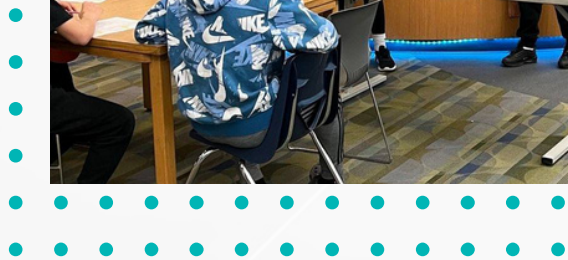


AIM

Aligned Impact Muscatine County

WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR

MUSCATINE COUNTY



2022-23

ANNUAL REPORT

DIRECTOR'S LETTER

KIM WARREN, DIRECTOR

Reflecting on the last year, we learned even more about the long-lasting effects of the pandemic on students' learning, especially for children experiencing poverty. However, our community's commitment to improving outcomes for students and families hasn't wavered. If anything, we have even more community-based organizations and businesses joining us to reach the community's bold goals.

Gains in any area, be it a 12% increase in students proficient in 3rd-grade reading or a 6% increase in Hispanic students enrolling in postsecondary education the fall after high school graduation, help fuel our momentum to continue to create the conditions for all students and families to succeed.

As you read our annual report, you will see areas that we have scaled effective practices. You will also notice that we have increased our data capacity to help make data-driven decisions.

Thank you for joining us to ensure a brighter future for Muscatine County students and families.



Kim Warren
Director

IOWA WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

Kim was recognized at the Iowa Women's Foundation's 10th annual "Ovation: A Tribute to Iowa Women and Girls". Ovation is IWF's signature publication, delivered annually at unveiling events across the state.



LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Brenda Arthur-Miller, West Liberty
Community School District
Tyler Baars, UnityPoint Trinity Muscatine
Stacey Cook, Bayer
Clint Christopher, Muscatine Community
School District
Dr. Naomi DeWinter, Muscatine
Community College
Rich Dwyer, Kent Corporation
Leslie Eichelberger, HNI
Robert Fiedler, Musser Public Library
Heidi Hoffman, ISU Extension and
Outreach Muscatine County
Hannah Howard, GMCCI
Bret Olson, Muscatine Community YMCA
Shane Orr, United Way of Muscatine
Erick Recinos, UnityPoint Health-Trinity
Nicholas Salazar, State Director, League of
United Latin American Citizens of Iowa
Charla Schafer, Community Foundation of
Greater Muscatine
Danni Zumwalt, Flickinger Learning Center



AIM STAFF

Kim Warren, Director
**Claudia Artola, Student Success
Facilitator**
Mindy Hoon, Data Manager
**Kaitlyn Wintermeyer, Early
Childhood Facilitator**
Allison Eagle, Office Coordinator
**Michele Rhoades, Communications
Manager**



The work of Aligned Impact Muscatine County (AIM) is supported through funds from Iowa College Aid, StriveTogether, United Way of Muscatine, Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine, Muscatine Community School District, and West Liberty Community School District.



MISSION



AIM aligns community resources and identifies effective practices for implementation to reduce achievement gaps and improve outcomes for all students and families



OUR GOALS

- Every child enters Kindergarten ready to learn.
- Every child succeeds academically through support in and out of school.
- Every student graduates from high school prepared for post-secondary education or career training.
- Every adult has the education, training, and skills to obtain a career that can sustain a family.

STRATEGY NETWORKS



**Early
Education**



**Academic
Success**



**Post
Secondary**



**Adult
Success**



EARLY EDUCATION

Goal: Every child enters Kindergarten ready to learn.

SMART Targets: • Increase available 0-5-year-old child care slots (1653 as of July 2021) by 10% (165) by the summer 2023.

KINDERGARTEN READINESS

“We’ve been expecting things to go back to ‘normal’ post-covid, but it’s just not happening.” This became a recurring theme in conversations between the AIM team and early childhood stakeholders early in the 2022-2023 school year. The stakeholders’ sense was validated when 2023 Fall FAST (an assessment of reading readiness among incoming kindergarten students) data was reviewed. The data was clear: kindergarten readiness is not returning to pre-covid levels in the way that assessments of older students are. Concerned with this trend, AIM approached Muscatine County’s Family Effectiveness Coalition to assess the factors affecting kindergarten readiness in our community, and to develop strategies to affect change. The group agreed to form a task force to explore the problem. AIM Director Kim Warren, Early Childhood Iowa Muscatine County Director Kaitlyn Wintermeyer, and Muskie Early Learning Center Principal Jessi Freers enrolled in StriveTogether’s Strategies for Systems Change course and have worked together to facilitate systems change conversations with the Family Effectiveness Coalition. To date, the group’s work has included data gathering, stakeholder outreach, and validation of hypotheses about factors affecting kindergarten readiness. Though the work is in its early stages, the group has identified four factors linked to kindergarten readiness in our community: preschool attendance, participation in community-based programs such as library groups or YMCA activities, quantity and quality of interaction with parents and caregivers, and the degree to which school facilities, policies, and communications are inclusive to families of all cultures. As these issues come into clearer focus through exploration, conversation, and data gathering, the group will soon use what it has learned to develop, test, and implement strategies to affect change in the coming years.

PRESCHOOL ACCESS

Although Iowa’s state funded voluntary preschool program addresses the tuition barrier to preschool attendance for 4 year old students, and tuition scholarships from Early Childhood Iowa fill the gap for 3 year old students from lower-income families, AIM noted in 2018 that students from lower-income families were still less likely to enroll in preschool, or to attend preschool regularly. Conversations with parents and other stakeholders revealed that working lack of transportation was a major barrier to preschool



participation. Working parents whose children attended childcare during the work day were not able to leave work to take their young children to or from preschool during the day, and other parents did not have the means of transportation, or found it difficult to load up their other children to transport a preschooler to and from school, especially part-day programs. In response, AIM partnered with Early Childhood Iowa Muscatine County, United Way, Muscatine Charities and a private transportation business to meet the need. This partnership remains strong today, with ten students receiving safe and consistent daily transportation throughout the 2022-2023 school year at no cost to their families. Participating families apply for this assistance through Early Childhood Iowa Muscatine County, are screened for income eligibility, and receive screening for developmental delays from UnityPoint Trinity Muscatine Public Health to ensure that they are receiving all the services they need to be well supported in preschool and beyond.

