


2013 Community Needs Assessment Report

SOUTH FULTON COUNTY COMMUNITIES

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Preface

When the needs assessment process began.

Startling statistics, poor school standings, local conversations, and the recent release of The Equality of Opportunity Project findings sparked a serious concern for the achievement of youth in our community. Motivated by this concern, Future Foundation, Inc., set out to complete a comprehensive examination of community gaps and obstructions to youth achievement. Future Foundation, Inc., in partnership with nonprofit consultant, Lisa Cowan, began a massive effort to systematically collect information about our neighbors and communities by conducting an extensive community needs assessment and longitudinal data analysis of the communities of East Point, College Park, and Southwest Fulton County, Georgia.

Who led and was involved in the needs assessment process.

The Future Foundation led the charge and partnered with nonprofit consultant, Lisa Cowan, and local Foundation partners, to analyze the current status and assess the needs of the residents in the East Point, College Park, and Southwest Fulton County communities. Surveys, focus groups, and extant longitudinal and trend data were collected as a part of the process.

How the community needs were identified.

The Assessment Project Team collected six years of American Community Survey and U.S. Census data exploring the demographic, social, economic, educational and housing characteristics of East Point, College Park, Atlanta, Fulton County, and the state of Georgia. The team also completed an academic performance trend analysis using ten years of data compiled by the Georgia's Governor's Office of Student Achievement. The academic performance trend analysis includes data for McNair Middle School, Paul D. West Middle School, Renaissance Middle School, Sandtown Middle School, Woodland Middle School, Banneker High School, Tri-Cities High School, Atlanta Public School System, Fulton County School System and aggregated schools of Georgia. In addition, adult and youth focus groups were conducted, and surveys were distributed to youth, adults, and key stakeholders throughout the community. These four methods of quantitative and qualitative data analyses provided a clear identification of the primary strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that impact the achievement of youth in the community. Study findings identified community needs, gaps in services, and the intersectionality of education and other social variables effecting the social mobility of the youth within the community. In turn, community feedback captured in surveys and focus groups provided recommendations for expanded wrap-around services and community assets to improve youth achievement and development in the community.

Executive Summary

On December 3, 2013, Future Foundation, Inc. in partnership with nonprofit consultant Lisa Cowan embarked on a month-long project evaluating the needs of the South Fulton community. The objective of this project was to complete a Community Needs Assessment through surveys, focus groups, literature, and data analysis to ascertain the educational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats existing within the cities of College Park and East Point, GA. Additional goals included a comparative study of College Park, East Point, Atlanta, Fulton County, and Georgia; and determining the intersectionality of education and other social variables effecting the social mobility of the youth within South Fulton communities. Below are a summary of findings:

School Quality

- Despite the low performance of South Fulton schools, the overall performance of Fulton County exceeds that of the state (e.g., see chart 19).
- Over the past 10 years, Paul D. West and McNair Middle Schools are the two lowest performing schools.
- For the ten-year period, 2004-2013, there is an overall upward trend in 7th grade ELA CRCT performance.
- College Park's low rate of school enrollment persisted among their 15 to 17 year olds, with only 69.1% enrolled in school. This is comparatively low considering the enrollment rates of 15 to 17 year olds residing in East Point (95.8%), Atlanta (93.5%), Fulton County (96.1%), and Georgia (95.8%) (ACS-S2103).
- The academic achievement of Atlanta, Banneker and Tri-Cities 9th graders remains comparatively dismal to Fulton County and the state of Georgia.
- High school graduation rates for Banneker and Tri-Cities are exponentially lower than both Fulton County and Georgia.

Student Achievement and Non-Academic Indicators

- Single-mother households are more likely than their married-couple counterparts to live in poverty. While only 5% of College Park married-couple households (with children under 18) lived in poverty in 2012, 70% of single-mother households lived below poverty level. In East Point, the percent of married-couple and single-mother families living in poverty was 10% and 49%, respectively.
- The predominant family structure in College Park is a single-mother household. In 2012, this family structure made up 55% of all families in the city, the highest it has been in the past six years. For East Point, single-mother households made up 48% of all families, which is also a six-year high.
- The probability of East Point and College Park youth obtaining high academic achievement and positive life outcomes is considerably lower than that of their larger Fulton County and Georgia peers.
- Studies show that a child's educational attainment is largely correlated with their parent's education levels. Less than nine percent of all families in Fulton County had

householders with less than a high school education, 40.8% of whom lived in poverty. In comparison, an estimated 13% of all Atlanta families had householders with less than a high school diploma; of these households, 47.5% lived below poverty. For College Park, 16% of householders did not complete high school, and 60.3% lived below the poverty level. The plight of families was most bleak in the city of East Point where 19% of householders were not high school graduates, and 40.8% of these families lived in poverty.

Community Needs

- The top five most needed and not currently used assets used to improve educational attainment, according to key stakeholders, were “church and faith-based organizations”, “quality schools”, “local public agencies”, “life-skills development programs” and “community amenities”.
- According to key stakeholders, the top five issues limiting student achievement are “lack of parental involvement”, “lack of after-school programs”, “lack of physical and mental health services”; “lack of teen pregnancy prevention and parenting classes”, “crime”, and “poverty/income inequality” were tied for fourth most important.
- According to youth, the top five problems that make it hard for them to do well in school are “too much crime, violence, gangs, and drugs”, “too much dating and teen pregnancy”, “not enough jobs for youth (after school or summer jobs)”, “don’t want to study”, and “not enough role models”.
- Student motivation is a key issue. According to youth, the top three problems preventing them from doing well in school are “don’t want to study”, “don’t understand the work”, and “too much crime, violence, gangs, and drugs”.

Introduction

In July of 2013, the findings of The Equality of Opportunity Project were released and provided some startling insight into the probability of intergenerational income mobility in the United States. The study examined upward mobility across U.S. metropolitan areas and found that a child's location can be a great predictor of the child's life chances. The study found that children raised in the Southeast and industrial Midwest are less likely than their Northeast, Great Plains, and West counterparts to become upwardly mobile. Specifically, a child born in the bottom fifth family income quintile in the city of Atlanta is 4% likely to end up in the top fifth quintile by the age of 30. This is opposed to their Houston, TX, New York, NY, San Francisco, CA and Salt Lake City, UT counterparts who are 8.4%, 9.7%, 11.2%, and 11.5% likely, respectively.

