

A Developmental Pathway for Achieving Promise Neighborhoods Results

PolicyLink

 Promise
Neighborhoods
Institute
at PolicyLink



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Introduction

In communities all across the nation, groups of stakeholders have committed themselves to realizing the Promise Neighborhoods vision and approach—a seamlessly linked cradle-to-career pipeline of programs, services, and supports to ensure the achievement of the 10 results for children. While the neighborhoods and local contexts in which this work is unfolding are diverse, including tribal, rural, and urban communities with varying levels of resources that are home to people of a range of cultures, races, and ethnicities, the desired results and indicators of success are clear and shared by all. The pursuit of these common results must be unique to each community, but there are key milestones that communities can expect to pass as they make progress in building a cradle-to-career pipeline.

To support communities using the Promise Neighborhoods approach in understanding these milestones and charting their course, *A Developmental Pathway for Achieving Promise*

Neighborhoods Results was created. The tool was developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education and the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink (PNI).^{*} It reflects the collective knowledge developed by all three partners about Promise Neighborhoods since the creation of the federal program and includes targeted guidance from the Urban Institute regarding data collection and reporting.^{**} The tool has also been initially reviewed by local Promise Neighborhoods leaders, and that process of local input, review, and refinement will continue as the tool is used in the field.

Who the tool is designed to assist

The tool is intended for use by any community with a set of stakeholders that has committed itself to the Promise Neighborhoods vision and approach. (Please see the appendix for a complete list of the 10 Promise Neighborhoods results and the 15 associated indicators.) While the tool lays out milestones beginning with the planning stage through the sustained achievement of results, it is assumed that even communities at this earliest stage of Promise Neighborhoods development have completed some preparations, such as identifying and convening an initial (but ever widening) set of community stakeholders, including residents and service providers, and understanding and committing to the Promise Neighborhoods results and indicators. Lastly, it is important to keep in mind that this tool was developed as a guide for any community that is building a Promise Neighborhood, regardless of whether it is or has been a grantee of the federal program.

Understanding the components of the tool

This tool is intended to highlight key milestones in the development of the infrastructure needed for a Promise Neighborhood and, most importantly, the achievement of better results for children and families. These milestones are organized into seven “conditions” that are necessary for the achievement of results, which span five “stages” of the development of a Promise Neighborhood. The seven conditions are: Data Use, Partnership, Engagement, Financing, Policy & Systems, Communications, and Organization and Leadership Capacity. For each condition listed, milestones are included for each of the five stages. Each condition shows the progression of milestones, from left

to right, across the following stages of Promise Neighborhoods work: Planning, Early Implementation, Full Implementation, Reaching Scale, and Sustaining Results (represented as columns). Your community may find itself in different stages (i.e., columns) of development for different milestones of a given condition. Also, given the complexities of community change work and changing local contexts, including the loss and addition of partners and resources, your community may “cycle” between stages based upon changing conditions or conclusions drawn from new data.

Timing of stages

The page that follows provides an overview of the types of results Promise Neighborhoods can expect to achieve over time and highlights some of the largest milestones in the development and implementation of a cradle-to-career pipeline. This overview, and the accompanying page for each condition, makes the following assumptions about the general time range in which, with adequate resources and effort, you can expect to complete each stage of the work: Stage 1 (Year 1–2); Stage 2 (Year 2–3); Stage 3 (Year 3–5); Stage 4 (Year 4–10); Stage 5 (Year 10+). Please note that there are overlapping time ranges (e.g., Stage 2 spans Years 2 and 3 while Stage 3 could start as early Year 3) to reflect the fact that these ranges can vary depending on a number of factors present in the local context in which the Promise Neighborhoods work is taking place.

While “Stage 5” is described as “Sustaining Results,” children and families should be experiencing better results beginning no later than “Stage 2—Early Implementation.” In other words, your community should be achieving better results beginning relatively early in your work; what changes is the scale, or number of children and families, you are able to positively impact. This work takes time, but the children and families who are connected to needed services and supports should begin to experience results shortly after implementation starts.

