

EDS/MEDS IN PHILLY: A 2020 VISION A WHYY CIVIC FORUM

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The group of 18 people who met in Studio 1 for the breakout group was diverse in gender, race and hometown. It was mostly middle-aged and older, with a sprinkling of younger people. Participants said they worked in higher education, health care, workforce development, biotech, economic development and K-12 education. The group had a strong focus on the need for those in lower economic strata to get a chance to participate in the energy of the eds/meds sector.

Their plenary discussion of issues was enthusiastic and wide-ranging, although it tended to stay at the level of generalities and not delve too much into details of implementation. The degree of detail achieved in breakout groups varied.

Hopes and Fears

Hope That ...

Philadelphia will be good at producing jobs that the Philadelphia School District trains kids to do.

Every person in the region is able to use their skills in a way that make sense to them.

Dynamic entrepreneurs will flourish through close connections to colleges.

Viable jobs will exist for folks without college degrees.

K-12 education is transformed.

Incentives are aligned.

Segmented industries find better ways to cooperate

We don't lose sight of the long-term, fundamental changes that we have to make.

That tech-ed produces a cadre of students ready to do the jobs we'll need them to do.

More students will get internships where they get paid or get college credits.

We stop teaching to the tests.

Overcome mindset of low expectations.

Find collective confidence to make “big asks.”

Half of new drugs invented in the world in the next decade will be invented here.

Fear That ...

We’ll see more people of color in tracks that deny them eds/meds opportunities.

We won’t be able to produce the needed workforce.

Recession combined with trends in financial aid/giving will put incredible stresses on higher education – and colleges will stop innovating because of lack of funds.

A PORTRAIT OF 2020

The group listed these traits of a 2020 Philadelphia whose eds/meds sector provokes envy around the nation:

- People feel free to take risks and pursue ideas without an atmosphere of negativity weighing them down
- Philly schools’ graduation rate is in the 80%-95% range
- The region’s college grad retention rate is more than 60%
- We have begun 5 or 6 world-class sector-based fetch initiatives – and all the people in one of those sectors know what’s going on in the others.
- We have 5 or 6 successful, celebrated tech entrepreneurs who are good role models, who give back to the community through philanthropic activity.
- Institutions in eds/meds space collaborate on multiple levels at a high rate of speed (e.g. Penn and Pfizer)
- We are the pre-eminent center for biomedical research and technology.
- We have figured out what richness of talent our health research sector needs to thrive – and we provide it.
- We have a prepared workforce that has been getting hands-on experiences K-12 that prepares them and creates an aspiration for

jobs in the eds/meds sector. High school looks totally different, and the workforce percolates up naturally from the school system.

- We have gotten good at scaling up initiatives from promising pilots. We have nurtured the social and professional networks that help that to happen.
- We have regional pride that cuts across demographic and socioeconomic differences. We know our successes, and we sing them loudly.
- Entrepreneurial hot spots are sprinkled across the region.
- Crime is down and unemployment is at its structural low.
- We have the best paid teachers in the land; teaching talent flocks to Philly to be part of the great urban school reform.
- Mothers of young black males do not spend every waking moment trying to figure out how to get their child out of the city.
- We have neighborhoods that are diverse in multiple ways.
- We have changed systems so that kids of color have freedom to participate, to create and to succeed.
- We have greater transparency; not so many secrets held by those in power.
- We have greater connectivity – within the region, among ed systems, among careers, with other regions.
- We have an inspirational regional vision.
- We're good at networking; we learned regionally how useful pathways develop. There are strong social networks. There is high productivity at night. There are multiple ways of connecting with people, sharing ideas and information.
- We broke down silos.

Here are the issues/challenges that were addressed to make all the things listed above happen:

- Lack of risk capital.

- Siloed nature of city and of its institutions.
- Job-killing tax structure
- Lack of educational access and affordability
- Poor quality of K-12 education.
- Out-of-date, negative view of Philadelphia and its economy, tied to a lack of a common, focused vision and belief that it can be achieved.
- Lack of economic opportunity
- Broken criminal justice system.
- Failure to think big and cooperate regionally on big infrastructure issues.

Groups chose to dig in for more detailed discussion of:

- Negative attitudes and lack of vision
- K-12 quality
- Silos
- Infrastructure.
- Lack of economic opportunity
- K-12 education.

Issue reports:

Issue: Negative attitude, lack of vision

Top challenges/threats: Negative self-image; perception of corrupt politics; not believing in possibility of change; lingering/perpetual problems sap spirit (e.g. schools).

What we stopped doing: Dwell in the past. Let outsiders/lazy journalists tell our story, set our image. Spreading messaging resources too thinly across uncoordinated organizations.