The Equality of Opportunity Project identified five indicators of intergenerational mobility: 1) school quality; 2) economic and racial segregation; 3) social capital; 4) family structure; and 5) income inequality. Informed by these five indicators, the following community analysis and needs assessment explores how the cities of College Park, East Point, and Atlanta compare to Fulton County and the state of Georgia on measures of academic achievement (school quality), social capital (family structure and racial segregation), human capital (economic segregation – access to jobs and educational attainment), and financial capital (income inequality). In addition, this report expounds on the intersectionality of academic performance, family structure, and income to further identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the achievement of children in the cities of College Park, East Point and Atlanta.

Current Community Snapshot

Fulton County was established on December 20, 1853 carved from the western portion of Dekalb County. It is the 144th of Georgia's 159 counties to be created. Currently composed of 14 incorporated cities and towns, Fulton County spreads 534.61 square miles and stretches 70 miles long. This county contains the state capital of Atlanta, GA, which divides the county into two: North Fulton containing the cities of Alpharetta, Johns Creek, Milton, Mountain Park, Roswell, Sandy Springs, and Atlanta; and South Fulton comprised of Chattahoochee Hill Country, College Park, East Point, Fairburn, Hapeville, Palmetto, and Union City. Future Foundation, Inc. serves the children and adults of the South Fulton communities of East Point, College Park, and southwest Atlanta.

College Park

Originally known as Manchester, the city of College Park was incorporated on January 1, 1895. Covering only 9.0 square miles, College Park has the fourth largest urban historic districts in Georgia with more than 850 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is also home to Woodward Academy, the largest independent school in the United States, and the Georgia International Convention Center, the second largest exhibit and meeting space in the state. The 2012 estimated 13,781 (e.g. see table1) residents of College Park were made up of 46.8% males and 53.2% females (e.g. see chart 17), with a median age of 31.6. The city's racial composition in 2012 was estimated 11.2% White, 82% Black or African American, 3.7% "some

other race”, 1.8% Multiracial, and 1.2% Asian (e.g. see chart 10). An estimated 9.2% of the population, of any race, were Hispanic or Latino (ACS-DP05). The estimated total of College Park families in 2012 was 2,864 (e.g. see table 1) with an average family size of 3.63, and an average household size of 2.56 (e.g. see table 1). Concerning College Park’s economic characteristics, the city’s median household income in 2012 was \$30,387 (e.g. see chart 7), and the per capita income was \$17,407 (in 2012 inflation-adjusted dollars). The unemployment rate was 11.2% in 2012 (e.g. see chart 1). By 2012, 36.5% of all College Park residents lived in poverty, 34.6% of families, and 58.6% of all children under 18 years of age (e.g. see chart 3).

East Point

Incorporated 161 years ago on January 1, 1853, and chartered in 1890, the city of East Point, GA has a total area of 13.8 square miles and is only 10 minutes away from the state capital, Atlanta, GA. East Point’s population grew rapidly in its early years, but is currently decreasing with an estimated population of 34,515 in 2012 (e.g. see table 1), down from its estimated 37,246 residents in 2007. The 2012 population was estimated 47.8% male and 52.2% female ((e.g. see chart 18), with a median age of 35.9. The city’s racial composition in 2012 was estimated 16.4% White, 75.5% Black or African American, 5.2% “some other race”, 1.2% Multiracial, 1.2% Asian, and 0.5% American Indian and Alaskan Native (e.g. see chart 11). An estimated 11.83% of the population, of any race, were Hispanic or Latino. (ACS-DP05) The estimated total of East Point families in 2012 was 7,496 with an average family size of 3.41, and an average household size of 2.60 (e.g. see table 1). Concerning East Point’s economic characteristics, the city’s median household income in 2012 was \$39,023 (e.g. see chart 7), and the per capita income was \$20,775 (in 2012 inflation-adjusted dollars). The unemployment rate has over doubled from its 6.1% rate in 2008 to a 12.7% rate in 2012 (e.g. see chart 7). By 2012, 23.1% of all East Point residents lived in poverty, 22% of families, and 36.1% of all children under 18 years of age (e.g. see chart 3).

Atlanta

Atlanta had an estimated population of 425,931 in 2012 (e.g., see table1), down from its estimated 439,275 residents in 2007. The 2012 population was estimated 49.7% male and 50.3% female, with a median age of 33.2. The city’s racial composition in 2012 was estimated 39% White, 53.8% Black or African American, 1.8% “some other race”, 1.7% Multiracial, 3.3% Asian, 0.2% American Indian and Alaskan Native, and 0.03% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (e.g. see chart 9). An estimated 5.4% of the population, of any race, were Hispanic or Latino. (ACS-DP05) The estimated total of Atlanta families in 2012 was 78,741 with an average family size of 3.26, and an average household size of 2.22 (e.g., see table 1). Concerning Atlanta’s economic characteristics, the city’s median household income in 2012 was \$46,146 (e.g., see chart 7), and the per capita income was \$35,719 (in 2012 inflation-adjusted dollars). The unemployment rate was 8.1% rate in 2012 (e.g., see chart 1). By 2012, 24.3% of all Atlanta residents lived in poverty (e.g., see chart 3), 19.9% of families (e.g., see chart 14), and 36% of all children under 18 years of age (e.g., see chart 4).

School Quality and Academic Performance: A Longitudinal and Comparative Study

In 2012, youth ages 19 and under made up 32%, 28%, and 23% of the entire population of College Park, East Point, and Atlanta, respectively. In College Park, an estimated 748 students were enrolled in elementary school, grades 5 to 8, and 535 in high school. For East Point, this number more than doubled with a total of 1,718 5th to 8th grade students, and 2,036 9th to 12th grade students. There were 16,714 5th to 8th grade and 16,592 9th to 12th grade students in Atlanta. 93.6% of College Park youth ages 10 to 14 were enrolled in school, compared to 97.7% of East Point youth, 97.2% of Atlanta youth, 97.6% of Fulton County youth, and 98.4% of Georgia youth.

School enrollment and completion rates become even more startling for both College Park and East Point when we consider the percent of youth ages 16 to 19 who were neither enrolled in school nor high school graduates. In 2012, an estimated 28% of College Park and 19% of East Point 16 to 19 year olds fell into this category. This compared to 6% in Atlanta and Fulton County, and 7% in Georgia.

