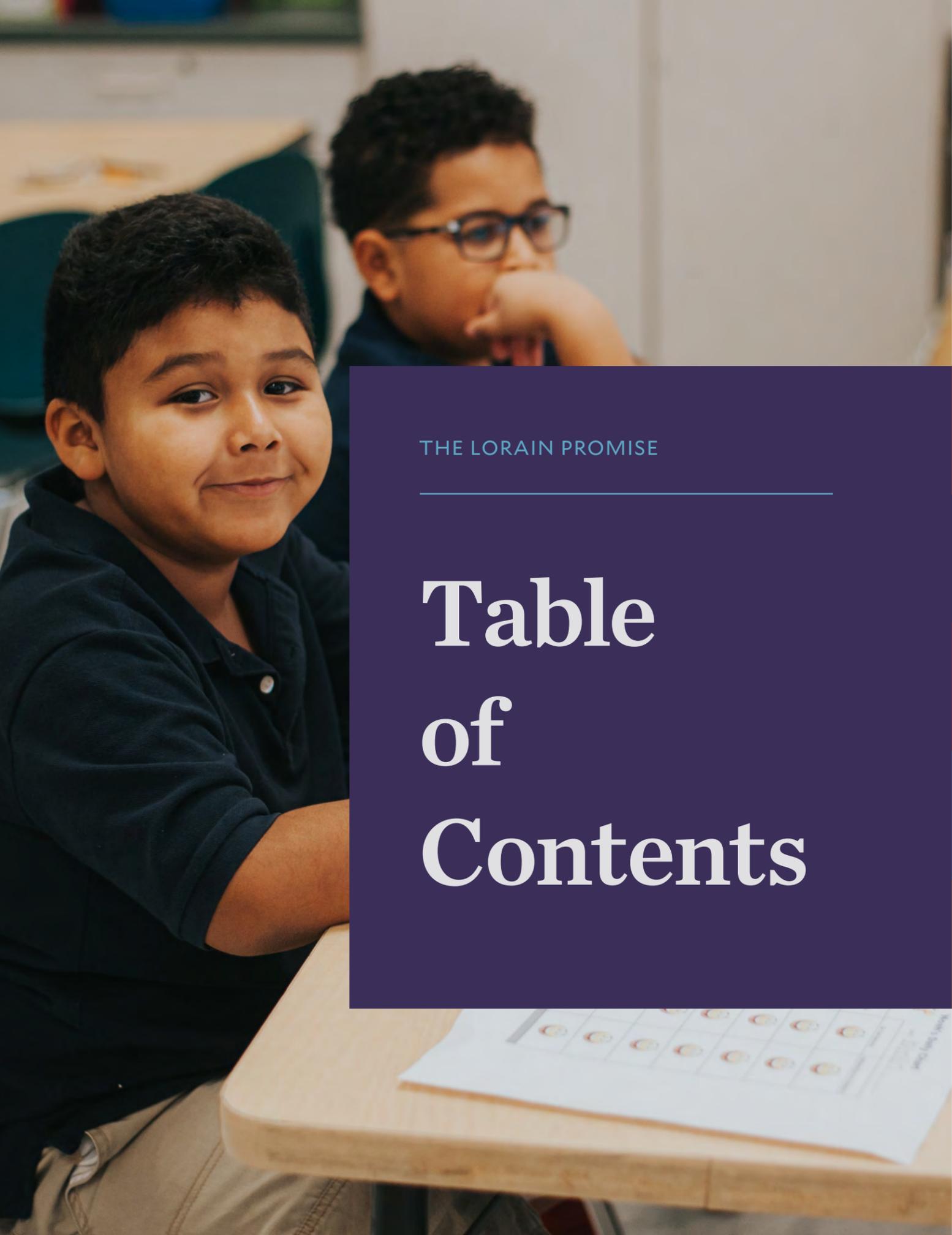


LORAIN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Lorain Promise

Redreaming “Possible”
in the Lorain City Schools



THE LORAIN PROMISE

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

2 OUR VISION

3 OUR CORE VALUES

4 90 DAY LISTENING TOUR—WHAT WE HEARD

6 THE CASE FOR CHANGE

10 WHY IT MATTERS

12 WHAT WE PLAN TO DO—THE LORAIN PROMISE

COMMITMENT ①

Support the whole child beginning at birth. 14

COMMITMENT ②

Invest in our early scholars. 26

COMMITMENT ③

Promote equity. 38

COMMITMENT ④

Create schools where adults and scholars thrive. 50

COMMITMENT ⑤

Prepare scholars for the world of tomorrow. 62

Our promise to the Lorain community. 74

78 WHAT'S NEXT?

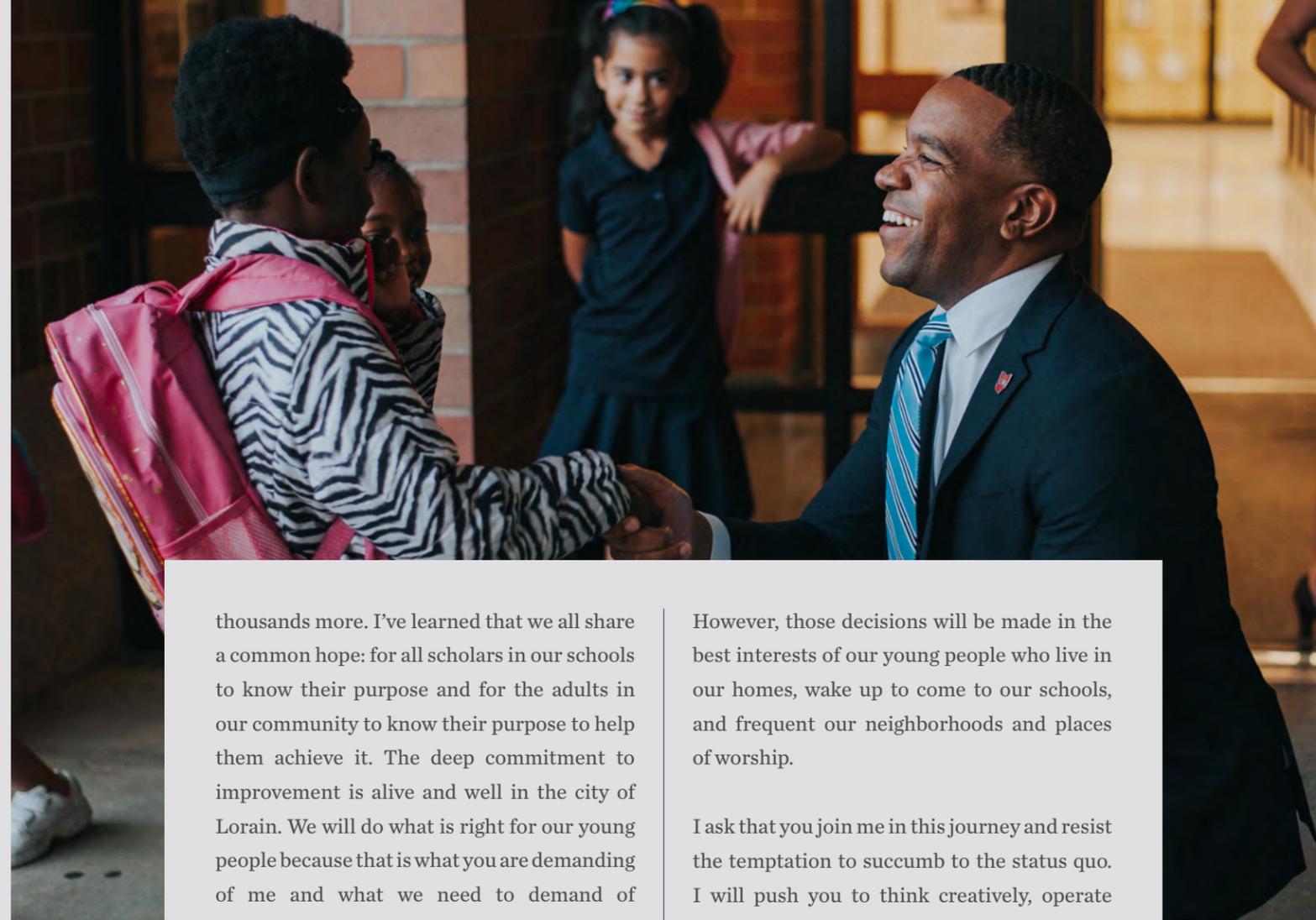
DEAR SCHOLARS, FAMILIES, TEACHERS, SCHOOL LEADERS,
DISTRICT STAFF, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS,

It is time to reimagine what's possible.

We live in a world that is full of opportunity if we have the knowledge and tools to take advantage of what we have in front of us. Nothing is standing in the way of using this legislation that has granted us the opportunity to rethink public education here in Lorain. Even better, the kids that this directly affects are asking for more. Our youth are imploring us to think out of the box, keep past misfortunes in the past, and push for an educational system that propels their young minds to levels we have not seen. The potential that lives in our scholars is immeasurable, and they will one day prove that we too have young people who can and will compete for opportunities to further their success in the best universities in this country, work in global environments,

and create the jobs of tomorrow. The world is thirsting for critical thinkers, innovators, collaborators, creative artists, and problem solvers and it is our job to provide them.

I am humbled by the abundance of support, productive community conversations, and healthy discourse that has greeted me since my entry. Among the many wonderful things about the Lorain community has been the willingness to share with an open heart and mind. In my first 90 days, I have been inspired by more than 100 one-on-one personal conversations, small group discussions, team meetings and think sessions, coupled with the deep community engagement efforts that have yielded feedback and insights from



thousands more. I've learned that we all share a common hope: for all scholars in our schools to know their purpose and for the adults in our community to know their purpose to help them achieve it. The deep commitment to improvement is alive and well in the city of Lorain. We will do what is right for our young people because that is what you are demanding of me and what we need to demand of each other.

