THE FORSYTH PROMISE
2016 Report

The Forsyth Promise
educate | equip | engage | cradle to career
In his closing at the inaugural Forsyth Promise Community Leadership Council meeting in June 2014, Rev. Prince Raney Rivers offered these words, "...The Forsyth Promise is not just another program and another meeting. It is the promise that none of our children are weeds who can be discarded. All of them are ours to take from cradle to career."

"Join us in making and keeping this promise.

**CULTIVATING A COMMON VISION**

Engaging in courageous conversations that lead to action. Using data to shed light on what is working and where to improve. Building trust and sustained relationships across organizations and the community. That’s what The Forsyth Promise has been doing in the first phase of developing this broad-based community partnership that puts children at the center of its work. Why?

**BECAUSE NOTHING CHANGES IF WE DON’T CHANGE.**

To achieve the measurable changes in educational outcomes for children from cradle to career, we must change. We must change the way we work together, the way we think about the challenges facing children, families, and schools, the way resources are invested and leveraged, and the way we develop solutions. Leading the comprehensive, integrated community effort to do just this is The Forsyth Promise.

Beginning in January 2017, a report will be released on an annual basis to monitor and assess the partnership’s progress as we work to ensure every child in Forsyth County receives the best education possible and is fully equipped to thrive throughout life. The 2017 report will serve as the partnership’s and our community’s baseline. In this 2016 report you will learn what The Forsyth Promise has been doing during the last two years to cultivate an environment that facilitates the individual, institutional, and systems-level changes needed to transform the lives of Forsyth County children and youth.

We invite you to read, think about, and discuss the information in this report. And then, we ask you to get involved. Whether you are a parent with children in a local school, a business or faith community leader, a teacher, a concerned community member, a young person dreaming about your future – we ALL have a stake in achieving these outcomes.

**THE FORSYTH PROMISE NEEDS YOU!**

**PARTNERSHIPS MOVE AT THE SPEED OF TRUST.**

Transforming community systems to work more equitably and effectively for every child requires institutions and individuals to work differently—together. This doesn’t just happen.

**WE MUST CREATE THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH DISRUPTIVE AND INNOVATIVE WORK CAN OCCUR.**

No one individual or organization can create the large-scale changes needed to improve long-term outcomes for children. When collaborative efforts are developed it is essential that we build trust, centralize and sustain support, and create mechanisms to help participants overcome the muscle memory of working in isolated and singularly focused ways.

**THIS IS THE ROLE OF THE FORSYTH PROMISE.**
The Forsyth Promise is focused on supporting the development of the whole child and is built around improving six primary outcomes that are academic and social-emotional in nature. These outcomes span from birth to young adulthood (see the chart on the next page). For each outcome, at least one indicator, or a measure of success, was selected to track our community’s progress toward the vision of The Forsyth Promise.

In the past year, a task force comprised of data experts and practitioners selected the Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) survey as a way to measure the outcomes related to social-emotional competence and community participation. A pilot was conducted in two schools this year, and an expanded implementation will occur in the 2016-17 school year.

In two of the six outcome areas, The Forsyth Promise has aligned with the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School District’s goals:

- By 2020, 90% of third-grade students will read on or above grade level.
- By 2018, 90% of high school students will graduate on time.

The Forsyth Promise also is committed to supporting the school district in reaching its 2018 goal of closing the achievement gap by 10 percentage points between students from different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, while increasing performance for all students.

In this upcoming year, The Forsyth Promise will set community-wide goals around Kindergarten Readiness and Post-Secondary Completion. Goals will be set for the Social-Emotional Competence and Community Participation outcomes once the Developmental Assets Profile is being more widely administered in the school system.
After their first year of work, two CANs engaged in a major act of continuous improvement by resetting their focus, engaging new partners, and refining their strategies. For example, after reviewing their initial body of work the Early Childhood Literacy CAN determined that transitioning to a broader Kindergarten Readiness orientation would help them achieve their goals more effectively.

Learning about the CANs’ current projects, accomplishments, and the list of active members, one can visit www.forsythpromise.org/can-overview/ and click on the individual CAN links.

