

## Breakout Sessions

### The Road to Improved Childcare Standards

*Presenter:* Kara Johnson, Executive Director, Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC)

*Session Description:* Devising a plan for improving childcare quality communitywide is a great challenge, but the results of the Early Childhood Development Study show how Greater Waco can address this vital need. Valuable resources already in place at the state and local levels make increased quality across the community possible and measurable.

Ms. Johnson stated that the quality for Pre-K daycare facilities could be improved through increased staff training, inclusion of healthcare screening and preventative services, and emphasis on the whole child's development, not just the academic side. She spoke to the benefits of improvements to the adult-to-child ratio and the establishment of a high-quality rating system for daycare facilities. She said that parental involvement prior to school is important and that parents should be encouraged to teach even simple school-ready tasks to their children. Ms. Johnson discussed ways to reach out to at-risk children, such as through home visits. She offered suggestions to get businesses more involved and supportive of their employees who have children at home.

### The Waco After-School Network, Parts 1 and 2

*Presenter:* Tameka Thomas, Board Member, Texas Afterschool Network

*Session Description:* This block of two sessions will officially launch the Greater Waco chapter of the Texas Afterschool Network. The goal of the network is to encourage after-school and extracurricular programs to align with the eight assumptions of the Education Alliance. Participants will receive information about the activities of the Network, three hours of training for staff and managers, and a resource manual.

Ms. Thomas introduced the Waco Afterschool Network and discussed how it would work to improve the quality of programs through better coordination and alignment with community goals.

### Effective Business/Industry/Education Partnerships

*Presenters:* Dr. Debra Bishop, Principal, A. J. Moore Academy; Angel Reiher, Associate Principal and Director of Career Academies, A. J. Moore Academy; Joe Nesbitt, Vice President Real Estate and Commercial Lending, Central National Bank; Lisa Saxenian, Assistant Principal, Waco High School; David Lacy, President, Community Bank and Trust; Clarence Simmons, Principal, Waco High School; Dr. David Bond,



Dr. Debra Bishop, A.J. Moore Academy Principal, meets with business leaders.

Senior Vice President, Center for Occupational Research and Development

*Session Description:* A. J. Moore Academy Magnet High School is an ethnically diverse school of 680 students, 84% of whom are economically disadvantaged. Despite challenging demographics, students are prepared to excel academically and socially in a unique and supportive school culture. Through a career academy model, each student participates in a rigorous 4-year career pathway program in engineering, finance, information technology, hospitality and tourism, environmental technology, or health professions. This presentation will divulge the secrets to the thriving school culture and the strength of its Business Advisory Board.

Presenters provided information on programs at A. J. Moore Academy; Waco High School; the Chamber of Commerce's Leadership, Education, and Development (LEAD) program; and the interface of the Business Committee throughout these programs. A success factor at A. J. Moore is the real-world experiences provided by business and industry while the LEAD program adds further opportunities for students to be engaged in many workplace environments. The business community provides career exposure, career exploration, job shadowing, and internships vital to providing students chances to focus their futures and see the relevance of academic coursework to their futures.

Attendees were given information concerning the Texas Education Agency rating of A. J. Moore in the Recognized category and receipt of the ACT 2009 College Readiness Award. The Business Advisory Board to the school consists of 65 members. Career academies offered at A. J. Moore include Engineering, Environmental Technology, Finance, Health Professions, Hospitality, and Information Technology. Dual credit for many courses is offered with both McLennan

## Breakout Sessions

Community College and Texas State Technical College. Bolstering the programs is project-based learning, made current and relevant through the assistance of the business community.

Waco High School's initiatives concerning modes of dress by students and the closed campus were greatly assisted by the support of the business community. The school is using smaller learning communities to add focus for students on academics and college readiness. Dual credit, mentoring, and strengthened partnerships between the school and postsecondary schools are providing students additional resources for success.

The Chamber's LEAD program gives students very positive experiences with local businesspersons/mentors that add to their knowledge of career options and give them confidence in their abilities and their futures. Every graduating student who was a LEAD participant has matriculated to postsecondary education.

The Business Stakeholder Group is supporting programs of the local school districts and working to further align programs and services between business and education.

### **Barriers to Success in Postsecondary Education: Waco's Postsecondary Statistics and What the Leaders of Postsecondary Education Think We Can Do About It**

*Presenters:* Dr. Johnette McKown, President, McLennan Community College; Elton Stuckly, Jr., President, Texas State Technical College Waco

*Session Description:* A critical challenge, not only for Waco but for the entire nation, is the fact that far too many high school graduates are unprepared for postsecondary work. In this session, participants will hear about remediation statistics from MCC and TSTC, what the two institutions already do to address remediation needs, and ideas from both presidents about what could make a great impact in our local metrics.

