WELCOME & INTRODUCTION
Dr. Alison Grizzle, emcee

- Founder of Clearview Strategy Partners
- Alabama Teacher of the Year (2013-2014)
- Experience in Birmingham City Schools and the Alabama State Department of Education
- Leadership Birmingham and Momentum Women’s Leadership graduate
Share your insights on social media!

#BGCommunityLab2019
ENDING SUMMER HUNGER
CHALLENGE

• Over 103,000 children in Central Alabama participate in free & reduced price school meals

• But what happens to the children over the summer?
• This gap leaves thousands of children at risk of hunger.
• One in five children is food insecure
• Over 68,000 children
• More than the population of Bessemer and Anniston combined
• Impacts behavior, cognitive development, summer learning loss, risk of diet-related diseases.
CHALLENGE

- USDA Summer Feeding Program reimburses summer meals delivered to children in qualifying areas.

- In Alabama, however, this resource is underutilized.
SOLUTION: Sponsor Organizations

• We needed an umbrella organization – also called a “sponsor” – for meal sites across the region.

• A sponsor serves to shield meal sites from burdensome admin tasks.

• The Food Bank was a natural choice
  • USDA contractor
  • Routinely perform food safety inspections
  • Facilitates network of 235 feeding programs across 12 counties
SOLUTION: Our Partnerships

**Summer Feeding Program Sponsor**
- Community Food Bank of Central Alabama
- Alabama Food Bank Association

**Meal Sites**
- YMCA Youth Center
- YMCA Northeast Family Branch
- YMCA Pelham
- A.G. Gaston Boys & Girls Club Birmingham
- A.G. Gaston Boys & Girls Bessemer
- Calvary Resurrection Christian Academy
- New Visionary Ministries
- Walker County Community Action

**Programmatic Partners**
- Jones Valley Teaching Farm
- Farm Food Collaborative / Food Bank of North Alabama

**Evaluation**
- Samford University

**Funders**
- Bold Goals Coalition / United Way
- Conagra Brands Foundation
- Enterprise Rent A Car Foundation

**Vendor**
- Valley Services, Inc.
SOLUTION: Free Summer Meals

- Free lunches and snack served 5 days a week for up to 10 weeks in May, June and July
- 7 to 17 sites across 3 counties
SOLUTION: Evaluation & Continuous Improvement

Photos credited to Samford University’s School of Public Health
SOLUTION: Locally Grown Snacks
SOLUTION: Summer Meals, Summer Moves

- Recruited medical students to lead cooking demos
- Teach the Let’s Move curriculum at smaller sites
SOLUTION: Pop-up Produce Stands

- Families take home fresh fruits and vegetables when picking up children from camp
- Festive atmosphere with cooking demos and recipes
- We reach entire families, not just children, including intergeneration households
RESULTS

• Enrollment grew 50% from 1,132 to 1,700 children

• Increased meals served by 32% from 57,000 to over 76,000 free meals and snacks served per summer

• Plus, 2,000 locally grown snacks per summer

• We reduced the over-order rate from 14% to 4.89%

• Meals distributed in 2019 had a value of over $187,000
RESULTS: Changing Lives
ENDING SUMMER HUNGER

Breakout Questions

This program only reimburses meals served to children. How can we further leverage federal child nutrition programs to ensure that entire households including adult family members are food secure?

Are there creative strategies for how to spread the word about free summer lunch sites to nearby families with children?

Are there new technologies, new partnerships or policy solutions we can cultivate to grow the program’s reach and overcome the limitations of meal deliveries in rural areas?
MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS
CHALLENGES

Children don’t have access to mental health supports they need

- Alabama ranked 46th among states for number of youth who need but do not receive mental health treatment

- 72.5% of Alabama youth (ages 12-17) who have had a major depressive episode do not receive any treatment
What is the top issue facing schools in Walker County?

“Student mental health. It is the one thing that seems to be a universal problem and the one variable we feel the least qualified to address in our classroom.”
SOLUTIONS

Enhance supports for children’s mental health by building stronger school mental health systems
• Schools can reach children where they are every day
• Intensive research and planning
• National experts, local plan
• Shared strategies, shared evaluation, plan to sustain
SOLUTIONS: A Comprehensive Plan

Building a connected system of support, not an isolated program

TRAINING
- Basic mental health training for all district staff (Youth Mental Health First Aid)
- Crisis prevention training for all/key district staff (Mandt)

ASSESSMENT
- Basic behavioral screening to identify students that may need any level of support (with a plan for follow up)

SERVICES
- Expanded in-school mental health services tailored to needs of that district
SOLUTIONS: Partners

