

Meeting Cincinnati's Graduation Challenge

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Cincinnati Dropout Prevention Summit

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"Dropping out of high school is no longer an option. It's not just quitting on yourself, it's quitting on your country. And this country needs the values and talents of every American."

President Barack Obama Speech to Join Session of Congress
February 24, 2009

Grad Nation

A Guidebook to Help Communities
Tackle The Dropout Crisis



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Graduation Nation:

A GUIDEBOOK TO HELP COMMUNITIES TACKLE THE DROPOUT CRISIS

- **Graduation Nation** contains research-based guidance for addressing the dropout crisis in your community, with ready-to-print tools and links to additional online resources.
- One size does not fit all, so you will not find step-by-step instructions, rather you will find tools to create a **customized solution** that's right for your community.
- This is an active process- use the **Grad Nation Action Tool** to begin assessing your community's next steps.
- The goal is to give **your community** the tools it needs to:
 - Rally your community to end the dropout crisis
 - Understand the dropout challenge
 - Comprehensively address your dropout crisis
 - Move forward to create lasting change



I. Rallying Your Community to End the Dropout Crisis

- **DEMONSTRATE A DROPOUT CRISIS EXISTS**
 - Every 26 seconds a student drops out of high school, resulting in 1.2 million dropouts, nationwide, every year
 - Gather local data
- **DEMONSTRATE THE CRIPPLING COSTS OF CRISIS**
 - Economic Impact
 - Wage Earning Gap
 - Social Services Cost
 - Idleness
 - Productive Citizenry



Rallying Your Community to End the Dropout Crisis

- **DEMONSTRATE CRISIS IS SOLVABLE**
 - We know who drops out and why
 - We know what helps kids stay on the path to graduation
 - Proven interventions and reforms, with accountability for results
- **DEMONSTRATE YOUR COMMUNITY MUST TAKE ACTION**
 - Identify crucial role of community in ending dropout crisis
 - Diverse pool of stakeholders: educators, parents, business leaders, nonprofits, students themselves
 - Confront skeptics who claim either the crisis doesn't exist, or that all students don't need to graduate from high school
 - Get accurate data in their hands
 - Explain the necessity of a diploma in economic and civic terms



II. Understanding Your Community's Dropout Crisis

ACCURATE, LOCAL DATA:

- How big is your problem?
 - ▣ What percentage of students who start ninth grade in your community do not graduate from high school in four years?
 - ▣ Each year, how many students drop out?
 - ▣ What schools in your community have the biggest problem?
 - ▣ During what grade(s) are students most likely to drop out?
 - ▣ How early can you reliably identify a significant number of students who absent effective intervention have high odds of dropping out?



Understanding Your Community's Dropout Crisis

- **WHEN AND WHY ARE STUDENTS DROPPING OUT?**
- Consider all the points students begin to disengage, and eventually drop out – for some it's 9th, 6th, or even 3rd grade
- Look at transcripts to determine:
 - How many credits were dropouts shy of graduating?
 - Failure in which courses was most associated with dropping out?
- Why are students dropping out?
 - Possibilities include: life events, fade outs, push outs and a failure to succeed in school
 - Use Surveys and Interviews to get student's perspective



Understanding Your Community's Dropout Crisis

- ❑ **HOW DOES YOUR COMMUNITY RESPONSE MEASURE UP?**
- ❑ Are existing supports directed to right students at the right time?
- ❑ Are current supports comprehensive and effective?
- ❑ What other responses are needed?
- ❑ What current efforts need to be reformed, modified or abandoned because they aren't working?
- ❑ **POLICY AUDIT: WHAT POLICIES NEED TO CHANGE?**
- ❑ Attendance Policies
- ❑ Grade Retention Policies / Grade Promotion Policies
- ❑ Grading Policies
- ❑ Over-Promotion of GED's / Alternative Schools



