



A ⁹⁰by 2020 Community Partnership Retrospective

A NEW APPROACH

Our community had a problem. A key finding from assessments focused on our children startled Anchorage residents. We had a high school graduation rate under 60% — not exactly what we wanted.

So we articulated a vision: Children enter school ready to learn, and graduate from high school prepared for the workforce, higher education, and life. **And set a goal: 90% graduation by 2020.**

In 2006, Anchorage embarked on a process to **imagine the community of our dreams** and begin to build that community.

Fourteen years later, the four year graduation rate is 84.1% and the five year graduation rate is 88.1%. We have made **tremendous progress** toward the vision for Anchorage children.

What happened in those 14 years? What did we learn?

Rather than add more programs, it was time to change the system —services, practices, policies, and budgets across organizations in a coordinated way to **achieve a specific goal** bigger than that of any one organization.

We followed these principles:

- Share a common vision of success
- Work across sectors to coordinate effective action based on proven methods
- Measure for results and accountability
- Continually adapt based on what works and what is possible
- Invest to achieve results for Anchorage children and youth

Public, private, and nonprofit sectors collaborated in this change. United Way of Anchorage performed a backbone function and **hundreds of organizations played a role**, from service providers to public agencies to funders.

Today, **the vision remains the same:** Children enter school ready to learn and graduate from high school prepared for the workforce, higher education, and life.

Together, let's persist in creating **a brighter future for our children** and a more prosperous tomorrow for Anchorage. The return on investment will extend far beyond 2020 and the halls of our schools.

WHY GRADUATION MATTERS

High school graduates are more likely to be financially stable, have healthier lives, be more civically engaged.

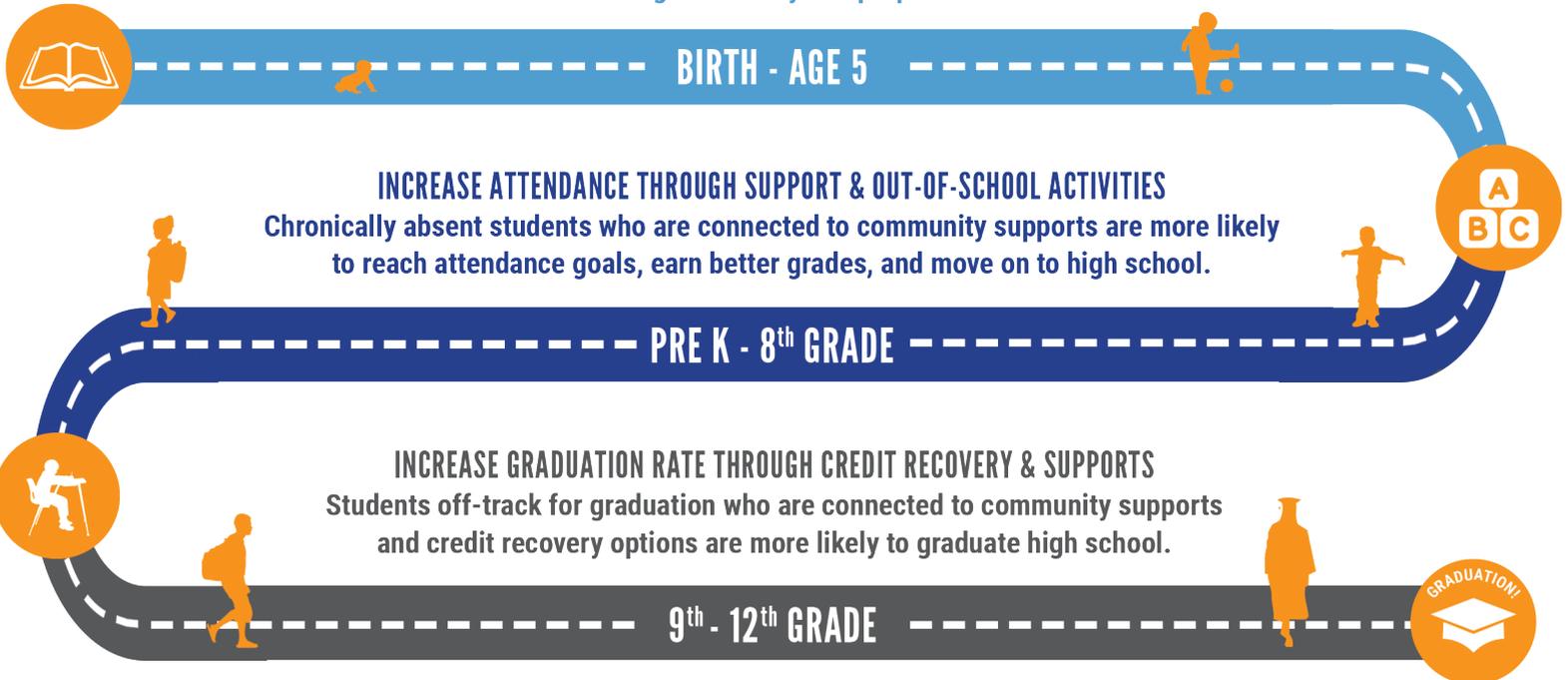
Increasing the number of graduates strengthens our city's economy, vitality, and sustainability.



