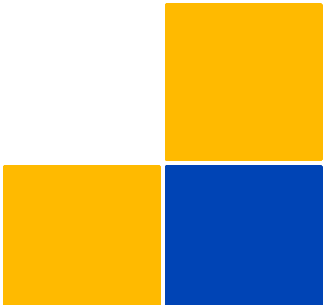
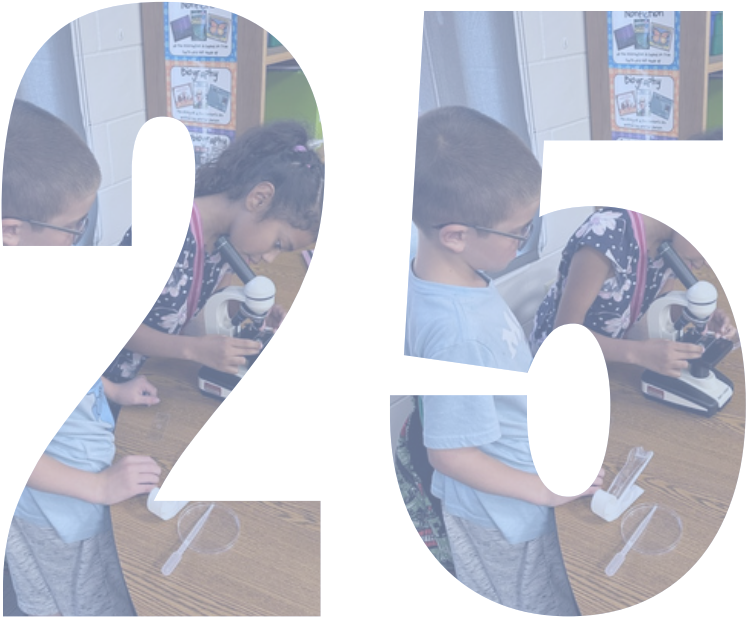


ANNUAL REPORT



Aligned
Impact
Muscatine County



Director's Letter

As we reflect on 2025, I am proud to share a year defined by growth, collaboration, and meaningful impact. Our mission to improve outcomes for all students and families continues to thrive, thanks to the unwavering support of our partners, funders, and community members who believe in the power of collective action.

This year, we secured a three-year, \$296,033 grant from the Iowa Child Abuse Prevention Program, enabling us to expand and stabilize family support programs at the Muscatine Community YMCA, Trinity Muscatine Public Health, and Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI). This investment is already strengthening families across Muscatine, Louisa, and Des Moines Counties.

We also celebrated several other major milestones that will translate into measurable improvements across the cradle to career continuum:

Secured \$93,000 in Early Childhood Iowa funding to provide preschool tuition and transportation scholarships for the 25/26 school year, ensuring more children have access to quality early learning experiences.



Assumed leadership of the Muscatine Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (CPPC), a vital initiative focused on preventing child abuse and neglect, reducing out-of-home placements, and supporting family reunification. This work is supported by \$20,000 in HHS funding.

Received funding from Kent Corporation, HNI Corporation, and an anonymous donor to enhance our community's shared data system—an essential tool for tracking outcomes and driving informed decision-making.



These successes reflect the power of aligned strategies, shared data, and community-wide collaboration. Throughout this report, you will see areas of great improvement, such as increases in 3rd grade reading proficiency and high school graduation. You will also find areas where we need to invest more time and resources, such as postsecondary enrollment. While there is still work to do, we are encouraged by the momentum and remain committed to improving outcomes for all children and families in Muscatine County.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we are creating a brighter future for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Wan".

STUDENT SUCCESS
FACILITATOR
JESENIA PESINA



EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR
KIM WARREN



DATA
MANAGER
MINDY HOON



MEET OUR TEAM

CHILDREN'S
FUNDING
COORDINATOR



YESENIA CRUZ



COMMUNICATIONS
MANAGER
MICHELE RHOADES



OFFICE COORDINATOR
ALLISON EAGLE

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



BRENDA ARTHUR-MILLER
WEST LIBERTY CSD



TYLER BAARS
UNITYPOINT TRINITY MUSCATINE



CLINT CHRISTOPHER
MUSCATINE CSD



DR. NAOMI DEWINTER
MUSCATINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



RICH DWYER
KENT WORLDWIDE



LESLIE EICHELBERGER
HNI



ROBERT FIEDLER
MUSSER PUBLIC LIBRARY



JESSE GARCIA
LULAC



HEIDI HOFFMAN
ISU EXTENSION & OUTREACH
MUSCATINE COUNTY



JAMIE LEZA
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF
GREATER MUSCATINE



DAVID LU
BAYER



BRETT OLSEN
MUSCATINE
COMMUNITY YMCA

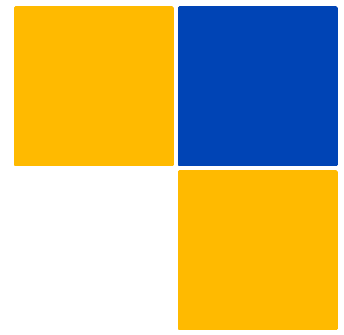


SHANE ORR
UNITED WAY
MUSCATINE COUNTY



DANNI ZUMWALT
UI CENTER FOR
ADVANCEMENT

Mission & Goals



Mission

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

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.

Our Strategy Networks

Early
Education



Academic
Success



Post
Secondary



**Muscatine
County**
Shared Data System



Childcare

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

SMART Targets: Increase single-female-headed households with children living above the ALICE threshold from 24% in 2022 (938 households) to 31% by 2030 (1230 households). 2023 is at 34%.

