

# Good Schools Pennsylvania

August 31, 2009

## **Taking education out of the education silo**

*Building One America Summit, September 17-18, Washington, D.C.*

Good Schools Pennsylvania's overriding belief is that an effective system of public education - including how we fund our schools - is vital to students, schools and communities. As champions of public education, we are frequently concerned about the educational strategies that help struggling schools in poor communities close student achievement gaps.

Now there is an opportunity to ask, "Why settle for having poor communities that have poor schools?"

On September 17-18, Good Schools Pennsylvania will be joining with our regional equity partner, the Southeastern Pennsylvania First Suburbs Project, to participate in the Building One America summit in Washington, D.C. The summit will highlight the policies, programs and strategies that have proven successful in combating concentrated poverty and sprawl.

We have ample evidence that Pennsylvania's historic system of education finance is a de facto housing policy: Communities without sufficient tax bases end up levying some of the highest tax rates in the state just to keep their heads above water. The high tax rate, in turn, discourages residential and commercial investment in one place, while encouraging it elsewhere - typically in Pennsylvania's dwindling open spaces.

At the Building One America summit, you can expect to hear from David Rusk of the Innovative Housing Institute discuss how housing policy is also inherently school policy. A national leader in regionalism, Rusk is knowledgeable about Pennsylvania's particulars, having worked recently with community leaders in York and Lancaster County.

Other not-to-be-missed presenters include Professor John A. Powell from the Kirwan Institute at Ohio State University, who will help us understand the "geography of opportunity," and Myron Orfield of the Brookings Institution - who also has a track record of working with community leaders in Pennsylvania - who will help us understand how transportation policy relates to housing policy, which relates to school policy, which relates to housing policy, which relates to transportation policy... Starting to get the picture?

If you do, consider joining Good Schools Pennsylvania at the Building One America summit. We have a limited number of slots reserved to offer leaders who want to participate in the Pennsylvania delegation. If you are unfamiliar with these issues but are interested in learning more, you too are welcome to join us and meet other local leaders - including municipal, school, faith and civic - who are prepared to step out of their sectoral silos to help craft and articulate a national policy that supports opportunity and prosperity for all.

For more information, [contact a Good Schools Pennsylvania staff person](#) or email us at [info@goodschoolspa.org](mailto:info@goodschoolspa.org).