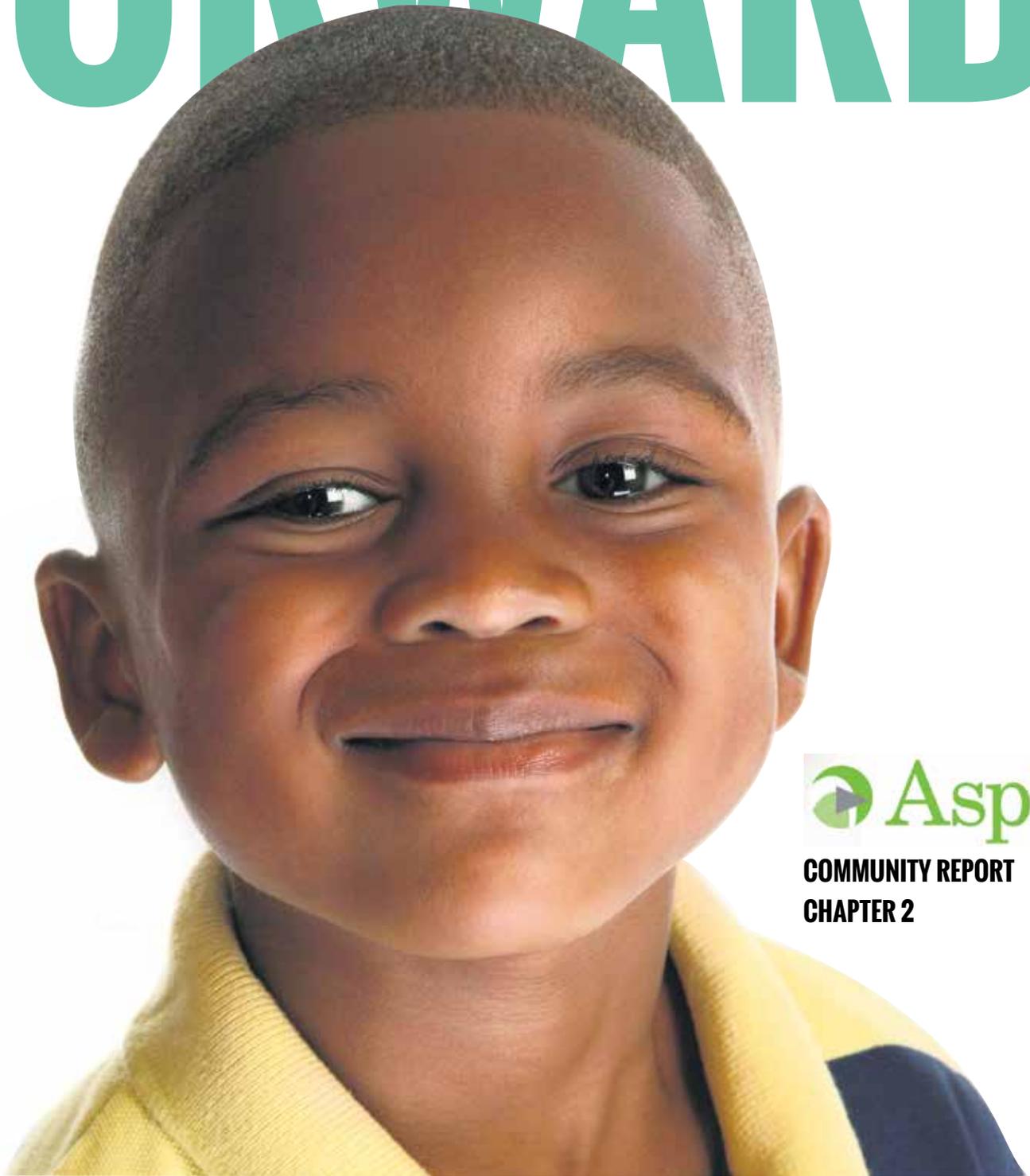


# FORWARD



**COMMUNITY REPORT  
CHAPTER 2**

# A

## LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIRMAN

At Aspire Toledo, we believe in the people of this region — their strength, their resourcefulness, their commitment to creating a better life for the next generation. The team at Aspire Toledo sees this every day.

We see it in the families, we see it in the schools, and we see it in the organizations dedicated to helping children throughout the area.

