

DRAFT Strategic Outline Feedback

How could this chart be useful in efforts to better serve student success?

- It's a beginning
- We've done the process—now share with the public and move into action w/ specific steps
- It can be used as a framework to build opportunities and to increase involvement of those who can best be served by the opportunities (connect opportunities with needs).
- Prioritized to create action plans.
- Help to identify overlap in categories.
- Help to apply, take “baby steps”
- Useful as a stepping stone, a beginning.
- Now we need to spread the news and take action!
- Shows where to start...a great map to work from and reference back to.
- Help create public exposure with connections highlighted.
- Prioritize: be more specific.
- Hyperlink each item to more details.
- Identified a process to build from.
- Chart should be widely shared when complete.
- Provide it as a tool for developing common language and strategic planning.

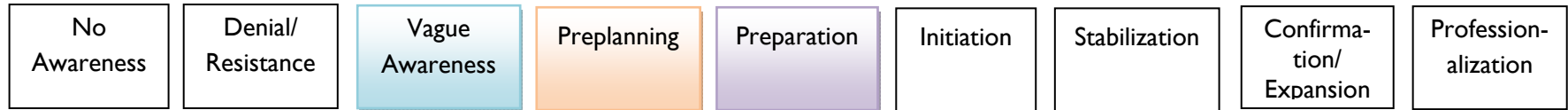
What would make it more useful?

- Lifelong learner (elders?)
- Attach what has been done so people know what has been successful
- Some are state/federal mandates...know what you're getting into.
- Narrow strategies to 2 or 3 for each segment.
- Define programs and acronyms.
- Simplify and display.
- Trim down to a few common initiatives.
- Prioritizing would be more useful.
- Include teacher quality, need more student input.
- Include supporting documents that create a sequential learning tool.

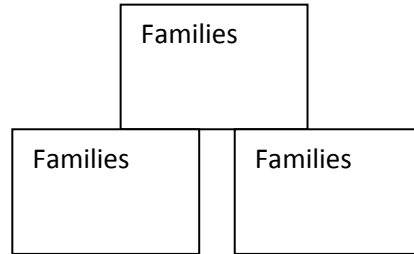
Suggestions for improvement

- Have the four areas intersect, not just cross opportunities between two.
- College as a fourth area, NOT bold employer investments.
- More time for follow up.
- Not everything in Itasca area needs to change. Use “enhancement” instead of “transformation.”
- Some way to show cross strategies that connect all areas.
- Addendum with further explanations at each block (i.e. to explain “budget shortfalls” opportunity and explain acronyms.
- Concept of “students” is too narrowly defined...we are all life-long learners.
- Explore all alternatives of learning.
- Change to “E-16” or “cradle to grave”
- E-12 or E-14 instead of K-12 or K-14
- Make arrows connecting the quadrants in both directions
- More “employer” opportunities
- Turn all green arrows toward center.
- More emphasis on family engagement... family engagement should be a bigger piece of the pie.
- Descriptions for “leading edge” and “unprecedented”
- Teachers/instruction needs to be seen as an opportunity.
- Legislative changes must be an opportunity.
- Commitment to high “quality leadership/instruction”
- Flip flop terms in strategic directions: “Leading edge community support” and “Unprecedented family engagement”

