

THE PULSE

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

Checking our pulse is essential in monitoring our Vital Signs. The Pulse highlights a specific indicator of human well-being that is contained in United Way of Central Oklahoma's Vital Signs report or is being noticed through United Way's work in the community.

United Way of Central Oklahoma focuses on the building blocks of a good life – a **quality education** that starts from birth and ultimately **leads to a stable job, enough income to support a family through retirement, good health and the ability to achieve one's full potential**. Social scientists have repeatedly demonstrated that few factors match the breadth of impact that education has on an individual and their community. In this issue of The Pulse, we explore the economic impact of obtaining a high school diploma.

\$1,058
PER STUDENT

funding has been **cut** by
the state over the past
nine years.¹

STATE
REVENUE

per student, pre-K-12, funding is
the **lowest it has been in over a
decade**.²



1 IN 5 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

in the state, because of state funding cuts,
hold **classes only 4 days per week**.¹



OKLAHOMA
EARNS A



ON THEIR STATE EDUCATION REPORT
CARD RANKING US **45TH IN THE NATION.**³

Increases in educational attainment have both direct and indirect health effects as well as an impact on overall well-being.

DIRECT BENEFITS OF EDUCATION ON HEALTH:⁴

- Adoption of healthier lifestyles
- Better ability to cope with stress
- More effective management of chronic disease

INDIRECT BENEFITS OF EDUCATION ON HEALTH:⁴

- Access to more privileged social position
- Better-paying jobs
- Higher income



WHAT IF ...
90%

of students from the Class of 2021 in central Oklahoma **earned a high school diploma?**
Projected actual **79%**⁵

AN INCREASE OF 2,100 GRADUATES

THE BENEFITS WOULD BE HUGE:



INVESTING IN IMPROVING HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES CREATES ECONOMIC BENEFITS FOR ALL.

Increasing the number of students that graduate high school and preparing them to succeed in college and a career requires the collective effort of parents, caregivers, educators, business leaders, policymakers, community members and nonprofits.

United Way of Central Oklahoma is committed to ensuring children and youth can start school ready to succeed, become proficient readers at a young age, stay on track in middle school, earn their high school diploma and pursue higher education.

LAST YEAR BECAUSE OF OUR DONORS ...

We invested **\$2.8 MILLION** in 20 programs at 15 United Way Partner Agencies **focusing on early education, character development, mentoring, career path exploration, resources for homeless students** to stay in school and much more!

40,502 CHILDREN AND YOUTH IMPACTED

For opportunities to volunteer at one of these agencies or mentor a youth, visit our **Volunteer Center** at volunteercentraloklahoma.org

The Pulse is a product of Vital Signs; Oklahoma's only broad-based community evaluation with over two decades of trend data in five key areas important to our quality of life.

Interested in printed copies of our research publications or a presentation?

Contact United Way of Central Oklahoma's Community Impact Department at
info@unitedwayokc.org or 236-8441.



NOTES AND CITATIONS

1. **OK Policy Institute.** Another year goes by, and Oklahoma still leads the nation for cuts to education. Gene Perry. [Online] Nov 2017. <https://okpolicy.org/another-year-goes-oklahoma-still-leads-nation-cuts-education/>.
2. -. Two big myths that distort Oklahoma's education funding debate. Gene Perry. [Online] October 2017. <https://okpolicy.org/two-big-myths-distort-oklahomas-education-funding-debate/>.
3. **Education Week.** Oklahoma State Highlights Report. Quality Counts 2018. [Online] January 2018. <https://www.edweek.org/ew/collections/quality-counts-2018-state-grades/report-card-map-rankings.html>.
4. **Olshansky, S.J., Antonucci, T., Berkman, RH., Boersch, A. et. al.** Differences in life expectancy due to race and educational differences are widening and many may not catch up. Health Affairs. [Online] 2012. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/full/10.1377/hlthaff.2011.0746>.
5. **Office of Educational Quality & Accountability.** Oklahoma School Profiles - Oklahoma County. [Online] 2016. <http://www.edprofiles.info/report-card/county/55/year/2016>.

*The projections included in this report are based on an economic model developed by Economic Modeling Specialists Inc. and updated by United Way of Central Oklahoma. To further explore how other educational scenarios may affect your community's life outcomes visit the Common Good Forecaster™ at UnitedWay.org.