



America's Promise Alliance Community & State Action Planning Guide to Improve Graduation and College-Readiness Rates

The America's Promise Alliance is committed to mobilizing the vast resources of states and local communities to address their dropout challenges and help more young people graduate from high school, ready for college, work and life. While we aim to serve as a catalyst for this action, we recognize that it is the states and communities themselves who will drive, and *sustain*, the actions that are necessary to make high school graduation and college readiness a reality for all of their youth. The Alliance applauds the leadership of your Dropout Prevention Leadership Team in making these crucial issues a priority for your state or community and encourages the Team to use your Dropout Summit, as well as the Action Plan the Team develops here, to shape your state's or community's long-term commitment to addressing the dropout challenge.

To help your Team prepare for your Summit and develop your Action Plan, we are providing a few tools. This *Action Planning Guide* was designed to walk you through an initial but comprehensive set of questions that your Team will want to answer in order to put together your state's or community's Action Plan. (Note: It may be helpful to answer many of the questions before your Summit.) The Alliance recognizes that states and communities are in various stages along the continuum of addressing their dropout challenges, so this action planning guide is meant to be flexible enough to apply to your local context. This planning guide is based upon and refers to sections of *Grad Nation: A Guidebook to Help Communities Tackle the Dropout Crisis*, a rich resource we commissioned to help you delve deeper into the questions and access many of the leading organizations and tools available around the country that can help you do this work.

At the end of this guide, you will find a customizable worksheet to capture your answers to a subset of the questions in this planning guide. This worksheet (found on pages 6-9) is the document that **all Alliance-funded summit states and communities are required to complete and submit within 60 days of your summit** in order to fulfill your Dropout Summit grant agreement.

Note that America's Promise Alliance may share your Team's Action Plan with leading national organizations and funding agents interested in providing resources – financial, human, and intellectual – to help your state or community pursue the priorities that are identified.

Helpful Resource to Do This Work

The Alliance recommends the following resource to help inform your Action Plan:

Grad Nation: A Guidebook to Help Communities Tackle the Dropout Crisis, by Robert Balfanz and Joanna Hornig Fox of the Everyone Graduates Center, and John Bridgeland and Mary McNaught of Civic Enterprises.

See www.americaspromise.org/GradNation

The *Grad Nation* Action Tool (pp. 91-93) provides a rapid assessment of your progress against the recommendations in *Grad Nation*. Completing it should give you a jump-start on developing a high-quality, evidence-based action plan.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING QUESTIONS

I. Building Knowledge: Understanding Your State's or Community's Dropout & College-Readiness Challenges

Understanding your state's or community's dropout and college-readiness challenges is the first step toward addressing them. Your Team will have likely collected some statistics about your youth population and graduation rates before your Summit. Use the list below as a guide for the types of questions the Team will need to answer in order to fully understand your local dropout & college-readiness challenges. (*See Part 2 of Grad Nation, pp. 22-41, for help with this area of planning.*)

- i. What data sources are available to help your Team collect the information it needs to understand your local dropout challenge? How will these resources be accessed?
- ii. What do both national and local data indicate about your state's or community's graduation and college-going rates over the last few years? Have the schools' graduation rates been improving or getting worse? How do your local (both school- and district-level) statistics compare with your state and the nation as a whole?
- iii. What do the different data sources say about the location of the graduation challenge (which schools), the grade levels in which students begin to show challenges and/or drop out of school, and the demographic characteristics of the youth who fall behind and/or drop out? (*Note: Later you should use this information to target dropout prevention efforts to the schools and young people facing the biggest challenges.*)
- iv. The Alliance strongly encourages all states and communities to facilitate focus groups, surveys, and/or interviews before, during, or immediately after your Summit to understand different perspectives on the dropout issue. What do personal responses from different stakeholders (e.g. recent dropouts, current students, graduates, teachers, parents, administrators, community members) indicate about the reasons students disengage and/or drop out of school and what can be done to address them?
- v. Perform partnership and program audits: What school- and community-based programs are currently in place to prevent student failure and/or increase student success, and what partnerships are in place with local, regional, and national organizations to support these programs? Are the programs and partnerships effective? What other programs and partnerships may be beneficial? (*Remember to not just consider dropout prevention programs here, but also wraparound supports like summer school programs and career exploration. You may want to use the Alliance's Five Promises framework to enhance your thinking around this.*)
- vi. Perform a policy audit: What state-, community-, and school-based policies are currently in place to prevent school failure, increase school success, and/or that more generally affect vulnerable youth? Are they effective and do they produce positive outcomes? (*Remember to think broadly and include classroom environment principles and policies such as employing high-quality teachers.*)
- vii. What programs and policies currently exist to increase college readiness and access for your state's or community's youth? Are they being utilized in an effective manner?

