

The Albany Promise

2012 Baseline Report to the Community

Early Release





Letter from the Co-Chairs

Dear Community Members,

We are proud to launch The Albany Promise and present this baseline report, which provides a detailed snapshot of education in Albany at this moment in time.

Historically, education systems like ours here in Albany were established to give children access to quality education and schools where they could develop the skills they needed to enter the workforce or college and build a better future for themselves and their families. Today, meeting that goal of preparing children to be successful adults is not so easily met.

Many sectors have recognized the need for improvement in education and have taken steps to address the problem—community groups and businesses have invested in support programming, and public policy makers are paying closer attention to the real challenges we face and possible solutions. But what these efforts have in good intentions, they lack in coordination, resulting in scattershot initiatives that are not as powerful as they could be, and not as effective as we need them to be.

But imagine if there was coordination. Imagine if community stakeholders took a targeted approach to solving this problem, working together to improve education from all angles by rethinking and applying the resources available.

The Albany Promise does just this through what is called a collective-impact approach—aligning leaders in the community, education, business, government, and philanthropy to create lasting change. The Albany Promise is built on four pillars: establishing a shared community vision, engaging in evidence-

based decision making, centering on collaborative action, and devising reliable means of investment and sustainability with the goal that every child has the chance to be successful from cradle to career.

We have come together and developed this comprehensive report to analyze both the educational and social/community indicators that affect Albany's children every day. These indicators were chosen by a broad cross section of participants to create a student roadmap to success. The data included in this report will shape our priorities as we move forward, and we will continue to report on our progress each year.

The Albany Promise is not a program designed to come into the community and single-handedly “fix the problem.” Rather, it is an *approach*, a plan for collective action that engages every community sector to ensure improved educational outcomes for all students.

We are proud to launch The Albany Promise, and we hope you will join this effort and help us establish effective solutions.

Ray, Barbara, Nancy



Raymond Colucciello
Superintendent, City School District of Albany



Barbara Smith
Common Council Member-4th Ward, City of Albany



Nancy Zimpher
Chancellor, The State University of New York



Overview

Respected leadership authority, teacher, and organizational consultant Dr. Stephen R. Covey is known to say that “accountability breeds response-ability.” With that in mind, we release the first Baseline Report to the Community with the hope that through greater accountability we can generate a community response in the form of shared responsibility for evidence-based decision making.

The Albany Promise is a regional, cross-sector partnership where community leaders in Albany, New York come together to support a shared cradle-to-career vision for education. The Albany Promise partnership is made up of education, community, business, civic, and philanthropic leaders.

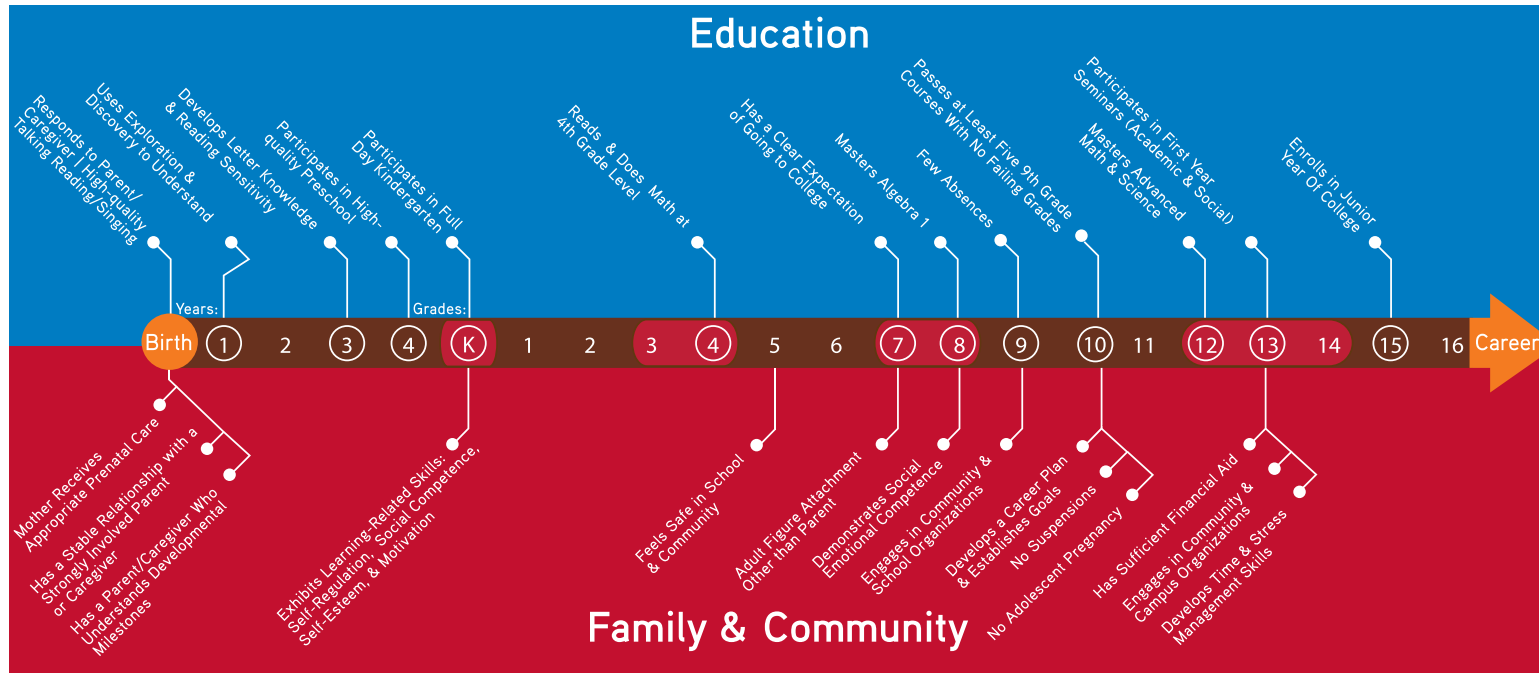
Writers for the Stanford Social Innovation Review state that “large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination, yet the social sector remains focused on the isolated intervention of individual organizations.” The Albany Promise is not another new intervention designed to come into the community and single-handedly fix the problem. The educational and economic challenges we face today did not occur overnight, nor will they be improved overnight. The Albany Promise is the new cradle-to-career civic infrastructure formed to use existing resources to target the needs of every individual child so that they have the support they need to succeed along their educational journey.

