

A partnership between Guilford County and the national scholarship and student-support program, **Say Yes to Education**, was formally announced on September 17, 2015. The partnership promises to make possible a **college scholarship to every student in the Guilford County Schools (GCS) system, beginning with the spring 2016 graduating class.**

In early 2014, four leading community organizations – Guilford Education Alliance, The Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro, High Point Community Foundation, and GCS – began exploring a potential partnership with **Say Yes to Education**. **Say Yes** was established in 1987 by founder and chairman George Weiss, and has evolved to a national nonprofit that helps organize communities around the goals of every public school student graduating from high school prepared for postsecondary education with access to scholarships that make education affordable. It works with community chapters in Syracuse and Buffalo, N.Y., with Guilford County as its third chapter. **Say Yes** helps galvanize its partner communities around three main goals:

1. Build local endowments that provide last-dollar tuition scholarships so public school graduates can afford and complete a postsecondary education;
2. Build student supports that help students every step of the way – after-school programs, summer programs, tutoring, legal assistance, health services and more; and
3. Work with school leadership to ensure students are on the path to academic success.

It is estimated that a **\$70 million endowment will be needed** in order to achieve the goal of the partnership. The local partners in Guilford County have already reached more than half of that need through fundraising efforts that generated \$32.5 million to date. The national **Say Yes** organization will invest \$15 million over the next three-to-five years as seed funding to build and/or expand upon supports that Guilford County students and their families need outside the classroom to achieve academic success. One million has already been invested to conduct feasibility studies, share the vision, and create basic organizational structures, including visits with diverse stakeholders of parents, students, teachers, nonprofits, business leaders, faith leaders, college and university administrators, and local government officials.

Say Yes to Education Guilford seeks to help GCS students get the support they need to graduate from high school ready for postsecondary success. Beginning with the youngest learners, **Say Yes** helps to provide students and their families the academic, social-emotional, and other supports to ensure that they can successfully graduate from college or postsecondary programs.

An endowment built with local, private contributions will provide last-dollar tuition scholarships (closes the gap between grants and aid, like Pell Grants, and the cost of in-state tuition) for all graduates of GCS to attend North Carolina public colleges, universities, or community colleges. These scholarships will close the gap between grants and aid, like Pell Grants, and the cost of in-state tuition. More than 100 private colleges and universities across the country participate in the **Say Yes Higher Education Compact**. These institutions have agreed to waive tuition for students in **Say Yes** communities who are admitted to their programs and have annual family incomes of \$75,000 or less. **Say Yes** students whose family income is above \$75,000, and are enrolled in a Compact institution, are eligible to receive annual grants of up to \$5,000 from the organization's local scholarship funds. Bennett College, Davidson College, Duke University, Greensboro College, Guilford College, Laurel University, and Salem College are all participating Compact institutions, and High Point University and Wake Forest University are participating local partners.

For more information, visit the **Say Yes** website: <http://sayyesguilford.org/>.



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