In Muscatine County, the demand for childcare far exceeds supply—there are about two children for every available spot. This shortage creates significant challenges for families, children, and the local economy. For parents, especially mothers, limited access to childcare often means reducing work hours, turning down promotions, or leaving the workforce. It can also prevent them from pursuing education or training, limiting career growth and financial stability. These barriers contribute to lost wages and added strain on families.

Children are also impacted. High-quality early childhood education supports cognitive, social, and emotional growth. Without consistent, enriching care, children may enter school less prepared, while unstable or low-quality arrangements can affect their security and well-being.

The ripple effects reach the economy. When parents struggle to secure childcare, they may miss work or be less productive. Employers then face higher absenteeism and turnover, disrupting operations and lowering workplace morale.

Addressing the childcare gap is not just a family issue—it's a community priority that influences education, workforce participation, and economic vitality. That's why this summer, AIM convened childcare providers, community groups, and businesses to discuss challenges, resources, and opportunities. In the months ahead, we will continue bringing people together to identify strategies to expand childcare availability and strengthen the childcare workforce.

Addressing the Childcare Gap



In Muscatine County, there are approximately two children for every available childcare spot.

Limited access to childcare can lead to reduced work hours, lost wages, increased economic strain.



Lack of high-quality early care affects cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Difficulty finding childcare can increase employee absenteeism and turnover.



Active Family Effectiveness Coalition Members

Child Care Resource and Referral
Early Childhood Iowa Muscatine County
ISU Ext. & Outreach-Muscatine County
Lutheran Services in Iowa
Muscatine Community School District
Muscatine Community YMCA
Musser Public Library
Parents as Teachers
United Way of Muscatine
UnityPoint Trinity Muscatine Public Health



Childcare Convening

Early Education

Goal: Every child enters Kindergarten ready to learn

SMART Targets: Increase fall FAST scores of Kindergarteners on free/reduced lunch from 48% (120 children) in 2023 to 73% by fall of 2030 (164 children). Fall 2024 at 53%.

Early childhood education plays a vital role in children's development, providing a strong foundation for academic, social, and emotional growth. Between ages 3–5, children absorb new information at a remarkable rate, and access to quality preschool programs paves the way for future learning.

After the reorganization of Early Childhood Iowa in 2024, Muscatine County was left without local leadership to coordinate early childhood and family programs. AIM stepped in to ensure these vital services remained intact for families. With Muscatine now part of a 5-county region, the absence of a local director jeopardized access to preschool tuition and transportation funds. United Way Muscatine County: Aligned Impact Muscatine (AIM) assumed responsibility for managing these funds and preserving equitable access to preschool for local families.

Through this work, AIM supported 8 students with tuition and 13 with transportation scholarships, ensuring they could attend quality preschool programs. Tuition partners included Zion Lutheran Preschool in Wilton, Saint Mary & Saint Mathias Guardian Angel Preschool, Lone Tree Community Preschool, and Durant Preschool. While not all these preschools are within Muscatine County, all students receiving tuition scholarships live in the county.

For transportation, AIM partnered with Non-Emergency Transport (NET). NET not only provided rides but also created a safe and fun environment where students sang songs, counted cars, and learned colors on their way to school. Parents shared how much the program reduced stress and allowed their children to reliably access preschool.

Parents from the program have said that the program relieved a lot of stress and has made it possible for their kids to get to and from school. One parent said they would have had to quit their job if the program had not been available because she had no other way of getting her child to and from school. Another parent highlighted how great NET has been and the open line of communication with them was so nice. They stated that she feels good about sending her child with NET because she knows how caring and kind they are with the kids. Another parent said they had moved far from her child's preschool, so walking wasn't an option anymore and that the transportation program helped reduce that stress, so she wasn't missing time at work.



Preschool classroom

Academic Success

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

SMART Targets: Increase 3rd grade reading proficiency from 47% in spring of 2023 (211 students) to 70% by spring of 2030 (320 students). Spring 2025 is 59%.

SPARK Program-For the 5th consecutive summer, the Muscatine Community School District partnered with AIM to deliver SPARK, a full-day summer learning program designed to combat summer learning loss and promote academic growth. Each morning, students participate in focused reading and math instruction. Afternoons are dedicated to hands-on enrichment classes that spark curiosity and creativity through STEM, the arts, and career exploration. AIM proudly continues to support the enrichment portion of SPARK, helping students discover new interests and build skills that extend beyond the classroom.

SPARK Partners

Betty Collins' Prehistoric Teeth Collection
CultureALL
Fire Department
Girl Scouts
Grain Processing Corporation
HNI
ISU Ext & Outreach Muscatine County
Mama Katambwa
Muscatine Ag Center
Muscatine Art Center
Muscatine Community College
Muscatine County Conservation
Muscatine Art Center
Muscatine Power & Water
Musser Public Library
Pilot Club
Police Department
Stanley Center for Peace and Security



MCC Career Exploration Class Guests

City of Muscatine Parks and Recreation
City of Muscatine Refuse Dept
HNI
Hy-vee
Muscatine Ag Center
Muscatine County Conservation
Muscatine Fire Department
Muscatine Police Department
Muscatine Power and Water
Muscatine Radiology
Rock Valley Physical Therapy
Stanley Center for Peace and Security
U of Iowa Healthcare



Academic Success, cont.

Muscatine Schools Enrichment Program-

Learning doesn't stop at the classroom door. That's why we're committed to building strong connections between students and our community. Through partnerships with local businesses and organizations, we bring real-world experiences into Kindergarten through 6th-grade classrooms in the Muscatine Community School District.

This initiative is guided by three key goals:

- Enhance hands-on learning by aligning community experiences with classroom curriculum.
- Strengthen students' sense of belonging by connecting them to the broader community.
- Introduce students to a variety of careers to spark early interest and inspiration.