90% BY 2020 ROADMAP TO SUCCESS

INCREASE EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY & KINDERGARTEN PREPAREDNESS

Children who are read to regularly are more likely to enter kindergarten ready and prepared to learn.



GROUNDBREAKING CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

The surprising alignment of separate high-level efforts was a big breakthrough that set the stage for system change. The Tri-Borough Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Policy Team brought together leaders from law enforcement, juvenile justice and the courts, Anchorage School District, and nonprofits. United Way of Anchorage had brought together a similar cross-sector group of leaders to tackle rising youth substance-use rates. These efforts converged after a 2006 summit.

Leaders of that time recognized that their work overlapped significantly both in their goals and the work needed to achieve them. In a nutshell, youth risk behaviors such as gang involvement and substance use would decrease and positive outcomes like engaging in school and graduating would increase if coordinated work increased protective factors for Anchorage youth with the right support (and intervention) at the right time.

A similar confluence of efforts launched when the Ready to Learn Task Force finalized its work, and early learning became a focus for Alaska. Best Beginnings was formed to carry forward the task force recommendations and has been a key partner since.

Mutual adoption of broad community goals, conscious use of data to monitor progress and willingness to break down institutional siloes remain vital to this work.



COLLABORATION

GRADUATION RATES:

2005: 59.6%

2006: 63.9%

2004 - 06

The 2006 Community Assessment Project reports alarming education data.

Community leaders set goals to increase kindergarten readiness, 3rd grade reading proficiency, high school graduation rates, and decrease substance use and violence.

Then-Mayor Mark Begich holds a summit and forms the Tri-Borough Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Policy Team

with leaders from education, courts, juvenile justice, law enforcement, and non-profits. Team adopts efforts to review and align policy and build Developmental Assets in support of young people.

Best Beginnings forms in 2006

to take on recommendations to improve early literacy and child well-being.

Best Beginnings continues today.

EVIDENCE-BASED IMPROVEMENTS IN SERVICES ACROSS ORGANIZATIONS

A coordinated focus was placed on building resiliency in children and youth by increasing protective factors such as a stable home, having relationships with supportive adults, and meaningful engagement in positive activities. **Here are a few highlights:**

- **United Way of Anchorage aligned millions to invest in programs that increase protective factors for families, children, and youth.**
- **Anchorage Youth Development Coalition was created to build youth resiliency through training, networking, and advocacy.**
- **Early childhood learning partners worked to improve child-care quality standards and support families with community events and early literacy materials.**

To help children most at risk due to poverty and adverse experiences, further innovation was required. Here are some examples:

- The “Step Up” program launched so expelled and long-term suspended high school students could keep up with classwork. The program has since expanded to serve middle school students.

- The “Community PLUS Schools” initiative began providing tailored community supports to at-risk students to improve attendance and performance. The initiative started with two pilot schools and now operates in 13 schools.
- High-school kids likely to drop out now get “Back on Track” with credit recovery and wraparound supports in night, day, and summer classrooms. To date, nearly 900 9-12th grade students have been served and 408 seniors have graduated.
- Access to early literacy events and materials has increased in low-income areas, where children receive free monthly books through Anchorage Imagination Library.



2007: 65%

2008: 64.5%

United Way forms Youth Substance Use workgroup, receives federal grant for Anchorage Youth Development Coalition.

AYDC continues today.

2007 - 08

Tri-Borough Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Policy Team aligns the work of various agencies in the Community Youth Plan to increase graduation rates, cut substance use and violence, and lead to broad private/public partnership eventually named Anchorage United for Youth.

Division of Juvenile Justice begins screening for mental health and substance use issues with support from a Reclaiming Futures grant.

This screening continues today.

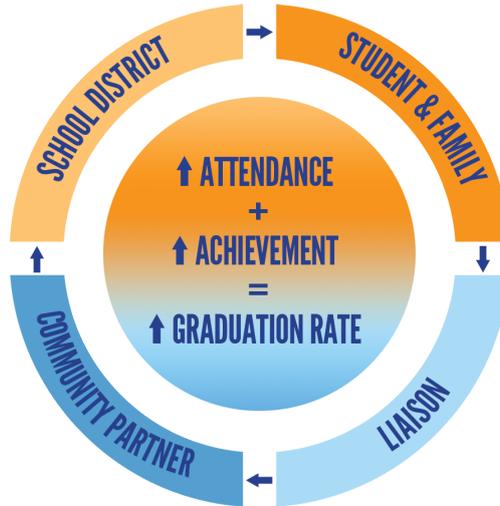
IT TAKES ALL OF US

SCHOOL DISTRICT

- Identify students in need
- Referrals made: HS students for credit recovery; all students for community-based support
- Collaborate with liaison to plan community support
- Continue monitoring student progress; collaborate with liaison for ongoing student support

COMMUNITY PARTNER

- Provide direct services for students and families referred by liaison



STUDENT & FAMILY

- Consent to connect student with credit recovery services and/or community-based support
- Engage in support provided
- Work to address academic and attendance issues

LIAISON

- Work with referral contact, student and family to determine support needed
- Connect student with appropriate community partner for support

DIRECT SERVICE EXAMPLES

Out-of-school Support
(e.g. tutoring, mentoring)

In-school Academic Supports

Basic Needs
(e.g. food, shelter, transportation, health care)

Social-Emotional
(e.g. counseling referrals)

Family Engagement and Outreach

GRADUATION RATES:

2009: 70%

2010: 69.6%

The Step Up program provides continued education for expelled and long-term suspended students so they don't fall behind and can potentially return to their school.

