



ALL-AMERICA CITY FINALIST

NEW BRITAIN

Community Snapshot

New Britain was established as a farming settlement in 1754 and became home to tradesmen and entrepreneurs who formed manufacturing firms. By 1890, New Britain was the largest manufacturer of small tools and hardware in America and gained the nickname “Hardware Capital of the World.” By mid-century, the city had 24,000 manufacturing jobs but outdated factories, changing production methods and higher labor costs led to an exodus of manufacturing industries in the 1960s. Today there are only 3,600 manufacturing jobs left and the educational landscape has changed dramatically. The closing of several parochial schools has put pressure on the public schools to accommodate a growing population.

Community Solutions Action Plan

The New Britain Early Childhood Collaborative has created a strategy based on the following three themes:

- Public messaging: Encourage parents and other adults to read to children regularly, get children to school consistently and engage in enrichment activities during the summer to support learning
- Get better results with existing resources: Provide more professional development and use of research-tested methods to best utilize extant services
- Targeted expansion of the highest return services: Effective efforts will be replicated by reallocating funds from less effective efforts and new funding when it becomes available

Partnerships

The New Britain Early Childhood Collaborative is leading this effort with support from the city’s mayor, superintendent of schools, the Community Foundation of Greater New Britain and the New Britain Herald Newspaper.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 73,206 residents
- 10,000 students
- 77 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals
- 43 percent of third graders read at grade level (state test)
- Almost one-third of kindergartners are English language learners
- 56 percent of students graduate in four years
- 23 percent of students are ready for kindergarten
- 50 percent of students have acceptable attendance
- Few summer program opportunities

GOALS (BY 2020)

- Exceed the state average for percentage of students reading at grade level
- Guarantee all children have access to at least one year of preschool
- Increase acceptable attendance to 95 percent
- Have all students enter school in the fall at the same or higher reading level

“In New Britain, we believe that by building on the relationships that we have developed ... we can dramatically alter the life chances