Welcome to the Southeastern North Carolina Dropout Prevention Newsletter. We highlight dropout prevention activities and accomplishments in the region, as well as local and national events, resources, funding and research. Please send us your stories, highlights, accomplishments and upcoming events.

Engage Southeast North Carolina Community Platform!

Check out the Engage Southeast North Carolina Community Platform! This tool will help organizations, community members, decision makers, and philanthropic funders in Columbus, Brunswick, New Hanover, Pender and Onslow County cross boundaries and collaborate on projects to improve the quality of life in Southeastern North Carolina. This platform will help dedicated organizations:

- **Learn about the demographics and post events** in each of the five counties in Southeastern North Carolina.
- **Identify issues and initiatives** that are important to the citizens and organizations of Southeastern North Carolina.
- **Collaborate** across geographical boundaries and diverse backgrounds to achieve common outcomes. Using team management tools, dedicated organizations can share information and resources that help partners achieve a common goal.
- **Map** the organizations, demographics and resources of a given area to identify areas of concern for communities in Southeastern North Carolina. Using Engage SENC’s Asset Mapping tool, you can filter local organizations by geographic area, organization type and service provided to identify gaps and areas of need in our communities.
- **Post** applied learning and volunteer opportunities for those in the area, as well as discover individuals who would like to serve the nonprofit sector with our Share Resources tab.

The goal of this platform is to provide a tool for individuals and organizations to discover the resources available in Southeastern North Carolina and identify areas of need facing our community. We hope that by making this information readily available and accessible, individuals will become more engaged with the nonprofit sector and philanthropy will increase in Southeastern North Carolina.

http://communityplatform.us/communityplatform/senc

More about the useful Shared Resources on Page 3. This tool could assist us in matching needs to services. We have wonderful resources in our community. Let’s get them where they are needed!
Who is Minding the Neighborhood?
From America's Promise Alliance

When there are more adults in a community, do young people there have stronger academic outcomes?

In a word, yes. New research released today from the Center for Promise at Boston University, the research institute for America’s Promise Alliance, finds that for every seven more adults in the neighborhood, one fewer young person leaves school.

Who’s Minding the Neighborhood? The Role of Adult Capacity in Keeping Young People on a Path to Graduation explores a neighborhood’s adult capacity to provide the supports all young people need to graduate.

While the nation’s high school graduation rate is at an all-time high, too many young people - nearly 700,000 16-19-year-olds - aren’t reaching this important educational milestone. The Center’s 2015 report Don’t Quit on Me, highlighted the importance of adult relationships for keeping young people in school. Who’s Minding the Neighborhood, funded by the Ford Foundation, explores whether more adults in a community - a higher adult-to-youth ratio - also means there will be more graduates.

How does this play out in your neighborhood?

Through a partnership with Community Commons—a nonprofit collaboration powered by the Institute for People, Place and Possibility, the Center for Applied Research and Environmental Systems, and Community Initiatives – you can find out the adult-to-youth ratio in your zip code and add other meaningful data to create maps and reports that explore your community’s health.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Graduating from high school is not only a strong predictor of adult success but also of adult physical and mental health outcomes and involvement with the criminal justice system, yet approximately 15% of students in North Carolina who enter high school each fall will not graduate within four or even five years.

North Carolina’s public school dropout rate slightly increased in 2014-15. The state’s dropout rate rose to 2.39 percent (11,190 students) from 2.28 percent (10,404 students) the previous year. The .11 percentage point increase was the first increase in the dropout rate since 2006-07, when the dropout rate increased from 5.04 to 5.24.

Dropout Statistics in North Carolina

- Students dropped out most frequently at 10th grade (30 percent), followed by 9th grade (28.1 percent).
- The number of high school students dropping out increased at all grade levels and for all ethnic groups except Asian, which decreased.
- Males accounted for 62 percent of reported dropouts, which was down from the 62.7 percent reported last year.
- Attendance issues were again the reason most often cited for dropping out, accounting for 40.3 percent of all dropouts. Enrollment in a community college came in second at 15.8 percent.

Graduation Rate versus Dropout Rate

In considering the annual dropout rate, it is critical to note that this rate is not the same as the four-year cohort graduation rate. The cohort graduation rate follows a group of ninth graders across four years’ time and reports the percentage of these students who graduate four years after beginning high school. North Carolina high schools reported a record-high 85.4 percent four-year cohort graduation rate for the class of 2015.

