Better Together

Giving every Columbus child the opportunity to succeed

ANNUAL REPORT 2013
We strive to ensure that every child and student receives the support that she or he needs to succeed academically and thrive in a fulfilling career.
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“Learn4Life helps strengthen our communities by following children before they even enter into preschool all the way through high school and into college or their first job. By supporting the education of our youth from cradle to career, Learn4Life is strengthening our workforce and in turn our communities for many years to come.”

CHAD JESTER
President
Nationwide Insurance Foundation

“The collective impact of the region’s leading business, community and academic organizations create meaningful linkages and innovative solutions for improving Columbus students’ academic and career preparation. Through Learn4Life’s well-planned and powerful partnerships, Columbus State and other key stakeholders are able to identify intervention strategies to reduce the need for student remediation and address academic and non-academic barriers to life-long student success.”

DR. DAVID HARRISON
President
Columbus State Community College

“Our participation in Learn4Life’s Partnership4Success has the potential to revolutionize the way Boys & Girls Clubs identify, engage and provide services to at-risk youth in our community. The data provided to us as part of this program has allowed us to reach out to youth who are in need of community-based intervention and youth development programs, but who – without the data provided to us – would not have been on our radar. Learn4Life has strengthened our efforts to put youth on the path to a great future.”

REBECCA ASMO
Executive Director
Boys & Girls Clubs of Columbus

“At the end of the day, Columbus won’t be able to reach its ambitious education goals without the active engagement of its community partners. That’s why Learn4Life is so important to the work we are doing. Together we are building a sense of shared responsibility for achieving measurable gains for our students. We are aligning our agendas and staying focused on what gets results.”

J. DANIEL GOOD, PH.D.
Interim Superintendent
Columbus City Schools
A LETTER
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Creating a culture of shared responsibility

Each year, far too many Columbus children enter kindergarten without the foundational skills essential for school success. Too many children in the elementary and middle grades are not meeting state standards in reading and mathematics. And one quarter of Columbus high school students leave without earning a diploma often leading to a lifetime of poverty.

This is not a problem that our schools can fix by themselves – and they shouldn’t be expected to do so. They need the support of a fully-engaged community – business, civic, academic and non-profit community leaders – united by a common vision and common goals.

After several years of planning, Learn4Life Columbus was launched by community leaders to create a cradle-to-career education support framework. As a two-year old organization, we are navigating our way through the charge and are in the early stages of several initiatives designed to engage our community in a collaborative way. Despite our relatively brief existence, community behavior is changing.

Over 140 organizations have joined together in a collective effort that Columbus has not experienced before. We know that collaborative action, data-driven decision-making and continuous quality improvement can change outcomes for children and students. Our school readiness partners are working to better prepare our young children for kindergarten and our Make Summer Count partners are working in creative ways to minimize summer learning loss. And with Learning Circle Education Services and Columbus City Schools, our Partnership4Success partners are laying the foundation for a system that can get the right student to the right service at the right time.

We know that we are Better Together, and with the help of countless community partners, we will work side by side to ensure that every child and student in Columbus has the opportunity to succeed. We thank our dedicated partners. And we thank you for your interest in Learn4Life.

STEVE VOTAW
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Learn4Life is a backbone organization that supports educators, families, child/family service providers, nonprofits, business and civic leaders, and elected officials. We are united by a common mission: to ensure every child and student receives the support they need to succeed academically and thrive in a fulfilling career.

As a “cradle-to-career” community-wide support system, Learn4Life is committed to:

• Creating a culture of community ownership and shared responsibility for child and student success
• Identifying and addressing academic and non-academic barriers to learning using the “collective impact” model
• Lifting up and supporting continuous improvement and data-driven decision-making that enables the community to enhance student achievement and school performance

In this context, Learn4Life is focused on seven education indicators that serve as baseline measures of student progress in three areas:

(1) School Readiness
(2) K-12 Academic Achievement
(3) Postsecondary Success

With our community partners, we are working to address the following indicators:

- Increase the percentage of children entering kindergarten scoring in the higher bands of the readiness assessment
- Increase the percentage of students who are proficient in reading by the end of 3rd grade
- Increase the percentage of students who are proficient in mathematics in the 8th grade
- Increase the percentage of students who graduate from high school
- Reduce the percentage of students needing remediation in postsecondary programs
- Increase the number of students enrolling in a postsecondary degree or certificate program
- Increase the number of students graduating with a postsecondary degree or certificate with value in the marketplace

This is not easy work, but when we work together as a community we know our students will do better.
COLLECTIVE IMPACT
STRONGER WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER

The concept could hardly be simpler. We are stronger working together than we are working as individual organizations. The rationale is as compelling as it is clear: working together, we can leverage our collective knowledge, ideas, resources, energy and resolve in ways that achieve better results than if we try to tackle large, complex problems as individual entities working independently. We are better together.

