

A photograph of four young people (three boys and one girl) sitting on a black metal bench in an urban park setting. They are dressed in casual clothing like plaid shirts, hoodies, and t-shirts. The background shows multi-story apartment buildings and trees. The image has a semi-transparent dark blue overlay.

What's Possible When We Work Together

an Overview

StriveTogether[®]

Every child. Cradle to career.



Building a National Movement


The **collective impact** of this local work has created a national movement, driven by data and unified by a shared goal of upward mobility for Black, Indigenous and Latinx youth and families.

We are a trusted coach, bridging relationships, resources and insights to enhance solutions as they are shaped by local data. **The StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network™** of nearly 70 communities provides a platform for connection that ignites progress through momentum, as learning is shared and applied from coast to coast.



[View Our Case Studies](#)

KEY



StriveTogether Proof Point communities have each achieved 4 or more examples of systems transformation along the cradle-to-career roadmap.

Chicago, IL *Thrive Chicago*
 Cincinnati, OH *Cradle to Career Cincinnati*
 Boston, MA *Boston Opportunity Agenda*
 Northfield, MN *Northfield Promise*
 Dayton, OH *Learn to Earn Dayton*
 Akron, OH *Summit Education Initiative*
 Portland, OR *All Hands Raised*
 Spartanburg, SC *Spartanburg Academic Movement*

Memphis, TN *Seeding Success*
 Dallas, TX *The Commit Partnership*
 Austin, TX *E3 Alliance*
 San Antonio, TX *UP Partnership*
 Salt Lake City, UT *Promise Partnership of Salt Lake*
 Tacoma, WA *Graduate Tacoma*
 Seattle, WA *The Road Map Project*
 Racine, WI *Higher Expectations for Racine County*

The Role We All Play

The way we work together is essential for community success. Our role supports the foundation of community collaboration, aiding local partners' accountability to coordinate the boots on the ground efforts that strengthen, scale and sustain the movement.

StriveTogether

NATIONAL NETWORK

CONVENE We bring community leaders together to learn from each other

COACH We help network members improve systems and practices

CODIFY We share key learnings to accelerate communities' progress

INVEST We provide resources to communities to get results

INFLUENCE We advocate for cradle-to-career work across the country

Partnerships

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Align local community stakeholders shift thinking
- Build sustainable capabilities in local partners
- Change and spread effective practices and policies locally with real-time data
- Direct funding and resources toward what works
- Hold community accountable to goals

Stakeholders

BOOTS ON THE GROUND

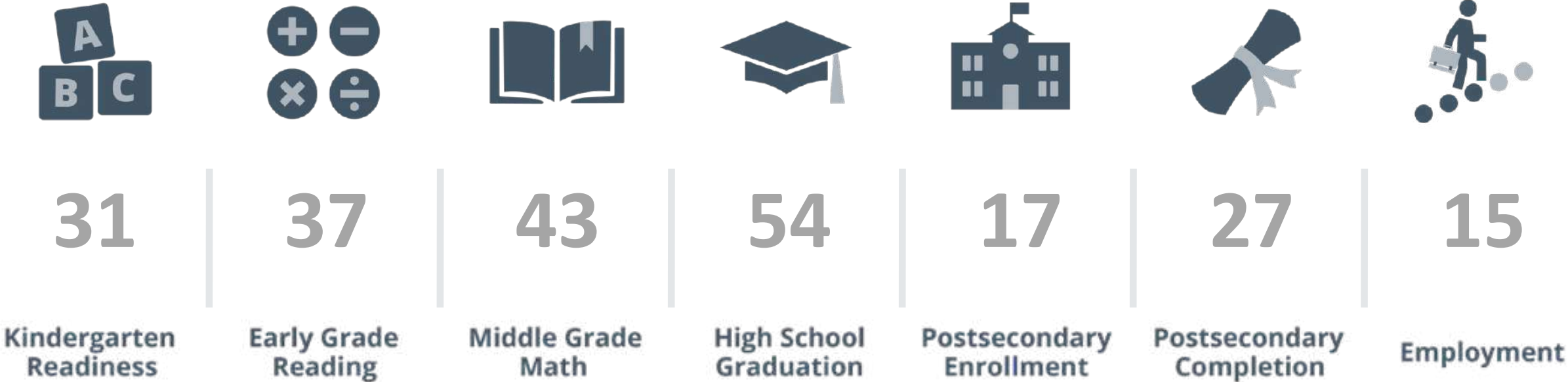
- Provide services and support to youth
- Engage in collaboration to advance racial and ethnic equity
- Advocate for policy/practice changes; mobilize action
- Invest in what works
- Sustain successes to achieve measurable progress



EVERY CHILD CAN REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL WITH ADVOCACY, ALONG WITH ACCESS TO SUPPORT AND RESOURCES FROM CRADLE TO CAREER.

