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## **Education: Students succeed academically and graduate from high school, prepared for higher education, career and community.**

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### **Academic Success Mobilization Plan Agenda to Action**

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#### **Why It Matters**

- Third grade reading scores are highly correlated with later academic success. By the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, children should show evidence of reading comprehension and be able to read unfamiliar words by employing various strategies. (Learn to read by end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, after 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, read to learn.)
- Children from low income families have been shown to lose 2+ months of learning over the summer (summer slide). This puts them in a “catch up” mode when school starts and can result, over the years, in a cumulative learning loss putting them grade levels behind their peers by middle school.
- Competence in mathematics is crucial for functioning in everyday life, critical thinking, success in workplaces reliant on technology, completing college and higher future earnings. School districts in Dane County require algebra for graduation. Algebra completion in 9<sup>th</sup> grade keeps students on track to graduate.
- A high school diploma is a minimum requirement for success in the workplace. Too few students obtain this minimum standard, which contributes to the magnitude of Dane County’s racial disparities in employment and other status indicators.
- Six year graduation rates for African American and Latinx students in Dane County are 86.5% and 86.9% respectively, compared with 94.4% for White students. (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction)

#### **Goal**

**We expect that at least 95% of all students in Dane County graduate high school in 6 years. To meet and exceed this ultimate goal, we will produce accelerated outcomes for students of color and students from low-income families, achieving an interim goal of a 90% or higher by 2022.**

#### **Best Practices and Research**

- Develop strong school, community and parent partnerships that encourage attendance from the time a child starts school (focus on Kindergarten).
- Trained volunteers who provide 1:1-1:3 tutoring to students for a minimum of 15 sessions, in concert with their teacher’s curriculum, can have a material impact on reading/math scores and student engagement.
- Increase student engagement in the classroom and community to keep youth interested in learning.
- Early identification and treatment of behavioral health issues ensures youth will be able to stay mentally engaged in their learning and less apt to struggle with truancy or drop out of school.
- Students’ transition to middle school and high school must address both their academic and social emotional needs in order for them to be on the path to graduate.
- To ensure that our youth take a pathway that leads out of poverty, they must be equipped with skills to enter postsecondary education and thrive in the workforce.
- Successful parent involvement leads to higher achievement, improved school attendance, improved student grades and many other factors associated with academic success.

#### **Strategies**

- Facilitate access to additional learning opportunities across settings to enhance students’ mastery of academic content
- Build students’ social/emotional and non-cognitive skills
- Ensure students’ behavioral health and wellness
- Foster connectedness, sense of belonging, leadership and academic success with Opportunity Youth (disconnected or at risk of disconnecting)
- Recognize family engagement as a key component to improving student success

