

HAMILTON

COMMUNITY

FOUNDATION



Advancing Post-Secondary Access

Topic: Helping more students go on to post-
secondary education

MAKING CONNECTIONS CONFERENCE 2017
People for Education

Presentation Overview

- Background
 - HCF
 - Education focus
- ABACUS overview
- Grad Track – a pilot project

Hamilton Community Foundation

- Established in 1954, HCF was the first community foundation in Ontario
- \$200M in endowed assets
- Annual granting of approximately \$8M annually

Why focus on education?

- 10+ years of poverty reduction and neighbourhood work
- Education as a driver for Hamilton's vitality
- HCF as an 'outside actor' in education can play several roles
- Fairmount Foundation commitment
- Explored the early intervention landscape
- HEQCO partnership

Research

- Overview of how early-intervention programs support targeted students to graduate high school and access PSE
- Highlighted that disadvantaged youth face a network of barriers, which are difficult to address effectively
- Concluded that programs which bundle supports offer promising practices to youth who are under-represented

providing information
counselling/mentoring

financial incentives
academic support

Environmental Scan & Consultation

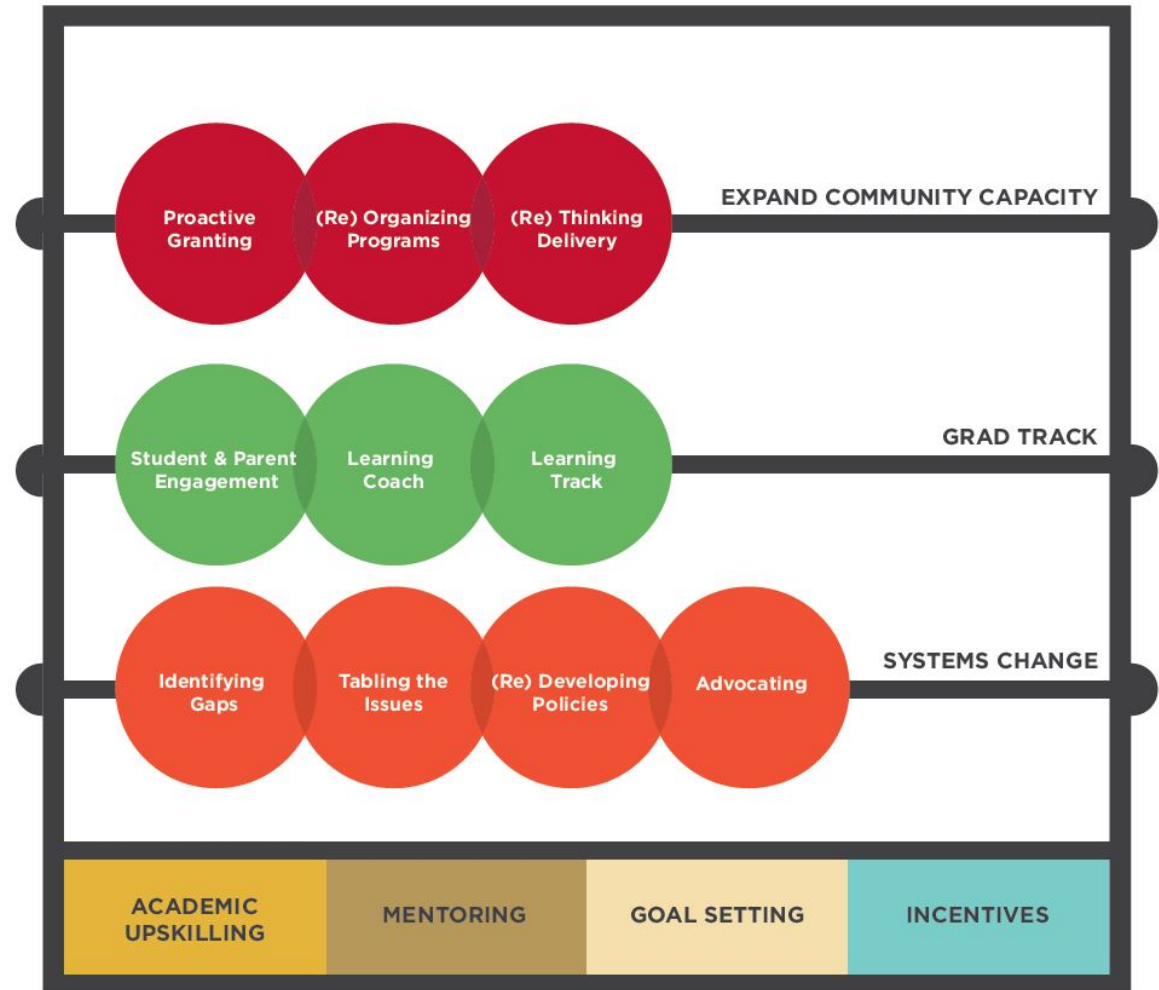
- Detailed environmental scans and maps of Hamilton education programs
- Identification of education and training as key issue in Neighbourhood Action Plans
- Consultation with key education and community stakeholders

Why the middle school years?