In June 2014 The Forsyth Promise began its initial phase of developing CANs around three outcome areas: Kindergarten Readiness, High School Graduation, and Post-Secondary Completion. Additional CANs will be launched within the next year.

One of the primary ways The Forsyth Promise is creating the conditions for meaningful change is by bringing together key partners who commit to build dynamic learning communities and collaborate to improve specific outcomes. In these Collaborative Action Networks (CANs), members are lifting up common challenges and creating shared solutions, aligning services, using data to help identify and spread best practices, and developing a culture of continuous improvement.

Moving from Talk to Action

It is important to use data and research to inform the development of successful strategies. However, it is easy in this work to get stuck in “analysis paralysis” — the act of overthinking a problem to the point of inaction. This was a primary lesson learned during the first phase of the CANs’ development.

“The experience has encouraged me that organizations and systems can actually really change for the better, and they can go through those changes without dividing and destroying themselves or those that work for them.”

— Kindergarten Readiness CAN Member

Maya Angelou

“Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”

— Maya Angelou

To learn more about the CANs’ current projects, accomplishments, and the list of active members, one can visit www.forsythpromise.org/can-overview/ and click on the individual CAN links.
A central principle for The Forsyth Promise from the beginning has been a commitment to ensuring equity for all children and youth by working to eliminate barriers to their educational success. One of the first expressions of this has been the pledge to disaggregate data by race, socio-economic status, and other relevant factors when possible in order to better understand and tackle the gaps that persist between different groups. Why is this important?

While disaggregating data enables us to do more strategic and targeted work to improve education outcomes and decrease disparities, we recognize that this is only a starting point. Earlier this year, the Executive Team created an action team to specifically focus on how The Forsyth Promise can work more intentionally to guarantee our commitment is reflected in all partnership structures, practices, and actions, and how we can support our partners in doing the same.

When different people come together to share and connect their ideas and dreams for our community’s children, anything is possible! This is the purpose of The Forsyth Promise Community Leadership Council (CLC). The CLC is open to anyone in the broader community who has an interest in and commitment to improving outcomes for children from cradle to career.

The CLC meets quarterly to receive updates about the partnership’s progress, provide feedback, share information, connect dots, and generate ideas about how to best address a particular education-related issue. Participants are intentionally assigned to tables to ensure a diversity of voices and experiences are represented, new connections can be made, and richer discussions can occur.

Beginning with its initial meeting in June 2014, the CLC has met eight times and averages 80-100 people in attendance. In total, nearly 400 people have attended these meetings. While there is an open invitation to get involved in the CLC, in order to develop strong social capital amongst participants and to build the partnership’s base, individuals are asked to sign a membership compact indicating their formal commitment to the work. To learn more or to join the CLC, visit www.forsythpromise.org/what-is-the-clc.
The Forsyth Promise is a member of the StriveTogether National Cradle to Career Network. The Network launched in 2011 as a way to connect communities who are building a cradle to career infrastructure using the StriveTogether framework. The Network enables members like The Forsyth Promise to share expertise, identify and adapt programs that work, and develop effective tools and resources that can be brought to bear on specific challenges.

StriveTogether’s Theory of Action is a rigorous collective impact framework that assists communities in creating a strong and sustainable “civic infrastructure” needed to educate, equip, and engage all children and youth from cradle to career successfully. This approach brings organizations, groups, and individuals together across sectors to unite around a shared vision, align existing resources (including programs and other supports), use data to inform decision-making and practices, and collectively work to eliminate disparities and improve educational outcomes for all students.

Across this framework, there are four “gateways” which signal a partnership’s progress towards impacting local systems and improving students’ educational success. By crossing through each gateway, there is a greater likelihood for sustained impact and improvement over time. For more information about the Theory of Action, visit www.strivetogether.org/strive-approach/theory-of-action.
WITH GRATITUDE

LEADERSHIP
For their passionate and focused leadership, we thank those who serve on The Forsyth Promise Executive Team.

