



Comprehensive Action Plan Reconnecting McDowell

Priority Need

Attracting and Retaining a Quality Teacher Corp

High quality instruction and student achievement in McDowell are hindered, in part, due to the persistent shortage of certified teachers. There are currently 25-29 vacant teaching positions, many of which have been reposted numerous times. As a result of the dearth of certified teachers, too many classes are staffed with a series of non-certified long-term substitutes and/or teachers teaching outside their subject area; many courses, e.g., the arts, advanced foreign language or math courses, are not available onsite in the secondary schools (though some may be available online). When there is no substitute teacher available for a class, it is not uncommon for students to be dispersed to myriad other classrooms or “warehoused” in other facilities, e.g., the gym, cafeteria, within the school.

Several factors contribute to the teacher shortage, including: 1) the physical isolation of McDowell; 2) the difficulty in travelling to and within the county, given its topography; 3) insufficient and inadequate housing stock; 4) “raiding” of staff by other, nearby counties; 5) teachers’ desire to live close to where they work; and 6) the reputation of the district and perceived and/or potential challenges of teaching in “hard-to-staff” districts and schools.

GOALS

Create the conditions necessary to increase the number of certified teachers hired by McDowell County School.

By 2017, all teaching positions in McDowell County will be filled by certified educators.

To accomplish these goals, the following short term and long term strategies will be pursued:

1st Year – 2012

- Acquire and convert existing property in downtown Welch to create ten (10) two bedroom loft apartments that also houses 20% commercial use
- Employ a West Virginia architectural firm to assess viability, approximate costs of conversion and a timeline
- Seek interest and commitment from the following government, labor and private lenders for reconstruction of Teacher Village:

Government

- West Virginia Economic Development Fund, McDowell Economic Development Authority:
- Governor's Economic Development Program
- West Virginia Housing Authority
- Ameriserve
- Erect Fund
- Safe and Housing Economic Development Program

Labor

- Building America Community Development Enterprise
- Using labor pension funds as a guarantor for housing project loan

Business/Philanthropic

- Greenbriar Foundation
- Habitat for Humanity
- RTI Foundation
- Create an advisory group of teachers to advise the partnership on the **appropriate community businesses, arts and culture organizations** that need to be part of the Village in Welch in order to provide the kind of life style supports needed to attract and retain teachers in McDowell
- Strengthen on-going career support for educators and school staff by expanding and individualizing professional development offerings, utilizing access to online resource banks that create virtual learning communities to new teachers, substitute teachers and school staff.
- Create plans for a satellite of the state's professional development academy (teacher center) in Mc Dowell County with technology capability to reach every educator and staff member for the purpose of building the capacity of teachers and support staff to direct their professional learning and take control of their own professional development throughout their careers. This includes on line and face to face courses specifically designed to support new teachers, substitute teachers and school staff in instructional strategies, behavior

management, offered by peers and via digital access, guaranteed by adequate bandwidth and on line support systems. Teachers and staff will voluntarily take courses according to their professional needs. This academy will serve as a model for other rural school districts.

Partners Needed for Investment

WV Professional Development Center/Program

Educational Alliance

Union Professional Development Specialists and Offerings

Technology partners

AFT On line Resource Bank

- Work with teachers and district leaders to develop a career ladder program and requisite supports to develop potential teacher leaders, coaches, and mentors – and to provide nurture and encouragement to strong teachers to remain in the district.
 - Innovation fund legislation
 - AFTWV and WVEA and McDowell County School District Administration
- Investigate establishment of a **Youth Build program** that would provide hands-on opportunities for youth to build the Welch Teacher Village/Education Station project. Convene a meeting with US Department of Labor and appropriate parties to explore requirements.
 - US Department of Labor
 - WV Workforce Investment Board
 - WV AFL-CIO
- Create a recruitment strategy that does the following: engages districts and unions who have large numbers of reduction in force layoffs; addresses shortage areas with incentives for potential candidates.
- Create a media campaign that highlights teacher success.
- Administer survey of teaching and living conditions needs to teachers
- Establish a health and fitness program for school district staff.
 - AFT West Virginia in collaboration with AFT

Long term strategies

2013-2017

- Develop Teacher Village housing complex to include community, social and fitness services.
- Create Teacher Village apartment complexes in other McDowell communities such as Bradshaw, Iaeger, North Fork and War, creating a minimum of 30-50 new units.

