

# READY FOR



# SUCCESS

## COMMUNITY REPORT

---

SEPT 09



**BUILDING  
BRIGHT  
FUTURES**  
CREATING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE & EQUITY

# FORWARD MOVING

## Comprehensive Community-Wide Model for Creating Educational Excellence and Equity

### FRIENDS AND COMMUNITY:

The Building Bright Futures Board of Directors is sincerely touched by the intensity of the public support for the dramatic changes required to improve academic achievement for all of our students. The challenges we face are large and complex but we are convinced that these challenges are equaled by the commitment of the Omaha metropolitan community. The programs and overall vision Building Bright Futures is launching during the current school year would not have been possible without the dedicated participation of thousands of people throughout the Douglas and Sarpy County area.

The tragic reality we face is the inequality of opportunity that exists for children in our community. We must revolutionize our educational systems to tackle the academic achievement gap.

To assure that every child is ready to succeed in school and in life we will need to sustain the high level of commitment we have experienced to date. Community engagement is the essential ingredient in producing successful schools, parents, teachers and students. It is the responsibility of every one of us to be the mentors, teachers and leaders that our children need.

Together, we have begun to build a comprehensive and coherent pathway to academic achievement and success for all of our children. We will need to continue to challenge and support each other in the months and years ahead if we are to achieve the vision of success we all share.

Sincerely,

The Building Bright Futures Board of Directors



**BUILDING  
BRIGHT  
FUTURES**  
CREATING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE & EQUITY

### Building Bright Futures Board of Directors

**Mr. Richard Holland,**  
CHAIRMAN

**Mr. Michael Yanney,**  
PRESIDENT

**Ms. Susie Buffett**

**Mr. Mike Fahey**

**Ms. Andy Holland**

**Mrs. Dianne Lozier**

**Mr. Wally Weitz,**  
TREASURER

**Mrs. Barbara Weitz**

**Mrs. Katie Weitz-White,**

SECRETARY

**Mr. John Cavanaugh,**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND VICE-PRESIDENT

### BUILDING BRIGHT FUTURES

#### Building Bright Futures Programs

Building Bright Futures programs are founded on a set of underlying operating principles directed at creating community-wide, measurable, sustainable improvement in academic performance and career opportunity outcomes for every student while eliminating the performance gaps among students. The Building Bright Futures effort began by identifying and creating an inventory of program and provider strengths as well as weaknesses in the community.

Building on what works and expanding the capacity of successful programs is the first step, followed closely by initiating policy changes and developing programs to meet identified needs. Building Bright Futures will coordinate with all existing programs and community resources to produce a concentrated effort designed to significantly change student outcomes.

#### Phase I

Building Bright Futures began over the course of an 18-month period from 2007 to 2008 with meetings hosting more than 1,500 community members representing more than 400 organizations. These meetings included students, parents, teachers, school administrators, neighborhood organizations, health care and behavioral health care providers, employers, non-profit program providers and religious leaders. Each participated in a comprehensive set of defined task force meetings and community forums that focused on each element required to achieve academic success. Groups identified the strengths and weaknesses of each of those elements within the Omaha metropolitan area. The result was the *2008 Building Bright Futures Community Action Plan for Creating Educational Excellence and Equity*, which summarizes the community-wide consensus on what needs to be done to dramatically improve academic performance, career awareness and create equality of opportunity within our educational system and community.

#### 2009 Community Report Phase II

These action steps are being implemented as a response to the community recommendations. These initial programs and activities are just the beginning of the community changing outcomes that can result from a focused, coordinated approach to closing achievement gaps and creating opportunities for educational excellence and equity for all students in Douglas and Sarpy counties. Phase II involves a coordinated program model for comprehensive community-wide excellence in education, designed to address each element essential for every student to succeed academically and to become a productive and contributing member of the community.

