

# Community School Community Conversations

## 2020-21 Report

### WHAT IS A COMMUNITY SCHOOL?

A community school is a way to put the school at the center of the community, making it a hub for services and programs. In collaboration with Racine Unified School District, United Way of Racine County implemented the community school model for Racine County with the LIFT (Link and Inspire for Tomorrow) strategy. Through LIFT, Racine County community schools intentionally create an infrastructure that forges strong relationships to align resources and expertise to move the needle on key indicators related to young people's success.

### WHAT ARE COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS?

Community Conversations provide the space for teachers, staff, students, parents and community members to share their knowledge and thoughts on where the Knapp community is and where we should be headed. Participation and feedback allow us to work together to develop strategies and mobilize resources to support Knapp students and families. Together, we heard from over 37 teachers and staff at Knapp, 4 parents or guardians and 99 students.

### WHAT'S NEXT?

United Way of Racine County is expanding services at Knapp through the Full-Service Community School grant provided by the Department of Education. This grant enables increases in staffing and infrastructure at both Knapp and Julian Thomas. In the 2021-22 school year, Knapp students and families can look forward to individual and family counseling through a school-based mental health clinic, a free HSED (High School Equivalency Diploma) program for adults, on-site education programs for parents and adults in the Knapp neighborhood, family empowerment programs and expanded afterschool opportunities. Please reach out to Community School Coordinator Zyaire Strowder ([zstrowder@unitedwayracine.org](mailto:zstrowder@unitedwayracine.org)) with questions or comments.



# Findings

## Aspirations

- More relationship-building activities and opportunities
- More community resources to support educational, career and financial development
- Small class sizes
- Enriched learning and tutoring opportunities, both in and after school
- Increased staffing resources to support the needs of students
- Increased budget for customized learning and classroom purchases

## Challenges

- High student mobility
- Chronic absenteeism and low student attendance
- Behavior challenges
- Parent engagement limited by time, transport and remote programming
- Addressing students' mental health needs
- Community resource visibility

## Possible solutions

- Engage new partners and orgs to expand services and programs
- Address students and families' mental health needs
- Extra mentoring, classes and math and reading tutoring
- Offer healthy food, all-season clothes and laundry facilities to families, such as through a pantry, grocery store or community garden
- Sports teams to build school spirit and teach students teamwork