However, the journey towards academic success is not a short one. It is one that will test our collective will and moral fortitude, as well as challenge our ability to put our scholars first while keeping our adult interests at bay. Nearly 6,700 scholars are counting on us to forge forward and put their best interests first by showing unrelenting care, a passion for progress and a distaste for inequity. To stay true to my promise of transparency, I will communicate with you both when we are doing well and when we are not meeting the mark. I will be driven by data to make hard decisions, and there may be times when those decisions are very unpopular ones.

However, those decisions will be made in the best interests of our young people who live in our homes, wake up to come to our schools, and frequent our neighborhoods and places of worship.

I ask that you join me in this journey and resist the temptation to succumb to the status quo. I will push you to think creatively, operate with a sense of joy, and expect nothing less than excellence from each other. The moment those three things aren't happening, let's call each other out and push each other to stay united behind our vision, behind our plan—The Lorain Promise, and behind our young people so they can flourish. The calculated risks we will take together will create rewards that span across generations if we all commit to reimagining what's possible. Our young people, better yet, our scholars, are waiting for us to create the path forward. The time is now. Let's get started.

In the best interest of scholars,

DAVID M. HARDY, JR.

OUR VISION

Lorain City Schools empowers every scholar to unlock their potential and realize their dreams.

Every scholar has talent, potential, and purpose. When a scholar walks through the front door, we need to make sure they are cared for, challenged and ready for success in college, career and life. From that first tentative step into preschool to that last confident step off the commencement stage on graduation day, we are here to support and inspire our scholars to reach for their dreams. The Lorain Promise—created with the support of voices throughout our community—will guide the district’s decision-making, including where to focus and how to best allocate people, time and resources. The plan charts our path to showing every scholar the inspiring possibilities that await them in school and in life.

OUR CORE VALUES

Our Core Values are the heart of our culture and the foundation of all of our work at Lorain City Schools, reflecting input from people across the community. They will shape who we are and how we work together to realize every scholar’s potential.

SCHOLARS FIRST

Everything we do is focused on ensuring that scholars reach their full potential. We will honor the voices of our scholars and their families and support each other as champions of Lorain’s scholars, knowing that we all have their best interests at heart.

ONE FOR ALL

Our differences as individuals strengthen our schools. We will focus on equity, work proactively to eliminate bias in our systems and procedures, and invest in effective strategies to ensure equal opportunity for all scholars and families.

EXPERIENCE JOY

Our schools will be places where all scholars and staff can pursue a love of learning with enthusiasm and optimism. We will lift each other up and celebrate our successes.

EXPECT EXCELLENCE

We will hold high expectations for every scholar and staff member—and hold each other accountable to ensuring that every scholar succeeds.

COLLABORATE WITH INTEGRITY

We promise to be transparent, knowing that we can only get better if we work together—and are honest with each other. We will hold ourselves to the highest standards of personal behavior, including trust, honesty, fairness, and integrity.

TAKE PRIDE

We value, honor and respect one another, our schools, and our community. We will work together to build schools where all adults look forward to coming to work and scholars are eager to learn.

90 DAY LISTENING TOUR

We wrote this plan with you in mind and over the last 90 days have talked to as many people as possible. We visited schools and spoke with teachers, principals and scholars. We attended community events at churches, schools and local non-profit organizations. We spoke with hundreds of people and heard from over a thousand with survey responses. Your input and ideas form the backbone of The Lorain Promise and it is our hope that you will continue to find ways to be engaged with us in this process of improvement for the success of our scholars.

WHAT WE DID:

3,306 TOTAL ESTIMATED TOUCHPOINTS WITH SCHOLARS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS, AND STAFF

35
FOCUS GROUPS

68
ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS

30
SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY TOWN HALL AND EVENTS

1,146 SURVEY RESPONSES

“

WHAT WE HEARD:

STUDENTS WANT

Schools that make their families feel welcome.

More interactive learning and classroom environments

Extra support for their peers who are struggling

More opportunities to share their ideas with the district

A continued emphasis on the wealth of extracurricular activities offered in LCS

FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY WANT

Additional opportunities for community engagement

Innovative ways for their students to learn, especially in math and science

Increased instructional focus on the linguistic and cultural diversity of Lorain's student population

More opportunities to become involved in their child's learning

More opportunities to access existing resources

TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS WANT

More resources available to support the social and emotional needs of students

A consistent vision and clear expectations for their work as educators and leaders

Additional opportunities for community involvement in schools.

Access to pre-kindergarten for all students

Access to technology resources for all scholars

”

THE CASE FOR CHANGE

Lorain is rich in community resources. We have scholars who are creative, intelligent, and eager to learn. We have parents and community members who care deeply that our children succeed. We have dedicated staff across the district who work tirelessly to support our scholars. Yet currently, too few Lorain scholars are getting the support and skills they need to pursue the colleges and careers of their choice—or to thrive once they get there.

LORAIN SCHOLARS ARE NOT GETTING WHAT THEY NEED TO PURSUE COLLEGE AND CAREERS OF THEIR DREAMS.



8 IN 10 LORAIN CITY SCHOOLS RISING SENIORS WILL GRADUATE IN FIVE YEARS



ONLY 4 IN 10 WILL ENROLL IN A TWO TO FOUR YEAR COLLEGE



JUST 2 WILL GRADUATE

THE CASE FOR CHANGE

THIS PROBLEM STARTS EARLY AND CONTINUES THROUGHOUT A SCHOLAR'S EDUCATION IN LORAIN:

THE HARD TRUTH:

WE ARE NOT ENGAGING WITH FAMILIES EARLY ENOUGH.

Only 57% of families are satisfied with opportunities to engage with their child's school. Only 46% of teachers believe their school regularly seeks input from scholars' families.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR OUR SCHOLARS:

Scholars succeed when families are involved in their learning. Right now, we aren't engaging families the way we need to be.

THE HARD TRUTH:

OUR SCHOLARS ARE ALREADY BEHIND WHEN THEY START SCHOOL.

Less than half of our Kindergarten scholars attended Pre-Kindergarten.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR OUR SCHOLARS:

Our scholars are behind from the first day of Kindergarten—with only 12% starting the year with the skills they need to succeed.

THE HARD TRUTH:

OPPORTUNITIES IN OUR SCHOOLS ARE UNEQUAL.

More than 30% of black and Latino scholars and 40% of scholars with disabilities across Lorain are absent for more than 10 days each school year.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR OUR SCHOLARS:

Scholars need to be at school to learn – the more absences each scholar has, the more likely they are to not meet learning goals.

THE HARD TRUTH:

OUR TEACHERS DO NOT FEEL SUPPORTED.

Only 48% of LCS teachers believe that the feedback they get from being observed helps them to improve student outcomes.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR OUR SCHOLARS:

Our staff are not getting the feedback or development they need to thrive, and as a result, scholars aren't getting access to improved instruction over time.

THE HARD TRUTH:

OUR SCHOLARS ARE NOT PREPARED FOR SUCCESS IN TODAY'S WORLD—OR THE WORLD OF THE FUTURE.

Only 40% of our third graders are reading at grade level - 25-35 percentage points lower than scholars in neighboring districts.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR OUR SCHOLARS:

By age 9, the majority of our scholars are not reaching a level that suggests they will be successful at middle school English Language Arts.³

Only 19% of eighth graders scored proficient in ELA and only 32% in math—20-50 percentage points lower than scholars in neighboring districts.¹

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR OUR SCHOLARS:

Going into high school, eight out of ten scholars are behind in math, ELA or both.

Only 1.1% of our juniors or seniors received remediation free scores on the ACT. Only 43% enroll in a two or four-year college after graduation², and only 17% graduate.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR OUR SCHOLARS:

Almost none of our scholars show academic readiness for college.

Even more alarming are the gaps in learning and opportunity between certain populations of scholars. Our black and Hispanic scholars, English Learners, and our scholars with disabilities are not being supported enough to succeed academically. Scholars of color and scholars with disabilities are also disproportionately subject to discipline issues and more likely to be chronically absent and we want to ensure these inequities do not persist.

Put simply: our system is failing scholars, and we cannot hope to achieve The Lorain Promise until that changes.

³http://www.ccrscenter.org/sites/default/files/CCRS%20Center_Predictors%20of%20Postsecondary%20Success_final_0.pdf

¹ 2016-17 data pulled from district report cards on <http://reportcard.education.ohio.gov>. College-going

data only represents those attending in-state, public universities. According to Lorain City Schools data, 24 students went to college out of the state of Ohio. Ohio overall data pulled from Summit Education Initiative <http://seisummit.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Educational-Attainment-2016.pdf>

² <http://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/Pages/District-Report.aspx?DistrictIRN=044263>

