

Building Jay County Wrap-Up Meeting Agenda



Welcome and Overview – Doug Inman

Action Team Presentations

Consultants David Bennett and John Peirce will explain the Final Report and Strategic Goal Tree handouts for each of the following subject areas followed by a summary of the next steps from each action-team leader.

Affordable, Quality Early Care and Education – Travis Richards

Education and Workforce Development - Rusty Inman

Chronic Absenteeism - Jeremy Gulley

Family System of Care – Justin Littman

Parenting Skills -Tashia Weaver

Drug Abuse Prevention - Kimbra Reynolds

The Road from Here – Doug Inman

Building Jay County's Future

Enhancing Early Childhood Education

The early years of life are critical to the development of a child. In Jay County, we want to ensure that each child receives the developmental supports they need to grow into healthy adults. Access to affordable, quality Early Care and Education (ECE) also makes it possible for adult care givers to work, improve their standard of living, and fill local employers' talent needs.

We will **support children, families, child care professionals, and employers by providing high quality child care so adults can work, employers have the talent they need, and children are kindergarten ready.**

Background

Children receive a wide variety of benefits from a strong system of early education. These benefits include:

- ***Expanding Brain Capacity*** - From birth to age 5, a child's brain develops more than at any other time in life, and early brain development has a lasting impact on a child's ability to learn and succeed in school and life. Early experiences affect the development of brain architecture, which provides the foundation for all future learning, behavior, and health.
- ***Developing Social and Emotional Skills*** - Socializing with people other than family is an important part of childhood education. Learning how to regulate one's emotions and behavior and how to interact with others, be it peers or teachers, can enhance the education process in the future and lead to better outcomes as an adult.

- ***Understanding the Process of Learning*** - If children aren't exposed to a positive learning experience, they can lose their natural enthusiasm. As a result, these children could have a tough time in elementary school and beyond. Early childhood education professionals know how foster learning through play in a fun and exciting way. Once children figure out that learning can be exciting and rewarding, they can accept the challenges that the process brings and enjoy being active learners.
- ***Improving Concentration*** - Young children have short attention spans. Early childhood education programs give them the opportunity to discover new environments, experiences, and connections while working on their ability to focus. By the time children go to kindergarten, they know how to listen, participate in group tasks, follow directions, and concentrate on individual projects.

Communities benefit if they develop strong systems of Early Care and Education (ECE). Besides being highly beneficial for children and their parents, ECE can lead to higher incomes, higher labor rate participation, better health and a lower crime rate.

Children in Jay County

According to a 2018 report¹, there are nearly 1,900 children ages 0-5 in Jay County. Of these, 59% live in a household where all parents work and need care.

But the economics of child care present a challenge. It costs an average of nearly \$6,000 per year for high-quality early education for one child with infant and toddler care being even more expensive. This presents a budgeting challenge for most families – but the problem is particularly acute for a family in poverty and for what United Way calls ALICE families—Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. One in four children in Jay County live in a family with income below the poverty level. Federal programs such as Head Start help offset the cost for a small number of children in poverty as do Child Care Development Fund vouchers for families up to 127% of the poverty level. Many ALICE families make a little too much household income to qualify for any subsidies. Even if they could afford care, families have a hard time finding openings in the limited number of child care facilities.

Earlier studies have found child care to be a critically important issue. A recent report for the State of Indiana² reiterated the importance of early childhood education.

¹ *Feasibility Study for an Early Childhood Education Center in Jay County*, Transform Consulting Group, June 2018

² *Closing the Gap: An Assessment of Indiana's Early Learning Opportunities* Early Learning Indiana, August 2021

Access to high-quality early learning opportunities is foundational to a child's success in kindergarten and beyond, a family's ability to achieve self-sufficiency and a community's economic resiliency.

As noted in the report, access to child care is not uniform statewide or even countywide, but varies greatly from community to community. Some communities are well sourced in terms of capacity and quality but lack affordability or choice. Other communities have greater scores for choice and affordability, yet lack sufficient capacity or quality. Overall, the report concluded that nearly every community in the state has opportunities to improve access.

As part of the Jay County Vision 2020 listening sessions³, the following themes emerged:

- Jay County has several established institutions that are committed to early childhood education. These include, but are not limited to Jay School Corporation, The Portland Foundation, Jay County Government, and Head Start. These and other organizations have made significant investments and impacts and are driving forward to increase the number and quality of educational opportunities.
- There is a need to communicate with families and caregivers about the importance of early childhood education and the resources available to them.
- There are a few programs operating in Jay County that are providing care and services to children aged zero to five. There are also some operating out of Kokomo, Muncie, and Indianapolis that serve Jay but are needed closer to home.
- If a large enough facility were available, it might be shared by multiple organizations building cost savings and convenience for beneficiaries.
- There is some desire for a forum where local, county, regional, state, and federal resources for Jay County early childhood education can come together to share information and create strategies to achieve common goals.
- A dedicated and coordinated effort is needed to maximize the potential for early childhood education in Jay County. Regular and ongoing meeting forums, combined information resources, a one-stop-shop location, and updated resource pamphlets for families all require project and organization management. Creating a full-time early childhood education coordinator position could take on these responsibilities.

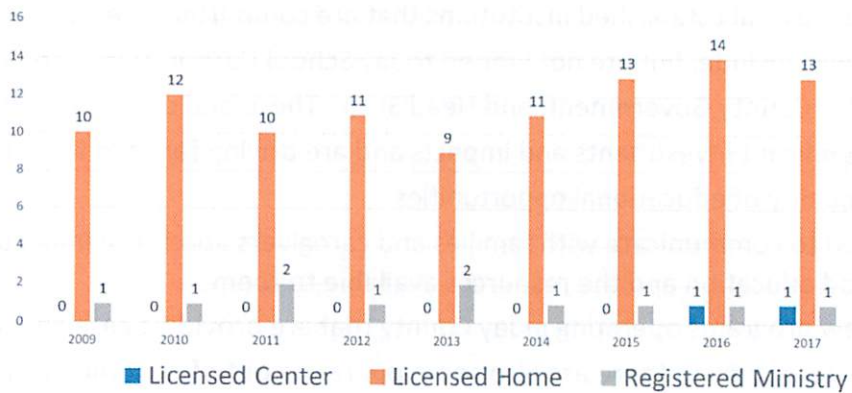
³ *Jay County Vision 20/20 Early Childhood Education Community Listening Sessions*, Indiana Communities Institute, Ball State University and Indiana Youth Institute, May 2017.

Early Childhood Education In Jay County

According to the Kids County Data Book (Published through the Indiana Youth Institute), in 2020 there were 12 child care facilities in Jay County – 2 licensed centers, 9 licensed homes and one registered ministry. The number of known facilities had declined to 8 by June 2022. Data for these facilities over time is shown below:

Child Care Facilities in Jay County

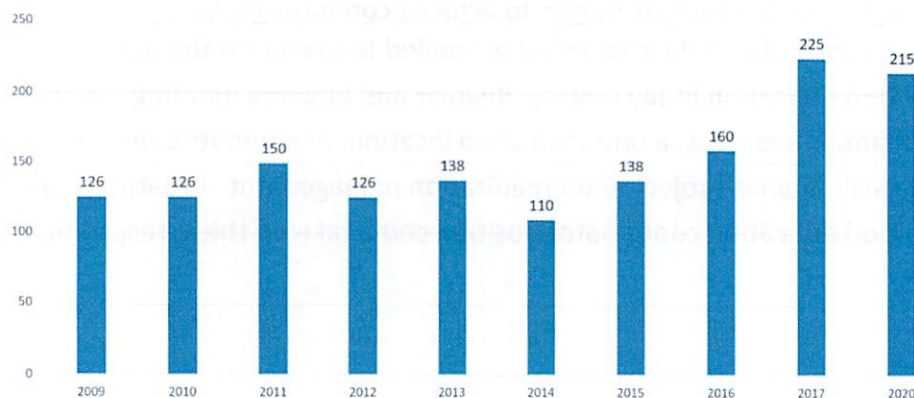
Source: Kids County Data Book



Note: Data unavailable for 2018 and 2019

Capacity of Child Care Facilities – Jay County

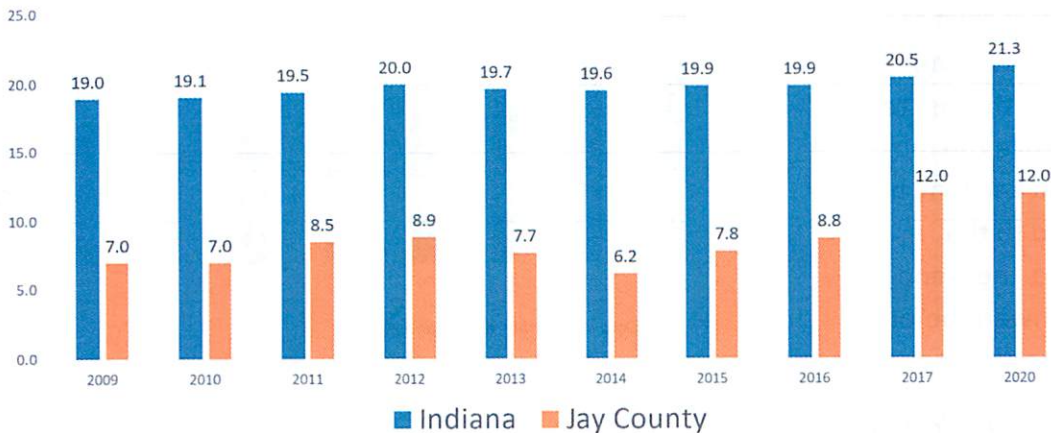
Source: Kids County Data Book



Note: Data unavailable for 2018 and 2019

Licensed Child Care Slots per 100 Children

Source: Kids County Data Book



Note: Data unavailable for 2018 and 2019

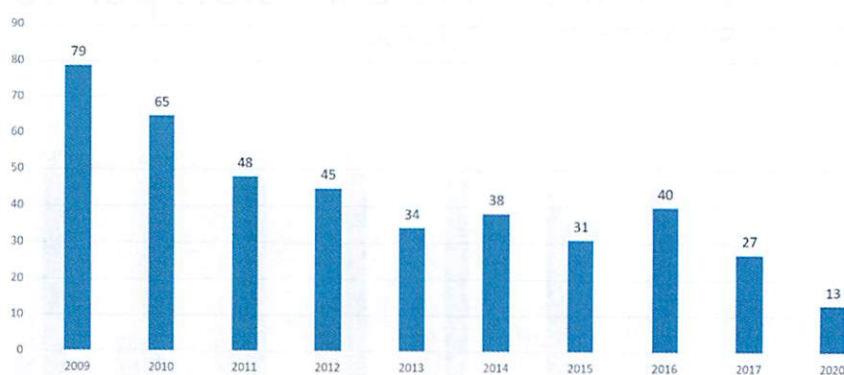
Despite the improvements in capacity noted above, the number of child care slots per 100 children in Jay County lags behind the rest of the State of Indiana. While there were 21.3 child care slots per 100 children in the State of Indiana, in Jay County the rate was only 12.0.

