



This countywide vision for educational excellence, workforce development and economic prosperity was created with input from over 1200 citizens within a 6-month period and has been endorsed by a substantial number of community, civic, business, education, and government organizations. The plan encompasses the strategic plans from each of the four school districts located primarily in Independence County: Batesville, Cedar Ridge, Midland, and Southside schools, which strategically align with the greater county vision.

Our Vision

Independence County will be a nationally-recognized, uniquely-progressive, rural, southern college community with outdoor recreation and adventure opportunities for all ages. An emphasis will be placed on restoring unique and historic architecture into beautiful turn-of-the-century neighborhoods, residential loft apartments, unique shopping venues, internet cafes, and eclectic restaurants and pubs, as well as creative place making. Tourism will be viewed as an economic driver utilizing Independence County's proximity to world-class outdoor recreation and development of strategic assets including an interconnected complex of outdoor attractions – hiking, biking, horseback riding, kayaking, canoeing, fishing, climbing, camping, etc. Additionally, the Batesville Community and Aquatics Park will fulfill economic impact goals by hosting statewide meetings, tradeshow, and corporate retreats as well as high volume sporting events – swimming, baseball, volleyball, soccer, etc.

Independence County will become a dynamic center of higher learning and training with unique educational partnerships beginning early in K-12 public schools and advancing with higher education and business partnerships. With abundant, affordable high-quality Pre-K, K-12 public school leaders in education innovation, a state-of-the-art workforce training center, and affordable, reliable access to broadband internet, Independence County students will be college or workforce ready upon graduation without need for remediation. Lyon College and UACCB's enrollment increases will provide trained candidate pools for education, healthcare, manufacturing, industrial, technology, and food processing jobs, meeting workforce needs for retention and economic expansion.

Expansion and support of White River Medical Center as North Central Arkansas's regional medical provider will continue, eliminating the need to travel elsewhere for medical services, including specialized practices, and supplying high-quality jobs.

Working together we will create a welcoming business environment that provides quality jobs that pay family sustaining wages for all Independence County residents.

Educational Attainment

1. Establish Ind Co. public schools as leaders in PreK-12 innovation
2. Facilitate growth of Lyon College and UACCB enrollment
3. Expand high-quality PreK to as many Ind Co. students as possible
4. Create a culture of and support educational attainment for all Ind Co. residents

Workforce Development

1. Establish workforce education pathways informed by business and industry
2. Evaluate the feasibility of an Ind Co. Promise program to fund workforce training for high school students
3. Expand high-quality PreK to as many Ind Co. students as possible
4. Develop an aggressive program of language education with a specific focus on ESL population

Economic Development

Meeting goals in both educational attainment and workforce development focus areas will provide a highly-trained, ready workforce to support business recruitment, retention, and expansion as well as opportunities for all residents to attain the education or skills they need to earn a family supporting wage.

Summary of Goals:

- Expand strategic workforce education pathways informed by business and industry by expanding Project Future Story to include new career pathways, promoting UACCB's high-quality workforce training center and its offerings to Southside students and parents, and expanding career exposure to grades 7-9.
- Expand and sustain high-quality pre-k by making creative use of facilities including weather shelters, rearranging elementary space to accommodate 4 year olds, etc. and seeking innovative public and private partnerships that offset the cost of care in order to increase school readiness in early learners and provide educational foundation needed to learn in elementary and secondary school systems regardless of a child's care arrangement.
- Create a culture that teachers cannot walk away from in order to attract and retain high-quality teachers. Make creative use of benefits and incentives in order to compete for the highest-quality staff and connect them with dynamic professional development, positive professional learning environments, and provide needed systematic leadership and support for them to excel.
- Increase parental involvement by evaluating past involvement and establishing a new paradigm for involvement that guides parent and community invitations to engage with schools.

