

The Central Indiana Collaborative Overview Brief for the Grad Nation Action Forum September 2009

Collaborative Overview

The Central Indiana Collaborative first formed in August 2008 upon receipt of its America's Promise Alliance Dropout Prevention Summit grant and was subsequently strengthened at the APA Featured Community Action Forum in September 2008, where 12 Summit grantee cities were identified as target communities for increased Alliance support. The Collaborative is taking a comprehensive approach to improving outcomes for youth by focusing not just on high school graduation and academic supports, but also on supporting the social and emotional needs of young people as well, so that they are fully prepared to become healthy, thriving adults.

Structure & Governance

- The Marion County Commission on Youth is the lead convener of the Collaborative.
- The Collaborative is currently meeting on approximately a monthly basis.
- The Collaborative works in tandem with MCCOY staff and the Ready by 21 Quality Counts Steering Committee.

About Our Work

The Central Indiana Collaborative's strategic goal:

- The overall goal of the Collaborative is to ensure all youth in the Central Indiana community have the supports they need to achieve academic and life success.
- The graduation goal of the Collaborative is to raise the graduation rate from 67% to 85% over the next five years and to decrease Central Indiana's dropout rate by 50% in the same time frame.

The focus areas for our work include:

- The sectors and entities involved in the Central Indiana Collaborative will create a unified vision and action plan for improving outcomes for youth by aligning and coordinating all of the key efforts currently underway in the region.
- The Collaborative seeks to increase the capacity to better serve young people by improving the systems and policies that drive the programs that serve them.

Key initiatives and programs:

- Central Indiana's Summit for Student Success took place on August 10, 2009. One of the Summit's main focus areas was bringing together the multiple sectors and asking them each to commit to the important goal of ensuring all of Central Indiana's young people are ready for college, work and life.
- Parent Engagement Summit: Indianapolis is one of seven cities receiving support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation (through APA) to host a parent engagement summit. That summit was held on June 6, 2009 and was attended by 30 parents and parent advocates. Topics included how parents can help their children maintain high

attendance rates, track yearly achievement of academic goals, plan for future success, and develop ongoing communication between home and school.

- Community Compacts for Youth: Community Compacts have been created for every sector that the Collaborative holds accountable for working to improve outcomes for youth. We have currently developed twelve compacts and have 125 commitments as of August 18, 2009. The goal is to obtain 200 signed compacts from every sector by December 31, 2009.
- Ready by 21 Quality Counts Initiative: This initiative is focused on improving the quality and reach of youth programs and strengthening local policies that guide resource allocation, accountability, and workforce development.

Resources Needed to Bring Our Work to Scale

- Staff: Having a full-time staff member focused exclusively on this work would move the effort forward more effectively and efficiently.
- Volunteers: We have been fortunate to have a tremendous number of organizations, agencies, and individuals who have contributed countless hours to the summit planning and implementation. As we develop post summit plans, many have committed to continuing their involvement. With staff support, we could grow our volunteer pool in many areas by recruiting key partners in various sectors (business, neighborhoods, or faith communities, as examples) of the community to be champions and advocates within their sectors for the work. Volunteers with specific skills—media relations and marketing come immediately to mind—would give our movement even greater power and impact.
- Informational Resources: Aligning policy and funding streams will be key for our ongoing success. Collaborative fundraising will be critically important for implementation. Information on these two topic areas would be an immense resource and give credibility to this effort in many sectors of the community.
- Other Resources: Tapping into local connections who are national America's Promise Alliance partners would be an asset to our work.

Questions & Challenges for Consideration

1. What are some strategies for engaging schools as partners in this work so that they recognize and accept what the community can bring to improve conditions for learning rather than becoming defensive?
2. How can we do a better job of engaging small businesses and corporations? What are some in-kind resources they can bring to the table?
3. Do you have some suggestions for building cross-sector trust that will ease folks' concerns about working together?

4. What are the data points that businesses, foundations, and community leaders need to convince leadership to become involved?
5. How do we tap into neighborhood leadership and the natural helpers that can impact the lives of children and youth?
6. We want to do a better job of reaching outside the “usual suspects;” how do we both identify and engage arts organizations, faith-based organizations, labor, seniors, etc.? We want everybody in the community to recognize that they have a meaningful role in student success.
7. We would like to identify measurable outcomes and indicators besides grades to identify progress toward success for young people. Have any ideas?
8. Youth engagement is a key strategy for success; we would like to do a better job of bringing youth voice and action to the table and would appreciate any guidance and suggestions.
9. Parent engagement and empowerment is another critically important component. What strategies and methods have you seen that help parents carry out their primary role as educators?

Appendix A: Central Indiana Collaborative Member List

Convener: John Brandon, Marion County Commission on Youth, Inc.

Member Organizations:

American Academy of Pediatrics
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Indiana
Boys & Girls Clubs of Indianapolis
Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce
Indiana Afterschool Network and Afterschool Coalition of Indianapolis
Indiana State Farm
IUPUI (Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis) Office of External Affairs
Indianapolis Urban League
Indianapolis Public Schools
Indianapolis Public Schools – Bridges to Success
Jewish Community Center – Indianapolis
Lumina Foundation
Net Literacy
Indiana Partnerships Center
United Way of Central Indiana

Appendix B: Demographics & Statistics

Indianapolis Public Schools

- Approximately 80 schools and 36,957 students (2006-07)ⁱ
- Ethnic distribution: 58% African American, 25% Caucasian, 12% Hispanic, 5% Multi-Racial
- Students enrolled in special education: 17%
- Students with limited English proficiency: 9%
- Students receiving free or reduced lunch rates: 82%
- Graduation rate: 30.5% in 2004-05ⁱⁱ (47.2% in 2008 according to the Indiana Department of Educationⁱⁱⁱ)

Graduation Rates for All Other Non-Charter School Districts in Marion County, IN^{iv}

- Beech Grove Community Schools: 66.3%
- MSD of Decatur Township: 71%
- Franklin Township Community School Corporation: 81.1%
- MSD of Lawrence Township: 79.2%
- MSD of Perry Township: 78.5%
- MSD of Pike Township: 74.3%
- School Town of Speedway: 86.3%
- MSD of Washington Township: 85.6%
- MSD of Warren Township: 66.7%
- MSD of Wayne Township: 70%

ⁱ Indianapolis Public Schools Website, "About IPS," <http://www.about.ips.k12.in.us/index.php?id=3058>

ⁱⁱ Swanson, Christopher B., *Cities in Crisis 2009: Closing the Graduation Gap* (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center)

ⁱⁱⁱ Indiana Department of Education Website, "Indiana K-12 Education Data," <http://www.doe.in.gov/data/>

^{iv} The Indiana Department of Education's 2008 cited rates are used for this section.