School Districts
Blount County Schools
Homewood City Schools
Pell City Schools
Tarrant City Schools
Walker Co. / Jasper City Schools

Funders
Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham
United Way of Central Alabama
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama
Anne B. LaRussa Foundation of Hope
Walker Area Community Foundation
Partnering School Districts

Providers
Gateway
JBS Mental Health Authority
Eastside Mental Health Center
Impact Family Counseling

Training / Evaluation
Gateway (training)
UAB – Education and Pub Health

SUPPORTING STRUCTURES
• Bold Goals Coalition
• Health Action Partnership
• Mental Health Priority Group
• Community Foundations and United Way
SOLUTIONS: District Partners

- Four diverse pilot districts:
  - Tarrant City
  - Pell City
  - Homewood City
  - Blount County

- Expanded to Walker Co. & Jasper City Schools this year
RESULTS

• All or most teachers and staff completed mental health training in each district.

• Over 11,000 students have received behavioral screening, helping students get the support they need.

• All four pilot districts have added mental health providers through partner agencies to meet student needs.
RESULTS

- 68% of teachers and staff say mental health training prepared them to use skills and techniques in the classroom, and 74% say trained staff has benefited students

- 61% say expanded mental health services have benefited students
RESULTS

• Walker County and Jasper City Schools have trained all counselors and some administrative staff on crisis prevention

• Walker County Schools has taken the bold step of converting one local teaching unit into the “Mental Health Coordinator” for the entire system
RESULTS

On Pell City providing mental health training to bus drivers:

“...[W]e had just done some research and found out that sometimes our bus drivers....know more of what’s going on from the home side and things that the students are dealing with. It has been very, very positive to have our bus drivers trained in Mental Health First Aid.”
RESULTS

“Instead of asking “What’s Wrong With You?” (in an accusatory voice), we need to be asking our children “What Has Happened To You?” (in a compassionate voice).

-Tina Aaron, Director, YAP (Youth Advocate Program)
MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS

Breakout Questions

What role(s) do you think schools can and should play in supporting the mental health of students?

What do you think is the value of changing culture, mindsets and skills district-wide around mental health? Why might a district-wide approach that trains all staff and screens all students be important?
CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM & SCHOOL ATTENDANCE
CHALLENGE: The Statistics

- 10% of school days
- 6.5 million student absences
- 1/3 of students
• Tackling chronic absence in our schools requires a shift in culture and in practice.
CHALLENGE: Culture Shift

Punishment & Blame VS. Problem Solving
CHALLENGE: Culture Shift

Effective approaches are those that treat student absenteeism as a problem to be solved, not a behavior to be punished.
### CHALLENGE: Culture Shift

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Illness, both chronic and acute</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lack of health, mental health, vision, or dental care</td>
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<td>• Trauma</td>
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<td>• Unsafe path to/from school</td>
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<td>• Poor Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Frequent moves or school changes</td>
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<td>• Involvement with child welfare or juvenile justice systems</td>
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<th>Negative School Experiences</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Struggling academically or socially</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Bullying</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Suspensions and expulsions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Negative attitudes of parents due to their own school experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Undiagnosed disability</td>
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<td>• Lack of appropriate accommodations for disability</td>
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<th>Lack of Engagement</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Lack of culturally relevant, engaging instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>• No meaningful relationships with adults in school</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Stronger ties with peers out of school than in school</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Unwelcoming school climate</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Failure to earn credits/ no future plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Many teacher absences or long-term substitutes</td>
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<th>Misconceptions</th>
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<td>• Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused</td>
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<td>• Missing 2 days per month doesn’t affect learning</td>
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<td>• Sporadic absences aren’t a problem</td>
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<td>• Attendance only matters in the older grades</td>
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CHALLENGE: Shift in Practice
SOLUTIONS: Attendance Professional Learning Community
SOLUTIONS: Common Goals

• Cultivate a school wide **culture** of attendance

• Use chronic absence **data** to determine need for additional supports

• Develop **staff capacity** to adopt effective attendance practice

• **Advocate** for resources and policies to improve attendance
SOLUTIONS: Effective Format

- Multiple districts
- Monthly meetings
- Homework
- Rotating host schools
- Collaborative planning
- Strategy sharing
- Accountability
- Collective Fundraising
SOLUTIONS: Successful Tools & Strategies

- Factors that contribute to chronic absence
- School Self-Assessments
- 3-Tiered Approach
- Attendance Teams
- Staff Development
- Incentives
- Early Outreach
- Examine Data
- Messaging
- Incorporate Trauma-Informed practices
- Research-based best practices
RESULTS: Changing Culture & Practice

Random Letters and Punitive Prodding
RESULTS: Changing Culture & Practice

Attendance PLC and “Super” Superintendent
RESULTS: Changing Culture & Practice

New Practices and New Thinking
RESULTS: Challenges

• Staff transitions

• Resources vs. Need

• Time / Responsibility
RESULTS: Successes

- Collaboration
- Changed Mindset
- Improved Attendance
CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM & SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Breakout Questions

How can we launch additional PLCs in communities who have expressed a desire to participate, but don’t have access to a trained facilitator with the time and expertise to provide training?