Lastly, it is worth noting that arriving at “Stage 4—Reaching Scale” requires that at least 65 percent of neighborhood children and families are connected to needed services and supports and are experiencing improved results. This figure is based on the experience of the Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ), which represents the most advanced example of a community-wide cradle-to-career pipeline. HCZ’s experience has led that organization’s leaders and staff, as well as the partners who worked together to create this tool, to believe that this level of “reach” to children and families within a community would roughly be the scale at which conditions in the neighborhood would reach a “tipping point” and set the stage for population-level change.

^{*} PNI combines the leadership of PolicyLink, the Harlem Children’s Zone, and CSSP in order to provide resources and guidance to build and sustain burgeoning Promise Neighborhoods.

^{**} See *Measuring Performance: A Guidance Document for Promise Neighborhoods on Collecting Data and Reporting Results* at <http://www.urban.org/publications/412767.html> for a detailed discussion of data collection and reporting in Promise Neighborhoods.

How to use this tool

While Promise Neighborhood communities might use this tool in a variety of ways, the following are three key ways that it can be used to accelerate your achievement of results:

- **Benchmarking**—Communities can use the tool to understand the stages of progress that they will move through and will use the milestones of each phase as benchmarks for their future planning and to track their own developmental progress.
- **Identifying Technical Assistance (TA) Priorities**—The tool provides a framework that can be used in agreeing on priorities for TA (i.e., by providing TA that helps sites meet agreed-upon milestones).
- **Communicating Expectations**—Communities can use this tool to communicate to residents, partners, and funders realistic, but ambitious, expectations regarding progress over time.

Progress Toward Promise Neighborhoods Results: Overview

Stages of Evolution

As Promise Neighborhoods build the cradle-to-career pipeline to achieve 10 results for children and families, they move through five developmental stages: planning, early implementation, full implementation, reaching scale, and sustaining results.

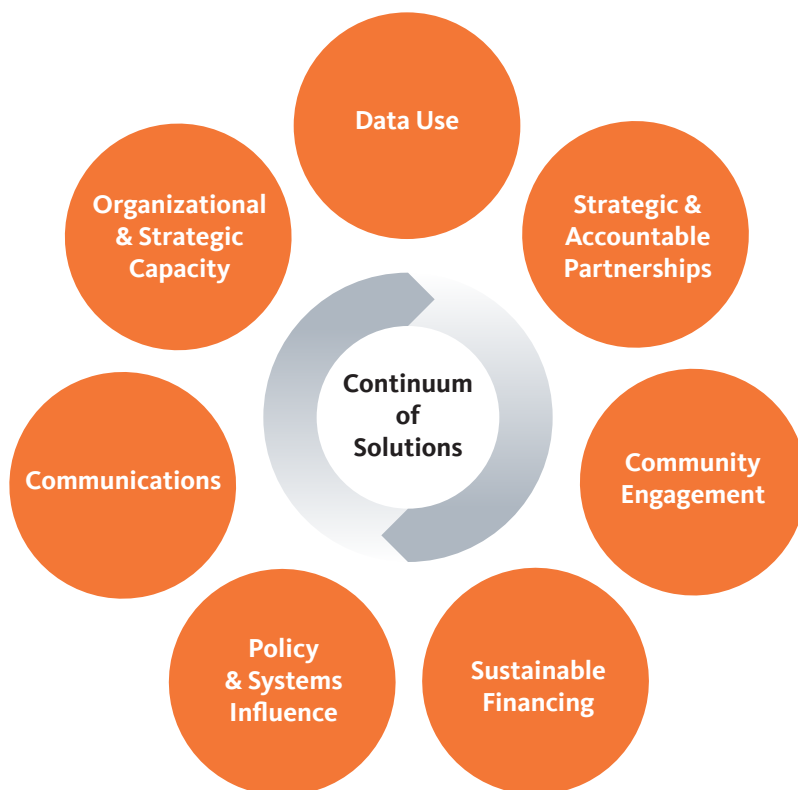
Key Conditions

At each stage, this work demands that Promise Neighborhoods create conditions related to data use, strategic and accountable partnerships, community engagement, sustainable financing, policy and systems influence, communications, and organizational and leadership capacity to support a continuum of solutions.

