

**Portland, Maine Community Solutions Action Plan**  
*Application for membership in the Grade-Level Reading Communities Network*

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## Part One: Community Overview

*A brief history:* Portland, Maine was established in 1633 and developed over the next two hundred years as a fishing and trading settlement, shipping center, and center for manufacturing and exporting steam locomotives. In the late 1860's Portland experienced four large and devastating fires; many commercial buildings, churches and residential homes were destroyed. Due to a concerted landmark preservation effort, much of the architecture from the Victorian-era was rebuilt and is maintained today. During World War II, Portland became the destroyer base for U.S. Navy convoys. In the 1970's the Maine Mall indoor shopping center was built in a suburb of South Portland, causing a dramatic change in the shopping culture of downtown and contributing to an economic depression for local business downtown. It took the city two decades to fully recover when new businesses began to revitalize the seaport area known today as the Old Port. This intentional transformation reinvigorated downtown Portland<sup>1</sup>. Today, Portland is a thriving business center for Maine and much of Northern New England. The dynamic nature of our community is built in part by the unique characteristics of the Old Port, the fishing industry and vital working waterfront, the arts district and booming tourism throughout downtown.

*Citizens of Portland:* Portland has always been a welcoming community to immigrants and refugees. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, laborers from the West Indies arrived by way of the molasses trade and found home in Portland's East End, working as dockworkers on the waterfront. In the late 1800's, Portland became a destination for Irish immigrants. At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Portland became a resettlement site for refugees from Somalia, dramatically altering the demographics of Portland. Today, immigrants and refugees from Sudan, Congo, Iraq, Afghanistan and Eritrea, among other countries, continue to find refuge and safety in the city and make Portland their home. One of the most notable shifts in the community is the number of languages spoken in Portland's public schools; approximately 60 languages are spoken by students, English being the most common followed by Somali, Arabic, Spanish, French and Khmer<sup>2</sup>. According to a report by the American Community Survey, the percentage of heads of households who speak a language other than English in the home rose by almost 20% from 2006-2008 to 2011. Although 85% of Portland's population is white, only 61% of Portland Public School students are white. Today much of Portland's school-age population comes from the immigrant and refugee families who have established a home in the city. This presents the city, and the schools in particular, with both opportunity and challenge. The culture in Portland today is a testament to the rugged individualism, diversity and loyalty of its people.

*Portland Statistics:* Over the last 12 years Portland demographics have shifted. The percentage of white residents has decreased by 7%. The percentage of single parent families living in poverty has increased by 8%. As the demographics shift, the culture shifts along with a need to change the way in which the city prepares and supports its students through school. The 2010 census indicates there are

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<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia. Retrieved on June 10, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Portland Public Schools: Learning to Succeed. District Fast Facts Spring 2013

66,194 people who reside in Portland: 85% white, 7% African American, 4% Asian, 3% Hispanic/Latino, 3% from two or more races and 0.5% Native American. Of the 30,725 households, 21% have children under the age of 18. Compared to 7% in the State of Maine, 14% of Portland's residents speak a language other than English in the home. Over 10% of the current Portland population is foreign born, compared to 3% throughout Maine. The median household income in Portland is almost \$3,000 below the State average (\$45,153 compared to \$47,898). 12% of Portland residents live in poverty, compared to 9% at the State level<sup>3</sup>. Additionally, the number of children under the age of six who live in poverty increased by approximately by 46% from 2006 to 2011. On the contrary, the poverty rate for children over six declined during this period.

*Learning in Portland:* Portland is a community and a culture of learning. Maine College of Art, located in Portland's downtown arts district, attracts students from around the country and was instrumental in the revitalization of Portland's downtown. Portland High School, the second oldest operating public high school in the United States, is also centrally located downtown. Learning spreads from the center of town into Portland's clusters of neighborhoods, many of which are built near the schools. All of Portland's elementary schools are in neighborhoods and many are in neighborhoods that serve a large number of families who live in affordable housing.

As of January 2013, Portland Public Schools, Maine's largest Regional School Unit, had 7,023 students enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12 in 16 schools. Of these students, 53% are eligible for free or reduced lunch, 20% are Limited English Proficient (LEP) and 15% receive special education services<sup>4</sup>. A 2012 study conducted by Scholastic Inc., of three Portland schools (Riverton Elementary, Moore Middle School and Portland High School), reported economically disadvantaged and LEP students are the two fastest growing populations in both the district overall and the City of Portland in particular<sup>5</sup>. More specifically, these two populations are growing faster within these three schools than in the district overall. In fact, the economically disadvantaged and LEP populations in the three aforementioned schools represent 74-86% of the struggling readers.

*Future:* The City of Portland recognizes that the economic and socio-political landscapes of the future will increasingly call for enhanced global awareness, job skills and academic credentials. Local and regional businesses are growing and hiring but often they have to look outside the area for qualified people with the skills necessary to fulfill job requirements. Forecasts predict the creation of 26,000 new high-wage jobs in high-growth sectors in Maine, which means that these jobs will require more highly skilled workers and entrepreneurs with post-secondary training and credentials. This is a concern because a trend in Portland is for younger adults to leave Maine to seek employment and other opportunities only to possibly return to raise a family.

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<sup>3</sup> Portland Public Schools: Learning to Succeed. District Fast Facts Spring 2013

<sup>4</sup> Portland Public Schools: Learning to Succeed. District Fast Facts Spring 2013

<sup>5</sup> Navigating Waves of Change in Portland ME: Driving Academic Improvement Through Challenging Times. Sam Howe. December 2012. Scholastic Inc.

Portland has been named as one of the top ten places to live, one of the ten best markets for job prospects and one of the top three cities in the nation for education and raising a family. It is also important to recognize that the ever-changing population in Portland requires innovative solutions to continue to move the city forward. Ever-increasing socio-economic gaps, changing workforce requirements and support for those with limited English language proficiency are among the challenges Portland must address. Portland is working toward addressing these issues through an initiative spearheaded by Mayor Michael Brennan known as “Portland ConnectED.” The initiative aims to build and sustain a citywide culture dedicated to defining and supporting highly effective education for Portland’s youth, families, and the community at large by coordinating efforts, aligning resources, and harnessing the expertise of organizations and leaders throughout the city. Uniting leaders and organizations from Portland’s education, business, non-profit, civic and philanthropic sectors, Portland ConnectED will coordinate independent and collective action, expertise, advocacy, and funding in key areas of development, learning, and career connection including Kindergarten readiness; grade-level reading proficiency by the end of third grade; high school graduation; and post-secondary enrollment, persistence, and completion.

## Part Two: The CSAP

### Assurance #1: The Problem

The Portland community and the Starting Strong subcommittee recognize the need for a community-wide strategy to address the achievement gaps between our students. These gaps are especially apparent with regard to reading at grade level at the end of third grade and are of urgent concern in the Portland community. The data and information we have gathered related to grade level reading and other associated factors helps teachers, youth outreach organizations, early childhood professionals and anyone working with Portland families to more fully understand the needs of our community. With regard to children and families living in poverty, it is critical that we fully understand our population in order to effectively work with and provide appropriate resources in order for all children to succeed in school and beyond.

Although 46% of Portland citizens have a Bachelors degree or higher, compared to 28% statewide, the city has a lower than average median household income and a higher percentage of families living below the federal poverty line as compared to both the state and nation averages<sup>6</sup>. In addition, the rate of homelessness in Portland is on the rise. The Maine Housing Authority's Annual Point in Time Survey<sup>7</sup> on January 30, 2013 found 114 families living in emergency homeless shelters in Portland. This compares to 83 families at the same time in 2012. The 2013 survey reported of the 470 homeless individuals, 69 were under the age of 18. Results from the Maine Department of Education Data Warehouse<sup>8</sup> shows the percentage of Portland Public School students enrolled in the Free or Reduced Lunch program has **increased** steadily since the 2007-08 school year. While enrollment across the state has been on the rise, Portland's enrollment trends higher.<sup>9</sup>

Our *end goal* is **that all Portland 3<sup>rd</sup> graders are reading at or above grade level (as evidenced by beginning of grade four testing) on the State of Maine's assessment of reading<sup>10</sup>**. All subgroups of students will make progress toward reading at or above grade level, including those students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, students who are not proficient in English and students who have IEPs. Targets will focus on all children as well as closing the gap between groups of children (i.e. children who live in poverty and children who do not). We aim to achieve grade-level reading through (1) **improving school readiness**, (2) **improving attendance** and (3) **reducing summer learning loss**.

