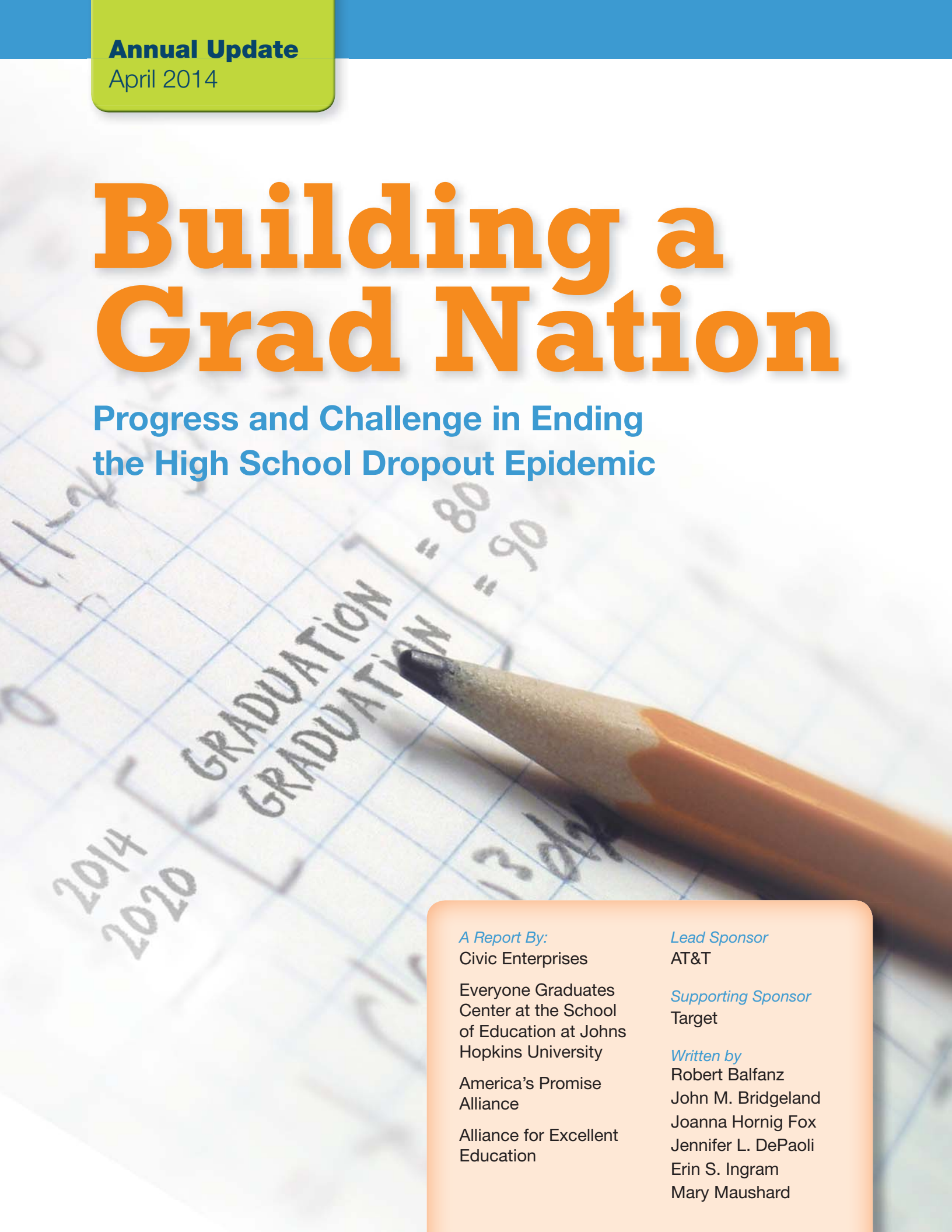
Annual Update
April 2014

Building a Grad Nation

Progress and Challenge in Ending the High School Dropout Epidemic



A Report By:
Civic Enterprises

Everyone Graduates Center at the School of Education at Johns Hopkins University

America's Promise Alliance

Alliance for Excellent Education

Lead Sponsor
AT&T

Supporting Sponsor
Target

Written by
Robert Balfanz
John M. Bridgeland
Joanna Hornig Fox
Jennifer L. DePaoli
Erin S. Ingram
Mary Maushard

Building a Grad Nation

Progress and Challenge in Ending the High School Dropout Epidemic

Annual Update
April 2014

A Report By:

Civic Enterprises
Everyone Graduates Center
at the School of Education
at Johns Hopkins University
America's Promise Alliance
Alliance for Excellent Education

Lead Sponsor

AT&T

Supporting Sponsor

Target

Written by

Robert Balfanz
John M. Bridgeland
Joanna Hornig Fox
Jennifer L. DePaoli
Erin S. Ingram
Mary Maushard

Data analysis by

Mark Pierson
Vaughan Byrnes

Table of Contents

Appendices

Tables

Figures

Letter from General and Mrs. Powell

The GradNation campaign set an ambitious goal: to raise the national high school graduation rate to 90 percent by 2020. With our Alliance partners, we forged a plan of action informed by research and data to meet this challenge. Across America, we see evidence of a powerful movement that is yielding results.

High school completion rates are rising. For the second year in a row, America is on track to reach the 90 percent graduation goal. Not only that – for the first time in our history, we have passed the milestone of 80 percent of young Americans graduating from high school. The number of schools where graduation is not the norm (dropout factories) is steadily shrinking. Through unprecedented collaborations, communities are bringing together the resources and opportunities all children need – especially those who have the fewest resources now – to succeed in school, work, and life.

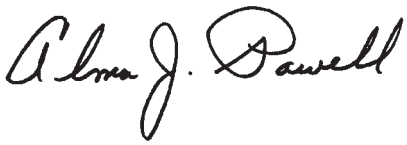
While we celebrate the nation's progress, we remain focused on the challenges ahead. Despite our gains, far too many young people still do not earn a high school diploma, and the number of non-graduates remains alarmingly high among young people of color and those from low-income communities. In other words, a young person's chances for success still depend too much on his or her zip code and skin color and too little on his or her abilities and effort.

Meanwhile, too many graduates leave high school unprepared for higher education and the workforce – with lasting consequences for their own lives and for our workforce and our economy.

The barriers that block the path to graduation and preparedness go beyond the classroom. They often involve multiple, interconnected challenges – such as poor health, hunger, bullying, and housing insecurity – that make students more likely to miss school, disengage, and leave without graduating. Schools alone cannot meet these challenges. It takes all of us, working together: educators, families, nonprofits, businesses, government, and the media.

We are encouraged and emboldened by the progress we have seen. The American can-do spirit is at work. Now, with the 90 percent goal in sight, we must move with renewed energy and urgency to make the promise of a brighter future a reality for all of America's young people.

General Colin L. Powell (Ret.)
Founding Chair, America's Promise Alliance



Alma J. Powell
Chair, America's Promise Alliance

Executive Summary

This fifth annual update on America's high school dropout crisis shows that, for the first time in history, the nation has crossed the 80 percent high school graduation rate threshold and remains on pace, for the second year in a row, to meet the goal of a 90 percent high school graduation rate by the Class of 2020. After the nation witnessed flat-lining high school graduation rates for three decades, rates have risen about 10 percentage points over the last 10 years. Improvements have been driven by dramatic gains in graduation rates among Hispanic and African American students. But it is in those same populations that some of the greatest challenges remain.

For the first time in history, the nation has crossed the 80 percent high school graduation rate threshold and remains on pace, for the second year in a row, to meet the goal of a 90 percent high school graduation rate by the Class of 2020.

This report highlights key developments in the effort to boost high school graduation rates during the past decade. It also outlines what it will take to get to 90 percent and identifies five critical areas – closing the opportunity gap between low-income students and their middle-to-high-income peers; solving the big city challenge; improving outcomes for students with disabilities; focusing on California; and boosting graduation rates for young men of color in key states – to help the nation reach its goal.

Part 1: Data and Trends highlights the latest graduation rates at the national and state levels, dropout factory trends, five areas of focus to reach the 90 percent goal, and a timeline of key developments in addressing the dropout crisis. **Part 2: Progress and Challenge** provides an update on four key planks – chronic absenteeism, middle grades reform, adult and peer supports, and re-engaging dropouts – of the nation's shared effort to implement the Civic Marshall Plan to reach the 90 percent goal. **Part 3: Moneyball for Dropout Prevention** shares best available research on what works. **Part 4: Paths Forward** offers policy recommendations and other ways to keep the nation on track to reach the 90 percent goal, with students prepared for college and the workforce. **Part 5: Final Word** offers a letter from young leaders. Throughout the report, we provide **case studies** and **snapshots** to highlight best evidence in dropout prevention and recovery and specific examples of success within schools, communities, states, and the nation.

Part 1: Graduation Rate Data, Dropout Factory Trends, and Five Critical Areas

Better data are enabling better analysis each year and building confidence in our ability to understand the progress the nation is making to end the dropout epidemic and the challenges that remain. The first-ever national cohort graduation rate and the averaged freshman graduation rate, which enables us to track trends over time, point to nearly identical rates of progress. Dropout factory trends also continue to point in the right direction. Five critical areas show where the nation must redouble its efforts to stay on track to reach the 90 percent goal. The 2012 data show:

- **The first-ever national Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate shows the nation crossed the threshold of 80 percent for the first time in history.** This rate reflects the cohort graduation rates from 47 states and the Averaged Freshman Graduation Rates for Idaho, Kentucky and Oklahoma.
- **The high school graduation rate, as measured by the Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate, increased from 71.7 percent in 2001 to 81 percent in 2012.** The greatest gains in high school graduation rates have occurred since 2006, with the national rate increasing approximately eight percentage points over six years. **If this average rate of improvement of 1.3 percentage points per year is maintained during the next eight years, the nation will reach its 90 percent graduation rate goal by 2020.** Students who graduated in 2012 were freshmen in 2008 when reform efforts of the nation's low-performing schools were well underway and during the very time when graduating from high school became more rigorous, showing that many schools and districts are rising to a standard of excellence.
- **Since 2006, gains in graduation rates have been driven by a 15-percentage point increase for Hispanic students and a 9-percentage point increase for African American students.** These gains outpace national rates of improvement, but also are in the very populations that have the farthest to go, with graduation

rates of 76 percent for Hispanic students and 68 percent for African American students, compared to 85 percent for White students.

- **There were 648 fewer high school dropout factories and 1.2 million fewer students attending them in 2012 than in 2002.** Dropout factories decreased from 2,007 in 2002 to 1,359 in 2012, a 32 percent decline. In 2004 when the dropout factory analysis was first performed, nearly half of all African American students and nearly 40 percent of Hispanic students attended high schools in which less than 60 percent of students were graduating. By 2012, those rates had dropped to 23 percent of African Americans and 15 percent of Hispanics attending such schools.

Since 2006, gains in graduation rates have been driven by a 15-percentage point increase for Hispanic students and a 9-percentage point increase for African American students. These gains outpace national rates of improvement, but also are in the very populations that have the farthest to go.

What Will It Take to Reach 90 Percent: Five Critical Areas

Closing the Opportunity Gap for Low-Income Students

- Graduation rates for low-income students range from 58 percent to 85 percent, compared to the national average of 80 percent for all students.
- In about half of the states, graduating is the norm for the vast majority of middle/high-income students, with 14 states already achieving a 90 percent or higher graduation rate for such students and with 10 states within 2 percentage points of reaching 90 percent.
- **For the majority of the states, achieving a 90 percent overall graduation rate will not be possible without significant improvements in graduation rates for low-income students.**

Solving the Big City Challenge – Act II

- There are nearly 200 fewer dropout factory high schools in urban areas in 2012 than in 2002.
- **Most big cities with high concentrations of low-income students, however, still have graduation rates in the 60s and a few in the 50s.**
- More than half of the remaining dropout factories are found in these urban areas.

Focusing on Special Education Students

- **The 90 percent goal will not be reached if students with disabilities, who represent 13 percent of all students nationally, continue to have low graduation rates.** The national average graduation rate for such students is 20 percentage points lower than the overall national average graduation rate.
- Graduation rates for students with disabilities also vary dramatically by state, with a 24 percent graduation rate in Nevada and an 81 percent graduation rate in Montana.

California Counts

- **The nation cannot reach its 90 percent goal without more progress in California, which has 14 percent of the country's student cohort and 20 percent of the nation's low-income students.**
- For 2012, California's cohort graduation rate is 79 percent for all students and 73 percent for low-income students.
- From 2011 to 2012, California boosted graduation rates significantly – two percentage points overall, three points for low-income students, four points for Native Americans, three points each for Hispanics and African Americans, and two points for students with disabilities.
- California has been making progress, notwithstanding huge demographic changes and budget challenges, once student enrollment growth stabilized. Educators have learned how to address the needs of students from non-English speaking backgrounds; districts have embarked on major reform efforts; large investments were made in out-of-school time learning; and legislators and policymakers focused attention on goals and implementation.

The nation cannot reach its 90 percent goal without more progress in California, which has 14 percent of the nation's student cohort and 20 percent of the nation's low-income students.

Accelerating Graduation Rates for Young Men of Color in Key States

- Despite progress, graduation rates for African Americans and Hispanics are still far too low. For young men of color, the numbers are even more troubling.
- Our nation cannot prosper nor remain true to its ideals when far too many young men of color are still not receiving the supports and opportunities needed to obtain a high school diploma.
- **In a sub-set of Midwestern and Southern states, which educate a large percentage of African American students, graduation rates for African American males remain in the upper 50s and low 60s.**

Part 2: Progress & Challenge – The Civic Marshall Plan to Build a Grad Nation

While all of the components of the Civic Marshall Plan are essential to reaching our 2020 goal, this year we focus on four planks that can leverage significant cross-sector collaboration to help keep more of our young people on track to high school graduation, and reconnect those who have strayed from the path.

The Civic Marshall Plan (CMP) evolved from work in the middle of the decade and was formally developed in 2010 by a coalition of leading organizations with the goal of ending the dropout crisis in our nation once and for all. CMP outlines 10 research-based strategies, or "planks," that address the dropout crisis and engage leading organizations across sectors to align their efforts with the CMP. While all of the components of the Civic Marshall Plan are essential to reaching our 2020 goal, this year we focus on four planks that can leverage significant cross-sector collaboration to help keep more of our young people on track to high school graduation, and reconnect those who have strayed from the path. We note that the Class of 2020 is now in the sixth grade. Those planks are:

- **Plank 2:** Chronic Absenteeism
- **Plank 4:** The Middle Grades
- **Plank 5:** Adult and Peer Supports
- **Plank 10:** Dropout Recovery

Plank 2: Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absence (defined as missing at least 10 percent of the school year for any reason) is an early warning indicator of potential dropout, and is associated with lower academic performance as early as first grade. There are many reasons that a student may be chronically absent from school, including poor health, safety concerns, housing instability, transportation issues, and feeling disconnected from their school. This year, we highlight national campaigns and local programs that are taking action to raise awareness of the importance of this issue, tackle the challenges holistically, and reduce chronic absenteeism in our classrooms.

Plank 4: The Middle Grades

The middle grades are pivotal years that can either place a student successfully on the path to high school, college, and career, or begin a downward trajectory of disengagement and low achievement in key subjects. This decline can be stopped and even reversed, but only if adults are paying attention. This section explores federal initiatives that are funding middle school redesign efforts, and takes a deep dive into high-performing schools implementing a variety of approaches to give their students a solid middle grades foundation from which to launch into high school.

Plank 5: Adult and Peer Supports

To succeed in school and in life, students need to develop skills often not taught in the classroom, such as self-awareness, self-control, persistence, collaboration, and conflict resolution. Positive role models help youth develop these skills, and provide encouragement to help students reach their goals even in the face of adversity. Across the nation, corporations, nonprofits, and public agencies are working together to provide our young people with access to these positive role models and additional support systems. This section highlights partnerships and programs

that provide young people with the right supports at the right time to achieve their full potential.

Plank 10: Dropout Recovery

As we work to ensure that more young people will graduate from high school on time, we must not forget about those who leave school without a diploma. Success in today's economy requires a high school degree perhaps more so than at any other time in our nation's history. In 2012, the employment rate for young adults who did not complete high school was just 48 percent, 64 percent for those with a high school diploma, and 87 percent for those with at least a bachelor's degree. However, in the United States today there are 6.7 million young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither in school nor working. They represent untapped potential and cost taxpayers $93 billion each year in lost revenues and increased social services. This year, we feature a range of stakeholders, including the federal government, national nonprofits, and bipartisan campaigns working to create more pathways back to school and employment for these young people, and to give them opportunities to take on the jobs of the future.

Part 3: Paths Forward

As this report shows, we need to look beyond academic improvements to reach our national goal of a 90 percent graduation rate by the Class of 2020, so we offer state recommendations to advance both "in school" and "in life" factors of achievement.

Recognizing the shifting landscape between federal and state policy, we provide recommendations on current and proposed federal interventions and state policy strategies that can help drive action at the state and district levels. As this report shows, we need to look beyond academic improvements to reach our national goal of a 90 percent graduation rate by the Class of 2020, so we offer state recommendations to advance both "in school" and "in life" factors of achievement.

Federal Interventions:

- **Continue to improve data reporting and accountability systems.** Forty-seven states now report graduation rates using a common measure – the four-year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR). To continue the progress made in strengthening graduation rate reporting and accountability, the U.S. Department of Education and state leaders need to reach consensus on key issues of variation across state lines, including establishing a common definition for when a first time ninth-grader is counted and accurately identifying student sub-groups. To address these variations, we propose the organization of a national, bipartisan forum on measuring high school graduation rates in partnership with the National Center for Education Statistics.
- **Continue to support school improvement and innovation.** In the absence of legislative action on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the U.S. Department of Education has advanced initiatives to support school improvement and innovation at the state and district levels. We support recent improvements to their School Improvement Grant (SIG) program, which give states more local control in turning around low-performing schools, as long as states use the flexibility to adopt evidence-based approaches. We recommend improving data collection on SIG schools to help states and districts make better data-driven decisions. We also urge Congress to fund recent Obama Administration proposals, including High School Redesign, Race to the Top Equity and Opportunity, and the Promise Neighborhood and Zones initiatives.

State Recommendations to Strengthen In-School Factors of Achievement:

- **Ensure students are college- and career-ready.** We support the work of states to incorporate college- and career-readiness standards and assessments into their K-12 systems, and encourage them to create more opportunities to connect students to college and career pathways.
- **Strengthen accountability and improvement systems by putting greater emphasis on traditionally underserved student subgroups.** States are in the process of designing and implementing new

accountability and improvement systems under waivers from key provisions of ESEA granted to states by the U.S. Department of Education. Evidence suggests that many states need to strengthen the systems they are now adopting to put a greater emphasis on traditionally underserved students. State leaders can address these concerns by fully implementing guidance provided by the Department in March 2013. This guidance suggests states and districts ensure evidence-based support is implemented when one or more groups of traditionally underserved students miss performance targets for two or more years.

- **Create state policies that link dropouts and graduates to college- and career-readiness.** We recommend states learn from Texas legislation, which provides financial incentives for districts to recover dropouts, and allocates funds for districts to implement college- and career-readiness programs and practices.
- **Eliminate counterproductive school and district policies.** State legislators should conduct policy audits to eliminate policies that counteract efforts to improve graduation rates, including discipline and retention policies that push out low-performing students.
- **Improve school-based early warning indicators for the "ABCs" in state data systems.** Research shows the "ABCs" – attendance, behavior, and course performance – are accurate indicators of dropping out as early as middle school. States should ensure these school-based indicators are included in data reports, starting with tracking chronic absenteeism at the student level.

Strengthening "In Life" Factors of Achievement:

- **Incorporate social and emotional learning (SEL) into the PreK-12 curriculum.** Educational and neuroscience research shows how critical social and emotional competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making) are to a student's academic success. This is especially true for students experiencing extreme stress brought on by growing up in poverty. Therefore, we recommend states establish comprehensive PreK-12 SEL standards, and revamp teacher certification requirements to make SEL an integral component of teacher education and professional development programs.
- **Align and coordinate services, resources, and data across state agencies.** States should take advantage of the opportunities technology presents to link agencies and provide better support to children and families. Removing current data exchange barriers between education, social, health, and safety services would ensure children are not falling between the cracks; states should bring these services together to create a seamlessly aligned system.
- **Ensure in-school access to health and wellness programs and services.** Students who have access to health services are more likely to be in school, and ultimately stay in school. We urge states to heed the call of the American Public Health Association to establish school-based health centers, as well as to pursue policies that promote a healthy school environment.
- **Publish an annual report card measuring health, safety, and education of children and families.** States already publish school reports based on standardized test scores, but these don't adequately show how schools and communities are measuring up on educating the whole child. We urge state leaders to consider creating what ASCD calls a "Whole Child State Report Card," which would provide a comprehensive look at the circumstances (e.g., hunger, poverty, crime, literacy, health) affecting the academic success of children in the state.
- **Push for effective parent and family engagement programs.** Research shows students with involved parents, regardless of family background or socioeconomic status, are more likely to attend school regularly, earn better grades, have better social skills, and graduate from high school and attend college. We recommend states support district efforts to implement parent and family engagement programs, and encourage them to give districts the flexibility to choose a program that fits their unique needs.

Part 1

The Quest for a 90 Percent High School Graduation Rate

Breaking News: Nation's High School Graduation Rate Reaches All-Time High

In 2012, the nation reached an important milestone in its quest to graduate all of its students prepared for college, career, and civic life. For the first time in its history, the national high school graduation rate crossed the 80 percent threshold. In a decade in which the depths of the dropout crisis first permeated the national consciousness and then propelled the nation to action, the graduation rate went from its modern low of 71.7 in 2001 to a record high of 81 percent in 2012 (Figure 1), with almost all of the progress occurring since 2006. Moreover, the first ever, national Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) is 80 percent. This measure follows individual students as they progress through high school and reports on the percent of entering ninth-graders who graduate on time (Table 1). If the nation continues this rate of improvement, it is firmly on pace to reach a 90 percent high school graduation rate by the Class of 2020.

This is a remarkable achievement, made all the more so by the fact that gains in the graduation rate have been driven by rapid improvement for Hispanic and African American students. The rates for Hispanic students have increased by 15 percentage points and for African Americans by 9 percentage points from 2006 to 2012 (Figure 2).

One reason for this is that the nation's dropout factory high schools (see sidebar) – declined by one-third over the past decade, from 2,007 such schools in 2002 to just 1,359 in 2012 (Table 2). The decline in the number and percentage of students attending high schools in which graduation is not the norm is even greater.

Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR or cohort rate): A method for tracking a group (or cohort) of students who enter high school together, as first-time 9th graders (or 10th graders, in schools that begin in 10th grade) and graduate "on-time" (i.e., within three or four years) with a regular diploma. The ACGR accounts (or adjusts) for students who transfer into a school, transfer to another school in the state, or die.

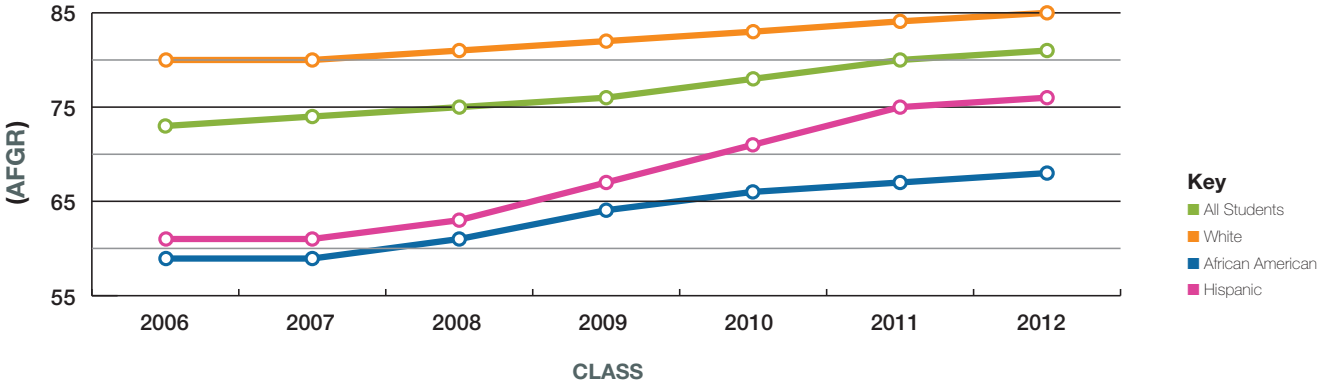
Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR): A method developed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) after convening panels of experts to make recommendations about the most effective strategy to calculate graduation rates in the absence of data systems based on individual student identifiers. The AFGR does not account for transfers in or out.

Dropout Factories: Schools in which the reported 12th grade enrollment is 60 percent or less than the 9th grade enrollment three years earlier.

* For a full list of frequently used terms and definitions, as well as an in-depth discussion of the graduation rates referenced in this report, please see appendices H and I.

FIGURE 1

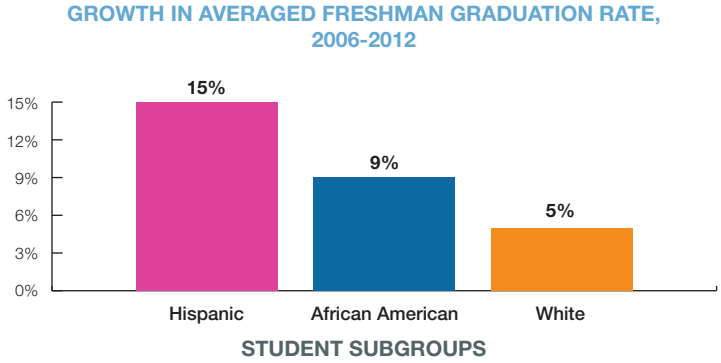
U.S. High School Averaged Freshman Graduation Rates (AFGR), Classes of 2006-2012



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "NCES Common Core of Data State Dropout and Graduation Rate Data file," School Year 2011-12, Preliminary Version 1a; School Year 2010-11, Provisional 1a; School Year 2009-10, 1a; School Year 2008-09, 1a; School Year 2007-08, 1b.

FIGURE 2

Change in AFGR for White, African American, and Hispanic Students 2006-2012



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "NCES Common Core of Data State Dropout and Graduation Rate Data file," School Year 2011-12, Preliminary Version 1a; School Year 2010-11, Provisional 1a; School Year 2009-10, 1a; School Year 2008-09, 1a; School Year 2007-08, 1b. Retrieved from: http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/AFGR0812.asp.

TABLE 1

U.S. High School Averaged Freshman Graduation Rates (AFGR), Classes of 2006-2012

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
All	73	74	75	76	78	80	81
White	80	80	81	82	83	84	85
African American	59	59	61	64	66	67	68
Hispanic	61	61	63	67	71	75	76

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "NCES Common Core of Data State Dropout and Graduation Rate Data file," School Year 2011-12, Preliminary Version 1a; School Year 2010-11, Provisional 1a; School Year 2009-10, 1a; School Year 2008-09, 1a; School Year 2007-08, 1b.

Today, half as many students attend one of these high schools as did 10 years ago, translating into 1.2 million fewer students in dropout factory high schools (Table 3).

We also see great improvements for African American and Hispanic students. The 2004 report, *Locating the Dropout Crisis* (Balfanz & Legters, 2004), which established the number, location, and enrollment patterns of dropout factory high schools, determined that almost half of African American and nearly 40 percent of Hispanic students attended these schools. By 2012, these rates were cut in half for African Americans and even more so for Hispanics (Figure 3). Despite this extraordinary progress, 23 percent of African American students, and 15 percent of Hispanic students were still attending dropout factory high schools in 2012, compared to 5 percent of White students.

While more states than ever are on pace to reach a 90 percent graduation rate in 2020, there is still considerable variation in graduation rates across states and student subgroups.

- No state has yet achieved an on-time four-year graduation rate (ACGR) of 90 percent[1], but five states are within two points (Table 4).
- Twenty-seven more states are on pace to reach 90 percent by 2020, if they can maintain the average rate of national improvement over the past six years (1.3 percentage point improvement per year).
- Fourteen states will need to improve at a faster pace, between 1.5 and 2.0 points per year, to reach the 2020 goal.
- Five states have four-year graduation rates that are 10 or more points below the national average. They will need very rapid and sustained rates of improvement to reach the goal.

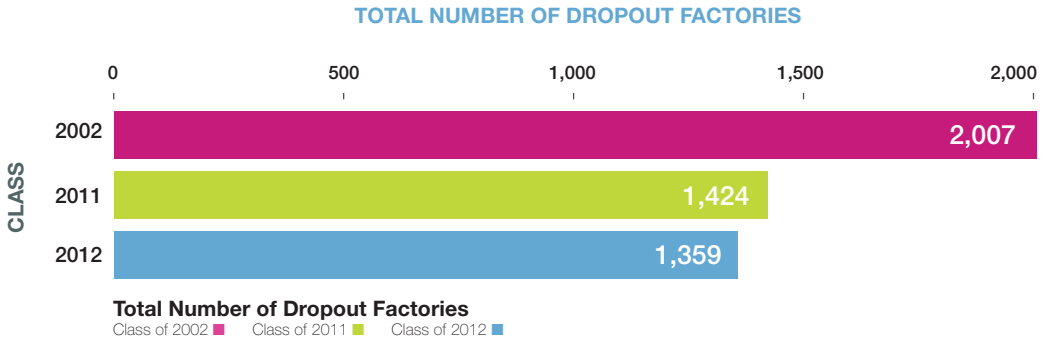
What has driven improvement in graduation rates?

The nation's recent success story on significantly improving its high school graduation rate has hundreds of thousands of contributors. First and foremost are the students themselves, who realized that whatever obstacles,

1. In 2013, Iowa achieved a 90 percent rate. However, this report went to press on March 25, 2014, and at that time, only 28 of the 50 states had reported 2013 graduation rates. Hence, throughout this report we use 2012 rates for consistency. See Appendix F for the 2013 rates that are available.

TABLE 2

Total Number and Change of High Schools with a Promoting Power of 60% or Below



The 2011 and 2012 numbers include the District of Columbia, all regular and vocational schools with 300 or more students.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1998-2013). Public Elementary/ Secondary School Universe Surveys.

frustrations, impediments, and antagonisms they faced, staying the course and graduating from high school were essential to their life success. Second are the parents, relatives, friends, teachers, principals, and social service providers who stood with these students and gave them the helping hands, encouragement, solutions and skills they needed to stay in school and graduate. Third are the school reforms, accountability systems, and other policies and programs that research shows to be effective in preventing students from dropping out.

Visit **Appendix A** to see how the number of dropout factory high schools has changed at the state and regional levels, as well as by locale, over the past decade. Also see **Appendix E** for the Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates (ACGR) by state for African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American students, as well as English Language Learners, students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students. See **Appendix F** for the graduation gap in each state between African Americans, Hispanics, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities and all students.

Beyond this, the variability of outcomes and rates of improvement across states, and across different groups of students within states, indicates that it is *unlikely* that broad social and economic forces drove most of the improvements. For example, how would the recession drive more students to stay in school in one state or community than in another otherwise similar state or community? The preponderance of evidence indicates that graduation rates went up in the states, communities, school districts, and schools that recognized and then effectively responded to the graduation challenge, employing a core set of strategies that have been highlighted in prior Grad Nation reports, and captured in the 10 planks of the Civic Marshall Plan to end the dropout crisis (see Appendix K for details).

The timeline on page 15 shows some of the key national developments that recognized and responded to the dropout crisis over the past decade. If we compare these developments to the timing and location of improvements in high school graduation rates, we can infer what drove the progress. Several factors stand out: awareness, accountability, targeted high school reforms, and targeted student interventions.

Awareness. The first of these factors is the recognition that a dropout crisis existed and that something could be done about it. At the turn of the century, the high school dropout crisis was not widely appreciated; no accurate or common measures of graduation rates were in use; most

states and schools were not held accountable for their graduation outcomes; and the data that were available seemed to indicate that most students graduated and that progress was being made in closing gaps. Starting with a conference on the dropout crisis organized by the Harvard Civil Rights project in 2001, awareness spread from academic and advocacy circles to policymakers, with a helping hand from the Alliance for Excellent Education. The crisis became more widely recognized in the middle of the decade when the National Governors Association (NGA) made 2005 the year of the high school and nearly every governor signed the NGA Graduation Rate Compact agreeing to the common calculation of graduation rates.

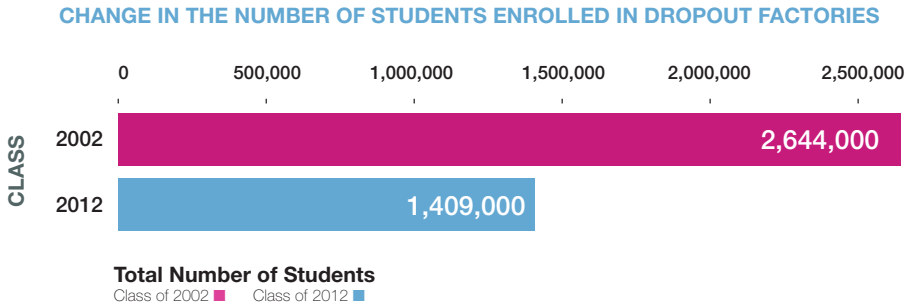
At the same time, the dropout crisis broke into public consciousness when reports such as *The Silent Epidemic* (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006) and *Locating the Dropout Crisis* (Balfanz & Legters, 2004) gave the problem faces and locations. In 2008, awareness moved more deeply into the nation's communities via more than 100 dropout summits organized by America's Promise Alliance. Thus, awareness led to mobilization by the middle of the decade, and in following years the nation's graduation rate accelerated.

Accountability. The second key factor in combating the dropout crisis is graduation rate accountability. In 2001, the very year that the nation's high school graduation rate hit a modern low, the nation's first graduation rate accountability system was launched with the passage of the bipartisan No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Although it contained some notable flaws (it allowed states to establish their own graduation measures and set their own improvement rates, leading in some cases to inflated measures and miniscule goals), NCLB held all of the nation's high schools accountable for their graduation rates and required them to report disaggregated outcomes for key student subgroups. In 2008, the U.S. Department of Education issued regulations correcting many of the initial weaknesses in graduation rate accountability by requiring all states to move toward a common and accurate measure of high school graduation rates. The Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) tracked, at the student level, what percentage of first-time freshmen graduated in four years. All states were also expected to set more ambitious graduation goals and annual rates of improvement. The 2012 cohort graduation rate data in this report are the outcome of those efforts. The more ambitious graduation rate improvement targets set by many states and the improved graduation rates in most states between 2011 and 2012 indicate that states got the message: *graduation rates matter.*

Targeted high school reforms. The third key factor is that there were three strands of high school reform efforts aimed directly at dropout factories, the subset of high schools that drove the dropout crisis. These efforts started early in the decade (and in some cases in the 1990s) and then expanded substantially later in the decade through both federal and private foundation efforts and funding.

TABLE 3

Change in the Number of Students Enrolled in High Schools with a Promoting Power of 60% or Less, 2002-2012

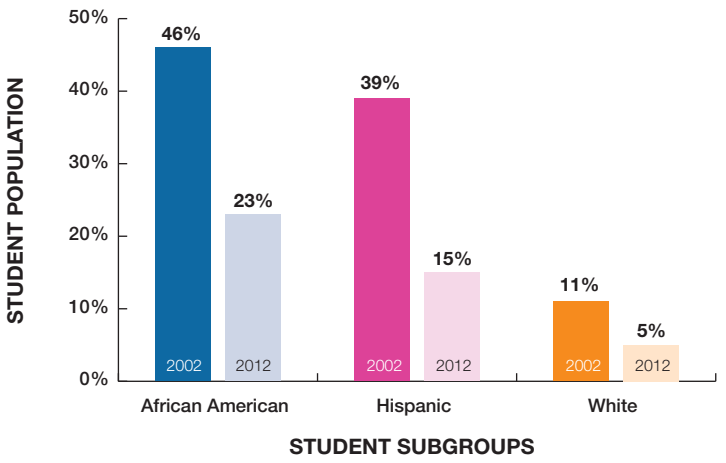


Note: All numbers are rounded to the nearest thousand.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1998-2013). Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Surveys.

FIGURE 3

Percentage of the Nation's Student Population in Dropout Factories, by Subgroup, 2002-2012



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1998-2013). Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Surveys.

First, the federal Smaller Learning Communities program provided grants to scores of districts to transform large high schools with low outcomes into more effective, personalized, and supportive schools-within-a-school (Smaller Learning Communities Program, 2011). In many cases, a separate ninth grade academy amassed additional supports to help students make it through the difficult transition to high school. These efforts built upon and spread the knowledge developed by research-based high school reform models and networks such as Talent Development High Schools, First Things First, High Schools That Work, and America's Choice. This knowledge was then codified and widely disseminated in documents such as *Breaking Ranks II* by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (2004). Then, in 2008 the U.S. Department of Education used stimulus funding to greatly expand its school improvement grants, specifically targeting the nation's dropout factories for transformation and turnaround.

Second, efforts began in New York City to replace dropout factories with new, smaller high schools specifically designed for students from high-poverty neighborhoods. These efforts spread to more districts in the middle of the decade, fueled by support from The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the mantra to create high schools that provided students with rigor, relevance, and relationships.

And third, reformers recognized that some students would need a second, and perhaps a third, chance to graduate, and that school districts needed to provide multiple pathways to graduation. Also beginning in New York, this work spread to many school districts through the support of the Youth Transitions Funders Group, and then the U.S. Department of Labor. Along the way, groups such as Jobs for the Future and the National League of Cities helped develop, codify, and spread effective practices and models to get students back on track and recover dropouts.