Future Foundation, Inc. serves students attending middle and high schools throughout College Park, East Point, and Atlanta for the purpose of increasing school enrollment, improving academic performance, and decreasing truancy. The following analysis uses data obtained from Georgia's Governor's Office of Student Achievement to explore the enrollment, performance, and truancy rates over time for Banneker High School, Tri-Cities High School, and their feeder middle schools: McNair Middle School, Paul D. West Middle School, Renaissance Middle School, Sandtown Middle School, and Woodland Middle School. Then compare these performance indicators to those of Atlanta Public School System, Fulton County Public School System, and an aggregated unit of schools in the state of Georgia.

Enrollment Demographics

The demographic characteristics of those enrolled in Banneker High School, Tri-Cities High School, and their feeder middle schools -- McNair Middle School, Paul D. West Middle School, Renaissance Middle School, Sandtown Middle School, and Woodland Middle School -- are significantly different from those enrolled in larger Fulton County and the state of Georgia. Similar to Atlanta Public Schools, blacks comprise a significantly larger percent of the high schools and middle schools in South Fulton than those in the county and statewide. In 2013, black students attending Tri-Cities and Banneker were 76% and 97% of all enrolled students, respectively. This is opposed to 42% of Fulton County and 37% of Georgia enrollment. Blacks as a portion of all students enrolled in McNair, Paul D. West, Renaissance, Sandtown, and Woodland was 96%, 68%, 88%, 98%, and 87%, respectively. These South Fulton schools also had a significantly higher proportion of economically disadvantaged students in comparison to all Fulton County schools.

CRCT

In 2013, 93.5% Renaissance of 6th grade students met or exceeded standards, performing just as well as their Fulton County counterparts (93.5%), and better than all Georgia 6th graders

(92.4%) on the English and Language Arts CRCT. Sixth graders at Sandtown also fared well on the ELA CRCT with 92.1% meeting or exceeding standards. The lowest performing schools in 2013 were Paul D West (81.1%) and Woodland (82.4) with a performance rate at least 10 percentage points lower than Fulton County and Georgia. While over the ten year period, there has been an upward trend in 6th grade ELA CRCT performance for all of the studied schools and systems, performance at Atlanta Public Schools, McNair and Paul D. West still lags. It should be noted, however, that despite the low performance of these South Fulton schools, the overall performance of Fulton County exceeds that of the state (e.g., see chart 19).

In 2013, 93% of Sandtown 7th grade students met or exceeded standards, performing better than their Atlanta Public School counterparts (91.1%), and just as well as all Georgia 7th graders (93%) on the English and Language Arts CRCT. Seventh graders at Woodland also fared well on the ELA CRCT with 90.6% meeting or exceeding standards. The lowest performing school in 2013 was Paul D West (77.6%) with a performance rate 10.2 percentage points less than the second lowest performing school (Renaissance at 87.8%).

In 2013, 95.5% of Sandtown 8th grade students met or exceeded standards, performing just as well as their Fulton County counterparts (95.4%), and better than all Georgia 8th graders (94.3%) on the English and Language Arts CRCT. Eighth graders at Renaissance also fared well on the ELA CRCT with 92.7% meeting or exceeding standards. The two lowest performing schools in 2013 were McNair (88.3%) and Paul D West (89.9%), reflecting their trending performance over the past 10 years. Despite the comparatively low and persistently lagging performance of these schools, Fulton County remains among the top two performing schools/systems (e.g., see chart 21).

The 6th grade performance on the Math CRCT plummeted across the board in the 2005 and 2006 school years. Despite this plunge, from 2003 to 2013, there is an overall upward trend in the performance of sixth grader's on the Math CRCT. These Math gains are quite minimal, however, when compared to 10-year gains in ELA. The upward trend in performance is true for all except for one school, Paul D. West. From 2003 to 2013, the performance of 6th graders at Paul D. West decreased 2.4 percentage points. McNair follows Paul D. West as the second lowest performer, with only 58.9% of its 6th graders meeting or exceeding standards. Similar to ELA performance, Fulton County was consistently the top Math CRCT performer, surpassing statewide performance every year except 2013 (both Fulton County and the state had 82.7% of its sixth graders meet or exceed standards). In 2013, the gap between the average performance of South Fulton 6th graders (63.9%) and 6th graders county-wide (82.7) was almost 20 percentage points (e.g., see chart 22).

The 7th grade performance on the Math CRCT plummeted across the board in the 2007 school year and took approximately 2 years to rebound back up to 2006 levels. Unfortunately, Paul D. West never fully recovered. In 2013, 65% of Paul D. West 7th graders met or exceeded standards on the Math CRCT; the same amount that met and exceeded in 2003. Despite the 2007 performance plunge, from 2003 to 2013, there is an overall upward trend in the performance of seventh grader's on the Math CRCT. Similar to 6th grade performance, Fulton County 7th

graders were consistently among the top Math CRCT performers, surpassed only 3 times by Sandtown and once by the state (e.g., see chart 23).

A 10-year trends in 8th grade performance is more difficult to discern due to the high fluctuations. Only two schools (Renaissance and Sandtown) and one school system (Atlanta Public Schools) had an increase over 10 percentage points over the last 10 years; and these two schools provide a skewed measure because they were both in their start-up phase. What is discernable are: 1) the two major dips in performance overall in 2008 and 2012; 2) the consistently low performance of McNair and Paul D. West 8th graders; and 3) the consistently high performance of Fulton County 8th graders (e.g., see chart 24).

EOCT

From 2006 to 2013, the performance rates of Atlanta (74% passed in 2013), Banneker (69% passed in 2013), and Tri-Cities (77% passed in 2013) 9th graders increased 27, 23, and 25 percentage points, respectively. Notwithstanding this progress, in 2013, the average 9th grader in these schools and school system performed 17 and 13 percentage points lower than their Fulton County (90% passed) and Georgia (86% passed) counterparts, respectively (e.g., see chart 25).

Over the eight years of available data, 9th grade performance on the Literature Composition EOCT has trended upward across the board. While gaps in achievement decrease for high school American Literature EOCT, Banneker and Tri-Cities do not perform as well as high school students county-wide. In 2013, Tri-Cities (84% pass) lagged Fulton County by 10 percentage points, and the state of Georgia by 7 percentage points. Banneker (80% pass) lagged Fulton County by 14 percentage points, and the state of Georgia by 11 percentage points. The persistent high achievement of Fulton County high school students gives reason to pause when considering the comparatively low performance of these two South Fulton schools (e.g., see chart 26).

