2015 Community Report Card

Waterbury youth succeed in school, work and life

WaterburyBTS.org
It Takes a Partnership

The Bridge to Success (BTS) Community Partnership is the first “cradle to career” partnership in Connecticut. In 2009, Waterbury’s local public and private organizations, families and volunteers concluded that improving the lives of the city’s children and youth cannot be done easily, quickly, or with a few good programs; rather, it takes a community-wide commitment to make a significant difference. A cradle to career youth plan was implemented to assure that Waterbury’s youth succeed. A partnership of parents, the office of the mayor, public schools, foundations, religious organizations, social service agencies, and others united to improve the lives of the city’s most vulnerable children and their families. The partnership’s common agenda is to assure that Waterbury’s youth succeed in school, work and life.

Parent Focus

“I’m a dad. I have a personal interest in ensuring that what we do for the community is done right. What BTS is doing is right and will give kids the opportunity to succeed.”

Dolton James describes the impact of BTS as the “elimination of duplicated efforts.” He noted that in the past, “volunteers were working with a finite set of resources toward accomplishing the same goals, but without collaboration, therefore, literally wasting time and money.”

Dolton James, PhD, Parent and past BTS Community Council chair

Aligning Partner Efforts

Dr. James notes that “funders want the best possible use for their donations. Aligning resources to people best suited for the work and known for their contributions and capabilities creates better results. Results are also now more accurately measured. Families receive more help, and have a stronger voice because of their partnership with BTS. Partners can describe cultural issues on a broad level and have established relationships with schools. This means that individual children, who may be struggling, do not fall through the cracks. Coordinating policies between schools and community partners creates a seamless transition so that, when children leave school, their learning continues in after-school programs, aligned with the same work they began at the start of the school day.”
Waterbury’s Community Context

“In diversity there is beauty and there is strength”
-Dr. Maya Angelou

BTS partners are from diverse backgrounds, and the organizations they represent are diverse in their missions and scopes. All 85 partner organizations work together so that Waterbury’s youth succeed. Waterbury has many economic and social challenges, as reflected in its unemployment rate of 9.3%, its poverty rate of 23%, and with 82% of children being low income*. The partnership addresses these challenges and assures the city’s youth succeed.

*Defined by eligibility for free and reduced lunch

Our Partnership - 85 member organizations

- Acts 4 Ministry, Inc.
  All Our Kin, Inc.
- American Savings Foundation
- The Bible Church of Waterbury
  Boy Scouts of America – CT Rivers Council
  Boys & Girls Club of Greater Waterbury
  Brass City Charter School
  Brass City Harvest
  Bristol Hospital Parent & Child Center
- BW STOP
- Catholic Charities
  Central Naugatuck Valley Regional Action Council
  Children’s Community School
  Christ Community Church of Greater Waterbury
  City of Waterbury – Bureau of Recreation
- City of Waterbury – Department of Health
- City of Waterbury – Office of the Mayor
- Community members
  Concepts for Adaptive Learning
  Connecticut Community Foundation
  CPEP
  CT Dance Theater
- CT Junior Republic
  Department of Children & Families
- Easter Seals of Greater Waterbury
- Family & Children’s Aid
  Family Services of Greater Waterbury Favor, Inc.
  Flanders Nature Center
- Girl Scouts of CT
- Girls, Inc.
- Governor’s Prevention Partnership
- Granville Academy
- Greater Waterbury Autism Speaks
- Greater Waterbury YMCA
- Gt Waterbury Area Alumnae Delta Sigma Theta
- Hispanic Coalition of Greater Waterbury
- Junior Achievement
- KaMs Kiddie Komer
- Kids Against Hunger Waterbury
- KidsTown
- The Leever Foundation
- Literacy Volunteers of Greater Waterbury
- Living Faith Christian Church
- Loyola Development Corporation
- Madre Latina
- Mattatuck Museum
- Naugatuck Valley Community College
- Neighborhood Housing Services of Waterbury
- New Opportunities, Inc.
- Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board
  Northwestern CT AHEC
  Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters
  Palace Theater
- Parents
  Planned Parenthood of CT
- Rainbow Academy LLC
  Rivera Memorial Foundation
  Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury
- Saint Mary’s Health System
  Save Girls on F.Y.E.R. Inc.
  Shakesperience Productions, Inc.
  Shop-Rite
  Silas Bronson Library
- StayWell Health Care, Inc.
  Stone Academy
  Taking Action in Waterbury
  Together We Shine
- UConn
  The Ungroup Society
- United Way of Greater Waterbury
- Unity Dance Ensemble
- Waterbury Hospital
- Waterbury PAL
- Waterbury Public Schools
  Waterbury Public Schools – Career Academy
  Waterbury Public Schools – Kingsbury School
- Waterbury Public Schools – Wilson Family Resource Center
- Waterbury Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Waterbury School Readiness Council
- Waterbury Symphony Orchestra - Bravo Waterbury!
- Waterbury Youth Council
- Waterbury Youth Service System, Inc.
- Webster Bank
- Wellmore Behavioral Health
- WOIC & Young Civic Learners
  Women’s Inspirational Network
  Workplace Success Group, LLC

