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The Columbus Partnership

> *"The levy results stung. We had made great progress in recent years. Our economic development efforts were bringing new companies and jobs to the area. We had helped redevelop downtown Columbus and keep the National Hockey League franchise in town. We were running the tables. But then we ran into a buzz saw called 'public education.'"*
> *—Alex Fischer, president and chief executive officer of the Columbus Partnership*

In May 2014, leaders of the Columbus Partnership paused to consider their next moves. The Partnership, a nonprofit civic alliance founded in 2002, brought together the heads of roughly 50 leading businesses and other organizations to focus on the vitality of Columbus, Ohio, and the surrounding region. For the most part, the Partnership had focused on the economic development of the Columbus community—for instance, pitching the city as an attractive site for foreign companies that were growing in the United States or facilitating the revitalization of downtown.

Starting in 2012, however, the Partnership had joined city-wide efforts to improve public education. Those efforts had come to a head in the fall of 2013 when the Partnership put its heft behind a ballot measure that would increase property taxes 23.5% to support the Columbus City Schools. The funding would help expand pre-kindergarten education, streamline the system's central administration, introduce state-of-the-art teaching tools, and support high-performing charter schools. Working closely with Columbus' longtime Mayor, Michael Coleman, Partnership members had spent $2.5 million campaigning for the levy. But amid other turmoil in the school system, 69% of voters had rejected the levy.

"We got our butts kicked," said Alex Fischer, head of the Columbus Partnership. "Now, should we continue to try to improve education in Columbus or go back to the stuff we know how to do? If we push forward with education, how should we change our approach?"

Columbus, Ohio

The city of Columbus covered more than 200 square miles (**Exhibit 1**), and its population of over 800,000 made it the 15th largest city in America in 2014. The greater Columbus Metropolitan Statistical Area, the 32nd biggest MSA in the nation, was home to nearly two million.

The history of Columbus dated back to 1812, when the legislature of the newly formed state of Ohio ended a squabble over the site of the state's capital by establishing a new town in the state's

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center, on the banks of the Scioto and Olentangy Rivers. By 1816, the town had a church, a school, a newspaper, a jail, and more than 700 residents, and the legislature moved into the just-built statehouse. The town soon became a hub of transportation, with navigable rivers, a connection to the Ohio and Erie Canal (completed in 1831), the National Road that stretched to Baltimore (also 1831), and a trans-Ohio railroad (1851). European immigrants, especially from Ireland and Germany, swelled the town.

From its early days, Columbus had more than its share of educational and cultural institutions, and the 1870 founding of the precursor to The Ohio State University set Columbus decisively on a path toward being a college town. By 2014, the city hosted more than 150,000 students at 32 colleges and universities.

Manufacturing took off in Columbus in the late 1800s. The Columbus Buggy Works, for instance, claimed to be the largest carriage maker in America in the 1880s, able to produce a vehicle every eight minutes. The city, however, never became a vehicle maker on the scale of Detroit, its neighbor three hours' drive to the north. Despite hosting an early steel plant, Columbus did not develop the massive steel industry of Pittsburgh, three hours to the east.

Instead, Columbus developed an economy centered on services. In 2014, the city's largest employers included the Ohio state government, The Ohio State University, JP Morgan Chase, Nationwide Mutual Insurance, OhioHealth (a system of hospitals), Honda, L Brands (owner of retailers Victoria's Secret and Bath and Body Works), Huntington Bancshares (a major regional bank), American Electric Power (a utility), Cardinal Health (a healthcare services and distribution company), and Battelle (the world's largest private, nonprofit research organization). Other Fortune 1000 companies founded and headquartered in the Columbus region included the shoe retailer DSW, the apparel retailer Express, Inc., the lawn and garden products company Scotts Miracle-Gro, the fast food company Wendy's, and the metals manufacturer Worthington Industries.

Exhibits 2a, 2b, and 2c compare Columbus to other American cities along demographic, economic, and other dimensions. On many metrics, Columbus was considered a typical American city—indeed so representative of the United States that fast food companies and other retailers often chose it as a test market for new products.[1]

The Columbus Way

City leaders considered Columbus far from typical, however, in the manner that citizens worked together. "Cooperation and collaboration is the Columbus way," the editors of the *Columbus Dispatch*, the city's daily newspaper, wrote in 2012. "It's one reason this city has thrived as others struggle."[2] Alex Fischer elaborated:

> "Leaders of all aspects—civic, business, government, community organizers—have an expectation of each other that we put our selfish interest aside, or at least below community interest. I think the Columbus Way has been our way for a long time. I'm not sure we've always been introspective enough to actually have recognized it and talked about it."[3]

In interviews and conversations, business leaders who had moved to Columbus from other cities said that they were more collaborative and civically engaged in Columbus than they had been in their prior homes. George Barrett, chief executive of Cardinal Health, explained: "I've always been involved in the communities where I've worked. But I had to up my game when I came to Columbus in 2008. No one takes you aside and tells you you have to do it. It's just kind of expected. We've found that the more active a role we play in our communities, the more engaged our employees feel. And that's ultimately good for our performance."

The Columbus Way was exemplified by the revitalization of downtown, recent developments at Columbus State Community College, and collective efforts related to data analysis and cybersecurity.

Downtown revitalization. In the late 1990s, Columbus's downtown resembled that of many American cities. The flagship department store was shuttered. City Center, a suburban-style shopping mall built in the 1980s with a design intended to keep shoppers inside, had killed off other downtown retailers, then succumbed to competition from suburban malls. The downtown population surged each weekday morning as workers made their way from open parking lots to high-rise office buildings, but workers retreated to the suburbs each afternoon. During evenings and weekends, "downtown" was more "ghost town." A downtown coffee shop named Insomnia closed at 5 PM each day, and then closed permanently.[4]

In 2001, Mayor Michael Coleman, then in his first term, engaged city councilors and business leaders in a process to consider the future of downtown. The resulting 2002 Strategic Plan for Downtown Columbus called for a reimagined, residential downtown with vibrant public spaces, retailing, and attractions. A public-private partnership, the Columbus Downtown Development Corporation (CDDC), was established to implement the plan.

