Focused on Children’s Success. TOGETHER.

ROC the Future is an alliance of over 60 leading Rochester-area institutions and community partners. We promote the alignment of community resources to improve the academic achievement of Rochester’s children.

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ROC the Future is not one organization, office, or staff. ROC the Future is all of us working together. **ROC the Future is you.**
Rochester’s Children Are…

**Diverse**

Our children have a wide range of experiences, perspectives, and talents. The cultural diversity among our children is rich. At least 75 languages are spoken by RCSD families\(^1\) and 11% of school-age children were born outside of the United States.\(^2\)

Our families come in many sizes and forms. Most children are being raised by a parent in families with one or two children.\(^3\) However, 14% of children are being raised by another relative or adult.\(^4\)

Our children have a wide range of interests. From drawing to double dutch, orchestra to outdoors, soccer to science — playgrounds and schools are full of energy and potential.

**Resilient**

Our children overcome many challenges. 91% are economically disadvantaged, and 21% have a disability.\(^5\) Many children have experienced trauma. Yet, they are resilient.

Many of our youth are responsible employees. They volunteer in the community and lead their own community initiatives. Center for Youth, Hillside Work-Scholarship, R-Centers, ROC2 Change, Rochester Youth Climate Leaders, Teen Empowerment are but a few of the places where you will find our children making a difference in our community.

**Nurtured**

Our children are nurtured at school. More than 80% of four year old children are enrolled in Rochester’s nationally-recognized pre-K classrooms.\(^6\)

Our children are nurtured at home. 83% of teens say they have clear rules at home and are helped and supported by their families.\(^7\)

*It is time for all of Rochester’s children to thrive.*
Every Child Is *School Ready*

**Kindergarten Readiness 2018 - 2019**

**GOAL:**

By 2020, 65% of all four-year-olds will be kindergarten ready.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RCSD &amp; Community-Based Programs</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Arrows indicate changes from the previous school year.*

“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, *play is serious learning.*” – Fred Rogers

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8 As measured by the COR Advantage
9 The Children’s Institute, 2019
Success in school begins long before a child enters the classroom. Children grow rapidly — physically, intellectually, and emotionally — during the first years of life. Together, families, schools, and the community can ensure that all of Rochester’s children have the opportunity to succeed.

In School…

Rochester’s pre-kindergarten programs, through both RCSD and community-based organizations, are nationally known for their quality. The Rochester Early Childhood Assessment Partnership (RECAP) has been evaluating early childhood education in our community for more than 20 years. The most recent assessments show that Rochester’s pre-K classroom initiatives and teacher support result in:

- High-quality classroom routines and environments
- Effective teaching strategies
- Positive family-teacher relationships
- Readiness for kindergarten

The benefits of children participating in two years of pre-kindergarten education are becoming clear. Students who attend two years of preschool programming are more prepared for kindergarten than those who attend only one year.10

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10-11 The Children’s Institute, 2019
In the Community...

Making sure our children are ready for kindergarten requires a coordinated network of providers who can ensure children are meeting developmental milestones. Through GROW-Rochester, free screenings are available to check children’s vision, hearing, thinking, language and communication skills, social and emotional development, dental health, and movement skills. The number of 3-year olds being screened is increasing each year.12

When children are identified as having delays, it is imperative that they receive prompt, professional intervention. Building on The Children's Agenda’s documentation of the shortage of professionals serving young children,13 parents, community members, and organizations successfully advocated this year for an increase in the preschool special education rates paid by Monroe County for occupational, physical, and speech therapy.

At Home...

A child’s first educators are in the home. Through nurturing relationships, play, and everyday learning, children develop a foundation that supports them when they start school. Parenting has its rewards, and it is also challenging.

Parents need friends, family, and people in the community that they can trust to help them. This year, ROC the Future supported a review of parent education programs in Rochester.14 The study found 18 programs that are grounded in research. More programs are available that provide family support and engagement. Parents as Teachers is currently implemented across most agencies and Nurse-Family Partnership is serving the most families.

ROC the Future will continue working to increase the capacity, completion, access, and coordination of these programs.

10-11 The Children’s Institute, 2019  
12 The Children’s Agenda, 2019  
13 The Children’s Agenda, 2019  
14 Boland & Hiley, 2019
Spotlight On ACTION

ROC the Future's School Readiness Outcomes Team has four goal areas. If your organization can help us reach one of these goals, please get involved!

