Leveraging the Local - In Nebraska

Presentation to
The Alliance for Early Success
2017 Partner Summit
Tampa, Florida
November 8, 2017
Children Age 0-5 At Risk of Failing in School: 2011-15

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table D170024, generated by First Five Nebraska, using American FactFinder; <http://factfinder.census.gov> (6 December 2016)

153,696 Number of Children Age 0-5 in Nebraska

62,729 (41%) Number and Percentage of Children Age 0-5 in Nebraska At Risk of Failing in School
Our Youngest Nebraskans
District 14: Senator Jim Smith
365th Nebraska Legislature • First Session 2017

Saving taxpayer dollars through strategic investments in Omaha’s youngest children at risk

In Omaha, the violent crime rate is nearly 25 percent higher than the national average for 1,800 residents. This comes at a catastrophic cost to our city’s taxpayers and economy. Considering severe budget shortfalls currently experienced in the city and state level, Nebraska cannot afford to pay approximately $200 million to incarcerate 5,000 adults in state prisons every year.

If we are serious about making better use of tax revenues in Omaha and across the state, the best research points to a strategy that prioritizes quality early care and learning opportunities for young children at risk.

National consensus data indicates that the vast majority of the incarcerated population exhibits severe disparities in executive function skills, an individual’s ability to focus on tasks, control impulses and emotions and interact appropriately in social contexts. Early executive function is built upon quality early experiences, especially with attentive, responsive parents and caregivers.

Absent these kinds of early experiences, however, children are statistically more likely to follow a trajectory that leads toward involvement in the state’s correction system and low lifetime productivity.

**District 14’s Youngest Children At Risk**

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<tr>
<th>Children Age 0-5</th>
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<td>District</td>
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<td>3,379</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Children Age 0-5 At Risk</th>
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<td>of School Failure</td>
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<td>District</td>
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<td>589</td>
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**District-specific program participation & workforce data**

**District-specific at-risk data**

**Gallup CFO: Fiscal accountability begins with strategically timed investments in Nebraska’s citizens**

“Clearly, a more efficient, accountable, and highest return on investment occurs in the first five years. It will [reduce] other demands on our tax dollars such as grade repetition, special education costs, work force training, welfare, and incarceration. I challenge you to find [an investment] that can produce such a high rate of return for such a relatively modest level of expenditure.”

**Total estimated number of children age 0-5 at risk of falling in school in District 14**

**Estimated number of children age 0-5 at risk in District 14 who do or do not participate in early childhood programs that currently meet moderately high-quality standards**

**Participant involvement (moderate)**

- 65%

**Participant involvement (outstanding)**

- 23%

**Participant involvement (insufficient)**

- 12%
Children At Risk Age 0-18 Months, Participating in High-Quality Early Care and Learning Programs*

*Data current as of December 2014
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Lack of vision at the state level

- Executive Branch
  - Governor and state agencies
- Legislative Branch
  - One-issue candidates
  - Tax reform; less government
Shifting Focus - Creating Demand at the Local Level

- Private sector investments
  - *One-year planning grants to build capacity*
  - *Co-horts of 10 communities*
  - *Expertise provided based on community need*
  - *Policy Leadership Academy*
    - *Building leadership skills to talk with elected officials, media, business, funders*
    - *10-month program; mentor next co-hort*
  - *Dividends Nebraska – business leaders involved in early childhood*