Results & Bright Spots

NUMBER OF OUR PARTNERSHIPS WITH OUTCOMES IMPROVING



OUR IMPACT

14+

Million Children

ONE COMMUNITY AT A TIME

8+

Million Children of Color

6+

Million Children Experiencing Poverty

OUR REACH

69

Cradle-to-Career Partnerships

30

States + Washington D.C.



StriveTogether Theory of Action™



Principles



Engage the Community



Advance Equity



Continuous Improvement



Leverage Existing Resources

Pillars



Shared Community Vision



Evidence-Based Decision Making



Collaborative Action



Investment & Sustainability

Gateway

Exploring

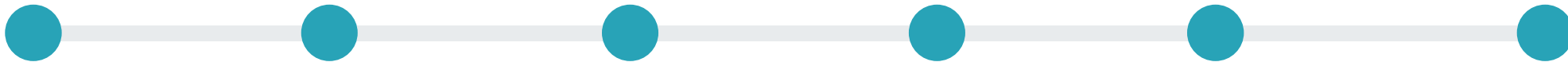
Emerging

Sustaining

Systems Change

Proof Point

Systems Transformation



Spartanburg Academic Movement | *Spartanburg, SC*



CHALLENGE

Spartanburg Academic Movement (SAM) faces a major economic mobility challenge, particularly for Black and Latine children and families. The partnership sought to address the equity gap in reading proficiency for these priority populations in four schools experiencing the highest rates of poverty.



SHIFTS

SAM worked closely with StriveTogether to implement continuous improvement in select schools. A pilot program called the Four School Project began in the 2018-19 school year, focusing on schools where students experienced poverty and disparate outcomes. SAM engaged teachers at these schools, providing coaching to help them use continuous improvement in the classroom.



RESULTS

Third grade reading proficiency in the four schools increased more than 60% in the 2018-19 academic year. One school also saw a decrease in discipline referrals from about 700 per year to fewer than 450. Along with these results, Spartanburg's schools have also seen a shift in culture among teachers, who have embraced the use of data to understand progress and places for improvement.



60%

increase of third grade reading proficiency in 2019

700

discipline referrals per year in 2018 to fewer than

450

discipline referrals per year in 2019

E3 Alliance | *Austin, TX*

CHALLENGE



Despite showing potential for advanced math, Black, Latine and students experiencing poverty were enrolling at much lower rates than their peers. E3 Alliance's research showed that placing an emphasis on math in middle school and getting students into advanced math pathways early leads to increased college enrollment, completion and success in transitioning to higher-wage jobs.

SHIFTS



E3 Alliance took an evidence-based approach to change policy. After determining the underlying factors that caused racial, ethnic and income-based discrepancies for students' math achievement, they worked with schools in central Texas to adopt a new policy for advanced math that automatically enrolls students in advanced math courses in middle school and provides the option to opt out versus asking them to opt in to advanced math.

RESULTS



Central Texas leads the state with the highest percentage of students completing Algebra I by eighth grade at 40%. Among Black and Latine fifth graders with the highest math performance, the racial gap for those completing Algebra I by eighth grade has been reduced by more than 75% and 50% respectively. The rate of Algebra I completion by eighth grade for students experiencing poverty has increased by 12% since E3 first began this work.



