

Illuminating Pathways to Educational Excellence



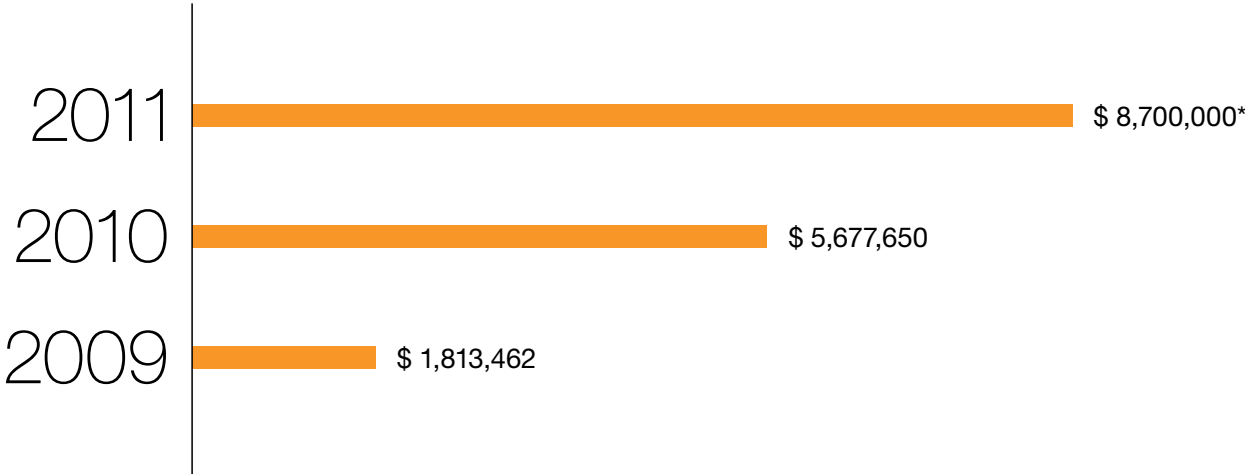
Every child has a promising future, and no organization can illuminate each of them alone. The efforts of Building Bright Futures will be more meaningful through continued collaboration with knowledgeable service providers who share the resolve that every child can and must succeed.

We envision a replicable, self-sustaining model of educational excellence created by mobilizing a strong, smart network of community resources to wholly support all children—from the time they are born until they graduate high school and beyond—resulting in bright futures that build themselves.

On a **Bright** Track

Thanks to the diligence of our staff and the efficiency of our partners, we have remained well within budget over the past three years—as we will into the future—ensuring that community funding is used to the greatest advantage of our students.

Expenditures



*Projected

2010 | 2011 Annual Report

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From our Board Chairman

Building Bright Futures was established by a passionate board. We had clear recognition of the terrible implications of poverty on the well-being of children in our community. I am lucky to have been a part of it.

We have no doubt that our mission is a powerful one. We know that it is difficult and can only be accomplished by **working together as a community.**

We have created a genuine movement – raising children to understand that they need to be in school, that they need care and guidance, that academic performance will impact the rest of their lives, and that the opportunities for educational success are not limited to children of wealth.

You can help in more ways than you have perhaps thought. One of those is educating the public's misunderstanding of a fundamental problem. Our observations say this:

Don't blame teachers and principals, and don't blame school boards.

We will always need good teachers, but we are neglecting the need for healthy, school-ready children, and we are doing this unwisely. Many experts estimate that 30 to 50 percent of poverty-ridden children are not ready for school. **It is the beginning of a lifetime of trouble.**

Poor children often do not have prenatal care and this neglect continues until school age. We have taken our first steps of funding high-quality childcare, and we are expanding our role on pushing proper medical care. But we are scratching the surface of a devastating problem. The problem is so large. Public funding – even if we have to neglect other problems – would pay big dividends. **Do what you can to educate your friends.**

You will notice that this report is written in the first person. We are all part of this effort. I hope you will recognize we are all in this for the long haul. It is a challenge for us all.

You have my deepest thanks for joining this effort.

Sincerely | **Richard "Dick" Holland** | Chairman of the Board

From our President

The 2010-2011 year has been a pivotal one for Building Bright Futures. We are beginning to see measurable progress for the youth in Douglas and Sarpy Counties—namely the significant portion living in poverty—because of the conversations we have started and the resources we have been able to bring together.

Building Bright Futures was developed from the recognition that **more than 40 percent of the children in our schools are impoverished—facing substantial odds of falling through the cracks before high school graduation**—and the passionate belief that, together, we have the power to change those odds. We have admittedly assumed some lofty goals, but looking closely at the community and our place in it, we know they are simply too important to ignore.

Our role is to be a catalyst—a convener. We can only be as effective as the network of providers we are working alongside. Phenomenal work is being done in the greater Omaha area; Building Bright Futures simply needs to fill the gaps and fuel dialogue to make the most of that knowledge and effort, and speak up for those who cannot advocate for themselves. We must focus on issues like truancy or school absenteeism and provide supports such as mentoring and tutoring to improve the academic performance of all students.