The Step-Up program continues today.

2009 - 10

Anchorage United for Youth implements **six strategies:** Increase support to families, increase adult support for young people, increase opportunities, change environmental conditions, intervene in school disengagement and in substance use.

Anchorage United for Youth convenes **summits in 2009 and 2010 to revise plans** and draw community support. More than 30 community conversations result in the 10 Simple Things You Can Do To Support Youth campaign.

CHANGED COMMUNITY NORMS

Anchorage is now a city that knows the high school graduation rate, expects the best, and gets involved to work toward a level educational playing field. That wasn't always true. Today, Anchorage is engaged at the grassroots level.

- Multiple summits were held over the years to convene and engage the community, review progress, update the plan, and provide volunteer opportunities.
- The "10 Simple Things" campaign increased awareness of everyday things adults can do to help youth thrive.
- A drive to increase the number of adults as mentors enrolled over 1000 volunteers.
- Multiple efforts increased community awareness and support of education and graduation like: GradBlitz celebrations, Chalk the Walk at schools, Grad year wristbands, Business Attendance Champions, and Graduation Station.
- Teens also volunteered as change agents. The 90% by 2020 Youth Task Force is a peer-led effort to support teens to graduation and it is active in high schools with high drop-out rates.



2011: 72.3%

2012: 72.8%

2013: 76.4%

2011 -
13

United Way matches its funding model to outcomes sought by Anchorage United for Youth, and for early literacy, parental support for young children and early care.

In 2011, Anchorage United for Youth sets bold goal of 90% graduation rate by 2020. The Anchorage School District adopts Destination 2020 goals, including 90% Academic Proficiency, 90% Attendance and 90% Graduation Rate.

In 2013, Anchorage United for Youth leaders adopt a cradle-to-career framework, enlarge the Leadership Team, and change name to 90% by 2020.



For the first time in MY life I'm enjoying reading out loud. My child and I bond while reading. I hope he always enjoys reading as much as he does now.

Imagination Library parent



BEST BEGINNINGS - IMAGINATION LIBRARY

Birth - Age 5

When children are read to from birth, research shows that they are much more likely to succeed in school and life. Anchorage Imagination Library is currently sending a book every month right to the mailbox of 1,450 children living in zip codes 99501 and 99508 (identified by 90% by 2020 as areas of need). By putting a book directly in the hands of families who may not otherwise be able to afford or acquire their own books, we know that families are reading more together, growing closer, and learning every day.

Concepts of early learning and literacy are also reinforced through in-person family engagement events and the delivery of a weekly parent newsletter that helps parents become the best teacher they can be for their child. It's all part of increasing the likelihood that by the time their child enters kindergarten, they are on a path to reading and learning success.



GRADUATION RATES:

2014: 73.6%

A focused strategy to get the right support to the right child at the right time gets a pilot test at two elementary schools. This develops into the Community PLUS Schools program.

Community PLUS Schools continues to expand today.

2014 - **15**

90% by 2020 leaders aim to strengthen alignment with school system and partners to boost kindergarten readiness, 8th grade math proficiency, on-time high school graduation, readiness for the workforce, and post-secondary education.

The Ready for Kindergarten Network identifies two neighborhoods most in need of early literacy and family support and begins work there with events and enrollments in Anchorage Imagination Library.

COMMUNITY PLUS SCHOOLS

Pre-K - 8th Grade

In 2013, a pilot program at two schools focused on identifying kids who were chronically absent and aimed to get them back to school and thriving with whatever help they needed. Over just six years, what began as a two-school pilot has expanded to four, then eight and now 12 elementary schools, plus Wendler Middle School.

Getting the right help, to the right child at the right time is a common sense and proven method. All it takes is time, hard work and steady care – and a spirit of fun in learning and achievement.

To that end, Community PLUS Schools offer tutoring, mentors, and a variety of activities to build the academic, social and emotional strength of our kids. PLUS supports also go beyond school for help with housing, clothing, school supplies, transportation, food, and family outreach activities.

The results? Attendance is markedly higher for the students receiving one or more PLUS supports than for their schools' population as a whole. You can't learn if you don't show up.