According to the data, the overall performance of Georgia high school students on the Algebra I EOCT is extremely low. 67% of all high school students in Georgia failed the Algebra I exam in 2013. This is an all-time low for the state, even with the 2010 dip in performance. What is more unnerving is the maintained stratification in performance among high school students in Fulton County. Banneker and Tri-Cities continue to perform the lowest. Only 25% of Banneker students passed the Algebra I EOCT, and a stark 8% of Tri-Cities students passed. Nevertheless, Fulton County, pushed by the comparatively higher achievement of its North Fulton students, still manages to outperform the state by 2 percentage points (e.g., see chart 27).

Graduation Rates

High school graduation rates for Banneker and Tri-Cities are exponentially lower than both Fulton County and Georgia. The graduation rate for Banneker H.S., Tri-Cities H.S. and Atlanta Public Schools are comparable- and are all lower than Fulton County and the State of Georgia. Between 2004 and 2009, Banneker, Tri-Cities, and Atlanta Public Schools' graduation rates trend upward. However, beginning in 2010, rates began a downward trend. This can be

attributed to a new formula being used to calculate graduation rates for all high schools across Georgia. In 2013, the gap between Banneker graduation rates and that of Fulton County reached 34%, with Banneker only graduating 41.7% of its senior class. The graduation rate for Tri-Cities, during this year is much more comparable to county and state rates than in previous years (e.g., see table 2).

Student Achievement and Nonacademic Indicators

The above analysis uses school indicators to paint a bleak picture of the academic achievement of youth attending schools in the South Fulton communities of College Park, East Point, and Atlanta. To get a complete portrait of those factors impacting student achievement, however, one must use a broader brush that includes both in-school and out-of-school indicators. Indeed, decades of social science research demonstrates that only one-third of the variation in student achievement can be attributed to the quality of a student's in-school experiences. The other two-thirds is attributable to nonacademic factors that impact children. These "out-of-school" factors include access to social capital, human capital, and financial capital. Gaps in children's access to these forms of capital are greatly exacerbated by race and poverty.

Social Capital

"Social capital comprises the nonfinancial resources available through relationships to people and institutions, including family, neighborhood and other social influences, that appear to shape a person's path to [educational achievement and positive life outcomes]" (Pathways 2008, p.7). Social capital includes both family and community indicators such as family structure, teen pregnancy, parenting skills, school-based relationships/peer pressure, community influence, and cultural, religious and recreational enrichments/community amenities. The following community analysis explores how the cities of College Park, East Point, and Atlanta compare to Fulton County and the state of Georgia on two of these social capital indicators: family structure and teen pregnancy. Community feedback on the other indicators are captured through the Community Needs Assessment Surveys and Focus Groups.

In 2012, married-couple families comprised only 36% of all College Park families. This is down two percentage points since 2008. At its six-year peak (2007-2012) in 2011, married-couple families were only 41% of all College Park Families. In East Point, married-couple families peaked at 46% of all families in 2009. They now comprise only 40% of all East Point families. In Atlanta, from 2007 to 2012, married-couple families continued to be a small majority of all families. The current percentage is 55%, and it reached its six-year peak in 2009 at 58%. While Atlanta numbers are better than those of both College Park and East Point, they still fall short of Fulton County and Georgia statistics. Over the past six years, married-couple families maintained an approximate 66% and 71% portion of all families in Fulton County and Georgia, respectively (e.g., see chart 5).

The low proportion of married-couple families in College Park, East Point and Atlanta is partially explained by the rates of births from unmarried mothers and teens. Of the College Park women 15-50 years of age who had a birth in 2012, 94% were unmarried. Of the East Point women 15-50 years of age who had a birth in 2012, 68% were unmarried. Of the Atlanta women

15-50 years of age who had a birth in 2012, 57% were unmarried. This compares to just 41% in Fulton County, and 39% in the state of Georgia. In addition, in 2010, the number of birth per 1,000 women 15-19 years of age was 45 in College Park, 60 in East Point, and 40 in Atlanta. This compares to 30 in Fulton County, and 32 in the state of Georgia. Consequently, the predominant family structure in College Park is a single-mother household. In 2012, this family structure made up 55% of all families in the city, the highest it has been in the past six years. For East Point, single-mother households made up 48% of all families, which is also a six-year high. In 2012, this broken family structure comprised 36%, 27%, and 23% of all families living in Atlanta, Fulton County, and Georgia, respectively (ACS-DP02).

The impact of family structure is even further exacerbated by race and poverty. “The proportion of births to unwed mothers in the black community is about 70% -- nearly three times the rate for white children” (Pathways, 2008, p.9). According to 2012 estimates, African-Americans made up 82% of College Park population (e.g., see chart 10), 75% of East Point population (e.g., see chart 11), and 54% of Atlanta population (e.g., see chart 9). In all three cities, African-Americans are the majority. In Fulton County and the state of Georgia, however, African-Americans are the minority making up only 44% and 31% of the population, respectively (e.g., see chart 12, 13).

Single-mother households are more likely than their married-couple counterparts to live in poverty. While only 5% of College Park married-couple households (with children under 18) lived in poverty in 2012, 70% of single-mother households lived below poverty level. In East Point, the percent of married-couple and single-mother families living in poverty was 10% and 49%, respectively. In Atlanta, the percent of married-couple and single-mother families living in poverty was 7% and 52%, respectively. Compare this to the 5% of married-couple and 41% of single-mother families living in poverty in Fulton County; and the 10% of married-couple and 42% of single-mother families living in poverty in the state of Georgia. It is notable that the percent of single-mother households living in poverty becomes a minority when looking at county-wide and statewide statistics; nevertheless the gap between married-couple and single-mother families still persists (ACS-S1702).

Social science research indicates that children raised in a married, two-parent household fare significantly better than their counterparts raised in other family structures on numerous important outcomes including academic achievement, educational attainment, employment, and occupational status. According to research, married, two-parent households produce children less likely to participate in delinquent behaviors such as crime, drug abuse, and dropping out of high school. Unfortunately, the majority of children residing in College Park and East Point are not raised in a married two-parent household. For these reasons, there must be an intervention to reestablish the traditional family structure and decrease teen pregnancy in these communities for the sake of improving youth academic achievement and positive life outcomes.

