

# Board Goals and Strategies

Year-End Report August 2016

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Goal Area 1: Guide the launch and development of the Cradle-to-Career Collaborative in order to ensure coordinated and aligned efforts from birth through college and career.

*1.a. Develop and begin to utilize a sustainable governance and funding model for coordination of the cradle to career efforts.*

The transition cradle to career work team met monthly throughout the school year to meet the deliverables for the coordinated funding 2015-16 MOU, as well as formally launch this community, cross sector collaborative. In partnership with the MSU ABLc Change team, a group of local leaders received training on the action learning model. Additionally, the cradle to career collaborative was launched in mid-April and participants generated six 100 day action learning teams and created the beginnings of a community framework. All six action teams are grounded in this framework with an overarching theme of parent engagement. The six priority indicators guide the work of the Cradle to Career Collaboration (**see Appendix A**).

A community celebration is scheduled for August 25<sup>th</sup>, and we anticipate most of this work continuing beyond the initial 100 days.

The council of community investors also met in early June to review the framework, make formal commitments to the collaborative, and discuss funding. Washtenaw Community College has designated funds, as well as the community coordinated funding partners. Conversations have begun with additional key institutions, such as EMU. The leadership teams for Success By 6/Great Start Collaborative, Washtenaw Alliance for Children and Youth, and Washtenaw Futures are all reviewing the framework, and we are exploring the option of working with MSU to redefine our current structures to examine efficiencies. WISD has submitted a funding request to the coordinated funders to serve as the sector leaders, data and research, convener and expert for early childhood and school age youth sectors. We anticipate to be offered a MOU for the 2016-17 fiscal year to primarily support staffing costs.

*1.b. Identify data that measures early childhood learning outcomes and propose a model data system to hold the data that bridges preschool data to the K-12 system in a longitudinal format.*

With the adoption of the Illuminate data warehouse system by most LEA's in both Washtenaw and Livingston, a team of Early Childhood and Achievement Initiative staff members from both ISDs began meeting in the spring to discuss how to store critical pre-kindergarten and other early childhood student outcome data. The purpose is to ensure that the considerable amount of child outcome data that is collected in Head Start and GSRP classrooms can be made available to elementary staff to guide instruction and to track the longer-term academic performance of students after the transition to the elementary grades. Illuminate is a secure web-based data warehouse designed to collect and report evidence of student performance through the accumulation of assessment data. Educators can access and build performance reports on students based on the assessment data collected over time. The WISD/LESA team has reviewed the demographic data collected in the ChildPlus student data management system as well as the child outcome data collected in the Teaching Strategies GOLD and High Scope COR child outcome assessments. Currently, Teaching Strategies GOLD and High Scope COR are the only comprehensive child

assessment tools utilized by the Head Start and GSRP programs within Washtenaw and Livingston counties. The team has also engaged with other ISDs who utilize or are adopting Illuminate. Illuminate is scheduled to release a container tool in August that is designed to perform a complete upload of Teaching Strategies GOLD data into Illuminate for student groups.

This fall, the WISD/LESA team plans to pilot the collection of Teaching Strategies GOLD data for a specific cohort of children. LEAs purchase the use of the Illuminate data warehouse on an annual price per child basis. There is still one outstanding issue to resolve: when entering preschool child outcome data, for children prior to kindergarten entry, it creates addition costs. Washtenaw ISD is also working with Ann Arbor Public Schools to ensure that student Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) data collected on participating kindergarteners, as part of the MAISA/WISD pilot this fall, will be transferred to the Illuminate data warehouse.

*1.c. Improve attendance and graduation rates through community and school partnerships that focus on understanding the root causes for chronic absence and building systems to track and manage truancy at the county level.*

Over 70 cases of chronic absenteeism were supported during the pilot year serving the following communities: Ann Arbor, Dexter, Lincoln, Manchester, Whitmore Lake, Ypsilanti, several public school academies, and WEOC. Through this case management process, relationships were built with Washtenaw County Juvenile Trial Court, Department of Health and Human Services, Community Mental Health, and various non-profits. A case study model was shared with members of the School Justice Partnership to highlight both successes and challenges in an attempt to garner systems change with key community leaders. From this, meetings were held with the county prosecutor to explore additional support through the court system. A work team will be meeting over the summer to generate a more formal report of year 1, as well as edit and modify the data portal based on lessons learned from year 1. An overview session of a free early warning system embedded into PowerSchool (in partnership with Macomb ISD) was conducted with all school districts and each community is at various stages of setup and implementation.