**Ready Child**
- Increase the number of children in high-quality education programs
- Identify and meet the developmental needs of children 0-8 years old

**Ready Family**
- Increase the number of families in evidence-based support programs
- Increase the number of families who understand their child’s development

**Ready Schools & Organizations**
- Increase professional learning
- Improve human resource/capital initiatives
- Strengthen school and center-based climates

**Ready Community**
- Increase number of organizations providing comprehensive developmental screenings
- Align existing community resources to promote whole-child health
- Increase number of adequately credentialed child-serving professionals

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In 2018

1,312 *families* were served with evidence-informed parent education programs

20-85% of families *completed* the programs

The stigma of *programs* as punitive or marginalizing is a barrier to participating

Fewer than 20% of the programs have a waitlist, but providers report challenges in accessing programs
Every Child Is Supported

Third Grade ELA Proficiency 2018 - 2019

GOAL:
A 10-point increase in the percentage of third-graders proficient on the NYS English Language Arts test each year until the district rate meets or exceeds the NYS rate

NY State: 52%
RCSD: 18%↑

Girls: 21%↑
Boys: 16%↑
General Education: 22%↓
Students with Disabilities: 3%↑
Non-English Language Learners: 21%↓
English Language Learners: 5%↓
Non-Economically Disadvantaged: 40%↑
Economically Disadvantaged: 16%↑
White: 34%↑
African American: 18%↓
Hispanic/Latino: 14%↓

*Arrows indicate changes from the previous school year.*
When Tommy was in third grade, he met Ms. Fowler. In her retirement, Ms. Fowler decided to work as a substitute teacher. In the school where she was assigned, there were 24 children in third grade who were struggling to read. One of them was Tommy. He did not know the letters or letter sounds, but he was motivated to learn, so she started working with him individually. She taught him strategies for connecting the letters to sounds and how to construct simple sentences. By the end of one year, Tommy had gained the equivalent of three grade levels in reading.

The research is clear. Early grade reading and literacy impact children’s future academic and personal success. Children who are not reading proficiently by third grade are four times less likely to graduate from high school with their peers. That struggle follows them into adulthood, making it harder for them to get hired and to stay employed.

Lack of reading proficiency is a national problem. It is also a local problem. Fewer than 20% of Rochester students are achieving English/Language Arts proficiency by third grade. That is less than half of the New York State rate.

“Once you learn to read you will be forever free.”
- Frederick Douglass

Grade 3 English Language Arts Proficiency

Although the district’s rate remains low, there are individual schools that are making strides. Seven RCSD and four charter schools have third grade ELA proficiency rates of 30% or higher.

In the coming year, ROC the Future will be studying these schools to identify critical elements of success that can be supported district-wide. Work is underway to support all of Rochester’s children in the early grades, both within the classroom and during out of school time.

16 Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2012
17 NYS Department of Education
In School...

Formal reading instruction is led by the schools. RCSD has adopted new, district-wide frameworks for reading instruction, curriculum, and tools. Children will be developing print and phonological awareness and skills through interactive reading and writing aloud and then moving onto reading fluency and comprehension. District-wide use of the workshop model for reading and writing is being implemented in all schools. This model combines teacher instruction, student independent and small group work, and student sharing of their work.

To benefit from classroom learning, students need to be in the classroom. **Less than 90% attendance is considered chronic absence.** Almost 33% of RCSD elementary students are chronically absent.\(^{18}\) RCSD has a system for following up on absences and the School Attendance Collaborative Action Network brings together community partners to support that work. The response system includes daily notification of unreported absences by robocall, live phone call made when robocall is not verified, home visit if the parent or guardian cannot be reached, and home visits twice a year for students who are chronically absent. Additionally, every school has an attendance team that provides individualized intervention for students and families who are struggling with attendance.

Because children’s lives impact their learning, increasingly schools are working to support children and families more comprehensively. One model for doing this is community schools. Community schools are both a place and a set of partnerships. By addressing academics, youth development, family support, and health and social services, these schools support learning and well-being. RCSD currently has 20 community schools enrolling 12,822 students who are supported by 100+ community partnerships.

In the Community...

What students experience outside of school can also support literacy and academic achievement. The Greater Rochester After School Alliance and the Greater Rochester Summer Learning Association are working to strengthen the impact of extracurricular programs. Preliminary data indicate that over the course of a year, students who participate in high-quality after school programs strengthen their social-emotional competencies\(^ {19}\) which, in turn, can support higher academic achievement.\(^ {20}\) This year, classroom instruction will also be enhanced by R-Centers and other extracurricular partners providing additional support for children who are struggling to learn to read through individual, multi-sensory instruction.