Collective impact is a new way for groups to work together. Instead of well-intentioned organizations working independently to affect educational change, collective action relies on the aligned efforts of a coordinated system of organizations focused on large, community-wide goals.

Collective impact is a response to the reality that when we work in isolation, our impact is diminished. We may experience sporadic pockets of success, but nothing approaching the scale of change needed to solve major social problems. Collective impact requires building a stronger community, not just stronger intervention programs and services. And that requires trust, honest dialogue and patience – intangibles that are every bit as important.

Using a collective impact approach, broad community-wide goals are identified and a network of organizations/stakeholders join together to devise common strategies and coordinate activities designed to achieve the goals. Success is measured not by meeting individual “client” needs but by how well the community as a whole is served.

DEPLOYING COLLECTIVE IMPACT IN COLUMBUS

Increasing numbers of community leaders, social service organizations and education stakeholders throughout Columbus are embracing collective impact as a strategy with great promise for helping our community achieve its most critical education improvement goals. The “coming together” of these organizations has begun and excitement clearly is building.

Learn4Life is excited to be part of this broad community effort serving as the “backbone support organization” that helps convene, facilitate, organize and support the activities of an ever-growing list of committed community partners identified on the inside back cover of this report.

Any talk of vital partnerships would be incomplete without acknowledging the role played by the Columbus business community, in particular American Electric Power, Cardinal Health, Chase, Crane Group, Limited Brands, Nationwide and PNC. Without their generous financial support, the work we have launched – and the benefits we expect to realize – would not be possible.
SCHOOL READINESS

Giving every child the opportunity to succeed

Objectives:

(a) Increase the percentage of children entering kindergarten who score in the higher bands of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment – Literacy (KRA-L), and (b) increase the percentage of students who are proficient in reading by the end of third grade.

Years of research tell us that children are born ready to learn and that investments in high-quality early learning yield huge economic and social dividends.

“Catch ‘em young,” James J. Heckman advises. The earlier we begin the better. In Heckman’s words, “Early learning begets later learning and early success breeds later success, just as early failure breeds later failure.”¹

Research led by Heckman, 2000 Nobel laureate in economics and an expert in the economics of human development, has shown that “early childhood development heavily influences health, economic and social outcomes for individuals and society at large.”²

Quality early learning experiences, together with a positive, nurturing home environment, access to essential healthcare and good nutrition, in his view, are essential to ensuring that all children enter kindergarten prepared to succeed.

At the core of all learning is literacy. It is the foundation on which all subsequent knowledge is built. Unfortunately, too many children in Columbus are entering kindergarten without a strong and necessary foundation for reading skills development.

Despite Good Intentions, Little Progress

Since 2009, the number of children identified in the lowest scoring band of the KRA-L has not changed for children entering Columbus City Schools kindergarten programs. For many of these students, without immediate and appropriate intervention, the readiness gap will become an achievement gap.

“The first years of life are crucial to the development and functioning of the brain. Early experiences affect learning, as well as the social and emotional development that are of fundamental importance to children’s well-being and future success. Research confirms that what children know and can do when they start school helps determine their success in the classroom and the workplace – and throughout their lives.”³

Source: From the Beginning: Firm Footing for Children, Families & Schools, School Readiness Solutions Group of the State Board of Education Columbus, Ohio, August 2006

¹ Invest in the Very Young, published by Ounce of Prevention Fund and the University of Chicago, Harris School of Public Studies, 2004
² Ibid
³ Ibid
The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment – Literacy (KRA-L) is a 15-minute assessment of skill areas critical to becoming a successful reader.

The KRA-L is administered prior to kindergarten entry with the child’s score falling into one of three score bands to be used as guidance for instructional decisions.