- Characteristics
 - Looming transition to high school
 - Developmental changes taking place
 - Need for preparation and planning that will shape future
 - High school early intervention may not be early enough
- Middle school years are least supported
 - Early years sector and Best Start Network are strong
 - Kindergarten to Grade 3 focus of literacy programming
 - Major provincial policy push in high school student success
 - Over 40 community agencies providing programs with some type of educational component:
 - few offer 'bundle of supports'
 - few focus on middle school years

Three elements of ABACUS

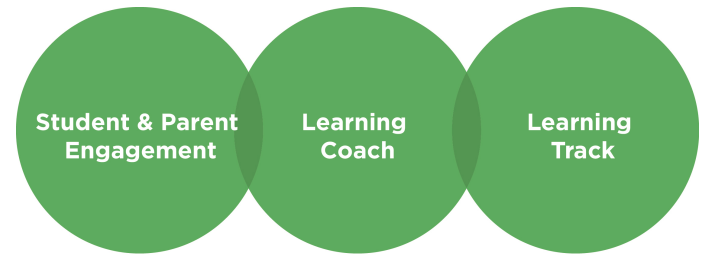
- Expand/build on existing community capacity through granting
- *Grad Track*: a pilot to deliver more intense programming
- Support systems change



Evaluation

- Three purposes:
 - Accountability
 - Continuous improvement
 - Mobilization
- Evaluation focus will evolve with learning
- Currently includes:
 - Grantee reporting
 - Developing collaborative evaluation
 - Grad Track - HEQCO to be a project partner in 8-year longitudinal study
 - Data sharing agreements with educational partners

Grad Track Program Overview



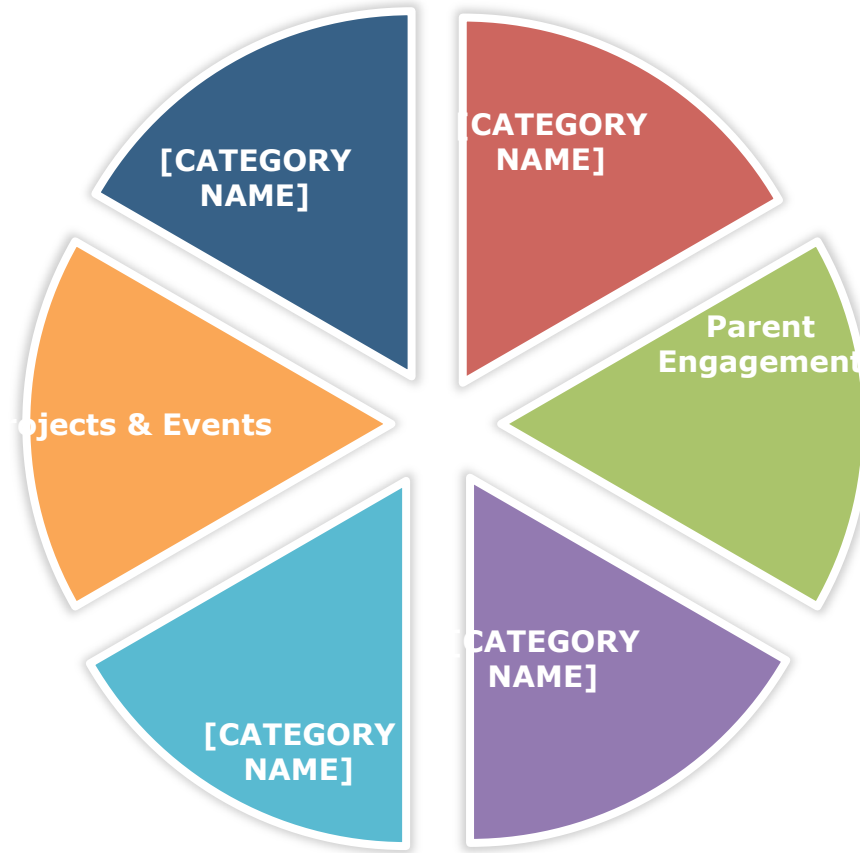
- More intensive support to small group of disengaging students
 - **FOCUS:** Gr 6 to transition to Gr 9
 - **AIM:** Set learning goals, learn how to navigate the system, create their own individualized education pathways
- Launched Fall 2016
- Partnership with HWDSB & HWCDSB
- Two pilot sites: St. Patrick & Hillcrest
 - **40 students**
- Close working partnership with educators

Grad Track Overview

Student & Parent Engagement

Learning Coach

Learning Track



Student Feedback: Learning Coach

Students saw LC as instrumental to future thinking and aspiration building

"The most helpful was probably Jen. Jen. She—most of the time, we have like, a chat, almost every day she's here, and um, just cause she knows what's going on with me, and stuff like that, and she wants to make sure I'm okay, and she helps me believe in myself, and she makes me want to come to school every day, maybe I'll see her every day, cause she gives me hope kind of..."

Student Feedback: Learning Pathway

Tool to build resilience through established rapport and meaningful relationships

“Cause, the learning pathways is planning out your life, basically, and it has helped me a lot with just staying focused with what I want to do... ‘cause it’s not more than one thing that I want to do, I just want to do dance, and when I plan it and think about it, it makes me know that nothing else is going to want to get in my way to change my love for dance.”

Student Feedback: Barriers to Success

Students perceived family to be either an important barrier or an important contributor to their futures.

"Family problems. When I'm all like, hyped up and stuff and I'm like, ahhh, I'm ready to do this! And like, and something happens to your family, and you start to break down, and like, you lose all of your energy..."

ABACUS

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Thank you