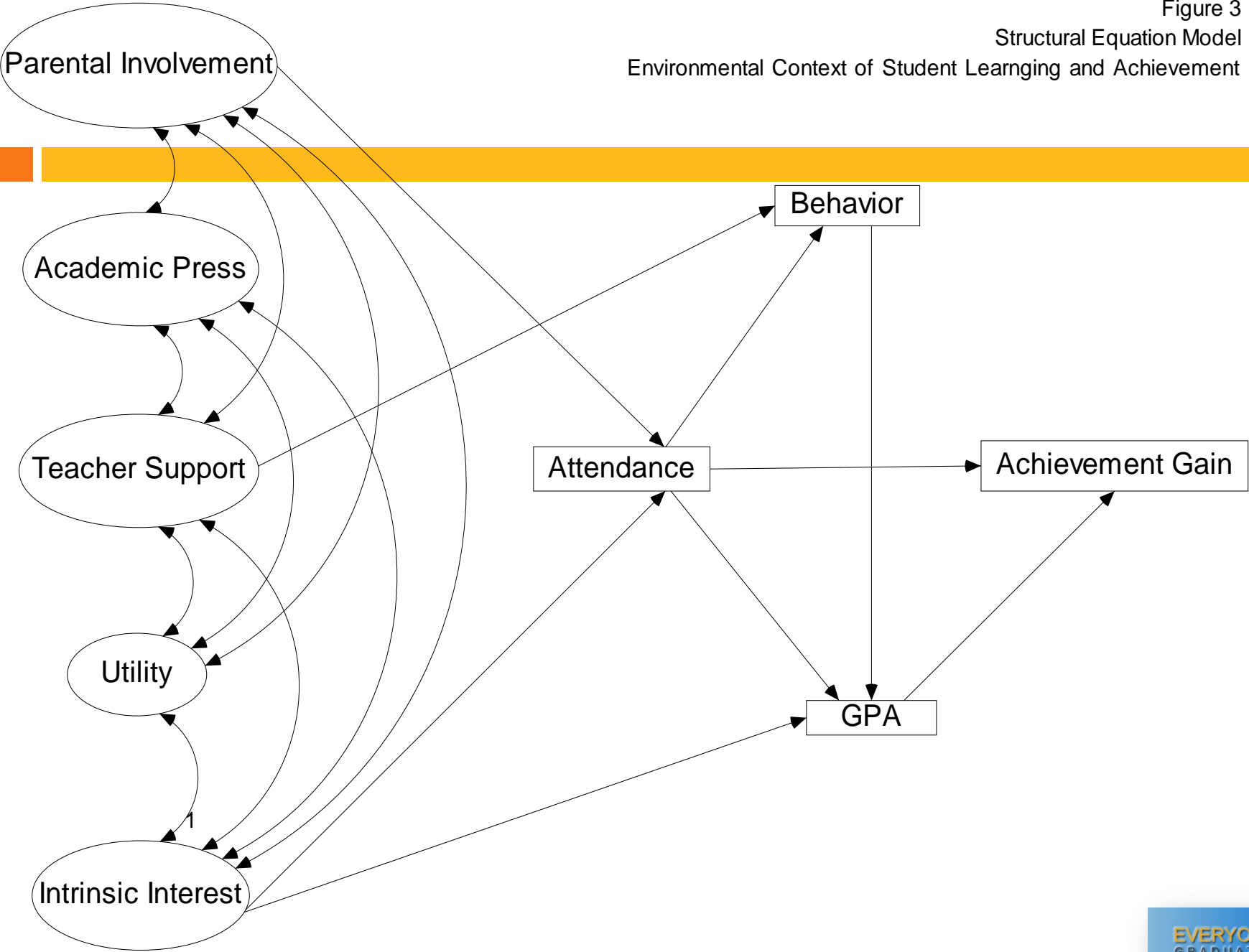
III. Solutions for Comprehensively Addressing Your Community's Dropout Crisis

- ❑ **DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE SET OF SOLUTIONS**
- ❑ Increase number of skilled and committed adults providing supports to students
- ❑ Create a New Deal-between teachers, parents and students
- ❑ Launch and maintain community campaign to improve student attendance
- ❑ **CREATING SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION**
- ❑ Organizational/Structural Reform
- ❑ Instructional, Curricular, Assessment Reforms
- ❑ Leadership Reforms

Figure 3

Structural Equation Model

Environmental Context of Student Learning and Achievement





Solutions for Addressing Your Community's Dropout Crisis

□ **IMPROVING COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS**

- Provide Rigorous College & Work Preparatory Curriculum for **ALL** Students
- Expand college level learning opportunities in HS
- Provide supports for students to make transition to college

□ **DEVELOP DROPOUT PREVENTION AND RECOVERY SYSTEMS**

- Establish early warning systems
- Multi-tiered response system
- Multiple pathways to success and alternate recovery programs



IV. Moving Forward to Create Lasting Change

- **DEVELOP COMMUNITY GRADUATION COMPACT**
 - Put your community's shared vision down on paper with real benchmarks, goals and timelines
 - Carefully identify partners whose collaboration will help achieve these goals on time, and with accountability
 - How local assets can be best leveraged to increase the graduation rate
- **PREPARE FOR LONG-TERM ACTION AND SUCCESS**
 - Keep key constituencies engaged with a mechanism for checking in on actual benchmarks and timetables
 - Celebrate incremental successes and work to address gaps as they present themselves




NOW IT'S TIME TO USE GRAD NATION

BEGIN WITH THE GRAD NATION ACTION TOOL TO ASSESS PRESENT STATUS:

- IDENTIFY GOALS**
- IDENTIFY PARTNERS & ROLES**
- IDENTIFY TIMELINE & BENCHMARKS**
- ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY**

DRAW ON RESOURCES IN THE TOOLKIT, PAIRED WITH ALL ACTION STEPS IN GUIDEBOOK, TO BEGIN THE WORK IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

NEXT STEPS



“When more than one million students a year drop out of high school, it’s more than a problem, it’s a catastrophe. Our economic and national security are at risk when we fail to educate the leaders and the workforce of the future. It’s time for a national ‘call to arms’ because we cannot afford to let nearly one-third of our kids fail.”

GENERAL COLIN POWELL

MORE RESOURCES:

GRAD NATION:

http://www.americaspromise.org/uploadedFiles/AmericasPromiseAlliance/Grad_Nation/GradNation_020509.pdf

AMERICA'S PROMISE: www.americaspromise.org

EVERYONE GRADUATES CENTER:

www.every1graduates.org

CIVIC ENTERPRISES: www.civicenterprises.net