WHY IT MATTERS

Research and experience tell us that a quality education has the power to transform lives. According to a 2007 report from the College Board, the level of education a person acquires influences almost every facet of a person's life, including their happiness and civic engagement.⁴ Americans with bachelor's degrees benefit compared to high school graduates who never attend college in multiple ways:⁵

annual earnings are about

62%
HIGHER

the incidence of poverty is

3x
LOWER

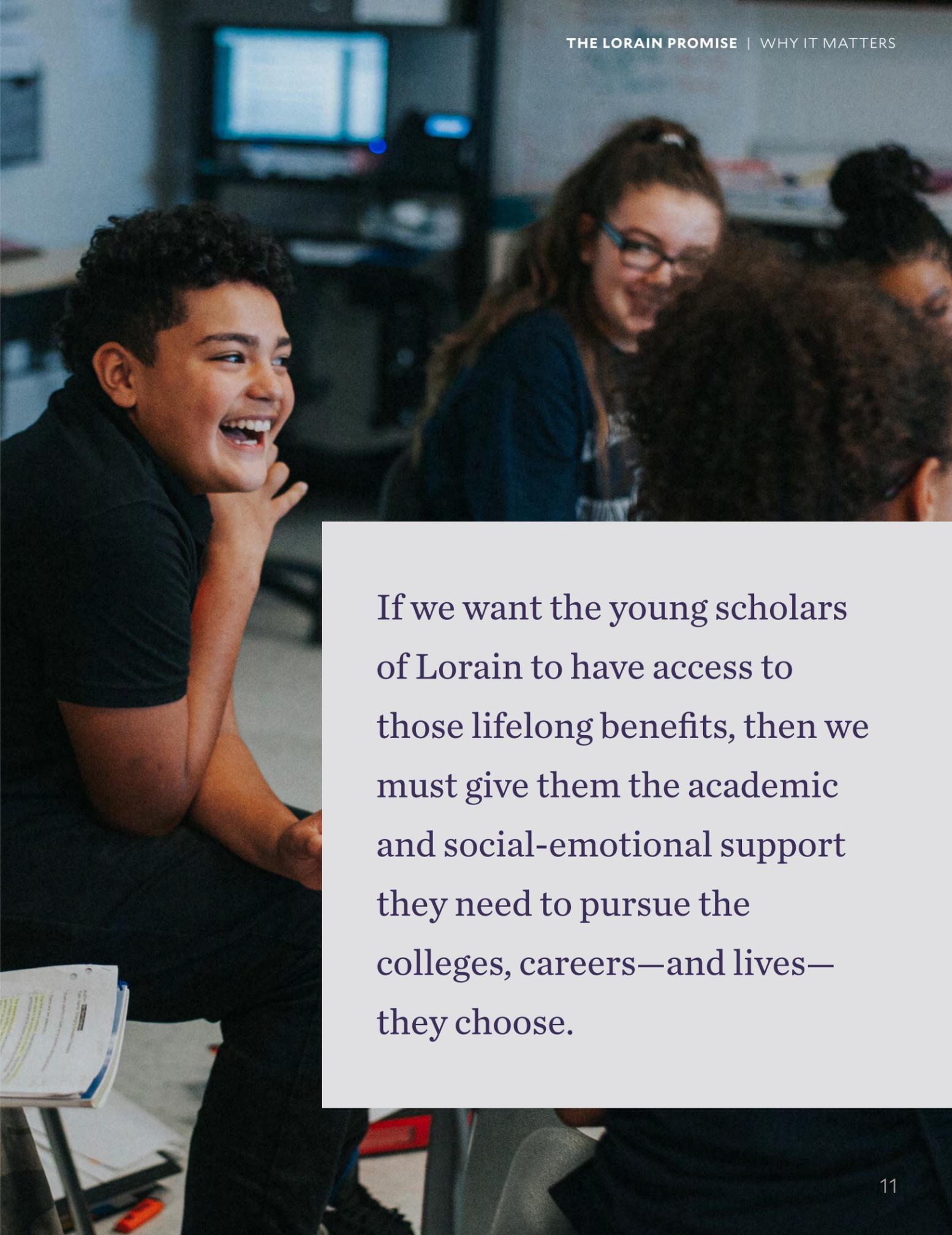
the probability of being employed is almost

2x
HIGHER

the probability of being in prison or jail is

4.9x
LOWER

If we want the young scholars of Lorain to have access to those lifelong benefits, then we must give them the academic and social-emotional support they need to pursue the colleges, careers—and lives—they choose.



⁴ Baum, S. and Ma, J. (2007). "Education Pays 2007: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society." NYC: College Board.

⁵ Trostel, Philip (2012). "It's Not Just the Money: The Benefits of College Education to Individuals and Society." Indianapolis: Lumina Foundation; <https://www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/its-not-just-the-money.pdf>

The Lorain Promise

We want all our scholars to dream big. To know the breadth of possibilities out there for them and to be able to achieve their dreams. The plan captured in this document establishes critical next steps to make this a reality. Our plan involves supporting our scholars and their families from the time a scholar is born until the time they graduate and enroll in college.

At every step, we as a community must work together to ensure our children have what they need to succeed. We hope that as you read the plan that follows, regardless of who you are, that you can identify places where you too, can join with us in the movement to improve Lorain schools and provide our scholars with the future they deserve.

LORAIN CITY SCHOOLS WILL SUPPORT SCHOLARS FROM THE TIME THEY ARE BORN UNTIL THE TIME THEY GRADUATE AND ENROLL IN COLLEGE.



1 COMMITMENT

Support the whole child beginning at birth.

“Children benefit when parents and family members get involved in their learning and development...family engagement is positively linked to children’s outcomes in preschool, kindergarten, and early elementary grades.”

—The Impact of Family Involvement on the Education of Children Ages 3 to 8, MDRC (2013)



With the support of the community, we will foster the growth of the whole child⁶ so that our scholars can thrive in and out of school. Research shows that when schools work together with families and community organizations, scholars’ learning improves, including higher grades, fewer discipline and absence issues, and an increased likelihood of high school graduation.⁷ One 15-year study of 400 Chicago schools found that schools with strong family and community ties, regardless of any other factors, were four times more likely to improve in reading and ten times more likely to improve in math.⁸ In a study of Title I schools, teachers who were “especially active” in engaging parents and sharing resources to support learning at home saw larger gains in student achievement, regardless of other factors.⁹

These family and community partnerships must begin when our scholars are born and continue throughout their lives. The basic needs of our scholars—food, clothing, and shelter—must be provided before we can expect them to engage in learning. Nationally, one in five children and adolescents experience a mental health problem during

school, which could include stress, anxiety, bullying, family problems, depression, a learning disability, and alcohol and substance abuse. Unfortunately, up to 80% of scholars do not receive the treatment they need.¹⁰

We must ensure that our scholars in Lorain are getting their basic needs met, and we

⁶ https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/34869_Kochhar_Bryant_Effective_Collaboration_for_Educating_the_Whole_Child_Ch1.pdf

⁷ Xitao, Fan & Michael Chen. “Parental Involvement and Students’ Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analysis” Educational Psychology Review 13.1

(2001): 1–22. Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement. Annual Synthesis. National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools. Sheldon, S. B., & Epstein, J.L. (2002). Improving student behavior and school discipline with family & community involvement. Education &

urban society, 35(1), 4-26

⁸ Bryk, Anthony, et al. Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. Print.

⁹ Westat and Policy Studies Associates. 2001. The Longitudinal Evaluation of School Change and Performance in

Title I Schools. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Deputy Secretary, Planning and Evaluation Service.

¹⁰ http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_929.html

1 COMMITMENT

have a wealth of community organizations in Lorain who want to support with this effort. At Lorain City Schools, we must do a better job of partnering with families and the community to ensure that scholars are receiving health and educational services from the time they are born and that, once they are in school, we continue to provide them with these services both inside and outside of our buildings. Families should see our schools and our staff as a community resource. We will open our doors, welcome them, and introduce them to knowledgeable staff who can provide families with information about partnerships and community services.

Just as importantly, we can invite families to participate in their child's learning. When families are involved academically, children earn higher grades and test scores, attend school more regularly, demonstrate more

positive behaviors, and are more likely to graduate from high school and to enroll in college.¹¹ We will support families with the resources they need to encourage learning at home from the time their children are born and once their children are in school, we will bring them in to regularly be a part of their child's education. We will encourage and support them to learn alongside their children and we will provide services to parents so that they can better understand the wealth of possibilities open to their children and guide them on how to support them to reach their goals.

As a community, we are strongest when we work together in service of our scholars. We commit to better engaging with families and with community members and organizations to provide our scholars with the support they need to thrive throughout their lives.



¹¹ <https://www2.ed.gov/PDFDocs/97-7022.pdf>

1 GOAL

By 2022, we will have established strong community partnerships that provide families and scholars in Lorain the services and resources they need to support readiness to learn.

1 HOW WE'LL KNOW IF WE'VE SUCCEEDED

90%
OF FAMILIES

*who utilize a LCS/
community partnership
service say that it has
supported their child's
readiness to learn*

*say they have the
information they need
from schools to
support their
child's learning*

*say that their child's
school offers regular
and accessible ways for
them to engage in their
child's learning*

ALL

OF OUR SCHOOLS

*have access to a school counselor
or psychologist at least
2.5 days a week*

ALL

OF OUR FAMILIES

*say they feel welcomed in our
schools and offices*



① WHAT SCHOLARS CAN EXPECT TO EXPERIENCE OR LEARN:

Scholars will have access to supports and resources from local community partners that support their readiness to learn – like glasses if they can't see well in the classroom.

Parents will be able to help their children by accessing necessary supports for themselves.

Scholars will get the social and mental health supports they need.

1 WHAT WE WILL DO TO GET THERE

STRATEGY ONE:

Build community, family, and school partnerships to support scholars beginning at birth

The majority of a child's brain is developed by the age of three—and the cognitive and emotional support they receive by this age are critical for their happiness and success throughout childhood and beyond. To address this critical developmental period, we will expand access to early childhood resources through deeper collaboration with our community partners. We will empower this network of organizations, led by our Community/Business/School Partnership team, allowing them to more effectively mobilize Lorain's existing assets in support of our early scholars. To better connect these assets to the community, we will look to partner with local housing agencies and social service agencies for distribution of early childhood resources and site-based trainings. As more and more parents depend on technology, and particularly social media, to acquire learning tools for their scholars, we commit to increasing the supply of early childhood resources through these channels, providing additional tools and free materials that parents can access through web and phone-based content. To further support this effort, our community partners will be equipped with free curriculum resources, aligned to the assessments and instructional priorities of the district, helping us build a more robust and coordinated network of supports across the many touchpoints our scholars have with these partners.

We also know that our scholars are from a wide variety of backgrounds, requiring us to provide differentiated supports based on the specific needs of our student populations. For example, our Spanish speaking families need dedicated support for their scholars before they ever enter kindergarten. Through our Spanish language partners such as El Centro, we will ensure that parents receive resources, developed in the Spanish language, to aid them in preparing their young scholars for kindergarten. Many trainings and resources like these will be delivered directly through our partners, ensuring parents are able to gain access to these tools in an environment where they feel comfortable.