Focus on Equity

As Promise Neighborhoods move through each developmental stage and work to create the conditions that support a continuum of solutions, there is a consistent focus on equity as a driving force and overall lens for this work.

Critical Elements to Achieving Collective Impact Through a Promise Neighborhoods Cradle-to-Career Strategy



Building the Cradle-to-Career Pipeline to Achieve Promise Neighborhoods Results

Stage 1: Planning

- A group of partners and residents use a results-driven approach (e.g., Results-Based Accountability) and the best available evidence to propose solutions for all 10 results and 15 indicators associated with the federal Promise Neighborhoods Program
- A case management function is designed to ensure individual children and families receive the services and supports needed to ensure healthy development and education success
- At least one component of the continuum of solutions is piloted based on a needs assessment and segmentation analysis

Stage 2: Early Implementation

- A sequence for rolling out solutions based on available resources is established and solutions to support at least 5 result areas are implemented
- A cohort of children and families are connected to needed services and supports and are experiencing improved results with corresponding population and performance data reflected in a data dashboard (e.g., Promise Scorecard)
- Clarity about the key components and the desired scale of each solution is established

Stage 3: Full Implementation

- Solutions that address the needs of all age, racial, ethnic, and language groups are in place in all 10 result areas
- At least 50 percent of children and families are connected to needed services and supports and are experiencing improved results
- Performance and local evaluation data inform the refinement of solutions

Stage 4: Reaching Scale

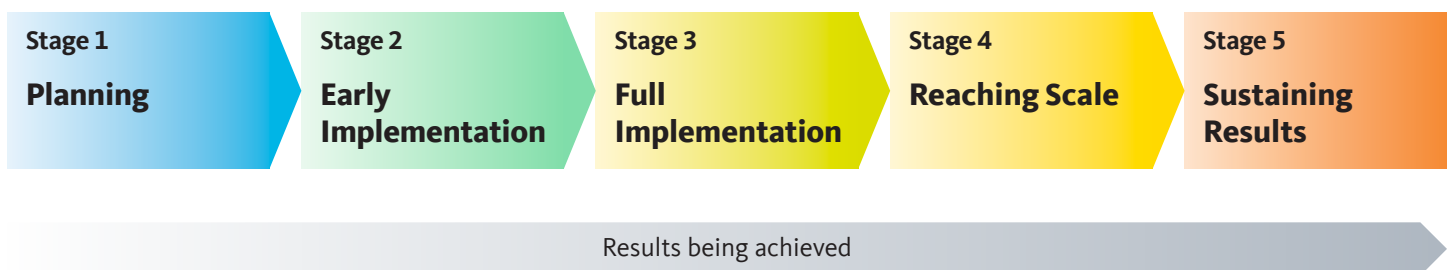
- Solutions reach the desired scale in all 10 result areas
- At least 65 percent* of neighborhood children and families are connected to needed services and supports and are experiencing improved results
- A data-driven continuous improvement process is applied to ensure the effectiveness of solutions

Stage 5: Sustaining Results

- Solutions are built into partner practice and funding patterns
- Children and families experience markedly better results across the board and population-level change is demonstrated on the 15 indicators of well-being
- A data-driven continuous improvement process is applied to ensure that solutions meet neighborhood needs as outcomes improve and/or demographics change

* Consistent with Harlem Children's Zone practice.