Financial assistance is available for certain families who wish to enroll their child in a preschool program. The Child Care and Development Fund is a federal program that helps low-income families obtain child care so that they may work, attend training, or continue their education. The purpose of CCDF is to increase the availability, affordability, and quality of child care.

It appears, however, that the use of this financial assistance is declining in Jay County. As the adjacent graph shows, the number of children who receive child care vouchers has steadily declined in the last ten years. While the most recent decline may be attributed to the pandemic, the trend was downward before that time.

Children Receiving Child Care Vouchers– Jay County

Source: Kids County Data Book



Note: Data unavailable for 2018 and 2019

The Goals for Jay County

In Jay County, we want to create a strong system in which **families have access to child care so adults can work and so children can learn.**

To do this, we will:

- Create a child-care-for-all center and consider co-locating family services in or near the facility.
- Address the needs of child care providers expressed in the Fall 2021 survey⁴ and their future needs.

THE METRICS: What are the shared metrics we want to improve?

- Number of children enrolled at the center
- Paths to Quality (PTQ) Level
- Number of thriving child care providers.
- Number of child care seats available.
- ECE staff retention.

In addition, Jay County ECE wants to help programs **continuously improve their operating costs/effectiveness and level of quality they provide.**

⁴ See *Jay County Employee Child Care Survey Results* and *Jay County Employer Child Care Survey Results*, both October 4, 2021 by the Jay County Development Corporation

To do this and to foster further development of the ECE system, we will:

- Form a cross-sector Early Childhood Coalition to sustain and improve access, affordability, and quality of ECE.
- Explore ways to engage employers in investing time, talent, and treasure in the ECE ecosystem.
- John Jay Center for Learning (JJCL) will create a pipeline of ECE talent by offering programs to achieve the Child Development Associate (CDA) certification. JJCL is exploring ways to offer courses to high school students and adults.

Measures of Success:

- Increase in funding from all sources to support child care.
- Increase number/level of programs on PTQ.
- Number of employers supporting the ECE eco system
- Amount of dollars, volunteer hours.
- Number of CDA grads.

How will this improve the quality of life in Jay County?

- More adults are enabled to work or pursue educational goals because of having child care.
- Wages, benefits, and working conditions for child care professionals improve to attract and retain talent needed.
- Jay County children have the support and opportunities they need to thrive and achieve success in school and life.
- The stories residents and others tell to describe Jay County are positive.

A Note of Appreciation

We wish to thank the following community leaders who served as members of our Steering Committee or on one of our task forces. Your contributions were greatly appreciated, and will help us to improve the quality of life for everyone in Jay County

- Chad Aker – President, Jay County Commissioners
- John Boggs – Mayor, City of Portland
- Carol Bradshaw - Forward STEPS Manager, Second Harvest Food Bank of East Central Indiana
- Michael Brewster – Jay County Coroner, Portland Police Department
- Amanda Bullion – Purdue Extension
- Ray Cooney – Editor, The Commercial Review
- PJ Corwin – Executive Director, Youth Service Bureau
- Jason Craig - Substance Misuse Prevention and Mental Health Promotion, Region 5 Regional Prevention Coordinator
- Gerry Cyranowski – Regional VP of Clinical Services, Meridian Health Services
- Randy Davis - Founder, A Better Life-Brianna's Hope
- Chad Dodd - Principal, Jay County High School
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- Julie Gregg – Principal, East Elementary School
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- Jon Vanator - President, IU Health Jay Hospital
- Tashia Weaver – Family Resource Center Coordinator, Strengthening Indiana Families

How Jay County Will Increase Access to Affordable, Quality Early Care and Education (ECE)

STRATEGIC GOAL TREE – Grand Scheme Updated 3/3/22

THE GRAND CHALLENGE

What common challenge are we addressing collectively?

Jay County supports children, families, child care professionals, and employers by providing high quality child care so adults can work, employers have the talent they need, and children are kindergarten ready.

THE GOALS

What are our common goals?

ECE capacity/access

Jay County families have access to child care so adults can work and so children can learn.

Affordable, quality care

Jay County ECE programs continuously improve their operating costs/effectiveness and level of quality they provide.

THE WORK

What are the catalytic projects?

Create a child-care-for-all center and consider co-locating family services in or near the facility.

Address the needs of child care providers expressed in the Fall 2021 survey and their future needs.

Form a cross-sector Early Childhood Coalition to sustain and improve access, affordability, and quality of ECE.

Explore ways to engage employers in investing time, talent, and treasure in the ECE ecosystem.

JJCL will create a pipeline of ECE talent.

THE METRICS

What are the shared metrics we want to improve?

- Number of children enrolled at the center
- Paths to Quality Level

- Number of thriving child care providers.
- Number of child care seats available.
- ECE staff retention.

- Increase in funding from all sources to support child care.
- Increase number/level of programs on PTQ.

- Number of employers supporting the ECE eco system
- Amount of dollars, volunteer hours.

Number of CDA grads.

THE OUTCOMES

What community level difference is made?

More adults are enabled to work or pursue educational goals because of having child care.

Wages, benefits, and working conditions for child care professionals improve to attract and retain talent needed.

Jay County children have the support and opportunities they need to thrive and achieve success in school and life.

The stories residents and others tell to describe Jay County are positive.

Building Jay County's Future

Workforce Development

The Education and Workforce Development Task Force has created a plan to ensure that:

- Jay County has a home-grown learning system that cultivates the talent employers need and increases educational attainment.
- Jay County coordinates talent with equitable economic opportunities to raise household income and earnings.

Background

A strong and diverse workforce is the backbone of any local economy. The availability of skills enhancement enables workers to fill higher-wage jobs and, by doing so, boosts economic prosperity both for their families and for the community.

Many communities face shortages of trained workers. Finding skilled workers is perhaps the most important barrier to growth for many companies – growth that could boost the local economy.

Fortunately, Jay County already has a strong workforce development system in place through the John Jay Center for Learning.

The need to enhance the workforce pipeline is a critical part of the Jay County Economic Development Plan.¹ While the plan addressed several economic issues, two important goals of the plan were:

- Determine the workforce development related needs of priority employers in Jay County; and,
- Provide workforce development training for youth and adults of targeted employers.

The Community Prosperity Chart Book², completed in July 2019, reached a similar conclusion. Jay County “has numerous larger employers ... and we recommend a robust and aggressive larger employer retention and expansion strategy”. This strategy included enhancing the workforce development system, along with other important matters. “Workforce development includes recruitment and skills training,” the report said.

John Jay Center for Learning

John Jay Center for Learning (JJCL), located in downtown Portland, Indiana, is dedicated to helping people achieve satisfaction and lifelong employability through education. The mission of JJCL is “Inspiration and Prosperity Through Learning”.

Services provided by JJCL include traditional college courses, vocational training, certifications, and career planning. They partner with Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana, Purdue Polytechnic, Vincennes University, Indiana Tech, and Indiana Wesleyan University. Through a partnership with the Jay School Corporation, they are also able to offer Adult Basic Education and High School Equivalency programs.

The Importance of the Agricultural Sector in Jay County

A 2017 report listed Jay County as the Number 1 agricultural county in the state and among the top 166 counties in the U.S. Companies such as Poet Biorefining, Tyson, and Andersons Agricultural Group are major employers. Workforce development efforts in Jay County will include meeting the needs of this sector.

Career opportunities in agriculture could come in one of two forms: the production side, and the value-added side. While Jay County has examples of both, a great deal of activity occurs on the production side in Jay County. In addition, some economic development statistics may refer to the value-added side as manufacturing, rather than agriculture.

The local 4-H organization is working with the agricultural community in two important areas: succession planning, and farmers as employers. Additional work is being done by the Purdue Extension in Jay County.

¹ *Jay County Economic Development Plan*, Purdue University, 2019

² *Community Prosperity Chart Book, Jay County*, E2 Entrepreneurial Ecosystems, July 2019.

Information on the programs offered by 4-H in Jay County is included in an appendix to this report.

The Goals for Jay County

Our workforce development efforts in Jay County will focus on three primary areas: **Adult Workforce Training, Employment and Wages, and Future Talent Pipeline.**

In the area of Adult Workforce Training, we will **increase the number of residents who achieve high value certifications in targeted workforce areas.** This will be completed through the John Jay Center for Learning, which offers courses based on needs of local employers.

