

# Building Strategic Partnerships with School Districts

United Way of Erie County  
*Brian Polito and Mike Jaruszewicz*

#CSxFE24



**#CSxFE24 Atlanta, GA May 29 - 31**



<https://bit.ly/csxfe24>

# STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP S WITH SCHOOL

*How to Create a Shared  
Framework for Success*

CSxFE 2024

UNITED WAY  
**COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**



United Way of Erie County

# Participant Poll





**Brian Polito**  
Superintendent,  
Erie's Public Schools



**Mike Jaruszewicz**  
SVP of Community Impact  
United Way of Erie County

# CSXFE LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Participants will learn key elements for successful partnerships between community school backbone organizations and school districts.
- Participants will assess their own community school partnerships to identify opportunities for improvement.
- Participants will develop their own plan of action to improve their working relationships.

# SESSION OVERVIEW

Audience poll results

Background to Erie's  
Public Schools and  
United Way

Community Schools  
in Erie, PA

Key elements of the  
partnership

Q&A

# POLL RESULTS

- [2024 CSxFE - Building strategic partnerships with school districts \(office.com\)](#)



The background features a large dark blue rectangle on the left containing the word "BACKGROUND" in white. To the right, a large yellow chevron shape points right, overlapping a smaller light blue chevron. The top and bottom edges of the image are decorated with diagonal stripes in orange and light blue.

BACKGROUND

# ERIE'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- Urban
- 10,105 Students
- Economically Disadvantaged - 84%
- ELL - 9.5%
- Special Education - 22.3%
- Homeless - 2.9%
- Race/Ethnicity
  - American Indian/Alaskan Native - 0.3%
  - Asian - 5.1%
  - Black - 33.1%
  - Native Hawaiian/other PI - 0.1%
  - Hispanic - 10.0%
  - White - 37.8%
  - 2 or More Races – 13.6%

# UNITED WAY OF ERIE COUNTY

- Issue focused
- Mission is to break the cycle of generational poverty through education
- Serves as the backbone organization for community schools in Erie County
  - Employs community school directors
  - Coordinates partner alignment
  - Leads resource development efforts
  - Leads the data collection and evaluation
  - Leads the marketing and brand management
  - Facilitates collaborative meetings and difficult conversations
  - Leads and supports systems-level change

