



# Community Conversations

The Prichard Committee is building a groundswell of champions to improve education outcomes – early childhood through postsecondary – with the unique combination of policy advocacy and local action. One part of this community engagement work is initiating conversations in communities across Kentucky to build on local responses to the needs of students and families and improve academic outcomes.



## **Robust, well-planned community engagement of this nature can result in:**

- Coordinated community response to increase student success.
- Greater public understanding of education issues and local priorities.
- Greater community commitment to equitable educational outcomes.
- Greater community ownership and investment in public schools.
- A common vision and shared commitment to pursue agreed upon action steps.
- Greater accountability for public funds.
- Increased quality of life for your community.

**Structured community conversations provide the opportunity for participants to weigh in on issues that matter to your community. The process can result in greater clarity about the issues at hand and solutions to seemingly intractable problems. Some practical questions to consider when designing community conversations are:**

- What would a successful Community Conversation look like to our community?
- What do I want my participants to know and do as a result of the conversation?
- How can we ensure that diverse voices from the community are included and invited?
- When is the best time, and where is the best location, to have this conversation?

**Participants in your Community Conversation can include multiple community stakeholders representing different constituencies and/or more specific groups such as business leaders, civic groups, educators, or community leaders. We recommend that organizers:**

- Strive for diversity in opinion, ethnicity, race, gender, and age that reflects the makeup of your community.
- Start recruitment efforts early.
- Consider relaxed locations where participants will be comfortable.
- Make sure that someone records the Conversation.
- Follow up with participants and include a thank you with agreed upon action steps.