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<sup>6</sup> Portland Public Schools: Learning to Succeed. District Fast Facts Spring 2013

<sup>7</sup> The Annual Point in Time Survey provides a snapshot of people experiencing homelessness on a particular night of the year. <http://www.mainehousing.org/data-reports/Housing-Reports>

<sup>8</sup> <http://maine.gov/doe/dataresources/warehouse.html>

<sup>9</sup> See appendix for a detailed graph of rate increase. <http://maine.gov/doe/dataresources/warehouse.html>

<sup>10</sup> As Maine schools transition to the Common Core State Standards, the statewide assessment of reading, the NECAP, may be replaced.

## **Where We Begin: Grade-Level Reading**

*(Please see charts and graphs related to grade-level reading in the appendix)*

The State of Maine currently uses the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) tests to assess students in grades 3 through 8 in reading and mathematics and students in grades 5 through 8 in writing. The tests are administered at the beginning of the year and, as described by the state, “are designed to measure the content and skills that students are expected to have as they begin the school year in their current grade- in other words, the content and skills that students have learned through the end of the previous grade.” Students score between a level 1 and 4, with levels 3 and 4 indicating proficiency.

For the purpose of this community plan, beginning of grade 4 NECAP reading results will be presented to indicate the percentage of third graders reading at grade level. Cumulatively, from the 2010-2011 school year to the 2012-2013 school year, 64% of Portland Public School students entering fourth grade were reading at grade-level. This compares to the 69% cumulative state average for these school years. Most recently (2012-2013 school year), 64% of students entering the fourth grade at Portland elementary schools start the year reading at grade level. Disaggregating the data to look more closely at subgroups, Caucasian students are reading at a high proficiency than African America, Asian and Hispanic students, 73% compared to 40%, 60% and 42% respectively. 67% of female fourth graders are reading at grade level compared to 58% of males. The largest disparities appear when examining English proficient, socioeconomic status and students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP). Only 35% of Portland 4<sup>th</sup> graders who are LEP start the year reading at grade level, compared to 72% of students who are proficient in English. Looking at socioeconomic status, 81% of students who are not economically disadvantaged are reading at grade level at the beginning of grade 4. Only 48% of students who are economically disadvantaged are reading at grade level. The final comparison in our disaggregated NECAP data is between students who have an IEP versus those who do not have an IEP. While 70% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders who do not have an IEP start the year reading at grade level, only 24% of those who do have an IEP are reading at grade level.

*What supports are in place for students?* The following are a small sampling of programs in the Portland area that support students:

**LearningWorks afterschool programs** are offered at four local elementary schools: East End, Presumption, Ocean Avenue and Reiche. The programming engages low income 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> graders who are “partially meeting” benchmarks on the NECAP. Using Eric Jensen and Ruby Payne’s research around brain development and youth in poverty, the programs develops problem solving, inquiry and decision making skills to build the youth’s thinking capacity and background knowledge. LearningWorks collaborates with the schools to engage youth, families and teachers with regard to programming.

Riverton Elementary, a School Improvement Grant (SIG) school, implemented **Parent Academies**, an evening program with childcare and dinner to engage families how to be a partner

in their child’s education, learn about the current curriculum and receive parenting advice and resources to help them better understand how they can help their child at home.

The **Multicultural and Multilingual Center** oversees Portland Public Schools’ English Language Acquisition Program for students whose home language is not English. The Center provides support services in the areas of classroom instruction, summer academic programs, staff development, curriculum and materials development, assessment, parent and community outreach, and advocacy. In-service training and education for Portland Public School faculty and staff is offered throughout the academic year. The Center partners with many local organizations, including the Telling Room, YMCA, Center for Grieving Children, Boys and Girls Club and Phoenix Foundation, among others.

**Portland’s Boys and Girls Club** is a vital resource in the community that connects with both children and families. On average, 289 children per day attend the Portland clubhouse. 60% of the children are in middle school and below.

**High School Graduation Rates**

*(Please see an additional graph related to high school graduation rates in the appendix)*

We understand third-grade reading proficiency is a predictor of high school graduation rates. We present the current data on Portland’s high school graduation rates to give perspective on the larger baseline data of our community.

For purposes of federal reporting and state-to-state consistency, graduation rates in Maine are calculated based on a four-year “Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate” (ACGR), i.e. the number of students who graduate within four years of starting high school.

**ACGR Graduation Rates, 2009-2012**

	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Casco Bay High School	70.5%	76.6%	74.6%
Deering High School	83.4%	83.6%	81.7%
Portland High School	68.7%	74.5%	73.4%
<b>PPS District Rate</b>	<i>76.5%</i>	<i>79.1%</i>	<i>77.4%</i>
<b>Maine Rate</b>	<i>80.3%</i>	<i>83.8%</i>	<i>85.4%</i>

The remainder of Assurance #2 will address data related to school readiness, attendance and summer learning loss, in the following format:

1. We will outline available and relevant data, both quantitative and qualitative, to describe the current situation and recent trends (titled “What We Know”)



2. We will detail our current resources, including the range of services and supports currently focused on addressing aspects of the problems described above. When possible, we will identify where key supports and services are missing and/or unavailable.

### **School Readiness**

It was important to our community to develop a clear, common definition of “school readiness.” The following was developed with consensus by the early childhood/school readiness subgroup of our larger community collaborative, Starting Strong:

“School readiness” describes the experiences of children, their families, schools, and communities that will best promote student success in kindergarten and beyond. When communities, schools and adults are focused on supporting children’s development, all children begin kindergarten ready to succeed.

**Communities: A ready community is one that identifies nurtures and supports families and children as its number one resource.**

Communities support school readiness by promoting innovative strategies to reach the most vulnerable children build a sustainable, comprehensive system that maximizes resources. Communities must regularly assess the status of children, families, schools, and community resources with regard to their role in school readiness and use these assessments in program planning and resource allocation. This planning focuses on access to opportunities to provide a better quality of life for families, encourage early learning opportunities, and foster community participation.

**Schools: A ready school is one that welcomes all families and children and creates an environment that is safe and conducive to learning.**

Ready schools facilitate the transition between home and school by communicating kindergarten and other school information to families through activities such as home visits, telephone calls, questionnaires, and kindergarten visitation days; and forming effective relationships with parents and early childhood programs to share children’s prekindergarten experiences and to assess their development. Ready schools provide resources and services to address the diverse and individual needs of students including educational services; health and mental health services; and social services. School administrators and teachers regularly review the quality, appropriateness, and alignment of the curriculum across all grades and phases of development; and regularly focus on and support the quality of teachers’ interactions with children at all grade levels.

**Families: A ready family has adults who understand they are the most important people in the child’s life and take responsibility for the child’s school readiness through direct, frequent, and positive involvement and interest in the child.**

Adults recognize their role as the child’s first and most important teacher, providing steady and supportive relationships, ensuring safe and consistent environments, promoting good health, and fostering curiosity, excitement about learning, determination, and self-control. Adults support school

readiness when they provide consistency and interact with their children, helping them to develop listening and communication skills and to express their feelings, needs, and wants. Ensuring children are healthy by completing all appropriate eye, ear, dental and other medical screenings as well as immunizations is also an important factor for school readiness. When adults read to and speak with young children regularly and respectfully; appreciate the child's view of the world; encourage exploration; are trustworthy and dependable; and engage with children with joy, warmth, and comfort, they are providing children with the experiences needed for future success.