2019 - 2020 IMPACT

713+ STUDENTS SERVED



966+ SUPPORTS PROVIDED



STUDENTS MEETING ATTENDANCE GOALS

SCHOOL AVERAGE

73.8%

PLUS SUPPORTED STUDENTS

86.9%

2015: 80.2%

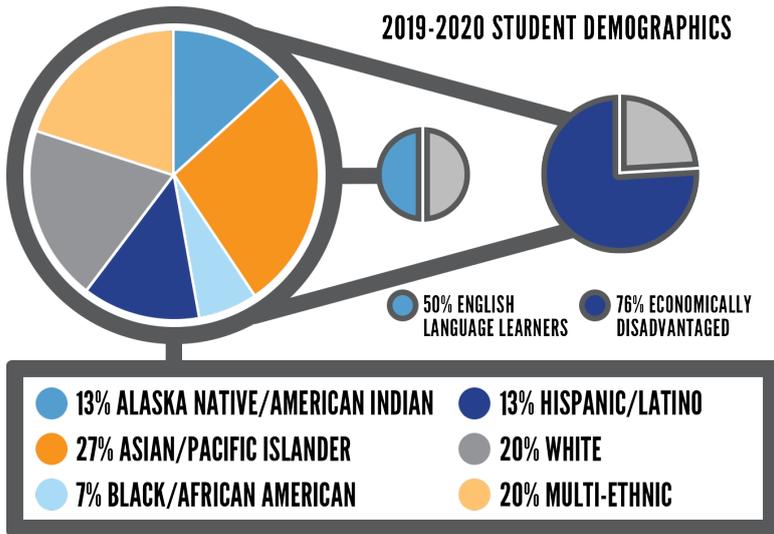
The 8th Grade Math Network links attendance with math proficiency and focuses on helping kids with poor attendance get back to class. Businesses share workforce readiness results with Anchorage School District.

90% by 2020 invites community support for GradBlitz celebrations, Chalk the Walk, Business Attendance Champions, and Graduation Station.

Reading Oasis book nooks established at two elementary schools and later expanded to eight area schools.

PLUS SCHOOLS SERVED

- Airport Heights Elementary
- Baxter Elementary
- College Gate Elementary
- Creekside Park Elementary
- Kasuun Elementary
- Lake Hood Elementary
- Lake Otis Elementary
- Muldoon Elementary
- Nunaka Valley Elementary
- Russian Jack Elementary
- Susitna Elementary
- Tyson Elementary
- Wendler Middle School



INSPIRED TO LEARN

The sound of laughter floated down the hallway at Airport Heights Elementary. In the classroom kitchen, Community PLUS Schools students were participating in Cooking Club. The students were learning to make personal pizzas. They were also learning life skills and what it means to work as a team. They are building self-confidence and being introduced to things they've never experienced and, most importantly, what it means to have another caring, supportive adult in their lives.

Students do better in school and attend more often when they have strong connections to adults who care about their wellbeing and give them support and guidance. Ms. Rane's Cooking Club is one of many supports that inspires kids to want to come to school.

GRADUATION RATES:

2016: 79.7%

2017: 81.5%

2016 - 17

Back on Track, a partnership of United Way, the Anchorage School District and Covenant House Alaska, launches to help those high school students most at risk of not graduating.

Back on Track continues today.

The 90% By 2020 Youth Task Force, a peer-led effort to boost graduation rates, begins in three high schools.

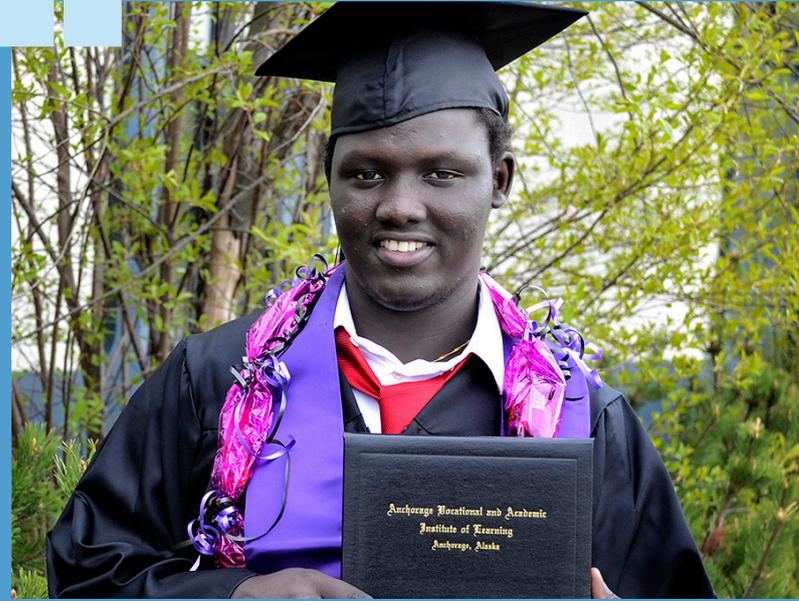
A GradNation Summit brings together students and business leaders to discuss obstacles to graduation and how to overcome them.

BACK ON TRACK

As of September 2020, 477 students at risk of not graduating from high school have earned their diplomas through support and credit recovery from the Back on Track classroom. This partnership of United Way of Anchorage, Anchorage School District, and Covenant House Alaska was first powered by an AT&T Aspire grant and launched in 2016.