II. Rallying Your State or Community: Getting Buy-In to Address the Crisis

States and communities are more likely to invest in addressing their dropout and college-readiness challenges when they understand the local impact. Community and state leaders may also be encouraged by knowing that these challenges can be solved if they work in partnership with their schools. Use the list

below as a guide for the information your Team should seek out in order to build public will for addressing these issues. (See *Part 1 of Grad Nation*, pp. 8-21, for help with this area of planning.)

- i. To determine the economic impact that young people who aren't graduating from high school ready for college and work have on the community, the Alliance encourages the surveying of local employers to better understand how the dropout challenge affects them. What are local employers saying about their workforce needs and the readiness of the labor pool in your community or state? What skills are needed, and does the community currently have an adequate supply of qualified employees with these skills?
- ii. Likewise, to determine the impact that students who graduate from high school ill-prepared for college have on colleges and other post-secondary institutions, the Alliance encourages the surveying of these institutions to better understand their point of view, as well as how many incoming freshmen each year require remedial courses.
- iii. The Team will also want to better understand how dropouts may be impacting your state or community's crime rates, reliance on social services (including welfare), unemployment rates, and other key indicators. Understanding these impacts will help the Team develop unique messages for each stakeholder audience in your state or community around why the dropout issue should matter to them.
- iv. Based on what the Team has discovered about how the community is affected by its dropout problem, what key "messages" to the public can be developed that will create and/or enhance community investment in this important issue? How will they be communicated?
- v. Now that your Team has collected pertinent information about your local dropout crisis, what is your state's or community's vision for your young people, related to their successful completion of high school and preparation for college and/or work? What is an ambitious and realistic long-term goal (e.g. 10-year) for your dropout and college-readiness challenges? How will you communicate this goal to the public?
- vi. Who can serve as your state's or community's champion and chief spokesperson around the high school dropout issue? If multiple spokespeople are needed, which leaders – elected officials, business leaders, other local influentials – will be recruited?

III. Identifying Solutions: Considering and Prioritizing Potential Solutions to Comprehensively Address Your Local Dropout Challenge

After constructing the vision statement and long-term goals, the Team can then start to think about potential solutions to achieve them. The Alliance advocates four focus areas that we believe to be key in addressing the dropout issue at the state and local levels: **transforming schools** including through increasing rigor and relevance, **supporting young people** holistically with wraparound services, **developing effective policies**, and **employing data systems** as a dropout prevention tool. (See *Part 3 of Grad Nation*, pp. 42-75, for help with this area of planning.)

- i. Transforming Schools (pp. 47-51)
How will the core curriculum be made more rigorous, and more relevant to today's youth? Additionally, how can the schools' teacher quality, environment, and other facets be strengthened?
 - How can the schools with the lowest graduation rates be transformed to serve their students better? (Some research-based school transformation strategies include infusing a college and

career-ready curriculum into all high schools, increasing teacher quality, and investing in comprehensive whole-school reform.)

- How can schools enhance their curricula with real-life opportunities such as career-exploration and service-learning to make it more relevant?

ii. Supporting Young People (pp. 52-59)

How will more young people, particularly those most in need, have access to wraparound supports such as tutoring, afterschool programs, mentors, social services, health care and others?

