the best schools in the nation—Hunter College—from nursery school through college. As a result, I like to say that everything I am is due to my family, my friends, and Hunter.

From my first day at Hunter through my last, I was constantly challenged by those around me in a supportive environment that demanded individuality. I am still reaping the benefits of empowering opportunities that I

got early like learning how to play chess from Grandmaster Sunil and the transformative art of storytelling as a four year old still in nursery school. All of it was made possible by the tireless dedication of my parents and the support network I was gifted.

To pay it forward, I wanted to make accessing great educational opportunities easier for families with fewer resources. So in 2015, together with some of my closest friends, I founded PASSNYC (Promoting Access to Specialized Schools in New York City). Our mission is to identify talented underserved students within New York City's underperforming school districts in order to increase the diversity of students taking the SHSAT. The goal is to share our network with those more deserving and talented than us.

Every student must have access to the empowering opportunities that I took for granted. Access is not enough though. We recognize that utilizing opportunities, such as the specialized high schools, frequently requires steadfast preparation too often unavailable to underserved students. Worse still, too many students in need that receive free preparation do not see the same improvement as their peers.

We can't create lasting, widespread, social change alone. Therefore, we launched our **Collective Impact Summit** in 2016 to begin rallying the resources necessary to address the systemic factors surrounding our mission. We hope you have fun reading this report from our inaugural Summit; like much of what it describes, it is a product of collective impact! In particular, we hope you will lend your generous support to the initiatives and proposals outlined within (pg 5-7) and get involved with the additional suggested next steps (pg 10) so that we can better serve the future of New York City.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan J. S. Baxter".

Ryan J. S. Baxter
Founder & Chairman
PASSNYC

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Special thanks to:

Abyssinian Baptist Church
Dr. Hazel N. Dukes
Harold O. Levy
HREP (Harlem Renaissance Education Pipeline)
Khan's Tutorial
Admission Squad
StuySU
NYC School Secrets

"Everyone in this room will be offering an idea—and collectively we can change the system, we can change the thinking, we can change the way people will perform."

Dr. Hazel Dukes

Summit Overview

The first annual PASSNYC Collective Impact Summit took place at the historic Abyssinian Baptist Church on October 14, 2016—with 50 attendees from over 40 different organizations, as well as esteemed speakers from the NAACP, Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, and the Harlem Renaissance Education Pipeline (HREP).

Our objective was to bring together NYC's top minds in education to brainstorm practical and immediate opportunities for collaboration, following the collective impact framework. Collective impact is used across disciplines to enact social change more effectively. PASSNYC Partnerships Director shared with us this helpful analogy:

"Has anyone here heard of CRISPR, or CRISPR/Cas9? Using this technique doctors can actually cut into our DNA and delete gene mutations that cause some diseases. Think about that... doctors are beginning scan embryos and remove genetic markers for cancer, MS, or Alzheimer's... Very cool, but why is this important to hear about today? I bring it up because this was not achieved by a couple doctors in a single lab. CRISPR is a product of collective impact. 20 labs from 6 different countries around the world realized the incredible impact their collective efforts could have on the medical field. This tool is not just a game changer for one illness, it is a game changer for treating ALL illnesses. So I implore you all, do not underestimate what can be achieved by coming together."

