



# UNITED FOR SCHOOLS IMPACT REPORT FY20-21

Mile High United Way's United for Schools works with partner schools to support families by developing parent advocates, strengthening school-community partnerships, and connecting parents and children to essential resources. **THANK YOU for your generous investment in the Mile High United Way United for Schools initiative.** Because of you, we were able to serve families across the metro area through our programs and initiatives. Through this impact report, we hope you see the lives changed and the tangible impact you have made on our community this year.

## Our Community Challenge

- 30–40% of students in Denver and Adams County were chronically absent during the 2018–2019 school year.<sup>1</sup>
- 41% of households making below \$20,000 do not have internet access, reflecting a major barrier to online schooling.<sup>2</sup>
- By 6th grade, chronic absenteeism is a proven early warning signal for students at risk of dropping out of school.<sup>3</sup>

## Your Impact at a Glance

**SEVEN** partner schools across Metro Denver

**402 STUDENTS** participating in out-of-school programs

**115 FAMILIES** received direct assistance through programs like the Mile High United Way 2-1-1 Help Center

**180 FAMILIES** supported by our team of Community Advocates

**\$70,000** in social-emotional education grants for partner schools

1 Denver Public Schools (Sept. 2019); Adams 12 Five-Star School District (Sept. 2019)  
 2 <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/fall16/highlight2.html>  
 3 EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST, 42(4), 223–235

## Pivoting to Meet the Needs of Families During the School Year

We know that for parents to prioritize their child’s learning, they must first have stability at home. That is why our United for Schools program pivoted this year to focus not only on improving student engagement, but on stabilizing families.

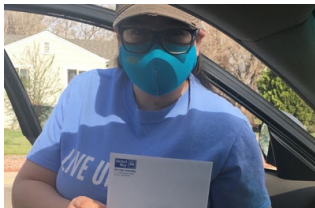
A key component to this approach is our boots-on-the-ground team of Community Advocates who facilitate support for families and schools across all areas of the program. Mile High United Way’s Community Advocates built relationships with 180 families across Metro Denver, helping them access direct financial assistance for rent, utilities, food, medical expenses, mental health services, and transportation. In addition to basic needs assistance, we are strengthening school-community partnerships, developing parent advocates, and bridging the digital divide for low-income families. This comprehensive strategy is keeping more students engaged in class, so they can build a foundation for learning and achievement.

“There are so many amazing components to the Mile High United Way and Thornton partnership...Getting Lyft vouchers for families so they can get transportation to the necessary places. Paying rent. Getting deposits. So, a lot of amazing stories at each of our schools through this partnership.”

– Shannon West, Principal, Thornton Elementary



### How We Promote Academic Success for Students



Direct Family Assistance



Computer and Internet Access



Digital Literacy Training



Parent Teacher Leadership Teams



Quality Out-of-School Time Programming



Capacity Building for School Leadership

## Bridging the Digital Divide for Low-Income Families

Remote and hybrid learning shined a harsh light on the inequities in our education system and on the digital divide that exists in our community. United in the belief that everyone should have equitable access to the internet, Mile High United Way partnered with [Comcast](#), [Ernst & Young](#), and Mobile Citizen to provide laptops, reliable internet, and digital literacy training for the communities we serve. These resources were delivered to families within our seven partnering elementary schools across Adams, Aurora, and Denver County school districts.

Our digital literacy training supports parents in building their own computer skills, so they can better support their child's online learning. The training includes easy-to-understand videos on computer and internet basics, offered in English, Spanish, Dari, and Pashto, as well as one-on-one tutoring.



**“I learned a lot that has helped me to support my son on any homework or computer tasks. We support each other, as he is being raised in this technological world, he is very advanced with it and the areas in which he doesn't manage, I help him. Having the knowledge removes the fear.”**

– Yadira, a parent in our United for Schools program on Parent Technology Training

## New Funding for Social-Emotional Education to Help Students Develop

Schools are a critical source of stability for students. Outside of the home environment, it's where many young students develop their ability to interact with others and form meaningful relationships. For this reason, it is important that schools in our community have support in preparing students not only academically, but socially and emotionally as well. Mile High United Way provided funding for social-emotional education for our partner schools this past year, delivering \$10,000 in social-emotional learning grants to each of our seven partner schools: Swansea Elementary, Garden Place Academy, McElwain Elementary, Coronado Hills Elementary, North Mor Elementary, Thornton Elementary, and Lansing Elementary.