We are proud to celebrate the successes of 2010-2011, but **we still have a long road ahead.** In the coming year, through collaboration and advocacy, Building Bright Futures is concentrated on bringing intense local and statewide attention to factors that are fundamental to educational success: quality prenatal care and parenting skills, expanded access to early childhood education, access to quality child care and eligibility for meaningful childcare subsidies, affordable access to physical and mental care, concentrated focus on reading skills, rigorous curriculum and high expectations, reduction in teen pregnancies, extended time in the classroom and connecting youth to a mentor.

We are dedicated to putting consistent measurements in place behind all youth-serving programs in the community so that we can effectively gauge collective progress toward these goals moving forward, and we are implementing robust new online tools to facilitate seamless communication between partners and with the public.

Thank you for supporting Building Bright Futures and sharing our vision of educational excellence for every student in our community. **The future is bright.**

Sincerely | **Michael Yanney** | President

Taking Community Action

The mission of Building Bright Futures is **to measurably improve lifelong educational outcomes for every child by thoughtfully mobilizing a comprehensive network of community resources.** Building Bright Futures serves as a catalyst to convene service providers around Early Childhood, Health, Academic Supports & Student Engagement and College & Career Readiness.

In September 2008, Building Bright Futures published a Community Action Plan based on extensive research and critical dialogue around the pivotal issue of poverty in Douglas and Sarpy Counties. The implications of poverty on a child’s development, academic achievement and life success are enormous; but a strong, collaborative system of community-wide interventions can make all the difference.

Of the 11,000 children born in the two-county area each year, nearly 4,000 are born into poverty, a disproportionate number of whom are ethnic minorities. These children are likely to begin kindergarten unprepared and will never catch up to their more affluent peers.

With the intention of closing this achievement gap, Building Bright Futures established four primary goals:

	Improve academic achievement.	1
2	Increase the number of students who graduate from high school prepared for work or post-secondary education.	
	Provide post-secondary educational opportunities to every economically disadvantaged high school graduate in the two-county area.	3
4	Increase civic participation and community responsibility.	

Incorporating the insights of task forces and community forums to meet those goals, 15 recommendations to get children “Ready for Learning,” “Ready for Life” and “Ready for Work” comprise Building Bright Futures’ initiatives. These recommendations are the living, breathing drivers behind Building Bright Futures’ collaborations and public advocacy in the areas of Early Childhood, Health, Academic Supports & Student Engagement and College & Career Readiness:

1	Increase low-income families' access to high-quality, comprehensive early care and education programs.
2	Ensure teacher quality, strong curricula and early identification of impediments to academic achievement.
3	Provide more time and opportunities for learning.
4	Improve school attendance.
5	Support students through critical academic transitions.
6	Develop immediate programs for credit rescue and recovery.
7	Increase access to healthcare coverage.
8	Support healthy development through developmental screening and prevention.
9	Increase access to behavioral health services in schools and communities for all children from infancy through age 18.
10	Equip families to support healthy child development.
11	Promote more mentoring relationships.
12	Expand enrollment in after-school programs.
13	Emphasize early career awareness and career planning.
14	Strengthen career and technical education and work opportunities.
15	Develop programs to bridge the transition from high school to post-secondary education and training.

As you'll see moving through this Annual Report, we have come a long way in the last four years, but we still have a long way to go before we see every child's bright future naturally come to light.

If we, as a community, want to create a bright future for all students, we must begin with shared goals and outcomes. These outcomes serve as a foundation for success in school and life.

- › Students will attend school 96 percent of the time.
- › Students will meet or exceed standards in Reading, Math and Writing measured with annual Nebraska State Accountability Test scores (NeSA) for grades 3–8 and grade 11.
- › Students will maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or above annually for grades 7–12.
- › Students will graduate from high school.
- › Students' behavior will preclude any suspensions or expulsions.
- › Students will participate in service learning as a means to demonstrate civic participation and community responsibility.

Additionally, community stakeholders will define the outcomes of kindergarten readiness and college and career readiness.

With a focus on common outcomes, Building Bright Futures has partnered with United Way of the Midlands, The Sherwood Foundation, Avenue Scholars Foundation and various community partners to develop a comprehensive community data management system utilizing nFocus. Expected to launch in early 2012, this resource will enable youth service providers to consistently collect information about youth served and compile findings across the two-county area. For the first time, our community will have one comprehensive source of information upon which to build efforts and measure progress. We are exploring ways to make the most of nFocus and look forward to sharing it community-wide.

At a Glance

Building Bright Futures is gaining insight and building partnerships to ensure that every student has a promising future.

We are Illuminating Pathways to Educational Excellence.

Collaboration between community agencies, providers, schools and families is essential to building bright futures for youth.

This report tells the story of our collective work to illuminate these pathways and their intersections—identifying roadblocks to student success, making efforts to break those barriers and realizing the impacts of that work. We are hard-pressed to do justice in one document to every dynamic partnership and every organization making phenomenal strides on behalf of the futures at stake (please note the list of partners beginning on Page 34), but we hope that the spirit of collaboration comes across fully.

College & Career Readiness

Youth need to be prepared for post-high school opportunities that align with personal goals and interests including post-secondary education, technical training and work opportunities.

Academic Supports & Student Engagement

Youth need positive adult relationships and concentrated support in and out of school, and in and out of the home, to be engaged in their education and have successful transitions from kindergarten through high school graduation.

Health

Youth need access to regular health care, including physical and mental health services, from birth to age 18, to be prepared for school—in class and ready to learn.

