

**Target 2** Parents and guardians have access to emotional and social support within the community.

**Strategy** Increase parents' and guardians' access to programs, support groups and services that will help them provide a foundation of support for their children.

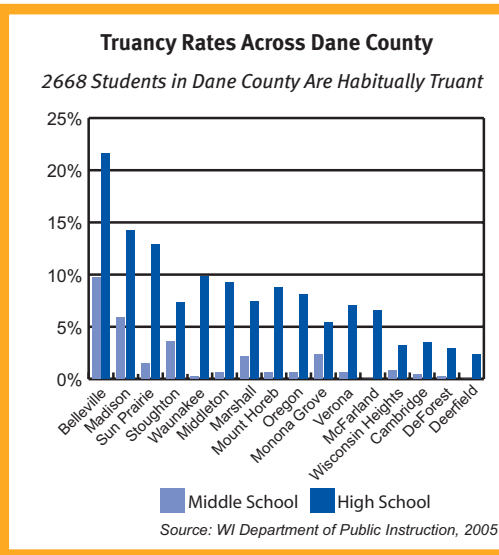
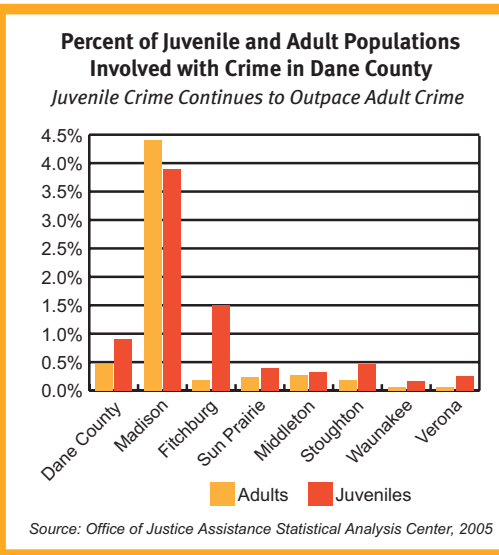
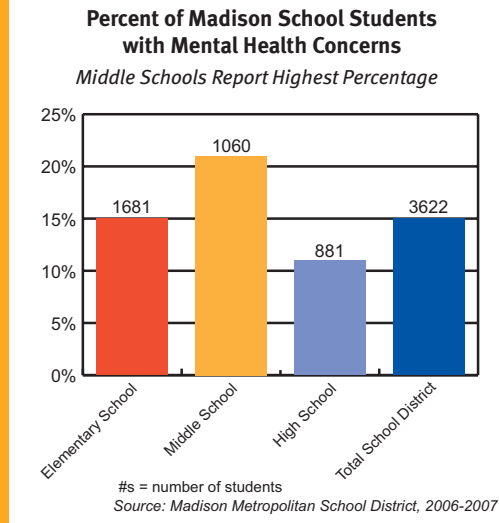
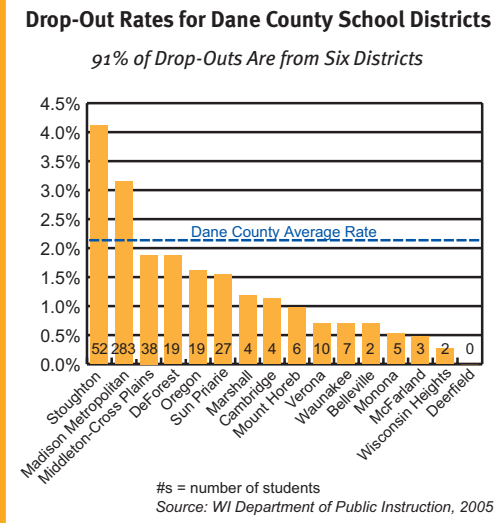
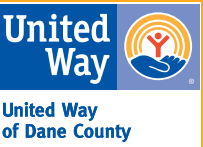
- Tactics**
- Create and build on existing parent support groups to help parents work together on the issues facing them and their children.
  - Promote United Way 2-1-1 as a central resource for finding out about services available to parents and youth in Dane County.



**Why It Matters**

Each year in Dane County, 500 students do not graduate from high school.

**United Way**  
*Delegation on Disconnected and Violent Youth*



# Achievement Connections

**A four-part plan to help youth stay positive, connected and on a path to a brighter future**

When a young person finds success, our community finds hope and is given a stronger future.

The path of the next generation, whether through their successes or their harmful choices, has great implications for all of us.

