

United Way of Erie County
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Abstract

Erie City School District is faced with district-wide challenges, including distressing levels of poverty (73% of students are economically disadvantaged), chronic absenteeism (23% of students were chronically absent in the first three quarters of 2018-19), substandard graduation rates (2017-18 graduation rate was 74%), and dismal standardized test performance (35% of students scoring proficient or higher in ELA and 21% proficient or higher in Math). Since partnering with United Way of Erie County to implement the community school model at five pilot schools, starting in 2016-17, great strides have been made to leverage and align community resources around student success.

Despite the gains that have been made, there are significant gaps between the assistance our students need and what our schools currently have the capacity to give. Recognizing this, United Way of Erie County and Erie City School District proposes the Removing Barriers to Learning through Case Management in Erie's Community Schools project, designed to serve the 3,138 high-risk, low-income students attending Edison Elementary School (PreK-5), McKinley Elementary School (PreK-5), Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School (PreK-5), East Middle School (6-8), and Strong Vincent Middle School (6-8). Each school is a Title I Schoolwide building.

This project will strengthen capacity to better utilize services for truancy, health, and community resources through incorporating case managers at each school. Case management will also allow two new services to be introduced, including home visitations and resource coordination. Additionally, data collected through this project will provide an opportunity to develop an early warning system that will improve efforts to support students in years to come. We anticipate this project will provide new services to 375 unduplicated individuals annually, including students and families.

Goals for this project include: increasing social, health, and mental health services and supports; increasing overall school attendance and decreasing truancy and chronic absence; increasing family and community engagement and supports; and implementing evaluation strategies that can build a predictive model that supports the development of an early warning system. Outcomes will include the number of students served, the increase in available services, the decrease in the rates of chronic absence and truancy, the increase in connections to community resources, and the creation of a predictive model.

Key partners in the success of this project include: United Way of Erie County (backbone organization); Erie City School District (local educational agency); Safe Harbor Behavioral Health of UPMC Hamot (case management organization and a school's Lead Partner); Gannon University (evaluator and a school's Lead Partner); Achievement Center, Edinboro University, and Family Services of NWPA (additional Lead Partners that assist in coordinating resources and providing leadership for each school); and LORD Corporation, Erie Insurance, Hamot Health Foundation, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, and Wabtec (Corporate Partners that assist in providing resources and leadership for each school).