At the end of the day, however, it will boil down to perseverance of the individual student.

Of 865 Cleveland school district graduates who in enrolled in 14 Ohio private and public universities or at Cuyahoga Community College in 2005, only 136 obtained degrees.

It's clear that the Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland has its work cut out.

Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson formed the compact, which includes the city and its school district, county government, the colleges and universities, and array of civic groups and foundations.

It is a noble undertaking and one that must forge ahead in promoting and monitoring the educational success of Cleveland school students.

The compact partner institutions have developed an intervention plan they hope will increase college graduation rates from 16 percent to 30 percent.

It is no secret that many high school graduates who attended Cleveland public schools have had to undergo remedial courses once they hit college campuses in order to have a chance of getting a "sheep skin."

This puts many at a disadvantage and even worse, may give cause for failure in a competitive and intellectual college environment.

The higher education community in Ohio is doing a yeoman job in attempting to attract qualified minority students to its ranks. Collaborative partnerships are doing all within their power to keep college students in the classrooms.

At the end of the day, however, it will boil down to perseverance of the individual student.

The world is at their fingertips.

Now they must reach out and grab.