Priority Need

Build a Strong Technology Infrastructure to Meet the Needs of Present and Future Educational Trends

In order to grow and learn, students, teachers and families in McDowell need the same connected environment that their peers have across the country, and across the world.

GOAL

All children and school staff in McDowell County will have uninterrupted, reliable state of the art access to the internet in their schools and their homes.

To accomplish this goal, the following short term and long term strategies will be pursued:

First year 2012:

- Create plans for a wireless, professional development center within the Teacher Village, equipped with resources, materials and equipment appropriate for class preparation.
- Build a technology blueprint that addresses the educational goals of the Reconnecting McDowell plan.
- Establish reliable interconnectivity for all schools and provide internet and cell phone access to the community.
 - Cisco
 - Frontier Communications

Long term strategies

2013-2017

- Address challenges to creating better band width access, internet access for schools and the community.
- Hire IT coaches, technology integration specialists and technology systems specialists.
- Establish a professional development academy in Mc Dowell County with technology capability to reach every educator and staff member for the purpose of building the capacity of teachers and support staff to direct their professional learning, one that accounts for the needs of rural students, and allows them to take control of their own professional development throughout their careers.

- On line and face to face courses specifically designed to support new teachers, substitute teachers and school staff in instructional strategies, behavior management, offered by peers and via digital access, guaranteed by **adequate bandwidth** and **on line support systems**. Teachers and staff will voluntarily take courses according to their professional needs. This academy will serve as a **model rural professional development center**, to be replicated in other rural communities.

Priority Need

Jobs and Workforce Development

All students need to see the options and possibilities that can await them once they complete their K-12 education. In places like McDowell, where the economy has suffered steadily over the decades and unemployment is high, it is imperative that students be given the opportunity through school to become aware of and experience the variety of options of the world of work.

GOAL

There will an increase in the number of jobs in McDowell County.

To accomplish this goal, the following short term and long term strategies will be pursued:

1st year 2012:

- Develop and implement the GIS Mapping System and its server for McDowell County that will help identify the best sites for businesses based on utilities, etc.
 - Rahall's Transportation
- Develop a business incubator with the McDowell Economic Authority, located in downtown Welch.
 - McDowell County Economic Development Council
- Expand availability of the micro-loan program that currently exists to provide support for small business growth.
- Convene a Town Hall meeting to conduct a community based SWOT analysis targeting current and potential business owners/operators to apprise them of available assistance and need. On-site workshops for participants.
- Develop and implement a media information campaign targeting potential businesses.
- Create wireless hotspots with company advertisers at potential business locations.
- Develop a business mentoring program for high school and middle school students.
 - Junior Achievement
 - Rural Community Development Grants

- Engage Junior Achievement and utilize internship opportunities from Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College to catalogue utilities and do a sustainability study.
- Create a **residential job training program** for students that provide vocational, technical, career mentoring and other opportunities for selected high school and middle school students while creating unique extended learning time scenarios. This school is one of several choice options for the McDowell School District.
 - United Mine Workers Training Program
 - Local Colleges
- Create a **Youth Build program** that would provide hands-on opportunities for youth to build the Welch Teacher Village/Education Station project.
 - US Department of Labor
 - WV AFL-CIO

Plan a “Challenge Academy” to identify students for GED program – through volunteer/voluntold strategies – military model – residential – drug testing.

Long term 2013-2017

- Develop a business incubator with the McDowell Economic Authority, located in downtown Welch.
- Expand availability of the micro-loan program that currently exists to provide support for small business growth.
- Diversify the economy through expansion and retention of existing businesses; attraction and creation of new business that will provide the creation of 100 -500 jobs in the near future.
- Develop a mentoring program for small business owners, and compile a catalogue of businesses/mentors.
- Engage Junior Achievement and utilize internship opportunities from Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College to catalogue utilities and do a sustainability study.
- Develop **apprenticeship programs in the trades with union partners.**