The purpose of The Albany Promise: 2012 Baseline Report to the Community is to serve as a catalyst for discussion about the current state of education in the Greater Capital Region. We envision that our partners will help us organize community conversations and drive action in order to take ownership and hold ourselves accountable for improving education in our region.

This initial report represents a snapshot of the local education data that currently exists. It tracks community-level outcome indicators that show student progress across The Albany Promise Student’s Roadmap to Success (depicted on the next page), from early learning through college and into a career. The data presented focuses on three communities within New York’s capital city: Arbor Hill, West Hill, and South End.

This report seeks to establish a baseline for how we are doing and the latest available data is presented wherever possible. Future reports will set forth benchmarks that we will strive to achieve. These benchmarks will take into account the existing goals of our partners, as well as the suggestions generated through our community conversations.

Student Roadmap to Success: Competencies, Experiences, & Transition Years



Key Transition Areas: ●
Benchmarks: ○

■ Competencies and experiences that shape educational development

■ Competencies and experiences that shape social and/or emotional development

Researched by the University of Cincinnati, Center for Urban Education © Strive 2006

Adapted by permission April 2012

The Student Roadmap to Success is The Albany Promise’s foundational document that organizes benchmarks of progress across the education continuum. It also illustrates the cradle to career commitment to education, beginning at birth and progressing through college and career. The roadmap represents the holistic nature of the educational journey, including both academic (above the timeline) and family and community support (below the timeline) benchmarks. The Albany Promise has established Educational and Family and Community goals:

Education

- Goal 1: Children enter kindergarten ready to succeed
- Goal 2: Students are proficient in core academic subjects
- Goal 3: Students successfully transition from middle to high school
- Goal 4: Students graduate from high school
- Goal 5: Graduates attain employment or a postsecondary degree/credential

Family and Community

- Goal 1: Children are healthy
- Goal 2: Children feel safe at school and in their community
- Goal 3: Children live in stable communities
- Goal 4: Family and community members support learning in schools
- Goal 5: Children have access to 21st century learning tools



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Special thanks to The Center for Human Services Research and The Albany Promise Data Committee!

The Center for Human Services Research (CHSR) is a university-based organization that conducts studies and designs information systems for a broad spectrum of agencies serving vulnerable populations and promoting positive social reform. Areas of inquiry are broad and include education and early childhood development, children’s mental health, family and children’s services, health behavior and services, youth development and juvenile justice.

Characteristic of all CHSR studies is a focus on rigorous methods, strong stakeholder involvement, and the dissemination of timely, accurate and non-partisan information to guide best practice in service delivery.



Introduction to The Albany Promise 2012 Baseline Report

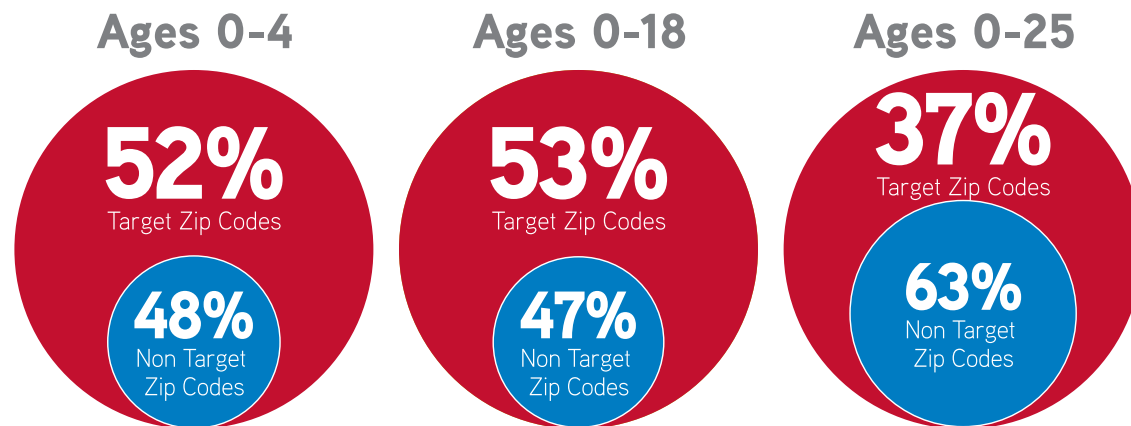
The Albany Promise 2012 Baseline Report presents goals and indicators that provide a broad view of student success from birth through college and into a career. The selection of goals and indicators were informed by a review of similar community efforts as well as input from The Albany Promise data committee, a group comprised of a cross section of stakeholders organized by the Center for Human Services Research at the University at Albany. All the chosen indicators are from trusted sources that will continue to be available in a consistent format so that changes can be measured over time, but the indicators included in this report do not represent a comprehensive community assessment. Agencies involved with The Albany Promise will continue to work together to augment our understanding of both the strengths and challenges facing community residents.

Many of the indicators include data for the City of Albany as a whole, as well as data for The Albany Promise target neighborhoods: Arbor

Hill, West Hill, and the South End. In most cases, the neighborhood data were obtained through analysis of postal ZIP codes. The ZIP codes included 12202, 12206, 12207, 12210 however, do not perfectly match neighborhood boundaries—for example, the 12210 ZIP code includes the Center Square neighborhood as well as the South End. Data more specific to neighborhood boundaries are generally not available, and the ZIP codes sufficiently approximate the target neighborhoods to offer meaningful information. Whenever possible, future reports will present indicators with data specific to these neighborhoods.