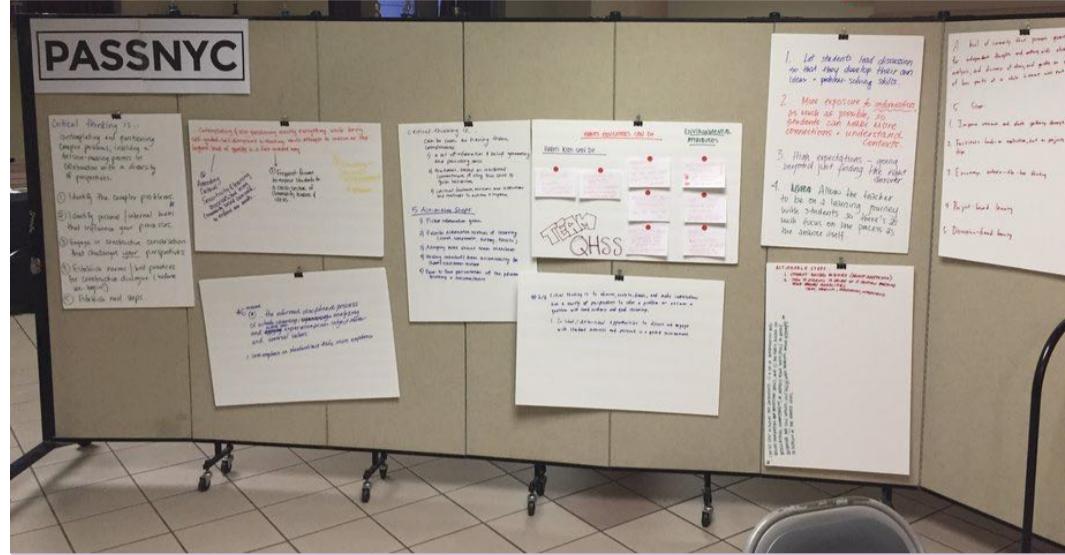
Examining Critical Thinking

Frequently discussed, but infrequently defined, critical thinking is often billed as a cure all for education. Our group warmed up with a brainstorming exercise focused on answering these questions:

- What is critical thinking?
- What actionable steps can we take to improve students' critical thinking skills?

Critical thinking is...

- contemplating and questioning complex problems, involving a decision-making process in collaboration with a diversity of perspectives
- the informed, disciplined process of actively observing, analyzing and acting upon experience across subject matter and universal values
- a set of information and belief-generating and processing skills; the habit, based on intellectual commitment, of using those skills to guide behavior; and feedback, revisions and methods to improve
- to observe, analyze, decode and make connections from a variety of perspectives to solve a problem or answer a question with sound evidence and good reasoning
- a level of curiosity that prompts questions, allows for independent thoughts and actions, aids observation, analysis and discovery of ideas, and guides on understanding of how parts of the whole interact with each other



Top 10 ways to improve critical thinking skills

1. **Hands-on activities:** projects, field trips, research and data gathering
2. **Student-raised inquiry:** focus on student interests and passions (both in school and after school)
3. **Establish norms:** discuss and establish best practices for constructive dialogue
4. **Assign leadership roles:** let students lead discussion so they develop their own ideas and problem-solving skills)
5. **Identify biases:** work together to identify personal and internal biases that influence your opinions
6. **High expectations:** go beyond just finding the right answer
7. **Embrace the process:** allow the teacher to be on a learning journey with students so there's as much focus on the process as the answer itself
8. **Accountability:** holding individuals and teams accountable for student / classroom actions
9. **Alternative methods of learning:** visual, auditory, kinesthetic
10. **Provide context:** more exposure to information so students can make more connections and understand context

Forging New Alliances: Collective Impact



CIE#1 - Free Online SHSAT Prep Pilot

Our first collective impact initiative already in implementation is focused on bringing resources together to provide completely free access to SHSAT prep. Along with PASSNYC, our partners TestPrepSHSAT.com, Gooroo, Citizen Schools, StuySU, NYC Schools Secrets and PS308 Clara Cardwell have collaborated to create a 60-hour, blended (both in-person and online) learning experience to provide almost 100 7th graders from six schools with free SHSAT prep. The first session was held in early December.

CIE#1 is using TestPrepSHSAT.com's online SHSAT Academy program, volunteer tutors from Gooroo Gives Back, and teaching staff from Citizen Schools and PS308. NYC School Secrets describes each of the specialized high schools as part of a broader overview of the high school selection process. StuySU provides student volunteers to share their experiences preparing for the SHSAT and at Stuyvesant.

