

Grad Nation Executive Summary

A Guidebook to Help Communities
Tackle The Dropout Crisis

For complete Guidebook visit:
www.americaspromise.org/gradnation



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Thank You for Joining Us!

An Open Letter to America

You already realize the enormity of the crisis we face. More than 1.2 million students drop out of America's high schools each year, and at least 15 million children overall are at risk of not reaching productive adulthood. This is more than a problem; it is a catastrophe. America's failure to educate tomorrow's leaders and workforce puts our entire economic and national security at risk.

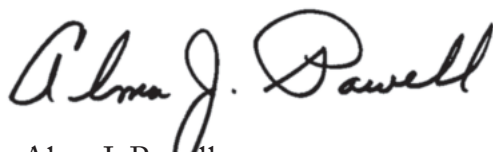
It's time for a nationwide "call to arms" — because we simply cannot afford to let nearly one-third of our kids fail.

The America's Promise Alliance is dedicated to improving the lives of America's young people by providing them with what we call the *Five Promises* — caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, effective education, and opportunities to help others. In fact, we have set a five-year goal of delivering more of these fundamental supports to the 15 million young people who need them most. Our research, *Every Child, Every Promise*, lays the groundwork for turning potential failure into action and, ultimately, into individual, community, and national success.

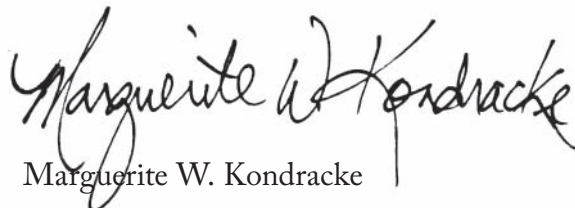
Our work is laser focused on ending the high school dropout epidemic. Over the next few years, the America's Promise Alliance is spearheading more than 100 dropout prevention summits in all 50 states. These summits will spark action in communities across America to address their high school dropout crises.

Grad Nation is your road map to playing a key role in this critical effort. It arms you and your community with the latest research, best practices, and key tools for meeting your community's dropout challenge. The guide will help you develop community-specific plans for keeping students on track to graduate from high school and to prepare for college, the workforce, and active citizenship. You can download *Grad Nation* at www.americaspromise.org/gradnation.

Thank you for stepping forward and becoming part of this critical nationwide initiative. Together, we can help all of America's children live up to their promise . . . and fulfill our promise to every child.



Alma J. Powell
Chair, America's Promise Alliance



Marguerite W. Kondracke
President and CEO, America's Promise Alliance

Grad Nation Executive Summary

Grad Nation is a comprehensive guidebook comprising the best evidence-based practices for keeping young people in high school, paired with suggestions for effectively preparing them for life after high school. It is a guidebook that provides a road map to help communities tackle the dropout crisis and develop tailored plans for keeping students on track to graduate from high school and prepare for college, work and life. Below is a summary of the guide and what you can expect to learn from each section.

I. Rallying Your Community to End the Dropout Crisis

Learn how to demonstrate that a dropout crisis exists and how crippling the cost of the crisis is to your community. In spite of what might appear to be daunting challenges, the problem is solvable. This section also shows how to take action, and how to deal with skeptics.

II. Understanding Your Community's Dropout Crisis

Get a better idea of how big your dropout crisis really is and how your community's response measures up. Find out what policies and practices may need to be changed, and whether or not your high school graduates are ready to succeed in college.

III. Solutions for Comprehensively Addressing the Dropout Crisis

This section shows you how to develop a comprehensive set of solutions, including school transformation, developing dropout prevention and recovery systems, integrating student

Grad Nation Executive Summary


Continued

support services, and creating new schools where needed. Learn how to create early warning systems and multi-tier responses and how to assess which student supports must be made available. This section also provides state-of-the-art information and resources on how to create “multiple pathways” to graduation and how to improve college and career readiness. Discover what policies must be in place and how to effectively re-allocate resources to support this comprehensive approach.

IV. Moving Forward to Create Lasting Change

Find out how to identify the right people to lead the effort, build teams, and then use those teams to organize a summit to mobilize and inspire support. Discover ways to form a community graduation compact, and how to prepare for long-term action and success.