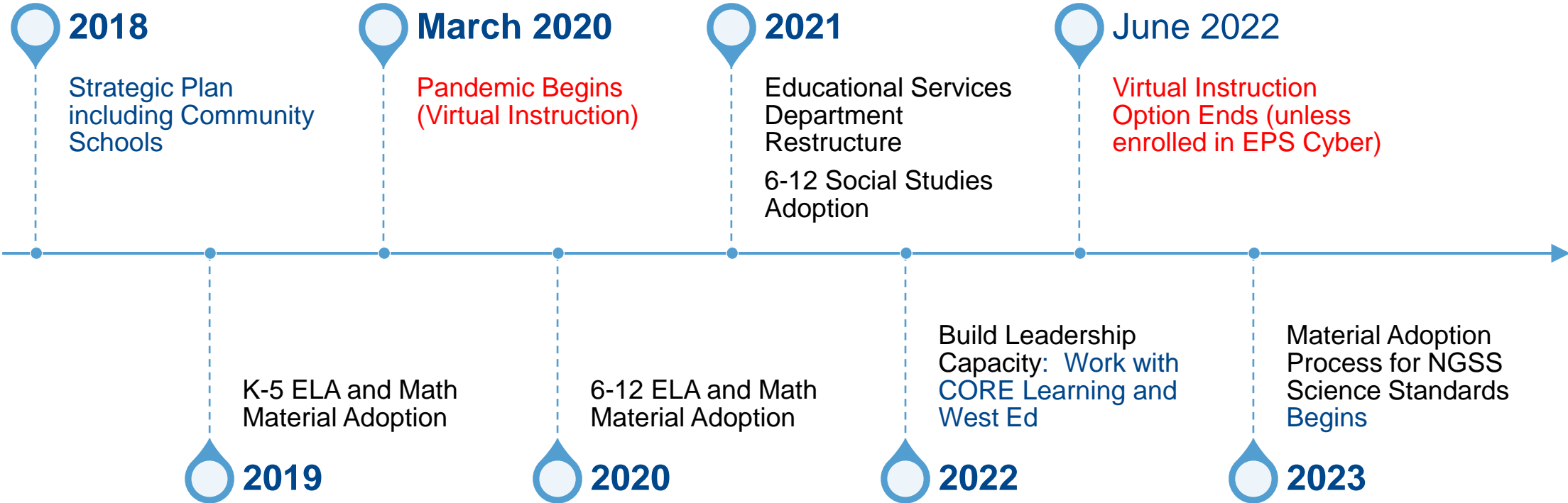


COMMUNITY SCHOOLS  
IN ERIE, PA

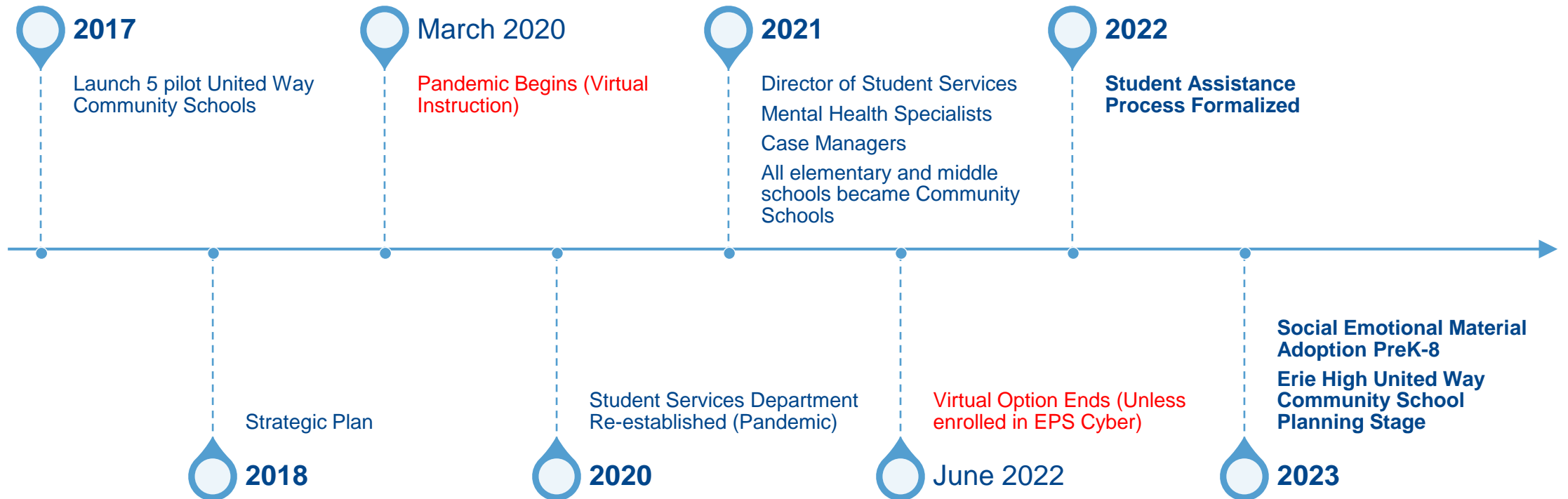
# IT IS WORKING

- Established a formalized framework for implementing the community school model in Erie
- Alignment of dozens of impact partners to address non-academic barriers
- Securing millions of dollars in new funding to support the work
- Improved student academic growth and proficiency

# Empowering Infrastructure: Educational Services



# Empowering Infrastructure: Student Services





KEY ELEMENTS OF  
OUR PARTNERSHIP  
*COMMITMENT,  
COMMUNICATION  
AND COLLABORATION*



# COMMITMENT

- Initial resistance
- Inclusion of community school expansion in the district strategic plan
- UWEC's primary focus
- Both organizations prioritized the expansion of the community school model for EPS
- Invitation to serve on boards and/or committees

# COMMUNICATI ON

- Initial barrier
- Weekly planning meetings with senior leadership to share status updates and to discuss opportunities and challenges
- Ad hoc planning meetings to focus on specific topics (e.g. process improvements)
- Community school annual progress reports, school board presentations, in-service day presentations, etc.

# COLLABORATIO N

## **Hiring processes**

- Join participation in relevant staff hiring committees and evaluations

## **Data sharing**

- United Way CSDs and Data Mgrs. access the SIS
- Collaborative survey processes for stakeholders

## **Resource development and leveraged funding**

- Resource development meetings and community school tours
- District funds used to support community schools
  - ESSER
  - Title I
- Collaborative grant applications to fund key initiatives
- United Way funding

# COLLABORATION CONT

## **Marketing and strategic communications**

- Coordinated messaging
- Joint outreach to city and county governments
- Joint press events
- United Way staff help administer school social media pages

## **Policies and procedures**

- Significant overhauls to related district policies and procedures
  - Student Assistance Program
  - Volunteers
  - Data collection and use
  - Program partnership agreements

The image features a central dark blue rectangle containing the text 'Q&A' in white. This rectangle is set against a larger, lighter blue background. To the right of the central rectangle is a large, stylized arrow pointing right, composed of a thick orange line and a blue arrowhead. The entire composition is framed by diagonal stripes in orange and light blue at the top and bottom edges.

Q&A

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THANK YOU!



United Way of Erie County



SCAN FOR PRESENTATION  
& MORE INFO

THANK YOU!



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