Early Childhood

Children need access to quality early learning and child care experiences in order to be prepared to enter kindergarten and prevent an achievement gap from forming.



In 2029, their baby will graduate from high school— **just like her parents did.**

Like roughly 1,400 other high school students in Douglas and Sarpy Counties, Yessenia and Luis, age 19, discovered that they were expecting a child. Unlike many, it hasn't derailed their pursuit of bright futures. Luis graduated from Central High School in May 2011 and will enroll at Metropolitan Community College; and Yessenia, who has attended schools in seven different states, is on track to graduate from high school in 2014. Together, they are participating in the ECS Teen & Young Parent Program to receive the health care and academic support services they need to become confident parents and exemplary role models for their daughter.

illuminating Pathways in

Early Childhood

What happens in the first five years of life dramatically impacts a child's future—in school and beyond. Recognizing that all children deserve the same opportunities and need concentrated support to realize success, early childhood is a core focus area of Building Bright Futures—working to address the Community Action Plan recommendations listed on Page 5.

There are nearly
4,000
 children
 born into poverty
 in Douglas & Sarpy
 Counties each year.

Identifying Roadblocks

Research has shown that impoverished children are at risk of starting kindergarten significantly behind their peers who come from families with more resources (time, education and materials).

Parents' lack of access to prenatal care is the first obstacle to a child's healthy and productive life, and that is just the beginning.

Of the 1,400 children born to teen parents each year, more than 1,000 are born into poverty. Meeting the prenatal and developmental needs of these teens and their children is one of the highest priorities for Building Bright Futures.

For low-income families, access to affordable, high-quality child care is limited. Children born into poverty are not getting the education they need to succeed, and most

Approximately

40%

of births in Douglas County are to mothers without a high school education.

children who enter kindergarten behind their peers will not catch up. Programs such as Educare, Early Head Start and Head Start, may only reach about one-fourth of the children in need.

Once an achievement gap forms, it is nearly impossible to narrow.

Eighty-five percent of failing students entered school unprepared. Over one-half of children in poverty are below grade-level by the middle of elementary school.

Nebraska has one of the most restrictive standards in the nation for childcare subsidy, leaving many families who are in desperate need of child care unable to qualify for support and unable to access quality child care.

Private childcare providers often are limited in securing well-qualified, well-trained staff.

Teen mothers give birth to low-birthweight babies at higher rates than non-teen parents. Low-birthweight can be an early indicator of developmental difficulties or delays.

Pregnant and parenting youth aging out of foster care have minimal supports to transition into independence, thus continuing the cycle of poverty.

Highlighting Efforts

To address roadblocks and align with the recommendations in the Community Action Plan, Early Childhood Services has undertaken two primary initiatives:

one

The Network of Excellence

has been established to ensure that all children have access to high quality early childhood care.

Early Childhood Services (ECS) has established Douglas and Sarpy Counties' **first comprehensive network of childcare providers, dedicated to creating effective learning experiences for children through high-quality early care and education programs.** The Network of Excellence enables childcare providers to continuously improve programs without increasing costs for families by encouraging peer-to-peer growth and training opportunities. As a matter of public policy, ECS is also working to improve childcare subsidies in support of quality early childcare programming for families of low income.

The Network of Excellence coordinates several levels of service ranging from periodic training workshops ensuring teacher quality, to intensive on-site coaching and quality management.

ECS is currently partnering with eight childcare providers serving our most vulnerable population in low-income areas to provide resources and specialized coaching.

ECS is working with the Early Childhood Training Center, Early Childhood Consortium of the Omaha Area (ECCOA), Munroe-Meyer Institute, the National Association for the Education of Young Children and T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Nebraska to provide individualized support and scholarships to early childhood teachers for professional development.

ECS is addressing physical and behavioral health in partnership with KidSquad and the School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) to ensure that children from birth to age 5 have access to vision, hearing, oral health, behavioral/mental health and nutrition services.

two

The Teen & Young Parent Program was created to ensure that teens and young parents have not only quality care and education for their children, but access to support and opportunities for their own academic and professional success.

This program is a comprehensive, **integrated system of early health, academic and family services** to support pregnant and parenting teens and young adults (up to age 21) with limited resources, and their children birth to age 5.

The program is designed to help teens and young parents graduate from high school and pursue post-secondary career and educational opportunities, **reduce repeat pregnancies**, be self-sufficient, learn positive parenting skills, engage in healthy lifestyles, and have access to physical and mental health services.

The goal is that parents will become their child's most effective teacher and their children will meet all developmental milestones, live in safe and stable homes, receive quality care and benefit from services based on identified special needs.

This collaborative program is designed to connect young families with appropriate resources and service providers.

ECS is a central point of intake for the initial collaborating service providers, including the Child Saving Institute, Nebraska Children's Home Society, Heartland Family Service, Lutheran Family Services and Visiting Nurse Association. These partners provide more than 50 supports including pregnancy testing and counseling, home visitation, parenting classes and childbirth education, play groups, study groups and tutoring, and incentive programs. ECS is establishing a consistent method to track collaborative service implementation and success, and meeting with community agencies, schools and potential referral sources to expand participation.

