

Dear Friends –

There are rich conversations happening in our neighborhoods, throughout our county, state, and around the country about new ways to assure that our kids achieve their full potential. There is a sense of urgency that we need to do what is right for kids, and make bold and lasting cultural and systemic changes. The Cradle to Career (C2C) partnership we are building in Multnomah County is providing a pragmatic outlet for these conversations.

On Friday, September 9, more than 200 leaders from throughout our community joined together at NW Natural for a special meeting of the Cradle to Career Council where **Governor John Kitzhaber outlined his vision for education improvement in Oregon and spoke to the alignment of his goals with those of the local Cradle to Career partnership.** The Governor spoke to our local efforts and the growing momentum that was apparent in the room that morning: “Together, through Cradle to Career, you are demonstrating the power that a framework informed by credible and agreed-upon data and focused on student results can have in galvanizing a community to support all students ... The fact that so many of you are here today and involved in this work is a testament to our shared determination to deliver the right kind of support for our students -- so that every one of them succeeds.”

Building on this momentum, our **local C2C partnership hosted the national Cradle to Career Network Convening in Portland** September 14-16. More than 300 educators, business and community leaders, elected officials, and others from more than 80 communities and 29 states across the country attended the two-day event. Portland is one of seven cities formally partnering to advance this work nationally. Local elected officials, superintendents, Council and Steering Committee members, and funders participated in the conference as panelists and speakers illustrating the depth of the local engagement in C2C. Jeff Edmondson, CEO of the national Strive Network said, “There was incredible buzz about the leadership role Portland is taking and how the community is embracing the systemic change - from how to engage a broad set of stakeholders from multiple sectors and backgrounds to purposefully using data to inform decisions about what to do and how to do it – Portland’s approach stood out to all.”

Here in Portland and Multnomah County we continue to make great progress. As we look ahead, I wanted to also share that **Judy Pepler, formerly of Qwest Oregon and co-chair of the C2C Council, recently accepted a senior position in the Wake County School System in Raleigh, North Carolina. Sarah Mensah, of the Portland Trail Blazers, will replace Judy and join Gregg Kantor of NW Natural as co-chair of the C2C Council.** Judy has been instrumental in the formation of the C2C partnership here locally and we knew when she was named a Broad Fellow that it was highly likely she would step up to play an important role in education. Congratulations Judy, the Raleigh community is lucky to have you and I cannot think of anyone better to step into C2C leadership than Sarah Mensah. Sarah had the vision for Cradle to Career well before most of us, and in her leadership role with the

Portland Schools Foundation Board inspired us to rethink, rebuild, and rebrand to become the entity trusted to manage the C2C partnership.

Finally, I want to pause for a moment to say thank you to all of you for your investment in this work. **I am especially grateful to the roughly 500 of you who recently raised your voice during our rebranding process.** I am excited to be CEO of this organization that we are about to rename. I am excited for many reasons but most importantly **I am affirmed that our new name will better reflect our work and who you told us we truly are.** I believe that this identity builds upon the past 17 years of passion, commitment, and work this organization has contributed to help meet the most urgent needs of our kids.

Sincerely,  
Dan

P.S. – All of you should have received an invitation [to attend a workshop on the C2C Collaboratives](#) that we are in the beginning stages of establishing. I hope that you will consider attending one of the sessions to learn more about where our work will most directly impact critical improvements for kids.