



GE College Bound District Program Frequently Asked Questions

Stamford Public Schools



The GE Foundation made progress toward its \$100 million commitment to American public education with the award of two recent additional College Bound District Program (CBDP) grants to school districts: \$20 million to Cincinnati, OH and \$15 million to Stamford, CT. Louisville, KY's Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), the largest of the districts, was awarded a \$25 million grant in September 2005.

Question: What is the GE College Bound District Program?

Answer: The College Bound District Program, known as CBDP, is a GE Foundation grant program that has been in existence since 1989. It was designed to increase the percentage of high school students who are college-ready with a focus on improving math and science achievement. The CBDP is designed to ensure that all students in targeted GE communities are college ready and have the math and science skills and knowledge to succeed in their academic pursuits and chosen careers. GE believes that CBDP funding can help secure the future for young Americans by preparing them for careers in a global economy.

Question: What is the Stamford Public Schools plan for implementing CBDP?

Answer: Stamford Public Schools (SPS) leaders and teachers developed a proposal to the GE Foundation to spend \$15.3 million over five years to ensure that all SPS graduates are college-ready. The major CBDP initiatives include: increasing time for teacher collaboration; enhance teacher content knowledge; institutionalizing data-based decision making; applying coaching strategies at every school; implementing common, standards-based, rigorous curricula in math and science; creating cutting-edge science facilities in all schools; increasing our communications and data access capabilities through technology; building survey capacity to collect qualitative information from stakeholders; developing evaluation strategies that incorporate growth models to analyze CMT data and alternate forms of assessment; and capitalizing on GE volunteers in student-centered and professional learning opportunities.

Question: What does the CBDP mean for teachers?

Answer: All SPS teachers will experience the impact of the CBDP over the next five years by having opportunities to participate in the activities proposed in the grant application approved by the GE Foundation. SPS teachers will have opportunities for both content knowledge and pedagogy-focused professional development beginning in spring of 2007, including: math content professional development sessions for teachers K-9 to prepare all students to achieve Algebra I proficiency by the end of grade 8; professional development on implementing common curriculum frameworks developed by SPS teachers during the summer and fall of 2006; professional development on building professional learning communities; Tech Boot Camps, which provide teachers with technology training along with a tablet PC to increase access to information and enhance instruction in their classrooms.

In addition to professional development, teachers may choose to participate in many of the committees assembled to advise on the progress and direction of CBDP activities, including the Best Practice Task Force (developing model lessons

**GE College Bound District Program
Frequently Asked Questions**

Stamford Public Schools

and units of study, the High School Reform Think Tank, the Steering Committee and the TetraData Power Users.

Question: **How does the expanded CBDP differ from the original GE initiative?**

Answer: Stamford has participated in the College Bound program since 1999, when KT Murphy and other schools enrolling graduates of KT Murphy participated in the K2C (Kids to College) program. While K2C focused on school-wide reform, GE ultimately grew to recognize that systemic, district-wide change was necessary in order to sustain reform. GE asked experts in the education field to assess the CBDP model to see how it could be made more effective. This research completed on behalf of the GE Foundation by the Urban Institute and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) found that a district approach to student achievement, rather than a one-school approach, would have a more positive impact on students, especially those in an urban setting. The current CBDP is a model that seeks to create social change through systems change that establishes collaboration among key constituencies. This focus is on the entire district and not just one or several schools. For CBDP, the key groups include school districts central offices, teachers' unions, school administrators, local GE volunteers and other members of the community.

Question: **Why were Louisville, KY, Cincinnati, OH and Stamford, CT selected?**

Answer: GE has a long history in these three communities. Key executive leadership and strong collaborative ties with the board of education, teacher's association and local government exist in all three districts. Louisville is home to the GE Consumer & Industrial headquarters, five GE businesses are located in Stamford and GE Aviation is headquartered in Cincinnati.