With Guy Worley, the mayor's former chief of staff, as CEO and Michael Morris, then the chief of American Electric Power (AEP), as its board chair, the CDDC launched a series of redevelopment efforts. With $18 million in private money and $7 mm in public funds, City Center was demolished and replaced by Columbus Commons, a 9-acre park with cafes, gardens, performances, and a steady stream of events. Unused land along the river became the Scioto Mile—a combination of walkways, nature preserve, and gathering spaces; twenty-four businesses and nonprofits, led by the AEP Foundation, covered half of the $44 million cost. In the adjacent Bicentennial Park, the AEP Foundation sponsored an immense interactive foundation that attracted kids and adults alike. The former department store, renovated with public and private money, became retail space on the ground floor and office space above. City incentives encouraged private developers to build new apartments and townhouses, especially in former parking lots.[5]

By 2010, Columbus's downtown population was rising for the first time since 1950, albeit modestly. An updated strategic plan boiled down more than 1,000 public comments into a handful of ambitious programs for the future, including redevelopment of the peninsula that lay across the river from downtown Columbus. Though downtown revitalization remained an unfinished project, the CDDC's Worley noted a key to the progress so far: "The reason Columbus has fared so well is our public and private leaders work so well together."[6]

Columbus State Community College. David Harrison, president of Columbus State Community College (CSCC), saw the building of connections as core to his institution's role: "We're a bridge, not a destination." Soon after arriving at CSCC in 2010, Harrison reached out to leaders at The Ohio State University (OSU), the state's flagship land-grant four-year university, and struck an unusual agreement. Under the Preferred Pathways program, any graduate of CSCC would be guaranteed admission to OSU. Harrison hoped that the program would bring a bachelor's degree within reach of many more of CSCC's 25,000 students. By 2014, CSCC alumni were establishing a track record of success at OSU, and CSCC had inked similar deals with six other local colleges.

After starting Preferred Pathways, Harrison opened conversations with superintendents of nearby K-12 education systems. He and the superintendents were jointly disappointed, for example, that 80% of students enrolling at CSCC had to take remedial math courses to fill gaps in their high school educations. Soon, CSCC and local school systems were offering CSCC's remedial math course to high school seniors for free.

In 2011 and 2012, CSCC hosted three regional summits of college and K-12 educators, government officials, and workforce development professionals. The resulting Central Ohio Compact set an ambitious goal: the portion of central Ohioans with a postsecondary credential would rise from roughly 36% in 2012 to 60% by 2025.[7] CSCC agreed to lead the development and implementation of a strategy to deliver on that goal, and central to the strategy were efforts to align high school and college curricula with the needs of employers. Soon, employers were contributing: AEP committed $5 million to help Columbus high school students earn college credit and career certifications; JP Morgan Chase backed the Compact with $2.5 million; Nationwide Children's Hospital supported a program to prepare residents of nearby neighborhoods for jobs at the hospital; and the Mayor's office pitched in $1.5 million to spur on the hospital program.[8]

Harrison reflected on his work in Columbus: "There's a strong collaborative spirit…. It's not the kind of thing you could write a manual about, partly because it's all so relationship driven."[9]

Big Data and cybersecurity. Patty Morrison and Mike Keller—the chief information officers of Cardinal Health and Nationwide Mutual, respectively—met in 2010 when Morrison joined Keller on the board of TechColumbus, an organization devoted to assisting high-growth startups in Columbus. Soon, the two were discussing the similar problems that their very different businesses faced, especially the challenges of analyzing "Big Data" and attracting workers skilled in data analytics. The chief executive of Nationwide endorsed the notion of a city-wide focus on data analytics, and he took the idea to his peers on the executive committee of the Columbus Partnership.

Along with their counterparts at L Brands and Huntington, and with the backing of their companies' chief executives, Morrison and Keller helped to convince IBM in 2012 to locate its new data analytics center of excellence in Columbus.[10] IBM was further enticed by The Ohio State University and Columbus State Community College, which agreed to develop new courses on data analytics.[11] At the ribbon-cutting ceremony for IBM's new center, Ohio Governor John Kasich noted that hundreds of executives would soon visit Columbus to get IBM's advice, and he joked that they would not be allowed to leave Ohio until "they move stuff here."[12]

CIOs at Cardinal Health, Nationwide, L Brands, and Huntington took a further step in 2014 when, along with colleagues at Battelle, AEP, and OhioHealth, they formed a new organization, the Columbus Collaboratory. Funding of $4 million from each of the seven companies, plus a $5 million state grant, would allow the Collaboratory to pursue projects in data analytics and cybersecurity and to develop a local workforce skilled in those areas.[13] The Collaboratory's interim CEO Brad Ashbrook described how the organization might operate:

> We'll bring in seven people and put them in rotational positions, one at each of the seven member companies. They'll work for three months at that firm—let's say, in cybersecurity—and then they'll all come back here for a week and share what they've learned and experienced. Then, like musical chairs, they'll rotate to the next slot on the circle and go back out there for another three months of experience, then come back in and report. And so on.[14]

The Columbus Partnership

Near the center of many Columbus collaborations was the Columbus Partnership. And at the center of the Partnership, by all accounts, were Leslie "Les" Wexner and John F. Wolfe.

Wexner was born in 1937 to immigrant shopkeeper parents and educated at OSU. He founded The Limited, one of the nation's first specialty apparel retailers, in 1963 and grew L Brands to be a global enterprise with revenue of more than $10 billion. Over time, L Brands had spun off retail chains ranging from The Limited and Express to Lane Bryant and Abercrombie & Fitch. In 2014, it continued to include the highly profitable Victoria's Secret and Bath & Body Works. Wexner was known for his philanthropy, especially to local causes. At OSU, both the medical center and the art museum bore his family name.