The Building Bright Futures program model is based upon maximizing parental engagement and involvement through early identification and intervention, parenting support from birth and creating an ongoing, coherent and coordinated family, in addition to fostering student support systems designed to provide students with the specific levels of support needed to become successful students and citizens.



# PIPELINE TO SUCCESS

**Building Bright Futures (BBF)** is committed to dramatic change in student success. Every child faces new challenges at each stage of life. Early and effective interventions and supports are critical. The BBF programs and support systems listed in the pipeline are designed to reduce these challenges.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

3,500 infants and parents at risk connected to existing community resources  
 1,000 teen parents and their children receiving support to be successful in school  
 1,000 children receiving high quality early childhood services

10,184 children under 5 in low-income families in Douglas and Sarpy Counties are not served by state and federally funded programs

## HEALTHY FUTURES

3,536 students in pilot school health centers  
 Facilitate access to comprehensive health curriculum for all students

82,000 youth without a regular health care provider and 10,118 youth without health insurance

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, ATTENDANCE & SERVICE LEARNING

5,700 students involved in 15 pilot schools  
 Provide 40 *Developmental Assets* training  
 250 school personnel trained in the School Refusal Assessment Survey

An average of 6,582 students in Douglas and Sarpy Counties are absent from school each day

## MENTORING

Establish full-time support for increasing the quality, capacity and diversity of mentors

8,000 vulnerable youth in the two-county area need mentors

## AFTER SCHOOL

Expand Middle School Learning Center Initiative (MSLCI) enrollment to 2,135 students

39,144 youth are left unsupervised after school

## ACADEMIC SUPPORTS

Provide tutoring to 1,928 students in 15 pilot sites

An estimated 15,000 youth are not proficient in reading and math

## QUALITY CURRICULUM

Support Nebraska's participation in the National Core Curriculum Project and the transition to statewide testing in reading, math and science

Nebraska needs common assessments and graduation requirements

## TEACHER & LEADER EFFECTIVENESS

Support increased teacher effectiveness and compensation  
 Support professional development that connects teacher effectiveness and student achievement

Nebraska ranks 45th in the nation for teacher compensation

## DIPLOMA NOW!

Provide credit rescue and credit recovery support for 690 students in two high schools and in two alternative high schools

10,845 young adults (ages 20-24) in Douglas and Sarpy Counties do not have a high-school diploma

## NEBRASKA CAREER CONNECTIONS

Increase access to Nebraska Career Connections in 15 pilot schools and the Middle School Learning Center Initiative serving 7,835 students

19,024 high school graduates (ages 18-24) do not have post-secondary education



# CREATING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY

Our mission is to improve academic performance, raise graduation rates, increase civic and community responsibility and ensure that all students are prepared for post-secondary education by developing partnerships with existing providers and creating new evidence-based programs to develop a comprehensive, community-based network of services.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF BUILDING BRIGHT FUTURES

Involve families and communities in meaningful ways.

Develop culturally responsive programs that build on the strengths of youth, families, and communities.

Focus on quality so every program is of the highest caliber.

Provide professional development so that professionals working with children – teachers, counselors, mentors, and others – receive the training and support they need to be successful.

Emphasize early identification of developmental academic delays or difficulties so children can benefit from effective early intervention.

Connect every child in the metro area with a highly trained, caring and competent professional (e.g., academic counselor or social worker) who provides advice, support and referrals to services, as needed.

Create a robust infrastructure that emphasizes sharing information across programs to ensure coordinated services.

## GOALS OF BUILDING BRIGHT FUTURES

Improve academic achievement.

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.

Increase civic participation and community responsibility.