The annual dropout rate illustrates the number and percentage of students who drop out during one year’s time. Some of these students may return to school the following year and complete high school while others may drop out multiple times. The four-year cohort graduation rate is considered a more comprehensive picture of the issue of students’ persistence and high school completion.
February 19–22, 2017; Embassy Suites at Kingston Plantation, Myrtle Beach, SC
The Dropout Prevention Coalition

Dabo Swinney to Headline; Forum Explores Powerful Positive Impact of Mentors on At-Risk Youth
The National Dropout Prevention Center/Network is excited to announce Dabo Swinney as the keynote speaker for the 2017 At-Risk Youth National FORUM! Scheduled for February 19-22, 2017, in Myrtle Beach, SC, the conference theme is All In for At-Risk Youth: Connections That Build Resilience and Success. Coach Swinney will be joined by Ms. Tara Brown award-winning educator, author and speaker, best-selling author and Principal Baruti Kafele, and Coastal Carolina Head Coach Gary Gilmore. These keynote speakers, along with over 75 breakout sessions, will focus on the opportunities coaches, afterschool workers, club sponsors, and everyone else who works with children and youth have to build powerful connections and positively impact their lives. http://dropoutprevention.org/conferences/2017-at-risk-youth-national-forum/

Join Us! We have discount codes for DPC members and friends
UNCW Presenters: Code UNCWP17 Cost $200.00
UNCW One Day: Code UNCWOD17 Cost $100.00
UNCW Entire Conference: Code UNCW17 Cost $220.00

Engage SENC Share Resources (Continued from Page 1)

The shared resources include( http://engagesenc.org/communityplatform/senc/classifieds ) :

Volunteer Opportunities: Post volunteer opportunities from your organization for members in the community.

UNCW Resources
- Faculty Expertise: Our database of UNCW faculty lists contact information and areas of expertise to help connect faculty to our community.
- Service Learning: Service Learning programs are distinguished by their intention to equally benefit the provider and recipient of the service.
- Research Opportunity: Research conducted by faculty or staff in which your organization can be a subject and/or beneficiary of research.
- Internship Opportunity: While students are encouraged to post internship opportunities they are interested in, organizations are encouraged to post internship opportunities on UNCW’s SeaWork.
- Directed Independent Study: Directed Independent Studies are crafted by the professor and students with specific learning outcomes, course objectives, and methods for evaluation in mind.
- Class Project: Usually assigned for a grade during the academic semester, class projects will come from a student or a group of students looking to complete an assignment for class.

Goods: Post goods that you are making available for donation, or solicit good donations for your organization.
News from NC Child

**Mecklenburg jailers hold some teens in solitary confinement. Critics call that torture.**

In 12 windowless cells at Mecklenburg County’s Jail North, inmates spend 23 hours alone each day. They’re allowed no visitors, no access to phones, no library books. Many spend months in the jail awaiting trial. Some are never convicted. They’re 16 and 17 years old.

President Obama in January banned solitary for youths in federal custody, saying the practice often has “devastating, lasting psychological consequences.” Five months later, North Carolina officials announced a similar ban for youths in the state prison system. But in Charlotte, at the sprawling jail off Statesville Road, the practice is still used for dozens of youths who fight, steal or repeatedly break other jail rules.


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**N.C. law extends foster care services until age 21**

A new state law going into effect in 2017 is designed to help children who would normally age out of the foster care system. "Foster 18 to 21" started on January 1, and it allows those aged 18 to 21 to continue to receive services through the system.

Megan Hartzog is a local foster mom who said it concerned her as thousands of children aged out of the foster care system. "I just feel so bad knowing that there is kids out there that don’t have their needs met," Hartzog said. “They don’t have the love. You know they are kind of just out there.”

Hartzog said she has seen so many children come and go, and knowing there is hope for their future is wonderful.

Excerpted from: Tamara Scott. "N.C. law extends foster care services until age 21" WNCT.

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**Report recommends teachers receive implicit bias training, addresses K-12 inequalities**

The Public School Forum of North Carolina released a 2016 report Oct. 20 to address racial inequity in state schools, teaching children with trauma and helping low-performing schools.