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\(^{18}\) Rochester City School District

\(^{19}\) American Institutes for Research, 2019

\(^{20}\) Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, 2011
At Home...

Families are critical to early grade literacy. Sharing books daily is a simple but powerful way for families to support their child’s early success. Among pre-kindergarten students, **96% of parents report reading to their children at least weekly, and 35% read daily**. Research has found that the more books children have in their homes, the more parent-child book sharing happens and the higher the child’s language skills.\(^{21}\) Research shows that book distribution programs can increase shared book reading.\(^{22}\)

In the coming year, ROC the Future will launch a home library initiative to make sure children and their families have quality books in their homes.

**Spotlight On ACTION**

ROC the Future’s Early Grade Literacy Outcomes Team is piloting strategies in three elementary schools this year. *Please contact ROC the Future to learn how your business or organization can support this work.*

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\(^{21}\) Evans, et al., 2014

\(^{22}\) Anderson, Atkinson, Swaggerty, & O’Brien, 2019
Every Child Is Successful

August High School Graduation 2018 - 2019

**GOAL:**
By August 2022, 80% of all high school seniors in Rochester will graduate with their 9th grade cohort

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>NY State</th>
<th>RCSD</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*63% ↑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
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<td>Non-English Language Learners</td>
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<tr>
<td>African American</td>
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</table>

*All subgroups, with the exception of one, are projected to be higher than the previous year. Final data should be available in December 2019.*

23 RCSD, 2019
Edison Tech senior, Delialys, is on track to graduate in June 2020 after overcoming significant challenges in her life. Delialys came to Rochester from Puerto Rico in 2014 after her grandmother passed away. She faced the daunting task of starting over with a blank academic slate in a new community with a new language. Delialys persevered with support from her school counselor, Edison’s Student & Family Support Center, Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection, and two science programs at the Rochester Institute of Technology. Delialys now maintains a 3.78 GPA, works at Wegmans, and serves as treasurer of Edison’s SkillsUSA chapter. Delialys’ goal is to attend RIT to study Graphic Design.

A high school diploma that prepares students for careers and further education is critical in today’s economy. That diploma should reflect that graduates have academic knowledge, cognitive skills, learning skills, and specialized content knowledge.24

“One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world.”
- Malala Yousafzai

RCSD’s graduation rate continues to rise steadily.25 To reach our goal for 2022, we will need to increase the rate of improvement over the next three years.

24 EdTrust, 2016
25 NYS Education Department
In School...

The path to graduation begins on the first day of high school. Research consistently shows that one of the strongest predictors of graduation is whether students end 9th grade with enough credits to be on track for graduation.26 In short, students who get behind during the first year of high school struggle to catch up and are more likely to leave school without a diploma. Last year ended with 63% of 9th graders being on track for graduation.27 Although the gains are small from year to year, the trend in Rochester is moving in the right direction.

In the Community...

For the school climate to positively influence our young people, they have to be in school. Consistent attendance varies greatly between high schools. The percentage of RCSD high school students chronically absent last school year ranged from 31% - 76%, depending on the school.28 **Everyone in the community can support high school attendance** by showing our youth that they matter to us and that we believe in their ability to succeed. However, there is evidence that, as a community, we are failing to provide that support. When completing the Youth Risk Behavior Survey,29 only half of Rochester teenagers agreed that they matter to people in the community. That lack of perceived support can erode their academic motivation and self-efficacy.

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26 Ritter, 2015; UChicago Consortium on School Research, 2017; Azff et al., 2017
27 Rochester City School District
28 For high schools with 55 or more 9th-grade students; Rochester City School District
29 Monroe County Department of Public Health, 2017
At Home...

Decades of research has shown that families play a significant role in educational outcomes, in many cases having more influence than the school itself.\textsuperscript{30} Family support can come in many forms.\textsuperscript{31} In Rochester, a high proportion of high school students report having support at home. We need to continue assisting families as they help their children navigate adolescence and set goals for their future.

\textsuperscript{30} Coleman et al., 1966; Jencks et al., 1972; Gandara, 1995

\textsuperscript{31} Gandara, 1995
Spotlight On ACTION

High school attendance and graduation rates vary greatly in Rochester. In looking at the highest performing schools and those making the greatest strides, a common factor is that they have an engaging school environment with high-quality teaching, positive student-teacher and student-student relationships, and a sense of safety and order. **A positive school environment does not happen by accident** – it is intentionally and consistently fostered.