The target neighborhoods are home to nearly 2,500 children under age five, and more than 9,000 children age 18 or younger. For both of these age groups, more than half of the city's population lives in a target neighborhood. Population distribution changes considerably among residents ages 0-25, with only 37% of this group living in a target neighborhood.

Figure 1. 2010 Census Summary Population Estimates



Goal 1: Children Enter Kindergarten Ready to Succeed

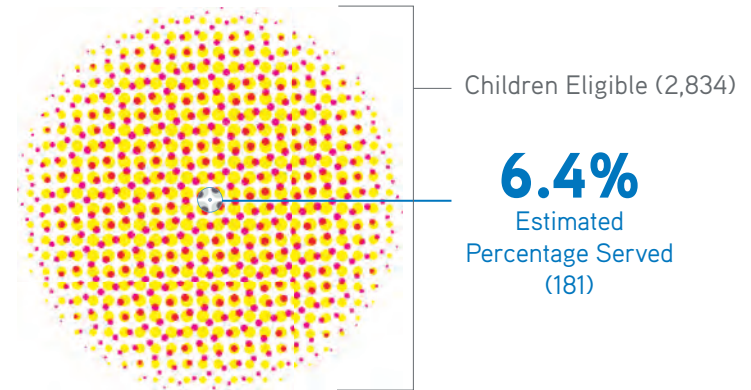


Now more than ever, children are expected to enter kindergarten with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in school. It is no longer reasonable to think of educational programs for 3- and 4-year-olds as

“preschool.” Rather, the years before kindergarten have become an important part of formal schooling. A substantial body of research clearly establishes that quality pre-kindergarten programs can build a foundation for later success in school and in life. Young children are capable learners who demonstrate lasting social and academic gains from high-quality preschool experience. Long-term benefits include: reductions in grade repetition and special education placement; increased achievement scores and graduation rates; increased adult economic success; and even reduced participation in crime and delinquency.

When children do not have access to quality preschool, they are at risk of falling behind their peers both academically and socially. Once this achievement gap is created, it becomes difficult for children to catch up during their subsequent years in school. Examining whether children enter kindergarten ready to succeed tells us if families need more support to get students off to a good start.

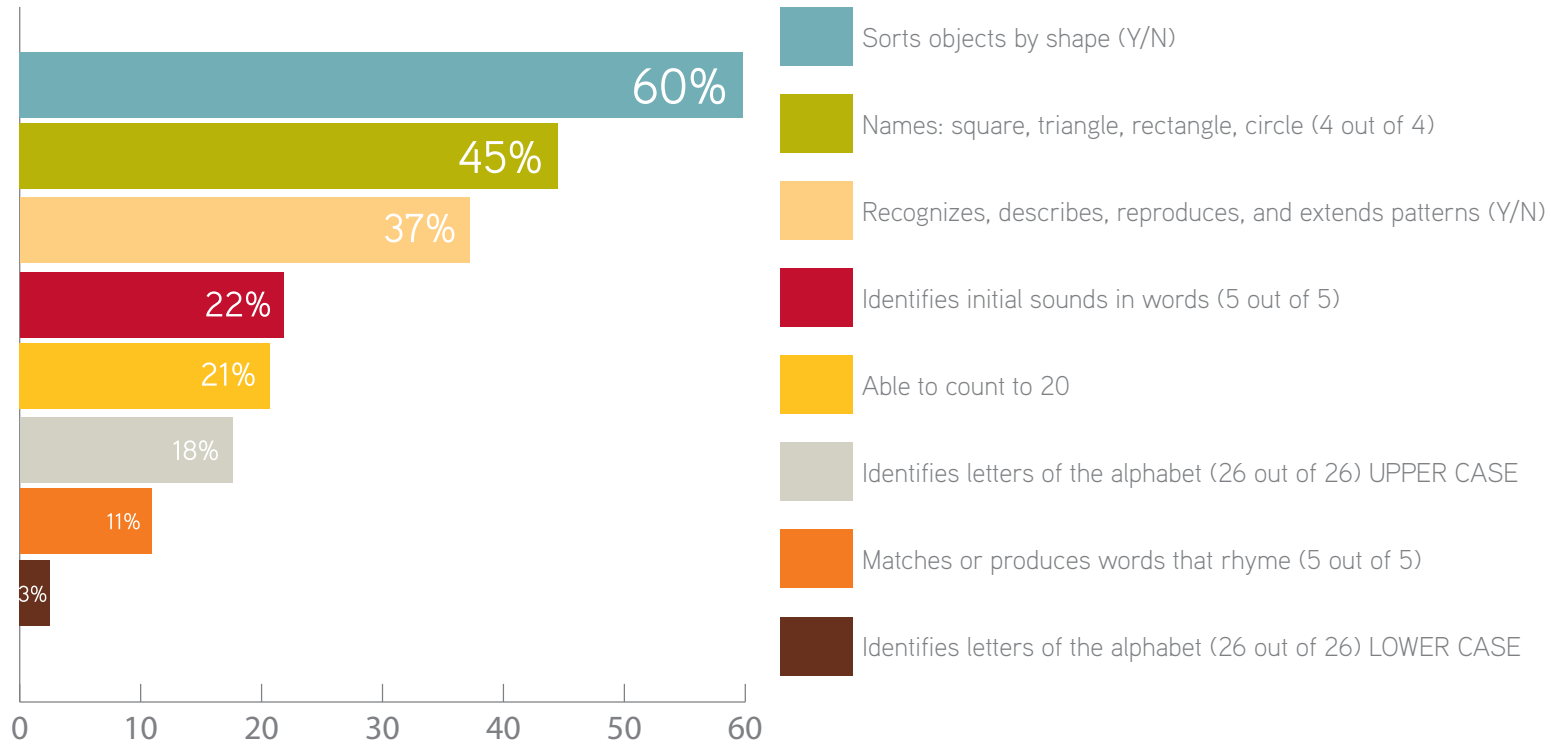
Figure 2. Licensed & Registered Childcare: Estimate of Eligible 0-4 Year Olds Served in Target Neighborhoods