- How will the schools and community work together to strategically target wraparound supports and services to the schools and students most in need? *(Research indicates that extra student supports are most often needed during the transition points, and especially from middle to high school, when a disproportionate number of students fall off-track and/or drop out.)*
- How will the schools and community actively engage youth by providing opportunities for them to share their experiences and drive youth-led dropout prevention efforts? *(Please work to engage all students, including those with special needs like youth with disabilities, foster youth, and youth in alternative schools.)*
- How will the schools actively involve parents and community members in their efforts to support students?

iii. Developing Effective Policies (pp. 71-75; also see pp. 35-41)

How will school, community, and state policies be strengthened to help more youth graduate ready for college, work, and life?

- How might school attendance policies be altered to better track and prevent chronic absenteeism, a primary dropout indicator? *(Note that many school policies, including strong attendance policies, can make a difference in the critical elementary and middle-school levels, so don't forget to consider them in your action planning.)*
- What state-level policies can the community work together to advocate for that would better support youth at risk of dropping out?
- How might high schools and post-secondary institutions work together to help increase students' college-readiness and ease the transition into higher education for all youth, and especially those traditionally underserved?

iv. Employing Data Systems (pp. 64-71)

How will data systems be used as a necessary dropout prevention and intervention tool to track students in relation to indicators of success and potential failure?

- What data systems are currently in place that help your schools monitor and track students, and how might these systems be enhanced to be used more strategically as a dropout prevention tool?
- How might employing an "early warning system" as early as the elementary grades be used to determine dropout patterns and indicators, in order to identify students in need of extra supports as early as possible?

IV. Organizing for Long-Term Success: Getting the Right People on Board, Committing to Action, Ensuring Accountability, Securing Resources, and Tracking Progress over Time

Your Summit will serve as a catalyst for action, but the real work will happen before and after this event. Effective, committed leadership is crucial to long-term success, so the Team will need to form strategic partnerships, leadership teams, and workgroups as some of its first action steps. Initial resources will also need to be garnered. Solid resources and a strong accountability plan are necessary for implementing dropout prevention action and sustaining the momentum long-term. *(See Part 4 of Grad Nation, pp. 76-90, for help with this area of planning.)*

- i. What additional stakeholders should be recruited into your Dropout Prevention Team to facilitate the planning, action, and sustainability of your state's or community's dropout prevention efforts? *(It is crucial to the success of the Team's efforts that representatives from all sectors are included in this work, including schools, businesses, nonprofit organizations, government, parents, and youth. See the list of the Alliance's national partners at www.americaspromise.org/alliancepartners for ideas.)*
- ii. What types of workgroups would be most beneficial for getting this work done, and who would it be strategic to invite onto those workgroups?
- iii. What financial, human, and other resources are needed in order to begin working on the dropout issue?
- iv. How will the Team formalize its commitment to solving the dropout challenge? (For example, create an agreement or contract and ask key stakeholders to sign onto it.)
- v. What are the major barriers to solving your state's or community's dropout challenge, and how will they be addressed and worked through?
- vi. How will the Team develop a strong accountability plan that will ensure success, and who will be included in this plan?
- vii. How will the Team evaluate its dropout prevention efforts to ensure it is making a difference? What is the plan to monitor and track the progress being made on its developed goals? And how will the Team maintain visibility around the local dropout prevention issue by reporting to the public on the progress being made?
- viii. Determine the resources (financial, human, intellectual, and otherwise) that are needed to carry out the Team's action plan and sustain it long-term.
 - a. What resources are currently available, what will potentially need to be blended, and what new resources will need to be sought to do this work?
 - b. Who might help secure additional resources to fill the gaps, and/or what funders (or others) may be approached?
 - c. Is there a resource goal that should be made public along with the outcome goal? (For example, Detroit is establishing a \$10 million venture fund to support its plan to cut its dropout rate in half.)
- ix. How will you make sure to revisit the state's or community's vision, goals, and strategies over time to confirm that they are still on-target and evolving as appropriate? How will the Team work to make sure that multiple sectors remain actively involved in this work long-term and that the effort is sufficiently institutionalized in a way that will transcend leadership transitions? *(Long-term multi-sector involvement is a crucial element of a successful sustainability plan.)*



ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

St. Louis City's Action Plan to Help More of its Young People Graduate High School, Ready for College, Work & Life