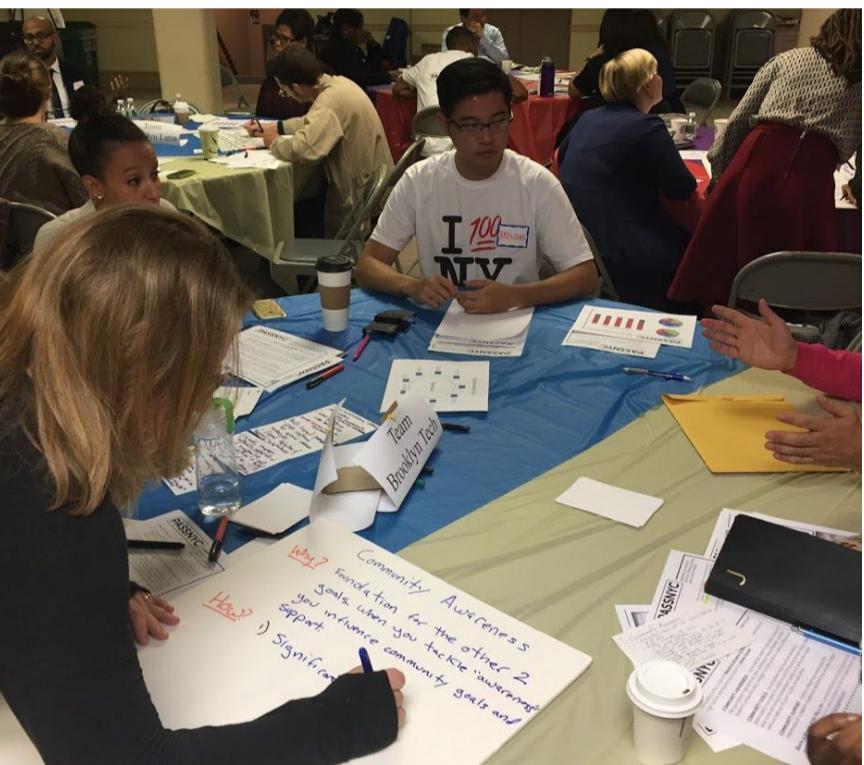


The three measures we will use to evaluate the impact of CIE#1 are 1) each school's number of SHSAT registrations, 2) the confidence 8th graders feel heading into the 2017 SHSAT versus the prior year, and 3) new SHS offers received by each schools. We are eager to learn more about spurring new SHSAT registrations and providing free resources to NYC's underserved families.

CIE#2 - Bronx Excellence SHSAT Parent Academy

To address challenges of community awareness and education, HREP and Bronx Charter School for Excellence proposed a "Parent Academy"—a community initiative with parent workshops. Parents would be contacted via assistant principals, principals, parent coordinators and teachers. The start of the program will be a potluck with kindergarten parents featuring Reevu Islam from Khan's Tutorial about the educational road ahead. The Parent Academy would continue throughout middle school with high quality

workshops and information sessions. Parents would take on roles running workshops to maximize engagement, and service providers like Khan's Tutorial would be engaged throughout the process.



Complementary projects proposed by various groups include (1) a survey or assessment of community needs done in collaboration with an independent budget office and Community Board 10, (2) additional community-driven programming to focus on non-academic enrichment, and (3) direct outreach at youth programs, community centers and other facilities, to parents and students that aren't able to make the time to attend workshops. Already existing initiatives include a bi-lingual workshop targeted at the Asian American community run by attendee and speaker Stanley Ng.

CIE#3 - Pooling Infrastructure and Resources

Leading test prep providers Admission Squad and ESPI proposed pooling resources to expand programming from weekend offerings to after-school and in-school offerings in underserved neighborhoods—giving students and parents more options and more flexibility. In particular, the importance of relying on underutilized parent expertise was emphasized.

Since plenty of high quality SHSAT programming is already available across the city, the group also proposed providing crucial but missing infrastructure in the form of transportation as well as internet. For example: (1) parents across the city could be recruited to help car-pool students to preparatory lessons, or (2) a volunteer-driven school bus with Wi-Fi. Admission Squad proposed tapping into existing volunteer corps such as JCC Literacy and Math, Grey's Matters, NYCare.

"My group began by identifying a process to understand and gauge specific needs in any community. From there, we agreed that SHSAT programming would be community driven and draw on the expertise of parent networks and community leaders."