Realizing Impacts

In 2011, the Network of Excellence reached approximately **600 children**, and **113 early childcare providers** received training and support for professional development to increase the quality of their care in eight private childcare centers. **Forty early childcare providers** traveled from Omaha to Lincoln to participate in critical early learning legislative hearings—taking advocacy into their own hands.

The Teen & Young Parent Program served nearly 500 teens and young adults.

Of the teens that were served, **61** obtained their high school diplomas in 2011.

Approximately **400** children of the teen and young parents are receiving the needed support to enter school on par with their peers.

An additional **73** teens who are expecting babies this year have access to the prenatal support services they need and are on track to graduate high school.

Through the Teen & Young Parent Program, teen mothers are being provided with prenatal care earlier in their pregnancies, which lowers the risk of low-birthweight babies.

The Teen & Young Parent Program has also worked with other BBF programs (D2 Center, SBHCs and the Attendance Collaborative) to coordinate services to help teen parents stay in school, improve attendance and increase their likelihood of graduation.

Moving Forward

The effort starts with seeing that **every parent has access to quality prenatal care and parenting training.**

Expanding the Teen & Young Parent Program—assuring that parenting teens in Douglas and Sarpy Counties have the support they need to graduate from high school and the skills to meet their children’s emotional, developmental and educational needs—is essential for the success of the next generation. With the efforts of the past two years, we are now within reach of meeting this goal.

We will work toward actively **reducing the number of teen pregnancies** by increasing high school education among teens and teen parents.

ECS and collaborating partners are impacting great numbers of children, but we need to continue working deeper to directly equip families with the knowledge and resources to support their children’s, as well as their own, personal healthy development.

ECS is working to assure that **every parent in need has access to quality childcare services.**

We currently have more than 15,000 infants and toddlers unserved or underserved by quality childcare services. Increasing eligibility and the amount of the low-income childcare subsidy are needed to provide sustainable improvements in quality childcare for families with limited resources, particularly in light of state and federal budget cuts affecting Head Start/Early Head Start programs. Currently, Nebraska ranks near the bottom in the

nation for childcare subsidy eligibility—limiting the amount of early childhood care received by impoverished children, and limiting providers’ ability to raise quality standards.

Through IBM’s KidSmart Early Learning Program, **children will receive a boost toward kindergarten readiness** as a result of 50 Young Explorer computer stations that were awarded to ECS for placement in Omaha childcare centers that serve youth from families with limited resources.

To keep informed about Early Childhood Services, visit www.ecsomaha.org.

For more information on critical public policy issues impacting children in Nebraska, visit <http://buildingbrightfutures.net/public-policy/>.

For the first time in Teddy's life, he is able **to be in school consistently.**

Teddy has asthma, but because his mom did not have the flexibility at work, nor reliable transportation, he wasn't able to visit a doctor to have it treated. He was feeling miserable and missing valuable time at school—limiting what he was able to learn. Last year, he saw a medical provider at a School-Based Health Center who helped get his chronic symptoms under control. Now, Teddy is spending more time in his second grade classroom—and performing better—than he and mom ever thought possible.

Illuminating Pathways in

Health



Access to physical, behavioral and mental health care is critical to a child's development. **Health fundamentally impacts a child's ability to be present in school and, therefore, touches all other aspects of academic achievement.** Health is an important Building Bright Futures focus area—addressing the Community Action Plan recommendations listed on Page 5.

Identifying Roadblocks

Children from low-income families do not have access to quality health care, which significantly impacts their school attendance and ability to advance on grade-level. Beginning prenatally, more than 35,000 children in Douglas and Sarpy Counties do not have a primary care physician, and research shows that children without continual care have poor school attendance.

“Continual care” includes basic treatment for things like colds and sore throats, as well as essential preventative health screenings. For example, it is clear that too many Nebraska children are affected developmentally and academically by elevated blood lead levels, but are not tested for exposure.

Disadvantaged youth also have limited access to behavioral and mental health evaluations and care.

Students with behavioral/mental health problems are

more likely to be placed in special education classrooms, receive failing grades, face grade retention, be subject to disciplinary action and drop out of high school. These issues, many of which **could be prevented with early developmental screening and accessible treatment,** are costing youth their futures, not to mention incurring fiscal costs for our schools and communities.

Highlighting Efforts

Building Bright Futures in partnership with area health care providers and Omaha Public Schools (OPS) has implemented **School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs)**: an integrated, in-school delivery model that offers quality physical and behavioral/mental health care services.

Under LB 1106 (passed by the Nebraska Legislature in 2010), school districts, community leaders and health care providers are able to come together for the first time to find a way to **provide youth consistent access to acute, chronic and preventative health care.**

The SBHCs enable low-income families to access consistent quality physical health care services, developmental screenings, behavioral/mental health care services and medical care coverage, all beginning at birth. They are not intended to replace a regular health care provider or a medical home, but rather to be a portal to care for those that do not yet have one.

In fall 2010, SBHCs were opened at six OPS sites with care provided by Charles Drew Health Center and OneWorld Community Health Centers. In addition to students at the six host schools, the SBHCs offer physical health care services to students at 63 OPS linked schools and their minor siblings. Collaborators in this effort include University of Nebraska Medical Center, Children's Hospital and Medical Center, Creighton University Medical Center and Boys Town National Research Hospital.