Targeted student interventions. A fourth key factor is increased ability in the middle of the decade to get the right intervention to the right student at the right time. In 2005, the UChicago Consortium on Chicago School Research and the Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University School of Education established the key on-and-off-track to graduation indicators for ninth-graders and middle grades students. This led to the rapid diffusion of early warning systems at the school, district and state levels. At this time nonprofits with national infrastructure also stepped up and re-tooled themselves to bring an evidence-based approach to dropout prevention. Organizations such as Communities In Schools, City Year, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Big Brothers Big Sisters increasingly provided schools with skilled adults who could help students with early warning indicators get back on track and stay there. The United Way also aided this effort by setting a national goal of cutting the dropout rate in half by 2018.

Thus, the timeline illustrates that the foundations of awareness and mobilization, better data and accountability, and new high school designs and solutions for the high schools and districts where the dropout crisis was concentrated were established early in the decade. Then, these efforts fused, expanded, and were further turbocharged by advances in student supports. Between 2006 and 2008 the nation recognized that a dropout crisis existed, and schools and districts understood that they were accountable for raising their graduation rates. They also knew that solutions existed, along with a knowledge base on how to use them, and early warning systems and enhanced student supports were coming to light. Leaders from all sectors and levels emerged to make solving the dropout crisis a top priority. All of these interventions in turn were targeted at the high schools and students who

needed them most. The years that followed then witnessed rapid growth in high school graduation rates and dramatic declines in the number of dropout factory high schools and the number of students who attend them.

What Will It Take to Get to 90 Percent?

Even with all the positive trends and rapid improvements, the nation still faces challenges and potential choke points on its way to achieving a 90 percent graduation rate by the Class of 2020. We highlight five critical areas where the nation needs to keep advancing to achieve its graduation goals.

Closing the Opportunity Gap for Low-Income Students

The nation's well-being requires not only reaching a 90 percent high school graduation rate, but doing so in a way that gives low-income students a clear pathway to adult success – a high school education that prepares them to succeed in post-secondary endeavors. In this regard, we still have a considerable way to go. For the first time, the adjusted cohort rate data, which is disaggregated for economically disadvantaged children, allows us to estimate state graduation rates by family income. The data maps on the following pages show each state's adjusted cohort rate for its low-income and middle- and high-income students, and how close these two groups of students are to 90 percent.

Table 4 shows the size of the gap between low- and middle/high-income students for each state, as well as the percentage of low-income students. The percentage of reported low-income students varies from 25 percent in Maine to 63 percent in California with the national average at 45 percent. These rates are for each state's adjusted ninth grade cohort for the class of 2012. This indicates wide variability in the educational challenges different states face. It also shows that the majority of states will not achieve a 90 percent overall graduation rate without significant improvements for low-income students.

For example, in Massachusetts and Connecticut, 94 percent of middle- and high-income students are graduating in four years – likely close to the maximum – but the states' overall graduation rates are at 85 percent. To reach 90 percent, these states will have to show gains among their low-income students. Nine states have graduation rates for middle- and high-income students between 85 percent and 89 percent, but have overall graduation rates below the national average (80 percent), because graduation rates for their low-income students are between only 59 percent and 72 percent.

While no state achieved an overall cohort graduation rate of 90 percent by 2012, 14 states have rates of 90 percent or greater for their middle- and high-income students. In an additional 10 states, the graduation rate is within two points of 90 percent for middle- and high-income students. This means in nearly half the states, it is the norm for middle- and high-income students to graduate. This may be in part why the dropout crisis remained quiet for years. In many neighborhoods it is simply not an issue. By contrast, there are seven states where the graduation rate for middle- and high-income students is below the overall national average of 80 percent. In Nevada, Oregon, Alaska, New Mexico, Louisiana, Georgia, and Arizona, despite significant improvements in some cases, graduation still is not the norm even among middle- and high-income students.

When the data on low-income students are closely examined, there is cause for concern. In only six states do low-income students graduate at or above the national

TIMELINE: 2000 to 2013

The first 12 years of this century saw both the lowest U.S. high school graduation rate recorded in more than 30 years (71.7 percent in 2001) and the highest rate ever experienced (80-81 percent in 2012), with the biggest gains coming after 2006.

To understand why graduation rates have increased, we compiled a timeline of some of the key developments that emerged since 2000 to raise awareness of, and address, the high school dropout epidemic. We recognize that high school graduation rates rose steadily and significantly from the post-Civil War period until the early 1970s, when rates started stagnating. Before the turn of the 21st century, many significant efforts laid a foundation for progress, including the GI Bill, Brown v. Board of Education, the Civil Rights Act, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and its later incarnations, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. We also note that the dropout challenge was largely hidden from the American people until more accurate data emerged to identify how low on-time graduation rates and how severe graduation gaps among different student populations actually were.

With better data, we now know that the first 12 years of this century saw both the lowest U.S. high school graduation rate recorded in more than 30 years (71.7 percent in 2001) and the highest rate ever experienced (80-81 percent in 2012), with the biggest gains coming after 2006. In the timeline below, we highlight some of the most influential events of the 21st century – publications, projects, campaigns, summits, initiatives, investments, policies, and programs – that have shaped the promising trajectory of high school graduation rates, and put the nation on pace, for the second year in a row, to meet the national goal of a 90 percent high school graduation rate by the Class of 2020.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2010 -2013	2011	2012	2013
POLICY AND PROGRAM INTERVENTIONS TO INCREASE GRADUATION RATES	No Child Left Behind (NCLB) includes Grad Rate Accountability/disaggregation of student data.	Federal Small Learning Community High School Reform Program (first funded in 2000; reauthorized in 2002 under NCLB). School Improvement Grants (SIGs) enacted as part of NCLB. Large-scale effort to create small high schools, including back on track options, launched in New York City (NYC DOE, New Visions, Carnegie Corp). Partner organizations of the Early College High School Initiative start to redesign 240+ schools in 28 states and D.C. Investment of approximately $2 billion from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation fuels era of district-led high school reform efforts to support creation of small high schools focused on relevance, rigor, and relationships. Continues through 2008.	Validation and spread of evidence-based whole school reform strategies and models for high schools: High Schools that Work, Talent Development High Schools, National Academy of Finance, First Things First, Americas Choice.	*Breaking Ranks II* (National Association of Secondary School Principals), a widely disseminated guide to secondary school reform.	National Governor's Association (NGA) Graduation Rate Compact: the nation's governors agree to use common graduation rate measure, and make 2005 the Year of Reforming High Schools. U.S. Department of Education launched the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems program. The program provides grants to states to design, develop, and implement statewide P-20 longitudinal data systems, and establishes unique student identifiers. National High School Center founded to provide technical assistance and helps spread high school reform strategies. National League of Cities launches Helping Municipal Leaders Expand Options and Alternatives for High School project, which signals greater involvement of mayors in solving dropout crisis.	Georgia's Governor Purdue introduced GA's High School Graduation Coach initiative, funding "graduation coaches" in all 369 high schools across the state; this concept spreads to other states. Spread of Early Warning Systems begins, supported by Everyone Graduates Center, CCSR, National High School Center, NGA Best Practices Center, and federal Regional Education Labs. Major national non-profits (Communities in Schools; City Year; Boys and Girls Club; Big Brothers Big Sisters, etc.) begin to focus efforts on evidence-based approaches to keeping students on track to graduate.	United Way of Southeastern Michigan launches community effort to transform or replace 30 low graduation rate high schools in Greater Detroit, setting an example for a growing number of community-led efforts. U.S. Department of Labor supports spread of Multiple Pathways to Graduation in mid-size cities. Texas High School Project, a statewide public/private high school re-design effort	U.S. Department of Education establishes Graduation Rate Regulations with states expected to use and report common Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate by 2010-11, set more ambitious graduation rate goals and growth targets. Jobs for the Future (JFF) launches Back on Track Pathways, a collaboration of JFF, YouthBuild USA, and National Youth Employment Coalition. AT&T launches Aspire with a $100 million multi-year commitment to spread effective dropout recovery and second-chance efforts; program supports local organizations helping to reduce dropout rates. Early College High School Initiative goes to scale in North Carolina.	*GradNation Community Guidebook* (America's Promise Alliance, Civic Enterprises, and Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University) U.S. Department of Education implements Race to the Top and i3 (Investing in Innovation) grants that include a focus on turning around lowest-performing schools. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act greatly increases SIG funding, targets high schools with graduation rates below 60 percent and their feeder middle schools for turnaround.	APA GradNation Communities Network lays out priorities for action in committed communities. U.S. Department of Education launched High School Graduation Initiative to support school districts doing dropout prevention and recovery work. Common Core State Standards announced and adopted by 45 states and the District of Columbia.	School Improvement Grants begin funding implementation of reforms for high schools with graduation rates below 60 percent	Common graduation rate measure – the Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) reported for 47 states (three have extensions).	States granted waivers from NCLB begin developing strategies to improve all high schools with graduation rates below 60%. *College Readiness: A Guide to the Field* (Annenberg Institute School Reform at Brown University, John W. Gardner Center at Stanford University, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) highlights what students need both in and out of school to be successful throughout college.	*Reforming Underperforming High Schools & Making it Happen* (MRDC) shows impact of NYC Small Schools reform efforts. Between 2002 and 2013, 18 states and D.C. raised legal age of leaving school to 18.
RAISING AWARENESS AND MOBILIZING A RESPONSE TO THE DROPOUT CRISIS	Harvard Civil Rights Project – 1st conference and publication from leading researchers on the dropout crisis. Alliance for Excellent Education (A4E) launched.	U.S. Department of Education establishes *What Works Clearinghouse*, including for dropout prevention. *High School Graduation Rates in the U.S.* (Manhattan Institute) ACHIEVE launches the American Diploma Project with the Education Trust, Thomas B. Fordham Institute, and the National Alliance of Business to identify the "must have" knowledge and skills needed for higher education and careers – a precursor to ACHIEVE's later work on raising graduation standards with states	The Urban Institute Education Policy Center begins series of reports on estimating graduation rates.	*Locating the Dropout Crisis* (Johns Hopkins University) identifies number and locations of the nation's "dropout factories." Panel of experts convened by the U.S. Department of Education recommends using Averaged Freshman Graduation Rates (AFGR) as an interim indicator of graduation rates until individual longitudinal student data are available.	Predictive power of early warning indicators and ability to show who is on and off track to graduation demonstrated for middle school students (Johns Hopkins and Philadelphia Education Fund) and ninth graders (UChicago Consortium of Chicago School Research). *Multiple Pathways to Graduation* (Youth Transitions Funders Group) focuses on struggling students and out-of-school youth. Data Quality Campaign founded. *One Third of a Nation* (ETS Policy Information Center) *Getting Serious About High School Graduation* (Southern Regional Education Board)	*The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts* (Civic Enterprises) brought domestic and international attention to the dropout crisis, including *TIME* cover story, two *Oprah* shows, National Public Radio, and David Broder column. Also outlined a 10-point plan of action. *Education Week*'s Annual Diplomas Counts series begins. California Dropout Project (University of California, Santa Barbara)	National Summit on America's Silent Epidemic (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Civic Enterprises, National Governors Association, *TIME* & MTV). Congressional Hearings held on solving the dropout crisis; bi-partisan high school reform legislation introduced *Raising the Compulsory School Attendance Age: The Case for Reform* (Civic Enterprises, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The Case Foundation, and The MCJ Foundation) *Reframing School Dropout as a Public Health Issue* (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) *The Turnaround Challenge* (Mass Insight Education) *The Price We Pay: Economic and Social Consequences of Inadequate Education* (Belfield & Levin) Associated Press prints list of Dropout Factory High Schools	*College Knowledge* (D. Conley) America's Promise Alliance (APA) holds 105 dropout summits in 55 cities in all 50 states. United Way sets 10-year goal to reduce the dropout rate 50 percent by 2018. Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins launched. *One Dream, Two Realities* (Civic Enterprises, with Hart Research Associates and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation), a report on perspectives of parents on America's high schools. *Career Academies: Long-Term Impacts on Work, Education, and Transitions to Adulthood* (MDRC)	National Conference of State Legislatures forms Task Force on Dropout Prevention and Recovery. *Achieving Graduation for All* (NGA) *Putting Middle Grade Students on the Graduation Path* (Everyone Graduates Center) *On the Frontlines of Schools: Perspectives of Teachers and Principals on the High School Dropout Problem* (Civic Enterprises, Hart Research Associates, the AT&T Foundation, and America's Promise Alliance)	APA launches GradNation Campaign with General and Mrs. Colin Powell and President Obama. *Building a Grad Nation* (Civic Enterprises, Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University, America's Promise Alliance, and Alliance for Excellent Education) inaugural report issued to provide annual update to nation on progress and challenges in meeting high school dropout crisis. *Raising Their Voices: Engaging Students, Teachers, and Parents to Help End the High School Dropout Epidemic* (Civic Enterprises, Hart Research Associates, the AT&T Foundation, and America's Promise Alliance) Attendance Works is founded. *Making it Happen* (MRDC) report on ConnectED center and Linked Learning Initiative in California.	*Building a Grad Nation* report released annually at the Building a Grad Nation Summit, convened by America's Promise Alliance, Civic Enterprises, Everyone Graduates Center and Alliance for Excellent Education.	*Dropping Out: Why Students Drop Out of High School and What Can Be Done About It* (R. Rumberger) *Education as a Data-Driven Enterprise* (Civic Enterprises, A4E, and the Data Quality Campaign for AT&T) *A Path to Graduation for Every Child* (NCSL) Analysis of 2009-10 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) shows suspensions and grade rate retentions are disproportionate by race.	Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) launches *American Graduate: Let's Make It Happen*, a nationwide public media initiative to help communities across the country identify and implement solutions to the high school dropout crisis. 1st CPB American Graduate Day, a multiplatform media "call to action" event to improve graduation rates.	George W. Bush Institute, Civic Enterprises, Everyone Graduates Center, and The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk host first of series of Early Warning Systems (EWS) summits to expand use of these systems. 2nd CPB American Graduate Day. APA continues series of Community Summits to inspire local collaborative action to increase high school graduation rates

TABLE 4

2012 ACGR by State, Percent Low-Income, ACGR Low-Income, ACGR Non-Low-Income, Gap between Low-Income and Non-Low-Income

STATE	OVERALL 2012 ACGR	% LOW-INCOME STUDENTS	LOW-INCOME 2012 ACGR	NON LOW-INCOME 2012 ACGR	Income Level Graduation Gap
Iowa	89%	36%	80%	94%	14
Vermont	88%	41%	77%	96%	19
Wisconsin	88%	30%	75%	94%	19
Nebraska	88%	35%	80%	92%	12
Texas	88%	48%	85%	91%	6
North Dakota	87%	28%	74%	92%	18
Tennessee	87%	58%	82%	94%	12
New Hampshire	86%	27%	73%	91%	18
New Jersey	86%	27%	75%	90%	15
Missouri	86%	39%	79%	91%	12
Indiana	86%	33%	85%	86%	1
Connecticut	85%	37%	70%	94%	24
Massachusetts	85%	41%	72%	94%	22
Kansas	85%	51%	76%	95%	19
Maine	85%	25%	76%	88%	12
Montana	84%	40%	73%	91%	18
Pennsylvania	84%	34%	74%	89%	15
Maryland	84%	32%	75%	88%	13
Arkansas	84%	49%	79%	89%	10
South Dakota	83%	28%	67%	89%	22
Virginia	83%	31%	72%	88%	16
Illinois	82%	41%	73%	88%	15
Hawaii	82%	43%	80%	84%	4
Ohio	81%	37%	68%	89%	21
Delaware	80%	47%	72%	87%	15
Utah	80%	31%	70%	84%	14
North Carolina	80%	44%	75%	84%	9
Wyoming	79%	37%	65%	87%	22
West Virginia	79%	56%	72%	88%	16
Minnesota	78%	32%	59%	87%	28
California	78%	63%	73%	86%	13
Rhode Island	77%	52%	66%	89%	23
Washington	77%	45%	66%	86%	20
New York	77%	42%	68%	84%	16
Michigan	76%	44%	64%	85%	21
Arizona	76%	40%	71%	79%	8
Colorado	75%	42%	61%	85%	24
Alabama	75%	52%	66%	85%	19
Florida	75%	41%	65%	82%	17
South Carolina	75%	49%	68%	82%	14
Mississippi	75%	53%	70%	81%	11
Louisiana	72%	51%	66%	78%	12
Alaska	70%	37%	59%	77%	18
Georgia	70%	49%	61%	79%	18
New Mexico	70%	57%	65%	77%	12
Oregon	68%	51%	61%	75%	14
Nevada	63%	57%	58%	70%	12
NATION:	**80%**	**45%**	**72%**	**87%**	**15**

Source: State level ACGR rates retrieved from http://eddataexpress.ed.gov/state-tables-main.cfm. District level rates, along with all counts of students in each cohort (denominator) and number of graduates (numerator) obtained directly from U.S. Department of Education through provisional data file of SY2011-12 District Level Four-Year Regulatory Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates.

average. Twenty-one states graduate only between 58 percent and 70 percent of their low-income students. In these states, three or four out of every 10 low-income students are not even reaching the starting gate for adult success by earning a high school diploma. The graduation gap between income groups varies widely among states. Even among states with similar levels of low-income students there is substantial variation in graduation outcomes. For example, in Texas, Tennessee, Kansas and Arkansas more than half of the students come from low-income families. This places them among 16 states that have higher-than-average percentages of low-income students. Yet even with this challenge these four states have been able to achieve above average overall graduation rates.

By contrast, Minnesota, Wyoming, and Alaska have much lower-than-average percentages of low-income students and yet still have below average overall graduation rates. This is because the graduation rates for their low-income students are very low, with only between 59 percent and 65 percent graduating. This indicates that, while some states seem to have learned how to provide the supports and educational opportunities low-income students need to succeed, others are still struggling.

Solving the Big City Challenge – Act II

America's largest cities have made considerable progress over the past decade in improving high school graduation rates. According to the latest data, there are almost 200 fewer dropout factory high schools in the nation's urban areas than in 2002, and 450,000 fewer low-income and minority students are attending high schools where graduation is about a 50/50 proposition. The good news is that the odds of getting a high school diploma, during an era when the requirements to earn one increased, clearly improved over the past decade in big cities that educate a high number of low-income students. However, very few big cities with high rates of poverty are able to graduate even three out of four ninth-graders and none have cracked 80 percent. Most big cities that have high concentrations of low-income students, even after significant improvements, still have graduation rates in the 60s and a few remain in the 50s. More than half of the nation's remaining dropout factory high schools are in urban areas. This indicates that the secondary school reform, new school creation, and multiple pathways to graduation movements that drove improvements over the last decade are in need of a second act.

Fortunately, next generation approaches are on the horizon. The Carnegie Corporation of New York (2014) has recently launched its Opportunity by Design program to spur a second generation of new high school creation. This program is building upon the initial success of the small school movement to create models that enable young men of color to not only graduate from high school but also to succeed in college.

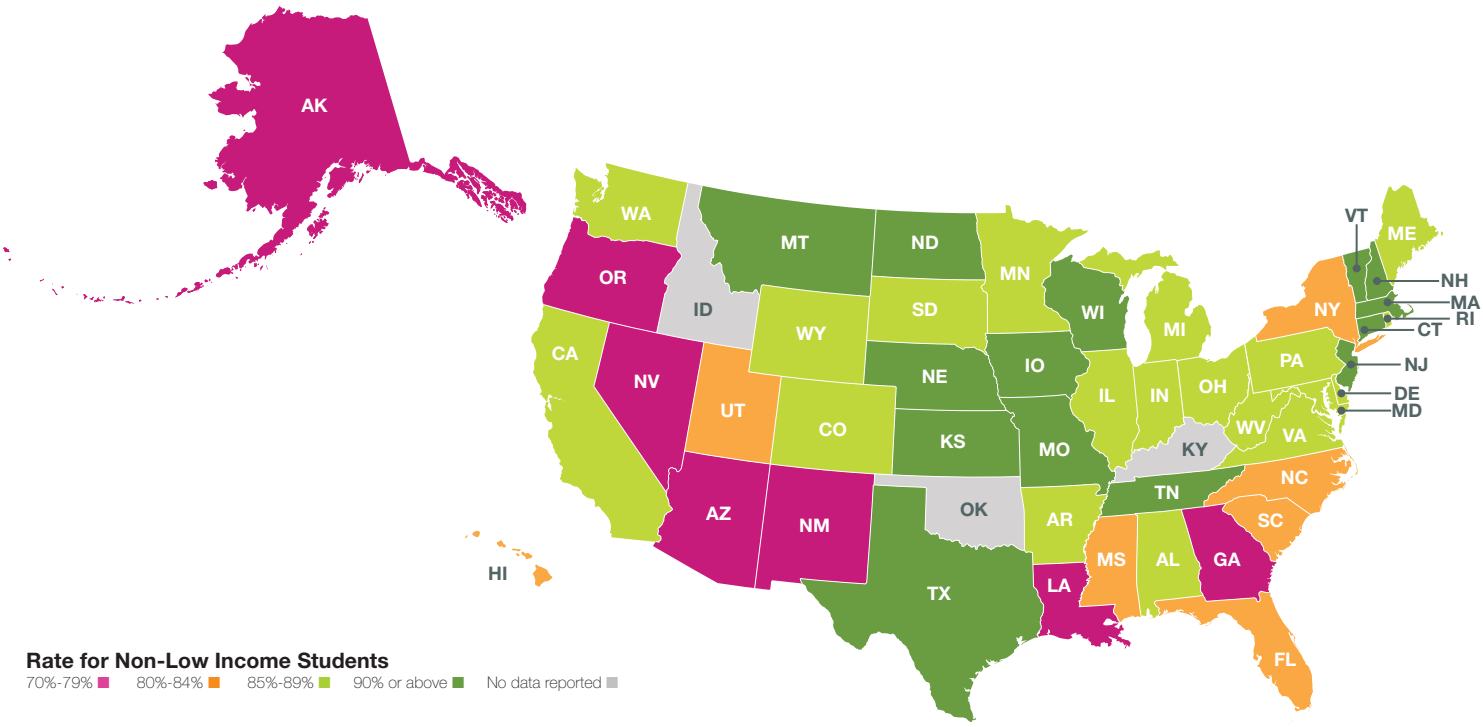
The Diplomas Now secondary turnaround model, which combines evidence-based whole school reform with enhanced student supports guided by an early warning system, has promising early results. As part of the federal Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) program, Diplomas Now is undertaking the largest randomized field trial of secondary school reform models ever conducted involving 60 high poverty middle and high schools in 11 major urban school districts and more than 30,000 students. Mass Insight Education has built upon its initial Turnaround Challenge work to advance a vision of feeder patterns of elementary, middle, and high schools turning around together to provide low-income parents with strong neighborhood schools. States and districts continue to refine Achievement or Turnaround zones, in which combinations of new schools, charter schools, and turnaround efforts are provided enhanced operating conditions and supports. And more districts are adopting a portfolio approach where families are provided a more diverse set of choices, including charters, theme, and technology-infused schools. Turnaround for Children is advancing a vision of "fortified learning environments" to provide students who live in poverty the additional supports they need to succeed in school. Integrated student supports and community schools continue to be centered on evidence-based practices.

The Aspen Forum on Community Solutions is providing grants to communities with disproportionate numbers of 16-to-24-year-olds who are neither working nor in school. These grants will foster more collaboration on common goals, use of data, school reforms, and other efforts to strengthen the school-to-work pipeline. YouthBuild and Year Up continue their efforts for students who have dropped out to earn credentials, perform national service, and develop the skills they need to enter the workforce.

Continued on page 20

TABLE 5A

State 2012 ACGR for Non-Low Income Students



STATE ABBREVIATION	STATE	Non-Low Income ACGR
NV	Nevada	70%
OR	Oregon	75%
AK	Alaska	77%
NM	New Mexico	77%
LA	Louisiana	78%
GA	Georgia	79%
AZ	Arizona	79%
MS	Mississippi	81%
SC	South Carolina	82%
FL	Florida	82%
HI	Hawaii	84%
NY	New York	84%
NC	North Carolina	84%
UT	Utah	84%
AL	Alabama	85%
CO	Colorado	85%

STATE ABBREVIATION	STATE	Non-Low Income ACGR
MI	Michigan	85%
WA	Washington	86%
CA	California	86%
IN	Indiana	86%
MN	Minnesota	87%
DE	Delaware	87%
WY	Wyoming	87%
ME	Maine	88%
VA	Virginia	88%
WV	West Virginia	88%
MD	Maryland	88%
IL	Illinois	88%
OH	Ohio	89%
AR	Arkansas	89%
RI	Rhode Island	89%
PA	Pennsylvania	89%
SD	South Dakota	89%

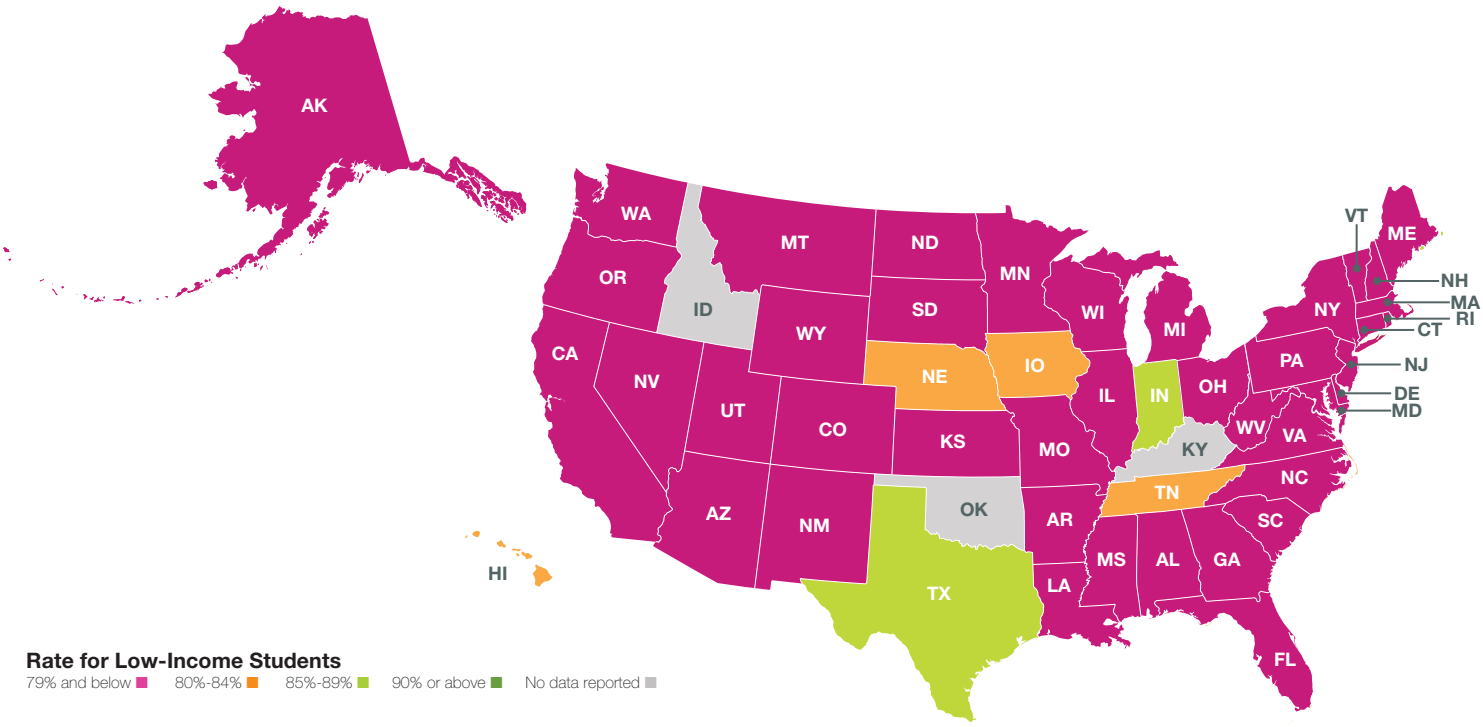
STATE ABBREVIATION	STATE	Non-Low Income ACGR
NJ	New Jersey	90%
MO	Missouri	91%
TX	Texas	91%
NH	New Hampshire	91%
MT	Montana	91%
ND	North Dakota	92%
NE	Nebraska	92%
WI	Wisconsin	94%
CT	Connecticut	94%
TN	Tennessee	94%
IO	Iowa	94%
MA	Massachusetts	94%
KS	Kansas	95%
VT	Vermont	96%
ID	Idaho	†
KY	Kentucky	†
OK	Oklahoma	†

Source: State level ACGR rates retrieved from http://eddataexpress.ed.gov/state-tables-main.cfm. District level rates, along which all counts of students in each cohort (denominator) and number of graduates (numerator) obtained directly from U.S. Department of Education through provisional data file of SY2011-12 District Level Four-Year Regulatory Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates.

† Not applicable: Data were not reported

TABLE 5B

State 2012 ACGR for Low-Income Students



STATE ABBREVIATION	STATE	Low-Income ACGR
NV	Nevada	58%
MN	Minnesota	59%
AK	Alaska	59%
CO	Colorado	61%
GA	Georgia	61%
OR	Oregon	61%
MI	Michigan	64%
WY	Wyoming	65%
FL	Florida	65%
NM	New Mexico	65%
RI	Rhode Island	66%
WA	Washington	66%
AL	Alabama	66%
LA	Louisiana	66%
SD	South Dakota	67%
OH	Ohio	68%
NY	New York	68%

STATE ABBREVIATION	STATE	Low-Income ACGR
SC	South Carolina	68%
CT	Connecticut	70%
UT	Utah	70%
MS	Mississippi	70%
AZ	Arizona	71%
MA	Massachusetts	72%
WV	West Virginia	72%
VA	Virginia	72%
DE	Delaware	72%
MT	Montana	73%
NH	New Hampshire	73%
IL	Illinois	73%
CA	California	73%
ND	North Dakota	74%
PA	Pennsylvania	74%
WI	Wisconsin	75%
NJ	New Jersey	75%

STATE ABBREVIATION	STATE	Low-Income ACGR
MD	Maryland	75%
NC	North Carolina	75%
KS	Kansas	76%
ME	Maine	76%
VT	Vermont	77%
MO	Missouri	79%
AR	Arkansas	79%
IO	Iowa	80%
NE	Nebraska	80%
HI	Hawaii	80%
TN	Tennessee	82%
TX	Texas	85%
IN	Indiana	85%
ID	Idaho	†
KY	Kentucky	†
OK	Oklahoma	†

Source: State level ACGR rates retrieved from http://eddataexpress.ed.gov/state-tables-main.cfm. District level rates, along which all counts of students in each cohort (denominator) and number of graduates (numerator) obtained directly from U.S. Department of Education through provisional data file of SY2011-12 District Level Four-Year Regulatory Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates.

† Not applicable: Data were not reported

The America's Promise Alliance GradNation campaign is leading another round of dropout prevention summits to prompt further local and state action and highlight examples of success. The Bush Institute's Middle Grades Matters initiative has brought together leading researchers and practitioners to translate best evidence into best practice and is piloting test models in various schools. In addition, Middle Grades Matters is leading a series of early warning system learning and teaching summits to increase the prevalence of these systems and their complementary supports across the country.

The U.S. Department of Education continues to focus School Improvement Grants and Investing in Innovation efforts on high schools with graduation rates below 60 percent. States receiving waivers from NCLB have pledged to find reform solutions for all their high schools with low graduation rates. The Department, in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service, has launched the School Turnaround Corps designed to use AmeriCorps members to provide the people-power needed to keep students on track in the highest-need schools. The U.S. Education and Labor Departments are also launching the Youth CareerConnect grant program, designed to spread high school career academies linked to preparation for middle class jobs in high-poverty communities.

Meeting the big city challenge is critical if the nation is to reach a 90 percent graduation rate by the Class of 2020. Table 6 shows that in a number of states, big cities with graduation rates in the upper 50s to lower 70s educate a substantial portion of the state's high school students. For example, Clark County (Las Vegas) educates 72 percent of Nevada's ninth grade class; New York City, 35 percent; Chicago, 17 percent; Providence, Rhode Island, 17 percent; Omaha, Nebraska, 15 percent; Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 14 percent; and Memphis, Tennessee, 13 percent of the same cohort of students. Philadelphia, Miami-Dade County (Florida), Chicago, Las Vegas, Los Angeles and New York also stand out as places where the size of the district, combined with existing graduation rates, creates additional challenges due to the sheer number of students still in need of improved educational opportunities and enhanced student supports (even as a number of these districts made substantial progress during the past decade). In these districts the number of students not graduating with their class each year ranges from 5,000 to 27,000. In all of the other major cities, by contrast, that number ranges from 500 to 2,700. Thus, it will be important to ensure that not only are strong, next generation secondary school improvement strategies developed for big cities, but that they are replicated and implemented well where they are needed the most.

Not Leaving Special Education Students Behind

The national graduation rate goal will not be reached if we continue to be satisfied with low graduation outcomes for students with disabilities, who make up about 13 percent of all students. Special education (education of students with disabilities) is greatly influenced by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) that in 1975 guaranteed for the first time that students with disabilities must receive a free, appropriate public education. (See Appendix I for more information on IDEA).

There are, however, tremendous variations in states' special education populations. Some states identify *twice* as many students in need of services as others, between 9 percent and 19 percent. The variation in graduation rates for students with disabilities by state is equally wide ranging. It varies nearly 60 percentage points, from 24 percent (ACGR) graduating in Nevada to 81 percent in Montana. This variation is more than twice as large as the variation among states for graduation rates for all students (63 percent in Nevada to 89 percent in Iowa).

The national average graduation rate for students with disabilities is 20 points lower than the average graduation rate for all students. Estimates by the Everyone Graduates Center indicate that raising the graduation rate of these students to 80 percent in 10 states would raise those states' graduation rates by four to six percentage points. Similarly, raising the rate in eight states would improve

Visit **Appendix C** to see ACGR rates for the 200 largest school districts, and their state by state consequences for improving state graduation rates.

TABLE 6

Graduation Rates in Big City School Districts with High Concentrations of Low Income Students

District Name	State Name	Overall 2012 ACGR	% Low-Income Students	Cohort Size	% of State's Total Cohort	# Not Getting Diploma in 4-Years
Des Moines Independent Comm School District	Iowa	79	63.3%	1923	5.7%	404
Columbus City School District	Ohio	79	74.7%	3251	2.3%	683
Houston Independent School District	Texas	79	68.5%	11461	3.6%	2407
Portland Public Schools	Maine	77	56.0%	562	4.0%	129
Miami-Dade County Public Schools	Florida	76	55.8%	23125	12.1%	5550
Omaha Public Schools	Nebraska	76	63.3%	3353	15.1%	805
Phoenix Union High School District	Arizona	75	74.1%	5653	7.3%	1413
Seattle Public Schools	Washington	75	51.4%	3300	10.1%	825
Wichita Public Schools	Kansas	74	75.7%	3581	10.0%	931
Kanawha County Schools (Charleston)	West Virginia	72	56.2%	2127	8.8%	596
Shelby County Schools (Memphis)	Tennessee	70	86.1%	9268	13.0%	2780
Chicago Public Schools	Illinois	69	82.9%	28142	17.5%	8724
Newark Public Schools	New Jersey	69	76.0%	2858	2.7%	886
Christina School District (Wilmington)	Delaware	68	56.6%	1167	12.0%	373
Los Angeles Unified School District	California	67	89.8%	43098	8.4%	14222
Bridgeport School District	Connecticut	66	99.2%	1273	2.9%	433
East Baton Rouge Parish School System	Louisiana	66	61.7%	2658	5.8%	904
Baltimore City Public Schools	Maryland	66	68.6%	6288	9.3%	2138
Boston Public Schools	Massachusetts	66	85.9%	4368	5.9%	1485
St. Paul Public School District	Minnesota	66	75.2%	2946	4.3%	1002
New York City School District	New York	66	71.3%	78642	35.4%	26738
Hartford School District	Connecticut	65	92.0%	1396	3.2%	489
Detroit City School District	Michigan	65	74.9%	5877	4.6%	2057
Providence Schools	Rhode Island	65	94.5%	2094	17.3%	733
Salt Lake City School District	Utah	65	59.4%	1944	4.8%	680
Jackson Public School District	Mississippi	63	71.8%	2103	6.2%	778
Portland Public Schools	Oregon	63	52.1%	3400	7.3%	1258
St. Louis Public Schools	Missouri	62	69.4%	2416	3.6%	918
Clark County School District	Nevada	62	64.7%	24832	72.4%	9436
Philadelphia City Schools	Pennsylvania	62	72.8%	13524	9.3%	5139
Milwaukee School District	Wisconsin	62	76.1%	6034	14.6%	2293
Richmond City Public Schools	Virginia	61	56.5%	1560	4.3%	608
Indianapolis Public Schools	Indiana	60	62.2%	1731	2.3%	692
Denver Public Schools	Colorado	59	75.7%	4950	8.1%	2030
Louisiana Recovery School District (New Orleans)	Louisiana	59	75.6%	585	1.3%	240
Cleveland Municipal School District	Ohio	59	99.9%	3339	2.3%	1369
Birmingham City Schools	Alabama	56	82.3%	2417	4.1%	1063
Atlanta Public Schools	Georgia	51	71.6%	3674	3.0%	1800
Minneapolis Public School District	Minnesota	50	59.9%	2480	3.6%	1240

the overall state average by three percentage points; for 12 states, two percentage points, and for 14 states, one percentage point. In only three states would there be no impact. Significantly, nine of the 10 states in which the impact would be greatest[2] have among the lowest overall graduation rates; the outlier is Virginia, with an 83 percent overall graduation rate and a 49 percent graduation rate for students with disabilities (see Table 7). The great variations in graduation rates are also seen within states. Different districts and schools within a state, sometimes with the same demographic characteristics and operating policies, may have vastly different graduation rates (Losen & Gillespie, 2012).