- Designates partners who serve as members of the BTS Community Council providing vision and strategic direction. Community Council seats are advertised to the public and elections are held to fill terms of 1-3 years.
Community Indicators

Community partners have agreed to monitor five indicators of child and youth success. These indicators are similar to those of cradle to career communities across the country. The following pages show each indicator, illustrate programs and services our community partners provide, and introduce you to some of our community leaders.

Indicator 1: Personal/Social Skills (Level 3)

Early Learning & Development

INDICATOR: 32% of Waterbury's kindergarten students scored at the highest level on personal/social skills in 2012

- Students who score high on personal/social skills are more likely to play and work well with other children, resolve conflicts peacefully, and follow classroom routines

Partner Story

Many BTS partners, like The Rainbow Academy, “help preschoolers transition from home to school, fostering the social skills necessary to move from being the center of their parents’ attention to being a member of a peer community. Small classes with plenty of attention from professional teachers and volunteers, such as foster grandparents, are integral to giving the children the attention they need while they develop empathy for fellow students. Parents are encouraged to help in classroom activities and chaperone field trips, where they see their children learn to interact cooperatively and reinforce positive behavior at home.” The importance of early education is evident when students leave quality early education sites and bring good self-esteem and a positive attitude to their next level of education, kindergarten.
Indicator 2: Third grade CMT Reading Scores

Early Literacy

Data Source: CT Department of Education - CEDaR

*CT = Connecticut Mastery Test. This test was the standard state-wide assessment administered to students in grades 3-8 through 2013. BTS will select a replacement to assess 3rd grade reading scores.

Partner Story

Julissa Crespo, Waterbury Public Schools and chair of the BTS Early Care & Education workgroup

Reading at, or above, proficiency in third grade is one of the most important predictors of school success, but every year a large percentage of children miss this crucial milestone. It’s important to start early with our pre-K students, teaching them the basics of reading from the very start, so they are reading at grade level by third grade. To encourage early literacy skills, early education providers ask open-ended questions to encourage vocabulary development, use descriptive language and show children words that are printed on business and street signs, billboards, and other places in addition to books. “We support parents in helping improve their children’s reading skills by hosting family literacy nights and maintaining a continuous dialogue. Early education partners hosted a book fair at a local bookseller, where members of the community volunteered to read to families and participate in activities throughout the weekend. This event was an effective way to engage parents and deliver the message of how important it is to read to their children. Parents saw first-hand how fun and easy it can be to open a book and spend time reading, every day, with their children.”
Indicator 3: Eighth Grade CMT Math Scores
Academic Success through Youth Development

**INDICATOR:** The percentage of children in grade 8 who have scored at or above proficiency on the math portion of the CMT

- Higher academic performance in 8th grade math helps to ensure that students are prepared for more advanced math courses in high school and graduate on time.

![Graph](image)

Data Source: CT State Department of Education - CEDaR

*CMT = Connecticut Mastery Test. This test was the standard state-wide assessment administered to students in Grades 3-8 through 2013. BTS will select a replacement to assess middle school success.