SBHC sites:

Belvedere Elementary

Indian Hill Elementary

Kellom Elementary

King Science Magnet Middle

Liberty Elementary

Spring Lake Magnet Elementary

In collaboration with OPS, local providers and Early Childhood Services, Building Bright Futures is developing the youth Behavioral and Mental Health Care model for implementation in coordination with the SBHCs to offer screenings, as well as intervention services that are more accessible—logistically and economically—for low-income families in need.

Realizing Impacts

With ready access to quality, affordable health care, children are able to avoid school absences. Research has shown that consistent presence in the classroom is at the core of **closing the achievement gap.**

The **2010-2011** school year was the first year of operation, during which **3,891** students in **36** schools enrolled, and **1,558** students were provided health care during a total of **2,245** visits.

That's 2,245 instances when students might have been out of school, potentially for multiple days, but instead received timely health care and were able to return to the classroom.

One-third of students served at the SBHCs were children from linked schools, and more than 75 percent were children under the age of 12. The highest concentration of visits occurred in the southeast region of the city through the Spring Lake and Indian Hill host sites. More than 70 percent of students served were African American or Hispanic, and nearly 60 percent of children served were enrolled in Medicaid/Kids Connection, which is a striking figure in comparison to the overall state enrollment of 33 percent.

Ninety percent of students who visited the SBHCs did so two times or less over the course of the year. The most common services provided were immunizations and treatment for common colds, asthma, ear infections, obesity and anemia. Several schools were also able to provide pre-K vision screenings and oral health in collaboration with a community dentistry team.

As the 2011-2012 school year is underway, more than 28,000 children and teens have enrolled in the SBHCs. The need for these important health services is self-evident.

Moving Forward

The SBHCs continue to be a highly successful community collaborative.

In recent years, we have made enormous strides in expanding accessibility to health care services and catalyzed exemplary, unprecedented collaboration between schools and health care providers. Due to the overwhelming need for SBHC services in our community, Building Bright Futures will open a seventh SBHC in 2012 at Omaha Northwest High School.

Because too many Nebraska children are impaired by lead poisoning, but are not tested for exposure, Building Bright Futures will continue to support efforts to expand blood lead testing of children prior to school enrollment.

Access to quality health care—physical, behavioral and mental—is critical to a child’s academic success from birth until graduation, integrated in every pathway to a bright future.

SBHCs can only be as effective as the prenatal care that precedes them and the academic supports that surround them. Expanding access to quality physical and behavioral health services for every child is essential to improving school attendance and academic achievement. Building on the success of the SBHCs and strengthening the collaboration among the community’s health care providers is the challenge moving forward.

For more information about the School-Based Health Centers, visit <http://www.ops.org/sbhc>.

To access the full 2010-2011 SBHC Data Report, visit <http://buildingbrightfutures.net/healthy-futures/>.

“My first two years of high school were **‘whatever’** to me. **Somehow, Juliana broke that wall.**”

Saul, 17, was involved with gangs, getting into fights, arguing with teachers and failing classes at Omaha South High School. He didn't see the point of attending because decisions made during his first two years had already made it impossible for him to graduate on time. At the start of the 2010-2011 school year, he was referred to Juliana Garza at Latino Center of the Midlands. As he began working with her on a regular basis, he realized what he would be missing in his life if he were to drop out. Now, with Juliana's continued guidance, Saul is submitting homework assignments, taking online credit recovery courses and working part-time. He is on track to graduate this year, and plans to go to college, enroll in the military or join the police force.

Illuminating Pathways in

Academic Supports
& **Student Engagement**



Active support systems, positive adult relationships and engagement with the learning process are crucial to student achievement.

Recognizing that youth need continual guidance during elementary, middle and high school, Academic Supports & Student Engagement is a large focus area of Building Bright Futures that encompasses many integrated initiatives—working toward the Community Action Plan recommendations listed on Page 5.

Building Bright Futures' Academic Supports & Student Engagement efforts encompass two ideas at the most basic level: **students must be in school to have a chance of demonstrating achievement, and students must have access to supports both when they are in school and when they are not.**

Under the umbrella of the initiatives on the following pages, schools and countless community providers are collaborating to surround youth. Many of these programs have been in place for years, but are integrating with others in new ways to ensure that more children are being fully supported.

As previously articulated, nearly 4,000 children in poverty enter kindergarten unprepared and are at an exponentially greater risk of failing. Beyond that, assuming that we are able to help students access quality health care and early learning during the first five years of life, there are still roughly 13 years of primary and secondary school during which gaps can form. Services supporting school-age children must intersect to help students be engaged in school and have access to the resources—relationships and materials—that will help them achieve. The community has a plethora of programs that support youth in school and out of school; yet without concentrated coordination and a shared focus on outcomes, we inadvertently present too many opportunities for students to fall through the cracks.

By starting conversations among families, schools and community providers, we are casting a wider net to support students in the classroom. We are dedicating resources specifically toward understanding why children aren't in school and getting them there consistently to ensure that they're learning, developing standards for after-school programming catered to the children served, increasing potential for positive relationships with adults, supporting children during transitions, and uncovering less traditional pathways to academic success for those who are no longer engaged in the school system.