**BAND 1**
(0-13 points)
Indicates a need to do additional assessment of language, early reading and/or possible related health concerns (i.e., oral, vision and medical) for systematic reading intervention

**BAND 2**
(14-23 points)
Indicates a need to monitor children who may be scoring at the lower end of the band and to assess for targeted skill instruction needs

**BAND 3**
(24-29 points)
Indicates children should do well with reading instruction and/or may need to be assessed for enrichment programs

As the graph above shows, for the last four years the percentage of Columbus City Schools children scoring in the lowest band of the KRA-L has remained relatively flat (34.29 percent in 2009, 34.27 percent in 2010, 34.51 percent in 2011, 34.80 percent in 2012), despite efforts of many well-intentioned stakeholders. For our children, “relatively flat” – another way of saying “little or no improvement.” It also is worth noting that since 2006 the percentage of Columbus City Schools children scoring in the lowest band has been nearly twice as high as the statewide average.

Time to sound the alarm
According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, “If current trends hold true, 6.6 million low-income children in the birth to age 8 grouping are at increased risk of failing to graduate from high school on time because they won’t be able to meet NAEP’s [National Assessment of Educational Progress] proficient reading level by the end of third grade.”
The concern for children’s reading skills extends beyond kindergarten readiness. If children enter kindergarten ill-prepared, they often continue to fall behind in reading.

The research is evident that students who are not proficient in reading at the end of the third grade will be faced with significant challenges throughout their school years. Up to half of the printed fourth grade curriculum is incomprehensible to students who read below that grade level. Also, students who cannot read proficiently beyond third grade tend to have more behavioral and social problems, are more often referred for special education and are four times more likely to drop out of school.

If children are not reading at grade-level by the end of third grade, they continue in the years ahead to stay behind their peers who can read. The graph below documents the passage rate of Columbus City Schools students performance on Ohio’s third-grade reading achievement assessment.

Columbus City Schools Students’ Proficient or Above on Grade Three Reading Ohio Achievement Assessment

Columbus Metropolitan Library has spent the last six months experiencing a whirlwind of all things SPARK. Most notable has been the deepened awareness of the seemingly insurmountable odds that keep at-risk children from being prepared for school. Through SPARK, we are developing long-term and meaningful partnerships with our families, and are now beginning to see traction with the work. Parents are opening up and engaging in the lessons and children are waiting for us with their SPARK homework in hand! Above all else, witnessing the dedication of families climbing the mountain toward school readiness is inspiring and humbling.

— ABBY KIRACOF, COLUMBUS METROPOLITAN LIBRARY
Columbus is rich with many programs and services. Visionary leaders, top-notch researchers, dedicated teachers, social workers, prevention staff, healthcare professionals and volunteers have made it their personal mission to improve the quality of life for our children. The following are four community collaborations that are working to improve early literacy for our youngest learners so they are more likely to become successful on their first real measure of success—the third grade reading achievement assessment results.

**ready 4 success**
Modeled after the Winning Beginnings campaign for kindergarten readiness, a United Way of Greater Cincinnati Success by 6 initiative, ready 4 success started as a partnership with Learning Circle Education Services, nine early childhood education and care agencies, Action for Children and Learn4Life. Key features of the initiative include (a) a screening of early reading skills of four-year-old children attending the centers; (b) assistance from a literacy specialist who will work with teachers and administrative leaders to share evidence-based instructional and programmatic improvement strategies; and (c) access, for the first time, to the KRA-L scores of the children who they served to learn of their impact and effectiveness. In time, we anticipate having access to an early childhood data hub that providers can use to track the performance and development of their children over time.

**SPARK Ohio (Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids)**
This new initiative fully exemplifies the meaning of alignment and collaboration. SPARK is a home-visitation model designed to provide parents of four-year-olds who do not have an opportunity to attend an early learning center with experiences that will support and enhance school readiness.

Columbus City School officials estimate that 50 percent of children entering kindergarten classes have little or no opportunity to enroll in a Pre-K program. Eight of our major community organizations—Columbus Metropolitan Library, Nationwide Children’s Hospital, Directions for Youth & Families, Franklin County Job and Family Services, Homeless Families Foundation, Schoenbaum Family Center, the YMCA and United Way of Central Ohio, have agreed to work together to implement SPARK in six high-need neighborhoods. Together they are SPARK Columbus!

The SPARK Ohio model includes the following:

- **Monthly instructional home visits** by a Parent Partner
- **Screenings for development and learning** that will result in an Individualized Learning Plan
- **Information about**, and linkages to, community resources, as needed

Children participating in SPARK in other Ohio communities have shown impressive KRA-L results. SPARK is an outcome of a W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant awarded in 2002 to the Sisters of Charity Foundation in Canton, Ohio.

