



Erie Together Activity Update **August 19, 2014**

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Until today, Erie Together Action Teams had not met individually since late May. This is because Erie Together held a “cross team” meeting in June, where members from all four teams came together to collectively discuss highlights, progress and connections, and we used the month of July to focus on the smaller “task team” activities. The August Action Team meetings began today (Action Teams 3 and 4) and will continue tomorrow (Action Teams 1 and 2).

The below bullets highlight notable work and accomplishments.

Action Team 1: Early Childhood Readiness and Success

- Pilot of 150 kindergarten-readiness parent training kits is well underway with several early childhood sites participating. Pre- and post-test data is being collected to determine kit impact on (1) parent understanding of the importance of kindergarten readiness; (2) parent understanding of the skills needed to be kindergarten ready; and (3) improvement in children’s kindergarten readiness skills. Once the pilot is completed, necessary adjustments (if any) will be made, and the kits will be made available to the broader community. Visit <http://www.erietogether.org/news/kindergarten-readiness-tool-kits-pilot-program> for more information, and to see recent media coverage.
- A kindergarten readiness home progress chart that lists essential skills and includes a way to track children’s improvement has been developed, printed and is available for distribution. Visit <http://www.erietogether.org/K-ReadinessProgressChart> to view and/or request a copy.
- Erie Together’s Kindergarten Readiness Checklist has been updated to reflect PA Core standards. Visit <http://www.erietogether.org/kindergarten-readiness> to access a revised copy or request more.

Other Related Activity

- Erie County public libraries held a “Celebrate Kindergarten” event on August 18 at the main branch, and a number of additional library branches across the county. Visit

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www.ErieTogether.org



<http://www.erietogether.org/news/erie-libraries-celebrate-kindergarten> for more information.

Action Team 2: Aligning Education to Careers

- A task team focused on easing transitions from high school to what is next finalized a piece entitled, "Are You Ready for Life After High School." This piece has been printed and is ready for distribution. Visit <http://www.erietogether.org/Post-Secondary> to access or download the PDF.

Next steps: drill deeper into the needs of parents and students regarding easing the transition from high school to post-secondary education and training. To that end, three focus groups are planned: one with high school students, one with college freshmen, and one with parents to garner input from them.

- A task team focused on raising the capacity of local "extended time" programs and connecting more students and families to high quality programs recently conducted a community survey to better understand local programs, needs, and ability to serve additional participants. More than 50 local programs responded to the survey, and data analysis is currently underway. As part of this process, Erie Together is working with community partners to identify ways to help build capacity and effectively serve more children.
- Erie Together recently conducted its annual survey of 8th graders, garnering over 2,200 responses. This data will be used to help inform Career Street's activities, to help achieve the overarching goal that 80% of Erie County 8th graders be exposed to three or more career exploration activities by the end of their 8th grade year.
- Erie Together is hosting a GradNation Summit as part of its 2014 Community Forum on November 18. The purpose of the summit, and the work leading up to it, is to develop (and ultimately implement) a plan to encourage and promote the involvement of caring adults in children's lives and educational success. This is being done to help achieve a national goal set by America's Promise that 90% of high school students graduate on time, prepared for the next step. Please visit <http://www.erietogether.org/CommunityForum> for more information.

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Action Team 3: Individual and Family Stability

- The Family Action Team process is being expanded through relationships with several local social service organizations and parishes. These opportunities are in various stages of development and implementation.
- The development of a comprehensive human services directory and companion veterans' web portal were two of Erie Together's high priorities. To that end, Gannon University and Erie GAINS worked to develop the human services directory, and Mr. Jay Breneman, along with help from the Edinboro University Veterans Success Center developed the veterans' portal. Please visit <http://hsd.gannon.edu> to access the human service directory, and www.veteransportal.com to access the veterans' portal. The Gannon Human Services Directory will also be available in hard copy at local library branch(es) and for purchase through Gannon. Please visit <http://www.yourerie.com/story/d/story/humans-services-directory-and-veterans-portal-laun/36922/4CNyS2GZhUmhbw4REcwUcw> for recent media coverage announcing the availability of these two resources.

Action Team 4: Aligning Workforce and Economic Development

- The Erie County Reentry Services and Support Alliance Planning Group continues to meet once every two to three weeks to develop a strategy for "transitioning clients" returning to the Erie community.
- The task team focused on connecting low income and minority workers to local jobs also continues to meet. Its goal is to encourage and help local employers proactively recruit low-income workers to fill local jobs (big contracted construction projects and/or within companies). Currently the group is exploring national best practices, including Cincinnati Works, to determine what can be learned to assist local efforts.
- Erie Together's Work Readiness Checklist has been updated, reprinted and is available for distribution. Please visit <http://www.erietogether.org/work-readiness> to access.

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