



“This is a problem we cannot afford to accept and we cannot afford to ignore.”

PRESIDENT
BARACK OBAMA AT
THE GRAD NATION
CAMPAIGN
ANNOUNCEMENT



GRAD NATION

MOBILIZING AMERICA TO END THE DROPOUT CRISIS



More than 12 years ago, all living presidents, with Nancy Reagan representing President Ronald Reagan, signed a Summit Declaration establishing the principles and purpose of America's Promise Alliance. Under the leadership of Founding Chairman Gen. Colin Powell, and our current board chair, Alma J. Powell, this shining moment became a resolute movement.

Today, America's Promise Alliance's 400+ cross-sector partners are working together like never before to provide America's young people the Five Promises they need to succeed:

- > **Caring adults** who are actively involved as parents, teachers, mentors, coaches and neighbors
- > **Safe places** that offer constructive use of time
- > **A healthy start** and healthy development
- > **An effective education** that builds marketable skills
- > **Opportunities to help others** by making a difference through service

When children receive at least four of these Promises, they are twice as likely to receive A's in school, twice as likely to avoid violence, and 40 percent more likely to volunteer in their community.

We believe firmly that if children receive the Five Promises, they will have the opportunity to realize their own human potential and will be prepared for success in college, work and life. Through our collective strengths and combined resources, we will bring more Promises to more young people in communities across the country.

Dropout Prevention Campaign



In April 2008, the Alliance launched the Dropout Prevention Campaign in an effort to reduce high school dropout rates and prepare young people for college, work and life. In total, 105 summits — one in all 50 states and 55 cities with the highest dropout rates — will be completed by the end of 2010. This campaign has brought together thousands of mayors and governors, business leaders, child advocates, school administrators, students and parents to raise awareness about the crisis, develop workable solutions, and create action plans.

The Dropout Prevention Summits are more than meetings; they are opportunities for meaningful change. For example, with support from the local United Way's \$10 million Greater Detroit Venture Fund, Detroit set a 10-year goal to graduate 80 percent of its youth from 35 high schools with significant dropout rates.

In Mississippi, the state mandated that every school district create a local action plan, and a statewide awareness campaign was developed. There are other signs of success including:

- > According to an independent evaluation by Duke University, summit participants reported higher levels of awareness and understanding of their communities' dropout problem following the summit, along with increased confidence that there are feasible solutions.
- > Key national Alliance partners including United Way, City Year, National Urban League and others have launched major dropout prevention initiatives.
- > National and local media have generated more than 2,600 stories on the topic of high school dropout prevention since the Alliance launched its Dropout Prevention Campaign in April 2008. Together, these stories have generated more than 400 million media impressions. Nine out of ten stories mention America's Promise Alliance and/or the Dropout Prevention Campaign.

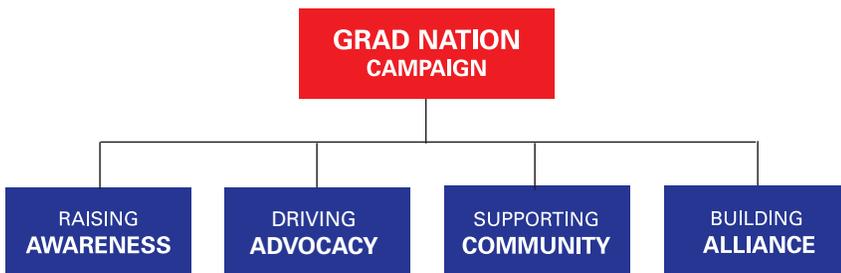
Grad Nation

GRAD NATION

On March 1, 2010, President Barack Obama, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, Gen. Colin Powell and Alliance Chair Alma Powell convened at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to announce the Grad Nation Campaign, the next phase of our work that will transform awareness into sustained, results-driven action. The goal, to **mobilize America to end the dropout crisis and ensure that high school graduates are prepared for college and a 21st century career** is a call to action for businesses, community leaders, policy makers, educators and the nation.

