

Gilman School District Area Strategic Plan

2023



Gilman School
District Area



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

WISCONSIN
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thriving rural communities occur when schools and communities work together to develop a vision of hope and opportunity. The Community Economic Analysis for Rural Wisconsin Communities program is a joint effort between the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension, and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to bring a structured community economic development strategic planning process to rural Wisconsin communities just like the communities served by the School District of Gilman. Using a flexible strategic planning process we are building from our existing strengths to develop a strong, inclusive local leadership team, to create an action plan and expand the working relationships with local and state partners to explore funding options and support the implementation of the plan.

Our strategic plan will address the challenges we face as we try to attract and retain people to our community such as access to housing, limited options to shop locally for even daily essentials, and limited local employment opportunities. Over the past year the Village of Gilman has had two active committees trying to address these issues. The housing committee is seeking options to increase the availability of housing and reaching out to general contractors that may be interested in building affordable housing within the Village of Gilman. The Gilman Industrial Foundation is aggressively developing strategies for revitalizing the downtown area by converting empty storefronts into business opportunities. Just recently the Gilman Industrial Foundation purchased the vacant bank and has converted the building into office space and a plaza for local craft vendors to market and sell their products.

This is the perfect time to be exploring opportunities in our community. For the past two years our District has experienced increased enrollments of 32 students in 2021-22 and 11 students in 2022-23. Families have indicated Gilman was attractive to them because Gilman is a rural community with access to outdoor activities and a school with a great reputation of being welcoming to new families and meeting the needs of students. It is our hope that through this process we can identify opportunities and strategies that will continue to draw people to our community. Looking ahead, we will plan for multiple ways to gather additional public input, and we are excited to have you involved and to hear from you as to how we can strengthen this community initiative. You can expect to hear from us on both a quarterly and annual basis, providing updates on our progress. If you are interested in joining our conversation or supporting us in any way, please contact one of our team members.

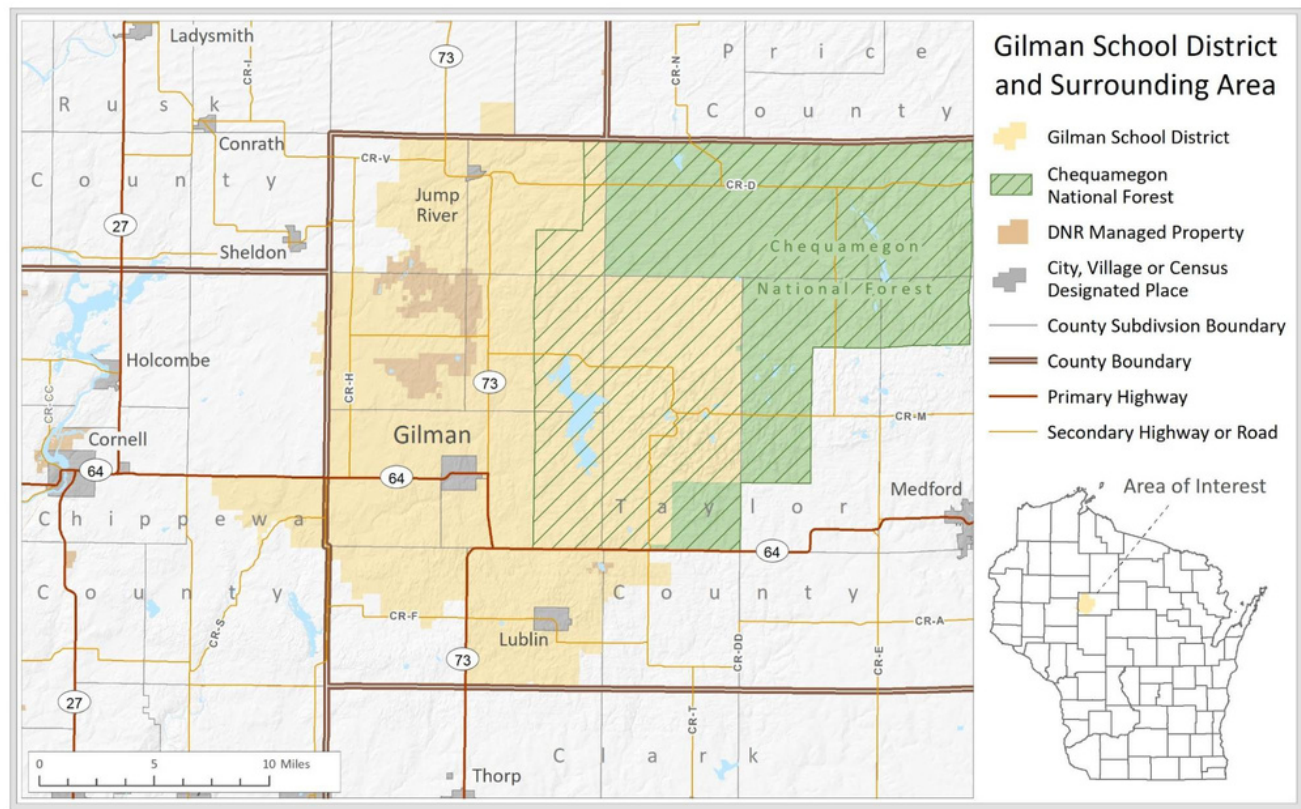
In support of a strong and vibrant community,
Dr. Wally Leipart, Ph.D.
Superintendent
School District of Gilman



EXPLANATION OF STUDY AREA

For the purpose of this study, the team used the Gilman School District (GSD) area as the footprint for mapping and data purposes. Here we differentiate the school district itself as an organization and the school district geographic area. That is, when we are referring to certain elements in the plan, we are not suggesting that the school district as an organization is responsible for the plan's implementation. Also, the demographic and economic characteristics in this plan refer to those found in the geographic area, not within the GSD as an organization.