Goal:	Action Steps:	Responsible Parties:	Timeline/Measures:	Resources Needed:	Notes:
<p>Create a culture of education and empowerment for attainment for all residents of all ages.</p> <p>Addresses Key Focus area of Educational Attainment; Addresses foundational values of opportunity and equity</p>	<p>Add all opportunities and events to the Chamber community calendar.</p> <p>Promote the calendar and offerings to school district patrons to encourage a culture of education county-wide.</p> <p>Evaluate the number community computer access and support programs, providing residents resources to complete an online GED, take a career readiness assessment, and navigate online learning and applications. Plan expansions only if needed.</p>	<p>Brandon Dayberry Southside High School; Lori Satterwhite Southside Elementary School</p>	<p>Calendar in progress – full launch by end of 2018</p> <p>At the end of 2018, the number of opportunities for increased educational attainment and personal growth cataloged on the calendar for 2018 will be compared to that of 2017 when there were 28 opportunities cataloged most of which were art leisure education in the city of Batesville.</p> <p>Evaluate access to and traffic of open labs at the beginning of 2019 to establish a baseline. Assess at the end of 2019, based on data whether there is more demand than supply and execute a plan to expand hours and resources.</p>	<p>“How To” resource for adding things to the community calendar</p> <p>Staff time to add events/opportunities to the calendar</p> <p>Staff time to promote calendar additions, specifically on social media and</p> <p>Staff time to inventory open access labs and hours and provide supply and demand report.</p> <p>Staff for supervision of facility during extended lab times, if needed.</p>	

Goal:	Action Steps:	Responsible Parties:	Timeline/Measures:	Resources Needed:	Notes:
<p>Establish strategic workforce education pathways informed by business and industry and aligned with prek-12 that provide college credit during high school and prepare students for both career and higher education options.</p> <p>Addresses Key Focus area of Teaching and Learning, Workforce Preparedness, Educational Attainment, and Economic Development; Addresses foundational values of opportunity and equity</p>	<p>Evaluate the feasibility of establishing an “Independence Promise” to all high school students in Independence Co. whereby costs of attending Lyon College or UACCB is funded by a partnership between area business, school districts, and philanthropy.</p> <p>Partner with the Education Foundation to pilot fundraising and tracking of results of Independence Promise as part of feasibility study.</p> <p>Assist in seeking and advocating for sustainable sources of funding these opportunities (and scaling) for students through Arkansas Scholarship Lottery Funding and AR Future Grants.</p> <p>Education Foundation will integrate education and business needs and responsibilities and coordinate joint efforts to align public schools, colleges, and the business community to ensure students graduating from high school are ready for the workplace with</p>	<p>UACCB Enrollment Services, Lyon College Enrollment Services; Southside School District’s Superintendent, Director of Federal Programs and Curriculum, High School Principal, High School Counselor, and High School Career Coach; Public Education Foundation Board of Directors, Business and Industry network – Batesville Area Chamber of Commerce, Rep. James Sturch & Bureau of Legislative Research, Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce; UACCB Workforce Education Director, Vice President of Academics, and Chancellor; Arkansas Career Education – Office of Skills Development and Governor’s Career Education and Workforce</p>	<p>In progress – 2023</p> <p>Each year in June, the following data will be collected and compared for growth to baseline data collected for the 2017 Education Summit– number of Independence County students enrolled in coursework at UACCB/Lyon College, number of free and reduced lunch students enrolled in coursework at UACCB/Lyon College, number of high school students graduating with post-secondary credentials, number of graduates seeking higher education, number of graduates that were involved in a career pathway that are employed in Independence County, wage of those employed in Independence County, number of career pathways available to high school students leading to a credential,</p>	<p>Lyon College discount agreement</p> <p>Staff time to promote the Independence Promise and educate families about the utility of the program, approximately \$1,500 for printed materials and reviews.</p> <p>Marketing funds approximately \$4,000 to inform the public of the results of the program and keep private donors aware of successes each year.</p> <p>Research funds approximately \$1,000 and travel funds approximately \$6,000 for one year to research and garner state-wide support for sustainably funding career pathways with early access to AR Scholarship Lottery funds.</p> <p>Staff time to track program results.</p> <p>Staff time to conduct meetings with business and industry and inform</p>	