Diana McKeage, PASSNYC Facilitator



CIE#4 - SHSAT and the College Process

Several working groups brought up the idea that taking SHSAT has value regardless of whether you gain admission to a specialized high school—because the SHSAT is one of the first elective steps towards achieving and activating the “college-going-mindset.” Collectively, it was proposed that test prep providers position the SHSAT as a “step to college.” As a first step, test prep providers should create incentives for all SHSAT takers related to college related resources, ex: a discount for future SAT prep. Additionally, SHSAT score reports need to better explain areas of challenge for future study focus.



In addition to the above proposals for collective impact projects, every single attending organization (see Appendix I, pg 11) has expressed commitment to empower HREP to improve outcomes for families and students in Central and West Harlem.

"I was a struggling high school student—and if it wasn't for the collective impact of my community, my church, Mr. Teddy who ran the corner store, and the aunts that weren't related to me in my building that worked with my parents, I wouldn't have graduated."

Dr. Sandye Johnson, HREP

Guest Speaker Highlights

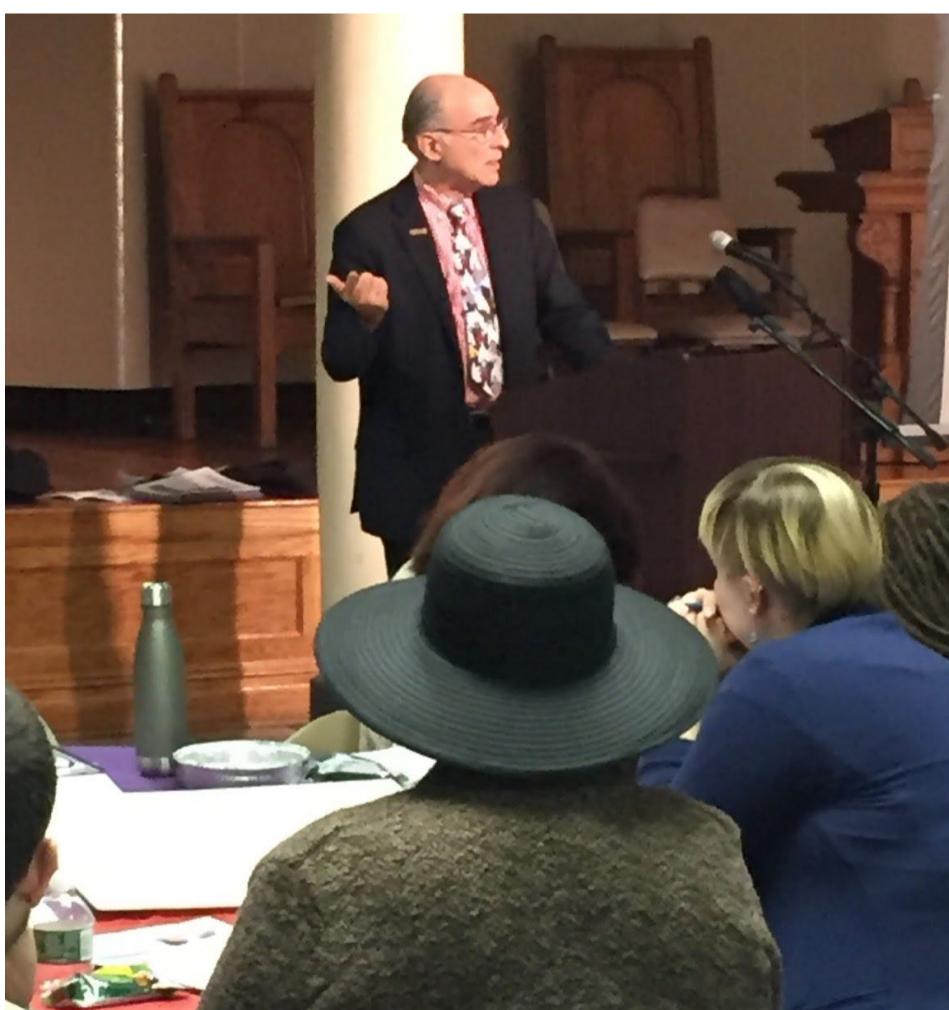
Our morning keynote speaker, civil rights activist and former national president of the NAACP **Dr. Hazel Dukes**, emphatically reminded us that every child deserves the same opportunities in education—regardless of their zip code—and called on the diverse audience to help shape the future of education in New York City.