We remain committed to the goals set forth by Aspire Toledo:

1. Children are born healthy
2. Children enter school ready
3. Children are succeeding in school
4. Youth graduate high school ready for the next step
5. Young adults are ready to embrace career opportunities

The past few years have been a time of gathering information and engaging with people from all walks of life. We've built a broad-based coalition of stakeholders: 300 parents, 120 students, 45 teachers and 143 service providers and community partners — and in the process, we have developed a solid foundation upon which we can build. These people have shared their insights throughout the process, helping Aspire Toledo gather, collect and filter the qualitative and quantitative data that serve as the basis for our work.

As a result, Aspire Toledo is better positioned to work with the entire community to provide a framework for success — and better outcomes for the children of this region.

Our combination of qualitative and quantitative data is truly innovative, and it has garnered considerable national attention. We are still not at the point where we can point to concrete, tangible results; however, bringing a wide range of people together has helped us achieve a consensus on how we establish best practices that deliver better outcomes for children. As we move ahead with pilot programs, that consensus will continue to evolve. The seeds of progress are taking root.

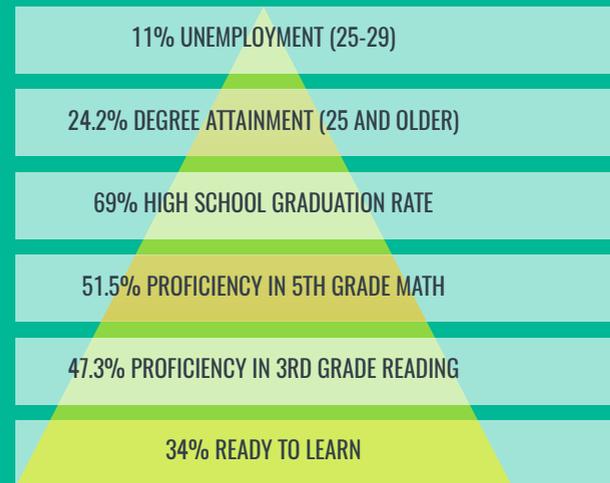
Toledo Day Nursery, for example, has used insights gained from working with Aspire to partner with Mosaic Ministries and their Baby University program, bringing their high-quality preschool program to Toledo's Old South End, where the data alerted us to the urgent need for high-performing early childhood education. By partnering with Aspire, Toledo Day Nursery could assess the specific performance measures needed to offer the best services to families in that region.

Even as we see more bright spots, we recognize that true progress will take years. The needle will not move overnight. We are looking at long-term, lasting change, and to achieve that, we must acknowledge the need for a structural change. The strong foundation we are building today will see improvements in our baseline statistics in the future. As you read this report, you'll see the progress we're making. We look forward to continuing this conversation.

Best wishes,

DENNIS JOHNSON  
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF MANAGERS

## WHY ASPIRE TOLEDO?



*From US Census and Ohio Department of Education*

**“Sustainable impact depends on the willingness of each and every individual and each and every organization to think differently about what they do every day. And most importantly, each must be open to changing what they do to make sure they are aligned with agreed-upon outcomes, using data on what works for kids to guide their actions.”**

**JEFF EDMONDSON**

Founder and Executive Director  
StriveTogether

**T**aking on a project of this scale requires a solid strategy — to ensure we arrive at true solutions, a tremendous amount of groundwork must be laid. With each step, it is essential that we gather insights from stakeholders across the spectrum.

Representatives from area service providers joined with educators and administrators, young people and their families, business and community leaders — each one adding their voice to gain new perspectives, fresh insights — and a greater potential for meaningful change.

Real community change is never a simple process. The status quo is deeply ingrained in the society. But facing the realities of the educational outcomes in the Toledo area has inspired countless people to actively search for solutions.

## THE ASPIRE TOLEDO PROCESS IN ACTION

To begin developing our model, Aspire Toledo worked with the community to select the initial outcomes to be addressed. Fostering an environment where children enter school ready is an immediate imperative, as it sets the tone for all endeavors to come. Developing the next generation of leaders – high school graduates fully prepared for the next stage of life – is also essential to sustain growth over time.

OUTCOME AREA

**2**

### Children Enter School Ready to Learn

Led by the Aspire Kindergarten Readiness Network

#### PURPOSE STATEMENT

To achieve school readiness, the Aspire Kindergarten Readiness Network will utilize data and existing resources to:

- Partner with families and professionals
- Strengthen communities
- Ensure children have the health and developmental characteristics needed to succeed by building the foundation for lifelong learning

#### THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE: READY TO LEARN



\* 2015 data reflects the Ohio Department of Education's change from the Kindergarten Readiness and Learning (KRA-L) test to the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) test, which measures a wider range of early learning metrics.

