

## Big Ideas for Little Kids: Policies to Transform the Next Decade

### Annual “State of the Children” Report Card and Address

<b>Problem</b>	<p>The well-being of children is a concern of our entire community, equally as valuable – and in fact integral to – economic development and other priorities chosen by local elected officials. Yet there is no institutional ownership of children's issues at high levels of local government. Private non-profit entities currently hold responsibility for monitoring the status of children and youth and reporting on areas of concern. Progress is sporadic, and too dependent on specific elected officials.</p>
<b>Solution</b>	<p><b>An ongoing, formal commitment by local government entities to monitor and improve the lives of children</b>, irrespective of changes in elected officeholders. Leaders from the City, County, and Rochester City School District (RCSD) would work with partners from other government levels and the private sector to publish an annual Report on the Status of Children. Public officials would identify positive and negative trends in children's lives and propose related changes in funding or services. This annual monitoring and its findings would become an integral part of the budget development process for the City, County, and RCSD.</p>
<b>Existing Experience</b>	<p>Rochester has seen local reports on the status of children in the past, most notably those of the United Way, ACT Rochester, and The Children's Agenda. However, none of these efforts has originated in the public sector, which limits their impact.</p> <p>In Maryland, an Executive Order in 2005 created a Governor's Office for Children, a Children's Cabinet, and an Advisory Council for children. The Office for Children is required to release an annual report on children that is used by state and local government as well as service providers to plan services and evaluate the effectiveness of programs.</p> <p>In Orange County, California, the County Board of Supervisors established an advisory board with representatives from public and community agencies. This board is required to publish an annual report, which is used to identify gaps in services and recommend collaborative programs to address unmet needs.</p> <p>In Arlington, Virginia, the school district and county government created a partnership that publishes a Community Report Card of the Status of Children. Because senior level staff from the County and School District are at the table, resources can be directed at identified problems.</p>
<b>What's Next?</b>	<p><b>An intergovernmental compact between the County, City and RSCD to create a body comprised of senior level staff working with children's advocates and service providers to publish an Annual Report on the Status of Children.</b> The report would be presented to the community by the County Executive, Mayor, and/or RCSD Superintendent, and would include plans to address any negative findings collaboratively.</p>