“Big thing we have to remember: A lot of parents don't know where they are going to be or what they will need the next week – it's just survival. We take for granted because we're not in that position. Parents feel like they're being judged. They are worried about making ends meet.”

–LCS Teacher

1 WHAT WE WILL DO TO GET THERE

Together, we will seek additional connection points for families as their children enter school in Pre-K – assessing the possibility of home visiting or intake interviews that could help identify child or family needs early on. We will encourage community partners, especially social service agencies, to keep the 0-3 age child prominently in mind when considering

additional or expanded services. We commit to improving communications with these agencies to provide consistent, continuous support to children as they transition into school and from year to year, or in the case that the child moves, from one Lorain school to another.

STRATEGY TWO:

Focus on providing resources our scholars need to be healthy and present every day

Social-emotional health affects learning and development and a child's long-term outcomes.¹² In listening to the community, we heard a need to provide scholars and families in Lorain with increased mental health services in schools. We commit to providing increased access to in-school counseling and school psychologists, as well as training for all staff on how to support the cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and talent development of children and youth from diverse backgrounds. We will also focus on building stronger community partnerships with organizations such as Lorain County Mental Health Services to support our families to gain free access to the mental health services needed inside and outside of school.

Social-emotional support is just one component of a healthy child and we want to make sure to take care of the whole child. A scholar who comes to school hungry, sleep deprived, or unable to see the blackboard is unlikely to succeed. Through community partnerships, we will provide scholars regular access to free immunizations, routine physicals, and eye and dental exams. We will ensure that our scholars receive healthy food during the day and partner with community organizations to make sure our families have access to nutritious food at home. We will help our scholars understand how to make healthy eating, exercise, and life decisions outside of school. A healthy child is a child who comes to school ready to engage in learning.

¹² https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/34869_Kochhar_Bryant_Effective_Collaboration_for_Educating_the_Whole_Child_Ch1.pdf

1 WHAT WE WILL DO TO GET THERE

STRATEGY THREE:

Remove barriers and build bridges between families and schools

Families have the greatest influence on how their child engages with their education. Families can reinforce the value of doing well in school, help their child build solid study habits, and intervene on their child's behalf when they think their child is falling behind academically. Schools can leverage families as their most important allies, but only if they're equipping them with the right information and tools. Currently, families in Lorain are not given enough opportunity to interact with their schools—and many have said that they don't feel welcome in their child's school. We commit to changing that.

First, all schools must have a welcoming environment with accessible school leaders and teachers so that parents feel comfortable sharing concerns and asking questions. Schools must make families welcome. We commit to having a designated family liaison in every school as a resource. Translation services will be readily available for our many families that do not speak English as a primary language. We will engage our families in their scholars' learning through regular events designed to teach families about what their children are learning and how their children are progressing. These events will be offered

at times when working parents can attend and where childcare is provided. We also want to make sure our families provide us with regular feedback to improve our schools. Right now, only 46% of teachers in Lorain say that their school regularly seeks input from scholars' families. We intend to tap into this source of information through ongoing family surveys that will tell us whether schools are setting families up for success to support their child academically. Capturing family feedback—in ways that are easiest for families to give it—lets us know how schools are currently engaging parents and what schools can do to provide more opportunity for parents to contribute to their child's learning.

Finally, we commit to ensuring that district communication is plainly shared in multiple languages, delivered proactively and consistently across all schools and to all community members. To ensure communication with families is timely, accessible, reliable, and transparent, we commit to using a combination of translation services for print, radio, television, and social media. This will allow LCS to reach its increasingly diverse student and family populations more effectively.

1 YEAR ONE INDICATOR OF SUCCESS

We will identify the greatest needs of families and scholars and develop a coordinated, cohesive approach with our community partners to provide supports needed.

2 COMMITMENT

Invest in our early scholars.

If our schools are going to live up to their promise of putting scholars first, then we need to make special investments in our kids during their first years in school.



We want all of Lorain’s children, at every stage of their lives, to be loved, cared for and supported, and to feel this from the moment they step foot into our schools. If we are going to live up to our promise of putting scholars first, then we need to make special investments in our kids during their early years. The research is clear: putting our resources in children as early as possible is the best investment we can make.¹³ When children are exposed to excellent academic resources early on—like good books, puzzles, and toys—and supported by teachers who know how to bring those materials to life for young scholars, they develop a thirst for learning that lasts throughout their years in school.

Right now, our scholars are not getting the support they need early enough. By the time they enter Kindergarten, our kids are showing up on that first day of school already behind their peers in neighboring school systems. Currently, only 12% of Kindergarten scholars in Lorain demonstrate the readiness needed to succeed in the areas of language and literacy, math, motor skills, and social skills.¹⁴ By 3rd grade, the percent of our scholars who are proficient in Reading is only 40%, compared to 66% and 76% in our neighboring districts of Clearview and Amherst.

If we want to prepare scholars for success throughout their academic careers, we need to start young. Right now, only a third to half

of Lorain scholars attend pre-kindergarten—a critical opportunity for growth that supports scholars with the academic and character development they need to be prepared for a joyful experience in school. In addition to early reading and number skills, pre-kindergarten supports children to learn important 21st century workforce and character skills like problem-solving, teamwork, and persistence.¹⁵ But our support shouldn’t end there. Continued intensive support in early grades, with a specific focus on reading, numeracy, and character skills development will ensure our scholars remain engaged in school and on-track to succeed in later grades.

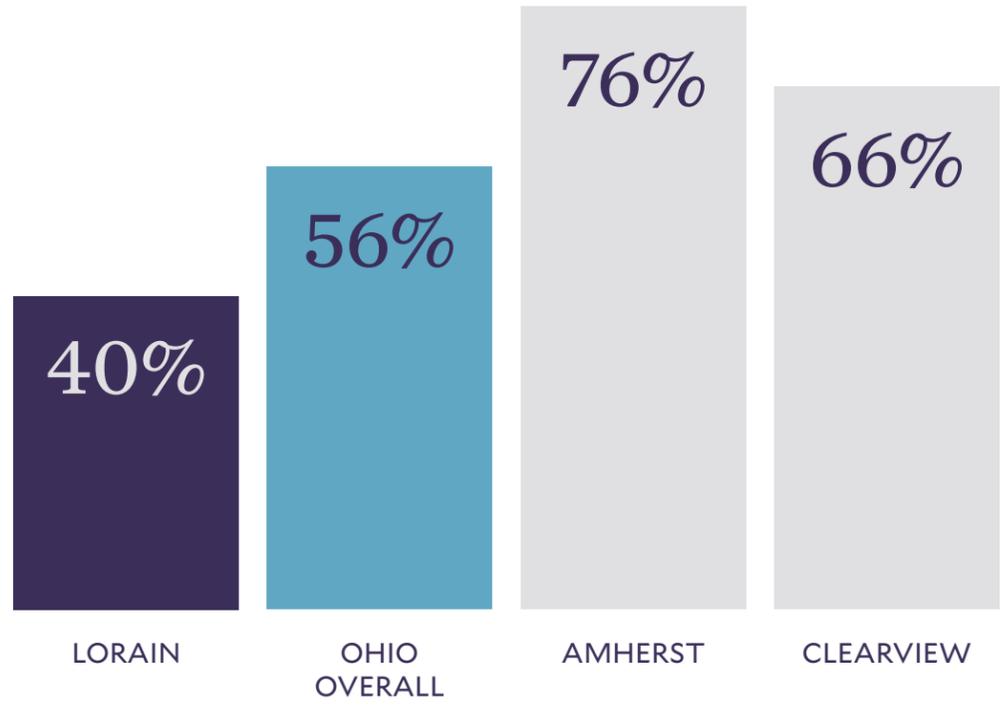
¹³ <https://heckmanequation.org/resource/invest-in-early-childhood-development-reduce-deficits-strengthen-the-economy/>

¹⁴ KRA assessment data, 2016-2017, <http://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/Pages/Download-Data.aspx>

¹⁵ <https://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/RR-13-21.pdf>

2 COMMITMENT

NEIGHBORING 3RD GRADERS READING PROFICIENTLY OR BETTER



2 GOAL

By 2022, our youngest scholars in Lorain will be equipped with the academic and character skills they need for a successful and joyful school experience in the years to come.

2 HOW WE'LL KNOW IF WE'VE SUCCEEDED

DOUBLE

THE PERCENT

of four-year-old scholars enrolled in free pre-kindergarten programs through LCS or other programs

of scholars that are Kindergarten-ready (language and literacy, math, motor skills, and social skills)

90%

OF FAMILIES

agree that their scholars are given the supports and tools they need to be successful in Kindergarten

OVER

80%

are reading on-track by second grade



② WHAT SCHOLARS CAN EXPECT TO EXPERIENCE OR LEARN:

Scholars will have universal access to Pre-K.

Scholars will be able to read on grade level by the time they begin third grade.

Scholars will develop character skills such as problem-solving, persistence, teamwork, and communication.

2 WHAT WE WILL DO TO GET THERE

STRATEGY ONE:

Ensure that every Lorain scholar has access to and attends a high-quality pre-kindergarten program

Kindergarten readiness is not just about succeeding academically, but also about building confidence and social preparedness. For most scholars, Kindergarten is their first interaction with formal schooling. These initial days and months can affect the way that scholars interact with their peers and how they feel about school for years to come. Participation in pre-kindergarten drastically improves a child's readiness for Kindergarten. It also has been shown to have a positive impact on attendance and achievement in

later years.¹⁶ This is when kids begin to learn what it means to be a good citizen, a friend to those around them, and a curious learner who strives for excellence. To make sure that all of our scholars have this strong start, we commit to providing a high-quality, free, full-day pre-kindergarten program for every eligible child in Lorain. We will make sure all families are aware of their options for pre-kindergarten, offer support during enrollment, and work to address any barriers, such as transportation, that may keep scholars from attending.

“Implement a Pre-K program so that students who are not prepared for kindergarten can catch up.”