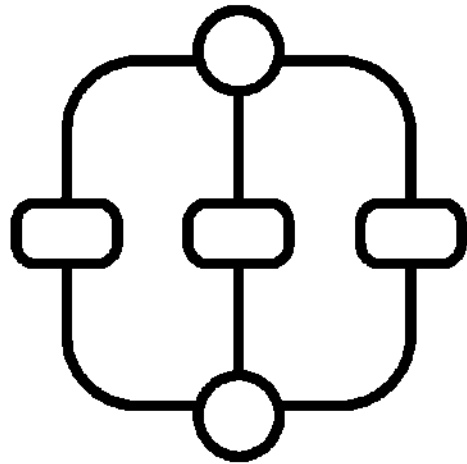
12%

increase in the rate of Algebra I completion by eighth grade for students experiencing poverty

40%

highest percentage of students completing Algebra I by eighth grade in the state

Common Challenges for Sustaining Partnerships



Sustainable Structures

Sustaining the work of the Partnership through a formal structure, e.g. a high-functioning backbone that is financially sustainable and is supported by the community



Leadership & Talent

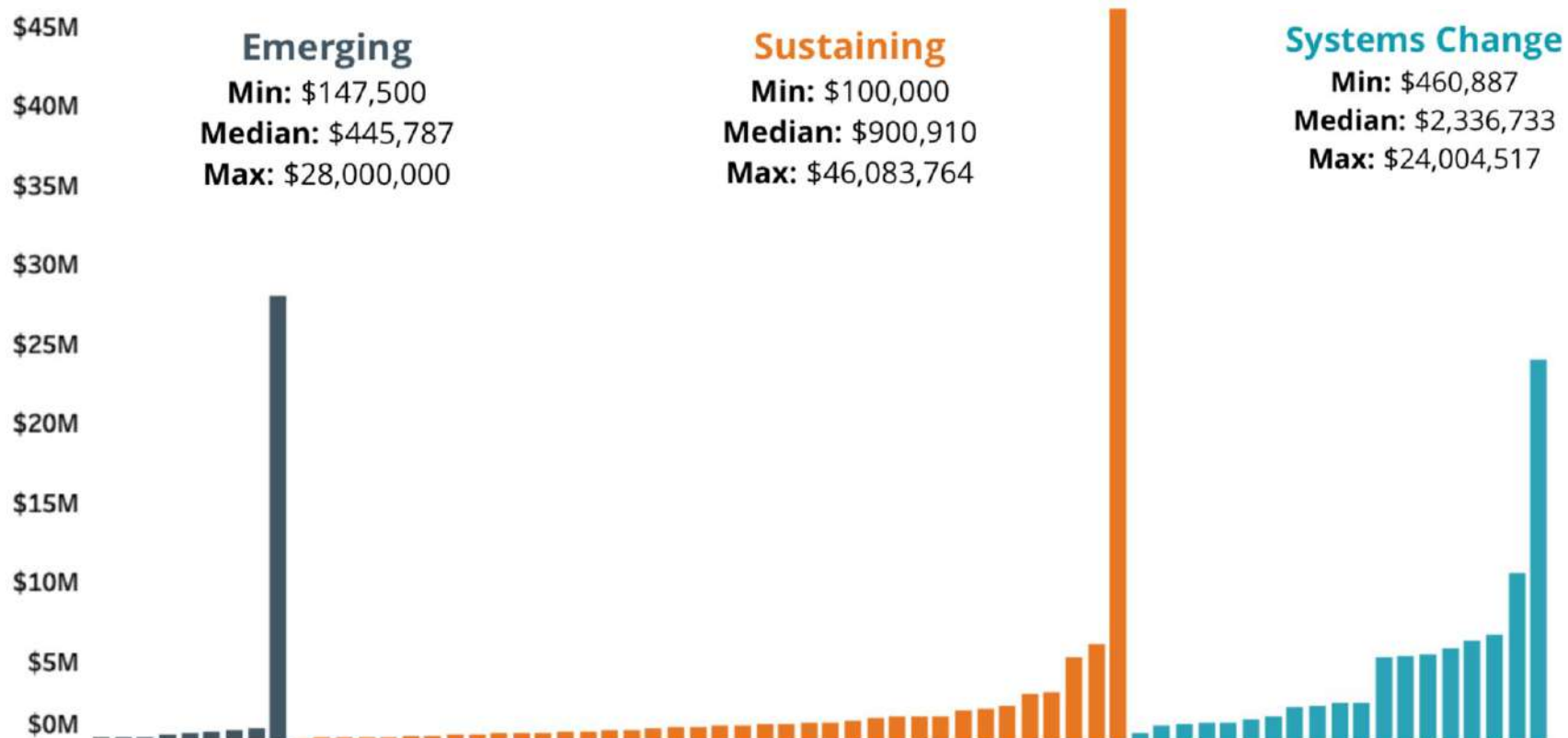
Preparing racially diverse, proximate, and outcomes-oriented leaders with the knowledge & skills to effectively lead systems change work within backbones & critical partners

