



July 2026

Opioid Settlement Funds Annual Report



Introduction

In early 2023, staff from Scott County Health Department and Scott County Community Services formed a Core Team to lead a community planning process for Scott County to determine how to utilize funds from opioid settlement litigations. Exhibit E lists allowable opioid remediation uses identified in the settlement. Strategies within Schedule A are “core abatement strategies”, indicating there is a strong evidence base to support their use. For more information on this process, see the Opioid Settlement Funds Report published in March 2024 [here](#). As a result of this process, the Opioid Settlement Steering Committee prioritized two core strategies for the initial use of funds: 1) Fund warm hand-off programs and recovery services and 2) Enrich evidence-based prevention strategies.

This report describes work to support the strategies between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026, Scott County Fiscal Year 2026.

Prioritized Strategies

Core Strategy #5: Fund warm hand-off programs and recovery services

For individuals struggling with substance use, transitions between care and connections to needed resources can be difficult to navigate. Assistance with these transfers (i.e. warm hand-offs) can help individuals successfully start receiving treatment and support services, such as beginning medications for opioid use disorder treatment, transitioning to a residential recovery facility, or receiving support services like housing, transportation, job placement, and treatment for co-occurring mental health conditions.

Core Strategy #7: Enrich evidence-based prevention strategies

The settlements recommended the funding of evidence-based primary prevention programs, which have been shown to prevent risk factors for both substance use and mental health problems by promoting positive youth development. These programs are most effective when they are delivered in a tiered fashion, are inclusive of parents and other caregivers, and are implemented in a way that is trauma informed, culturally sensitive, and equitable.

Year 2 Progress (July 2025 – June 2026)

Core Strategy #5: Fund warm hand-off programs and recovery services

Strategy: Opioid Care Coordinators

Individual Care Coordination

Opioid care coordinator positions continue to work out of Scott County Community Services. In Year 2, there were two individuals supporting this work.

Opioid care coordinators:

- Provide continuous support and navigation assistance to individuals with opioid use disorder to treatment services and other needed resources
- Stay in contact with individuals to assist in navigating services and ensuring adherence to treatment plans.
- Offer ongoing support, such as transportation to appointments, to increase engagement and continuity of care.

	FY25	FY26	Total
Number of People Served	104	58	162

Many individuals that the opioid care coordinators work with are involved in the criminal justice system. Upon release from the Scott County Jail, care coordinators have been able to connect individuals directly to treatment services or temporary housing until space opens at a treatment facility. Stabilizing these individuals enables them to focus on treatment, which improves their physical and mental health. Care coordinators have seen clients succeed after treatment by obtaining their own housing, employment, child visitations, and other necessary medical care.

Awareness of Opioids, Overdose Prevention, and Support Services

The opioid care coordinators provided presentations on opioid awareness and overdose prevention to students in schools. In the 2025-2026 school year, the opioid care coordinators reached approximately 650 students in Bettendorf, Davenport, North Scott, and Pleasant Valley school districts.