The Five Developmental Stages in the Cradle-to-Career Pipeline



Key Condition:

Data Use

Collecting, Analyzing, and Using Promise Neighborhoods Data for Learning, Accountability, and Creating a Culture of Results



Stage 1

Planning

A needs assessment and segmentation analysis are conducted to guide the development and targeting of solutions

A data system is developed or purchased that includes the key components outlined in the Promise Neighborhoods data guidance document (case management system, neighborhood- and school-level data system, longitudinal data system, and data dashboard)

A results-driven approach (e.g., Results-Based Accountability) is used to create a data plan that follows the recommendations in the Promise Neighborhoods data guidance document (including baselines, targets, solutions, partners, and performance measures) and ways to assess fidelity of implementation, scale, and impact are identified

Stage 2

Early Implementation

The Promise Neighborhoods data system is operational and used for case management in addition to neighborhood- and school-level data collection and storage

Population and performance data are collected regularly and captured in the case management system and a data dashboard (e.g., Promise Scorecard)

Performance data are used to create a culture of accountability, manage the performance of partners in achieving targets, continuously improve solutions, and monitor fidelity of implementation, scale, and impact

Stage 3

Full Implementation

Longitudinal data for all 10 Promise Neighborhoods results and the 15 associated indicators are collected and can be shared as restricted use data files

Individual case data are used to improve the quality and effectiveness of solutions

Disaggregated performance and population data are available for use by partners to maintain a culture of accountability, manage the performance of partners in achieving targets, continuously improve solutions, and monitor fidelity of implementation, scale, and impact

Stage 4

Reaching Scale

Longitudinal data for all 10 Promise Neighborhoods results and the 15 associated indicators are collected and can be shared as restricted use data files (with an increase in data quality and completeness)

Individual and disaggregated performance and population data are routinely used by partners to continuously improve solutions and ensure targets are being met

Data are used to make the case for funding and policy changes and to maintain a culture of accountability, manage the performance of partners in achieving targets, continuously improve solutions, and monitor fidelity of implementation, scale, and impact

Stage 5

Sustaining Results

Longitudinal data for all 10 Promise Neighborhoods results and the 15 associated indicators are collected and can be shared as restricted use data files (with complete and high-quality data)

Needs assessment and segmentation analysis data are routinely updated to ensure that solutions meet neighborhood needs as outcomes improve and/or demographics change

Individual and disaggregated performance and population data are routinely used by partners to maintain a culture of accountability, manage the performance of partners in achieving targets, continuously improve solutions, and monitor fidelity of implementation, scale, and impact

Key Condition:

Partnership

Creating Strategic and Accountable Partnerships with Schools and other Organizational Stakeholders



Stage 1

Planning

Using a results-driven approach (e.g., Results-Based Accountability), partners with expertise along the continuum of solutions are engaged in the needs assessment and solution development

Partners understand the Promise Neighborhoods theory of change and are clear about their roles and responsibilities for contributing to targets during planning and early implementation

A formal governance structure is developed for the Promise Neighborhood, and clear decision-making processes are developed and used by partners to identify and select solutions, based on best evidence

Stage 2

Early Implementation

MOUs and performance-based contracts are developed to define partner roles and contributions to targets by indicator

A formal governance structure and accountability process for the partnership are implemented and used to manage partner performance

Partners use individual and performance data to develop the right mix of solutions that include families, programs, policies and/or systems and align their individual and collective contributions with performance and population targets

Stage 3

Full Implementation

MOUs and performance-based contracts are refined based on the needs of the population being served and the satisfactory performance history of partners

A formal governance structure is engaging the partners needed to reach scale (50% of population) and an accountability process is implemented and being used to manage partner performance as well as to report progress to the public

Partners use data to identify needed supports and corrective actions in areas where targets are not being met

Stage 4

Reaching Scale

MOUs and performance-based contracts are revised to reflect the desired scale and impact of solutions

The formal governance structure is engaging the partners needed to reach scale (65% of population) and periodically revisiting its effectiveness

The partnership uses its accountability process to provide support and/or corrective action to partners who are not delivering solutions with fidelity and/or meeting scale and impact targets

Stage 5

Sustaining Results

Partners routinely redirect and raise new resources, and align their own policies and practices to support the delivery of solutions

