**Executive Summary**

**Me and My School**

**April 2016**

We recognize that a strong start ensures a successful future. Those first tentative steps into a preschool

or kindergarten classroom may seem far removed from the confident steps across a graduation stage,

but in the Boone County Schools, we must recognize the whole picture. And begin each student's educational pathway in preschool or Kindergarten with their high school graduation in mind, so by the time a child completes twelfth grade, they are poised to successfully transition to college or career and life.

The Boone County Schools 2010-2015 Strategic plan graphically depicted the staircase to College, Career and Life Readiness, the largest step representing the K-Readiness (birth to) building to 24-27 range or higher on the ACT. Parallel to the staircase was a focus on critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity, the 4-Cs. The Boone County Schools 2015-2020 Strategic plan takes this even further: All learners will demonstrate the 21st Century skills and knowledge that will prepare them for success in college, career, and life. The 4C’s have become the 10C’s; critical thinking, character, challenge communication, cultural competency, choice creativity, collaboration, compassion and community connections.

The Boone County Schools implement a quality preschool program for children ages three and four who qualify with any category of disability and four year olds who quality as income eligible. Over 470 students were served in 2014-2015.

Several of the Boone County elementary schools collaborate with community partners to provide “full day “ Kindergarten ( ½ day public school and ½ day parent paid to the collaborating partner) for some of their five year olds. One of our schools provides full day Kindergarten through Title I funding. Approximately 1475 Kindergarten children were educated in the Boone County Schools.

Our region has a bold goal that 85% of children will be ready for kindergarten by 2020.  Northern Kentucky has a long-standing history of a collective impact approach through United Way’s Success By 6® initiative and its strong partners, which have contributed to our community’s success to date.

In 2014-2015 The Boone County Head Start program provided early child care to 59 Boone County children while the total County early care and education program capacity was 6,695.

As one of the founding partners of Boone County Success By 6, our goal continues to be that at least 85% of our incoming children enter school ready to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences that best promote the child’s success and ability to be ready to grow, ready to learn and ready to succeed. Boone Count Success By 6 works diligently with Early Child Care Centers on quality early care, health initiatives, literacy and social emotional strategies. As well as home visitations.

In 2013-2014 the Kentucky department of Education initiated a process in which all incoming Kindergarten children take a readiness assessment within the first few weeks of school, the results of which indicate a snapshot of readiness.

Brigance Readiness Percentages

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2013-2014 | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 |
| District Totals | 56.7 | 58.5 | 60.5 |
| State | 49.0 | 50.0 | 50.1 |

Despite our progress, we must provide every child and family the opportunity to be ready for school focusing on all gap groups to include male and female students, students with and without disabilities, students with and without English proficiency, minority and nonminority students, and students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch and those who are not eligible for free and reduced lunch

**The Research is Clear**

An increasing number of studies show that quality of preschool is associated with a host of benefits to students, schools, and society at large. Some benefits accrue in the short term, while the child is enrolled. Some benefits accrue in the medium term as the child progresses through school. Others accrue over the longer term and through adulthood, with entry into the labor force. One obvious benefit of Early Childhood Education (ECE) is enhanced academic achievement. These enhancements are evident in higher test scores, graduation rates, retention rates, and college attendance (Economic Benefits of Quality Universal Preschool, 2014, UC Economic Center).

Studies have also shown that when children go on to kindergarten and higher grades, those with ECE are less likely to repeat grades and need less special education assistance. Children who have had ECE also commit fewer crimes over their lifetime than children in the same socioeconomic circumstances who have not had ECE. Over the long term, further gains from ECE are realized on local, state, and national levels, as the children enter the labor force themselves, earn higher salaries, and contribute larger income and sales tax payments (Economic Benefits of Quality Universal Preschool, 2014, UC Economic Center).

Ockerman Elementary and Florence Elementary readiness scores are significantly lower that both the state and district average. It is therefore incumbent upon us to leverage the resource of our partners and the community as a whole.

An initial, immediate step to provide every child and family the opportunity to be ready for school has been provided through our partnership with and funding through SuccessBy6 to implement ***Me and My School*****Transition Project.** SuccessBy 6 has awardedstart-up funding of $4000 to each school.

The goals of ***Me and My School*- Kindergarten Transition Project** are Supporting Children, Engaging Families, and Promoting Ready Schools as specified below:

* **Support Children**

Develop children’s approaches to learning, pre-reading skills, cognitive, motor development, and self- regulation

* **Engage Families**

Facilitate engagement of Family Toolkit activities (that are based on the revised Parent Guides from the Governor's Office of Early Childhood) for parents and caregivers to do at home in support of kindergarten readiness.

* **Promoting Ready Schools**

Provide family outreach so that teachers and schools become familiar with every child before the first day of kindergarten.

