

Detroit College Promise awards 100 scholarships to DPS grads

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Dr. Nat Pernick, founder and executive director of Detroit College Promise, will award 100 Detroit Public Schools students college scholarships year, a continuation of its awards program begun in 2009. Detroit College Promise, in partnership with the DPS, public and private sector, civic and community leaders and parents, strives to strengthen the Detroit Public Schools by offering a financial incentive in the form of a scholarship to students who live in Detroit and graduate from a DPS school.

The incentive is a scholarship that can be used at any Michigan public college or university and students can apply as early as kindergarten. The Detroit College Promise fund has been able to provide a \$500 college scholarship to hundreds of DPS graduates since it began in early 2009. Last year the average DPS student who received the scholarship also obtained \$9,300 in other scholarship money.

“That’s quite a bit,” says Dr. Pernick. “For most of them that paid all of their tuition. We’d like to give more than that. We are moving toward the Kalamazoo Promise model.”

Detroit College Promise began offering its scholarships to graduates of Cody High School in 2009. It expanded to six DPS high schools last year and will cover all 33 regular DPS high schools this year. It has registered 50 percent of the students in DPS high schools and as high as 80 percent in some of the high schools. It’s also moving to begin signing up students in grades K-8 this year.

“The point is to get the students in kindergarten to start thinking about college,” Pernick says.

Detroit College Promise has raised \$150,000 for its scholarship goals from 200 donors. It has a goal of \$10 million, which would provide every DPS student a four-year college scholarship.

About Dr. Nat Pernick, M.D. founder and executive director, Detroit College Promise

Nat Pernick is an AP/CP board certified pathologist with a passion to advance education in Detroit. He believes a high-quality education provides the greatest opportunity for youths and families to dramatically improve their lives. His clear and unwavering vision has been instrumental in creating a solid, child-centered program whose philosophy reflects the importance of a strong education base regardless of race, income or gender.

Dr. Pernick is a third-generation Detroiter whose parents graduated from Detroit’s Central High School in the late 1940s. He has 16-plus years of post-high school education, including a B.S. in mathematics from Wayne State University, medical and law degrees from the University of Michigan, and a residency in anatomic and clinical pathology, followed by a fellowship in surgical pathology and research, at Wayne State.

Dr. Pernick has written or co-authored 13 medical publications to date. He has over 30 years of experience designing computer systems, working first with Wang Laboratories and subsequently for various clinical laboratories and private companies, the University of Michigan, the National Institutes of Health and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. He has previously served as special assistant attorney general under Attorneys General Frank J. Kelley, Jennifer Granholm and Michael Cox, and had a private law practice for 20 years.