Dubuque Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
Year One Progress: 2012-2013
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In July 2012, Dubuque’s Grade-Level Reading Campaign, made up of dozens of community partners including schools, nonprofits, higher education, business, government and philanthropy, was recognized by the National Civic League with the All-America City Award for its 3rd Grade Reading Community Solutions Action Plan (CSAP).

In September 2012, the CSAP was also selected as a Together for Tomorrow Challenge winner for the 2012-13 school year by the U.S. Department of Education and the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Since then, the Dubuque team has shifted to implementing the plan through a collective impact approach. The focus of the Campaign partners has been to organize our efforts around pilot programs in each focus area. This move to action and shared learning has informed our work and provided early wins to build momentum and engagement while establishing the groundwork for sustainable, system-level impacts on 3rd grade reading. Partnerships continue to flourish in each of the focus areas and, while it is early in our work, our progress is exciting.

BUILDING CAMPAIGN CAPACITY

Committed and engaged partners have adopted a collective impact approach to collaboration in meeting a set of common Campaign objectives. Acting as the backbone organization, Every Child/Every Promise facilitated continuous communication among Campaign partners who have agreed to shared measurement of outcomes and are implementing mutually reinforcing activities.

To facilitate collaboration, information sharing and Campaign activities, VISTA members are working as a part of an exciting collaboration between the City of Dubuque and the Dubuque Community Schools. The city and schools partnered on the application and split the cost of the VISTAs who are serving to support each of the three focus areas: School Attendance, Summer Learning and School Readiness.
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Dubuque's Vision: Attendance is a community priority of parents, students, nonprofits, business partners and schools, with no students missing more than 10% of school each year.

Progress Update: Year One
A School Attendance Committee piloted multiple best practices in one of our most at-risk elementary schools during the 2012-13 school year. Working with Dubuque Community School District administrators and the building principal at Fulton Elementary School, the committee has taken the following actions:

- Implemented an intervention process that catches attendance issues early
- Received a grant from the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque to implement an attendance pilot program
- Tested best practice policies and programs that have proven successful in other schools and districts

What happened?
In the pilot school, attendance was better than the year prior. In fact, chronic absence was reduced from 7% to 2% and the number of students who attended 98% of the time went from 22% to 24%.

What's next?
The Attendance Committee is scaling the best practice policies and programs to roll out to all 13 elementary schools in the district. In addition, Dubuque Community Schools supported a strong attendance awareness campaign during the 2013-14 school year.
SUMMER LEARNING

Dubuque’s Vision: Change summertime focus from “keeping kids busy” to purposeful activities that foster skills including reading, math and science growth, and instill a love for life-long learning, healthy living, and connection to school.

Progress Update: Year One

A Summer Learning Committee implemented a pilot summer learning program this summer (2013) with support from a planning grant from the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque. The summer pilot, called Summer Academy, was led by St. Mark Youth Enrichment and supported by dozens of community partners. Summer Academy offered 47 at-risk students in 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades a seven-week, research-based, summer learning program.

The program included:
- Activity-based learning with a focus on reading
- Fun, enriched activities from 24 community-based organizations
- Best-practice- and research-based instruction by certified teachers
- A community-supported collaborative approach among schools, nonprofits and government partners
- Community volunteers, including community leaders, reading to children daily

What happened?

Approximately 84% of the students maintained or improved their reading proficiency. Community partners learned new ways to incorporate reading strategies into their programs. Students had fun and parents reported students reading regularly during the summer in many forms. Partners including St. Mark Youth Enrichment, Dubuque Community School District, Every Child/Every Promise, Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, City of Dubuque Leisure Services, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and Loras College worked together, learned and shared best practices.

What's next?

Data from the summer pilot was used to identify what worked and what didn't. The year one pilot will also inform a plan for replicating the summer learning program in future years. The development of a Summer Learning awareness campaign is being explored.
**SCHOOL READINESS**

**Dubuque’s Vision**: All young people in Dubuque are school ready through high quality early education in combination with additional supports to compensate for and overcome early disadvantages for higher achievement levels.

**Progress Update: Year One**

The Carnegie Stout Public Library launched the Bridge to Reading Dubuque Picture Book Award, which connects pre-schoolers to reading at an early age. Funding support from McGraw-Hill made the new program possible.

Meanwhile, to address a growing need for highly skilled people to work in preschools and daycare centers in our community, leaders from the Dubuque Community School District and Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) partnered to develop a new program that creates an affordable pathway for training opportunities for early childhood professionals.

High school juniors and seniors can now enroll in early childhood development classes that earn dual credit at NICC. NICC offers certificate training programs for preschool professionals and directors. Dubuque’s free four-year preschool, while at risk, continues to work for policy changes at the state level to ensure continued access and high participation.

**What happened?**

More than 100 students registered for the new pathway to early childhood development careers courses this fall.

The Bridge to Reading Dubuque Picture Book Award was recognized statewide and will be expanding to other communities in the future.

**What’s next?**

We continue advocating for universal four-year-old preschool policies that support a public/private approach like Dubuque’s model. We are working to expand access and build capacity in communities to provide universal four-year preschool for every child.
THANK YOU

On behalf of the Dubuque Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, we thank the Annie E Casey Foundation and the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading for providing a platform and technical support to our efforts.

We also thank the partners of the Dubuque Campaign for Grade-Level Reading for their passion, openness to innovation and willingness to partner. Taking the Community Solutions Action Plan from paper to action requires the work and dedication of many individuals and organizations. This summary shares the highlights of the first year; there are many more contributions that make up the successes of the first year of Dubuque’s Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. We call on others to join the Campaign, and honor our first-year partners below.

Alliant Energy
Boys and Girls of Greater Dubuque
Carnegie Stout Public Library
City of Dubuque
Clarke University
Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque
Crescent Community Health Center
Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce
Dubuque Community School District
Dubuque County Early Childhood
Dubuque Racing Association
Mystique Casino
Diamond Jo Casino

Every Child/Every Promise
Four Oaks: Parents as Teachers
Greater Dubuque Development Corporation
Holy Family Schools
Iowa State University Extension & Outreach
Loras College
Multicultural Family Center
Northeast Iowa Community College
Operation New View: Head Start
University of Dubuque
St. Mark Youth Enrichment

We’re proud of our progress but recognize there is still much to do before we achieve Dubuque’s Vision: at least 90% of our students in grades 3, 4, and 5 will be proficient in reading.

CONTACT INFORMATION

To get involved in Dubuque’s Campaign for Grade-Level Reading or for more information about volunteering or providing financial support contact:

Katie Foust
Every Child/Every Promise Coordinator
Katie@dbqfoundation.org
563-588-2700

Every Child/Every Promise
700 Locust Street, Suite 195
Dubuque, IA 52001
www.everychild-everypromise.org

Every Child/Every Promise works in strategic alliance with the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque.

www.dbqfoundation.org