—LCS Teacher

2 WHAT WE WILL DO TO GET THERE

STRATEGY TWO:

Strengthen K-2 literacy and numeracy instruction so that all scholars are on-track to succeed by third grade

If we want our scholars in Lorain to have every opportunity available to them later in life, we need to make sure they are academically on-track by third grade. Early grade literacy and numeracy are predictors of success in later years. Scholars who do not read at grade level by third grade are more likely to stay behind throughout their schooling and are four times more likely to drop out of high school than proficient readers.^{17,18} It is during early years that scholars transition from learning to read to reading to learn—a skill they need for later success in school and careers. It is also important that our scholars are learning the mathematical thinking and reasoning they need

early on. Right now, only half of our scholars are proficient in Math by the end of third grade. Over the next five years we will deeply invest in the resources and staff development needed to achieve this goal. We will ensure that scholars have materials that focus on early numeracy as well as high-quality, grade-level appropriate text, deepen comprehension, and foster a love of reading. However, we know that good materials are essential but can only take us so far. We heard from our teachers that they want increased support and we will honor this with rigorous professional development and job embedded coaching and feedback to better serve our scholars.

¹⁶ Henry, G., Gordon, C., Mashburn, A. and Ponder, B., 2001. Pre-K Longitudinal Study: Findings from the 1999-2000 School Year. Atlanta GA: Georgia State University, Applied Research Center. In Georgia, 82 percent of young scholars who participated in the state's universal pre-k program had higher scores on third grade readiness, compared with those who did not participate in the program.

¹⁷ Schorr, Lisbeth, and Marchand, Vicky. 2007. Pathway to Children Ready for School and Succeeding at Third Grade. Cambridge: Project on Effective Interventions at Harvard University.

¹⁸ Hernandez, Donald. 2011. Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation. New York: Foundation for Child Development and the Annie E. Casey Foundation

2 WHAT WE WILL DO TO GET THERE

STRATEGY THREE:

Ensure that every early scholar in Lorain develops the character skills they need to succeed in school and in the 21st century workforce

Scholars need more than just academic proficiency to succeed in school and in their future careers. Skills such as problem-solving, persistence, teamwork, and communication have been identified as the most important skills for 21st century jobs.¹⁹ These skills, among others, are also linked to success throughout high school and in college.²⁰ Early on, we need to make sure our scholars have these character skills not only so that they can excel academically and in the workforce, but also because these are traits that will help them

to be a good classmate and an engaged citizen in their schools and community. Starting in pre-kindergarten, we will work with our teachers to ensure that character development is given equal weight and attention during the school day as academics. We will work with our principals to build character traits into a vision for excellent school culture at each school and make sure they and their teachers understand how to emphasize and teach these skills from the first day of school.

2 YEAR ONE INDICATOR OF SUCCESS

We will increase the percentage of eligible four-year-old scholars enrolled in a high-quality pre-kindergarten program. A plan will be in place for strengthening K-2 resources for school year 2018-2019.

¹⁹ <https://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/RR-13-21.pdf>

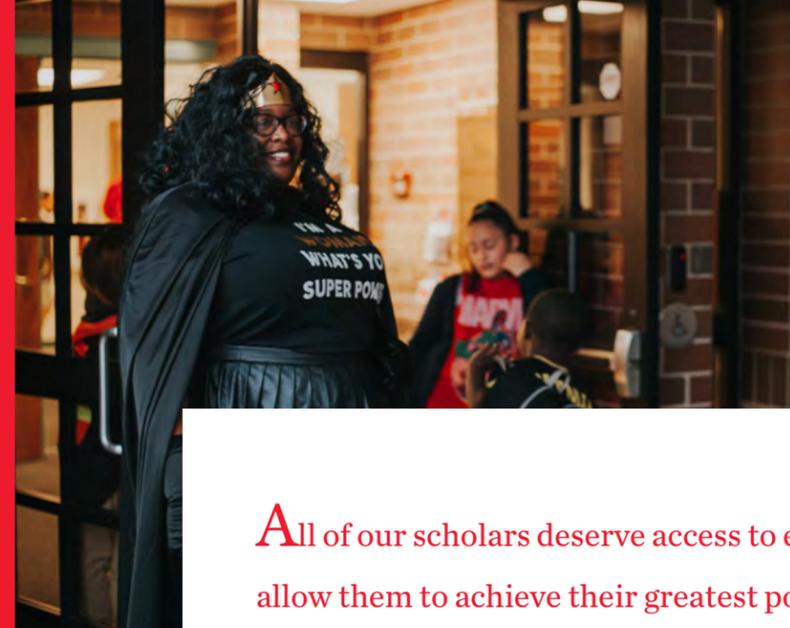
²⁰ http://www.ccrscenter.org/sites/default/files/CCRS%20Center_Predictors%20of%20Postsecondary%20Success_final_0.pdf

3 COMMITMENT

Promote equity.

“Cultural Competency and equity must be at the forefront of all things LCS. Discussions on race, employees mirroring student population, accountability, growing your own and response to wrongdoing must be addressed adequately.”

—LCS Teacher



All of our scholars deserve access to educational opportunities that allow them to achieve their greatest potential. This means not only raising the bar for all scholars, but also acknowledging that there are specific populations of scholars who are currently not receiving the services and support they need to succeed. We believe it is critical to shine a light on the opportunity and achievement gap that persists for our scholars of color, our scholars with disabilities and our English Learners. Moving forward, we will explicitly focus on realizing greater equity for these scholars and direct additional resources and programming to the scholars who need them most.

We have an incredibly diverse population of scholars in Lorain, yet we are not equitably serving all of them. In LCS, black and Hispanic scholars make up approximately 70% of the student population. 7.6% of our scholars have limited English proficiency. 20% of our scholars are students with disabilities. The data points below give just a glimpse into the current inequalities across student populations in our district:

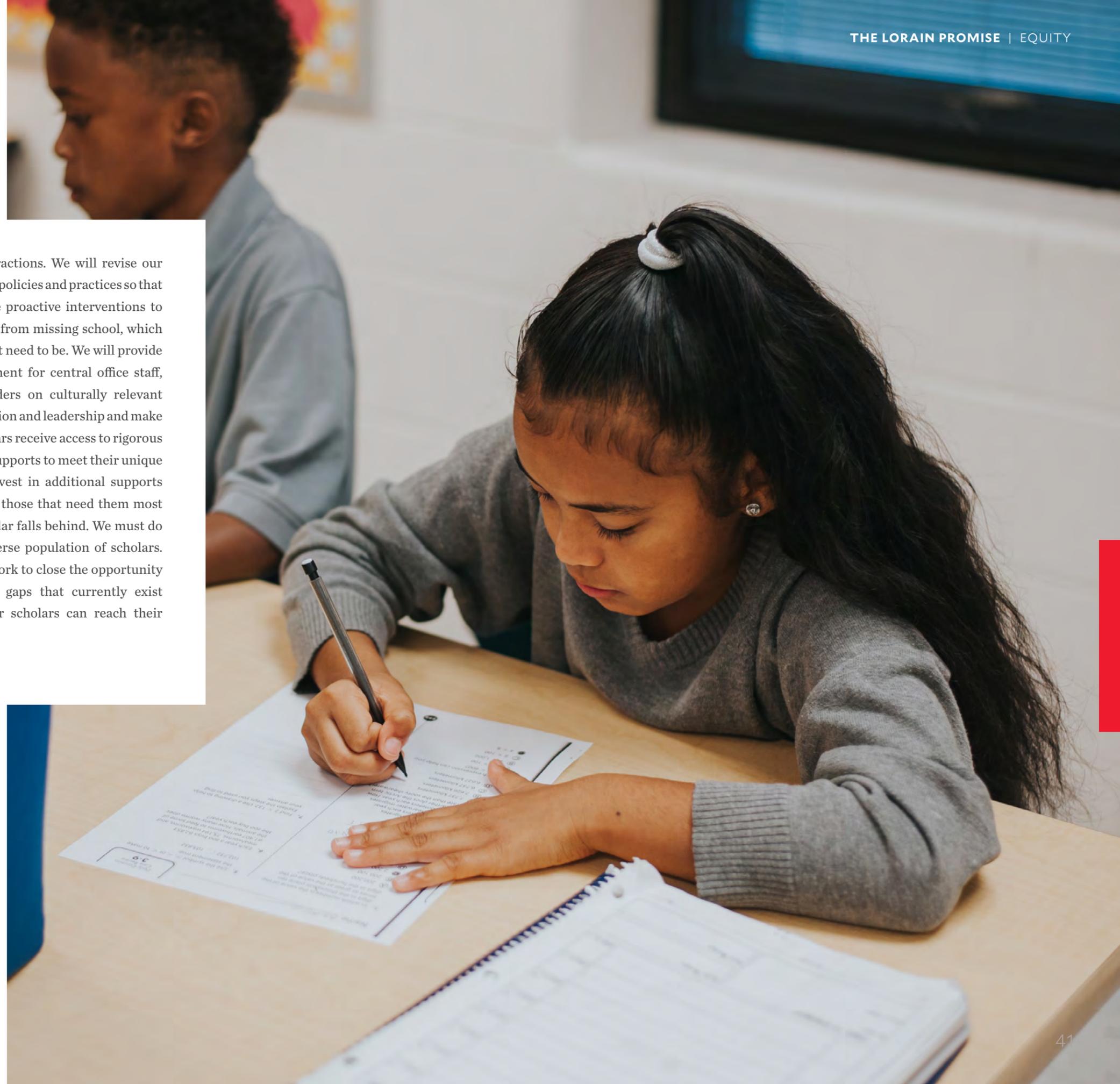
- Black male scholars in Lorain account for 14% of the student population—but 25% of all out of school suspensions. Male students with disabilities account for 21% of district out of school suspensions, while they are only 13% of enrolled students.
- More than 30% of black and Latino scholars and 40% of students with disabilities across Lorain are absent for more than 10 days each school year.
- Reading proficiency rates in third grade are 10-20 percentage points lower for black and Hispanic scholars than their white peers.