One way to foster such an environment is through an advisory program. These programs include small groups of students who meet regularly with an advisor. The success of advisory programs in Rochester, and in schools around the nation, led RCSD to initiate advisory programs district-wide in all high schools beginning this year. Each school is designing its own advisory program to fit the needs of its students.

ROC the Future is providing support to Joseph C. Wilson Magnet School and Edison Career and Technology High School as they implement their programs. Lessons learned from these schools will be shared with RCSD so they can apply those learnings to the professional development and the support they provide district-wide. **The goal is that these programs will:**

- **Help students adjust to expectations**
- **Build community in school**
- **Provide academic advising**
- **Develop social-emotional skills**
- **Strengthen relationships between school and families**
College and Career Readiness

GOAL:

Rochester students graduate prepared to enter college or career training programs and persist to complete those programs

FAFSA submissions by end of March 44% ↑

High school graduates who enrolled in college in the first year after high school 53% ↓

Students enrolled in college who returned for a second year 65% ↓

Students who completed a post-secondary degree within six years 19% ↓

Arrows indicate changes from the previous school year.

32 2019 data, Rochester Education Foundation
33 2017 data, National Student Clearinghouse
34 2016 data, National Student Clearinghouse
35 2018 data, National Student Clearinghouse
Cameron graduated from The Leadership Academy for Young Men in 2017. The transition to college was initially a challenge due to the rigor of the coursework and the need to prioritize his efforts. With the support of community mentors, teachers, and family, he persisted and graduated in 2019 with an associate’s degree in Communications and Media Studies. Since graduating, Cameron traveled in Europe and has been investing energy into his clothing line. He is working full-time and will soon continue his studies, pursuing a bachelor’s degree in Business Communications. His experiences have taught him that if he perseveres, he can accomplish anything.

Every student should graduate from high school ready to pursue training for a career or college. Yet, nationally, almost half of high school graduates have not taken a course of study that prepares them for advanced training or higher education.36 As a community, we need to apply our collective resources and efforts to ensuring Rochester’s young adults are on a path to self-sufficiency and well-being.

In High School...

A significant barrier to enrolling in post-secondary training and education programs is affordability. That is why the Rochester College Access Network has been working to increase the number of students who submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by March of their senior year in high school. This increases the chances that students will receive student aid packages that allow them to enroll in career training programs or college. Last year, 44% of seniors at both RCSD and charter schools completed the FAFSA.37

“The progress of the world depends almost entirely on education.”
- George Eastman

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36 EdTrust, 2016
37 Rochester Education Foundation, 2019
Enrolling in College...

The most recent data indicate that 53% of RCSD graduates go on to enroll in college at some time during the first year after high school – 37% at two-year institutions and 16% at four-year institutions. The most common institutions for enrollment are:

- Monroe Community College
- University at Buffalo
- Genesee Community College
- University of Rochester
- Finger Lakes Community College
- Rochester Institute of Technology
- Alfred State College
- Keuka College
- Nazareth College
- University at Buffalo
- Rochester Institute of Technology
- Alfred State College
- Keuka College
- Nazareth College

Staying in College...

Enrolling in college is only the first step. Students must then persist in their education. The most common time for students to drop out of post-secondary education is between their first and second years. Significantly more students persist who attend four-year institutions than two-year institutions.

Finishing College...

RCSD’s Class of 2012 illustrates the different paths that high school graduates may take as they move into their adult lives.

- In the first year after high school, 63% of graduates enrolled in a two-year or four-year institution.
- However, over the course of six years, only 19% persisted to graduation.
- Among those who stop their post-secondary enrollment at some point, very few return.

This underscores the need to ensure that high school graduates are prepared for post-secondary education and that they receive the necessary supports – academic, emotional, social, and financial – to continue through to graduation.

