



STRATEGIC PLAN

Keeping Kids at the Heart of All We Do

September 30, 2026



As the Indianapolis education landscape continues to shift, RISE UNITED, a 501c3 nonprofit organization, is uniquely positioned to educate parents, train advocates, and develop leaders to improve student outcomes.

AT RISE UNITED, WE ARE FOCUSED ON KEEPING KIDS AT THE HEART OF ALL WE DO.

We improve the education landscape by educating parents, training advocates, and developing leaders to invest in student success.

Over the next 4 years, we will educate, train, and develop community members towards civic leadership to improve our K-12 education landscape. This focus allows us to bring community members closer to the issues that impact marginalized students, and solutions that ignite residents towards action and engagement.

Over the next 4 years, RISE UNITED will support K-12 students and engage the full community.



1,000

By 2030, we will educate, train, and develop 1,000 community members to improve student outcomes.



50,000

By 2030, we will impact 50,000 students through programs that improve community engagement and civic leadership in the K-12 education space.





THROUGH THE RISE UNITED LIFECYCLE, COMMUNITY MEMBERS CAN GET ENGAGED AT ANY POINT—WHETHER FROM A RISE UNITED EDUCATION SERIES, TRAINING, OR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

RISE UNITED has established several programs to educate, train, and develop leaders.

In this next iteration of our work, we will evolve these programs to meet the most pressing needs of the Indianapolis education landscape while building a clear infrastructure to keep community members engaged in our work long-term.

THESE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF RISE UNITED PROGRAMS TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION OF ENGAGING THE FULL COMMUNITY IN IMPROVING EDUCATION OUTCOMES



Educate Parents and Community for Engagement in K-12 Issues and Solutions

RISE + SHINE

A series to educate parents and community about changes in the K-12 landscape and specific impacts to their children.

COLLEGE SIGNING DAY

A city-wide event where RISE UNITED provides scholarships to graduating high school seniors and celebrates their achievements.





Train Advocates for Influential Positions in Education

FREEDOM READERS

A multigenerational literacy program that trains parents and caregivers in the Science of Reading principals to extend learning from school into home. This program also provides a pipeline for parents to become full-time educators.



Develop Leaders to Partner With RISE UNITED on Education Improvements

CIRCLE CITY LEADERS

A leadership development program that connects local community members to the most pressing issues in education, and equips them with the tools to lead change for K-12 public school students



The RISE UNITED strategic plan articulates our vision, mission, goals, and strategies to achieve progress for Indianapolis students. We invite the full community to join us because every student deserves the resources and support needed to thrive.



VISION

Every Indianapolis resident is engaged in building a public education system that prepares every student for graduation and beyond.

MISSION

We exist to educate, train, and develop Indianapolis residents to improve public schools.





GOAL 1

Equip and Inspire Education Champions
to Prioritize Student Success



GOAL 1

Build a powerful network of bold, student-centered leaders who champion student success, sustain long-term alignment with RISE UNITED priorities, and drive transformative change for the better across our education landscape.

STRATEGY 1

Partner with Community Members to Move Students Forward

Strengthen long-term alignment between RISE UNITED and community members by building trust, accountability, and clear connections between programming in community engagement and Freedom Readers.

STRATEGY 2

Support Bold and Courageous Leaders for Student-Centered Change

Educate, train, and develop leaders who boldly elevate student-centered priorities in public forums and community influence. Community members can apply to the Circle City Leaders (CCL) program to achieve education change aligned to this strategy.

STRATEGY 3

Train Leaders for Elevated Positions in Decision-Making

Equip emerging leaders with advanced training, mentorship, and opportunities that prepare them for influential roles on education nonprofit boards.





GOAL 2

Build a Powerful Base of Community
Leaders Driving Education Change



GOAL 2

Train and sustain a diverse network of community leaders who are equipped, connected, and motivated to take collective action, ensuring that student needs remain at the center of all decision-making.

STRATEGY 1

Educate Parents on the K-12 Education Landscape

Educate parents on the K-12 education landscape to increase their awareness of topics like school performance, accountability, and resources for student success. Leverage RISE + Shine events as an opportunity to support parents through a shifting education landscape.

STRATEGY 2

Partner With Trusted Community Organizations

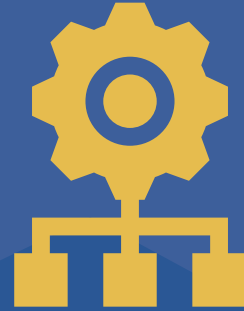
Formalize relationships with trusted community organizations, schools, and universities to develop comprehensive offerings to support parents in navigating the K-12 education system.

STRATEGY 3

Equip Future Leaders for Impact

Eliminate barriers to college enrollment by expanding College Signing Day to graduating high school seniors across Marion County.





GOAL 3

Secure the Financial Resources, Operational Capacity,
and Organizational Infrastructure Necessary to Sustain
and Scale RISE UNITED's Mission and Impact



GOAL 3

Ensure RISE UNITED maintains the organizational infrastructure, talent, systems, and operational excellence required to sustain current work and scale its impact over time, positioning the organization for long-term success and resilience.

STRATEGY 1

Build Sustainable and Diverse Revenue Streams

Secure stable, multi-year, and diversified revenue sources to ensure long-term financial resilience and growth.

STRATEGY 2

Strengthen Donor Engagement and Philanthropic Partnerships

Deepen donor relationships and cross-sector partnerships through intentional stewardship, convenings, and collaborative campaigns.

STRATEGY 3

Invest in Organizational Capacity and Leadership

Build and retain a high-performing, mission-aligned team and board with the expertise, training, and leadership capacity to advance RISE UNITED's mission.

STRATEGY 4

Advance Brand, Communications, and Thought Leadership

Position RISE UNITED as a leading, credible voice in education equity through storytelling, digital presence, and consistent external communications.

STRATEGY 5

Leverage Technology and Data to Drive Impact and Growth

Strengthen RISE UNITED's use of technology and data systems to improve decision-making, demonstrate impact, and support scalable growth.



APPENDIX A

Strategic Plan Definitions

- **Advocacy:** Public actions, such as speaking, writing, organizing, or campaigning, that aim to influence education policies and practices.
- **Community Engagement:** The intentional process of building relationships and partnerships with students, families, residents, and stakeholders to actively participate in shaping education decisions and outcomes.
- **Community Members:** Students, families, residents, and other local stakeholders who are directly affected by and invested in public education, and whose perspectives and priorities help shape education decisions.
- **Community Organizing:** The process of bringing together students, families, and residents to build collective power and influence education policy decisions.
- **Education Advancement:** Ensuring that all students, regardless of background or circumstance, have fair access to the resources, opportunities, and support needed to succeed.
- **Education Champions:** Community members, leaders, or decision-makers who actively advocate for policies and practices that prioritize student success.
- **Organizing Framework:** The structured approach RISE UNITED uses to train, mobilize, and sustain community leaders in education advocacy.
- **Public Schools:** Any traditional district school or public charter school serving grades K–12.
- **RISE UNITED Lifecycle:** Community and coalition members who come into the RISE UNITED work and stay engaged over time to create impact for our north star.
- **Student Success:** The achievement of positive academic, personal, and career outcomes that prepare K–12 students for graduation and postsecondary opportunities.
- **Systems Change:** Transformations in the structures, policies, and practices that shape education, aimed at creating long-term improvements for students.
- **Thought Leadership:** The practice of shaping conversations and influencing ideas in the public sphere by sharing expertise, research, and stories

RISE



Prepared by



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MORELAND**
STRATEGIES