It is well established that there are disproportionalities in outcomes for students with disabilities. In a study of 7,000 school districts and 85 percent of the nation's school children, the U.S. Civil Rights Data Collection found that students with disabilities were suspended at twice the rate (13 percent) of their non-disabled peers. Students with disabilities were subject to physical restraint at a rate six times that of students in the general population, and African American students, who represented 21 percent of students with disabilities, comprised 44 percent of those subject to mechanical restraint. White students, by contrast, represented 54 percent of the sample of students with disabilities but only 34 percent of those mechanically restrained. This is significant because students who are restrained and suspended are not in class, and it is well established that receiving even one suspension dramatically raises the chances that, absent interventions, a child will dropout rather than graduate.

States, districts, schools, and individual educators have taken steps to greatly improve graduation rates for all students with disabilities – those with specific learning disabilities (41 percent of the population, typically dyslexia or dyscalculia), those with visual or hearing impairments (19 percent); health impairments (13 percent); and intellectual disabilities, all others and autism (7 percent each).

Kansas, one of the states with the highest graduation rates for students with disabilities, is a fine example of a positive and productive approach to equitably educating students with disabilities. Fortified by the special education department at Kansas State University, K-12 educators and the Kansas Department of Education have worked for many years to include students with disabilities in general education, rather than self-contained, classrooms. A multi-tiered system of support unites teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, and the community in creating a learning environment that accepts all students for who they are and teaches to their needs. Additionally, the state created the Kansas Technical Assistance System Network to coordinate all special education services across the state, and to provide professional development and technical assistance supporting inclusion. According to a recent evaluation by WestED (n.d.), approximately 44 percent of the 1,400 Kansas schools have participated in some level of formal training. The inclusion model used in Kansas has produced significant achievement gains for both students with disabilities and general education students; the university educators recently received a $24 million grant to pilot their practice and support the model in 64 schools nationwide.

California Counts

The nation cannot reach its 90 percent goal without California, the nation's most populous state. Fourteen percent - 6.2 million - of the nation's total student cohort live in California, as do 20 percent of the country's low-income student cohort. It is one of 23 states projected to have significant enrollment growth by 2021. According to projections by the Everyone Graduates Center, California will need to graduate a total of 440,000 more students – 300,000 of those from low-income families – by 2020 if the state is to obtain a 90 percent graduation rate.

The challenges in California start with its size and diversity. Its population of 38 million is vibrantly multicultural: 39 percent White, 38 percent Hispanic, 14 percent Asian, and 6.6 percent African American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). California is first in the nation in the number of Hispanic students (3.2 million); White students (1.6 million); low-income students (1.2 million); Asian/Pacific Islands students (754,800); and students with disabilities (692,000 students) (California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System [CALPADS], 2013). It is also fifth in the number of African American students (406,000), and second in Native American students (63,000) (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2012).

2 Oregon, Nevada, Georgia, Rhode Island, New York, Florida, South Carolina, Louisiana and Alaska

TABLE 7

ACGR for Students with Disabilities and the Gap from 2011 and the General Population in 2012

	State	2012 ACGR Students with Disabilities	ACGR Change for Students with Disabilities, (2012-2011)	ACGR Gap with General Population 2012
81%	MT	81%	12	-3
71-80%	AR	79%	4	-5
	KS	77%	4	-8
	TX	77%	0	-11
	HI	74%	15	-8
	NJ	74%	1	-12
	IA	73%	3	-16
	MO	73%	4	-13
	TN	73%	6	-14
	NE	72%	2	-16
	IN	71%	6	-15
	VT	71%	2	-17
61-70%	ME	70%	4	-15
	NH	70%	1	-16
	PA	70%	-1	-14
	IL	69%	3	-13
	MA	69%	3	-16
	WI	69%	2	-19
	ND	68%	1	-19
	OH	68%	1	-13
	AZ	65%	-2	-11
	CT	64%	2	-21
	SD	64%	0	-19
	UT	64%	5	-16
	CA	61%	2	-17
51-60%	NC	60%	3	-20
	WV	60%	0	-19
	RI	59%	1	-18
	WY	59%	2	-20
	NM	56%	9	-14
	WA	58%	2	-19
	DE	57%	1	-23
	MD	57%	0	-27
	MN	56%	0	-22
	AL	54%	24	-21
	CO	54%	1	-21
	MI	54%	2	-22
41-50%	VA	49%	2	-34
	FL	48%	4	-27
	NY	48%	0	-29
	AK	46%	6	-24
	DC	44%	5	-15
31-40%	SC	40%	1	-35
	OR	38%	-4	-30
	GA	35%	5	-35
	LA	33%	4	-39
	MS	32%	0	-43
24%	NV	24%	1	-39
	ID	†	†	†
	KY	†	†	†
	OK	†	†	†

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1998-2013). Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Surveys.

† Not applicable: Data were not reported

It is every bit as diverse economically. The Central Valley's sweep of irrigated agricultural lands generates nearly half of the nation's produce and is a magnet for low-income and migrant workers. The state has the highest poverty rate in the country, but it is also a laboratory for innovation and entrepreneurship, pushing the median household income to 20 percent higher than the national average (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). According to the World Bank, the state places among the top 10 economies in the world. By 2025, California will need one million more highly-skilled workers to sustain its economy (Public Policy Institute of California [PPIC], 2014).

To understand the challenge for California's policymakers and educators, consider the context:

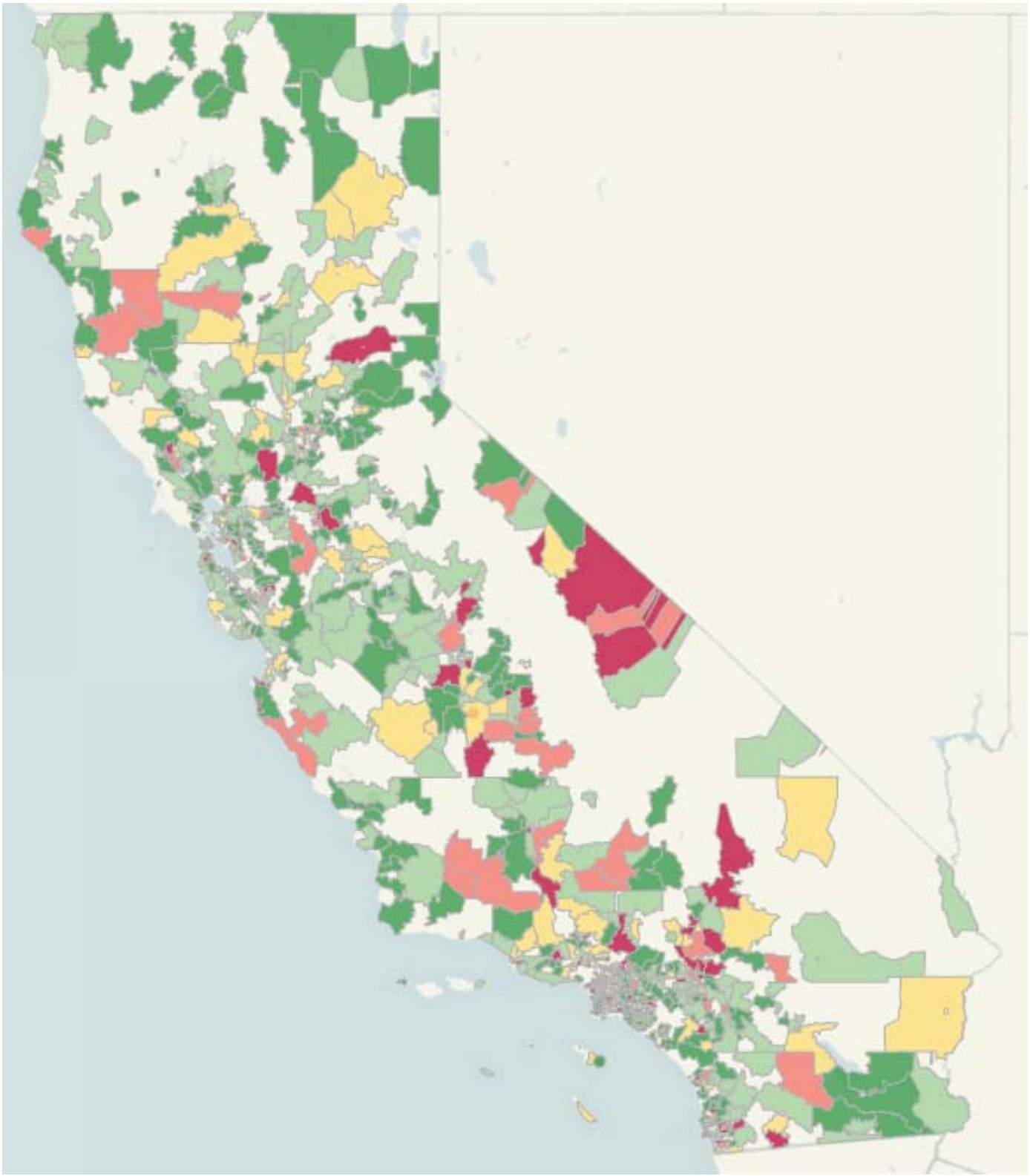
- **Student diversity.** Fifty-two percent of its students are Hispanic, an increase from 45 percent a few years ago (158 percent since 1994) (California Department of Education, 2014). Their graduation rate is 73 percent, compared with an 85 percent rate for White students and a 90 percent rate for Asian/Pacific Islanders in 2011-12. Twenty-nine percent of students are characterized as English Language Learners (ELL), compared with 10 percent nationwide (CALPADS, 2013).
- **Low-income students.** Sixty-three percent of California's students are low-income. These students represent 20 percent of the nation's low-income students and 20 percent of the nation's low-income graduates (NCES, 2012). About 73 percent of California's low-income students graduate, compared with 86 percent of other students (ED Data Express, 2012).
- **Expansive school system.** There are 1,043 school districts and 10,296 schools, as well as a system of alternative schooling. The sheer size and scope of the California school system creates organizational and delivery challenges, requiring new strategic thinking (ED Data Express, 2012).
- **Southern California.** The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the nation's second largest school district, serves 11 percent of California's students (NCES, 2012). Its high school graduation rate is 67 percent, 11 points lower than the state average. Los Angeles County, home to numerous school districts, has a larger population, at 9.8 million, than that of 42 states, and a student population of 1.7 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). If the U.S. is to reach a 90 percent graduation rate, southern California must do its part. (See California graduation rate map by zip code).
- **Decreased state education funding.** The recession left the state reeling. Educational funding was slashed, with a 15.3 percent decrease between 2007-08 and 2009-10 and a 13 percent overall decrease since 2007-08 (California Budget Project, 2011). Per-pupil funding plummeted and the ratios of teachers, administrators and counselors to students rose significantly. Many programs were slashed, including teacher education and professional development.

Despite these challenges, the adjusted cohort graduation rate for 2011-2012 was 79 percent, up two percentage points from 2010-2011, with a rise that began in 2008 (Ed-Data, 2012). In that same period, graduation rates increased across student subgroups, with the largest subgroup, low-income students, increasing by three percentage points. This continues an upward trend first seen in the state Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate between 2009 and 2010.

While it is impossible to define which efforts were the most effective in improving California's high school graduation rates, a number of key elements can be identified:

- **Focus on Core Needs.** Growth in student enrollment stabilized from 2003 to 2013 at 6.2 million after increasing steadily from 4.1 million in 1980 (CALPADS, 2013). This stabilization allowed school districts to shift attention from providing facilities and hiring teachers to educating students.
- **More Attuned Teachers and Policymakers.** With more experience, more educators were better prepared to teach students of different languages. Additionally, there were more Hispanic educators, legislators, and policymakers, placing greater intent behind developing policy solutions for the growing Hispanic population.
- **More Native-Born Hispanics.** The Hispanic youth population has become increasingly native-born, suggesting they are encountering fewer cultural challenges. At the same time, school districts improved supports for parents from different language backgrounds, teaching adults as well as students about educational expectations.

CALIFORNIA 2011-2012 ACGR BY ZIP CODE



ACGR Range
50%-59% ■ 60%-69% ■ 70%-79% ■ 80%-89% ■ 90%-100% ■

White areas within California represent locations in which these are no high schools reporting ACGR in these zip codes.
Source: California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS, 2013)

- **Expanded District Reform Efforts.** Districts serving low-income and minority students undertook major reform efforts that were good enough to be repeatedly recognized nationally and provide lessons for others. Twenty percent of the districts that were either finalists for or grand winners of the Broad Prize for Urban Education have been California districts since its inception 11 years ago

Each of these elements has been important to California's success in raising its high school graduation rates. The state has also provided its students with a series of supports to succeed from elementary school to high school graduation, and on into college and career. In particular, California has focused on significantly investing in expanded learning time, college- and career-readiness, and improved data and research.

Investing in Expanded Learning Time

California's large investment in expanded learning time (after-school and summer learning opportunities) is key to ensuring students are prepared to succeed at the next level. In 2002, voters approved a proposal that, beginning in 2006, funneled $550 million a year into K-9 expanded learning programs, primarily for elementary and middle schools, over three times what all other states *combined* spend on expanded learning time. This built on a foundation laid in 1997 when the state first funded expanded learning time at more than $100 million annually. Augmenting state funds, California distributes half of its $130 million federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers award, which must be spent on out-of-school programs, to high schools.

There is already evidence that this investment will have strong payoffs for California, as students who first benefitted in elementary school continue to move through the education system. For example, in 2008, the Central Valley Foundation found in 80 sites, students' regular school attendance improved by an average of 14 days a year; 27 percent of ELLs were reclassified as fluent, compared with seven percent of non-participants; and 40 percent of those below grade level improved test scores. An evaluation by the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (2014) and the Oakland Unified School District After-School Program Office (2011) found that approximately half the 20,000 students enrolled in out-of-school programs also attended regular school daily. Youth who attended after-school programs 100 or more days a year were 20 percent more likely to score proficient or advanced on the California Standardized Tests in math and English, and ELLs who attended 100 days or more were 40 percent more likely to move out of ELL status. California has also implemented a new state data system, and is now able to begin an overall evaluation of these programs to further assess the outcomes of these programs.

During the middle grades, California provides students with additional supports to develop needed pre-college skills and set college-going goals through a program called Advancement by Individual Determination (AVID). Designed in 1980 by a far-sighted California teacher, AVID supports low-income students through mentoring, goal setting, and an inventive curriculum that focuses on writing, inquiry, self-management, and organizational skills needed for college (AVID, n.d.). Although the legislature recently phased out categorical AVID funding, it is expected that many school districts will reinstate it under the new funding formula.

Focus on College-and Career-Readiness

In addition to increasing the number of graduates, the state also seeks to prepare its students for college and career success. Both the University of California (UC) and California State University System (CSU) require students to complete a rigorous series of high school courses known as "a-g" as the first step to admission. Since 1994, the number of Hispanic graduates has increased by 158 percent, and the number of Hispanic completers of "a-g" course requirements has increased by 253 percent. However, the percent of Hispanic "a-g" completers is still far lower than for Whites, Asians, and qualified students of other ethnicities.

To prepare more students to complete the "a-g" course requirements, and to set more students solidly on the path to graduation, California has implemented a long-term push to enhance students' mathematics capacity. This tripled the number of Hispanic students taking Algebra I in eighth grade and doubled the number scoring proficient or advanced on state tests. African American students showed similar increases (despite their decline in high school enrollment) (The Campaign for College Opportunity, n.d.).

After recognizing that 25,000 students annually met CSU admission requirements, but then took remediation

courses once admitted, a safety net strategy was developed. The Early Assessment Program (EAP) in mathematics and English was instituted through a unique collaboration of the California State Board of Education, the California Department of Education, and the CSU system. Eleventh-graders who take the assessments receive feedback that enables them to design their 12th grade course load to better prepare for four-year college and move straight into regular courses.

California has long advanced career technical education (CTE) as a strategy for motivating and engaging its students in rigorous education. Since the 1980s, the state has funded California Partnership Academies (CPAs), small academies with a themed focus within larger schools. Early studies of CPAs by MDRC (Kemple, 2008) showed the benefits for future-wage earning, particularly for at-risk males. Emerging evidence shows that in 500 CPAs across the state, graduation rates for Hispanic students are 94 percent and for African American students, 92 percent. These successes were sufficient to retain state categorical funding under the new funding formula.

Positive lessons learned about the viability of the career-focused learning approach used in academies led to the more recent Linked Learning effort. With support from ConnectED: The California Center for College and Career, and the James Irvine Foundation, curriculum was developed that fused rigorous academics with strong technical courses, work-based learning, and student supports. Nine districts agreed to implement Linked Learning curriculum (the California Linked Learning District Initiative). A recent rigorous evaluation shows that by 10th grade, participating students had earned an average of 6.6 more credits than their non-participating peers, and were 8.9 percent more likely to have completed the appropriate credits by the end of 10th grade. Increased credit accrual is an important indicator that students are solidly on the path to high school graduation (ConnectED California, 2013).

This year, the California legislature established the California Career Pathways Trust, providing $250 million in one-time competitive grants to launch and support high-quality CTE efforts similar to Linked Learning, K-14. Competition for the grants is fierce and not yet completed (California Department of Education, n.d.). At the same time, the legislature began to phase out former funding for the Regional Occupation Centers and Programs that in many cases were the backbone of vocational education in the state. The formation of the trust, coupled with continued funding for CPAs and Linked Learning, suggests that a new, standards-based approach is being fashioned to bring CTE into alignment with the Common Core Standards in English and mathematics and the Next Generation Science Standards.

Improving Outcomes through Data and Research

California continues to look for new ways to use research and data to make practical improvements to K-12 education. To do this, the state has forged unique relationships among academics from leading California colleges and universities, the governor, legislators, the State Board of Education, the California Department of Education, and non-profit organizations. The wide range of perspectives and educational missions found among these stakeholders yields vigorous and informed discussions about education policy and practice. The California Dropout Research Project at UC Santa Barbara was among the first to formally study the in-state graduation challenge, and others have followed. The EdData website posts easily accessible data, and the EdResource site provides access to an array of research references and resources. These research and data efforts support informed improvement efforts.

California's efforts to provide students with rigorous academics, expanded learning time, career and technical education, and preparation for college success, will be greatly informed through CALPADS, the new state-wide educational data system, now operational after several years of struggle. This system, which can track data across multiple departments, divisions and organizations, will enable greater understanding of the effectiveness of interventions and help to inform and coordinate future planning.

On the Horizon

Looking ahead, new funding and accountability strategies will play a pivotal role in the future of California's educational efforts. In July 2013, the governor signed legislation enacting a new strategy for funding and accountability. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) will provide increased, generally unrestricted funding to districts and schools with high percentages of ELLs and low-income learners, replacing a 40-year system of

categorical funding. To receive unrestricted funding under LCFF, districts must design Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAPs), based on a template developed by the State Board of Education and approved by the legislature. These plans are intended to align district plans and budgets with eight key criteria for low-income and ELL improvement, and funding is tiered, so that districts with higher percentages of these high-needs students receive more funds with which to educate them. When full funding is achieved in eight years, districts with high-needs students are expected to receive $3,000 more per student, with an additional $10 billion flowing to districts to support improved outcomes for students at risk, compared with $1 billion through present funding (Children Now, n.d.).

The paired LCFF and LCAP give many measures of control back to the districts, accompanied by additional and distributed responsibility. The enabling legislation requires districts to educate, reach out to, and significantly involve parents and community members in the choices and decision-making that go into meaningful planning, with a parent advisory committee and an additional ELL advisory committee for high-ELL districts. Additionally, the new legislation broadens the role of the 58 elected county superintendents. Previously charged largely with financial oversight, these superintendents must approve LCAPs from all of their districts to ensure that each meets the state criteria and supports the planned activities and strategies to improve the outcomes of high-need students, an important strategy in a state with the number of districts that California has.

By any measure, California is key to helping the nation meet its graduation goal. Over time, it has established the building blocks to support students from elementary school to high school and beyond. This work must continue in order to propel graduation outcomes forward in the nation's largest state and the nation as a whole.

Accelerating Graduation Rates for Young Men of Color in Key States

Despite the progress made in raising graduation rates of African Americans and Hispanics in the past decade, and the dramatic decline in the percent of these students attending dropout factory high schools, young men of color still have unacceptably low graduation rates. Current federal, as well as most state, data do not enable disaggregation of graduation rates by race/ethnicity and gender. Where it has been possible to do this with either state or local data, significant gaps, often about 10 percentage points, have been found. Hence, the data seen in Table 8 are troubling. It shows the graduation rates for African American and Hispanic students in the 13 states that educate two-thirds of the nation's African American and three-fourths of its Hispanic students.

In the nation's historic industrial hubs – New York, Ohio, and Michigan – the overall four-year graduation rates for African Americans are in the low 60s, which means the rate for African American males is likely in the 50s. In Illinois and Pennsylvania, they are likely in the low 60s. Similarly, across an arc of southern states that hug the Atlantic Coast and Gulf of Mexico – Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana – the overall African American graduation rates hover in the low to mid 60s and male rates in the high 50s to low 60s. For Hispanics in seven of the 13 states where the overwhelming majority of Hispanics attend high school, on-time graduation rates for males are likely in the low 60s (see Appendix E for more detail). As President Obama's My Brother's Keeper initiative has pointed out, the nation cannot prosper nor remain true to its ideal that if you are willing to put in the work, a path to success can be found, when far too many young men of color are still not receiving the supports and opportunities to obtain a high school diploma, the minimum credential needed to obtain work in the 21st century.

Conclusion

The nation has much to be proud of in its response to the dropout crisis. In a decade, the nation was mobilized to action and made significant progress. Overall, we have raised the nation's grade in graduating high school students from a C minus to a B minus. Put in perspective, when a high school student increases his or her GPA by a full letter grade, it can be trajectory altering, and a B or better average can put that student on the path to college success. This holds true for our nation as well, as we strive to meet the challenge of graduating at least 90 percent of high school students prepared for post-secondary success. We are on the path toward this outcome and that is a momentous development, but we have not yet achieved it. There are still significant road blocks. A full reading of our report card shows we are still earning Ds and Fs in graduating students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and young men of color. Many of our large cities are no longer failing, but they need to keep pushing to reach good outcomes for *all* students, not just more students. In too many states, the gaps between low-income and middle- and high-income students reveal that while we are doing better on average, there are still areas of significant weakness. Unless we meet these challenges, our momentum will stall, and although we will have moved beyond poor performance, we will not have achieved the outcomes our future demands. The fact that the nation has demonstrated it can improve graduation rates, means that it is obligated more than ever to make it possible for all students.

TABLE 8

2012 African American and Hispanic ACGRs in States that Will Drive Outcomes for Young Men of Color

State	African American ACGR	% of Nation's African American Student Cohort	Hispanic ACGR	% of Nation's Hispanic Student Cohort
New York	63%	7.1%	63%	6.0%
Pennsylvania	68%	3.8%	68%	1.4%
Ohio	61%	4.0%	68%	0.5%
Michigan	60%	4.1%	64%	0.8%
Illinois	68%	5.2%	76%	4.2%
North Carolina	75%	5.2%	73%	1.4%
Georgia	62%	8.1%	60%	1.5%
Florida	64%	7.1%	73%	6.0%
Alabama	67%	3.6%	69%	0.2%
Louisiana	65%	3.3%	71%	0.2%
Texas	84%	6.9%	84%	19.3%
Colorado	66%	0.5%	62%	2.3%
California	66%	6.4%	73%	32.2%
TOTAL	**65.3%**		**76.0%**	

Source: State level ACGR rates retrieved from http://eddataexpress.ed.gov/state-tables-main.cfm. District level rates, along which all counts of students in each cohort (denominator) and number of graduates (numerator) obtained directly from U.S. Department of Education through provisional data file of SY2011-12 District Level Four-Year Regulatory Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates.

CASE STUDY 1

Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD – Putting Dropouts Back on Track

Serving three cities along the Texas-Mexico border, the Pharr-San Juan-Alamo (PSJA) Independent School District operates in one of the nation's most impoverished regions, and enrolls 32,000 students – of whom 88 percent are economically disadvantaged, 99 percent are Hispanic, and 41 percent limited English proficient. Faced with a dropout rate nearly twice the Texas state average, PSJA's new superintendent Dr. Daniel P. King, prioritized dropout prevention and recovery in 2007 (Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD, n.d.). With the slogan, "You didn't graduate from high school? Start college today!" gracing banners around town, and a door-to-door effort to reach out to dropouts, PSJA set out to reverse their dropout trend, establish a college-going environment, and re-engage off-track and out-of-school youth.

Led by Dr. King, PSJA initiated the first of its integral partnerships, working with South Texas College in 2007 to open the College, Career, and Technology Academy (CCTA), an "early college" school where non-graduating seniors could earn their high school diploma in a dual enrollment setting. Initially serving students lacking three or fewer credits, CCTA now enrolls students up to age 26 lacking up to five high school credits, and provides them with tutoring for Texas state exit-level exams and the chance to earn college credits alongside their high school diploma. In 2011, CCTA became the cornerstone of Jobs for the Future's "Back on Track to College" Replication Network, an

initiative to replicate the success of the model to other districts in Texas. CCTA also served as inspiration for state legislation that supports dropout recovery programs by funding students up to age 26, and aims to increase educational attainment through college exposure experiences for students (Allen & Wolfe, 2010).

PSJA has become a state and national model for dropout recovery and dual-enrollment because of its overwhelmingly positive results:

- Raised the district's four-year graduation rate from 62.4 percent to 87.8 percent in first four years
- CCTA has graduated over 1,200 former dropouts, ages 18-26, since 2007
- Currently more than 40 percent of its high school students enroll in college courses
- Doubled the number of students enrolling in college after graduation between 2007-2011
- All three comprehensive high schools, formerly designated as "dropout factories," have raised their 4-year graduation rates.

Ingredients of the PSJA approach include:

Targeting at-risk students. Each school year starts with a month-long campaign to identify and target secondary students who have not returned to school. On each Saturday of

CASE STUDY 1 (CONTINUED)

the month, more than 300 school and community volunteers participate in the annual "Countdown to Zero" campaign, canvassing neighborhoods to recover dropouts. Volunteers pass out individual student packets including flyers about the district's dropout recovery programs and encourage students to re-enroll. Then, students returning to school are monitored daily by the district's dropout recovery staff. In 2008, the district initiated the "Be on Time" program to identify 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students who had fallen behind their initial cohort. Principals of each PSJA high school are responsible for developing individualized action plans to catch these off-track students up with their peers and boost on-time graduation rates.

Personalized instruction. Upon enrolling in CCTA, students sit down one-on-one with school staff to review their course needs and arrange a schedule, while staff organize their course offerings each semester around identified student needs. To better engage limited English proficient students, faculty members at CCTA are trained in sheltered instruction and instructional strategies for English Language Learners (ELLs) in math and science, and are specialized in serving at-risk youth. The campus also offers remediation courses for Texas high school exit exams aligned with student needs, credit recovery, and supplemental tutoring and instruction to help students prepare for college entrance exams.

Strong student support system. The CCTA campus offers transportation and flexible scheduling for students that allows them to meet family and work obligations, and helps connect students to social service agencies that provide child-care. CCTA also has a full-time community liaison on staff to monitor student attendance and follow up with students who are absent and at risk of dropping out again. Additionally, the school has developed a mentoring program in which students are assigned to a Mentor course with an adult who can help them with college visits, writing resumes, and other college and career readiness objectives.

Teacher and staff buy-in. Teachers and school staff are often weary of change in a climate of constantly revolving education reforms, so Dr. King knew listening to teachers' concerns would be critical to advancing his reform initiatives. When he arrived in the district in 2007, he visited each high school repeatedly to hear their questions and frustrations, and then returned to share possible solutions. His willingness to include teachers in the process, along with his attitude and forward-thinking reforms, made the process move smoothly and allowed the district to bring about systemic changes.

Challenges and Next Steps

To take the success of CCTA district-wide, PSJA is currently in the process of expanding the early college model in order to provide dual-enrollment opportunities to all of its 8,000 high school students (Le, 2012). One of the biggest challenges of creating a "college for all" environment has been earning the support of the community – many of whom never had the opportunity to attend college or earn post-secondary credentials. CCTA's achievements

CASE STUDY 1 (CONTINUED)

with recovering dropouts and connecting them to college has helped the community see the potential of the early college model for all students, and created the trust needed to get their "College[3]" strategy, emphasizing college readiness, connectedness, and completion, off the ground. Despite some pushback on the early college model for all, the strategy is successfully being implemented, and will eventually allow all PSJA high school students to graduate with several college credits, an industry-recognized certificate, or an Associate's degree.

Scaling up of the early college model has also required the district to course correct as they learn how to fully implement college and career pathways for every student. This has meant re-aligning their curriculum from high school down to elementary school, which has necessitated intense professional development and coaching for all teachers and creating a unified district system out of a previously decentralized one. PSJA's efforts to ease the transition from high school to college has also been hindered by data-sharing complications between K-12 and post-secondary education institutions, which make it difficult to track and support students once they graduate. Sustaining the district's transformation will take continued backing from the state, community wide buy-in, and continued efforts to align K-12 and higher education data systems.

To learn more about PSJA and hear success stories of CCTA graduates, visit their YouTube channel: **http://www.youtube.com/user/PSJAISD/featured**

CASE STUDY 2

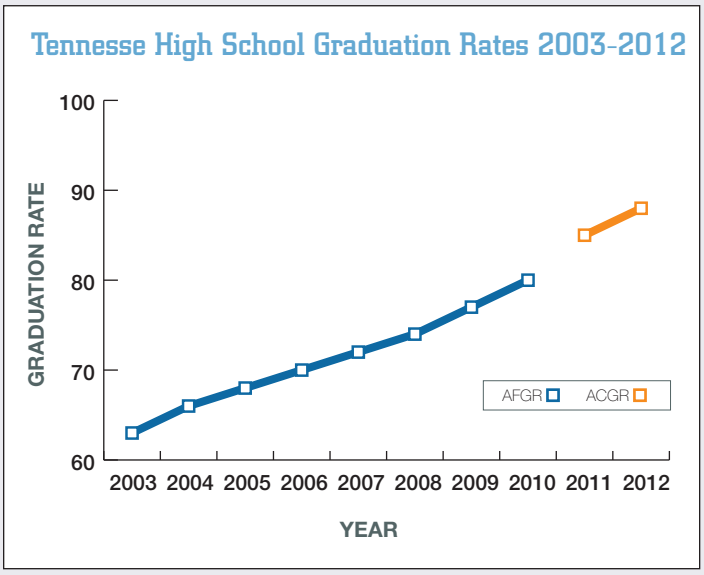
Where are they now?

Update on Schools Previously Featured in BGN Reports

In previous reports, we featured states, districts, and high schools that have made impressive gains in boosting high school graduation rates and described many components of their success. Here, we show where three previously profiled sites are today, and the progress they have made over time. These gains have not been easily won, but they provide proof that progress is possible even in the most challenging circumstances.

Tennessee

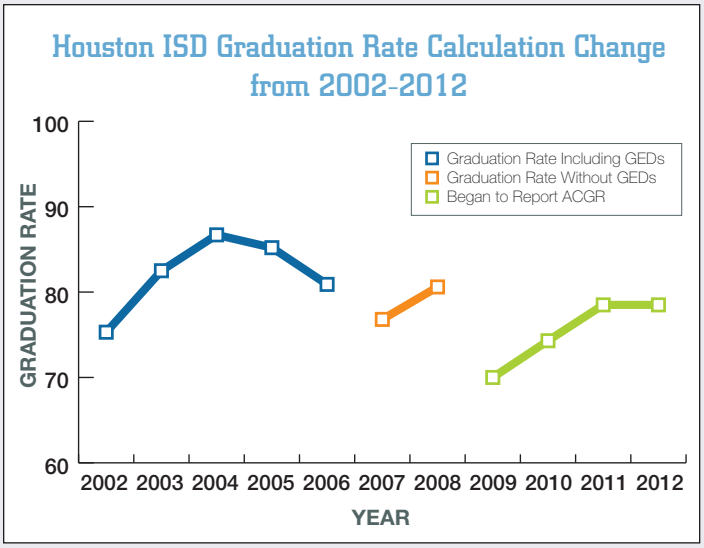
In 2010, we showcased Tennessee as the nation's leader in raising statewide high school graduation rates. With a systematic approach built on strong leadership, multi-sector collaboration, and continuous refinement of statewide supports to improve student outcomes, Tennessee increased its graduation rate 17 percentage points from 2003 to 2010. Since adopting the Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate in 2011, the state has continued its progress, with a graduation rate of 87 percent in 2012 (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Tennessee is on pace to reach the 90 percent goal, and demonstrates that with a long-term commitment from all stakeholders, real and sustainable educational improvements can be made.



Houston Independent School District (Texas)

In 2010, we profiled the Houston Independent School District (HISD), Texas' largest district and the seventh largest in the nation, as an urban district making progress amid immense challenges. Similar to other large, urban school districts, HISD serves a majority of minority and low-income students (62 percent Hispanic, 25 percent African American, and 80 percent economically disadvantaged), and approximately 30 percent of its students are limited English proficient (Houston Independent School District, n.d.). HISD, like the rest of Texas, has experienced highs and lows on its path to raising graduation rates and establishing a uniform graduation rate calculation. The state came under scrutiny in 2005 for counting GED recipients as graduates and excluding GED program enrollees and unconfirmed transfer students from cohort measures, leading to inflated graduation rates. In 2006, the state addressed these concerns by phasing in

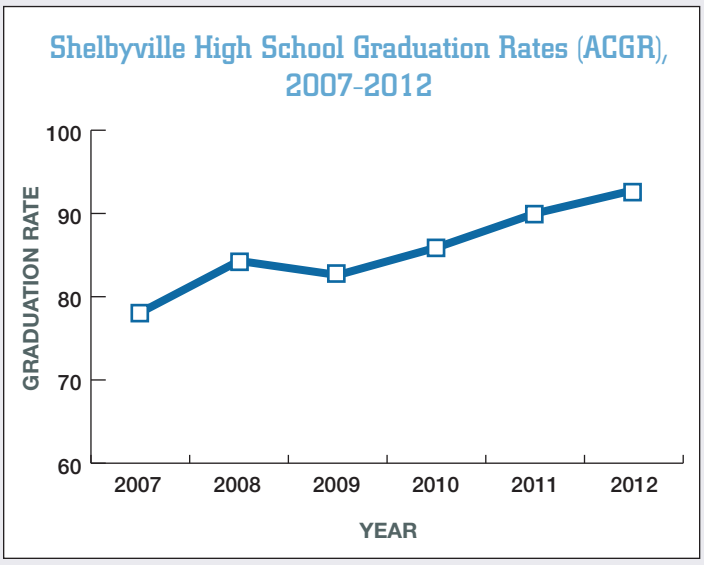
CASE STUDY 2 (CONTINUED)



a calculation based on the national graduation rate definition, but it was not until 2009 that it started reporting ACGR, the national standard for graduation rate reporting (Texas Legislative Council, 2010). (We raised some concerns in the 2013 *Building a Grad Nation* report over the methods Texas uses to calculate ACGR, but still noted that by any measure, the state has made real progress.) The resulting data fluctuations highlight the importance of uniform graduation rate calculations. However, they also show that HISD – winner of the Broad Prize for Urban Education in 2002 and 2013 – is still on track to reach an 80 percent graduation rate – a milestone no large, urban district has yet to achieve (Texas Education Agency Division of Research and Analysis, 2014).

Shelbyville High School (Indiana)

In 2006, Shelbyville High School became the poster child for the nation's dropout crisis after it was featured on the cover of *TIME* magazine's "Dropout Nation" issue, prompted by the release of *The Silent Epidemic* report. The article reported that one in three Shelbyville High School students would not graduate that year, but when the school was profiled in our 2013 report, it had already made incredible gains – graduating nine out of ten students in 2011. Just one year later, Shelbyville's graduation rates continue to climb – reaching 92.8 percent in 2012. District leaders credit a greater focus on creating a culture in the school where every student counts, a positive, success-oriented climate, the implementation of an early warning system, a laser-like focus on increasing high school graduation rates, and strong and committed teachers for turning the school and



district around. Coming amid an economic downturn, this significant rise is all the more remarkable, and makes Shelbyville a model for increasing graduation rates and improving educational outcomes (Indiana Department of Education, n.d.).

Part 2

Progress and Challenge
– The Civic Marshall Plan to Build a Grad Nation

INTRODUCTION

This year, the Class of 2020 is in sixth grade, and our nation remains on pace to meet our 2020 target after decades of declining or flat-lining high school graduation rates. With this in mind, we ask ourselves – ***what will it take to get to 90 percent?***

In March 2010, a coalition of leading U.S. organizations gathered to develop a plan of action for ending the dropout crisis in America once and for all. Mindful of national goals set in previous years, which had come and gone without much progress, the group set the ambitious goal of a 90 percent nationwide high school graduation rate for the Class of 2020. The strategies for achieving this goal, this time, became known as the Civic Marshall Plan to Build a Grad Nation (CMP).

The CMP is an evolving framework that seeks to share research-based solutions, highlight concrete progress in schools and communities, spark innovation, and build more momentum across the nation to end the dropout crisis. It is not a prescription – every school and community has its own unique set of challenges. Rather, it offers stakeholders a set of 10 evidence-based planks that can be implemented in a variety of innovative ways to improve high school graduation rates and prepare students for college and the workforce.