#### THE CAFÉ CONVERSATION

- Early Childhood Professionals
- Preschool Teachers
- Head Start and Early Head Start Teachers/Administrators
- Kindergarten Teachers/Administrators
- Parents of Preschool-Age Children
- Parents of Kindergarten-Age Children
- In-home Child Care Providers
- Toledo-Lucas County Librarians
- Home Visitors
- Mental Health Professionals

OUTCOME AREA

**4**

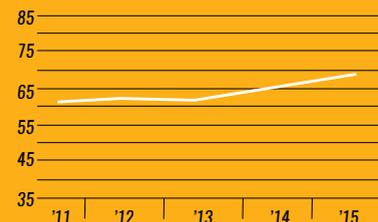
### Youth Graduate High School Prepared for the Next Step

Led by the Aspire Graduation Network

#### PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Aspire Graduation Network will collaboratively identify and implement strategies and actions to increase graduation rates.

#### THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE: GRADUATION RATES



\*Graduation rates for Lucas County based on 4-year cohorts

#### THE CAFÉ CONVERSATION

- Waite High School Teachers/Administrators
- Toledo-Lucas County Librarians
- After School and Out-of-School Youth Providers
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse Professionals
- Parents of Junior High and High School Youth
- In-school High School Youth
- Out-of-school High School-Age Youth, including court-involved youth
- Juvenile Court Professionals

Working groups of community partners formed to help achieve each outcome.

The 2015 High School graduation rate in Lucas County was only 69%, far below the statewide average of 90%.

In 2015, only 18% of children in Toledo Public Schools entered kindergarten fully prepared to learn.

To improve these numbers, we need to ask WHY they aren't moving.

Café Conversations bring stakeholders together to support conversations that matter with an emphasis on asking WHY.

# P

Programs throughout the country are missing the opportunity to ask the fundamental question — why? Aspire Toledo has taken a revolutionary approach through our Café Conversations.



Unique to Aspire Toledo, these in-depth discussions are designed to empower every group of stakeholders to take an active role in Aspire Toledo's progress by giving them a voice in the process.

Through these meetings, we heard people's concerns regarding these outcomes.

## OUTCOME AREA 2

How can we...

- Address the shortage of qualified preschool teachers.
- Help parents understand the impact of preschool in relation to social and emotional development — and keep them engaged throughout the process.
- Ensure children's ability to develop social/emotional/cognitive skills needed for success.
- Promote the importance of understanding the cultural differences that may exist between children and their teachers and mentors.

## OUTCOME AREA 4

How can we...

- Help students succeed even with their increased adult responsibilities. *Many students are trying to juggle school while holding down jobs, looking after younger siblings and even caring for children of their own.*
- Meet students' basic needs and overcoming obstacles. *Language barriers are an immediate concern, and the everyday realities of poverty often stand in the way of achievement.*
- Encourage success even where parental support is lacking.
- Ensure that young people's needs are being met as they develop and prepare for life after school.

From here, we have been able to generate the insights that will lead to greater progress.

# T

Translating these qualitative benchmarks into a quantitative assessment helps us measure whether programs are set up to deliver optimal outcomes.



Each organization self-selects their program's Primary Metric from Aspire Toledo's Community Outcomes:

- Children are born healthy
- Children enter school ready to learn
- Children are succeeding in school
- Youth graduate high school prepared for the next step
- Young adults are ready to embrace career opportunities

Aspire Toledo then conducts a site visit, measuring these four Secondary Indicators ...

- Program Evaluation
- Cultural Competency
- Parent Engagement
- Staff Support

... and the Secondary Indicators relevant to their program:

- Early Childhood Social and Emotional Development
- Early Childhood Readiness to Learn
- Youth Development
- College and Career Readiness

Information, data and evidence are gathered to answer a series of questions. These answers are matched to definitions determined by community and national experts.

The organization is then given a rating based their ability to demonstrate proficiency in their Primary Metric and Secondary Indicators:

- Emerging
- Approaching
- Achieving

We discuss the results with each organization in-depth at a follow-up meeting and guide them toward tools to help them overcome deficiencies.

# COMMUNITY LEVEL DATA

# A

Aspire Toledo is driven by data. Having a quantitative baseline is essential as we seek to measure growth within our community.



To achieve that goal, we're developing a Data Warehouse, making valid, reliable community data more accessible and supporting data-driven decision making. This system, developed in collaboration with the University of Toledo, aggregates and displays a wide variety of information that can be overlaid on a map of the region.

