



AmeriCorps & Public-Private Partnerships

SPOTLIGHT ON LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT & CITY YEAR LITTLE ROCK



In 2016, Superintendent Michael Poore was recruited to lead the Little Rock School District, serving 25,000 Pre-K to adult education students. In this urban district – with neighborhoods of concentrated poverty - one out of five students was not graduating with their classmates, and the consequences were real. Students who drop out are eight times more likely to become incarcerated and three times more likely to be unemployed. When a student drops out it has a lasting effect on the community and the economy as a whole. Students who drop out earn roughly \$1 million less than high school graduates. Furthermore, out-of-school, out-of-work young people can cost the country about \$1.6 trillion in increased social services and lost earnings and taxes over the course of their lifetimes.

Committed to making sure every student in his district has the supports needed to realize their full potential, Superintendent Poore has partnered with City Year Little Rock, a local non-profit designed to help close the gap between what students need to succeed and what many schools are designed and resourced to provide. City Year deploys 54 highly skilled AmeriCorps members to serve in six Little Rock schools. These talented, diverse young men and women work alongside teachers to establish positive developmental relationships with the students and provide personalized social, emotional, and academic supports that heighten student engagement, improve school culture, advance school-wide improvement practices, and ensure that students are on-track to graduate from high school prepared for college, career, and civic success. City Year fits with Superintendent Poore's philosophy of what education is all about: personalized learning, students as the solution, a team approach with staff, and project-based learning.

As Superintendent Poore has said, “Every child is a little bit different. Every child brings a strength. Every kid brings an opportunity. Every kid also brings something that’s a little tough for them. For a child to succeed they must first have someone who believes in them, cares about them, and is connected to them. There’s an art of caring that’s necessary to create a learner. That’s what City Year is all about.”

The partnership with City Year Little Rock is also a great example of a powerful public-private partnership. The school district shoulders some of the cost, but so does the City of Little Rock, the Chamber of Commerce, and local businesses who see the value of the program. That local investment is matched by the federal government through the Corporation for National and Community Service, the independent agency that runs AmeriCorps.



When everyone has skin in the effort, it leads to collaboration, sharing of ideas, and most importantly significant results for the students served by our City Year AmeriCorps members. The local support in City Year strengthens their community impact and it increases the return of the taxpayer dollar.

-Superintendent Poore-

The investment is paying off. Little Rock was one out of 12 school districts in the state last year that increased in every test area in every grade from third to 12th. Eighty-six percent of teachers found that City Year AmeriCorps members improved overall focus and order in the classroom – an essential ingredient to successful learning.