- Strengthen transitions into community college through McDowell-based college awareness and orientation programs, dual enrollment opportunities, and **satellite campuses near or in McDowell high school complexes.**
- Create a **residential job training program** for students that provide vocational, technical, career mentoring and other opportunities for selected high school and middle school students while creating unique extended learning time scenarios. Investigate the feasibility of planning and opening a residential school (students spend 4 days/week on campus and a long weekend at home) for a targeted subgroup of students. In addition to the academic program, this school might include nutrition, farming, gardening; health services; student experiences with specified trades. This school is one of several choice options for the McDowell School District.
 - United Mine Workers Training Program
 - WV Community College Council
- Create a **Youth Build program** that would provide hands-on opportunities for youth to build the Welch Teacher Village/Education Station project.
 - US Department of Labor

Priority Need

Transportation Improvements to Spur Economic Growth
and Expand Recreational Opportunities

GOAL

Transportation to and from McDowell will be improved; recreational, housing, and business opportunities will increase.

To accomplish this goal, the following short term and long term strategies will be pursued:

Year One 2012

- **Conduct a land use master plan for McDowell County**
 - WV Dept of Commerce,
 - Office of Coalfield Community Development and
 - McDowell Economic Development Authority
 - Rahall Transportation
- **Conduct an up to date assessment of land use**
 - RTI / GIS
- **Convene town meetings to educate and engage community and gain buy-in for new land use planning process.**
- **Explore Main Street Programs to revitalize McDowell communities, especially those that support the arts, in downtown areas.**

Long term Strategies

2013-2017

- **Incorporate the 1-73/74 (King Coal Highway) plans making access to the county easier and more efficient – currently it is a two way road that wraps around the mountain.**
- **Reclaim and re-use of former mining projects for new businesses.**
- **Expand the Hatfield McCoy trails in order to **expand recreational opportunities.****

Priority Need

Community-Wide, School-Based Arts Education Program

GOAL

McDowell County schools and community will increase the opportunities, venues and resources, for families to attend, participate in and benefit from all forms of artistic expression.

To accomplish this goal, the following short term and long term strategies will be pursued:

- Connect with state level offerings both virtually and on-site through artist in residence programs that visit the schools and deepen the curricular offerings in the schools, provide art and music programs for families and offer monthly residencies for teachers on curricular integrated themes for students and professional development for teachers at all levels.
 - West Virginia Commission on the Arts
- Establish Parents as Partners program that creates a unique extended learning time opportunity for students of all ages to learn musical instruments, create environmental art, as both parents and students develop skills in other areas.
- Secure funding from groups willing to support art instructors for the high school.
- Secure funding from groups willing to support a music teacher in an elementary/middle school.
- Expand student participation in choirs at all elementary schools.
- Secure song sheets and scripts for plays.
 - First Book

Priority Need

Attend to the Health, Social and Emotional Needs of Children and Enhance Community Health – Prevention and Intervention Services

There is a need in McDowell County for a unique approach to a district-wide community schools focus that engages current community resources to offer a range of programming and services that support the success of students and their families. Community schools will focus on the whole child, addressing the academic, physical, social and emotional needs of students while fostering the active involvement of their families. Specific services, supports and opportunities available at individual community schools will vary, depending on needs and resources, each school will have a community school coordinator working with school staff to develop a comprehensive approach and align all school-sponsored and funded programs.

GOAL

Improve the health and wellness statistics of children and families living in McDowell County by creating additional opportunities and venues for counseling, physical activity, health related appointments,

First year 2012

- Establish a sub committee of non-profit organizations to guide the development of the community approach, with AFT experts and school district and community representatives.
- Create community centers in several areas in the county, staffed with dentists, nurses and counselors who work in mobile vans to service parents at school sites, create curriculum units that make well-being part of the curriculum, work with schools and student committees on nutritional approaches to cafeterias and family meals.