Participants were updated on enrollment, budget, and demographic statistics of the two colleges. The largest percent of Midway High School graduates attend McLennan while the largest percent of Waco High School students attend TSTC. Among the statistics, it was reported that 60 percent of Texas high school graduates attend college; 84 percent of McLennan and 75 percent of TSTC students attend full time; 64 percent of McLennan students enroll in academic transfer courses; 20 percent of entering four-year college students enroll in at least one remedial course, while

42 percent of entering two-year college students enroll in at least one remedial course; and the highest number of remedial enrollments are in mathematics courses.

Remediation of mathematics and reading is a barrier to students entering college and after enrollment; students often face barriers of self-confidence. Many programs are in place at Waco colleges to address remedial academic and college success needs.



Dr. Elton Stuckly, TSTC Waco President, and Dr. Johnette McKown, McLennan Community College President, present "Barriers to Success" session.

### **What Waco's Parents Believe About Their Child's Barriers to College: Results of a Recently Conducted Survey of Waco's Parents**



*Presenter:* Dr. Paul Illich, Vice President, McLennan Community College

*Session Description:* This presentation will include information about Waco parents' perceptions about postsecondary education and financial aid. Topics will include the value Waco parents place on education, the degree to which they understand financing options including grants and scholarships, and the degree to which they are saving money to send their children to college. The results might surprise you.

The study that sought to address barriers to college was conducted with grant funds. It showed that parents are aware of the importance of a college education, but that affordability is a concern. Eighty-eight percent of respondents stated a belief that their children could be successful in college, but a significant number of respondents were unaware of the scholarship opportunities available to their children. Dr. Illich reported that 85 percent of McLennan

## Breakout Sessions

Community College (MCC) students work at least part-time. He stated that MCC students utilize support from many sources, including scholarships, grants, their parents, and their own earnings.

### **Little Ideas That Can Make a Big Difference: Efforts Within the Faith Community**

*Presenters:* Ruben Andrade, Pastor, Family of Faith Worship Center; Melba Bunch, BLOCK Fest Facilitator Trainer, Region 12; Kevin Harrison, Senior Pastor, Victorious Life Church; Dr. Cyndi Hernandez, Assistant Director of Educational Research and Community Outreach (CASPER), Baylor University; Linda Packard, Librarian, Central Presbyterian Church; Charles Packard, Pastor, Central Presbyterian Church; Jimmy Hunter, Pastor, Toliver Chapel Baptist Church

*Session Description:* In this session, participants will learn about relatively simple ways that communities of faith are improving educational outcomes for their members, area schools, and communities. Presentations include a variety of ideas such as reading and tutoring programs, parent-child engagement programs, mentoring programs, service projects, and sermon themes on the congregation's role in teaching and learning. Participants will learn how to host "ready-made" programs as well as how they can partner with others to begin or expand their own work.

The panel of presenters provided examples of faith communities' programs that enhance educational opportunities in the Waco area. Programs involving reading, parent-student engagement, homework assistance, summer camps, and tutoring were highlighted. It was emphasized that the faith community has a deep reach into the issues facing the education of our children.



The Faith-Based Stakeholder Group presents a panel on "Little Ideas."

### **Local Government Policies Impacting Child Development and Education**

*Presenter:* Megan Henderson, Director of Regional Services, Heart of Texas Council of Governments; Susan Thames, Connally ISD; Scott Wilson, Board President, Groesbeck ISD; Sharon Fuller, Parks and Recreation Department, City of Waco; Crystal Anthony, GEAR UP Waco Interim Director

*Session Description:* Policies enacted within municipalities, school districts, and major government sectors affect very young and school-age children. In this session, participants will hear from a panel of local government officials and learn about creative, simple, and cost-effective strategies that local governments have implemented to positively impact young residents. There will also be a discussion of ideas that can be implemented in support of the Education Alliance and the children of McLennan County.

The presenters explained how various projects and policies were developed, including the support garnered for them from local and state governmental agencies. Attendees in the session were shown how community support is important in the development of education and related policy.

### **Plugging the Brain Drain: Why Education Is a Driver of Economic Development**

*Presenters:* Jim Vaughn, President and CEO, Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce; Bill Clifton, Partner, The Clifton Group; Thomas M. Kelly, Director, Center for Business and Economic Research, Baylor University

*Session Description:* The ability of any community to attract desirable businesses is directly related to the educational level of its workforce. In this session, participants will focus on Greater Waco's issues and the future that is possible when the educational level is increased.