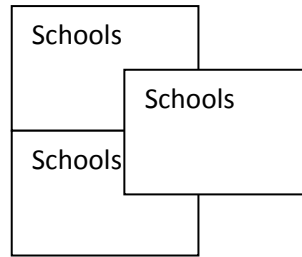
Stages of Community Readiness



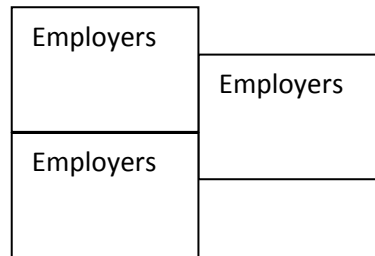
Families



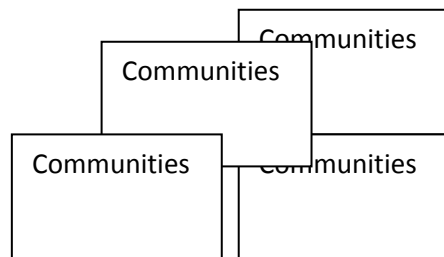
Schools



Employers



Community



Vague awareness. There is a general feeling among some that there is a local problem and that something ought to be done about it, but there is no immediate motivation to do anything. There may be stories or anecdotes about the problem, but ideas about why the problem occurs and who has the problem tend to be stereotyped and/or vague. No identifiable leadership exists or leadership lacks energy or motivation for dealing with this problem. This climate does not serve to motivate leaders.

Preplanning. There is clear recognition on the part of at least some that there is a local problem and that something should be done about it. There are identifiable leaders, and there may even be a committee, but efforts are not focused or detailed. There is discussion but no real planning of actions to address the problem. This climate is beginning to acknowledge the necessity of dealing with the problem.

Preparation. Planning is going on and focuses on practical details. There is general information about local problems and about the pros and cons of prevention activities, actions or policies, but it may not be based on formally collected data. Leadership is active and energetic. Decisions are being made about what will be done and who will do it. Resources (people, money, time, space, etc.) are being actively sought or have been committed. This climate offers at

Student Success Community Alliance: Draft Roles



Supporter

- Assist as possible
- Representation from across IASC region

Core team

- Provides guidance & coordination through planning
- Representation from across IASC region
- Meets monthly
- Convened by Blandin Foundation and IASC

Ally

- Available for active support as needed
- Attend quarterly meetings
- Representation from across IASC region

Community At Large

- Engaged through outreach efforts
- Potential supporters and allies

Community Convening III- Suggestions to Core Team

What other feedback/ suggestions do you have for us of for the core team as they move the work forward?

- Need to narrow tasks and put into action plan with accountability.
- Consider discussing integration of Native American cultures and values in education since there is such a large Native American population in this area.
- Stay focused and patient...it takes time to change the culture.
- Timelines- create the sense of urgency (this will be different in all communities- find out that it is and more). Also redo the contact list w/ who these people represent- school/ family/ community/ business- and where they work.
- Prioritize!! Also start with something that promises early success.
- Don't feel like you have to take all this on yourself...use your resources and networks.
- Start coming up with ideas for solutions.
- Be bold- don't recreate the wheel- research best practices globally.
- Remember: "It takes a village", you can't do it alone.
- Don't give up.
- All Students—lifelong learners, Birth—Death: Include Everyone!
- Go forward with courage and pure motives. It would have been good to see (physically on a map) where the current districts are.
- Make some visible progress ASAP.
- Please be mindful of the (inconsistent) moral development "obstacle". Whose morals shall families follow and who gets to decide?
- Don't forget to look at all areas of the community. Don't get stuck thinking only one area geographically. Try not to place blame on any one group for short falls.
- Not ok to tread water, time to move forward.
- Listen to the unheard like youth, American Indian, Parents with not a good experience with education & folk in poverty.
- Don't let the time lag to get them going.
- Culture is more important that strategy and plan.
- Go core team! Go core team!
- Establish one or two goals and develop a plan to achieve.
- Include struggling students and families.
- It takes time- patience & perseverance are needed.
- Relationships & trust- key ingredients to success.
- Create a 50 year vision and let that pull you forward.
- Keep checking and rechecking with Ally and Support Groups to keep track.
- Students input → students talked to me that they felt the majority of adults really didn't want to hear from them. Also, they thought they were coming to these meeting with other students who are successful students.

