

Bright Futures: Groups will report on progress this afternoon

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“dizzying.”

But it’s a start.

Before this fall, few students in teacher Yano Jones’ class at Omaha Northwest High School realized the value of a solid ACT score.

Now they know that a good score can lead to scholarships and more college choices.

They are among 167 students at three high schools and Metro Community College enrolled in the foundation’s college access program, the Avenue Scholars.

A key component is a daily class that teaches everything from managing a checkbook to finding help on an English paper at college.

Teachers called “talent advisers” lead the coursework and coach students outside the classroom. The foundation aims to pick advisers who come from backgrounds similar to those of the students. It also pays their salaries.

Jones, a first-generation college graduate, reminded the scholars on Wednesday to bring pencils and calculators to the

ACT exam on Oct. 24. If you don’t have a calculator, he told them, we’ll get you one.

He advised them not to skim the reading section — you have to read every word and understand it.

“This is a gold mine,” Jones said of the program. “We’re putting it all together. They’re going to have the tools they need to be successful.”

Most of his students earn less-than-stellar grades but show motivation.

Senior Travon Smith, who turns 17 on Thursday, feels more confident asking teachers for help and managing his time after becoming an Avenue Scholar.

He knows he’s been given a chance to do something — classmates ask how they, too, can join.













“They’re going to help me further myself,” he said of the program.

Most of this year’s investment on younger children will focus on ramping up the quality of child care for those receiving state-subsidized care. Such chil-

Which schools benefit?

Building Bright Futures has targeted 15 schools for attendance incentives, truancy prevention and tutoring programs.

Many of those schools were selected for other programs:

 Health clinic	 Avenue Scholars	 Middle school after-school program
OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS		
Franklin Elementary		
Indian Hill Elementary		
Kellom Elementary		
Kennedy Elementary		
Norris Middle School		
Nathan Hale Middle School		
Spring Lake Magnet Center		
Blackburn Alternative High School		
Northwest High School		
South High School		
RALSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS		
Mockingbird Elementary		
Ralston Middle School		
Ralston High School		
MILLARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS		
Millard Alternative Middle School		
Millard Alternative High School		

MATT HANEY
THE WORLD-HERALD

dren are among the poorest in the metro area, putting them at risk of academic failure.

Building Bright Futures is recruiting large day care providers to agree to outside review and to comply with standards in exchange for funding and staff training.

As the overall effort contin-

ues, Cavanaugh said, it makes sense to coordinate with another local achievement movement: the two-county learning community council. No plans, however, have been formalized with the elected body so far.

Cavanaugh’s group and the foundation have relied mainly on private funding. They plan to

MORE ON BRIGHT FUTURES

Who runs Building Bright Futures and the Bright Futures Foundation?

Each has an executive director and board of directors. Some members, including Susie Buffett, Mike Yanney and Dick Holland, serve on both boards. Both organizations work directly with school districts.

Who funds them?

Board members provide primary funding. Building Bright Futures partners with national foundations and has targeted federal money to after-school programs. Eventually, both groups will seek broader support.

seek federal and other foundation grants when possible.

Both groups are collecting data to measure what works and what doesn’t when it comes to helping children from birth through college and beyond, Cavanaugh said.

“We have a single simple goal of improving academic performance,” he said. “We have to do all these things.”

Contact the writer:
444-1037, michaela.saunders@owh.com