Name of Summit State or Community: St. Louis City

Date and Location of Summit: 2/19 – Harris Stowe State University; April 30 - Monsanto YMCA; 6/22 – Regional Arts Commission

Geographical Area Covered by Action Plan: St. Louis City; St. Louis Public School District

Date Submitted: 9/8/09

Main Point of Contact: Kira Switzer – 314.308.3789, kiraswitzer@gmail.com

I. Building Knowledge: Understanding Your State's or Community's Dropout & College-Readiness Challenges

1. What is your state's or community's current graduation rate? (please cite the source and methodology)
The graduation rate was 53.1% in 2008, according to the SLPS website (2007-08 SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT CARD).

Methodology: The quotient of the number of graduates in the current year, as of June 30, divided by: the sum of the number of graduates in the current year as of June 30, plus the number of twelfth-graders who dropped out in the current year, plus the number of eleventh-graders who dropped out in the preceding year, plus the number of tenth-graders who dropped out in the second preceding year, plus the number of ninth-graders who dropped out in the third preceding year.

2. What does both national and local data indicate about your state's or community's graduation and college-going rates over the last few years (e.g. over the last 2, 5 and 10 years)? Have the schools' rates been improving or getting worse? How do your local statistics compare with your state and the nation as a whole?
The graduation rate for SLPS has steadily decreased over the last five years. Graduation rates for Missouri have remained around 85% over the last five years, emphasizing a marked distinction between St. Louis City's and Missouri's rates. St. Louis City is also clearly below the national average for graduation rates.
3. Please describe what efforts have or will be taken to better understand the issues from key perspectives, such as parents and young people themselves. Explain what data analysis, surveys, interviews or other efforts have or will be implemented to build your knowledge base of who drops out, from which schools, when, and why. What is known, and what do you still seek to learn?

In January 2008, a youth summit was held to hear directly from disengaged youth why they were dropping out of school and what could be done to get youth to remain in school. Focus groups were also held in addition to the youth summit. The information was compiled into a white paper, along with recommendations. (See attached paper on Re-engaging Disconnected Youth.)

In November 2008, there was a change in the superintendent position for SLPS. Dropouts are a main concern of the new superintendent and SLPS is in the midst of creating a long-range plan. We are confident that he will be a partner in the effort to reduce dropouts. In addition, a local funder and the juvenile court partnered with SLPS to establish a school for adjudicated youth. This is the first of many steps that SLPS will take to address the issue of dropouts and getting youth educated.

Shearwater High School, which will provide an education for disconnected youth starting in Fall 2010, was endorsed by Mayor Slay. St. Louis City is also working with AHSI and is examining other schools for St. Louis City.

In addition, we are exploring a youth engagement strategy/process with local organizations and funders. This will help us hear from youth what issues are and how we, as a community, can work to improve the situations.

II. **Rallying Your State or Community: Getting Buy-In to Address the Crisis**

1. What key data and message points have you developed around the issue to secure commitment from your community's and state's leaders and to mobilize the general public? What's the impact of the dropout challenge on your economy, state or city budget, social services, employers, post-secondary institutions, etc? If you don't yet have these data and message points, what are your plans to obtain them?

We will work with the State as we develop talking points, some of which may include:

- Almost 50% of our youth do not graduate from high school.
- There are no performing schools in the City; we need to target 6 areas for school development.
- Every student a graduate.
- Ready for college, work and life by 21.

The impacts of dropouts on the St. Louis area include:

- Unprepared workers entering the workforce, which impacts employers.
- Community college courses are being developed at three levels below basic courses to accommodate even high school graduates.
- High school dropouts are more likely to be arrested or incarcerated.
- High school dropouts earn a lower income over their lifetimes.

2. Who is serving or can serve as your state's or community's champion and chief spokesperson around the high school dropout issue? If multiple spokespeople are needed, which leaders – elected officials, business leaders, other local influentials – will be recruited?