Muscatine Elementary Enrichment Community Partners

CultureAll
Indigenous Coalition of Muscatine
ISU Ext & Outreach
It Takes A Village
James Zahara and the Beast
Jill Esbaum-Author
MCC Supply Chain & Logistics

MCC Nursing
Muscatine Art Center
Muscatine County Conservation
Musser Library
Pearl Button Museum
Stanley Center for Peace and Security

Academic Success, cont.

West Liberty Enrichment Program: Children are naturally curious and love to learn, especially when they can apply what they've learned in meaningful, hands-on ways. Each school year, we collaborate with West Liberty Elementary to support enrichment activities for kindergarten and 3rd-grade classes. This year, we expanded our efforts by also working with 2nd-grade students, connecting them to Stanley Center for Peace and Security Culture Kits to enhance their unit on China.

One 2nd-grade teacher shared: "We showed the items to students and they really enjoyed being able to have a hands-on experience. They loved seeing the money and the different pieces of art. The kit definitely helped their learning of Chinese culture!"

This initiative provided students with immersive learning experiences that deepened their engagement with classroom content. For example, students explored STEM concepts through basic coding activities using Hexbugs, provided by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Kim Wiele, a retired teacher from West Liberty Elementary, led the popular 3rd-grade STEM Hexbug and Kindergarten roller coaster activity. Students were excited to reconnect with a beloved former teacher and appreciated the chance to learn from her through hands-on exploration.

Students also learned about migration history and cultural artifacts through the Diversity Services Center of Iowa, and observed tadpole metamorphosis from Muscatine County Conservation.

West Liberty Enrichment Community Partnerships

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



West Liberty Schools
Enrichment Program

CPPC

Muscatine County Community Partnership for Protecting Children

In the fall of 2024, AIM was given the opportunity to oversee the work of the Muscatine County Community Partnership for Protecting Children (CPPC). The collaborative efforts of CPPC aligned with our goals of improving outcomes for children and families. Through a collaborative, community-based approach, CPPC worked to prevent child abuse and neglect, reduce out-of-home placements, and support family reunification efforts.

To further community safety and mental health, one individual was trained to facilitate sessions on internet safety through the TechniCool program, and another was certified as a Mental Health First Aid trainer. Six community programs received hygiene supplies to support their clients, and 290 youth participating in summer learning programs were rewarded with books, crafts, STEM activities, and snacks to encourage attendance and engagement.

CPPC also invested in professional development and advocacy. Four members attended the Prevent Child Abuse Iowa Conference, and the Shared Decision-Making Board led awareness events and activities for Child Abuse Prevention Month in April.

A major milestone was the successful acquisition of a three-year, \$296,033 grant from the Iowa Child Abuse Prevention Program. This funding will help stabilize and expand family support programs at the Muscatine Community YMCA, Trinity Muscatine Public Health, and LSI, benefiting families in Muscatine, Louisa, and Des Moines Counties.

	12	CAR SEATS DELIVERED Keeping children safe through access to vital car safety equipment
	9	CHILDREN SUPPORTED WITH BASICS Clothing, shoes, and access to enriching out-of-school programs
	7	FOSTER FAMILIES HONORED A special appreciation event celebrated their vital role
	5	FAMILIES EMPOWERED WITH READING Online literacy class + free books to build home libraries
	2	YOUTH EQUIPPED FOR INDEPENDENCE Teens transitioning out of foster care received home essentials and a bicycle

Muscatine County CPPC Shared Decision-Making Board

- City of Muscatine
- DECAT
- Families First
- First Five
- Every Child
- Health and Human Services (HHS)
- Iowa Juvenile Courts
- Iowa Total Care
- ISU Extension & Outreach Muscatine County
- Life Connections
- LSI (Lutheran Services in Iowa)
- MCSA (Muscatine Center for Social Action)
- LSI (Lutheran Services in Iowa)
- MCSA (Muscatine Center for Social Action)
- Muscatine Community School District
- Muscatine Community YMCA
- Muscatine Police Department
- Parent Partners
- Parents as Teachers
- Safe Families
- The Bridge
- Trinity Muscatine Public Health
- United Way Muscatine County
- UnityPoint Robert Young
- WellPoint

Children's Funding Coordinator

Aligned Impact Muscatine County (AIM), in collaboration with the Children's Funding Project (CFP), successfully secured grant funding to establish the role of Children's Funding Coordinator (CFC) for Muscatine County. CFP is a national organization that supports communities in expanding equitable opportunities for children and youth through strategic public financing. As part of this partnership, CFP provides coaching and technical assistance to CFCs, equipping them with tools to develop fiscal maps, create cost models, and identify sustainable funding sources.

AIM's CFC is currently leading the data collection effort from federal, state, and local sources to develop Muscatine County's fiscal map. This map will illustrate the full spectrum of financial resources directed toward children and youth services in the county—offering clarity on investment levels, funding sources, and alignment with community goals. In tandem, cost modeling will be used to assess the actual cost of program implementation and long-term sustainability. These tools will enable stakeholders to strategically address funding gaps and explore additional financing options to fully realize Muscatine County's vision for children and youth.

In April, our CFC, Yesenia, shared Muscatine County's progress during the Rural Summit for Cradle to Career Success held in Anchorage, Alaska. AIM, CFP, and StriveTogether jointly presented on the power of aligning people, data, and financial resources behind a unified vision for rural children and youth. As CFP's first rural partnership, Muscatine County is proud to serve as a model for how targeted fiscal strategies can positively transform outcomes in rural communities.

Looking ahead, once the fiscal map, cost modeling, and funding source analysis are complete, Muscatine County will be equipped with actionable insights and tools to guide data-driven decisions. These resources will support the community in aligning investments with shared goals, driving sustainable impact in services for children and youth.