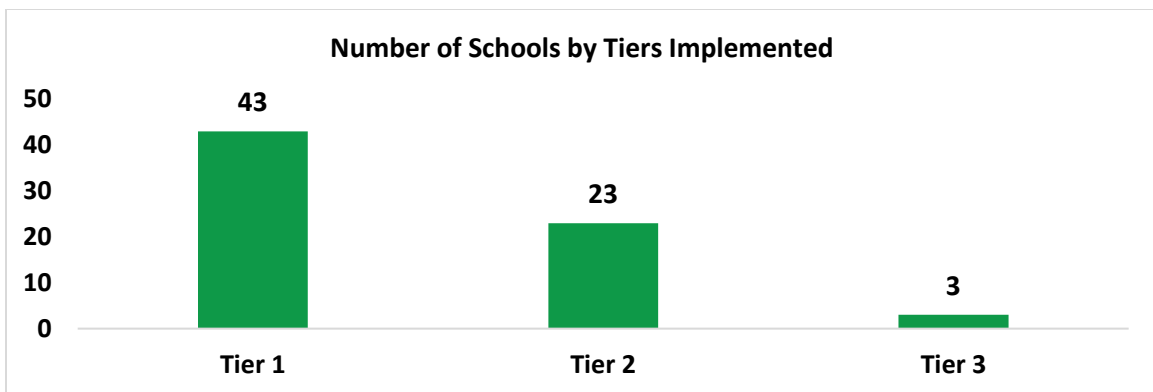
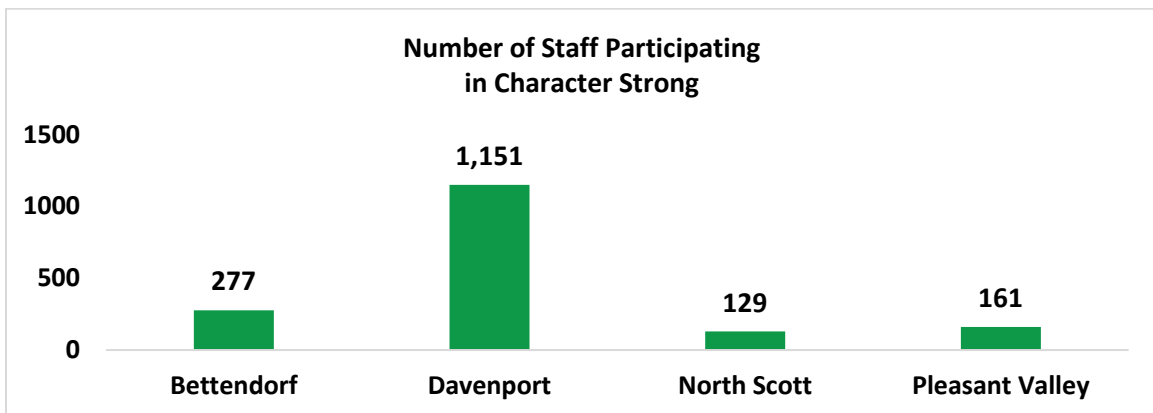
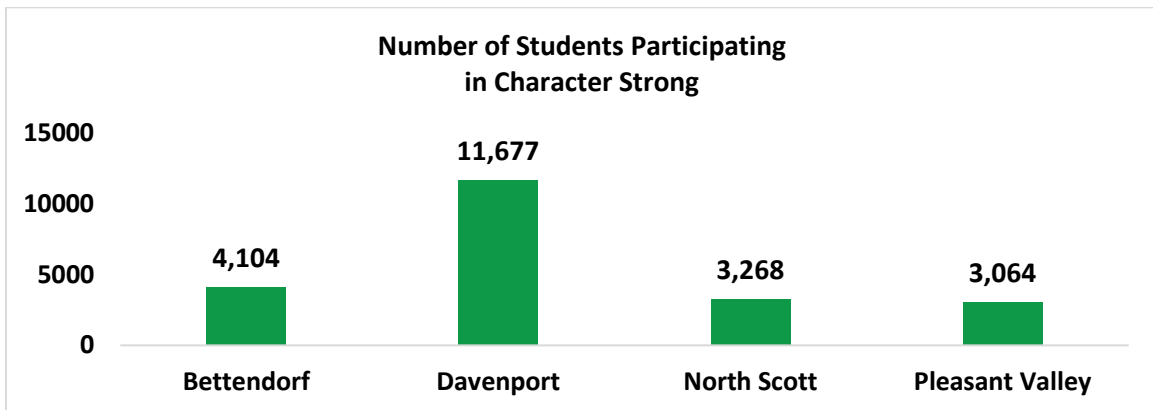
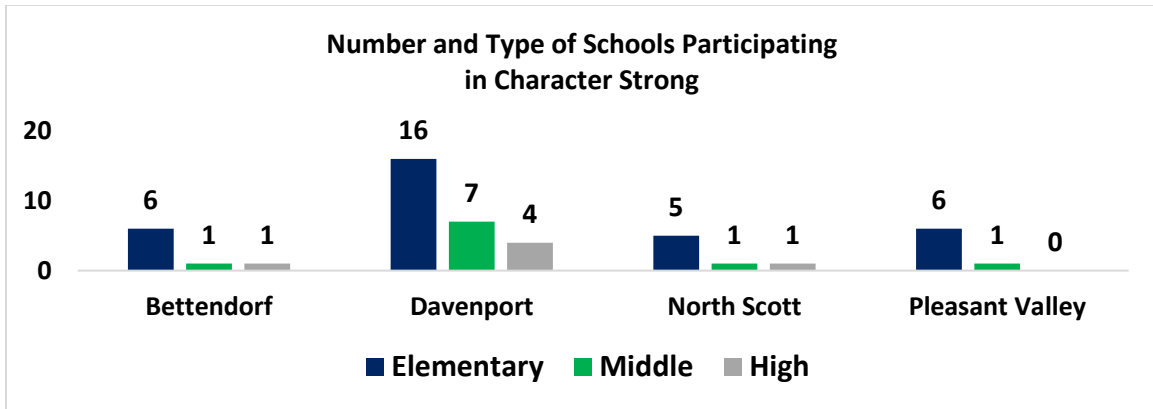
Additional education to community members included presentations with the Vera French Carol Center and Rock Island Arsenal to over 360 individuals. General outreach was conducted at multiple resource fairs in the community, including at Behavioral Health Group in Davenport, the Quad Cities Youth Conference, and the Health Fair at the Freight House Farmer's Market.