Identifying Roadblocks

Attendance and Achievement

Approximately **6,000 students in the metropolitan area are absent from school each day.** During the 2010-2011 school year, over 3,000 students were referred to the Douglas County Attorney for 20 or more absences.

In 2009-2010, students in 11th grade who missed more than 20 days of school had a NeSA Reading score of 72, compared with a score of 102 for those who were absent less than 20 days.

Students who miss school (for health or other reasons) are at risk of limiting their bright futures. Absenteeism is a primary predictor of school failure because students who fall behind are significantly more likely to drop out—dramatically increasing chances of unemployment and incarceration, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and costing society successful and contributing citizens.

It is staggering that 50 percent of the students on free and reduced lunch scored below average on NeSA Reading tests.

Poverty is not only the greatest predictor of attendance, but is also the greatest link to academic failure.

Time and Relationships

Nearly 25% of K-12 youth in Omaha look after themselves after school for an average of eight hours per week. Between 3 and 6 p.m., youth are more likely to engage in risky behaviors. Those who are enrolled in after-school programs are less likely to drop out of high school, be suspended or be arrested.

Only 12 percent of children participate in after-school programs

(an average of seven hours per week or three days per week). But 48 percent of students surveyed say that they would participate if such programs were made available to them.

Stable adult relationships both inside and outside of school are crucial for youth development.

Relationships with a caring adult are shown to decrease risky behaviors, increase communication skills, improve self-esteem and improve school engagement.

The following describe the current Building Bright Futures-supported programs and activities addressing the Community Action Plan recommendations for Academic Supports & Student Engagement.

UNO Attendance Collaborative

Highlighting Efforts

The Attendance Collaborative is a partnership between BBF and the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO), working with schools, parents, students and community organizations to improve school attendance and engagement through the implementation of school-based absenteeism prevention practices and intervention strategies. Currently, the Collaborative is active at 23 pilot sites in the Omaha, Millard and Ralston Public Schools.

The pilot schools have implemented an “Absenteeism Prevention and Intervention Plan”

in order to identify barriers at the school level that may impact school attendance and culture, inherently encouraging positive relationships and students’ engagement with school.

The Collaborative is working closely with community partners and the pilot schools and districts to approach chronic absenteeism through a best practice model, and to communicate that model

with schools and other service providers. BBF also worked with the 11 school district superintendents to develop **uniform attendance policies throughout the metro area.**

Youth Attendance Navigators (YANs), a partnership with the City of Omaha, are active in five OPS middle and high schools through local community agencies: The Y of Greater Omaha, Urban League of Nebraska, Completely KIDS, Latino Center of the Midlands and Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands. Focusing on students who have missed between seven and 12 days of school, YANs work closely with youth and families to improve attendance.

Omaha Housing Authority (OHA) is working with families to improve daily attendance of students living in OHA developments by conducting home visits, assisting with transportation to school, etc. Currently, over 30 schools in OPS that enroll 11 or more OHA students are involved.

Realizing Impacts

During the 2010-2011 school year, the Attendance Collaborative impacted 15,041 Omaha pilot school students,

1,779 Ralston pilot school students and 175 Millard pilot school students. **These efforts contributed to an overall decrease of approximately 7 percent of students missing 10 or more days of school.**

The student-staff advocate program was developed to connect excessively absent students with a caring adult in the school building. Fifteen pilot schools participated in the program **with a total of 731 students** paired with an advocate.

Moving Forward

Continuing the momentum created this year among the 23 pilot schools, school superintendents, school administrators, principals, teachers, parents, county attorneys and juvenile judges, in addition to city, county and state officials, presents a major opportunity to improve academic performance by increasing school attendance. By targeting the students with a history of more than 10 school absences and **providing early, strong and persistent support** and intervention, we will reduce the number of referrals to the County Attorney.

UNO Service Learning

Highlighting Efforts

The service learning approach developed through the UNO Service Learning Academy in partnership with BBF, offers a pragmatic and proven model to **build bridges between schools and the community.** K-12 students involved in service learning get first-hand experience in working with agencies and organizations serving the community. These partnering organizations provide “real life,” meaningful learning experiences for students. Week-long Service Learning Seminars for P-12 and college educators and non-profit providers teach quality standards to co-develop effective service learning projects and asset-rich student experiences. This program is designed to be a catalyst for bringing relevance to the classroom and to support BBF’s goal to increase civic participation and community responsibility.

Realizing Impacts

To date, 115 K-16 faculty have completed training to integrate quality service learning experiences into the curriculum. In the fall of 2011, 32 service learning projects are being implemented. Over the past three semesters, **2,000 K-12 students** and **1,000 UNO students** have been engaged with service learning.

Moving Forward

Once a teacher is trained in service learning pedagogy, the teacher embeds it into the curriculum. In addition, once teachers are trained, they tend to build a school cohort of educators engaged in service learning. This momentum impacts hundreds of students throughout the school. Additional outreach efforts are under way to expand the reach of service learning in Douglas and Sarpy Counties.

Academic **Supports**

Highlighting Efforts

In the beginning stage of this effort, two projects are in place to complement schools' and providers' work to improve academic achievement:

The Math Teacher Assistant (MTA) Program

has been developed in partnership with UNO – employing math or math education majors as MTAs in eight pilot middle school classrooms. Working with students one-on-one or in small groups, these assistants are able to deepen the effectiveness of math teachers' lessons.

