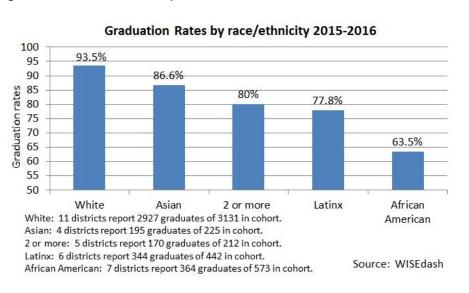# Academic Success Mobilization Plan 3.0

November 2017

I.   Introduction

For decades, United Way of Dane County has led efforts to reduce the achievement gap in education between white students and students of color. We began our work in 1995 when we convened the community, and brought together business leaders, content experts, teachers, practitioners, parents, and residents to tackle this issue. We ultimately mobilized thousands of volunteers and organizations to improve early grade literacy through our first signature project, Schools of Hope. Throughout 22 years, with the support of the community and school districts, we have continued to refine our first initiative and to add more high-leverage strategies and supports. We seek to ensure that young people in Dane County succeed academically and graduate high school, regardless of race.

Together, we worked to increase graduation rates across Dane County, particularly for the most underserved and marginalized youth. This goal supports United Way's larger vision of eliminating poverty and stabilizing families. Our work together has seen progress. But despite gains and successes, disparate educational outcomes continue to harm our community.

Graduation Rates by race/ethnicity 2015-2016

White: 11 districts report 2927 graduates of 3131 in cohort.
Asian: 4 districts report 195 graduates of 225 in cohort.
2 or more: 5 districts report 170 graduates of 212 in cohort.
Latinx: 6 districts report 344 graduates of 442 in cohort.
African American: 7 districts report 364 graduates of 573 in cohort.

Source: WISEdash

Several school districts had their race/ethnic information redacted in WISE-dash (Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction Public Information Portal) due to very small student numbers, a policy of DPI. For this chart, Belleville, Cambridge, Deerfield, and Mt. Horeb were not part of the calculation because of redacted information. Also, we chose to redact McFarland because its Dane County school enrollment is co-mingled with its virtual school, which may include enrollment of students from all over the state of Wisconsin.
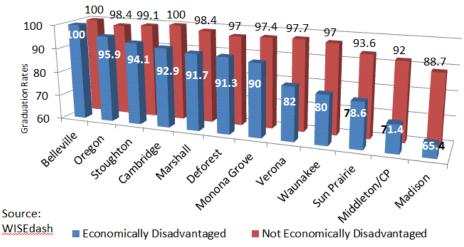
Our Academic Success Community Solutions Team is a collective of educational leaders, practitioners, parents, business leaders, and community members who inform our investment in education. They spent the past year diving deep into the issues to examine the data, listen to stakeholders, and evaluate the ground level work of our youth-serving partner agencies. As a result, they have written this new Academic Success Mobilization Plan 3.0.

As we step back and reflect on what young people in Dane County need, it is evident that they must be prepared not only to graduate, but also to be ready for life beyond the diploma. We remain steadfast in our dedication to build academic success in youth—we will not let up on this. We understand, however, that in order for students to be successful in the classroom and ultimately graduate, they must be holistically prepared to succeed: academically strong, equipped with skillsets that take them beyond high school, mentally healthy, and ready for success as adults.

We seek to ensure that students succeed academically and graduate from high school, prepared for higher education, career, and community.

Why it matters

- **Reading by Third Grade** • Third grade reading scores are highly correlated with later academic success.[1] Early intervention is critical for children who are struggling with reading. By the end of third grade, children should show evidence of reading comprehension and be able to read unfamiliar words by employing various strategies.
- **Ninth Grade on Track** • Research has shown that competence in mathematics is crucial for functioning in everyday life, as well as for success in workplaces that are reliant on technology.[2] Students who take higher-level math and science courses requiring strong fundamental skills in mathematics are more likely to attend and complete college. Achievement in high school mathematics is also associated with higher future earnings. School districts in Dane County require algebra for graduation. Completion of algebra in 9th grade helps keep students on track to graduate.

Source: WISEdash

Deerfield, Wisconsin Heights, and Mt. Horeb Districts' information were redacted due to low numbers. McFarland's District is 61.8% for Economically Disadvantaged and 79.5% for Not Economically Disadvantaged, but not comparable due to its virtual school.

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[1] Hernandez, Donald J., *Double Jeopardy, How Third Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation*, Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2012.
[2] Great Schools, *Why is Algebra so Important*?, http://www.greatschools.org/students/academic-skills/354-why-algebra.gs

- **Graduation ●** Today there is almost universal recognition that a high school diploma is a minimum requirement for success in the workplace and that too few students obtain this minimum standard.[3] This contributes to the sheer magnitude of Dane County's racial disparities in employment and other status indicators.[4]
- **Behavioral Health ●** 10% of students in our schools have witnessed or are exposed to something that was a traumatic experience for them, (examples: domestic violence, loss of a family member; living with a family member whose caregiving ability is impaired). 18% are dealing with behavioral health issues in MMSD.[5] These experiences are often the causes for underlying anger, depression, anxiety, and other behaviors that get in the way of learning.
- **Summer and Out of School Time ●** Identified as the "summer slide," children from low income families have been shown to lose 2+ months of learning over the course of summer because of their inability to practice reading over the summer. This puts them in a "catch up" mode when school starts and can result, over the years, in a cumulative learning loss that puts them grade levels behind their peers by middle school.

II. The Problem Statement

Dane County's students are not equally in situations to thrive in the classroom and community, contributing to disparities in academic achievement. **Disparities are not an issue of potential, but rather of students not in a position to receive the same opportunities.**

It is not possible to address academic success without acknowledging the historical and community context that students live in. Issues of institutionalized racism, implicit bias, and systemic inequality continue to impact students and are the root causes of disparities in academic outcomes, both in Dane County and across the United States. In fact, the 2013 Race to Equity report found that African American Dane County residents generally fare worse than African Americans living elsewhere in the state of Wisconsin and the rest of the nation, due to a complex mix of the "legacy of slavery and racism, the mismatch between our labor markets and key parts of our workforce, and the fragmentation and underdevelopment of too many of our neighborhoods of color," as well as the "composition, priorities, policies, training, and practices of many of the county's majority-dominated institutions, especially those that directly influence the future education, employment, opportunity, status, achievement, security, health, and empowerment of Dane County's growing populations of color".[6] The Academic Success team must therefore take an equity lens to the investment process. Support programs and agencies that engage in strong diversity and inclusion practices for better results.

We believe that all children must succeed academically and graduate to be positioned for life's opportunities. It is up to us to partner with our school districts, families, and local nonprofit

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[3] E.g., Orfield (004); Barton (005); National Association of Secondary School Principles (005).

[4] Race to Equity, A Baseline Report on the State of Racial Disparities in Dane County, WI Council on Children and Families, 2013.

[5] Madison Metropolitan School District data, 2006-2007

[6] Race to Equity: Baseline Report on the State of Racial Disparities in Dane County/Race to Equity Project Team; Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, 2013.

agencies to ensure our children graduate and become prepared for higher education and successful and productive lives. To do this, we must look at the whole picture.

III. Background: United Way's Involvement Addressing Educational Disparities

A. Our history in supporting academic success

United Way of Dane County has been deeply involved in addressing educational disparities for over 20 years. Schools of Hope began in 1995 as a civic journalism project of the Wisconsin State Journal and WISC-TV that examined critical racial achievement issues in the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD), including safety, discipline, cost, race, culture, family involvement, and academic standards and achievement. The media asked United Way to do something about the wide and growing racial achievement gap. With the support of 100 Black Men of Madison, Inc., we convened a leadership team to examine the issues that emerged from the report and to work on a solution.

The team, consisting of representatives from education, local government, faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, parents, students, business leaders, leaders representing communities of color, labor union, and United Way of Dane County. They decided to engage the community in the challenge of reducing the racial achievement gap for third grade reading and eventually successfully completing algebra by the beginning of tenth grade. We began tutoring in 1998 in early grade reading. In 2008 we released a Mobilization Plan for Schools of Hope, which chronicled the growth of the program and results we had at the time. The plan recommended we continue to focus on third grade reading, increase the fidelity of the model, and continue middle school tutoring with a focus on math towards the goal of algebra completion.

In 2007 our community decided to address the long-term trend of increasing youth crime, which occurred at twice the rate of crimes committed by adults. In response, we created the Delegation on Disconnected and Violent Youth. This Delegation was charged with identifying an approach to addressing the rise in youth crime. The Delegation determined that the best way to reduce youth crime was to keep youth in school, ensuring that they achieved a high school diploma. This Delegation produced our Achievement Connections Mobilization plan. The plan includes strategies to assist students in addressing their academic performance and behavioral health needs. Included in the plan are middle and high school tutoring, behavioral health assessment and treatment, and teacher training and parent engagement. For five years, we assisted the districts with the 8th-9th grade transition. That work has been taken over wholly by the districts.