**Children: A ready child is one who enters school healthy and eager to learn and curious about others and the surrounding world.**

All Portland children who are 5 years old by October 15<sup>th</sup> are kindergarten eligible. Children entering kindergarten vary in their early experiences, skills, knowledge, language, culture and family background. Physical well-being, social development, and curiosity are very important for kindergarten success. When children can: communicate their needs, wants, and thoughts, engage in new activities, follow directions, regulate their behaviors, demonstrate emerging academic skills, and respect others, they display skills that will ensure future academic success.

*What We Know:* The City of Portland has an estimated 3,574 children under the age of 5 (5.4% of Portland's population). There is a capacity to serve 1,658 children under the age of 5 in 63 licensed child care programs. These licensed programs include 28 family child care homes, 31 child care centers and 4 nurseries<sup>11</sup>. In the 2012-13 school year, the second year Portland has offered public Pre-K, five classes are located at four locations with a total enrollment of 85 (compared to 592 Kindergarteners)<sup>12</sup>. The public Pre-K program this school year purposefully did not include transportation to and from school with the idea that having parents bring their child into school would facilitate parent engagement in their children's education. Analyzing data, particularly attendance data, from this school year (when transportation was not provided) to last school year (when it was provided) will be helpful in making a decision about the provision of transportation in the coming year. The first year public Pre-K programs were offered in Portland, information regarding the available service was not translated so non-English speaking families were not made aware of the program. School readiness is as much about the readiness of the schools to serve their students as it is about the students' readiness to attend and succeed school. The city's goal is to have an opening for any child who chooses to attend by the 2016-2017 school year.

Based on data from April 2013, 100 families in Portland are currently authorized for child care subsidy<sup>13</sup>. Although there are currently no wait lists, anecdotally, the requirements for eligibility often make it very difficult for families to qualify for subsidies. In addition, this number does not account for the families using TANF vouchers. Because child care in Portland is costly, many turn to informal networks, including family, friends and neighbors, to help with child care. These networks of care can

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<sup>11</sup> University of Maine. The Center for Research and Evaluation May 2013

<sup>12</sup> Portland Public Schools: Learning to Succeed. District Fast Facts Spring 2013

<sup>13</sup> Office of Child and Family Services, Maine Department of Health and Human Services April 2013

be tenuous, the dynamics change often and the quality of the learning environments varies. As a result, children who experience this type of informal child care often enter Kindergarten with limited exposure to a structured school experience.

All children entering Kindergarten in Portland Public Schools are screened with the *Early Screening Inventory-Revised (ESI)*. The ESI measures three content areas to determine a child's readiness for Kindergarten. However, conversations with elementary school principals, teachers and district administrators as well as comparisons of the ESI to our community definition of school readiness make it clear that the ESI does not accurately measure what we believe makes a child ready for school. The ESI does not address all areas of school readiness that our community knows to be true, particularly social-emotional readiness. Although a child may assess as "ready" on the ESI, s/he may not have the social-emotional skills to sit through a book reading or navigate a classroom independently, for example. Portland Public Schools has been participating in a pilot to identify and utilize a screening tool that does measure all areas of school readiness. The Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning – fourth edition (DIAL-4) was identified and is now being utilized by select staff. The State of Maine, as part of a consortium of states, was recently awarded a Kindergarten Entry Assessment grant from the U.S. Department of Education. We will integrate this new data as it is available.

Portland early childhood professionals from the Kindergarten and Pre-K perspectives note that expectations for Kindergarteners have changed and what is considered "typical" of a Kindergarten student can vary across schools. Because early care and education programs and K-5 do not have a standard assessment of "ready," particularly in terms of social-emotional readiness, early care programs in Portland prepare their children for entry into Kindergarten differently. Portland has recognized the need for alignment and consistency between the Pre-K to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade so there is a shared understanding and definition of "ready" in terms of standards, curriculum and assessment.

*What We Have:* Portland has a number of **accredited, high quality child care programs** that provide rich early childhood experiences, a number of which are partners in this effort. Please find a list of programs under the asset mapping resources list in the appendix.

To ease the transition from early care and education programs to Kindergarten, one child care program in Portland, Catherine Morrill Day Nursery, has started to collaborate with the nearby elementary school, Reiche Community School. With encouragement from a **professional development seminar on the importance of early education**, Kindergarten teachers from Reiche have visited Catherine Morrill's early childhood setting and visa versa. Additionally, Reiche encourages Catherine Morrill to bring preschool classrooms to play on the Reiche playground. Although not all Catherine Morrill children attend Reiche for Kindergarten, this fun connection to their elementary school environment gives those who attend some familiarity once they arrive.

Some elementary schools **use the ESI session as a time to connect with families** and ease the transition into Kindergarten. Schools use the 30 minute individual interviews and screening to introduce parents and children to their Kindergarten teacher, the school nurse, librarian and occupational therapist, if needed. As another way to develop relationships with families, some teachers make a point of riding the school bus with their students on the first few days of school (parents are also invited). Open houses prior to the start of school are another way for parents to meet Kindergarten teachers and explore the classroom. However, these are inconsistent strategies, not implemented district-wide. Both of these practices related to school readiness are opportunities to discuss the importance of regular attendance with students and families.

Provided through LearningWorks, the **Riverton Family Literacy Initiative** seeks to improve the literacy of impoverished families whose children attend the Riverton Head Start program. The collaboration between Portland Public Schools, Portland Adult Education and LearningWorks is designed to help parents create a literacy rich home environment. Currently, the program provides support to 12 Somali mothers within the housing community.

**The Sam L. Cohen Children’s Library at the Portland Public Library** offers reading programs specific to children under the age of two, two year olds and three to five year olds. The library also offers Family Place, topic-centered workshops in five week sessions. Topics have included vaccination, literacy, nutrition and child development, among others. The library partners with select early childhood programs to supply book totes every six weeks.

**Maine Families** offers comprehensive parenting information, as well as support for good health and family well-being for expectant parents and families with new babies. Portland **Public Health Nurses** provide in home nursing assessments and care for pregnant women, mothers, infants and children with identified special needs. **Early Head Start** provides home visiting to low income pregnant woman and families with children from birth to age three. Services are family centered and focused on improving social competencies.

**Maine Roads to Quality** offers professional development opportunities for practitioners working with children and families with a focus on school readiness.

Portland Public Schools’ hosts a **Kindergarten Readiness Night** in the spring to parents of children entering Kindergarten in the fall. The evening includes a panel of staff members throughout the district to discuss the transition into Kindergarten. At least one Portland child care facility offered free child care for parents who wanted to attend. Although the evening is a great effort to help families transition into the district, the number of representatives who attended from the district was limited; all district Kindergarten teachers were invited, although few if any attended other than the two teachers participating in the panel.

## **Attendance**

*What We Know:* In the 2011-2012 school year, the overall student attendance rate for Portland Public Schools was 91.0%, compared to 94.2% at the state level<sup>14</sup>. We understand that this data does not go deep enough and may be overlooking our students who are most at need. Portland Public Schools does not have a district-wide, working definition of or tracking system for attendance and tardiness. Both the state and the district are committed to working with Attendance Works in the development of common definitions of attendance and tardiness. Portland elementary schools will determine baseline chronic absenteeism data by using Attendance Works' self-calculating spreadsheet, "School Attendance Tracking Tool." Targets regarding the reduction of chronic absences will be developed following initial data collection. The groundwork we have laid through both statewide and district efforts will ensure we are tracking chronic absenteeism.

Portland public schools do not have a district-wide policy regarding the activities or programs for the transition into Kindergarten, whether transitioning from home or an early care and education program. According to community members from early care programs and elementary schools, this transition is a key time to lay out expectations of attendance to parents and children for the school-age years. While parents may have a clear understanding of attendance policies in early care and education programs, including both the academic and financial ramifications of missing programming, expectations for Kindergarten attendance are not as clearly defined. The lack of consistency throughout the district regarding the ways schools help families prepare for Kindergarten may be contributing to some cases of chronic absenteeism.