Human Capital

“Human capital... [refers to those] skills and personal traits that seem to cause some people to be able to take greater advantage of economic opportunities open to them” (Pathways,

2008, p.20). Human capital includes both education/skills and health indicators such as parent's educational attainment, access to proper wellness resources (including physical and mental health services), job readiness, and efforts in the workforce. The following community analysis explores how the cities of College Park, East Point, and Atlanta compare to Fulton County and the state of Georgia on two of these human capital indicators: parent educational attainment and efforts in workforce. Community feedback on the other indicators are captured through the Community Needs Assessment Surveys and Focus Groups.

In 2012, the percent of adults 25 years and older with less than a high school diploma was 16% in College Park, 18% in East Point and 13% in Atlanta, but under 10% in all of Fulton County. Less than nine percent of all families in Fulton County had householders with less than a high school education, 40.8% of whom lived in poverty. In comparison, an estimated 13% of all Atlanta families had householders with less than a high school diploma; of these households, 47.5% lived below poverty. For College Park, 16% of householders did not complete high school, and 60.3% lived below the poverty level. The plight of families was most bleak in the city of East Point where 19% of householders were not high school graduates, and 40.8% of these families lived in poverty (ACS-S1701, S1702).

The poverty rates for these families is a direct result of their efforts in the workforce. The availability and access to jobs that fit their skills and education level is very limited. While 52% of College Park adults (25-64 years of age) with less than a high school education are in the labor force, 31% of them are unemployed. For East Point, 64% of adults with less than a high school education are in the labor force, but 24% are unemployed. In Atlanta, 53% of adults with less than a high school education are in the labor force, but 25% are unemployed. This is compared to 20% of Fulton County and 16% of Georgia adults with less than a high school education who are in the labor force but unemployed (ACS-S2301).

The lack of access to jobs (economic segregation) for South Fulton residents becomes even more apparent when looking at the unemployment rates for those with high educational attainment. The unemployment rate for College Park and East Point adults (25-64 years of age) with bachelor's degrees or higher (9%) almost doubled that of the county and state (5%). Despite this unequal access to jobs, educational attainment still assists in leveling the playing field. Indeed, employability and access to jobs increases with educational attainment (ACS-S22301).

Studies show that a child's educational attainment is largely correlated with their parent's education levels. A child is more likely to obtain a college degree if their parents graduated from college. Consequently, a child living in College Park, East Point, or Atlanta is less likely to graduate from college and more likely to live in poverty, due to the low educational attainment and high unemployment of householders in these communities. The state of families in South Fulton is further exacerbated by the lack of access to jobs. To resolve these problems, there must be a push for economic development, economic desegregation, and job-skills development. But more importantly, we must remind youth of the value and possibilities of educational aspirations. We must continue to invest in those programs providing educational support and job and college

readiness, so that the youth of South Fulton can avoid the mistakes of their preceding generation, and form a future that is much better than their present.

Financial Capital

Financial capital refers an individual's available economic resources and their ability to manage, use and save them appropriately. Financial capital includes both savings and wealth indicators such as income, homeownership, entrepreneurship, financial literacy and financial management. The following community analysis explores how the cities of College Park, East Point, and Atlanta compare to Fulton County and the state of Georgia on two of these financial capital indicators: income and homeownership. Community feedback on the other indicators are captured through the Community Needs Assessment Surveys and Focus Groups.

The stratified access to financial capital and the bleak plight of the South Fulton communities of East Point and College Park are quite evident by looking at poverty levels, median income, per capita income and homeownership. In 2012, the estimated median household income of College Park and East Point were \$30,387 and \$39,023, respectively. Their per capita income in 2012 inflation-adjusted dollars were \$17,407 and \$20,775, respectively. While Atlanta's median household income (\$46,146) and per capita income (\$35,719) were more than that of College Park and East Point, it still was less than the median household income (\$57,664) and per capita income (\$37,238) of Fulton County (e.g., chart 7).

In addition, 36.5% of all College Park residents, 24.3% of all Atlanta residents, and 23.1% of all East Point residents live below the poverty level. This is significantly higher than the 17.4% poverty rate of Georgia, and the 16.8% of Fulton County (e.g., chart 14). The children living in the South Fulton communities of College Park, East Point, and Atlanta are even worse off. The majority, 58.6%, of all College Park children live in poverty. The poverty rate for children living in East Point and Atlanta was approximately 36%. The poverty rate for Fulton County children was significantly lower at 23% (e.g., see chart 4).

Homeownership is another indicator of financial capital. It demonstrates an individual's ability to save and invest. Of the occupied housing units in College Park in 2012, only 25% were owner-occupied. This is compared to 46% in East Point and Atlanta, and a larger 55% in Fulton County (ACS-DP04).

The financial state of South Fulton communities must be ameliorated to improve academic achievement and positive life outcomes. Studies show that children from low-income levels are less likely than their middle- and upper-class counterparts to attend and complete post-secondary education. Two reasons are the achievement gaps in elementary and secondary academics, and college affordability. Not only is there a need to increase income earning power within South Fulton communities, but there needs to be complimentary income management and financial literacy programs. Through appropriate income stewardship and financial literacy, college funds are formed and access to financial capital is gained.

Community Needs Assessment: Surveys and Focus Groups

Considering all the statistics and data presented above, the academic achievement and life outcomes for the youth of College Park, East Point, and Atlanta are impaired due to both in-school and out-of-school experiences. To gain some insight into what these South Fulton communities believe are the crucial obstructions and vital assets impacting youth achievement, three surveys instruments were created and distributed throughout the communities, and two focus groups were held. The following is a summary of survey and focus group findings.

Survey Results

Youth

The Community Needs Assessment Youth Survey was completed by 259 respondents. Of these 259 respondents, 53% were female and 47% were male. 86% of respondents were Black and 11% were Hispanic. 71% spoke only English in their household. 87% were from the South Fulton communities of Atlanta, East Point and College Park. 54% lived in a single-mother household. 90% were high school students; 56% were 9th graders. Here is a summary of their responses.

