2017 IMPACT Education Summit
Independence County
ForwARd is a public-private partnership established by the Arkansas Department of Education, the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation to serve their shared strategic interests to achieve an order of magnitude increase in student achievement, wage growth, and economic prosperity for the state of Arkansas.

In this capacity, ForwARd serves as a convener, catalyst, trusted partner, and truth teller inspiring leadership and engaging residents working together to improve educational outcomes for students and adults that connect with opportunities for meaningful employment contributing to economic prosperity of themselves and their communities.
About Independence County

- Population: 36,804 (2010 Census)
- Square mileage: 772
- County seat: Batesville
- School Districts: 4 Primarily Located + 2 Secondarily Located
- Sales Tax Rate: 10.00%
- Economic Development Tax: No
- Food Tax: No
- Lodging Tax: Yes
- Largest Industries: Agriculture/Poultry, Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Education
About IMPACT

- Anchor Organizations: The Batesville Area Chamber of Commerce, Lyon College, & UACCB
- Facilitator: BACC
- Hubs: (4) – Economic Prosperity, Educational Excellence, Tourism, & Healthy Living and Wellbeing
- Objectives: 120+
- Work Method: Grassroots/Resident Engagement in Project Clusters
- Review Year: 2020
What Can Business + Education Solve Together?

7 in 10

- Arkansas students cannot read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade.
- Jobs currently available in Arkansas are low-skill, low-wage jobs.
- Arkansas 4-year-olds are not enrolled in a Pre-K program.
- Inmates in Arkansas State Prisons do not have a high school diploma.
- Only 7 in 10 of today’s jobs will still be here by the 2030’s.

Our economy is rapidly changing, becoming more automated and technological. We must develop a more highly educated workforce if we are to compete successfully in this new economy and eliminate the 70/30 split.
Educational Excellence Summit

Awakening the Community

• 2017 Education Summit - brought all stakeholders business/industry, certified/classified staff, students, parents, administrators, state agencies, etc. to the same tables.

Building Authentic Relationships

• Superintendent Roundtables, Chamber Partnership Visits with Largest Employers, County-Wide HR Affiliate Group
  • Learn and promote the strengths
  • Note areas of cognitive dissonance - we wanted to gather data that would tell the true story of what was actually happening at the summit

The 2017 IMPACT Education Summit had approximately brought together 400 stakeholders from (4) school districts and all major employers for assemblies and planning basecamps.
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Planning
Logistics Committee

- A Logistics Committee was established and consisted of representatives from each school district, both colleges, and a representative from the Batesville Area Chamber which met weekly for 2 hours from April - August to develop and execute a plan for all logistics related to the education summit including:
  - Parking
  - Meals
  - Snacks
  - Nametags
  - Signage
  - Set-up
  - Seating assignments
  - Room assignments
  - Facility needs
  - Registration
  - Communication with attendees
  - Audio/visual needs for the day
Logistics Committee

• The logistics committee was free to invite expert advisors to meetings as needed to complete their planning process.

• Several google sheet templates were created by this team including an attendee list, budget, and set-up details.
Content Committee

- A Content Committee was also established and consisted of representatives from each school district, both colleges, and a representative from the Batesville Area Chamber which met weekly for 2 hours from April - August to develop and execute a plan for all content presented and discussed at the education summit in alignment with the IMPACT Independence County strategic plan. This included:
  - Collection of data for baseline insight
  - Creating topic content for presentations
  - Securing presenters for introduction of topic
  - Approving facilitation questions for roundtable discussions
  - Securing facilitators to lead discussions
  - Creation of process that allowed schools to summarize and present content, etc.
Diverse Stakeholders

Each school district was asked to have present and make available all day long a reasonable number of: teachers, administrators, classified staff, and parents from all levels of education. Students in 6th grade and above were also requested from each school district.

Both colleges were asked to be present and make available all day long: administrators that make program decisions and staff that facilitate transfer, admissions, and other processes that involve smooth K-12 – higher education transitions including financial aid.

The top ten largest employers of Independence County were asked to be present and make available a representative from lunch until the end of the day.