EARLY EDUCATION, CONT.

CHILDCARE

Obtaining high-quality, affordable childcare continues to be a challenge for many residents of Muscatine County. Muscatine County gained about 100 childcare spots from July 2021 to July 2022. However, this gain is due to an increase in Department of Education preschool spaces. While these spaces are essential, they don't always include before and after-school care for working parents. Space available at childcare centers and homes decreased by 179 spaces over the same time period.



To address these challenges, AIM staff worked with the Iowa Women's Foundation to hold community conversations with large employers and childcare providers. This group looked at local data and how other Iowa businesses supported childcare in their communities. After these conversations, some employers decided to support childcare in Muscatine County.

HNI was awarded a State of Iowa Child Care Business Incentive Grant. Funds from this grant helped a new childcare provider, Birdie's Nest, open in a closed childcare facility. This new provider, once fully staffed, will provide 98 childcare spaces. The Stanley Consultants Charitable Foundation supported a scholarship fund for students pursuing the Child Development Associate certification through Muscatine Community College. The Muscatine Community College Foundation matched their donation. This support will help 16 staff from local childcare providers obtain the training they need to offer quality childcare in our community.



Active Family Effectiveness Coalition Members

- Early Childhood Iowa Muscatine County
- Iowa State University Ext. & Outreach-Muscatine County
- Lutheran Services in Iowa
- Mississippi Bend AEA
- Muscatine Community School District
- Muscatine Community YMCA
- Muscatine County Conservation
- Musser Public Library
- Parents as Teachers
- United Way of Muscatine
- UnityPoint New Horizons
- UnityPoint Trinity Muscatine Public Health



Stanley Consultants donates to the Child Development Associate (CDA) certification program at Muscatine Community College



ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Goal: Every child succeeds academically through support in and out of school.

- SMART Targets:**
- Increase 3rd grade reading proficiency from 41.5% in spring of 2021 to 75% by spring of 2025.
 - Decrease the number of D's and F's in math of 7th and 8th graders by 50% by the end of the 2021-2022 school year.

MUSCATINE ELEMENTARY PROGRAMMING

Last school year, we worked with Jefferson and Franklin Elementary schools to pilot offering enrichment opportunities connected to topics students were learning in ELA, math, science, and social studies. We built on that success and scaled the enrichment offerings to all 6 elementary schools K-6th grades in the Muscatine Community School District.

The goals of this project were to:

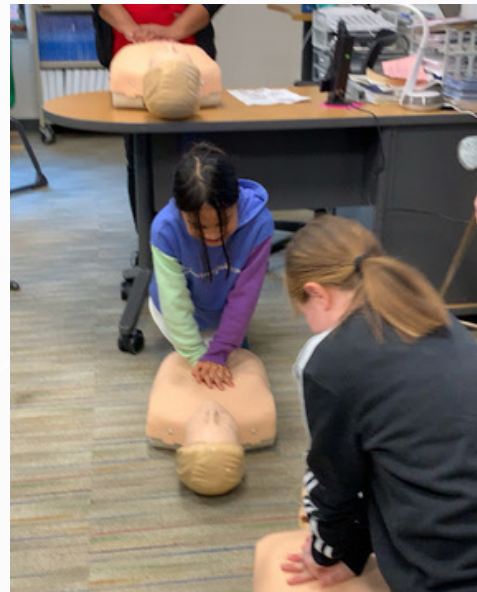
- Increase students' hands-on experiences with community partners/businesses related to their curriculum.
- Connect students to the broader community.
- Expose students to various careers.

The results of this projects were:

- 21 unique experiences
- Led by 12 community partners
- With 1743 students impacted

Community Partners

City of Muscatine City Council and Staff
Diversity Services Center of Iowa
EICC Iowa Intermediary Network
Family Eye Center
ISU Extension and Outreach Muscatine County
It Takes a Village Animal Rescue
James Zahara and The Beast
Muscatine Art Center
Muscatine Community College
Muscatine County Conservation
Muscatine County Courthouse
Muscatine Police Dept and Muscatine County Sheriff K-9 Units



4th grade students learning CPR from MCC Nursing students



3rd grade students on a field trip to the courthouse

ACADEMIC SUCCESS, CONT.

SPARK PROGRAM

There is a need within our community for academic and recreational programs during the summer for elementary-age children. Various reasons exist for this need. Some students require academic assistance to prevent summer learning loss, while others seek opportunities to engage in hands-on activities such as learning to engineer a car out of robotic legos or cook homemade pasta. Some students require a combination of both. The SPARK program has been bridging these gaps in academics



and experiences for students since the summer of 2021. This summer, 328 students participated in the program.

AIM continues to support the afternoon enrichment class time of SPARK. In the morning, students engage in reading and math activities. In the afternoon, they rotate through engaging hands-on enrichment classes that expose them to STEM, creative, and career exploration activities.

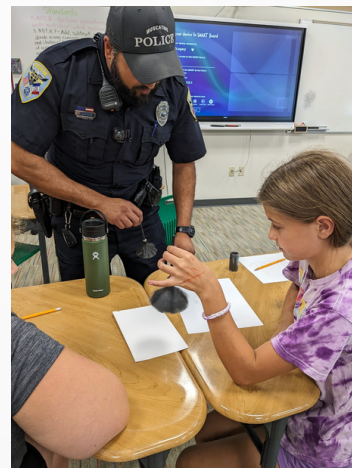
Class Guests/Field Trips:

- B100
- Culterall
- HNI
- ISU Ext & Outreach Master Gardeners
- ISU Water Rocks
- Kent Corp
- Muscatine Ag Center
- Muscatine Art Center
- Muscatine Community College-Chemistry Department
- Muscatine Community College-Intermediary Network
- Muscatine County Conservation
- Muscatine Fire Department
- Muscatine Police Department
- Muscatine Power and Water
- Musser Library
- Rachelle Chase, Susan Clark book author
- Stanley Center for Peace and Security
- United Way of Muscatine Intern Day of Caring Volunteers



MCC Career Exploration Class Guests:

- Community Health Center
- Deloitte
- Iowa College Aid
- John Deere
- Muscatine County Sheriff's Office
- Muscatine Police Department
- West Hill Cakery



ACADEMIC SUCCESS, CONT.