The United Way Board of Directors approved the Academic Success 2.0 Mobilization Plan in November 2014. This plan combined the 2007 Achievement Connections and the 2008 Schools of Hope Mobilization Plans under the umbrella of Academic Success. The overarching goal of the Academic Success area for the Agenda for Change was: all students succeed academically and graduate from high school, regardless of race. It also set community-wide goals:

1. Increase the graduation rate in Dane County from 91.4% to 95% by 2020 with an interim goal of 93.2% by 2016 (six-year cohort).
2. Increase the 4-year graduation rate for MMSD students from 74.5% to 84.5% by 2020 with an interim goal of 79.5% by 2016 (six-year cohort).

To achieve that community level goal, the Mobilization Plan guided our team, the Academic Success Community Solutions Team (CST), to pursue five areas of focus:

1. Tutoring, for third grade reading proficiency, and middle school and high school tutoring so that students would pass with a C or better
2. Chronic absenteeism, particularly at the elementary level
3. Behavioral health
4. Address summer learning loss at elementary years
5. Using leadership teams to engage school district staff, business leaders, and parents for local decision-making

Since the Schools of Hope tutoring initiatives launched in 1998, we have made important headway in implementing the following strategies through our Signature Initiatives. As of 2017, these initiatives operate in 13 Dane County School Districts (Appendix C).

In addition to our Signature Initiatives, the Academic Success Community Solutions Team invests in several other community initiatives, including mentoring programs, out-of-school time programs, and parent and family English language supports. In 2015-2016 alone, Academic Success funded programs served over 13,000 Dane County participants (total not unduplicated). That is over 16% of Dane County's total K-12 enrollment.

B. Academic Success and United Way's Work on Family Stabilization and Poverty

United Way has a 6-point Agenda for Change focused on improving family stabilization, reducing poverty, and improving the human condition in Dane County. The overarching key performance indicator is the reduction of poverty from its current level of 12.2% of the Dane County population (64,062 of 523,643 residents of which 14,875 are children). We recognize United Way can not make this happen alone, but we invite collective and collaborative relationships and partnerships to address this goal in its concurrent Strategic Vision and Goals 2018-2022.

The Agenda for Change, the aspirational vision approved by the United Way's Board of Directors, is a statement that requires collaborative work across the community to reduce poverty and is focused on children as the future for Dane County. Here is a brief summary of that work intertwined with that of this plan:

Agenda	Goal	Addresses poverty
• Children are cared for and have fun as they become prepared for school. *Born Learning Mobilization Plan 2.0*	Ensure children are developmentally ready for kindergarten.	Recognizes the achievement gap starts in early childhood, and that the foundation skills of learning begin in the first 3 years of life. The first three years of brain development are responsible for later developing executive function (e.g. decision-making and interpersonal skills).

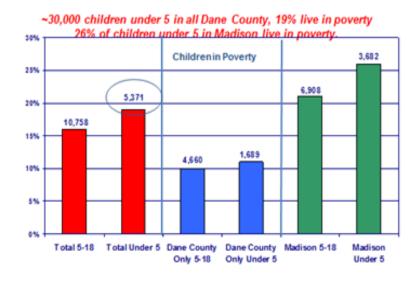|		
• Students succeed academically and graduate high school, regardless of race. *Academic Success Mobilization Plan 3.0*	All students graduate from high school.	Without a diploma, young adults can't compete for jobs with family-sustaining wages, nor can they go on into post-secondary education to get ready for 21st century careers.
• More people are on pathways out of poverty. *Strong Roots Mobilization Plan* *Journey Home Mobilization Plan*	Individuals complete job training and placed in family-sustaining jobs with supports for retention and growth.	Adults are moving into jobs/careers with family-sustaining wages and economic mobility. Former offenders are helped to become productive citizens.
• There is a decrease in family homelessness. *Housing for All Mobilization Plan*	Families are permanently housed.	Without a home, families can't find jobs, or create the safety of a home for children to feel secure. Children in homes are much more likely to be learning and academically successful.
• People's health issues are identified and treated early. *Healthy for Life Plan*	Children's behavioral health issues are addressed and treated early.	Children who have unaddressed trauma and adverse childhood experiences have difficulty concentrating in school. They are highly likely to experience academic failure, drop out, acting out, and suffer from depression, anger, and anxiety.
• Seniors and people with disabilities are able to stay in their homes. *Safe and Healthy Aging Mobilization Plan* *Youth Transitions Mobilization Plan*	Keep seniors in homes of their choice. Youth with disabilities graduate from high school and graduate from high school.	Prevent institutionalization which can be an expensive burden on a family. Youth with disabilities can move into jobs with family-sustaining wages, or post-secondary education to get ready for 21st century careers.

For more, please go to our website to read all of the Mobilization Plans in the Agenda for Change and see details that reinforce the Academic Success Mobilization Plan in support of children and their academic success: **www.unitedwaydanecounty.org**

IV.   What Works

The Academic Success Community Solutions Team gathered research that drove the change in the Mobilization Plan. Below is the result of their work.

A. Kindergarten Readiness
Being ready to learn by kindergarten is crucial in determining outcomes once students start school, which can affect their outcomes in adulthood. The Wisconsin

~30,000 children under 5 in all Dane County, 19% live in poverty 26% of children under 5 in Madison live in poverty.

Children in Poverty

Council on Children and Families writes, "Research demonstrates that by age 4, children who live in families with incomes below poverty are 18 months behind what is normal for

their age group. By the time they are 10, that gap is still there, and for children living in the poorest families, the gap is even larger."[7]
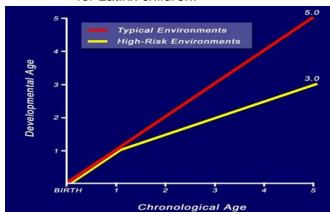
A September 2017 report for the Wisconsin Center on Education Research leaves no question on the need for kindergarten readiness.

The guiding principle of Born Learning 2.0 is that every child in our community deserves an equal shot at success. And by coming together as a community, we can make a real, quantifiable difference in our children's future.

—Joe Parisi
Dane County Executive

Wisconsin's gaps between Black and White student high school graduation rates and Black and White fourth-grade math and reading scores are the largest in the nation. These inequalities have led to criticisms of Wisconsin's schools and teachers as ineffective in bolstering the success of students of color and those who are economically disadvantaged.

We know that nationally, students of color and children who are poor enter Kindergarten substantially behind their peers and that disparity can account for much, if not most, of the achievement gap we see later in primary and secondary school. Their key findings:

1. Almost 66% of African American children and 70% of Latinx children enter Kindergarten less prepared than the typical White child.
2. Almost 75% of poor children enter Kindergarten behind the typical, more economically-advantaged child.
3. Differences in the economic resources of families of White children and children of color account for much, but not all of the racial/ethnic differences in school readiness we observe in Wisconsin. If children of color were as financially well-off as White children in the state, we would expect gaps in early literacy skills to shrink by 60% for African American children and 40% for Latinx children."[8]

By age 5, many children in high-risk environments are already developmentally behind. This gap only grows over time – undermining school readiness and success in life. Dr. Craig T. Ramey, Georgetown University
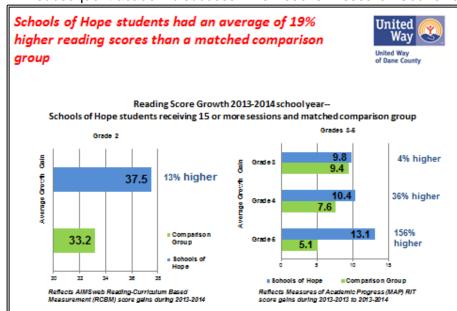
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[7] Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (2008). Let's Start at the Very Beginning: A Very Good Place to Start! WisKids Count Issue Brief (page 3.).
[8] Kindergarten Readiness in Wisconsin, WCER Working Paper No. 2017-3, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, School of Education, University of Wisconsin—Madison, E. Grodsky, Y Huangfu, H. Meisner, and C. Packard, September, 2017.

Recognizing that achievement gaps begin prior to school entrance, United Way's Born Learning Mobilization Plan aims to increase the percentage of children entering kindergarten at age-expected development, which gives them a solid foundation for their success in school. Their goal: 80% of our 4-year olds will be at age-expected development and ready to begin school by 2020. Please go to our website to see full details on the strategies and resources for this plan.