3 COMMITMENT

- Only 14% of black students and 19% of Hispanic students are proficient in Algebra, compared to 32% of white scholars.
- Only 34% of our students with limited English proficiency graduated last year. While this number is 67% and 70% for our black and Hispanic scholars, respectively, this is still far behind the 80% of our white scholars that graduated.

Our belief in equity is rooted in the fact that our differences as individuals strengthen our schools. To live this belief and ensure that all of our scholars in LCS succeed, we need to make sure that all scholars are welcomed, accepted, and protected against discrimination in our schools. We need our scholars to want to attend school. To make this a reality, we commit to consistently working to eliminate bias in our

systems and interactions. We will revise our current discipline policies and practices so that we focus on more proactive interventions to keep our scholars from missing school, which is where they most need to be. We will provide ongoing development for central office staff, teachers and leaders on culturally relevant practices, instruction and leadership and make sure that all scholars receive access to rigorous coursework and supports to meet their unique needs. We will invest in additional supports and resources for those that need them most to ensure no scholar falls behind. We must do better by our diverse population of scholars. We will actively work to close the opportunity and achievement gaps that currently exist so that all of our scholars can reach their full potential.



3 GOAL

By 2022, we will have built a culture of equity. We will raise the achievement of all scholars while shrinking the achievement and opportunity gaps between scholars regardless of race, income, or prior achievement.

3 HOW WE'LL KNOW IF WE SUCCEEDED

REDUCE

THE GAP

between white students and students of color on all academic metrics set throughout this plan

Black male students and male students with disabilities will

NO LONGER BE DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED
by discipline policies

90%

OF SCHOLARS

report that their school is inclusive of all students, regardless of race, culture, or socioeconomic background

50%

REDUCTION

in chronic absentee rate across all students

ALL

SCHOLARS

experience at least three opportunities each year that expose them to colleges, careers, and the world around them

3 WHAT SCHOLARS CAN EXPECT TO EXPERIENCE OR LEARN:

Scholars will have opportunities to visit colleges, explore careers, and explore local and national culture.

Teachers will understand how their personal biases impact their approach to teaching and be able to adjust their approach accordingly. Scholars will be able to feel the difference.

Scholars will be in school every day, learning from their choices rather than receiving punishment that keeps them out of the classroom.

3 WHAT WE WILL DO TO GET THERE

STRATEGY ONE:

Close the opportunity gap

We want all scholars to have the opportunities that will help them realize their college and life possibilities. To do this, we need to level the playing field and make sure that ALL of our scholars have access to and utilize the tools they need to succeed. First and foremost, this means we need scholars to be in school learning. The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) collected absenteeism rates from all public schools and school districts nationwide for the 2013-14 school year and released results in 2016. In total, more than 6.5 million students—14 percent of all students in the U.S.—are chronically absent, including 19 percent of all high school students.²¹ In Lorain, over 40% of high school scholars are absent more than 10 days a year. Across the district, chronic absenteeism rates in LCS are 15-20 percentage points higher than neighboring districts.

When scholars feel well supported and engaged in their learning, they are more likely to attend school.²² To achieve this, some scholars need

more support and increased access to resources than others. We commit to identifying supports that scholars need and engaging families and the community in solutions. We will partner

“Two generations ago, when people used the expression “our kids,” they meant our community’s or our nation’s children, but now the term has shriveled to refer only to our biological children. America never thrived in the past with such a narrow vision...and we can’t let it be our future.”

—Closing the Opportunity Gap (2016)

3 WHAT WE WILL DO TO GET THERE

with community organizations to provide afterschool tutoring and weekend support for scholars who struggle academically. We will connect scholars with internship and mentor programs so that they can experience what’s possible. We will provide increased access to technology and Wi-Fi at home so that scholars can more easily complete their homework and have access to a world of information at their

fingertips. Our schools will provide access to enrichment opportunities such as field trips to museums and college campuses so that scholars can learn about life outside of Lorain. These supports and experiences, among others, will help to engage all scholars in their learning and inspire them to want to come to school each day.

STRATEGY TWO:

Build culturally relevant leadership and teaching practices across the district

Lorain scholars come from diverse backgrounds and represent a wide array of cultural norms and beliefs. When teachers walk into their classrooms they should feel prepared to build a safe, thriving and equitable learning environment that recognizes the inherent value of every scholar. To do this, teachers and leaders need to reflect on who they are and what they bring into their classrooms and schools. In short, they should know themselves, their scholars and their communities. Culturally relevant teaching and leadership is a way of approaching instruction that creates a bridge between scholars’ home and school lives.²³ It utilizes the backgrounds, knowledge, and

experiences of scholars to inform the teacher’s lessons and methodology. In Lorain, we will commit to training all teachers, principals and central office staff in culturally relevant practices. Through this important work, we will make space for staff to discuss and reflect on who they are, who our scholars and families are and where they come from, and the socio-political perspectives and biases that manifest in our schools and classrooms. This type self-reflection is challenging but necessary if we are to create learning environments where all scholars are valued for who they are and the unique experiences and backgrounds they bring to school.

²¹ Civil Rights Data Collection for the 2013-14 School Year. (2016). U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/crdc-2013-14.html>

²² <http://www.attendanceworks.org/research/evidence-based-solutions/>

²³ <https://cedar.education.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/culturally-responsive.pdf>

3 WHAT WE WILL DO TO GET THERE

STRATEGY THREE:

Establish restorative justice practices and positive school culture in each of our buildings

Scholars who have been suspended have far higher dropout rates and are significantly more likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system than their peers.²⁴ Just last year, 1,037 scholars were suspended from Lorain Public Schools—most from the high school. That means that over 15% of scholars missed at least one day of school due to suspension. Across the United States, we can estimate that public school children lose nearly *18 million days of instruction* in just one school year because of exclusionary discipline.²⁵ Further, black scholars are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white scholars (16:5).²⁶ In addition to fundamental equity concerns, this disparity in treatment limits time in class, denies opportunities to learn, pushes scholars off the pathway to college and into the pipeline to prison, and negatively impacts the entire school environment.

The community in Lorain and the staff in our schools understand we have a problem when it comes to our discipline practices. In a community-wide survey, only 29% of respondents said they were satisfied with

LCS discipline policies. Only 39% of teachers reported that there are consistent expectations and consequences for student behavior. To address student behavior, our schools must start focusing on interventions that rely on proactive strategies and approaches that include interventions before a situation results in suspension.²⁷ We will start by revisiting district-wide discipline policies and rolling out training for all staff on new strategies and approaches they can use to address the unique learning environments in their schools. We will support schools to develop leadership teams focused on school climate and healthy, proactive approaches to behavior.

“We’re all good students, but there are other kids who are getting in trouble. We wish that principals and teachers would understand that there are other kids who need the support.”

—LCS Student

3 YEAR ONE INDICATOR OF SUCCESS

We will write an equity plan that addresses the opportunity and achievement gaps in Lorain. We will be prepared to act on this plan beginning in school year 2018-19.

²⁴ disciplinerevolutionproject.org/research

²⁵ Losen, D., Hodson, C., Keith, M.A. III, Morrison, K., Belway, S. (2015). Are We Closing the School Discipline Gap?

UCLA, The Center for Civil Rights Remedies. Retrieved from [https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/federal-reports/are-we-closing-](https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/federal-reports/are-we-closing-the-school-discipline-gap)

[the-school-discipline-gap](https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/federal-reports/are-we-closing-the-school-discipline-gap)

²⁶ Civil Rights Data Collection, Data Snapshot: School Discipline, (March 2014). Washington, DC. U.S. Department of Education, Office for

Civil Rights. Retrieved from <http://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/CRDC-School-Discipline-Snapshot.pdf>

²⁷ <https://www.pbis.org/research/tier1supports/evaluation-studies>

4 COMMITMENT

Create schools where adults and scholars thrive.

“Enable the building principals to be instructional leaders with their staff, so the site will own the student learning needs and plan the appropriate instruction & implement it. Accountability is important... continuity is important and staff have to have several years to become savvy in using the materials. Continuous progress is vital.”

— Retired LCS Staff Member



We can only make good on all of our commitments if every Lorain City Schools staff member feels supported in their job and is working together with our scholars to create joyful and engaging learning environments. Research shows that scholars who experience even one highly effective teacher are more likely to attend college, earn a higher salary, and save for retirement.²⁸ We also know that school leaders who build strong instructional cultures are more likely to keep their effective teachers and demonstrate proficiency rates that are 21 percentage points higher in math and 14 percentage points higher in reading.²⁹

Currently, only 64% of Lorain teachers believe that their school is committed to improving their instructional practice and only 32% believe that professional development at their school is well-planned and facilitated. Less than 50% of teachers across the district believe that they receive valuable feedback after observations that helps to improve student outcomes. Meanwhile, we heard from school leaders in Lorain that they *want* to be spending more time workshopping with their peers and visiting classrooms, but they are overwhelmed with other responsibilities like lunch duty and emails taking them away from instructional leadership in their schools.

At the central office, we must focus our efforts on ensuring that schools have the support and resources they need to be successful, and we must not overburden schools with unnecessary tasks that are unrelated to instruction. We must give instructional leaders autonomy to make cultural and instructional decisions about their schools while holding them accountable for results. We must support our teachers who are on the frontline of providing for our scholars each and every day and equip them with the tools and skills they need to help scholars be successful and to engage them in joyful learning experiences.

²⁸ Chetty, Friedman, and Rockoff. “The Long-Term Impacts of Teachers: Teacher Value-Added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood.” NBER, 2012.

²⁹ https://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNTP_Greenhouse_Schools_2012.pdf

④ COMMITMENT

Creating strong learning environments doesn't stop with the adults in our buildings. We must raise up student voices and give our scholars the place they deserve at the table. Including our scholars in decision making at their schools and at the district level helps them to become more engaged citizens, teaches them important skills around innovation and problem-solving, shows how much we value them, and enlists them in creating an environment where they want to spend time. Only when the adults and scholars in our buildings partner together with aligned goals will we truly be able to create schools where adults and scholars thrive.