Success in this area will be measured through:

- Enrollment in targeted workforce development skills courses
- Number of certifications awarded in targeted areas

A related goal for our workforce efforts will be in Employment and Wages. We want to ensure that **residents who upgrade their skills increase their household income.**

In this area, JJCL will partner with Jay County Economic Development Corporation and work to increase participation in JJCL job skills and outplacement programs. The goal will be to measure the wages and benefits earned after completion of JJCL job skills programs compared to prior wages and benefits. This information can be used to entice other adults to participate in such programs.

Finally, our efforts will enhance the Future Talent Pipeline. In this area, schools and the community will collaborate to **provide mentoring programs and engaging learning opportunities that provide the skills and developmental assets children need to thrive.**

Some of the most important programs in this section will include:

- 4-H Youth Development Programs
- Other out-of-school-time (OST) programs TBD
- Career-embedded learning opportunities TBD by Jay County Jr.-Sr. High School

Success in this area will be measured by the following metrics:

- Number of youth engaged in 4-H programs
- Number of and % of students engaged in other OST programs and jobs
- Number of and % of students who progress toward “industry standard” credentials in high school

How Will This Improve the Quality of Life in Jay County?

If we are successful in our efforts, we hope to accomplish the following goals:

- Labor force levels improve
- Workforce participation improves
- Average wages rise
- Median family income increases
- Population grows
- Net migration Improves
- High school graduation levels rise
- The number of residents with post-secondary degrees and certifications increase
- The stories residents and others tell to describe economic opportunities in Jay County are positive.

Appendix: 4-H Youth Development Programs

4-H youth development programs delivered through Purdue Extension in all Jay County communities contribute to Education and Workforce Development outcomes by preparing young people to be leaders through hands-on experiences alongside their peers and caring adults. Community clubs, afterschool programs, school enrichment, camps/workshops, and special interest programs are among the ways the Extension provides such experiences. 4-H programs are grounded in the belief that kids learn best by doing. Children and teens complete hands-on projects in areas like science, health, agriculture, and civic engagement, in a positive environment where they receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles.

Regardless of the project area, all 4-H programs include mentoring and career readiness as core elements. Jay County 4-H uses the National 4-H Youth Thriving Model and Search Institute's Developmental Relationships Framework as its guide to ensure participating youth have the kinds of experiences that research shows matters most for their development. The five critical elements adult leaders are trained to provide include the following:

EXPRESS CARE - Show me that I matter to you.

- Be dependable—Be someone I can trust.
- Listen—Really pay attention when we are together.
- Believe in me—Make me feel known and valued.
- Be warm—Show me you enjoy being with me.
- Encourage—Praise me for my efforts and achievements.

CHALLENGE GROWTH - Push me to keep getting better.

- Expect my best—Expect me to live up to my potential.
- Stretch—Push me to go further.
- Hold me accountable—Insist I take responsibility for my actions.
- Reflect on failures—Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks.

PROVIDE SUPPORT - Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.

- Navigate—Guide me through hard situations and systems.
- Empower—Build my confidence to take charge of my life.
- Advocate—Stand up for me when I need it.
- Set boundaries—Put in place limits that keep me on track.

SHARE POWER - Treat me with respect and give me a say.

- Respect me—Take me seriously and treat me fairly.
- Include me—Involve me in decisions that affect me.
- Collaborate—Work with me to solve problems and reach goals.
- Let me lead—Create opportunities for me to take action and lead.

EXPAND POSSIBILITIES - Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.

- **Inspire**—Inspire me to see possibilities for my future.
- **Broaden horizons**—Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places.
- **Connect**—Introduce me to people who can help me grow.

Jay County 4-H programs include the following:

- **4-H Clubs** provide youth with educational, fun learning experiences with their peers. Youth enroll in subject matter areas of interest (projects), participate in 6-12 meetings during the year, select youth officers, carry out club responsibilities, participate in service to the community, and receive recognition for their work. Club meetings typically are held once a month in a location such as a school, community center, church, or other public meeting space. Project evaluation is often carried out during the county fair or at the end of the 4-H Youth Development Program year. Clubs use their meetings to develop group process skills, leadership ability, and communication skills.
- **After-school Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) programs** give youths experience in the use of computer aided design and 3D printing, writing code, and programming robots and drones.

Location	2021-2022
Bloomfield STEAM After School	12
West Jay STEAM After School	12
Homeschool STEAM Group	8

- **Youth mentoring** for youth in grades 9 through 12 is funded by a special grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Youth are paired with caring adult mentors for at least 12 months. Mentors create the developmental relationships and adult-youth partnerships that will launch youth on the path to success.
- **UAV precision agriculture programs** allow youth to explore how to operate unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) or drones that farmers use to become better managers of their production practices.
- **Soccer for Success** trains teens to coach younger children to play the game, make healthy choices, and build peer mentoring relationships that positively impact both the mentor and mentee. The program is especially popular among Hispanic and Latino youth that come from countries where soccer is their national sport.

- ***Back a 4-Her** engages community leaders to network with and invest in Jay County 4-H youth, their 4-H experiences, and their futures. The program allows youth the opportunity to showcase the skills they are building through participation in 4-H, and the money raised by the 4-Her can be used to attend college, pay for necessary materials for 4-H projects, expand future 4-H participation in camps and trips at local, state, and national levels, and more.
- ***Livestock Auction** provides youth in 4-H livestock projects the opportunity to sell one of their 4-H animals. This opportunity helps youth learn to track expenses to determine profit/loss margins. 4-H youth use the money raised to attend college, pay for the next year's 4-H animal projects, and more.

*4-H youth choose whether to participate in Back a 4-Her or the Livestock Auction. Youth cannot participate in both fund-raising events.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN 4-H PROGRAMS OVERALL												
Year	School Enrollment	Hispanic/Latino Enrolment	Total Youth Engaged	Hispanic/Latino	Not Hispanic/Latino	Male	Female	Farm	Town/Non-Farm	Town 10-50K	Suburb	City
2008	3764		685	1	684	330	355	284	374	25	0	2
2009	3671		741	5	736	342	399	305	385	50		1
2010	3635		701	1	700	394	471	326	351	23	0	1
2011	3643		675	6	669	310	365	328	317	25	1	4
2012	3626		643	6	637	294	349	316	298	24	0	5
2013	3503		585	7	578	272	313	285	261	36	1	2
2014	3465		571	6	565	265	306	287	241	39	3	1
2015	3463		530	21	510	262	268	321	180	23	6	0
2016	3443		479	16	464	235	244	300	157	19	2	1
2017	3376		467	12	456	223	244	299	158	7	2	1
2018	3250		415	9	406	199	216	268	135	9	2	1
2019	3167		397	7	390	190	207	247	134	9	5	2
2020	3147		415	12	403	201	214	254	151	5	4	2
2021	3020		413	13	400	209	203	214	175	19	5	0

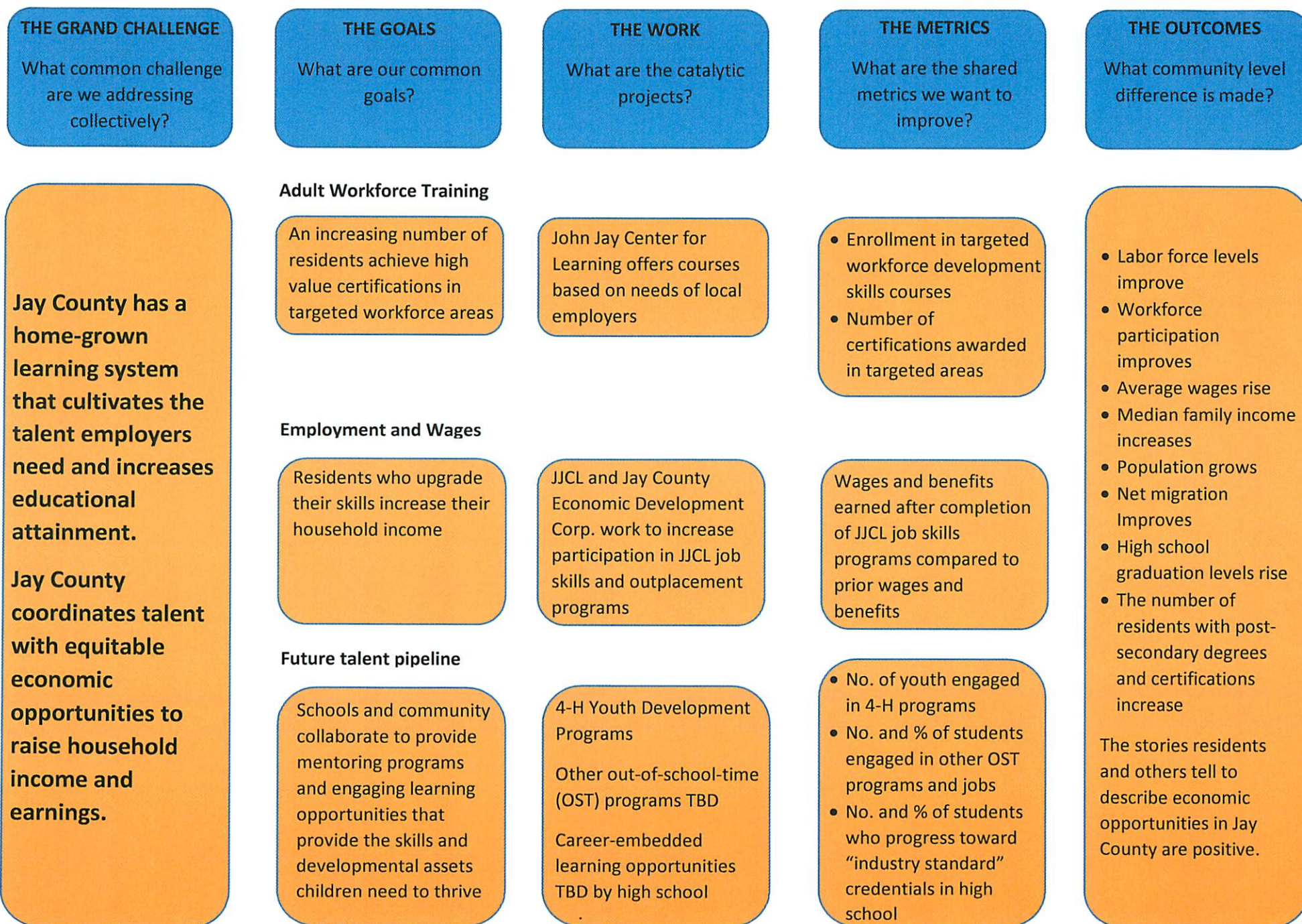
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How Jay County Will Increase Workforce Skills

STRATEGIC GOAL TREE – Grand Scheme Updated 6/20/22



Building Jay County's Future

Attendance Improvement

Summary

Consistent attendance is important for school success. Yet a disturbing number of students – both in Jay County and across the State of Indiana – exhibit a high degree of unexcused absences and chronic absenteeism. Students are chronically absent when they miss more than 10 percent of school days. These absences interfere with achieving a successful educational outcome.