WEST LIBERTY PROGRAMMING

Last school year, we worked with West Liberty Elementary to create a pilot for their 3rd-grade class that allowed students to connect class content with real-life experiences and environment. As a team, we wanted to offer students the chance to explore new areas such as civics, math, science, and more. This has been possible due to the collaboration of community partners that visit the students in their classrooms and present the students with engaging activities. We were able to provide this to more than 80 students.

With a similar purpose in mind, West Liberty Middle School paired with Aligned Impact Muscatine County to create an initiative that would provide students with the opportunity to learn about careers.

Thanks to these partnerships, students are able to connect with their community and learn more about possible careers.



Career Exploration with 7th grade students in West Liberty

Community Partnerships:

- Diversity Services Center of Iowa
- ISU Extension and Outreach Muscatine County
- Muscatine County Conservation
- Stanley Consultants



West Liberty elementary students during enrichment programming.



POST SECONDARY

Goal: Every student graduates from high school prepared for post-secondary education or career training.

- SMART Targets:**
- Increase high school graduation at Muscatine County Schools within the Free and Reduced Lunch category from 79.9% in 2018 to 84.9% (21 students) by 2023.
 - Increase postsecondary enrollment within one year after high school of students of color from 60.1%* (92) to 70.1% (15 additional students) and students on FRL from 58.7%* (105) to 68.7% (18 additional students) by the class of 2023.

SUMMER MELT

Aligned Impact Muscatine County believes that every kid deserves equal access to post-secondary education. We are committed to assisting in closing educational gaps. We do this by tackling multiple educational gaps with different strategies.

Each year many high school seniors who intend to go on to post-secondary education, (e.g. community college, university, or trade school), don't attend in the fall for various reasons. Some of these reasons have been identified as a result of insufficient financial aid, missed administrative deadlines, lack of post-secondary knowledge and career exploration, or lack of support from family and friends. This phenomenon is referred to as summer melt.

As a result, Aligned Impact Muscatine County has worked together with multiple community organizations such as Muscatine Community School District, West Liberty Community School District, Eastern Iowa Community College, and Iowa State Extension and Outreach Muscatine County to bring this resource to the students and the community for a third year.

The program began June 1st and will continue through the summer. The services offered by the mentors are financial aid assistance, college enrollment, career building and exploration, and post-secondary mentorship. These services are offered online and in person. The students can set up appointments with mentors through text, calendar bookings, email, etc.

This year, we were awarded a grant from StriveTogether that made it possible for us to add extra mentors to the program. Our mentors are bilingual in English and Spanish and are able to accommodate the student's schedules and meet with them at public places that are easily accessible to the students. Students that participated in the program last year highly benefited from financial aid assistance, post-secondary mentorship, and scholarship aid. Last year we were able to help 18 students and after all the efforts, we were able to access more than twenty-eight thousand dollars via scholarships for students to use for their education. We are on track to serve the same number of people again this year.



Decision Day at Muscatine High School



POST SECONDARY, CONT.

COURSE TO COLLEGE

One of our strategies this year was to bring back our post secondary workshop for a second year. This workshop incorporates data, student voices, and conversations with the hope to supply Muscatine High School and West Liberty high school staff and leaders with information regarding the efforts done in the schools to improve enrollment, graduation rates, educational programs, etc.

This information is presented to the staff to help them get a closer look of what has succeeded and what we can continue working on. Aside from data, we included student testimonials about their experience enrolling in institutions and what supported them throughout the process and what they felt could be useful for other students as well. After all the information was distributed, the workshop offered a space for conversations. These conversations led to goals that were shared amongst all groups that the participants were committing to follow through.

This workshop also was enriched by data learned at Post-Secondary + Workforce Convening in Baltimore provided by StriveTogether. Members from our postsecondary group were able to attend the convening and learn about adaptive challenges, how to develop plans for next steps, identify new opportunities to accelerate progress and more. One of the strategies that we are working on implementing is our civic influencers. A group of youth leaders that connect with fellow classmates and support their post secondary transition.

To keep supporting students through their secondary transitions, Aligned Impact Muscatine County was able to get a grant through the Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine that helps provide students with Course to College events. Course to College is a program that supports high schools in creating a college-going culture across the state of Iowa through five steps: prepare, apply, finance, decide, and go.

Post Secondary Community Partnerships:

Eastern Iowa Community College
Iowa State Extension and Outreach Muscatine County
Muscatine Community School District
Upward Bound
West Liberty High School

YOUTH BOARDS

This year, Aligned Impact Muscatine County wanted to increase community involvement by uplifting youth voices. For that reason, AIM partnered up with community organizations in West Liberty to create a pilot for a youth advisory board. This pilot offered organizations the opportunity to gain a youth perspective while nurturing future community leaders. The community organizations have served as positive role models and motivate youth to become leaders and role models for others. This opportunity has created and benefited future contributing members of society by providing them with professional career experience and the opportunity to make a positive impact on the community. The pilot took place at the West Liberty High School, where 17 students were interviewed and then selected by one of the organizations of their choice.

We are also working on getting this program established in Muscatine schools. We have gathered a big response and interest from multiple organizations. We are also planning on pairing with the Muscatine Community College Silver/Blue Cord program to provide those students with the opportunity to provide their voices to the community.

West Liberty Youth Board Community Partnerships:

Muscatine County Fair
UnityPoint Trinity Muscatine Public Health
West Liberty Chamber of Commerce
West Liberty Public Library

ADULT SUCCESS

Goal: Every adult has the education, training, and skills to obtain a career that can sustain a family.

