

Communities In Schools: 2018/2019

The Greater Johnstown School District (GJSD) is located in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. A city that once had over 67,000 residents now has approximately 19,000 due to many factors, including the decline of the steel industry and 3 major floods. GJSD is the only school district that serves students that live within the City of Johnstown. Along with the general population decline, GJSD's student population has continued to decline, forcing many of the district's schools to close over the years. Most recently, the school district closed a middle school building and combined the district's two elementary schools into one. The GJSD now encompasses 1 elementary school, 1 middle school and 1 high school with a total of just over 3,100 students. The district is a Title I recipient and provides free lunches to all of its students through the Community Eligibility Provision Program (CEP). Nearly 50% of GJSD students live in single-parent households.

According to the PA School Performance Profile, 86% of the student population is considered economically disadvantaged, and student ethnicity is broken down by the following: 50% white, 31% African American, 15% mixed race, 3% Hispanic, and all other races make up less than 1%. In GJSD, 1 out of every 3 students lives in public housing. The district also has a very high mobility/transiency rate among students and in 2017-18 school year over 400 students came and left our elementary school. According to the U. S. Census our median household income is \$24,415 while the Pennsylvania statewide median income is \$53,599. The per capita death rate for drug overdoses within the City of Johnstown was the highest in the state in 2016 leaving many of our students to be raised by extended family, most often aging grandparents.

Despite the challenges, the resiliency of Greater Johnstown School District's cannot be rivaled. The district has continually demonstrated its sustained ability to utilize resources to respond, withstand, and recover from adverse situations. Our community doesn't just overcome obstacles, our community triumphs from them. The district and its people believe in one another and demonstrate unconditional love and support to each other and our children. The focus of the district has been on growth and tremendous growth is being made all across the district. We believe in our community, our district and our students and will never quit in striving to achieve what is best for our children.

Communities In Schools was welcomed to the Greater Johnstown Middle School for the start of the 2018/2019 School Year to assist the school with specific areas of concern. The focus areas were *attendance, behavior, and parent engagement*. The CIS team took a tiered approach to address these issues. The Community School Director took the lead on the school-wide implementation of programming and resources, along with the Community School Navigator or social worker, supporting students on a one-on-one basis. Considerable improvements have been made for attendance, behavior, and parent engagement for this school year. The data shows an

88% increase in student attendance for those targeted for intervention. There was a 100% improvement of students moving from Tier 3 to Tier 2 behavioral intervention. Family engagement continues to improve regarding participation in programs, groups and parent attendance at events. The volunteer physician supported both students and parents with physical health issues, examinations, and referrals. We are planning to add a dental center within the next two years.

In January of this year, we added a Community School director and navigator to our elementary school. We also were able to add three additional behavioral health workers. The same three goals were the focus of the elementary school as well. As of last year, at Greater Johnstown Elementary School, approximately 40% of students were identified as needing advanced level behavioral support, or approximately 460 students. In the past, we have only been able to see about 100 of those kids identified and have had a 60-70% success rate. The data for the 18/19 school year shows that percentage significantly and drastically reduced from 40% needing advanced level behavioral support to 23% now making up the top two tiers of the PBIS model. This puts GJSD right in line with where the district should be compared to national norms. The 18/19 data shows that the students who were able to be given a targeted Tier II intervention were able to decrease their problem behaviors by 40% on average.

The Greater Johnstown School District has developed a results framework that will utilize community schools as a primary vehicle for increasing student success and strengthening families and community. With the collaboration of the 1889 Jefferson Center for Population Health, the experience of the GJSD, and the CiS data system, quantitative and qualitative academic, social, emotional, and health outcome measures will be measured. Ultimately, the goal is for students to graduate ready for college, careers, and citizenship. Also working with the United Way of Laurel Highlands, we expect to remove barriers so that students are ready to enter school, and with CiS in place, improve student attendance, become active in the community, and have families that are increasingly involved in their child's education. Intensive programs to reduce obesity, prevent tobacco use, and type 2 diabetes will support the 1889 Jefferson Center for Population Health's goals for the community. This model will improve our students' education by removing barriers thwarting their potential and success.