



ALL-AMERICA CITY FINALIST

DUBUQUE

Community Snapshot

Dubuque, located along the Mississippi River, is Iowa's oldest and seventh-largest city and a regional center for commerce, industry, education, medical services, culture and tourism. Dubuque is known as the "Masterpiece on the Mississippi," but this wasn't always the case. In the 1980s, Dubuque endured 23 percent unemployment, an exodus of residents, struggling downtown businesses, disconnected neighborhoods and little hope. A billboard proclaimed: "Last one to leave Dubuque, turn off the lights." In these difficult times, leaders from the private, nonprofit and public sectors facilitated community visioning that helped change Dubuque, focusing on grassroots efforts to address community rebirth. From this, Dubuque has gone from good to great in many areas: job growth and retention, sustainability, partnerships, community development, civic engagement and education.

Community Solutions Action Plan

The 3rd Grade Reading Coalition will implement the following strategies:

- Expand or scale programs and implement innovative new approaches
- Integrate national programs into the community network
- Braid learning strategies into the abundance of summer programming and work to incorporate summer learning into the year-round curriculum
- Adapt promising practices from outside the community and scale best practices within the district to target the last 5 percent of students with chronic absence

Partnerships

The 3rd Grade Reading Coalition is led by a group of leaders and experts from area schools, colleges, universities, nonprofits, businesses, city government and philanthropies and is facilitated by Every Child/Every Promise (ECEP). Founding members of the 3rd Grade Reading Coalition include Carnegie-Stout Public Library, Clarke University, Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, Crescent Community Health Center, Dubuque Community School District, Dubuque Community School District Foundation, Dubuque County Early Childhood, Four Oaks: Parents as Teachers, Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, Holy Family Schools, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Leisure Services, Loras College, Multicultural Family Center, Northeast Iowa Community College, Operation New View: Head Start, and St. Mark Community Center. Support comes from the City of Dubuque, Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque and Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 58,000 residents
- Approximately 12,000 students
- 38 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals
- Approximately 86 percent of third-graders read at grade level (Basic Reading Inventory)
- 2 percent of K-3 students are English language learners
- 87.5 percent graduation rate
- 93 percent are ready for kindergarten
- 95 percent of students attend school daily
- Summer learning programs are available but aren't coordinated with school curricula

GOALS

- At least 90 percent of third-grade students reading at grade level
- No student will miss more than 10 percent of school in a year
- 100 percent of students prepared for school
- Summer programming is data-driven and coordinated with student needs and curricula

"The biggest challenge facing our community is the disproportionate achievement rates of minority students and students in poverty."