SMART Targets: • Increase the educational attainment of Muscatine County residents with only a high school diploma or equivalent by 250 individuals, from 11,351 to 11,601 by 2025.

The adult success team works collaboratively to create opportunities for adults to get the education and/or training they need to obtain financially stable employment. The group identified the need to have better coordination between organizations that are providing support to adults. The meetings of this group serve as a solution-focused social service team. Agency employees bring anonymous client opportunities and challenges to the meetings. The ability to have community organizations work together in one meeting will allow us to more holistically address needs and identify system issues that need to be addressed.

The team also identifies system barriers for clients. The group identified that transportation to HiSET classes is a barrier for many clients. The group is piloting using community Almoner Funds to pay for bus passes for clients taking HiSET classes. The group will monitor progress to determine if this is an effective practice to support people in completing the HiSET program.

AIM is also a partner for the Fueling the Future project alongside MCSA, the Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine, Muscatine Community College, United Way of Muscatine, UnityPoint, and the City of Muscatine. Fueling the Future targets adults in low-income families of elementary-aged children receiving weekend "backpack" food subsidies in Muscatine County. It engages them in a six-week intensive "earn while you learn" upskill training. This multi-stepped program will stabilize emergent family issues; education for the custodial adults in high-demand jobs; long-term advancement of skilled workers in the community; and a stronger next-generation Iowa workforce. An HRSA grant funds the program through MCSA and many local partners. To learn more about Fueling the Future, visit fuelingthefutureiowa.org.

Community Partnerships:

1st Five
City of Muscatine Public Housing
Diversity Services Center of Iowa
Fueling the Future
Iowa Probation
Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services
IowaWorks
Mothers Mentoring and Support Program
Muscatine Center for Social Action
Muscatine Community College
Muscatine County Community Services
Promise Jobs
Riverbend Transit
The Salvation Army of Muscatine County
UnityPoint Trinity Muscatine Public Health

COMMUNITY DATA TEAM

The role of the data team is to identify best practices for data collection and sources that measure cradle-to-career outcomes. This group recognized that our community needed to update our data capacity to be able to measure outcomes at the community and programmatic levels easily. After evaluating various data options, the group decided to move forward with working with WillBridge to build a multifaceted county-wide shared data system. Implementation of the system has begun, and preliminary reports are being produced for testing. The system is anticipated to be able to run personalized reports by 2024.

The data team also recognized the need to measure system indicators. The community has traditionally measured indicators at the personal level, meaning how individuals are doing within a system-academic achievement, enrollment, program participation, etc. However, we rarely measure the system to see if it works well for individuals. One system we have been regularly measuring is childcare by seeing if the number of spaces available matches the level of need in the community. The data team decided to measure transitions from high school to postsecondary enrollment. Follow-up surveys were sent to seniors at MHS and WLHS. Once the responses are analyzed, we hope to get a clear picture of how the education system is and isn't working for students with post-secondary aspirations.

Data Team Members:

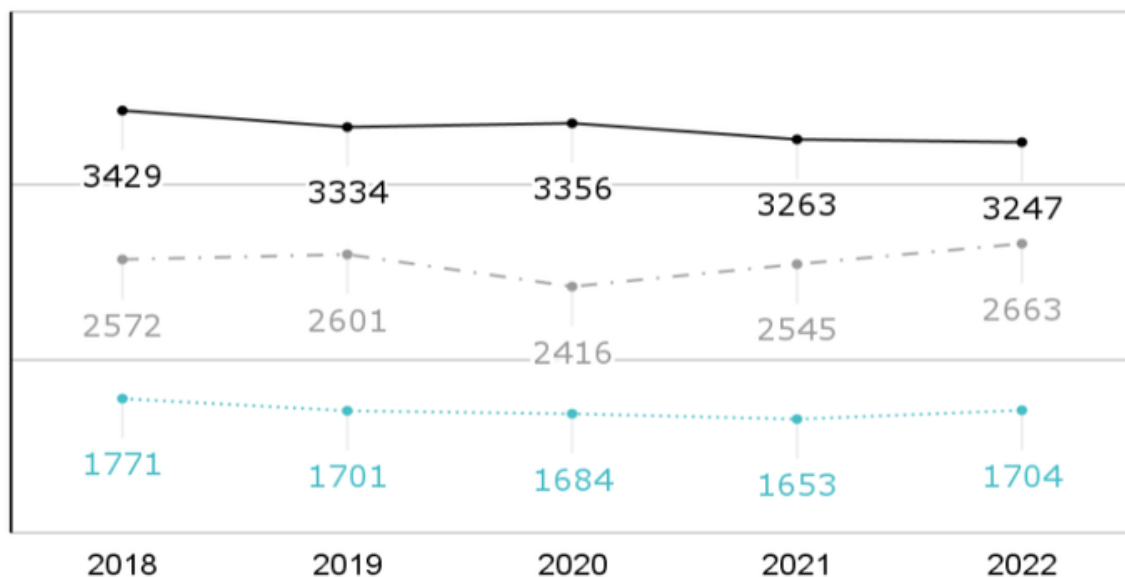
Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine
 Early Childhood Iowa Muscatine County
 LSI
 Muscatine Community College
 Muscatine Community School District

Mississippi Bend AEA
 Parents as Teachers
 Stanley Center for Peace and Security
 West Liberty Community School District