Dr. Jewel Cherry, Forsyth Technical Community College (Executive Team Co-Chair)
Jill Tackabery, Former WS/FC Schools Board Member & Community Volunteer (Executive Team Co-Chair)
Rev. Chuck Spong, Love Out Loud (Incoming Executive Team Co-Chair)
Brenda Evans, United Way Women’s Leadership Council (Executive Team Treasurer)
Larry Vellani, Smart Start of Forsyth County (Executive Team Secretary)
Susie Campbell, Shelco, Inc.
Dr. Trae Cotton, Winston-Salem State University
Dr. Beverly Emory, WS/FC Schools
Chris Fox, Hanesbrands Inc.
Cindy Gordineer, United Way of Forsyth County
Ronda Mays, Forsyth County Association of Educators
Marlon Hunter, Forsyth County Department of Public Health
Victor Isler, Forsyth County Department of Social Services
Kay Landry, WS/FC Schools (High School Graduation CAN Representative)
Mona Lovett, Crosby Scholars Community Partnership (Post-Secondary Completion CAN Representative)
Elisabeth Motsinger, WS/FC Schools Board of Education
Dr. Eve Phillips, WS/FC Schools
Rev. Prince Raney Rivers, United Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church
Allen Smart, Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust
Trina Stephens, Imprints Cares (Kindergarten Readiness CAN Representative)
Mari Jo Turner, Hispanic League
Betty Lou Vontsolos, Inmar
Scott Wierman, The Winston-Salem Foundation
Rev. Lawrence Womack, St. Anne’s Episcopal Church

PARTNERS
For their commitment to changing the status quo and learning how to work better together, we thank the various organizations and individuals who are Collaborative Action Network (CAN) members. To see the member list for each network, visit www.forsythpromise.org/can-overview/ and click on the individual CAN links.

INVESTORS
Hanesbrands
Lumina Foundation
The Winston-Salem Foundation
Duke Energy Foundation
United Way of Forsyth County
United Way of Forsyth County Foundation
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

OPERATIONS TEAM
For stewarding the time and talent of all our volunteers and professional partners in living into the change we are creating, we thank the following staff: Dr. Sharee Fowler, Adam Hill, Stefon Plummer, and Tash Lane.

BACKBONE SUPPORTS
United Way of Forsyth County has served as the fiscal and administrative agent for The Forsyth Promise since its inception, and Forsyth Futures has acted as our lead data management partner. We thank both organizations for continuing to provide these significant contributions that help ensure the partnership’s success.
How do we make sure every child has a chance to thrive in school, in work and in life?

We’re doing it by working together like never before. By consciously stepping out of silos to embrace a common vision. By collectively spreading the practices that work best from cradle to career. By intentionally staying connected to our kids and to each other.

We’re doing it by actively aligning our passions to embrace the possible. THIS IS THE FORSYTH PROMISE.

The Forsyth Promise brings all of our community’s efforts and ideas together to
– shine the light on what’s working well,
– move toward common goals and outcomes, and
– make our community’s support for kids more aligned and effective.

In a nutshell, The Forsyth Promise PUTS US ALL ON THE SAME PAGE.

The Forsyth Promise brings all of our community’s efforts and ideas together to
– shine the light on what’s working well,
– move toward common goals and outcomes, and
– make our community’s support for kids more aligned and effective.

For example, what if groups supporting the success of every child could come together to examine data from all angles and identify what worked best for different groups of kids? Then, what if they worked together to spread their most effective efforts to reach more kids?

THE FORSYTH PROMISE makes it possible for us to work together like never before on behalf of our kids. It’s voluntary, but REQUIRES COMMITMENT.

It welcomes everyone, but stays focused on key outcomes. And it makes sense, because we know that when WE ALL bring our passions to the table, a more promising future becomes possible.

www.forsythpromise.org
ADDRESS
301 N. Main Street
Suite 1700
Winston-Salem, NC  27101
336.721.9375

ONLINE
forsythpromise@gmail.com
#forsythpromise
www.forsythpromise.org

CONNECT
Visit our website for regular updates about the partnership.
Follow us on Twitter. Like us on Facebook. Spread the word!

DONATE
If you believe in what we’re about and see the value of this partnership,
we invite you to support our work financially.

COMMIT
Join the Community Leadership Council or a Collaborative Action
Network. Become a champion for The Forsyth Promise's vision!