

STATEMENT OF INTENT 2024-25

Building Community

Community Schools is a movement made up of people who have “**Yes**,” written on their hearts,” according to Jane Quinn. Jane is a guiding light for Community Schools work, and her articulation of who we need to be as members of a movement to build a transformational community is simple and profound. **We say yes.** In a world of not enough, not right now, there is no way, and no one is here — we say “Yes.” Yes, we can find the resources, yes, we can do that now, yes, we can make a way, and yes, we are here. We arrive on time with a strong will to do what is required to make a difference for individual lives and for our community.

We need to quantify what “enough” is for our young people and families. How many young people are food insecure? How many young people need a dentist or a doctor? What is the number of third graders who are not reading at grade level, and how many tutors do we need? This year, we take measure of needs across developmental domains using our Collaboration ARCH model to remind us to be “whole child” and we detail the number of children who need care and support. We are setting out to know how much we need. Percentages help track disparity, but we need to know how many pairs of shoes we need to get, how many warm meals we need to make, how many rides we need to provide, and how many mentors and volunteers we need to recruit in order to change what it means to grow up in Wayne County.

In many respects, we already know what needs to be done. We need Community Circles to build attachment, we need evidence-based programs and counseling to build Regulation, we need tutors and more focused use of technology to build competency, and we need more physical activity, better nutrition, and a broader understanding of wellness to address health issues and social symptoms like vaping and chronic absenteeism. Mentoring, teaching expectations, setting goals, using practices like check in/check out and check and connect, operating school pantries, and linking people to My Wayfinder so they can find their own help are activities we immediately push forward while we more precisely articulate the need.

We must advance in teams with organized membership, clear agendas, and coherent work plans. The Wayne Partnership continues as the umbrella for us all and the Community Schools Coalition functions as a sorting and placing force to position help for youth and families appropriately in each school. Community Schools Advisory Boards monitor the arrival of specific help with Building Implementation teams. Tiered support teams identify needs and count each kind of support to make sure what is needed at each grade level in each building is provided. We work together to place and activate resources building by building in each community.

Last year, we took time to consider the rhythms and patterns of partnership. Disrupted by COVID-19, and disjointed by leadership transitions that strain organizational memory, we know we are not yet fully recovered. But we remember the source of our strength, and it is found in one another. We continue to restore patterns for events, rhythms of routine delivery intervals, and predictable program seasons. Predictable scheduling gives us time to find one another and invite whoever is missing to join us and continually improve.

Exhaustion after COVID-19 and gaps in academic and social skill sets are still very real. Challenges ahead may make it easier to step back, to settle for less, and to withdraw into our individual selves, or huddle into our individual teams. We are not after what is easy nor what is comfortable. **We are after what is right.** We are determined that our children, our families, and our communities deserve the best. We are people who have “yes” written on our hearts, and that deep commitment will be seen in what we do, the words we choose, the care we take to manage our thoughts and attitudes, how we treat one another, and how we hold out hope for Wayne County. **Yes, we are Building Community.**