Question: **What are the key components of the CBDP?**

Answer: The CBDP components include: (1) constituency engagement; (2) management capacity; (3) Common math and science curricula; (4) teacher professional development; and (5) in-depth evaluation strategies. In addition, local GE executives champion the CBDP in each community and GE volunteers share their professional skills in the classroom.

Question: **Why is GE interested in improving student achievement in math and science?**

Answer: The world becomes more competitive every day, and GE wants to make sure the U.S. can produce students who can compete in and lead this global workforce. The need to strengthen education for all students has never been more urgent. Increasing proficiency in math and science fields is critical to sustaining America's ability to meet the needs and challenges of the 21st century.

Question: **How do GE's efforts in education differ from that of other philanthropic efforts in the field?**

Answer: GE's approach to philanthropy is to enable educational institutions to increase student achievement using a *systems change model* that requires collaboration among the districts' central office, teachers' unions, school administrators, local GE volunteers and the community.

**GE College Bound District Program
Frequently Asked Questions**

Stamford Public Schools

Question: What is GE’s current commitment to the CBDP?

Answer: In 2004, the GE Foundation has launched a new phase of the program in a number of targeted school districts, tripling its previous investment and enhancing management capacity, constituency engagement, professional development, curriculum strategies, volunteering and evaluation. The focus changed from a school-by-school approach to supporting entire school districts.

Question: What other districts are being considered at this time?

Answer: The GE Foundation is working with its evaluation partners to assess potential districts.

Question: How will the school districts implement the CBDP?

Answer: The five-year grants to the districts will support a comprehensive effort to improve student achievement scores in math and science, close achievement gaps, and increase the number of students ready for college. The districts create collaborative teams—comprised of the teachers’ union, central office staff and broad-based community groups—charged with improving communication and planning, implementing standardized curricula and using data and research to drive important decisions.

Question: If college-readiness is the longer-term goal for all SPS students, what are the expected short-term goals for SPS?

Answer: SPS expects to realize the following goals through the CBDP:

SPS GOALS

- To improve the engagement and level of collaboration of key stakeholders
 - To collect key baseline data about internal and external communication processes and improve the quality of the communication
 - To identify strategies to improve information technology and management processes
 - To increase capacity to survey stakeholders efficiently
 - To create common time for teacher collaboration in every school
 - To develop leadership capacity
 - To increase teacher content knowledge in math and science
 - To establish professional learning communities
 - To launch SPS data-based decision making processes
 - To plan coaching strategies for math and science in all schools
 - To develop K-12 standards-based common curricula in math and science
 - To begin development of K-12 common, formative assessments in math and science
 - To map common curricula to 21st century skills
 - To develop and implement inquiry-based teaching and learning strategies
 - To add cutting-edge science materials and lab space in all schools
 - To engage GE Volunteers in student-centered and professional learning opportunities
 - To improve evaluation of student outcomes and develop new evaluation strategies to measure growth
-

Question: How will GE leaders and volunteers be involved in SPS?

Answer: SPS has identified three key initiatives to engage GE executive leadership: development of a service-focused culture in Central office and schools, where staff members regard parents/families as customers; *leadership development* and training to identifying and support high-potential staff; and *improving SPS management structure and recruitment* in consultation with senior Human Resource leaders at GE Equipment Services. SPS will engage GE Volunteers through a variety of *student-centered activities* (mentoring and tutoring support, expanding College Bound District I Program efforts and engaging GE affinity

GE College Bound District Program
Frequently Asked Questions

Stamford Public Schools

groups) and *professional opportunities* (content-specific professional training and networking events).

Question: **How will the CBDP initiatives be evaluated to see if they are successful?**

Answer: The GE Foundation awarded the American Institutes for Research (AIR) nearly \$2 million to support rigorous evaluation of the CBDP and to document and disseminate findings nationally. AIR will evaluate the impact of each of the district's CBDPs and the impact of the CBDP as a whole on college-readiness and college-going.