



Every day, care.

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**WHIRLPOOL BRAND BRINGS CARE COUNTS™ LAUNDRY PROGRAM TO ALL BENTON HARBOR AREA SCHOOLS**

*Benton Harbor-based Whirlpool brand installs washing machines and dryers in six schools across the district; provides access to clean clothes to combat chronic absenteeism for community students*

**BENTON HARBOR, MI (Sept. 7, 2021)** — To help maximize K-12 attendance and support educational equality in the Benton Harbor community, Whirlpool brand is expanding its commitment to providing ways for families to care for their loved ones in its own backyard by bringing the [Care Counts™ laundry program](#) to Benton Harbor Area Schools beginning this academic year.

The Care Counts™ laundry program by Whirlpool brand is designed to remove one small but important barrier to attendance - access to clean clothes - by installing washers and dryers in schools nationwide. Since its inception in 2015, the program has contributed to decreases in chronic absenteeism, and increases in attendance rates, grades and engagement levels among participating at-risk students. When most schools halted in-person learning due to COVID-19, the Care Counts™ laundry program by Whirlpool brand continued to be a resource for students with the help of school leaders and community volunteers. As a result, nearly 90% of participating high-risk elementary school students<sup>1</sup> enrolled in the program were reported by teachers to feel connected to their school during the 2020-2021 school year, despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

“At Whirlpool brand, we believe that acts of cooking, cleaning and washing have the power to change lives. Since we first launched the Care Counts™ laundry program seven years ago, we’ve seen first-hand how the program positively impacts the lives of children who might not otherwise have access to clean clothes,” said Laura Fletty, Communications Manager for Whirlpool brand. “It is an honor to bring the Care Counts™ laundry program by Whirlpool brand to Benton Harbor Area Schools. The positive response has been incredibly moving, and we are excited to see the program help the students and families in our own community thrive.”

Working hand-in-hand with the Benton Harbor Area School Board and superintendent Dr. Andraé Townsel, Whirlpool brand installed washers and dryers in every school within the district and developed a customized program to collect anonymized data to study the impact that the program made on student attendance, grades, graduation rates and engagement. Townsel, who began his service with Benton Harbor Area Schools in February 2020, has been a strong

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<sup>1</sup>High-risk elementary school students is defined as elementary students at risk of missing 10% or more days of school during a reporting period

advocate for the Care Counts™ laundry program after speaking to school leaders in other participating districts and hearing about the impact firsthand.

“Since I stepped into my role as superintendent, my vision was to build lasting relationships and trust within the Benton Harbor community to better serve our students. Listening to the needs of the students, parents, and school staff was vital in establishing how we advance the lives of our young people,” said Dr. Townsel. “With the support of Whirlpool brand and the implementation of the Care Counts™ laundry program, we can achieve a collective goal of excellence for our students by supporting their growth and prosperity within our community and beyond.”

The introduction of the Care Counts™ laundry program by Whirlpool brand to Benton Harbor Area Schools will be the first time that laundry units have been placed in every school in a district. The program has historically focused on supporting elementary students, but Whirlpool brand will include all levels of education for Benton Harbor Area Schools including: Fair Plain East Elementary School, Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, Fair Plain Middle School, Benton Harbor High School, Discovery Enrichment Center, and CAPE Center. As of the 2021-2022 school year, the Care Counts™ laundry program by Whirlpool brand is present in 134 schools across 36 states - including the Benton Harbor Area Schools - and has provided access to clean clothes for thousands of children nationwide.

To learn more about the Care Counts™ Laundry Program by Whirlpool brand, visit <https://www.whirlpool.com/care-counts>

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### **About Whirlpool Brand**

For more than one hundred years, Whirlpool brand has been inspired by how people care for their families. Whirlpool brand is designing home appliances that are focused on improving how families give and get the care they need with the latest technologies and innovations – whether that means flexible refrigerator storage for all types of family needs, induction technology for efficient cooking and easier cleaning, or laundry pairs that sense and adapt to clothes with the latest in connected technologies. Whirlpool brand created and continues outpacing goals of its Care Counts™ Laundry Program, through which the brand is committed to helping create educational equality by installing washers and dryers in schools to help remove one small but important barrier to attendance – access to clean clothes. Whirlpool brand is part of Whirlpool Corporation, a leading appliance manufacturer committed to being the best global kitchen and laundry company, in constant pursuit of improving life at home. For more information on Whirlpool, please visit [whirlpool.com/everydaycare](http://whirlpool.com/everydaycare) or find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/whirlpoolusa](https://facebook.com/whirlpoolusa) or Twitter at [@WhirlpoolUSA](https://twitter.com/WhirlpoolUSA). Additional information about the company can be found at [whirlpoolcorp.com](http://whirlpoolcorp.com).