Our most effective Partnership models are either independent or housed in a United Way

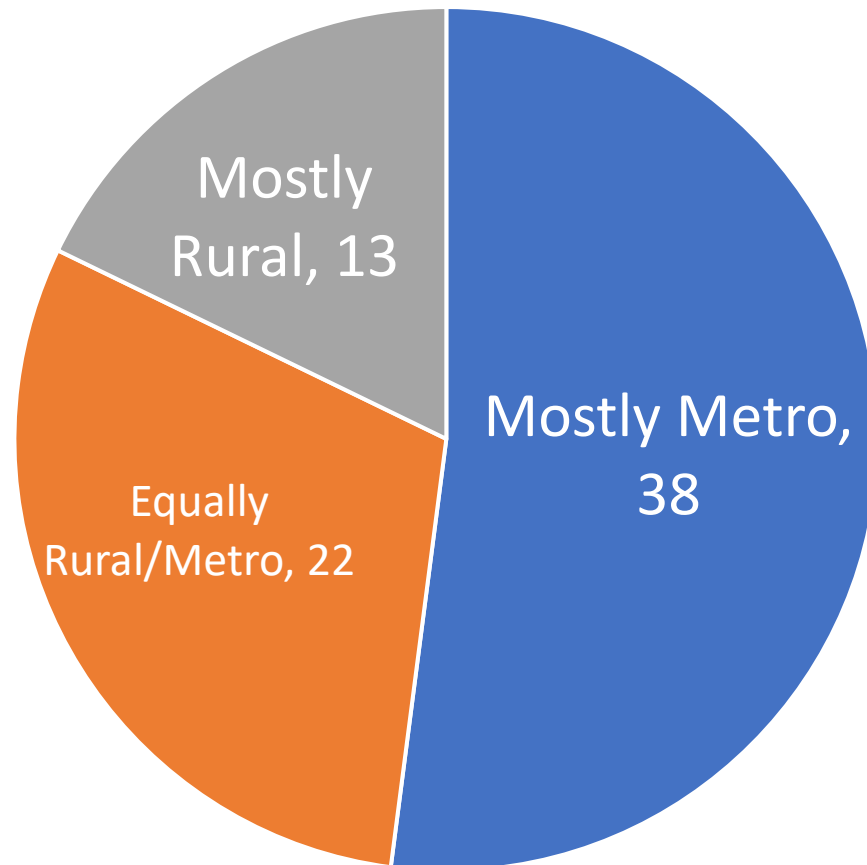
	Description	Benefits	Challenges	
27	Standalone	Stand-alone 501(c)(3) organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure is well understood by funders, giving greater access to philanthropic grants and individual donations Full control over goals and objectives Can be perceived in the field as more independent than other structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure, board, reputation often “built from scratch.” May have more limited resources than other structures, particularly at the start
15	United Way	Housed as a project within the United Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependent on credibility of the organization Access to infrastructure (e.g. HR, data, IT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited independence to act (perceived or real) Often little ability to expand or customize infrastructure Nested structure may limit funding available
13	Foundation	Housed as a project within a local foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependent on credibility of the organization Can utilize existing operating infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited independence to act (perceived or real) Often little ability to expand or customize infrastructure Nested structure may limit funding available
10	Other Anchor (e.g. Coalition)	Arrangement where each partner has distinct roles and responsibilities, and works in coordination to facilitate outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each partner can leverage their unique strengths and take actions the others cannot (e.g., government partner can navigate bureaucratic processes; nonprofit partner can access flexible funding and engage in advocacy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level of coordination and communication required between partners. Leaders must have strong trust, mutual respect, and appreciation for what each can achieve, which is often cultivated with sustained engagement
3	Higher Education	Housed as a project within an Institution of Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependent on credibility of the organization Can utilize existing operating infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited independence to act (perceived or real) Often little ability to expand or customize infrastructure Nested structure may limit funding available
1	Government	Housed in government entity that is dedicated in part or in full to achieving particular outcomes in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has strong convening power. Access to infrastructure (e.g. HR, data, IT) May have more reliable funding and/or ability to access funding not available to other structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of flexibility to hire and fire staff or engage in certain activities, like lobbying Slow bureaucracies Subject to leadership change and operational disruption