Core Strategy #7: Enrich evidence-based prevention strategies

Strategy: School-based prevention programs

The four public school districts in Scott County (Bettendorf, Davenport, North Scott, and Pleasant Valley) discussed prevention curriculum needs for all youth in Scott County. Collectively they selected the curriculum Character Strong as an evidence-based prevention program for preventing the development of behavioral health problems, including mental health and substance use issues. The 2025-2026 school year was the first time that the curriculum was offered in all four school districts!

In total, there were 49 schools, over 1,700 staff, and over 22,100 students participating in the Character Strong curriculum.



School districts were asked to share feedback on implementation of Character Strong and the impacts of the curriculum on their students and teachers. Several themes emerged that have been summarized below.

Student Engagement & Skill Building

The Character Strong curriculum has been effective at engaging students in fun and age-appropriate ways, such as songs, characters, games, and hands-on activities. These activities make the content easier for students to understand and remember long-term. For example, a teacher overheard a kindergartener tell a classmate to “just keep trying and you can push through”, which was in reference to a previous Character Strong lesson. One school implemented a kindness chain activity, where students participated in over 4,000 acts of kindness. This was part of launching a Character Strong Dares program that was linked to classrooms while teaching the topic of kindness in the curriculum.

Several teachers reported similar sentiments that students enjoy participating in the lessons through small-group discussions with their peers. Having a consistent, structured time for students to discuss social emotional concepts, such as empathy, respect, and problem-solving skills, has been very beneficial for relationship building between peers. Some classes chose to empower students to lead the lessons themselves. This was described as a “win-win”. When shifting the instructional lead to the student, overall engagement increases, and it challenges students to apply higher-level thinking skills as they manage the preparation and delivery of their own lessons to peers.

Self-regulation was a skill highlighted by several teachers in the Character Strong curriculum. Students have increased self-awareness and skills to apply self-regulation tools when needed in the classroom. For example, one teacher described success in helping students resolve conflicts throughout the school year by using “I feel” statements. Another teacher shared how a Character Strong self-regulation tool was implemented with a student who was consistently leaving the classroom. After implementation of the tool, that student’s elopement went down to almost zero.

Increased connection and trust between students and teachers was another positive outcome of the curriculum. Several students have identified teachers as trusted adults and someone they feel strongly connected to throughout the school day. Staff believe this increased sense of connection is partially the result of the meaningful conversations and relationship-building opportunities created through Character Strong lessons and advisory discussions. These strengthened student-adult relationships have become an important support for student belonging and emotional safety within the school environment.

High school staff have observed positive growth in student relationships and peer interactions since implementing the Character Strong curriculum. Some students have specifically expressed appreciation to staff for addressing important social-emotional topics in a meaningful and supportive way, sharing comments such as, “thank you for taking this topic seriously”. These responses

reflect the value students place on having structured opportunities to discuss relationships, emotions, and personal growth within the school setting.

– School District Staff Feedback from the 2025-2026 School Year

Teacher Satisfaction

Teachers across all districts reported high satisfaction with the Character Strong curriculum. The prepared content saves teachers time in lesson preparation as everything is ready-to-use. Teachers report that the materials are easy to access, well organized, and user friendly, so that teachers can “plug-and-play” lessons that are effective and engaging for students.

Additional benefits reported by teachers include increased student motivation and classroom engagement with the content. The social emotional learning concepts are relevant and applicable for students not just in the classroom, but outside as well.

Overall, implementing the curriculum in multiple grade levels and schools within each district has created continuity and consistency across classrooms, grades, and entire school buildings. Teachers and students can discuss the same concepts using the same language learned from the curriculum content.