Executive director of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation and former chancellor of New York City schools **Harold Levy** spoke about the origin and history of the City's newest specialized high schools. These schools were placed intentionally on campuses to encourage college attendance—and in areas where privileged parents would be less likely to send their kids, in order to create more opportunity for low-income students.

Levy also highlighted several concepts that drive the work of the **Jack Cooke Kent Foundation**:

- too few students get positive reinforcement in the early days of college education, and end up feeling symptoms of the “impostor syndrome”
- only about half of high-achieving low-income students, compared to high-achieving high-income students, apply for selective schools
- guidance counselors receive limited training, have caseloads of up to 500 students in New York, and are incentivized to talk students down in order to meet college acceptance goals

The Jack Cooke Kent Foundation is attempting to address these challenges both through direct scholarships and further training for education professionals. The Foundation gives the largest scholarships in the country (up to \$40,000 per year) to students in the 7th and 12th grades, as well as to community college students that want to continue their education. They have also created national online training programs for guidance counselors that will be eligible for P credits.



Stanley Ng—senior data consultant for Tested, a documentary exploring the New York City admissions system for specialized high schools and the effects of testing culture on students—shared some statistics highlighting equal access challenges across the city:

- there are 13,000 students in the Bronx, but only 4,600 take the SHSAT (vs 50% of students in Brooklyn and Queens who take the exam)
- 50% of specialized high school offers come from 5% of junior high schools in New York City, whereas 85% of offers come from 15% of junior high schools
- Queens is facing a severe shortage of high school seats (by 7,200 seats as of 2 years ago)
- Asian and White students are 150% more likely to sit for the exam as compared to Black and Latino students

Finally, **Dr. Sandye Johnson** spoke about the importance of collective impact in her personal life and in the Harlem community. Dr. Johnson is

the Co-Director of the **Harlem Renaissance Education Pipeline (HREP)**, a Cradle to Career Collective Impact Partnership of several organizations working together to improve outcomes for families and students throughout District 5.

About: Harlem Renaissance Education Pipeline

We first learned of collective impact through our work with HREP, an organization that seeks to engage the South and Central Harlem community to eliminate locally defined disparities and to develop a culture of continuous improvement while leveraging existing resources.

PASSNYC served on the HREP design team for over a year to assist them in refining their mission, vision and core indicators. Our work culminated in HREP's successful application to become a StriveTogether Cradle to Career network member. We're proud that every PASSNYC partner has agreed support efforts to further empower HREP.



"I believe that education is a civil right, that should be put back on the front burner. I believe all education should be excellent."

Dr. Hazel Dukes

"I'd like to start by letting you all know what you are not here to do, and that is share tired rhetoric about flaws in the current system. You are here to come together as an educational community around practical and pragmatic steps forward."

Rande Rogers, PASSNYC Director of Partnerships

The Future: Pragmatic Steps Forward

In the next few months, we have our work cut out for us. If our ideas and plans stay locked within the pages of this report—no students will benefit from our creativity and determination. To get involved in one of the listed initiatives, propose a new project, or obtain contact information, reach out to PASSNYC at outreach@passnyc.org.

In addition, we have identified two concrete areas of focus for any organization or individual looking to take action immediately:

Legislative Advocacy: At the conclusion of our Summit, representatives from Khan's Tutorial encouraged attendees to review New York State Bill A09864, which requires organizations offering test preparation to register with the superintendent. Khan's Tutorial pointed out that the criteria for operating isn't listed, and that the passage of this bill would threaten the ability of low-income New Yorkers to access the resources they need.

Address the Counseling Gap: Several groups brought up the need for better training for school staff (K-8, with a particular focus on guidance counselors) on all aspects of high school admissions, including guidance on recognizing impact of bias—however no concrete plans were proposed. Private advisors including the [College Advising Corps at NYU](#) were discussed as a potential model to bridge the gap.



