

ALLEGANY COUNTY UNITED WAY EDUCATION IMPACT COUNCIL

STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES

VISION: Provide people of all ages with the tools and structures necessary to succeed.

The Allegany County United Way (ACUW) and the Allegany County United Way Education Impact Council are committed to advancing the common good and to creating opportunities for a better life for all by focusing on community-level changes that can and will improve people's lives. The ACUW and the Education Impact Council plan to improve education outcomes by mobilizing the public sector, private sector, and individuals around the systems that impact individuals' ability to attain a quality education. A comprehensive approach to education is needed to assure our children enter kindergarten ready to learn, they successfully complete high school, and when they graduate, they are prepared for college or advanced training.

Every parent's dream is for our children to succeed – and for their success to surpass ours. But today's youth are less likely to earn a diploma than their parents, a distinction not shared by any other industrialized country. The ACUW and the Education Council want to change that reality, and to boost every child's chance for success in school, work, and life.

The national statistics are startling:*

- 46% of children start school without the skills they need to succeed.
- 67% of fourth-graders cannot read proficiently.
- 25% of high school students fail to graduate on time.
- 15% of young adults are neither working nor attending school.

Disadvantaged children come to school at least two years behind their peers in pre-reading skills. For every 50 children who don't learn to read in kindergarten, 44 of them will still be struggling to read in 3rd grade. Children without reading skills in the 3rd grade have a greater chance of not graduating from high school. And research shows that grades and absenteeism rates by 3rd grade predict with *90% accuracy* whether children will dropout.

The education challenge does not end with high school graduation. A far too large percentage of employers and college professors say today's high school graduates don't have the skills to succeed in work or college. To develop a strong workforce for the future – one that can help America compete and help individuals be successful – our investment in children's education must start early and be sustained.

It is for all of these reasons that the Education Impact Council, with the approval of the Allegany County United Way Board of Directors, has identified the following five focus areas that will drive its education impact agenda:

1. School Readiness
2. Improving Early Grade Literacy
3. Successful Middle School Transition
4. On-Time High School Graduation

5. Prepared for and Completing Transitions to College or Advanced Training

If the Allegany County United Way and the Allegany County United Way Education Impact Council are to make meaningful progress toward the community impact goals, it must think beyond the traditional approaches and identify community-level system changes that will help reach and impact a greater percentage of Allegany County children and adults. It is important to note that this is a dynamic process and as the work moves forward, the ACUW and the Education Impact Council expect to identify additional strategies that will be well suited to assist in the achievement of the education impact vision.

Contained within this document are advocacy and public policy approaches. The ACUW and the Education Impact Council realize that advocacy is naturally embedded in the strategies and approaches; however, there are some approaches that stand-alone. These advocacy approaches are noted and will be the responsibility of the ACUW and the Education Impact Council to execute; therefore they will not be available for funding.

*All statistics and references were obtained from the United Way World Wide Education Agenda. Please refer to www.liveunited.org, page 24 of education document

FOCUS AREA

SCHOOL READINESS

Allegany County United Way Success by 6 Initiative covers this focus area. See Supporting Sb6 Plan

Result: Quality child care, family support, early intervention, and public awareness will equip families to provide quality early learning experiences ensuring the child's readiness for Kindergarten.

Indicator: Percentage of three and four year olds with school readiness skills.

Strategy 1: Engaging parents/caregivers in student's academic progression

Result: Students will become engaged in learning at a very early age

- Promote early screening and intervention in early years especially for disabilities and mental health issues.
- Establish early warning systems to identify and offer services to students at risk
- Provide early learning experiences to stimulate all learning modalities
- Use of data-driven plans for literacy improvement
- Provide parent conferences to monitor student progress
- Equip parents/caregivers to read interactively with young children and support adult literacy skill building at home to boost family literacy
- Get more books into low-income homes to provide readiness opportunities
- Offer family literacy programs and activities that help parents to improve their reading
- Provide literacy-rich environments wherever children are (home, childcare, after-school)

Strategy 2: Supporting and educating families to improve academic achievement

Result: Families will have the early literacy supports to improve academic achievement

- Evaluate support needs of individual and/or families.
- Increase availability and use of formal and informal literacy supports for families
- Develop methods to increase parent/caregiver's knowledge of the student's on-going academic progress
- Provide parent workshops to increase their knowledge of the importance of academic progress
- Offer family literacy programs and activities that help parents to improve their reading

Strategy 3: Connecting students and families with the resources they need outside of school

Result: Students and families will have the necessary resources for success outside of school

- Facilitate family support systems and positive social connections within the community
- Improve and increase parenting skills and knowledge of child development supports through parent-child centers and home visitation programs with trained personnel.
- Promote public awareness campaigns about the importance of academic achievement
- Support children's health and fitness

Advocacy

- Influence public policies that support volunteerism to support students

Strategy 4: Leveraging and aligning institutional support in systems

Result: Community systems (schools, health care, human services & juvenile justice, etc) will develop mechanisms to coordinate and deliver sustainable, needed services.

