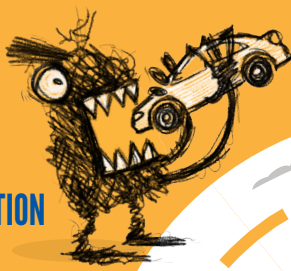


# BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY

UNITED WAY   
**COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

**LACK OF  
TRANSPORTATION**



**HOMELESSNESS**



**IMPROPER  
CLOTHES**



**BULLYING**



**POOR  
EYESIGHT**



## **THE BARRIER BEAST**

Many students in our community face common nonacademic barriers along their educational journey. This initiative works hard to remove the "barrier beast" from their days, making their path uninhibited so they can focus on becoming the best student they can be.

**TRAUMA**







# THE STRATEGY

## EDUCATION & OUR LOCAL ECONOMY

United Way is working to create a stronger economic future for Erie County by strategically investing in its children through the Community Schools Model. A child's zip code should not determine their success in school or life. **This comprehensive initiative is focused on removing nonacademic barrier that prevent students from being mentally present and engaged at school.**

- Researching and gathering data to identify and prioritize the needs of each school and its community
- Addressing four pillars identified in each school's Action Plan
- Creating a positive culture of learning and achievement
- Employing Community School Directors and empowering them to use their Action Plan to implement strategies with support from other United Way staff, their school team and partners
- Striving to level the playing field for low-income students by bringing customized resources directly into the school



### FAST FACTS

**\$75-100K**

Launching a Community School costs \$75,000–100,000

**\$500K-1.5M**

A mature Community School costs \$500,000–\$1.5M

# THE TEAM



## BACKBONE ORGANIZATION

United Way serves as the backbone organization for each Community School located in Erie County by employing all Community School Directors, providing technical assistance, maintaining partnership alignment, driving impact, measuring results, ensuring clear communication and assuring the work is implemented with fidelity by all partners. Collaboration among multiple organizations is simple in theory but can be complex in practice.



## COMMUNITY SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Directors are employed by United Way. They work closely with the school principal and Community School Leadership Team, to guide ongoing needs, assess resources and develop an action plan that drives all nonacademic activities in the school. The Director also ensures that all initiatives are implemented according to the partnership agreement.



## CORPORATE PARTNER

The Corporate Partner commits to financial support for a minimum three-year cycle. They may designate a champion to serve as liaison to the Community School, including engaging with the Community School Director to identify and oversee other employees as volunteers.



## PARTNER COALITION

Partners provide guidance and high need resources identified for their school. They also work with the Community School Director and United Way to secure additional resources to support school strategies. Community Schools have many partners in addition to a Lead Partner.



## COMMUNITY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM

Leadership Teams are led by the school principal and Community School Director. They include a diverse group of members like teachers, parents, partners and other key stakeholders. This team collectively sets a direction for the Community School by reviewing gathered custom data and helps identify strategies to support student success during the action planning process. They then assist with the implementation of strategic problem-solving solutions to identified challenges.



## DATA-DRIVEN ACCOUNTABILITY

The Community Schools initiative is effective because it is a data-driven model with a set of built-in systems of checks and balances. All resources and initiatives brought into a Community School must align with the action plan developed by the Community School Director and United Way with input from partners. Detailed strategies, action steps, outputs, outcomes, indicators, data sources and measurements are included and evaluated regularly.



# THE MODEL

## THE FOUR PILLARS

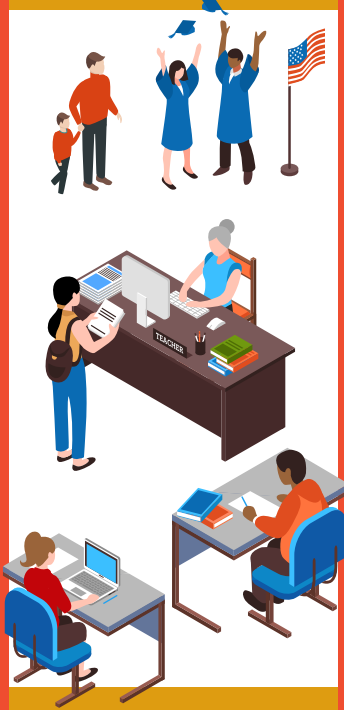
The pillars are modeled after the Four Pillars of Community Schools set forth by the Learning Policy Institute, but were amended to address the needs specific to Erie's Community Schools. These pillars demonstrate the thematic domains of improvement within the Community Schools Model. Action Plan Strategies differ based on school assets, needs and gaps, but the scope of the goals (bulleted below) remain consistent initiative-wide:

### POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR WELLNESS & LEARNING



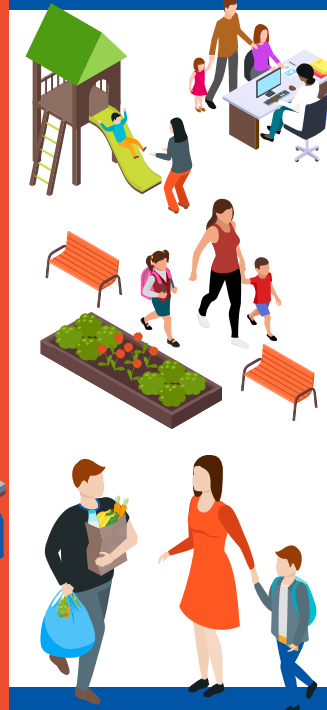
- Improved school readiness
- Improved school attendance
- Increased access to health and wellness supports
- Improved school safety
- Improved school culture

### EXPANDED LEARNING TIMES & ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES



- Increased access to enrichment opportunities
- Increased access to expanded academic learning
- Improved alignment between core academic curriculum and enrichment

### AUTHENTIC FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



- Improved family partnerships and involvement
- Improved family connections to community resources

### COMMUNITY & NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIPS



- Improved neighborhood support of Community School
- Improved community partnerships

# ★ THE TIMELINE

United Way of Erie County / Community Schools Initiative

## IT'S A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT!

The ultimate outcome of the model is to move the majority of low-income students into meeting or exceeding academic proficiency measures. Success is measured through the lens of short-term, mid-term and long-term outcomes.

### PHASE 3 YEAR 8+

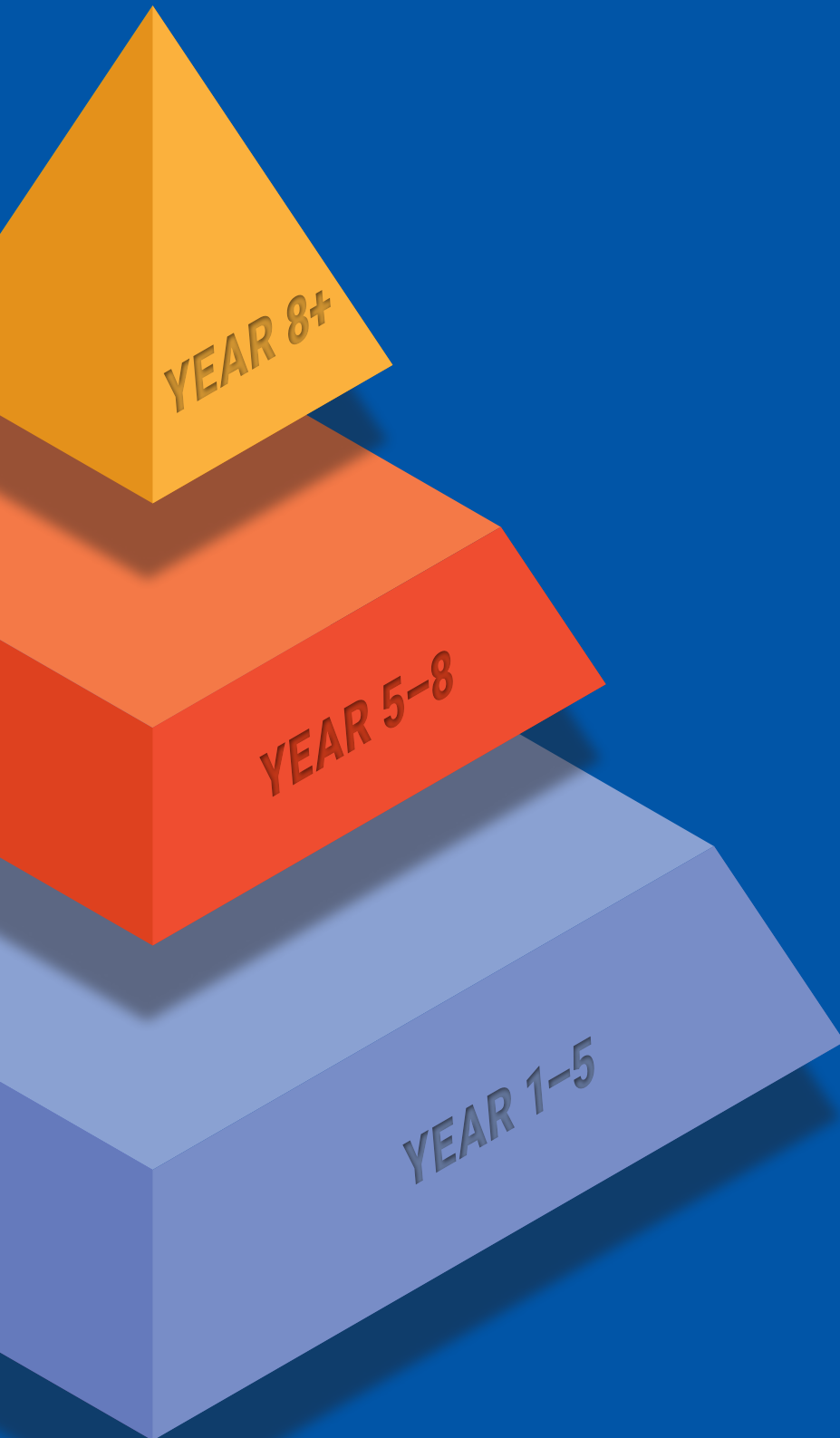
Long-term outcomes include increasing access to support and improving community culture that leads students to meet or exceed academic proficiency measures. Results are measured through PSSA scores and student-level academic test scores collected by United Way.