Pre-kindergartners in Albany public schools are assessed in the fall, winter, spring, and at grade exit using a locally-developed measure that focuses on English language arts and math. Specific skills assessed include: letter and sound recognition; counting; rhyming words; and identification of colors, numbers, and shapes. Each of these skills is aligned with a benchmark indicator from the New York State Pre-kindergarten Learning Standards. These standards were adopted in 2011 and represent an attempt on the part of the Board of Regents to align curriculum and instruction from pre-k through college.

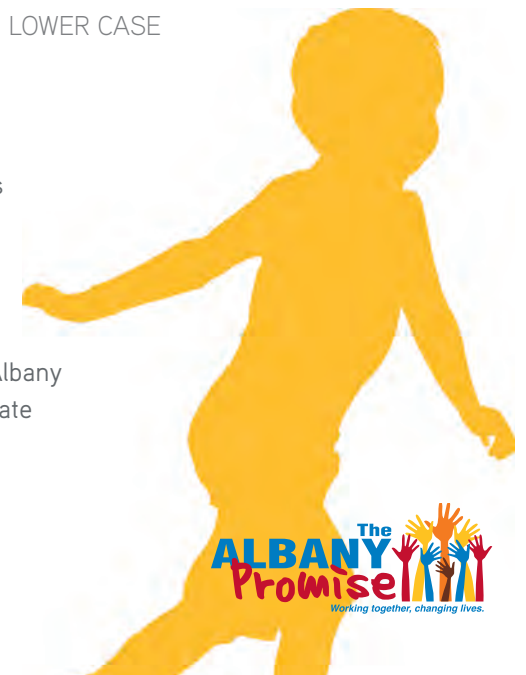
In 2011, entering pre-kindergarteners in Albany public schools demonstrated the following abilities:

Figure 3. Proportion of Albany Children Performing at or Above Benchmark Upon Entering Pre-kindergarten



Many factors impact infant and child development. Our initial focus is on exposure to lead, which is directly related to cognitive delays and is one of the most common preventable poisonings of childhood. Typical sources of exposure include lead paint and lead found in soil and water. Housing built before 1978 has the greatest risk of containing lead-based paint. Exposure to lead can have a wide range of effects on a child's development and behavior. Even in small amounts, exposure can cause inattentiveness, hyperactivity and irritability. As lead levels increase, children may also have problems with learning and reading, delayed growth, and hearing loss.

A report from the State Department of Health shows that from 2005-2007, the highest incidence of elevated blood lead levels among children less than six years of age in Albany County was found in the West Hills and South End areas. A more recent report released in 2011 showed that overall, Albany County blood lead levels remain high compared to state averages.



Goal 2: Students are Proficient in Core Academic Subjects



Each year, the New York State Education Department develops assessment exams for grades 3-8 in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. Tests are designed to assess the extent to which students have achieved state learning standards for their grade level. For all elementary and middle school tests, the state uses a scoring scale of 1 to 4, with levels defined as follows:

- Level 1: Not meeting learning standards
- Level 2: Partially meeting learning standards
- Level 3: Meeting learning standards
- Level 4: Meeting learning standards with distinction

Students are considered to be "proficient" in a subject area if they score at least a "3" on these tests.

Figure 1 shows the percent of students in grades 4 and 8 who demonstrated proficiency in 2011. Proficiency rates are also shown specifically for students who live in The Albany Promise target neighborhoods. Significant differences exist among racial groups, such that in both 4th and 8th grades, students ethnically identified as black are less than half as likely to demonstrate proficiency in either ELA or Math compared to their white peers.

Figure 4. 2011 Fourth and Eighth Grade Math and English Language Arts Proficiency