- Support community-building activities and capacity building of neighborhood organizations to support early literacy
- Improve and promote early literacy activities in communities
- Promote mechanisms for identifying obstacles to coordination and delivery of needed services and referring them for system-level action
- Ensure high-quality early childhood education and care
- Connect data systems: schools, communities and others to improve communication, coordination and quality across systems.
- Educate the public about what children need for success and enlist them in individual and collective solutions.

Advocacy

- Influence system policies and practices to support the educational development of children and their families.

FOCUS AREA

IMPROVING EARLY GRADE LITERACY

Intended Result: Students will be reading on grade level or higher by the end of 4th Grade

Indicator: Reading on grade level at start of fourth grade.

Strategy 1: Engaging parents/caregivers in student's academic progression

Result: Students will become engaged and proficient in literacy skills

- Promote early screening and intervention in grades 1-4 especially for disabilities and mental health issues.
- Establish early warning systems to identify and offer services to students at risk of dropping out
- Provide learning experiences to stimulate all learning modalities
- Use of data-driven, individualized plans for literacy improvement

Strategy 2: Supporting and educating families to improve academic achievement

Result: Families will have the literacy supports to improve academic achievement

- Evaluate support needs of individual and/or families.
- Increase availability and use of formal and informal literacy supports for families
- Develop methods to increase parent/caregiver's knowledge of the student's on-going academic progress
- Educate the parents/caregivers on best practices to support the child's learning – learning style, etc.
- Offer targeted, trained tutoring at all ages, e.g. 1-on-1 literacy tutors in K-3 classrooms; academic tutoring in school and out-of-school settings; high school students tutoring elementary students (and thereby improving their own literacy skills)
- Help parents to focus on the **3 A's**
 - Attendance every day
 - Achievement every year
 - Attainment over time

Strategy 3: Connecting students and families with the resources they need outside of school

Result: Students and families will have the necessary resources for success outside of school

- Facilitate family support systems and positive social connections within the community
- Improve and increase parenting skills and knowledge of child development supports through parent-child centers and home visitation programs with trained personnel.
- Address chronic absences early, including consistent measurement and responsive strategies
- Promote public awareness campaigns about the importance of academic achievement

Advocacy

- Influence public policies that support volunteerism to support students

Strategy 4: Leveraging and aligning institutional support in systems

Result: Community systems (schools, health care, human services & juvenile justice, etc) will develop mechanisms to coordinate and deliver sustainable, needed services.

- Support community-building activities and capacity building of neighborhood organizations to support early literacy
- Improve and promote literacy activities in communities
- Promote mechanisms for identifying obstacles to coordination and delivery of needed services and referring them for system-level action
- Strengthen connections between schools and quality before and after-school programs, as well as community-based organizations that serve youth
- Add school-based services, such as those organized by Communities in Schools, Community Schools
- Link school and community systems
- Enhance out-of-school environments for children by establishing community hubs (in libraries, schools, parks, workplaces, etc.) where students and families can take part in learning activities
- Connect data systems: schools, communities, and others to improve communication, coordination and quality across systems
- Educate the public about what children need for success and enlist them in individual and collective solutions

Advocacy

- Influence system policies and practices to support the educational development of children and their families

FOCUS AREA

SUCCESSFUL MIDDLE SCHOOL TRANSITIONS

Intended Result: By adopting and internalizing the 21st Century Workforce Competencies, the students at risk will have a more positive attitude about self and learning while defining a career path.

Indicator: Middle school student success

Strategy 1: Engaging parents/caregivers in student's academic progression

Result: Parents/caregivers will be directly involved in their child's day-to-day academic progress

- Model positive parenting practices in program activities
- Increase knowledge of student's on-going academic progress
- Influence parent-caregiver/student attitudes about achievement
- Increase parent-caregiver knowledge about students who fail in middle level are in danger of dropping out
- Evaluation of student/parent/caregiver needs

Strategy 2: Connecting students and families to the resources they need outside of school

Result: Students will be able to access the support resources they need to be successful

- Provide a tutoring program for at-risk students in cooperation with the school program
- Evaluate the academic needs of the individual student
- Increase availability and use of formal and informal academic support (e.g. in-school remediation, out-of-school supports, agency programmatic support, etc.)
- Increase students' and parents' knowledge about the importance of the 21st Century Workforce Competencies through career counseling

Strategy 3: Providing mentoring programs involving peers, local businesses, and local industries

Result: Students and their families will develop social, emotional and intellectual skills

- Facilitate family support systems and positive social connections within the community
- Improve and increase parenting skills and knowledge of child development supports through parent-child centers and home visitation programs with trained personnel.
- Promote public awareness campaigns about the importance of student achievement and its purpose for life and career.
- Create an atmosphere whereby students and their families can address obstacles to excelling in school.