B. Learn to Read by Third Grade – Because After Third Grade You Read to Learn!

Nationally, there is growing recognition among educators of the importance of children reading at grade level by the end of third grade. Over 30 years of research shows the correlation between students' reading ability at the end of third grade and their subsequent academic success. The National Research Council concluded: "Academic

Schools of Hope students had an average of 19% higher reading scores than a matched comparison group

United Way
United Way of Dane County

Reading Score Growth 2013-2014 school year--
Schools of Hope students receiving 15 or more sessions and matched comparison group

success, as defined by high school graduation, can be predicted with reasonable accuracy by knowing someone's reading skill at the end of third grade. A person who is not at least a modestly skilled reader by that time is unlikely to graduate from high school."[9] 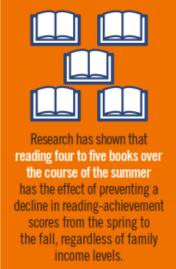Through third grade, children are learning to read; beginning in 4th grade children read to learn. According to the Annie E. Casey Report "Early Warning – Why reading at the End of Third Grade Matters," in fourth grade children are using the skills they have learned to solve problems and go deeper into subjects they are studying.[10] A child behind in reading will find the fourth grade reading material incomprehensible.

C. The Importance of Summer Learning

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[9] National Research Council. Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children. Edited by Catherine E. Snow, Susan Burns and Peg Griffin, Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1998.

[10] Hernandez, Donald J., Double Jeopardy, How Third Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2012.

During the summer school break, an annual achievement gap of approximately three months has been created between wealthy and poor students (Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, and Greathouse, 1996, the effects of summer vacation on achievement test scores: A narrative and meta-analytic review.). The loss in reading levels is greatest among students from lower-income families. By contrast, students from upper-income families often increase their reading levels during the summer. (Cooper et al, 1996) This achievement gap has most dramatically widened during the elementary school years. Various studies have shown that over the course of six summers, the gap widened from less than a year's difference entering kindergarten to more than a three-year gap between lower and upper-income students by the end of 6th grade (Alexander, Entwisle & Olsen, 2007). This gap widens even when students receive effective instruction during the school year (Cooper et al, 1996). Thus, the loss that occurs during the summer months is called by some the most compelling explanation of the widening achievement gap between the rich and poor (Allington, 2013). This summer regression in reading and literacy development is referred to as the "Summer Slide" (Allington, 2013).

According to a study by Entwisle and Olson:

- During the school year, lower-income children's skills improve at close to the same rate as those of their more advantaged peers.
- Over the summer, middle- and upper-income children's skills continue to improve, while lower-income children's skills do not.
- Summer learning shortfall experienced by low-income children over the elementary grades has consequences that reverberate throughout children's schooling and can impact whether a child ultimately earns a high school diploma and continues on to college.

Richard L. Allington, co-author of Summer Reading: Closing the Rich/Poor Achievement Gap (Teachers College and International Reading Association, 2013), tells us that any child who fails to read during the summer break will lose some reading proficiency. Children from low-income families routinely lose two to three months of reading proficiency every summer while middle-class children gain about a month. This creates a three to four month gap every summer. From grade one to grade nine, children from low-income families lose two or more years of reading proficiency during the summers when school is not in session.

> *"The most effective way to help children maintain and grow their reading skills is to put books in their hands. Not just any books, but books that they choose!"*
>
> -- Richard Allington
> Professor of Education
> University of Texas, Fort Knox

Research has shown that reading four to five books over the course of the summer has the effect of preventing a decline in reading-achievement scores from the spring to the fall, regardless of family income levels.

D. Transition to Middle and High School

Transition is difficult for any student at any stage in his or her education. The transitions into both middle and high school are particularly difficult, as they are key points in determining future outcomes.

Many studies indicate that receiving passing grades in the core subjects of Math, English, Science, and Social Studies and being on-pace with credit accumulation in the freshman year of high school are highly related to graduation.[11][12] One study found that students who passed Algebra I by their freshman year of high school graduated at twice the rate (70% compared to 35%) of students who had not passed Algebra 1 by 9th grade.[13] Further research shows that students who take higher-level math and science courses requiring strong fundamental skills in mathematics are more likely to attend and complete college, secure technically-skilled jobs, and earn higher wages.[14][15][16][17][18]

Research shows that most high school dropouts fail at least 25% of their ninth grade, while 8% of high school graduates experienced the same difficulty.[19] And more than one "F" in core subjects and fewer than five full course credits by the end of freshman year are key indicators a student is not on track to graduate,[20] as well as low attendance in the first 30 days of ninth grade.[21] The challenge in transition happens well before high school, which includes a drop in grades,[22] motivation[23], self esteem[24], and parent involvement[25]. Promising research in Chicago Public Schools has shown that focusing on the transition between eighth grade and ninth grade and focusing on the on-track behaviors of students in ninth grade raised graduation rates by 13% over a six-year period (Roderick et al., 2014).

[11] Allensworth, E. M. & Easton, J. Q. (2005). The on-track indicator as a predictor of high school graduation. Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago.

[12] Roderick, M. & Camburn, E. (1999). Risk and recovery from course failure in the early years of high school. American Educational Research Journal, 36(2), 303-343. DOI: 10.3102/00028312036002303

[13] Silver, D., Saunders, M., & Zarate, M. E. (2008). What factors predict high school graduation in the Los Angeles Unified School District? (California Dropout Research Project Policy Brief 14). Santa Barbara, CA: UCSB Gevirtz Graduate School of Education.

[14] Attewell, P., & Domina, T. (2008). Raising the Bar: Curricular Intensity and Academic Performance. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 30 (1), 51 –71.

[15] Aughinbaugh, A. (2012). The effects of high school math curriculum on college attendance: Evidence from the NLSY97. Economics of Education Review, 31(6), 861–870.

[16] Long, M. C., Conger, D., & Iatarola, P. (2012). Effects of High School Course-Taking on Secondary and Postsecondary Success. American Educational Research Journal, 49(2), 285–322

[17] Joensen, J. S., & Nielsen, H. S. (2009). Is there a Causal Effect of High School Math on Labor Market Outcomes? Journal of Human Resources, 44(1), 171–198.

[18] Rose, H. & Betts, J. R. (2001). Math matters: The links between high school curriculum, college graduation, and earnings. San Francisco, CA: Public Policy Institute of California.

[19] Kennelly and Monrad. (2007). "Easing the Transition to High School: Research and Best Practices Designed to Support High School Learning." National High School Center

[20] ibid

[21] Ibid.

[22] "Making the Transition to Middle School: How Mentoring Can Help (September 2008). From Mentoring Resource Center Fact Sheet. Retrieved from: http://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/making-the-transition-to-middle-school.pdf

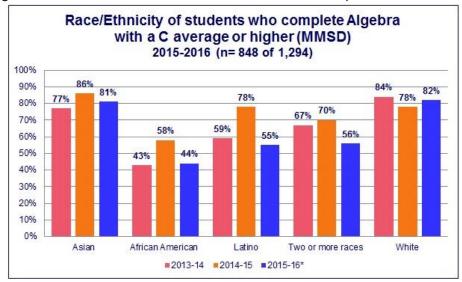[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

E. Completion of Algebra With a C or Better by the Beginning of 10th Grade – A Critical Gateway to Graduation and College and/or a Career

The transition from arithmetic to the symbolic language of algebra helps students develop abstract reasoning and critical thinking skills necessary to excel in math and science. A low-income student who succeeds in algebra has virtually the same chance of going to college as a child from a more affluent family who also passes the course. Receiving a "C" or better also means that the student has deeper content understanding.

Research tells us that algebra is considered a gateway course for educational achievement beyond high school.[26] It is the language of math and science, and the language of problem solving. It deals in abstractions that expand thinking skills. Also, middle school represents the second most available time for brain development and our ability to influence student learning.[27] A child from a low-income family who succeeds in algebra stands virtually the same chance of going to college as a child from an upper-income family who passes the course.[28]

F. Graduation Rates

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, graduation rates nationally have increased from 79% for 2010-11 to 83% for 2014-15. Rates of graduation are still disparate by race/ethnicity; 88% of White public students, 78% of Latino/a students, and
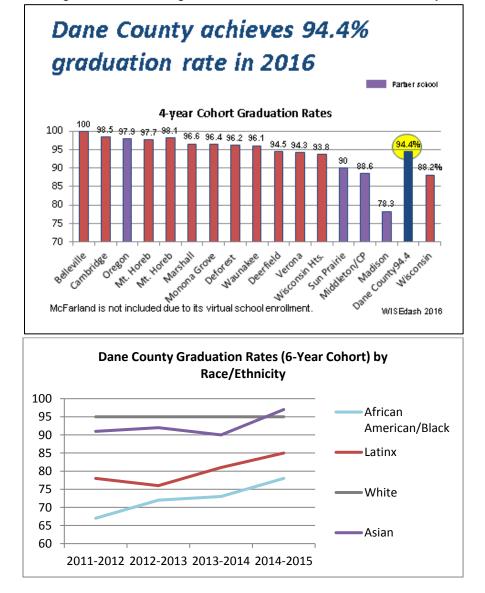
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[26] Christmas, P., & Fey, J. (1990). Communicating the importance of algebra to students. In Edgar L. Edwards, Jr. (Ed.), Algebra for everyone. Reston, Virginia: NCTM.