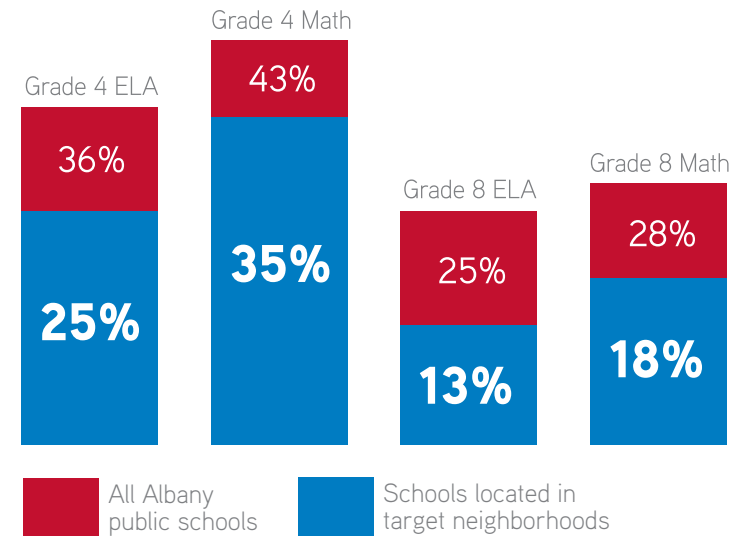
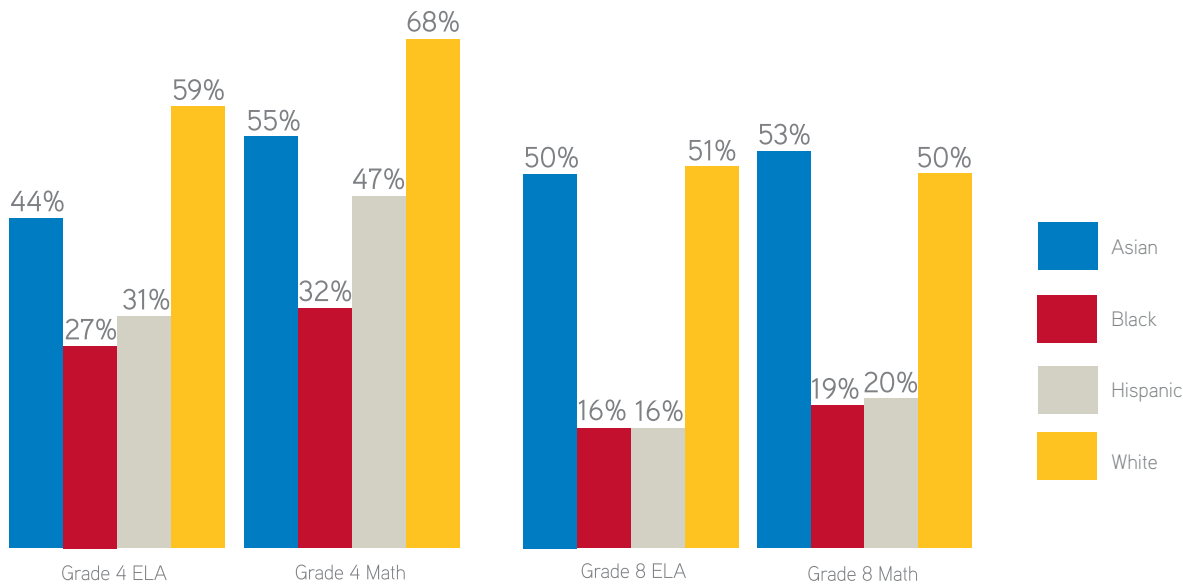


Figure 5. 2011 Fourth and Eighth Grade Math and ELA Proficiency Rates by Race

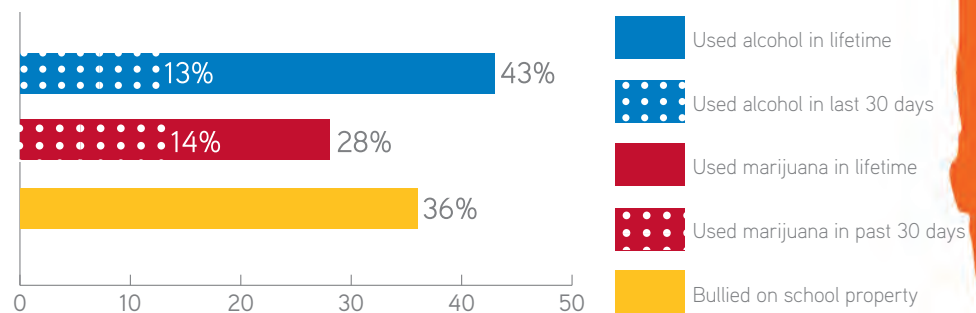


Non-academic factors also impact student ability to learn in school. Among these factors are substance use and being bullied. Though quite different in nature, the existence of either of these conditions can contribute to an unhealthy school environment and can prevent students from reaching their full academic potential.

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey is administered anonymously to a sample of middle school and high school students each year. In the spring of 2011, 43% of 7th and 8th graders surveyed reported having used alcohol in their lifetime, and 13% reported use in the past month. More than one-quarter of middle school students (28%) reported having used marijuana in their lifetime, with half of those students (14%) using in the past month.

Victims of bullying suffer physically and emotionally, and school performance often declines as well. If bullying persists, children can become afraid to go to school. Problems with low self-esteem and depression can last into adulthood and interfere with personal and professional lives. More than one-third (36%) of 7th and 8th graders in Albany Public Schools reported being bullied on school property.

Figure 6. Percentage of 7th and 8th Graders Reporting Substance Use and Bullying, 2011



Goal 3: Students Successfully Transition from Middle to High School



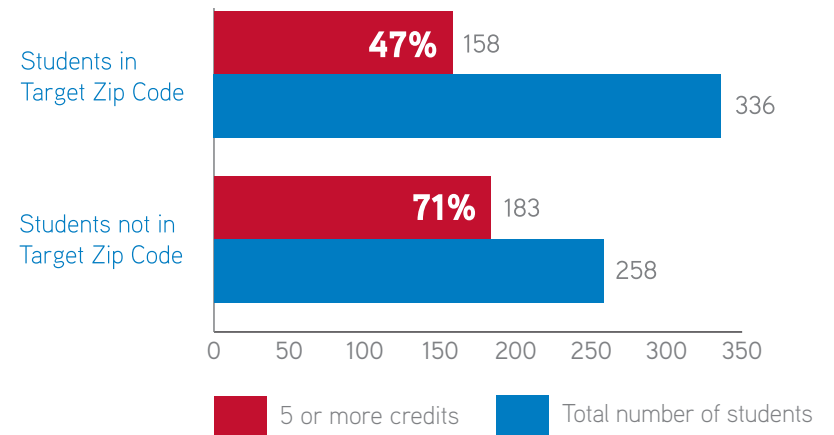
Ninth grade is a key transition period as students move to a new building with more challenging coursework and new social networks. Examining 9th grade performance provides critical information regarding student and family needs to successfully make this transition.

Evidence of successful transition can be found in academic, behavioral and social-emotional indicators. One indicator of academic success in 9th grade is progress toward graduation. A 9th grade student is considered by the guidance office to be on track to graduate on time if he or she earns five or more credits toward graduation during their freshman year. A credit is earned by passing one year-long class. Among 9th graders who were enrolled at Albany High School following the 2010-2011 school year, 58% had earned five or more credits toward graduation. Among students from this group who live in a target neighborhood, 47% had earned at least 5 credits.

