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THE NEW JERSEY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION CAMPAIGN

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT ...

There are many reasons why the America's Promise Alliance has declared the dropout issue a "crisis" in our country. Here are just some of the many reasons why:

- Every 26 seconds, one American high school student drops out of school. That adds up to more than 1.1 million students per year.
- It is approximated that **19,000** students did not graduate from New Jersey's high schools in 2007; the lost lifetime earnings for that class of dropouts alone are estimated at **\$4.9 billion**.
- If New Jersey's high schools graduated all students ready for college, it is estimated the state would save almost **\$95.6 million** a year in community college remediation costs and lost earnings.
- If the male high school graduation rate increased by just **5%**, it is estimated New Jersey's economy would see a combination of crime-related savings and additional revenue of about **\$189 million**.
- The number of young people ages 18-24 not in school and not working in New Jersey increased by 34% in New Jersey between 2002 and 2006. It is estimated that 13%, or 98,000, young people ages 18-24 in New Jersey are idle at one of the most crucial points in their lives.
- Teens make up about 10 percent of the state's population, but account for about **20 percent of all arrests**.
- It is estimated that only 63% of African-American and 67% of Hispanic high school students will graduate in New Jersey.
- Approximately 75% of New Jersey prison inmates have not graduated from high school.



- The average annual income for a high school dropout in 2005 was \$17,299, compared to \$26,933 for a high school graduate, a difference of \$9,634.
- Students living in low-income families drop out of school at six times the rate of their peers from high-income families.

Sources: The America's Promise Alliance; the Alliance for Excellent Education; U.S. Census Bureau (2006); U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistic; Association for Children of New Jersey, KidsCount 2008.

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT....

We are heeding the America's Promise Alliance's call to action by launching the ***New Jersey High School Graduation Campaign***. During the course of this campaign we will:

- engage and bring together a diverse range of stakeholders from all corners of New Jersey;
- convene regional forums throughout New Jersey;
- initiate specific dropout prevention efforts;
- convene a major statewide summit and conference in the fall of 2009 in order to present policy recommendations, share best and promising practices, and reach consensus on specific action plans for continuing our work.

The Campaign builds upon important initiatives already happening.

- ***The New Jersey Secondary Education Redesign Initiative***: This initiative focuses on redesigning middle schools and high schools by aligning content standards, assessments and high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations. The initiative encompasses grades 6-12 in order to develop and ensure a smooth transition from middle school to high school and provide the skills needed for high school success. Please visit <http://www.state.nj.us/education/ser/> for more information.
- ***The Governor's Prevention Strategy for Safe Streets & Neighborhoods***: This initiative identifies the issue of "Keeping Young People in School and Engaged" as the critical starting point for successful prevention of youth and gang violence. Through the leadership of the Office of Attorney General, the Prevention Strategy is promoting coordination of all state youth and family-serving resources and promoting the use of evidence-based programs and strategies to help young people succeed. Other specific initiatives underway include implementation of truancy reduction pilot programs, expanding jobs and workforce training opportunities for at-risk teens, and expanding out of school time opportunities. Please visit <http://www.state.nj.us/lps/> for more information.



HOW THE CAMPAIGN WILL BE ORGANIZED ...

October 16 -- December 2008:

- ***Blueprints for Safe Streets & Schools: The Governor's Conference on Delinquency Prevention*** convenes October 28 & 29 in Eatontown, New Jersey (go to <http://www.state.nj.us/lps/> and click on the "Save the Date" icon for more information and to register)
- Prevention Strategy Truancy Reduction Pilot Projects get underway

January -- April 2009:

- Outreach continues to education, business, nonprofit, faith-based, and public
- Regional Forums are convened, a minimum of three statewide – one each in south, central and north New Jersey
- Regional teams help prepare comprehensive reports after each Forum

May -- June 2009:

- Information obtained from Regional Forums synthesized and examined along with related research into state and nation-wide best practices, information obtained from America's Promise Alliance Summits and other initiatives (such as the Secondary Education Redesign Initiative and the Truancy Reduction Pilot Project)

July -- August 2009:

- A draft report reflecting the results from the regional forums, including potential policy recommendations, best practices, and strategic action plans is distributed to all Symposium and Regional Forum participants with an opportunity for everyone to offer additional comments and recommendations

September -- October 2009:

- Final preparations for and convening the ***New Jersey High School Graduation Campaign Summit***, which will include presentation of the Final Report

Regional Forums

- Regional teams will take the lead in outreach with the goal of ensuring widespread participation from all corners of the region, especially the education, business, nonprofit, faith-based, and public sectors.
- Sessions will begin with the introduction of two or three key issues to consider, including "What is our graduation rate?" "How do we calculate it?" and "Who is responsible in terms of accountability?"
- Sessions will then focus on facilitating in-depth exploration of issues, ideas, practices, and policies.
- There are ***Five Broad Themes***:
 - ***Providing Comprehensive Support for Students & Families...***
 - ***Promoting & Supporting Teachers ...***
 - ***Promoting & Cultivating School Leadership ...***
 - ***Promoting Business & Community Engagement and Partnership ...***
 - ***Ensuring Rigorous Curriculum and High Expectations ...***



WHO SHOULD GET INVOLVED ...

Anyone and everyone who has a vested interest in helping our children and providing opportunities for them to graduate and succeed in life!

Students, young people, parents, teachers, youth-serving nonprofit and faith-based organizations, city council members, business leaders, clergy, principals, workforce trainers, and mentors are just some of the many who should be joining our campaign and participating in our Regional Forums and Summit.

LEARN MORE

- America's Promise Alliance: <http://www.americaspromise.org>
- Alliance for Excellent Education: <http://www.all4ed.org/>
- Achieve (American Diploma Project): <http://www.achieve.org/>
- The Silent Epidemic: <http://www.silentepidemic.org/>
- National Dropout Prevention Center: <http://www.dropoutprevention.org/>
- Communities In Schools: <http://www.cisnet.org/>
- Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools (The Graduation Gap): <http://web.jhu.edu/CSOS/graduation-gap/gradgap.html>
- Jobs for American Graduates, Inc.: <http://www.jag.org/>
- WAVE (Work, Achievement, Values, & Education): <http://www.waveinc.org/>
- NJ Department of Education: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/>
- NJ Department of Law & Public Safety: <http://www.state.nj.us/lps/>
- National Center for School Engagement: <http://www.schoolengagement.org/>

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