4 GOAL

By 2022, all LCS staff are supported to perform their best and to create strong learning environments so that scholars love coming to school and are supported to achieve high expectations.

4 HOW WE'LL KNOW IF WE SUCCEEDED

90%

OF SCHOOL LEADERS, TEACHERS, AND CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF
report that they feel well supported to meet the expectations of their job in service of scholars

90%

OF SCHOOL LEADERS AND TEACHERS
report they get the support and service they need from the central office

90%

OF TEACHERS
report that they receive regular observations followed by actionable and valuable feedback from their school leaders

90%

OF SCHOLARS
report that teachers hold high expectations for them and support them to meet these expectations
report that they enjoy coming to school every day



④ WHAT SCHOLARS CAN EXPECT TO EXPERIENCE OR LEARN:

Scholars will feel that their teachers and all adults in LCS hold high expectations for them.

Teachers, leaders and central office staff know what is expected of them to best serve scholars, and as a result, scholars feel well supported to achieve.

Scholars enjoy coming to school every day.

4 WHAT WE WILL DO TO GET THERE

STRATEGY ONE:

Define our vision for instructional excellence— and focus our resources on supporting that vision

Supporting our scholars to succeed should be the singular priority of every LCS staff member, and this means prioritizing the creation of schools where our scholars feel safe, loved, and excited to learn. We will begin by setting a strong vision for instruction and student success at the district leadership level with the support of voices throughout the district. Currently, only 37% of central office staff agree that the district has a clearly stated overarching vision that drives decision making at all levels. Our vision will be clear and focused on student learning and success. Based on this vision, we will take a hard look at how we currently spend our resources to ensure that everything we do is aligned to

supporting the education of our scholars. We commit to closely looking at the structures, systems, and processes coming down from our central office— and to organizing this central entity to effectively support schools to achieve our vision. We will also examine our current spending. Right now, 66% of the district's funds are spent on classroom instruction, ranking Lorain 37th out of 46 of other like districts in the state.³⁰ Our spending should not only focus on instructional support, but we should be able to measure whether or not our investments are resulting in better education for kids. If they're not, we will rethink how we are spending money towards better resources and programming.

4 WHAT WE WILL DO TO GET THERE

STRATEGY TWO:

Develop, recognize, and reward our high-performing staff

If we want every scholar in Lorain to have access to great teachers and school leaders, we must invest in the development and recognition of our people. From our central office staff to our school based staff, we will ensure that there are opportunities for career growth and development. Currently, only 23% of Effective or Highly Effective teachers in the district say that they've been approached with opportunities for teacher leadership roles and only 39% have had their accomplishments recognized publicly. Similarly, only 35% of central office employees say that someone is thinking about their career progression. If we are not recognizing and rewarding potential

within our own staff, we are doing ourselves and our scholars a disservice. Moving forward, we commit to identifying career pathways and other ways to recognize our most effective staff at all levels. This means an increased focus on instructional leadership, feedback, job-embedded coaching and professional development experiences. We will invest in building management skills at all levels and make sure that we are holding ourselves accountable for results. Finally, we will remove any barriers to success that are preventing us from building the talent pool we need to serve our scholars.

³⁰ <http://www.chroniclet.com/Local-News/2017/10/06/Lorain-Schools-CEO-looks-to-hire-firm-to-look-at-budget.html>; <http://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/Pages/District-Report.aspx?DistrictIRN=044263>

4 WHAT WE WILL DO TO GET THERE

STRATEGY THREE:

Raise scholar voices in school and district decision making

Our scholars have an incredibly important perspective on their own schooling and this perspective should be heard regularly and in a variety of contexts. This is about more than simply having a student council. This is about including scholars in decisions that adults typically make that affect their experiences in school. Moving forward, not only will scholars have a voice in decisions that affect their fellow scholars and their school community, they will be valued as sources of innovative ideas. This includes inviting them to any meetings that are about their own learning (parent teacher conferences, IEP meetings, discipline

hearings, etc.), asking them to take part in school or district leadership meetings, and working with them to create an innovation lab. It means incorporating experiences as part of their classes where they can research and think about their school and offer suggestions for improvement. All of this requires that as adults, we listen to and value the ideas and opinions of our young people. By engaging them in the creation of their own learning environment, we will create more relevant and appealing schools that scholars look forward to attending every day.

4 YEAR ONE INDICATOR OF SUCCESS

We will develop a vision of excellence in our schools and align professional learning for LCS staff at all levels. We will create opportunities for innovation for our scholars to give us ideas to improve our schools.

5 COMMITMENT

Prepare scholars for the world of tomorrow.

Nationally, about half of students who enter college will earn a degree within six years. In Lorain, only 17% of scholars graduate from college within six years.³¹



Whether our children want to become astronauts, entrepreneurs, health care providers, computer engineers or teachers, we have the responsibility to prepare them to achieve their dreams after they leave our schools. For generations, a high school diploma was an achievement that guaranteed a steady job and income to support a family. This is no longer the case. To succeed in today's job market, education beyond high school is necessary. Unfortunately, too few of Lorain's scholars obtain this level of education. Nationally, about half of scholars who enter college will earn a degree within six years.³² In Lorain, only 17% of scholars graduate from college within six years.

When we look at why this is the case, a few things are clear. By the time they leave our classrooms, our scholars need strong language and math skills as well as critical thinking and problem-solving abilities to succeed in college and the workforce. Yet our graduates are not currently equipped with foundational academic skills they need. Starting in 3rd grade, our scholars are already far behind their peers in Math and ELA, and by the time they are ready to start high school, only 32% are proficient in Math and only 19% in English

Language Arts. As a consequence, in 2016-17, only 1.1% of juniors and seniors who took the ACT received scores that suggest they will not require remediation coursework—"catch-up" classes that often indicate a difficult path ahead in college.³³ Nationally, fewer than one in 10 scholars who enroll in remedial coursework in community college will attain a credential within three years³⁴ and then scholars and families are penalized again by having to pay tuition for remedial courses.³⁵

³¹ <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/04/26/college-completion-rates-vary-race-and-ethnicity-report-finds>

³² Ohio data below comes from: <https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/>

<unsecured/documents/cccr2017/Ohio-CCCR-2017-Final.pdf>

³³ <http://www.chronicle.com/article/Postsecondary-Success-Starts/239658>

³⁴ https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2016/04/06/remedial-classes-have-become-a-hidden-cost-of-college/?utm_term=.cca896731f36

³⁵ <http://www.air.org/resource/early-college-early-success-early-college-high-school-initiative-impact-study-2013>

5 COMMITMENT

Scholars are also not being given access to the experiences they need to prepare themselves for college and career. Our high schools lack advanced language courses and honors courses that many colleges look for on applications—and only 3% of recent graduates earned an honors diploma. We offer few opportunities for scholars to take college-credit bearing courses in high school. Nationally, students who enroll in early college programs are more likely to graduate high school and to enroll in a four-year college. They have the opportunity to earn an Associate's Degree while in high school and graduate with two years of college already paid for. Currently, only 2 of Lorain High School's current graduating class will graduate with an Associate's Degree (by taking enough credits and meeting Lorain County Community College's requirements). Another 50 scholars from Lorain are enrolled in a local Early College program in Elyria that is no longer offered in Lorain. We also fail to provide opportunities and access for scholars to intern or shadow those in the greater Cleveland region to learn more about the possibility of

careers that await them. Our scholars should be actively dreaming and aspiring to career goals and we are not exposing them to these options, nor giving them experiences to get there.

We must do better by our scholars. We commit to providing them with the academic supports they need to succeed in college and the careers of tomorrow. To do this, we will focus on providing intensive supports in ELA and Math so that our scholars are on-track to succeed from an early age and have the fundamental literacy and numeracy skills needed to excel in college. We will also strengthen our course offerings outside of ELA and Math so that scholars are exposed to a wealth of diverse content that helps them to discover their passions and set goals for their future. We will ensure that scholars are exposed to opportunities to learn about the diversity of career opportunities available to them and we will provide them with college preparatory and early college access support needed to achieve future success.



5 GOAL

By 2022, all high school scholars will be prepared and have the opportunity to obtain an Associate's Degree or industry equivalent while still in high school.

5 HOW WE'LL KNOW IF WE'VE SUCCEEDED:

INCREASE THE PERCENT
of 3rd through 8th graders that are proficient
IN MATH BY | IN ELA BY
30% & 20%

THE MAJORITY
of 8th grade scholars are prepared to take honors courses, including math and science, in high school

ALL SCHOLARS

will take the ACT by the end of their junior year. We will

TRIPLE THE PERCENT
receiving remediation-free scores

INCREASE THE PERCENT
of graduates who complete an Associate's Degree by graduation by

50%

INCREASE THE PERCENT
of graduates who enroll in college by

50%

5 WHAT SCHOLARS CAN EXPECT TO EXPERIENCE OR LEARN:

Scholars will have access to more rigorous and relevant materials in their Math and ELA classes and be asked to do more challenging thinking.

Scholars will have access to a wide array of courses and learning experiences across subjects such as arts, technology, engineering, languages and civics.

Scholars will know what their post-high school options include and feel prepared to choose the best path for their future.

5 WHAT WE WILL DO TO GET THERE

STRATEGY ONE:

Intensive focus on Math and ELA

By the time a child reaches middle school, we can predict how they will do in high school and beyond, based on their ELA and Math performance. Currently, in Lorain, the picture does not look promising for our scholars. The percentage of our middle school scholars that reach proficiency in ELA and/or Math hovers around 20-30%. This means that at least 7-8 scholars out of every 10 are underprepared for success in high school. When you look at neighboring districts, such as Clearview and Amherst, kids are doing better (by 20-50 percentage points), and our scholars can, too. To do this, we will focus on intensive academic support, resources, and time in ELA and Math from K-12 to make sure our scholars are on-

track and prepared for high school by the end of middle school. We will roll out new Math and ELA materials and resources that better align with demands of college and career—and we will support our teachers and school leaders to ensure that they know how best to use these resources to ensure that scholars learn. We will extend instructional time because the more time our scholars spend learning, the better prepared they will be. Extended learning time may take the shape of a longer school day, after-school partnerships, or by extending the school year. Our aim is that every scholar in Lorain is eligible and on-track to take honors level courses in high school that will prepare them to be college ready.