The presenters provided background information concerning the value of a strong and prominent education community when economic development activities are undertaken. They point to the fact that Waco has an exceptional collection of education resources including Baylor University, McLennan Community College, Texas State Technical College, Waco ISD, and several other local public and private education providers.

## Breakout Sessions

### **The Zero to Five Challenge: A New Focus on Early Learning at the U.S. Department of Education**

*Presenter:* Dr. Patricia Crisp, U.S. Department of Education

*Session Description:* This session will present a brief overview of the state of early learning nationwide, including neuroscience, social science, and economic science research that points to the investment required in early learning to reach the higher education goals needed to sustain our nation's future. Discussion will include policy and resources available to help build the high-quality childhood programs that align with the goals of the Education Alliance and our local metrics.

Dr. Crisp provided an overview of the state of early learning and stated that the road to college begins at birth. She gave information to attendees on federal programs available to assist the states in raising the quality of their early learning programs.

She said that there is an urgency to close the achievement gap between high- and low-income children. She also pointed out that, nationally, in math achievement Latino children average 19 percent lower and African Americans 21 percent lower math than non-African American and non-Latino groups. She said that what is at stake with lower achievement is school failure and diminished human potential.

### **Developing an Outreach Program for Students and Parents to Encourage Postsecondary Paths and Success**

*Presenters:* Robbie Stabeno, Director of Scholarships and MAC, Waco Foundation; Chris Lazaro, Program Analyst, City of Waco Housing and Community Development Services

*Session Description:* This session is a working meeting of the Scholarship and Student Stakeholder Groups. Both are interested in reaching out to local students and parents to provide information and encouragement regarding postsecondary options and financial aid. Participants will gain an understanding of outreach efforts already in place and develop plans for increasing outreach to more families.

The stakeholder leaders discussed current initiatives of each group and how they were collaborating to maximize their efforts to reach students and parents. The MAC Scholarship program, housed at the Waco Foundation, has been exceptionally successful in providing financial guidance and funding for students seeking postsecondary education opportunities. Reaching more potential students and their

parents or guardians with vital information is a primary focus of the two stakeholder groups.

### **Best Practices for Tutoring Programs and Tutor Training (2 sessions)**

*Session Description 1:* Tutors abiding by certain best practices can eliminate reading deficits. In this session, participants will learn about incredible results from a successful local best practices pilot project and how our local tutoring programs can adopt these practices, experience the same results, and drastically increase the number of students reading on grade level. *Session Description 2:* This session will provide an actual training for program staff, volunteers, or parents who are tutoring or are interested in reading tutoring. Participants will learn about best practices and how they can tutor in ways that are guaranteed to increase students' reading grade levels.

*Presenters:* Dr. Cyndi Hernandez, Assistant Director for Educational Research and Outreach for CASPER, Baylor University; Ashley Weaver, Project Coordinator, Greater Waco Community Education Alliance

The presenters began by suggesting that the first step toward assisting struggling readers is to identify them through observation and appropriate testing, and that reading on grade level is essential to learning and a key determinant of future school and personal success. They provided information on the guided reading pilot being held at Doris Miller School, including the training required of tutors and the response thus far of the students in the program. During the second session, the presenters provided initial training for those who would like to become reading tutors.



**Mayor DuPuy congratulates a Star Reader from the Best Practices Reading Tutoring Program.**

## Breakout Sessions



The Block Fest demonstration draws a large crowd.

### BLOCK Fest Demonstration

*Presenter:* Melba Bunch, Education Specialist III, Education Service Region 12

*Session Description:* This year's Summit will launch an effort to infuse block play—which is linked to higher math scores—into children's activities and, ultimately, move math metrics for the Alliance. Participants will learn how a "Block Fest" is organized and how businesses, childcare centers, and community groups can access trained facilitators or train their own to host block play events for parents and children age 8 months to 8 years.

Approximately 30 children and their parents were introduced to block play. Several block play stations and facilitators were utilized to help the parents learn how to use the blocks to teach and reinforce math, literacy, and science words and concepts. Parents were shown how to sit down and play with their children in new ways using questions such as these: I wonder what would happen if . . . ? Can you find a larger square block? How many blocks are in this tower? The room was buzzing with enthusiasm, encouragement, and excitement as children learned foundational math concepts through play.

### Waco's Childcare Agenda for the 2011 Legislative Session

*Presenters:* Megan Henderson, Director of Regional Services, Heart of Texas Council of Governments; Kara Johnson, Executive Director, Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC)

*Session Description:* Some of the goals of the Alliance will be most effectively implemented if Waco follows and aligns with statewide policy efforts with regard to early childhood and education. Attendees interested in learning about the major policy direction areas for McLennan County and Texas are encouraged to attend this information and planning session, which will begin the discussion of what needs to happen locally to prepare for the legislative session in 2011.