With great connection to the economic strength of Dane County, youth achievement lies at the intersection of education, health and safety – issues included in our community’s Agenda for Change. United Way convened the Delegation on Disconnected and Violent Youth – a diverse team of community leaders and experts in the field – to create a plan that will improve the immediate future for all of us. That plan is Achievement Connections.

**The Goal: Increase graduation rates with strategies to improve habitual truancy and academic achievement and reduce referrals to the District Attorney.**

The Framework for Success – Achievement Connections Teams

To successfully impact these issues, Achievement Connections Teams will be convened to engage local communities and be the catalyst for the four Achievement Connections strategies. Drawing from wide community representation, these leadership teams will employ collaborative, measurable solutions that reconnect youth to their families, schools and success.

**Target 1 Students are engaged in the classroom, after school and in the community.**

**Strategy** Increase student engagement through mentoring, volunteerism, after-school programs and improved educational techniques.

**Tactics**

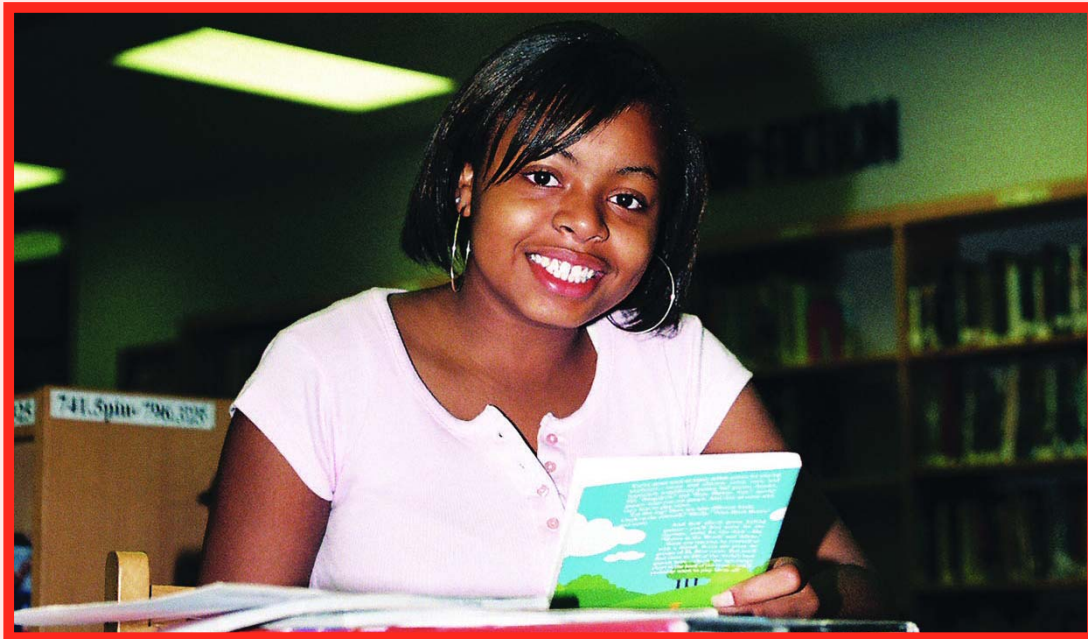
- Create a pool of Graduation Mentors to work with youth as they transition into middle school, continuing with them until they graduate from high school.
- Provide training through UW-Madison on techniques to keep youth engaged in the traditional classroom setting.
- Align after-school and summer programming to support improved school attendance, academic achievement and graduation rates.
- Promote volunteer activities as career-building experience.
- Expand Schools of Hope tutoring to additional school districts.
- Support smaller learning communities in schools and other opportunities for students to work in small groups.
- Create peer courts to provide youth with learning and leadership opportunities as they help determine consequences for their peers who have made bad choices.

**Target 3 Mental health issues are identified early and treated promptly.**

**Strategy** Increase the number of youth who receive early screening and intervention for mental health issues.

**Tactics**

- Screen all sixth graders for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and depression. Students found to be dealing with these concerns will be treated through group sessions and individual therapy.
- Enhance other programming to provide follow-up to those students with other mental health issues, including alcohol or drug use. Provide anger management group sessions to youth ages 8-18 who need to learn anger coping skills.



**Target 4 Youth who have dropped out of school earn a high school diploma and gain employment skills.**

**Strategy** Enroll young adults up to the age of 25 in new and existing programs that provide specific employment experience coupled with educational opportunities that lead to a diploma.

**Tactics**

- Work with individual Community Leadership Teams to determine the appropriate form of outreach for their community.
- Facilitate work with youth apprentice programs that teach youth employment skills while helping them achieve a high school diploma.
- Create new learning academies with a focus on health care, advanced manufacturing and other occupations.