5 WHAT WE WILL DO TO GET THERE

STRATEGY TWO:

Expand access to diverse pathways of learning across subject areas

We know that Math and ELA are not the only subject areas that make for a rich and fulfilling school experience. Scholars need access to a variety of courses and experiences that will expand their thinking and help them to achieve their goals. Whether focused on the arts, computer programming, foreign language, or government, scholars should be able to find courses, pathways for creative thinking, mentorship opportunities, or experiences that align to their passions and make them excited about learning and attending school. Our scholars at the high school level should have the ability to begin pursuing their higher education goals right away, accessing to college-level courses for credit through Lorain County Community College, Advanced Placement, or International Baccalaureate courses, as well as access to career and technical education classes—without being persuaded to choose one over the other. In addition, all scholars should have access to the courses they need to become a competitive applicant for the college of their choice. Our current course offerings and minimum graduation requirements are just enough for scholars to get by, but lack some of the additional content that make

scholars competitive for the best colleges. Our commitment to providing a variety of enriching courses for scholars will require us to do some rethinking of schedules, assess current course offerings, talk to scholars about what they want and need, and to look at the job market of today and the future.

“There aren’t a lot of opportunity for students to explore careers through school district. As a community, we need to feed their dreams and goals with positivity. Exposing them to areas of interest may spark their desire to excel to do well in school... they need to be taught regardless of their background they can accomplish anything.”

–Community Member

5 WHAT WE WILL DO TO GET THERE

STRATEGY THREE:

Expand support for our scholars to reach their college and career goals

From the time scholars are in elementary school, we should expose them to rich experiences outside of school to help them understand the wealth of career and life opportunities available to them. Through public and private partnerships, we can ensure that scholars have access to job shadowing and internships starting in middle school and going through high school. Right now, only a few high school scholars are graduating with an industry credential—most in construction and maintenance fields.³⁶ We commit to providing better college and career counseling support to scholars and their families to place them on the path to higher education beginning in high school, directing them to resources and support to help them achieve those goals.

Knowing how important college is, our hope is that every scholar aspires to higher education, and we will make sure they have what they need to pursue a credential during or after high school. This includes providing in-school time and preparation support for every scholar that is taking the ACT in their junior year. It also means providing increased access to early college programs and encouraging our scholars to pursue an Associate's Degree while in high school. We will hold a high bar for our graduating scholars, knowing this will mean success in college and career. Our scholars can and will meet this bar for excellence, but only with the love and support of everyone in our schools and community.

5 YEAR ONE INDICATOR OF SUCCESS

We will build a plan to strengthen Math resources in grades 3-8, starting in school year 2018-2019.

We will double the number of scholars who are eligible to enter an early college program for next school year.

³⁶ Data from Lorain City Public Schools. <https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Data/Report-Card-Resources/Prepared-for-Success-Measure/Technical-Documentation-Prep-for-Success.pdf.aspx>

OUR PROMISE TO THE LORAIN COMMUNITY

Our promise to the Lorain community.

**At every step, we as a community must work together
to give our children what they need to succeed.**

OUR PROMISE TO THE LORAIN COMMUNITY

Whether you are an educator, a family member, a community leader, or anyone else invested in the success of our scholars, we hope that The Lorain Promise will help you identify how you can join us in the movement to improve Lorain schools and provide our scholars with the futures they deserve. Lorain City Schools recognizes that this requires a partnership between schools and our community that is rooted in honesty and trust. To ensure that every Lorain scholar receives an equitable school experience that prepares them for college and career, LCS commits to partnering with the Lorain community to:

Guarantee that all scholars and families feel welcome in every LCS building.

Extend how we support scholars—moving beyond the K-12 years to a model where we support scholars starting at birth, adding programming that supports scholars and families outside of regular school hours.

Provide clear, ongoing communication regarding our schools' areas of successes and development, opportunity for feedback on these areas, and transparent reporting on what actions the district is taking in response.

Build school committees and community task forces that reflect the diversity of our community and empower community members to take action.

Maximize the existing assets in our community to create increased and equitable access to the tools our scholars need to succeed.



OUR PROMISE TO THE LORAIN COMMUNITY

This plan will only become reality when our leaders, teachers, scholars, families and the entire community of Lorain City Schools work together. Realizing the potential of our schools and our scholars will require commitments from all of us. Our scholars need and deserve actively-invested adults. We are asking that everyone do their part to:

Set and communicate high expectations for our scholars.

Help scholars to know what's possible, experience joy in learning and achieve their dreams.

Ensure all scholars are in school, on time, every day.

Support scholars' academic growth and ask for help when you need it.

Seek assistance for our scholars' social, emotional and health needs.

Invest existing community resources in our scholars whether it be in the form of time, funds, spaces, skills or services.

OUR PROMISE TO THE LORAIN COMMUNITY

IF WE TRULY ALL WORK TOGETHER AND HOLD EACH OTHER ACCOUNTABLE, HERE IS WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT TO SEE AS WE FULFILL ASPECTS OF THIS PLAN.

SCHOLARS

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT TO SEE:

Adults inside and outside of school who support you to achieve your goals.

More enriching experiences and courses during your time at school.

Extra support to succeed academically and prepare for college and career.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU:

Believe that you can achieve anything. Hold high expectations for yourself and your future.

Show up. Attend school and be prepared to learn.

Use your voice. Share your opinions about your own learning experiences. Be a good scholar-citizen and encourage your peers. Celebrate your successes and help each other through struggles.

FAMILIES

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT TO SEE:

Consistent and transparent communication about your child's school and learning experience.

More opportunities to participate in learning events at your child's school.

Community partnerships that provide resources and support to your family outside of school.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU:

Help your child believe that they can achieve anything. Hold high expectations for your child's future and work with them at home.

Access the community and school resources that are available to support you and your child.

Be engaged. Advocate for your scholar and what is best for them. Let us know when you don't feel good about your experience in your scholar's school.

OUR PROMISE TO THE LORAIN COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT TO SEE:

True partnership directly aligned with the commitments in The Lorain Promise.

We will work together on direction of programming.

Opportunities to share resources in support of our families and scholars.

Transparency and accountability for serving scholars.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU:

Hold high expectations for our scholars and LCS and look for ways to support their goals.

Engage with us. Select a commitment that you and your organization will focus on. Contribute to and work with other partners to reach all of our scholars.

Help us to measure effectiveness of our commitments and our partnerships so that we can improve over time.

LORAIN CITY SCHOOLS STAFF

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT TO SEE:

A culture of respect, transparency, and high expectations.

More opportunities for professional learning and development.

Better instructional resources and materials.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU:

Hold high expectations for our scholars and for your work in service of scholars' education.

Believe the best in your leaders, colleagues, scholars, and their families and begin interactions with positive intentions.

Ask for help when you need it. Be there for your colleagues when they need support and be open to admitting your own vulnerabilities.

WHAT'S NEXT?

As we embark upon this next phase of work, we want you to continue to engage with us. And we want you to have enough information to hold us accountable for progress and results. The following are ways in which we will share our progress over time:

Monthly and quarterly updates on our top priorities posted to our website and linked in our newsletter.

Quarterly in-person updates to the Academic Distress Commission (ADC), open to the public.

CEO public town halls (every second Thursday of the month).

Community Business Schools Task Force (every third Wednesday of the month).

Please look for the first quarterly update in early January to announce progress on Year 1 Indicators as well as priorities for change in school year 2018-2019. In the meantime, we will begin work behind the scenes to ensure that the district is set up to deliver on all of the commitments we are making.

THE NEXT 6-9 MONTHS WILL FOCUS ON GETTING THE RIGHT PEOPLE INTO THE RIGHT ROLES AND PRIORITIZING WHICH INITIATIVES TO TAKE ON IN WHICH ORDER:

BY DAY
30

We will organize roles and responsibilities in the administrative office to best support our commitments and goals.

BY DAY
60

We will identify and prioritize the initiatives we are going to act on first.

BY DAY
90

We will begin planning for, and in some cases, piloting, one to two initiatives within each commitment.

BY DAY
120

We will have teams in place for implementation of one initiative per commitment.

BY MONTH
6

We will begin implementation of initiatives in preparation for the 2018-2019 school year.

AND BY THE START OF THE 2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR,
WE WILL HAVE MET OUR YEAR 1 INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:

Support the whole child beginning at birth.

We will identify the greatest needs of families and scholars and develop a coordinated, cohesive approach with our community partners to provide supports needed.

Invest in our early scholars.

We will increase the percentage of eligible four-year-old scholars enrolled in a high-quality pre-kindergarten program. A plan will be in place for strengthening K-2 resources for school year 2018-2019.

Promote equity.

We will write an equity plan that addresses the opportunity and achievement gaps in Lorain. We will be prepared to act on this plan beginning in school year 2018-19.

Create schools where adults and scholars thrive.

We will develop a vision of excellence in our schools and align professional learning for LCS staff at all levels. We will create opportunities for innovation for our scholars to give us ideas to improve our schools.

Prepare scholars for the world of tomorrow.

We will build a plan to strengthen Math resources in grades 3-8, starting in school year 2018-2019. We will double the number of scholars who are eligible to enter an early college program for next school year.



FOR MORE DETAILS AND FOR ALL UPDATES, PLEASE VISIT:

www.lorainschools.org/tlp



facebook.com/lorainschools



[@lorainschools](https://twitter.com/lorainschools)



instagram.com/loraincityschools



youtube.com/user/LorainSchoolsTV20