Stephanie Krauss – Shearwater Education Foundation
Kelvin Adams – St. Louis Public School District
Judge Jimmie Edwards – Juvenile Court
Debra Hollingsworth – AT&T
Mayor Francis Slay – St. Louis City
Robbyn Wahby – Mayor's Office

Dave Thomas – Logos School
Rich Patton – Children’s Agenda

Other spokespeople will be identified and recruited, as needed.

3. What is your state’s or community’s vision statement for your young people, related to their successful completion of high school and preparation for college and/or work? What is your quantifiable long-term goal (e.g. 10-year) for your dropout and college-readiness challenges? *(Example from Detroit: “Vision- All children and youth in southeastern Michigan graduate from high school prepared for life, work and postsecondary education. Goal- The 30 high schools in the region with dropout rates of 40% or higher will be transformed into small schools or learning communities graduating 80% of youth with an average ACT score of 18 within four years after entering 9th grade.”)*

Vision:

The SLPS Board’s vision is to make SLPS the district of choice for families in the St. Louis region and to provide a world-class education as a nationally-recognized leader in student achievement and teacher quality.

The following goals and information are included in SLPS’ Comprehensive Long Range Plan (CLRP - December 2008):

- The Special Administrative Board (SAB) will rebuild the St. Louis Schools (SLPS) to:
 - Improve student academic achievement; and
 - Improve operations to better serve students, parents, staff, and the community.
- SLPS will regain full accreditation by continuing to implement the strategies identified in the Comprehensive Long Range Plan with the understanding that full accreditation is a step in reestablishing SLPS as a premier urban public school district.
- The District will provide SLPS graduates with an education that prepares them for the workforce via continued education in college or career/technical school; or immediate employment. (Specific objectives and strategies are listed in the CLRP.)
- The District must demand strong leadership from principals and effective instruction from teachers to ensure students perform academically at or above their grade level. (Specific objectives and strategies are listed in the CLRP.)
- Parents and the community should be engaged in setting high expectations and supporting student achievement. (Specific objectives and strategies are listed in the CLRP.)
- The District’s physical plant should reflect the number and needs of the students enrolled. (Specific objectives and strategies are listed in the CLRP.)
- The District must develop stable leadership in its administration and support an effective governance system. (Specific objectives and strategies are listed in the CLRP.)

The community holds confidence in the current Superintendent and is supportive of his efforts to rebuild the school system. Organizations and funders are cooperating, as needed, with the Superintendent/SLPS to address current and future needs.

III. Identifying Solutions: Considering and Prioritizing Potential Solutions to Comprehensively Address Your Local Dropout Challenge

The Alliance advocates four focus areas that we believe to be key in addressing the dropout issue at the state and local levels: **transforming schools** including through increasing curricular rigor and

relevance, **supporting young people** holistically with wraparound services, **developing effective policies**, and **employing data systems** as a dropout prevention tool.

1. Please identify your highest-priority strategies and/or reforms consistent with *Grad Nation* that your state or community will pursue in order to **transform the schools** that the majority of your local dropouts attend. For each priority, what would you need to do in the next 6-12 months to advance it? Is anything already underway locally to support it? What support or information would help you make better progress?

(Example from Tulsa: Provide comprehensive social supports at schools to deal with the issues of poverty and the generational dropout crisis. Move to a Community School model for middle and high schools which is currently done in elementary schools.)

Top SLPS administrators have made the following presentations:

http://slps.schoolwires.net/19621051994153557/lib/19621051994153557/2009/April_2009/AlternativeEducation1.ppt

http://slps.schoolwires.net/19621051994153557/lib/19621051994153557/2009/April_2009/High%20School%20Reform%20Design.ppt

As a community, we support the Superintendent and his staff as they work to improve the state of SLPS. The information in these presentations will be used as initial solutions and refined, as necessary, as we all move forward.

2. Please identify your highest-priority strategies, programs, policies, and/or reforms consistent with *Grad Nation* that your state or community will pursue in order to **support young people**. How will more young people, particularly those most in need, receive wraparound supports in and out of school, such as tutoring, afterschool programs, mentors, social services, health care and others? For each priority, what would you need to do in the next 6-12 months to advance it? Is anything already underway locally to support it? What support or information would help you make better progress?