- Be brave- be realistic- involve as many outside your circle as possible.
- Keep the communication open.
- Stay real. To do just that is realistic.
- Include all voices.
- Relay to our communities that there truly is a sense of urgency to reform our schools, even here in the Grand Rapids area.
- Drive forward with energy.
- Just stay motivated and organized.
- Early graduation for high school students.
- Keep your eye on student success.
- Please move it forward.
- Seek public opinion to gain more ideas
- Think outside the box!
- Stay the course!
- Talk to students, get their opinion.
- Continue to seek input & diverse perspective regularly. Have good diversity in the group. Plan on this being at least a five- year effort.
- Select people who can take a risk and are strong enough to endure the conflict inherent in change.
- I'd be happy to help.
- Ask some people to join who didn't "self identify" as core team members.

Student Success Community Conversations Summary

The Itasca Area Schools Collaborative and the Blandin Foundation co-sponsored three “community conversations” related to student success in the spring of 2010. One hundred community members participated, representing a variety of perspectives and geographic locations. Together they addressed the overarching question, “How can we help all students in the Itasca Area succeed?”

Conversation 1: February 23, 2010

The group began by outlining the *current reality* in the Itasca Area related to student success. Participants reflected upon and shared examples of positive learning experiences they personally have had in the Itasca area, examples of student success they have observed in others, and examples of situations where they wish students were being better helped to succeed. This led to the identification of prevailing trends: key assets and challenges that families, schools, employers and community at large face related to helping students succeed. With these in mind, participants shared what gives them hope that we can better help students succeed in the future. A summary of this “current reality” exercise can be found in the February 23, 2010 meeting notes.

Conversation 2: March 16, 2010

Participants described a *practical vision* for the future by considering the following: “It’s 2015, and we’ve had 5 successful years of progress toward helping all students succeed. What is different?” Specific answers were prioritized from the perspective of families, schools, employers and community at large. Examples of the practical vision include “parent/school cooperation”; “maximize advantages of technology”; “student-business engagement”; and “breaking the cycles: poverty and brain drain.”

The group then considered obstacles that stand between the situation today (the *current reality*) and where the group would like to see the Itasca area (the *practical vision*). Once again, answers were prioritized, taking into account the unique situations facing families, schools, employers and communities. Examples of the obstacles identified include “stressed families, low wages”; “tenure is outdated”; “no entity to facilitate communication”; and “public apathy.”

Conversation then focused on identifying promising opportunities that are available to families, schools, employers and communities. The intent was to surface opportunities “that can help move us from where we are to where we want to go”. This exercise generated dozens of responses, including “mentoring programs”; “family-friendly K-12 schools”, “parent/student/teacher involvement”; “educational paradigm shift”; “after school programs”; “win-win scholarships and internships”; and “capitalize on inherent belief in education”. A summary of the practical vision, obstacles and opportunities exercises can be found in the March 16, 2010 meeting notes.

Conversation 3: April 13, 2010

At the final meeting, the IASC-Blandin Foundation planning team suggested a “possible way forward” that would help carry on the group’s work once the conversation series ended:

1. Identify four “strategic directions” that will act as a guide when future decisions are made about how best to support student success. A draft of the strategic directions was prepared that clustered the opportunities identified by the group during conversation 2 into themes. Suggestions for improvement were collected and will be consulted to revise the strategic outline.
2. Introduce the “Student Success Community Alliance, an intentional and influential network of community members focused on serving student success in the Itasca area. Participants volunteered

to participate in Alliance as a core team member, ally, or supporter. The core team will link efforts to maximize coordination, and will be guided by the strategic directions mentioned above.

3. Begin gauging readiness for action. Through this exercise, the group discussed how to create meaningful change by estimating the stage of readiness for families, schools, employers and community at large.

A summary of the draft strategic directions, suggestions for improvement, and readiness estimation can be in the April 13, 2010 meeting notes.

Next Steps

Approximately 30 people signaled an initial interest in participating in the core team. IASC-Blandin Foundation will provide staffing and facilitation for the core team, which will meet for the first time in May. The full group will reconvene on September 28, 2010 to check in on progress.