Yesenia presented with Kenny Francis (Children's Funding Project) and Josh Davis (StriveTogether) for the Rural Summit for Cradle to Career Success

Post-Secondary

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

SMART Targets: Increase high school graduation completion of students on free/reduced lunch from 70% in 2022 (200 students) to 83% by fall of 2030 (213 students). Class of 2024 is 81%.

Increase postsecondary enrollment of high school graduates on free/reduced lunch in fall after graduation from 37% in the fall of 2023 (72 students) to 53% by fall of 2030 (113 students). Class of 2024 is 35%.

Post-Secondary Workshop: The Postsecondary Strategy Group hosts an annual workshop at Muscatine Community College focused on improving postsecondary outcomes. These workshops bring together school district staff, EICC representatives, high school students, college students, and local community organizations to review local data and gather student input. Together, the group identifies successful programs that can be expanded, shares best practices to strengthen education systems, and explores strategies to boost engagement with students and families.

This year's action teams included career academy enrollment, support for first-generation college students, workforce partnerships, and improving high school graduation rates.

West Liberty Youth Board: The West Liberty Youth Board was created to elevate youth voices on local community boards and to help students develop leadership and professional skills.

This year, 7 students participated in the program. After being interviewed, each student was selected by one of the participating community organizations based on their interests. Many of the students were particularly drawn to community organizations, such as LULAC and Dream Catchers.

The program featured after-school sessions held on Fridays, focused on building skills and preparing students to actively participate on their assigned boards. These meetings equipped students with essential tools for success in leadership roles, covering topics such as Robert's Rules of Order, effective communication, team-building activities, and resume development.

West Liberty Youth Board Community Partnerships

West Liberty Youth Dream Catchers
LULAC Council 310



Muscatine's Decision Day

Course to College: Each year, AIM partners with local high schools to apply for Impact Grants through the Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine. These grants support Course to College initiatives such as Career Exploration classes, College Application Day, Senior Days, and other college and career readiness activities.

Prepare – Throughout the school year, the goal is to ensure students are prepared for their future. This is accomplished through career-focused experiences, including job shadowing and guest speakers in the Career Exploration class, which currently has 106 students enrolled. The Strategies for Academic Success class supports this goal with 90 students participating. Additional preparation efforts include student enrollment in concurrent courses and Career Academy programs.

Apply – Once students feel ready for their next step, they begin the college application process. Schools support this through events like College Application Day at Muscatine High School and Senior Day at West Liberty High School. This year, 114 students participated in Muscatine’s event, while 82 students took part in West Liberty’s, submitting applications to more than 13 colleges and universities.

Finance - During the school year, FAFSA-related workshops helped students create accounts, followed by several FAFSA Completion Events in February. Ongoing support was provided throughout the semester. Local Scholarship Packet workshops were also held for both Muscatine and West Liberty High Schools, resulting in 222 applications—representing 48% of seniors.

Decide - Senior Decision Day took place at Muscatine High School on April 25, 2025, with 64 students from the Class of 2025 in attendance. West Liberty High School celebrated its Senior Decision Day on April 30 with a whole-school assembly to acknowledge the senior plans of the Class of 2025.

Go - Students complete the senior exit survey and receive assistance from the Summer Melt program to transition to college (May–August).

Summer Melt - Each year, from May through August, the Summer Melt program supports high school graduates by helping them feel confident and prepared to begin college. It addresses common gaps during the transition, such as completing the FAFSA, registering for orientation, and navigating enrollment. To make the process more accessible, Summer Melt provides near-peer mentors—current or recent college students who guide grads through each step. Many mentors are bilingual in English and Spanish, and meetings are scheduled at convenient public locations.

In 2025, Summer Melt helped 20 students from 2 institutions. Most were recent high school graduates, while others were already enrolled in college and needed FAFSA assistance.

For this year’s program, we are hosting events for families to better understand FAFSA and get questions answered. We are also offering drop-in sessions at the Coffee Belt in Muscatine and in West Liberty to reach more students in surrounding communities.

We aim to collaborate with additional community partners to expand our reach and continue supporting students on their path to higher education.



Data

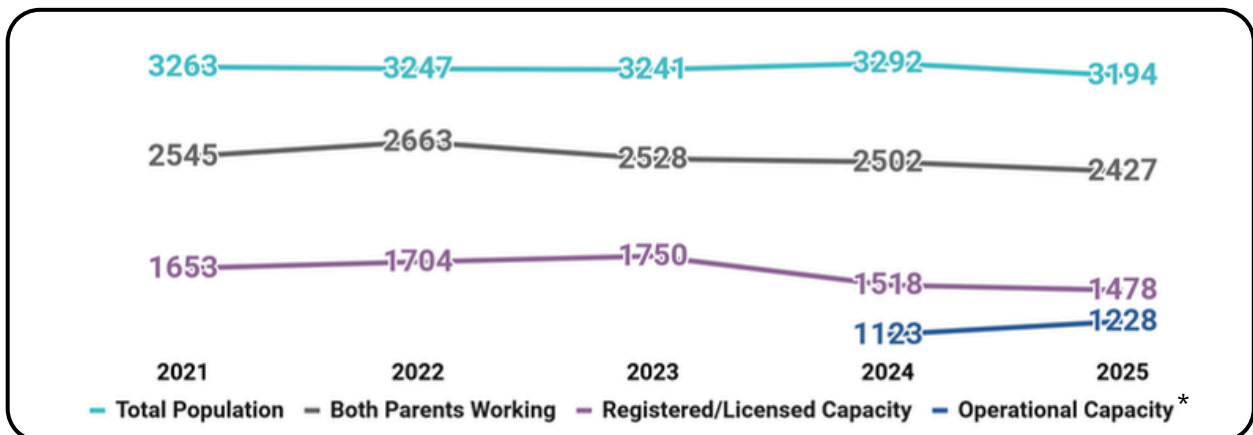
Over the past year, the Muscatine County Shared Data System has continued to grow in its role supporting improved outcomes for youth and families from cradle to career. Designed as a secure, integrated platform, the system brings together educational data from local school districts with information from community organizations to support coordinated, data-driven efforts.