Map 1: Boundaries of the Study Area



LEADERSHIP TEAM

The development of this strategic plan for the School District of Gilman (GSD) area was a collaborative effort led by a dedicated and experienced leadership team. Comprised of individuals with a diverse set of skills and backgrounds, this team reviewed economic and demographic trends for the area, reviewed the area assets and amenities, conducted an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges (SWOC), and identified priority areas. These efforts have culminated in the development of this strategic plan that will guide community and economic development efforts for the GSD area. The leadership team included:

- Jane DeStaercke, President, Village of Gilman
- Candice Grunseth, Clerk, Village of Gilman
- Adam Johnson, Community Member
- Walter Leipart, Superintendent, School District of Gilman
- Lynn Rosemeyer, Member, Gilman Industrial Foundation
- Tom Tallier, Chief of Police, Village of Gilman
- Fred Romig, Community Business Member
- Cheryl Rosemeyer, Business Manager, School District of Gilman and Village of Gilman Board
- Lacey Repinski, Community Member

This effort was supported by a team for the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension including:

- Michelle Grimm, Taylor County Community Development Educator
- Steven Chmielewski, Waukesha and Jefferson Counties Community Development Educator
- Tessa Conroy, Community Economic Development Specialist, Associate Professor of Agricultural and Applied Economics
- Steve Deller, Community Economic Development Specialist, Professor of Agricultural and Applied Economics
- McKenna Goetz, Community Economic Development Research Assistant
- Brandon Hofstedt, Community Economic Development Program Manager
- Matt Kures, Community Economic Development Specialist
- Kristin Runge, Community Economic Development Specialist



INTENT OF PLAN

The Community Economic Analysis for Rural Wisconsin Communities (CEA-RWC) program is a joint effort between the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension, and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) to bring a structured community economic development strategic planning program to a set of five rural Wisconsin communities throughout the state. The School District of Gilman is one of five communities chosen for this pilot program.

As many rural communities struggle with identifying opportunities and strategies to move the community forward, the CEA-RWC program leverages resources to engage in comprehensive community economic development planning.

This program is a structured, yet flexible strategic planning process to build on existing strengths to:

- Better organize for community economic development by building a strong, inclusive local leadership team,
- Further identify economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats,
- Increase comfort with the range of policy options and strategies to pursue,
- Develop an action plan that identifies 3-5 strategic priorities identified by the community, and
- Expand working relationships with partners (federal, state, local, and philanthropic organizations) to explore funding options and support for the implementation of the plan



INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

The School District of Gilman (GSD) area is located in the scenic north central region of Wisconsin, serving rural communities across Taylor, Rusk, Chippewa, and Clark counties. These communities include the Villages of Gilman and Lublin and the Towns of Taft, Ford, Aurora, Grover, Roosevelt, Cleveland, McKinley, Colburn, Aurora, Hawkins, Jump River, Lawrence, Maplehurst, Pershing, and Ruby. As in many rural areas, the school is the glue that holds the area together.

Through the CEA-RWC process, Gilman stakeholders identified priority concerns for their community and set strategy for forward momentum. As a group the following priorities were identified:

- Vibrant Main Street
- Volunteering & Community Engagement
- Growth Mindset & Quality of Life

The goal of this strategic plan is to support the communities of the GSD area to create a thriving, family-friendly community.

SITUATION

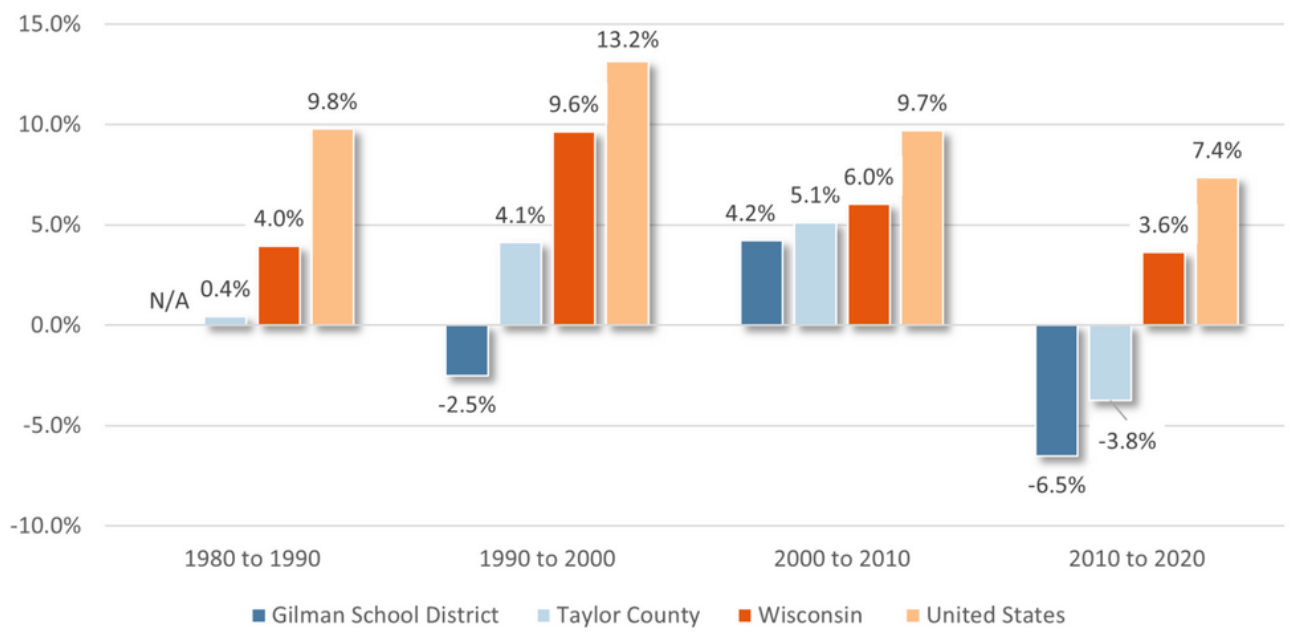
Rural communities, including those located in the GSD area, have faced numerous demographic and economic transitions over the last few decades. While these changes are often viewed in terms of rural competitive disadvantage or decline, these changes have created both distress and opportunities for rural regions. As CEA-RWC process in the GSD area works to develop community economic development strategies and initiatives, it is important for community stakeholders to address and recognize both challenges and assets present in the community and broader region.



Population

Like many rural areas, the GSD area has experienced limited population growth over the past several decades (Figure 1). While the District’s 2020 population of 3,004 residents is -6.5% lower than it was in 2010, its total population has varied little since 1990. Rates of population change for the School District of Gilman have also somewhat mirrored the minimal gains and losses in Taylor County over this period. The relative population stability of the GSD and Taylor County suggests some level of economic resiliency, especially when compared to other rural regions that have faced significant declines. However, limited population change does influence future community economic development initiatives in terms of scale, scope and focus.