The 10 Planks of the Civic Marshall Plan

1. **Grade-Level Reading:** Increase the number of students reading with proficiency by fourth grade.
2. **Chronic Absenteeism:** Reduce chronic absenteeism (missing 20 days or being absent 10 percent or more of school days in one year), a key early warning indicator of a student being "off track" to graduate.
3. **Early Warning Systems:** Establish early warning indicator and intervention systems that use the early predictors of dropping out (attendance, behavior, and course performance in reading and math).
4. **The Middle Grades:** Redesign the middle grades to foster high student engagement and preparation for rigorous high school courses.
5. **Adult and Peer Supports:** Provide sustained, quality adult and peer support to all students who want and need it, continual supports from mentors for all off-track students, and intensive wraparound supports for the highest-need students.
6. **Transition Supports:** Provide transition supports for struggling students in grades 8-10 in all schools with graduation rates below 75 percent, as well as their feeder middle and elementary schools.
7. **Effective Schools:** Transform or replace the nation's high school dropout factories with effective schools.
8. **Compulsory School Age:** Raise the compulsory school attendance age to graduation or 18 in all states, coupled with support for struggling students.
9. **Pathways to College/Career:** Provide all youth (including those who have dropped out) clear pathways into college and career.
10. **Dropout Recovery:** Create comprehensive dropout recovery programs for disconnected youth.

While all of the components of the Civic Marshall Plan are essential to reaching our goal, this year we focus on four:

- **Plank 2:** Chronic Absenteeism
- **Plank 4:** The Middle Grades
- **Plank 5:** Adult and Peer Supports
- **Plank 10:** Dropout Recovery

The first three planks are critical to student success in navigating the perilous middle grades years, the time when significant numbers of students begin to fall off track to high school graduation. This period of time is also when many of the largest challenges to a 90 percent graduation rate (continued low rates for low-income students, students with disabilities, and young men of color) become manifest. These three planks are also critical to the success of big cities with high-poverty populations, and states with significant projected increases in enrollment such as California. Both of these groups must improve student outcomes during the middle grades if they are to reach the 90 percent goal by 2020. And finally, because no plan or set of reforms will work for every student the first time, we focus on those students who have already dropped out. Providing this demographic with strong second and third chance options to re-engage with school and work will ensure all students are kept on the path to success in school and in life.

Each of these planks represents a challenge that is too great for schools to address on their own. Rather, we must rally support from a diverse group of stakeholders, from community change agents to federal policymakers, and school principals to corporate CEOs. If we can unite this group around the common goal, and support their hard work in our schools and communities, we can continue to tackle the dropout crisis at every level and provide all students with the supports they need to earn their high school diploma.

In the following updates, we showcase bright spots at the national, state, and local levels, and highlight ways that schools, families, businesses, nonprofits, and government agencies are working together to help students reach their full potential.

Plank 2: Chronic Absenteeism

Defining the Challenge:

Before a student can thrive in school, he or she must regularly *attend* school. As we continue our work toward achieving a national 90 percent high school graduation rate, a focus on reducing chronic absenteeism must be a priority.

Researchers have identified three key factors that are better predictors of student outcomes than demographics or test scores – attendance, behavior, and course performance, or the ABCs (Balfanz, Herzog, & Mac Iver, 2007). The attendance component is defined as a student missing 10 percent or more of a school year for any reason, whether excused and unexcused. This level of absence is referred to as "chronic absenteeism," the detrimental effects of which are seen long before a student reaches high school. For example, chronic absence that begins in kindergarten is associated with lower academic performance in first grade. For poor children a languid early start frequently is associated with poor performance that extends through fifth grade (Attendance Works, n.d.-b). By the time students reach sixth grade, chronic absence is a clear predictor that, without interventions, a student will not complete high school. By ninth grade, missing 20 percent of the school year is a better indicator than test scores that the student will drop out (Allensworth & Easton, 2007).

By the time students reach sixth grade, chronic absence is a clear predictor that, without interventions, a student will not complete high school. By ninth grade, missing 20 percent of the school year is a better indicator than test scores that the student will drop out.

Despite the impact of chronic absenteeism on student achievement, it is not consistently defined or measured across states, nor is it part of many state report cards or federal accountability standards. To ensure that students are fully benefitting from their time in school, we must foster reforms that track attendance and absentee patterns of

Expanding the Range of Early Warning Systems

In 2014, Early Warning Systems (EWS) are providing common-sense solutions to the nation's dropout problem. Through a focus on three indicators – attendance, behavior and course passing – Early Warning Systems enable teachers and administrators to see patterns in the school or district, identify those students who are disengaging and going off track, and adjust policies and practices in time to help students rather than punish them.

The Data Quality Campaign, a national organization that champions development and use of technical data systems, reports in its 2013 survey that 31 states have some form of an EWS, a significant gain from just 18 states in 2011. Twenty-six of the states self-report that their systems are specifically targeted to dropout prevention, and a few are beginning to incorporate college readiness indicators. The incorporation of these measures would allow Early Warning Systems to play a key role in raising the national graduation rate to 90 percent by 2020, and helping all students to be ready for college and career.

States have a key role to play in moving this work forward. They are uniquely positioned to act as an equalizer by providing resources and tools to smaller or less affluent districts that otherwise would not have access. In addition, states can create standardized systems that will drive progress. For example, the Alabama Graduation Tracking System monitors student attendance, behavior, and course performance through the state-mandated student data management system. Frequent reports give schools, principals, counselors, and teachers the tools to identify and support individual students.

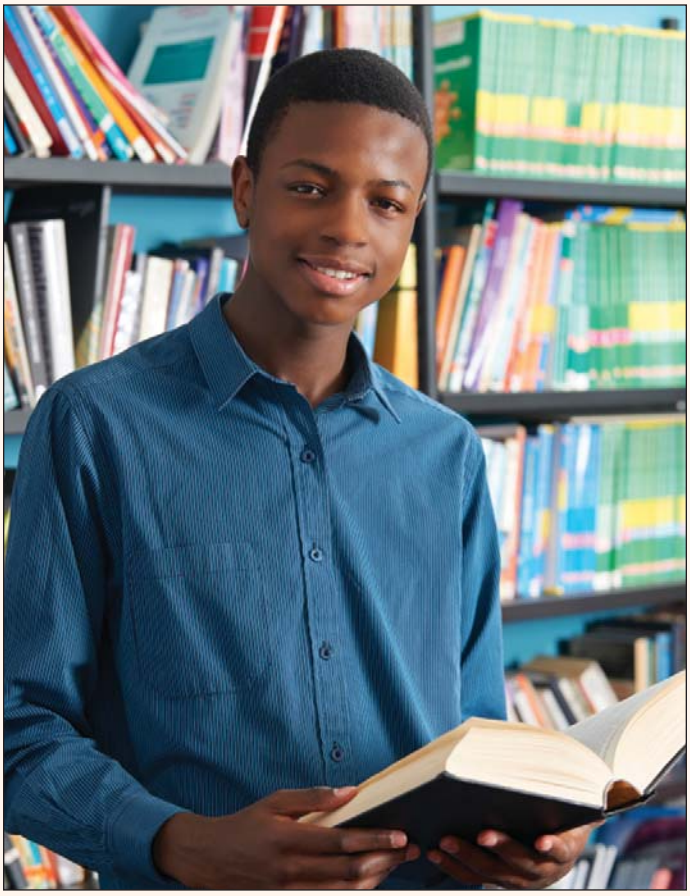
At the district level, administrators can identify patterns within and across schools and use this information to assist school-level personnel in their work. This easily accessible data allows school personnel to convene, create action plans, and get students back on track.

Early Warning Systems introduce a new way to quickly provide students with the supports they need to succeed, regardless of what school they attend, or the challenges they may be facing outside of the classroom. With early warning indicators and the associated system of interventions firmly in place, educators have a valuable tool to help them address the barriers that stand in the way of student success.

SNAPSHOT 1

Combating Chronic Absenteeism in Our Communities

In 2012, it was estimated that as many as 7.5 million students are chronically absent annually in this country (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012). This finding moved the issue of chronic absenteeism to the top of the agenda for many educators, policymakers, and parents. Currently, fewer than 10 states track chronic absenteeism. But thanks to increased awareness, many districts and individual schools are undertaking tracking initiatives, even when a state doesn't require it. Acknowledging the existence and scope of chronic absenteeism is the first step to solving it.



The NYC Task Force on Truancy, Chronic Absenteeism & School Engagement has been instrumental in linking community partners to counteract chronic absenteeism in New York City public schools. In 2013, an evaluation of the program shed two new beams of light on this issue:

- The academic impacts of chronic absenteeism are reversible. Students who had been chronically absent but began attending school regularly raised their achievement levels.
- This initiative can be replicated, and with a relatively small investment of money. Attendance mentors with access to student data and integrated into school wide efforts were a key to New York City's success; students with these mentors made significantly greater progress in returning to school than those without (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2013).

In Pennsylvania, the United Way of Allegheny County is launching a smaller version of the NYC Truancy Campaign that will include a pilot mentoring effort in partnership with the Pittsburgh Public Schools. This follows an ambitious 2013-2014 attendance campaign, "Be There," launched by the United Way of Allegheny County and community and school district partners. The attendance campaign included a conference with national experts, data-sharing among several agencies, and creative messaging to increase stakeholder engagement. "Be There" organizers are planning end-of-school celebrations and "Getting to the Finish Line" rallies to spur students' attendance in the last 30 days of school. The spread of these initiatives across the country bodes well for the future, as they demonstrate that more and more stakeholders understand the importance of school attendance for student success.

individual students, and allow for timely interventions that will put students back on track to graduation.

Chronic absence is not the result of a single factor, and low-income children in particular may face multiple barriers to regular school attendance, including poor health or untreated chronic diseases, the need to care for elderly relatives or siblings, and safety concerns due to violence, both within schools or neighborhoods.

Encouragingly, schools and districts across the country are coordinating with other stakeholder organizations and agencies to share data, analyze patterns of chronic absenteeism, and implement interventions that address the root causes.

National Update

Chronic absenteeism is perpetuated by several misconceptions that include:

- Regular school attendance is not important until high school.
- Schools and districts already collect data on individual absences and therefore do not need to update their systems.
- Schools and districts are unable to influence attendance rates because it is ultimately the family's responsibility to ensure their child's presence in the classroom.

The **Attendance Awareness Campaign** was created to combat these misconceptions, articulate the need for policy and program changes, and inspire stakeholders across the country to take action. The campaign was created in 2013 by five national organizations: America's Promise Alliance, Attendance Works, the Campaign for Grade Level Reading, Civic Enterprises, and Points of Light Institute, with another thirty-five national organizations joining the campaign as formal partners over the course of the year.

A central component of the campaign was Attendance Awareness Month, which kicked off in September of 2013 with the participation of 1,000 schools and communities and 40 national partners (Attendance Works, n.d.-a). Attendance Works created a toolkit for participants, which included sample press releases and media tools; suggestions to incentivize school attendance; creative ideas for contests and events; and advice on how to use data to identify, track, and intervene with chronically-absent students. The toolkit was downloaded more than 13,000 times during the course of the campaign.

Students may also be chronically absent due to a lack of access to health care, which can lead to poor mental and physical health, difficulty focusing in the classroom, and accumulated absences from school. This is no small factor in student attendance – in 2010, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that 12.8 million days of school are missed each year due to asthma alone. Understanding the large role that health plays in a student's academic success, the **American Public Health Association** (APHA), is working to increase access to physical and mental health care in order to improve student wellness and overcome social barriers to educational access (American Public Health Association, n.d.).

APHA supports School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) as a powerful way to provide students with access to medical care within school walls. SBHCs provide health services, such as immunizations, treatment for chronic illnesses like asthma and diabetes, nutrition education, mental health counseling, and resources to confront bullying and violence. In the United States today, there are approximately 2,400 SBHCs serving more than two million students (School-Based Health Alliance, n.d.).

State/Local Level Update

On the local level, the programs achieving the strongest results in reducing student absences are doing so by tackling multiple risk factors at once. For example, the Austin Independent School District (ISD) is increasing attendance rates with the help of a program called **AimTruancy Solutions**. This program utilizes a combination of attendance incentives, including mentoring, GPS check-ins, teacher engagement, and wake-up calls to get students to school every day (Taboada, 2013). The combined components engage youth in their school attendance and give them a sense of accountability, while also raising awareness among adults of student attendance patterns so that they can be more prepared to intervene if students begin to fall off track (Taboada, 2013).

In 2012, Austin ISD implemented the AimTruancy program in nine high schools with a high number of chronically absent students (Cargile, 2013). During the 2012-2013 school year, AimTruancy provided mentoring and case

management support services to more than 1,000 students and families (AimTruancy Solutions, n.d.). Early figures showed that before enrolling in the program, students were attending school on average 78 percent of the time. Those same students have averaged a 90 percent attendance rate since enrolling in AimTruancy (Taboada, 2013). By February 2013, average days missed by students dropped from 48 days a year to 27 (Cargile, 2013).

The AimTruancy model targets numerous factors that contribute to chronic absenteeism. But even when those factors are identified, addressing them solely through school resources can be an overwhelming proposition. Fortunately, there are many promising examples of schools and districts collaborating with community partners, sharing data about the students who consistently miss school, and working jointly to tackle multiple barriers to attendance. This approach alleviates the burden on schools, and provides students with the right supports at the right time to keep them in the classroom.

The **Baltimore Student Attendance Campaign** is one such example of interagency collaboration and data sharing. Led by the school district, the mayor's office and Open Society Foundation-Baltimore, the campaign brings together more than 20 nonprofit and public agencies to analyze and address issues of transportation, health, parental engagement, and homelessness, to name a few. Together, they drive toward solutions that will help students to attend school regularly (Attendance Works, 2013).

A unique aspect of this collaborative is the data sharing agreement with the Baltimore City Department of Social Services. Under this agreement, the city school district shares information about those students who are chronically absent with child welfare workers. Social workers are then able to provide those families with the extra supports they need to help get the student to school consistently. This data-sharing approach has generated initial positive results for students in foster care, with an average attendance rate of 96 percent for children under the age of 13 (Attendance Works, 2013).

Closing Thoughts

Extensive research confirms that students who are chronically absent from school are more likely to fall behind academically and drop out before receiving their high school diploma. Research also shows that dropping out is usually a slow process of disengagement from school, with attendance patterns being a very early warning indicator of trouble (Bridgeland et al., 2006). Tracking and reducing rates of chronic absenteeism in schools across the nation will propel us toward our goal of a nationwide 90 percent high school graduation rate by the Class of 2020. Through collaboration and continued data sharing, we can ensure that our students are consistently present in the classroom and on track to their high school commencement.

Plank 4: The Middle Grades

Defining the Challenge

The middle grades are pivotal years that can either place a student successfully on the path to high school, college, and career, or initiate a downward trajectory of disengagement, poor attendance, behavior issues, and low achievement in key subjects. This slide can be stopped and even reversed, but only if adults are paying attention.

Despite the importance of these years, there are few ways to measure middle school performance across states. Unlike high school, there are no comparative statistics,

such as graduation rates, ACT or SAT scores, or AP and International Baccalaureate completion, that determine how well a school is serving its students. The only measure of a middle schools' success on a national scale is the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) eighth-grade sampling in math and reading – available only by state and for a few large urban districts.

In 2013, the NAEP estimated that by eighth grade, 64.5 percent of students are less than proficient in mathematics and reading (NAEP, 2013).

In 2013, the NAEP estimated that by eighth grade, 64.5 percent of students are less than proficient in mathematics and reading (NAEP, 2013). Without a strong foundation in these core subjects, students are unprepared to cope with challenging high school academics, making them more likely to disengage and drop out before earning their diploma. Redesigning the middle grades to give students a better skills base from which to launch to high school is therefore a key strategy to help us reach our 2020 goal.

National Update

Current work to implement middle school redesign has a long and rich history that incorporates efforts of researchers, education associations, and district and school leaders and teachers across the country. These reforms articulate principles and practices to make middle school a meaningful, supportive and rigorous educational experience that addresses the needs of young adolescents on the threshold of adulthood.

Specifically, redesign efforts build on goals that set expectations for:

- High school readiness
- College, career and life preparation
- Rigorous, relevant and engaging curriculum
- High attendance, good behavior and solid academic performance
- Built-in time for academic and social/emotional support for students
- Scheduled time for teachers to collaborate and plan
- School structures that foster development of positive relationships among students, teachers, counselors, administrators and parents
- Supportive communities

At the same time, the search continues for new and improved models that support school and student success more broadly. Like middle school students themselves, these approaches come in many shapes and sizes.

The federal **Investment in Innovation (i3)** awards enable organizations, districts, and networks to undertake rigorous, evidence-based efforts and research to determine what works. Two recipients which focus on middle schools are national models – the **National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform** (Forum) and **Diplomas Now.** The Forum is using the i3 award to rigorously implement and evaluate its "Schools to Watch" program in 18 middle schools in California, Illinois, and North Carolina, and will evaluate the benefits of academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity, and organizational structures that support student learning. Diplomas Now, a partnership that links three nonprofit organizations – Talent Development Secondary, Communities In Schools, and City Year in 41 schools in 14 cities – introduces strong curriculum, positive school climates, and student supports into low-performing, high poverty schools. Early results are promising. In 2012, there was a 45 percent reduction in students with less than 85 percent attendance and a 68 percent reduction in the number of students suspended. Students' academic performance also improved, with a 61 percent reduction in the number of students failing English, and a 52 percent reduction in the number of students failing math (Diplomas Now, n.d.).

State/Local Level Update

Inspiring examples of middle schools that improve outcomes for low-income students are found in diverse schools across the country. These schools set high expectations, provide an array of student supports, foster school climates that enhance student engagement and literacy, create organizational structures that enable adults to share thinking and learning time without students around, and foster positive relationships with and among students.

Recently recognized as both the Diplomas Now Middle School of the Year (2013) and as one of 13 National Network of Partnership Schools standouts, **Clinton Middle School, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), California** serves 900 students, 94 percent Hispanic and 6 percent African American, 30 percent

SNAPSHOT 2

United Way Works to Cut the Dropout Rate

United Way is moving toward its goal of cutting the nation's dropout rate in half by 2018 by working with community partners and schools. United Way Worldwide's almost 1200 community affiliates are increasingly coming together to share learning and solve big local problems, including increasing high school graduation rates and improving middle schools, and they are doing so as part of networks, rather than working independently. The story of this emerging work provides a "best practices" example of how a large national non-profit is encouraging its independent affiliates to depend on each other with shared solutions, consistent strategies, and mutual accountability, arising from unique capacities and local strengths.

The *Middle Grades Success and Transitions Challenge,* led by the parent United Way Worldwide, began in January 2013 to strengthen and advance the work of local United Way affiliates and their school and community partners with a middle grades focus. Nine affiliates received $50,000 each in matching grants and technical assistance to engage community residents, build awareness, and create or strengthen coalitions to develop and implement strategies for the middle grades.*

Four additional affiliates, although not funded, are participating in the middle grades learning community.** Each is working on specific community issues and starting points. Some, such as Suncoast United Way (Tampa, Fla.), Metro United Way (Louisville, Ky.), and the United Way of Greater Atlanta, are emphasizing family engagement in and with schools, as a path to increased student achievement.

Each United Way affiliate participating in this pilot effort is working on its own in its community. Some are just getting started and their efforts are focused on laying the groundwork and building the relationships necessary among schools, community partners, and other affiliates. Others, with already-established early warning systems, are working to expand to additional schools, or strengthening elements of the work, such as timely use of student data, and ensuring quality support for students. All are, however, investing in programs that support students outside of the school day (after-school, summer learning, mentoring programs); have a history of working collaboratively in their community around shared goals; and have the relationships, and credibility needed to operate as an honest broker in the development of early warning systems.

Challenges have included: managing turnover at the United Way and with school and community partners; timing work to coincide and not conflict with the school calendar; data-sharing among the United Way, schools, and community-based providers; building a general awareness of the importance of the middle grades; creating ongoing, meaningful engagement opportunities for community residents who want to be involved; and using all aspects of the local United Way organization to support the work.

All acknowledge and agree that the "sweet spot" for United Way affiliates is on the "response" aspect of early warning systems – leveraging, brokering and ensuring the quality of interventions and support so that they are effective and improve academic success. The compact intends to expand this work over the next five to six years by creating an infrastructure that builds on the work

SNAPSHOT 2 (CONTINUED)

of these early adopters. This includes a phased-in approach that will add groups of additional affiliates, and develop and provide tools and technical assistance that they and other United Way affiliates can use in their efforts.

* United Ways participating in the *Middle Grades Success and Transitions Challenge*: United Way of Allegheny County (Pittsburgh, Pa); Suncoast United Way (Tampa, Fl.); Metro United Way (Louisville, Ky.); United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County (N.C.); United Way of Greenville County (S.C.); United Way of the National Capital Area (DC); United Way of Greater Atlanta (Ga.; Valley of the Sun United Way (Phoenix, Ariz.); Spokane County United Way (Wash.).

** Unfunded United Ways that participate in the middle grades learning community are: Heart of Florida United Way (Orlando, Fl.); United Way of King County (Seattle, Wash.); United Way of Central Georgia (Macon); and United Way of Coastal Georgia (Brunswick).

English language learners and 88 percent economically disadvantaged (Los Angeles Unified School District, 2012). Clinton sets students up for success with an entire arsenal of strategies – rigorous academics imbued with research-based practices, high expectations, and a strong set of support systems to help students rise to those expectations. Supports include a "second shift" of adults focused on meeting students' needs, and strong outreach efforts to engage parents and families. Teachers work in teams by content areas, across content areas, and by grade level to identify and address student needs. Instructional content area and literacy coaches from the UCLA Center X provide teachers with extensive professional development opportunities, and support rigor in the classroom and implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Eighteen City Year corps members (in a full year of national service) act as mentors, advisors and role models, and a Communities In Schools site coordinator connects students with external resources and agencies when needed. Underpinning these supports is a robust Early Warning System (EWS) focused on attendance, behavior, and course performance in math and English Language Arts. An EWS team of teachers, counselors, and City Year and Communities in Schools personnel monitor students' progress at least every two weeks.

Approximately 80 percent of Clinton students speak Spanish at home, so the school works hard to overcome language barriers and grow parent participation in the school community. Para Progressar, an ESL/Education Access class for adults, helps parents develop their English skills. Artes Academicos, an innovative evening program, engages parents in weekly art projects to stimulate interest, accompanied by seminars that provide information on ways to better support their students, as well as relevant academic topics.

Clinton's approach has generated impressive outcomes. Fifty percent of seventh-graders are proficient in math on California tests, and the school improved substantially on California's Academic Performance Indicator (API) scale. Only one-third of students exhibit warning signals in attendance, behavior, and course passing. The number of students making straight A's has doubled, and more than 46 percent made the honor roll.

Even more significant is the culture shift among the students. As one school advisor put it, "The first year it was not cool to do well. Now, when we give out report cards, it's 'Oh man! What did you do?' when friends see a D." School personnel attribute the change to students' realization that all the adults are there to help them do well, combined with consistent and high expectations, recognition of student success, and a principal with a driving vision that is shared and implemented by all.

On the other side of the country, **T.E. Mabry Middle School, Spartanburg One, Spartanburg, South Carolina** is a national and state School to Watch, as well as a Making Middle Grades Work site. Mabry is a small school, with 420 students – about 83 percent White and 60 percent eligible for free and reduced-price lunches – in a small district in the northern part of the state. Mabry places a strong emphasis on creating standards-based consistency in the content their students are taught. Teachers are given ample time to plan lessons collaboratively to ensure that this happens. They meet in the morning to plan by department and produce common lesson plans for each course. In the afternoon they come together in grade level and interdisciplinary teams to

review data, identify struggling students, hold student-led parent and student conferences, and engage in goal setting and curriculum enhancement.

Proficient literacy is central to Mabry's culture. All students read during a 40-minute flex period organized within the lunch schedule. The librarian helps students choose material appropriate for their reading levels and interests, and students report on what they have read in weekly logs and journals. When enough books have been read and reported on, students receive prizes and honors during the reading celebration that occurs every nine weeks. Teachers support the reading initiative by using planning time to develop interesting, cross subject supplemental projects that make standards-based curriculum come alive

Teachers and administrators at Mabry have a strong focus on data. They review hard data from electronic portfolios, which every teacher is expected to monitor at least every two weeks, and "soft data," what they know of the students, and then jointly create a plan to get students up to speed where necessary.

To support the success of their teaching staff, Mabry – like every school in the district – receives district funding for an instructional coach who provides professional development support in the mornings and afternoons. Students can take advantage of Mabry's weekly After School Assistance program during which all teachers stay after the school day ends to focus on individual student needs. The district runs a late bus on these days to ensure that students can benefit from the program and still get home safely.

Mabry's scores on the South Carolina exams significantly surpass state averages. Each school in South Carolina receives an Absolute and Growth rating from one of five categories – *Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average,* or *Unsatisfactory* – based on student test scores. In 2009, Mabry received *Average* Absolute and Growth scores. In 2010, the Absolute and Growth scores were elevated to *Good*, and since 2011, Mabry has maintained an *Excellent* status for both Absolute and Growth scores (South Carolina Department of Education, 2013). Its success can be attributed to multiple factors including a strong and energetic principal, a supportive and close-knit community, and a strong district superintendent and school board that build a learning culture from elementary school forward.

Stories of schools like Clinton and Mabry – schools which create caring school climates and rigorous learning environments and which bring struggling students to success – can be found in all parts of the country. Perceiving that "schools can't do it alone," **Elev8**, with $119 million in support from **Atlantic Philanthropies since 2007,** melds the community school concept with school-based health centers, family and community engagement focus, and out-of-school learning time efforts in 19 middle schools in Chicago, Baltimore, New Mexico, and Oakland. Evaluations are promising. In Oakland, researchers found decreased long-term hardship and lowered reliance on social services, estimating $25 million in societal savings over the projected lifetimes of those served (DeNike & Ohlson, 2013). Hence, the Oakland school district committed to expanding the Elev8 effort, and the county health agency is working to open more school-based health centers. In Chicago, a 2011 analysis showed the promise of school-based health centers: more than 95 percent of students in Elev8 schools had seen a healthcare professional, received a basic physical, and were up-to-date on their immunizations, compared with 50 to 70 percent of the students in non-Elev8 schools. (Atlantic Philanthropies, 2014).

Closing Thoughts

In conclusion, we know that middle grades are pivotal years for our young people to build their skill sets and prepare for the challenges of high school. Without a strong foundation, students are more likely to struggle academically, become disengaged, and eventually drop out before they reach graduation. If we are to reach our 2020 goal, we must better prepare our young people for success in high school and beyond. By combining rigorous academics with strong support systems, from within the school and also the related community, we can give students the confidence and capabilities they need to move forward into high school and earn their diplomas.

Plank 5: Adult & Peer Supports

Defining the Challenge:

Positive role models can help young people develop skills often not systematically taught in the classroom, such as self-awareness, self-control, persistence, collaboration, and conflict resolution.

Beyond the classroom, young people benefit greatly from the support of an adult or peer who can help guide healthy decision-making during challenging circumstances. A nationally representative survey of high school dropouts showed that only 41 percent had an adult in their school environment they could talk to about personal problems, and 62 percent said that schools needed to provide students with more support systems outside the classroom (Bridgeland et al., 2006). Positive role models can help young people develop skills often not systematically taught in the classroom, such as self-awareness and self-control, grit and persistence, and collaboration and conflict resolution.

Developing these social and emotional skills or non-cognitive capacities in students shows promise for closing achievement gaps based on race and income (Balfanz et al., 2007). Research also demonstrates that a caring and supportive environment within the school walls is important to keep students engaged in their studies and on track for graduation (Bridgeland et al., 2006). However, while the U.S. devotes significant resources to developing academic skills within public school classrooms – an estimated $550 billion in 2010 according to the U.S. Census Bureau (University of Chicago Crime Lab, 2012) – insufficient attention is paid beyond the early grades to addressing non-academic factors of student growth and development that positively impact academic learning.

In turn, teachers across the United States recognize that social and emotional learning that complements and supports rigorous and relevant instruction is too often a missing piece of education. In a national survey, more than three-quarters of teachers expressed that social and emotional learning is beneficial to students because of positive effects on school attendance, academic success, college preparation, and workforce readiness (Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan, 2013).

National Update

A recent study found that more than three-quarters of at-risk young adults who had a mentor aspire to enroll in and graduate from college, versus only 56 percent of at-risk young adults who had no mentor. Additionally, 45 percent of all at-risk youth with a mentor are enrolled in some type of post-secondary education as opposed to 29 percent of at-risk youth who are enrolled but never had a mentor.

Creating these support systems for students is not a task that schools can tackle alone. As a nation, we must rally behind our young people to teach them the skills they need to be successful. High-quality mentoring is an evidence-based intervention that can boost students' performance in school and encourage college-going aspirations. A recent study found that more than three-quarters of at-risk young adults who had a mentor aspire to enroll in and graduate from college, versus only 56 percent of at-risk young adults who had no mentor. Additionally, 45 percent of all at-risk youth with a mentor are enrolled in some type of post-secondary education as opposed to 29 percent of at-risk youth who are enrolled but never had a mentor (Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014).

To increase opportunities for young people to engage in positive mentoring relationships, MENTOR: the National Mentoring Partnership, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships came together to sponsor **The Corporate Mentoring Challenge.** The Challenge encourages private corporations to create or expand existing mentoring initiatives and encourage their employees to participate, with the goal of increasing the number of mentors available to young people around the country. Corporations are in a unique position to leverage the power of mentoring as they can draw from a pool of professional adults with the capability to model the behaviors and aptitudes students need to be successful academically and in the workforce.

As the private sector continues to champion adult and peer supports in their communities, our nation has witnessed the emergence of champions within the Executive Branch. The Obama administration's **My Brother's Keeper** initiative, announced in February 2014, unites private and nonprofit organizations nationwide to help young men of color reach their full potential through mentoring, college and career readiness, and other such supports. Philanthropic leaders like the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Atlantic Philanthropies, Bloomberg Philanthropies, the California Endowment, the Ford Foundation, and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation have collectively pledged $200 million over the next five years to drive toward evidence-based solutions for some of the most intractable problems facing this cohort of youth.

State/Local Level Update

At the community level, highly effective programs leverage adult and peer supports to provide students with a variety of tools and resources that will help them navigate challenges ranging from creating healthy peer relationships to choosing a college that will be a good fit for their future goals.

The ability to set goals, maintain focus, and manage conflict are learned skills necessary for a young person to be successful both as a student and an adult. However, particularly for young people growing up in low-income and underserved neighborhoods, there is a lack of supportive adults to model these positive behaviors and help students cultivate these skills. **Becoming a Man (B.A.M.)** is a dropout and violence prevention program addressing this shortage in underserved schools in urban Chicago.

Violence is a constant reality in many low-income neighborhoods of Chicago. By the time the school year ended in 2012, 24 Chicago Public School students had been fatally shot, and another 319 had been wounded by gunfire (Ahmed-Ullah, 2012). Research by the University of Chicago Crime Lab found that many of these violent incidents were caused by impulsive and reactive decisions made by young people in possession of firearms (University of Chicago Crime Lab, 2012). B.A.M. seeks to address the root cause of that violence by engaging at-risk males in grades 7-12 through in-school programming. Participants learn about and practice impulse control, reading the social cues and intentions of others, visionary goal setting, personal responsibility, and integrity. These non-cognitive skills are highly correlated with reductions in violent and anti-social behavior.

In 2012, B.A.M. underwent a rigorous randomized control trial which found that the program reduced violent crime arrests by 44 percent and weapons crime and vandalism by 36 percent, reduced the likelihood of attending school in a juvenile justice setting by 53 percent.

In 2012, B.A.M. underwent a rigorous randomized control trial which found that the program reduced violent crime arrests by 44 percent and weapons crime and vandalism by 36 percent, reduced the likelihood of attending school in a juvenile justice setting by 53 percent, and forecast an increase in future graduation rates by 10-23 percent (University of Chicago Crime Lab, 2012).

During the 2012-13 school year, B.A.M. served 492 young men in 17 schools. This year, that number has more than tripled to 1,500 male youths in nearly 40 schools in underserved Chicago neighborhoods including Austin, Englewood, North Lawndale, Woodlawn, and Pilsen/Little Village (Becoming a Man, n.d.).

Young people can also greatly benefit from the presence of an adult who comes from a similar background and has faced comparable challenges. These role models are uniquely equipped to anticipate the likely roadblocks and help students envision ways to overcome those challenges. The **National College Advising Corps (NCAC)** provides these positive influences in the form of recent college graduates who are employed as college advisors in underserved high schools in Chapel Hill, Chicago, New York City, San Francisco, and St. Louis.

NCAC advisors are well attuned to the challenges that their students face as they make the journey from high school to college. In 2013, 69 percent of advisors were from underrepresented populations, 63 percent were Pell eligible as students, and 54 percent were the first in their families to attend college (National College Advising Corps, 2014). NCAC's approach is working – high schools with NCAC corps advisors see an eight to 10 percent increase in college-going rates compared to schools without advisors.

NCAC has big plans for growth in the 2014-15 school year thanks to a $10 million gift from the John M. Belk Endowment. This new funding, along with previous commitments, will allow NCAC to place 504 advisers in 552 high schools, and serve 165,000 students in the 2014-15 school year (National College Advising Corps, 2014).

Closing Thoughts

Adult and peer supports provide students with the essential developmental resources they need to be ready to learn, to succeed in school, and to graduate from high school. Increasing access to these support systems can help young people overcome academic difficulties, high poverty environments, and many other barriers to graduation. Research affirms that having these non-academic components in place results in increased academic achievement, social competence, and civic engagement, regardless of race or family income (Balfanz et al., 2007). These supports are therefore a key component to move the nation closer to our 2020 goal.

SNAPSHOT 3

Technology Brings STEM Professionals to the Classroom

A workforce skilled in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) is crucial to maintaining America's competitive edge in a global market. In 2011, 26 million U.S. jobs required a high level of knowledge in any one STEM field. The demand to fill these jobs has steadily increased in past decades, but the rate at which schools are producing graduates with adequate skills is not keeping pace. By 2018, it is estimated 2.4 million STEM jobs will go unfilled. This is ironic given America's high youth unemployment.

In California, where the demand for STEM jobs is concentrated, students lag behind the national average in math and science. Aragon Burlingham witnessed the gaps in students' knowledge of basic math and science firsthand while mentoring high school students in California's public schools. Determined to find a way to close those gaps, in 2007, he left his job as a Silicon Valley engineer to found We Teach Science, a nonprofit mentoring

Continued on page 49

SNAPSHOT 3 (CONTINUED)

organization that employs an innovative use of technology to advance science and math skills in public schools.

Burlingham originally intended the program to focus on science, but he quickly realized many students lacked the foundation in math they needed to understand scientific concepts. Using its flagship program, Remote Tutoring and Mentoring (RTM), We Teach Science (WTS) helps remedy this problem by giving students the opportunity to meet once a week with STEM professionals via a web-based, interactive whiteboard and audio connection for tutoring sessions in math. This virtual approach to tutoring and mentoring gives STEM professionals the flexibility to regularly engage with students without having to interrupt their workday.

By 2011, WTS served students in the California school districts of Pacifica and Berryessa. In 2012, AT&T, through the AT&T Aspire Mentoring Academy provided financial support and engaged AT&T's employees as tutors and mentors. This allowed WTS to expand to California's San Leandro School District and the DeSoto School District in Texas. When asked to describe AT&T's impact on his program, Burlingham says, "It boils down to one word – relevance." Interacting with professionals who daily use the mathematical concepts taught in school captures students' attention and helps encourage them to consider a STEM-related career in the future. Helping students to see the link between what they learn in the classroom and future employment opportunities is critical, as a lack of connection between learning in school and real-life experience is a leading reason that students leave school before graduation (Bridgeland et al., 2006).

We Teach Science produces real results. Through data-sharing agreements with partner school districts, WTS has determined that, on average, mentored students improve their California Standardized Test (CST) scores by 13.3 points every year. In 2013, 60 percent of students who scored in either the Far Below Basic or Below Basic categories on the CST improved their scores by one category, compared to only 10 percent of nonparticipant peers. And 13 percent more students said they either "liked or loved math," from the beginning to the end of the year.

We Teach Science's innovative use of technology connects students with the resources they need to excel in math and science. By opening students up to the possibility of pursuing a career in a STEM field, We Teach Science is doing its part to unleash the potential of America's youth to become our nation's future leaders in scientific and technological innovation and helping to close America's skills gap.

Plank 10: Dropout Recovery

Defining the Challenge

In 2012, the employment rate for young adults who did not complete high school was just 48 percent, 64 percent for those with a high school diploma, and 87 percent for those with at least a bachelor's degree. Keeping with this trend, it is estimated that by 2020 more than 65 percent of U.S. jobs will require some form of postsecondary education.

As we work to ensure that more young people will graduate from high school on time, we must not forget about those who leave school without a diploma. Success in today's economy requires a degree perhaps more so than at any other time in our nation's history. In 2012, the employment rate for young adults who did not complete high school was just 48 percent, 64 percent for those with a high school diploma, and 87 percent for those with at least a bachelor's degree (Child Trends, 2014). Keeping with this trend, it is estimated that by 2020 more than 65 percent of U.S. jobs will require some form of postsecondary education. However, in the United States today there are 6.7 million young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither in school nor working.