Omaha Public Library: Homework Help & tutor.com

is a partnership with Omaha Public Library, the City of Omaha and BBF promoting the use of the library for homework help and tutor.com. Available to anyone with an Omaha Public Library card through the Library's website, tutor.com provides one-on-one interactive tutoring to help students with homework, projects and test preparation.

Realizing Impacts

Daily classroom math instruction has been supplemented by focused support from 20 MTAs, **directly impacting 1,400 students.**

More than 1,000 students have used tutor.com for help with school assignments and studying.

Moving Forward

BBF will continue to work with partners, including UNO and the Omaha Public Library, to expand access to academic supports within and outside of the classroom.

Midlands Mentoring Partnership

Highlighting Efforts

Midlands Mentoring Partnership (MMP) is a collaboration of mentoring organizations that achieve membership by showing evidence of meeting quality standards. This collaboration exists to foster public awareness of the youth need for stable relationships with adults and the existence

of high-quality mentoring programs; support targeted mentor recruitment; and raise the quality of local mentoring programs to national standards. Currently, 16 organizations are members of MMP.

Realizing Impacts

MMP has added four member organizations, bringing the total of member organizations to 16, while three additional organizations are finalizing documentation to become full members. These 19 providers

collectively made **629 new mentor matches in 2010-2011.**

Moving Forward

Expanding access to quality mentoring programs and assuring that every child in the community has a caring adult in their life will improve school attendance and the academic performance of each child.

Collective for Youth

Highlighting Efforts

The Middle School Learning Center Initiative (MSLCI) is transitioning from its small OPS-serving base to the Collective for Youth – **a coordinated city-wide network of high-quality after-school providers.** The Collective for Youth/MSLCI was created to address extended learning (after school and during the summer) needs of middle school students. In partnership with the City of Omaha, The Sherwood Foundation, OPS and community agencies, Collective for Youth is dedicated to building and maintaining quality after-school programs within designated school buildings.

Through MSLCI sites, academic support, recreation, nutrition and cultural programming are delivered by teachers, enrichment activity providers and youth service agencies based

on the needs of the surrounding community. Currently, programs are officially administered by six community agencies in seven OPS middle schools through open enrollment, focusing on students in need.

Realizing Impacts

The MSLCI has catalyzed provision of academic and enrichment programs every day after school for **1,346 students**, the majority of whom are from families with limited resources.

Moving Forward

Expansion of after-school programs through the Collective for Youth will help provide greater continuity, quality and access to out-of-school time academic supports. Providing up access to the 48 percent of students surveyed who indicated an interest in participating in after-school programs is a high priority for the Collective for Youth.

Re-engagement

Highlighting Efforts

The D2 Center | Directions Diploma has been established to **assist disengaged and out-of-school youth ages 15 to 20 in finding a pathway to a high school diploma.** The D2 Center offers opportunities for re-engagement and credit recovery through a comprehensive system of supports including behavioral/mental health, social services and college or career readiness.

By assessing academic status and any non-academic factors contributing to disengagement, staff identifies strategies and a plan **in partnership with the youth** to help put them on track to obtain their high school diploma working with Youth Navigators and community-based partners.

Realizing Impacts

The D2 Center has opened its doors to students in need of an unconventional pathway to high school graduation. Since the start of the 2011 school year, 32 students have entered the D2 Center.

Moving Forward

Expansion of programs, such as those offered at the D2 Center, and further coordination of new and existing in-school and out-of-school supports, will create more opportunities for student success.

Early Career Awareness

Highlighting Efforts

Nebraska Career Connections is an online tool funded by the Nebraska Department of Education, for use by youth-serving agencies, to promote early career awareness and post-secondary readiness. The revamped website and corresponding comprehensive instruction manual are being incorporated into BBF and community programs.

Realizing Impacts

Approximately **1,000 students received a jump-start on career exploration** using Nebraska Career Connections through community providers.

BBF is Moving Forward

Illuminating the pathway to educational excellence begins at the earliest moment of a child's existence and continues throughout each student's life. **BBF is dedicated to bringing the entire community together to eliminate the barriers to academic success encountered by children living in poverty.**

Concentrated, consistent access to quality learning opportunities is the most direct way to level the playing field for all youth, regardless of income. Therefore, BBF is advocating for extension of the school day and school year, and implementation of mandatory summer school for those who need it. If we can ensure that children get to the classroom and are engaged in effective, highly-focused learning experiences when they are there, elongating that school time can only result in greater academic achievement and more timely detection of additional needs.

For more information on Academic Supports & Student Engagement, visit www.buildingbrightfutures.net.

Illuminating Pathways in

College & Career Readiness

Low educational attainment among young people is a significant barrier to employment and earning potential. In addition to Early Childhood, Health and Academic Supports & Student Engagement services, students, particularly those from low-income families, need **concentrated college and career guidance** to take the next steps toward the bright futures they envision.

Born out of the same research and Community Action Plan, **Avenue Scholars Foundation** is dedicated to supporting students of talent and financial need from high school through higher education and into the workforce – creating pathways that lead to productive adult lives.