The partnership is able to influence policy and funding streams to sustain their work

Partners use data to ensure solutions continue to be effective as results improve and/or neighborhood demographics change over time

Key Condition:

Engagement

Ensuring Neighborhood Residents are Leaders, Owners, and Contributors to the Achievement of Better Results



Stage 1

Planning

Students, families, and other neighborhood residents are trained in data collection and analysis and participate in gathering and analyzing data as well as introducing or vetting proposals for the continuum of solutions

Resident voice and the lived experience of students and families are used to inform the content and delivery methods of solutions

Solutions and support systems are designed in ways that provide multiple avenues for students, families, and other residents to contribute to the achievement of better results

Stage 2

Early Implementation

Available performance data are shared with students, families, and other neighborhood residents via a data dashboard (e.g., Promise Scorecard)

Residents are trained in a results-driven approach (e.g., Results-Based Accountability) and help refine solutions based on what they are learning from data, the performance of partners, their experience and perspective

Qualified residents are hired to deliver solutions and manage support systems and residents contribute to the effectiveness of solutions in multiple ways, including governance, decision making, and strengthening their own family

Stage 3

Full Implementation

Residents use a results-based approach (e.g., Results-Based Accountability) to help design and implement the accountability system

Residents contribute to the strategy for bringing successful solutions to greater scale based on what they are learning from data, the performance of partners, their experience and perspective

Residents play a leadership role in strengthening their own families by contributing to the achievement of results in multiple ways

Stage 4

Reaching Scale

Residents routinely use data to hold partners accountable for delivering solutions with fidelity and at the desired scale and level of impact

Partner organizations change policies and practices to support authentic resident participation in their work

A resident leadership pipeline is developed to ensure more residents have the skills and access needed to contribute meaningfully to the achievement of better results

Stage 5

Sustaining Results

Residents routinely use data to advocate for policy and funding needed to sustain what is working and hold partners accountable

Partner organizations routinely work with residents to ensure their policy, practice, and funding approaches are aligned with resident needs and priorities

Residents are actively engaged in the life of the neighborhood and contribute to the achievement of better results

Key Condition:

Financing

Developing Financing Strategies to Align, Target, and Attract Resources



Stage 1 Planning

Resources to support the planning and capacity-building process are secured

The costs of delivering solutions and building and maintaining support systems are rigorously estimated using best practice finance and accounting tools

Existing resources that can support solutions and corresponding systems are identified, aligned and/or integrated to achieve the results, and a plan for securing additional resources is developed

Stage 2 Early Implementation

An analysis of existing and newly secured resources is used to inform the strategy for rolling out and scaling up solutions

Expenditures are analyzed to inform any needed revisions to short-term and long-term cost projections

Ongoing identification, alignment, and integration of resources is used to help sustain early implementation and identify gaps in funding

Stage 3 Full Implementation

Partners are redirecting resources to support the continuum of solutions and new funding needed for solutions and systems is secured

Expenditure and performance data are used to guide funding priorities and estimate the costs of taking solutions to scale

A business plan that includes multiple options for securing the resources needed to maintain the cradle-to-career continuum of solutions is developed and implemented

Stage 4 Reaching Scale

Partners use performance data to continue to change funding priorities and patterns to support solutions that are working

Cost estimates for sustaining the work at scale are developed

Partners are successfully pursuing the financing strategies outlined in the business plan

Stage 5 Sustaining Results

A good mix of flexible private and public funds are available to support the cradle-to-career continuum of solutions and ongoing continuous improvement

New estimates for sustaining the work are created as solutions change to reflect improved results and/or changing demographics

The financing plan is periodically updated

Key Condition:

Policy & Systems

Addressing Policy and Regulatory Issues that Support or Impede the Achievement of Better Results



Stage 1 Planning

A scan of the current policy environment is conducted to identify opportunities and potential threats

Partners with policy expertise and influence are enlisted in the design of solutions and a policy agenda is developed to support the achievement of results