COMMUNITY DATA

Muscatine County Childcare 0-5 years inventory

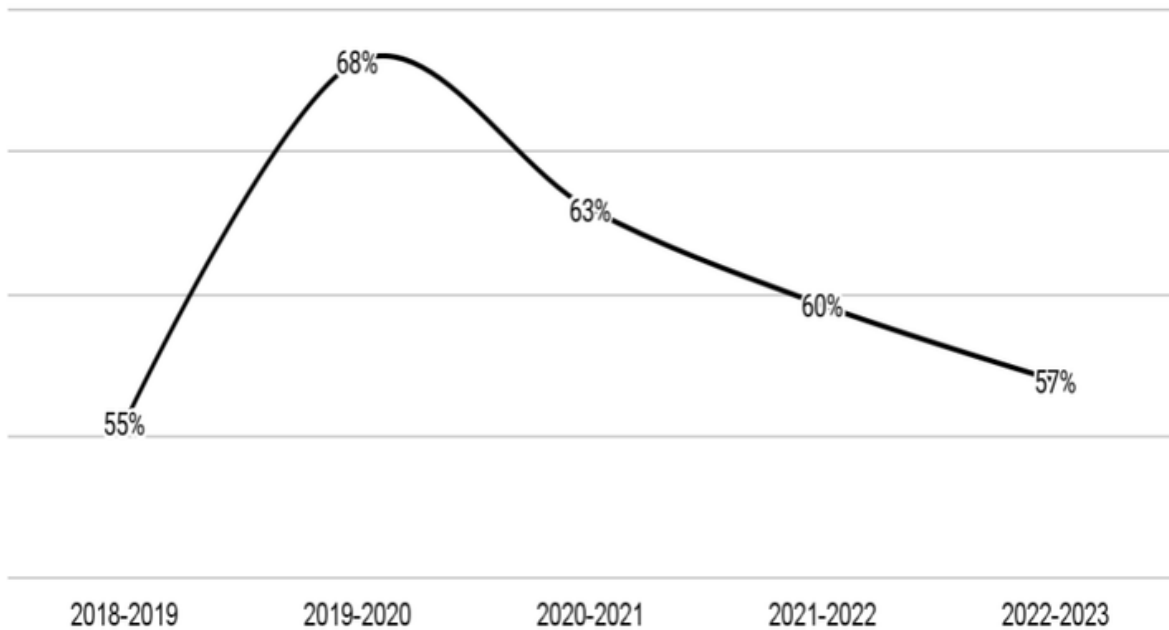
● Available Childcare ● Both Parents Working ● Total Population



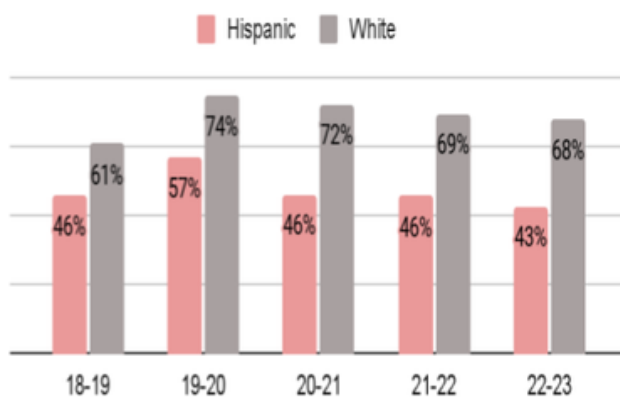
Muscatine County Childcare data provided by Child Care Resource & Referral as of July 1, 2022.

<https://iowaccrr.org/data/>

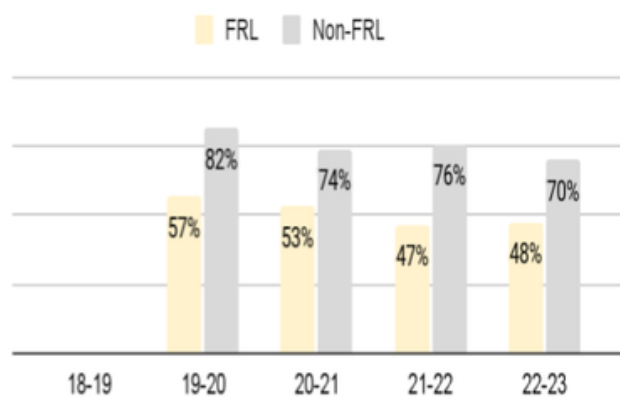
Overall Kindergarteners Meeting Fall FAST Benchmarks in Muscatine County



Socioeconomic Status



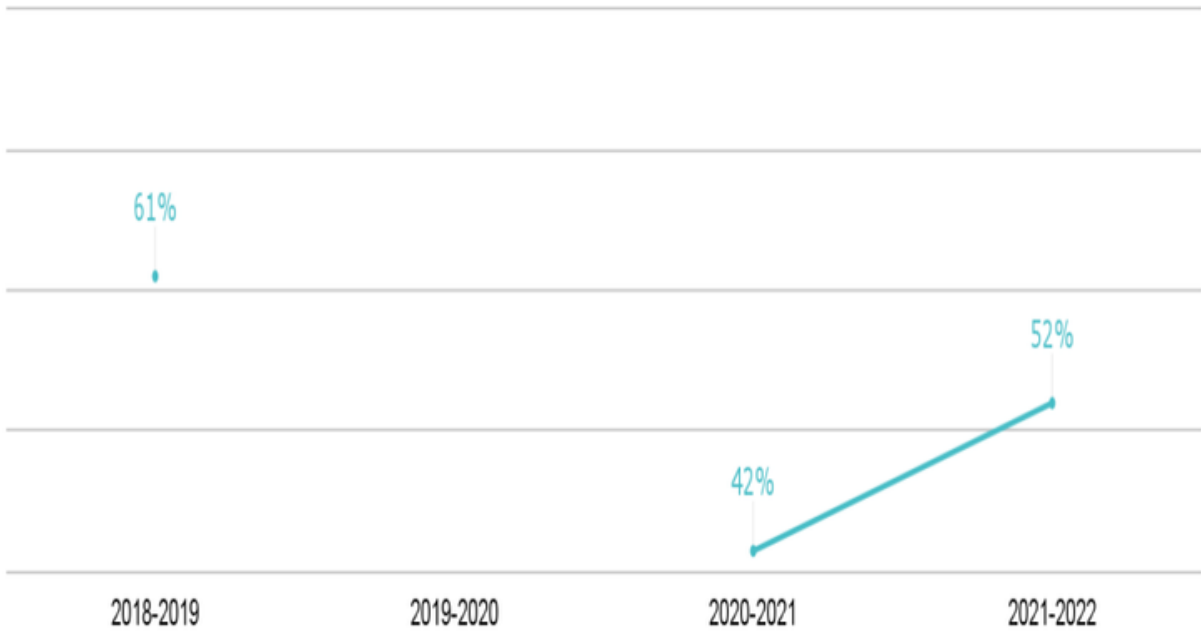
Race & Ethnicity Status



Muscatine County Kindergarten Fall FAST benchmarks are provided by Muscatine County Shared Data System. Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton school districts are included in the benchmark data. The percentages are the students who are at or above proficient in the Fall of their kindergarten year.