Avenue Scholars Foundation serves approximately 530 students in seven area high schools, Metropolitan Community College and UNO, using the best practice of “intrusive advisement” which centers on a close student-advisor relationship. “Talent Advisors” are the cornerstone of the program – helping students feel valued by the institution and motivated to succeed in school.

Talent Advisors work closely with each student to develop a comprehensive academic, career and financial plan designed to achieve a successful college or vocational school experience. They meet daily at their schools and the Avenue Center – a state-of-the-art area designed to promote academic excellence, peer collaboration and social networking.

Students enter the Avenue Scholars Program as high school juniors with a 2.2 GPA. In the first two years, **99 percent of Scholars in high school graduated and 88 percent advanced to a post-secondary academic experience.**

They significantly outperformed other students in their cohort and 88 percent remain in college for a second year. The third class of Avenue Scholars is beginning in 2011-12.

The program has seen remarkable progress in improved grade performance at the high school level and is helping to drive college entry and retention. Avenue Scholars Foundation will not truly achieve its mission until academic training leads Scholars to quality job opportunities in careers they love.

Partner & Provider Network

Building Bright Futures (BBF) could not be successful without the collaboration of its partners. Thank you for your work and dedication to the youth in our community.

Funding Partners

Buffett Early Childhood Fund
 City of Omaha
 Holland Family Foundation
 Lozier Foundation
 Michael B. Yanney
 Mutual of Omaha Foundation
 Nebraska Department of Education
 Region 6
 The Sherwood Foundation
 Weitz Family Foundation
 William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation

Federal, State and Local Collaborative Partners

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School District Partners

Bellevue Public Schools
 Bennington Public Schools
 Douglas County West Community Schools
 Elkhorn Public Schools
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 Millard Public Schools
 Omaha Public Schools
 Papillion–La Vista Public Schools
 Ralston Public Schools
 South Sarpy District #46
 Westside Community Schools

Pilot Schools

Millard Public Schools

Millard Central Middle School
 Millard Horizon High School

Omaha Public Schools

Belvedere Elementary School
 Franklin Elementary School
 Indian Hill Elementary School
 Kellom Elementary School
 Kennedy Elementary School
 Liberty Elementary School
 Spring Lake Magnet Elementary School
 King Science and Technology Magnet Middle School
 McMillan Magnet Middle School
 Monroe Middle School
 Nathan Hale Middle School
 Norris Middle School
 R. M. Marrs Magnet Middle School
 Benson Magnet High School
 Blackburn Alternative High School
 Omaha Northwest Magnet High School
 Omaha North Magnet High School
 Omaha South Magnet High School

Ralston Public Schools

Mockingbird Elementary School
 Ralston Middle School
 Ralston High School

Program & Provider Partners

100 Black Men of Omaha
 African Culture Connection
 Alegent Health
 Avenue Scholars Foundation
 Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands
 Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands
 Boys Town National Research Hospital
 Buffett Early Childhood Fund
 Center for Holistic Development
 Charles Drew Health Center
 Child Saving Institute
 Children's Hospital & Medical Center
 Children's Physicians
 City of Omaha, Office of the Mayor
 Community Action Champion Groups
 Community Conversations
 Completely KIDS
 Conference for Inclusive Communities
 Creighton University
 Creighton University Medical Center
 Early Childhood Consortium of the Omaha Area (ECCOA)
 Early Childhood Training Center (ECTC)
 Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership (ENCAP)
 Educare
 Education Service Unit 3 (ESU3)
 Empowerment Network
 Girls Incorporated of Omaha
 GMBC Amachi
 Goodwill
 Habitat for Humanity
 Head Start
 Heartland Family Service
 Hope Center for Kids
 Juvenile Justice Provider Forum
 KidSquad
 Latino Center of the Midlands
 Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties
 Lutheran Family Services
 Methodist Health Systems
 Metropolitan Child Advocacy Coalition (MCAC)
 Metropolitan Community College

Metropolitan Omaha Education Consortium (MOEC)
 Midwest Trailblazers
 Munroe-Meyer Institute
 Nebraska 21st Century Community Learning Centers
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 Nebraska Children & Families Foundation
 Nebraska Children's Home Society
 Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
 Nebraska Early Childhood Training Center
 Nebraska Humane Society
 Nothing But Net Foundation
 Ollie Webb Center Inc.
 Omaha Community Foundation
 Omaha Home for Boys
 Omaha Housing Authority
 Omaha Public Library
 OneWorld Community Health Centers
 Open Door Mission
 Partnership For Our Kids
 Release Ministries
 South Omaha Neighborhood Association
 TeamMates Mentoring Program
 The Greater Omaha After School Alliance
 The Y (YMCA of Greater Omaha)
 United Way of the Midlands
 University of Nebraska at Omaha
 University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC)
 University of Nebraska System
 UNMC College of Public Health
 UNMC Physicians
 Urban League of Nebraska
 Visiting Nurses Association of the Midlands
 Voices for Children
 Women's Center for Advancement (WCA)
 Youth Emergency Services

Data Partners

Avenue Scholars Foundation
 Boys & Girls Club of the Midlands
 The Sherwood Foundation
 United Way of the Midlands

Leadership

The passion and energy of Building Bright Futures' leadership keeps the organization afloat and conversations with partners alive.

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Illuminating Pathways to Educational Excellence