Figure 1: Gilman School District Population Change



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

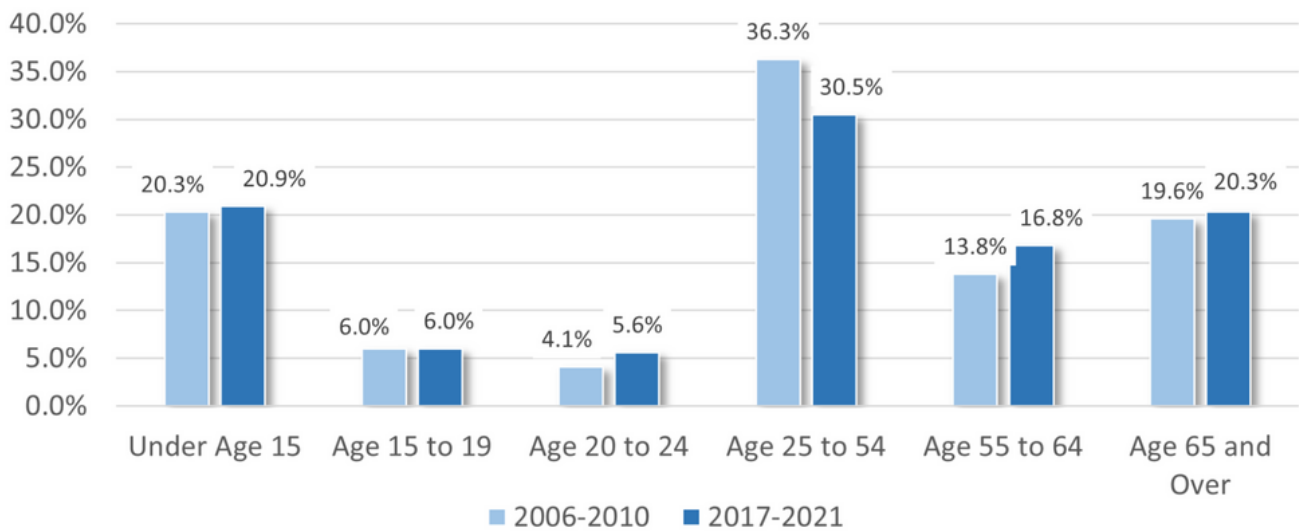
While the school district’s total population has remained somewhat stable, that does not mean that it has not experienced other shifts in the demographic composition of its residents. One of the biggest changes over the last decade is to the region’s age structure (Figure 2). While the percentage of individuals age 19 and under has remained largely unchanged between the 2006-2010 and 2017-2021 periods, the share of prime working age residents (e.g., ages 25 to 54) dropped from 36.4% to 30.5% over the same period. In contrast, the shares of residents ages 55 and over increased over the past decade.



The changes to age distribution in the GSD area somewhat mirror those occurring in the United States, State of Wisconsin and Taylor County. Both Taylor County and the GSD study area have a notably larger share of individuals aged 55 and over (36.1% and 37.1% respectively) compared to the state (31.2%) and national (29.0%) averages. The decline in the region’s working age population and greater share of individuals aged 55 and older create several implications for community economic development initiatives in the GSD area:

- Regional employers will need to consider additional strategies for attracting and retaining employees or enhancing productivity through other means;
- A greater share of residents approaching retirement age could create a pool of potential volunteers in the community;
- As individuals between the ages of 55 and 64 may have a **high entrepreneurial propensity in rural areas**, there may be additional opportunities for the region to support new business formation;
- The shifting age structure of the region could impact the future types of housing units needed.

Figure 2: Gilman School District Age Distribution -2006-2010 vs 2017-2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

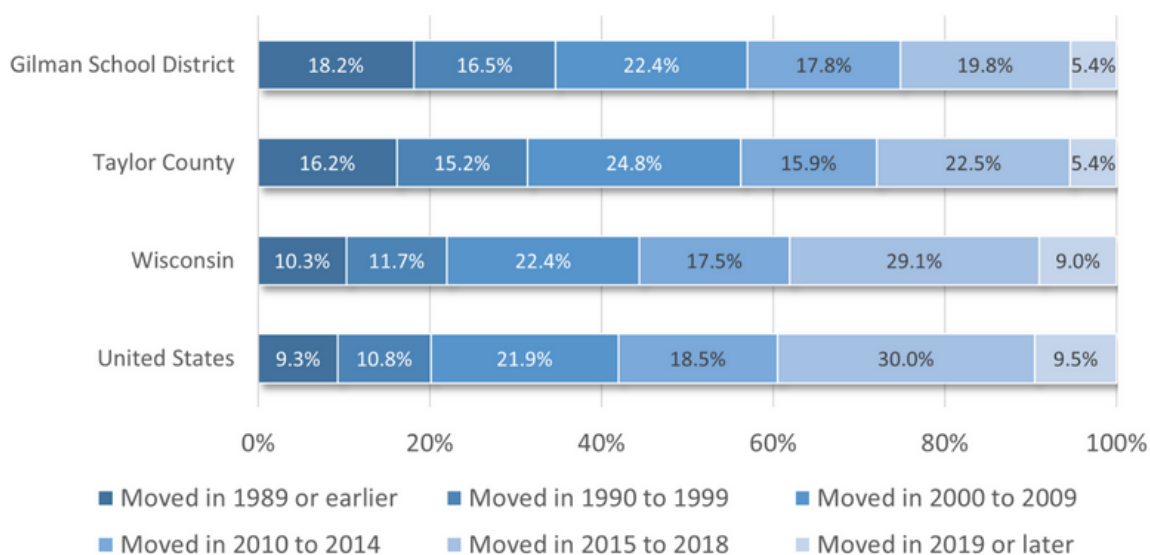


In- and Out-Migration

The relative stability of the total population of the GSD area somewhat masks resident turnover in the area. Even those areas with a stable or declining population, such as the GSD area, will have households moving into and out of the area creating residential churn. For example, consider when current residents of GSD area moved into the community (Figure 3). Despite a small change in total population, 43% of the residents living in the school district have moved into their current housing unit since 2010. While some of these residents may have simply moved from one house to another within the district, mobility statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey suggest that depending on the year, 45% to 60% of the residents who move in the school district have moved from outside their prior county of residence or from outside the state.¹

In addition to the 43% of GSD area residents who have moved into their current house over the last decade, the area also has 35% of its residents who have lived in their housing unit since 1999 or earlier. As the region looks to create community economic development strategies, preferences and priorities may differ between long-time residents and newcomers. Accordingly, the community will need to work to build consensus, collaboration and communication with all stakeholders as strategies are initiated.