**2012 and 2013 Language & Early Literacy Conferences**
Two Language & Early Literacy Conferences attracted more than 200 attendees each year who learned about evidence-based language and early literacy practices. The conferences led to a series of Conversations About Practice, free seminars where teachers working with young children could continue their dialogue with the experts, learning about implementation strategies. More than 120 different educators have attended one or more Conversations.
Healthy Weight 0-5

According to the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about one in eight preschoolers in the U.S. is obese. Children who are overweight or obese as preschoolers are five times as likely as normal-weight children to be overweight or obese as adults. Obesity rates in preschoolers of low income families, after decades of rising, began to level off from 2003 through 2008 and now are showing small declines in many states.

Here in Columbus, local school officials reported in the 2011-12 school year that 28 percent of kindergarten students – more than one in four – were overweight or obese. To help address this issue, the Cardinal Health Foundation awarded Learn4Life a 2013 project management grant for the Healthy Weight 0-5 Initiative. The project’s goal is to dramatically increase the number of Central Ohio children who enter school at healthy weights.

This initiative is focused on the “touchpoints” that support young families’ access to child care, health care, nutritious food, fitness and the interrelationships among them. Working together, Learn4Life and Cardinal Health are building on existing resources, identifying gaps and developing common priorities, which will target the following behaviors that result in healthy weights:

1. Reduced consumption of sweetened beverages
2. Increased consumption of fruits and vegetables
3. Portion control issues
4. Increased physical activity and motor skill development
5. Limitations on television screen time

According to the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about one in eight preschoolers in the U.S. is obese. Children who are overweight or obese as preschoolers are five times as likely as normal-weight children to be overweight or obese as adults. Obesity rates in preschoolers of low income families, after decades of rising, began to level off from 2003 through 2008 and now are showing small declines in many states.

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5. Limitations on television screen time
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Objectives:

(a) Increase the percentage of students who are proficient in mathematics by the end of eighth grade, and (b) increase the percentage of students who graduate from high school on time.

The middle school years have often been called the “Bermuda Triangle” of American education. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has said it’s “a time when students sink or swim, and sail into choppy waters with few pedagogical stars by which to navigate.” And he has described the history of middle grades reform as little more than continual tinkering and persistent dissatisfaction.4

The middle grades matter and some of the strongest evidence comes from a recent study conducted by ACT, which is an independent, not-for-profit organization that provides assessment, research, information and program management services in the broad areas of education and workforce development. Searching for the critical defining points for students in the college and career readiness process, ACT’s research confirms that “eighth-grade students’ academic achievement has a larger impact on their readiness for college by the end of high school than anything that happens academically in today's high schools.”5 ACT goes so far as to suggest that if students are not on target for college and career readiness by the time they reach this point – the end of eighth grade – the impact may be nearly irreversible.6

Learn4Life’s decision to focus on improving middle-grade students’ academic achievement makes sense. But why mathematics? Three reasons stand out:

Why Proficiency in Eighth Grade Mathematics?

1. First, mathematics knowledge and skills, along with those in English, are needed for success at the postsecondary level. Years of research point to success in Algebra I as a leading indicator of college success.7

2. Second, central Ohio’s future economic prosperity depends on its capacity to produce enough STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) workers to compete successfully in the global economy. Central Ohio’s chances for future economic growth and prosperity are based on its capacity to generate and apply new ideas to the creation and upgrading of products and services, and its success in developing technology-savvy workers with a strong work ethic and advanced reasoning, collaboration and problem-solving skills.

4 Secretary Arne Duncan, Speech at the National Forum’s Annual Schools to Watch Conference, June 23, 2011
5 ACT, The Forgotten Middle: Ensuring That All Students Are on Target for College and Career Readiness Before High School, 2008
6 Ibid
7 Musen, L., Pre-Algebra and Algebra Enrollment and Achievement, Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, 2010
In all fairness, it must be acknowledged that Columbus's eighth-grade mathematics achievement scores have improved in recent years, but the 53.9 percent who achieved proficiency in 2012-13 only brought the district back to the level achieved in the 2007-08 school year.

**Time to sound the alarm**

In the view of New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman, *“math and science are the keys to innovation and power in today’s world.”* Assuming there is a direct link between improving mathematics and science education and enhancing Central Ohio’s ability to prosper in today’s knowledge economy, our community has a lot of work to do.