*What We Have:* District wide, schools use **Infinite Campus** to track student data, including attendance. The system alerts school secretaries or an automated telephone system to call home when a student is absent and the parent has not called to check in. Another district-wide practice engages social workers when students become consistently, or chronically, absent. The current system for addressing absences is inconsistent. **Anecdotally, schools and teachers develop personal strategies to help students who struggle to arrive at school on time, or at all.** Some strategies that have been used include supplying alarm clocks to students, offering attendance incentives and employing an older sibling or classmate to help the student get to the bus on time. One local principal picks up a child from home every day so he can arrive at school on time. Within each school building and within each classroom, school staff work individually with families in order to support them.

For many, issues of attendance, as well as school readiness and summer learning loss, are intimately tied to the larger needs of the family, including securing housing, employment, access to food, health care and mental health needs. Some early care and education programs and all public schools **offer families support from social workers.** Social workers meet with families and help them connect to other

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<sup>14</sup> <http://maine.gov/doe/dataresources/warehouse.html>

available services. However, social workers are dependent upon funding and with regular cuts, social service supports are often underfunded, which results in more risk for the most vulnerable families and children. Elementary schools report their social workers do not have sufficient time to work with all families in need. Some early care and education programs rely on Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to support social workers, but only eligible families can use the services.

Riverton and East End, Portland's two School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools, have begun to address attendance issues using innovative practices. Two years ago, East End started the "**Rise and Shine**" program. By starting school 30 minutes early, East End invites kids in for rich, interactive activities in order to motivate kids to arrive on time. Different choices of early-morning enrichment activities include reading, yoga, film club, gardening, math, etc. Programs run in six week cycles. The program starts each day in school on a positive note and with a successful school experience. Rise and Shine allows for a successful transition into the school day. East End has seen positive changes in their students' attendance, tardiness and behavior.

Another innovative, and low cost, initiative at some Portland elementary schools to encourage attendance is the "**Walking School Bus.**" Portland's Walking School Bus is a group of students, supervised by a trained adult volunteer, who walks along a designated route to and/or from school each school day. Children can join the Walking School Bus at stops along the route near their homes. Families can also drop off their children at a meeting point, such as a nearby park, to join the group as they walk together to school. The program was brought to Portland through a collaboration between Portland Public Schools and the Maine Safe Routes to School Program. The program is targeted at elementary age children (K-5).

### **Summer Learning Loss**

*What We Know and What We Have:* Currently, we do not have access to data that tracks summer learning loss. One possible way of determining baseline data is by calculating the percentage of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders who scored lower on the fall NWEA compared to the previous spring NWEA. If chosen as our method of baseline data collection we will work with Portland Public Schools' Coordinator of Data, Program Review, and Shared Accountability on analyzing this specific data point.

Students can regress whenever they leave the consistent, predictable pattern of the schools learning environment, whether in early care and education programs or school-age classrooms. According to local early childhood providers, special needs, low-income children who receive subsidized care are often most affected by summer learning loss. Although these children are provided services during the school year, they often do not qualify for funding through the summer due to the fact that Child Development Services (and early intervention program) requires proof of regression to subsidize summer care; by then it is oftentimes too late to receive the services they need.

To help address summer learning loss, many teachers and schools provide students with **summer reading lists and announce summer projects and competitions** at the end of the school year to encourage reading throughout the summer. Some teachers prepare booklets and journals to send home with kids for the summer, although once the children have left the classroom for the summer, teachers are not involved and children often have no one to remind them to read or write in their journal each day. Some children may not have an appropriate space in their home to read or write; others may not have access to books.

**Portland Public Library** annually offers a summer reading program to engage students of all ages. Although they have attempted to collaborate with schools with regard to reading lists, the library has struggled to create lasting partnerships with the district. In addition to summer programming, the library website offers two reading programs: Tumblebooks and Muzzy Languages. Both programs allow students to read books online. Muzzy offers read-aloud programs in ten languages. A summer Book Mobile is a new initiative that is scheduled to begin this summer.

**Portland Public Schools** offer summer programming for children with limited English-language proficiency and special needs as well as those schools with a Title I plan, which tend to be schools with students who live with a high level of poverty. A summer lunch program is also provided to keep children and families connected to school.

The **John T. Gorman Foundation (JTG)** recently funded a summer learning initiative for five Maine schools, including Portland, supported by research regarding best-practices and standards for summer programs. Additionally, JTG is funding a summer intern to interview school staff in Maine who work with a high percentage of students who receive Free and Reduced Lunch and high NECAP reading scores to determine what programs are most effective. This research will help to inform future funding. JTG is committed to working with Starting Strong and sharing the lessons learned with the community.

**Learning Works** offers summer programming for children who are partially meeting standards in Math and Literacy in grades 2-5 at East End Community, Reiche, Presumpscot and Ocean Avenue Schools. Programming is a hands-on exploration of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)-focused standards with an emphasis on building non-fiction literacy.

Open year round between three to six hours a day, depending on the site, Portland's **Boys and Girls Club** offers students small group activities and large group recreation.

The **Portland Recreation Department** offers summer programs and camps to school age students. They annually partner with the Portland Public Library to provide books on a rotating basis to each site. In addition, they partner with the Portland Seadogs to challenge kids to "Read Your Way to Opening Day".

From 1999-2009, the Libra Foundation offered scholarships for 4-6<sup>th</sup> graders in Portland schools to attend summer camps in Maine through the **Summer Champs** program. Scholarships were made available regardless of family income. More than 87% of eligible students in Portland used the scholarships over the 10 years of funding. The program ended at the end of the 2009 summer and to date, nothing has yet to take its place.

A local early care and education program invites **lower income families who are not enrolled in full-year programming on field trips**. These families receive newsletters from the school and are offered opportunities to come into the classroom for visits during the summer.

During the summer of 2013, the partners of Portland ConnectED, led by the Mayor and Superintendent, launched a **public awareness and education campaign** to highlight the expanded summer food service and summer learning opportunities and to increase interest and participation in healthy eating and active summer learning.

### **Assurance #2: Destination**

Starting Strong and the Portland community have set four ambitious, yet achievable goals related to third grade reading, school readiness, school attendance and summer learning loss. These benchmarks are draft statements and will go through extensive community input prior to being finalized. Additional data from Portland Public Schools is currently being analyzed to assist us in this process. These benchmarks and indicators help to create a shared, common lens and direction of focus for all involved. Each benchmark relates to the larger goal that Portland students achieve grade level reading by the end of third grade.

### **GOAL #1: Third Grade Reading**

*What is Portland's goal?* All Portland 3<sup>rd</sup> graders are reading at or above grade level (as evidenced by beginning of grade four testing) on the State of Maine's assessment of reading<sup>15</sup>. All subgroups of students will make progress toward reading at or above grade level, including those students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, students who are not proficient in English and students who have IEPs. Targets will focus on all children as well as closing the gap between groups of children (i.e. children who live in poverty and children who do not).

### **GOAL #2: School Readiness**

*What is Portland's goal?* All Portland children will enter Kindergarten prepared to succeed in school.

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<sup>15</sup> As Maine schools transition to the Common Core State Standards, the statewide assessment of reading, the NECAP, may be replaced.



### **GOAL #3: School Attendance**

*What is Portland's goal?* All children enrolled in early learning programs to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade will arrive at school on time every day.

### **GOAL #4: Summer Learning**

*What is Portland's goal?* All Portland pre-kindergarten-3<sup>rd</sup> grade students will maintain or improve their reading level over the summer in order to enter the school year at or above grade level.

### **Assurance #3: Strategy**

As mentioned above, we aim to achieve grade level reading by (1) **improving school readiness**, (2) **improving attendance** and (3) **reducing summer learning loss**. Although we present an outline of our proposed plan throughout this document, our community coalition, Starting Strong, has committed to using the Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework to more fully engage the community in the development and implementation of strategies. Select members of Starting Strong have been trained in RBA to help facilitate group work.