**Partner Story**

Manny Martinez explains, “Our Power Hour program is designed to improve youth study skills, especially in the area of math. The program features fun-with-a-purpose activities such as brainteasers and math problems that incorporate a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) component. Before they actually produce an object on the 3D printer, they use different disciplines such as science and engineering, to understand the work behind printing something like a checker piece that children can later use in the game room. Older students get a boost of self-confidence when helping younger students.” Parents are invited to volunteer in the program and participate in special events, such as attending a speaker series in which local principals describe why homework is an important ingredient in learning, and how they can partner with the teachers to help their children succeed.

**Manny Martinez**, Boys and Girls Club of Greater Waterbury and vice chair of the BTS Positive Youth Development workgroup
Indicator 4: High School Graduation Rates
Youth Development

Data Source: CT Department of Education - CEDaR

### Partner Story

Dave Burgos, Connecticut Junior Republic and chair of the BTS Positive Youth Development workgroup, believes that “Success always follows education” and that “homework assistance, college tours, development of college portfolios, and participation in programs to improve communication, coping and problem solving skills help discourage risky behavior and promote high school completion. Students talk about and explore career options in a job club and discover work readiness skills and employment opportunities in the summer, finding new possibilities in hands on lessons.” The question, “What am I going to do when I leave high school?” is not just about job, but also relationship goals. “Youth develop a sense of hope and purpose, modeling what it is like to be a good friend, sibling, parent, or spouse, and changing negative cycles. Building self-esteem and resilience helps them aspire to a bright future and make the right decisions to achieve their dreams.”
Indicator 5: Secondary School Education
Job and Career Readiness

**INDICATOR:** Percentage of Waterbury public school students who graduate from high school and report plans to continue their education

- Students who move on to post-secondary education are more likely to be employed and become productive members of society

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**Partner Story**

Cathy Awwad notes “Children and youth who participate in our program develop a new vision of their futures, changing their perceptions about what it means to have a job. The program exposes the children to a variety of jobs available in every industry sector. Students may be aware that doctors and nurses work in a hospital, but we demonstrate that these facilities are miniature cities, and people work there as pharmacy technicians, respiratory therapists, drug and alcohol counselors, IT staff, bookkeepers, maintenance personnel, and much more.”

“Educational opportunities promote a sense of possibility, describing options ranging from a four-year degree to an apprenticeship, to encourage the children to think of education as a life-long and worthwhile pursuit. Through discussion with staff, and the ability to meet local business owners and manufacturers, students find work more appealing as they broaden their impression of what it means to show up at a job every day. They also develop a sense of what it means to offer an employer soft skills such as punctuality and dependability. Most importantly, students develop a real sense that they can receive a paycheck in exchange for doing something they enjoy. They realize they can feel proud and excited about their futures.”
Strategies: Best Practices

BTS embraces best practices. The Partnership has tailored, customized and adopted best practices from each of these national and local initiatives to assure Waterbury’s youth succeed in school, work and life.

Working together, Waterbury BTS partners coordinate services and resources to maximize outcomes. Eighty-five local public and private organizations representing over 200 individuals now partner on the following strategies:

1. Promoting grade-level reading
2. Promoting positive youth assets and development
3. Supporting parents/caregivers as their child’s first teacher
4. Promoting exposure and access to post-secondary education and careers

Selected local strategies are outlined on the following pages.
FACT: Attendance matters from the first day of school until the last day. Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed in school.

Anne Marie Cullinan, Waterbury Public Schools and member of the BTS Community Council with Lena and Layla Maghfour, students who attend Carrington Elementary School

Strategy: Attendance Matters

The schools can’t do it alone. The schools and the community are working in a partnership, side by side, to increase school attendance:

- Community organizations and programs like Gear Up, Restorative Justice, and the Truancy Clinic reinforce the high value of school attendance and focus on finding solutions for children, youth and families
- English, Spanish and Albanian School Success Pledge Cards encourage families to encourage reading and school attendance
- School leaders set measurable goals to reduce chronic absenteeism
- Data dashboards are used for up-to-the-minute data reporting on students
- Students receive positive group rewards in classes with the best attendance
- Full-time social workers in all schools visit homes to help families cope with and develop solutions to attendance barriers
- Attendance is tracked and displayed in school lobbies and reviewed by schools and the community to help determine action
- Waterbury Public Schools’ Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) rewards good things kids do each day at school, like helping a fellow student tie his shoes, or listening politely to instructions

Chronic Absenteeism by Grade: 2013-14

When do Absences Become a Problem?