The presenters led attendees through a discussion of recent state legislative endeavors and programs on the federal legislative agenda. They encouraged cross-agency and cross-group contact on issues to give a stronger voice to the region. As a follow-up to the session, the Government/Policy Stakeholder Group is convening a forum to draft an Alliance legislative agenda.

### A Superintendent's View of the Potential of the Education Alliance

*Presenters:* Dr. Roland Hernandez, Superintendent, Waco ISD; Dr. Sharon Shields, Superintendent, La Vega ISD; Brad Lancaster, Superintendent, Midway ISD; Dr. Jon Engelhardt, Dean of the School of Education, Baylor University

*Session Description:* During this panel discussion, superintendents will share their views on how they envision the Education Alliance supporting their efforts in educating Greater Waco's future workforce and citizenry. Participants will hear about perspectives, hopes, challenges, and ideas from some of our area's top leadership.

Dr. Engelhardt provided background information showing that the most efficient schools in the U.S. are those whose communities are more involved. The session utilized a question-and-answer format that allowed education leaders the opportunity to talk directly about the impact and potential of the Alliance. Overall, the superintendents welcome additional focus on issues that schools face and support structures that can be improved to assist the schools. Because the schools belong to the community, ownership of their success is essential. Questions covered relationships between superintendents and school boards, issues of longer school days and extended calendars, social skills, the elements of successful schools, barriers to communication among groups, and attention to high-quality instruction.

## Breakout Sessions

### Preparing Waco's Youth for the Technical Jobs of the Future

*Presenters:* Willard Still, American Bank; Bob Davis, BRD Management, Inc.; Peter Kultgen, Bird-Kultgen, Inc.

*Session Description:* The Waco Business League's education goal is to ensure that all students have access to career pathways in postsecondary-level education that is relevant to market needs. During this session, Business League leaders will explain the two initiatives being explored by Business League members as they look for ways to reach and influence students within the school system and address policy at the state level.

The Waco Business League has been holding a series of meetings among local education providers and business leaders with the intent to strengthen future communication channels. The main focus has been on career and technical education programs. Following the meetings, the League plans to develop strategies for assisting service providers and championing needed legislative initiatives that support schools and businesses in their common mission of a better prepared workforce and citizenry. Presenters discussed current League activities and took additional testimony from attendees.



Jakob Stewart, Congressman Chet Edwards' office, discusses workforce issues with Rob Wolaver, TSTC Waco.

### Linkages Between Parents' Engagement and Child Performance: A Summary of Facts, Local Efforts, and What Additional Work Targeting Parents Is Needed

*Presenter:* Doug McDurham, Executive Director, Communities in Schools – Heart of Texas

*Session Description:* There is vast and striking evidence that the engagement and education levels of parents are directly linked to the educational achievement of their children. This session will provide an overview of this research and show how a slight

increase in parent involvement could drastically impact student achievement in McLennan County.

Emphasizing that parental and family involvement is a critical element in student success, this session provided study information indicating that for middle and high school students the involvement translates into improved quality of student learning, better grades, and higher rates of enrollment in higher education. Moreover, the involvement reduces dropping out of school and results in the development of more realistic plans for a student's future. Family activities connected to learning, assistance with homework, and being active in a child's school were examples given of how a parent and family can be involved.

It was reported that children from diverse cultural backgrounds do better when families and school personnel join forces to bridge the gap between home and school. Four versions of family-school partnerships were provided that displayed varying levels of collaboration. At one end of the spectrum is the "partnership school" version, in which "all families and community have something great to offer—we do whatever it takes to work closely together to make sure every single student succeeds." At the other end, the "fortress school" is defined as a view that "parents belong at home, not at school." The handout provided a tool for assessment of the relationship between families and the local school.

### Preview of New Scholarship Website and Review Services

*Presenters:* Robbie Stabeno, Director of MAC and Scholarships, Waco Foundation; Alexis Budd, Intern, Waco Foundation; Harry Harelik, McLennan Community College

*Session Description:* Over the past year, the Scholarship Stakeholder Group has worked to implement plans developed during the 2008 Education Summit. During this session, participants will view the launch of a new website that provides information about local scholarships. In addition, the session will premiere the new central scholarship application and a new pilot program designed to facilitate the review of scholarship applications.

This session provided a preview of a new website that will enable McLennan County to provide information on local and national scholarship opportunities available to students. The information provided will include requirements for application and a common application format.