Priorities:

- Teen Pregnancy/Dropout
- Behavioral Health/Substance Abuse
- Poor Nutrition
- Lack of Physical Activity

Broad Short Term Goals – to be completed by 2013:

- Public Health Healthy Community Assessment
- Walking WV Challenge
- Highmark Take 10 Nutrition Program
- Community Garden
- Cooking Class
- Wal-Mart Healthy Snack Display

- Hard Work Café
- Fitness Center Program
- 5310 Touch Screen
- Marshall University Health Assessment and Program Resources Survey

Short Term Strategies:

- 2013 – work with Marshall University students, based on data that that WV Dept of Ed (Melanie) and SBHC folks already have, develop a survey for an MC assessment – starting with Rev. Watts’ document
 - Send to Jennifer (Marshall):
 - School climate data
 - School based health data & needs
 - Put residents into county – could conduct health assessments, including behavioral health assessments for community
 - Could attract more residents to MC...they will have seen, and experienced MC life
 - Marshall can pay them to do this – covering their expenses.
 - Could do with the local health department because they have to do a community needs
 - Marshall – would target students & families
 - Would require parental authorization
 - Could include in their consents for using the sbhc...
- 2013 – replace Northfork sports sign [SOCIAL HEALTH]
 - It’s a sense of pride for the community
 - Career tech folks could make the sign
 - High Mark and WV Free said they could contribute to having it replaced
- 2013 – Community gardens (WV Free) [OBESITY]
 - Incorporate healthy decision making with students
 - Community service
 - Students from drug court could conduct their community service in these gardens
- 2013 Highmark can conduct Walking Challenges [OBESITY]
 - Walk Across WV –apply to history class
 - Provide pedometers
 - Have an interactive website
 - Asst. Superintendent Bonita will work with the Board to integrate into classes
 - Include families
- 2013 – Health & Education Fair
 - Could do at” back to school day”
 - What is the follow-up – Toque River would do follow-up
- 2013 - Nutritional Program with Highmark
 - West Virginia Free – community garden
 - Include school & community gardens
 - Connect to school day
 - Community cooking classes
 - Need to get transportation
 - Work with parent Title 1 coordinator
 - Work with churches

- Office of Healthy Lifestyles used to have a toolkit – NEED to search for this. There is probably an evaluation on this program, which would help us troubleshoot (Teresa Mace – DHHR)
- Work with Wal-Mart to share healthy snack through displays (could pull from community transformation grant)
 - Work with Pro Start – vocational cooking school (Dr. Dantonio)
- Highmark has a Take Ten program
 - Intended for k-5, provides teachers with curriculum
 - Asst. Superintendent Bonita will ask the Board to integrate into school day
 - Work with the school wellness committee

Broad Long Term Goals – to be accomplished by 2015:

- School site Childcare
- Farmers Market
- Food Preparation and Preservation School
- Mental Health Program

Long term Strategies

- 2015 – Teen pregnancy early child care centers with classes (e.g. parenting, cooking)
 - School site Childcare services (location, transportation) for teen mothers
 - Talk to Family and consumer science under Dr. Dantonio (under career tech)
 - Prevention/wellness
- Create community centers in several areas in the county, staffed with dentists, nurses and counselors who work in mobile vans to service parents at school sites, create curriculum units that make well-being part of the curriculum, work with schools and student committees on nutritional approaches to cafeterias and family meals.

Priority Need

Strengthen Literacy Resources and Create Links to Home

The major work of the elementary school years is to build students' literacy, numeracy, language and general world knowledge. Skilled and knowledgeable teachers implementing a sound curriculum, using research-based instructional strategies and materials in an environment conducive to teaching and learning are critical elements in succeeding in this work. Seeing and relating to parents as partners helps to facilitate student success. Creating and expanding children's home libraries are an essential step in providing a strong foundation for literacy.

GOAL

Increase literacy rates among the adult population in McDowell County. All parents and children in McDowell County will have a home library and all schools will be equipped with age appropriate reading materials for all students in the District.

In order to strengthen literacy resources and create links to homes, the following short term and long term goals need to be pursued:

1ST year 2012

Increase access to books for children and families

- Secure funding from corporate funders to provide for First Book expansion that will provide 18 books per child over the next five years, beginning in 2012 – draw up plans for events, distribution and delivery processes.
 - Private funders
 - First Book
- Imagination Library will sign up newborns and provide 60 books per child from birth to age

Establish structures for parent engagement in the schools

- Establish in each school a process for selecting parent outreach coordinators to get messages to churches, community, homes, parent welcoming events and family dinners.
- Establish parent to parent advisory groups in all schools and expand as a catalyst for change.
- Plan outreach to parents through parent advisory dialogue sessions, using Title One guidance.
- Expand parenting skills in assisting student learning through GED Centers.