Question #1: Here is a list of problems that sometimes makes it hard for youth to do well in school. How big are these problems for you: a big problem; somewhat of a problem; or not a problem at all?

The top five problems were “too much crime, violence, gangs, and drugs”, “too much dating and teen pregnancy”, “not enough jobs for youth (after school or summer jobs)”, “don’t want to study”, and “not enough role models”. 49% of respondents said “too much crime, violence, gangs, and drugs” was a big problem. 41% listed “too much dating and teen pregnancy” and “not enough jobs for youth (after school or summer jobs)” as a big problem. 33% of respondents said “not enough role models” was a big problem. The three least problematic issues were “not enough support from parents and family”, “fear of doing well”, “not enough programs for activities (music, sports, art, acting)”.

Question #2: From the above list, what are your top three things keeping you from doing your best in school?

The top three problems listed were “don’t want to study”, “don’t understand the work”, and “too much crime, violence, gangs, and drugs”. 26% of respondents said “don’t want to study. 14% of respondents said “don’t understand the work” and 13% of respondents said “too much crime, violence, gangs, drugs”.

Question #3: Here is a list of things people sometimes look forward to doing in their lifetime. How likely are you to do these things in your lifetime?

The top five things that people look forward to and are likely to do in their lifetime are “get a high school diploma”, “own a home”, “have a career”, “have a bank account, and “save money in a bank account”. 99% of respondents said they were somewhat likely or very likely to

“get a high school diploma”. 99% of respondents said they were somewhat likely or very likely to “own a home”. 98% said they were likely or somewhat likely to “have a career”. 98% of respondents said they were somewhat likely or very likely to “have a bank account”. 97% of respondents said they were somewhat likely or very likely to “save money in a savings account”.

Questions #4: Here is a list of 5 things people look forward to doing in their lifetime. How important are these to you? Rank them with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.

The most important were “learning and gaining knowledge”, “raising a family” “making a difference in society” “raising a family” “becoming rich” and “becoming famous”. 79% of respondents said “learning and gaining knowledge. 66% of respondents said “raising a family”. 65% of respondents said “making a difference in society”. 57% of respondents said “becoming rich”. 43% of respondents said “becoming famous”.

Stakeholder

The Community Needs Assessment Youth Survey was completed by 16 respondents. Of these respondents, ten (83.3%) were female and two (16.7%) were male. Eleven (91.7%) respondents were Black or African/American, four (33%) did not respond; and one (8.3%) was other. Five (41.7%) respondents were age 55 to 65; two (16.7%) respondents were age 35 to 44; two (16.7%) respondents were 45 to 54; three (25%) respondents were age 25 to 34; and four (33%) respondents did not answer.

Question #1: Rank the most important issues preventing youth achievement in your community? Choose five (5) issues; 1-Most Important, 5-Least Important

The top five issues were “lack of parental involvement”, “lack of after-school programs”, “lack of physical and mental health services”, “lack of teen pregnancy prevention and parenting classes”, “crime”, and “poverty/income inequality” were tied for fourth most important.

Question #2: Rank the most important assets currently used to improve the educational attainment of youth in your community. Choose five (5) assets; 1 Most Important, 5-Least Important.

The top five most important assets currently used to improve educational attainment of youth were “community-based organizations and nonprofits”, life-skills development programs”, “quality schools”, “physical and mental health services” and “after-school programs”.

Question # 3: Rank the assets that are most needed and not currently used to improve the educational attainment of youth in your community. Choose five (5) assets; 1-Most Important, 5-Least Important.

The top five most needed and not currently used assets used to improve educational attainment were “church and faith-based organizations”, “quality schools”, “local public agencies”, “life-skills development programs” and “community amenities”.

Question # 4: How well do you agree with the following statements?

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL
I AM SATISFIED WITH THE TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	7.69%	38.46%	15.38%	38.46%	13
I AM SATISFIED WITH THE QUALITY OF SCHOOLS IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	7.69%	30.77%	15.38%	46.15%	13
I AM SATISFIED WITH THE HOUSING OPTIONS IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	0%	30.77%	38.46%	30.77%	13
I AM SATISFIED WITH THE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	0%	38.46%	23.08%	38.46%	13
I AM SATISFIED WITH THE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	15.38%	38.46%	7.69%	38.46%	13
I AM SATISFIED WITH THE PARENTING CLASSES PROVIDED TO MY COMMUNITY.	0%	0%	30.77%	38.46%	30.77%	13
I AM SATISFIED WITH THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	15.38%	30.77%	7.69%	46.15%	13
I AM SATISFIED WITH THE MENTORING PROGRAMS IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	7.69%	15.38%	46.15%	30.77%	13
I AM SATISFIED WITH THE JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	7.69%	15.38%	38.46%	38.46%	13
I AM SATISFIED WITH THE HEALTH CARE AND WELLNESS SERVICES IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	0%	53.85%	15.38%	30.77%	13
I AM SATISFIED WITH THE CRIME PREVENTION AND CONTROL EFFORTS IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	15.38%	30.77%	23.08%	30.77%	13
I AM SATISFIED WITH THE JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULTS IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	0%	0%	53.85%	46.15%	13
I AM SATISFIED WITH THE JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	0%	15.38%	30.77%	53.85%	13
I AM SATISFIED WITH THE RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL BUSINESSES (FULL SERVICE GROCERY STORES, HARDWARE STORES, CLOTHING STORES, GAS STATIONS, RESTAURANTS, ETC.) IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	15.38%	23.08%	23.08%	38.46%	13
I AM SATISFIED WITH THE FINANCIAL LITERACY PROGRAMS OFFERED IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	0%	23.08%	53.85%	23.08%	13
I AM SATISFIED WITH THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PROVIDED IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	46.15%	15.38%	23.08%	15.38%	13
I AM SATISFIED WITH THE LIFE-SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS OFFERED	0%	7.69%	15.38%	46.15%	30.77%	13