[27] Alexander, Entwisle and Olson, 2007, Summer learning and its implications: insights from the Beginning School Study, New Directions for Youth Development, Volume 2007, Issue 214.

[28] Source: GEAR Up Program

75% of Black students graduated in 2014-15.[29] A high school diploma decreases the chances of unemployment from 7.4% to 5.2% and increases lifetime earnings by 40%[30][31] In Dane County, our collective partnerships toward increasing graduation rates have been successful. We are proud to say that we have met or almost met the interim goals we set for graduation rates in both Dane County and MMSD. As of the 2014-2015 school year, Dane County has a graduation rate of 93.1%, .1% away from our 2016 goal. MMSD achieved an 80.6% graduation rate, surpassing the 2016 goal of 79.5%. When we began this work the gradation rate was 91% for Dane County and 74.5% in Madison.

Dane County achieves 94.4% graduation rate in 2016

4-year Cohort Graduation Rates

McFarland is not included due to its virtual school enrollment.

WISEdash 2016

Dane County Graduation Rates (6-Year Cohort) by Race/Ethnicity

African American/Black

Latinx

White

Asian

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[29] Public High School Graduation Rates. (Updated April 2017). Retrieved from
https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_coi.asp
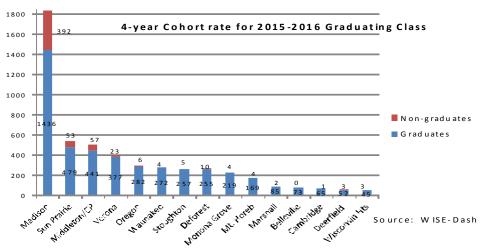[30] Employment Projections (Last modified April 20, 2017). Retrieved from
https://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm
[31] Lifetime earning trends by education level (last modified 2010). Retrieved from
https://trends.collegeboard.org/education-pays/figures-tables/lifetime-earnings-education-level

Although there are still significant disparities by race/ethnicity, Dane County high school graduation rates are improving for all demographics.

G. Drop Out Prevention

In June 2016, 567 of 5,074 (11.2%) didn't graduate with their class.

4-year Cohort rate for 2015-2016 Graduating Class

Source: WISE-Dash

McFarland is not included due to their virtual school: 107 of 459 (23.3%) did not graduate.

The Institute for Educational Science provides the following recommendations for dropout prevention: (1) Use data systems to identify at-risk students early; (2) provide adult advocates to students at-risk; (3) provide academic support and enrichment; (4) implement programs to improve students' classroom behavior and social skills; (5) provide personalized learning environments and individualized instruction; (6) provide rigorous and relevant instruction to better engage students in learning (Freeman & Simonson, 2015, p. 208).

H. The Importance of post-secondary Education and College Readiness

Despite the rising costs of college and soaring rates of student debt, postsecondary education remains key to economic stability. According to the Pew Research Center, millennials earn $2,000 more annually with a two-year degree or some college and $17,500 more with a bachelor's degree than they do with only a high school diploma.[32]

Associate degrees also bring additional earnings beyond graduating high school. The Center for Analysis of Postsecondary Education and Employment, a research center funded by the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education, found that completing an associates degree yields on average $4,640-$7,160 per year

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[32] The Rising Cost of Not Going to College (Updated February 11, 2014). Retrieved from http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/02/11/the-rising-cost-of-not-going-to-college/

more than those who begin college and do not complete.[33] A postsecondary education improves quality of life across indicators.

Based on estimates from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the minimum annual income before taxes needed to support one adult and one child is $48,538 [34]. However, in Dane County, individuals without a high school diploma make an average of $20,222 per year and individuals with a high school diploma make an average of $30,325 per year, in comparison, individuals with some college or associate's degree have an annual income of $34,794 and individuals with a bachelor's degree have an annual income of $49,937[35].

A college degree brings more than earnings. According to the Lumnia Foundation, in 2012, Americans with bachelor's degrees (and without graduate degrees) have:

- 3.5 times lower incidence of poverty (Income)
- 2.4 times lower incidence of receiving worker's compensation (Income)
- 4.9 times lower probability of being in prison or jail (Income)
- 47% higher likelihood of having health insurance through employment (Health)
- 44% higher likelihood of reporting very good or excellent health (Health)
- 3.9 times lower likelihood of being a regular smoker and a significantly higher incidence of exercising, having a healthy diet, wearing seat belts, and seeking preventative medical care (Health)
- 72% greater likelihood of having a retirement plan (Health) [36]

This research supports work in United Way of Dane County's Community Impact Areas, as noted in the parentheses above. In Dane County, a proportionally well educated seat of private, public, four and two year institutions, the importance of preparing young people for college is even more urgent in narrowing the income gap and creating an equitable growing workforce.

I. **Career Readiness Skills**
To ensure that our youth take a pathway that leads out of poverty, they must be equipped with skills to not only to enter postsecondary education, but to ultimately thrive in the workforce. There are varying definitions and interpretations of "career ready", and every career field requires different skill sets, but there are skills that certainly cut across all careers. Additionally, many of the skills necessary to be successful in college are also necessary for career readiness. Conley and McGauhey describe study skills, time

[33] Belfield, Clive and Bailey, Thomas (2017). "The Labor Market Returns to Sub-Baccalaureate College: A Review." The Center for Analysis of Postsecondary Education and Employment. Retrieved from http://capseecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/labor-market-returns-sub-baccalaureate-college-review.pdf

[34] Glasmeier, A. K. (2017) Living Wage Calculation for Dane County, Wisconsin. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2017.

[35] U.S. Census Bureau. (2017) Retrieved from https://factfinder.census.gov

[36] Trotsel, Philip. (October 14, 2015). "It's Not Just The Money: The Benefits of College Education to Individuals and Society." The Lumnia Foundation. Retrieved from https://www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/its-not-just-the-money.pdf

management, persistence, and ownership of learning, as well as the ability to "formulate problems, collect information, interpret and analyze findings, and communicate in a variety of modes, all with precision and accuracy."[37]

The skill sets that prepare students for post secondary education, career fields, and civic engagement are not only vital to life beyond a diploma, they strengthen students' ability to learn and own their experiences in the K-12 school system.

J. Social/Emotional and Non-Cognitive Skills

Many authors are now focusing on social/emotional and non-cognitive skills as a way of predicting success, rather than just achievement-based standardized tests, arguing that achievement tests do not show skills of character, including personality traits, goals, motivations, and preferences, that are valued in the labor market and in schools. Reliable measures of character have predictive power that is as convincing as measures of cognitive skills, according to some research.[38][39] One study specifically of American Indian and Alaska Native students found students with higher social-emotional competence had higher academic achievement. The study controlled for measures of poverty and race.[40]

Of important relevance to our work is the apparent malleability of non-cognitive and social-emotional skills. There are several studies indicating that direct and focused interventions can lead to improvement in students' so-called "soft skills" and, ultimately, improved academic outcomes. A study of the OneGoal program, which tries to help disadvantaged high school students attend and complete college by teaching non-cognitive skills, found the program improved academic indicators, increased college enrollment by 10-20 percentage points with the greatest effect on four-your college enrollment and persistence, and reduced arrest rates by 5% for participating males.[41] The authors found that the improvement in non-cognitive skills accounted for 15-30% of the program's impact. A meta-analysis of 213 school-based social and emotional learning programs found that participants showed statistically-significant improvements in social and emotional skills, attitudes (toward self, others and school), and positive social behavior and academic performance; academic performance in particular

[37] Conley, David T. and McGaughy, Charis. (2012). "College and Career". From North County Professional Development Foundation. Retrieved from http://www.ncpdf.org/pdf/steering/2015-09-18/4.0%20ASCD%20Article%20College%20&%20%20Career%20Readiness%20.pdf

[38] Kautz, T., Heckman, J. J., Diris, R., Ter Weel, B., & Borghans, L. (2014). Fostering and measuring skills: Improving cognitive and non-cognitive skills to promote lifetime success (No. w20749). National Bureau of Economic Research.

[39] Hamedani, M. G., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2015). Social emotional learning in high school: How three urban high schools engage, educate, and empower youth. Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education. March.

[40] Chain, J., Shapiro, V. B., LeBuffe, P. A., & Bryson, A. M. (2017). Academic Achievement of American Indian and Alaska Native Students: Does Social-Emotional Competence Reduce the Impact of Poverty? American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research (Online), 24(1), 1.