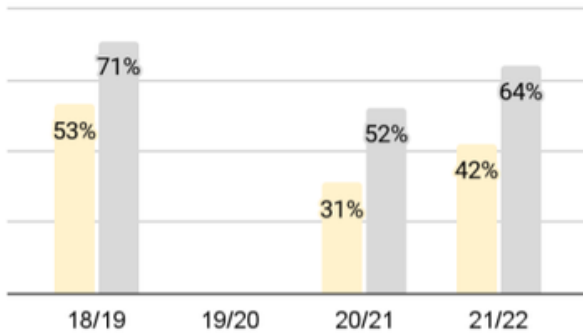
FRL=Free & Reduced Lunch

Overall 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency for Muscatine County



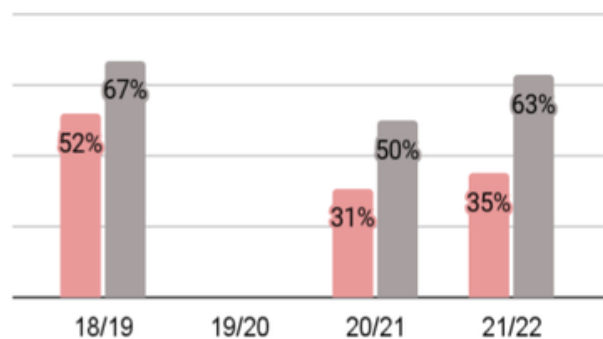
Socioeconomic Status

FRL Non-FRL



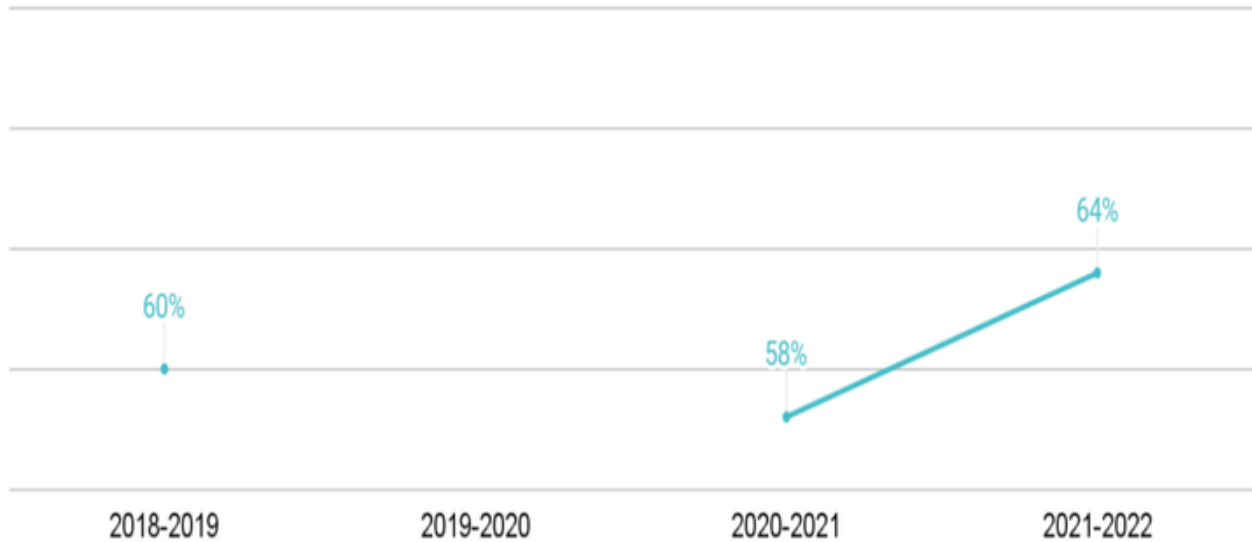
Race & Ethnicity Status

Hispanic White

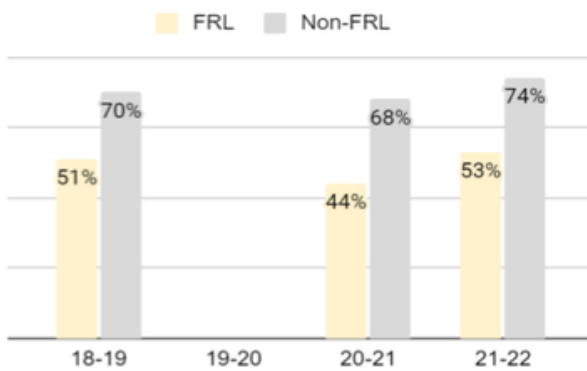


Muscatine County 3rd grade Reading Proficiency and 8th grade Math Proficiency data provided by Muscatine County Shared Data System. Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton school districts are included in the outcome data. The percentages are of the students who are at or above proficient on the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP) given yearly in the Spring.