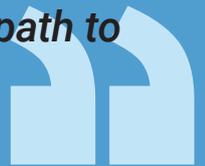
Criteria for Back on Track enrollment are straightforward – economically disadvantaged and lagging significantly in credit accrual. But criteria don't begin to tell the story. Back on Track beats back despair. Many of the students are homeless, deal with dysfunctional families, have pinballed through foster care, suffer addictions, or struggle in school while trying to hold a job to provide for their families. Some have known the street all too well.

Caring teachers and service coordinators work together to get students the help they need, from housing and health care to phone checks and night classes. They combine rigor and flexibility, give students both a high bar of achievement and a fighting chance to reach it. They tap the resilience of students who have dealt with much worse than the woes of algebra. They rekindle hope, and the students run with heart and hard work to a diploma that counts.



It was one of the best things that happened to me. I cannot emphasize enough the importance the Back on Track program played in my path to higher education.

Garang
2018 Back on Track graduate



2018: 80.7%

2019: 84.1%

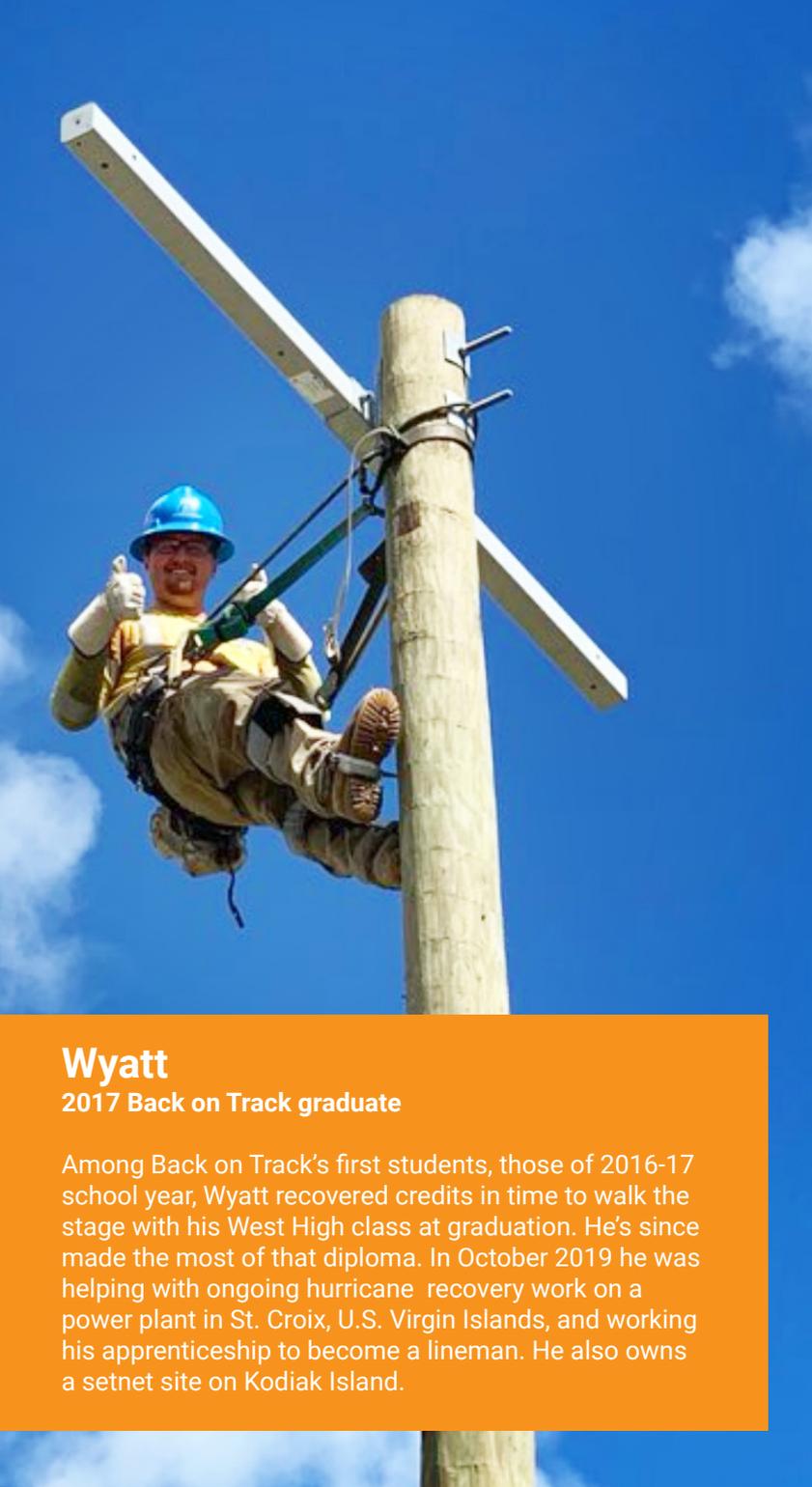
2018 -
19

Best Beginnings: 35 percent of children in targeted neighborhoods have enrolled in Imagination Library.