Figure 3: Population by Year Householder Moved into Housing Unit



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

¹ | In total, only about 9% of School District of Gilman moved in the prior year. Of these individuals who move, about 45% to 65% come from outside their prior county or state of residence.



As suggested earlier, the relative population stability of the School District of Gilman should be recognized for its resiliency. However, the lack of growth should not suggest a shortage of future opportunities to attract new residents. The churn in population suggests a notable number of new householders to the area over the last decade.

Quality of Life

Furthermore, many rural regions shifted from net out-migration to net in-migration since the start of the pandemic, indicating that some rural communities are either attracting new residents or retaining residents at a greater rate. Not surprisingly, households in the post-pandemic economy are often placing a greater importance on quality-of-life considerations, such as school quality, recreational amenities, and public safety, when choosing a place to live.

Access to grocery stores, retail enterprises, financial institutions, restaurants, personal services, health care, entertainment and other establishments is another important quality of life concern for many residents. Not unlike many other small communities, however, the School District of Gilman faces a challenging market for the provision of many goods and services given its location and market size. As a result, the School District of Gilman faces a potential leakage of revenues to shopping opportunities in the surrounding region.

Employment location quotients provide one basic perspective on the potential availability or deficit of various goods and services in the School District of Gilman. In this example, location quotients are calculated by comparing a given industry's share of total employment in the School District of Gilman to the same industry's share of overall employment in the United States:

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Location Quotient} \\ \text{(LQ) for industry (i)} \\ \text{in the Gilman School} \\ \text{District (GSD)} \end{array} = \frac{\begin{array}{l} \text{Industry (i) employment in GSD} \\ \text{Total employment in GSD} \end{array}}{\begin{array}{l} \text{Industry (i) employment in U.S.} \\ \text{Total employment in U.S.} \end{array}}$$



The critical value for a location quotient is 1.0. An LQ of 1.0 means that the GSD has the same proportion of employment in an industry as the nation. An LQ greater than 1.0 denotes that an area's share of employment in a given industry is greater than its national share. Conversely, an LQ less than 1.0 indicates an area's employment in an industry is below the U.S. percentage. Location quotients greater than 1.0 are important as they imply that an area has a specialization in those industries. More specifically, an LQ greater than 1.0 suggests that an industry is producing more goods or services than can be consumed locally. These goods and services are in turn exported out of the region, connecting the area to external economies and bringing outside dollars into local communities. In contrast, an LQ less than 1.0 suggests that local industries are not meeting demand (demand is greater than supply) and the good or service must be imported.²

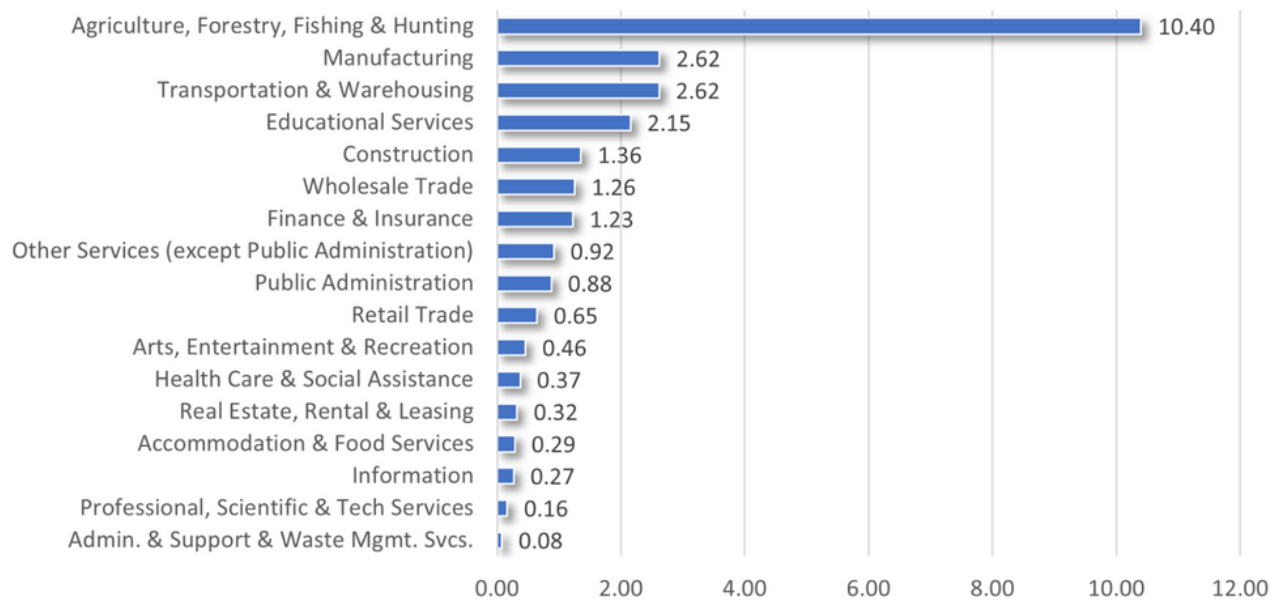
Several industries in the GSD service area have location quotients significantly greater than 1.0 (Figure 4) including educational services (2.15); transportation and warehousing (2.62); manufacturing (2.62) and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (10.40). In terms of total employment, manufacturing and educational services are the two largest industry sectors. The total employment in the educational services sector also shows the impact of the School District of Gilman itself as an employer in the region in addition to its significance as an anchor institution.

In contrast, many of the aforementioned industry categories that serve residents and contribute to quality of life all have location quotients well below 1.0, suggesting that local demand is not being met and spending is occurring elsewhere. These industries include accommodation and food services; retail trade; health care and social assistance; other services; and arts, entertainment and recreation. While additional market research is needed to confirm development opportunities in these categories, filling these potential demand gaps with local establishments could both enhance the local economy and improve quality of life perceptions of future households that may consider the school district as a place of residence. Many of these business categories are also well-suited to fill commercial spaces in downtown Gilman.

² | Due to accuracy issues with employment data, location quotients between 0.75 and 1.25 are generally considered not to be significantly different from 1.0.



