

# A new opportunity for Rochester's students

By **JEROME UNDERWOOD** and **HOLLI BUDD**

In spring 2020, Rochester, like the rest of our nation, was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nine months later, the impact of COVID-19 on our city's most vulnerable families, students and schools has presented us with extraordinary challenges and uncertainty. At the same time, the pandemic has also created a unique opportunity for those of us committed to the long-term health and wellbeing of Rochester's children to take bold, decisive action to reimagine public education across our great city.

This is no small undertaking — the current challenges facing Black, Brown and economically marginalized families and students are deeply embedded in the design of the systems and structures of our nation and city. But systems and structures designed to produce inequitable outcomes for people of color can also be redesigned to produce greater quality of life outcomes for all families and children. Today, we believe there is great promise for the community to reimagine, co-create and design a system of quality schools that meet the needs of all students and families in Rochester.

To that end, Action for a Better Community (ABC) and The Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation are partnering with a group of values aligned local and national professionals with a history of authentic community engagement, to select a social entrepreneur that will work to create high-quality systems of schools



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with a commitment to educational equity and deep expertise in systems change. The Rochester Education Fellow will create a vision and framework that is both built from the ground up with Rochester community input and support and one that is dedicated to a long term commitment in the city of Rochester.

The Fellowship selection committee is looking for an entrepreneur who cares deeply about accelerating the scope and pace of transforming public education for all of Rochester's families and children, in a way that reflects the diversity of the community they will be serving.

The Rochester Education Fellowship is

a unique, two-year fellowship designed to equip a talented entrepreneur with the skills, mindsets and knowledge to co-create a community and student-centered vision for high-quality education in Rochester. This vision will deliver markedly better results and provide a sustainable, high-quality and equitable education that makes good on our promise to educate all students.

The application window will be open through April 2021, with a recipient selected in June 2021. Those interested in applying can do so at [RochesterEducationFellowship.org](http://RochesterEducationFellowship.org).

We have gathered a selection committee deeply committed to Rochester, including community partners, parents, educators and advocates. These leaders have long track records addressing social determinants of great education and have spent years listening and learning from both local and national education stakeholders in pursuit of an answer that will make a difference for the children of Rochester. With their support and leadership, we will select an exceptional Fellow to reimagine Rochester's public school systems with the needs of Black, Brown and economically marginalized families and students at the center.

*Jerome Underwood is president & CEO of Action for a Better Community. Holli Budd is executive director of the Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation. They are serving as co-chairs of the Rochester Education Fellowship Selection Committee.*