



Pennsylvania's Post-Summit Action Plan

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

(See Part 2 of *Grad Nation*, pp. 20-38, for help with this area of planning.)

1. What is your state's or community's current graduation rate? (please cite the source and methodology)

The most recently reported high school graduation rate for Pennsylvania was for the 2006-2007 school year and was 89.8%. This graduation rate was based upon the current method of calculation and Pennsylvania's capacity to collect data as of 2006-2007. The formula used did not include only those students who have graduated in four years but rather the number of students who graduated in a particular year as compared to those students who have dropped out of the school over the four years prior. The formula is as follows:

$$[(\text{Number of Graduates for year 4}) / (\text{Number of Graduates for year 4} + \text{Grade 12 dropouts for year 4} + \text{Grade 11 dropouts from year 3} + \text{Grade 10 dropouts from year 2} + \text{Grade 9 dropouts from year 1})] \times 100$$

Another indicator calculated several years ago by a Pennsylvania non-profit child advocacy organization, PA Partnerships for Children, is the "graduation gap." The graduation gap took the 9th grade school district annual enrollment in 2000-2001 and compared it to the graduation reports by school district in 2003-2004. Although this indicator does not track students individually, it does attempt to estimate the number of students graduating within four years. The graduation gap reported was -21.7% for the 2003-2004 school year, meaning that nearly 22 percent of Pennsylvania's ninth graders failed to graduate from high school in the Commonwealth four years later.

Pennsylvania has now fully developed its student identification system and collected its first round of student-level data that will lead to the implementation of the NGA graduation calculation beginning with the class of 2010. A work group has already been formed within the Pennsylvania Department of Education to ensure a timely and smooth transition to the new NGA graduation calculation.

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?

It is difficult to determine where PA's graduation rate stands compared to other states because of the different methods of calculating graduation rates across the nation, as well as the lack of capacity in PA to calculate a cohort graduation rate until 2010. As stated above, since PA has only had a student identification system in place since the 2006-2007 school year, the state reported graduation rate has been calculated by taking the number of students who graduated in a particular year as compared to those students who have dropped out of the school over the four years prior.

Different sources, some of which are suggested in *Grad Nation*, report different graduation rates for PA. This is likely due to the use of various methodologies for calculating graduation rates for both PA and the United States. The *Learning to Finish* website reports that Pennsylvania's statewide graduation rate has remained at least 10 percentage points higher than the national average for the

past 5 years.¹ Since none of the calculations for Pennsylvania make use of a student identification system, we anticipate that the transition to a cohort graduation calculation, which will take place in 2010, will result in a reduced rate.

PA recognizes the difficulty of measuring graduation trends without a formula that accurately tracks and accounts for each student. Thus, defining and implementing a statewide *cohort* graduation calculation is one of the first steps to a comprehensive statewide initiative to increase the state's high school graduation rate. The PA Department of Education (PDE) has already taken the following important steps to ensure the calculation of an accurate cohort graduation rate:

1. Implemented the statewide Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS), which assigns unique student identification numbers to all public school students and accurately tracks their movement, test scores, graduation etc. PA was recently given the 2008 Leadership Award from the Data Quality Campaign for its development and implementation of PIMS.
2. PA school districts have received technical support from the PDE to make sure that data is accurately entered and managed.
3. A workgroup has been formed to determine policy and practice issues that need to be addressed in order to transition to the new cohort graduation rate.

Pa also utilizes other sources of data that illustrate trends within the state about student achievement. Because PA is committed not only to students obtaining their high school diplomas, but also to these students' success in postsecondary education and the workforce, these other indicators are very important. Some of the data that is used is listed below:

- The Pennsylvania State System of Assessment (PSSA): Used to determine Annual Yearly Progress for schools and districts pursuant to No Child Left Behind Act, this data also tells us important information about struggling students and which districts they are in. Recent trends in PSSA data indicate:
 - Student achievement has increased in every subject, at all grade levels and for all ethnic, racial and economic groups of students since 2002.
 - The achievement gap across the state has shrunk by an average of 26 percent for African-American students, 20 percent for Latino students and 23 percent for low-income students – but the percent of African-American and Latino students scoring proficient remains about 30 percentage points lower than for white students.
- Pa high school graduates compared to proficiency on the PSSA:
 - In the 2004-2005 school year, 44.6% of students who received high school diplomas did not score proficient on the math AND reading section of the PA statewide assessments in 11th grade or on the 12th grade retest.
 - PA is addressing the above “graduation gap” through several initiatives to strengthen the rigor of high school curriculum across the commonwealth. PA is investigating the implementation of statewide graduation requirements to ensure that all students obtaining a high school diploma are prepared for postsecondary education and the workforce. Details about these initiatives can be found later in this report.
- Remediation data:
 - 20,465 of the 62,247 (33 percent) recent Pennsylvania high school graduates who enrolled in state system institutions or community colleges required one or more remedial courses in core academic subjects so they could catch up to their college-level peers.
 - Those students enrolled in a total 37,311 of these “remedial” courses at the

¹ See www.learningtofinish.org/calculator/index.php

college level.

