



Erie Together Activity Update **June 2014**

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The following bullets highlight important Erie Together activities since April 2014.

Action Team 1: Early Childhood Readiness and Success

Easing transitions into Kindergarten

- An Erie Together task team focusing on easing children's transition into Kindergarten has collected transition practices data from all Erie County school districts except one. The group is now analyzing the data to identify local "best practices" and areas for improvement, and will share best practice information across Erie County to help the school districts learn from one another. Additionally, efforts are underway to explore options to bring relevant transitions-related training to Erie County to further assist local districts.

Other related activity

- Kindergarten Readiness Home Progress Chart: Work on the chart continues.
- Kindergarten Readiness Checklist: Team members reviewed the current checklist against the PA Core Standards and recommended a number of changes which will now be incorporated prior to the checklist's upcoming reprint.
- Efforts are underway to collect data on Kindergarten readiness from Erie County school districts and nonpublic schools so Erie Together can have a baseline to help evaluate our strategies and inform our work moving forward.
- Laurie Root from United Way of Erie County made a presentation to the team regarding United Way's early literacy efforts, and discussed opportunities to pursue synergies with Erie Together's kindergarten readiness and parental training work. Because a number of individuals missed the May Action Team meeting due to a conflicting early childhood event, these discussions will be continued.
- A statewide "Pre-K for PA" campaign is launching to support the idea that by 2018, every 3- and 4-year-old child in Pennsylvania will have access to a pre-k program, public or private, that meets high quality standards and accreditations. To show support for this campaign, visit <http://www.prekforpa.org/>

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Action Team 2: Aligning K-12 Education to Careers

Erie Together Annual Survey of 8th Graders re: career awareness, preparation and exploration

- The survey has been deployed by almost all Erie County school districts and the parochial schools, and we have received nearly 2,000 student responses to date. Once the survey closes later this month, we will review and analyze the data.
- Moving forward, this data will be used to help gauge Career Street's impact, and also to help inform Career Street's activity over time. While Career Street was created to enhance career exploration activities for students in grades K-12, Erie Together's primary goal is that 80% of Erie County 8th graders be exposed to three or more career exploration experiences by the end of their 8th grade year.

Connecting children and families to high quality "out-of-school" (i.e. after school and summer) programs

- One of Erie Together's task teams is looking at ways to connect more children and families to high quality after school and summer school programs. This involves understanding what currently exists in our community, what their programmatic goals and outcomes are, and finding ways to connect families to high quality programs. This research is underway, and as part of its work, this group is also considering ways to help local providers build their capacity through training and other means.

High School to Post-Secondary Education/Training Transitions

- This task team made great progress on the checklist they are developing that outlines what students need to be successful in life after high school. The checklist should be in close-to-final draft form to share at the Erie Together Cross Team meeting on June 18.

Other related activity

- Erie Together staff attended a viewing of "First Generation," a documentary chronicling four first-generation college students' experiences in the college and financial aid application and acceptance processes. Erie Together's intent is to bring this film to the Erie community so that students, guidance counselors, parents, and others may benefit from what can be learned through the film. For more information, visit <http://www.firstgenerationfilm.com/trailer.php>. This planning is underway.
- Erie was recently chosen as a "GradNation Summit site" through America's Promise Alliance, and Erie Together agreed to be the summit convener. The summit will take place in conjunction with Erie Together's community forum on November 18, 2014 at the Bayfront Convention Center. The general purpose of the summit is to find ways to improve high school graduation rates and children's preparedness for life after high

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school. The specific local challenge we intend to address is how to get parents and caring adults engaged in children's educational success. For more information visit <http://www.americaspromise.org/program/gradnation-community-summits>.

- McDowell EXPOSURE students held their second annual benefit concert in partnership with Erie Together (their seventh overall). The experience was tremendous for all who participated. Through their efforts, they raised nearly \$1,000 to support the Urban Erie Community Development Corporation's Walking in Black History program.

Action Team 3: Individual and Family Stability

Update on Family Action Team (FACT) expansion efforts: Many train-the-trainer efforts are currently underway in various stages of implementation, and these efforts were listed in the last Erie Together Activity Update. Additionally, a new task team has been formed to explore implementing the FACT process in local high schools. The group is focusing its efforts first on opportunities that may exist within Erie's Public Schools.

Human Services Directory: Gannon University has nearly completed a comprehensive Human Services Directory which will soon be available in print form (for purchase) and online. Additionally, staff at Edinboro University have created an online "Veterans Portal" that will include resources available for veterans, along with important news and events. This portal will also link to Gannon's directory, and vice versa. Erie Together will help publicize the availability of both of these tools once they are ready for public viewing and use.

Action Team 4: Aligning Workforce and Economic Development

Ex-Offender Reentry Strategy: The "Erie County Reentry Services and Support Alliance planning group" continues to work hard to develop a countywide strategy to assist transitioning clients as they reintegrate back into our community. Things are progressing well.

Connecting Low Income and Minority Workers to Local Jobs: This team is also making good progress, and is looking to expand its membership by adding a few key constituency groups to its roster. The next meeting will take place later this month.

Other related activity

- On June 4, UPMC Hamot is hosting a job fair from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Booker T. Washington Center. This event is free for employers and job seekers.
- In late May, Erie Together met with the Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority to discuss local transportation-related challenges and potential solutions. This was a very productive meeting, and opened the door for ongoing communications moving forward.

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