School attendance is also important because students are more likely to succeed academically when they attend school consistently. There are significant impacts on students, schools, and communities when children do not attend school regularly. When children miss school, they miss out on carefully planned

sequences of instruction, are more likely to fall behind academically, and more likely to drop out of school. Frequently absent students require more time and resources from school staff in order to catch up, which can negatively affect peers. At the community level, high school drop-outs are more likely to be on welfare or involved in the criminal justice system compared to high school graduates. Finally, large numbers of absences suggest that schools and communities are not effectively meeting the needs of children and families.

Figure 7. 2010-11 9th Graders with 5 or more Credits Towards Graduation



In the Spring of 2011, 9th graders had missed an average (median) of 11 days of school for reasons other than excused absence. This figure reflects the number of days that a student missed due to unexcused absence, in- or out-of-school suspension, or incarceration. The average number of days missed for these reasons among students in target neighborhoods was 18.

Figure 8. 2011 Average Days Missed by 9th Graders Due to Unexcused Absence, Suspension, or Incarceration

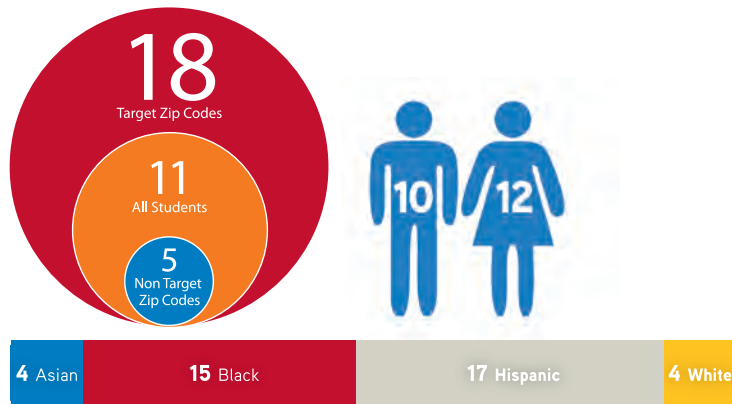
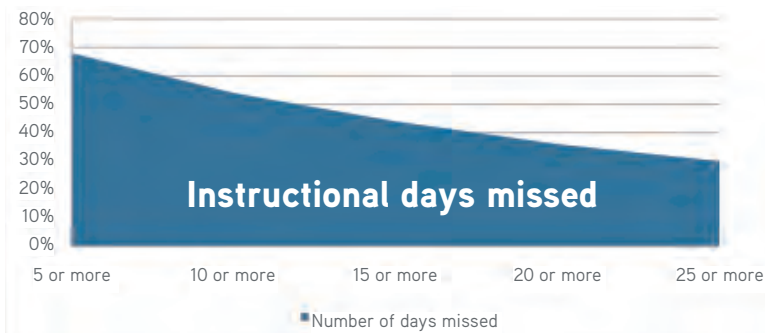


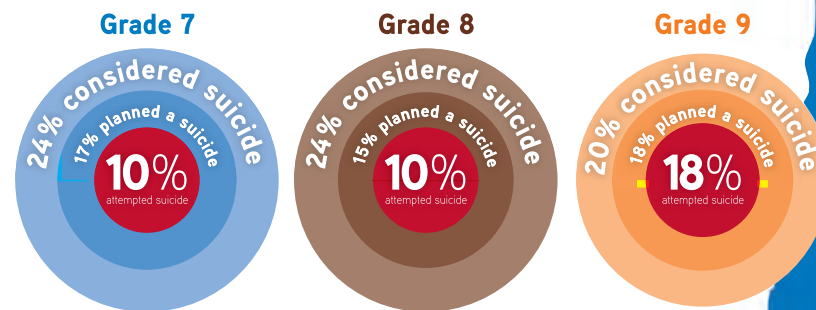
Figure 9. 2011 Percent of 9th Graders with Unexcused Absence, Suspension, or Incarceration



High rates of violent or disruptive incidents at school discourage school attendance and have a negative impact on the school environment. During the 2010-2011 school year, a total of 455 VADIR (Violent and Disruptive Incident Report) offenses were committed by 225 different 9th graders. This total accounts for more than half of all offenses committed at the high school, meaning that 9th graders committed more offenses than 10th, 11th, and 12th graders combined. In 2009-10, Albany High School had the second highest number of VADIR offenses for any school in the state outside of New York City. The following year saw significant improvement, as the number of offenses at the high school declined by 39%.

Another important indicator of a successful transition to high school is student mental health. If teens are suffering from depression they are less effective students and community members. In the 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 20% of 9th graders reported that they had considered suicide in the past 12 months. YRBS data suggest that mental health needs are a significant concern at the middle school level, as well.

Figure 10. 2009-10 Suicide Risk Factors
Grade 7 & 8 (ever in lifetime), Grade 9 (past 12 months)



Goal 4: Students Graduate from High School Ready to Succeed



A high school diploma can be the gateway to better employment and a successful college career. Graduates have a better chance of earning admission to a college or university and are in a better position to obtain higher paying jobs with opportunities for career growth.

The 2010-2011 graduation rate for Albany High School was 53%. Some students dropped out of school, some lacked sufficient credits for graduation, and some switched to different schools. Tracking those who do not graduate provides important information about the kinds of support teens and their families need to encourage graduation and future success. Data are currently being collected to distinguish among students who transfer to other educational settings and those who leave due to non-attendance. During the first part of the 2011-12 school year, most students who left Albany High School transferred to other schools. However, it is reasonable to expect that the percent that leave due to non-attendance will increase during the second half of the year.

Developing proficiency in basic English and math skills is important to future success. In the 2010-2011 school year, 78% of students in the Albany School District who took the Comprehensive English Regents passed the exam. This represents an almost 30% increase compared to the previous year. During those same years, approximately half of the students who took the Integrated Algebra Regents exam passed.