#### **2020 Community Impact Investment - \$2,251,091**

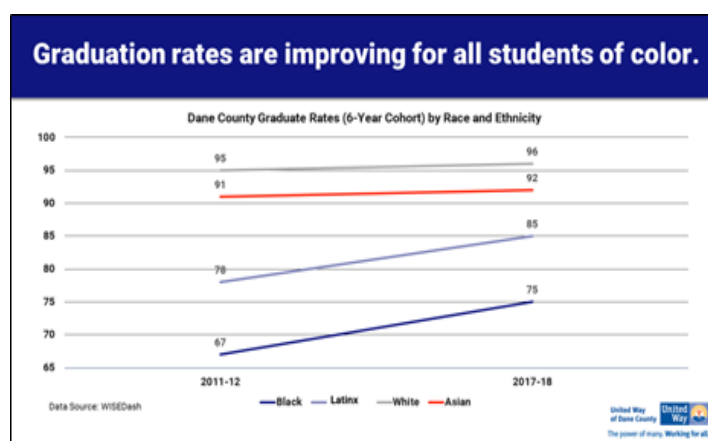
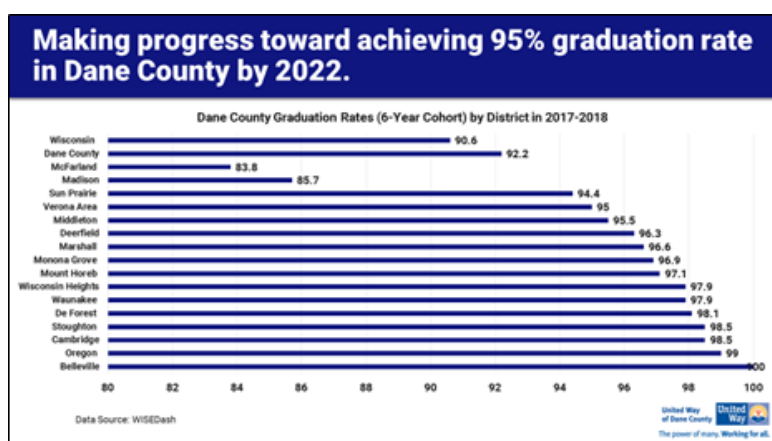
- Tutor more than 2,000 students using research-based methods and mobilize more than 1,000 community volunteers to support tutoring in elementary, middle and high schools in Madison, Middleton/Cross Plains, Oregon and Sun Prairie. Partners include Centro Hispano, Urban League of Greater Madison and school districts.

- Support neighborhood and school-based programs that are aligned with United Way's vision of academic achievement, providing more than 7,000 children with homework help and support, mentoring, and improvement in social skills for educational advancement.

### 2019 Progress on Academic Success Strategies (2017-2018 academic year)

- 57% (1,218) of a combined 2,146 elementary, middle and high school students received 15+ hours of tutoring in reading and math.
- 6-year Dane County Graduation Rate for 2017-18 is 92%, up from 87.8% in 2013. Black and Latinx 6-year rates are now 86.5% and 86.9% compared to 67% and 75% in 2012.
- Completed the first year of a three year pilot of the DESSA-Mini, a social emotional learning screener, at two partner agencies serving 250 elementary and middle school students in school based programs. Second year of screening underway; added eight additional agencies that will screen 500 students enrolled in after school programs in the 2019-20 academic year. Initial results have informed opportunities to build and strengthen out-of-school programs.

### Measures



### How We Accomplished It

Our support of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) opportunities for youth expanded beyond school-based programs to include assessing the role community-based programs play in building Social Emotional skills in their youth participants. A three-year grant-funded pilot of the DESSA Mini SEL student assessment began with 250 students overall being screened in Centro Hispano and Big Brothers/Big Sisters school-based programs (2018-2019 Academic Year). These results informed opportunities to build and strengthen out-of-school programs that help youth gain these important skills. Seven additional agencies are piloting the DESSA with a goal of screening 500 students over the 2019-20 Academic Year. UWDC partnered with the Aperture Foundation to provide an in person training to agencies on how to effectively use data from the DESSA and available tools for building SEL Competencies in youth.

A generous one-time gift allowed us to create the Cheryl Rosen Weston-Opportunity Youth Fund to more comprehensively invest in Opportunity Youth. Through a special RFP incorporated into the overall 2019 investment process, \$240,000 will be invested in 2020 and 2021 into individual and group mentoring for young people involved or at risk of being involved in the juvenile justice system. Five agencies will carry out this work. Our commitment helped to leverage a decision by Dane County to also invest \$100,000 annually from 2020-2024 into this work.

United Way, MMSD and Urban League worked collaboratively to reimagine the Middle Schools of Hope program in order to improve students' leadership and sense of belonging, specifically for African American students. American Family Insurance's Institute for Corporate and Social Impact facilitated an engagement and planning process that included interviews with African American middle school students and led to the development of a leadership course for seven Black seventh graders focused on identity, leadership and community building. The course is being piloted at O'Keefe Middle School. United Way is working collaboratively with both the Urban League and O'Keefe to determine scale-ability and evaluation metrics.

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