The Shared Data System has been built to be a key driver of:

- Informed decision-making – Helping partners design programs that address disparities and promote more equitable outcomes.
- Cross-sector collaboration – Enabling organizations to align efforts and develop targeted strategies using shared data.
- Equity-focused insights – Allowing users to examine outcomes by gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status to identify gaps and direct resources where they're most needed.
- Data security and community trust – Upholding strong standards for data privacy, aggregation, and reporting to ensure confidentiality and build confidence among partners.

In the year ahead, the system will continue expanding its support for program design by providing more accessible, actionable insights, helping partners create responsive and inclusive solutions that reflect the evolving needs of Muscatine County families.

Muscatine County Child Care Data



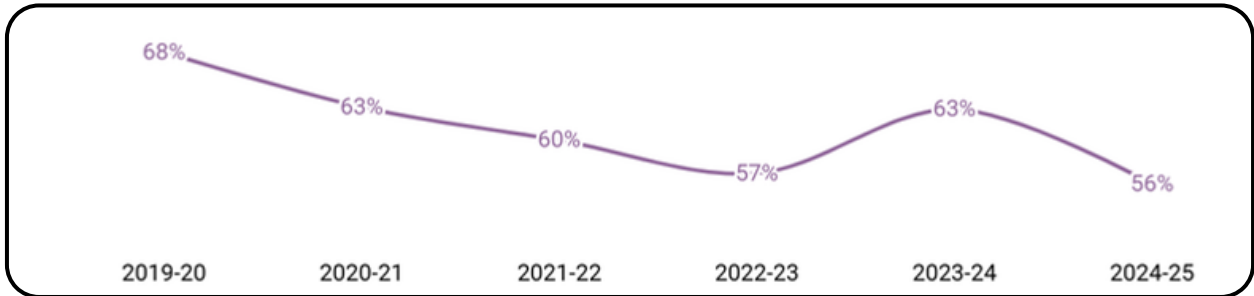
*New data from State of Iowa Department of Health & Human Services



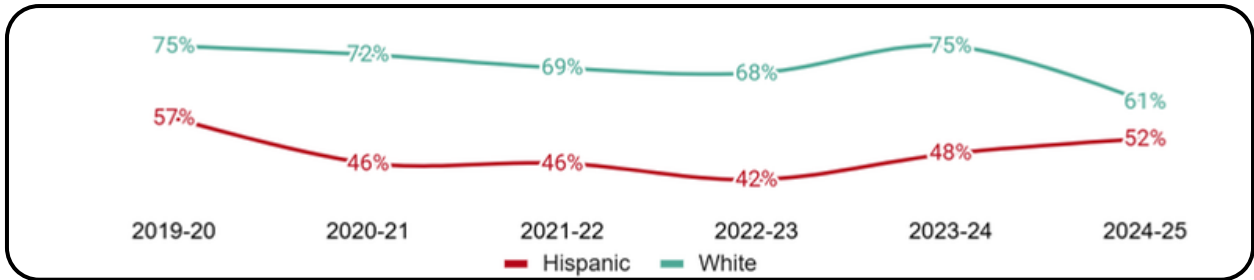
Mindy and Yesenia working on data.