The forum consisted of educators, administrators, policy-makers and other experts. The report recommended potential solutions like creating task forces, increasing diversity in AP and honors classes, providing teachers with more cultural competency training and investing in early childhood education programs.

Mark Jewell, president of the North Carolina Association of Educators, said the association supports the report’s recommendations.

“(The report) is great information that needs to be shared with our community leaders and business leaders who support our public schools in North Carolina,” he said.

Robert Smith Named First Wendy and Dell Murphy Distinguished Professor in Education

To support teaching, scholarship and engagement in the Watson College of Education, the Murphy family established the Wendy and Dell Murphy Distinguished Professorship in Education. WCE professor Robert Smith is the first professorship recipient.

“Along with the ideas and intellectual energy Dr. Smith will contribute to his work as the Murphy Professor of Education, he brings a passion for supporting public education, schools and teachers,” said WCE Dean Van Dempsey. “I am certain this passion will fuel the energy of colleagues in the Watson College, in our relationships with K-12 schools and educators, and among our key policy stakeholders.”

Smith is a professor in the Department of Instructional Technology, Foundations and Secondary Education. He joined the UNCW faculty in 1991. As WCE’s Murphy Distinguished Professor, he will work to identify and share best practices in public school innovation through partnerships at the state, district and individual school levels. His appointment is for three years.

“Educational reform has often been pursued through accountability rather than innovation,” Smith said. “We need to support teachers and schools and provide incentives to create and share innovative educational practices. I will be an advocate for change and will work to build support for incorporating effective new practices into K-12 schools.”

The Murphy family established the distinguished professorship with a matching grant from The North Carolina Distinguished Professors Endowment Trust Fund to support teaching, scholarship and engagement through WCE. The professorship focuses on K-12 education with an emphasis on innovation, school reform and research in policy and practice. UNCW’s Strategic Plan includes an increased focus on fundraising for key initiatives, such as distinguished professorships to support faculty teaching and research.

“The Murphys’ generous gift will support research and innovation that will benefit both students and educators in North Carolina,” said Eddie Stuart, vice chancellor for university advancement. “We thank Wendy and Dell Murphy for their continued commitment to UNCW’s educational mission.”

-- Tricia Vance

Clifford Barnett Honored by the Southeastern NC MLK Celebration Committee

Dr. Rev. Clifford Barnett’s was awarded Distinguished Citizen Award from the Southeastern North Carolina Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Committee. He was recognized for his years of service to the community. It was awarded during MLK celebration in January.

National Dropout Prevention Center: Top Stories

- **Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 2013**, a report just released in October from NCES, includes detailed information on dropout and graduation indicators.

- **Achieve** analyzed factors in offering and achieving diplomas across different states and explains some of the variables in “How the States Got Their Rates: 2014 Graduates.”

- Review and learn about education policy issues, by state, at The Education Commission of the States State Legislation page. Policy related to dropout prevention efforts are scattered across topics listed on this page:


Note particularly the “Attendance” and “At-Risk” categories. Most of NDPC/N’s 15 Effective Strategies, as well as “Youth Engagement,” “School Climate,” “Health,” “ESSA,” and “P-16 or P-20,” are listed also as categories of legislation.
Community Discussion on Economic Opportunity for Children

More than 100 community members attended the “Building Economic Opportunity” event at UNCW on Oct. 13. The event was one of five community discussions across the state convened by NC Child to engage citizens in efforts to build an economic opportunity policy agenda to help children and families.

At the event, NC Child shared Wilmington and New Hanover county data on child well-being. The organizations proposed policy solutions on a range of issues including paid family leave, universal pre-K and ideas to help close the health insurance coverage gap in North Carolina were also presented and discussed.

The Wilmington event followed similar events held in Asheville, Goldsboro, Winston-Salem and Mars Hill. Adam Sotak, Public Engagement Director at NC Child, summarized discussions at the community events in an October blog post titled What We Learned: Community Discussions and Building Economic Opportunity.