[41] Kautz, T., & Zanoni, W. (2014). Measuring and fostering non-cognitive skills in adolescence: Evidence from Chicago Public Schools and the OneGoal Program. University of Chicago.

improved by an 11-percentile-point gain in achievement.[42] Additionally, drawing upon the framework established by the Consortium for Chicago School Research (CCSR) at the University of Chicago, the close monitoring and advocacy of an adult (mentor, tutor, after school program staff member etc.) is a research-based strategy for improving students' non-cognitive skills.[43]

Additionally, schools have become more proactive in teaching social-emotional learning as a way to build and maintain a positive learning environment. SEL focuses on building cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies in five areas: self-awareness; self-management; social awareness; relationship skills; and responsible decision making (Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning). High school graduation rates, for example, are lower for youth with behavioral health issues resulting in higher school dropout rates and lower school performance rates when compared with their peers.[44]

K. Behavioral (Mental) Health

National research and local experience confirms the importance of providing non-academic behavioral health supports that remove or minimize barriers to learning and increase the likelihood that students will graduate. Students who struggle with anxiety, depression, difficulty regulating their emotions, and other issues that keep them mentally preoccupied and not able to focus on what is occurring in their classrooms will not perform well in school. Some students who have witnessed or experienced violence or trauma may have behaviors that are disruptive to their classmates, as well. Helping and providing school-based support to students with these concerns is a key non-academic intervention that promotes positive outcomes for these learners.

Educators, researchers, and school staff see increased need for mental health support for young people and its connection to student success. An estimated 1 in 5 students nationally have mental health concerns severe enough to cause significant impairment in daily functions, preventing them from thriving in the community, at school and at home.

Mental health is an issue that historically comes with stigma. In 2004, California set aside funds for local and statewide activities that focused on the prevention and early intervention of mental illness. One of many initiatives was "Walk In Our Shoes," a theater production about mental health targeted at middle school students. Wong found students who watched the production were more willing to interact with classmates who had mental health issues and had a more positive response to hypothetical students with

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[42] Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. Child Development, 82, 405– 432. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624 .2010.01564

[43] Nagaoka, Farrington, Ehrlich, & Heath (June 2015). "Foundations for Young Adult Success: A Developmental Framework." The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.

[44] Youth Violence, Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms, & Learning Victor G. Carrion, M.D. | Stanford University, Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, Stanford Early Life Stress Research Program, California Healthy Students Research Project, Brief Number 5

those issues. It is clear that there remains a need for mental health support and that it is key to academic and personal success for students in the K-12 system and beyond.

L. Engaging and Empowering Families in Their Children's Education

Studies show that successful parent involvement leads to higher achievement, improved school attendance, improved student perception of well-being, improved student behavior, improved parent and student perceptions of classroom and school climate, improved educational aspirations of students and their parents, improved student grades, and parent satisfaction with teachers.[45] These positive outcomes reached students from all socio-economic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.[46] For instance, parent expectations, student expectations and peer interest have been shown to predict math intrinsic motivation in 9th grade, even after controlling for SES, race, gender, and math achievement, with parent expectations as the largest contributing factor to math achievement.[47]

> *"I was raised with an extended family structure that included aunts, uncles, and siblings. My parents were like my hubcap and the other adults in my life were the spokes, keeping the wheels in place and keeping me moving forward. I raised my children the same way."*
> – Parent, Verona Area School District

While the benefits of parent and family involvement in students' educations are clearly defined, the mechanisms to make this connection have historically not been well-understood.[48] Obstacles to parents and families engaging with schools range from differing ideas among parents and teachers about what constitutes involvement, time and job pressures to cultural differences, fear of authority-based institutions, parent illiteracy, and parent and family members' own negative education experiences.[49]

Successful initiatives to break down barriers and increase parent and family involvement in children's academic experiences build on the strengths of parents and families' own experiences, knowledge, and beliefs, developing parents' skills and knowledge to further their students' progress.[50] Research indicates programs that provide targeted, culturally-responsive support to parents and families can lead to improved student achievement.

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[45] Anfara Jr, V. A., & Mertens, S. B. (2008). Varieties of parent involvement in schooling. Middle School Journal, 39(3), 60.

[46] Jeynes, W. H. (2003). A meta-analysis: The effects of parental involvement on minority children's academic achievement. Education and urban society, 35(2), 202-218.

[47] Froiland, J. M., & Davison, M. L. (2016). The longitudinal influences of peers, parents, motivation, and mathematics course-taking on high school math achievement. Learning and Individual Differences, 50, 252-259.

[48] Kerbow and Bernhardt (1993).

[49] Froiland, J. M., & Davison, M. L. (2016).

[50] Dearing, E., Walsh, M. E., Sibley, E., Lee-St John, T., Foley, C., & Raczek, A. E. (2016). Can Community and School-Based Supports Improve the Achievement of First-Generation Immigrant Children Attending High-Poverty Schools?. Child Development, 87(3), 883-897.

These are the issues most relevant in understanding the drivers of student success. Below is the process that we undertook to develop our Academic Success Mobilization Plan.

V.   Building the New Plan

In 2017, our Academic Success Community Solutions Team evaluated the results of the Academic Success Mobilization Plan 2.0 through the end of 2016. Team members reviewed:

- Fidelity of our strategies, including scale, cost, and data.
- Latest research in student success, ranging from out-of-school programs to tutoring to children's mental health.
- Our current investments, looking critically at amounts invested in each area in Dane County and the outcomes achieved.
- Frameworks and results of our district partners, which clearly indicated new leadership across districts led to the implementation of more rigorous curriculum and instruction.

Furthermore, our agency partners provided input and feedback on needs of their students and families, impact they have on students' outcomes, and our proposed goals and strategies.

Finally, we engaged with various groups of stakeholders directly affected by this important work: high school and college students representing several Dane County school districts and post-secondary institutions, out of school youth serving staff, MMSD Principals representing all grade levels, and parents of youth. This examination resulted in three key takeaways:

1. **We cannot address academic achievement without supporting the whole child.** In order for students to be college, career, and community ready upon graduation, they need a set of skills and abilities beyond academic success solely measured by content mastery.
2. **Students must be prepared to advance beyond the K-12 school setting.** In the 21st century labor market and to earn a family-sustaining wage, addressed in the Strong Roots Mobilization Plan--students must be prepared to advance beyond the K-12 school setting.
   "I worked for a pre-college program over the summer. The students that I worked with felt welcome and involved. We found our own voice. The experience gave me skill sets such as group facilitation and networking." – Junior, Madison College
3. **There is a need for a reciprocal learning relationship between United Way and partner agencies.** Our non-profit agency partners are key in successful outcomes. Their executive directors, program managers, and front line staff have a keen understanding of the issues in real time, informing our strategic planning. Likewise, United Way of Dane County has valuable resources in our staff, volunteers, and professional development opportunities. We must continue to strengthen our relationship with and learn from each others' expertise.

VI.   New Goal

In recognition of the necessity of preparing students to advance beyond high school to establish individual and family stability, we revised our strategic goal; **students succeed academically and graduate high school, prepared for higher education, career, and community.**

"I'm not going to close the door on myself to it (college). Even if I decide not to attend, I want to be ready." –Sophomore, Madison East High School
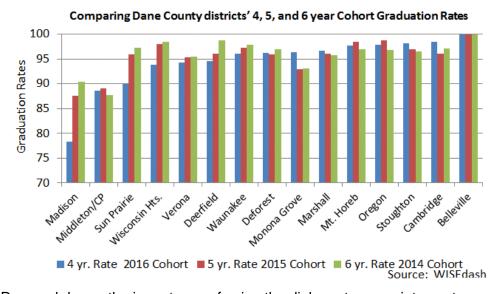
We believe that by providing academic support to improve students' mastery of academic content, supporting the development of their social and emotional and non-cognitive skills, engaging and empowering their families, and addressing behavioral health issues, children can succeed academically and graduate from high school, ready for the next step.

Through leveraging our school district partnerships, we will support and enhance the districts' work in decreasing the racial and economic achievement gap in 4th grade reading and completion of Algebra by 10th grade with a C or better, and provide additional supports to disconnected students to ensure they graduate.

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.

Moving to a 6-year graduation rate indicator

We revised our goal to measure six-year graduation rates. While the ideal is on time high school graduation, many youth in Dane County face barriers that do not reflect their ability to graduate, but rather their ability to graduate on time. Jobs that support economic hardship, family obligations, and issues related to immigration status lead many students to slow or temporarily stop, but ultimately continue high school. Six year graduation rates reflect the resiliency of students who experience lifes barriers. Our strategies will continue for those who become temporarily disconnected. On time graduation is the focus, but earning a diploma is more important than earning it in four years.

Research bears the importance of using the diploma to move into post-secondary

education, not only for entering the workforce and creating economic well-being, but also for indicators of health, wellness, and personal well-being.

VII.   Our Priority Population

While we are expanding our definition of academic success and adopting a more well-rounded portfolio of strategies accordingly, we believe we should narrow the focus and impact of the Academic Success Community Solutions Team by prioritizing the students we will serve.