Anchorage Imagination Library continues today.

Community PLUS Schools: More schools added, raising the total number to 13. Enrollment through online registration swiftly links families to needed supports.

Look Past The Labels: A new media campaign urges people to see the child and their needs, and ignore stereotypes kids can be burdened with. United Way makes presentations to community groups.



Wyatt

2017 Back on Track graduate

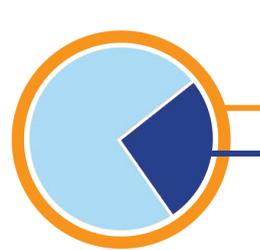
Among Back on Track's first students, those of 2016-17 school year, Wyatt recovered credits in time to walk the stage with his West High class at graduation. He's since made the most of that diploma. In October 2019 he was helping with ongoing hurricane recovery work on a power plant in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, and working his apprenticeship to become a lineman. He also owns a setnet site on Kodiak Island.

TRIUMPHS & CHALLENGES

2016 - 2020

968 STUDENTS SERVED

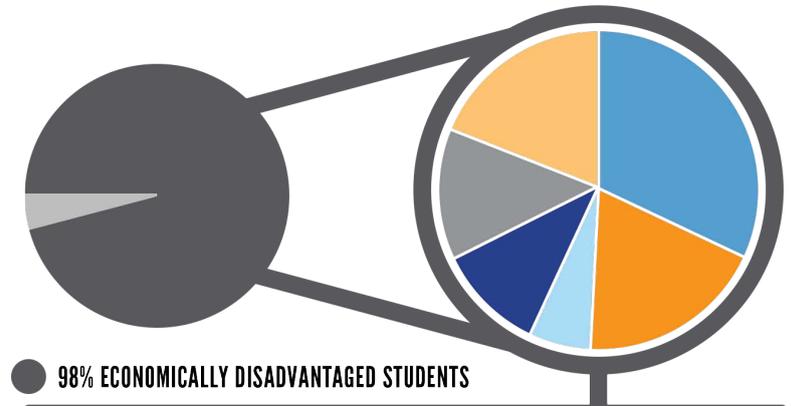
477 GRADUATES TO DATE



38.5% CHILD IN TRANSITION STUDENTS:
Students experiencing homelessness who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence (As defined by the US Department of Education under the McKinney-Vento Act)

100% RECEIVED EVERYDAY SUPPORTS:
Tutoring, Transportation, Staff Phone Check-Ins, Classroom Support, Optional Aspire Seminar Curriculum and Guidance

26.5% RECEIVED INTENSIVE SUPPORTS:
Home Visits, Basic Needs Services, Village and Tribal-Affiliated Resources, Job Search and Prep Assistance, Post-Secondary Education Guidance, Navigation of Federal Systems and More



98% ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

32% ALASKA NATIVE/AMERICAN INDIAN	11% HISPANIC
19% ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER	13% WHITE
6% BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	19% MULTI-ETHNIC



Ane
2019 Back on Track graduate

Ane

One of nine siblings living with their grandparents, Ane was struggling. "I didn't graduate. I blame myself for the crowd I hung out with, for skipping classes ... I felt like giving up and just not caring for school anymore," said Ane. After her grandfather died, she decided to make a change. "I looked at my grandmother and my family one day and thought to myself: I deserve to make them proud. Seeing them happy is what I live for."

Making them proud was a full-time job and then some. She joined Back on Track while she was the primary caregiver for her grandmother. That meant up at 5 a.m., to make breakfast and make sure grandma took her medications. Then school at East. Then a Back on Track evening class at Covenant House, along with playing piano for evening services at her church. Then home to fix dinner for her grandmother. Homework came last and late.

When her grandmother was hospitalized in intensive care, Ane stopped going to school to be with her. After she got some help for her grandmother she found she'd missed too many days to return to East. Back on Track teacher Barb Dexter told her that door was still open and to come in – that very day.

"I was beyond grateful and I actually cried from how excited I was," Ane says. "Leaving the hospital that day I told my grandma that this is for her and I would not let her down."

She didn't. She doubled down to earn her diploma. Now she works as a caregiver. Long-term, Ane wants to become a pediatric nurse.