Grad Nation Action Tools and Resources

Throughout the guidebook, you will encounter these symbols  that indicate hyperlinks to interactive tools to help guide your efforts. In addition to the hot-linked tools, you will find a simple checklist towards the end of the guide that can help inform and drive your action planning process. This Action Tool was designed to help you assess what resources you already have in place and what gaps need to be addressed in your community. Each question provides page references to help you along the way.

Grad Nation Action Tool

Congratulations on recognizing the need for action in your community, and on moving forward with action plans tailored to your community.

To help you in your planning efforts, we have developed a quick assessment tool¹ that takes inventory of what you already have in place and what gaps still need to be addressed. Please feel free to use this as a way of informing and driving your action planning process.

Grad Nation Action Tool

Please use this as a helpful way to drive your action planning and address your community's drop-out challenge.	Answer (Yes/No)	To Do List
1. Rallying Your Community to End the Dropout Crisis		
a. Do you have accurate data concerning your drop-out challenge? (p. 8, p. 17)		
b. Have you compared this data to other districts; to your state; to other states; and to the national rate? (p. 9)		
c. Have you assessed the costs of your dropouts to the local economy and community? (p. 16)		
2. Understanding Your Dropout Rate		
a. Do you know where the problem is the worst in your community/state? (pp. 21-22)		
b. Do you know which students are dropping out; for what reason; and at what rate? (pp. 23-25)		
c. Have you surveyed low-attendance students as to why they don't attend school regularly? (p. 26)		
d. Have you surveyed students as to how they view their classroom and school experience? (p. 27)		
e. Have you asked dropouts and those who appear close to dropping out why they are doing so? (pp. 27-28)		
f. Have you coordinated all student supports/wraparound services across the four key transitions? (p. 31)		

1 http://www.americaspromise.org/uploads/Attachment/America'sPromise/Assets/Grad_Nation/Tools/GradNation_Activity4.pdf

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Grad Nation Action Tool Continued

(Continued)	Answer (Yes/No)	To Do List
2. Understanding Your Dropout Rate		
g. Do you know which student supports/wraparound services are most effective and how many students each is reaching? (p. 30)		
h. Have you reviewed current policies to ensure that they are all aligned with best practice? (pp. 36-38)		
i. Local District:		
1. Attendance		
2. Grade retention		
3. Grade promotion		
4. Grading policy		
5. Referral to GED programs		
6. Referral to alternative schools		
ii. State Level		
1. School accountability measures (what is being measured)		
2. Compulsory school age		
i. Do you understand your high school graduates' success rate in college? (pp. 34-36)		
3. Solutions for Comprehensively Addressing Your Community's Dropout Crisis		
a. Is your approach comprehensive? (pp. 41-43)		
b. Do you have a plan to transform the middle and high schools which most of your community's dropouts attended? (pp. 44-48)		
c. Have you developed comprehensive student supports and addressed all Promises of the 5 Promises framework? (pp. 49-51)		
d. Have you substantially increased the number of skilled and committed adults (including parents) who provide student supports? (pp. 52-55)		
e. Have you created and launched a community-wide campaign to improve all students' attendance? (pp. 55-60)		
f. Have you provided a rigorous college and work preparatory curriculum for all secondary school students? (pp. 57-60)		
g. Have you developed early warning systems based on (A, B, C's) attendance, behavior and course performance? (pp. 62-63)		

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Training and assistance

In addition to the checklists and online resources, you may contact any of the organizations listed below should you have any questions, or need additional advice to help you and your fellow school and community leaders with your efforts to increase high school graduation rates and college and workforce readiness. They are experienced, respected providers of technical assistance to states, communities, schools, and districts.

Academy for Educational Development

1825 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20009
202-884-8000
<http://www.aed.org/>

Annenberg Institute for School Reform

Brown University
Box 1958
Providence, RI 02912
410-863-7790
<http://www.annenberginstitute.org>

Career Academy Support Network

Graduate School of Education
University of California at Berkeley
Berkeley, CA 94720
510-643-5748
<http://casn.berkeley.edu>

Communities In Schools Inc.