The data on absenteeism is troubling both in Jay County and across the state of Indiana. Statewide, nearly 20% of Indiana students are chronically absent. In Jay County, nearly 400 students had ten or more unexcused absences in the 2020-2021 school year. This is important because Indiana law considers students to be habitual truants when they have 10 or more unexcused absences in an academic year.ⁱ

Further complicating the situation is the fact that there has been an alarming jump in this figure since the start of the pandemic – and there is little indication that those higher absentee rates will fall as the pandemic fades.

This plan is designed to significantly reduce the number of students who are chronically absent from the classroom. It will help to identify students at risk of becoming chronically absent and deliver a series of services intended to improve attendance rates.

Why Good Attendance is Important

At the core of an effective educational system is a fundamental truth: students have to be present and engaged in order to learn. Attending school regularly is important to ensuring children develop a sturdy foundation for subsequent learning.

During the early elementary years, children are gaining basic social and academic skills critical to ongoing academic success. Unless students attain these essential skills by third grade, they often require extra help to catch up and are at grave risk of eventually dropping out of school.

According to one study, low academic performance in the first-grade correlates strongly with chronic absenteeism in kindergarten.¹ Another study from Baltimore found a strong relationship between sixth-grade attendance and the percentage of students graduating on time or within a year of their expected high school graduation.²

Data from the State of Indiana affirm these conclusions. One study found that Indiana third graders who were chronically absent scored nearly 50 points lower in math and 40 points lower in reading on Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP) tests. Students who were chronically absent through middle school scored 70 points lower in math and 35 points lower in English/language arts.³

But the negative effects of chronic absenteeism are not limited to the absent student. The educational experiences of children who attend school regularly can be diminished when teachers must divert their attention to meet the learning and social needs of children who miss substantial amounts of school.

¹ Chang, Hedy and Romero, Mariajose, *Present, Engaged and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades*, National Center for Children in Poverty, New York, NY, September 2008.

² Baltimore Education Research Consortium (BERC) 2011. *Destination Graduation: Sixth Grade Early Warning Indicators for Baltimore City Schools: Their Prevalence and Impact* BERC: Baltimore MD.

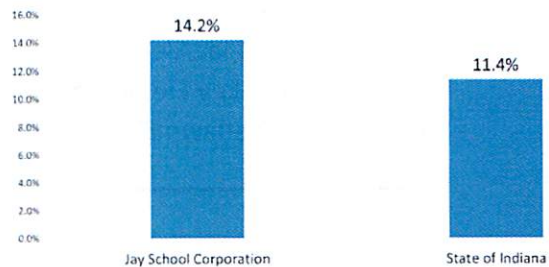
³ *Chronic absence hurts thousands of Indiana students' test scores, chances of graduation*, Center for Evaluation & Education Policy at Indiana University, July 2012

Chronic Absenteeism in Jay County

Rates of chronic absenteeism are tracked at the school building level, by school corporation, and for the entire state. The Indiana Department of Education defines “chronic absenteeism” as occurring when a student misses more than 10% of enrolled days during the school year (180 days).

Indiana law considers students to be habitual truants when they have 10 or more unexcused absences in an academic year - although local districts may lower that threshold when dealing with truants in their schools.

Figure 1: Chronic Absenteeism
Jay School Corporation vs State of Indiana



As noted in the adjacent chart, in the 2019-2020 school year, while 11.4% of students across the State were chronically absent, in Jay County the percentage was 14.2%.

As the pandemic worsened, the problem of chronic absenteeism grew more acute. On March 6, 2020, Governor Eric Holcomb issued an executive order declaring a public health emergency due to COVID-19, and on March 19 ordered all Indiana public schools to close through the end of May of 2020. While these restrictions have eased, student absenteeism has not declined to pre-pandemic levels.

The spike in the number of children missing school came as districts switched back-and-forth between in-person and virtual instruction and families grappled with turmoil at home. According to a news story from WFYI⁴, more than 200,000 Indiana students missed 10 percent of school days (18 or more) in the 2020-2021 school year. That amounts to 19% of all Indiana students.

Jay County witnessed a similar spike in absenteeism. As shown in Figure 2, in March of 2019, a total 69 students at all grade levels had ten or more unexcused absences. By March of 2021, that figure had soared to 388 students – including 112 students at the elementary school level.

Figure 3 shows the numbers as a percentage of student enrollment. Regardless of grade level absenteeism spiked – to 6.7% of elementary school students, 17.5% of students in grades 7 and 8, and 22% of high school students.

A closer look at the elementary school grades gives further insight. Figure 4 shows elementary school attendance broken down by number of unexcused absences. Data is disaggregated for

⁴ *Chronic absenteeism spiked during COVID in Indiana schools*, October 17, 2021, WFYI website

each of the elementary schools – East, Bloomfield, West Jay, East Jay and Redkey. Data for each is as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Grade</u>
Bloomfield Elementary School	269	KG-6
East Elementary School	415	KG-2
East Jay Elementary	526	3-6
Redkey Elementary School	226	KG-6
Westlawn Elementary School	238	KG-6

As noted in Figure 5, data on chronic absenteeism spiked at each of the elementary schools between March of 2019 and March of 2021. While a total of 47 elementary school students had 10 or more unexcused absences in 2019, by 2021 this number had jumped to 112 students.

Chronic Absenteeism in Jay County – Updated Data

Figure 2:
Number of Students with 10+ Chronic Absenteeism
2019 vs 2021

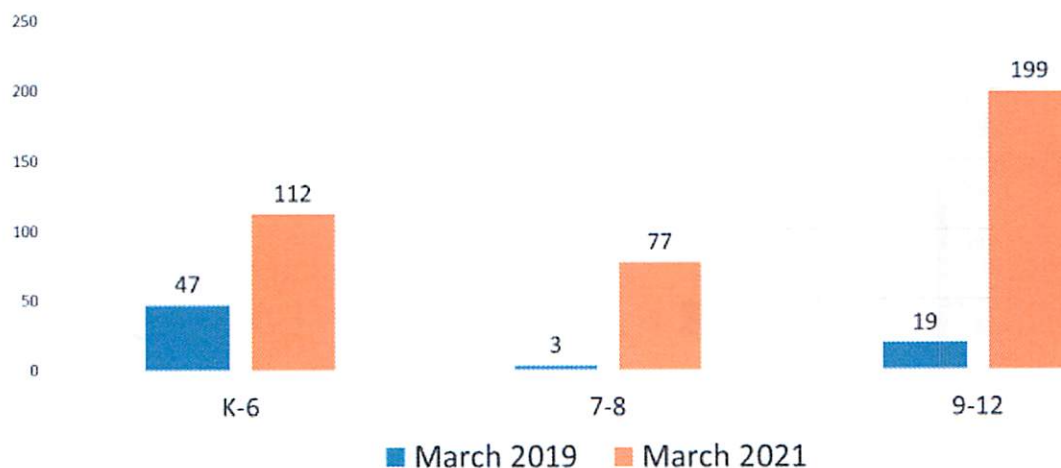
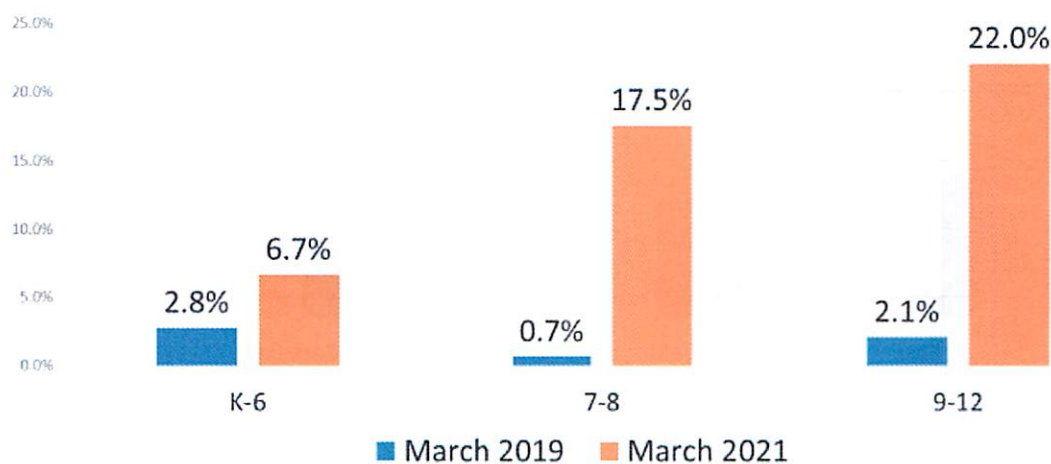