Effective Partnership needs to be well-capitalized, but there are examples of smaller, highly-effective Partnerships

Budget distribution, by gateway¹¹
(each partnership is represented by a bar on the graph below)



Partnerships by Rural/Metro Status

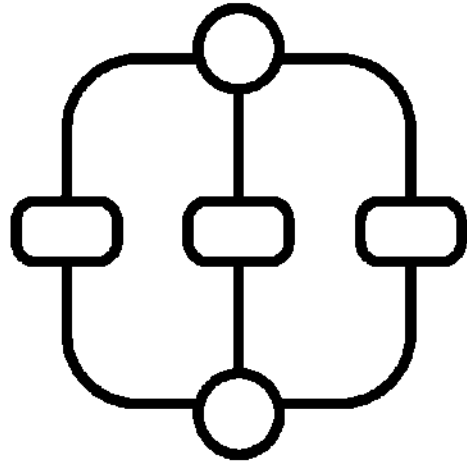


Funding Streams for Place-based Partnerships, and Their Benefits and Challenges

Stream	Description	Characteristics
Local Philanthropy	Grants from a foundation focused on a limited geographic region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tend to be smaller grants that need to be renewed, but reliable over time Levels of restriction vary greatly by foundation Limited availability in geographies without a robust philanthropic community
National Philanthropy	Grants from a foundation funding nationally or internationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tend to be larger grants that are frequently innovation- or growth-focused Frequently used as pass-through funding for partners
Earned Revenue Streams	Selling a product or service, generally with some connection to mission in the case of place-based partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of revenue is fully under the discretion of management Often requires upfront investment of time and money; financially risky to launch Can create challenging internal dynamics between staff directly tasked with earning revenue and staff who are not
Local Government	Grants or contracts from city, county, or state departments or programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally available to partnerships as contract for services (e.g., consulting with a school district to improve data collection) Little or no coverage of indirect costs Sometimes slow to pay and occasionally includes heavy reporting requirements
Federal Government	Grants or contracts from federal departments or programs. Might be passed through local municipalities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally secured as pass-through to fund direct services, with limited funding available to collective impact functions Typically available to nonprofits with large operating budgets Notoriously slow to pay and doesn't pay full cost of services Heavy reporting requirements Can be a highly reliable source of funding, but might need an act of Congress

22 Partnerships now leverage public resources for 10%+ of their budget

Common Challenges for Sustaining Partnerships



Sustainable Structures

Sustaining the work of the Partnership through a formal structure, e.g. a high-functioning backbone that is financially sustainable and is supported by the community



Leadership & Talent

Preparing racially diverse, proximate, and outcomes-oriented leaders with the knowledge & skills to effectively lead systems change work within backbones & critical partners

Leadership & Talent: StriveTogether Training Hub

The Training Hub connects leaders in community partnerships to best-in-class training opportunities so they can create lasting change in their communities by shifting policies, practices, resources, and power structures.

We provide:

- **Self-assessments to help participants identify their development path**
- **Virtual trainings to individuals & teams that aligns with their goals**
- **Regular coaching to reinforce skills so that participants can apply it in role**

Topics Covered by the Training Hub



Collaborative Improvement

- Helps leaders and groups defined shared goals, assess system performance and move from intention to action
- Encourages communities to adopt or abandon efforts based on results.
- Focuses on user-centric, creative problem-solving to engage people impacted by the work.



Data & Analytics (*in development*)

- Effectively express the value of using data in decision-making
- Select appropriate performance metrics, collect & analyze relevant data, and design & develop data visualization strategies to move from information to insights
- Utilize best practices in data management, performance management, open data, and advanced analytics



Backbone Infrastructure (*Launching in 2023*)

- Set clear SMARTIE goals & vision for its contributions to advance the work of the Partnership
- Attract and retain racially diverse, proximate leaders who have clearly defined roles and responsibilities within the Backbone & critical institutions
- Build and implement a sustainable, diversified funding plan to adequately support staff, enabling functions, and collaborative Partnership efforts

If you know of individuals
or teams interested that
would like to learn more,
contact me at:
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Stay Connected.