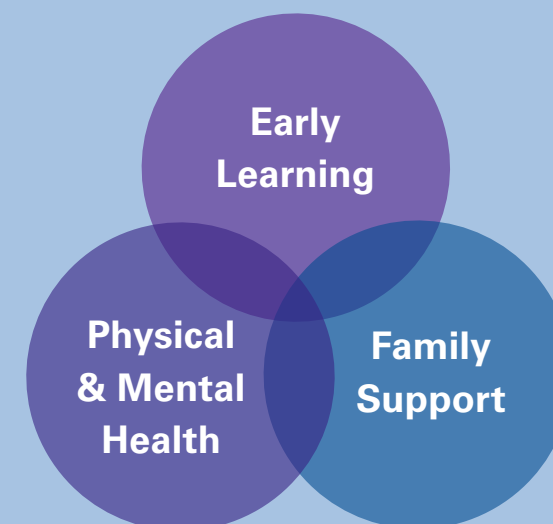
# READY FOR LIFE

High quality early childhood education is essential for success in life, from social-emotional and language development to success in school, reduction in crime and economic prosperity.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Building Bright Futures Early Childhood Services (BBF ECS) will enable parents to be their child's first effective teacher through home visitation services in the first 12 month period. BBF ECS will promote every child's healthy growth and development through comprehensive health care and provide effective early learning through high quality early care and education programs. All domains of development – physical, social-emotional and intellectual – will be promoted. All networks of support will be coordinated and integrated to achieve maximum effectiveness, minimize unnecessary duplication and prevent children and families from falling through the cracks.

BBF ECS will be composed of a comprehensive, integrated system of early health and family support services, early childhood education supports and additional resources. These components will connect through shared data and information, common assessments and reporting, as well as coordinated care and referral.



## COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Support healthy developmental screening and prevention

Equip families to support healthy child development

Increase low-income families' access to high-quality, comprehensive early childhood education programs

### Early Childhood Education Network of Excellence will offer:

- Supports to existing providers
- Assessment of programs and child outcomes
- Data Registry

### Early Childhood Health and Family Supports will offer:

- Enhanced Medical Homes that maintain a comprehensive approach as well as developmental screening and guidance
- A single point of intake/referral for home visitation/family supports through assessment of need matched with referred service level, care coordination and data registry

## PUBLIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Private investments must be met with public policy reform to lift Nebraska out of the bottom rankings in childcare assistance eligibility, childcare licensing regulation and oversight.

- Increase the eligibility level for childcare subsidies and target funding at programs working to achieve high quality
- Pass childcare licensing rules and regulations that will improve the standard of care for licensed childcare programs

# READY FOR LIFE

Access to quality health-care and an effective health curriculum are essential elements of academic success.

## HEALTHY FUTURES

The Coordinated School Health Model is the framework for Healthy Futures. The first two strategies include:

### Coordinated School Health Centers

Coordinated School Health Centers (CSHC) are school-based centers operated by professional health-care providers that assure access to the highest quality health-care for every student. A health-care provider led system will develop a sustainable business model for the CSHCs. The current goal is to start the first two, of six, pilot sites by mid-fall 2009.

### Health Literacy

Health Literacy involves the development of a comprehensive K-12 health education curriculum for all students in the two-county area that helps youth move towards productive and healthy life choices. The first step involves exploring community-wide use of supplements to health curriculum that aligns with national health standards.

Addressing the behavioral/mental health needs of school-age children will be developed in alignment with the school health centers.

## COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase access to quality health care coverage

Increase access to behavioral health services in schools and communities for all children from infancy through age 18

# READY FOR LEARNING

Success in school requires student engagement, parental support, quality health care, effective teaching, inspired leadership and rigorous curriculum.

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, ATTENDANCE AND SERVICE LEARNING

Student Engagement, Attendance & Service Learning is a collaboration between BBF and the University of Nebraska at Omaha working on the following five strategies:

### Attendance Incentives Program

The Attendance Incentives Program has begun in 15 pilot elementary, middle and high schools in three school districts to increase attendance at the school building level based upon the Attendance Incentive Action Plans created by each school building. Tangible, special recognition and privileges are being used as incentives for students and for school buildings. A Best Practice Model for School Attendance has been developed for use by all school districts to ensure earlier recognition and intervention for youth.