SUCCESS

WHERE THEY ARE TODAY



77
EMPLOYED



42
ATTENDING COLLEGE



22
HELD INTERNSHIPS



10
SERVING IN THE U.S. MILITARY



3
ATTENDING TRADE SCHOOL

DESTINATION GRADUATION

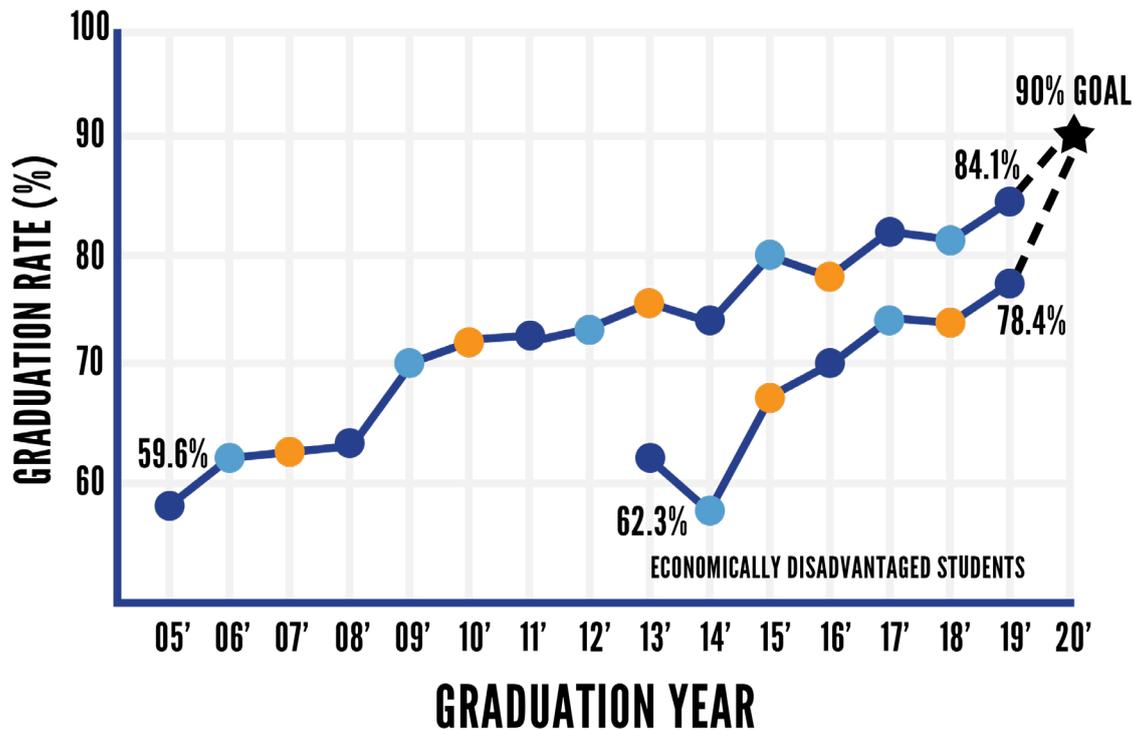
Anchorage is a community that cares deeply about its kids and takes action. We have great resources in our city and state - schools, families, service providers, funders, and leaders across sectors willing to innovate to create the best community for our children.

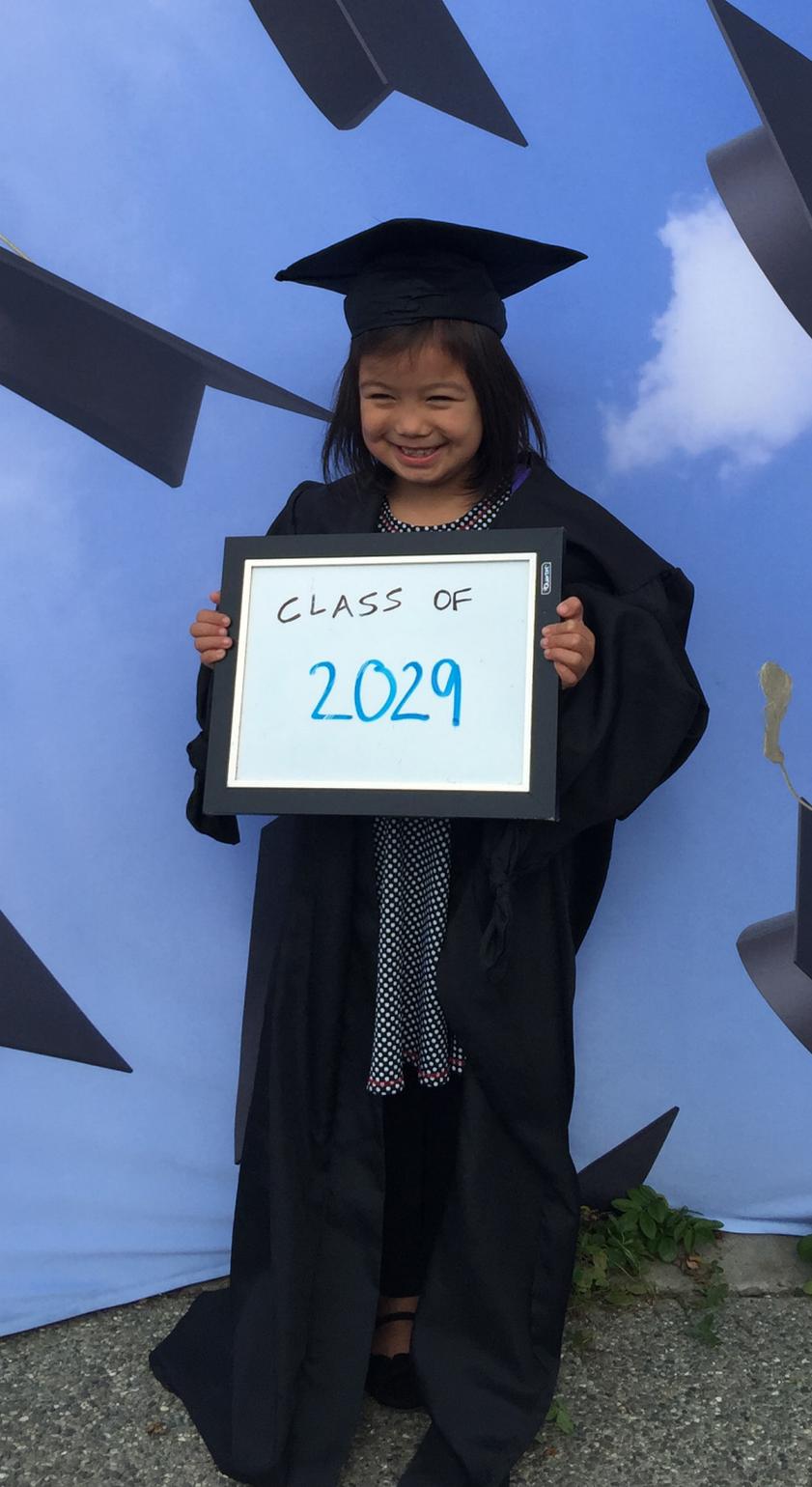
The work doesn't stop at 2020. Our goal has always been to make a sustained change - change that will help level the educational playing field so our students and our city have the opportunity to realize their full potential. A date come to pass and a benchmark unachieved won't stop us from striving to climb higher, and we can use the lessons we've learned to get there.

