

# **WABASH COUNTY PROMISE**

**A COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS INITIATIVE**



## **INFORMATION & OVERVIEW**

### **2013**

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# WABASH COUNTY PROMISE

Presenting Sponsor: Beauchamp McSpadden



## Welcome to the “Walk Into My Future” Event!

The Wabash County Promise is a collaborative, grounded in evidence based research, to eliminate our County’s cultural bias against education. Using intentional influence systems, we can foster hope in the lives of youth, increase educational attainment rates significantly and strengthen the economic vitality of our county. We are bringing businesses, organizations, schools and faith communities together to deliver on the promise.

### OUR BELIEF

We believe the trajectory of a child’s life should be determined by their potential and not by situational limitations.

### OUR PROMISE

Wabash County will support all youth in the development of their college & career identity through college and career discovery, academic readiness, and educational savings.

### OVERVIEW

- Start early: shape the college and career identity of students in grades K-3
- Stay the course: implement college and career readiness strategies for grades K-12
- Plan ahead: simplify the process for parents to establish college savings accounts for kids
- Change culture: Bring the county together to reduce the cultural bias against education

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

- Any Wabash County student in grades K-3 (students in grades 4 - 12 can establish a CollegeChoice 529 account, though they are not eligible for the matching gift funds)

### STUDENT ACTIVITIES

- Establish a CollegeChoice529 account at school registration
- Participate in age-appropriate college and career discovery activities in the classroom
- Invite champions to provide encouragement and make an investment in the student’s CollegeChoice529 account
- Participate in the “Walk Into My Future” event on the campus of Manchester University

### MATCHING GIFTS

- Parkview Health has made a \$25 investment in every K-3 student who established a CollegeChoice529 at registration
- Leading up to “Walk Into My Future,” students will ask champions (friends, family, neighbors) in their life to make a gift of \$5.29 or more into their college savings account
- Students who raise \$25 or more receive a community matching gift of \$75

### WHAT ARE CHAMPIONS

- Champions will provide words of encouragement and support for a student’s aspirations
- Champions can make a gift of \$5.29 or more to the student's CollegeChoice529 account

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### What is a college-going culture?

College-going culture refers to the environment, attitudes, and practices in schools and communities that encourage students and their families to obtain the information, tools, and perspective to enhance access to and success in post-secondary education.

Three necessary elements are:

1. Students learn about options for their future, careers and the education they require, as early as elementary school, with a specific focus beginning in middle school.
2. Schools convey the expectation that all students can prepare for the opportunity to attend and be successful in post-secondary education.
3. Schools, families, and communities give students the same message of high expectations for their future.

In addition to college-going, the broad goal is for students to believe they can have a great future, and that they can plan and prepare for many options leading to a creative and productive life after high school. Students may think they know what they want, but we know their interests and career aspirations may and most likely will change, and they need to be prepared. Students need to know that there are many paths they can take to have a successful life journey.

### How do attitudes of adults affect college-going?

We know that students respond to the level of expectations held of them by the adults in their lives. In one recent story, a principal asked his kindergarten teachers to tell him who in their class was "college material." Indeed, teachers responded with the names of specific children they had already decided were going to college. Even at five years-old, some children were already getting the message in school that they could not go as far as their peers.

When information about college does not get through, the students who need that information the most -- because their family members do not have personal knowledge or experiences that they can share -- are the ones who can be left behind. This situation particularly hurts students whose parents did not attend college, as their families often lack the knowledge that is needed about what courses to take and how to prepare for college admission, and often believe that college is too expensive for their family to afford.

Low expectations can heavily influence the life trajectory for student success. When adults begin to hold all students to high expectations for achievement and success, it can make a profound difference in students' lives.

### How Wabash County is nurturing the potential of youth

Students are likely to achieve academic or career success if they can visualize the path to their future. Believing they are on a path is a fundamental shift in consciousness that is essential for students to gain motivation and take the steps necessary to achieve their highest potential.

Throughout the Wabash County Promise, students will think about what they want to be when they grow up, identify champions in their life who can help them on the path to their future, and build excitement about visiting a college campus.

Our community is uniquely positioned to support students during their college and career discovery activities, encourage them in their dreams and making an investment to help them achieve them.

Adapted from *Believing the College Dream Curriculum* from College Tools for Schools (2011)

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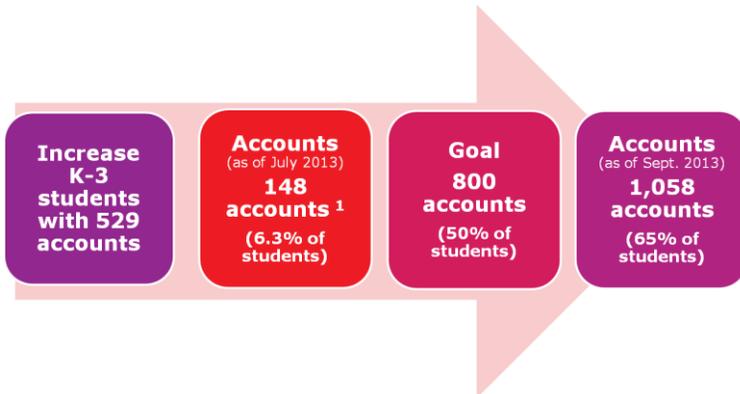
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## Statistics

### Wabash County Promise Increase College Savings for Youth

Indiana's CollegeChoice 529



- When children have a savings account in their name, they are **seven times** more likely to attend college and avoid "wilt" than similar youth who do not have an account. (Elliott & Beverly 2010) <sup>2</sup>
- "I adamantly believe that higher education is the foundation that creates a better tomorrow and inspires countless students to become vital thought-leaders of the future." (W. Parker Beauchamp, President, Beauchamp & McSpadden, INC)
- "We all want the children in our lives to have the brightest future possible. This is a wonderful way to help them with a gift that will last a lifetime – money to help them afford higher education." (Richard Mourdock, Indiana Treasurer of State)
- "In order to continue our success we must develop our children and grandchildren into a 21<sup>st</sup> Century workforce. The Wabash Promise offers us a change to begin to build that respect for education and to help our parents, grandparents, and students to understand that it is not beyond their economic reach." (Bill Konyha, President, Economic Development Group of Wabash County)
- "The Wabash County Promise is dedicated to developing college and career-ready students within our community, fostering initiatives at every grade level and pursuing partnerships with local universities." (Senator Jim Banks, State of Indiana)
- "Now, more than at any time previously, it is critical that Wabash County invest significantly into the development and retention of our homegrown talent." (Howard Halderman, President, Halderman Farm Management)
- "I am proud to support the Wabash County Promise in its pursuit of increased accessibility of higher education for the students of Wabash County." (Ryan Twiss, Director of the Talent Initiative, NE Indiana's Big Goal Collaborative)
- "I feel that this program will increase the awareness of our parents and students to become keenly aware of the commitment to prepare for post-secondary education in Wabash County." (William C. Reichart, Superintendent, Manchester Community Schools)
- "If we want to ensure a strong economy for our community we must work together to support our students and encourage their pursuit of higher education, military service, or their readiness to enter the workforce." (Sandra Weaver, Superintendent MSD)
- "Nothing is more precious than our youth and we owe them our very best efforts." (Honorable Robert R McCallen, III)