Disconnected youth (which we refer to in this report as "Opportunity Youth," given that surveys of this demographic demonstrate that they do not view themselves as disconnected, and the majority are working to reconnect to school and work (Bridgeland et al., 2006)) cost taxpayers $93 billion annually, and $1.6 trillion over their lifetimes in lost revenues and increased social services (Belfield, Levin, & Rosen, 2012). But instead of viewing these young people as liabilities, we should see them as assets – as potential to be fulfilled. In 2012, 3.7 million U.S. jobs went unfilled due to a lack of skilled workers, (Gragg, n.d.), and in a recent poll of U.S. companies, 40 percent of respondents said that they were being held back by an inability to find qualified workers (Opportunity Nation, n.d.-a). If we invest in re-engaging this demographic in school and work, they can become a valuable resource to our nation as they take on the jobs of the future and strengthen our communities and our economy.

National Update

Young people drop out of school for a diverse set of reasons, which requires us to create an equally diverse set of pathways to steer them back to school and career. **Opportunity Nation,** a national campaign, is working with nonprofits, businesses, governments, and community organizations to create a variety of options for young people to re-engage, whether that is through obtaining a GED, pursuing higher education, or gaining work experience.

Opportunity Nation's goal is to give every young person the opportunity to achieve their full potential, regardless of where they start in life. The campaign's Shared Plan of Action builds alternative pathways to education and career for young adults, encourages organizations, businesses, and governments to consider innovative ways to better support youth, and incorporates suggestions to expand school and career options for young people through policy at every level of government. The Shared Plan advocates for action steps that include: federal investment in career and technical education programs to train students for the 29 million jobs requiring a sub-baccalaureate degree; improved college guidance in "high need" school districts; increased access to dropout recovery programs, and

flexible scheduling for those programs; the recruitment of millions of new volunteer mentors; and increased federal investment in programs that have proven to be effective (Opportunity Nation, n.d.-b).

We must also continue to support programs having a positive impact on Opportunity Youth by helping them grow and serve more young people. The **Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund**, launched alongside the **Aspen Forum for Community Solutions** in 2012, has to date disseminated $6 million in grants to community organizations around the country whose collective impact strategies are designed to channel the untapped potential of Opportunity Youth. In addition, the Fund provides those communities with technical assistance, and has established a learning community that allows the grantees to share best practices. The communities that received initial planning grants will be invited to apply for implementation grants in the coming months. These communities include the Hopi Reservation in Arizona, a group in rural Maine, and organizations in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, Boston, New Orleans, Baltimore, and Detroit.

In December 2013, the Fund announced a flagship corporate partnership with JP Morgan Chase, which committed $5 million over five years as part of JP MorganChase's $250 million, five year *New Skills at Work* Initiative (The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions, n.d.).

State/Local Level Update

A promising pathway back to school and employment for Opportunity Youth combines academics with on-the-job learning. This allows students to gain career experience while simultaneously completing their education, fast-tracking them into the workforce. Recognizing that some of the most rapidly growing employment sectors require more than a high school degree, many of these programs have broadened their focus beyond a high school diploma towards two-year degrees, technical training, or college.

One successful model of this approach is **Year Up,** which operates in 12 cities across the country. The program combines hands-on skills training, college credits, and corporate internships, and is highly effective in helping young adults navigate the path to education and career. Eighty-five percent of Year Up graduates are employed or enrolled in college full-time within four months of attending the program, and graduates earn on average $15 per hour, the equivalent of $30,000 per year.

Building on this success, Year Up intends to scale its program nationally with the support of community colleges. In 2010, Year Up launched its first Community College Pilot Program in Baltimore. The core program components remain the same, but students are also dual-enrolled at Baltimore City Community College, giving them access to

the library, tutoring, and other college services. A similar Community College Pilot was launched at Miami Dade College in 2012, and another in 2013 in partnership with Peirce College in Philadelphia (Year Up, n.d.). Year Up hopes to reach many more opportunity youth through the community college system and help them transition successfully into the world of work.

Students disconnect from school and work for many reasons, and programs must provide flexible options if their students are to succeed. **Gateway to College** focuses on young people who were unable to thrive in a traditional high school setting for any number of reasons. Participants include teen parents, adjudicated youth, foster youth, those recovering from drug and alcohol addictions, and those who need a flexible schedule to accommodate work and family responsibilities. To meet these needs, Gateway to College created a dual credit system in which students can earn their high school diploma, while simultaneously progressing towards their college degree or certificate.

The program focuses on young people ages 16-21 who have either already dropped out of high school, or are at serious risk for dropping out. Within Gateway to College, 66 percent are students of color, and 75 percent are first-generation college-goers. On average, students enter the program at age 17 with a GPA around 1.44 and only 46 percent of their high school credits completed (Gateway to College, n.d.). Gateway to College also provides young people with access to instructors and dropout youth resource specialists who help students gain not only academic credits, but also the life skills and study habits they will need to be successful in college.

Gateway to College students have an average attendance rate of 82 percent, despite the fact that many of them struggled with attendance in high school. Participants have passed 72 percent of the nearly 70,000 college courses taken, and they graduate from the program with a high school diploma and an average of 33 college credits, putting them well on their way to an associate's degree.

Data collected from 2004 through 2012 shows that participants respond positively to this approach. Students have an average attendance rate of 82 percent, despite the fact that many of them struggled with attendance in high school. Participants have passed 72 percent of the nearly 70,000 college courses taken, and they graduate from the program with a high school diploma and an average of 33 college credits, putting them well on their way to an associate's degree (Gateway to College, n.d.).

Gateway to College was founded at the Portland Community College in 2000, and soon captured the attention of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for its innovative approach to working with opportunity youth. In 2003, the Gates Foundation funded the replication of the program, and today, Gateway to College is a national network of 43 colleges working in partnership with 125 school districts in 23 states.

Closing Thoughts

The overarching goal of our 90 percent high school graduation rate by the Class of 2020 is to open the door for more young Americans to succeed in school and career. When offered the opportunity to re-engage, many Opportunity Youth demonstrate persistence and resilience in the face of challenges, as well as a thirst to succeed and give back to their communities. To deny this opportunity to young people is to squander an enormous source of talent and potential our nation cannot afford to lose.

SNAPSHOT 4

CPB's American Graduate: Let's Make It Happen

Public media stations are well positioned to help communities address critical issues as the most trusted institution in the country when it comes to education, reporting and local service. Locally owned and operated with more than 120 million Americans tuning in monthly and nearly 65 million listening each week, public broadcasting stations can put a spotlight on the issue and bring diverse communities together through programming that educates, informs, and inspires.

In 2011, as part of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's (CPB) strategic framework around Digital, Diversity, and Dialogue, CPB launched American Graduate: Let's Make It Happen. This initiative was a five-year commitment to partner with stations in at-risk communities and help address the high school dropout crisis as a key media partner with the America's Promise Alliance Grad Nation campaign. Working with key station leaders and potential partner organizations, CPB aligned public media's content and services with the strategies outlined in the Civic Marshall Plan.

Through over 1700 hours of national and local education-related television and radio journalism, documentaries from diverse perspectives, over 800 digital student and teacher resources, public media stations leveraged their convening power and community connections to amplify the voices of teachers, parents, students and concerning community stakeholders – all affected by the issue. American Graduate has illuminated new possibilities for collaboration and inspired others to action.

The Everyone Graduates Center at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education in a Summer 2013 report concluded that local public media stations have a critical and unique role to play in building community capacity to meet the national priority of ending America's high school dropout crisis. As part of a survey among American Graduate community partners conducted by the Everyone Graduates Center, respondents confirmed that public media stations told the story of the dropout crisis in a way that enabled more people to get involved. Community partners also reported that public media facilitated greater focus and collaboration among community organizations and that students' participation in American Graduate programs resulted in their increased commitment to school, to graduating, and to preparing for their future.

For example, both Alabama Public Television and WVAS-FM partnered with local historically black colleges and universities to engage and mentor students on the path to graduation.

A series of local American Graduate Community Town Halls this year brought together businesses, parents, students, educators, intervention and faith-based organizations to discuss the challenges facing students beyond the classroom and identify a renewed plan of action. Key themes emerged around the need for increased participation from caring adults across all sectors and access to quality early childhood education as a long-term preventative solution. In addition, survey data confirmed that individuals were motivated to act as a result their participation in the town halls and broadcasts.

The American Graduate initiative is helping to reshape the story from a crisis to an opportunity for success. By celebrating and telling the story of "movers" in the community and inviting others to share their personal stories of champions, American Graduate can inspire millions to identify simple or scalable ways they can be *American Graduate Champions*.

Part 3

Moneyball for Dropout Prevention

We are repeatedly asked, "What works to prevent students from dropping out or being pushed out from high school?" There could not be a more important question. And it is a question a new campaign, called "Moneyball for Government," a project of Results for America, is asking every day to encourage governments at all levels to increase their use of evidence and data when investing limited taxpayer dollars. Any investment, by the private or public sectors, should adopt this same approach to improve outcomes for young people, families, communities, and our economy. So this section of the report highlights some important, recent reviews of the latest evidence of effectiveness in dropout prevention and provides other resources that are building the evidence base.

Russell W. Rumberger has been a leading researcher on dropout prevention over the last three decades and collaborated with us on this section. One outstanding resource is his recent book, *Dropping Out: Why Students Drop Out of High School and What Can Be Done About It.*

Another important and recent resource is The Campbell Collaboration's systematic review and summary evidence of the effects of various prevention and intervention programs to increase school completion or to reduce dropping out. This meta-analysis, which included 548 reports describing 167 studies based on generally rigorous selection criteria, examines the comparative effectiveness of different programs and approaches to determine the most reliable effects on school completion and dropout outcomes. The conclusion was that "most [reviewed] school- and community-based programs were effective in decreasing school dropout…if they are implemented well and are appropriate for the local environment." The study's authors also recommended that policymakers and practitioners should consider cost-effectiveness when choosing between effective dropout prevention programs, a critical component of the Moneyball approach.

We strongly encourage you to read the entire report, *Dropout Prevention and Intervention Programs: Effects on Completion and Dropout Among School-aged Children and Youth,* found at: **http://campbellcollaboration.org/lib/project/158/**. Consistent with these principles, some of the types of programs that were deemed effective are highlighted below. We also align these types of programs with what the dropouts themselves told us they needed to stay in school and on track, based on the report, *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts* and the Civic Marshall Plan's evidence-based planks.

School or Class Restructuring: Creating smaller, more personalized learning environments; blocked schedules in which students spend more time with fewer teachers; in academies during the critical transition year of ninth grade; or in classes or academies with a career or career technical focus. Such evidence is consistent with the number one solution dropouts themselves identified – making classroom learning more personalized, engaging and relevant.

Career Technical Training: Coursework, internships, or employment oriented toward work or career interests. Again, these efforts reflect the interests of students who left school in making high school courses relevant to their career interests and their desire to see school lead to a job.

Supplemental Academic Services: Tutoring, homework assistance, and acceleration courses that refresh students' prior learning. Many dropouts cited falling behind in school and finding it difficult to catch up as a reason for dropping out.

The "Moneyball" for Government Approach

We believe that government at all levels should help improve outcomes for young people, their families, and communities by:

- Building evidence about the practices, policies, and programs that will achieve the most effective and efficient results, so that policymakers can make better decisions;
- Investing limited taxpayer dollars in programs that use evidence and data to demonstrate they work; and
- Directing funds away from practices, policies, and programs that consistently fail to achieve measurable outcomes.

For more information, visit **http://moneyballforgov.com**

Mentoring and Counseling: Adult mentors or trained counselors for students. Dropouts cited the need for a caring adult who knew their names and their interests to help them stay on track in school.

Alternative Schools: Schools that provide educational and social and emotional services to students who are not thriving or have been pushed out of regular schools, and some of which provide the flexibility for older students to go to school and work, addressing one of the main reasons students cited for dropping out – they needed a job to support themselves and their families.

Attendance Monitoring and Behavioral Contingency Programs: Dropping out is often a slow process of disengagement from school, with early warning indicators that point to poor attendance patterns and behavior. Successful programs incentivize students to demonstrate good attendance, school performance and other behaviors.

College-Oriented Programming: Programs focus on a college preparatory curriculum and college-oriented academic advising. Dropouts told us they wanted more expected of them and the opportunity to earn college credits while in high school.

Community Service: Programs plan and carry out a community service project, commonly coupled with skill building. Dropouts cited service-learning – having more real-world service opportunities that are linked to classroom learning and reflection – as a leading solution to keeping them engaged in school.

Teenage Parents: A variety of programs encourage young mothers to complete schooling and many tie welfare payments or other incentives to school enrollment and attendance. Program components include daycare services. A significant percentage of dropouts cited teenage pregnancy and parenthood as a reason for dropping out, not seeing the means to stay in school and raise a child. However, many teenage parents had high grades and were doing well in school.

Other resources that are building and sharing the evidence base for dropout prevention and intervention programs include:

1. **What Works Clearinghouse at the U.S. Department of Education** (http://www.ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Topic.aspx?sid=3)
   - Employs strict criteria for considering evidence
   - Has reviewed 28 programs to date and finds only five programs that improved graduation rates
2. **Washington State Institute for Public Policy** (http://wsipp.wa.gov/ReportFile/1045/Wsipp_What-Works-Targeted-Truancy-and-Dropout-Programs-in-Middle-and-High-School_Full-Report.pdf)
   - Uses more inclusive criteria for considering evidence, but discounted estimates of effects for weaker studies
   - Finds only six studies that improved graduation rates and only significant effects were for alternative education programs (Career Academies in particular)
3. **The Dropout Prevention Practice Guide** (http://www.ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide.aspx?sid=9)
   - Given the building evidence, we also recommend examining strategies in this Guide

Finally, we should consider not just effectiveness of dropout prevention programs, but their costs and cost-effectiveness when choosing between approaches. See studies and resources at the Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University **(http://cbcse.org/)**, including the recent report, *Cost-effectiveness Analysis of Interventions that Improve High School Completion.*

Part 4 Paths Forward

From early education through career entry, our nation's education system must be strengthened if we are to equip children with the knowledge and skills to succeed in adolescence and adult life.

All of us – students, families, educators, business leaders, nonprofits, and officials in federal, state, and local governments – must continue to work together to improve practices, policies, and partnerships, maintain momentum, and achieve our GradNation goals. From early education through career entry, our nation's education system must be strengthened if we are to equip children with the knowledge and skills to succeed in adolescence and adult life.

The first Building a Grad Nation report outlined a comprehensive set of practices, policies and strategies to boost high school graduation rates. Subsequent reports provided supplemental policy recommendations and strategies across all levels of government aligned with the core elements of the report and the Civic Marshall Plan. This year's report once again recognizes the shifting landscape between federal and state policy and growing importance of state efforts. Therefore, we provide an overview of current federal interventions that can help drive action in states and districts, and state policy recommendations with the potential to bring the national goal of a 90 percent graduation rate by the Class of 2020 within reach.

As this report shows, we must commit ourselves to improving educational outcomes for all children by addressing both "in-school" and "in-life" factors. Much, but not all, recent education reform has focused on academic, in-school factors of achievement, such as improving data reporting, teacher and principal effectiveness, standards, curriculum, and assessment. While these efforts must continue, and even be accelerated, education leaders and policymakers should be mindful that a child's complete set of needs – including, health, nutrition, social and emotional development, adult and peer supports – play a significant and complementary role in academic and life success. We urge stakeholders across the spectrum of government to pay due attention to policies and strategies intended to improve the school environment and address the social, emotional, and health needs of children that dramatically affect their ability to thrive.

Federal Policies/Interventions:

1. Continue to improve data reporting and accountability systems. The nation has made significant progress in strengthening graduation rate reporting and accountability, aided by the passage of No Child Left Behind, the National Governors Association Graduation Rate Compact, the U.S. Department of Education's 2008 graduation rate regulations, and the Race to the Top initiatives. Forty-seven states are reporting graduation rates using a common measure – the four-year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) – at the school, district, and state levels for all students and for student subgroups. To maintain progress and enable stakeholders to accurately compare rates across states, however, the U.S. Department of Education and state leaders need to reach a consensus on key issues of variation in graduation rate reporting. These issues include:

- Establishing common definitions for who is a first time ninth-grader, when the cohort counts are established, when the four years of the four-year ACGR is over;
- Identifying student subgroups accurately and consistently across states, especially for students with disabilities, those with immigrant status, and economically disadvantaged students;

- Defining what counts as a "regular" diploma (currently states have flexibility to decide and there is wide variation, especially for students with disabilities);
- Defining the parameters for extended time beyond four years (some states permit students to stay for a year or two beyond 12th grade to earn both their high school diploma and college credit, others provide students an extended year or even two to attain a "regular" high school diploma);
- Reporting by charter schools, home schools, virtual schools, juvenile detention centers, and governors' schools;
- Establishing that students can be removed from a school's ninth grade cohort only if they enroll in another institution from which they can earn a regular high school diploma (or if they meet another reasonable exclusion, including death);
- Establishing how undocumented transfers out of state and the country will be coded/counted, and providing training for local districts on how to record this;
- Establishing how to account for middle grade dropouts – students who leave school before becoming part of an official ninth grade cohort.

To better understand and address the variations in these definitions across the state, we propose the organization of a national, bipartisan forum on measuring and reporting high school graduation rates in partnership with the National Center for Education Statistics. Bringing together stakeholders at every level and across educational domains can spur needed conversations on how best to ensure states, districts, and schools maintain a level of flexibility, share ideas, capabilities, proficiencies and information, and work toward better data reporting and accountability regionally and nationally. Such a forum should also consider the question of students who drop out in the middle grades, or before the ninth grade cohort is established.

2. Continue to support school improvement and innovation at the state and district levels.

In the absence of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the U.S. Department of Education has been instrumental in moving forward initiatives to support school improvement and innovation at the state and district levels. Since 2009, the U.S. Department of Education has directed funds toward a state's lowest-performing schools through its School Improvement Grants (SIG) program. More than half of schools in the first two SIG cohorts showed incremental gains on student test scores, a promising sign for the program; however, gaps in school data and uneven results among schools within different locations (i.e. rural vs. urban) and interventions taken indicate improvements can be made (Klein, 2013). Recent changes to SIG regulations allow states to have a greater say in the turnaround interventions schools can take, providing more flexibility for districts and schools to tailor reform strategies to their particular circumstances (Klein, 2014; Slavin, 2014). The new leeway will allow states to come up with their own interventions for school turnaround or adopt a "whole school reform" model that would let states partner with an organization that has an established track record of success. To take full advantage of these new options, states should implement targeted, evidence-based turnaround and transformation strategies. The Institute for Education Sciences (IES) and other federal research organizations can assist states by collecting and distributing information on high quality intervention programs. The U.S.

Department of Education should also ensure that data collection on these schools is complete and accurate to help states and districts make data-driven decisions on school improvement.

On the innovation frontier, the U.S. Department of Education has helped spur the growth of evidence-based practices through its Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) to move forward proven programs and practices. The Obama Administration has also asked Congress to fund new initiatives, including High School Redesign, which promotes whole school redesign of the traditional American high school (U.S. Department of Education, 2013a). The intent is to bring high schools into the 21st century by more effectively engaging students in rigorous and relevant coursework and providing young people with opportunities to apply classroom learning to the real world. The goal is to increase graduation rates and prepare students for college and career by ensuring that students graduate with (1) credits toward a postsecondary credential and (2) career-related experiences and competencies.

Under the President's proposal, $150 million would be disseminated through a competitive grant process to partnerships amongst school districts, employers, and institutions of higher education committed to transforming the high school experience. Traditional instruction will be complemented by effective applied learning opportunities and exposure to the workplace. Students would no longer move along in their studies based on the amount of time spent in class; rather, redesigned high schools would use competency-based progression – allowing students to advance at their own pace, or receive additional support when needed. And students will earn credit toward a postsecondary credential and receive targeted college and career counseling, effectively building the transition to postsecondary education and the workforce into the educational design.

As part of achieving the President's high school redesign goal, the U.S. Department of Labor is collaborating with the U.S. Department of Education on the Youth CareerConnect (YCC) grant program, a $100 million grant program to scale up evidence-based high school models (The White House, 2013). Approximately 25-40 grants will be awarded for program implementation in the 2014-15 school year. Though a step in the right direction, the YCC grants do not require all students in a school or district to be served, nor do applicants have to propose whole school redesign. Therefore, we recommend that Congress also fund President Obama's High School Redesign proposal. We anticipate that it will lead to students graduating from high school with the critical thinking skills and ability to apply knowledge to solve problems that will prepare today's students for tomorrow's opportunities.

The Obama Administration and U.S. Department of Education have also set as a priority the closing of achievement gaps for chronically low-performing student groups. The Race to the Top (RTT) Equity and Opportunity competition intends to drive systemic change in districts and schools by encouraging them to invest in programs and strategies that can help mitigate the effects of poverty (U.S. Department of Education, 2014b). The administration is also putting high-poverty students and schools at the forefront through the Promise Neighborhoods and Promise Zones initiatives to improve educational outcomes and revitalize communities by investing in high-quality schools, stimulating economic activity, and reducing violent crime (The White House, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2013b). President Obama also recently signed a Presidential Memorandum establishing the My Brother's

Keeper Task Force, a collaboration focusing specifically on creating opportunities for boys and young men of color, and keeping them on the right track in school and in life (The White House, n.d.-a).

These and other initiatives are critical to moving school improvement and innovation forward, and directly addressing persistent opportunity and achievement gaps. Therefore, federal funding should continue to encourage states, districts, and schools to implement evidence-based strategies and build collaborative movements to close these gaps and help students reach their full potential.

State Strategies:

Strengthening In-School Factors of Achievement

1. Ensure students are college- and career-ready. Forty-four states and the District of Columbia have adopted the carefully developed, research-based Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Unlike many previously adopted state academic content standards, these aim to align curriculum with the essential concepts students must master to graduate high school with the skills to succeed in college and career training programs. We support the work of states to incorporate college- and career-ready standards and assessments into their K-12 system. In line with the Obama Administration's High School Redesign initiative, we also believe states should encourage schools and districts to create more college- and career-ready opportunities. This includes offering students project- and problem-based learning experiences, internships and mentorships, and opportunities to gain college credit while working toward their high school diploma.

2. Strengthen accountability and improvement systems by putting greater emphasis on traditionally underserved student subgroups. The nation's progress on graduation rates is fueled by improvements among students who have traditionally been underserved by America's public school system. While there have been improvements in the graduation rates among African American and Hispanic students overall, outcomes differ widely by state. Roughly 40 percent of states have seen increases in graduation rates among students of color over the past several years, and roughly 40 percent of

Federal E-rate Program

High-speed broadband is a critical element of educational infrastructure in the 21st century. While most schools have internet access of some sort, many lack the quality of connectivity needed to take advantage of digital learning opportunities unimagined just a few years ago. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is working to change that.

In 1996, Congress directed the FCC to create the E-rate (Education rate) program. E-rate provides telephone and internet service to schools and libraries with discounts on these services. The discounts are based on the percentage of low-income students served with higher discounts to schools and libraries in rural areas.

Largely because of E-rate, nearly every classroom in America has access to the internet. However, half of the schools and libraries that apply for E-rate have slower internet access than the average American home. President Obama has set a goal of providing 99 percent of students with high speed broadband in their schools and libraries over the next five years. The FCC is considering how to modernize and expand E-rate to bring the nation's schools into the digital age.

Applicants have requested more funding than is available every year since the inception of E-rate. In 2013, nearly $5 billion in funding was requested, but only $2.4 billion was available. The FCC should expand the E-rate program to achieve the President's goal.

states have seen declines (Balfanz, Bridgeland, Bruce, & Fox, 2013).

States are in the process of designing and implementing new accountability and improvement systems under waivers from key provisions of ESEA granted to states by the U.S. Department of Education. Evidence suggests that many states need to strengthen the systems they are adopting to put a greater emphasis on traditionally underserved students. For example:

- An analysis of subgroup accountability conducted by the Campaign for High School Equity, a coalition of civil rights organizations, explored significant changes made to accountability systems in ESEA waiver states and found that many created new "super subgroups" of students. The formation of these new groups is cause for concern because it allows states to "hide" underserved student groups within larger groups, and eliminates the automatic triggering of intervention for low-performing, underserved students. ESEA waivers have resulted in 22 states identifying fewer schools for supports and interventions, with nine of those states seeing a greater than 50 percent decrease in the number of identified schools (Campaign for High School Equity, 2013).
- An analysis by the Alliance for Excellent Education found that 11 states with waivers either do not require interventions based on the graduation rates of student subgroups, or include subgroup graduation rates for such a small portion of their overall index that they are unlikely to trigger an intervention (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2013).

One way to begin addressing these concerns is to fully implement guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Education in March 2013. Specifically, states and school districts should ensure that evidence-based support is implemented when one or more groups of traditionally underserved students (i.e., African American, Hispanic, students with disabilities, English language learners, and low-income students) miss performance targets for two or more years.

3. Create state policies that link dropouts and graduates to college and career opportunities.

States should learn from the Texas legislation that provides financial incentives for districts to recover dropouts. Texas House Bill 1137 authorized state funding for school districts to help young people up to age 26 receive their high school diplomas (Allen & Wolfe, 2010). (Most states cut off free public education funding for students at age 21). Texas also encourages districts to recover dropouts by giving them credit in its state accountability system for students who get back on-track immediately or remain enrolled and progress toward a degree until age 26. In 2006, the state also passed House Bill 1 to allocate funds for districts to implement college- and career-readiness programs and practices. HB1 requires all districts to make the equivalent of 12 hours of college credit available to high school students. Similarly, Tennessee's governor recently proposed the 'Tennessee Promise" program, which would use state lottery reserve funds to pay for two years of community or technical college for all high school graduates, making community college free for all students (State of Tennessee, 2014). We encourage other states to take note of the efforts in Texas and Tennessee to increase access to college- and career programs, and consider how similar legislation could be enacted elsewhere.

4. Eliminate counterproductive school and district policies.

Many schools and districts have policies that unintentionally counteract efforts to improve graduation rates. This includes discipline and retention policies that push out low-performing students, especially those who have behavioral issues. A recent report by the Discipline Disparities Research-to-Practice Collaborative found that students of color, particularly African-Americans, and students with disabilities are suspended at disproportionate rates compared to White students, which puts them at much greater risk for disengaging and dropping out of school (Discipline Disparities Research-to-Practice Collaborative, 2014). (There is far less discrimination in serious disciplinary violations that are far more stringently defined. The wide gap between reasonableness and putative discrimination is found in local practices, primarily "willful defiance" and "disruption of classroom"). This fact is at the heart of the recent U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice push to redesign discipline policies and practices to foster safe and supportive school climates (U.S. Department of Education, 2014d). Federal IDEA regulations require states to report annually on disciplinary actions involving students with disabilities, but do not hold schools and districts accountable. The Civil Rights Data Collection and Title IV of ESEA (Safe

and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act) require only sampled – not universal – reporting from schools, districts, and states on school discipline disaggregated by student subgroup, and neither mandate annual collection of data (Losen, 2011). Only 18 states require some type of discipline data collection or reporting through state statute, and of those, only eight require student data to be disaggregated by student subgroups (CSG Justice Center, 2014). Accordingly, states should hold schools and districts accountable for tracking and reporting the effects of: attendance; grade retention and promotion; discipline policies; and the over-promotion of GED programs and alternative schools, on student graduation rates, especially for the student subgroups most affected.

5. Improve school-based early warning indicators and interventions for the "ABCs" in state data systems. Research shows the "ABCs" – attendance, behavior problems, and course performance – are accurate indicators of dropping out as early as middle school. Students missing 10 percent of school days, receiving a poor behavior grade, and/or failing mathematics or English in sixth grade have an increased risk of dropping out, and states should ensure these school-based indicators are included in data reports to identify off-track students (Attendance Works, n.d.-b). This needs to start with tracking chronic absence at the student-level, not just the school-level as many schools do. Most importantly, students identified through early warning indicator data systems need to be supported through comprehensive school interventions, including tutoring and academic wraparound services, mentoring programs, and social and emotional learning supports.

Strengthening "In Life" Factors of Student Achievement

1. Incorporate social and emotional learning into the K-12 curriculum. Evidence increasingly suggests college, career, and life readiness is driven by more than just content knowledge and academic skills, and that student success is affected by a wider set of factors, including social and emotional competence (Farrington et al., 2012). In a large-scale meta-analysis of students in kindergarten through high school, those in school-based, universal social and emotional learning (SEL) programs demonstrated significantly improved attitudes, behaviors, and academic performance (Durlak, Weissberg, Schellinger, Dymnicki, & Taylor, 2011). SEL gives students crucial skills – self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making – that help them handle stress, persist in the face of tough challenges, and build positive relationships with adults and peers. SEL not only improves academic performance, but also has the potential to reshape children's brain plasticity and promotes adaptive emotional and cognitive functioning in ways that have a positive lifelong impact (Edutopia, 2008). This is especially important for many children living in poverty, who suffer great stress and trauma early in life that negatively affects the way they learn and perform academically.

Therefore, it is important that states move social and emotional learning from the periphery of education policy into the center of the conversation. Although all states have preschool SEL standards and many have integrated SEL standards, only Illinois, Kansas, and Pennsylvania have stand-alone K-12 SEL standards (Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013). To make it a priority in schools, states need to establish comprehensive K-12 SEL standards. A recent survey of U.S teachers indicates the majority support SEL standards and want more training in teaching SEL behaviors (J. Bridgeland et al., 2013). As such, states should also lay the foundation for SEL in classrooms by

revamping state teacher certification requirements, which have the greatest potential for making SEL an important component of teacher education programs and professional development. State and district leaders can learn more from the nearly 20 years of work by the Collaboration for Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning (CASEL) and from their Collaborating Districts Initiative (CASEL, n.d.-a), as well as from the work of Turnaround for Children in creating Fortified Learning Environments for children growing up in poverty (Turnaround for Children, n.d.).

2. Align and coordinate services, resources, and data across state agencies. In our increasingly connected world, it is necessary for states to take advantage of the opportunities technology presents to link agencies and provide better support to children and families. Coordinated data systems –sometimes impeded by incompatibility among systems, bureaucratic restrictions, and privacy protocols – are necessary to serving children well in the 21st century. Removing communication barriers among education, social, health, and safety services will ensure children are not falling through the cracks. States should make every effort to bring these services together and create a seamlessly aligned system.

3. Ensure in-school access to health and wellness programs and services. The health and well-being of young people plays a critical role in their educational achievement. Conversely, a young person's level of educational attainment plays an equally important role in their health over a lifetime (Office of Adolescent Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013). Students with access to health services are more likely to be in school, and ultimately stay in school. The American Public Health Association (APHA) reports that more than 8.3 million children and teens – about 16 percent of the K-12 enrollment in this country – do not have access to quality health care. This is particularly true in communities with lower income rates and higher percentages of minority racial and ethnic groups. Accordingly, the APHA is promoting school-based health centers to ensure students have access to the health care they need. We urge states to assess school and district needs, allocating funds to ensure schools, especially those in the highest-need communities, are equipped to provide basic health services to their students, often with alignments with local health agencies. States can also pursue policies to promote healthy school environments (restricting vending machine sales to healthy foods and beverages, requiring physical education and opportunities for physical activity, implementing staff health initiatives). The "Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child" model developed by ASCD and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), offers a framework for aligning a coordinated school health approach with the structure and objectives of education (ASCD, 2014).

4. Publish annual report cards measuring health, safety, and education of children and families. States publish school reports based on standardized test scores, but these reports do not adequately show how schools and communities are measuring up on educating the whole child. ASCD recommends states publish a "Whole Child State Report Card," which would provide a comprehensive look at the circumstances (hunger, poverty, crime, literacy, health) of children in the state. This report could provide a more nuanced understanding of child welfare and pave the way for policies and programs that address the areas most in need of improvement (ASCD, n.d.).

5. Push for effective parent and family engagement programs. Research shows students with involved parents, regardless of family background or socioeconomic status, are more likely to attend school regularly; earn higher test scores and grades; have better social skills and behavior; and graduate from high school and attend college. Parent engagement can come in many forms, and may vary from school to school, but regardless of its core elements, it is a vital component of student success. State lawmakers should support district efforts to implement parent and family engagement programs. Most importantly, hosting Parent Universities and aligning parent education programs with school and district education programs that draw parents to schools (programs that feature students' accomplishments – everyone participates) are key. To learn more about the perspectives of parents, see *Two Dreams, One Reality* (J. M. Bridgeland, Dilulio, Streeter, & Mason, 2008). To learn more about promising practices, consult the PTA and Harvard Family Research Project's "Seeing is Believing: Promising Practices for How School Districts Promote Family Engagement," the Parent Engagement Toolkit created by America's Promise Alliance and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the work of the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University.

Part 5

Final Word:
A Letter from Young Leaders

When You Care, It Strengthens Our Resolve to Succeed

If our country is to become a GradNation, we must equip our young people with the capabilities to overcome the challenges they encounter along the path to graduation. The middle grades are critical years – students must take on more responsibility, learn to navigate complex social situations, and avoid pitfalls that can hinder their progress. During this time, the presence of caring adults is instrumental in building students' skills and confidence, and developing the future-oriented goals and aspirations that will bring them success in high school and beyond.

This year, we asked current high school students to reflect on their middle school experiences, and share in their own words the supports that had the greatest impact on helping them navigate these formative years. In response, young people shared stories of adults who stepped up when they were struggling, provided a safe space to grow and learn, and offered encouragement just when it was needed the most.

We share two of their stories with you.

Dear Adults,

When I was in middle school, I thought nothing would ever get better. I was going through the incredibly difficult process of finding myself and breaking free from expectations set on me by other people. I went through many phases in my attempt to be happy. I was a "tomboy," then "emo" and later "geek." I was picked on about all of the roles I played and realized that I still wasn't happy trying to fit in and that I'd be much happier being myself—even if that meant being picked on too.

For a long time I felt like I didn't have anywhere to turn. I didn't have many friends and there were problems at home. While in a period of darkness, the kind when you think no one cares about you, I had a teacher stand up for me. She complimented me and told the other kids in the class to stop bullying me. Things began looking up and I made it through middle school. My life is improving as I'm getting older.

Amira Bauer-Hutsell
Junior from the Class of 2015
Norwood High School in Norwood, Ohio

Dear Adults,

I am grateful for finding the organization Live It Like You Mean It, (or rather, for LILYMI finding me). In 7th grade I joined Girls Circle, a place where girls open up and have a safe place to talk. Both groups were run by caring adult mentors from LILYMI. At that point in my life, I had lost any confidence I had in myself and others. But I met a mentor who encouraged me.

Restoring and renewing my confidence did not happen overnight. My mentor(s) made a commitment to look out for me. My main mentor, Glenna, works with lots of kids, but when I'm with her she makes me feel like in that moment I'm the only person who matters. My mentor knows my fears and my dreams. She helped me realize that I can make my life the way I want it to be.

Now that I am in high school, I have the opportunity to go back and support new middle school students. Someone cared about me and now I help others. My advice to other youth is to connect with a group and mentor. Then begin to help others also because in the process you will help yourself.

Sara Katheryn Lowery
Sophomore from the Class of 2016
Norwood High School in Norwood, Ohio

Conclusion

We cannot be satisfied with simply getting students to graduation. To truly create an opportunity nation, we must be sure our young people are prepared to succeed well beyond the day they don their cap and gown.

For the first time in our nation's history, 80 percent of U.S. high school students graduated on time, marking a major milestone toward reaching our target of a 90 percent graduation rate for the Class of 2020. A committed effort to shine a light on America's dropout crisis and a burst of progress since 2006 have brought us to this point – our goal is no longer a distant prospect, but a distinct probability. As much hope as this achievement provides, however, now is not the time to put our efforts on cruise control.

A closer look at the graduation rate data reveals that the nation's progress continues to be hampered by our failure to ensure that all students have access to a high-quality education. Though headway has been made in closing persistent "graduation gaps" for the most underserved students, significant challenges remain in closing these gaps for African American, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students, as well as for students with disabilities. Stagnating levels of educational attainment among the nation's youth have become a serious cause for concern – one that cannot be ignored in the push to raise the graduation rate. We cannot be satisfied with simply getting students to graduation. To truly create an opportunity nation, we must be sure our young people are prepared to succeed well beyond the day they don their cap and gown.

Our nation remains on pace to achieve the graduation goal set by the Civic Marshall Plan in 2010, but the challenges we still face remind us that the road to becoming a GradNation will not be traveled easily. It will take a concerted and aggressive cross-sector effort and holistic approach to close graduation gaps and ensure all students have outstanding educational opportunities and experiences that can take them into college and career. The emergence of such successful efforts, highlighted throughout this report, in schools, districts, and states across the country, gives us reason to believe the obstacles standing in our way can be overcome. If we are willing to tackle our biggest challenges together, our nation can become a place where all children can earn high school diplomas and move forward knowing they have the tools to succeed in whatever path they choose.

Acknowledgements

We express our utmost gratitude for the leadership and vision of General Colin and Alma Powell and the America's Promise Alliance Trustees, without whom the GradNation Campaign would not be possible.

A special thanks to the staff, fellows, interns, and volunteers of the co-convening organizations: America's Promise Alliance, the Alliance for Excellent Education, Civic Enterprises, and the Everyone Graduates Center of Johns Hopkins University, School of Education and all of the partner organizations of GradNation.