A team from Michigan State University (Hejnal, Maring, McDowell, Rencher & Tafelski, 2016) researched both quantitative and qualitative data for middle school students in our county. A formal presentation to the School Justice Partnership group occurred in May. Six key findings were concluded.

1. The majority of individual attendance challenges are unique to individual students and their families.
2. Students who experience anxiety seem particularly unmotivated to attend school more frequently.
3. Some students attribute academic success within schools to innate ability, and not effort and hard work.
4. Students perceive that their attendance in school does not impact their future goals.
5. Practitioners within these schools have a deficit-based understanding of student risk factors and the multiple challenges of home environment that contribute to chronic absenteeism.
6. Some schools have systems in place for notifying the parents/guardians of absent students via phone calls, letters, and parent conferences.

A series of recommendations was proposed by MSU. The team structured their organizational response to the epidemic of chronic absenteeism as a shift from a school-wide universal reactionary policy to proactive protocols that address the individual student systematically (catalyze a shift in mindset). They separated strategy and tactics to provide rationale to support implementation methods. The four recommendations are summarized below.

1. Reconfigure school wide systems (organizational)
  - a. Adopt truancy and chronic absenteeism intervention model
  - b. Integrate surplus thinking into school culture
  - c. Monitor positive intervention supports for attendance
2. Implement proactive progressive controls (individual)
  - a. Develop personalized early response protocols
  - b. Change compliance behaviors to improvement behaviors for staff
  - c. Monitor effectiveness of interventions
3. Implement programmatic supports (organizational)
  - a. Adjust scheduling for extenuating circumstances

- b. Assign attendance mentors
  - c. Add supplemental courses that build upon social skills
4. Establish student evaluation protocol (individual)
- a. Review attendance records and engage parents early
  - b. Know the whole child/youth
  - c. Assess student engagement through goals and self-concept

The researchers have offered to work with our school teams to share their research and provide technical support and guidance to help local leaders explore components of their framework to implement. Several of the researchers have piloted many of these recommendations in their own schools so they can offer action learning suggestions. This was a tremendous opportunity to benefit from their research efforts and we will create a plan for next steps to influence our work locally.

*1.d. Support, as part of a community collaborative, the Washtenaw County My Brother's Keeper Initiative to implement a coherent cradle-to-college-and-career strategy for improving the life outcomes of all young people to ensure that they can reach their full potential, regardless of who they are, where they come from, or the circumstances into which they are born.*

Washtenaw ISD participated on the steering committee of the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) initiative and worked in close partnership with Dr. Ronald Woods, Executive Director of Washtenaw County MBK and professor at Eastern Michigan University. An initial summit took place in October with more than 200 participants from the community. Washtenaw ISD team members facilitated conversations around the six milestones. Subsequent to the summit, members of the WISD team engaged in the policy review process, completed at the end of December 2015.

In January, the MBK partnership convened a session with students in conjunction with Eastern Michigan University's MLK Jr. Day Celebration. Action plans have not been finalized, but members of the MBK leadership participated in the training offered through the Cradle to Career Collaborative. The training focused on 100-day challenges, designed to identify root causes of specific areas of focus and implement small but measurable changes. Washtenaw ISD and EMU committed to funding, in partnership with the Michigan Community Service Commission, two Vista Volunteers dedicated to supporting the MBK work in Washtenaw County. Initial training for the volunteers took place in the third week of June, and they will also engage in the MBK component of the June 27<sup>th</sup> Points of Light conference in Detroit. During the summer, WISD will work with the MBK Executive Director and the Vista Volunteers to map out next steps. The focus is identifying ways to embed the initiative within the larger Cradle-to-Career framing to ensure sustainability without losing specific focus on young boys and men of color.

Interwoven in this work is Washtenaw Futures, an initiative that strives to make college an achievable reality for all students in Washtenaw County, with emphasis on supporting low-income youth, youth of color, and youth who will be the first in their families to pursue college. Currently, there are 10 Washtenaw County high schools plugged into the program and there has been an increase in the number of students filling out college applications (**See Appendix B**).

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Goal Area 2: Lead efforts to address digital convergence in Washtenaw County, ensuring that we are positioned to utilize technology to enhance and advance educational opportunities and outcomes for students.

*2.a. Develop, in partnership with the local districts, a strategic approach to incorporating technology in teaching, learning, and school management systems.*

Six of our districts (Chelsea, Dexter, Manchester, Milan, Saline, Whitmore Lake) worked with Modern Teacher, a national educational and digital convergence company. They participated in visioning work around shifting to a

more project-based, technology-rich, instructionally-sound approach to teaching and learning. The districts also looked at the many technical systems that have to work in concert for this kind of instruction to occur. Two of the districts have decided to continue these efforts next year by moving from the district-level visioning work to the classroom-level instructional work. Washtenaw ISD instructional staff participated in the district visioning work and is well-versed in the approach. Because the district-level visioning work took the entire winter and spring, development of the teacher-level network was shifted from the spring to the fall of 2016.