Data Source: Waterbury Public Schools

Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.

Graphics created by Attendance Works
Strategy: Building Child and Youth Assets

The 40 Developmental Assets* are “developmental vitamins” or positive experiences and qualities that help to ensure youth become healthy adults. BTS monitors the 40 Developmental Assets that Waterbury’s youth possess, and discusses those results with community partners. The graphs below show the percentage of youth who possess each of the seven priority Developmental Assets that the city’s youth identified as areas of strength, and opportunities for improvement.

Youth Identified Asset Strengths

Youth Identified Opportunities

Safety: Young person feels safe at home, school, and the neighborhood.
Self-esteem: Young person reports having high self-esteem.
Restraint: Young person believes it is important to avoid sexual activity, alcohol and other drugs.
Adult role models: Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.

Youth Identified Strengths

Family Support: Family life provides high levels of love and support.
Honesty: Young person tells the truth even when it is not easy.
Sense of Purpose: Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.”

Youth Identified Asset Opportunities

Safety: Young person feels safe at home, school, and the neighborhood.
Self-esteem: Young person reports having high self-esteem.
Restraint: Young person believes it is important to avoid sexual activity, alcohol and other drugs.
Adult role models: Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.

Partner Story

Glenis Vialva, notes that after school programs like Linking Academics to Life “offer a diverse set of skills that build assets in middle and high school children. Before visiting the state capital, students prepare, then debate the selected topic in small breakout sessions in Hartford, and finally present their opinions to legislators. Elected officials reported that this feedback was instrumental in influencing how they voted on new legislation. Students feel a sense of purpose and know their input counts. They are invited to participate on youth councils and city focus groups to share their point of view and participate in moving community efforts forward.”
Strategy: Addressing Disparities

Taking a closer look

Identifying disparities in community indicators and measures can help to identify vulnerable students and guide community and school interventions to be more strategic.

Gender Disparity
In 2013, a higher percent of girls were at or above proficiency on the 3rd grade CMT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>3rd Grade Reading</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Economic Disparity
In 2013 students qualifying for free lunch were least likely to graduate from high school within four years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Status</th>
<th>High School Graduation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free Lunch¹</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced Lunch²</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Free Lunch: annual income <$26k for a family of 3
² Reduced Lunch: annual income <37k for a family of 3

Racial/Ethnic Disparity
In 2013 a lower percentage of Latino and African American students reached proficiency on the reading portion of the 3rd grade CMT, graduated from high school within four years, and attended school regularly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial/Ethnic Group</th>
<th>3rd Grade Reading</th>
<th>High School Graduation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School Attendance²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial/Ethnic Group</th>
<th>School Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² School attendance indicates the percent of students who attended school regularly and were not chronically absent (missing 18 or more days of school).
Parent Rubis Collado is enthusiastic about BTS and its programs because she has seen a change in her community.

“Parents are more engaged and there are more resources to help those trying to raise children in these challenging times. BTS is helping me so much to grow as a parent, citizen, mom, and professional.”

As a parent liaison, Rubis has seen the lines between school and home blur as members of the community attend evening events to celebrate literacy or culture. She feels that BTS has empowered the community, creating opportunities like book fairs and forums where she and others can find mentors and share information.

“The Bridge to Success Community Partnership is like a dream come true.”

Ivette Melendez, Waterbury Youth Council and member of the BTS Community Council

Volunteering for the BTS youth council while in high school, Ivette had the opportunity to evaluate projects for grants, and see how results make a difference in the community, especially in the areas of guiding and acting as adult role models, improving self-esteem, and resolving conflict peacefully. She commented, “The 40 Developmental Assets are important because they build a person’s character.”

“I am proud to have a voice in making things better for Waterbury’s youth.”