In contrast to Wexner, Wolfe represented "old money" in Columbus. The Wolfe family had owned the *Columbus Dispatch*, the city's main daily newspaper, since 1905, and the family's success in media and banking gave the Wolfes enduring influence in the city. In the years after World War II, recalled one civic leader, "The talk around town was that if you wanted something done, you had to have it cleared with the Wolfes."[15] Reflecting the family's conservative leaning, the *Dispatch* had not endorsed a Democratic presidential candidate since Woodrow Wilson in 1916.[16] The Wolfe family routinely gave generously to civic causes--$10 million to a recent campaign for Nationwide Children's Hospital, for instance, and $2 million to the Scioto Mile.[17] John F. Wolfe, age 70 in 2014, was known to be soft-spoken and private, preferring to work behind the scenes.

Wexner recalled the origins of the Columbus Partnership:

> One day in the late 1980s, J.W. Wolfe [the Wolfe family patriarch before John F. Wolfe] called me into his office and asked if I wanted to join him as one of the three or four people who decides what happens in town—like who's mayor and where the highways go. I said, "No way, not with that few people," and I left his office. Within an hour, my banker called me up, said I was crazy, and told me to call J.W. immediately to apologize and accept his offer. I refused.
>
> We tried to get a larger group, maybe 30-40, together to talk about what's going on in the community. But that just became the Mayor's Club. Ohio's Governor George Voinovich also came to me and said, "You folks in Columbus have to get your community organized, like we did in Cleveland when I was mayor." Still no traction.

Further encouragement from Governor Voinovich led Wexner to partner with John F. Wolfe and convene what would become the Partnership:

> With the help of Richard Chatten—a McKinsey alum on the faculty at Case Western Reserve University, who founded the civic organization Cleveland Tomorrow—we managed to get four or five people together four to six times a year for several years in the late 1990s, without a real agenda. We made a list of what we might work on: highways, the airport, museums, the university, economic development. Economic development really struck a chord.
>
> Around the time we got to 12 members, in 2000, we visited other communities to see how they were approaching things: Cleveland, Milwaukee, Toronto, Austin, the Twin Cities. We brought in Bob Milbourne as our first director. At about 22 members, the

> organization came into focus. We learned how to do more formal things, like bring in outside speakers.
>
> We expanded gradually, up to about 50 members today. But the core was that three of us—John F., myself, and the head of Nationwide at the time—were trusted, and we trusted each other. No one had an agenda or was trying to do anything selfish. The community was already good on philanthropy, but we wanted to do better than we were doing.

In 2014, the Columbus Partnership's members were the chief executives of 53 companies and other organizations (**Exhibit 3**). The Partnership sought demographic diversity, but it was hard to come by: the Partnership's members in 2014 included six women and four African-Americans.

Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman was included in many Partnership functions but was not a member. First elected Mayor in 1999, Coleman ran unopposed in 2003 and won nearly 70% of the vote when reelected in 2007 and 2011. He described his background and his relationship with the business community:

> In public service, I came up through the African-American grassroots system, and I have always been a Democrat. But I was also a business lawyer before taking public office. So I had no learning curve when it came to understanding the business community. There was probably a bigger learning curve for the business community. Still, the *Dispatch* endorsed me each time I ran for office.
>
> Soon after I was first elected, two things happened. First, I reached out personally to individual business leaders. I wanted them to know that as an African-American Democrat, I didn't have horns or a tail. Second, George Voinovich called me and said, "You and the business community have to forge an alliance. If you work together, you can get things done. You have the same agenda." He was working on Les Wexner at the same time.
>
> The fact that the business community in Columbus comes up with a collective view is enormously helpful. The Mayor has to be part of the dialogue, but I can't go to each and every person on each and every issue.

John F. Wolfe remarked on why "this city has collegiality between elected officials and the private sector":

> We have a dominant mayor and other public officials who are fiscally responsible. We have a supportive electorate, with the important exception of the recent school levy. And we have 50 CEOs who are very compatible. The CEOs truly feel they have an obligation to the betterment of the community even though many of them came from outside Columbus.

The Columbus Partnership made use of the city's collegiality to pursue a range of activities.

Benchmarking. Every two years since 2005, the Partnership along with the Columbus Foundation had commissioned a local research firm to benchmark the Columbus region against other cities on a variety of dimensions. The 2013 benchmarking study ran to 130 pages and compared cities on 90 metrics in five categories: population vitality, economic strength, personal prosperity, lifelong learning, and community wellbeing.[18] Fifteen metro areas—some considered "best in class" and some with comparable demographics and geography—provided a basis of comparison.[a]

Economic development. Promoting economic development was a focus of the Columbus Partnership from its earliest days, and the Great Recession of 2007-09 made the economic health of the 11-county Columbus region an urgent matter. Efforts reached a milestone in 2010 when the Partnership worked with the City of Columbus, the Columbus Chamber of Commerce, and others to establish a regional economic development strategy called Columbus 2020, set up as a separate nonprofit organization. Kenny McDonald, an economic development expert with experience in Charlotte, Albuquerque, and Savannah, led Columbus 2020, while the Columbus Partnership's Alex Fischer chaired the organization's board. Initial funding for Columbus 2020 came from the Columbus Partnership, but by 2014, 195 private-sector companies provided 73% of total investment, while 28 local governments, nonprofits, foundations, and educational institutions contributed 27%.

After consulting with roughly 2,000 local leaders in small groups over the course of a year, the board of Columbus 2020 agreed on four goals for the region: by 2020, the region would generate 150,000 net new jobs, raise per-capita income by 30%, attract $8 billion of capital investment, and be recognized as a national leader in economic development collaboration.[19] Toward these ends, the 20-person staff of Columbus 2020 marketed the Columbus region to companies worldwide, conducted customized research for firms considering expansion in the region, and helped companies navigate the process of growing in Columbus. The organization helped firms understand and tap the many incentives that local and state authorities offered in order to attract business. At any moment, the Columbus 2020 team would be working with, and courting, dozens of companies with potential expansion plans.

While working day-to-day to land specific project, Columbus 2020 also sought over the long run to "improve the civic infrastructure" in Columbus and to create "a platform for the open exchange of ideas, aggregating information for policy makers, and working to enhance the human and physical infrastructure necessary for economic growth."[20] In 2014, the Columbus 2020 team was focused on five longer-term priorities: improving the ability of Columbus's educational institutions to produce the talent that companies would need; increasing global trade and investment in the region; developing better transportation infrastructure and utilities; making Columbus more attractive for early-stage and high-growth companies; and increasing manufacturing competitiveness.[21] Columbus 2020 pursued such long-run efforts indirectly—by making the needs of the community clear to everyone and assembling groups that could act on those needs. For instance, it had helped to bring together the founders of the Columbus Collaboratory, described earlier.