“Teachers have reported that the Character Strong curriculum is well organized and easy to navigate, making it easier to plan ahead and deliver lessons effectively. Staff appreciate the ability to quickly access materials and prepare lessons, even when preparation time is limited. Teachers have also noted that the curriculum makes learning outcomes more clearly identifiable.”

“Teachers have found the Character Strong curriculum to be very user-friendly and easy to access. Because materials are organized and readily available, staff report that implementation has not added a significant burden to teacher workload. The accessibility of the platform has supported consistent use across classrooms and settings.”

“Character Strong has created a guaranteed and viable curriculum that spans our K-12 system, creating language, expectations, opportunities, and fluid understanding to support all our DCSD students. Educators can have conversations with peers at any level about the content, which is a key factor in continuing to build a strong sense of community in and across buildings.”

– School District Staff Feedback from the 2025-2026 School Year

Family & Community Engagement

The Character Strong curriculum has not just impacted the school environment, but home environments as well. Many families have mentioned different topics covered in the classroom and how their child talks about the concepts and uses the same language at home in conversations with teachers and school staff. Parents have mentioned how students have been motivated to persevere, have courage, and be creative problem solvers doing their schoolwork, and during home activities. Numerous parents asked the schools about the songs the kids learned and teachers shared the songs with parents for home listening. One school reported including the Character Strong family newsletter with the school's packet of information that gets sent home with students.

Families have been supportive outside of school of the Character Strong interventions that are being utilized with students. Some schools collaborated with families to implement these interventions, which required additional support from the parents and families.

Parents/caregivers being receptive to these interventions has helped strengthen consistency between school and home supports for students. These conversations have helped families better understand the social-emotional skills being reinforced at school and ways to support students outside of the classroom environment. Overall, these efforts have helped create stronger home-school connections and provided families with additional tools to support students' social-emotional growth and skill development.

"One positive outcome observed through implementation has been an increased student understanding of emotional regulation and self-awareness across the building. Staff have also noticed growing community awareness and understanding of student dysregulation and the importance of social-emotional supports within schools. While family engagement efforts are still developing, this increased understanding has helped strengthen support for student behavioral and emotional needs within the broader school community."

– School District Staff Feedback from the 2025-2026 School Year

Overall Impact

"It's powerful to have all schools in Scott County using Character Strong to teach the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. These competencies, when taught in childhood, foster academic success, positive mental health, and success into adulthood. This funding is truly making a difference for the citizens of Scott County!"

“Thank you for the opportunity to bring a high quality social-emotional learning curriculum to our students. Implementing Character Strong will do more than support learning in the classroom. It will shape students’ character and strengthen relationships which stretch far beyond the classroom. This is what builds strong communities!”

– School District Staff Feedback from the 2025-2026 School Year

The Opioid Settlement funding has the potential to create both short-term and long-term impacts in Scott County schools and on Scott County students. Character Strong “focuses on universally valued life skills and character traits such as responsibility, perseverance, honesty, and respect. The program is designed to strengthen school culture, help students build positive relationships, and support their ability to succeed in school and in life”.

Indicators from the Iowa School Performance Profiles will be monitored on a long-term basis to track things such as attendance, academic performance, absenteeism, graduation rate, suspension and expulsion, and postsecondary readiness/enrollment for each district.

- [Bettendorf Community School District 2025 School Performance Profile](#)
- [Davenport Community School District 2025 School Performance Profile](#)
- [North Scott Community School District 2025 School Performance Profile](#)
- [Pleasant Valley Community School District 2025 School Performance Profile](#)

New Website – Scott County Opioid Initiatives

In May 2026, a new website page was created on the Scott County website under the Community Services department titled “Opioid Initiatives”. The landing page provides an overview of the opioid settlement funds, how much Scott County is receiving, and partners who are involved in the Scott County Opioid Settlement Steering Committee. There are two sub-pages: Current Initiatives and Data & Reports. The Current Initiatives page outlines the prioritized areas for initial use of funds and the strategies that have been implemented within each one. The Data & Reports page lists relevant data sources for substance use and overdoses, as well as progress reports for the use of funds in Scott County. This new website page allows for transparency and accountability of the use of opioid settlement funds in Scott County.

The page also includes information on other initiatives the county is engaged in outside of those supported by the Opioid Settlement dollars.

To view the page, visit <https://www.scottcountyiowa.gov/community/opioid-initiatives>.