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Managing Director of Innovation

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Visit us at [StriveTogether.org](https://www.StriveTogether.org) | Listen at [TogetherforChange](#)

Proving it's Possible

“ Our systems have been designed to produce wicked disparities in American communities for hundreds of years ”

Jennifer Blatz, StriveTogether President and CEO

WHY OUR WORK MATTERS

RACIAL EQUITY

Racial equity is at the core of what we do and who we are. Our network members work to eliminate disparities and change systems.

49%

of Network closing a disparity gap in at least two outcome areas.

33 partnerships

(Data source: the 2019 Civic Infrastructure Assessment.)

ECONOMIC MOBILITY

Our cradle-to-career roadmap is the pathway to economic mobility. Equity in education is fundamental for mobility and the use of data to drive improvement is crucial.

54%

of Network improving early grade reading outcomes..

*Third grade reading proficiency is the greatest predictor of economic mobility.**

37 Partnerships

**Urban Institute*

SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

Black, Indigenous, and Latinx youth are stuck in systems designed to fail them.

StriveTogether communities use data to inform system changes as they work towards systems transformation for better outcomes.

19

Partnerships achieving systems change.

Including tangible shifts in local and state policy, power dynamics and resource allocation.

OUR IMPACT

14+

Million Children

ONE COMMUNITY AT A TIME

8+

Million Children of Color

6+

Million Children Experiencing Poverty

OUR REACH

69

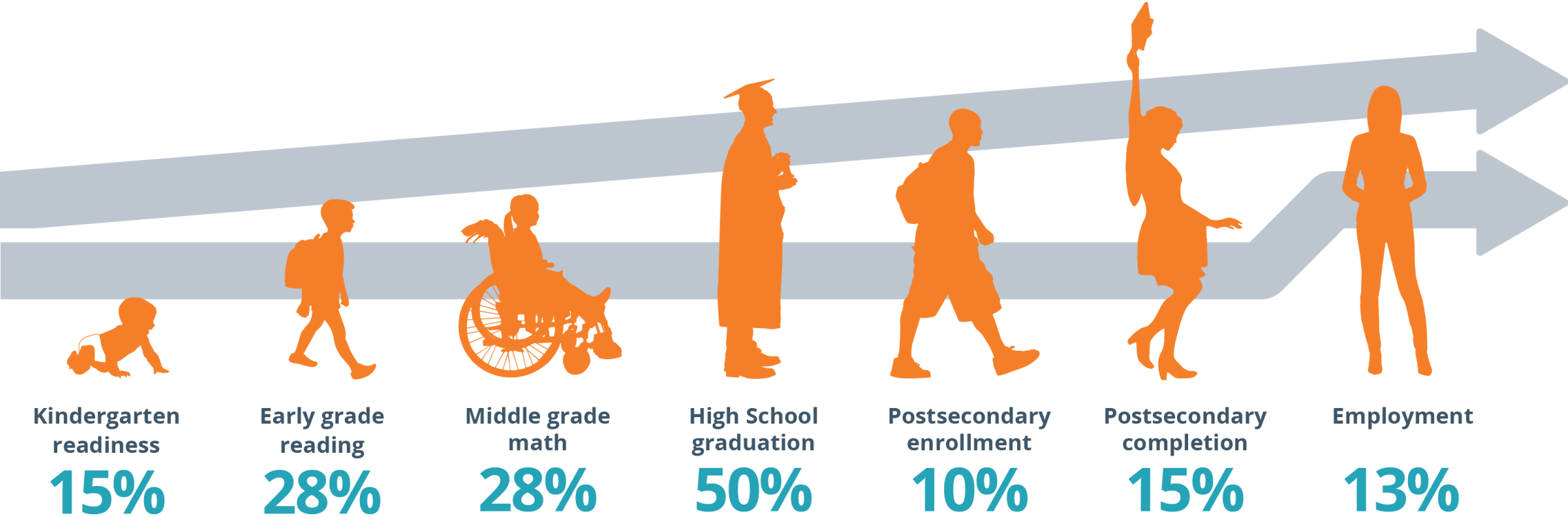
Cradle-to-Career Partnerships

30

States + Washington D.C.