By late 2014, the Columbus region had made considerable progress toward the Columbus 2020 goals. Since 2010, the region had added 85,000 net new jobs, had seen personal per-capita income rise 11%, and had attracted $4.5 billion of capital investment.[22] The region's unemployment rate stood at 3.7%, while the national rate was 5.8%.[23]

Community branding. An enduring frustration for many Columbus leaders was the city's lack of image in the minds of most people in the world. As one Columbian put it, "We have this great city, but no one knows a thing about it. I'll celebrate the day when an outsider calls us 'Columbus' instead of 'Columbus, Ohio.' Why must they always add that 'Comma Ohio'?"

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[a] In the 2013 report, the benchmark cities were Austin, Charlotte, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Jacksonville, Kansas City, Louisville, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Nashville, Portland, Raleigh, and San Diego.

Since 2007, a coalition of organizations including the Columbus Partnership had worked to develop a unified brand image for Columbus. The family of logos that emerged from the initiative are shown in **Exhibit 4**. Backing the logos was an effort to tell outsiders a unified story about Columbus as a "smart and open" city—a community "open to all…always taking risks, always thinking big…an educated community with more than 40 regional colleges and universities…and a youthful, vibrant, engaged citizenry…."[24]

Freshman orientation. Each August, the Columbus Partnership helped to bus OSU's 7,000 new freshmen from campus to Nationwide Arena, on the northern edge of downtown. There, Mayor Coleman, local business leaders, and local celebrities welcomed the new students to town and introduced them to the city's attractions.

Opportunistic issues. The Columbus Partnership got involved in an array of issues in the city, especially ones related to economic development. Alex Fischer explained: "When you convene a group like ours, your phone rings a lot, asking for help on any number of important issues. We have to be opportunistic around the issues of the day."[25] In the depths of the Great Recession, for instance, Mayor Coleman found himself facing a City budget shortfall of more than $100 million despite having furloughed certain City workers, reduced trash pickup, and trimmed pensions. The Mayor sought, and received, unanimous support from the Columbus Partnership for a ballot measure that would raise income taxes and prevent further cuts, including police and firefighter layoffs. The ballot measure passed with support from 51.7% of voters.[26]

Another example arose when the majority owner of the Columbus Blue Jackets, the city's National Hockey League franchise, said in 2011 that he might have to move the team to another city. The team was losing money, in part because of payments it was making to Nationwide's realty group for the use of Nationwide Arena. The Columbus Partnership helped to engineer a complicated deal that would keep the team in town. The public used casino revenue to buy the Arena; Nationwide bought naming rights to the Arena and invested in the team; the new, public owners of the Arena gave the team free use of the facility; and the team pledged to stay in Columbus until 2039.[27]

Leadership retreats. In 2002, the Partnership held a retreat at the Harvard Kennedy School's Center for Public Leadership, whose leadership council was co-chaired by Les Wexner and his wife Abigail. The retreat soon became an annual, two-day event and a hallmark of the Partnership's activities. Each retreat focused on an issue of current importance in Columbus and allowed Partnership members to discuss the issue with each other and with outsiders.

Public Education in Columbus

The Partnership's Harvard retreat in May 2014 focused on public education in Columbus. Education had long been of interest to the Partnership and a passion for individual members, but as a focal Partnership activity, it had taken a backseat to economic development. In the last two, tumultuous years, however, education had moved to the fore.

The data-tampering scandal. In June 2012, the *Columbus Dispatch* broke the story that employees of the Columbus City Schools (CCS) school district had retroactively altered the enrollment and attendance records of thousands of students at the end of each school year.[28] For rating a school's official performance, only the test scores of continuously enrolled students counted. So by withdrawing and re-enrolling students with poor attendance records and poor test scores, officials could artificially raise attendance rates and boost average test scores in a school. Such changes could help a school meet certain performance requirements and improve the school's state-mandated "report card." Soon, state and federal investigations of CCS were underway.

The Commission. In December 2012, at the urging of the Columbus Partnership and many others, Mayor Coleman and Columbus City Council President Andrew Ginther announced the formation of the Columbus Education Commission. A group of 25 civic leaders, the Commission was charged "to examine the challenges and opportunities facing all children living within the Columbus City Schools district, from preschool to career."[29] Beyond the data-tampering scandal, Coleman and Ginther had good reason to call for change: like most U.S. cities, Columbus had serious problems in its education system. In Columbus City Schools, 34% of children arrived unready for kindergarten, compared to 19% in Ohio as a whole. Among CCS third graders, 61% passed the state reading assessment, compared to 80% in Ohio, and the gap in the pass rate between economically disadvantaged students and other students was larger in CCS than in any surrounding school district. The CCS graduation rate, at 77.6%, was far below the state rate of 84.3%.[30] Of the 131,000 children living in the city of Columbus in 2012, only 49,000 attended CCS schools; 53,000 commuted to the schools of nearby suburban districts, 13,000 went to public charter schools, and 16,000 took options such as private schools or home-schooling.[31]

The Columbus Partnership was deeply involved in the new Commission. George Barrett, a Partnership member and chief executive of Cardinal Health, was one of three Commission co-chairs. Alex Fischer and four other Partnership members served on the Commission. The Partnership also provided financial support alongside the City, the City Council, and Battelle.

Between December 2012 and April 2013, the Commission gathered input from education experts, reviewed prior research, visited schools, held 17 public events, and solicited ideas from the community using television advertising, social media, and a postcard campaign.[32] On April 30, 2013, the Commission delivered a 109-page report that laid out dozens of recommendations in six areas:[33]

1. "Make sure every Columbus child is ready for kindergarten," especially by expanding access to high-quality, affordable pre-kindergarten programs.
2. "Recruit and retain high-performing teachers and principals," particularly by developing a new, comprehensive human resource strategy and giving principals more authority to make personnel decisions.
3. "Support state-of-the-art teaching tools and materials" that offer students personalized instruction.
4. "Create more high-performing neighborhood schools and school choices," including by growing the number of high-quality charter schools in Columbus.
5. "Give students a clear purpose" by making sure that every CCS graduate is prepared to go to college, get a job, join the military, or start a business.
6. "Partner with the community to serve the whole child"—that is, to address health, nutrition, social, and other needs so that each child arrives at school ready to learn.