IN MY COMMUNITY.						
I AM SATISFIED WITH THE EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES (DROPOUT PREVENTION, TUTORING, COLLEGE ENTRY ACT/SAT PREPARATION, MATH/SCIENCE/READING/WRITING PROGRAMS) OFFERED IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	0%	15.38%	30.77%	53.85%	13
	0	0	2	4	7	
I AM SATISFIED WITH MY COMMUNITY AMENITIES (PARKS, MUSEUMS, LIBRARIES, CULTURAL CENTERS, RECREATIONAL CENTERS).	0%	15.38%	38.46%	15.38%	30.77%	13
	0	2	5	2	4	
I AM SATISFIED WITH LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS' SUPPORT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF YOUTH AND FAMILIES IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	7.69%	30.77%	30.77%	30.77%	13
	0	1	4	4	4	
I AM SATISFIED WITH LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS' SUPPORT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF YOUTH AND FAMILIES IN MY COMMUNITY.	7.69%	15.38%	7.69%	15.38%	53.85%	13
	1	2	1	2	7	
I AM SATISFIED WITH LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCIES (LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, COURTS, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, ETC.) SUPPORT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF YOUTH AND FAMILIES IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	7.69%	15.38%	30.77%	46.15%	13
	0	1	2	4	6	
I AM SATISFIED WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICE AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS' SUPPORT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF YOUTH AND FAMILIES IN MY COMMUNITY.	7.69%	30.77%	38.46%	15.38%	7.69%	13
	1	4	5	2	1	
I AM SATISFIED LOCAL SCHOOL LEADERS' SUPPORT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF YOUTH AND FAMILIES IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	0%	46.15%	30.77%	23.08%	13
	0	0	6	4	3	
I AM SATISFIED WITH CHURCHES' AND OTHER FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS' SUPPORT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF YOUTH AND FAMILIES IN MY COMMUNITY.	0%	0%	46.15%	23.08%	30.77%	13
	0	0	6	3	4	
I AM WILLING TO ASSIST IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF YOUTH AND FAMILIES IN MY COMMUNITY.	69.23%	30.77%	0%	0%	0%	13
	9	4	0	0	0	

Question #5: In what city do you reside in?

Four (36%) respondents reside in Atlanta; three (18.8%) respondents did not answer, two (18%) respondents reside in East Point; and one (9%) respondent each resides in Fairburn, Marietta, Loganville, and Fulton County respectively.

Focus Groups

Youth

On the evening of December 16, 2013, an hour-long focus group was conducted at the Reef House Teen Center with a group of 11 youth. Of these 11 participants, all were black, and nine (82%) were female. None of the participants spoke a language other than English in their household. Seven (64%) were from East Point and four (36%) were from Atlanta. Five (45%) lived in a single-mother household, and six (55%) lived with both their mother and father. Four (36%) were in the 6th grade, two each (18%) were in the 7th grade, in the 8th grade, and in the 10th grade. The remaining one (9%) participant was a 9th grader. During the focus group, youth answered questions concerning their future goals and Future Foundation's role in their lives. The following is a summary of responses.

What do you want to accomplish in your lifetime?

Many of the participants wanted to have careers in the medical field (doctor, nurse) and become professional athletes. Other occupations included entrepreneur, police officer, and model. A couple of the youth stated that in order to accomplish these goals they needed to improve their attitude and to "stop being outspoken."

Do you plan to attend college?

Many of the students stated that they would. The youth were asked how they intend to get to college. Answers included getting good grades, having a high grade point average, and doing the work. Many stated that they would pay for college by working and obtaining scholarships or by family support.

Do you have everything you need at this moment in your life?

Half of the room stated that they did not have everything they needed. Money was a theme throughout the group. Some of the youth felt that money would afford them the opportunity to do what they wanted. Others stated that "money can't buy you happiness" and it "can't give you love." They did agree that they had family support. The youth stated that their family provided food, clothing, and shelter.

Do you have great schools in your community? What is an issue at your school?

One participant stated that "you have to go up north to go to a great school." Another response stated that their school was a "good" school only due to the magnet program. Some participants discussed safety issues at their school. One participant specifically mentioned "gangbangers" and the worries of being "jumped" by other students. She stated that suspensions "don't work" because students come back and continue to get into fights.

If you have friends that dropped out, what caused them to drop out?

One participant stated that a lack of confidence was a major issue. Many of the participants stated that they lacked support or "someone there for them" like Future Foundation. Pregnancy and a lack of discipline rounded out the responses.

What does success look like to you (person)?

Entertainers were a small portion of the responses. Beyonce', Rihanna, and Willow Smith were on the list of successful individuals. Quite a few participants named their relatives as their vision of success. Reasons for "success" included: money, looks, gives good advice, college education, and encouragement.

How does Future Foundation help you be successful? How confident are you in your ability to achieve your goals?

Participants noted that Future Foundation helps them with their attitudes and keeps them out of trouble. One specifically stated that Future Foundation keeps him from being a "street pharmacist." There is also the added benefit of getting assistance with school work.

What improvements do you think can improve your community (South Fulton)?

One participant stated that she wished there were more teachers that cared about students. Another participant stated that she wanted improved technology "my own computer" since other schools had computers for each student. Other responses included "people that care more about themselves" (i.e. look, smell).

Parents

On the evening of December 16, 2013, an hour-long focus group was conducted at the Reef House Teen Center with a group of 12 adults. Of these 12 participants, all 100% were black, and ten (83%) were female. One (8%) participant was 18-29 years of age. Nine (75%) were 30-49, and two (17%) were 50-64 years of age. Five (42%) respondents were high school graduates or equivalent; one (8%) has some college education; three (25%) have an Associate's degree; one (8%) has a Bachelor's degree; and two (17%) have a Graduate degree. Three (25%) participants' household income is \$10-10,999; two (17%) participants' household income is \$20-29,999; two (17%) participants' household income is \$70,000 or greater; one (8%) participant's household income is \$40-49,999; one (8%) participant's household income is less than \$9,000; and one (8%) participant's household income is \$50-59,999. Seven (58%) participants work full time; two (17%) participants work more than one job; two (17%) participants are unemployed and looking; and one (8%) participant is working part-time. Six (50%) participants are married; five (42%) participants are single; and one (8%) participant is divorced. Eleven (92%) participants speak only English in their household and one (8%) participant spoke another language besides English in their household. Nine (75%) participants reside in East Point, GA; two (17%) participants reside in Union City, GA; and one (8%) participant did not respond. During the focus group, several questions were posed to prompt dialogue regarding what can be done to ensure the future success of their children and the role of Future Foundation in their lives. The following is a summary of responses.

What are three things you hope your child accomplishes in their lifetime?