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38-39-40 National Student Clearinghouse
You Can Make a *Difference...*

**Businesses** Provide paid time off for parents to attend school conferences • Host book drives • Require teen employees to attend school and have passing grades • Put children’s books in waiting areas • Provide on-site childcare • Pay livable wages • Provide paid time off for children’s medical and dental appointments • Offer high school internships and summer employment

**Childcare Providers** Get training on developmental milestones • Refer children for developmental screenings when needed • Read with children every day • Teach children social and emotional skills • Use Ready Rosie videos

**Coaches** Require players to attend school and have passing grades • Connect players who are struggling in school with tutoring and support services • Expect positive behavior on and off the field

**Faith Communities** Host book drives • Provide afterschool, weekend, and summer programs for children • Mentor youth

**Government** Invest in youth development programs • Prioritize affordable housing • Build neighborhood playgrounds • Put mini-playspaces at major bus stops • Invest in the early childhood and youth development workforce • Train all recreation staff in social-emotional learning and trauma-informed practices • Hire more teen literacy aides • Invest in community-wide literacy projects • Invest in universal pre-kindergarten programs for 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds

**Medical Professionals** Ask parents and children about school attendance • Conduct comprehensive developmental screenings and refer children when further evaluation is needed • Teach parents about developmental milestones • Give children books to take home when you see them for an appointment

**Property Owners** Keep sidewalks cleared in the winter for children walking to school • Provide new renters a welcome basket with children’s books • Maintain outdoor playspace on your property • Provide free wi-fi to tenants

**Neighbors** Help parents get their children to school • Ask teenagers why they aren’t in school • Host reading parties on your front porch • Ask neighborhood children what funny or interesting thing happened at school today

**Parents and Families** Read to your child daily from birth through eight years • Get a library card • Take your child to the library regularly • Visit city parks • Take your child for a hike • Take your child to the beach • Visit a museum • Cook with your child • Use Ready Rosie videos • Take your child to doctor and dental check-ups every year • Learn about developmental milestones • Get to know your child’s teachers • Get your child to school every day • Get to know the parents of your child’s friends • Make sure your child has a designated place and time to do homework • Ask for help when you need it

**Philanthropists** Align your funding priorities with cradle-to-career outcomes • Provide resources for evaluation of process and outcomes
is led by its **Conveners**

School Readiness Outcome Team Lead
Children's Institute, Nazareth College

Expanded Learning Opportunities
Collaborative Action Network Lead
Greater Rochester After School Alliance
Membership: Rochester City School District, United Way, Children's Institute, Monroe County Youth Bureau, Wilson Foundation, City of Rochester, Girl Scouts, Greater Rochester Health Foundation, Horizons @ Warner, Community Place of Greater Rochester, Boy Scouts, YMCA, EnCompass Resources, Boys & Girls Club, Greater Rochester Summer Learning Association, Monroe County

School Attendance Collaborative Action Network Lead
Rochester City School District
Membership includes committed volunteers as well as representatives from the following organizations: Causewave Community Partners, Coordinated Care Services, Inc., Hillside Children's Center, Ibero American Action League, Monroe County Department of Probation, Rochester Americorps, WDKX

Parent Engagement Collaborative Action Network Lead
ROC the Future; Head Start; University of Rochester, Department of Pediatrics

Perinatal Collaborative Action Network Lead
Healthy Baby Network
Membership: Baby Love, Child Care Council, Coordinated Care Services, Inc., Eastman Dental, Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield, Fidelis Care, Finger Lakes Children's Environmental Health Center, Greater Rochester Health Foundation, Healthy Baby Network, Highland Family Medicine, Hillside - Parents as Teachers, Jordan Health, March of Dimes, Metro Council for Teen Potential, Monroe County WIC, Monroe Plan for Medical Care, MVP Healthcare, Nazareth College, NeighborWorks Rochester, Nurse-Family Partnership, Parkway OB/GYN, Pathstone, Phillis Wheatley Library, Planned Parenthood, Regional Early Childhood Direction Center, Rochester City School District, Regional Primary Care Network, Society for the Protection and Care of Children, Successful Pathways, The Housing Council, The Women's Center at Alexander Park, Trillium Health, Unity Health/Rochester Regional, Unity West Main OB/GYN, University of Rochester Medical Center

Rochester College Access Collaborative Action Network Lead
Rochester Education Foundation
Membership includes committed volunteers as well as representatives from the following organizations: Bryant and Stratton College, Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection, Horizons-Cognitive Marketing, JJ College Admission Advising, Monroe Community College, Monroe Council for Teen Potential, National Council of Jewish Women, Nazareth College, Rochester Area Community Foundation, Rochester City School District, Rochester Education Foundation, Rochester Institute of Technology, St. John Fisher College, SUNY Brockport and REOC, SUNY Geneseo, United Way of Greater Rochester, University of Rochester, Urban League of Rochester, and Young Women's College Prep
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