Surrounding these priorities, the Commission called on the entire community to make a "new compact for educational excellence" in which "every sector of the community [is] aligned—the superintendent, school board, the city leaders, the private sector, and civic leadership—around common goals and metrics" and "all stakeholders hold each other accountable."[34] The Commission also called for four specific next steps:[35]

1. Create "a Public/Private Partnership to lead the drive for educational excellence within Columbus."
2. Set up "an Office of Independent Auditor…responsible for auditing the fiscal and performance management of Columbus City Schools."
3. Change how the Columbus School Board governs CCS based on "research on the practices of effective school boards."
4. Have the Mayor "appoint a Director of Educational Improvement within his cabinet to increase the city's capacity to support educational excellence in the community."

In addition, "the Mayor, the City Council President, and the private sector should establish a community outreach effort to educate residents about this report," and "the next Columbus City Schools voted levy should incorporate all appropriate recommendations from the Columbus Education Commission."[36]

On the ballot. Core elements of the Commission's recommendations were incorporated into two proposals that Columbus voters would see on the ballot in November 2013. "Issue 50" floated a bond to pay for school renovations and technology upgrades, and it raised property taxes by $76.6 million per year—or 23.5%—to hire an independent auditor, offer preschool in the district, expand teacher training, and enroll some district students in high-performing, nonprofit charter schools. "Issue 51" defined the selection and powers of the independent auditor.[37]

By election day, the prior superintendent of CCS, in office since 2001, had retired, and Dan Good, a reform-minded superintendent from a nearby suburb, had been appointed as interim superintendent, with a one-year contract. Investigations of CCS were still underway, and some individuals allegedly involved in data tampering remained in their jobs.

Support for Issues 50 and 51 came from Mayor Coleman, the City Council, the school board, the *Columbus Dispatch*, the Columbus Partnership, and others, who spent more than $2.5 million advertising in favor of the ballot measures. Opposition came mainly from grassroots organizations with names such as "It's OK to Vote No" and "No Cheater No Charters Columbus."

On November 5, voters soundly rejected both Issues: 69% opposed Issue 50 and 61% voted against Issue 51. "You can't fool the people," said Jonathan Beard, an activist who organized the opposition. "Any time you spend $2 1/2 million and you can't get to 50 percent against opponents that had $4,000, you just had a bad idea to start with."[38]

Next Moves

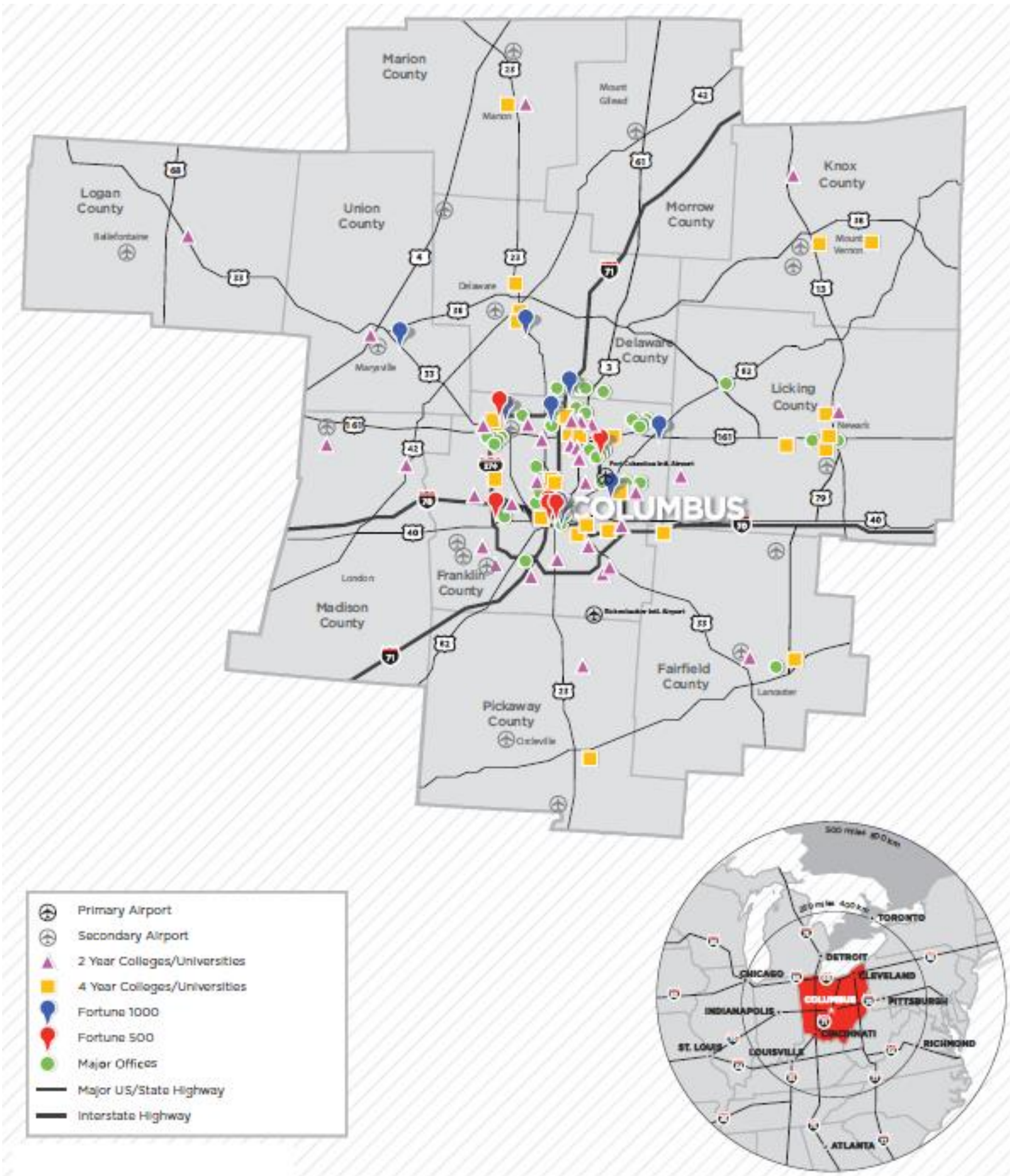
In the wake of the levy defeat, the leaders of the Columbus Partnership paused to consider their next moves. Should they continue to push to improve public education in Columbus, and if so, how?