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8 Anthony Carnevale, Nicole Smith and Michelle Melton, *STEM*, Center on Education and the Workforce, 2011


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**Eighth-Grade Mathematics Proficiency, 2008-2009 to 2012-2013**

![Eighth-Grade Mathematics Proficiency Graph](image)

Source: Ohio Department of Education
On-time high school graduation

Our second focus indicator in Academic Achievement is graduation rates. Nationally, there is no greater problem that plagues our education system. About every 10 seconds, a young person drops out of school. That’s over 6,800 dropouts every school day – and it means that over a million young people who enter the ninth grade fail to graduate four years later with their peers. Half of our African American, Latino and Native American students drop out. And students in low-income families drop out of school at six times the rate of their peers from high-income families.

As a nation, we are losing a fourth of our human capital through school dropouts – a tremendous waste of talent. And the situation is no better in Columbus. At the end of the 2012-13 school year, only 79.2 percent of the city’s seniors graduated, which was up from 72.7 percent in the 2008-09 school year.

Columbus City Schools Graduation Rates, 2006-07 through 2012-13

Source: Ohio Department of Education 2012

Of the 20,200 Central Ohio students who started ninth grade in 2006, 15,155 graduated from the twelfth grade four years later. That means approximately 25 percent failed to graduate from high school with their peers.

Source: Ohio Department of Education 2012
Learn4Life is working with the community to develop strategies to tackle the issues of eighth-grade mathematics proficiency and high school graduation. Our initial strategy recognizes that students’ academic success and personal development also depend upon factors outside the school day and beyond school walls. So building on the strengths of the city’s youth serving organizations we are creating quality out-of-school learning opportunities designed to improve learning and to make the benefits accessible to every child. And we are doing it better together.

**Partnership4Success**

In partnership with Learning Circle Education Services, Columbus City Schools and five community organizations—Boys and Girls Club of Columbus, City Year, Communities in Schools, Directions for Youth & Families and YMCA – Partnership4Success was created to align schools and community partners with shared access to current student data regarding attendance, academics and discipline so that targeted interventions can be identified and implemented. These organizations have access to student-level data they never had before, providing new insights into students’ every day struggles. Using a continuous improvement process with this information, goals and action plans are being created to meet specific student needs.

This initiative lays the foundation for the Learning Partner Dashboard strategy, which is being designed to create a platform that can capture student information over time, Pre-K through postsecondary, and allow for continuous improvement planning and implementation from numerous community partners on the cradle to career pathway.

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**Reflections on Partnership4Success**

“Knowledge is power. The knowledge gained through our participation and collaboration with Learn4Life has been valuable. The knowledge gained from the data and the knowledge of the work of our partner agencies has informed our work and given us increased resources to improve programming and deliver services to the youth and families we serve.”
— Lisa Lambert, Communities In Schools

“The ability to make real-time impact relies on real-time data. Learn4Life, in partnership with Learning Circle Education Services, has provided the key to making a real measurable difference in the lives of the kids we serve.”
— Todd Tuney, City Year Columbus

“By having access to data related to our program participants, we can work towards individualizing our programming to better meet students’ needs. This partnership work also will help us to improve communicating with the building administrators and teaching staff so that we can work as a more cohesive team to meet the needs of the children that we all serve. We also hope that this strengthens our partnerships with other community-based youth development agencies so that we are able to better work together to meet the needs of the children in the communities that we serve.”
— Andrew Roberts, YMCA
Make Summer Count

Make Summer Count is the product of a conversation that began with scores of community partners in October 2012. The collaborative effort was piloted in the summer of 2013 and planning for 2014 has already begun.

This initiative has two primary goals:

1. Increase opportunities for academic enhancement during the summer months by incorporating activities into meal sites and day camp schedules.

2. Increase the number of children and students participating in free meal sites throughout the city.

“Summer learning loss” affects a lot of students. In fact, research shows that some students may lose up to two months of grade level equivalency in mathematics computation skills over the summer months; and low-income students may lose more than two months in reading achievement, while their middle-income peers make slight gains.10

Experiential learning opportunities for enrichment or acceleration – along with summer meals – are a vital resource that a community can provide.

**POSTSECONDARY ACCESS & SUCCESS**

**Objectives:**

a) Increase the number of students enrolling in a postsecondary degree or credential program, (b) reduce the percentage of students needing remediation upon entry into a postsecondary program, and (c) increase the number of students graduating with a postsecondary degree or certificate with value in the marketplace.