Figure 3:
Percent of Students with 10+ Chronic Absenteeism
2019 vs 2021



Chronic Absenteeism in Jay County – Data for Elementary Schools

Figure 4: Attendance Data
Jay County Elementary Schools - 2021

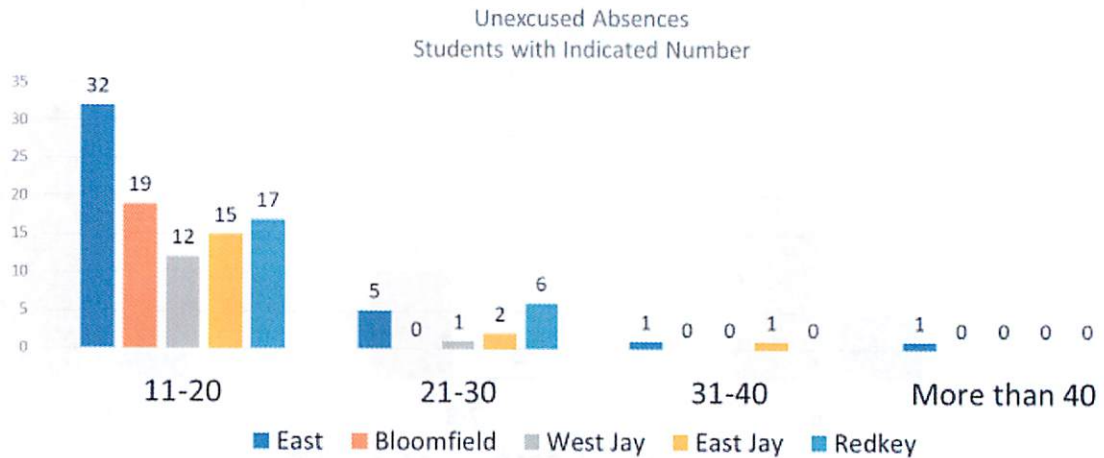
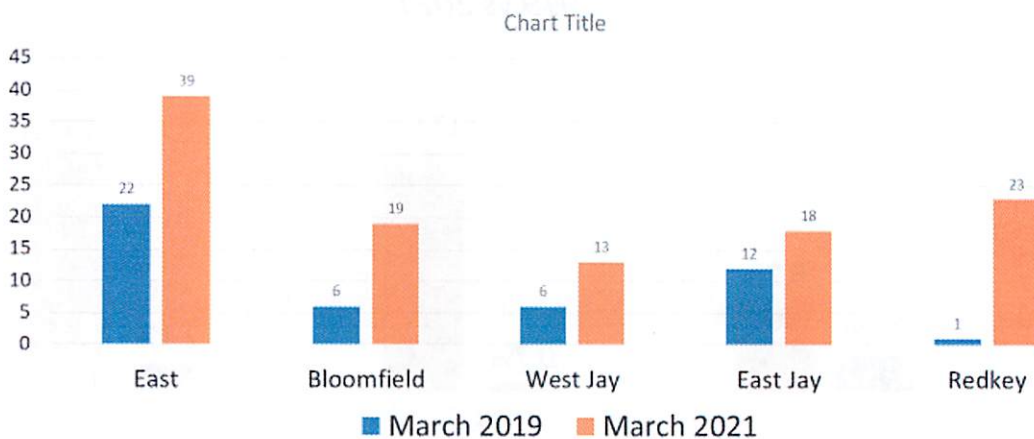
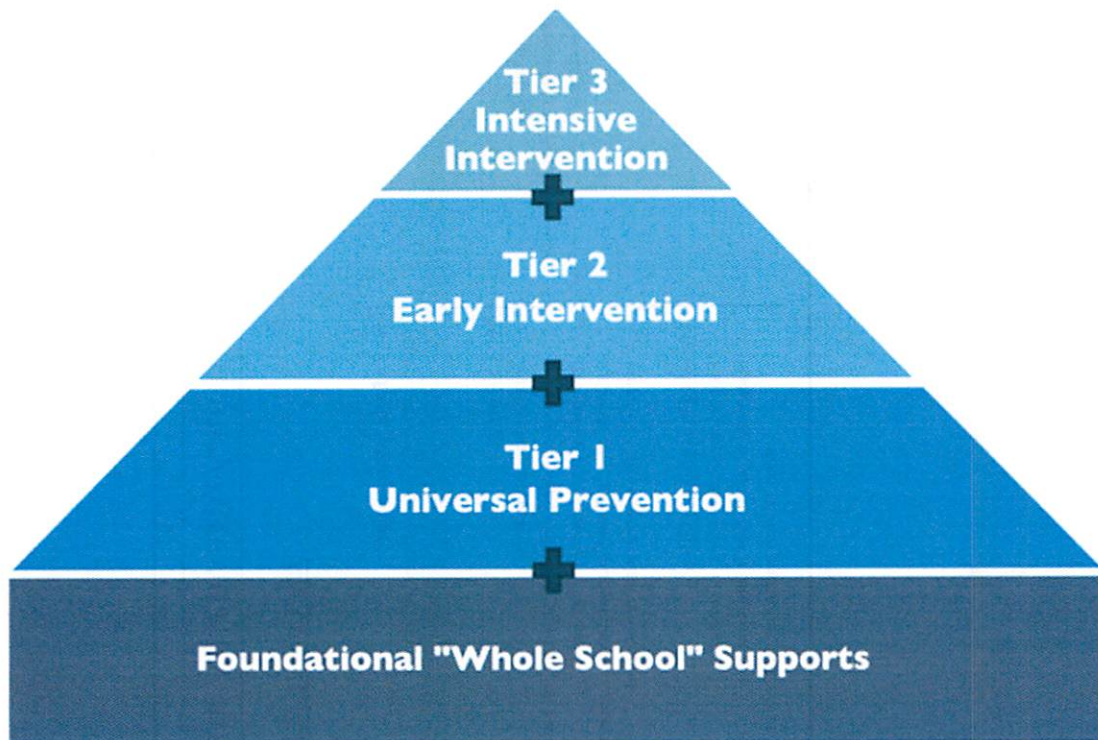


Figure 5: Total Chronic Absenteeism
Jay County Elementary Schools: 2019 vs 2021



A System for Dealing with Chronic Absenteeism

How can Jay County deal with this issue? A system recommended by Attendance Works could help provide a solution⁵.



In this recommended system, students at different levels, or “tiers”, would receive a different level of support. All students would receive services at the base of the pyramid – otherwise known as foundational “whole school” supports. As chronic absenteeism progresses, the level and intensity of services would increase as well.

⁵ <https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/>

Community Attendance Improvement Program

Jay County Schools

Tier 1 <i>Universal Supports</i>	Tier 2 - Early Intervention <i>Triggering Event = 5 Unexcused Absences</i>	Tier 3 - Intensive Intervention <i>Triggering Event = ???</i>
<div></div> <p>System-Wide Messages Schedules and Expectations Personalized Communications to Absent Families Recognizing Good Attendance Careful Data Collection</p>	<p><u>Tier 2 Supports</u></p> <p>After-school programs Meeting or home visit with student and family Mentoring (in-person and virtual) Tailored physical and mental health supports Individual attendance plan developed</p> <p><u>Referral to Prosecutor's Office</u></p> <p>Prosecutor Opens File on Family Summary of what Tier II interventions <i>Who, When and What Outcomes</i></p>	<p><u>Tier 3 Supports</u></p> <p>Intensive outreach to locate student and family and assess situation Coordinated case management with multiple systems Intervention from DCS Intensive Mental Health/Addiction/Family Support Treatments</p> <p><u>Juvenile Justice System</u></p> <p>Misdemeanor charges for violating Indiana's compulsory education laws Revocation of driving privileges</p>

Tier 1 Universal Supports

- Clear, concise, and consistent communication about schedules and expectations
- Predictable daily/weekly routines related to attendance
- Taking attendance accurately with care
- Personalized communication to families when students are absent
- Recognition of good and improved attendance
- Access to wellness check and connectivity assessments
- Regular monitoring of attendance data

Tier 2 Early Intervention

- Using absenteeism data to activate targeted supports
- Meeting or home visit with student and family when absences add up (in person or virtual)
- Individual attendance plan developed with families and students
- Mentoring (in-person and virtual)
- Tailored physical and mental health supports
- Prioritizing participation in expanded learning
- Tech support and training to ensure access to virtual learning supports

Tier 3 Intensive Intervention

- Intensive outreach to locate student and family and assess situation
- Coordinated case management with multiple systems including child welfare, mental health, health, housing/homelessness, and juvenile justice (as a last resort)

Legal Intervention

While legal action may be avoided using Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, the county prosecutor does have tools available to enforce state laws on truancy.

Penalties for Parents of Truant Students - Because parents are legally responsible for making sure their children go to school, they could face misdemeanor charges for violating Indiana's compulsory education laws. Convictions bring mandatory jail time (up to 180 days), along with potential fines (up to \$1,000) for each day of violation.

Legal Consequences for Truant Students - Indiana law considers students to be habitual truants when they have 10 or more unexcused absences in an academic year (although local districts may lower that threshold when dealing with truants in their schools). Schools must report habitual truants to the juvenile court, where the students could come under that court's supervision, with all the potential legal consequences that involves. Also, habitual truants who are 13 or 14 may not get a learner's permit or driver's license until they turn 18 or demonstrate that their attendance record has improved.