“It is critical that BTS and its partners demonstrate and reinforce positive youth development. Extracurricular activities include painting or playing a musical instrument, but participants can learn more than artistic techniques, they can gain confidence and the language to say no to drugs, or how to make new friends. Learning how to look another person in the eye, or speak to more than one person at once, is critical. We need a way to teach kids how to have conversations, avoiding negative results like fights and suspensions.”

Rubis Collado, Career Academy parent liaison and parent
“Waterbury’s Bridge to Success (BTS) Community Partnership is to be commended for keeping the focus on the City’s children and youth - our future citizens. My office is an advocate for youth-empowerment and community-focused initiatives. This public/private BTS Partnership is one of Waterbury’s nationally-recognized assets focusing on assuring the City’s youth succeed in school, work and life. Together, we are building a strong bridge to connect our youth to a brighter future.”

City of Waterbury Mayor Neil M. O’Leary

“The Waterbury Public School system is pleased to be a BTS Community Partner. The Waterbury Blueprint for Change – Moving Forward for Student Success, details the strategies and action steps to improve teaching and learning in the Waterbury schools. The Blueprint for Change was developed with input from all segments of the community, and was designed to assure that Waterbury children and youth receive a quality education that prepares them to be successful in graduating from high school, and in meeting the challenges ahead in the colleges or careers of their choice. BTS supports the full implementation of the Blueprint for Change. Through the BTS Community Council and BTS Work Groups, families are encouraged to continue to work closely with the schools and community. And, by joining forces, we ensure the City’s youth, from cradle-to-career, have access to the quality healthcare, education and support they need to become successful adults.”

Dr. Kathleen M. Ouellette, superintendent of Waterbury Public Schools
How Can You Take Action?

Subscribe to the BTS Weekly Newsletter: call (203) 754-0040 or email: info@WaterburyBTS.org, or visit our website: www.WaterburyBTS.org

**Youth**
- Find your voice and be heard for what you believe in
- Join a youth group
- Participate in after school activities
- Mentor or refer other young people who need help

**Parents / Caregivers**
- Be an active participant in your child’s learning
- Read to and with your children
- Make sure your children attend school every day
- Be positive when communicating to your children
- Have conversations with children and youth, and ask about their day
- Encourage your children to graduate from high school, dream big and strive to go to college

**Community Members**
- Learn about the 40 Developmental Assets and help nurture children in your neighborhood, place of worship
- Encourage children and youth to attend school every day
- Sign up to be a mentor
- Encourage youth to be involved in community activities and organizations

**Teachers**
- Learn about the 40 Developmental Assets
- Nurture the children and youth in your class
- Encourage healthy nutrition and physical activity in and out of the classroom
- Develop and tie activities to literacy
- Encourage your students to graduate from high school, dream big and strive to go to college

**Community Organizations**
- Become a BTS partner
- Join a workgroup
- Forward the BTS weekly newsletter to your staff and colleagues

**Faith Community**
- Encourage children to attend school every day
- Encourage parents and children to read together

**Philanthropic Organizations**
- Become a BTS partner
- Support BTS backbone operations
- Support BTS partner organizations

More resources may be found on these websites:

- [www.bornlearning.org](http://www.bornlearning.org)
- [www.reachoutandread.org](http://www.reachoutandread.org)
- [www.readtogrow.org](http://www.readtogrow.org)
- [www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org)
- [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)
- [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)
- [www.abc-of-fitness.com](http://www.abc-of-fitness.com)
- [www.waterburybridgetosuccess.org](http://www.waterburybridgetosuccess.org)

Contact Us:
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Email: info@WaterburyBTS.org
Web: WaterburyBTS.org
Thank You to Our Generous Funding Partners

who understand it takes a partnership to assure Waterbury’s youth succeed in school, work and life.

American Savings Foundation  
Corrine G. Levin Fund  
Connecticut State Department of Education  
Connecticut Community Foundation  
Connecticut Community Foundation Women’s Fund  
Children’s Fund of Connecticut  
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Leever Foundation  
Office of the Mayor and City of Waterbury  
Parents and other community members  
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