Advocacy

- Influence system policies and practices to support the educational development of youth and their families

Strategy 4: Assisting to improve absenteeism and/or truancy

Result: Students will be in school and attending after-school opportunities each day

- Collaborate to connect families, whose children do not attend school, to community resources

FOCUS AREA

ON-TIME HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

Intended Result: Students will graduate from high school on time with their cohort.

Indicator: On-time high school graduation rate.

Strategy 1: Engaging parents/caregivers in student's academic progression

Result: Students will become engaged and proficient in courses in high school

- Promote screening and intervention especially for disabilities and mental health issues.
- Follow-up on early warning systems to identify risk factors for potential drop-outs
- Provide learning experiences which are driven by career goals
- Use of data-driven, individualized plans for academic improvement
- Provide parent conferences to monitor student progress on graduation goals

Strategy 2: Supporting and educating families to improve academic achievement

Result: Families will have the literacy supports to improve academic achievement

- Evaluate support needs of individual and/or families.
- Increase availability and use of formal and informal literacy supports for families
- Develop methods to increase parent/caregiver's knowledge of the student's on-going academic progress
- Educate the parents/caregivers on best practices to support the child's learning – learning style, etc.

Strategy 3: Connecting students and families with the resources they need outside of school

Result: Students and families will have the necessary resources for success outside of school

- Facilitate family support systems and positive social connections within the community
- Improve and increase parenting skills and knowledge of adolescent youth development supports through parent-child centers and home visitation programs with trained personnel.
- Promote public awareness campaigns about the importance of academic achievement
- Boost in-school and community-based mentoring of targeted students to promote academic success and post-secondary planning
- Make the connection more tangible for disconnected youth between school and work – through career and technical education, apprenticeships, internships and summer work-study, innovative approaches like Junior Achievement, and engaging middle school and high school families in college guidance.
- Provide information about work opportunities, including college and career fairs

Strategy 4: Leveraging and aligning institutional support in systems

Result: Community systems (schools, health care, human services & juvenile justice, etc) will develop mechanisms to coordinate and deliver sustainable, needed services.

- Support community-building activities and capacity building of neighborhood organizations to support on time graduation
- Improve and promote literacy activities in communities
- Support and promote activities which break the obstacles to service coordination and delivery

- Promote mechanisms for identifying obstacles to coordination and delivery of needed services and referring them for system-level action
- Strengthen connections between schools and quality before and after-school programs, as well as community-based organizations that serve adolescent youth
- Enhance out-of-school environments for adolescent youth by establishing community hubs (in libraries, schools, parks, workplaces, etc.) where students and families can take part in learning activities
- Educate the public about what adolescent youth need for success and enlist them in individual and collective solutions

Advocacy

- Influence system policies and practices to support the educational development of youth and their families

FOCUS AREA

PREPARED FOR /COMPLETING TRANSITIONS TO COLLEGE OR ADVANCED TRAINING

Intended Result: Students will be enrolled in a college and/or advanced training by age 21

Indicators: Successful college entrance and completion.

Strategy 1: Engaging parents/caregivers in student's academic progression

Result: Students will become engaged and proficient in courses in high school

- Promote screening and intervention especially for disabilities and mental health issues.
- Follow-up on early warning systems to identify risk factors for potential drop-outs
- Provide learning experiences which are driven by career goals
- Use of data-driven, individualized plans for academic improvement
- Provide parent conferences to monitor student progress on graduation goals and/or career plans

Strategy 2: Supporting and educating families to improve academic achievement

Result: Families will have the literacy supports to improve academic achievement

- Evaluate support needs of individual and/or families.
- Increase availability and use of formal and informal literacy supports for families
- Develop methods to increase parent/caregiver's knowledge of the student's on-going academic progress
- Educate the parents/caregivers on best practices to support the student's learning – learning style, etc.

Strategy 3: Connecting students and families with the resources they need outside of school

Result: Students and families will have the necessary resources for success outside of school

- Facilitate family support systems and positive social connections within the community
- Improve and increase parenting skills and knowledge of young adult development supports through parent-child centers and home visitation programs with trained personnel.
- Promote public awareness campaigns about the importance of academic achievement
- Expand school-to-work programs

Strategy 4: Leveraging and aligning institutional support in systems

Result: Community systems (schools, health care, human services & juvenile justice, etc) will develop mechanisms to coordinate and deliver sustainable, needed services.

- Support community-building activities and capacity building of neighborhood organizations to support transitions to college or advanced training
- Improve and promote transitions to college or advanced training activities in communities
- Promote mechanisms for identifying obstacles to coordination and delivery of needed services and referring them for system-level action
- Connect data systems: schools, communities and others to improve communication, coordination and quality across systems

- Educate the public about what high school graduates need for success and enlist them in individual and collective solutions

DOCUMENTS USED IN THIS PROCESS

- Allegany County United Way Community Needs Assessment
- Allegany County United Way Community Needs Refresher
- 2010 Data Compilation of Free & Reduced Lunch
- 2010 Data Compilation Grades 6 – 8
- 2010 Data Compilation High School
- TASA Data
- 2009 Student Risk and Protective Factor Survey
- Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) Data