



ALL-AMERICA CITY FINALIST

INDIANAPOLIS

Community Snapshot

Indianapolis, the “Heart of the Heartland,” is the capital of Indiana and is considered the crossroads of America because of its central location. Thousands of businesses, big and small, are based within the metro Indianapolis area and it is also home to many outstanding post-secondary schools, including Butler University and Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. Yet, despite universities and opportunities, 41 percent of inner-city adults over 25 lack a high school diploma and fewer than 30 percent of the students are earning their high school diplomas in a four-year period. Indianapolis is among the best in the country in so many categories and is striving to bring public education for inner-city youth to that same high standard.

Community Solutions Action Plan

The City of Indianapolis has joined with local school districts, including the Indianapolis Public Schools and other community partners to form a city-wide campaign aimed at improving early childhood education. Their motto is: “The Heart of the Heartland – All children WILL read on grade level by 3rd grade.” The members propose to do the following:

- Target school readiness, attendance and summer learning
- Implement “Cradle to College” initiative
- Develop a city-wide preschool curriculum to promote consistency in early education
- Award grants to preschool teachers who commit to kindergarten readiness assessments
- Create a mandatory first-grade orientation program for parents and students to promote good attendance
- Expand an Early Intervention and Prevention initiative providing neighborhood workshops

Partnerships

The Proposal Development Team (composed of the majority of leaders in Indianapolis) have come together to address the disproportionate educational opportunities for the more than 30,000 students attending the city’s public schools. In addition to city officials, the partnership is made up of representatives from all local school districts, United Way of Central Indiana, Outreach Inc., Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce and various other entities.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Approximately 829,000 city residents; 1.7 million metropolitan area residents
- About 33,000 students
- An estimated 11,000 students live in poverty
- The grade-level reading rate of Indianapolis 3rd graders is 20 percent lower than surrounding districts
- 49 percent graduation rate
- 95 percent student attendance rate
- 22.6 percent of children participate in summer learning programs

GOALS

- Provide opportunities for parents to engage in their children’s early literacy and preschool skills
- Implement city-wide preschool curriculum to promote consistency in early education
- Collaborate with local counties’ youth commissions to align summer programs with academic goals of the school system.
- Seek funding for scholarships to allow low-income children to attend summer enrichment programs

“The children of the inner city must, at a minimum, be given the same literacy opportunities as their suburban sisters and brothers to level the playing field.”