The benefits of postsecondary education have long been well-documented. Individuals with a postsecondary degree or credential earn substantially more over the course of a lifetime than their counterparts who have no education or training beyond high school. Postsecondary graduates are less likely to be unemployed or to rely on public assistance than high school graduates. They also are more likely to vote, volunteer and lead healthy lifestyles, among other economic and noneconomic benefits.

In addition to creating economic opportunity, postsecondary education supports economic prosperity. Our ability – as a nation, as a state, as a community – to thrive and succeed in the global knowledge economy will be linked inextricably to our success at raising the educational attainment levels of our citizens.

How big is the challenge? According to Complete College America, by 2020 nearly 60 percent of all jobs in Ohio will require a college or university degree, certificate or some other credential of value in the marketplace. Unfortunately, just 36 percent of Ohio adults currently meet that requirement. A study conducted by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce estimates that Ohio’s institutions of higher education will have to increase the number of degrees they award by 10 percent annually to meet projected workforce needs in 2018.11

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11 Anthony Carnevale, et al., Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Projections Through 2018, Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, June 2010
Improving postsecondary access and success for young people graduating from high school in Columbus requires understanding and acknowledging that the problem is multi-dimensional – part preparation, part alignment and part support. In each instance, the evidence is clear and the reality is irrefutably harsh. Consider the following:

1. **Too few Columbus City Schools students are enrolling in postsecondary education.**

In 2011, just **33.6 percent** of Columbus City Schools high school graduates enrolled in a public college or university in Ohio. Of these students, **63 percent** enrolled in a university, and the remaining **37 percent** enrolled in a community college.

2. **Of the Columbus City Schools high school graduates enrolling in postsecondary education, too many require remediation.**

- In 2011, **39 percent** of the Columbus City Schools graduates who enrolled in an Ohio public college or university required English remediation.
- In 2011, **59 percent** of the Columbus City Schools graduates who enrolled in an Ohio public college or university required mathematics remediation.

### Ohio Public School Students Entering College and Requiring English Remediation

![Graph showing percentage of students requiring English remediation from 2007 to 2011 for Columbus City Schools and Ohio Public Schools.]

Source: Ohio Board of Regents
3. Too many Columbus City Schools high school graduates enrolling in postsecondary education are dropping out without earning any degree or certificate.

From the district’s 2004, 2005 and 2006 graduating classes, an increasing number of students entered an Ohio public college or university as a degree seeking student (637 students in 2004 to 837 in 2006). However, the percentage of students who earned a two or four year degree certificate in six years declined (from 39.1 percent in the 2004 cohort to 26 percent in the 2006 cohort).
These Numbers are Unacceptable

We have reached a turning point here in central Ohio. How we respond to the challenge of educational improvement will shape the future not just for our children and our broader community, but for future generations as well.

The prescription for change is a community-wide response – a strategic, collaborative and integrated effort to ensure more of our young people pursue postsecondary education options, are prepared to succeed in a college or university environment and, ultimately, earn a degree or certificate of value in the marketplace.

Time to Sound the Alarm

Raising education attainment levels by increasing the percentage of citizens with college degrees or postsecondary credentials is an imperative for nations, states and communities that want to be competitive in a global economy in which knowledge and innovation are highly prized and rewarded.

However meeting this challenge will not be possible if we continue doing the same things we’re doing now. In fact, the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) projects that the continuation of current practices will leave Ohio in 2025 with 60,000 fewer citizens with postsecondary credentials than it has today.12

Marshaling Regional Resources and Action

The Central Ohio Compact, was formed in 2012 in an effort to adopt a regional approach for addressing the major challenges facing local students who are seeking to earn postsecondary education credentials. The Compact is a collaboration among local school districts, higher education institutions, employers and other key community stakeholders. The group’s ultimate goal is to increase college success for central Ohio students, which in turn will position the central Ohio region as an economic leader.

Between May 2011 and April 2012, Columbus State Community College hosted three regional summits on behalf of the Compact. Attendees included representatives from public and private colleges and universities, school district leaders, education collaboratives, workforce and economic development professionals, and government officials.

12 National Center for High Education Management Systems, College Attainment Dashboard Tool, July 19, 2012
Learn4Life shares the Compact’s commitment to:

- Increase the number of students earning a postsecondary degree credential
- Ensure that college-bound high school graduates are prepared
- Increase the number of high school graduates with credit toward a college degree or certificate
- Increase the number of community college graduates earning bachelor’s degrees through guaranteed pathways to completion
- Employ evidence-based strategies for working adults, low-income and first-generation college students, and students of color
- Manage the costs of education for students, families and taxpayers through dual enrollment, 2+2 and 3+1 bachelor’s degree programs, shared facilities and services, and integrated planning.