Jay Co Prosecutors Office

Zechariah Landers

zlanders@co.jay.in.us

- Recommends starting Tier II interventions at 5th day of unexcused absence.
- Needs a continuous flow of referrals (don't wait till the last minute and dump a stack of referrals).
- Focus on K-6 as a prioritization
- Ensure referral has a summary of what Tier II intervention were done, by whom and when and to what outcome.

Possible Process:

- Target Group of Students (Chronically absent school year 21-22)
- Define a flow chart of what actions occur, by whom, by when and for what reason.
- Monthly agenda item for the "County Child Protection Team"
- This portion of the monthly meeting will be to review the status of interventions in regard to the student target group and related data.
- What data do we need to inform us if we are "implementing our plan"? (Measures of Performance)
- What data do we need to show if it is making a difference? (Measures of Effect)

Miscellaneous

- Need an information flier with all partnering logos to send to parents of target groups on school year 22-23 expectations, programs, supports and process.
- Need an "information campaign" to inform parents of the "reset" as to attendance expectations.
- Student handbooks need updating as to when Dr. Notes are due.
- HIPAA and FERPA MOUs to share information.
- Jay County Prosecutor need to share data/status of cases referred to inform the system.
- JSC (Julie and James) will work on Tier I interventions and the formation of our "target group", what data we collect, how it is used, who gets it and the "flow chart" of Tier II actions from partners.
- We need to get probation involved. Especially now that there will be a change in leadership.
- We are concerned that much the target group of students will have parents who refuse to "consent" or cooperate with Tier II.

- JSC is considering contracting for two full time Social Workers / Mental Health Counselors that can also be a part of coordinating Tier I and Tier II functions.
- JSC Attendance Officer will be responsible for providing all required information for referrals to the prosecutor's office.

A Note of Appreciation

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- Rex Journey – Jay County Commissioner
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- Annie Van Horn – Director of Special Education, Jay School Corporation
- Jenni VanSkyock – Program Manager, IU Health Jay Hospital Outpatient Behavioral Health
- Jon Vanator - President, IU Health Jay Hospital
- Tashia Weaver – Family Resource Center Coordinator, Strengthening Indiana Families

Appendix 1: Resources and Contact Information – Tier II

Purdue Extension

Keen, Allison K

keen12@purdue.edu

- After school programs
- Mentoring students grade 9-12

IU Health

Cassie Alexander

calexander5@iuhealth.org

- Mental Health - Addiction Counseling

Department of Child Services (DCS)

Justin Littman

justin.littman@dcs.in.gov

- Tier II and III Meetings with parents

Children's Bureau

Tashia Weaver

TWeaver@childrensbureau.org

- Transportation
- Currently serves 22 families
- Connects families to services that are obstacles to student attendance
- Consent-based program
- "Prevents families from being DCS cases"

Youth Services Bureau (YSB)

PJ Corwin

pj.corwin@ysbjc.com

- Home-based Services
- Provides chronic absence curriculum
- Will provide budget estimates for the program to JSC.
- "Prevents families from being DCS cases"

JCSO/PPD/SRO

Dwane Ford

dford@co.jay.in.us

Mike Brewster

mb715@thecityofportland.net

Cody Jesse SRO

sro@jayschools.k12.in.us,

- PPD - (East and EJE) can do home visits with partnering agencies if security concerns in Portland.
- Drug prevention.
- Home visits to locate truants.
- SRO will help with providing notice of service.

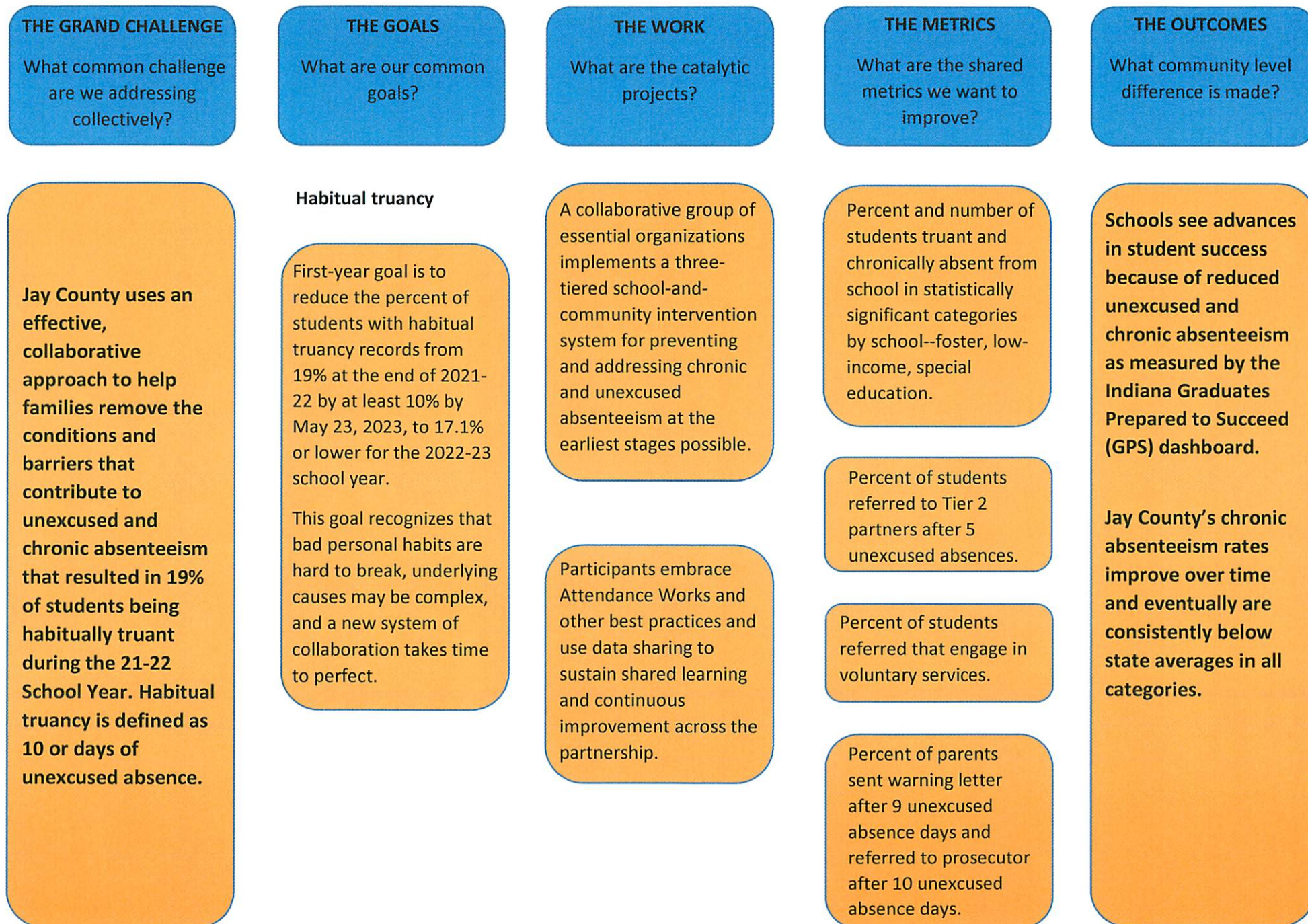
Jay County Probation Department

Contact information unavailable

ⁱ Indiana Code Title 20. Education § 20-33-2-11, <https://codes.findlaw.com/in/title-20-education/in-code-sect-20-33-2-11.html>

How Jay County Will Decrease Chronic Absenteeism in Schools

STRATEGIC GOAL TREE – Grand Scheme Updated 06/20/22



Building Jay County's Future

Improved System of Care

All of us face challenges in our lives. In Jay County, we want to make sure that an effective support system exists for families burdened by mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, and other serious issues.

We will help families grow stronger by offering an easy-to-navigate system of technical assistance and resources that promote safe, stable, nurturing, and thriving families.

Background

Families in need of services can face a confusing system for obtaining needed services. An effective system of care can help a family:

- Obtain concrete help in time of need including basic needs such as food, housing, and transportation
- Connect with the appropriate provider for their medical needs
- Receive services to deal with substance use disorder
- Access programs providing mental health services
- Get help dealing with domestic violence
- Understand the stages of their child's development
- Get information on how to become a better parent
- Understand the importance of prenatal care
- Learn and understand signs of normal and alarming pregnancy
- Understand the importance of regularly scheduled well child visits
- Understand the importance of immunizations

The Goals for Jay County

In Jay County, we will enhance the current system which strives to ensure that Jay County families of all types are affirmed and respected when they interact with partner organizations and can easily navigate the system of care.

To achieve this goal, we will:

- Explore creation of a Family Resource Service Center based on successful models in Colorado and Pennsylvania. This may or may not include physical co-location of services.
- Recognize all families have strengths on which to build, support families to recognize and exercise their power, and promote access to resources available in the community.
- Consider the use of financial literacy courses to support families in managing and strengthening their family finances.
- Create a comprehensive “no wrong door” system of care using “warm hand-offs” to help families get the help they need.
- Train participating partner organizations in how to provide trauma informed, strengths-based care.

Measuring Our Success

To measure our progress towards implementing a successful parenting skills program, we will use the following as our metrics:

- Number of individuals/families participating in Service Center programs that may be adopted.
- Number of substantiated DCS cases.
- Number of adults and children incarcerated in county jails.

How will this improve the quality of life in Jay County?