Muscatine County Kindergarten Fall FAST Proficiency Scores

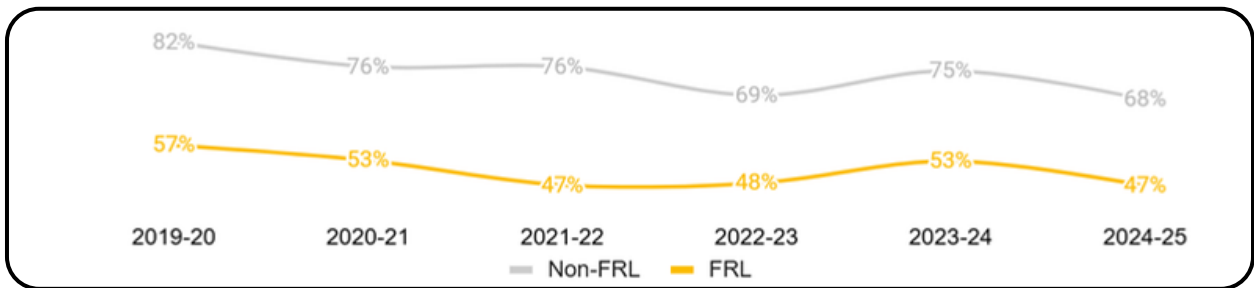
Overall Proficiency



Proficiency by Race/Ethnicity



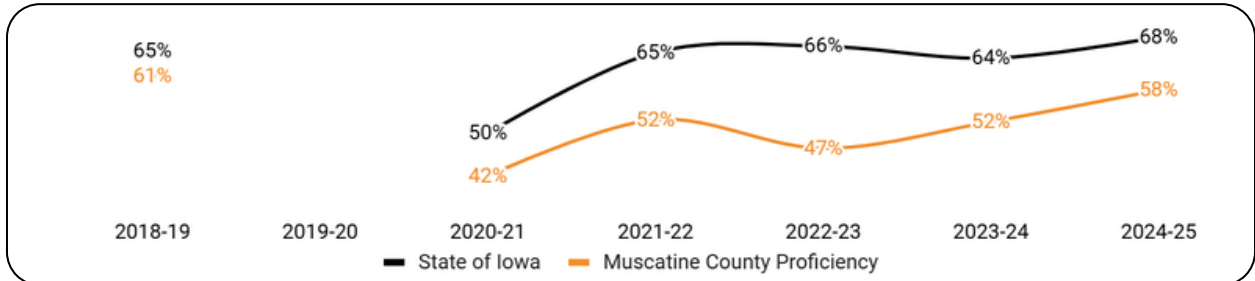
Proficiency by Socioeconomic Status



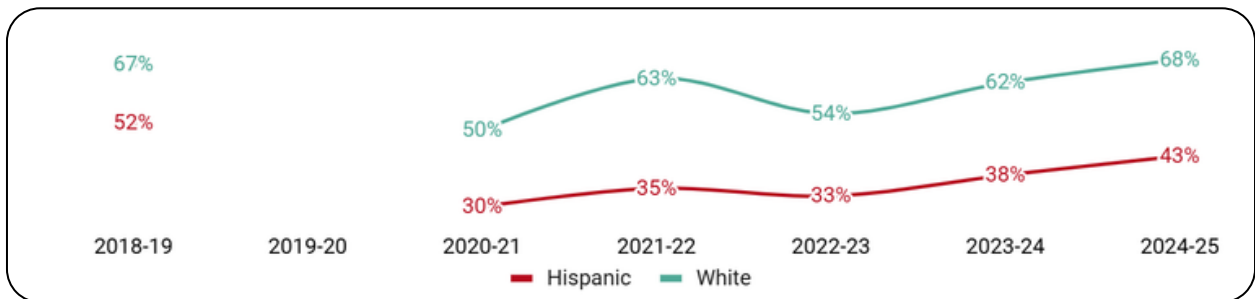
West Liberty Kindergarteners enjoy a roller coaster challenge for STEM enrichment

Muscatine County 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency on ISASP Testing

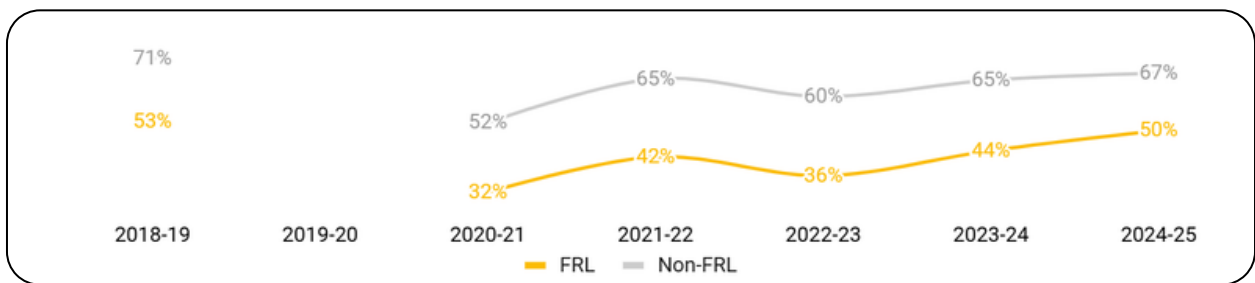
Overall Advance/Proficient Scores



Advance/Proficient by Race/Ethnicity



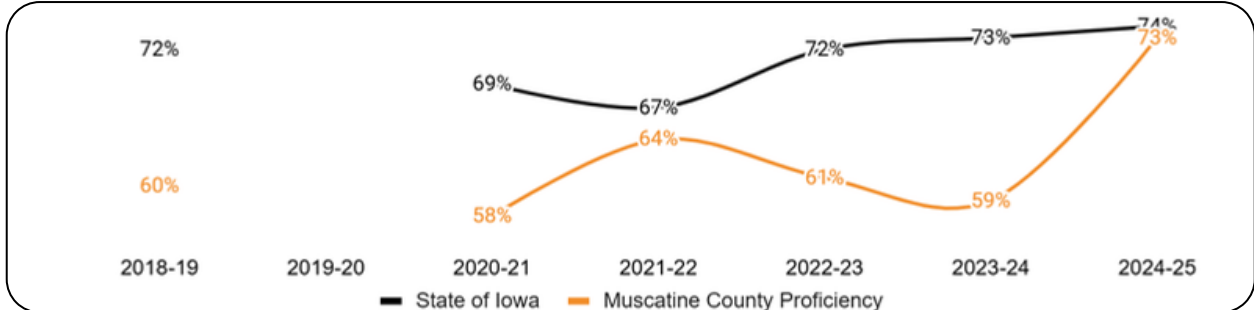
Advance/Proficient by Socioeconomic Status