We've learned that sustained change requires help that's specifically tailored to our students. We've learned that such help — nimble, coordinated, and on time — often makes the difference between a student doubling down to graduate or further declining.

When we tap into our collective talents and resources, we see the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. We have proven we are able to tackle tough problems and improve things. But we know we can go much further.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES





WHERE WE'LL GO

All of us involved in 90% by 2020 are learning how to better help our kids to a promising future. We've learned to tailor support to the needs of students and families, rather than wedge people into programs. The right help to the right student at the right time is a method that requires flexibility, resourcefulness, and wide community support—**especially when the challenge includes a worldwide pandemic.**

The leading partners of 90% by 2020 will be aligning with the Anchorage School District's new strategic plan as we move forward to support all of our kids beyond 2020.



JOIN US

Invest: Your investment will directly support community solutions that prepare our children for success in school, work, and life.

Volunteer: Kids in Anchorage need caring adults who will lead activities and give their time to tutor, coach, or mentor.

Engage: Connect with us on social media. Visit us at 90by2020.org and sign up to receive our newsletter. Set high expectations for children and youth, and let them know that their attendance, academic achievement, and graduation matter.



90% by 2020 LEADERSHIP

Tom Barrett, *Community Member*
Stephanie Berglund, *CEO | thread*
Ethan Berkowitz, *Mayor | Municipality of Anchorage*
Damian Bilbao, *Alaska Vice President, Commercial Ventures | BP*
Bill Bishop, *President and CEO | Alaska Communications*
Deena Bishop, *Superintendent | Anchorage School District*
Michele Brown, *President and CEO | United Way of Anchorage*
Bruce Bustamante, *President | Anchorage Chamber of Commerce*
Heather Cavanaugh, *Director, External Affairs and Corporate Communications | Alaska Communications*
Judith Crotty, *Vice President, Community Development Manager | Wells Fargo*
Cheryl Frasca, *Executive Director | Education Matters, Inc.*
Darlene Gates, *President | ExxonMobil Alaska*
Cheri Gillian, *Executive Vice President, Board Secretary and Chief Administrative Officer | First National Bank Alaska*
Andrew Halcro, *Executive Director | Anchorage Community Development Authority*
Abbe Hensley, *Executive Director | Best Beginnings*

Celeste Hodge Growden, *President | Alaska Black Caucus*
Sonya Hunte, *Senior Director, Equity & Compliance | Anchorage School District*
Jeff Jessee, *Dean, College of Health | University of Alaska, Anchorage*
Shannon Kuhn, *Special Assistant to the Mayor | Municipality of Anchorage*
Starr Marsett, *Treasurer | Anchorage School Board*
Deena Mitchell, *Member | Anchorage School Board*
Kathy Moffitt, *Administrative Projects Director | Anchorage School District*
Gloria O'Neill, *President and CEO | Cook Inlet Tribal Council*
Ben Post, *Representative | Anchorage School Board Student Advisory Board*
Kathleen Plunkett, *Community Member*
Bill Popp, *President and CEO | Anchorage Economic Development Corporation*
Greg Razo, *Vice President, Government Relations | Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI)*
Felix Rivera, *Chair, Anchorage Assembly*
Shawn Rivera, *Community Member*
Ira Slomski-Pritz, *Special Assistant to the Mayor | Municipality of Anchorage*
Ed Ulman, *CEO and General Manager | Alaska Public Media*
Elisa Vakalis, *President | Anchorage School Board*
Natasha von Imhof, *Community Member*

as of 6/30/2020

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