*What is RBA?* By placing consistent emphasis on a disciplined, analytical process and continuous improvement, Results-Based Accountability (RBA) has proven to be a successful, sustainable practice to help multiple organizations work in collaborative partnership toward shared goals. RBA can be of particular use in “collective impact” work, which requires effective collaboration among large working groups and multiple agencies with varying cultures and practices. Also known as outcomes-based accountability, RBA is a management tool designed to facilitate collaboration among multiple organizations to achieve shared goals. According to one of its strongest proponents, RBA “is a disciplined way of thinking and taking action that can be used to improve the quality of life in communities...and also to improve the performance of programs, agencies, and systems.” Though it can take a variety of shapes depending on the circumstances, RBA should always include a clearly articulated desired result together with a data collection and reporting protocol to assess progress.

To date, we have used the RBA analysis to develop evidence-based, promising practices and no and low-cost solutions to “turn the curve” and meet our goal related to school readiness. The strategies we developed as a group have been selected because of their leverage, feasibility, specificity and consistency with our community values. In addition, these strategies address what we see as the root causes of why some students do not enter school ready to learn. We are committed to looking at attendance and summer learning loss using the RBA framework by conducting community conversations around attendance and summer learning loss. These community conversations are intended to reveal the root causes of chronic absenteeism and summer learning loss which will create the foundation for our strategies moving forward. Bringing the larger community into this framework

ensures we are making data-driven decisions that are in line with our community needs and supported by community members.

To ensure our students are reading proficiently by the end of third grade, Starting Strong's CSAP is rooted in eight Guiding Principles. Throughout the implementation and exploration of strategies, we will follow these principles:

- Portland's Starting Strong Subcommittee and the larger work toward our goal is a partnership among the community, parents and schools.
- We will use outcome-based and data-driven processes to guide all work, such as the Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework.
- Strategies will coordinate between and within programs, activities, schools and families to mutually reinforce one another and maximize the impact on all children birth-8.
  - To encourage consistency and avoid duplication, coordination between groups may include collaboration around timing, content and recruitment of students based on individual needs.
- Strategies will build on and/or integrate existing infrastructure as determined by the mapping of community resources<sup>16</sup>.
- While maintaining universal, population level support, certain strategies and programming will be prioritized by those that have greatest impact on children with the highest needs.
- Strategies will be culturally sensitive. To ensure access to all parents, strategies will explore transportation and translation needs and will be sensitive to where families live, work and spend time.
- Strategies will be research-based, where appropriate, but promising practices will also be explored.
- In addition to strategies that require funding, low and no-cost strategies will be explored.

The following “umbrella” strategies were developed by the Starting Strong group before our decision to utilize the RBA framework. Although they do not specifically address school readiness, attendance or summer learning loss, we feel they are important steps in reaching our larger goal.

**Community-wide education campaign led by a common vision and theory of action:** Our commitment to ensure Portland students are reading at grade level by the end of third grade will be guided by an education campaign with a clear, common vision and theory of action. This vision, as well as the larger CSAP strategies, will be community-based, growing, molding and changing based on local voices and local knowledge. The vision will be the collective voice of the community, stemming from the knowledge and lived-experiences of not only parents, early care and education providers and teachers, but also business leaders, students, bus drivers and local politicians. The education campaign and vision will be informed by the needs of the community as established by a community

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<sup>16</sup> An initial mapping of resources for children 0-8 was completed in October 2012. It can be found in the appendix

assessment and a continual process of research, reflection and action. Because of the growing number of low-income students in our district, part of our theory of action will include research-based frameworks around teaching to children in poverty<sup>17</sup>. The Starting Strong campaign, based in a common set of values and beliefs, will be a collective message from the community to the community about the importance of school readiness, attendance and summer learning to ensure success for all of Portland's learners.

**Systemic alignment of all programs serving Portland children birth to age 8:** Working alongside families and schools, we are committed to building stronger connections and coordinated information systems between families, schools, services and programs that serve children birth to 8. A mapping of existing services will assist in this process. In coordination with state level standards and assessments and in partnership with schools, Starting Strong will facilitate the development of a common evidence and research-based birth-8 academic curriculum that ensures a coordinated system of alignment and accountability. As children move through the system, all providers, from doctors to afterschool program staff to family childcare providers and Kindergarten teachers, will be working from a shared understanding of the Portland education system's standards, curriculum and assessment. Those working with Portland's youngest population will approach their work from a common lens and, by working together, will be able to more effectively identify and support children at-risk or at-need of services.

**Coordinated data and resource sharing:** Integral to the success of a systemic alignment of programs, we will build upon and strengthen the current data collection processes related to Portland's birth-8 population. Three levels of an improved system include: coordinating and strengthening data collection methodology of what data is collected, how it is collected and how it is input; improving ease of access to data; and improving use of data to ensure decisions that affect Portland's youth are consistently data-driven. This system will ensure consistency across all services that are working with Portland youth and will encourage early care and education programs, public schools and enrichment programs to communicate around lessons learned and inspiring best practices.

**Improve access to high quality educational experiences for all children, birth-8:** Key to the success of this community plan is ensuring equal access to high quality educational experiences for all Portland's young learners. This requires confidence in the instructional quality and educational expertise across the district.

**Increase access to health and wellness programs, supports and services for children birth-8:** The incorporation of a public health component into this community campaign expands our commitment to wraparound services that fully support children's growth and learning from birth forward. Consciously increasing access to health and wellness programs will help address both children and families' health related barriers that hinder learning. Working together with families and healthcare providers, we will

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<sup>17</sup> While we will reach all students and families with this initiative, we understand we need to initially over-resource to children and families in poverty, as they are falling farthest behind most often.

support access to health care in uncharacteristic location; care does not only need to come from a doctor's office, but can also be accessed in community centers, public housing, health portals or schools. This link will strengthen the overall connection between families, school and community.

**Strategies related to school readiness.** Using the RBA framework, we have selected the following strategies to address school readiness:

1. Support expanded access to **universal Pre-Kindergarten** with multiple delivery models.
2. Support **unified professional development opportunities** across birth-8 programs to focus practices and to address data goals. Professional development will have an emphasis on early language and literacy.
3. Implement a **community-wide campaign** with a focuses on parent engagement so all parents have access to knowledge about how to support their children for success in school.
4. Increase opportunities to access **Portland Adult Education** programs.
5. Support cross-system collaboration between families, early care and education providers and K-3 teachers which allows the community to unite around a **shared definition of school readiness** that is supported by parents' understanding of what it means to be school ready. Professional development opportunities related to school readiness will be grounded in this definition.
6. Develop and adopt a **common screening tool** that assesses social and academic readiness for children entering Kindergarten in Portland.
7. Support cross-system collaboration between early care and education providers, community organizations and Portland Public Schools, specifically K-3 teachers, around the implementation of a city-wide **shared data system**. The data system will be structured around shared indicators.

The following strategies related to attendance and summer learning loss did not come from an RBA framework. They were developed as a group but will be revised, utilizing RBA, based on our community conversations about the root causes of attendance and summer learning loss.

**Strategies related to attendance:**

1. Implement a **community-wide campaign** with a focus on attendance to develop a culture of consistent attendance throughout the community. This information will be both disseminated by and geared toward parents, providers and teachers. Integrate community members including public health nurses, home visitors, social workers and the medical community.
2. Support Portland Public Schools in sharing **best practices** of attendance and exploring the implementation of **district-wide definition and policies** around chronic absences and tardiness.
3. Support **training and information for early care and education providers** and teachers to strengthen sensitivity to and awareness of familial issues related to chronic absenteeism or tardiness.

4. Implement a **district-wide data system** with accurate information on attendance to be utilized by all academic and enrichment touch-points (e.g., classroom teacher, afterschool programming staff and sports coach). Coordinate and share this information with before/after school programs to identify and reach out to chronically absent students.
5. Implement **Count ME In**, a research-based approach to attendance coordinated through Spurwink utilizing information from “Attendance Works”. Include strong emphasis on improving collaboration and wraparound services from resources such as Opportunity Alliance, Spurwink and Sweetser.
6. Increase and strengthen **collaboration between before/after school programs and schools** to strengthen on-time attendance.
7. Advocate for and explore alternative funding options for elementary schools to develop or continue growing **school-based health centers**.