How could technology improve or expand our reach?

How can we better communicate our successes to other educational leaders to encourage them to implement best practices?
HONORING PHIL HAMMONDS
HONORING PHIL HAMMONDS
BREAK
EARLY LEARNING ACTION NETWORK: PRE-K PROJECT
CHALLENGES

• Improving school readiness for young children

• Increasing diverse delivery of Alabama First Class Pre-K (child care has lowest number of grants)

• Assisting child care programs in grant process

• Plan to act on these needs
SOLUTIONS: Early Learning Action Network
RESULTS: Our Progress

First Class Pre-K Grants Awarded to Jefferson Co Child Care Centers
## RESULTS: Then vs. Now

<table>
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<tr>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2019</th>
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<tr>
<td>• 4 programs</td>
<td>• 15 programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 6 partners sharing agency time</td>
<td>• 7 partners, 1 project coordinator, 4 student fellows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• $10,000 investment per year, over 2 years</td>
<td>• $100,000 over three years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developed model idea</td>
<td>• Model determination and expansion</td>
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SOLUTIONS: Return On Pre-K Investment

$1 invested in high-quality PRE-K yields a $7 return-on-investment

Source: Dollars and Sense: A Review of Economic Analyses of Pre-K, Albert Wat, Pre-K Now, May 2007
SOLUTIONS: First Class Pre-K Program

• Administered by the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education.

• #1 in nation for quality, meeting 10 out of 10 NIEER quality benchmarks for 13 years in a row.

• First Class Pre-K graduates have higher reading and math proficiency rates than their peers, regardless of zip code or demographics
Alabama First Class Pre-K by the Numbers

• Current state funding allows 38% of Alabama’s four-year-olds to attend

• This is up from just 6% in 2012

• But Central Alabama counties are below the statewide rate:
  • Blount County: 15%
  • Jefferson County: 27%
  • Shelby County: 19%
  • St. Clair County: 35%
  • Walker County: 23%
RESULTS: Early Learning Action Network

- Expansion to Five County Region: Blount, Jefferson, St. Clair, Shelby, Walker

- This year we had interest and representation from all five counties during our Pre-K Orientation and Kickoff and counties outside of our region

- This year’s cohort of providers will include representation from Jefferson, Shelby and Walker Counties

- Still some work to do
RESULTS: Scaling Our Solution

Who Has an Interest?
- Academic achievement
- Lifelong Success
- Philanthropy

Who Do You Know?
- Community/Neighborhoods
- Government/Leadership
- Agencies/Organizations
- Businesses
- Schools

Who Will Do the Work?
- SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)
- Mobile County has adopted this project
- Those who you know who have an interest
RESULTS: Leveraging Advocacy

- Advocacy is how we build support for Pre-K expansion
- Alabama Legislature approved largest-ever $26.8 million increase for First Class Pre-K in 2019
- Sign-up for Alabama School Readiness Alliance alerts: www.alabamaschoolreadiness.org
PRE-K PROJECT AND EARLY LEARNING ACTION NETWORK

Breakout Questions

What role do you see yourself playing in this project?

What about this project impacts your work/interests in community well-being?

What would you like to know more about this project or its presence in your community?
KEYNOTE
PRESENTATION
Josh Davis, featured guest

- Vice President of External Affairs, StriveTogether
- Former Vice President of External Affairs, Delta Health Alliance (DHA)
LUNCH & DATA WALK
BOLD GOALS
COMMUNITY LAB
WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY LAB?

- A brainstorming session with members of your group to determine ways to scale community solutions
- A simulation expanding on the topics and programs highlighted in this morning’s Lightning Rounds
- An opportunity to interact and exchange ideas with members of your group
PURPOSE

• Participate in scaling the solutions you learned about in this morning’s Lightning Rounds.

• Learn from peers as your group works to scale solutions across our community

• Leave your mark on today’s event
HOW IT WILL WORK

Part 1: Understanding your project. (10 minutes)

Part 2: Help the Coalition see with fresh eyes. (20 minutes)

Part 3: Brainstorm and build out a scalable solution. (20 minutes)

Part 4: Develop a 2-minute overview of your scalable solution. (10 minutes)

Part 5: Presentations from a select number of groups
CLOSING
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