(Example from New York State: "1. Ensure that each student is connected to one caring adult in school, by structuring mentoring programs that can be implemented with limited resources. 2. Engage the community in the mentoring process, especially during afterschool hours. 3. Provide quality afterschool programs that can increase student voice and provide social, emotional, physical and intellectual support to youth. 4. Identify and enhance mechanisms of improving student engagement in the educational process.")

Top SLPS administrators have made the following presentations:

http://slps.schoolwires.net/19621051994153557/lib/19621051994153557/2009/April_2009/AlternativeEducation1.ppt

http://slps.schoolwires.net/19621051994153557/lib/19621051994153557/2009/April_2009/High%20School%20Reform%20Design.ppt

As a community, we support the Superintendent and his staff as they work to improve the state of SLPS. The information in these presentations will be used as initial solutions and refined, as necessary, as we all move forward.

3. Please identify your highest-priority policies or reforms consistent with *Grad Nation* that your state or community will pursue in order to **develop effective policies** at the local or state level that encourage high school completion and college readiness. For each, what would you need to do in the next 6-12 months to advance this priority? Is anything already underway locally to support it? What support or information would help you make better progress?

(Select examples from New York state: "1. Encourage the Board of Regents to include service learning in the revised learning standards. 2. Provide a minimum of 5 hours of service learning

training to all staff and administrators as part of the professional development plan to effectively implement revisions made to the learning standards to include service learning. 3. Provide universal health care, including mental health. 4. Short of that, ensure that 90% of all children without health care are enrolled in Child Health Plus. 5. Provide full-day Pre-K with transportation. 6. Develop Regents policies and regulations for meaningful student involvement in decision making in schools. 7. End out of school suspension in the next year.” Other example drawn from Grad Nation: “We will work with our state legislature to raise our maximum compulsory school age from 16 to 18 years old.”)

Graduate students at a local university have completed or are working on policy briefs for the following issues identified in the attached white paper on disconnected youth:

1. Amend board policy and administrative practices to allow students between 16 and 17 years of age to attend alternative education/GED programs outside the traditional school system.
2. Address child care assistance regulations to allow pregnant/parenting teens to apply for child care assistance while pregnant rather than waiting until after they have given birth.
3. Develop legislation that gives school districts the responsibility and resources to develop in-district alternatives for youth who require learning in a nontraditional environment, and for districts to notify youth of all alternative educational options when they are highly at-risk of dropping out.

In addition, another priority is to:

4. Identify other policy barriers at state and local levels.

4. Please identify your highest-priority strategies, programs, policies, and/or reforms consistent with *Grad Nation* that your state or community will pursue in order to **employ data systems** that identify those young people most at-risk for dropping out and drive appropriate supports and services. For each, what would you need to do in the next 6-12 months to advance this priority? Is anything already underway locally to support it? What support or information would help you make better progress?

(Example from Iowa state: “Access multiple state agencies' data, complete analysis and establish state level baseline and targets. State Team will provide relevant local data to Community Teams to assist in their planning and ongoing monitoring of progress.” Other example drawn from Grad Nation: “We will develop an early-warning system that tracks individual students starting in elementary school along key indicators, like attendance, behavior, and course completion, to help us identify and direct supports and services to young people most at-risk of dropping out.”)

SLPS is examining data systems to help identify those young people most at-risk of dropping out by using early indicators. SLPS is also using the full service school model to provide services to the youth who need them.

IV. Organizing for Long-Term Success: Getting the Right People on Board, Committing to Action, Ensuring Accountability, Securing Resources, and Tracking Progress over Time

1. What group or committee will coordinate and sustain the work outlined in this action plan? What leaders does it have from various sectors – business, education, nonprofit, government, faith, etc.? (Please submit group’s roster along with this plan.) Who else is needed? Who convenes the group, how often, and what sub-groups or committees does your effort need?