#### **Strategies related to summer learning loss:**

1. Support **research-based summer learning programs** through schools and community organizations.
2. **Incentivize student summer learning** through collaboration with local businesses and community organizations.
3. Encourage **stronger coordination between enrichment program staff and school staff**, including professional development and training.
4. Support the exploration of **strategies to provide early intervention and early childhood special education services through the summer** for children who are on federal subsidies.
5. Coordination between the library’s **summer Book Mobile**, low-income housing developments and schools, organize events focused around reading that come to one neighborhood a month to engage families around reading in the summer.
6. Coordinate with the **Preble Street Maine Hunger Initiative** and **summer lunch programs** to ensure programming supports and is in line with the **Let’s Go 5-2-1-0** campaign to educate children on health and wellness.

#### **Assurance #4 Connecting for Synergy**

*We are aligning and connecting with other important initiatives.*

In its founding *Statement of Shared Intent and Guiding Principles*, the Portland ConnectED Steering Committee resolved “[t]o align Partnership efforts, where appropriate, with the efforts, expertise, and resources of local, regional, and national networks undertaking similar or complementary initiatives.” The partners adopted this provision in full recognition of the fact that our success in achieving our shared goals in timely fashion will, in turn, depend upon the sharing of ideas, research, data, resources, and strategic efforts with an array of local, regional, and national partners.

One of the very first actions of Portland ConnectED's Starting Strong Subcommittee was to reach out to connect with the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, a relationship that has been embraced wholeheartedly by all our local partners. Within the city limits, in addition to reaching out to existing institutional partners and ongoing programs, we have sought to connect to appropriate degrees with other collaborative initiative, including but not limited to:

- Portland Defending Childhood (local affiliate of federal Dept. of Justice initiative)
- Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (collaborative of local child protection case managers)
- Share Our Strength (a statewide and nationwide hunger prevention network)
- Cumberland County Food Security Coalition
- Count Me In (a local adaptation of the Attendance Works framework)

Making use of results-based analytical frameworks, the Subcommittee has sought to align the strategic work of scores of local organizations around shared community objectives, including school readiness, improved attendance, and the mitigation of summer learning loss. The Starting Strong Subcommittee has also connected to varying degrees with regional and statewide coalitions, including:

- Early Childhood Funders Group
- Maine Children's Alliance (statewide policy organization)
- Maine Center for Economic Policy
- Maine Early Learning Investment Group
- Let's Go! (a state affiliate of a nationwide obesity prevention program)
- Reading Matters to ME! (a statewide literacy initiative)

Notably, the Starting Strong planning, decision-making, and strategic action is undertaken in close communication with state-level early childhood leaders who are engaged in a multi-state consortium to develop early childhood readiness standards and screening tools.

Finally, through the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and through its own initiative, the Starting Strong Subcommittee has developed relationships with the National Summer Learning Association (including a local NSLA representative who has helped with evaluation), Attendance Works, the Strive Network, and the National League of Cities. In addition, the Portland Mayor's Office has offered to host a Northeast Regional Grade-Level Reading Roundtable in conjunction with the National League of Cities and the Campaign.

### **Assurance #5 Data (Holders to Data Contributors):**

Specifically because of our commitment to the RBA framework, we view accurate, timely and high-quality data as paramount to this entire process. Data is key to capturing our baseline, tracking indicators over time and measuring larger project success. In addition, reliable data will be used consistently to make both large and small-scale project decisions. As discussed previously, Starting Strong is made up of partners from all sectors of the community. This is particularly useful when thinking about data.

**Portland Public Schools:** A large portion of our data will come from our contacts at the Portland school district. PPS commitment to the Starting Strong vision ensures ongoing access to needed data. Timely data on baseline scores for the DIAL pilot capturing school readiness, NECAP (or the new Common Core assessment) scores for third grade reading proficiency, and attendance will all come from the school district. More specifically, attendance data will be available through the district's Infinite Campus database. As discussed previously, we will work with the district to determine baseline summer learning loss data by calculating the percentage of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders who scored lower on the fall NWEA compared to the previous spring NWEA.

#### **Maine Department of Education Data Warehouse**

(<http://maine.gov/doe/dataresources/warehouse.html>): The State has created a database to store all Maine schools' data in one centralized location. The Warehouse creates tables and charts and allows for quick, accessible access to a variety of data, including data related to: discipline, dropout, English Language Learners, enrollment, finance, graduation, student assessments, special education, staff, attendance and student need.

### **Assurance #6 Success and Sustainability**

*We have the support, resources and capacity to execute, implement, and get this done.*

From its inception, the Starting Strong Subcommittee of Portland ConnectED, which has guided our work with the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, has enjoyed strong support. That support has only grown and solidified through the process of developing the Community Solutions Action Plan. The Steering Committee of Portland ConnectED comprises key partners from the City of Portland, the business community, the philanthropic community, civic institutions, and early childhood educators, including the local Head Start provider and District leadership from Portland Public Schools.

Through a Leadership Team of four representatives, a few of these partners, including major funders in the early childhood realm, have, with the support of dedicated staff, led the work of the Starting Strong Subcommittee. Those key partners include the John T. Gorman Foundation, the Sam L. Cohen Foundation, and the United Way of Greater Portland. The Subcommittee features representatives from

an even broader array of important sectors in the community, including health, inter-faith, and after-school organizations.

Meetings of ad hoc working groups convened to address specific indicators, results-based accountability principles, and more have been consistently well attended, drawing a variety of participants from neighboring communities and state agencies, as well as an active core of local partners. Inquiries and requests for information continue to come in as the number of interested community members steadily grows and often outpaces our capacity for outreach.

All the evidence points to the conclusion that the goals and work of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading have found fertile ground for long and productive growth here in Portland, Maine. The Leadership Team is in the midst of crafting a sustainability plan and budget to reflect the express, ongoing commitment of several key partners. Although this plan, as of this writing, has not yet been finalized, there is little doubt in anyone's mind that the Starting Strong/CGLR work will continue to thrive and drive the City's larger "cradle-to-career" work overall.



## **Part Three: Overview of the CSAP Development Process**

**February 2013:** On February 25, 2013, Portland’s Mayor Michael Brennan announced the creation of Portland ConnectED, a community initiative designed to create pathways to success from “cradle to career” for all of Portland. Portland ConnectED was developed to build partnerships among education, business, non-profit, civic and philanthropic sectors. In the Mayor’s words: “Portland ConnectED will help the community live up to a promise that all residents find a career within the global economy right here in Portland...We know that early childhood development is a fundamental factor in future success. We also know that early grade level literacy is a key determinant for high school graduation and achievement, and post-secondary training and credentials are increasingly necessary for success in today’s modern global economy. Portland ConnectED will connect the dots between these stages and put all Portland children on a pathway to a satisfying and promising career.” The Starting Strong Subcommittee of Portland ConnectED was formed to specifically address grade level reading. The Starting Strong Leadership Team was formed to work on specific tasks within the Starting Strong workplan.

**March 2013:** Following the Mayor’s announcement of Portland ConnectED, the John T. Gorman Foundation and the Starting Strong Subcommittee of Portland ConnectED hosted a Grade-Level Reading Forum with Ron Fairchild, Senior Consultant at the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, and two Massachusetts CGLR cities. Over 59 people attended the forum.

Starting in January 2013, the smaller Starting Strong Leadership Team met biweekly to develop the Community Solutions Action Plan (CSAP). As sections were complete, they were presented to the larger Starting Strong Subcommittee, which continues to convene monthly. A full-group brainstorming sessions was used to develop the initial list of strategies to address school readiness, attendance and summer learning loss. This list continued to be refined in subsequent meetings as it began with many detailed strategies that were too specific.

The group continues to discuss the importance of gathering authentic community input. Although we have a variety of sectors at the table, we are fully aware that we are missing those who would be most affected by the implementation of this plan. Our current “community conversations” strategy was specifically designed to reach those whose ideas have not yet been included in the CSAP.