Responses ranged from educational achievements to athletic dreams. The overall hope was that their children receive the highest level of education while achieving career success. In addition, the parents also stated that they wanted their children to be independent thinkers, entrepreneurs, world travelers, and philanthropists. Success in all their endeavors was a dream for their children as well.

What resources do they have now that will help them accomplish their goals?

The participants agreed that a strong family support system will give them a foundation towards achieving their goals. Future Foundation was also mentioned as a community support system for the youth due to its positive effect on their self-esteem. Besides a good education, church was listed as a top resource for the youth. According to the group, faith based organizations provide support and establish a moral compass for the youth.

What resources would you like to see more of in your community?

The majority of the parents stated that the Reef House has been a safe haven for their children. They state that the program gives the children a place to go after school and a way for them the stay out of trouble. The Reef House provides homework assistance, field trips (cultural exposure), and life skills training. The participants reiterated that they wished more programs like this existed in the community.

Have you seen a noticeable difference in your child due to their participation in Future Foundation programs?

Many of the participants stated that they noticed a big difference in their child(ren) from the program. An increase in confidence was one of the most important differences noted. Some parents also stated that they noticed social growth in their children, ranging from friendlier peer interactions to a refinement in their behavior (more polished in social situations.)

Who are the community leaders/members that provide additional support? Do you feel like your voice is heard regarding changes in the community?

The YMCA and Boys & Girls Club were other social service agencies mentioned as additional supportive services in the community. Participants felt that these agencies as well as Future Foundation act as proxy when they are unavailable for school meetings or other important events.

What would a holistic program look like through your viewpoint?

Education continued as a prominent theme with the participants. Many of the participants stated that a holistic program would include tutoring, homework assistance, and individuals that can be available to address school needs when the parents need extra support.

What obstacles do your children face while trying to achieve their goals?

The overwhelming response was peer pressure. Many of the participants felt that children are pressured to “fit in” by competing with their friends to have the designer labels (clothing, shoes, etc) due to the influence of entertainers. Many of them agreed that children look to these entertainers as role models. One participant stated that children lack the balance between school and extracurricular activities and their free time. Stereotypes from others are also a key obstacle.

What are the chances of success for youth in South Fulton versus youth in North Fulton?

One participant begged the question “Are they any different?” He stated that parent expectations may not have an effect on what a child may want to do. He stated that the child will ultimately make their own decision. “If they aren’t grounded at home, they won’t be grounded anywhere. A handful of successful people came from broken homes.” The same participant stated that no one knows how to fix this problem. This started a dialogue about the impact of parents on their children. Participants stated that parents set the foundation but factors such as internal motivation and parent age can have an effect.

What are the resource differences in South Fulton and North Fulton?

Participants stated that the biggest difference was the discrepancies in income between the areas. North Fulton incomes top six figures and they are able to provide more resources to schools/communities. One participant stated that individuals in North Fulton “fight” for change more in their communities. She gave an example to the number of participants that showed up to complete this needs assessment with Future Foundation. The school curriculums are the same but the community backing is different. Racial/diversity issues and deplorable school facilities were also discussed.

How can we address this gap? Do you feel like you can make change on your own?

This question was posed after Census data on poverty and education rates from South Fulton cities and Fulton County was shared with the group. A few of the participants stated that they were willing to put in the work to make change happen in their community. One participant stated that she puts in the work each day at work by inspiring children to learn and not pushing her values on them. She stated that her students are able to “blend in mainstream America.”

How can we help youth in South Fulton be more successful?

Participants agreed that more outside sources and support are needed in the community as well as increased parental involvement. All agreed that sharing the Future Foundation with the community could benefit other youth. Also, more parental involvement is also needed.

If you could change three things in your community to assist in youth success, what would it be?

Increased parenting classes, financial entrepreneurship, and community child rearing were key changes participants wanted addressed in the community. They stated that many youth do not have a fear of authority. One participant stated that world travel would also give children broader experiences as well as humility and appreciation. Another participant agreed that if their children had the opportunity to visit a third world country they would “change their ways.”

South Fulton and North Fulton: A Conclusion

The life experiences and life chances of the children and adults living in the South Fulton communities of East Point, College Park, and Atlanta are very different from that of their North Fulton counterparts. On average, over the last ten years, youth residing in North Fulton are graduating at a rate of 77%, 8 percentage points higher than the 69% graduation rate of Georgia state. Students attending secondary schools in South Fulton, however, are graduating at a rate of 52%, 17 percentage points lower than the state graduation rate. The educational attainment of those 25 years and older tell a similar dismal story of the plight of adults living in South Fulton. In 2012, an estimated 12.59% of Atlanta adults, 15.56% of College Park adults, and 17.80% of East Point adults 25 years and older had an educational attainment of less than a high school diploma(e.g., see chart 8). These are opposed to the 9.82% of adults Fulton County wide. The educational attainment of South Fulton adults has a direct negative impact on the employability, and consequently income of these individuals. The unemployment rate for those adults 25 to 64 years of age with less than a high school diploma was an estimated 25%, 31%, and 24% in 2012 for Atlanta, College Park, and East Point, respectively. The unemployment rate for these individuals Fulton County wide was 20%. (ACS-DP02)

Educational attainment is seen as the ultimate leveler in this highly stratified socioeconomic society. Indeed, increased levels of education provide monetary and nonmonetary benefits for both the individual and their community. “U.S. adults with at least a bachelor’s degree earned \$26,700 more on average than adults with only high school diplomas or GED credentials in 2011” (SREB Fact Book on Higher Education 2013, p. 69). Additionally, society reaps significant rewards when a higher percentage of its residents have postsecondary education. Higher rates of civic participation, community service, volunteering, voting correspond to higher levels of education as do lower unemployment and poverty rates. A more educated workforce leads to higher wages for all. “The considerable nonmonetary reward of a college education includes...greater opportunities for the next generation” (Education Pays 2007, College Board 2007, p.2).

To even enjoy the benefits of postsecondary education and become college ready, students must adequately perform in quality primary and secondary educational institutions. Consequently, in an effort to improve the plight of youth in the South Fulton communities of East Point, College Park and Atlanta, Future Foundation, Inc. works to encourage children to dream about, invest in, and prepare for their futures through education. The magnitude of and the great need for this task becomes more evident as we evaluate school quality, academic

performance, social capital, human capital, and financial capital available to the students in the East Point, College Park, and Atlanta communities.