	<p>reasonable new employee training and without remediation. At Southside, continue Project Future Story relationship with UACCB, all other schools, and Lyon College. Evaluate successes and challenges of Project Future Story.</p> <p>Promote UACCB’s high-quality workforce training center and its offerings to Southside students and parents. The training center will train students to support the local needs of industry and connect graduates of the program to jobs locally without the business having to invest in retraining the graduate.</p> <p>Southside School District will offer more relevant hands-on STEM for K-6, expand career focused exposure for 7-9, and expand career pathway programs that can start 10-12. They will also be an ACE cyber security pilot program and be seeking business partnerships alongside their higher educational partnership with UACCB.</p>	<p>Development Board of Directors;</p>	<p>number of high school students enrolled in STEM coursework.</p> <p>In addition, the Public Education Foundation will produce an annual report regarding the ROI for private investments in the Independence Promise Program.</p> <p>The program aims to invest in 230 students in its first year and eventually 600+ students each year.</p>	<p>education organizations at joint education meetings.</p> <p>Reliable area workforce data</p> <p>Investment in innovative STEM kits and experiences for students.</p> <p>Cooperation, support, and research from ForWARD Arkansas, State Representatives and Senators, Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce, to secure a sustainable funding source which provides access to higher education/training for all students.</p> <p>High-quality prek-10 experiences that support higher level training and coursework.</p> <p>Entry/exit point maps that explain to families and students their higher education and training entry and exit, as well as re-entry options.</p>	<p>*K-3 teachers will increase the number of STEM stations available to students; 3rd grade teachers will increase science instruction to one hour per day.</p>
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	<p>At Southside, create STEM leadership PLC and begin micro-credentials. Attend PD around STEM offerings for K-6. STEM PLC attend HSTI in June 2018 to investigate best practices for STEM.</p>				<p>*STEM team will watch STEM micro-credentials; choose two to present to grade level teams; help grade level teams implement both micro-credentials in classrooms. *3rd grade science teachers will attend science PD at the North Central Coop; Lynn McGaffee will work with teachers this summer to increase their knowledge of the ACT Aspire Science assessment and effective science pedagogy.</p>
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Goal:	Action Steps:	Responsible Parties:	Timeline/Measures:	Resources Needed:	Notes:
<p>Expand and sustain high-quality Pre-K for as many Independence County students as financially possible to give them the educational foundation and readiness needed to advance to elementary, secondary, and higher education/training.</p> <p>Addresses Key Focus area of Pre-K; Addresses foundational values of opportunity and equity</p>	<p>Expand existing quality programs to maximum capacity and support programs unable to solely support infant and toddler care.</p> <p>At Southside, make creative use of facilities including weather shelters, rearranging elementary space to accommodate 4 year olds, etc. Seek innovative public + private partnerships that offset the cost of care.</p> <p>Increase school readiness in early learners and provide educational foundation needed to learn in elementary and secondary school systems regardless of a child’s care arrangement.</p> <p>At Southside, expand Dolly Parton Imagination Library to all families in the HIPPY program and Pre-K students.</p> <p>Retain quality childcare workers in program by creating clear paths to and assisting with financial aid to obtain credentials. – At Southside, host grow your</p>	<p>County school Pre-K directors, superintendents, White River Planning and Development District, City of Batesville, Independence County, AEDC, and NorthArkansas Child Care Aware; Batesville School District Admin Team; Southside School District’s Director of Federal Programs and Curriculum and Pre-K Director; Parents as Teachers programs; Independence County Library, United Way; UACCB’s Early Childhood Department and Financial Aid</p>	<p>In progress – Fall 2019 (and ongoing for growth)</p> <p>Each year in June, the following data will be collected and compared for growth to baseline data collected for the 2017 Education Summit– demand for infant and toddler care based on county birth rates, supply for infant and toddler care, number of families served by Parents as Teachers programs, number of students ready for kindergarten based on QELI scores, average cost of child care per week in Independence County, hours of demand and availability for childcare in Independence County, Early Childhood professionals retention and salary information, number of professionals seeking advancement in each district</p>	<p>Private partnerships that assume some cost either through employee benefit or overhead of supplying childcare.</p> <p>Increased funding for childcare for families below the FPL or a new model incorporating pre-k as part of the public school education model.</p> <p>More innovative ways to address childcare safety to reduce regulations.</p> <p>Funding for school readiness “kits” for families, caregivers, etc. who care for children in the home.</p> <p>Funding for expansion of HIPPY staff.</p> <p>Staff time to collect and analyze data.</p> <p>Private investment or reallocation of library funding/model to develop sustainable programs such as DPIL.</p>	