**June 2013:** A Results-Based Accountability (RBA) training was hosted by the John T. Gorman foundation as an available tool for refining our strategies. Many Starting Strong members attended the training.

**July 2013-August 2013:** Members of the Starting Strong Subcommittee attended a follow-up RBA session during which we used the framework of RBA to approach school readiness.

**September 2013:** At the September meeting of Starting Strong Subcommittee the current draft of the CSAP and the draft of the RBA analysis of school readiness was presented with the intent of getting the groups' "okay" to submit the CSAP and continue to use the RBA framework with attendance and summer learning loss. The revised community input gathering process was also presented to the group.

***Looking Ahead...***

**October-November 2013:** Members of the Subcommittee signed up for small group work on the RBA refinement of attendance and summer learning loss<sup>18</sup> strategies. In addition, we will convene a group of local experts to add a health indicator to our framework around addressing school readiness.

**Late October-December 2013:** Member of the Subcommittee have volunteered to reach out to their constituents with a targeted set of 3-4 questions that help uncover the root causes to absenteeism and summer learning loss. The root causes are key to developing strategies when using the RBA framework. The process for gathering input will be based in the Harwood Institute's work. Following our member outreach, we will develop a simple online training tool for Parent Teacher Organization leaders, cultural brokers and parent community specialists within the schools to conduct these community conversations and share their findings with us.

**January 2014:** Implementation of prioritized strategies within the CSAP begins!

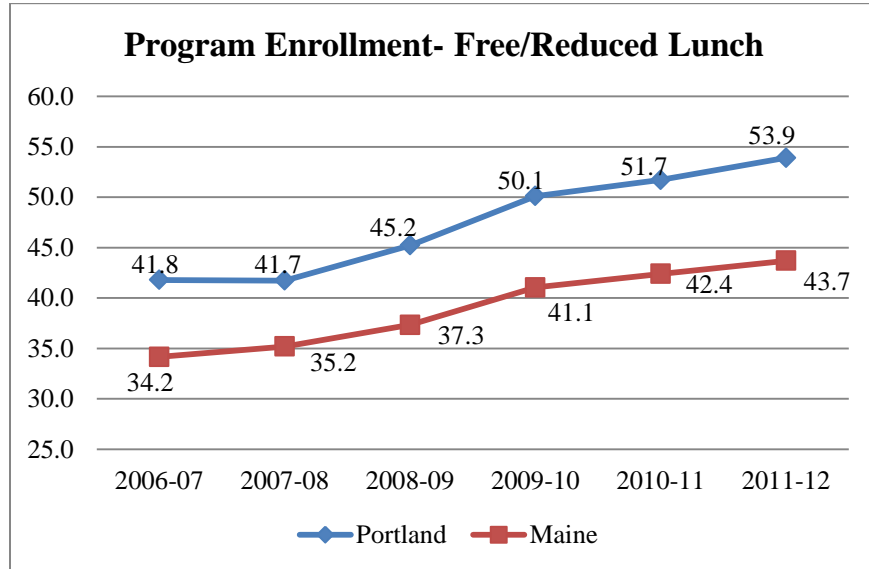
Please see the Starting Strong Subcommittee overview attached as Appendix Two for further details.

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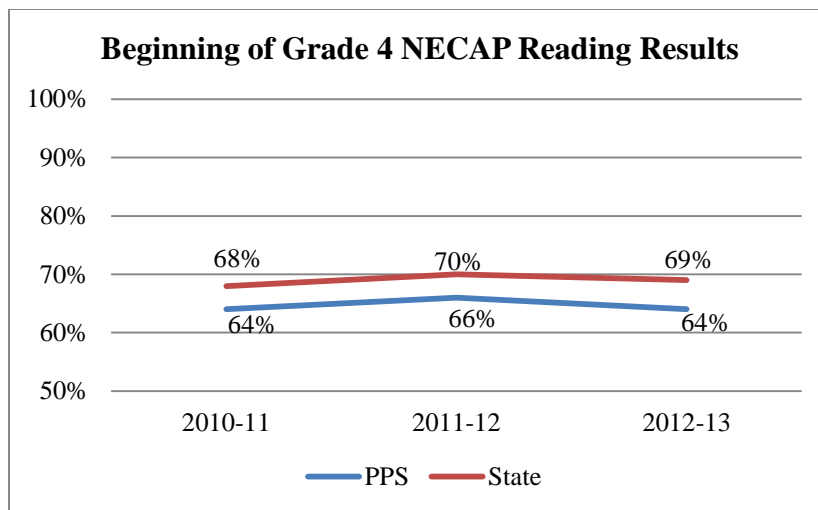
<sup>18</sup> Refining the summer learning loss strategies will take time as we do not yet have access to data. We expect this to be a 4-5 month process

**Appendix One:** Data and explanatory information for Part Two of the CSAP

**1. Portland Public Schools free and reduced lunch enrollment:**

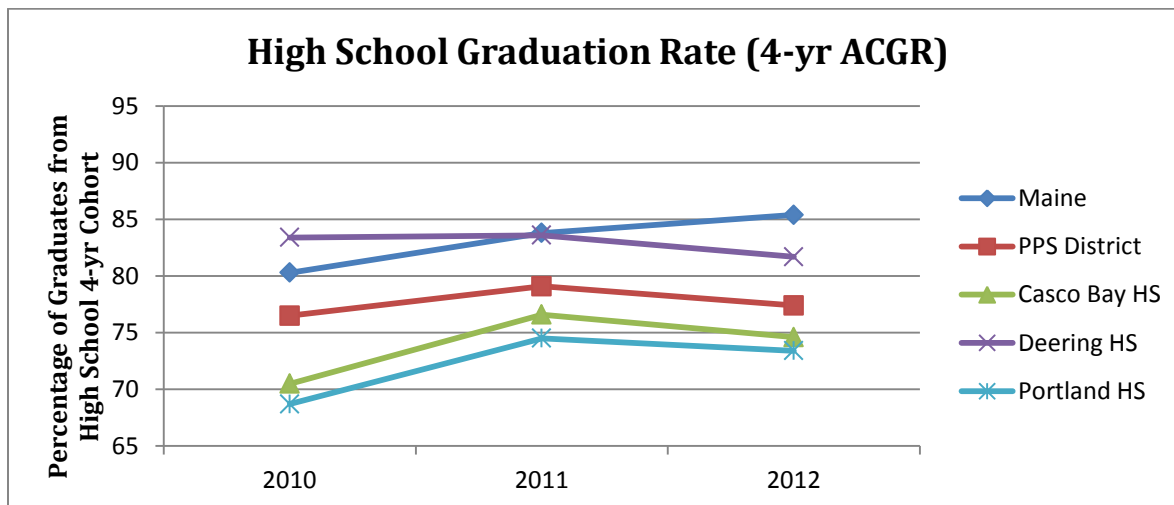


**2. Beginning of Grade 4 NECAP Reading Results:**



<b>Portland Public Schools 2012-2013 Beginning of Grade 4 NECAP Reading Results</b>	
	<i>% of students reading at grade level</i>
All Students	64%
<b><i>Ethnicity</i></b>	
Caucasian	73%
African American	40%
Asian	60%
Hispanic	42%
<b><i>Gender</i></b>	
Male	58%
Female	67%
<b><i>Limited English Proficient (LEP) Status</i></b>	
LEP	35%
Non-LEP	72%
<b><i>Socioeconomic Status</i></b>	
Economically disadvantaged	48%
Not economically disadvantaged	81%
<b><i>Individualized Education Plan (IEP)</i></b>	
Students with an IEP	24%
No IEP	70%

### 3. High School Graduation Rates:



#### **4. Portland Asset Mapping: Resources for Ages 0-8. Completed October 2012**

##### **Early Care and Education Providers**

###### ***Centers***

###### **Level 4 Centers**

Bright Horizons

Catherine Morrill

Circle Time

First Lutheran Children's Program

JCA

Opportunity Alliance (multiple sites: Early Head Start, Head Start)

Peaks Island Children's Workshop

St. Elizabeth's (Catholic Charities)