Stage 2 Early Implementation

A prioritized list of policy advocacy opportunities that are aligned with the continuum of solutions is developed as well as a strategy to advance the policy opportunities

Partners with policy expertise begin to work on opportunities and address threats in the policy environment

Stage 3 Full Implementation

A policy advocacy agenda that supports scaling up what works is implemented and advanced

Policy opportunities and threats are successfully addressed

Stage 4 Reaching Scale

A policy advocacy agenda that supports sustaining what works is implemented and advanced

Policymakers are increasingly responsive to efforts to align policy and funding to support the cradle-to-career continuum of solutions

Stage 5 Sustaining Results

Local and national policymakers routinely look to the Promise Neighborhood partnership to inform the development of relevant policy and allocation of funding

Local and national policies are developed or amended in ways that support the achievement of results

Key Condition:

Communications

Using Communications Strategies to Build Public and Political Will



Stage 1

Planning

A plan is created for communicating the opportunity of building a Promise Neighborhood to key audiences such as funders, policymakers, and local residents

Data from the needs assessment are used to communicate both need and opportunity and build support for the work

Communications training is provided to partners and resident leaders to tell powerful stories about the neighborhood

Stage 2

Early Implementation

Data-driven messages calculated to build public and political will for the work are developed and help lay the groundwork for a strategic communications plan

A wide range of communications channels are used to communicate messages and early success stories and to manage potentially unfavorable or negative information

Partners and resident leaders are increasingly skilled at telling results stories about their Promise Neighborhoods work

Stage 3

Full Implementation

A strategic communications plan to attract resources, influence policy, and build public support for the work is developed

Media and communications strategies use performance data and success stories to attract the resources and support needed to take solutions to scale

Partners and resident leaders are increasingly skilled at telling results stories about the Promise Neighborhoods work and the communications plan is fully integrated into the fund-raising and policy areas

Stage 4

Reaching Scale

The strategic communications plan is updated to ensure data about what is working are employed effectively to influence policy and funding needed for sustainability

The Promise Neighborhood is getting positive coverage by the media and communications strategies are helping attract additional resources

Partners and resident leaders are increasingly skilled at telling results stories about the Promise Neighborhoods work and the communications plan is fully integrated into the fund-raising and policy areas

Stage 5

Sustaining Results

The strategic communications plan is updated periodically to sustain public and political support for the work

The execution of communications strategies successfully influence public and political will

Partners and resident leaders are increasingly skilled at telling results stories about the Promise Neighborhoods work and the communications plan is fully integrated into the fund-raising and policy areas

Key Condition:

Organization & Leadership

Deepening Organization and Leadership Capacity



Stage 1

Planning

Partner organizations identify a trusted and credible lead agency with the capacity to mobilize stakeholders around the development of a cradle-to-career pipeline and to serve as a fiscal agent for Promise Neighborhoods work

The lead agency and partner organizations outline the personal and organizational roles, competencies, and capacities needed to successfully execute the work during planning and assess their relative capacity in these areas

A plan for providing leadership development and organizational capacity building is developed to support implementation and provide back office services

Stage 2

Early Implementation

The lead agency and partner organizations expand staffing as needed (per plan) and intentionally align operational systems to support data use, strategic and accountable partnerships, community engagement, sustainable financing, policy and systems influence, and communications

Promise Neighborhoods leaders participate in results-based leadership development activities that build skills needed for execution

Performance data are used to identify specific capacity-building partners needed to help Promise Neighborhoods service providers execute solutions with fidelity

Stage 3

Full Implementation

The lead agency and partner organizations expand staffing as needed (per plan) and refine operational systems to strengthen data use, strategic and accountable partnerships, community engagement, sustainable financing, policy and systems influence, and communications

A cadre of Promise Neighborhoods leaders infuse results-based leadership skills into partner organizations and ensure leadership development opportunities are more broadly available to partners and residents