The goal of the Academic Success Mobilization Plan is to prepare students to graduate ready for college, career, and community. We will prioritize the students who are positioned furthest away from this goal. Specifically:

1. **Early Elementary Literacy:** The top priority and the largest number of students we serve will be in the elementary grades who are reading below grade level. This presents an opportunity to work early and proactively in partnership with families, teachers, and community members to build early literacy skills that lay the foundation for future academic success.
2. **Middle and High School Transitions:** In middle and high school, we will have the greatest impact focusing on 6th grade and 9th grade students who are below grade level in literacy or mathematics. We know that students struggle with transitions during adolescence. This is a critical period of identity development and learning becomes difficult when students are worried about themselves, their physical or psychological safety, and how they are perceived. Through academic support in literacy and mathematics, we can also help students develop the social/emotional and non-cognitive skills and behavioral health support to be successful.
3. **Opportunity (disconnecting and disconnected) Youth:** We believe that our most "at risk" youth, and the youth with the most opportunity, are students who are truant and in danger of dropping out, have dropped out, are severely under-credited, have been incarcerated, are working one or more jobs to support their family. We prioritize support for the youth that is needed most—with student voice and a pathway to graduation and post-secondary options.

This does not mean that we may not serve students outside of this population. Rather, it provides direction and focus in serving students with the greatest needs in Dane County. See Section XII. (Page 27), for scale of these populations.

VIII.   Revised Academic Success Strategies

To ensure that students receive the intentional supports they need to graduate ready for higher education, career, and community, we have chosen the following 5 high-leverage strategies.

1. **Facilitate access to additional learning opportunities across settings to enhance students' mastery of academic content**

   This focus area consolidates our current strategies of third grade reading, summer reading loss, and 10th grade Algebra completion, built on the premise that proficiency in

core subjects of mathematics and literacy are critical to students' academic and career success. While the classroom setting is the primary driver of content mastery, this knowledge can be enhanced through additional learning experiences both in and out of school settings. More privileged students have greater access to out-of-school learning experiences and tutoring to enhance academics, widening academic opportunity gaps.

Research bears the importance of tutoring programs that rely on highly skilled, trained tutors. Additionally, out-of-school programs providing academic support that complement learning during school are most effective in advancing students academically.

2. Build students' social/emotional and non-cognitive skills

Non-cognitive and social-emotional skills are the traits and habits that employers look for in employees and that help students succeed. Closely associated with the work of economist James Heckman, non-cognitive skills are traits and habits just as--if not more--critical to education, employment, and life outcomes as academic achievement. The term encompasses attributes of academic behaviors, perseverance, mindsets, learning strategies, and social skills.[51] Social-emotional learning focuses on building cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies in the areas of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.[52]

> *"I was mentoring a middle schooler. He wouldn't listen to anyone. Teachers didn't want to work with him. I helped him start a talent show during the lunch hour. I found out this kid could sing. He didn't think anyone liked him. He realized his entire group loved him! He just needed someone close to his age to listen."* – Sophomroe, Verona Area HS

The US Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools recommends mentoring as a way to support students in the move to middle school and recommends structures for expanding the capacity of mentoring in schools and community-based organizations.[53] Additionally, long term and supportive mentoring relationships increase civic engagement and decrease delinquency, substance abuse, and depression over time.[54] Coupled with close academic support and mental health resources, mentoring develops social emotional skills needed to navigate change that comes in the transition.

3. Ensure students' behavioral health and wellness

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[51] Nagaoka, Farrington, Ehrlich, & Heath (June 2015). "Foundations for Young Adult Success: A Developmental Framework." The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.
[52] CASEL Website. Retrieved from http://www.casel.org
[53] "Making the Transition to Middle School: How Mentoring Can Help": (September 2008). Retrieved from http://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/making-the-transition-to-middle-school.pdf
[54] Erdem, G., DuBois, D.L., Larose, S., Wit, D., & Lipman, E.L. (2016). Mentoring Relationships, positive development, youth emotional and behavioral problems: investigation of a medinational model. Journal of Community Psychology, 44 (4), 464-483

National research and local experience confirms the importance of providing non-academic behavioral health supports that remove or minimize barriers to learning.[55][56][57] Although historically the focus of education has been on academic learning and indicators of achievement, we must also address student mental health as it is a significant contributor to academic outcomes.[58] Suldo et al. note that academic achievement can affect mental health, particularly internalizing problems.

An important practice for responding to students' mental health needs is universal screening for concerns, such as trauma exposure, which maximizes the identification of at-risk students and allows schools to respond to specific students without singling them out during screening. Additionally, if schools do not use a universal screening tool, they are likely to use office referrals to identify students needing additional mental health support. This may capture students who are acting out; it may not capture students who internalize behaviors non-threatening to classroom management.[59] Woodbridge identified 13.5% of middle school students universally screened reported traumatic stress symptoms at the clinical or subclinical level.[60] Moreover, Gonzalez found that 9.5% of elementary students who were screened had stress symptoms at the clinical level, and 26% had symptoms at the moderately-elevated level.[61] As schools universally screen students, this can help prevent re-traumatization of students[62] and help re-frame struggling students in a different lens,[63] and "this shift in perspective may be particularly important for reducing racial disparities in academic outcomes and suspensions."[64]

To address the barriers that mental health concerns can pose to academic success, resources need to be "where the kids are." Bringing clinicians into schools eliminates

[55] Gonzalez, A., Monzon, N., Solis, D., Jaycox, L., & Langley, A. K. (2015). Trauma exposure in elementary school children: Description of screening procedures, prevalence of exposure, and posttraumatic stress symptoms. School Mental Health, 8(1), 77-88. doi:10.1007/s12310-015-9167-7.

[56] Woodbridge, M. W., Sumi, W. C., Thornton, S. P., Fabrikant, N., Rouspil, K. M., Langley, A. K., & Kataoka, S. H. (2015). Screening for trauma in early adolescence: Findings from a diverse school district. School Mental Health. , 8(1), 89-105. doi:10.1007/s12310-015-9169-5.

[57] Dane County Youth Assessment Overview Report (2015). Dane County Youth Commission. Retrieved from https://danecountyhumanservices.org/yth/dox/asmt_survey/2015/2015_exec_sum.pdf.

[58] Suldo, S. M., Gormley, M. J., DuPaul, G. J., & Anderson-Butcher, D. (2014). The impact of school mental health on student and school-level academic outcomes: Current status of the research and future directions. School Mental Health, 6(2), 84-98.

[59] Bruhn, A. L., Woods-Groves, S., & Huddle, S. (2014). A preliminary investigation of emotional and behavioral screening practices in K–12 schools. Education and Treatment of Children, 37(4), 611-634.

[60] Woodbridge, M. W., Sumi, W. C., Thornton, S. P., Fabrikant, N., Rouspil, K. M., Langley, A. K., & Kataoka, S. H. (2015). Screening for trauma in early adolescence: Findings from a diverse school district. School Mental Health. , 8(1), 89-105. doi:10.1007/s12310-015-9169-5.

[61] Gonzalez, A., Monzon, N., Solis, D., Jaycox, L., & Langley, A. K. (2015). Trauma exposure in elementary school children: Description of screening procedures, prevalence of exposure, and posttraumatic stress symptoms. School Mental Health, 8(1), 77-88. doi:10.1007/s12310-015-9167-7.

[62] Overstreet, S., & Chafouleas, S. M. (2016). Trauma-informed schools: Introduction to the special issue. School Mental Health, 8(1), 1-6.

[63] Wisconsin Department of Health Services. (2013). Retrieved from www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/tic

[64] Overstreet, S., & Chafouleas, S. M. (2016). Trauma-informed schools: Introduction to the special issue. School Mental Health, 8(1), 3.

barriers of cost and transportation[65] treatment and is a proven method for addressing the mental health needs of students, both in individual and in group settings.[66] One study examined student outcomes after community mental health clinicians were placed on-site in schools. It found students who received mental health services saw decreased suspensions, improved attendance, and demonstrated significant improvements on how teachers and parents rated the students for social-emotional skills.[67]

> *"I suffered from mild depression my senior year at East High School, but was still functional and able to earn a full tuition scholarship. In my first two years of college, it got worse. My advisor told me she had been through something similar and encouraged me to use a free service through the counseling psychology department, offered to students in the Division of Diversity Equity, and Educational Achievement. Without that push from an advisor, I never would have felt confident enough to seek help or share something like this with a group of people I never met."* –Junior, UW Madison

4. Foster connectedness, sense of belonging, leadership, and academic success with Opportunity Youth (disconnected or at risk of disconnecting)

Engagement and academic achievement go hand-in-hand. Young people's school experience, including students' relationships with adults, feelings of safety, supportive environments, and connections to peers, coupled with high expectations for learning, all contribute to students' sense of belonging at school and in the community.[68] Opportunities for leadership are key to developing motivated students and citizens. When students have the chance to develop and practice leadership, remarkable results can occur. Many youth organizations are led by low-income youth and young people of color exercising their voices and agency to change institutions and policies that impose barriers for their development.[69]

For students at the margins, this engagement is critical. Many of the organizations in Dane County that most successfully serve Opportunity Youth develop leadership and agency.