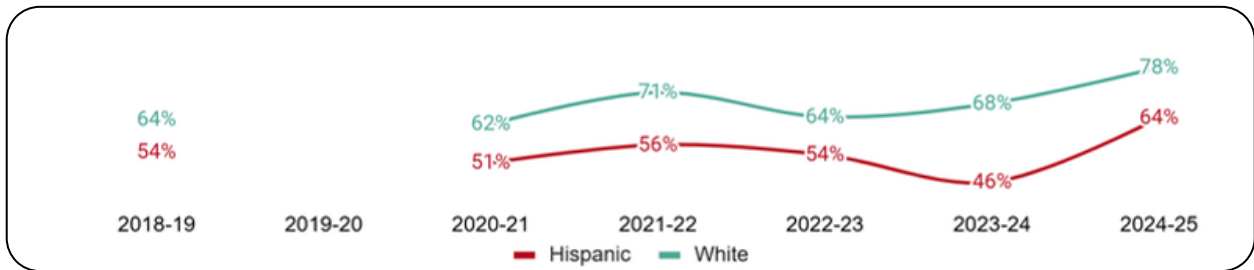
SPARK Program

Muscatine County 8th Grade Math Proficiency on ISASP Testing

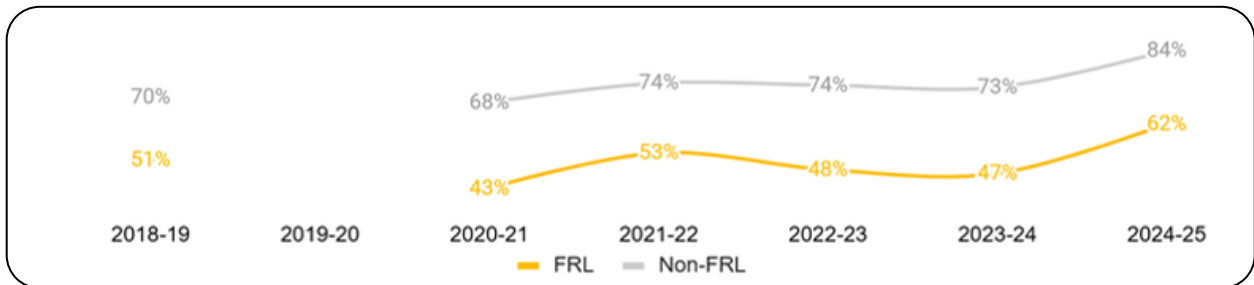
Overall Proficiency Scores



Advance/Proficient by Race/Ethnicity



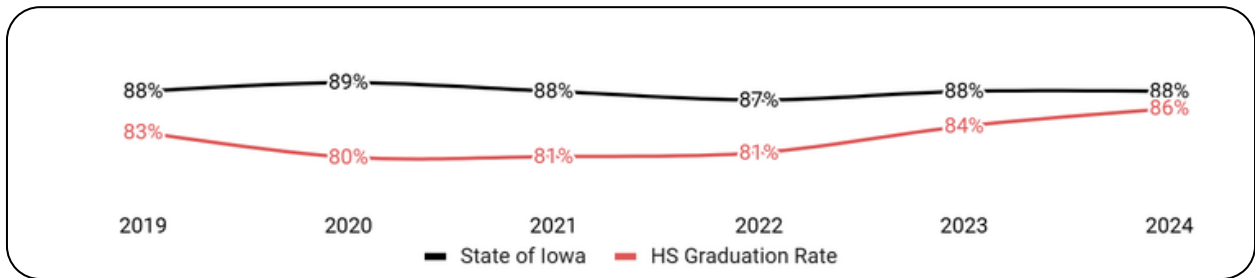
Advance/Proficient by Socioeconomic Status



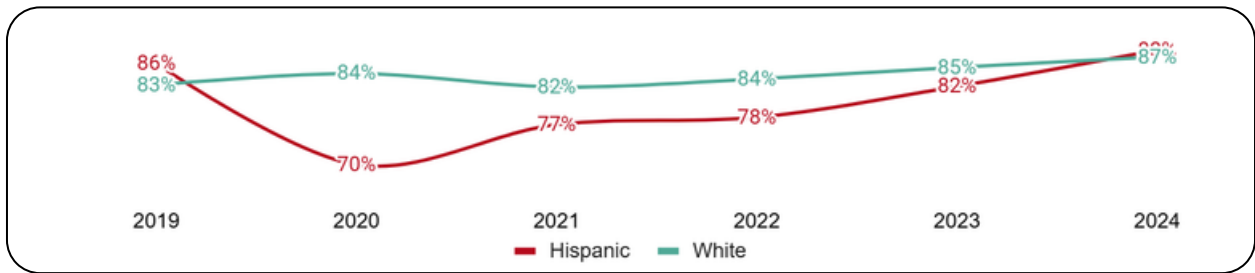
Stanley Center for Peace and Security bring the Earth Balloon for student enrichment programs.

Muscatine County High School Graduation Rates

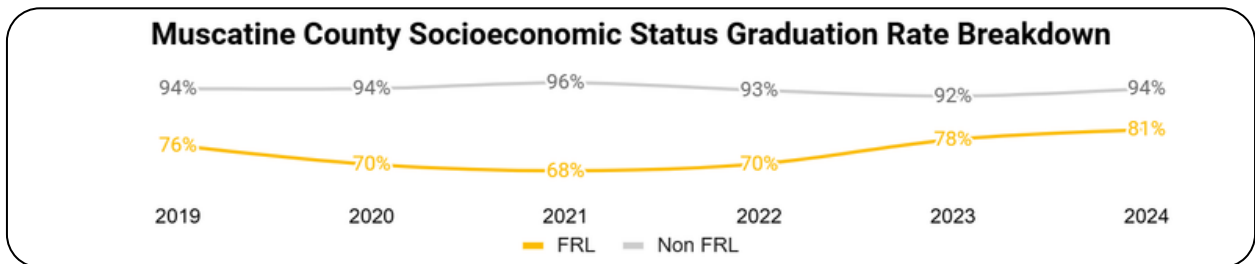
Overall High School Graduation Rate



High School Graduation Rate by Race/Ethnicity



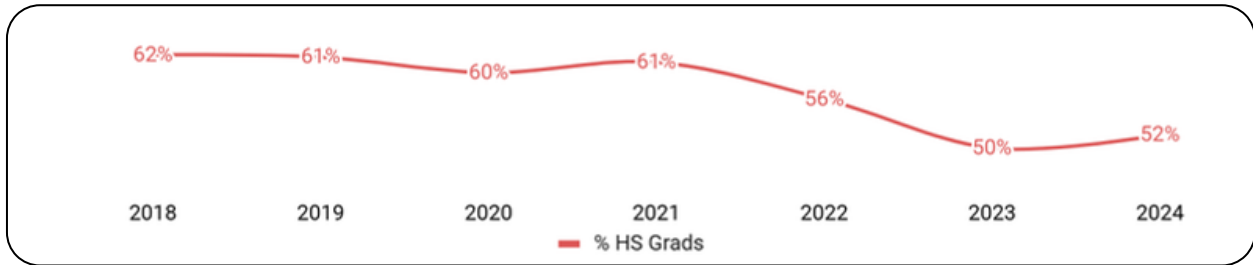
High School Graduation Rate by Socioeconomic Status



