Education partnership receives $120K grant to boost Birmingham's college enrollment

Feb 27, 2015, 1:17pm CST

Alan Alexander
Reporter - Birmingham Business Journal
Email

A recently formed partnership between various Birmingham education establishments to boost post-secondary enrollment and graduation numbers within Birmingham City Schools has gained national recognition.

Lumina Foundation chose Birmingham as one of 20 other cities for that partnership and will pledge $120,000 over the next two and a half years in funding.

The partnership hopes to raise the college enrollment numbers for Birmingham City Schools from 36 to 75 percent.

The effort will be headed up by Alabama Possible, a nonprofit aimed at reducing poverty. The education partnership includes the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, Birmingham City Schools, the Birmingham Education Foundation, Jefferson State Community College, Lawson State Community College, and the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

"Low-income students, like those who graduate from Birmingham City Schools, are among the least likely to attain the thing most likely to lift them out of poverty: a college degree or credential," said Kristina Scott, executive director of Alabama Possible. "Our partnership's goals include aligning support services to overcome the economic, social and psychological barriers for low-income and first-generation students to build a culture of college access and success."

The overall effort connects to Goal 2025, Lumina's national goal to increase the percentage of Americans with high-quality degrees, certificates, and other credentials to 60 percent by the year 2025.

"Two-thirds of Americans live in or near cities. Our nation cannot meet its growing demand for citizens who have earned a postsecondary credential without meaningful community-based efforts that are tightly focused on increasing educational attainment," said Lumina CEO Jamie Merisotis.