The Wilmington community discussion was held in McNeill Hall on campus. UNCW’s College of Health and Human Services, the Watson College of Education, UNCW’s Dropout Prevention Coalition, New Hanover NAACP and Smart Start of New Hanover County sponsored the event. Materials shared by NC Child at the event include:

- Wilmington Agenda & Program Packet - includes overview of NC Child’s proposed policy solutions for building economic opportunity coupled with messaging and framing.
- Wilmington Presentation – includes Wilmington and New Hanover county data on child well-being and an economic opportunity overview.
- Wilmington Policy Walk – detailed information on eight proposed economic opportunity policy solutions and accompanying Wilmington/New Hanover County data points.

What are the Barriers to Wellness for Young People?

That’s the question teams of young people -- with support from the research institute, the Center for Promise at Boston University School of Education – explored in five cities. The answer uncovered by this multi-city, youth-led assessment is difficult to hear. The biggest barriers to wellness, the youth-led research teams found, are fear, along with inequitable access to social supports, opportunities, and experiences essential for healthy development. Today, America’s Promise Alliance released “Barriers to Wellness: Voices and Views from Young People in Five Cities,” a study designed to tap into young people’s perspectives by engaging them not only as partners, but as leaders in community health research.

Assessment methods varied in Boston, Chicago, Denver, Philadelphia, and St. Paul, but common themes emerged. Young people say:

- They feel unsafe and unwelcome in public gathering places, forcing them indoors during after-school hours.
- They fear both violence and the police in their neighborhoods.
- They lack access to healthy food and information about safe sex.
- They engage in risky behaviors to cope with stress.

As the study notes, “When we listen to what young people say about striving for wellness against the odds that adversity creates, we hear that feeling safe and welcome in their own communities is an essential precursor to improving health.”
New Additions to Forest of DREAMS at Community Boys and Girls Club. More on page 8

“Whatever it takes”

The Board of Directors of Communities In Schools of Cape Fear Invites you to

The 2017 Healthy Start Breakfast
Wednesday, February 15th
7:30 a.m.

First Baptist Activity Center
1939 Independence Blvd, Wilmington NC 28403

Please join us for a light breakfast and 45 minute program, during which you will learn how we do “whatever it takes” to ensure our kids succeed in school and in life. Donations are not required, but appreciated.

RSVP to louise@ciscapefear.org, or call 910-343-1901

The mission of Communities In Schools of Cape Fear is to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.
An excellent source for funding information is the Foundation Center. Listings of foundations and guidelines for writing grants are available. Sample proposals and common grant applications are also provided. The Foundation Center provides a variety of other resources and materials.

Many businesses donate money to the communities in which they are located. You will usually find giving guidelines on corporate websites under headings such as “community” or “corporate citizenship.” Business grants can be found at: http://dropoutprevention.org/resources/e-newsletters/

- Government grants can be found at UCLA Center’s Mental Health in Schools site.
- Grants Alert – A website dedicated to making life a little easier for those who devote their time to searching for education grants.
- Grant Station can help your organization make smarter, better-informed fundraising decisions.
- Grant Watch – A free grants listing service that helps teachers find classroom grants for school funding.
- GrantWrangler – A free grants listing service that helps teachers find classroom grants for school funding.

More grant information is available at Dropout Prevention, Youth Today and America’s Promise Grants.

Service Learning: Community Arts Project

This fall, as part of an EDN 414 project introduced by WCE faculty members Christine Liao and Georgie Bramley, 51 Watson College students worked with elementary school children in New Hanover and Pender counties to create artwork for CBGCW’s newly repaired fence. More than 1,000 children participated in the project. The students designed trees and a variety of creatures including fishes and sea turtles from recycled materials. On Nov. 14, students enrolled in Robertson’s EDN 203 course met at the Community Boys and Girls Club to create a new ‘Community Dreams Forest’ with artwork designed by the children. The students enjoyed “making something for someone else and participating in efforts to enhance the local community,” Robertson said. The artwork will be on display for a year or more and Robertson hopes WCE will continue to partner with local elementary schools to support community art projects.

National News

America’s Promise Alliance
http://www.americaspromise.org/news

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network
http://dropoutprevention.org/resources/e-newsletters/

State News

NC Child: http://www.ncchild.org/

Trillium: North Carolina Mental Health Resources Information:
https://indd.adobe.com/view/cba52382-fd0c-476c-b607-5e3e5e752ccb

NOTE: Please send any items you would like to have included in upcoming newsletters to Janna Robertson. We want to share your news!