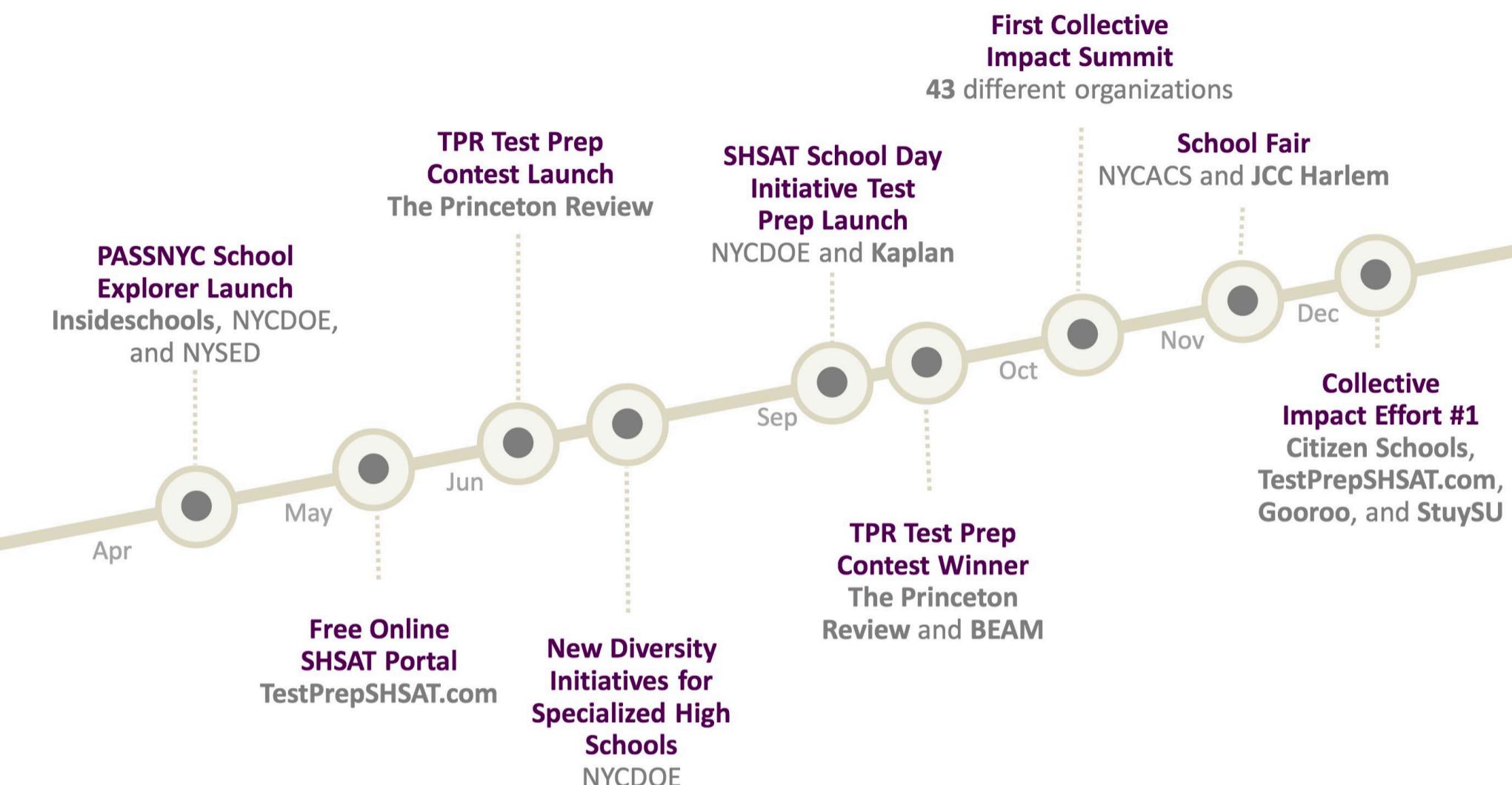
Appendix I: Organizations in Attendance



"I was excited by how the more we talked, the more our group members discovered how much we had to learn from each other, and everyone exchanged contact information."

Summit Attendee

Appendix II: 2016 Collective Impact Timeline



Other Highlights:

- Created custom database tool for Exam School Partnership Initiative;
- Launched HREP.nyc for Harlem Renaissance Education Pipeline;
- Designed custom user reminder solution for Let's Talk Schools;
- Drafted district report for Community Education Council of District 5.