Data comes from a wide range of sources:

- School districts
- City of Toledo
- Lucas County
- State of Ohio
- U.S. Census
- American Community Survey
- National public and non-profit sources

Current and historical data can be used for creating reports and maps with widespread applicability for public policy, community planning, grant writing, continuous improvement, program evaluation and more.

The Data Warehouse allows Aspire Toledo and service providers to:

- See above the program level and identify support gaps in the cradle-to-career objective
- Create centralized access to data, making it easy for organizations to locate and search
- Ensure consistent and comparable data

# STUDENT DATA SYSTEMS

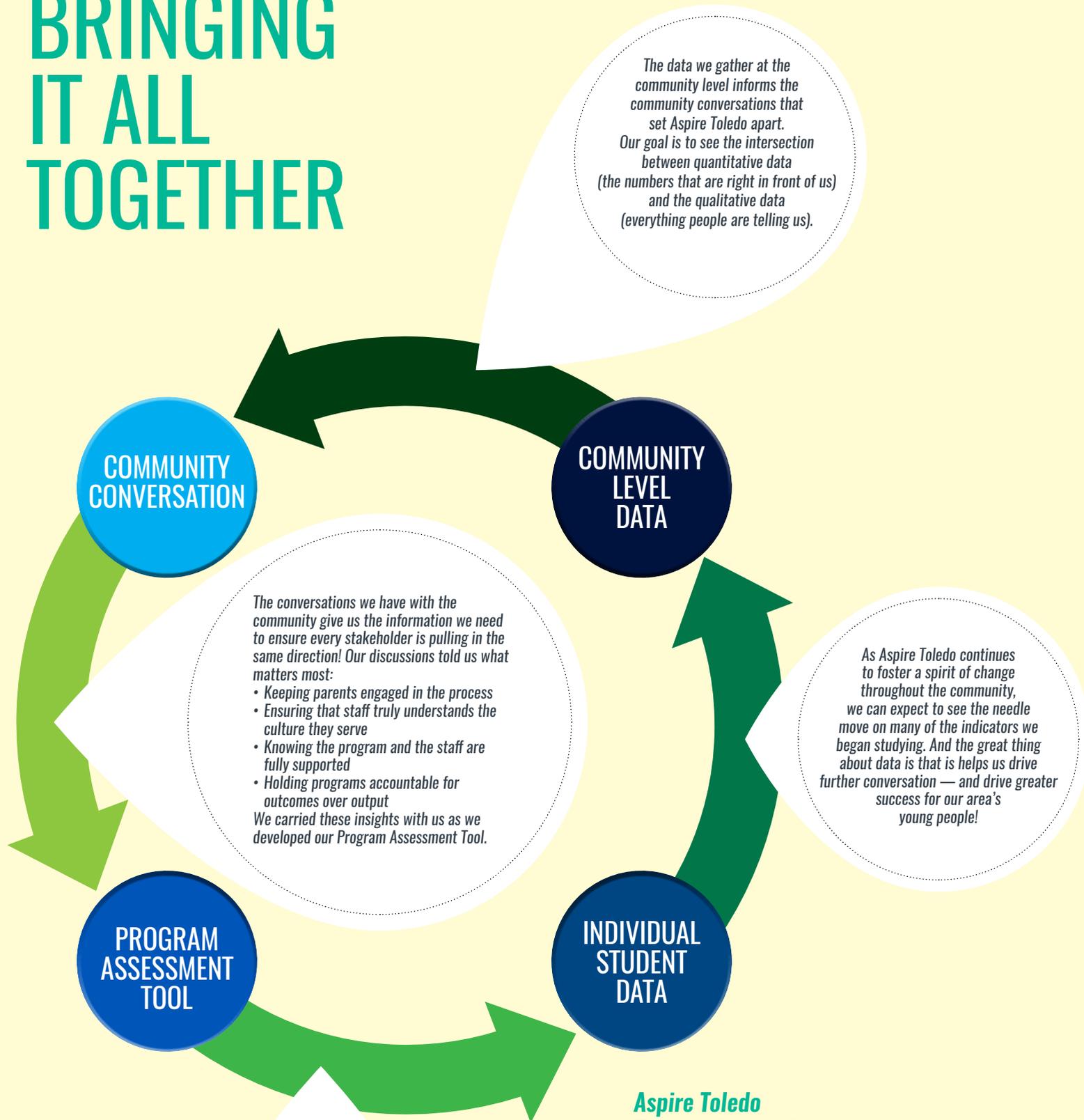
# U

Understanding the connection between data at the individual student level and at the community level – simultaneously – enables us to foster a spirit of continuous improvement.