Figure 4: Gilman School District Location Quotients (2022)



Source: ESRI

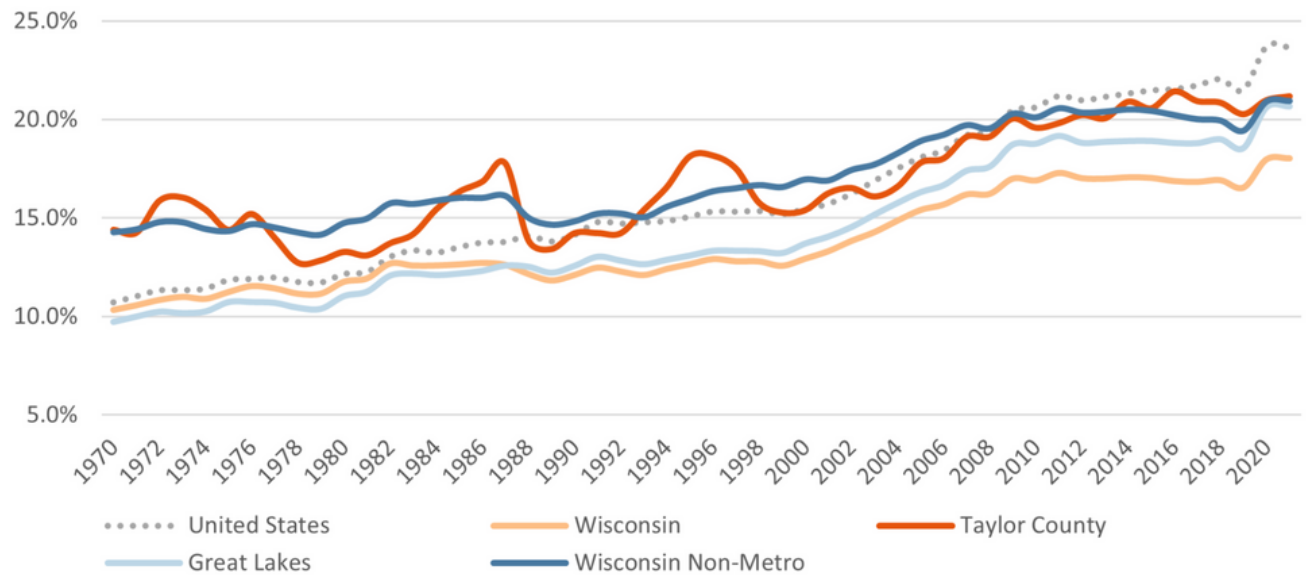
Entrepreneurship

Developing and supporting entrepreneurs is a foundational community economic development strategy. Of particular interest is how communities and organizations can effectively develop strategies that stimulate growth among existing and latent business owners. While strategies for supporting entrepreneurs will vary according to the entrepreneurial aspirations of communities and individuals, creating a foundational ecosystem that encourages business formation and growth is vital to success. The Gilman Industrial Foundation is one example of an organization that could contribute to this ecosystem. Importantly, Taylor County has a growing share of employees who are also business owners or proprietors. Since 1970, the share of Taylor County employees who are proprietors increased from 14.4% to 21.2% in 2021. This trend can be considered to be a measure of the county’s changing entrepreneurship breadth, and suggests there is a growing, broad propensity for entrepreneurial activity in the region. ³

³ | For more on entrepreneurial breadth, see Henderson, J., Low, S.A., and Weiler, S. (2007) The Drivers of Regional Entrepreneurship in Rural and Metro Areas. In Walzer, N (Ed), Entrepreneurship and Local Economic Development (pp. 81-102). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books



Figure 5: Non-Farm Proprietors Employment as a share Share of Total Employment (1970 to 2021)



Data Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE GSD AREA

CEA-RWC PROCESS

Priority areas outlined in this strategic community economic development plan were identified through a multi-step process where the planning team engaged in strategic thinking and generative discussion. These discussions relied on the GSD area demographic and economic trends and research, as well as on local knowledge of the GSD area stakeholders. This effort began with core members of both the community leadership team and the Extension outreach team working together to prepare for logistics and communications for the launch of the program. The program included four main sessions where the Extension and the GSD area leadership team team worked together addressing core components and phases of strategic planning.

Session 1: On November 18, 2022, the leadership team launched the process by identifying and establishing a team of community leaders ready to commit to a process for community economic analysis and action planning. Agenda topics included project overview, desired outcome and a community and economic data discussion in review of the GSD area.

Session 2: On December 13, 2022, the leadership team reconvened to conduct an environmental scan of the GSD area and to help clarify and prioritize the strategic issues that the community can address. To assist in thinking about the different components of the GSD area, the Community Capitals Framework was shared to give considerations of the different components that make up a healthy rural ecosystem for a vital local economy and social well-being.

Session 3: On January 12, 2023, the leadership team met to identify three to five strategic priorities. Prior to this session, a survey link was shared with additional GSD area stakeholders to gather more input about the internal community strengths and weaknesses as well as external community challenges and opportunities.

The leadership team then prioritized and identified the following topics as the strategic issues:

- Vibrant Main Street
- Volunteering & Community Engagement Growth
- Mindset & Quality of Life



Between session 3 and 4, a subcommittee of Extension and GSD area leaders worked together to draft the initial strategic plan with a strong focus on clarifying goals and objectives. This draft was then brought to discussion with the community leadership team at Session 4.

Session 4: On March 21, 2023, the leadership team met to review the draft plan, clarifying priorities, goals and objectives, as well as identifying resources and components needed for successful implementation.

CEA-RWC PRIORITIES

The following priorities were identified as fundamental decisions and actions that will help to shape and support the plan's implementation. As the GSD area community works together to manage implementation of the plan, results will be of public value.

PRIORITY #1 - VIBRANT MAIN STREET

Downtowns are vital centers of commerce, culture, and social activity in many communities. They play a crucial role in generating sales and tax revenue, creating job opportunities for entrepreneurs and businesses. Downtowns contribute significantly to the quality of life by offering access to shopping, services, entertainment, and socializing for residents and visitors.

Within the GSD area, there is one downtown location in the village of Gilman. Located on State Highway 64, the downtown area of Gilman has experienced the closure of businesses such as the bowling alley and local grocery store, resulting in several empty buildings. Over the last several years, there have been efforts to proactively take steps toward revitalizing the downtown area. For example, the Gilman Industrial Foundation recently acquired an empty bank building, converting it into office space and a plaza for local craft vendors to sell their products.

The idea for what is now Hidden Treasures on Main came from discussions at the Gilman Development Foundation Empty Spaces committee meetings. With a loan from the Gilman Revolving Loan Fund, the building was purchased, and the necessary remodeling was completed. The shop opened in mid-November of 2022 and has since expanded from a vendor driven gift shop to a store selling meats, cheeses, wines, clothing, among many other items. The newly added coffee shop has been a huge success, adding another place for the community to gather. Soon an outdoor patio area will be added to the rear of the store providing additional space.