Thank you especially for the significant contributions of Jessica Carnichon, Phillip Lovell, Martens Roc, and Bob Wise of the Alliance for Excellent Education; Paul Allvin, Esther Berg, John Gomperts, Maya Grigorovich-Barsky, Melinda Hudson, Cody Oliver, and David Park of America's Promise Alliance; for the tireless efforts of Liz Gubernatis and Diana Marsteller of the Everyone Graduates Center; and for the boundless energy and enthusiasm of the Civic Enterprises team, including Tess Mason-Elder, Caitlin-Marie Ward, and Hina Samnani. Special thanks to Kathleen McMahon, Chief of Staff, Civic Enterprises, and Mary Bruce of AmeriCorps Alums.

Many individuals have been wonderfully helpful in sharing their experience to build a GradNation. For their willingness to share lessons learned and next steps envisioned both in their own organizations and for the country, we offer thanks to Hedy Chang of Attendance Works; Suzanne Immerman of the U.S. Department of Education; Stephanie Aaronson of the Center for Public Broadcasting; David Shapiro and Tammy Tai of MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership; Melody Barnes and Emma Uman of Melody Barnes Solutions; Ross Santy of the National Center for Education Statistics; Sunny Deye of the National Conference of State Legislatures; Russell Krunmow of Opportunity Nation; Arianna Vasquez-Hernadez of the Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District; Russ Rumberger of the University of California, Santa Barbara; and Aragon Burlingham of We Teach Science.

Lastly, thanks to the many respondents from the State of California, United Way Worldwide and individual United Way affiliates, schools and school districts across the country that contributed their wisdom and expertise to helping us shape particular sections of this report.

References

Ahmed-Ullah, N. (2012, June 26). Number of CPS students shot rises, as does fear of more to come. *Chicago Tribune.* Retrieved from http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-06-26/news/ct-met-cps-student-violence-0625-20120626_1_cps-students-students-shot-safe-haven-program

AimTruancy Solutions. (n.d.). Dropout prevention and truancy intervention. *In the news: Aim Truancy Solutions*. Retrieved from http://www.aimtruancy.com/in-the-news/

Allen, L., & Wolfe, R. E. (2010, September 4). Back on track to college: A Texas school district leverages state policy to put dropouts on the path to success. *Jobs for the Future*. Retrieved from http://www.jff.org/publications/back-track-college-texas-school-district-leverages-state-policy-put-dropouts-path

Allensworth, E. M., & Easton, J.Q. (2007). What matters for staying on track and graduating in Chicago Public High Schools: A close look at course grades, failures, and attendance in the freshman year. *University of Chicago, Consortium on Chicago School Research*.

Alliance for Excellent Education. (2013). The effect of ESEA waiver plans on high school graduation rate accountability. *Alliance for Excellent Education*. Retrieved from http://all4ed.org/reports-fact-sheets/the-effect-of-esea-waiver-plans-on-high-school-graduation-rate-accountability/

American Public Health Association. (n.d.). The Center for School, Health and Education. Retrieved from http://www.apha.org/programs/schoolhealthed/

ASCD. (2014, March 20). ASCD and CDC announce whole school, whole community, whole child model. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/news-media/Press-Room/News-Releases/ASCD-and-CDC-announce-whole-child-model.aspx

ASCD. (n.d.). ASCD whole child state policy recommendations. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/public-policy/wholechildpolicies.aspx

Atlantic Philanthropies. (2014). Atlantic Philanthropies. Retrieved from http://www.atlanticphilanthropies.org

Attendance Works. (2013). The attendance imperative: How states can advance achievement by reducing chronic absence. Retrieved from http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/AAM-Policy-Brief-Final-9.18.pdf

Attendance Works. (n.d., a). About Attendance Works. *Attendance Works.* Retrieved from http://www.attendanceworks.org/about/

Attendance Works. (n.d., b). Why it matters. *Attendance Works*. Retrieved from http://www.attendanceworks.org/about/why-it-matters/

AVID. (n.d.). What is AVID? Retrieved from http://www.avid.org/abo_whatisavid.html

Balfanz, R. (2009). Putting middle grades students on the graduation path. *Everyone Graduates Center and Talent Development Middle Grades Program & National Middle School Association*. Retrieved from https://www.amle.org/portals/0/pdf/articles/Policy_Brief_Balfanz.pdf

Balfanz, R., Bridgeland, J., Bruce, M., & Fox, J. H. (2013). Building a grad nation: Progress and challenge in ending the high school dropout epidemic. Retrieved from http://www.civicenterprises.net/home

Balfanz, R., Bridgeland, J.M., Friant, R.S., & Moore, L.A. (2010). Raising their voices: Engaging students, teachers, and parents to help end the high school dropout epidemic. *Civic Enterprises & Peter D. Hart Research Associates*. Retrieved from http://www.civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/raising_their_voices.pdf

Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012). The importance of being in school: A report on absenteeism in the nation's public schools. *Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University School of Education*. Retrieved from http://new.every1graduates.org/the-importance-of-being-in-school/

Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2013). Meeting the challenge of combating chronic absenteeism. *Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University School of Education*. Retrieved from http://new.every-1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/NYC-Chronic-Absenteeism-Impact-Report.pdf

Balfanz, R., Herzog, L., & Mac Iver, D. J. (2007). Preventing student disengagement and keeping students on the graduation path in urban middle-grades schools: Early identification and effective interventions. *Educational Psychologist*, *42*(4), 223–235.

Balfanz, R. & Legters, N. (2004). Locating the dropout crisis: Which high schools produce the nation's dropouts? Where are they located? Who attends them? *Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk*. Retrieved from http://new.every1graduates.org/locating-the-dropout-crisis-full-repor/

Barton, P.E. (2005). One-Third of a Nation. *Educational Testing Service*. Retrieved from http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/PICONETHIRD.pdf

Becoming a Man. (n.d.). Becoming a Man - B.A.M. Retrieved from http://www.youth-guidance.org/our-programs/b-a-m-becoming-a-man/

Belfield, C.R. & Levin, H.M. (2007). *The price we pay: Economic and social consequences of inadequate education.* Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

Belfield, C. R., Levin, H. M., & Rosen, R. (2012). The economic value of opportunity youth. *Civic Enterprises & Corporation for National and Community Service*. Retrieved from http://www.civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/econ_value_opportunity_youth.pdf

Berkeley Unified School District. (n.d.). Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). Retrieved from http://www.berkeleyschools.net/local-control/lcap/

Bridgeland, J., Bruce, M., & Hariharan, A. (2013). The missing piece: A national survey on how social and emotional learning can empower children and transform schools. *Civic Enterprises with Peter D. Hart Research Associates*. Retrieved from http://www.civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/CASEL-Report-low-res-FINAL.pdf

Bridgeland, J.M., Dilulio, J.J., & Balfanz, R. (2009). On the front lines of schools: Perspectives of teachers and principals on the high school dropout problem. *Civic Enterprises, Peter D. Hart Research Associates, the AT&T Foundation, & the America's Promise Alliance*. Retrieved from http://www.att.com/Common/merger/files/pdf/Schools_Front_Lines.pdf

Bridgeland, J., Dilulio, J., Jr., & Morison, K. (2006). The silent epidemic: Perspectives of high school dropouts. *Civic Enterprises in association with Hart Research Associates*. Retrieved from https://docs.gatesfoundation.org/Documents/thesilentepidemic3-06FINAL.pdf

Bridgeland, J.M., Jr. Dilulio, J.J., Streeter, R. (2007). Raising the compulsory school attendance age: The case for reform. *Civic Enterprises*. Retrieved from http://www.civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/the_case_for_reform.pdf

Bridgeland, J. M., Dilulio, J. J., Streeter, R. T., & Mason, J. R. (2008). One dream, two realities. *Civic Enterprises with Peter D. Hart Research Associates*. Retrieved from http://www.hartresearch.com/new/pdf/onedream.pdf

Bridgeland, J. M., & Mason-Elder, T. (2012). National roadmap for opportunity youth. *Civic Enterprises*. Retrieved from http://www.civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/Opportunity%20Youth%20National%20Roadmap%20Final%202012.pdf

Bruce, M., & Bridgeland, J. (2014). The mentoring effect: Young people's perspectives on the outcomes and availability of mentoring. *Civic Enterprises with Peter D. Hart Research Associates*. Retrieved from http://www.mentoring.org/images/uploads/Report_TheMentoringEffect.pdf

California Budget Project. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.cbp.org/publications/publications.html

California Department of Education. (n.d.). California Careers Pathway Trust. Retrieved from http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct/gi/ccptinfo.asp

California Department of Education. (2013). California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS). Retrieved from http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sp/cl/

California Department of Education Educational Demographics Unit. (n.d.). Enrollment by gender, grade and ethnic designation - enrollment by ethnicity for 2012-13. Retrieved from http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/Enrollment/EthnicGrade.aspx?cChoice=StEnrAll&cYear=2012-13&cLevel=State&cTopic=Enrollment&myTimeFrame=S&cType=ALL&cGender=B

Calkins, A., Guenther, W., Belfiore, G., & Lash, D. (2007). The turnaround challenge: Why America's best opportunity to dramatically improve student achievement lies in our worst-performing schools. *Mass Insight*. Retrieved from http://www.massinsight.org/publications/turnaround/51/file/1/pubs/2010/04/15/TheTurnaroundChallenge_MainReport.pdf

Campaign for High School Equity. (2013). Maintaining a focus on subgroups in an era of Elementary and Secondary Education Act waivers. *Campaign for High School Equity*. Retrieved from: http://www.highschoolequity.org/images/WaiversReport_R8.pdf

Cargile, E. (2013, February 8). Investigation into Aim Truancy's mentor program with Austin ISD. Retrieved from http://www.aimtruancy.com/tag/aimtruancy-mentor-program/

Carnegie Corporation of New York. (n.d.). Opportunity by design: New high school models for student success. Retrieved from http://carnegie.org/programs/urban-and-higher-education/new-designs-innovation-in-classroom-school-college-and-system-design/opportunity-by-design-new-high-school-models-for-student-success/

CASEL. (n.d., a). CASEL's Collaborating District Initiative. Retrieved from http://www.casel.org/collaborating-districts

CASEL. (n.d., b). What is SEL? *CASEL*. Retrieved from http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning/

Children Now. (n.d.). LCFF. Retrieved from http://lcff.childrennow.org/

Child Trends. (2014). Making the grade: Assessing the evidence for integrated student supports. *Child Trends*. Retrieved from http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/2014-07ISSPaper.pdf

Civic Enterprises and the Data Quality Campaign. (2011). Education as a data-driven enterprise: A primer for leaders in business, philanthropy, and education. Retrieved from http://www.civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/education_as_a%20data-driven_enterprise.pdf

College Board. (2014). AP students. Retrieved from http:// apstudent.collegeboard.org

Common Core State Standards. (2014, March 24). Common Core State Standards Initiative. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/

Conley, D. T. (2005). *College knowledge: What it really takes for students to succeed and what we can do to get them ready.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

ConnectEd California. (n.d.). Linked learning. Retrieved from http://www.connectedcalifornia.org/linked_learning

Corporation for Public Broadcasting. (2014). American Graduate Let's Make it Happen. Retrieved from http://www.americangraduate.org/

CSG Justice Center. (2014, March 10). School discipline data: A snapshot of legislative action. Retrieved from http://csgjusticecenter.org/youth/publications/school-discipline-data-a-snapshot-of-legislative-action/

Daugherty, R. (2005). Getting Serious About High School Graduation. *Southern Regional Education Board*. Retrieved from http://publications.sreb.org/2005/05E06-Graduation.pdf

DeNike, M., & Ohlson, B. (2013). Elev8 Oakland community schools: Cost benefit analysis. Retrieved from http://www.brightresearchgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Elev8-Oakland-Community-Schools-Cost-Benefit-Analysis.pdf

Deyé, S. (2011). A path to graduation for every child: State legislative roles and responsibilities: A report of the NCLS task force on school dropout prevention and recovery. *National Conference of State Legislatures*. Retrieved from http://www.ncsl.org/documents/educ/ncsldropouttaskforcereport.pdf

Diplomas Now. (n.d.). Our impact: Diplomas Now. Retrieved from http://diplomasnow.org/our-impact/

Discipline Disparities Research-to-Practice Collaborative. (2014, March 14). Discipline disparities series: Briefing papers. Retrieved from http://www.indiana.edu/~atlantic/briefing-papers/

Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Schellinger, K. B., Dymnicki, A. B., & Taylor, R. D. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, *82*(1), 405 – 432.

ED Data Express. (n.d.). California State Snapshot. Retrieved from http://eddataexpress.ed.gov/state-report.cfm/state/CA/

Ed-Data. (n.d.). State of California Education Profile. *State Reports*. Retrieved from http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/App_Resx/EdDataClassic/fsTwoPanel.aspx?#!bottom=/_layouts/EdDataClassic/profile.asp?Tab=1&level=04&reportNumber=16#studentsbyraceethnicity

Education Week. (2006). Diplomas count: An essential guide to graduation policy and rates. *Education Week*. Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2006/06/22/41s_about.h25.html

Edutopia. (2008, February 27). The heart-brain connection: The neuroscience of social, emotional, and academic learning. Retrieved from http://www.edutopia.org/richard-davidson-sel-brain-video

Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University. (2013). American Graduate Initiative action evaluation: Final report. Retrieved from http://new.every1graduates.org/corporation-for-public-broadcasting/

Farrington, C. A., Nagaoka, J., Roderick, M., Allensworth, E., Keyes, T. S., Johnson, D. W., & Beechum, N. O. (2012). Teaching adolescents to become learners: The role of noncognitive factors in shaping school performance: A critical literature review. *Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research*. Retrieved from https://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/teaching-adolescents-become-learners-role-noncognitive-factors-shaping-school

Freudenberg N. & Ruglis J. (2007). Reframing school dropout as a public health issue. *Center for Disease Control*. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2007/oct/07_0063.htm

Gateway to College. (n.d.). Gateway to college: Early results. Retrieved from http://www.gatewaytocollege.org/early_results.asp

GradNation. (2013). Community guidebook updated edition. Retrieved from http://guidebook.americaspromise.org/

Gragg, R. (n.d.). Statement by national skills coalition on the manufacturing jobs in America initiative. Retrieved from http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/homepage-archive/documents/2013/2013-10-29_rachel-gragg.pdf

Green, J.P. (2002). High School Graduation Rates in the United States. *Manhattan Institute for Policy Research*. Retrieved from http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_baeo.htm

Houston Independent School District. (n.d.). Demographics, facts, and figures. Retrieved from http://www.houstonisd.org/domain/7908

Indiana Department of Education. (n.d.). IDOE Data. Retrieved from http://www.doe.in.gov/idoe/idoe-data

Institute of Education Sciences. (n.d.). What Works Clearinghouse. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). International Baccalaureate Organization. Retrieved from www.ibo.org

Investing in Innovation Fund (i3). (2014, March 28). Investing in innovation fund (I3). Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/index.html

Kemple, J. J. (2008). Career academies: Long-term impacts on work, education, and transitions to adulthood. *MDRC*. Retrieved from http://www.mdrc.org/publication/career-academies-long-term-impacts-work-education-and-transitions-adulthood

Klein, A. (2013, November 21). School improvement grant program gets mixed grades in ed. dept. analysis. *Education Week*. Retrieved from http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2013/11/us_department_of_education_ana.html?cmp=SOC-SHR-FB

Klein, A. (2014, January 29). SIG Program gets makeover in newly passed budget. *Education Week*. Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/01/29/19budget-sig.h33.html

Le, C. (2012, March). Launching early college district-wide: Pharr San Juan Alamo. Retrieved from http://www.jff.org/publications/launching-early-college-districtwide-pharr-san-juan-alamos-college-all-strategy

Legal Information Institute. (n.d.). Brown V. Board of Education. Retrieved from http://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/347/483

Los Angeles County QuickFacts from the U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06037.html

Los Angeles Unified School District. (2013). Board informatives. Retrieved from http://data.lausd.net/resources/#Board_Informatives

Los Angeles Unified School District. (n.d.). School profile: Clinton Middle School. Retrieved from http://search.lausd.k12.ca.us/cgi-bin/fccgi.exe?w3exec=school.profile.content&which=8062

Losen, D. J. (2011). Good discipline: Legislation for education reform. *National Education Policy Center*. Retrieved from http://nepc.colorado.edu/files/NEPC-SchoolDiscipline-Losen-2-LB_FINAL.pdf

Losen, D.J. & Gillispie, J. (2012). Opportunities suspended: The disparate impact of disciplinary exclusion from school. *The Civil Rights Project at UCLA*. Retrieved from http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/federal-reports/upcoming-ccrr-research

McAlister, S. & Pascale, M. (2012). College readiness: A guide to the field. *Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University & the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*. Retrieved from http://annenberginstitute.org/sites/default/files/CRIS_Guide.pdf

MDRC. (2012, July 5). Career academies: Exploring college and career options (ECCO). Retrieved from http://www.mdrc.org/project/career-academies-exploring-college-and-career-options-ecco

MDRC. (2013). Reforming underperforming high schools. Retrieved from http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/High_School_Reform_030513_0.pdf

NAEP (2013). Mathematics and reading 2013. Retrieved from http://nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_2013/#/what-knowledge

National Association of Secondary School Principals. (2004). *Breaking ranks II strategies for leading high school reform*. Reston, VA: NASSP.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). Common Core of Data (CCD). Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/AFGR0812.asp

National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). Public elementary/secondary school universe surveys (1998-2013). Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/pubschuniv.asp

National Center for Education Statistics. (2014, March 6). NAEP nations report card. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/

National College Advising Corps. (2014, January 16). $10 million gift highlights college advising corps 2014 - 2015 expansion. Retrieved from http://advisingcorps.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Jan-16-CAC-Press-Release.pdf

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities. (n.d.). IDEA–the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. *National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities*. Retrieved from http://nichcy.org/laws/idea

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network. (n.d.). Why students drop out. Retrieved from http://www.dropoutprevention.org/statistics/quick-facts/why-students-drop-out

National Governor Association. (2011). High school reform. Retrieved from http://www.nga.org/cms/home/federal-relations/nga-committees/page-ew-committee/col2-content/list---ecw-right/list-ecw-issues/content-reference-ecw-issues@/main-content-list/high-school-reform.html

National School Boards Association. (n.d.). Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Retrieved from http://www.nsba.org/Advocacy/Key-Issues/NCLB

Oakland Fund for Children and Youth. (n.d.). Home. Retrieved from http://www.ofcy.org/

Oakland Unified School District (n.d.). Overview. Retrieved from http://publicportal.ousd.k12.ca.us/Page/1

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2013, July 19). The Office of Adolescent Health. Retrieved from http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/

Office of School Turnaround. (2014, February 14). School improvement grants. *Programs*. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html

Opportunity Nation. (n.d., a). Opportunity Nation: Jobs and the economy. Retrieved from http://www.opportunitynation.org/page/s/opportunity-nation-summit-livestream

Opportunity Nation. (n.d., b). Opportunity nation: The shared plan for action. Retrieved from http://www.opportunitynation.org/page/s/opportunity-nation-summit-livestream

Pew Research Center. (2014). Nonpartisan, non-advocacy public opinion polling and demographic research. *Hispanic Trends Project*. Retrieved from http://www.pewresearch.org/

Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD. (n.d.). About Daniel P. King, PhD, superintendent of schools. *PSJA Administration*. Retrieved from http://www.psjaisd.us/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=110689&type=d

Piniciotta, D. & Reyna, R. (2009). Achieving graduation for all: A governor's guide to dropout prevention and recovery. *National Governors Association Center for Best Practices*. Retrieved from http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/0910ACHIEVINGGRADUATION.PDF

Public Education Partners. (n.d.). Graduation rates and definitions. Retrieved from http://www.publicedpartnersgc.org/files/1254419522.pdf

Public Policy Institute of California. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.ppic.org/main/home.asp

School-Based Health Alliance. (n.d.). School-based health center capital program: Use of federal funds and estimated reach of programs. Retrieved from http://www.sbh4all.org/atf/cf/%7BB241D183-DA6F-443F-9588-3230D027D8DB%7D/SBHCC%20impact%20summary.pdf

Slavin, R. (2014, February 20). School improvement grants embrace evidence of effectiveness. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-e-slavin/school-improvement-grants_b_4822503.html

Smaller Learning Communities Programs. (2011, September 9). Smaller Learning Communities Programs. *Programs*. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/programs/slcp/index.html

South Carolina Department of Education. (n.d.). 2013 State report card. Retrieved from https://ed.sc.gov/data/report-cards/2013/index.cfm

State of Tennessee. (2014). Drive to 55: Tennessee promise. Retrieved from http://www.driveto55.org/tennessee-promise/

Taboada, M. (2013, January 1). New voluntary program tracks students with GPS, increases attendance. *Local Education*. Retrieved from http://www.statesman.com/news/news/local-education/new-voluntary-program-tracks-students-with-gps-inc/nTj9G/

Texas Education Agency Division of Research and Analysis. (2014, March 26). Completion, graduation, and dropouts. Retrieved from http://www.tea.state.tx.us/acctres/dropcomp_index.html

Texas Legislative Council. (2010, June). Calculation of high school graduation rates. Retrieved from http://www.tlc.state.tx.us/pubspol/gradrates_2010.pdf

The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions. (n.d.). Aspen Forum for Community Solutions announces new partnership. *JP Morgan Chase & Co*. Retrieved from http://aspencommunitysolutions.org/the-aspen-forum-for-community-solutions-announces-new-partnership-with-jpmorgan-chase-co/

The Campaign for College Opportunity. (n.d.) The state of higher education in California. Retrieved from http://www.collegecampaign.org/resource-library/our-publications/the-state-of-higher-education-in-california/

The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles. (2010). Dropouts in America: How severe is the problem? What do we know about intervention and prevention? Retrieved from http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/school-dropouts/dropouts-in-america-how-severe-is-the-problem-2028what-do-we-know-about-intervention-and-prevention

The White House. (2013, November 19). Fact Sheet: Youth Career Connect Grants. Retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/11/19/fact-sheet-youth-careerconnect-grants

The White House. (2014, January 8). Fact sheet: President Obama's Promise Zones Initiative. Retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/01/08/fact-sheet-president-obama-s-promise-zones-initiative

The White House. (n.d., a). My Brother's Keeper. Retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/my-brothers-keeper

The White House. (n.d., b). Race to the Top. Retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/k-12/race-to-the-top

Turnaround for Children. (n.d.). Turnaround for Children. Retrieved from http://turnaroundusa.org/

U.C. Santa Barbara, Gevirtz Graduate School of Education. (2014). California Dropout Research Project. Retrieved from http://www.cdrp.ucsb.edu/

Urban Institute. (2014). Education. Retrieved from http://www.urban.org/education/

U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). State Median Income. *Income*. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/data/statemedian/index.html

U.S. Census Bureau. (2014). California QuickFacts. Retrieved from http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06000.html

U.S. Department of Education. (2013a, June 7). Fact sheet: Redesigning America's high schools. Retrieved from https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/fact-sheet-redesigning-americas-high-schools

U.S. Department of Education. (2013b, August 23). Promise neighborhoods: Program home page. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/index.html?exp=0

U.S. Department of Education. (2014a, January 22). EDFacts workbook. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/eden-workbook.html

U.S. Department of Education. (2014b, January 28). Race to the Top - Equity and Opportunity: Support to close achievement and opportunity gaps. Retrieved from http://www.ed.gov/racetothetop-equity-opportunity

U.S. Department of Education. (2014c, February 14). School Improvement Grants. *Programs*. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html

U.S. Department of Education. (2014d, March 6). School climate and discipline. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/index.html

U.S. Department of Education. (2014e, March 7). Index page for the ESEA flexibility page. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/index.html

U.S. Department of Education. (2014f, March 18). Investing in Innovation Fund (i3). Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/index.html

University of Chicago Crime Lab. (2012). BAM - Sports Edition (Research and Policy Brief). *University of Chicago Crime Lab*. Retrieved from https://crimelab.uchicago.edu/sites/crimelab.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/BAM_FINAL%20Research%20and%20Policy%20Brief_20120711.pdf

Weissberg, R., & Cascarino, J. (2013). Academic + social-emotional learning = national priority. *Kappan*, *95*(2), 8–13.

WestEd (n.d.). Special Education Students, Academic Success. Retrieved from **http://www.wested.org/area_of_work/special-education/**

Year Up. (n.d.). Closing the opportunity divide in Baltimore. Retrieved from **http://www.yearup.org/locations/main.php?page=baltimore**

YouthBuild USA. (n.d.). Retrieved from **https://youthbuild.org/**

Youth Transition Funders Group. (2014). About YTFG: Multiple pathways to graduation work group. Retrieved from **http://www.ytfg.org/about-ytfg**

APPENDIX A

Dropout Factory Change by Region and State, 2002-2012

	Dropout Factories		Change		
	2002	2012	Schools		Students
	N	N	%	N	N
NORTHEAST					
New York	145	120	-17%	-25	-131,538
Pennsylvania	48	38	-21%	-10	-33,414
New Jersey	24	21	-13%	-3	-12,790
Massachusetts	24	20	-17%	-4	-12,840
Connecticut	13	10	-23%	-3	-13,264
Rhode Island	7	4	-43%	-3	-4,085
New Hampshire	5	1	-80%	-4	-1,002
Maine	4	1	-75%	-3	-2,334
Vermont	3	0	-100%	-3	-2,311
Subtotal	**273**	**215**	**-43%**	**-58**	**-213,578**
MIDWEST					
Michigan	79	57	-28%	-22	-43,808
Ohio	75	142	89%	67	20,592
Illinois	63	70	11%	7	-9,548
Indiana	30	11	-63%	-19	-25,058
Missouri	25	14	-44%	-11	-8,433
Wisconsin	16	11	-31%	-5	-5,858
Kansas	9	8	-11%	-1	-2,730
Minnesota	6	2	-67%	-4	-5,533
Iowa	4	2	-50%	-2	-3,702
Nebraska	4	2	-50%	-2	-3,730
South Dakota	3	2	-33%	-1	-835
North Dakota	0	1		1	1,092
Subtotal	**314**	**322**	**25%**	**8**	**-87,551**

	Dropout Factories		Change		
	2002	2012	Schools		Students
	N	N	%	N	N
SOUTH					
Texas	240	103	-57%	-137	-197,815
Florida	162	67	-59%	-95	-198,626
Georgia	156	108	-31%	-48	-51,905
North Carolina	106	63	-41%	-43	-49,172
South Carolina	101	48	-52%	-53	-53,702
Alabama	71	26	-63%	-45	-31,418
Louisiana	64	31	-52%	-33	-33,171
Tennessee	58	16	-72%	-42	-43,769
Mississippi	52	23	-56%	-29	-25,850
Kentucky	39	15	-62%	-24	-19,131
Virginia	26	16	-38%	-10	-13,024
Maryland	17	26	53%	9	10,078
Oklahoma	15	8	-47%	-7	-9,960
Delaware	8	4	-50%	-4	-7,738
West Virginia	6	2	-67%	-4	-4,072
Arkansas	5	7	40%	2	861
Subtotal	**1,126**	**563**	**91%**	**-563**	**-728,414**
WEST					
California	129	116	-10%	-13	-154,690
Arizona	37	23	-38%	-14	-26,916
Washington	32	13	-59%	-19	-28,381
Colorado	32	16	-50%	-16	-19,730
New Mexico	27	27	0%	0	-7,680
Alaska	9	5	-44%	-4	-5,043
Nevada	8	22	175%	14	27,761
Oregon	7	3	-57%	-4	-4,557
Hawaii	6	8	33%	2	-1,658
Idaho	2	4	100%	2	2,958
Montana	1	1	0%	0	-224
Wyoming	1	0	-100%	-1	-1,011
Utah	1	7	600%	6	6,787
Subtotal	**292**	**245**	**-16%**	**-47**	**-212,384**
Total	**2,005**	**1,345**	**-33%**	**-660**	**-1,241,927**

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1998-2012). Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Surveys.
Note: Does not include data from the District of Columbia

APPENIX B

Dropout Factory Change by Locale 2002-2012

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS WITH PROMOTING POWER AT OR BELOW 60%

Class	Cities	Suburbs	Towns	Rural
2002	905	477	247	378
2012	714	267	123	255
Change (N)	-191	-210	-124	-123
Change (%)	-21%	-44%	-50%	-33%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1998-2012). Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Surveys.

Note: In 2006 NCES changed the definition of "Rural" from population size, to proximity to urban areas referred to as the "urban-centric" classification system.

APPENDIX C

Top Two-Hundred Largest School Districts by Total Number of K-12 Students and 2011-2012 ACGR by State

				Number of Students			2012 ACGR	
District	City	State	Local	District	State	Students In District Per State	District	State
				N	N	%	%	%
ALASKA				**48,765**	**131,166**	**37%**	**73%**	**84%**
Anchorage School District	Jber	AK	City	48,765	131,166	37%	73%	84%
ALABAMA				**130,501**	**731,725**	**18%**	**76%**	**75%**
Mobile County	Citronelle	AL	City	60,770	731,725	8%	68%	75%
Houston County	Cottonwood	AL	Rural	35,349	731,725	5%	87%	75%
Baldwin County	Fairhope	AL	Rural	34,382	731,725	5%	74%	75%
ARIZONA				**298,232**	**1,078,209**	**28%**	**87%**	**76%**
Mesa Unified District	Mesa	AZ	City	64,688	1,078,209	6%	76%	76%
Tucson Unified District	Tucson	AZ	City	51,740	1,078,209	5%	80%	76%
Chandler Unified District	Chandler	AZ	Suburb	39,430	1,078,209	4%	92%	76%
Gilbert Unified District	Gilbert	AZ	Suburb	38,264	1,078,209	4%	87%	76%
Peoria Unified School District	Peoria	AZ	Suburb	36,513	1,078,209	3%	93%	76%
Deer Valley Unified District	Phoenix	AZ	City	34,639	1,078,209	3%	91%	76%
Paradise Valley Unified District	Phoenix	AZ	City	32,958	1,078,209	3%	88%	76%
CALIFORNIA				**1,912,899**	**6,202,862**	**31%**	**82%**	**78%**
Los Angeles Unified	Los Angeles	CA	City	659,132	6,202,862	11%	67%	78%
San Diego Unified	San Diego	CA	City	130,719	6,202,862	2%	87%	78%
Long Beach Unified	Long Beach	CA	City	83,440	6,202,862	1%	80%	78%
Fresno Unified	Fresno	CA	City	74,228	6,202,862	1%	75%	78%
Elk Grove Unified	Sacramento	CA	Suburb	61,840	6,202,862	1%	86%	78%
Santa Ana Unified	Santa Ana	CA	City	57,211	6,202,862	1%	85%	78%
San Francisco Unified	San Francisco	CA	City	56,310	6,202,862	1%	82%	78%
San Bernardino City Unified	San Bernardino	CA	City	54,229	6,202,862	1%	74%	78%
Corona-Norco Unified	Corona	CA	Suburb	53,456	6,202,862	1%	91%	78%
Capistrano Unified	Dana Point	CA	Suburb	53,136	6,202,862	1%	97%	78%
Garden Grove Unified	Garden Grove	CA	Suburb	47,979	6,202,862	1%	88%	78%
Sacramento City Unified	Sacramento	CA	City	47,614	6,202,862	1%	80%	78%
San Juan Unified	Citrus Heights	CA	Suburb	46,359	6,202,862	1%	81%	78%
Oakland Unified	Oakland	CA	City	46,193	6,202,862	1%	59%	78%
Riverside Unified	Riverside	CA	City	42,270	6,202,862	1%	82%	78%
Fontana Unified	Fontana	CA	Suburb	40,555	6,202,862	1%	83%	78%
Sweetwater Union High	Chula Vista	CA	Suburb	40,552	6,202,862	1%	83%	78%
Clovis Unified	Fresno	CA	Suburb	38,841	6,202,862	1%	93%	78%
Stockton Unified	Stockton	CA	City	38,766	6,202,862	1%	71%	78%
Kern Union High	Lake Isabella	CA	City	37,505	6,202,862	1%	81%	78%
Moreno Valley Unified	Moreno Valley	CA	Suburb	35,637	6,202,862	1%	75%	78%
Poway Unified	San Diego	CA	City	34,490	6,202,862	1%	96%	78%
Mt. Diablo Unified	Walnut Creek	CA	Suburb	33,727	6,202,862	1%	81%	78%
San Jose Unified	San Jose	CA	City	33,265	6,202,862	1%	84%	78%
Fremont Unified	Fremont	CA	City	32,767	6,202,862	1%	90%	78%
Anaheim Union High	Anaheim	CA	City	32,678	6,202,862	1%	82%	78%

APPENDIX C (CONTINUED)

Top Two-Hundred Largest School Districts by Total Number of K-12 Students and 2011-2012 ACGR by State

				Number of Students			2012 ACGR	
District	City	State	Local	District	State	Students In District Per State	District	State
				N	N	%	%	%
COLORADO				**364,605**	**853,669**	**43%**	**72%**	**75%**
Jefferson County School District No. R-1	Lakewood	CO	Suburb	85,793	853,669	10%	81%	75%
School District No. 1 In The County Of Denver And State Of C	Denver	CO	City	80,863	853,669	9%	59%	75%
Douglas County School District, No. Re 1	Littleton	CO	Suburb	63,114	853,669	7%	87%	75%
Cherry Creek, School District No. 5, In The County Of Arapah	Aurora	CO	Suburb	52,171	853,669	6%	87%	75%
Adams 12 Five Star Schools	Brighton	CO	Suburb	42,990	853,669	5%	70%	75%
Aurora, Joint District No. 28 Of The Counties Of Adams And A	Aurora	CO	City	39,674	853,669	5%	48%	75%
FLORIDA				**2,256,994**	**2,668,113**	**85%**	**74%**	**75%**
Dade	Miami	FL	Suburb	350,239	2,668,113	13%	76%	75%
Broward	Pompano Beach	FL	Suburb	258,478	2,668,113	10%	76%	75%
Hillsborough	Tampa	FL	Suburb	197,041	2,668,113	7%	73%	75%
Orange	Orlando	FL	Suburb	180,735	2,668,113	7%	74%	75%
Palm Beach	Loxahatchee	FL	Suburb	176,901	2,668,113	7%	77%	75%
Duval	Jacksonville	FL	City	125,429	2,668,113	5%	68%	75%
Pinellas	St Petersburg	FL	City	103,776	2,668,113	4%	72%	75%
Polk	Avon Park	FL	Suburb	96,070	2,668,113	4%	68%	75%
Lee	North Fort Myers	FL	City	84,686	2,668,113	3%	72%	75%
Brevard	Melbourne	FL	Suburb	71,792	2,668,113	3%	85%	75%
Pasco	New Port Richey	FL	Suburb	66,659	2,668,113	2%	77%	75%
Seminole	Casselberry	FL	Suburb	66,189	2,668,113	2%	80%	75%
Volusia	Holly Hill	FL	Suburb	61,524	2,668,113	2%	67%	75%
Osceola	Kissimmee	FL	Suburb	55,278	2,668,113	2%	78%	75%
Manatee	Bradenton	FL	Suburb	44,986	2,668,113	2%	76%	75%
Collier	Naples	FL	Suburb	43,238	2,668,113	2%	78%	75%
Marion	Silver Springs	FL	Suburb	42,754	2,668,113	2%	75%	75%
Lake	Eustis	FL	Suburb	41,319	2,668,113	2%	78%	75%
Sarasota	Sarasota	FL	Suburb	41,083	2,668,113	2%	78%	75%
Escambia	Pensacola Beach	FL	Suburb	40,496	2,668,113	2%	62%	75%
St. Lucie	Fort Pierce	FL	Suburb	39,444	2,668,113	1%	71%	75%
Clay	Green Cove Springs	FL	Suburb	35,659	2,668,113	1%	74%	75%
Leon	Tallahassee	FL	City	33,218	2,668,113	1%	71%	75%
GEORGIA				**801,866**	**1,685,016**	**48%**	**67%**	**70%**
Gwinnett County	Duluth	GA	Suburb	162,370	1,685,016	10%	71%	70%
Dekalb County	Atlanta	GA	Suburb	109,795	1,685,016	7%	57%	70%
Cobb County	Acworth	GA	Suburb	107,291	1,685,016	6%	76%	70%
Fulton County	Palmetto	GA	Suburb	93,205	1,685,016	6%	71%	70%
Clayton County	Forest Park	GA	Suburb	51,018	1,685,016	3%	54%	70%
Atlanta Public Schools	Atlanta	GA	City	50,009	1,685,016	3%	51%	70%

APPENDIX C (CONTINUED)

Top Two-Hundred Largest School Districts by Total Number of K-12 Students and 2011-2012 ACGR by State