- Demonstrates how specific factors affect specific outcomes
- Empowers programs and service providers to monitor metrics and outcomes, providing true insight into each program's value and enabling potential access to more funding sources
- Data is organized by student, recording individual milestones, from birth to graduation, with personal identifiers removed.



# BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER



The data we gather at the community level informs the community conversations that set Aspire Toledo apart. Our goal is to see the intersection between quantitative data (the numbers that are right in front of us) and the qualitative data (everything people are telling us).

The conversations we have with the community give us the information we need to ensure every stakeholder is pulling in the same direction! Our discussions told us what matters most:

- Keeping parents engaged in the process
- Ensuring that staff truly understands the culture they serve
- Knowing the program and the staff are fully supported
- Holding programs accountable for outcomes over output

We carried these insights with us as we developed our Program Assessment Tool.

As Aspire Toledo continues to foster a spirit of change throughout the community, we can expect to see the needle move on many of the indicators we began studying. And the great thing about data is that it helps us drive further conversation — and drive greater success for our area's young people!

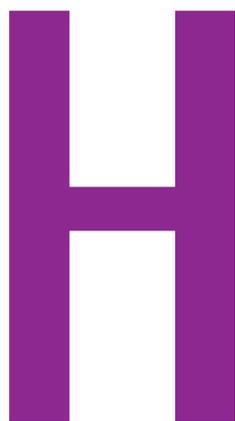
As we gather more information from our Program Assessment Tool, we will be able to gain an even greater understanding of which student data can facilitate continuous improvement.

## Aspire Toledo Partnerships in Action

“When Pastor David Kaiser of Mosaic Ministries approached us about his work in South Toledo, we knew we were a philosophical match for a partnership. Using the data and insights provided by Aspire Toledo, it was demographically clear that South Toledo children and families were in need of a high-quality early childhood program. Our first classroom opened in September 2016, and our goal is to open a second classroom this fall. Our hope is to fill the building with young children and ensure that 100% of them leave our classrooms kindergarten ready.”

DR. KAREN MCCOY  
President, Toledo Day Nursery

# DRIVEN BY DATA. ENSURING EMPOWERMENT. ASPIRE TOLEDO OFFERS OPPORTUNITY.



Assessing the power of collective impact, Aspire Toledo is creating an environment where every stakeholder can benefit.

**Students and families** will have access to programs that are truly responsive to their needs, delivering culturally competent programming that's proven to be outcome-based and geared toward engaging the entire family.

**Funding organizations** will be able to assess a program's specific outcomes — and be sure they support the programming that most closely aligns with their own priorities.

**Service organizations** that partner with Aspire Toledo will gain new insights into the motivations of funding organizations. In the process of their partnership, they have the potential to increase their access to funding sources that had once been out of reach.



**“We find that Aspire Toledo’s five primary outcomes match very well with the Y’s objectives. The evaluations we’ve received have enabled us to better our programs’ overall effectiveness, and their emphasis on continuous improvement helps position us for better outcomes over time.”**

**BRAD TOFT**  
President and CEO  
YMCA of Greater Toledo

## RECENT ASPIRE TOLEDO MILESTONES

### Testing and Piloting

• **Phase 1:**  
**November 2016 - February 2017**

We worked with select area nonprofits to determine just how effective the Program Assessment Tool is. We specifically set out to “break” it, and we are pleased to report that it is accurately measuring what we’ve set out to measure.

• **Phase 2:**  
**March 2017 - June 2017**

We have applied the Aspire Toledo approach to a wide range of organizations, with an eye toward determining that we are achieving consistent results.

• **Phase 3:**  
**Ongoing**

We will be applying the Program Assessment Tool to even more organizations, and we’ll use the expanding pool of data to identify the gaps that organizations’ programming can meet. From there, we’ll be able to move forward with continuous improvement.



## STAFF

### KATIE ENRIGHT

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### KRISTEN KANIA

DATA AND OUTCOME NETWORK MANAGER

### ERIC KLINGER

COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT

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### TOLEDO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

### UNITER WAY OF GREATER TOLEDO

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PRESIDENT, TOLEDO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
TREASURER, ASPIRE TOLEDO



LEARN HOW TO GET INVOLVED:  
[ASPIRETOLEDO.ORG](http://ASPIRETOLEDO.ORG)