Based on research and progress thus far, we believe we can be successful through unprecedented collaboration and integration of resources across all sectors. The country's lowest performing schools represent a mere 12 percent of all high schools and yet they account for approximately 50 percent of all high school dropouts. By providing the necessary support to the communities that serve those schools, we can make a lasting impact on graduation rates.

Based on the strength of our Alliance and our understanding of what is needed to drive real change, we've developed the following framework for the Grad Nation Campaign:



By mobilizing communities to bring the fundamental supports to our most vulnerable young people, and aggressively supporting education reform, we can end the dropout crisis and transform the life of every child.



As we mobilize the nation to end the dropout crisis, we also intend to gauge our success along the way toward meeting the Grad Nation goal. In consultation with the U.S. Department of Education, we will regularly track several highly reliable indicators that influence graduation rates:

- **Pre-school enrollment**
- **Fourth grade reading scores**
- **Eighth grade math and science scores**
- **Youth service participation**
- **Out-of-school time participation**
- **Health care access**
- **Adoption of common core standards for college and career readiness**
- **Successful promotion from ninth grade**
- **High school graduation**
- **Minimum two-year post secondary education**

Along with these indicators there are others — such as school attendance — for which there are simply no reliable sources of national data but that are critical to track at the local level. We encourage communities to adopt these metrics.

Grad Nation Initiatives

There are numerous initiatives that will stem from the Grad Nation framework. Some examples of initiatives that will help us reach our goal include:

RAISING AWARENESS

Amplify the youth voice and engage young people to be part of the solution. Initiatives such as the Gallup Student Poll will help engage young people in the issue of dropout prevention and college and workforce readiness. The Gallup Student Poll is a landmark effort to capture the youth voice through measurement of hope, engagement and well-being — indicators of a young person's success in school and life.

Through a generous grant from AT&T, young people throughout the country have been empowered to make a difference through "My Idea" grants. With awards ranging from \$500 to \$20,000, high school aged youth are helping ensure that the Five Promises are delivered to more young people in their communities.

Give voice to business leaders and highlight

21st century skills. The high school dropout crisis not only affects the well-being of young people, it also has a major impact on our economy and the business community. Just how prepared are our young people? CEOs from across the country will answer that question through a survey sponsored by America's Promise Alliance, the Pearson Foundation, and *The Financial Times*.

Recognize leaders in providing young people with the Five Promises. *100 Best Communities for Young People* presented by ING highlights communities that are improving outcomes for youth through innovative, creative and effective programs. Likewise, the Promise Places initiative provides recognition for organizations that deliver all Five Promises under one roof.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

Leverage Dropout Prevention Summits and build post-summit technical assistance. This work will help support each summit-convening team in the development of a Post-Summit Action Plan to address increasing graduation rates and college and workforce

readiness. We will provide tiered levels of technical assistance to communities to execute their action plans.

Report on progress and barriers to increasing high school graduation rates.

America's Promise Alliance, Civic Enterprises and the Everyone Graduates Center will issue a report that will drive awareness to action based on promising and moving reforms. This resource for local, state and national leaders will offer proven solutions to the high school dropout crisis.

Engage with communities where the needs and opportunities are greatest.

We will bring our national partners and their local affiliates together with other public and private organizations to take a deeper dive in communities such as Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, Jackson, Louisville, Nashville, New Orleans, New York, Oakland and Washington, D.C., with more communities to come. These communities will serve as collaboration models for others throughout the country.

BUILDING ALLIANCE

Connect the 400+ Alliance partners to support the Grad Nation goal. The goal of the Grad Nation Campaign cannot be accomplished without a focused effort among the Alliance partners. The Alliance will provide the infrastructure and support for our work to raise awareness and support communities across the country.

Business Leadership. With so much at stake, the business community will be a major focus and beneficiary of our efforts to prepare young people for 21st century careers. Through the Grad Nation Business Leaders' Council, we will leverage the thought leadership that drives our economy to help drive this campaign.

DRIVING ADVOCACY

Support legislation. With help from its policy arm First Focus, the Alliance will drive advocacy in order to meet students' comprehensive needs, improve graduation rate accountability, support high and middle schools, and reconnect high school dropouts to education, careers and supports.



**Get involved. Join us in our efforts.
Visit www.americaspromise.org for
more information.**