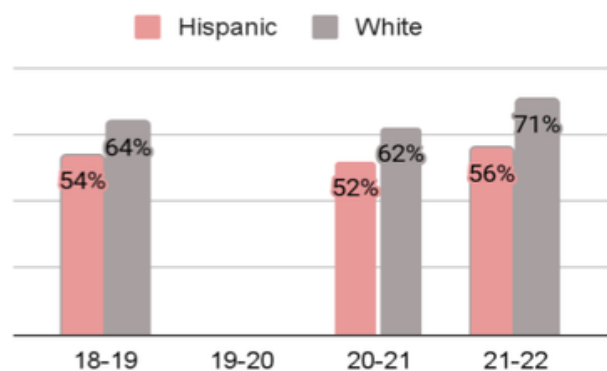
Overall 8th Grade Math Proficiency for Muscatine County



Socioeconomic Status

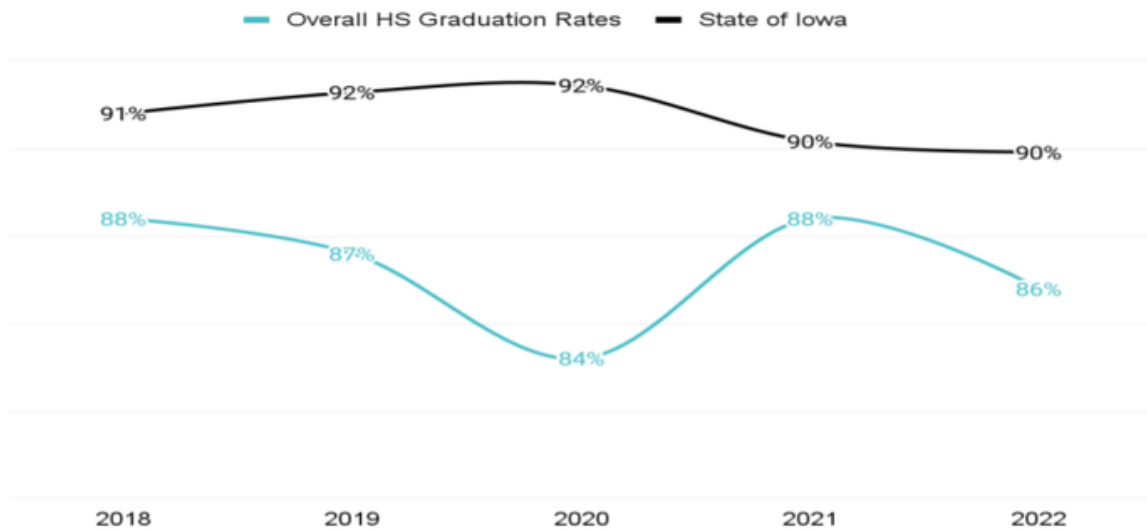


Race & Ethnicity Status

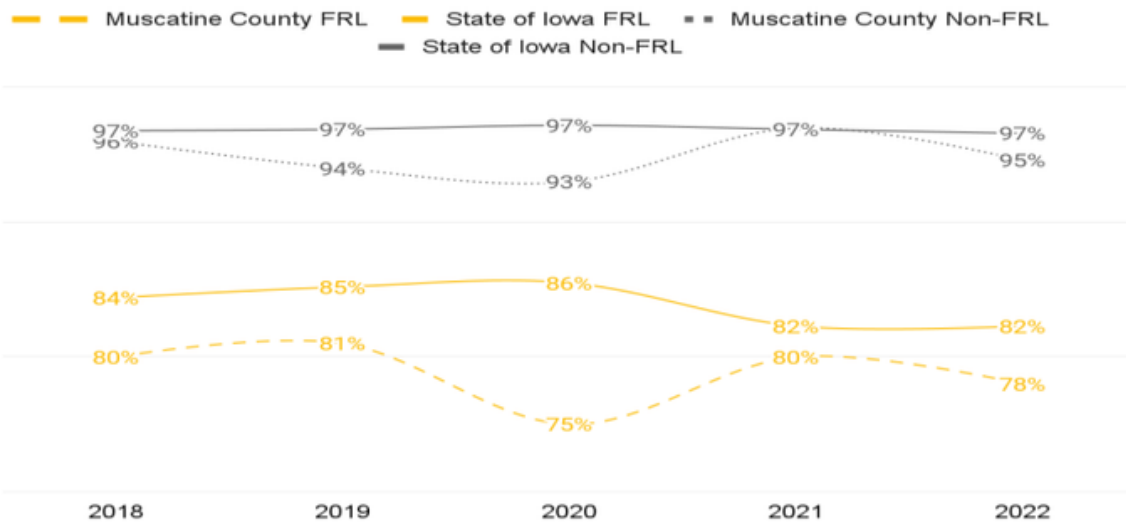


Muscatine County 3rd grade Reading Proficiency and 8th grade Math Proficiency data provided by Muscatine County Shared Data System. Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton school districts are included in the outcome data. The percentages are of the students who are at or above proficient on the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP) given yearly in the Spring.

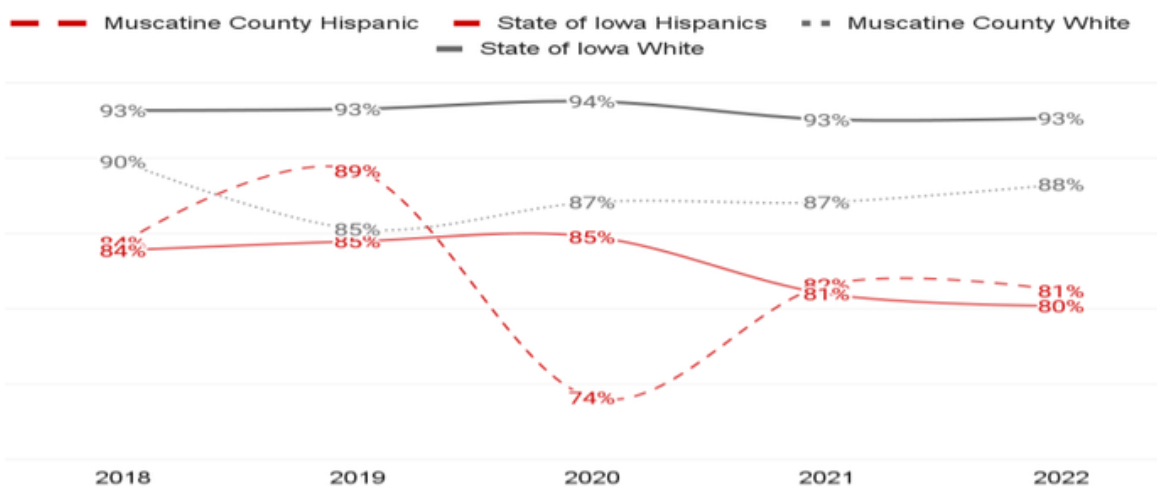
Overall High School Graduation Rates for Muscatine County