### Attendance Media Campaign

The media campaign will include posters, media events and other advertising mediums that have been created to stress the importance of daily attendance at school. The campaign will focus on parents, students and the community to ensure that all students are "On Time! All Day! Every Day! Every School Day Counts."

## COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensure teacher quality, strong curricula and support interventions and tutoring that have a positive impact on improving academic achievement

Provide more time and opportunities for learning

Improve school attendance and reduce truancy through developing student assets and the use of incentives

Support students through critical academic transitions

Promote more mentoring relationships

Expand enrollment in after-school programs

### School Refusal Assessment Survey

Training has occurred for more than 250 school personnel and community providers regarding the School Refusal Assessment Survey to assist in early detection and intervention for youth. An advisory network of key stakeholders from the schools and community has also been created to execute implementation of this assessment tool.

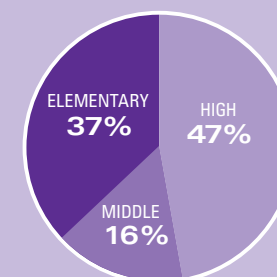
### 40 Developmental Assets Framework

Infusion of the principles of the 40 Developmental Assets Framework has begun by conducting meetings and training with more than 50 different entities, including schools, coalitions, community and governmental organizations. A Speaker's Bureau will be available to conduct further training on the 40 Assets and the creation of an external and an internal advisory network to assist in meeting the needs of the community.

### Service Learning

As a leader in service learning, UNO is supporting BBF in K-12 post-secondary activities to enhance student engagement through service learning. Service learning is a promising practice to engage students and provide a real-life connection between school and the community.

Absences by Grade Level as a Percentage of Total Daily Absences



Sources: These figures are based on Average Daily Attendance (ADA) and Average Daily Membership (ADM) data for 2006-07 for all districts except Douglas County West. OPS data are for 2004-05. Absences are calculated differently within and across school districts.

# READY FOR LEARNING

## MENTORING

The Midlands Mentoring Partnership (MMP) is designed to connect existing youth-mentoring programs and serve as a resource center for organizations desiring to start a mentoring program. The purpose of the Midlands Mentoring Partnership is also to increase awareness of youth mentoring, participate in community recruitment processes, support the implementation of quality mentoring standards and monitor outcomes of programs and share resources. An executive director for the Midlands Mentoring Partnership has been hired and a new board of directors established. The MMP Board is working with the MMP Providers Council and other key collaborators to gather information in order to create a strategic plan, specifically focused on fulfilling the priorities of mentoring quality, capacity and diversity.

## AFTER SCHOOL

The Middle School Learning Center Initiative (MSLCI) is a collaboration between the City of Omaha, the Sherwood Foundation, Omaha Public Schools with funding support from the Federal Government. The mission of the MSLCI is to lead the community in a partnership that builds and sustains quality after-school programs. These high quality and free after-school programs are directly tied to the school day curriculum and focus on recreation, academic enrichment, nutrition and cultural activities. Extended day learning opportunities that are provided in caring and safe environments will nurture positive relationships and foster the growth of responsible behavior.

- Collaborating on the development of a public-private community-wide partnership, focusing on middle school after-school time
- Support the expansion of Middle School Learning Center Initiative (MSLCI)

## UNEQUAL STARTS LEAD TO UNEQUAL RESULTS....

- An average of 6,582 public school students in the metro area are absent each day from school
- 5,895 public school students in the two-county area dropped out between 2003 & 2006
- 8,000 vulnerable youth need mentors in Douglas and Sarpy Counties.