What we kept doing, but did better: Marketing by organizations such as Select Philadelphia and Campus Philly. We focused more on telling a positive, new Philadelphia story addressed to individuals, not just corporations.

We focused our goals in alignment with the story we wanted to tell: e.g. mayor's focus on halving dropout rate, doubling college graduation rate was right kind of idea.

What we started doing: We raised expectations, ours and others'. We told the story of the middle-class opportunities that abound here. We rallied around visionary leaders, instead of chasing them away with our carping and negativity. We told a detailed story of exactly what eds and meds do this city and region. We began cross-organizational collaboration around conveying the 4-5 key messages that need to be delivered about the regional economy.

Issue: Siloed institutions

Top challenges/threats: Breaking barriers between and within institutions so ideas with potential are acted upon. Inability to find potential collaborators. Academics and business are separate. Business community and K-12 are separate.

What we stopped doing: Guarding ideas. Keeping groups separate.

What we kept doing, but did better: Enhanced capability to do cross-disciplinary research. Got colleges and universities to interact with K-12. Created government-funded partnership for innovation at a new, larger level. Paired management talent with viable ideas.

What we started doing: Aligned science technology education across all levels, from pre-K to K-12 to college and graduate education. Employers became more involved in education. Budding entrepreneurs got to interact with serial entrepreneurs.

Key stakeholders: Colleges and consortiums. Businesses. K-12 educators. Government.

Key assets/resources: Existing institutions. Entrepreneurs (serial) and groups.

Issue: Planes, trains etc i.e. Infrastructure

Top challenges/threats: Funding. Planning. Community Consensus. "Need for speed" i.e. sense of urgency.

What we stopped doing: Being limited by small aspirations. Stopped asking "Where's the money?" as the first question about any big idea.

What we kept doing, but did better: More players in the regional conversation. We decided to act, to pick one big project and just get it done. The airport and SEPTA would be possible places to start. We did a new round of needed capital projects like the Kimmel Center and Convention Center.

What we started doing: Went to DC and pushed for high-speed rail to connect regions. We gave SEPTA a fresh start, with an eye to expanding the service not just letting it slowly erode. We covered I-95 in Center City and extended the street grid to the river. We found more ways to fund P-Cubed and early adopters.

Key stakeholders: Congressional delegation. Travelers. People who understand the role of quality of life in economic development. Eds and meds leaders.

Key assets/resources: Region has good bone structure (e.g. rail, port, city grid).

Issue: Lack of economic opportunity.

Key challenges/threats: Lack of development. Poor record of developing and attracting serial entrepreneurs. Lack of consistent, coherent economic policy. Putting the mechanisms in place to capture the big deal. Need to invest in the talent to build the infrastructure (people won't take a pay cut just to play here). Transportation. Capital formation.

What we stopped doing: We stopped applying inappropriate incentives (e.g. tax credit on housing). We reduced the number of "kings." We stopped channeling people into the criminal justice system for life for weak reasons. We stopped maintaining "the clubs" designed to hold power and opportunity in a small number of hands.

What we kept doing, but did better: Tax incentives for business owners. Workforce training. Expanded the role of community colleges in workforce development. Transparency.

What we started doing: Created venture capital funds for development. Expanded research park activity across the region. Expanded monetary incentives. Invested in new market opportunities. Trained young entrepreneurs in how to navigate the region: "How to play the game" "Where to get the funding."

Key stakeholders: City and state government. Economic development agencies (Ben Franklin Science Center; DVIRC). Entrepreneurs. City agencies. International agencies.

Key assets/resources: Venture capital. Entrepreneurs.

Issue: K-12 Quality

Top challenges/threats: Low graduate rates. Skill development. Lack of quality teachers. Resistance to change. School model and structure (length of school year

etc.). Teaching to the test. One size fits all. Parental involvement. Poverty and other risk factors for learning.

What we stopped doing: Stopped ineffective means of measuring achievement. Stopped viewing a university education as the only end of K-12 education, realizing that there are other ways to propel kids on a good path.

What we kept doing but did better: Strengthening early childhood education. Exposing middle school students to what is beyond middle school (education and careers). Defining quality teachers by student outcomes. Finding quality teachers from non-traditional paths.

What we started doing: Connecting students with community organizations and businesses, post high school opportunities and higher education. Internships and other learning opportunities that are oriented to workforce/career. Extend learning time (longer day, year).

Key stakeholders: Teacher unions, teachers, administrators. Departments of education. Universities. Businesses. Students and parents. Nonprofits.

Key assets/resources: Recent college grads. Social entrepreneurs. Foundations, philanthropists, individual donors. Business leaders. Grassroots organizations. Good data. Information on best practices.