Results & Bright Spots

PERCENT OF OUR PARTNERSHIPS WITH DISPARITY GAPS CLOSING



Our Commitment

When we are willing to put the needs of children above the preservation of institutions it positively impacts mobility for youth and families.

“ There are no quick fixes when so many young people are caught up in a mesh of systems designed to fail them. Our Cradle to Career Network brings communities across the country together to build better systems that yield better results for every child.”

Jennifer Blatz, StriveTogether President and CEO



What We Do

We work in communities to improve mobility for Black, Indigenous, and Latinx youth and families by achieving equity in actionable milestones along the [StriveTogether Theory of Action™](#).

We assume [five key roles](#) to develop the capacities of communities to enable them to tackle this transformative work.



Convene



Coach



Codify



Invest



Influence

Our leadership in these roles help communities working towards change build [critical capacities](#) needed to support the success of every child.



Policy, Advocacy & Mobilization



Communications & Engagement



Practice Improvement & Acceleration



Leadership & Talent



Data & Information



Sustainable Resources

Graduate Tacoma | *Tacoma, WA*

CHALLENGE



In Washington state, Tacoma was once known as one of the nation's "dropout factories," where no more than 60% of students made it to their senior year. Students of color were graduating at rates as low as 9%. Data showed a correlation between eligible students not applying for the statewide College Bound Scholarship and not graduating from high school, highlighting the need for access to postsecondary funding as a motivating factor.

SHIFTS



Graduate Tacoma worked with Tacoma Public Schools to implement policies that automatically enroll eligible students in college-level courses and in the College Bound Scholarship. They also eliminated the cost barrier to college entry exams and changed discipline policies which disproportionately affected students of color.

RESULTS



Through their partnership with Tacoma Public Schools, Graduate Tacoma has been able to increase the number of students graduating high school in four years from 55% in 2010 to 90% in 2020. They have also narrowed equity gaps, and students of color are graduating at rates of 81% and higher.



High school graduation rates improved from

55% → **90%**
in 2010 in 2020

81%

the rate students of color now
graduating

Wisconsin Partnership | *Wisconsin*

CHALLENGE



The Wisconsin Partnership — made up of Achieve Brown County, Building Our Future, Higher Expectations for Racine County and Milwaukee Succeeds — was established in 2019 through a StriveTogether Strategic Initiatives Fund grant to improve access to high-quality early childhood supports which help prepare children for kindergarten. During the COVID-19 pandemic, their focus has been stabilizing the availability of child care slots.

SHIFTS



The Wisconsin Partnership led the first cohort of the Parents Advocating for Child Care Fellowship from November 2020 to June 2021 to build capacity and capability among 19 parents for child care advocacy efforts. Parents successfully advocated to elected officials on behalf of early childhood care and education, while showing an increase in knowledge and skills related to advocacy, child care, government and data.

RESULTS



Worked with other state advocates to secure a \$29 million increase in funding for the Wisconsin Shares subsidy program in the 2021-23 state budget and successfully advocated for state ARPA fund allocation, including bringing \$587 million to date to 3,600 early child care and education programs across the state to remain open, keep staff employed and safely serve children throughout the pandemic.



successfully advocated

\$587M

for

3,600

early child care and education
programs to stay open during
the pandemic

Learn to Earn Dayton | *Dayton, OH*



CHALLENGE

Learn to Earn Dayton has been working toward improving college attendance, retention and graduation rates for Black and Latine high school students based on data highlighting educational inequities in elementary, middle and high school.



SHIFTS

They used disaggregated postsecondary data in hosting listening sessions to discuss results and explore strategies to bridge opportunity gaps. These efforts led to policy changes at three postsecondary institutions that ultimately lower barriers to entry by increasing tuition transparency, providing services to underrepresented students and supporting the seamless transition of credits from high school to college.



RESULTS

Thanks to new policies, the University of Dayton set a record total enrollment of 11,677 students for the 2020-2021 academic year, with additional records for underrepresented students among undergraduates (15.9%) and the first-year class (19.8%). They also achieved a 98% retention rate from 2019-2021.