Source: Nebraska Dept. of Education, University of Nebraska - Omaha, After-school Needs Assessment

## ACADEMIC SUPPORTS

Academic supports will include tutoring and interventions in reading and math in all pilot schools. A gap analysis of tutoring opportunities, needs and effectiveness will be conducted at all pilot schools

## QUALITY CURRICULUM

A rigorous and relevant quality curriculum is at the foundation for optimizing learning experiences. BBF is supporting the commitment by the State of Nebraska to the National Core Curriculum Project and will be supporting professional development opportunities that improve access to a quality curriculum for all students in Douglas and Sarpy counties.

## TEACHER AND LEADER EFFECTIVENESS AND COMPENSATION

Improving student achievement begins in every classroom with an effective teacher. It is supported in every school by an effective leader. BBF is supporting policy changes, professional development and increased teacher compensation that will result in improved student achievement, engagement and attendance.



# READY FOR SUCCESS

Every child deserves the opportunity to achieve their full potential for a productive and rewarding life.

## DIPLOMA NOW!

Diploma Now! is the BBF framework for a comprehensive approach to increasing graduation rates and decreasing the dropout rate. Strategies and alternatives for a smooth transition between schools and the juvenile justice system are being examined. In partnership with early childhood strategies, BBF will re-engage teen parents in a pathway to a high school diploma. Developing multiple pathways to a high school diploma for students who have dropped out of school or are at risk of dropping out will be a component of the framework. Credit recovery and credit rescue will be available in the pilot high schools.

## NEBRASKA CAREER CONNECTIONS

Nebraska Career Connections is a comprehensive career exploration and planning tool. BBF, in partnership with the Nebraska Department of Education, is implementing the Nebraska Career Connections in 15 pilot schools and in the Middle School Learning Center Initiative sites.

## COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

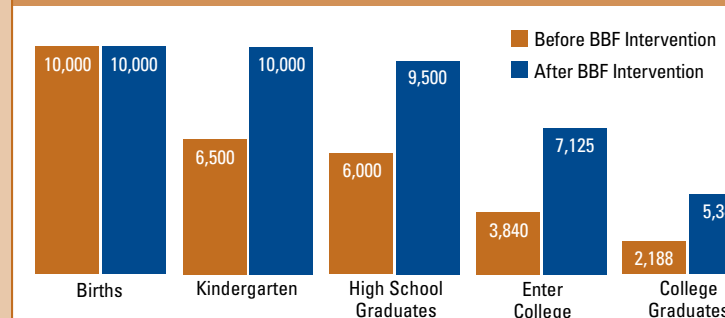
Develop immediate programs for credit rescue and recovery and initiatives to reengage students at-risk of dropping out or who have dropped out of school

Emphasize early career awareness and planning

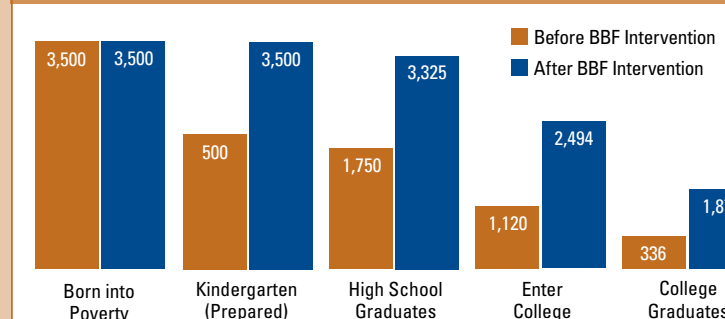
Strengthen career and technical education and work opportunities

Develop programs to bridge the transition from high school to post-secondary education and training

Educational Path for All Students in Douglas-Sarpy Counties  
(After Building Bright Futures intervention)



Students in Poverty After Building Bright Futures Intervention  
(Opportunity raises the bar for children in poverty)





## COMMUNITY REPORT | 09



**BUILDING  
BRIGHT  
FUTURES**  
CREATING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE & EQUITY

**BUILDING BRIGHT FUTURES**  
1004 Farnam Street • Suite 102  
Omaha, NE 68102

Visit [www.buildingbrightfutures.net](http://www.buildingbrightfutures.net) for more information