Educational non-profits, state agency representatives, and board members of various community organizations were invited to attend as observers of topic presentations and roundtable discussions.
Event Objectives

• Involve cross-sector organizations in planning a format that would:
  • Bring all stakeholders together
  • Communicate the community’s desired vision for the education system(s) in Independence County
  • Reveal evidence-based (data-based) assessment of our current reality as it related to our call to action
  • Share inspiration/best practices from experts
  • Facilitate opportunities for all stakeholders to brainstorm improvements for their preferred future (see school facilitation guide; see business/industry facilitation guide)
Unique Participant Engagement

All participants were seated together in a ballroom to hear data insights and presentations given by expert presenters, which introduced each topic. This was referred to as an assembly. Once a topic and its data for Independence County had been presented, participants were dismissed for their “basecamp” where only those from their school were present to participate in roundtable, facilitator led discussions. This model repeated itself for three sessions.

[View Summit Schedule Here]

At the end of the day all participants except for those serving on school leadership teams were dismissed. The school leadership teams remained to summarize their school’s input. The initial schedule had allowed for presentations; however, after finishing the day our schools had so many ideas and information to sort through, IMPACT and school leaders thought it best to delay presentations until they had more time to develop thoughts and ideas.

Following Labor day, presentations were made by each district on their priorities for the new school year, specific to the shared community vision for education in Independence County.
Outcomes

Documenting Desired Results

- The desired outcome of the Education Summit was documenting what stakeholders felt were needed improvements that they could imagine, develop ideas around those improvements, and brainstorm partnership opportunities.
- Two months later, each school presented their needed improvements, commitments to those improvements, and roles and responsibilities to IMPACT steering committee, business/industry partners, and ADE.

Midland School District brings community stakeholders to deliver vision for district improvements.
Outcomes

Batesville’s E3 Internship Program

• Student, career-focused internships at Flowers Baking Company, Atlas Asphalt, Main Street Batesville, Citizens Bank, Intimidator Group, Wade’s Heating & Electric, etc.

• Exploratory project with largest employer in Independence County.

Cedar Ridge’s Project Lead the Way and Leader in Me Programs

• Transformative, hands-on learning experiences taught in partnership with licensed and practicing engineers employed by FutureFuel Chemical Company.

• Elementary Leadership program focused on highly effective habits of youth which align with workforce leadership needs.

BHS Junior, Kadar Floyd, publicly signs his internship offer from Atlas Asphalt CEO, Mark Lamberth, to work on a $58 million dollar state highway expansion Spring and Summer 2019.
Outcomes

Midland’s Project Future City (STEAM Transformation - $350,000 investment)

- In partnership with the City of Batesville planning division, local architects, and the Batesville Area Chamber of Commerce’s Community Development leaders, students imagine, research, design, and build cities of the future that showcase their solution to a city-wide sustainability issue. Bad Boy Mowers and FutureFuel Chemical Company have sponsored the students’ attendance at the regional competition in Huntsville, AL.

City of Batesville Engineer, Damon Johnson, mentors Midland students in preparation for Future City Regional Competition.
Outcomes

Southside’s My Future Story Program

- An exploratory pathway program which inspired a county-wide scholarship program (The Independence Promise Program) funded entirely by area business/industry and philanthropy, and further inspired newly enacted ACT 456 for the entire state!

Southside Superintendent, Roger Rich, stands with others from Independence County to commemorate the Governor’s signing of ACT 456.
Outcomes

ACT Work Ready Community (40 local partners)

- Anchor organizations in Independence County are leveraging the ACT® WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate® (NCRC®) and employer relationships to measure and close the skills gap — building common frameworks that link, align and match their workforce development efforts.

Excel by Eight (50+ local partners)

- When communities have a fully powered grid of resources, child development outcomes improve. Over the next five years, our anchor organizations will work together with partners in creating a model of change for building and repairing Independence County’s resource grid.

Partners assemble to learn about the Excel by Eight initiative from the Arkansas Grade-Level Reading Campaign, Arkansas Children’s Hospital, and the Arkansas Community Foundation.
Resources
Additional Resources

Schedule

Facilitation

There were (3) types of facilitation guides.

1) Each district had their own specific facilitation guide with their data. Click here to see an example guide.

2) Each college had their own specific facilitation guide with county-level data.

3) The employer group had their own specific facilitation guide. Click here to see an example guide.
Additional Resources

Expenses

Expenses for the event were minimal (grab-n-go breakfast, boxed lunch, canned drinks, packaged snacks, books borrowed from classrooms as centerpieces, tablecloths borrowed from local supplier, pens and notepads donated from banks, and markers and large easel paper donate by Walmart). For all hard cost items, a sponsor or partner was solicited by a logistics committee representative.

Participant Communication

Engagement Corners

Engagement corners were utilized to encourage more passive input from participants during break times and before and after sessions.

Parent Engagement Corner

Broadband Engagement Corner

Healthy Living and Wellbeing Engagement Corner