11,677

students is University of Dayton's set record of enrollment for the 2020-2021 academic year

98%

the retention rate the University of Dayton has achieved over the past three years

Baltimore's Promise | *Baltimore, MD*



CHALLENGE

Data from a study on Baltimore City Public Schools students showed that, six years after graduation, fewer than 12% had earned any type of degree, the majority did not earn a living wage, regardless of college degree attainment. This issue disproportionately affects Black youth.



SHIFTS

Baltimore's Promise partnered with the Baltimore Mayor's Office of Employment Development and Baltimore City Public Schools to create the Grads2Careers initiative, which creates immediate opportunities for Baltimore high school graduates who do not plan on attending college by funding training slots in programs with demonstrated success offering occupational skills training.



RESULTS

Of the 501 youth who have participated, 226 have obtained employment and 34 have enrolled in college, for a total positive outcomes rate of 52%. The program's success has led to adoption by Baltimore City Public Schools as a named postsecondary option for students, and Baltimore City mayor's office aligning 40% of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding to the Grads2Careers priority population.



52%

Of participants secured a job or enrolled in college

40%

of WIOA funding to Grads2Careers priority population



the challenge

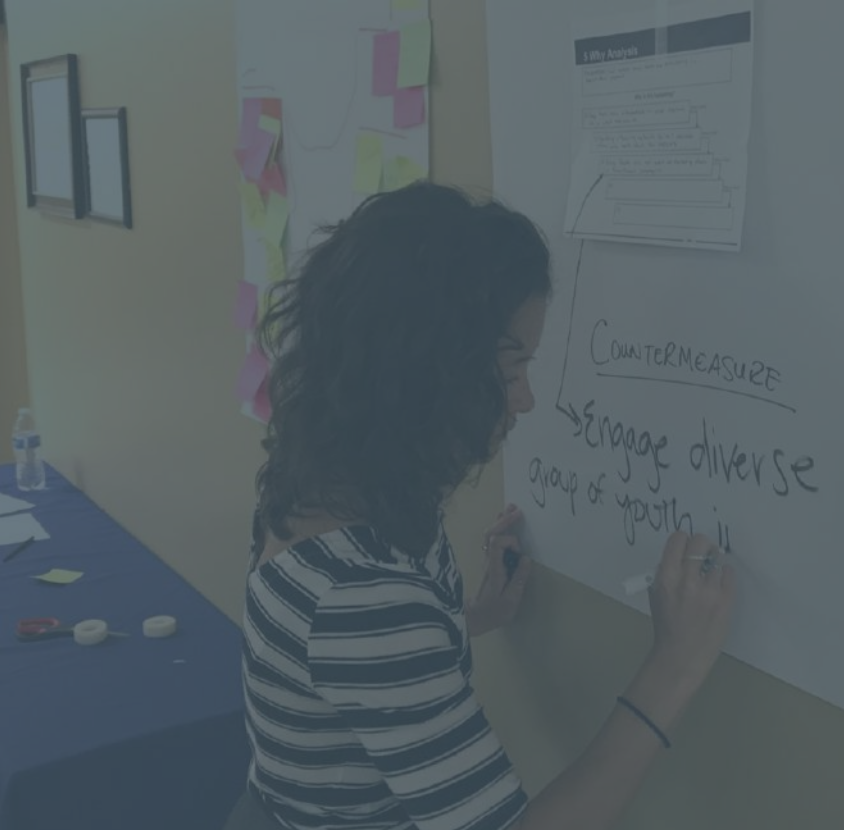
Home to 10% of the nation's students, Texas ranked 37th among states in education funding and 12th in terms of poverty.

the solution

A statewide coalition mobilized around data and advocated for equitable school finance reform.

the outcome

House Bill 3 signed into law, investing \$6.5 billion to support equitable education outcomes.



the challenge

In Chicago, many young people are unconnected to education and employment.

the solution

Working with city and county policymakers, advocated to shift resources to address barriers to education and employment.

the outcome

\$15 million investment has led to hundreds of young people connected to education and employment.



the challenge

In Tulsa, OK, the pandemic deepened the digital divide for students of color and students living in poverty.

the solution

Using census tracts, internet access maps revealed significant disparities. Data shared with the Mayor's office, school system and other stakeholders.

the outcome

Secured \$5.6 million in state COVID relief funding to subsidize internet service for up to 20,000 families of public school students.