

## About Communities Just for the Kids

*Communities Just for the Kids* is an outreach program of *Just for the Kids* and its partnering organizations across the country. It was initiated as a way to make *Just for the Kids* school resources more accessible to parents, foundations, business coalitions, and other public school supporters who want to help their schools raise student achievement. (For more information about *Just for the Kids*, visit [www.just4kids.org](http://www.just4kids.org).)

## Ways to Help Your Schools Achieve, *Today!*

### For School Partner Organizations

*As a member of an organization or company that wants to help schools get better, [www.just4kids.org](http://www.just4kids.org) exists as a resource for you to find out how your schools are doing academically, what achievement levels they can reasonably be expected to reach, and how the practices of higher performing schools may differ from those in your schools. In order to put school specific resources found on [www.just4kids.org](http://www.just4kids.org) to work, you'll also need some ideas for integrating them as you collaborate with school leadership. Below are some ideas for school partners pulled together through the *Communities Just for the Kids* outreach program to get you started helping your schools achieve, today!*



### *Ways to Focus Schools on Academic Data:*

- **Organize a meeting with a school principal or district representative to review a sample school's achievement level according to the data on [www.just4kids.org](http://www.just4kids.org).** Use *Just for the Kids School Reports* to fuel the conversation and gain insight on challenges and areas of need.
- **Before making a donation to a school, determine where the school needs the most assistance by using academic data on [www.just4kids.org](http://www.just4kids.org) and direct your funds accordingly.** Look at the *Just for the Kids* data and *Opportunity Gap Bar Charts* to find areas of need and donate to projects specifically geared to that grade or subject area.
- **If you have already made a school donation to support improvement, check to see if there is an increase in academic performance over time by looking to the data on [www.just4kids.org](http://www.just4kids.org).** Ask the people who run your existing contribution programs to analyze your past efforts and contributions using *Just for the Kids Multi-Year Summary Charts* to measure the potential impact of your contribution.
- **Talk to the principal or school leaders about how your partnership has contributed to increased academic performance using the data at [www.just4kids.org](http://www.just4kids.org) as a benchmark.** If necessary, work together to make changes in your efforts so that you will see an increase in students' academic performance over time.

### *Ways to Help Define Goals for Improvement:*

- **Encourage the schools you are working with to review their *Just for the Kids School Reports*.** Have each school then choose a one year goal for improvement based on their performance data to be supported in part by funding from your organization.
- **Encourage schools you are working with to access the interactive *Just for the Kids Best Practice Framework* on [www.just4kids.org](http://www.just4kids.org) for inspiration as they develop their annual plan for improvement.** The *Best Practice Framework* documents the practices of *Higher Performing Schools* in detail. Encourage school leaders to use this knowledge.
- **Extend a challenge to a school based on its *Opportunity Gap Reports* on [www.just4kids.org](http://www.just4kids.org).** For example, if a school or grade closes the opportunity gap based on an annual review of *JFTK School Reports*, give a donation of money or computers. Or determine another challenge based on particulars of that school's data.
- **If you determine a more formalized approach incorporating *Just for the Kids* is desired for your district.** Access [www.just4kids.org](http://www.just4kids.org) and click on *Tools & Services* to check status of JFTK School and District Services availability in your state.

### *Ways to Recognize and Inspire Success:*

- **Celebrate the most improved schools in your district at closing their *Opportunity Gaps* as part of a community meeting or luncheon.** Select these schools using *Just for the Kids School Reports* and verifying progress with additional information from the district.
- **Sponsor a prize program to reward an elementary, middle and high school in your district each year.** Using the *Just for the Kids School Reports*, recognize schools that are the most improved overall, that have achieved significant academic growth within a certain AYP student population, or have sustained high performance for many years. Determine an appropriate prize for each school and publicize the results in a local newspaper.
- **Sponsor an award at your school for a team of teachers.** For example, consider looking at school performance in math, science and language arts for the current school year and the prior school year using resources on [www.just4kids.org](http://www.just4kids.org) to determine the greatest growth gains. Make a contribution or support a need of the winning department team based on the results.
- **Show volunteers they are making a difference by using *Just for the Kids School Reports* on [www.just4kids.org](http://www.just4kids.org).** In particular, the *Multi-Year Summary Charts* will give volunteers a good picture of a school's progress over time.
- **Use data to inspire a new principal at a school in your area who is faced with great challenges.** *Just for the Kids* data can help pinpoint and celebrate success within all socio-economic environments and with every type of student population. Use it as a source of encouragement for educators in your community.



### *Ways to Connect with a Larger Community:*

- **Sponsor a *Best Practice Exchange* to connect *Higher Performing Schools* in your state with schools in need of improvement through school visits or web-based conferences.** Sponsor an exchange where principals and teachers from one school can learn about methods and practices of their peers in higher performing schools. Use *Just for the Kids Higher Performing School* lists on [www.just4kids.org](http://www.just4kids.org) to identify and contact participating schools.
- **Share ideas presented above with statewide membership of your organization.** The information at [www.just4kids.org](http://www.just4kids.org) and the tools and strategies available to you through *Communities Just for the Kids* are adaptable to all of your organization's local chapters.

- **Ask key state level leaders, such as legislators, school board members, or heads of other business and community organizations, to insist on the use data for good decision-making on issues in public education.** See information at [www.dataqualitycampaign.org](http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org) for information about developing statewide data systems and the level of data available in your state.
- **Engage your organization as a *Just for the Kids* state partner.** State proponents of *Just for the Kids* promote the collection of good data in the state, use the data to identify consistently *Higher Performing Schools*, and initiate formal studies of successful practices in *Higher Performing Schools*. Contact Susan Bonesteel, National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) Director of State Services to discuss a partnership with *Just for the Kids* at [sbonesteel@just4kids.org](mailto:sbonesteel@just4kids.org). (*NCEA is the national sponsor of Just for the Kids.*)

## Contact Us

For more information about the tools and services on [www.just4kids.org](http://www.just4kids.org), or if you or your organization has valuable feedback on how you're using the resources found there, logon to [www.just4kids.org](http://www.just4kids.org) and refer to the *Contact Us* section.