Following an examination of existing community assets and analysis of challenges and opportunities in the GSD area, the leadership team identified the guiding question: “How do we make our community attractive with a vibrant main street?” These conversations and this guiding question helped shape the following economic development goal and related objectives to support the priority, Vibrant Main Street.

Goal: Revive Downtown Gilman by creating a thriving local shopping hub that is attractive to and ideal for residents and visitors, current and future.

Objective A: Establish and sustain a permanent and active downtown leadership group in cooperation with the Gilman Development Foundation				
Strategies <i>Steps and actions to address goal and objectives</i>	Resource <i>Who would be involved in it? People, organizations, partners</i>	Point of Contact <i>Who is responsible?</i>	Timeline <i>Start and stop, or by what date?</i>	Outcome <i>Measurement/Outcome How will we know this was successful?</i>
Bimonthly Meetings Establish safe and effective group norms (Facilitated by Walter Leipart)	Industrial Foundation (Alicia Soper) Village of Gilman School District of Gilman	Lynn Rosemeyer	August 2023	Continued momentum Evaluation of group and meetings Annual Report of accomplishments See Objective B

Objective B: Conduct an analysis of downtown Gilman, exploring assets and opportunities-Engage Connect Communities with this initiative				
Strategies <i>Steps and actions to address goal and objectives</i>	Resource <i>Who would be involved in it? People, organizations, partners</i>	Point of Contact <i>Who is responsible?</i>	Timeline <i>Start and stop, or by what date?</i>	Outcome <i>Measurement/Outcome How will we know this was successful?</i>
Reach out to WEDC and UW-Madison, Extension Engage in discussions and determine best approach for Gilman	Connect Communities Dave Wiezbra (WEDC) Erinn Welty (WEDC) Todd Barman (Extension)	Jane DeStaercke Lynn Rosemeyer	October 2023	Establish a plan of work



Objective C: Engage in a community wide design and visioning process that helps discover a shared vision for the future (strategies related to the use of downtown spaces) -Ex: Howick (sp) Community Conversations looking at past/present/future

Strategies <i>Steps and actions to address goal and objectives</i>	Resource <i>Who would be involved in it? People, organizations, partners</i>	Point of Contact <i>Who is responsible?</i>	Timeline <i>Start and stop, or by what date?</i>	Outcome <i>Measurement/Outcome How will we know this was successful?</i>
Take info from objective A and B and have larger community conversation around visioning	Ex: Design Wisconsin Charette program	Walter Leipart	Reach out to Howick by April 20, 2023 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify bigger issues for revitalization Find other things around downtown to consider

Objective D: Leverage and improve downtown aesthetics

Strategies <i>Steps and actions to address goal and objectives</i>	Resource <i>Who would be involved in it? People, organizations, partners</i>	Point of Contact <i>Who is responsible?</i>	Timeline <i>Start and stop, or by what date?</i>	Outcome <i>Measurement/Outcome How will we know this was successful?</i>
<p>Explore success stories in other communities</p> <p>Develop resource list from other communities</p> <p>Explore empty space ordinances</p> <p>Campaign to advance solidarity in local spending</p> <p>Select low cost and quick return aesthetic improvements</p>	<p>Village, property owners, business owners</p> <p>Kristin Runge (Extension)</p> <p>Karl Green (Extension)</p> <p>Todd Johnson (Extension)</p> <p>Todd Barman (Extension)</p>	<p>Empty space committee chair</p> <p>Lynn Rosemeyer</p> <p>Name to be identified</p>	<p>April 2024</p>	<p>Encouragement to take action on empty spaces</p> <p>Pack theater to show interest in local spending</p> <p>Empty Space committee presents findings in August, 2023</p> <p>Team initiates actionable items (ex: summer school project use- pop up idea)</p>



Objective E: Explore feasibility of developing business incubator/ coworking space in underutilized building (residential upstairs) with high speed internet

Strategies <i>Steps and actions to address goal and objectives</i>	Resource <i>Who would be involved in it? People, organizations, partners</i>	Point of Contact <i>Who is responsible?</i>	Timeline <i>Start and stop, or by what date?</i>	Outcome <i>Measurement/Outcome How will we know this was successful?</i>
Understand demographics of who would use this space Determine space from previous objectives Determine use- for co-working space for rent	Whole community	Walter Leipart		Long term- created gathering space

PRIORITY #2 - VOLUNTEERING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Volunteering and community engagement plays a crucial role in building and strengthening social connections in rural communities. By volunteering, community members can get to know each other, share skills and knowledge, and collaborate towards shared goals. Given the pressing needs and challenges that rural communities face, volunteering and community engagement are vital tactics for addressing many local issues. Moreover, volunteering and community engagement also support the development of civic engagement and leadership in rural communities. By participating in local organizations and activities, rural community members can build their skills and confidence and take an active role in shaping the future of their communities. This ultimately helps foster the next generation of local leaders and volunteers, promoting the sustainability and vitality of rural communities.

The communities of the GSD area, like many communities, rely on volunteers. Local businesses and the school district have supported and promoted ways to allow people to volunteer and pursue volunteer opportunities and community engagement activities. Despite a commitment to volunteering and community engagement, the GSD area has its challenges. For example, the population of the GSD area and the broader Taylor County is aging and losing population, placing pressure on fewer people to support volunteer activities. There is also a shortage of volunteer firefighters and EMTs.



Following an examination of existing community assets and analysis of challenges and opportunities in the GSD area, the leadership team identified the guiding questions: “How can we create an incentive to increase community engagement and volunteerism?” and “How can we pull community leaders/organizations to support the development of volunteerism?” These conversations and this guiding question helped shape the following goal and related objectives for Volunteering & Community Engagement.

Goal: Revive Downtown Gilman by creating a thriving local shopping hub that is attractive to and ideal for residents and visitors, current and future.