				Number of Students			2012 ACGR	
District	City	State	Local	District	State	Students In District Per State	District	State
				N	N	%	%	%
Henry County	Mcdonough	GA	Rural	48,153	1,685,016	3%	76%	70%
Cherokee County	Woodstock	GA	Rural	42,861	1,685,016	3%	73%	70%
Forsyth County	Cumming	GA	Suburb	37,262	1,685,016	2%	88%	70%
Chatham County	Savannah	GA	City	35,842	1,685,016	2%	63%	70%
Muscogee County	Columbus	GA	City	32,231	1,685,016	2%	68%	70%
Richmond County	Augusta	GA	City	31,829	1,685,016	2%	59%	70%
HAWAII				**182,705**	**182,705**	**100%**	**82%**	**82%**
Hawaii Department Of Education	Lihue	HI	Suburb	182,705	182,705	100%	82%	82%
IOWA				**31,886**	**485,358**	**7%**	**79%**	**89%**
Des Moines Independent Comm School District	Des Moines	IA	City	31,886	485,358	7%	79%	89%
IDAHO				**36,303**	**279,486**	**13%**	**85%**	†
Meridian Joint District	Boise	ID	Suburb	36,303	279,486	13%	85%	
ILLINOIS				**441,969**	**2,073,794**	**21%**	**74%**	**82%**
City Of Chicago Sd 299	Chicago	IL	City	401,946	2,073,794	19%	69%	82%
Sd U-46	South Elgin	IL	Suburb	40,023	2,073,794	2%	80%	82%
KANSAS				**48,698**	**481,519**	**10%**	**74%**	**85%**
Wichita	Wichita	KS	City	48,698	481,519	10%	74%	85%
KENTUCKY				**271,929**	**681,643**	**40%**		†
Jefferson County	Louisville	KY	City	143,282	681,643	21%	N/A	
Fayette County	Lexington	KY	City	65,451	681,643	10%	N/A	
Knox County	Barbourville	KY	City	63,196	681,643	9%	N/A	
LOUISIANA				**199,610**	**702,301**	**28%**	**71%**	**72%**
Jefferson Parish	Kenner	LA	Suburb	45,688	702,301	7%	70%	72%
East Baton Rouge Parish	Baton Rouge	LA	City	42,854	702,301	6%	66%	72%
Caddo Parish	Shreveport	LA	City	41,667	702,301	6%	63%	72%
St. Tammany Parish	Mandeville	LA	Suburb	37,058	702,301	5%	79%	72%
Calcasieu Parish	Sulphur	LA	City	32,343	702,301	5%	78%	72%
MASSACHUSETTS				**55,027**	**953,369**	**6%**	**66%**	**85%**
Boston	Roxbury	MA	City	55,027	953,369	6%	66%	85%
MARYLAND				**666,126**	**854,295**	**78%**	**83%**	**84%**
Montgomery County Public Schools	Gaithersburg	MD	Suburb	146,459	854,295	17%	87%	84%
Prince George's County Public Schools	Riverdale	MD	Suburb	123,807	854,295	14%	73%	84%
Baltimore County Public Schools	Baltimore	MD	Suburb	105,153	854,295	12%	84%	84%
Baltimore City Public Schools	Baltimore	MD	City	84,212	854,295	10%	67%	84%
Anne Arundel County Public Schools	Glen Burnie	MD	Suburb	76,303	854,295	9%	85%	84%
Howard County Public Schools	Ellicott City	MD	Suburb	51,555	854,295	6%	90%	84%
Frederick County Public Schools	Frederick	MD	Suburb	40,413	854,295	5%	93%	84%
Harford County Public Schools	Bel Air	MD	Suburb	38,224	854,295	4%	88%	84%

APPENDIX C (CONTINUED)

Top Two-Hundred Largest School Districts by Total Number of K-12 Students and 2011-2012 ACGR by State

				Number of Students			2012 ACGR	
District	City	State	Local	District	State	Students In District Per State	District	State
				N	N	%	%	%
MICHIGAN				**65,573**	**1,533,660**	**4%**	**65%**	**76%**
Detroit City School District	Detroit	MI	City	65,573	1,533,660	4%	65%	76%
MINNESOTA				**110,986**	**839,645**	**13%**	**64%**	**78%**
Anoka-Hennepin Public School Dist.	Coon Rapids	MN	Suburb	38,686	839,645	5%	76%	78%
St. Paul Public School District	St. Paul	MN	City	37,864	839,645	5%	66%	78%
Minneapolis Public School Dist.	Minneapolis	MN	City	34,436	839,645	4%	50%	78%
MISSISSIPPI				**32,311**	**490,619**	**7%**	**86%**	**75%**
Desoto Co School Dist	Olive Branch	MS	Rural	32,311	490,619	7%	86%	75%
NORTH CAROLINA				**604,120**	**1,499,541**	**40%**	**81%**	**85%**
Wake County Schools	Cary	NC	City	148,120	1,499,541	10%	81%	85%
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	Charlotte	NC	City	137,394	1,499,541	9%	75%	85%
Guilford County Schools	Brown Summit	NC	City	74,083	1,499,541	5%	85%	85%
Forsyth County Schools	Winston-Salem	NC	City	53,336	1,499,541	4%	81%	85%
Cumberland County Schools	Fayetteville	NC	City	53,048	1,499,541	4%	81%	85%
Union County Public Schools	Marshville	NC	Rural	40,105	1,499,541	3%	90%	85%
Durham Public Schools	Durham	NC	City	33,253	1,499,541	2%	77%	85%
Johnston County Schools	Smithfield	NC	Rural	33,091	1,499,541	2%	82%	85%
Gaston County Schools	Mount Holly	NC	Suburb	31,690	1,499,541	2%	78%	85%
NEBRASKA				**86,868**	**301,409**	**29%**	**79%**	**88%**
Omaha Public Schools	Omaha	NE	City	50,340	301,409	17%	76%	88%
Lincoln Public Schools	Lincoln	NE	City	36,528	301,409	12%	83%	88%
NEW JERSEY				**35,543**	**1,352,571**	**3%**	**69%**	**86%**
Newark	Newark	NJ	City	35,543	1,352,571	3%	69%	86%
NEW MEXICO				**93,326**	**335,236**	**28%**	**65%**	**70%**
Albuquerque Public Schools	Albuquerque	NM	City	93,326	335,236	28%	65%	70%
NEVADA				**377,632**	**439,128**	**86%**	**66%**	**63%**
Clark County School District	Sandy Valley	NV	City	312,892	439,128	71%	62%	63%
Washoe County School District	Reno	NV	City	64,740	439,128	15%	70%	63%
NEW YORK				**1,057,961**	**2,702,568**	**39%**	**60%**	**77%**
New York City Department Of Education	New York City	NY	City	1,025,238	2,702,568	38%	65%	77%
Buffalo City School District	Buffalo	NY	City	32,723	2,702,568	1%	56%	77%
OHIO				**125,387**	**1,738,861**	**7%**	**68%**	**81%**
Columbus City School District	Columbus	OH	City	50,488	1,738,861	3%	79%	81%
Cleveland Municipal	Cleveland	OH	City	42,802	1,738,861	2%	59%	81%
Cincinnati City	Cincinnati	OH	City	32,097	1,738,861	2%	66%	81%
OKLAHOMA				**84,411**	**666,011**	**13%**		**†**
Oklahoma City	Oklahoma City	OK	City	43,212	666,011	6%	N/A	
Tulsa	Tulsa	OK	City	41,199	666,011	6%	N/A	
OREGON				**123,411**	**553,240**	**22%**	**70%**	**68%**
Portland SD 1J	Portland	OR	City	44,349	553,240	8%	63%	68%
Salem-Keizer SD 24J	Salem	OR	City	40,085	553,240	7%	69%	68%
Beaverton SD 48J	Portland	OR	City	38,977	553,240	7%	78%	68%

APPENDIX C (CONTINUED)

Top Two-Hundred Largest School Districts by Total Number of K-12 Students and 2011-2012 ACGR by State

				Number of Students			2012 ACGR	
District	City	State	Local	District	State	Students In District Per State	District	State
				N	N	%	%	%
PENNSYLVANIA				**146,482**	**1,747,825**	**8%**	**66%**	**84%**
Philadelphia City SD	Philadelphia	PA	City	146,482	1,747,825	8%	66%	84%
SOUTH CAROLINA				**155,168**	**726,003**	**21%**	**75%**	**75%**
Greenville 01	Greer	SC	Suburb	72,153	726,003	10%	72%	75%
Charleston 01	North Charleston	SC	City	44,058	726,003	6%	76%	75%
Horry 01	Myrtle Beach	SC	Rural	38,957	726,003	5%	77%	75%
TENNESSEE				**503,533**	**987,830**	**51%**	**87%**	**87%**
Memphis	Memphis	TN	City	110,952	987,830	11%	70%	87%
Shelby County	Millington	TN	Rural	81,835	987,830	8%	91%	87%
Davidson County	Goodlettsville	TN	City	79,448	987,830	8%	78%	87%
Montgomery County	Clarksville	TN	City	67,802	987,830	7%	95%	87%
Madison County	Jackson	TN	Rural	48,628	987,830	5%	95%	87%
Hamilton County	Soddy Daisy	TN	City	43,296	987,830	4%	81%	87%
Rutherford County	Lavergne	TN	Rural	39,608	987,830	4%	91%	87%
Williamson County	Spring Hill	TN	Rural	31,964	987,830	3%	92%	87%
TEXAS				**2,343,294**	**5,000,193**	**47%**	**88%**	**88%**
Houston ISD	Bellaire	TX	City	203,012	5,000,193	4%	79%	88%
Dallas ISD	Dallas	TX	City	157,420	5,000,193	3%	81%	88%
Cypress-Fairbanks ISD	Cypress	TX	Suburb	107,960	5,000,193	2%	90%	88%
Northside ISD	Vernon	TX	City	98,285	5,000,193	2%	92%	88%
Austin ISD	Austin	TX	City	86,503	5,000,193	2%	83%	88%
Fort Worth ISD	Fort Worth	TX	City	83,109	5,000,193	2%	80%	88%
Fort Bend ISD	Houston	TX	Suburb	69,449	5,000,193	1%	91%	88%
North East ISD	San Antonio	TX	City	67,439	5,000,193	1%	89%	88%
Arlington ISD	Arlington	TX	City	64,703	5,000,193	1%	83%	88%
Aldine ISD	Houston	TX	Suburb	64,300	5,000,193	1%	79%	88%
El Paso ISD	El Paso	TX	City	64,214	5,000,193	1%	82%	88%
Katy ISD	Katy	TX	Suburb	62,414	5,000,193	1%	93%	88%
Garland ISD	Garland	TX	Suburb	58,151	5,000,193	1%	90%	88%
Plano ISD	Plano	TX	City	55,659	5,000,193	1%	95%	88%
San Antonio ISD	San Antonio	TX	City	54,394	5,000,193	1%	79%	88%
Pasadena ISD	Houston	TX	Suburb	52,942	5,000,193	1%	85%	88%
Conroe ISD	Conroe	TX	Town	52,664	5,000,193	1%	93%	88%
Lewisville ISD	Frisco	TX	Suburb	51,920	5,000,193	1%	93%	88%
Brownsville ISD	Brownsville	TX	City	49,655	5,000,193	1%	87%	88%
Klein ISD	Klein	TX	Suburb	46,001	5,000,193	1%	88%	88%
Alief ISD	Houston	TX	City	45,410	5,000,193	1%	93%	88%
Round Rock ISD	Round Rock	TX	City	45,034	5,000,193	1%	94%	88%
Ysleta ISD	El Paso	TX	City	44,376	5,000,193	1%	86%	88%
Socorro ISD	El Paso	TX	Rural	43,672	5,000,193	1%	89%	88%
United ISD	Laredo	TX	City	42,179	5,000,193	1%	94%	88%
Killeen ISD	Killeen	TX	City	40,998	5,000,193	1%	86%	88%

APPENDIX C (CONTINUED)

Top Two-Hundred Largest School Districts by Total Number of K-12 Students and 2011-2012 ACGR by State

				Number of Students			2012 ACGR	
District	City	State	Local	District	State	Students In District Per State	District	State
				N	N	%	%	%
Frisco ISD	Plano	TX	Rural	40,123	5,000,193	1%	98%	88%
Clear Creek ISD	Houston	TX	Suburb	39,209	5,000,193	1%	95%	88%
Corpus Christi ISD	Corpus Christi	TX	City	38,678	5,000,193	1%	85%	88%
Mesquite ISD	Mesquite	TX	Suburb	38,287	5,000,193	1%	89%	88%
Richardson ISD	Richardson	TX	City	37,044	5,000,193	1%	91%	88%
Spring ISD	Houston	TX	Suburb	36,513	5,000,193	1%	82%	88%
Humble ISD	Kingwood	TX	Suburb	36,076	5,000,193	1%	94%	88%
Irving ISD	Irving	TX	City	34,770	5,000,193	1%	86%	88%
Spring Branch ISD	Houston	TX	City	33,687	5,000,193	1%	88%	88%
Edinburg CISD	Edinburg	TX	City	33,412	5,000,193	1%	88%	88%
Leander ISD	Leander	TX	Suburb	33,309	5,000,193	1%	94%	88%
Keller ISD	Keller	TX	Rural	33,130	5,000,193	1%	94%	88%
Amarillo ISD	Amarillo	TX	City	32,995	5,000,193	1%	84%	88%
Mansfield ISD	Mansfield	TX	Suburb	32,564	5,000,193	1%	91%	88%
Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD	Alamo	TX	City	31,634	5,000,193	1%	88%	88%
UTAH				**292,948**	**598,261**	**49%**	**77%**	**80%**
Alpine District	Alpine	UT	Suburb	69,639	598,261	12%	78%	80%
Davis District	Layton	UT	Suburb	69,285	598,261	12%	84%	80%
Granite District	Salt Lake City	UT	Suburb	69,117	598,261	12%	68%	80%
Jordan District	West Jordan	UT	Suburb	50,961	598,261	9%	83%	80%
Canyons District	Sandy	UT	Suburb	33,946	598,261	6%	71%	80%
VIRGINIA				**577,669**	**1,255,551**	**46%**	**85%**	**83%**
Fairfax Co Pblc Schs	Falls Church	VA	Suburb	177,551	1,255,551	14%	89%	83%
Prince William Co Pblc Schs	Woodbridge	VA	Suburb	81,844	1,255,551	7%	85%	83%
Va Beach City Pblc Schs	Virginia Beach	VA	City	70,978	1,255,551	6%	84%	83%
Loudoun Co Pblc Schs	Ashburn	VA	Suburb	65,571	1,255,551	5%	93%	83%
Chesterfield Co Pblc Schs	Midlothian	VA	Suburb	59,192	1,255,551	5%	87%	83%
Henrico Co Pblc Schs	Richmond	VA	Suburb	49,604	1,255,551	4%	84%	83%
Chesapeake City Pblc Schs	Chesapeake	VA	Suburb	39,468	1,255,551	3%	86%	83%
Norfolk City Pblc Schs	Norfolk	VA	City	33,461	1,255,551	3%	71%	83%
WASHINGTON				**49,269**	**1,045,321**	**5%**	**75%**	**77%**
Seattle Public Schools	Seattle	WA	City	49,269	1,045,321	5%	75%	77%
WISCONSIN				**78,869**	**870,282**	**9%**	**62%**	**88%**
Milwaukee School District	Milwaukee	WI	City	78,869	870,282	9%	62%	88%

† = No Data Available

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Surveys.

APPENDIX D

Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) and Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR), by State, 2003-2012

All States	2003 (%)	2004 (%)	2005 (%)	2006 (%)	2007 (%)	2008 (%)	2009 (%)	2010 (%)	2011 (%)	2012 (%)	Change in AFGR, 2003-2010 (% Point)	Average Annual Change in AFGR, 2003-2010 (% Point)	Change in Four-Year Cohort Rate, 2003-2012 (%)	Average Annual Change in Four-Year Cohort Rate, 2003-2012 (%)
AFGR	73.9	75.0	74.7	73.2	73.9	74.7	75.5	78.2			4.3	0.6	—	—
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	80.0			—	—
ALABAMA														
AFGR	64.7	65.0	65.9	66.2	67.1	69.0	69.9	71.8			7.1	1.0		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	65.1	—	72.0	75.0			9.9	5.0
ALASKA														
AFGR	68.0	67.2	64.1	66.5	69.1	69.1	72.6	75.5			7.5	1.1		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	68.0	70.0			2.0	2.0
ARIZONA														
AFGR	75.9	66.8	84.7	70.5	69.6	70.7	72.5	74.7			-1.2	-0.2		
ACGR	74.0	80.0	74.6	69.9	73.4	74.9	76.1	75.4	77.9	76.0			2.0	0.2
ARKANSAS														
AFGR	76.7	76.8	75.7	80.4	74.4	76.4	74.0	75.0			-1.7	-0.2		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	68.0	80.5	80.7	84.0			16.0	5.3
CALIFORNIA														
AFGR	74.1	73.9	74.6	69.2	70.7	71.2	71.0	78.2			4.2	0.6		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	74.7	76.3	79.0			4.3	2.2
COLORADO														
AFGR	76.4	78.7	76.7	75.5	76.6	75.4	77.6	79.8			3.4	0.5		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	70.2	74.4	70.7	72.4	73.9	75.0			4.8	1.0
CONNECTICUT														
AFGR	80.9	80.7	80.9	81.8	82.2	82.3	75.4	75.1			-5.8	-0.8		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	79.3	81.8	83.0	85.0			5.7	1.9
DELAWARE														
AFGR	73.0	72.9	73.1	76.3	71.9	72.1	73.7	75.5			2.5	0.4		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	75.8	78.5	80.0			4.2	2.1
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA														
AFGR	59.6	68.2	68.8	—	54.9	56.0	62.4	59.9			0.3	0.0		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	58.6	59.0			0.4	0.4
FLORIDA														
AFGR	66.7	66.4	64.6	63.6	65.0	66.9	68.9	70.8			4.1	0.6		
ACGR	56.5	59.2	59.3	58.8	59.8	62.7	65.5	69.0	70.6	75.0			18.5	2.1
GEORGIA														
AFGR	60.8	61.2	61.7	62.4	64.1	65.4	67.8	69.9			9.1	1.3		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	58.6	64.0	67.5	70.0			11.4	3.8

APPENDIX D (CONTINUED)

Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) and Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR), by State, 2003-2012

All States	2003 (%)	2004 (%)	2005 (%)	2006 (%)	2007 (%)	2008 (%)	2009 (%)	2010 (%)	2011 (%)	2012 (%)	Change in AFGR, 2003-2010 (% Point)	Average Annual Change in AFGR, 2003-2010 (% Point)	Change in Four-Year Cohort Rate, 2003-2012 (%)	Average Annual Change in Four-Year Cohort Rate, 2003-2012 (%)
HAWAII														
AFGR	71.3	72.6	75.1	75.5	75.4	76.0	75.3	75.4			4.1	0.6		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	80.0	82.0			2.0	2.0
IDAHO														
AFGR	81.5	81.5	81.0	80.5	80.4	80.1	80.6	84.0			2.5	0.4		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—			—	—
ILLINOIS														
AFGR	75.9	80.3	79.4	79.7	79.5	80.4	77.7	81.9			6.0	0.9		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	83.8	82.0			-1.8	-1.8
INDIANA														
AFGR	75.5	73.5	73.2	73.3	73.9	74.1	75.2	77.2			1.7	0.2		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	81.5	84.1	85.7	86.0			4.5	1.5
IOWA														
AFGR	85.3	85.8	86.6	86.9	86.5	86.4	85.7	87.9			2.6	0.4		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	88.8	88.3	89.0			0.2	0.1
KANSAS														
AFGR	76.9	77.9	79.2	77.6	78.9	79.1	80.2	84.5			7.6	1.1		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	80.7	83.0	85.0			4.3	2.2
KENTUCKY														
AFGR	71.7	73.0	75.9	77.2	76.4	74.4	77.6	79.9			8.2	1.2		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—			—	—
LOUISIANA														
AFGR	64.1	69.4	63.9	59.5	61.3	63.5	67.3	68.8			4.7	0.7		
ACGR	—	—	—	64.8	66.3	66.0	67.3	67.2	70.9	72.0			7.2	1.2
MAINE														
AFGR	76.3	77.6	78.6	76.3	78.5	79.1	79.9	82.8			6.5	0.9		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	80.4	82.8	83.8	85.0			4.6	1.5
MARYLAND														
AFGR	79.2	79.5	79.3	79.9	80.0	80.4	80.1	82.2			3.0	0.4		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	82.0	82.8	84.0			2.0	1.0
MASSACHUSETTS														
AFGR	75.7	79.3	78.7	79.5	80.8	81.5	83.3	82.6			6.9	1.0		
ACGR	—	—	—	79.9	80.9	81.2	81.5	82.1	83.4	85.0			5.1	0.8

APPENDIX D (CONTINUED)

Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) and Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR), by State, 2003-2012

All States	2003 (%)	2004 (%)	2005 (%)	2006 (%)	2007 (%)	2008 (%)	2009 (%)	2010 (%)	2011 (%)	2012 (%)	Change in AFGR, 2003-2010 (% Point)	Average Annual Change in AFGR, 2003-2010 (% Point)	Change in Four-Year Cohort Rate, 2003-2012 (%)	Average Annual Change in Four-Year Cohort Rate, 2003-2012 (%)
MICHIGAN														
AFGR	74.0	72.5	73.0	72.2	77.0	76.3	75.3	75.9			1.9	0.3		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	75.5	75.5	75.2	76.0	74.3	76.0			0.6	0.1
MINNESOTA														
AFGR	84.8	84.7	85.9	86.2	86.5	86.4	87.4	88.2			3.4	0.5		
ACGR	72.5	73.5	74.8	75.2	74.8	74.3	74.3	75.5	76.9	78.0			5.5	0.6
MISSISSIPPI														
AFGR	62.7	62.7	63.3	63.5	63.6	63.9	62.0	63.8			1.1	0.2		
ACGR	—	—	—	70.8	73.8	72.0	71.6	71.4	73.7	75.0			2.9	0.6
MISSOURI														
AFGR	78.3	80.4	80.6	81.0	81.9	82.4	83.1	83.7			5.4	0.8		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	81.3	86.0			4.8	4.8
MONTANA														
AFGR	81.0	80.4	81.5	81.9	81.5	82.0	82.0	81.9			0.9	0.1		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	82.2	84.0			1.8	1.8
NEBRASKA														
AFGR	85.2	87.6	87.8	87.0	86.3	83.8	82.9	83.8			-1.4	-0.2		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	86.0	88.0			2.1	2.1
NEVADA														
AFGR	72.3	57.4	55.8	55.8	54.2	56.3	56.3	57.8			-14.5	-2.1		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	62.0	63.0			1.0	1.0
NEW HAMPSHIRE														
AFGR	78.2	78.7	80.1	81.1	81.7	83.4	84.3	86.3			8.1	1.2		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	85.9	86.1	86.0			0.1	0.1
NEW JERSEY														
AFGR	87.0	86.3	85.1	84.8	84.4	84.6	85.3	87.2			0.2	0.0		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	83.2	86.0			2.8	2.8
NEW MEXICO														
AFGR	63.1	67.0	65.4	67.3	59.1	66.8	64.8	67.3			4.2	0.6		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	60.3	66.1	67.3	63.0	70.0			9.7	2.4
NEW YORK														
AFGR	60.9	—	65.3	67.4	68.8	70.8	73.5	76.0			15.1	2.2		
ACGR	—	—	65.8	67.2	71.0	73.6	74.0	76.0	76.8	77.0			11.2	1.6
NORTH CAROLINA														

APPENDIX D (CONTINUED)

Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) and Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR), by State, 2003-2012

All States	2003 (%)	2004 (%)	2005 (%)	2006 (%)	2007 (%)	2008 (%)	2009 (%)	2010 (%)	2011 (%)	2012 (%)	Change in AFGR, 2003-2010 (% Point)	Average Annual Change in AFGR, 2003-2010 (% Point)	Change in Four-Year Cohort Rate, 2003-2012 (%)	Average Annual Change in Four-Year Cohort Rate, 2003-2012 (%)
AFGR	70.1	71.4	72.6	71.8	68.6	72.8	75.1	76.9			6.9	1.0		
ACGR	—	—	—	68.3	69.5	70.3	71.8	74.2	77.9	80.0			11.7	2.0
NORTH DAKOTA														
AFGR	86.4	86.1	86.3	82.1	83.1	83.8	87.4	88.4			2.0	0.3		
ACGR	—	—	86.7	86.2	87.7	86.9	85.4	86.2	86.3	87.0			0.3	0.0
OHIO														
AFGR	79.0	81.3	80.2	79.2	78.7	79.0	79.6	81.4			2.4	0.3		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	78.0	80.0	81.0			3.0	1.5
OKLAHOMA														
AFGR	76.0	77.0	76.9	77.8	77.8	78.0	77.3	78.5			2.5	0.4		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—			—	—
OREGON														
AFGR	73.7	74.2	74.2	73.0	73.8	76.7	76.5	76.3			2.6	0.4		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	66.2	66.4	67.7	68.0			1.8	0.6
PENNSYLVANIA														
AFGR	81.7	82.2	82.5	—	83.0	82.7	80.5	84.1			2.4	0.3		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	77.8	82.6	84.0			6.2	3.1
RHODE ISLAND														
AFGR	77.7	75.9	78.4	77.8	78.4	76.4	75.3	76.4			-1.3	-0.2		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	73.9	75.5	75.8	77.3	77.0			3.1	0.8
SOUTH CAROLINA														
AFGR	59.7	60.6	60.1	—	58.9	62.2	66.0	68.2			8.5	1.2		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	72.0	73.6	75.0			3.0	1.5
SOUTH DAKOTA														
AFGR	83.0	83.7	82.3	84.5	82.5	84.4	81.7	81.8			-1.2	-0.2		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	83.4	83.0			-0.4	-0.4
TENNESSEE														
AFGR	63.4	66.1	68.5	70.6	72.6	74.9	77.4	80.4			17.0	2.4		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	85.5	87.0			1.5	1.5

APPENDIX D (CONTINUED)

Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) and Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR), by State, 2003-2012

All States	2003 (%)	2004 (%)	2005 (%)	2006 (%)	2007 (%)	2008 (%)	2009 (%)	2010 (%)	2011 (%)	2012 (%)	Change in AFGR, 2003-2010 (% Point)	Average Annual Change in AFGR, 2003-2010 (% Point)	Change in Four-Year Cohort Rate, 2003-2012 (%)	Average Annual Change in Four-Year Cohort Rate, 2003-2012 (%)
TEXAS														
AFGR	75.5	76.7	74.0	72.5	71.9	73.1	75.4	78.9			3.4	0.5		
ACGR	84.2	84.6	84.0	80.4	78.0	79.1	80.6	84.3	85.9	88.0			3.8	0.4
UTAH														
AFGR	80.2	83.0	84.4	78.6	76.6	74.3	79.4	78.6			-1.6	-0.2		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	69.0	72.0	75.0	76.0	80.0			11.0	2.8
VERMONT														
AFGR	83.6	85.4	86.5	82.3	88.6	89.3	89.6	91.4			7.8	1.1		
ACGR	—	—	—	85.1	86.4	85.7	85.6	87.5	87.5	88.0			2.9	0.5
VIRGINIA														
AFGR	80.6	79.3	79.6	74.5	75.5	77.0	78.4	81.2			0.6	0.1		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	82.0	83.0			1.0	1.0
WASHINGTON														
AFGR	74.2	74.6	75.0	72.9	74.8	71.9	73.7	77.2			3.0	0.4		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	75.4	76.6	77.0			1.6	0.8
WEST VIRGINIA														
AFGR	75.7	76.9	77.3	76.9	78.2	77.3	77.0	78.3			2.6	0.4		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	75.5	76.5	79.0			3.5	1.8
WISCONSIN														
AFGR	85.8	—	86.7	87.5	88.5	89.6	90.7	91.1			5.3	0.8		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	85.7	87.0	88.0			2.3	1.2
WYOMING														
AFGR	73.9	76.0	76.7	76.1	75.8	76.0	75.2	80.3			6.4	0.9		
ACGR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	80.4	79.7	79.0			-1.4	-0.7

"Sources: Stillwell, R., and Sable, J. (2013). Public School Graduates and Dropouts from the Common Core of Data: School Year 2009–10: First Look (Provisional Data) (NCES 2013-309). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics; U.S. Department of Education (2012). Provisional Data File: SY2010-11 Four-Year Regulatory Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates."

APPENDIX E

Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates (ACGR), by State and Subgroup, 2011-2012

		Major Racial and Ethnic Groups							Special Populations			Asian/Pacific Islander Detail 2
	All Students	American Indian / Alaska Native or Native American	Asian / Pacific Islander 1	Black (not Hispanic) or African American	Hispanic / Latino	Multicultural or Multiethnic or Multiracial	White (not Hispanic) or Caucasian	Children with disabilities (IDEA)	Limited English proficient (LEP) Students	Economically Disadvantaged Students	Asian	Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander or Pacific Islander
Alabama	75%	84%	85%	67%	69%	89%	81%	54%	36%	66%		
Alaska	70%	54%	76%	61%	70%	67%	76%	46%	47%	59%		
Arizona	76%	63%	85%	71%	70%	78%	84%	65%	24%	71%	87%	63%
Arkansas	84%	78%	84%	78%	78%	84%	87%	79%	77%	79%	88%	63%
California	78%	72%	90%	66%	73%	74%	86%	61%	62%	73%	91%	77%
Colorado	75%	58%	82%	66%	62%	80%	82%	54%	53%	61%	83%	70%
Connecticut	85%	85%	92%	73%	69%	83%	91%	64%	63%	70%	92%	95%
Delaware	80%	72%	93%	74%	74%	87%	83%	57%	71%	72%	94%	67%
Florida	75%	70%	88%	64%	73%	79%	79%	48%	57%	65%	88%	
Georgia	70%	67%	82%	62%	60%	72%	78%	35%	44%	61%		
Hawaii	82%	65%	84%	76%	76%		79%	74%	56%	80%		
Idaho	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
Illinois	82%	79%	93%	68%	76%	83%	89%	69%	66%	73%	93%	87%
Indiana	86%	78%	89%	73%	80%	84%	89%	71%	78%	85%	89%	88%
Iowa	89%	73%	89%	74%	77%	84%	91%	73%	74%	80%	90%	77%
Kansas	85%	78%	86%	75%	77%	84%	88%	77%	74%	76%	88%	62%
Kentucky	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
Louisiana	72%	73%	86%	65%	71%	79%	78%	33%	49%	66%	86%	58%
Maine	85%	72%	89%	72%	80%	73%	86%	70%	74%	76%	89%	86%
Maryland	84%	79%	93%	77%	73%	89%	90%	57%	55%	75%	93%	75%
Massachusetts	85%	70%	89%	73%	66%	83%	90%	69%	61%	72%	90%	71%
Michigan	76%	66%	87%	60%	64%	74%	82%	54%	63%	64%	87%	73%
Minnesota	78%	45%	74%	51%	53%		84%	56%	51%	59%		
Mississippi	75%	71%	90%	69%	79%		82%	32%	54%	70%	90%	
Missouri	86%	87%	90%	73%	80%	87%	89%	73%	67%	79%	90%	90%
Montana	84%	63%	92%	79%	79%		87%	81%	53%	73%	95%	82%
Nebraska	88%	67%	83%	74%	78%	85%	91%	72%	64%	80%	84%	82%
Nevada	63%	54%	74%	48%	55%	78%	72%	24%	23%	58%	75%	72%
New Hampshire	86%	73%	86%	76%	74%	85%	87%	70%	68%	73%	87%	55%
New Jersey	86%	84%	95%	75%	77%	90%	93%	74%	73%	75%	95%	91%

APPENDIX E (CONTINUED)

Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates (ACGR), by State and Subgroup, 2011-2012

		Major Racial and Ethnic Groups						Special Populations			Asian/Pacific Islander Detail 2	
	All Students	American Indian / Alaska Native or Native American	Asian / Pacific Islander 1	Black (not Hispanic) or African American	Hispanic / Latino	Multicultural or Multiethnic or Multiracial	White (not Hispanic) or Caucasian	Children with disabilities (IDEA)	Limited English proficient (LEP) Students	Economically Disadvantaged Students	Asian	Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander or Pacific Islander
New Mexico	70%	65%	84%	69%	68%		77%	56%	66%	65%		
New York	77%	63%	86%	63%	63%	80%	87%	48%	44%	68%		
North Carolina	80%	74%	88%	75%	73%	81%	85%	60%	50%	75%		
North Dakota	87%	63%	86%	76%	73%		90%	68%	68%	74%	86%	
Ohio	81%	65%	90%	61%	68%	75%	86%	68%	62%	68%		
Oklahoma	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
Oregon	68%	51%	79%	53%	60%	69%	71%	38%	49%	61%	81%	66%
Pennsylvania	84%	74%	89%	68%	68%	76%	89%	70%	64%	74%		
Rhode Island	77%	58%	79%	67%	67%	74%	82%	59%	69%	66%	80%	73%
South Carolina	75%	71%	85%	71%	69%		78%	40%	64%	68%		
South Dakota	83%	47%	84%	67%	67%	81%	89%	64%	60%	67%	86%	64%
Tennessee	87%	88%	91%	79%	80%		91%	73%	72%	82%	91%	95%
Texas	88%	87%	94%	84%	84%	92%	93%	77%	59%	85%	94%	89%
Utah	80%	64%	78%	64%	66%	81%	83%	64%	51%	70%	79%	76%
Vermont	88%	78%	94%	72%	86%	76%	88%	71%	75%	77%	92%	88%
Virginia	83%			75%	73%		87%	49%	55%	72%	90%	
Washington	77%	57%	83%	67%	67%	78%	80%	58%	54%	66%	84%	65%
West Virginia	79%	67%	94%	74%	79%	73%	80%	60%	83%	72%		
Wisconsin	88%	77%	89%	64%	74%	84%	92%	69%	66%	75%	88%	89%
Wyoming	79%	50%	86%	66%	67%	74%	82%	59%	56%	65%	84%	100%

‡ Reporting standards not met: Data have been suppressed due to a small number of students in the category, complementary suppression has been applied to protect another small count, or the data have been redacted due to anomalies.

- Data were not reported to the Department in time for inclusion in the file, or the category is not used by the SEA.

† Not applicable: Data are not expected to be reported by the SEA for SY2011-12.

1 The Asian/Pacific Islander column represents either the value reported by the state to the Department of Education for the major racial and ethnic group Asian/Pacific Islander or an aggregation of values reported by the state for the major racial and ethnic groups Asian, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander or Pacific Islander, and Filipino. (California is the only state currently using the major racial and ethnic group Filipino.)

2 Disaggregated reporting for Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates is done according to the provisions outlined within each state's Accountablity Workbook. Accordingly, not every state uses major racial and ethnic groups which enable further disaggregation of Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) populations.

Source: Reproduced from the United States Department of Education (2013). Provisional Data File: SY2011-12 Four-Year Regulatory Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates; Data Notes for Provisional SY2011-12 Four-Year Regulatory Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates. Retrieved December 17, 2012 from http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/states-report-new-high-school-graduation-rates-using-more-accurate-common-measur.

APPENDIX F

2012 Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) Gaps, by Subgroup and State

	White Students	African American Students	
	Rate (%)	Rate (%)	Difference (% Points)
Minnesota	84	51	33
Wisconsin	92	64	28
Ohio	86	61	25
New York	87	63	24
Nevada	72	48	24
South Dakota	89	67	22
Michigan	82	60	22
Pennsylvania	89	68	21
Illinois	89	68	21
California	86	66	20
Utah	83	64	19
Connecticut	91	73	18
New Jersey	93	75	18
Oregon	71	53	18
Massachusetts	90	73	17
Iowa	91	74	17
Nebraska	91	74	17
Colorado	82	66	16
Georgia	78	62	16
Wyoming	82	66	16
Indiana	89	73	16
Missouri	89	73	16
Vermont	88	72	16
Rhode Island	82	67	15
Florida	79	64	15
Alaska	76	61	15
North Dakota	90	76	14
Alabama	81	67	14
Maine	86	72	14
Maryland	90	77	13
Arizona	84	71	13
Washington	80	67	13
Kansas	88	75	13
Louisiana	78	65	13
Mississippi	82	69	13
Virginia	87	75	12
Tennessee	91	79	12
New Hampshire	87	76	11
North Carolina	85	75	10
Texas	93	84	9
Arkansas	87	78	9
Delaware	83	74	9
New Mexico	77	69	8
Montana	87	79	8
South Carolina	78	71	7
West Virginia	80	74	6
Hawaii	79	76	3
Idaho	†	†	†
Kentucky	†	†	†
Oklahoma	†	†	†

	White Students	Hispanic Students	
	Rate (%)	Rate (%)	Difference (% Points)
Minnesota	84	53	31
Massachusetts	90	66	24
New York	87	63	24
Connecticut	91	69	22
South Dakota	89	67	22
Pennsylvania	89	68	21
Colorado	82	62	20
Wisconsin	92	74	18
Ohio	86	68	18
Michigan	82	64	18
Georgia	78	60	18
Maryland	90	73	17
North Dakota	90	73	17
Utah	83	66	17
Nevada	72	55	17
New Jersey	93	77	16
Rhode Island	82	67	15
Wyoming	82	67	15
Iowa	91	77	14
Virginia	87	73	14
Arizona	84	70	14
Nebraska	91	78	13
Illinois	89	76	13
New Hampshire	87	74	13
California	86	73	13
Washington	80	67	13
North Carolina	85	73	12
Alabama	81	69	12
Tennessee	91	80	11
Kansas	88	77	11
Oregon	71	60	11
Texas	93	84	9
Indiana	89	80	9
Missouri	89	80	9
Arkansas	87	78	9
Delaware	83	74	9
South Carolina	78	69	9
New Mexico	77	68	9
Montana	87	79	8
Louisiana	78	71	7
Maine	86	80	6
Florida	79	73	6
Alaska	76	70	6
Mississippi	82	79	3
Hawaii	79	76	3
Vermont	88	86	2
West Virginia	80	79	1
Idaho	†	†	†
Kentucky	†	†	†
Oklahoma	†	†	†

- Data were not reported to the Department in time for inclusion in the file, or the category is not used by the SEA.

† Not applicable: Data are not expected to be reported by the SEA for SY2011-12.

Source: U.S. Department of Education (2013). Provisional Data File: SY2011-12 Four-Year Regulatory Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates.