In addition to the Modern Teacher visioning work, we contracted with McREL International to develop a process for identifying a common instructional framework that incorporates all our existing network models and articulates how they are connected. All 14 districts in Washtenaw and Livingston Counties are engaged in the instructional framing work. McREL facilitated three regional meetings, providing extensive resources, behind-the-scenes support, and framework development.

### *2.b. Review of technology infrastructure and capacity related to emerging opportunities.*

As part of the investigation into the capacity of the countywide infrastructure, the county technology directors met on April 29, 2016, with the purpose to explore various options for shared internet services models. The meeting was facilitated by a Modern Teacher representative. The team viewed various options and generated additional questions on the models presented for consideration. The goal is to provide recommendations to the superintendents on possible cost-sharing models. The group determined that the network could not be considered in isolation. The services that we access over the network need to also be considered.

The complexity of the interdependency of services and the network is essential to understanding the overall cost. The Technology Department will continue to review and recommend the cost of the primary services provided by the ISD. This process is underway, and recommendations on how to reduce costs of these services are being examined over the course of the next six months. The research team will continue to explore a long-term model for providing cost-reducing technology services for the ISD, while providing a high level of service to the local districts. Services will be reviewed to gain a deeper understanding of ISD offerings and impacts on schools. The 2016-17 budget will remain the same with any recommendations being implemented in the 2017-18 budget year.

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**Goal Area 3: Increase investments in education in order to ensure all students have access to high quality educational opportunities and supports, with specific focus on achieving an equitable system for students in poverty, students with disabilities and students of color.**

### *3.a. Organize and collaborate with local districts to ensure stakeholders are well educated about a county Special Education Millage and programs.*

The groundwork for a Special Education millage increase campaign was laid in the fall of 2015, following the pledged support of countywide school boards, superintendents, and stakeholders. This process was solidified through resolutions passed by local boards of education in December 2015 and January 2016. The WISD Board of Education passed a resolution on January 27, 2016 to place the request for a 1.5 mill increase on the May 3, 2016 ballot. The resolution was filed with the Washtenaw County Clerk and the WISD staff launched an information campaign that consisted of:

- Developing a timeline/strategy for implementing the campaign
- Identifying students to highlight during the campaign
- Producing print and electronic materials to provide facts related to the ballot question (social media, traditional advertising, flyers, posters, Let's Talk website feedback tool)
- Hosting public informational meetings and making presentations to various employee and civic groups



- Scheduling meetings (almost weekly) with the local districts to assist with their information campaigns and to maintain a pulse on public sentiment towards the millage question

Many volunteers, board members, and staff contributed toward the effort to engage voters. The final outcome was 59.09% of the voters approved the Special Education Millage increase.

Moving forward, district leadership will work together to allocate millage dollars through the funding distribution formula. There will also be discussions in the upcoming year to plan for the 2017 millage renewal campaign.

*3.b. Investigate and develop models for revenue generation to sustain high quality programing and address emerging needs and opportunities within Washtenaw County—all with a focus on advancing our commitment to the continuous improvement of achievement for every student while providing high quality service to our customers.*

The WISD administrative team continues to look for opportunities to generate revenue to sustain our high quality programs and to assist districts with emerging needs.

This year, revenue generation opportunities have arisen primarily in the Achievement Initiatives and Technology Departments:

- The Achievement Initiatives (AI) Department worked with other Math/Science Center regions to secure the services of the WISD Math Coordinator to represent them at statewide meetings/trainings, for a fee.
- The AI Department maximized existing and new grants to fund staff within the department.
- The AI Department developed a shared staffing arrangement with Lincoln to provide curriculum director services and professional development services for the district for two years.
- The AI Department also secured a contract with the State School Reform/Redesign Office regarding priority school data collection and storage. This contract will fund a portion of AI and Technology staff time.
- The Technology Department finalized contracts with Lincoln and Ypsilanti to provide technology staff to both districts. The contracts provided savings to each district while also utilizing a portion of WISD technology staff time to provide some services to the districts. They have also been having more recent discussions with Whitmore Lake regarding cooperative services we can provide to them.
- The Technology Department also entered into an agreement with the Statewide Educational Network to provide wide area network coordination and expertise to the organization.
- The Technology Department is currently discussing the services we provide to our local districts with their technology directors, including costing out the various services so there is clarity regarding the value provided.