- Plan for county-wide parent meetings, coupled with a Read to Me day.
- Examine and report on statewide parent engagement models that work – work with the Harliss Center Model attendance incentive.

Long term strategies

2013-2017

- Meet at churches, parks and games that attract parents from the schools to build trust and fellowship.
- Create opportunities for literacy brunches or snacks either immediately before or after school for parent/caregiver awareness sessions on topics related to book reading strategies, vocabulary development.
- Develop and send home monthly informative, attractive brochures/fliers on helpful hints/tips for parents/caregivers.
- Create professional development components aligned with the literature where teachers received advanced skill coaching in all forms of literature and how to design engaging approaches to classroom instruction and parental engagement sessions.
- Adequately supply school and county libraries.

Priority Need

Improve and Expand Early Childhood Education – Create Literacy Ministries in Community Churches

There is a need to develop procedures and structures that address family literacy, quality and accountability of early childhood programs, transition supports at every level of early childhood and to increase the attendance and enrollment for early childhood programs in McDowell

In order to improve and expand early childhood education the following short term and long term strategies need to be pursued

GOAL

All parents and future parents in McDowell County will be supported in early literacy efforts.

Headstart and pre school classes will accommodate all three and four year olds in McDowell County.

Early childhood educators in McDowell will be supported and trained in effective early literacy instruction.

1ST Year – 2012

- Train and provide support for families to help enhance children's oral language by creating family literacy ministries in 20-50 churches.
 - Launch training sessions
 - Launch literacy centers at these sites in 6 months
- Develop a system for reporting program quality and accountability to stakeholders (RM, government agencies, Head Start, HHS, WV Dept of Ed, parents, etc.) which details populations served, measurements for success, parent engagement annually for each program.
- Create a comprehensive early childhood transition plan (pre-natal-K) that supports families by providing training and resources while collaborating with community partners and stakeholders and lays the groundwork to begin in 6 months.
 - Save the Children
 - US Department of Education
- Study the feasibility to increase the number of Head Start/pre-school classes to increase enrollment of 3 year olds in order to eliminate the current waiting list

Long term strategies

2013-2017

- Expand the effort to include most/all communities of faith
- Build trainings for coordinators on the accountability system
- In three years, involve all schools in developing and providing effective transitions at each of the 5 transition levels for 90% of the children and 20-30 community organizations with the goal of increasing attendance and enrollment ultimately of all 3 and 4 year olds.
- Increase the capacity of Head Start/preschool classes to include all 3 year olds.

Priority Need

College and Career Ready – K-12

Every student graduating from the McDowell School System will have mastered the applicable skill sets required to be college and career ready.

GOAL

Being college and career ready means that McDowell County schools will tailor the art of teaching, curriculum and learning supports that allow the learner to meet a progression of proficiency targets, in ways that address individual learning profiles, personal talent, aspirations and needs, but ultimately prepare the student to successfully transition to and succeed in their selected post-secondary goals and educational programs.

To accomplish this goal, the following short term and long term strategies will be pursued:

September 2012

- Implement state law for K-12 career prep working with EA and mentoring program and partnering with K-12 community and higher education
 - Professional development – teachers add guts – aligning CURRENT curriculum to college prep showing how to integrate
 - Collecting evidence of implementation
 - Check lesson plans
 - Principal walk-through
 - Student work (on walls, etc.)
 - Faculty ownership
 - Using existing resources (portfolios)

Long term strategies

- Instill focused goals at an early age (Pre-K)
 - Exposure
 - Information
 - Tap into existing resources (listed in document to start with)
 - Professional development
 - Career exploration
 - Parent resources
 - So parents are a knowledgeable and positive influence
 - Focus on professional development
 - For teachers

- Increase in graduation rates/college attendance, etc.
 - Parent resources
 - GEAR UP
 - Through schools
 - Professional development
- Emphasis on implementing entrepreneurial pathways for students/adults
 - Mentorship program