**The three outcomes will be measured as follows:**

* **Support Children**

20% increase from 2015 of children who attend ***Me and My School*** will enter Kindergarten better prepared compared to students that did not attend.

* **Engage Families**

Families will complete 75% of the activity cards from the Family Kindergarten Kit with their child.

* **Promote Ready Schools**

75% of families participated in at least two (2) innovative family outreach events at school site to facilitate a successful transition

Schools will implement ***Me and My School*** daily, four hours a day (8:30 am -12:30 pm) for four weeks in the summer of 2016. The Florence Elementary program will run June 6- July 1 with Ockerman Elementary beginning June 20 and ending July 15.

**Me and My Schools program:**

Children become familiar with their school, their teacher, and other staff and participate in a fun, enriching experience that provides developmentally appropriate activities that promote kindergarten readiness.  Children will eat breakfast, participate in a literacy block (reading, phonics and writing), Large Motor movement (**MINDS in Motion**/Free Play), Math and numeracy block, eat lunch and work in the Fast ForWord Computer-based Readiness program daily. Children will also learn the school behavior expectations through the positive behaviors interventions and supports process (PBIS).

**Intentional and intensive recruitment:**

* Students are being recruited from current preschool classes;
* Students registering for Kindergarten are receiving save the date cards;
* Early childcare centers have been asked to distribute save the date cards;
* Information will be available on all school and district social media venues;
* School and District newsletters and websites will feature articles;
* Local media will be contacted;
* Parents/Guardians in the Ockerman and Florence residential areas will receive calls

Personal phone calls and texts;

* Homes, apartment complexes, hotels and mobile home visits will be made;
* Flyers will be distributed; and
* Street signs will be placed in strategic locations.

**Teaching Teams for *Me and My Schools*** will include 1 certified teacher and 1 para-educator for each 20 children participating.

**Family Activities will include**:

* Dissemination and training on how to use the ToolKits provided to each family during the initial orientation and informational session. Each child will receive a Toolkit to include include Me & My School Messenger Bag, 8 count jumbo crayons, alphabet flash cards, a 5” inflated Spikey ball, a stubby paint brush, a dual lens magnifying glass, a set of pattern blocks, pattern block activity cards, 6 activity bingo cards, and a Parent Guide ( Three to Four Years). Toolkits cost about $32 /child.
* Parents/families will participate in Ready, Set School parenting workshops. They will select three topics, each 45minutes in length from the following: **Parent Café’ Your Child’s Readiness to Start School; Building School Success at Home; Teach Your Child: Feel What you Want, Control What you Do; Creating Positive Social Connections; Building Language and Literacy; Partnering with Schools; Getting to Know My School; and Parent Café’: Your Child’s Success Depends on You!**
* Parents and families will be provided incentives if they return activity cards each week, which may include new school outfits, backpack of school supplies, restaurant cards and others.

**In addition each School will provide events to facilitate transition to Kindergarten**

Both schools will host Back to School Nights and K Kamps. During the K Kamps, incoming kindergarten students will get the opportunity to experience what a day in kindergarten will be like.  The children will participate in fun learning experiences, meet the teachers and staff at their schools and walk away with great ideas to help prepare them to be “school” ready.  Parents will be invited to a K 411 session to begin the process of partnering with their child’s school as an active member of the school community.

**Transportation will be provided by school bus to and from school each day.**

**Additional Community Partners include:**

* **Boone County SuccesBy6:** providing supports on best practices regarding kindergarten transitions, facilitating communication and offering materials, resources and referrals for community partnerships;
* **4-C for Children**: facilitating parenting workshop[s- ***Ready , Set, Succeed***
* **Boone County Public Library:** providing age-appropriate, hands –on literacy activities and resources for classroom and home use.

**Schools who have previous implemented *Me and My School* report**:

Schools participating in the program have reported students who attended the ***Me and My School*** Kindergarten Transition Pilot were becoming the “leaders of the class.” Students will learn through weekly thematic units and community visitors while becoming comfortable with the school setting and getting prepared for the transition into kindergarten. A couple of schools shared that “it was the smoothest start to kindergarten that they’d ever had.” The Brigance data looks solid with schools reporting higher percentages for kindergarten readiness compared to the students who did not attend.  Increasing test scores is critical, but not enough can be said about a confident student who is ready to learn.

**Sustainability and expansion:**

Our current work includes the development of a comprehensive School readiness plan with one of our first action plans being the ***Me and My Schools*** pilot. We will pilot the ***Me and My Schools*** at Ockerman Elementary and Florence Elementary in the summer of 2016 with the understanding that as we meet the goals outlined, we will continue at the two pilot schools and expand to the next three schools whose readiness scores are lower than our expectation. Once data is accrued we will leverage the resources of our other community partners and local business, industry and government to continue ***Me and My Schools*** and implement the next steps in our Readiness Action Plan.

Every graduate college, career and life ready begins with our very youngest children!