Objective A: Develop a local study group to explore and identify barriers to volunteering and community engagement and share possible solutions for overcoming these barriers for a variety of households in rural communities (e.g., single, young families, empty nesters, elderly, and so on).				
Strategies <i>Steps and actions to address goal and objectives</i>	Resource <i>Who would be involved in it? People, organizations, partners</i>	Point of Contact <i>Who is responsible?</i>	Timeline <i>Start and stop, or by what date?</i>	Outcome <i>Measurement/Outcome How will we know this was successful?</i>
Develop campaign to provide platform for community groups Develop list of volunteer opportunities and groups Share with realtors	GSD staff List of areas to help promote/ connect volunteer need	Adam Jonson Miia Vick	2023-2024 school year	Increased community awareness of groups to be involved with Increase in community service 33% Churn in volunteers per group



Objective B: Foster more volunteerism in the GSD area by educating the public about opportunities to volunteer and creating a climate that promotes it

Strategies <i>Steps and actions to address goal and objectives</i>	Resource <i>Who would be involved in it? People, organizations, partners</i>	Point of Contact <i>Who is responsible?</i>	Timeline <i>Start and stop, or by what date?</i>	Outcome <i>Measurement/Outcome How will we know this was successful?</i>
<p>Hold public meetings about opportunities</p> <p>Create educational materials on how and where to volunteer for GSD area residents</p>	<p>School District of Gilman</p> <p>Michelle Grimm (Extension)</p>	<p>School District of Gilman</p>	<p>2023-2024 school year</p>	<p>Develop clearinghouse of organizations and opportunities (Ex: portrait of a graduate)</p> <p>Align with school district</p>

Objective C: Incentivize opportunities to increase community engagement and volunteerism with local, state and federal programs.

Strategies <i>Steps and actions to address goal and objectives</i>	Resource <i>Who would be involved in it? People, organizations, partners</i>	Point of Contact <i>Who is responsible?</i>	Timeline <i>Start and stop, or by what date?</i>	Outcome <i>Measurement/Outcome How will we know this was successful?</i>
<p>Create model for organizations to determine ways to reward staff for volunteering</p> <p>Secure board approval</p> <p>Promote organizations/ opportunities</p> <p>Reach out to businesses where residents of Gilman work to promote the need for more collaborations with businesses</p>		<p>Walter Leipart</p> <p>Lynn Rosemeyer</p> <p>Kasee Rosemeyer</p>	<p>2023-2024 school year</p>	<p>Model developed</p> <p>Model shared for replication at August Foundation meeting</p>



Objective D: Educate the community about existing volunteer opportunities. Measure

Strategies <i>Steps and actions to address goal and objectives</i>	Resource <i>Who would be involved in it? People, organizations, partners</i>	Point of Contact <i>Who is responsible?</i>	Timeline <i>Start and stop, or by what date?</i>	Outcome <i>Measurement/Outcome How will we know this was successful?</i>
<p>Investigate ways to promote and support volunteering in the community</p> <p>Update Taylor County list through IRS 990</p> <p>Determine criteria invites and readiness for community service fair</p> <p>Develop examples of incentives in other communities</p> <p>Engage target audiences (e.g., youth, young adults, families, empty nesters) to inform opportunities</p> <p>Survey of residents to identify barriers and how to overcome them to get involved</p>	<p>Michelle Grimm (Extension)</p>	<p>Wally Leipart</p>	<p>2023-2024 school year</p>	<p>With Churn of new staff, provide opportunities to raise awareness and fill gaps</p> <p>Determine community event to expand the ones we have; survey of barriers and how could we get them involved (input from target audiences)</p> <p>Volunteer hours needed/applied for High School graduation</p> <p>Churn of new staff</p> <p>Opportunities to raise awareness and fill gaps</p> <p>Survey of barriers and solutions</p> <p>Volunteer hours needed and applied for HS graduation</p>
<p>Facilitate communications with parents</p> <p>Revitalize district newsletter, include section for community relations</p> <p>Have web presence/awareness campaign</p>	<p>GSD Student project</p> <p>Lions club</p>	<p>Walter Leipart</p> <p>Bobbi Marion (GSD)</p> <p>Carrie Person (Gilman High School)</p>		<p>Pictures, updates, Increase participation by volunteer organizations</p> <p>Events kept up to date</p>



PRIORITY #3 - GROWTH MINDSET & QUALITY OF LIFE

The concept of community development revolves around the interactions among community members, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of life over time. These interactions play a crucial role in enhancing various aspects of the community, such as education, housing, recreation, and cultural opportunities. A key element of this approach is the collective leadership that arises from a group of individuals living in the community, working together to tackle common challenges.

This asset-based approach thrives when individuals believe in the power of collaboration to effect positive change and take organized action to address shared needs. It stands in stark contrast to a victim mentality, which assumes that individuals have no control over their circumstances and are powerless to make a difference.

Overall, community development relies on fostering strong relationships, leveraging community resources, and empowering individuals to actively participate in shaping their shared future. By embracing this growth mindset, communities can create solutions that lead to lasting improvements in the quality of life.

Following an examination of existing assets and analysis of challenges and opportunities in the GSD area, the leadership team identified two driving questions: How can we develop a growth mindset in our community to create opportunities to improve the quality of life for those who live here? How do you create the highest quality of life for our residents?

These guiding questions helped shape the following goal and related objectives for the Growth Mindset and Quality of Life priority.



Goal: Maximize and celebrate the qualities and opportunities of the GSD area as a rural community to improve the quality of life

Objective A: Develop a public relations campaign talking about the things that are good; celebrating successes.				
Strategies <i>Steps and actions to address goal and objectives</i>	Resource <i>Who would be involved in it? People, organizations, partners</i>	Point of Contact <i>Who is responsible?</i>	Timeline <i>Start and stop, or by what date?</i>	Outcome <i>Measurement/Outcome How will we know this was successful?</i>
<p>Develop a Public relations committee to share information from other groups in a timely and appropriate manner.</p> <p>Develop a marketing plan</p> <p>Apply findings from community conversations and feedback</p> <p>Additional strategies as determined by committee</p>	<p>Walter Leipart</p> <p>Carrie Person</p> <p>Denise Kroeplin</p> <p>Miia Vick</p> <p>Candice Grunseth</p> <p>Fred Romig</p>	<p>Walter Leipart</p>	<p>Annual</p> <p>Continuous incoming communications / testimonials</p>	<p>Series of celebrations of small successes in community</p> <p>Community members communicate positive attributes of school/ students/ staff building community to school board</p>

Objective B: Support GSD area communities to identify, advocate and create opportunities to improve quality of life.				
Strategies <i>Steps and actions to address goal and objectives</i>	Resource <i>Who would be involved in it? People, organizations, partners</i>	Point of Contact <i>Who is responsible?</i>	Timeline <i>Start and stop, or by what date?</i>	Outcome <i>Measurement/Outcome How will we know this was successful?</i>
<p>Public relations committee or development foundation makes this a standing agenda item at meetings</p>	<p>Ex: Maple fest and other events</p>	<p>Walter Leipart</p>		<p>Quarterly reports to stakeholders</p>



Objective C: Leverage rural assets and characteristics to improve quality of life in the GSD area.