SLPS and the Special Administrative Board will coordinate and sustain the work outlined in the SLPS presentations. The Mayor's Youth Development Task Force (YDTF) will work on identifying policy barriers to graduation and building stakeholder groups to address them. The YDTF will meet quarterly, with subgroups meeting as needed. Past subgroups included: Beyond High School, Connecting Services, Creating a Youth-Focused Community, Data and Information Systems, Multiple Pathways, Training & Professional Development, Youth Engagement and Building a Cross-Systems Collaborative. Future subgroups will be responsive to SLPS' plans.

2. What financial, human, and other resources are needed in order to begin acting on this plan? What resources are currently available, what will potentially need to be blended, and what new resources will need to be sought to do this work? Who might help secure additional resources to fill the gaps, and/or what funders (or others) may be approached? Will your state or community set a resource goal along with the outcome goal?

Resources needed to act on the plan:

Staff time

Chairperson for YDTF

SLPS hire Director of Alternative Education

Increased state funding for alternative education

Increased state and federal funding for mental health services

Increased state and federal funding for employment services

Resources currently available:

Staff time for consultant for YDTF through agreement with Mental Health Board of St. Louis

Attention of the Mayor and Superintendent

Potential chairperson for YDTF

*The priorities of SLPS must be outlined before resources can be fully analyzed and allocated.

3. How will your community or state evaluate its dropout prevention efforts to ensure it is making a difference? What is the plan to monitor and track the progress being made on its developed goals? How will you maintain visibility around the local dropout prevention issue by reporting to the public on the progress being made?
 - Evaluation: Track graduation rates; look at Shearwater High School outcomes after 2010-11 school year
 - Plan to monitor and track progress being made on goals: Need to see what strategies will be employed
 - Maintain visibility with reports to public: Groups that will hear progress on goals include the Mayor's Commission on Children, Youth and Families, Mayor's Youth Development Task Force and the SLPS Special Administrative Board. These groups have many members and far-reaching contacts in the community. In addition, as we work with local organizations and funders to implement a youth engagement strategy and process, youth will also be informed and involved.

V. Staying Connected to the America's Promise Alliance: Identifying Long-term Interests, Priorities, and Points of Alignment

1. As part of our Alliance's goal to reach 15 million young people with more supports (i.e the Five Promises) by 2012, America's Promise has committed to resourcing and advocating for certain strategic priorities. Together, we are always looking for states and communities that share similar interests and that may provide effective models for policy and practice, investment opportunities and

other points of alignment, including possible technical assistance from our Alliance partners. Please describe if your action plan has strategies specific to:

- a. Focusing on the middle school years, especially providing service-learning and career exploration opportunities in and out of school –
 - i. This will be addressed by the “after school” initiative and it will be examined in ASAP’s (After School for All Partnership) three-year plan.
- b. Improving young people’s access to quality health care, including promotion of SCHIP and Medicaid public health insurance programs –
 - i. Vision for Children at Risk has a priority to promote SCHIP.
- c. Creating community hubs (e.g. schools, afterschool programs, community centers) where coordinated wraparound supports are available to young people and their families –
 - i. The Mayor led an effort (ASAP – After School for All Partnership) to create a coordinated system of after school care. The full service school model is also being utilized in SLPS, with the support of the teachers’ union.
- d. Engaging parents and caregivers to increase graduation and college readiness rates –
 - i. A new collaboration of local funders is forming around the issue of college access.
- e. Supporting young people in foster care so they graduate from high school prepared for college, work and life –
 - i. The Foster Care Coalition and Aging Out Initiative are supporting young people in foster care so they graduate from high school prepared for college, work and life.
- f. Developing young people’s financial literacy –
 - i. The State of Missouri requires that students take a class in financial literacy.

If your plan does not include any of the above but your state or community has strong interest in developing one or more of these strategies, please note accordingly.

2. How can the America’s Promise Alliance best support your state or community with the implementation of this dropout prevention plan? The Alliance is interested in hearing how we can best assist you in your dropout prevention efforts, including resources we can provide, relationships we can facilitate, and any other needs your community may have. *Please be as expansive and forthright as you can. We will use your feedback to ensure that the most useful resources are provided to our Dropout Summit states and communities through our website, training and technical assistance, and other means.*

Work with national organizations (United Way of America, Conference of Mayors, etc.) to keep this issue as a priority of the White House and Congress.