

Say Yes to Education Syracuse

Syracuse, NY

Education, Children and Families

A young person who has been well-served by our education system is one who is prepared to thrive in life as a contributing member of society. This journey begins with early childhood care and education and continues into the K-12 system, but that is only part of the picture. Teachers and schools have a central role, but as part of a larger constellation of systems and supports that impact a young person's development. These include (but are not limited to) family stability and well-being, access to meaningful post-secondary opportunities such as college or skills-based credentials, and workforce development and community and economic development.

Overview of the Initiative

Say Yes Syracuse seeks to develop the full potential of every child, particularly students from low-income and other backgrounds historically underrepresented on the nation's college and university campuses. **Say Yes to Syracuse** provides comprehensive support to Syracuse City School District students to eliminate predictable barriers to academic achievement. Those efforts culminate with access to financial aid assistance for college. Syracuse City School District graduates who meet residency and other requirements and who have been admitted to an in-state public college or university are eligible to receive "last dollar" tuition scholarships (after Pell Grants and state aid) to that institution from the local Say Yes Scholarship Fund, regardless of annual family income. In addition, depending on family income, **Say Yes Syracuse** Scholars may be eligible to receive scholarships to one of the more than 100 private colleges and universities in the Say Yes Higher Education Compact.

Since the program began in 2008, the following positive changes have taken place:

- The city's high school graduation rate went from under 50% in 2008 to 64.5% in 2019
- In 2016, the city's high school achievement gap between black and white students was 0%
- Since the fall of 2009, more than 4,220 **Say Yes Syracuse** students have enrolled in 2 and 4-year colleges (public and private) with scholarships from the **Say Yes Syracuse** partnership, representing over \$10 million from the local scholarship fund
- The partnership has secured a \$20 million regional economic development grant from the State of New York. With an overall endowment of \$30 million, **Say Yes Syracuse** is estimated to have the resources to make it possible, in perpetuity, for every Syracuse City School District graduate to attend an in-state public college or university, tuition-free.

Partners

Say Yes Syracuse is a landmark collaboration that brings together the Syracuse City School District, The Central NY Community Foundation, Syracuse University, Onondaga Community College, the member colleges and universities of the Say Yes Higher Education Compact, the Syracuse Teachers' Association, the Syracuse Association of Administrators and Supervisors, the American Institutes for Research, the City of Syracuse, Onondaga County, the Volunteer Lawyer Project and the Onondaga County Bar Association and a diverse group of Syracuse area corporate, non-profit, and philanthropic organizations.

Other resources

Say Yes Syracuse [website](#)

Say Yes Syracuse [case study](#)