

Say Yes To Education, How About Free College Tuition?

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Guilford Organizations & Foundation Leaders Raise \$28 Million For Free College Tuition



(Photo: Say Yes to Education)

GREENSBORO, NC -- Say Yes to Education, the national non-profit that helps students across the country, wants to help Guilford County students pay for college.

This could mean every Guilford County Schools (GCS) graduate, regardless of family income, could attend a two-year or four-year college tuition free.

In January, Say Yes to Education reached out to Guilford County. This move came after the Guilford Education Alliance and The Community Foundation applied for the tuition free scholarship program in 2014.

There were 100 communities across the country up for consideration.

So, what's next?

Guilford County organizations have to raise \$28 million to be officially selected as the next Say Yes community and be a part of the free tuition scholarship program.

The tuition would go to students who attend a public state college or university after other financial aid, like Pell Grants are factored into the cost.

On Monday, Say Yes to Education in Guilford County got its first major pledge towards the \$28 million fundraising effort.

Phillips Foundation pledged \$5 million as the first financial commitment to a new \$28 million fundraising effort launched by organizations in Guilford County.

"Phillips Foundation seeks out once-in-a-generation, transformational grant opportunities within Greensboro and Guilford County," said Elizabeth Phillips, executive director of the Phillips Foundation.

The community organizations have a fall deadline to raise the \$28 million to make Say Yes happen in Guilford County.

If the \$28 million commitment is met, the class of Spring 2016 would be the first class of student, who might qualify for the program.

In the meantime, Say Yes organizers will start to raise awareness of the Say Yes concept throughout Guilford county. This could included presentations and social media campaign.

Say Yes to Education's main mission surrounds education, with helping students access, afford and complete a college or higher education.

"Say Yes is an ideal fit for our investment criteria, as it will produce positive, measurable, system-wide outcomes in our public schools and community, with ripple effects to the national education conversation, said Phillips. "We are proud to be a lead local funder in this important effort to bring the promise of higher education to students of Guilford County Schools, and we look forward to being a strong partner in this community-wide campaign."

A spokesperson with Say Yes to Education, said the nonprofit currently works with nearly 65,000 public school students, ranging in age from pre-k to high school. Most are in the upstate New York cities of Buffalo and Syracuse, where Say Yes has community-wide chapters similar to the model under consideration in Guilford County.

Since its inception, more than 5,000 students have gone off to college with support from Say Yes — most of them in the last three years, following the establishment of the citywide program in Buffalo (2012).

For its first two decades, prior to the establishment of the Syracuse chapter, Say Yes worked with smaller cohorts of children, usually 100 to 300 students at a time.

For more information, please visit [Say Yes to Education \(http://www.sayyestoeducation.org/\)](http://www.sayyestoeducation.org/) on it's mission.

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