There was no lack of other issues calling for the Partnership's attention. In the domain of economic development, several members felt that entrepreneurship in Columbus deserved greater focus. The colleges and universities in Columbus produced a steady stream of entrepreneurial talent and innovations. But most of the promising graduates left Columbus to start ventures in the Bay Area, Chicago, New York, Boston, and other cities, where capital and co-founders were plentiful. Institutions like OSU had bureaucracies that slowed the commercialization of new technology. Columbus was one of the largest U.S. travel markets without a non-stop flight to the Bay Area.

The Partnership might also be able to affect the quality of K-12 education in Columbus without reforming the entire public school system. Since the mid-2000s, individual members of the Partnership had worked to bring high-quality charter schools to the city.[b] Local leaders including Abigail Wexner convinced KIPP, one of the most successful "chains" of charter schools, to open a middle school in Columbus in 2008. The success of that school led those leaders and KIPP, in 2013, to begin construction of a gorgeous new campus on the grounds of a former golf course in northeast Columbus. When completed in 2016, the campus would educate 2,000 students from kindergarten to high school. Perhaps the comprehensive reform of CCS, apparently rejected by the electorate, was unnecessary.

[b] Charter schools enrolled students by lottery, received public funds based on a per-student formula, but operated independently of the conventional school district. They had to achieve certain performance targets in order to renew their charters.

Exhibit 1 Map of the Columbus, Ohio Region



Source: columbusregion.com

Exhibit 2a City Statistics

	Demographics						Economics			
City	City population (000s)[a]	MSA population (000s)[b]	City population growth rate (%)[c]	Median age (years)	Portion of population black (%)[d]	Portion of population Latino or Hispanic (%)	Median household income ($000s)	Cost of living (COL) index[e]	COL-adjusted median HH income ($000s)[f]	CAGR in median HH income (%)[g]
Columbus	**823**	1,967	2.2	*36*	16.4	*3.7*	54	*93.8*	58	1.4
Atlanta	*448*	**5,523**	1.6	*36*	**34.3**	10.5	56	95.6	58	*0.4*
Austin	**885**	*1,883*	**3.4**	*34*	*8.4*	**31.9**	62	98.5	63	**2.5**
Boston	646	**4,684**	**2.7**	**39**	9.4	9.9	**73**	**111.6**	**65**	2.0
Charlotte	**793**	2,335	**3.5**	37	**23.5**	9.6	*51*	*94.3*	*54*	*1.1*
Chattanooga	*173*	*542*	**2.8**	**40**	14.9	*3.7*	*48*	*90.5*	*53*	2.1
Detroit	689	4,295	*-2.4*	**40**	**23.6**	*4.1*	*52*	97.8	*53*	*0.3*
Miami	*418*	**5,828**	1.8	**40**	**22.4**	**42.7**	*47*	105.0	*45*	*1.1*
Milwaukee	599	*1,570*	*0.9*	37	18.0	10.1	*52*	*95.2*	55	*1.1*
Minn.-St. Paul	*400*	3,459	1.7	37	*9.0*	*5.6*	**67**	103.0	**65**	1.5
Nashville	634	*1,758*	*1.1*	*36*	16.4	*6.7*	52	*94.1*	55	1.7
New York	**8,406**	**19,950**	*0.7*	38	18.6	**23.5**	66	**122.2**	*54*	2.0
Salt Lake City	*191*	*1,140*	*0.6*	*32*	*2.1*	**17.3**	62	99.1	62	**2.9**
San Francisco	**837**	4,516	1.9	**39**	*9.4*	**21.9**	**80**	**121.3**	**66**	**2.5**
Seattle	652	3,610	2.5	37	*7.6*	9.5	**67**	**107.0**	**63**	**2.6**
Washington, DC	646	**5,950**	**2.9**	36	**27.1**	14.7	**90**	**120.4**	**75**	**2.4**

Note: For data sources and coverage areas, see Appendix A. In each column, the five highest figures are **in bold**, and the five lowest are *italicized with grey background*.

[a] As of July 1, 2013. Nashville figure is reported for Nashville-Davidson metropolitan government (balance). Minn.-St. Paul figure is for Minneapolis only; the figure for St. Paul is 295.

[b] As of July 1, 2013.

[c] Compound annual growth rate (CAGR) over the period 2005–2013, except for Nashville, where data began in 2007.

[d] Includes people of two or more races of which one is black.

[e] 2012 Regional Price Parities (U.S. average = 100).

[f] Median household income divided by (COL index / 100).

[g] Over the period 2005–2013 in nominal dollars. Inflation averaged 2.2% annually according to the Consumer Price Index and 1.9% according to the Personal Consumption Expenditures price index.