The Children's Center

Youth and Family Outreach

###### **Level 3 Centers**

Children's Odyssey

###### **Level 2 Centers**

Trinity Day School

###### **Level 1 Centers**

Back Cove School

Children's Adventure Center

Children's CO-OP

Children's House

Hug-a-Bug

Portside Learning Center

Waynflete School

###### **Non-QRIS Centers**

All Aboard

Breakwater

Children's Center

Gentle Wings

Heartfelt School

Just Kidden

###### **Centers Unknown**

Children's Nursery School

***Family Based:*** 29 Providers (two level 4, one level 3, three level 2, six level 1, seventeen non-QRIS)

### **Portland Public Schools**

Maine Family Literacy Partnership (LearningWorks)

Public Pre-K: Portland Public Schools sites:

- PATHS
- Longfellow Elementary School
- Riverton Elementary School
- Youth and Family Services

### **Out of School Time**

A Company of Girls

Boys & Girls Clubs

Girl Scouts

Boy Scouts

LearningWorks Afterschool

LearningWorks Summer Learning Program

Parkside Neighborhood Center

Portland Recreation Department (City of Portland)

Rippleffect

Root Cellar

Sail Maine

Salvation Army - summer camp

The Telling Room

YES! Summer Basketball League

YMCA

### **Parent and Family Support**

Community Partnership for Protecting Children (Opp. Alliance)

Connections for Kids

Family Shelter (City of Portland)

Family Mediation (Opportunity Alliance)

Strong Fathers (Opportunity Alliance); Father's Support (YMCA)

Immigrant/Refugee Services (City of Portland)

Maine Families Home Visiting (Opportunity Alliance)

Maternal and Child Health (City of Portland)

Parent Education (City of Portland)

Parenting Education (Opportunity Alliance)

Parents as Partners (Opportunity Alliance)

Portland Community Free Clinic (adults)

Step Up Shelter

Young Parent Program (Opportunity Alliance)

22 Park Avenue (Opportunity Alliance)

### **Child Physical Health**

Healthy Maine Partnerships (City of Portland, Opportunity Alliance)

HomeHealth Visiting Nurses

Maine Families Home Visiting (Opportunity Alliance)

Maternal and Child Health (City of Portland)  
Minority Health Program (City of Portland)  
Northeast Hearing and Speech  
Oral Health

- Children's Oral Health Program
- Community Dental

Portland Community Health Center  
School Based Health Centers  
Summer Food Program (Opportunity Alliance)

### **Child Mental Health**

Children's Case Management (CCC, Opportunity Alliance)  
Center for Grieving Children  
Child, Youth & Family Therapy (CCC)  
Family Intervention Response & Support Team (FIRST) (CCC)  
Kids First  
Maine Med Center, McGeachey Hall  
North East Occupational Exchange (NOE)  
Providence  
Refugee & Immigrant Counseling & Case Management Program (CCC)  
Spring Harbor  
Sexual Abuse Treatment (SAT) (CCC)  
Spurwink Services  
Sweetser

### **Child Well Being**

Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (Opportunity Alliance)  
Treatment Foster Care (Opportunity Alliance)

### **Mentoring (formal, informal, adult engagement)**

Big Brother Big Sisters  
Foster Grandparents

### **Violence and Abuse**

Family Crisis Services  
Pine Tree Legal Assistance  
Portland Defending Childhood  
Sexual Assault Services Southern Maine

### **Homelessness**

Homeless Youth Services (Opportunity Alliance)  
Preble Street  
Portland Adult Ed  
City of Portland Public Health

### **Sports Leagues/Athletic Activities**

Basketball  
Football  
Little League  
Winter Activities (City of Portland)  
Soccer  
Winter Kids

### **Services for Refugee and Immigrant Youth**

Extensive list of New American organizations and service providers needs to be assessed for age 0-8 services (provided by LearningWorks/ICL Hudson Family asset mapping project)

### **Substance Abuse**

Day One

### **Other**

Children's Museum  
Community Centers (City of Portland)  
Compass Project- Spurwink Services  
Portland Public Library  
Raising Readers

### **Advocacy**

Start Me Right

### **Coalitions**

Early Childhood Funders Network  
Educate Maine  
Maine Children's Alliance –Shared Services  
Maine Children's Cabinet (Not Convened Under Gov LePage)  
Maine Early Learning Investors Group

## **Appendix Two: *Starting Strong Subcommittee Overview for Part Three of the CSAP***

See below/attached.





## THE STARTING STRONG SUBCOMMITTEE

### Overview

Portland ConnectED is a far-reaching initiative to build and sustain a citywide culture and civic infrastructure dedicated to supporting highly effective education for Portland’s youth, for Portland families, and for the Portland community at large.

To achieve this overarching goal, Portland ConnectED will coordinate efforts, align resources, and harness the expertise of organizations and leaders throughout the city—and the country—to work together towards specific, measurable, shared objectives that will help prepare our citizens to meet the challenges of the future.

Within Portland ConnectED, the Starting Strong Subcommittee is focusing on a few of those critical objectives to ensure a strong childhood experience for all our children. Specifically, two of our prime objectives are to increase school readiness and reading proficiency by the end of third grade.

Families, communities, early childhood providers, and schools all share in the responsibility to provide supports and experiences that promote the healthy development of each child. Children thrive when families and communities have the capacity to ensure safe and healthy experiences that encourage learning and support each child.

By working together like never before, Portland ConnectED’s Starting Strong Subcommittee seeks to build this capacity and ensure a strong start for all children in Portland.

*"Portland ConnectED is one of the most significant and far-reaching educational partnerships in the history of the city of Portland, one that catapults our community into a leadership role in our state — and in the nation."*

-Portland Mayor Michael Brennan

### Structure of the Starting Strong Subcommittee

The Starting Strong Subcommittee therefore aims to engage the Portland community, individuals, and organizations in developing and implementing a plan to increase the number of children ready for school and reading proficiently by grade three. This work will involve a wide array of sectors from throughout the community, including:

Parents	Students
Early Care and Education	Higher Education
Business	Faith/Religion
Health	Out-of-School Time Providers
Social Services	Philanthropy
Civic/Public	Community Leaders

The following structure was developed to foster broad community involvement:

**1. Starting Strong Subcommittee**

- To provide leadership, strategic guidance, and oversight in the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan to meet goals of school readiness and grade level reading by the end of third grade.
- Membership: 15-25 people from broad, diverse set of stakeholders who mostly provide direct services for children.
- Meetings: quarterly, perhaps more frequent during certain periods.

**2. Starting Strong Work Group**

- To coordinate day-to-day development and implementation of the plan.
- Membership: Subset of Starting Strong Subcommittee members, primarily high-level staff from direct-services organizations.
- Meetings: twice-per-month.

**3. Community Implementation Group(s)**

- Critical to final development and implementation of the community solutions action plan.
- Membership: hundreds (hopefully) of individuals from across Portland, representing a true cross-section of the city, including parents and students.
- Input will be gathered from this group through focus groups, community forums, and other meetings.

**Workplan/Major Activities**

Activity	Timeline
Convene Starting Strong Subcommittee	January 2013, quarterly
Convene Starting Strong Work Group (every two weeks)	January 2013, 2x/month
Bring Panel from other Communities to Portland	March 14, 2013
Complete Asset Map	March 2013
Gather data/statistics to serve as baseline data for Portland ConnectED to provide context for developing a community solutions action plan	March 2013
Draft community solutions action plan	April – June 2013
Gather input broadly from community	June – September 2013
Final community solutions action plan	September 2013
Implementation of plan	September 2013 forward

*“We know that early childhood development is a fundamental factor in future success. We also know that early grade level literacy is a key determinant for high school graduation and achievement, and post-secondary training and credentials are increasingly necessary for success in today’s modern global economy. Portland ConnectED will connect the dots between these stages and put all Portland children on a pathway to a satisfying and promising career.”*

-Portland Mayor Michael Brennan

For more information about the Starting Strong Subcommittee and/or the Portland Campaign for Grade Level Reading, please contact:

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