In 2018, we will conduct additional research with local experts and specialists in this field. We anticipate convening student services specialists, law enforcement officials, juvenile justice experts, experts in runaway youth service, behavioral health providers, AODA specialists, parents, and others. We will examine the systems that serve youth who have

[65] Brunjes, Eadie, Hill, Frost, Kantachote, Anam, (2013). Cost Benefit Analysis of Providing Access to Healing (PATH) Program. Prepared for United Way Fox Cities. Retrieved from: https://www.unitedwayfoxcities.org/our-work/united-ways-path-for-students/

[66] Whiston & Quinby, 2009 NEED CITATION

[67] Ballard, K. L., Sander, M. A., & Klimes-Dougan, B. (2014). School-related and social–emotional outcomes of providing mental health services in schools. Community mental health journal, 50(2), 145-149.

[68] Gowing, A., & Jackson, A. C. (2016). Connecting to School: Exploring Student and Staff Understandings of Connectedness to School and the Factors Associated With This Process. The Educational and Developmental Psychologist, 33(01), 54-69.

[69] Ginwright, Cammarota & Noguera. (2005). Youth, Social Justice, and Communitites:Toward a Theory of Urban Youth Policy

acted out and wish to support their path back to graduation. Specific strategies will be determined. We anticipate we will:

      a. Give preference to programs that seek our investment that foster student connectedness, sense of belonging, leadership, agency, and academic success, particularly for Opportunity Youth.

      b. As funds are available, provide micro-investments to small organizations that do this work and target Opportunity Youth in communities of color.

5. Recognize family engagement as a key component to improve student success

All of our district partners recognize parent and family engagement as a key component to improving student outcomes. It is important that our strategies include parents and, in some cases, families, to support their children. Parent engagement requires an objective tied to learning in order to maximize the effectiveness of strategies focused on the mastery of content, social and emotional skills, or behavioral health. Recognizing the strong need for imbedded engagement, we will be do two things:

      a. Give preference to programs that seek our investment that show parent engagement activities and innovation and anticipated/actual results.

      b. As investment funds are available, provide micro-investments to small grass-roots organizations of parents who wish to develop capacity to engage other parents in their children's education and seek to drive activities or innovation in parent engagement.

IX.   Indicators of Impact

At United Way, we will continue to use our traditional research and practice-backed measures of academic success to ensure that our efforts are working for children in Dane County. Third grade reading -- and tenth grade algebra completion continue to be indicators of high school graduation our strategic goal. Additionally, post-secondary enrollment and degrees are indicators that support college and career readiness.

We seek to ensure that impact indicators are holistic and that the work of partner agencies outside of the academic realm do not go unnoticed. United Way's Healthy for Life agency partners continue to operate in schools and address youth mental health and trauma, measuring the impact that they have on children in our community.

Finally, we are exploring measures of social emotional learning and non-cognitive skills, looking at tools that not only measure growth, but also provide our agency partners with tools to enhance the impact that they already have on youth development. There is consensus among scholars and practitioners of youth development of the importance of social emotional learning and non-cognitive skills. There is not, however, a consensus on which tools are most effective in measuring either. United Way of Dane County will work with our partner agencies to determine which tools best measure impact in the most efficient and effective way.

X.   Ways of Working With Partner Agencies

Agency partners are critical to the work that we do collectively. Their experience with children and families gives them content expertise, which helps us understand the drivers of academic success. As we expand our areas of focus to encompass the whole student, we must acknowledge that our agency partners have holistically served youth for decades. Neighborhood based community centers, school based tutoring, college preparatory programs, mentoring organizations, and parental support agencies all do more than academics; they build, stand with, and advocate for children and families. We value their input and strive for a parallel, mutual relationship. As we broaden our areas of focus within Academic Success, it is important that we refine and deepen our understanding of the relationship between United Way and our partner agencies. The refinement process is not static. It is constantly reexamined. Below are guidelines for this relationship based on experience and feedback.

- **Reciprocal learning:** We commit to a relationship based on respect and curiosity from both sides. Agencies are the expert in their areas. Their staff has years—in many cases decades—of experience serving youth and families. We seek to ask questions, take notes, and continually refine our services based on feedback. Some questions include:
  - What are your best practices?
  - Who do you serve? How has this changed over time?
  - What challenges do you face? What have you learned from those challenges?
  - How does state and federal policy affect your work?
  - How does your work intersect with other institutions in your community?
  - What would you do in a world of unlimited resources?

  For the past two years, our community solutions team volunteers have committed to regularly visiting our partner organizations, meeting with executive directors, front line staff, students, and families and seeking to understand the work of the agency beyond traditional funding cycles. They ask questions and have critical conversations during and afterward, which ultimately inform priorities. Additionally, our volunteers are content experts in many areas, both research and practice based, and can work with organizations to strategize and problem solve. This experiential learning has enhanced United Way of Dane County in its work to address educational disparities and has the potential to strengthen non-profit agencies. We will continue to find ways to learn from our partners to inform our work and lend our skill sets when needed.

- **Create opportunities for capacity building and continuous improvement:** Our agencies operate under limited resources and often lack the time and the funds for professional development. We have committed in our relationship to provide resources for our agencies: training and recruitment of traditionally-underrepresented board members though our BoardWalk Academy and providing professional development for existing members through our board training programs that are cosponsored with the City of Madison and Dane County. We also provide resources and training for volunteer managers to enhance their skills to engage volunteers in effective and meaningful ways. We have provided organizational capacity building services in partnership with other community organizations. We commit to doing all that we can to support our partner agencies, their executive teams, program managers, front line staff, and boards.

- **Set aside investments for developing and grassroots organizations:** Our established agency partners do amazing work, and we are proud to continue to invest in them. Equally important are organizations and faith communities that are not in our pipelines, but have capacities needed to achieve better results. They may be small and have limited staff or space, address a new or unmet need in the community, or do work that is not eligible for traditional streams of funding.

XI. Conclusion

In partnership with our community, we have witnessed results in decreasing the educational achievement gap and increasing graduation rates in Dane County. We will continue this work, while looking holistically at our students and preparing them for life beyond a high school diploma. We have gained new insight into the drivers of student success—with research and community input we have developed this plan-- providing an opportunity to serve more students in a more holistic way. We will work with our partners to serve the entire student, equipping those who struggle with academic, non cognitive, and social emotional skills. Moreover, we will support and empower families and rely on partners that can meet students' social/emotionl and behavioral health needs. We will hone our attention on students with the highest levels of need; early elementary, sixth and ninth grade transition, and opportunity youth. Finally, we will strengthen our relationship with our partner agencies, working toward a reciprocal learning environment. Doing this work collaboratively will lead us to our Agenda for Change goal; stabilizing families and moving families on pathways out of poverty.

XII. Strategies at a glance

High level strategy	Current Initiatives	Programs and activities in which we'll invest	With outcomes in	For priority populations
1. **Facilitate access to additional learning opportunities across settings to enhance students' mastery of academic content**	• Schools of Hope –-Elementary • Schools of Hope—Middle School • Achievement Connections—High School	• Tutoring • Out of School time programs that support academics	• 4th grade reading • 6th grade math • Middle school literacy • Algebra completion	• Elementary students struggling in reading/literacy • Middle School students struggling in math/literacy
2. **Build students' social/emotional and non-cognitive skills**		• Screeners or assessments • Mentoring • Group approaches in skill-building	• Social/emotional and non-cognitive skills	• 9th grade students at risk of not completing algebra
3. **Ensure students' behavioral health and wellness**	• FACE-Kids • Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Treatment in Schools	• Treatment in schools • Treatment in out-of-school programs with families • Group approaches	• Behavioral health • Trauma treatment • Anger, anxiety, and depression	• Universal screening for 6th graders and treatment when warranted • Students K-12 struggling with anger, anxiety, and depression
4. **Foster connectedness, sense of belonging, academic success with Opportunity Youth**		• Same as above and others to be determined	• Credit attainment • Graduation	• Opportunity Youth (Disconnecting or disconnected youth--truant, credit deficient, in the juvenile justice system, helping to support family economic obligations)
5. **Parent engagement**		1. Engagement imbedded in any programs outlined above 2. Micro-investments will be available for small grass-roots organizations that wish to build capacity in communities of color		