277 South Washington Street, Suite 210
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-519-8999
<http://www.cisnet.org/>

Council of Great City Schools

1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 702
Washington, DC 20004
<http://www.cgcs.org>

Data Quality Campaign

4030-2 West Braker Lane, Suite 200
Austin, TX 78759
512-320-1816
<http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/>

Education Trust

1250 H Street, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
202-293-1217
<http://www.edtrust.org/edtrust>

EdWorks

4350 Glendale-Milford Road
Cincinnati, OH 45242
513-824-6000
<http://www.edworkspartners.org/whoisedworks/>

Everyone Graduates Center

Center for Social Organization of Schools
Johns Hopkins University
3003 N. Charles Street, Suite 200
Baltimore, MD 21218
410-516-8800
<http://www.every1graduates.org>

First Things First

308 Glendale Drive
Toms River, NJ 08753
732-557-0200 and 215-545-1335
<http://www.irre.org/ftf>

Training and assistance

Continued

High School Survey of Student Engagement

Center for Evaluation & Education Policy
1900 East Tenth Street
Bloomington, IN 47406-7512
812-856-1429
<http://www.indiana.edu/~ceep/hssse>

High Schools That Work

Southern Regional Education Board
592 10th Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30318
404-875-9211
<http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/HSTWindex.asp>

Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG)

1729 King Street, Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-684-9479
<http://www.jag.org>

Jobs for the Future

88 Broad Street
Boston, MA 02110
617-728-4446
<http://www.jff.org>

National Academy Foundation

39 Broadway, Suite 1640
New York, NY 10006
212-635-2400
<http://www.naf.org>

National Center for School Engagement

Partnership for Families and Children
450 Lincoln St., Suite 100
Denver, CO 80203
1-888-272-0454 ext. 115
<http://www.schoolengagement.org/>

National Conference of State Legislatures

7700 East First Place
Denver, CO 80230
303-364-7700
<http://www.ncsl.org>

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network

Clemson University, 209 Martin Street
Clemson, SC 29631-1555
864-656-2599
<http://www.dropoutprevention.org/ndpcdefault.htm>

National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities

209 Martin Street
Clemson, SC 29631-1555
866-745-5641
<http://www.ndpc-sd.org/>

National Governors Association's Center for Best Practices

444 N. Capitol St., Suite 267
Washington, DC 20001
202-624-5300
<http://www.nga.org/center>

National High School Center

American Institutes for Research (AIR)
1000 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW
Washington, DC 20007
1-800-634-0503
<http://www.betterhighschools.org>

National League of Cities

1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 550
Washington, DC 20004
202-626-3000
<http://www.nlc.org>

Training and assistance

Continued

National Women's Law Center

11 Dupont Circle NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036
202-588-5180
<http://www.nwlc.org>

North Central Comprehensive Center

Hamline University
1536 Hewitt Avenue, MS C-1924
St. Paul, MN 55104
651-523-2079
<http://www.mcrel.org/nccc>

Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center

101 SW Main St., Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204-3213
1-800-547-6339
<http://www.nwrel.org/nwrcc>

Phi Delta Kappa International

Curriculum Management Center
P.O. Box 789
Bloomington, IN 47402
800-766-1156
<http://www.pdkintl.org/icmc/audits.htm>

Public Education Network

601 Thirteenth Street, NW, Suite 710
Washington, DC 20005
202-628-7460
<http://www.PublicEducation.org>

The Rural School and Community Trust

1530 Wilson Blvd., Suite 240
Arlington, VA 22209
703-243-1487
<http://www.ruraledu.org>

SERVE Center at University of North Carolina at Greensboro

P.O. Box 5367
Greensboro, NC 27435
800-755-3277
<http://www.serve.org>

Stanford School Re-Design Network

SRN Leads
Stanford University
505 Lasuen Mall
Stanford, CA 94305
650-725-0703
<http://www.srnleads.org>

Talent Development High Schools and Talent Development Middle Schools

Center for Social Organization of Schools
Johns Hopkins University
3003 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
410-516-8800
<http://www.csos.jhu.edu>

WAVE

(Work, Achievement, Values & Education)
525 School Street SW Suite 500
Washington, DC 20024-2795
202-484-0103
<http://www.waveinc.org>

WestEd

730 Harrison Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
1-877-4WestEd or 415-565-3000
<http://www.wested.org>

Thank you to our sponsors

We are proud to acknowledge those Alliance partners whose generous sponsorship of the *Dropout Prevention Initiative* demonstrates the spirit of commitment to promoting educational excellence in America and improving the well-being of our country's young people.

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