For more information about the Central Ohio Compact, and for a listing of the schools, colleges and universities, businesses and community organizations that are partners in this initiative, see http://www.cscc.edu/centralohiocompact/

The Price of Inadequate Academic Preparation

According to the Alliance for Excellent Education, the United States loses $5.6 billion every year due to the academic shortcomings of students enrolling in postsecondary education. That includes $3.6 billion annually to provide remedial classes and $2 billion annually in additional earning if students who dropped out had instead completed their degrees at the same time as non-remedial students.

Learn4Life looks forward to continued engagement with the Compact in the coming year. As our organization has evolved, most of our energies to date have been targeted at school readiness and school achievement. As we head into 2014, we expect to ramp up our involvement in the area of postsecondary access and success. It’s a priority that clearly demands more of our attention.

## Community Report Card

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<td><strong>Indicator 3:</strong> Increase percentage of students who are proficient in mathematics in the eighth grade</td>
<td>2013 Columbus City Schools eighth graders proficient in mathematics</td>
<td>Change since recent year &lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicator 4:</strong> Increase the percentage of students who graduate from high school on time</td>
<td>2013 Columbus City Schools graduation rate</td>
<td>Change since recent year +1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>79.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal: Earn a Postsecondary Degree or Credential</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicator 5:</strong> Reduce the percentage of students needing remediation in postsecondary programs</td>
<td>Public postsecondary English remediation rate for 2011 Columbus City Schools graduates</td>
<td>Change since recent year +2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public postsecondary mathematics remediation rate for 2011 Columbus City Schools graduates</td>
<td>Change since recent year 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicator 6:</strong> Increase the number of students enrolling in a postsecondary degree or certification program</td>
<td>Ohio public postsecondary enrollment of 2011 Columbus City Schools graduates</td>
<td>Change since recent year &lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicator 7:</strong> Increase the number of students graduating with a postsecondary degree or certificate</td>
<td>Ohio public postsecondary graduation rate for 2006 cohort of Columbus City Schools graduates</td>
<td>2005 cohort -1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning is a never-ending journey. It is a journey for our youngest children whose beginning years are critical for building the early foundation needed for success later in school and in life. It is a journey for elementary and middle-grade students who are, with the help of dedicated teachers, embracing positive behaviors and discovering that hard work can bring life success. And it is a journey for young people who are preparing for the challenges of postsecondary education or searching for realistic paths to employability.

The “learning journey” metaphor also applies to Learn4Life – and to our community partners who have joined us in accepting responsibility for student success beyond school boundaries. During the past two years, we have learned a great deal about what it means to develop a cradle to career pathway. We have gained a better understanding that strengthening the quality of instruction, important as this is, must be accompanied by an array of learner supports that can significantly increase the likelihood of success. We also have been reminded that the majority of time for learning is available outside the traditional school day and beyond traditional school boundaries. So that is where Learn4Life and our community partners have focused most of our early attention.

As we move forward, we will strengthen existing collaborations and nurture new partnerships. Drawing on the collective strengths of the community, we will search for ways Columbus can create a birth-to-career education system that gives every child the opportunity to succeed, improves students’ academic achievement, and ensures that our community prospers in an economy where competition for business investment, jobs and talent is intense.

• We will work to ensure that our youngest learners are ready for kindergarten and can read proficiently by the end third grade. Together.

• We will work to improve the academic achievement of K-12 students, increasing math skills and graduation rates. Together.

• We will work to increase the number of students enrolling in postsecondary programs and then earning a degree or certificate with value in the marketplace. Together.

Learn4Life is committed to giving every Columbus child the opportunity to succeed. It is our cause – and we are determined to turn our aspiration into a top civic priority. By convening, collaborating and staying focused on research-driven best practices, we can create quality learning opportunities for all children. We will get the job done. And we will do it better together.
Learn4Life acknowledges and appreciates the outstanding professional support provided by Don Van Meter at VMC Consulting Group, Tiffany Wise and her colleagues at treetree, and Taylor Swope in the preparation of this report.