The New York State Regents Examination is the achievement exam that measures high school students' general educational development in each of five subject areas: English, Mathematics, US History and Government, Sciences, and Global History and Geography. Students' scores on the English (ELA) and Integrated Algebra (IA) assessments are often used as a measure of college-readiness for students entering college after high school. Scores above 65 are necessary for graduation with a Regent's Diploma; scores above 75 on the ELA and IA assessments are necessary for a student to be considered ready for college. In 2009, the state-wide percentage of students graduating college ready was 41%.

Regents exam scores vary widely across the state, and are often correlated with socio-economic conditions of the local school districts. Scores in urban districts are generally lower than those more affluent suburban districts. More students in the target neighborhood need to score above 75% if they are to be able to begin college without needing to take remedial courses before beginning college level work. Students who need remedial courses in college are far less likely to persist from year to year in college, are less likely to graduate, and take on greater student loan debt than students who start taking college level courses immediately upon entering college.

Figure 11. High School English and Math Proficiency and Graduation Rate, 2010-2011

**PASSED ENGLISH REGENTS EXAM
EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN 75%**



**PASSED ALGEBRA REGENTS EXAM
EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN 75%**

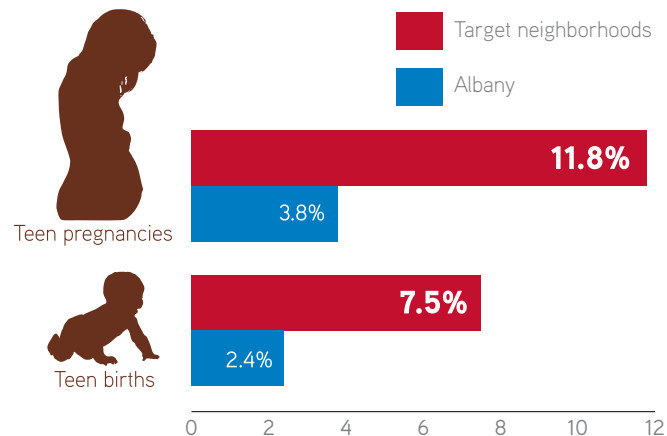


GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL



Parenthood is a leading cause of school drop-out among teenage girls. Fewer than four in ten (38%) mothers who have a child before they turn 18 have a high school diploma. Because the relationship between academic failure and teen pregnancy is so strong, improving education outcomes for young people needs to include efforts to reduce teen pregnancy. In the City of Albany from 2007-2009, there were an average of 38 pregnancies per year for every thousand teenage girls. This rate more than tripled for children living in the target neighborhood, to 118 per thousand. Teen birth rates also differed significantly depending on where children lived, with a rate of 24 per thousand for the City of Albany and 75 per thousand for the target neighborhoods.

Figure 12. Teen pregnancy and birth rates, 2007-2009

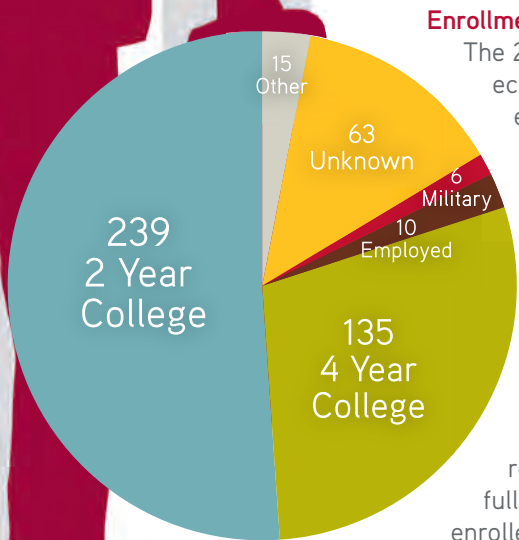


Goal 5: Graduates Attain Employment or Post-Secondary Degree/Credential



Among students who graduated from Albany High School in 2011, the majority attended a 2- or 4-year college.

Figure 13. 2011 Post-Graduation Plans of Albany High School Graduating Seniors
(468 students surveyed)



Enrollment

The 21st century global economy demands education beyond high school, whether it is a high-skilled certification, a two-year or four-year degree. Among the benefits include increased income, job growth, better health and well-being. In this report enrollment represents the total of full- and part-time students enrolled in the participating institutions.

Figure 14. 2011 Participating Area Colleges: Post-Secondary Enrollment, Retention, Transfer and Graduation Rate
(students from target zip codes)

	Enrollment Total Combined	Retention Average %	Transfers Total Combined	Graduation Rate Combined Average %
Community Colleges	1170	39	88	12
Private Colleges	130	34	14	25
Public Universities	19	100	17	40

Note: Graduation reflects 3 year Associates and 6 year Bachelors

Associate's Degree Seeking Students Enrollment in the participating community colleges is robust. Associate's degrees are often the key to increased rates of employment for a population and are often the first step to future degree attainment.

Bachelor's Degree Seeking Students Enrollment in Bachelor's degree programs lags behind that of associate degrees for the target neighborhoods.

Retention

In this report, the percent of students who are retained in college is calculated as the number of first-time, full-time students enrolled in fall of 2010 who returned to college in the fall term of 2011. Research confirms that successful transition from the first year of college to the second year often correlates with the long-term educational success of a student.

Associate’s Degree Seeking Students While students are enrolling in the local community colleges, more needs to be done to discover the causes of student attrition. Raising the retention rate for target populations will likely lead to higher rates of academic success and graduation.

Bachelor’s Degree Seeking Students While students from the target areas are enrolling in participating Bachelor’s degree-granting institutions, more needs to be done to discover the causes of student attrition. Raising the retention rate for target populations will likely lead to higher rates of academic success and graduation.

