

HANCOCK COUNTY PROMISE

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HANCOCK COUNTY CHOSEN TO LAUNCH PROMISE PROGRAM

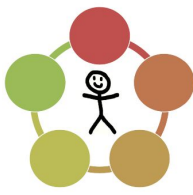
Promise Indiana promotes saving for post-secondary education through community-driven initiative.

College may seem far away to kindergarteners, but this fall, Hancock County will bring post-secondary education and careers front of mind for kindergarteners and their families through a collaborative effort called "The Promise." The "Hancock County Promise" program makes educational savings a reality by helping families to start a CollegeChoice 529 Direct Savings account through their school. The Hancock County Promise program has seeded the accounts with an initial investment of \$125,000 from the following local sponsors (\$5,000 per year for a commitment of five years): Hancock Health, NineStar Connect, Greenfield Bank, The EMS Group and Tyner Pond Farm. These sponsors are helping to rally the community, families, and champions by contributing to the individual accounts. Meijer in McCordsville will sponsor the third phase of the program for Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation kindergarteners. Hancock County is among the newest group of communities to launch the Promise program, with the support of Promise Indiana and the Indiana Education Savings Authority.

During school registration, the "Hancock County Promise" helps families take that first step to start saving, while also integrating college and career discovery activities in the classroom. The selected age group to benefit from this program is kindergarteners in all Hancock County schools, including Eastern Hancock, Greenfield-Central, Southern Hancock, Mt. Vernon, Geist Montessori and St. Michael's.

Youth in the program not only build assets for post-secondary education and learn about college and careers, but they also visit a college campus for a day of interactive learning and dynamic hands-on experiences called "Walk Into My Future." Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) will host the event this fall, with college students and faculty leading campus tours and activity stations for elementary-aged youth.

The Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation's Superintendent, Dr. Shane Robbins, states, "The Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation led the initiative county-wide under the leadership of Mr. Scott Shipley, Director of Special Programs. We are changing the county culture with nearly 1,000 kindergarteners per year and creating a culture that post-secondary education is possible for all. Through the years, the experience will have a positive impact on our community and the futures of all students."



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To get Hancock County Promise underway, a steering committee was assembled, which included all Hancock County school districts, community and private foundations, local businesses and government, economic development groups, and nonprofits.

"It was evident that the team from Hancock County had the drive and partnerships to make this a success for the students and families in their community," said Phil Maurizi, VP of Operations for Promise Indiana. "We look forward to working with all the collaborators to achieve absolute success in their first year, but also to making the Promise program better and stronger with their innovation. Their work will impact not only local youth, but communities around the state of Indiana."

Timeline:

The Hancock County Promise will be launched in the summer and fall to kindergarteners and their parents. Parents will sign their kids up for a CollegeChoice 529 Direct Savings account in July and August. This phase one for all Hancock County kindergarteners is sponsored by Hancock Health, NineStar Connect, Greenfield Bank, The EMS Group, and Tyner Pond Farm. These sponsors have solidified their partnership with a commitment of five years. During the month of October, youth will invite champions—friends, family members, neighbors, coaches, and teachers—to invest in their college savings accounts. Youth who raise \$25 in contributions from their champions will receive a matching deposit from a local partners. We are seeking contributions for this "community match" third phase. Contributions can be made to any of the schools or school foundations. The Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation has secured Meijer in McCordsville to sponsor this third phase for Mt. Vernon kindergarteners.

Research from the Center on Assets, Education, and Inclusion at the University of Kansas shows that youth with a college savings account in their name are between three and four and half times more likely to go to college than those without an account. CollegeChoice 529 Direct Savings accounts can be used at any eligible institution—2-year community colleges, 4-year colleges and universities, even trade and technical schools. The Promise program began in Wabash County in 2013, and has expanded each year to new communities selected through a competitive application process. Since 2014, Benton, Blackford, Fulton, Howard, Jay, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Marshall, Noble, Steuben, and Whitley counties have started local Promise programs, as well as Lawrenceburg (Dearborn County) and select communities in Indianapolis (Marion County).

To date, over 10,000 youth around the state have started a CollegeChoice 529 direct savings account through the Promise program. To learn more or get involved with the Hancock County Promise, contact Scott Shipley at the Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation (317) 485-3100 or scott.shipley@mvcsc.k12.in.us or visit www.PromiseIndiana.org.