Socioeconomic Status

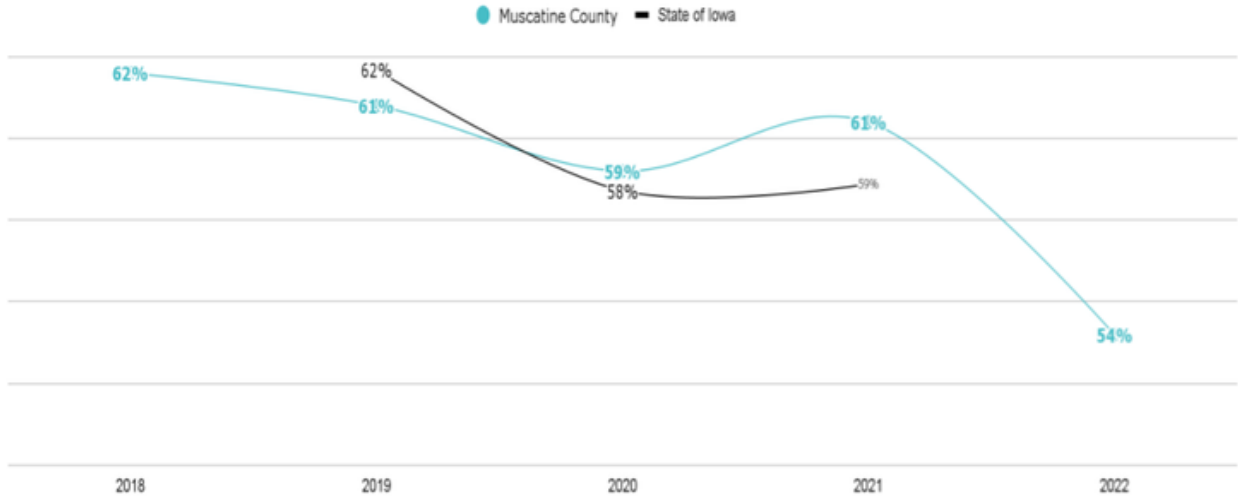


Race & Ethnicity Status

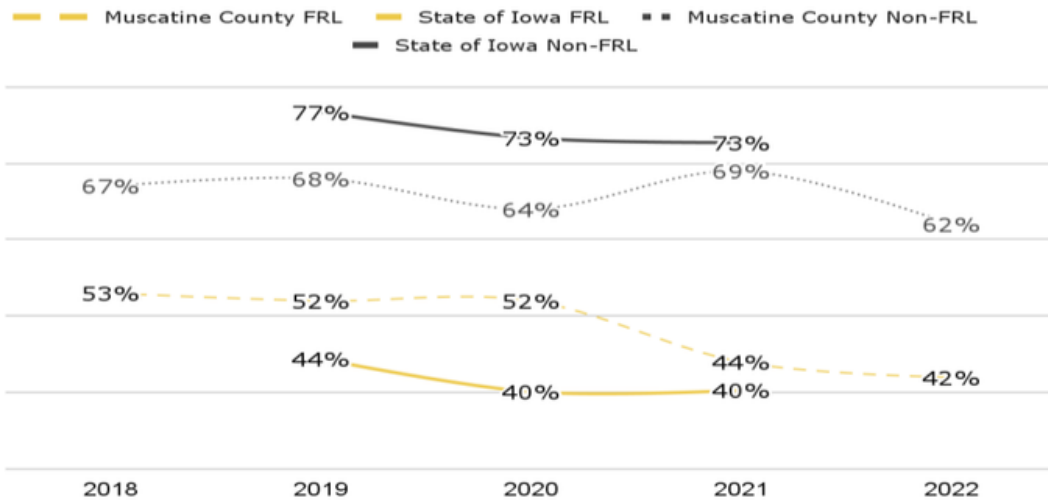


Data for the Muscatine County High School Graduation Rates was supplied by educateiowa.gov. Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton school districts are included in the outcome data.

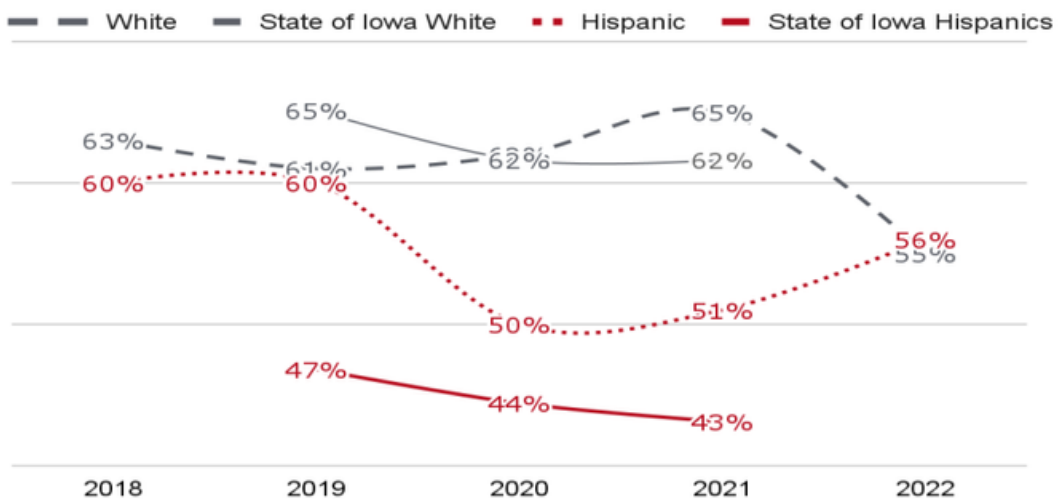
Fall Enrollment in Post Secondary Education



Socioeconomic Status



Race & Ethnicity Status



Fall enrollment in Post Secondary Education data was supplied by the National Student Clearinghouse and the State of Iowa data Iowa Postsecondary Readiness Report. Muscatine, West Liberty, & Wilton school districts are included in the outcome data.