Graduation

Associate’s Degree Seeking Students (system average: 22% for the last 5 yrs) The percent of first-time, full-time students who graduate from college within three years from associate’s degree programs is a standard success measure in higher education. The reported rates include graduates from Hudson Valley Community College and Schenectady County Community College. Students who transfer and graduate elsewhere are not counted.

While enrollment in the community college sector is robust, students from the target neighborhoods graduate in the standard timeframe at a lower rate than the average for either the SUNY system of 30 community colleges or the two reporting colleges.

Bachelor’s Degree Seeking Students—Private Colleges (Combined institutional average: 68% for the last 5 yrs) The percent of first-time, full-time students who graduate from college within six years for bachelor’s degree programs is a standard success measure in higher education. The reported rates include graduates from The Sage Colleges and the College of St. Rose. Students who transfer and graduate elsewhere are not counted.

Students from the target neighborhoods graduate in the standard timeframe at a lower rate than the institutional average of the two reporting colleges.

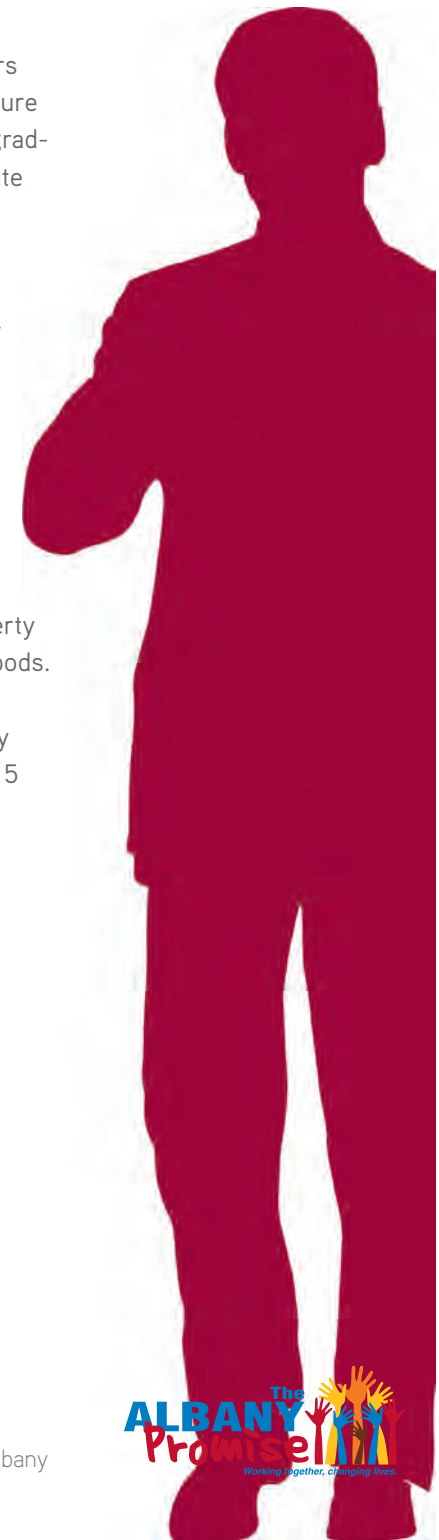
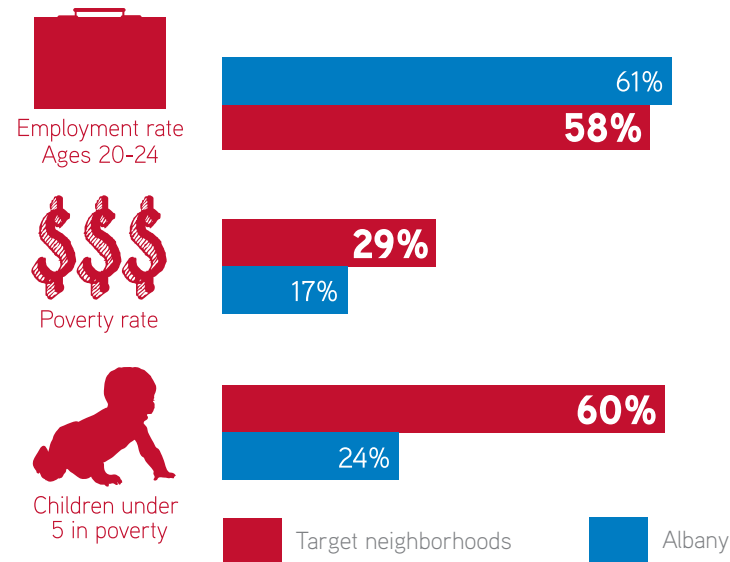
Bachelor’s Degree Seeking Students—Public University (Institutional average: 65% for the last 5 yrs) The percent of first-time,

full-time students who graduate from college within six years for Bachelor’s degree programs is a standard success measure in higher education. Note that the reported rates represent graduates from SUNY Albany. Students who transfer and graduate elsewhere are not counted.

Students from the target neighborhoods graduate in the standard timeframe at a lower rate than the reported institutional average at SUNY-Albany.

From 2006-2010, the employment rate for ages 20-24 in Albany was 61%. This rate was similar in the target neighborhood ZIP codes (58%). However, poverty data suggest that household income in the target neighborhoods lags considerably behind the city as a whole. Less than one-fifth (17%) of Albany residents were living below the federal poverty line, compared to 29% for residents of the target neighborhoods. Differences in poverty rates among young children are even more striking, with 24% of children less than age 5 in Albany living in poverty, compared to 60% of children less than age 5 in target neighborhoods.

Figure 15. Poverty and Employment Rates, 2006-2010



The Albany Promise Stakeholder Council:

(Alphabetized by organization*)

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*Special thanks to the Albany School District
for providing authentic photos throughout the report.*



The Albany Promise

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Early Release



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