APPENDIX F (CONTINUED)

2012 Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) Gaps, by Subgroup and State

	All students	Students with Disabilities	
	Rate (%)	Rate (%)	Difference (% Points)
Mississippi	75	32	43
Nevada	63	24	39
Louisiana	72	33	39
Georgia	70	35	35
South Carolina	75	40	35
Virginia	83	49	34
Oregon	68	38	30
New York	77	48	29
Maryland	84	57	27
Florida	75	48	27
Alaska	70	46	24
Delaware	80	57	23
Michigan	76	54	22
Minnesota	78	56	22
Connecticut	85	64	21
Colorado	75	54	21
Alabama	75	54	21
Wyoming	79	59	20
North Carolina	80	60	20
Washington	77	58	19
Wisconsin	88	69	19
South Dakota	83	64	19
North Dakota	87	68	19
West Virginia	79	60	19
Rhode Island	77	59	18
California	78	61	17
Vermont	88	71	17
Utah	80	64	16
Massachusetts	85	69	16
Iowa	89	73	16
Nebraska	88	72	16
New Hampshire	86	70	16
Indiana	86	71	15
Maine	85	70	15
Pennsylvania	84	70	14
Tennessee	87	73	14
New Mexico	70	56	14
Ohio	81	68	13
Illinois	82	69	13
Missouri	86	73	13
New Jersey	86	74	12
Arizona	76	65	11
Texas	88	77	11
Kansas	85	77	8
Hawaii	82	74	8
Arkansas	84	79	5
Montana	84	81	3
Idaho	†	†	†
Kentucky	†	†	†
Oklahoma	†	†	†

	All students	Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	
	Rate (%)	Rate (%)	Difference (% Points)
Arizona	76	24	52
Nevada	63	23	40
Alabama	75	36	39
New York	77	44	33
Montana	84	53	31
North Carolina	80	50	30
Utah	80	51	29
Texas	88	59	29
Maryland	84	55	29
Virginia	83	55	28
Minnesota	78	51	27
Georgia	70	44	26
Hawaii	82	56	26
Massachusetts	85	61	24
Nebraska	88	64	24
Louisiana	72	49	23
Alaska	70	47	23
Washington	77	54	23
South Dakota	83	60	23
Wyoming	79	56	23
Connecticut	85	63	22
Colorado	75	53	22
Wisconsin	88	66	22
Mississippi	75	54	21
Pennsylvania	84	64	20
Oregon	68	49	19
North Dakota	87	68	19
Ohio	81	62	19
Missouri	86	67	19
Florida	75	57	18
New Hampshire	86	68	18
California	78	62	16
Illinois	82	66	16
Iowa	89	74	15
Tennessee	87	72	15
Michigan	76	63	13
Vermont	88	75	13
New Jersey	86	73	13
South Carolina	75	64	11
Maine	85	74	11
Kansas	85	74	11
Delaware	80	71	9
Rhode Island	77	69	8
Indiana	86	78	8
Arkansas	84	77	7
New Mexico	70	66	4
West Virginia	79	83	-4
Idaho	†	†	†
Kentucky	†	†	†
Oklahoma	†	†	†

- Data were not reported to the Department in time for inclusion in the file, or the category is not used by the SEA.

† Not applicable: Data are not expected to be reported by the SEA for SY2011-12.

Source: U.S. Department of Education (2013). Provisional Data File: SY2011-12 Four-Year Regulatory Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates.

APPENDIX G

Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) Public Availability, by State, District, and School, Classes of 2010-2012

	Earliest ACGR	2010 ACGR (State-Level)	2011 ACGR (State-Level)	2012 ACGR (State-Level)	2010 ACGR (District-Level)	2011 ACGR (District-Level)	2012 ACGR (District-Level)	2010 ACGR (School-Level)	2011 ACGR (School-Level)	2012 ACGR (School-Level)
Alabama	2009	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Alaska	2011	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes †	Yes †	No	Yes †	Yes †
Arizona	2003	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Arkansas	2009	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes †	Yes †	Yes	Yes †	Yes †	Yes
California	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes †	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colorado	2007	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Connecticut	2009	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Delaware	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes †	Yes	Yes †	Yes †	Yes	Yes †
Florida	2003	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Georgia	2009	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Hawaii	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes †	Yes †	Yes †
Idaho[1]	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Illinois	2011	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Indiana	2009	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Iowa	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kansas	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes †	Yes †	Yes	Yes †	Yes	Yes
Kentucky[2]	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Louisiana	2006	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Maine	2009	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maryland	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Massachusetts	2006	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Michigan	2007	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Minnesota	2003	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mississippi	2003	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Missouri	2011	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Montana	2011	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Nebraska	2011	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Nevada	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Hampshire	2011	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
New Jersey	2008	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Mexico	2006	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New York	2006	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Carolina	2006	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes †	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
North Dakota	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes †	Yes	Yes	Yes †	Yes	Yes
Ohio	N/A	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Oklahoma[3]	2008	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
Oregon	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Pennsylvania	2007	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Rhode Island	2011	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes †	Yes	Yes	Yes †	Yes	Yes
South Carolina	2011	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
South Dakota	2011	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes †	Yes	No	Yes †	Yes
Tennessee	2003	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Texas	2008	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Utah	2006	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes †	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vermont	2011	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes †	Yes †	No	Yes	Yes
Virginia	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes †	Yes	Yes	Yes †	Yes	Yes
Washington[4]	2009	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
West Virginia	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wisconsin	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wyoming	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

† Data is available only in district/school report cards. It is not readily accessible in one file.

1 Idaho received a waiver from the USDOE that excuses them from reporting ACGR. They expect to report ACGR beginning with the 2013/14 school year.

2 Kentucky received a waiver from the USDOE that excuses them from reporting ACGR. They expect to report ACGR beginning with the 2012/13 school year.

3 Oklahoma requested a waiver from the USDOE that would excuse them from reporting ACGR. They expect to report ACGR beginning with the 2012/13 school year.

4 Washington reported its 2010 state-level ACGR for informational purposes only. They did not make available 2010 district- or school-level data.

Source: The USDOE also recently released the State Level 2012 ACGR for all 50 states and the District of Columbia, available at http://eddataexpress.ed.gov/state-tables-main.cfm. District and School level ACGR for 2012, where available, can be obtained from each state's Department of Education's website or by open request to their Department of Education.

APPENDIX H

Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) Data Links, by State

	Department	Link to Main Website	Link to ACGR Data
Alabama	Alabama State Department of Education	http://www.alsde.edu/home/Default.aspx	http://www03.alsde.edu/Accountability/preaccountability.asp
Alaska	Alaska Department of Education & Early Development	http://www.eed.state.ak.us/	http://www.eed.state.ak.us/stats/
Arizona	Arizona Department of Education	http://www.azed.gov/	http://www.azed.gov/research-evaluation/graduation-rates/
Arkansas	Arkansas Department of Education	http://www.arkansased.org/	http://www.arkansased.org/divisions/public-school-accountability/school-performance/graduation-rate
California	California Department of Education	http://www.cde.ca.gov/	(1) http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/cohortrates/GradRates.aspx?cds=00000000000000&TheYear=2010-11&Agg=T&Topic=Graduates&RC=State&SubGroup=Ethnic/Racial (2) http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/ (3) http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filescohort.asp
Colorado	Colorado Department of Education	http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_home.htm	(1) http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/gradcurrent
Connecticut	Connecticut State Department of Education	http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/site/default.asp	http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2758&q=334898
Delaware	Delaware Department of Education	http://www.doe.k12.de.us/	http://profiles.doe.k12.de.us/SchoolProfiles/State/Account.aspx
Florida	Florida Department of Education	http://www.fldoe.org/default.asp	http://www.fldoe.org/eias/eiaspubs/pubstudent.asp
Georgia	Georgia Department of Education	http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/Pages/Home.aspx	http://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/communications/Pages/PressReleaseDetails.aspx?PressView=default&pid=147
Hawaii	Hawaii State Department of Education	http://doe.k12.hi.us/	http://arch.k12.hi.us/school/nclb/nclb.html#
Idaho	Idaho State Department of Education	http://www.sde.idaho.gov/	Idaho presently has a waiver from the USDOE that excuses them from reporting ACGR
Illinois	Illinois State Board of Education	http://www.isbe.net/	http://www.isbe.net/assessment/report_card.htm
Indiana	Indiana State Department of Education	http://www.doe.in.gov/	http://www.doe.in.gov/accountability/graduation-cohort-rate
Iowa	Iowa Department of Education	http://educateiowa.gov/	(1) https://www.educateiowa.gov/documents/graduates/2013/06/iowa-public-high-school-class-2012-4yr-graduation-data-school-subgroup (2) https://www.educateiowa.gov/article/2014/03/12/graduation-rate
Kansas	Kansas State Department of Education	http://www.ksde.org/	(1)http://www.ksde.org/Agency/DivisionofLearningServices/TeacherLicensureandAccreditation/PK-12/GraduationandSchoolsofChoice/GraduationandDropouts.aspx (2)http://svapp15586.ksde.org/rcard/index.aspx
Kentucky	Kentucky Department of Education	http://education.ky.gov/Pages/default.aspx	Kentucky presently has a waiver from the USDOE that excuses them from reporting ACGR
Louisiana	Louisiana Department of Education	http://www.doe.state.la.us/	http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/data-management/cohort-graduation-rates-(2006-2012).pdf?sfvrsn=2
Maine	Maine Department of Education	http://www.maine.gov/doe/	(1) http://www.maine.gov/education/gradrates/ (2) http://www.maine.gov/education/gradrates/gradrates.html
Maryland	Maryland State Department of Education	http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE	(1) http://www.mdreportcard.org/downloadindex.aspx?K=01AAAA (2) http://www.mdreportcard.org/CohortGradRate.aspx?PV=160:12:99:AAAA:1:N:0:13:1:2:1:1:1:1:3
Massachusetts	Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education	http://www.doe.mass.edu/	(1) http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/gradrates/ (2) http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/gradrates.aspx
Michigan	Michigan Department of Education	http://michigan.gov/mde	http://mi.gov/cepi/0,4546,7-113-21423_30451_51357---,00.html
Minnesota	Minnesota Department of Education	https://education.state.mn.us/MDE/index.html	http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/Data.jsp

APPENDIX H (CONTINUED)

Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) Data Links, by State

	Department	Link to Main Website	Link to ACGR Data
Mississippi	Mississippi Department of Education	http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/mde-home	http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/dropout-prevention-and-compulsory-school-attendance/dropout-graduation-rate-information
Missouri	Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education	http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/Pages/default.aspx	http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/guidedinquiry/Pages/District-and-School-Information.aspx
Montana	Montana Office of Public Instruction	http://opi.mt.gov/	(1) http://opi.mt.gov/Reports&Data/Measurement/Index.html (2) http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/Measurement/
Nebraska	Nebraska Department of Education	http://www.education.ne.gov/	9
Nevada	Nevada Department of Education	http://www.doe.nv.gov/	http://www.nevadareportcard.com/di/main/cohort
New Hampshire	New Hampshire Department of Education	http://www.education.nh.gov/	http://www.education.nh.gov/data/dropouts.htm
New Jersey	State of New Jersey Department of Education	http://www.state.nj.us/education/	http://www.state.nj.us/education/data/grate/
New Mexico	New Mexico Public Education Department	http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/index.html	http://www.ped.state.nm.us/Graduation/index.html
New York	New York State Education Department	http://www.nysed.gov/	http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/pressRelease/20130617/home.html
North Carolina	North Carolina State Board of Education, Department of Public Instruction	http://www.ncpublicschools.org/organization/	http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/cohortgradrate
North Dakota	North Dakota Department of Public Instruction	http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/	(1) http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/dpi/reports/Profile/index.shtm (2) http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/resource/graduation.shtm
Ohio	Ohio Department of Education	http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDefaultPage.aspx?page=1	http://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/Pages/Download-Data.aspx
Oklahoma	Oklahoma State Department of Education	http://www.ok.gov/sde/	In August of 2012, Oklahoma requested from the USDOE a waiver to excuse them from reporting ACGR. They are presently awaiting its approval.
Oregon	Oregon Department of Education	http://www.ode.state.or.us/home/	http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2644
Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania Department of Education	http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=7237&mode=2	Pennsylvania did not provide publicly downloaded files of the Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates for its districts and schools, for the Class of 2012.
Rhode Island	Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education	http://www.ride.ri.gov/default.aspx	http://www.eride.ri.gov/eride40/reportcards/12/default.aspx
South Carolina	South Carolina Department of Education	http://ed.sc.gov/	http://ed.sc.gov/data/report-cards/
South Dakota	South Dakota Department of Education	http://doe.sd.gov/	http://doe.sd.gov/reportcard/index.aspx
Tennessee	Tennessee Department of Education	http://tn.gov/education/	http://www.tn.gov/education/research/dataavailablefordownload_000.shtml
Texas	Texas Education Agency	http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index.aspx	http://www.tea.state.tx.us/acctres/completion/2012/level.html
Utah	Utah State Office of Education	http://schools.utah.gov/main/	http://schools.utah.gov/data/Educational-Data/Graduation-Dropout-Rates.aspx
Vermont	State of Vermont Department of Education	http://education.vermont.gov/	(1)http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/data/dropout_completion.html
Virginia	Virginia Department of Education	http://www.doe.virginia.gov/	http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/graduation_completion/cohort_reports/index.shtml
Washington	State of Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction	http://www.k12.wa.us/	http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/default.aspx
West Virginia	West Virginia Department of Education	http://wvde.state.wv.us/	http://wveis.k12.wv.us/nclb/pub/enroll/repstatgr.cfm?xrep=1&sy=11
Wisconsin	Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction	http://dpi.wi.gov/	http://data.dpi.state.wi.us/data/HSCompletionPage.aspx?OrgLevel=st&GraphFile=HIGHSCHOOLCOMPLETION&SCounty=47&SAthleticConf=45&SCESA=05&CompareTo=CURRENTONLY
Wyoming	Wyoming Department of Education	http://edu.wyoming.gov/Default.aspx	http://edu.wyoming.gov/DataInformationAndReporting/GraduateData.aspx

Note: Current as of press time.

Appendix I: Frequently Used Terms and Definitions

Student subgroup-related terms (U.S. Department of Education, 2014a):

- **African American:** Includes black, non-Hispanic persons; defined as a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
- **American Indian/Alaskan Native:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- **Asian:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including for example, Cambodia, China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- **Hispanic:** A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- **Limited English Proficiency (LEP):** Also known as English Language Learners (ELL), defined as students who fall into one of four categories: 1) who were not born in the United States or whose native languages are languages other than English; 2) who are a Native American or Alaskan Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas and who come from an environment where languages other than English have a significant impact on their level of language proficiency; 3) who are migratory, whose native languages are languages other than English; and who come from an environment where languages other than English are dominant; or 4) whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the ability to meet the state's proficient level of achievement on state assessments and the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English, and/or the opportunity to fully participate in society.
- **Students with Disabilities:** Defined as students with mental retardation, hearing impairments, (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, need special education and related services.
- **White:** Includes white, non-Hispanic persons, defined as a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.

- **Advanced Placement (AP):** Programs offered by the College Board that provide college-level curriculum courses to high school students. Students who successfully complete the AP examination can earn college credit (College Board, 2014).
- **Brown v. Board of Education:** A 1954 landmark case in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that state laws establishing separate public schools for black and white students was unconstitutional (Legal Information Institute, n.d.).
- **Chronic Absenteeism:** A measure of how much school a student misses for any reason. It is usually equated to missing ten percent of the school year, or typically 18 school days (Attendance Works, n.d.-b).
- **Common Core State Standards:** Developed by state education chiefs and governors in 48 states, Common Core is a set of college-and-career-ready standards for kindergarten through 12th grade in English language arts/literacy and mathematics. To date, 45 states have adopted the Standards and are working to implement them in their school districts (Common Core State Standards, 2014).
- **Disconnected/Opportunity Youth:** Young people ages 16 – 24 who are neither in school nor working. Out of the 38.9 million Americans who fall into the age group of 16 – 24, some 6.7 million can be described as opportunity youth (Bridgeland & Mason-Elder, 2012).
- **Early College High Schools:** Small schools designed to allow students to earn both a high school diploma and an Associate's degree or two years of credit toward a Bachelor's degree. Established in 2002, the Early College High School Initiative is an approach that redesigns a high school's academic rigor and support programs to colligate resources.

- **ESEA State Waivers:** A formal process under which states may apply for flexibility from certain provisions of the No Child Left Behind/ Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The process was established in September of 2011, and 45 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Bureau of Indian Education submitted requests for ESEA flexibility (U.S. Department of Education, 2014e).
- **Fortified Learning Environments:** A classroom that goes beyond instruction to also reduce stress, foster positive connections with adults and peers, and promote non-cognitive attributes such as academic mindsets, motivation, self-regulation, and social efficacy (Farrington et al., 2012)
- **Free- and Reduced-Price Lunch:** Students qualify for free and reduced price lunches if their household's income is no greater than 130% of the federal poverty guidelines. Additionally, a child can receive free or reduced price meals if the family is already receiving SNAP food stamps.
- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** U.S. federal law originally enacted in 1975 that mandates how states and public agencies provide services, including early intervention, special education, and other related services, to children with disabilities. Most recent amendments to the law were passed in 2004 (National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, n.d.).
- **International Baccalaureate (IB):** Founded in 1968, IB is a nonprofit educational foundation that provides four educational diploma programs to students (aged 3 to 19) in over 147 countries (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014).
- **Investment in Innovation Fund (i3):** Established under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the Investing in Innovation Fund provides grants to schools and nonprofits in order to implement innovative educational practices that are demonstrated to have an impact on improving overall student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2014f).
- **National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP):** Overseen by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education, NAEP is a national assessment of U.S students' knowledge of various subject areas, including mathematics, reading, science, writing, the arts, and history. (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014)The NAEP assessment is administered uniformly across the nation and serves as a common metric for all states (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014).
- **National Governor's Association (NGA) Graduation Rate Compact:** A four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate used to determine the percentage of on-time high school graduates from a given four-year cohort. This rate is widely considered to be a high-quality and practical graduation rate with the capability to improve consistency and accuracy among statewide reporting systems (Public Education Partners, n.d.).
- **No Child Left Behind:** The No Child Left Behind act is a 2002 reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The law was intended to hold states accountable for improving the academic performance of all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, proficiency in English, disability, or economic status (National School Boards Association, n.d.).
- **Problem-Based Learning:** A teaching method in which students learn about a subject through problem solving. The role of the instructor is to support and guide students, and to monitor the learning process.
- **Project-Based Learning:** A teaching method in which students learn core components of a curriculum, and then apply what they have learned to solve problems in a collaborative way.
- **Race to the Top:** A competitive grant program of over $4 billion created by the U.S. Department of Education to spur innovation and reforms in state and local school district K-12 education (The White House, n.d.-b).
- **School-Based Health Centers:** Recommended by the American Public Health Association, school-based health centers provide primary care, mental health services, and sometimes oral health care to students regardless of their ability to pay, and in a location that meets students where they spend most of their waking hours: school (American Public Health Association, n.d.).
- **School Improvement Grants (SIG):** Authorized under the No Child Left Behind Act in 2009, these grants are given to State educational agencies (SEAs) to provide resources to substantially raise the achievement of

students in the lowest-performing schools. SEAs determine which schools receive these grants based on each school's need for the funds and commitment to use funds to provide adequate resources (U.S. Department of Education, 2014c).

- **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)**: The process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, n.d.-b).
- **Student Enrollment Count Mechanisms/Deadlines:** States use different mechanisms for counting students for the purpose of funding school districts. For an overview of mechanisms and deadlines used by each state and an analysis of the implications of those policies, please see "Student enrollment count mechanisms for school funding: A survey of state policies" (Groginsky, 2010).
- **What Works Clearinghouse (U.S. Department of Education):** Established in 2002, What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) is an initiative of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) at the U.S. Department of Education that aims to inform educators and policymakers of the effectiveness of a given practice, program, or policy (also known as "interventions"). WWC provides evidence-based data to the public to improve student outcomes in education (Institute of Education Sciences, n.d.).

Appendix J: Graduation Rate FAQ

- **Why does graduating from high school matter?** High school graduates are more likely to be employed, make higher taxable incomes, and generate jobs than those without a high school diploma. For example, had the nation already reached our 90 percent goal, the additional graduates from a single class would have earned an estimated $5.3 billion more in income, generated more than 37,000 jobs and increased the GDP by $6.6 billion per year. Graduates are less likely to engage in criminal behavior or receive social services. They have better health outcomes and higher life expectancies. Strong evidence also links increased educational attainment with higher voting and volunteering rates. Finally, this issue even affects national security, as only graduates can be accepted to serve in the armed forces.

- **How were high school graduation rates determined in the past?** Historically, high school graduation rates have been arrived at using multiple formulas that varied by state and researcher, and were based on several different definitions of the student baseline, of a diploma, and of a graduate. These rates include the leaver method, the completer method, and, most notably, state methods.

- **How were graduation rates determined on an interim basis?** Beginning in the late 1990s, researchers and then the states and federal government began developing alternative graduation rate calculations. In 2005, members of the National Governors Association (NGA), deeply concerned about strategies for improving schools, reached a consensus that high school graduation rates should be calculated in a uniform way across the states, and in a pioneering compact, generated a formula for doing so. The formula was modified and refined in a 29-page rulemaking document released by then-Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, in December 2008. States were expected to report graduation rates using the refined formula (the Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate [ACGR]) beginning with the 2010-11 school year. The Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) was an interim calculation that is still used today, for purposes of continuity.

- **What is the ACGR?** The Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) is a method for tracking a group (or cohort) of students who enter high school together, as first-time ninth-graders (or tenth-graders, in schools that begin in tenth grade) and graduate "on-time" (i.e., within three or four years) with a regular diploma. The ACGR accounts (or adjusts) for students who transfer into the school, transfer out to another school in the state, or die. The ACGR is based on a state's ability to follow individual students, made feasible by assigning a single student identifier to each student, as also required in the 2008 regulations. Most states calculate the ACGR at the state, school district, and school-levels.

- **What is the formula for the ACGR?** The U.S. Department of Education provided the following formula to calculate the ACGR for the graduating class of 2012

  Number of cohort members who earned a regular high school diploma by the end of the 2011-2012 school year

  Number of first-time 9th graders in fall 2008 (starting cohort) plus students who transferred in, minus students who transferred out, emigrated, or died during school years 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011-2012

  The same formula is followed for each graduating class.

- **Time span for the ACGR:** The four-year ACGR is the "gold standard" for graduation rate reporting, as it is the number of years in which U.S. students are typically expected to complete high school. The four-year ACGR is the rate that the U.S. Department of Education reported in its news releases in November 2012 and 2013. In addition to the four-year ACGR, many states calculate five and six-year ACGR to enable consideration of those students who take additional time to complete the standard course of study. Students who graduate early (i.e., in one, two, or three years) are included as graduates with their original four-year cohort. Three-year ACGRs are often calculated for schools that begin at the tenth grade.

- **What does using the ACGR accomplish?** Using the ACGR means that states are no longer estimating graduation rates from aggregate enrollment numbers (as is done with the Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate [AFGR]). ACGR counts individual students who graduate within a given time period.

- **What goes into the ACGR?** For ACGR to provide an accurate picture, states must carefully define the terms they use to calculate ACGR and enact regulations and legislation that comply with the original federal regulations surrounding ACGR. "Graduation," for instance, is intended to mean that students have received the regular state diploma, rather than a GED, a certificate of attendance, a certificate of completion, an alternative diploma or a waiver diploma. "Transfer out" is intended to mean that when a student leaves school, his or her next destination is known and verified in writing, not assumed or conjectured. "Transfers in" should be added to the cohort.

- **Do all states use the same formula to calculate ACGR?** No, not yet. While each state follows the same general ACGR formula provided by the U.S. Department of Education (see the above section, "What is the formula for the ACGR?"), states vary in the ways they define each component of the formula. For instance, states vary in how they count students who "transfer out" into incarceration, homeschooling, or across state boundaries. Students who "transfer out" into homeschooling during high school are considered valid transfers out in most states, although in most states there is no requirement that homeschooled students gain a diploma of any sort. Students who "transfer out" across state lines are considered valid, though documentation is not required in every state. Even more variation occurs among students with disabilities, who constitute approximately 14 percent of the student population. Some rigorous states expect students with disabilities to gain a regular diploma in four years, while other states say that they are granting a "regular diploma" to these students when, in fact, the "regular diploma" for special education students is whatever their individual education plan (IEP, required for students with disabilities) outlines. As a result, it may take several more years to fully implement the ACGR approach uniformly and with fidelity.

- **Why do the ambiguities and loopholes matter?** They matter because they can impede our ability to truly measure real graduation rates and compare rates across states. The U.S. Department of Education developed a comprehensive formula, arrived at after a great deal of input and consensus from education experts across the states. To be able to make accurate comparisons across states, and to learn what is working and who still needs additional support, it is imperative that states use common definitions. When evaluating your state's regulation, ask "What happens if we change the definition of a ninth-grade cohort or a graduate?" The answer to this question affects your state's graduation rate and its ability to identify those schools, districts, and groups in need of additional support.

- **Are all states now reporting the four-year ACGR at the state level?** Five states began using a formula similar to ACGR in 2003, or have calculated ACGR back to this period. By 2006, 11 states had reported ACGR, and by 2009, 24 had reported it. Thirty-five states reported in 2010. As of March, 2014, 47 states and the District of Columbia had reported for each of the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years, and 28 states had already reported for 2012-2013 (see Appendix F for a list of the earliest years in which ACGR was reported by state). Three states —Idaho, Kentucky, and Oklahoma — were granted waivers by the U.S. Department of Education allowing them to delay reporting because of technical difficulties with data systems.

- **Do all states report ACGR at the school and district levels?** Not all states are reporting ACGR for schools yet, nor do all of those that report it do so in an easy-to-use format.

1. See Appendix F for a state-by-state list of the level at which states report 2010, 2011, and 2012 ACGR in an easy-to-use format.
2. See Appendix D for 2012 reported ACGR by state and subgroup.
3. See Appendix G for links to state sources of ACGR.

- **Is the graduation rate that is reported on state report cards the same as the ACGR?** Not necessarily. State accountability systems issue state, district, and school report cards. States are supposed to report ACGR, but can also report other graduation-related statistics, which may in some cases lead to confusion as to what the graduation rate actually is. In some states, report cards use methods other than the ACGR to estimate graduation rates. Many state calculation methods inflate the graduation rate by counting GEDs as regular diplomas, or by counting fourth, fifth, and sixth-year graduates together. Some states count students who received a certificate of completion or attendance rather

than a diploma as graduates. Check with your state department of education about what method and definitions are used in your state, district, and school report cards. In addition, you may wish to check out the Alliance for Excellent Education's website and the individual state report cards for previous years. Those report cards list results by state method, average freshman graduation rate (a different method that preceded ACGR), and results from independent sources. Together, these rates give the range in previous rates and illustrate why a common method based on common definitions and individual students was so badly needed.

- **Is the ACGR the ONLY graduation rate that is used in Building a Grad Nation: Progress and Challenges, Annual Report 2014?** No. Because states are still in transition from using previous rates to using the ACGR, and because trend lines can only be established for states with several years of ACGR data, two other graduation rate estimations are used in this report: the Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) and Promoting Power (PP).
  - The AFGR was developed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) after convening panels of experts to make recommendations about the most effective strategy to calculate graduation rates in the absence of data systems based on individual student identifiers. The AFGR depends on enrollment by grade reported annually by each school and district to the NCES' Common Core of Data or CCD. The AFGR is calculated by dividing the number of diploma recipients by the average of the number of ninth-graders three years earlier, the number of tenth-graders two years earlier, and the number of eighth-graders four years earlier. The average is taken because research has shown that many ninth grades are disproportionately large because of the number of students retained. The AFGR does not account for transfers in or out.
  - Promoting Power is an estimated graduation rate developed by the Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University School of Education. It compares the number of twelfth-grade students in a school to the number of ninth-graders three years earlier by using the grade level enrollment numbers reported to the federal Common Core of Data. Promoting Power does not account for students who make it to twelfth grade but ultimately do not graduate, nor does it adjust for transfers in or out. In the absence of uniform, school-level graduation rates, Promoting Power enables up-to-date comparisons to be made across states and schools. Promoting Power has been used in each of the Building a Grad Nation Annual Reports.
- **What is a "dropout factory" school?** A dropout factory is a high school with a Promoting Power of 60 percent or less. In other words, it is a school in which its reported twelfth grade enrollment is 60 percent or less than its ninth-grade enrollment three years earlier.
- **Why are AFGR and PP used in this report, in addition to ACGR?** AFGR is used because it has been retroactively calculated for more than 30 years, enabling comparison of national and state trend lines and changes over time. Because AFGR is easily available only at the state level, (although it can be calculated for districts and schools using CCD data, as is done for select districts and schools by the Broad Prize for Urban Education) other more school-specific measures were needed. Promoting Power is one such proxy and enables zeroing in on the number, distribution, and characteristics of schools with low Promoting Power ("dropout factories"). As ACGR becomes more prevalent, use of PP and AFGR will gradually be phased out.
- **Is there one list of low-performing high schools based on ACGR?** No, there is not one centralized list of low-performing high schools across the nation based on ACGR. Each state calculates its own ACGR and most, but not all, states have done so school by school. Appendix F summarizes the availability of school-by-school and district-by-district ACGR data by state, for the 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-2012 school years, the most recent periods for which ACGR is available (except in 28 states which have reported 2013 ACGR). In states that do not publish ACGR by school, it is recommended that state departments of education be contacted. Appendix G lists links for each state, current as of press time.
- **Are there other lists of low-performing schools based on different measurement systems?** The Civic Marshall Plan state indices for each state, available at http:// new.every1graduates.org/building-a-grad-nation- state-profiles-and-annual-updates, provide the

latest available ACGR (2012), AFGR (2011) and Promoting Power (2012) estimates for each state. The Alliance for Excellent Education (www.all4ed.org) maintains a Promoting Power database of all high schools by state, county, zip code, and congressional district for the classes of 2008, 2009, and 2010: http://www.all4ed.org/about_the_crisis/schools/ state and local info/promoting power.

- **Is the dropout rate the inverse of the graduation rate?** No. Graduation rates are not the inverse of dropout rates. Generally, the dropout rate is the total number of students who drop out from all grades in a school or district in a given year, divided by the total enrollment in those grades. Depending on the state, dropout rates may cover grades 7 to 12 or grades 9 to 12. Dropout rates can be among the most misleading of indicators because the data is diluted over the grades. Ten to 15 percent is typically considered a very high dropout rate.

- **Are graduation rates reported or calculated using school and district enrollment data comparable to those reported by the U.S. Census?** Not on face value. Two different situations are being addressed. The Census Bureau conducts two surveys (the Current Population Survey and the American Community Survey) that provide snapshots of educational attainment for the population, snapshots that are taken separately for different age groups. Typically, both surveys produce higher rates of educational attainment than do high school graduation rates. In part, the surveys are covering an older population that has had time to "get back on the graduation path" through alternate methods, including the GED (not included in the ACGR or AFGR). They also are not restricted to students enrolled in public schools, but include a sampling of the 11 percent of the population who attended private school and the 3 percent who are home-schooled, both estimated to have very high graduation rates. One survey excludes those living in group situations, such as the incarcerated and the military; the incarcerated population tends to have low graduation rates.

- **How do I find out the graduation rate in my school or community?** Consult the tables listed earlier in Appendix G for web resources, or contact your state department of education if its website does not provide school-by-school information. The Grad Nation: A Guidebook to Help Communities Tackle the Dropout Crisis also provides information on how to find out the graduation rate and size of the dropout crisis in your community. http://www. americaspromise.org/our-work/Dropout-Prevention/~/ media/Files/Our%20Work/Dropout%20Prevention/ Grad%20Nation%20Guidebook%20052809.ashx. The Civic Marshall Plan's State Challenge also provides a quick snapshot of each state's status in meeting the graduation challenge. Download your state's index to see where it stands. http://new.every1graduates.org/building-a- grad-nation-state-profiles-and-annual-updates/

Appendix K:
Civic Marshall Plan Principles

Every school in every community has unique opportunities to accelerate achievement for their children. To do so, stakeholders at every level require a set of appropriate solutions for their unique needs. The Civic Marshall Plan is not meant to be a prescription, but rather an iterative, evolving, dynamic, solutions-oriented campaign to end America's dropout crisis. Therefore, the Civic Marshall Plan's action items are organized around Four Leading Principles: focus, high expectations, accountability, and collaboration. The principles offer stakeholders key themes that can guide all of their work, while the action items provide targeted issues on which they can focus to reach the goal of 90 percent graduation rate by 2020.

PRINCIPLE: STRATEGIC FOCUS: We must direct human, financial and technical capacities and resources to low-graduation rate communities, school systems, schools and disadvantaged students.

Action Items:

- Serve communities housing the "dropout factory high schools" that have 60 percent and lower high school graduation rates and their feeder middle and elementary schools
- Serve communities housing the high schools that have 61 to 75 percent graduation rates and their feeder middle and elementary schools to ensure they do not slip into a "dropout factory"
- Integrate multi-sector, business and community-based efforts in collaboration with individual school and school system efforts

PRINCIPLE: HIGH EXPECTATIONS: All students deserve a world-class education and all children can succeed, if provided appropriate supports.

Action Items:

- Reduce chronic absenteeism with policies and practices that support students in coming to school, staying in school, and learning at school.
- Support, promote, or launch grade-level reading campaigns, ensuring all students read proficiently and with comprehension by fourth grade and beyond.
- Support students in advancing on grade level through school transitions.
- Redesign middle grades education, engaging, effective, academically directed schools.
- Provide engaging and demanding coursework that prepares students for college and careers, as outlined in the Common Core State Standards.
- Transform or replace "dropout factories."
- Expand education options and choices for students, connecting high school and postsecondary opportunities, including quality career technical education, early college high schools, dual enrollment, back on track and recovery programs.
- Reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; strengthen state and school system policies to accelerate student achievement.

PRINCIPLE: ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUPPORT. We must measure our work so that we know what's working – and what is not. We must build state, school system, and school capacity to improve graduation and college readiness rates.

Action Items:

- Use evidence-based strategies, promising practices, and data-driven decision making in all education-related sectors.
- Fully implement, use and improve linked educational data systems throughout the educational continuum.
- Develop and support highly effective and accountable teachers, counselors, youth-serving personnel, and administrator, working with those who represent teachers.
- Build Early Warning Indicator and Intervention Systems to identify and appropriately support "on track" and "off track" students.
- Measure the effectiveness of in-school and out-of-school interventions in order to promote and scale best practices.
- Maximize "time on task" in school and maximize extended learning time in school, out of school, afterschool, and during the summer.

THOUGHTFUL COLLABORATION. Ending the dropout crisis requires an all-hands-on-deck approach. To achieve collective impact, collaborations must be deliberately planned, guided by shared metrics and thoughtfully integrated to maximize efficiency and outcomes.

Action items:

- Showcase examples of success at the state and community levels, serving as a challenge to others
- Create multi-sector and community-based efforts that harness the power of youth-serving agencies, nonprofits and businesses as education partners
- Ensure parents and families are continuously engaged in their child's education and provided appropriate resources to promote their child's success.
- Elicit the perspectives of students, educators, and parents.
- Educate community members about the need for education, high school and beyond, using all available tools to keep Grad Nation a local, state, and national priority.

Appendix L:
Key programs of GradNation Campaign

The GradNation campaign needs everyone to help young people achieve their full potential. In addition to the Civic Marshall Plan, key initiatives of the GradNation campaign involve America's Promise's national partners and communities across the country, and are designed to provide more young people with the Five Promises: caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, an effective education, and opportunities to help others.

- **Building a GradNation Summit** — As the campaign's premier event, the summit brings together great minds to share ideas and best practices; to challenge old thinking; and to help organizations working in youth development, education, and neighborhood transformation move beyond individual silos and unleash the real power of cross-sector collaboration. Hundreds convene each year in Washington, D.C., to share progress and inspire action to reach the GradNation goal.
- **Center for Promise** — In collaboration with Tufts University's School of Arts and Sciences, the center takes a child-centered approach to research what is needed to help all young people in America succeed in school and life. The center's work adds to the academic exploration of these issues, and helps give communities and individuals the tools and knowledge to work together effectively to support young people.
- **GradNation Communities Network** — Communities are on the front line of helping young people succeed in school, work, and life. Members of the GradNation Communities Network commit to work across sectors to pursue the GradNation goals, share best practices, and provide annual updates on progress and challenges. Any community can apply to join the effort and benefit significantly through support and services to help end the dropout crisis, including training and networking opportunities; connections to resources, tools and expertise; and funding opportunities.
- **GradNation Community Summits** — Local summits, convened by community leaders and supported by America's Promise, are hasting the nation's progress toward reaching the national goal of a 90 percent on-time high school graduation rate by 2020. From 2013 through 2015, America's Promise will support summits in 100 communities across the country, as leaders from businesses, civic organizations, non-profits, local government, public schools, higher education, foundations and faith-based organizations join with parents and young people to develop a blueprint to accelerate progress that is tailored to each community's strengths and needs. At the heart of these plans are the Five Promises, the wraparound services that dramatically increase a young person's chance of success: caring adults, safe places, an effective education, a healthy start and opportunities to help others.
- **GradNation.org** — Learn, connect, and act: That is the mantra of GradNation.org, the digital hub of the GradNation campaign. This new online platform is a vibrant and growing showcase of ideas, research, best practices, stories and colleagues who are at work across the nation who working hard to improve graduation rates among young Americans.

TARGET

CIVIC ENTERPRISES

EVERYONE GRADUATES CENTER

AMERICA'S PROMISE ALLIANCE

ALLIANCE FOR EXCELLENT EDUCATION