Exhibit 2b City Statistics, continued

City	CAGR in private-sector jobs (%)[a]	Unemploy-ment rate (%)[b]	Peak unem-ployment rate (%)[c]	Productivity ($000s)[d]	Productivity growth rate (%)[e]	Portion of population in poverty (%)	Inequality: 95/20 metric (city)[f]	Inequality: 95/20 metric (MSA)	Upward economic mobility[g]
	Economics (continued)								
Columbus	0.9	6.2	9.7	*91*	0.8	14.8	*8.2*	*8.0*	*37.6*
Atlanta	1.3	**7.9**	**10.6**	94	*-0.2*	**15.9**	**19.2**	8.6	*36.1*
Austin	**3.1**	*5.2*	*7.5*	*86*	**1.4**	14.3	*9.1*	8.5	40.0
Boston	*0.6*	6.4	*8.5*	**114**	1.1	*10.4*	**15.0**	**10.0**	**44.7**
Charlotte	**1.7**	**8.1**	**12.6**	102	**1.2**	14.8	*10.2*	**9.5**	*35.6*
Chattanooga	*0.2*	**7.6**	10.2	*73*	*0.2*	**16.1**		8.4	*37.9*
Detroit	*-0.3*	**9.4**	**16.9**	94	*0.1*	**16.9**	12.0	9.5	*37.3*
Miami	**1.6**	7.4	**11.9**	*82*	*-0.2*	**17.7**	**14.8**	**10.8**	39.9
Milwaukee	*0.1*	7.3	10.2	95	1.1	**15.9**	*8.6*	8.8	38.5
Minn.-St. Paul	0.7	*4.8*	*8.5*	98	0.8	*10.3*	12.5	*7.9*	**44.6**
Nashville	**1.6**	6.5	10.3	*89*	**1.2**	13.7	*7.9*	8.4	38.2
New York	1.2	**7.8**	9.7	**124**	*0.4*	14.6	13.7	**11.8**	**43.9**
Salt Lake City	**1.6**	*4.2*	*8.4*	94	**1.2**	*12.4*		*7.1*	**45.8**
San Francisco	*0.7*	6.6	**10.7**	**131**	1.0	*11.5*	**17.1**	**11.8**	**44.5**
Seattle	1.1	*5.9*	10.3	**123**	**1.5**	12.6	10.4	*8.2*	43.3
Washington, DC	1.4	*5.4*	*7.1*	**115**	1.0	*8.5*	**14.4**	*7.6*	43.1

Note: For data sources and coverage areas, see Appendix A. In each column, the five highest figures are **in bold**, and the five lowest are *italicized with grey background*.

[a] Over the period 2001–2013.

[b] Annual figures for 2013.

[c] Not seasonally adjusted. The months in which MSAs reached peak unemployment during or after the Great Recession ranged from March 2009 (Minneapolis-Saint Paul) to August 2010 (Milwaukee).

[d] Value added per job in 2013, calculated as metropolitan area GDP divided by total employment (number of jobs).

[e] CAGR of real value added per job, 2001–2013. Real value added per job is calculated as real metropolitan area GDP (in chained 2009 dollars) divided by total employment (number of jobs).

[f] The ratio of household income at the 95th percentile to household income at the 20th percentile in 2013.

[g] Expected income rank (on a 0–100 scale) of children whose parents were at the 25th percentile of the national income distribution. A higher figure reflects greater mobility.

Exhibit 2c City Statistics, continued

	Education		**Social**					
City	High school graduation rate (%)[a]	Test score percentile (income adjusted)[b]	Racial segre-gation[c]	Income segregation[c]	Fraction of children with single mother (%)[d]	Fraction religious[e]	Violent crime rate[f]	Social capital index[g]
Columbus	77	**3.7**	0.27	**0.12**	22.8	*0.36*	**0.0030**	**0.61**
Atlanta	*59*	*-7.9*	0.32	0.11	**23.0**	0.44	0.0025	*-1.21*
Austin	**84**	-2.1	*0.17*	**0.14**	*19.3*	0.45	*0.0013*	-0.19
Boston	67	**4.1**	0.26	*0.09*	20.6	**0.65**	0.0027	**0.30**
Charlotte	**85**	-2.3	0.22	*0.10*	21.9	0.50	**0.0037**	-0.48
Chattanooga	**83**	*-7.9*	**0.34**	*0.08*	22.8	0.52	**0.0027**	-0.41
Detroit	71	-5.4	**0.47**	**0.12**	**24.9**	*0.41*	0.0026	-0.26
Miami	77	*-7.0*	**0.33**	0.11	**25.8**	*0.42*		*-2.14*
Milwaukee	*61*	-4.2	**0.44**	0.11	**24.5**	**0.56**		**1.12**
Minn.-St. Paul	*59*	**0.4**	*0.19*	0.10	*18.7*	**0.57**	*0.0016*	**1.35**
Nashville	79	-6.7	0.25	0.10	22.3	0.48	0.0020	-0.40
New York	*64*	**-1.4**	**0.38**	**0.13**	**27.8**	**0.63**	**0.0035**	*-1.11*
Salt Lake City	71	*-8.4*	*0.11*	*0.10*	*14.7*	**0.70**	*0.0010*	*-0.64*
San Francisco	**82**	*-17.3*	*0.21*	0.11	*19.3*	*0.38*	**0.0032**	-0.38
Seattle	**85**	**-0.1**	*0.11*	*0.08*	*19.5*	*0.32*	*0.0019*	**-0.12**
Washington, DC	*61*	-6.9	0.27	**0.13**	21.5	0.46	*0.0012*	*-0.75*

Note: For data sources and coverage areas, see Appendix A. In each column, the five highest figures are **in bold**, and the five lowest are *italicized with grey background*.

[a] Minn.-St. Paul figure is for Minneapolis only; the figure for the St. Paul Public School District is 76%. Data are for the latest years available: Class of 2014 (Atlanta, Boston, Charlotte, Chattanooga, Detroit, Miami, Minneapolis, Nashville, New York, Salt Lake City, Washington), Class of 2013 (Austin, Columbus, Milwaukee, San Francisco), and Class of 2012 (Seattle).

[b] Residual from a regression of mean math and English standardized test scores on household income per capita in 2000. A city with a high figure has unusually high test scores, controlling for household incomes.

[c] Segregation indices measure, in essence, the degree to which census tracts are more homogeneous than the entire commuting zone in terms of race or income-percentile mix.

[d] Number of single female households with children divided by total number of households with children.

[e] Share of religious adherents.

[f] Number of arrests for serious violent crimes per capita.

[g] Standardized index combining measures of voter turnout rates, the fraction of people who return their census forms, and measures of participation in community organizations.