### PHASE 2 YEAR 5–8

Mid-term outcomes include removing nonacademic barriers to learning so students can be at school and ready to learn. Results are measured through academic growth scores and school-based data collected by United Way.

### PHASE 1 YEAR 1–5

Short-term outcomes include identifying and beginning to remove nonacademic barriers to learning. Results are measured through quarterly reporting and school-based data collected by United Way.





# MEASURING SUCCESS!

## WHAT WE'RE AIMING FOR

### POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR WELLNESS & LEARNING

INCREASED
Survey results reporting school pride
Number of staff reporting feeling valued and appreciated
Access to in-school physical and mental health supports
DECREASED
Behavioral incidents
Chronic absenteeism and truancy rates
Staff mobility

### EXPANDED LEARNING TIMES & ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

INCREASED
Number of students enrolled in after-school programs
Access to academic and tutoring supports
Opportunities for students to learn and grow passions, hobbies and interests with the support of their school

### AUTHENTIC FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

INCREASED
Number of parent volunteers
Opportunities for families to engage in academic curriculum
Attendance at parent/teacher conferences
Family awareness of supports available at the school
Survey results reporting comfortability in reaching out to Community School Director

### COMMUNITY & NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIPS

IMPROVED
Stakeholder understanding and appreciation of the Community School Model
Participation in and involvement of the Community School Leadership Team
INCREASED
Number of community partners involved in programming or supports at the school
Amount of school neighbors who are positively engaged with the school and model

# THE DIFFERENCE



*"I really want to thank you from the bottom of my family's heart, because some times we are not able to get things we need and one year we almost went without Thanksgiving dinner. Thank you for this Christmas dinner. I really want to thank you because I get to tell my mom and she might tear up. So yet again, I want to say thank you and you are a really good person. And this means a lot to me."*

– Student

*"Thank you for the after school initiatives. It is very good for both kids at their age. It is important to have positivity from being in an initiative like that."*

– Parent

*"I'm so excited for clubs! Thank you for taking my suggestion seriously and making up a club that I wanted."*

– Student

*"You motivate us and always help us out, no matter the circumstance."*

– Student, complimenting Community School staff



United Way of Erie County