	<p>own teacher meetings each semester.</p> <p>Connect CDA professionals with higher learning and advancement opportunities.</p>				
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Goal:	Action Steps:	Responsible Parties:	Timeline/Measures:	Resources Needed:	Notes:
<p>Strengthen the educational core and parental involvement to support outward growth of innovation and increase student achievement.</p> <p>Addresses Key Focus area of Teaching and Learning, Pre-K, Support Beyond the Classroom, Educational Attainment; Addresses foundational values of opportunity and equity</p>	<p>Improve test scores by 25% math, science, and literacy.</p> <p>Build capacity to establish Independence County as a leader in K-12 education innovation – target teacher salaries to be in the top quartile in the state. At Southside, create a culture that teachers cannot walk away from by increasing investment in innovation and professional development as well as “growing your own” teachers through robust Teacher cadet programs.</p> <p>At Southside, implement BOY assessments, disaggregate data in all PLCs, plan for student growth and learning with MAP assessments, and share data and growth plans in Admin PLC. Plan data walk for back to school in-service and celebrations for growth.</p> <p>Increase parental involvement by establishing what the current paradigm of parent involvement in each district looks like (current reality), envision what the new paradigm of engagement should look like, then partner</p>	<p>Southside Admin PLC, teachers; Parent involvement coordinators, teachers, parent teacher organizations, parents, community mentors; Southside IT team</p>	<p>Each year in June, the following data will be collected and compared for growth to baseline data collected for the 2017 Education Summit– ACT Aspire math, science, and ELA scores % meeting readiness, AP participation/passing rates by district, grade 11 ACT % meeting college readiness, grade inflation rates, college going rates, college remediation rates.</p> <p>After establishing the current parent involvement paradigm at each district, we will collect data based on what can be measured and add it to data collection that will be collected and compared each year.</p>	<p>Merit based evaluations or incentive pay for Arkansas teachers and changes to fair dismissal act resulting in higher quality teachers and better pay for those teachers</p> <p>Staff time to create a continuous improvement model applied to curriculum and assessment informed by student achievement data Data training for teachers and key administrators</p> <p>Transition from e-school or adapt e-school to be a robust data management tool that is comprehensive and user-friendly for teachers, students, and families.</p> <p>Staff time for parent involvement assessments in each district and funding to provide incentives to encourage attendance (food, door prizes, etc.)</p> <p>Streamlining and involving school board in compliance reporting</p> <p>Connections to community-minded broadband internet service</p>	<p>Increased test scores by 25% over 5-year span based on 2016-17 scores: 2018-19 to increase math by 4%, Science by 6%, and Literacy by 7%.</p> <p>Creating a unique culture will continue by the addition of New Teacher Academy and Novice Teacher Program.</p>

	<p>with the Chamber, WRF, and Garland Yates of Community Democracy Workshop to engage parents and families in education.</p> <p>At Southside school district, engage families on campus and at home using One Book reading campaign complete with activities and connections for home.</p> <p>Utilize broadband internet needs assessment maps provided by ForwARd for Independence County to creatively brainstorm access to reliable broadband internet service to underserved areas.</p> <p>Assist in seeking funding/partnerships to develop affordable county-wide internet access for emergency service facilities and low to moderate income households.</p>			<p>providers and/or innovative solutions for home access in homes below the FPL</p>	
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Goal:	Action Steps:	Responsible Parties:	Timeline/Measures:	Resources Needed:	Notes:
<p>Develop an aggressive program of language education in Pre-K-12 with a specific focus on ESL population</p> <p>Addresses Key Focus area of Teaching and Learning and Pre-K; Addresses Workforce Development and Educational Attainment; Addresses foundational values of opportunity and equity</p>	<p>At Southside, exchange best practices, successes and failures with other districts that have high ESL populations to obtain worthwhile research for development and program improvements.</p> <p>At Southside, explore the best practices for students who arrive non-English speakers such as New Language Academy at Springdale School District</p> <p>Build capacity for family learning programs and engagement with ESL families.</p>	<p>Southside Admin PLC, teachers</p>	<p>Spring 2018 – Summer 2019</p> <p>We will collect baseline ESL data from both districts and compare time periods for testing out of ESL supports as well as engagement baselines based on current family engagement and measure annually growth.</p>	<p>Staff time for research and development of successful ESL and family engagement programs</p> <p>Funding to provide incentives to encourage attendance (food, door prizes, etc.)</p> <p>Funding for E.L. Achieve program and high quality PD and support of that program</p>	