As parents and other family caregivers become more confident and adept in leading their families, there will be fewer confirmed cases of child abuse and neglect and fewer victims of substance abuse. We will see improvement in Economic Self-Sufficiency and Health measures chosen to assess family stability based on factors to be determined after study of the Family Service models and in the five Protective Factors that are the foundation of the Strengthening Families approach. They include parental resilience, social connections, concrete support in times of need, knowledge of parenting and child development, and social and emotional competence of children. Research studies show that when these Protective Factors are well established in a family, the likelihood of child abuse and neglect diminishes.¹

A Note of Appreciation

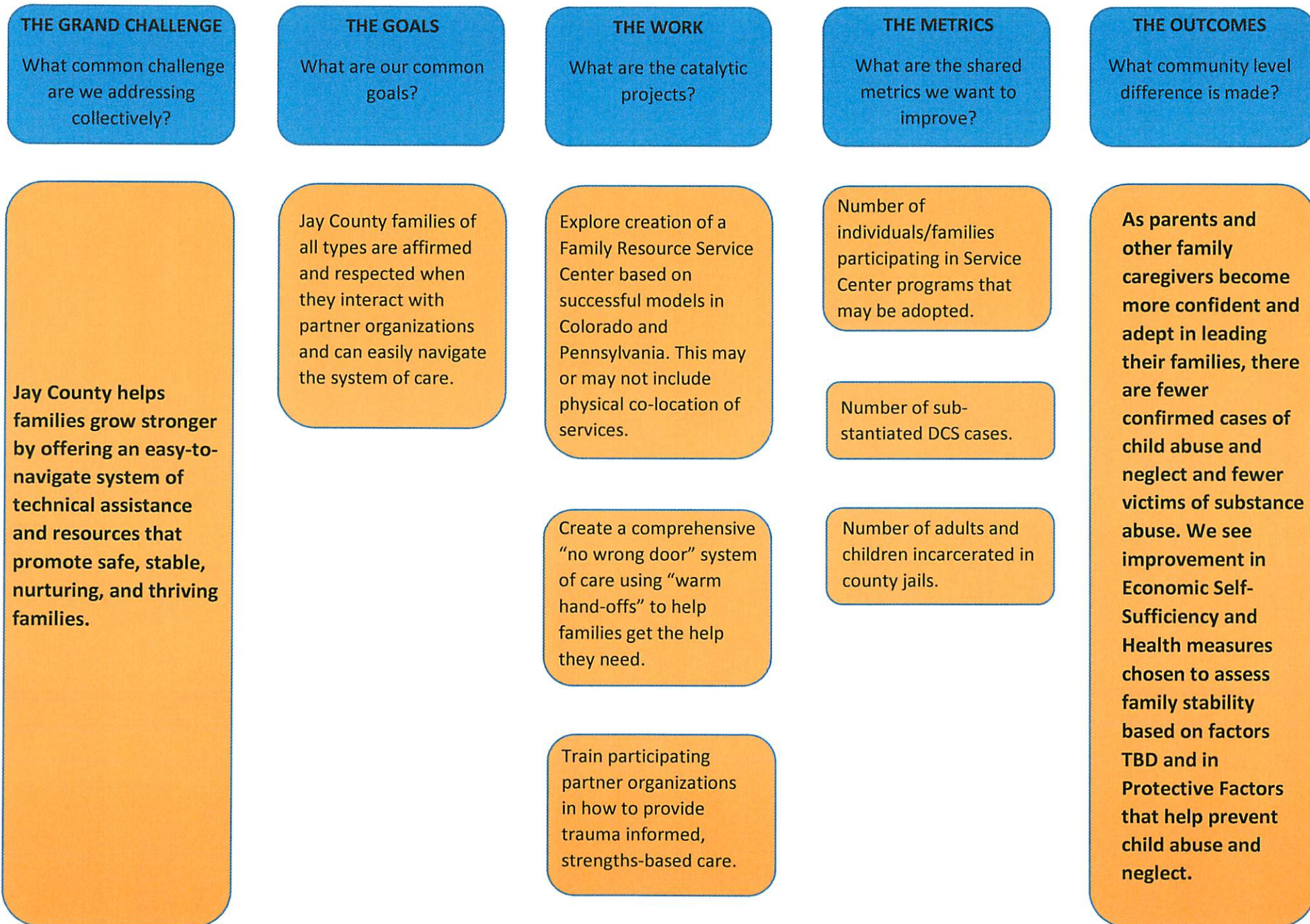
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ⁱ Protective Factors Framework, Center for the Study of Social Policy, <https://cssp.org/our-work/projects/protective-factors-framework/>

How Jay County will Help Families Navigate an Improved System of Care

STRATEGIC GOAL TREE – Grand Scheme Updated 05/31/22



Building Jay County's Future

Improving Parenting Skills

Strong and healthy families are the backbone of Jay County, but raising children can be a challenge. We want to give parents the tools they need to raise healthy and happy children.

We will **help families grow stronger from the inside out by offering supportive learning opportunities that promote the following Strengthening Families' five Protective Factors:**

- **Parental Resilience.**
- **Social Connections.**
- **Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development.**
- **Concrete Support in Times of Need.**
- **Social and Emotional Competence of Children.**

Background

Good parenting skills play a large role in the healthy development of a child. Most people would agree that properly raising a child requires a lot of patience, nurturing, and guidance. But how does a parent acquire these skills?

Parenting is a skill that can be learned and mastered. Like any newly-acquired skill, though, expertise doesn't just happen – it requires good training and practice.

The types of parenting skills also differ. Some require forms of caring while others are firm and disciplinarian. In addition, a parenting skill that works for one child may not work for another as every child is unique, and moods and situations change on daily basis.

Acquiring good parenting skills takes time and they are not developed or enhanced overnight. And as a child grows, a parent must improve their skills at dealing with them.

The Goals for Jay County

In Jay County, we will enhance the current system which strives to ensure that Jay County families have the parenting skills, knowledge of child development, and resources they need to thrive and address challenges they face based on the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors framework. As a result, instances of child abuse and neglect will decline.

To achieve this goal, we will provide universally available training and educational sessions to families normalizing the need for parent support and education. Specific programs will be designed after testing models such as Safe Sitter® and Parent Cafes. Efforts will include not just parents, but also foster parents, grandparents, and others who care for children.

Measuring Our Success

To measure our progress towards implementing a successful parenting skills program, we will use the following as our metrics:

- **Number of participants that complete the sessions.**
- **Number of participants that respond positively to a to-be-determined percentage of the end-of-program, evaluation questions.**
- **Number of participants that stay connected to at least one community partner after program completion.**
- **Number of substantiated Department of Child Services (DCS) cases of child abuse and neglect.**

How will this improve the quality of life in Jay County?

If we are successful in delivering the parent training sessions, we hope to achieve multiple outcomes. As parents, foster parents, and other family caregivers are confidently and effectively leading their families, there will be fewer problems with chronic absenteeism and higher academic performance of children in school. There will be fewer confirmed cases of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect. Fewer children and adults will become victims of substance abuse. While we know that we will not be able to attribute such community-level improvements directly to our efforts, research studies support the common-sense notion that when these Protective Factors are well established in a family, the likelihood of child abuse and neglect diminishes. Research shows that these Protective Factors also build family strengths and a family environment that promotes optimal child and youth development.ⁱ

A Note of Appreciation

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ⁱ Protective Factors Framework, Center for the Study of Social Policy, <https://cssp.org/our-work/projects/protective-factors-framework/>

How Jay County will help parents and caregivers provide safe, nurturing environments for children

STRATEGIC GOAL TREE – Grand Scheme Updated 6/2/22

THE GRAND CHALLENGE

What common challenge are we addressing collectively?

Jay County helps families grow stronger from the inside out by offering supportive learning opportunities that promote:

- **Parental Resilience.**
- **Social Connections.**
- **Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development.**
- **Concrete Support in Times of Need.**
- **Social and Emotional Competence of Children**

THE GOALS

What are our common goals?

Jay County families have the parenting skills, knowledge of child development, and resources they need to thrive and address challenges they face based on the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors framework and instances of child abuse and neglect decline.

THE WORK

What are the catalytic projects?

Provide universally available training and educational sessions to families normalizing the need for parent support and education. Specific programs will be designed after testing models such as Safe Sitter® and Parent Cafes.

THE METRICS

What are the shared metrics we want to improve?

Number of participants that complete the sessions.

Number of participants that respond positively to a TBD percentage of the end-of-program, evaluation questions.

Number of participants that stay connected to at least one community partner after program completion.

Number of substantiated DCS cases.

THE OUTCOMES

What community level difference is made?

As parents, foster parents, and other family caregivers are confidently and effectively leading their families, there are fewer problems with chronic absenteeism and higher academic performance of children in school. There are fewer confirmed cases of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect. Fewer children and adults become victims of substance abuse.

Building Jay County's Future

Substance Use Disorder

Summary

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) is a behavioral health disorder that affects millions in the United States, involving heavy use of alcohol and other drugs. SUD is widespread throughout the United States, and Jay County is not immune to the problem.

A team is moving forward, however, to address the issue. Jay County organizations are collaborating with partners in Blackford County in the Consortium for Opioids Response and Engagement-East Central Indiana, better known as CORE-ECI. The goal of CORE-ECI is to reduce drug use, abuse, and mortality with technical assistance from Purdue University and IU Health.