Strategies <i>Steps and actions to address goal and objectives</i>	Resource <i>Who would be involved in it? People, organizations, partners</i>	Point of Contact <i>Who is responsible?</i>	Timeline <i>Start and stop, or by what date?</i>	Outcome <i>Measurement/Outcome How will we know this was successful?</i>
Committee or subcommittee designed for this work				

Objective D: Create network opportunities for stakeholders and community organizations to work together to utilize our assets and focus collective efforts to make the best about our unique community challenges.

Strategies <i>Steps and actions to address goal and objectives</i>	Resource <i>Who would be involved in it? People, organizations, partners</i>	Point of Contact <i>Who is responsible?</i>	Timeline <i>Start and stop, or by what date?</i>	Outcome <i>Measurement/Outcome How will we know this was successful?</i>
Public relations committee				

Objective E: Annually, provide a community update on progress improving quality of life. This performance measurement can then be shared with all community organizations.

Strategies <i>Steps and actions to address goal and objectives</i>	Resource <i>Who would be involved in it? People, organizations, partners</i>	Point of Contact <i>Who is responsible?</i>	Timeline <i>Start and stop, or by what date?</i>	Outcome <i>Measurement/Outcome How will we know this was successful?</i>
Public relations committee				Annual report



CONCLUSION

The Gilman School District Area Leadership Team has established this strategic plan for the purpose of supporting a thriving rural community where a diverse group of people come together to turn a vision of hope and opportunity into reality. We want to thank the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension, and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation for partnering with us to conduct a structured community economic development strategic plan. Our plan built from our existing strengths to develop a comprehensive action plan and expand the working relationships with local and state partners to explore funding options and support the implementation of the plan.

Our mission is to identify opportunities and strategies that will continue to draw people to our community. This strategic plan will help us take the next steps in revitalizing our community through the achievement of the following goals, 1) establish a vibrant Main Street, 2) increase volunteerism and community engagement, and 3) support a community mindset that embraces the quality of life that can be realized in a rural community. Our goals are supported by a clearly defined action plan that includes opportunities for continuous feedback from community members. Our goals and action plan are supported by a public-private partnership in our community grounded in a commitment to make the Gilman region a great place to raise a family

Our strategic plan addresses the challenges we face as we try to attract and retain people to our community such as access to housing, limited options to shop locally for even daily essentials, and limited local employment opportunities. Work teams and committees will establish action plans to increase the availability of housing and reach out to general contractors who may be interested in building affordable housing within the Village of Gilman. Other committees will develop strategies for revitalizing the downtown area by converting empty storefronts into business opportunities. At the same time the School District of Gilman will take the lead in increasing volunteerism and community engagement through service projects for students and promoting involvement in community activities and service organizations.

This is the perfect time to be exploring opportunities in our community. New families in our community have indicated Gilman is an attractive community because of our access to outdoor activities and a school with a great reputation of being welcoming to new families while meeting the needs of students. Looking ahead, we will plan for multiple ways to gather additional public input. We are excited to have you involved and to hear from you as to how we can strengthen this community initiative. You can expect to hear from us on both a quarterly and annual basis, providing updates on our progress. If you are interested in joining our conversation or supporting us in any way, please contact one of our team members.

In conclusion, the work that we started with this strategic plan requires the support of local, regional, and state agencies coming together to share resources and ideas that have worked in other rural communities. We need to continue to strengthen our community relationships at the local, regional, state and federal level. This support could be in the form of additional information, technical assistance or further facilitation of community economic development discussions. Finally, we need to leverage the resources within the community team and our community resources to support a strong and vibrant community.



APPENDIX



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF GILMAN Portrait of a Graduate





SCHOOL DISTRICT OF GILMAN Portrait of a Graduate



School District of Gilman - Redefining Ready Report Card

COLLEGE READINESS STANDARDS					
College Ready: A student who meets the ACT Metric and/or meets the "GPA of 2.8 or Higher" metric and 1 or more of the other Non-Standardized Test Metrics in the College Ready Indicators section.					
	ACT Score: The ACT's minimum benchmark scores that predict college-level success in the four content areas - English: 18, Math: 22, Reading: 22, Science: 23.	2021	2022	2023	2024
	%	%			
	Students earning 2.8 GPA: According to the National College and Career Readiness Indicators, GPA is the strongest predictor of student success in college and correlates to both adult income and adult health and wellness.	2021	2022	2023	2024
	%	%			
	Algebra 2: Success in Algebra II in high school is linked to both college enrollment and bachelor's attainment.	2021	2022	2023	2024
	%	%			
	Dual Credit: Dual enrollment students are statistically significantly more likely to: 1. persist in college to a second semester; 2. earn higher post-secondary GPA one year and two years after high school graduation.	2021	2022	2023	2024
	%	%			
	GPA of 2.8 or Above: High School Grade Point Average is consistently the strongest predictor of 4 year college outcomes for all academic disciplines, campuses and freshman cohorts.	2021	2022	2023	2024

LIFE READINESS STANDARDS					
	Attendance Rate Freshman Year: Percentage of students attending more than 90% of days during Freshman year.	2021	2022	2023	2024
	%	%			
	Community Service Hours: *2-4-6-8 who do we appreciate the Ginger campaign? Or how many events per year?	2021	2022	2023	2024
	Student Involvement in Activities: Participants in extracurricular activities were more likely to aspire to higher education and complete at least a bachelor's degree. How many would we prefer?	2021	2022	2023	2024
	Growth Mindset: Autonomy, Belongingness, Goal Orientation, Efficacy, Individual Hope, Engagement	2021	2022	2023	2024

CAREER READINESS STANDARDS					
	Work Based Learning: Students participating in a DPI approved Work Based Learning Experience. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Apprenticeships School Based Enterprise 	2021	2022	2023	2024
	Industry Recognized Certification Programs: Industry Recognized Credentials Developed between DPI and DWD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Drivers License Certified Nursing Assistant 	2021	2022	2023	2024
	Dual Credit: Dual Credit Career pathway courses	2021	2022	2023	2024