Target Populations Summarized

Grade level	Target population	Scale of population in Dane County	Strategies	The "why"?
<u>Elementary</u> (focus on K-3rd grade)	• Students struggling with literacy • Their parents/ guardians	On the 2016 Forward Exam, 2,746 3rd grade students scored "below proficiency" in literacy. With our focus on tutoring K-3, we estimate <u>10,984 K-3 students in Dane County need literacy support</u>.	• Academic Support with a focus on literacy • Family engagement	• Proficiency in reading by 3rd grade is key for learning in 4th grade and beyond. • Understanding how to navigate school system, provide literacy support, be empowered to advocate. • Parents want to understand how to support their children's learning.
<u>Middle</u> (focus on 6th grade)	• Students struggling with math and literacy • Their parents/ guardians	On the 2016 Forward Exam • 2,263 6th graders are "below proficiency" in literacy • 2,211 6th graders are "below proficiency" in math	• Academic support in math and literacy • Social emotional and non cognitive skills • Behavioral health identification and treatment in school (6th grade) • Family engagement	• Algebra foundations are learned in middle school. • Middle school is next greatest growth of social and emotional learning. • 6th grade is an ideal time to identify anger, anxiety, and depression, particularly when trauma may be the root cause, • Parents want to help their children through these transition years.
<u>High</u> (focus on 9th grade)	• Students struggling with algebra • Their families • Disconnected youth (truant, undercredited, in the juvenile justice system, helping support family economic obligations	On the 2016 Forward Exam • 2,757 8th graders are "below proficiency" in math, and will likely need algebra support in 9th grade 500-600 students drop out of high school, and do not graduate with their cohort in 4 years, although about 200 more were able to graduate within 6 years.	• Academic support in algebra • Social emotional learning and non cognitive skills • Behavioral health support • Family engagement	• Algebra is most likely class to fail in high school, and is a key to graduation. • Life's issues can prevent some young people from graduation, preventing them from post-secondary education and 21st century careers. • Students begin to push away parents, They are needed just as much, but in different ways with new strategies. High school can be difficult for parents, too.

Appendix A

Dane County School Districts with United Way of Dane County Signature Initiatives in the 2017-2018 Academic Year

Program*	School District												
	Madison Metropolitan School District	Sun Prairie Area School District	Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District	Oregon School District	Monona Grove School District	Deerfield Community School District	Verona Area School District	Marshall Public Schools	School District of Cambridge	McFarland School District	Waunakee Community School District	DeForest Area School District	Mt. Horeb Area School District
Elementary Schools of Hope	X	X											
Middle Schools of Hope	X	X		X									
Achievement Connections	X		X										
Summer Reading programs	X	X	X										
CBITS (Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools)	X	X	X	X									
FACE Kids (Five+ Agency Collaborative Effort)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X**

*School-based, Signature Initiatives only- many other funded programs also benefit students in these districts

**Catholic Charities received funding from SSM to build off FACE Kids to do suicide prevention groups in Mt. Horeb

Community Volunteers

Jennifer Cheatham, Chair
Superintendent
Madison Metropolitan School District

Derrell Connor, Vice Chair
Benefits Advisor
Hemb Insurance Group, LLC

Connie Bettin, LCSW
PASS AmeriCorps Director/
Children, Youth and Families Prevention
Manager
Dane County Human Services

Sal Carranza, Past Chair
Senior Institutional Planner
University of Wisconsin System

E. Deon Carruthers
Community Development Specialist
City of Madison

Allison Cooley
Founder and CEO
Effectability LLC

Sherri Cyra
Assistant Superintendent
Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District

Jessica Hankey
Director, Strategic Partnerships & Innovation
Madison Metropolitan School District

Donna Hurd
Director of Administration
Perkins Coie LLP

Reginald D. McGee
Principal
Cardinal Heights Upper Middle School
Sun Prairie Area School District

Jim Moeser (retired)
Deputy Director
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families

Joe Oswald
Community Leader

WI Laborers District Council, Retired

John Wedge
Director
WEAC/NEA Region 6

Krissy Wick
Director of Public Service
Madison Public Library

Agency Representatives

Karen Menéndez Coller
Executive Director
Centro Hispano

Sandy Morales
CEO
Big Brothers Big Sisters

Guest Facilitators

Zachary Herrmann
Special Assistant to the Superintendent
Madison Metropolitan School District

Annalee Good
Director of the WCER Evaluation Clinic
Co-director of the Wisconsin Evaluation
Collaborative
Wisconsin Center for Education Research
University of Wisconsin-Madison

United Way of Dane County Staff

Joe Maldonado
Director of Community Impact, Academic
Success

Alyssa Ignaczak
Assistant Director of Strategic Collaborations

Carli Wilke
Development Director

Kelly Abrams
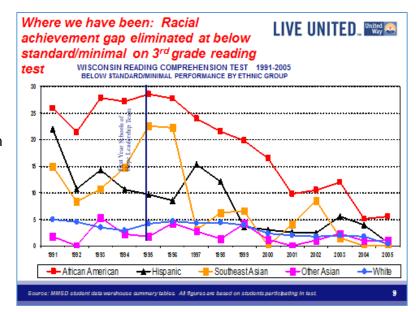Assistant Director of Data, Research and
Evaluation

Deedra Atkinson
EVP Community Impact and Strategy

History of United Way's Academic Success Initiatives

1. **Tutoring**
   Since 1998, nearly **75,000 students have received 1:1 – 1:3 tutoring** in math and/or literacy through Elementary Schools of Hope, Middle Schools of Hope, and Achievement Connections, including over 56,000 elementary school students, 15,000 middle school students, and 2,700 high school students (numbers are duplicated). Additionally, these programs leveraged over **21,500** community volunteer tutors who provide coaching and additional practice time in reading and math. Below are highlights from 2015-2016 results, the most recent year for which data is available.

- *Elementary Schools of Hope:* In Madison in 2015-2016, 51% of K-2 students met their literacy targets; 62% met their MAP Reading Fall-Spring Growth targets. In every grade level, ESOH students demonstrated greater growth than a demographically similar group.

- *Middle Schools of Hope*: In 2015-16, 53% of Madison middle school students met or exceeded their Math Fall-Spring Growth target and 57% met or exceeded their MAP Reading Fall-Spring Growth targets. In Sun Prairie, students experienced an average 56 point growth in the Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading; a growth over 50 points is considered more than a year's worth of growth.

- *High School Achievement Connections*: The evaluation for 2015-16 found statistically- significant positive correlations between the number of mathematics objectives students mastered and higher math GPA among students, as well as improved student engagement for program participants.
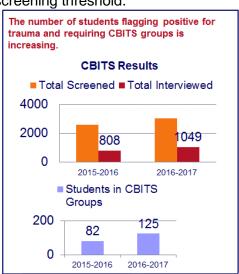
   A 2015-2016 survey conducted by the Madison Metropolitan School District found overwhelmingly-positive support of all three Signature Tutoring Initiatives from staff and student participants.
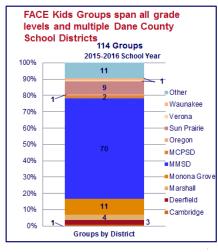
2. **Chronic absenteeism**
   In tackling the issue of attendance, the United Way of Dane County in partnership with MMSD and the City of Madison launched the **HERE! Every Student Every Day Initiative** in 2012. In 2014, United Way allocated $36,000 in one-time funding for eight different community-school partnerships addressing chronic absenteeism. Through our efforts we learned that attendance is an indicator of other issues, such as family and individual engagement. Thus, to improve attendance, we must address these root causes. These initiatives have moved to a school-based focus.

3. **Behavioral Health**
   a. The *Five+ Agency Collaborative Effort for Kids* program (*FACE-Kids*) is a collaboration of seven community-based mental health providers who pool staff resources and expertise to provide accessible group counseling in schools. Since 2006, nearly 6,000 students have participated in a FACE-Kids group. In 2016 alone, 876 students with behavioral health needs increased their understanding of how to manage and cope with their problems by participating in 114 school-based FACE Kids groups held in schools across Dane County.

   b. The *Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools* program (*CBITS*) has screened over 24,000 Dane County 6th graders for anxiety and depression resulting from extreme stress or exposure to violence or other significant traumatic events. The initiative provides treatment in school for the student along with parent and teacher involvement. A recent evaluation found more than 59% of CBITS participants in the Madison Metropolitan School District lowered their PTSD scores after the 10-week intervention, and 25% lowered their score below the 14 point screening threshold.

4. **Summer reading loss**

   In 2014, United Way of Dane County, the Madison Metropolitan School District, and the Madison Public Library launched the *Read Up* program to prevent the summer slide in reading loss. Since then, Read Up has served over 1,200 Madison students, the majority of whom came from low-income households (numbers are not unduplicated); 75% of these students maintained or increased their reading levels over the summer months, an impressive feat considering we would typically see a decrease in reading levels for this demographic group. In addition, United Way launched summer reading initiatives in the Sun Prairie Area School District and the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District in 2016, serving an additional 130 students.

5. We also created community-based Leadership Teams in each district to guide these strategies appropriately for each district, which set their own goals, contributed resources, and engaged the local community.