Drug Overdoses in The United States

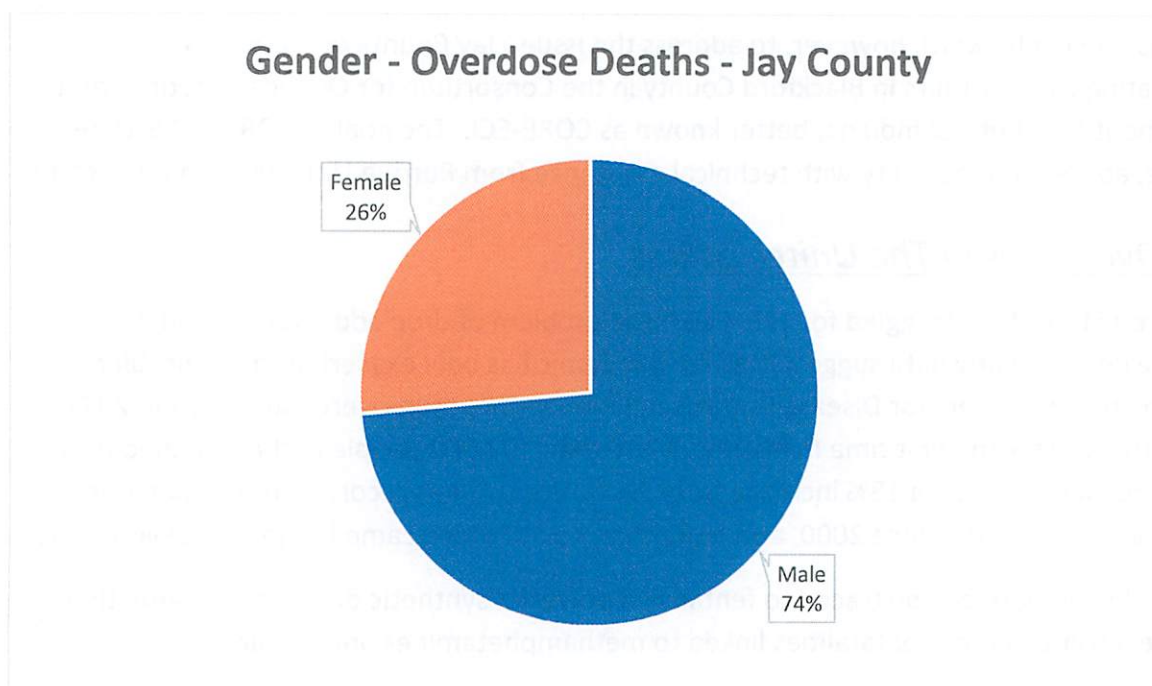
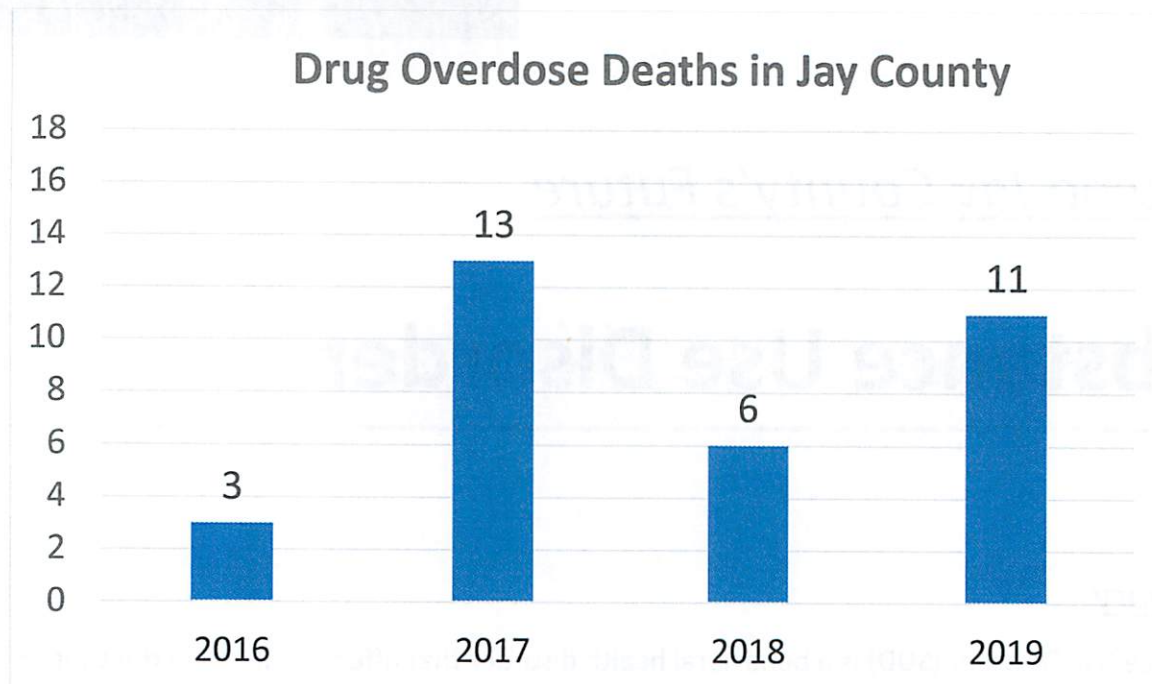
The United States has struggled for years with the problem of drug addiction and related drug overdose deaths. Early data suggest that the pandemic has only exacerbated the problem. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, drug-overdose deaths in 2021 topped 100,000 for the first time in history. More than 107,000 people in the U.S. died from drug overdoses last year, a 15% increase from 2020. The U.S. has recorded more than one million overdose deaths since 2000, and more than half of those came in the past seven years.¹

Much of the increase can be traced to fentanyl, a powerful synthetic drug. At the same time, there are a rising number of fatalities linked to methamphetamines and cocaine.

¹ *Drug-Overdose Deaths Reached a Record in 2021, Fueled by Fentanyl*, Wall Street Journal, May 11, 2022

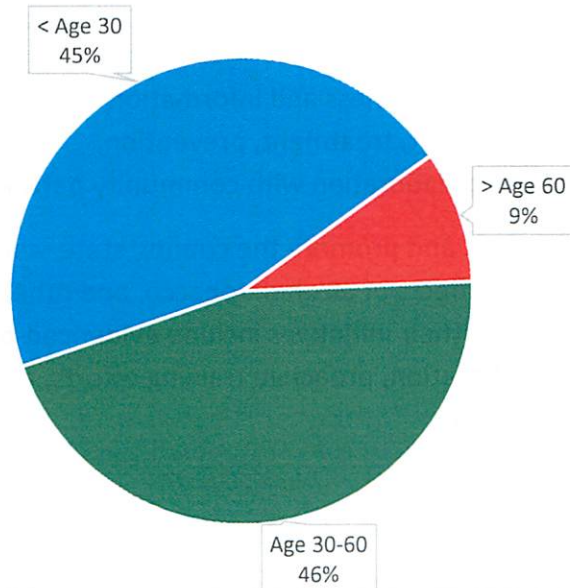
Drug Overdose Data in Jay County

Jay County has not been immune to substance use disorder. In the four years 2016-19, 33 County residents died from a drug overdose², as shown below:

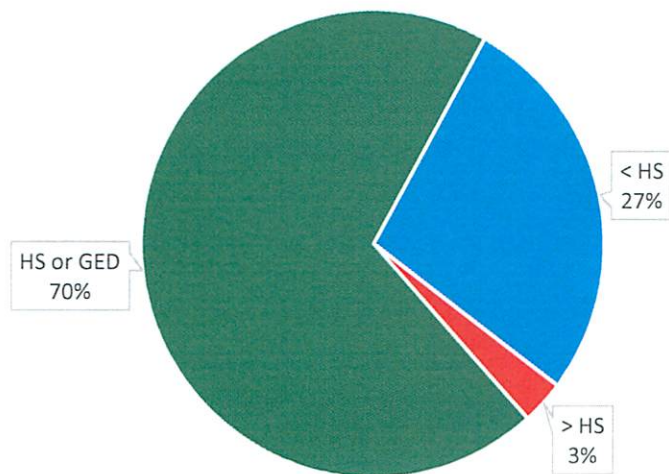


² This information provided by Jay County Coroner Michael Brewster.

Age - Overdose Deaths - Jay County



Education - Overdose Deaths - Jay County



A System for Dealing with Substance Use Disorder

Jay County has begun to deal with substance use disorder through the Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition (JCDPC).

The purpose of JCDPC is to:

- Promote community-wide awareness and information sharing regarding substance use,
- Utilize education, enforcement, treatment, prevention,
- Coordinate and facilitate collaboration with community partners

JCDPC seeks to support, advocate, and promote the county, state, and national efforts to prevent and reduce the harmful effects of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use among youth and adults in Jay County, Indiana. Their initiatives include evidenced-based prevention programming, community collaboration, proactive training efforts, and a Quick Response Team that includes Peer Recovery Coaches.

Goals and Metrics

The strategic goals, and the metrics used to measure completion of those goals, have not yet been developed. The Portland Foundation will monitor the work of the CORE-ECI group and their process moves forward and will publicize the goals and measurements when they are available.

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- Rusty Inman – Executive Director, John Jay Center for Learning
- Virgil Jones - Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition
- Rex Journay – Jay County Commissioner
- Allison Keen – Youth Educator, Purdue Extension
- Justin Littman – Family Case Manager Supervisor, Department of Child Services
- John Moore – Board Member, The Portland Foundation
- Krista Muhlenkamp – Board Member, The Portland Foundation
- Michele Owen – Executive Director, Family Alliance
- Chynna Ratliffe - Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition
- Kimbra Reynolds - Executive Director, Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition
- Travis Richards - Executive Director, Jay County Development Corporation
- Jane Ann Runyon – Executive Director, United Way of Jay County
- Christy Shauver – Director of Community Development, Jay County Development Corporation
- Mitch Sutton – Police Chief, City of Portland
- Annie Van Horn – Director of Special Education, Jay School Corporation
- Jenni VanSkyock – Program Manager, IU Health Jay Hospital Outpatient Behavioral Health
- Jon Vanator - President, IU Health Jay Hospital
- Tashia Weaver – Family Resource Center Coordinator, Strengthening Indiana Families

Jay County Drug Prevention and Treatment System Strategic Goal Tree

This is a placeholder for the eventual strategies expected from the CORE-ECI team meetings hosted by Purdue University