Promise Neighborhoods service providers put in place processes to support the implementation of solutions with increased fidelity; services are not continued if performance does not improve

Stage 4

Reaching Scale

The lead agency and partner organizations are appropriately staffed with operational systems that reinforce a collaborative culture marked by data use, strategic and accountable partnerships, community engagement, sustainable financing, policy and systems influence, and communications

Leaders and staff of partner organizations and engaged residents are well-versed in managing toward a common set of results, and indicators

Promise Neighborhoods service providers have processes and systems for reflection and revision of solution implementation embedded in a culture of results; services are not continued if performance does not improve

Stage 5

Sustaining Results

The lead agency and partner organizations monitor changes in the social, economic, demographic, political, and funding landscape and redistribute or restructure leadership roles as needed to sustain Promise Neighborhoods results

A pipeline to identify and support new leaders is developed to provide a deep leadership bench and contribute to sustainability

Promise Neighborhoods service providers have the skills and capacities needed to consistently contribute to improved results in the neighborhood and have succession plans in place to weather leadership changes and staff turnover

Appendix:

Promise Neighborhood Results & Indicators

Table 1. Education Results & Indicators

| Results | Indicators |
|---|--|
| Children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and % of children birth to kindergarten entry who have a place where they usually go, other than an emergency room, when they are sick or in need of advice about their health. • # and % of three-year-olds and children in kindergarten who demonstrate at the beginning of the program or school year age-appropriate functioning across multiple domains of early learning as determined using developmentally appropriate early learning measures. • # and % of children, from birth to kindergarten entry, participating in center-based or formal home-based early learning settings or programs, which may include Early Head Start, Head Start, child care, or preschool. |
| Students are proficient in core academic subjects. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and % of students at or above grade level according to State mathematics and reading or language arts assessments in at least the grades required by the ESEA (third through eighth and once in high school). |
| Students successfully transition from middle school grades to high school. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance rate of students in sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth grade. |
| Youth graduate from high school. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduation rate. |
| High school graduates obtain a postsecondary degree, certification, or credential. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and % of Promise Neighborhood students who graduate with a regular high school diploma and obtain postsecondary degrees, vocational certificates, or other industry-recognized certifications or credentials without the need for remediation. |

Table 2. Family and Community Results & Indicators

| Results | Indicators |
|---|---|
| Students are healthy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and % of children who participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily. • # & % of children who consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily; or possible third indicator, to be determined (TBD) by applicant. |
| Students feel safe at school and in their community. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and % of students who feel safe at school and traveling to and from school, as measured by a school climate needs assessment; or possible second indicator, TBD by applicant. |
| Students live in stable communities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student mobility rate; or possible second indicator, TBD by applicant. |
| Families and community members support learning in Promise Neighborhood schools. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For children birth to kindergarten entry, the # and % of parents or family members who report that they read to their child three or more times a week. • For children in kindergarten through the eighth grade, the # and % of parents or family members who report encouraging their child to read books outside of school. • For children in the ninth through twelfth grades, the # and % of parents or family members who report talking with their child about the importance of college and career; or possible fourth indicator TBD by applicant. |
| Students have access to 21st century learning tools. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and % of students who have school and home access (and % of the day they have access) to broadband Internet and a connected computing device; or possible second indicator TBD by applicant. |

Source: U.S. Department of Education

Acknowledgments

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The Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink partners: PolicyLink, Center for the Study of Social Policy, Harlem Children's Zone

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PolicyLink

Headquarters:
1438 Webster Street
Suite 303
Oakland, CA 94612
t 510 663-2333
f 510 663-9684

Communications:
55 West 39th Street
11th Floor
New York, NY 10018
t 212 629-9570
f 212 763-2350

<http://www.policylink.org>



The Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink (PNI) helps build and sustain Promise Neighborhoods to ensure children are healthy, succeed in school, reach their full potential, and that families and neighborhoods support the healthy development, academic success, and well-being of their children.

www.promiseneighborhoodsinstitute.org