Finally, we appreciate the dedicated efforts of our skilled and knowledgeable staff: LaShaun Carter, Shelby Dowdy, Kellee Gauthier, Laurie Gyurko, Dionna Hannah, Janet Ligon, and Sandy Miller. Their unwavering support of our work and their determination to create a better future for all Columbus children and families were instrumental in the preparation of this report.
Learn4Life’s Community Partners

ACTION FOR CHILDREN • ADAMH • AEP • AFTER SCHOOL ALL-STARs • ALL IN A DAY • ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES • ATONEMENT LUTHERAN • BATTELLE • BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS • BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB • BROAD STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH • CAMP MARY ORTON • CAPITAL UNIVERSITY • CARDINAL HEALTH • CENTRAL COMMUNITY HOUSE • CHILD DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF FRANKLIN CO., INC. • CHILDHOOD LEAGUE • CHILDREN’S HUNGER ALLIANCE • CHILDREN’S DEFENSE FUND • FREEDOM SCHOOLS • CITY OF COLUMBUS • CITY YEAR • COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY • COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS • COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS- PRE-K • COLUMBUS EARLY LEARNING CENTERS • COLUMBUS HOUSING PARTNERSHIP • COLUMBUS MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND AFFILIATES • COLUMBUS METROPOLITAN LIBRARY • COLUMBUS PARTNERSHIP • COLUMBUS PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT • COLUMBUS RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT • COLUMBUS SPEECH AND HEARING • COLUMBUS STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE • COLUMBUS URBAN LEAGUE COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS • COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL PEOPLE • COMMUNITY PROPERTIES OF OHIO • COMMUNITY RESEARCH PARTNERS • CONFIDENT PARENTS CONFIDENT KIDS • COSI • CREATIVE CHILD CARE • DIRECTIONS FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES • E.L. HARDY CENTER • EASTER SEALS OF CENTRAL AND SOUTHEAST OHIO • EDUCATION COUNCIL • EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER OF OHIO • ETHIOTSS • FAMILY CHILDREN FIRST COUNCIL • FIFTH THIRD BANK • FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES • FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH • FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN’S SERVICES • FRANKLIN COUNTY JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES • FRANKLIN PARK CONSERVATORY • FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY • GODMAN GUILD • HANDS ON CENTRAL OHIO • HILLTOP PRESCHOOL • HILLTOP PRIMETIME • HOMELESS FAMILIES FOUNDATION • HOMEPORT • HUMAN SERVICES CHAMBER • HUNTINGTON • I KNOW I CAN • IMPACT COMMUNITY ACTION • J. ASHBURN JR. YOUTH CENTER • JP MORGAN CHASE • JUMP FORWARD TUTORING • KIDS CARE • KING ARTS COMPLEX • KIPP CENTRAL OHIO • KNOWLEDGE WORKS • KRILE COMMUNICATIONS • LEARNING CIRCLE EDUCATION SERVICES • LIMITED BRANDS • LOCAL MATTERS • MID OHIO FOOD BANK • MT SINAI HEALTH CARE FOUNDATION • NATIONWIDE CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL • NATIONWIDE INSURANCE • NBC 4 • OHIO AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK • OHIO BOARD OF REGENTS • OHIO CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL ASSOCIATION • OHIO CHILDREN’S FOUNDATION • OHIO COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK • OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH • OHIO RESOURCE CENTER • OSU & CCS PROJECT ASPIRE • OSU COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN ECeLOGY • OSU COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK • OSU, DEPARTMENT OF TEACHING & LEARNING • OTTERBEIN UNIVERSITY • PNC • PROJECT LEAD THE WAY • REYNOLDSBURG CITY SCHOOLS • SCHOENBAUM FAMILY CENTER • SISTERS OF CHARITY • SOUTHSIDE LEARNING • SOUTHWEST CITY SCHOOLS • SPARK OHIO • ST. STEPHENS COMMUNITY HOUSE • ST. VINCENT’S FAMILY CENTER • THE COLUMBUS FOUNDATION • THE CRANE CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH AND POLICY • THE CRANE GROUP • THE SALVATION ARMY • TREETREE • UNITED SCHOOLS NETWORK (COLUMBUS COLLEGIATE ACADEMY) • UNITED WAY • URBAN RESURRECTION CDC • VERIZON • VINEYARD COLUMBUS • WBNS • WHITEHALL CITY SCHOOLS • YMCA • YMCA EARLY EDUCATION CHILD CARE • OUR PLAY STATION AND LEARNING • COLUMBUS MONTESSORI EDUCATION CENTER