Exhibit 3 Members of the Columbus Partnership in 2014

Individual	Organization
Alex Fischer	The Columbus Partnership
Joseph Chlapaty	Advanced Drainage Systems
Nicholas K. Akins	American Electric Power
Adam A. Grzybicki	AT&T Ohio
Jeffrey Wadsworth	Battelle
David Campisi	Big Lots, Inc.
Steven A. Davis	Bob Evans Farms, Inc.
M. Cameron Mitchell	Cameron Mitchell Restaurants
George S. Barrett	Cardinal Health
John W. Partridge, Jr.	Columbia Gas of Ohio
John Davidson	Columbus Blue Jackets
Vacant	Columbus College of Art & Design
Anthony Precourt	Columbus Crew
Elaine Roberts	Columbus Regional Airport Authority
David T. Harrison	Columbus State Community College
Jack Hanna	Columbus Zoo and Aquarium
Tanny Crane	Crane Group Co.
Mark Kvamme	Drive Capital
Michael A. Weiss	Express
Jordan A. Miller, Jr.	Fifth Third Bank
Michael P. Glimcher	W.P. Glimcher
Thomas H. Welch	Grange Insurance
David B. Fischer	Greif, Inc.
Craig O. Morrison	Hexion Inc.
Tomomi Kosaka	Honda of America Mfg., Inc.
Stephen D. Steinour	Huntington Bancshares Inc.
James M. Malz	JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A.

Individual	Organization
Melissa P. Ingwersen	KeyBank
Leslie H. Wexner	L Brands
John B. Gerlach, Jr.	Lancaster Colony Corporation
Robert H. Schottenstein	M/I Homes, Inc.
Jack Nicklaus	Memorial Tournament
Daniel H. Rosenthal	Milestone Aviation Group LLC
Claus von Zychlin	Mount Carmel Health System
Stephen S. Rasmussen	Nationwide
Steven J. Allen	Nationwide Children's Hospital
Jordan B. Hansell	NetJets Inc.
David P. Blom	OhioHealth
Michael Gonsiorowski	PNC
Nancy Kramer	Resource
Thomas M. Feeney	Safelite Group
Jay L. Schottenstein	Schottenstein Stores Corporation
Alex Shumate	Squire Sanders
Robert P. Restrepo, Jr.	State Auto Insurance Companies
David R. Meuse	Stonehenge Financial Holdings
Michael J. Fiorile	The Columbus Foundation
John F. Wolfe	The Dispatch Printing Company
David L. Kaufman	The Motorists Insurance Group
John W. Kessler	The New Albany Company
Joseph A. Alutto	The Ohio State University
James Hagedorn	The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company
Lisa Ingram	White Castle
Abigail S. Wexner	Whitebarn Associates
Steven G. Gabbe	Wexner Medical Center @ OSU

Source: The Columbus Partnership

Exhibit 4 Logos of Columbus Organizations

Source: www.columbuspartnership.com

Appendix A: Sources for Data in Exhibit 2, City Statistics

City population (city):[c] Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Incorporated Places of 50,000 or More, Ranked by July 1, 2013 Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2013. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. Release Date: May 2014.

MSA population (MSA): Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2013. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. Release Date: March 2014.

City population growth rate (city): American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates.

Median age (MSA): 2013 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates.

Portion of population black (MSA): U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates.

Portion of population Latino or Hispanic (MSA): U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates.

Median household income (MSA): U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates of Income in the Past 12 Months (In 2013 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars).

Cost of living index (MSA): Bureau of Economic Analysis.

COL-adjusted median household income (MSA): 2013 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates; Bureau of Economic Analysis.

CAGR in median household income (MSA): U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey, Income in the Past 12 Months (In 2005 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars); 2013 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates of Income in the Past 12 Months (In 2013 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars).

CAGR in private-sector jobs (MSA): Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Unemployment rate (MSA): Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Peak unemployment rate (MSA): Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Productivity (MSA): Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Productivity growth rate (MSA): Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Portion of population in poverty (MSA): 2013 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates.

Inequality: 95/20 metric (city): Brookings Institution analysis of 2013 American Community Survey data, in "Income Inequality in America's 50 Largest Cities, 2007–2013," Appendix to Alan Berube and Natalie Holmes, "Some cities are still more unequal than others—an update," Brookings Institution Report, http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports2/2015/03/city-inequality-berube-holmes, accessed March 2015.

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[c] Parentheticals indicate the geographical area covered by the data: cities proper, metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), or commuting zones (CZs).

Inequality: 95/20 metric (MSA): 2013 American Community Survey data obtained from Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010.

Upward economic mobility (MSA): Raj Chetty, Nathaniel Hendren, Patrick Kline, and Emmanuel Saez, "Where is the Land of Opportunity? The Geography of Intergenerational Mobility in the United States?" NBER Working Paper No. 19843, 2014, Online Data Table IV, http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/, accessed November 2014.

High school graduation rate (city school district): State and DC departments of education.

Test score percentile (CZ): George Bush Global Report Card, as reported in Chetty et al.

Racial segregation (CZ): Raj Chetty, Nathaniel Hendren, Patrick Kline, and Emmanuel Saez, "Where is the Land of Opportunity? The Geography of Intergenerational Mobility in the United States?" NBER Working Paper No. 19843, 2014, Online Data Table VIII, http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/, accessed November 2014.

Income segregation (CZ): Raj Chetty, Nathaniel Hendren, Patrick Kline, and Emmanuel Saez, "Where is the Land of Opportunity? The Geography of Intergenerational Mobility in the United States?" NBER Working Paper No. 19843, 2014, Online Data Table VIII, http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/, accessed November 2014. Authors' analysis of 2000 Census SF3 Sample Data Table P052. See Appendix D of Chetty et al. for further details.

Fraction of children with single mother (CZ): 2000 Census SF3 Sample Data Table P015, as reported in Chetty et al.

Fraction religious (CZ): Association of Religion Data Archives, as reported in Chetty et al.

Violent crime rate (CZ): Uniform Crime Reports, as reported in Chetty et al.

Social capital index (CZ): Anil Rupasingha and Stephan J. Goetz, "US County-Level Social Capital Data, 1990–2005," The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, 2008, as reported in Chetty et al.

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