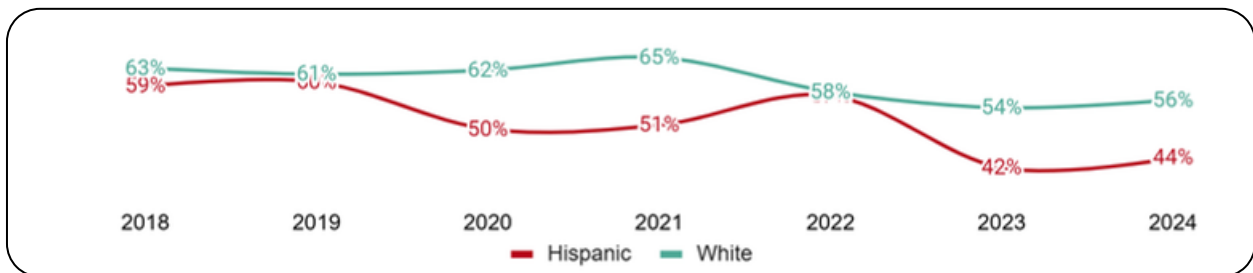
West Liberty High School Graduation

National Student Clearinghouse Fall Enrollment After HS Graduation Muscatine County

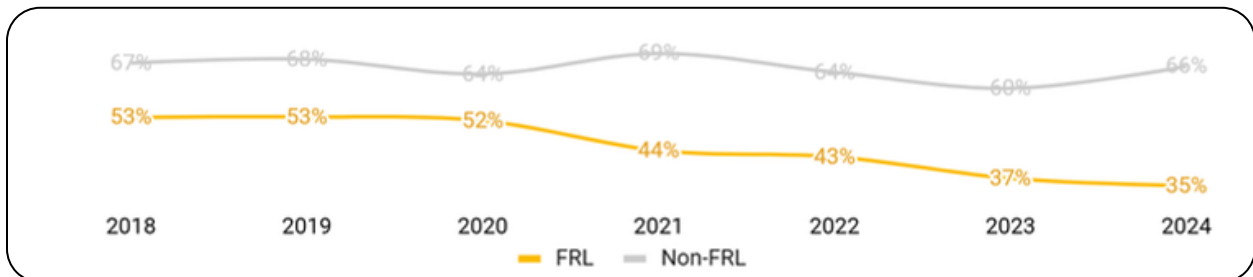
Overall Fall Enrollment after HS Graduation



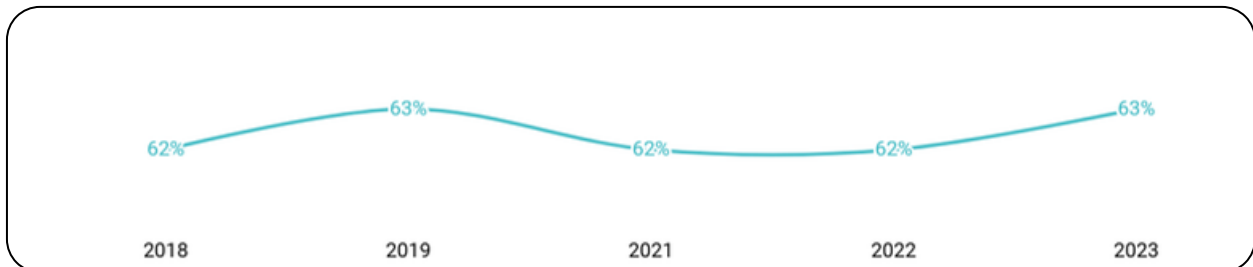
Fall Enrollment after HS Graduation by Race/Ethnicity



Fall Enrollment after HS Graduation by Socioeconomic Status



ALICE Employment Data Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed % of Households above ALICE Threshold



Looking Ahead

This year, we saw meaningful progress across Muscatine County's cradle-to-career work. From early childhood to postsecondary success, our community's collaborative efforts have impacted measurable gains in educational outcomes, family support, and community engagement.

Notable achievements include:

- A 5% increase in 3rd-grade reading proficiency since 2023, reflecting the success of programs like SPARK and expanded enrichment opportunities, in supporting the amazing work of teachers.
- High school graduation rates for students on free/reduced lunch rose to 81%, nearing the community's 2030 goal of 83%.
- The Summer Melt program supported 20 students, including 10 first-generation college attendees, helping bridge the transition from high school to higher education.
- AIM's leadership in early education access ensured preschool tuition and transportation for 21 children, directly impacting kindergarten readiness.

These results demonstrate the power of aligned strategies, shared data, and community-wide collaboration. Yet, we recognize that challenges remain—particularly in postsecondary enrollment, where rates for students on free/reduced lunch declined slightly to 35%. This indicates a need for deeper engagement, expanded mentorship, and support to ensure all students can pursue their aspirations beyond high school.

Looking ahead, AIM is committed to:

- Expanding access to quality childcare, a foundational issue affecting workforce participation and early learning.
- Strengthening postsecondary pathways, with a focus on first-generation students and career readiness.
- Enhancing data transparency, ensuring that every decision reflects the needs of our community.
- Sustaining family support programs through strategic funding and cross-sector partnerships.

Together, we've built a strong foundation. With continued collaboration, innovation, and investment, we will create a future where every child and family in Muscatine County can thrive.



SPARK Program