- The students requiring these additional courses came from 522 local education entities, including school districts, charter schools and vocational/technical schools.
- These additional classes make up a total cost of \$26.5 million: \$13.8 million paid by taxpayers and \$12.7 million paid by students and their families.
- Region-specific data is also available and was released in a press conference on January 21, 2009. Details can be found at:
<http://www.pdenewsroom.state.pa.us/newsroom/cwp/view.asp?a=3&q=148018>
- Statewide dropout rate²:
 - PA uses an annual or “event” dropout rate that measures the percentage of students who drop out compared to the annual enrollment. This rate has declined over the past ten years from 2.6% in the 1999-2000 school year to 1.9% in the 2005-2006 school year.
 - Dropout rates from the 2005-2006 school year indicate that the majority of students drop out in 11th and 12th grade.
 - Urban and rural counties both vary in their range of dropout rates. In 2005-2006, 14 counties had a dropout rate higher than the state average of 1.9% and 20 counties had a dropout rate less than 1.2%.
 - A higher percentage of black and Latino students drop out of school.
 - In 2005-2006 the following reasons were reported for students dropping out:³
 - 44.6% disliked school
 - 17.4% for academic problems
 - 8% for behavioral problems
 - 7.3% for child care, marriage or pregnancy
 - 19% wanted to work
 - 3.7% ran away or were expelled

PA has made important strides to improve the rigor of education, increase the graduation rate and reduce the dropout rate across the state. However, the trends also indicate that there is much work to be done, specifically regarding particular populations of students.

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?

There are several sources of formal reporting that PA uses to inform its work around dropout prevention and re-engagement. Below is a brief description of some of these key sources as well as other sources PA plans to employ moving forward.

Resources already available:

1. Reports by Paul Harrington, Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, on the economic impact of under educated citizens in PA
 - a. The reports by Paul Harrington were released by Pennsylvania’s Department of Labor & Industry on the day of the PA Statewide Dropout Summit, November 13, 2008. The reports explain Professor Harrington's newly completed research with Pennsylvania

² <http://www.pde.state.pa.us/k12statistics/lib/k12statistics/0506PDropinPAEnt.pdf>

³ The local education agency submits the reasons for a student dropping out based on either what the student told them when they dropped out or what the LEA believed to be true at the time

- specific economic data on the severe costs of undereducated students to (1) the individual student in terms of lost earning capacity and (2) the community in terms of transfer payments (welfare etc) and lost tax revenues. These reports are available on the summit website or at Pennsylvania's workforce website at <http://www.paworkforce.state.pa.us/media/cwp/view.asp?a=470&q=159596>.
- b. Region specific information has been pulled from this report and will be shared with local leaders across the state to assist them in rallying support within their specific communities for dropout prevention and re-engagement work.
2. Report from the Governor's Commission on College and Career Readiness
 - a. In August of 2005 Governor Rendell convened a group of educators, business leaders, and education advocates to form the Governor's Commission on College and Career Readiness (Commission). The group conducted research and interviews and formulated several key recommendations based on this work. The first recommendation made by the Commission was to have all high school graduates in PA show proficiency on state academic standards by scoring proficient or advanced on the state assessment in 11th grade or by passing a series of graduation competency exams. The full report can be found at: http://www.pde.state.pa.us/stateboard_ed/cwp/view.asp?A=3&Q=126857
 3. Report by the Gates Foundation about why students leave school based on a survey of young people (<http://www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/thesilentepidemic3-06.pdf>)
 4. Data is available on the dropout crisis in the Philadelphia area from the Public School Notebook (<http://www.thenotebook.org/>) and Project U-turn (<http://www.projectturn.net/>)
 5. PA Youth in Transition initiative:
 - a. The PA Youth in Transition (PAYT) initiative is a business education collaborative effort among the Pennsylvania Departments of Labor & Industry, Public Welfare and Education, the Pennsylvania State and Local Workforce Investment Boards, PA CareerLink, and Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children. The purpose of PAYT is to reconnect Pennsylvania dropouts and youth aging out of foster care to high quality educational options, earning a high school diploma or GED leading to postsecondary education, credentials or successful careers.
 - b. PAYT regional teams have already done significant work to evaluate the scope of the dropout crisis within nine regions of Pennsylvania. This work included surveys, focus groups and the formation of regional stakeholder groups. Input was gathered from youth themselves, parents, schools, service providers, local government, and businesses. PAYT coordinators served as the facilitators for regional discussions at the PA Dropout Summit and will continue to be the state's point-of-contact for regional dropout work. Some highlights of the work done by regional PAYT teams so far include:
 - i. Creation of regional stakeholder groups (including youth service agencies, schools, higher education institutions, etc) to foster communication and collaboration across systems;
 - ii. Creation of community service directories with information on services and programs available to youth in particular regions;
 - iii. Convening of youth summits to gather input from youth;
 - iv. Utilization of youth "researchers" to gather information from other youth about the reasons students drop out; and
 - v. Founding of a one-stop youth re-engagement center in Philadelphia where students who have dropped out can go for support and information about different education and career pathways

Moving forward:

PA is moving aggressively in the right direction, but we also understand that many Pennsylvania youth are still falling through the cracks of academic success. PA is committed to working to improve and better coordinate its dropout prevention and re-engagement strategies, which includes expanding the inclusion of multiple stakeholders, especially youth and parents. The main strategies to accomplish these goals are listed below.

1. Create a state level work group to continue collaboration among government agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses and education programs.
 - a. The group will include representatives from the following state and regional stakeholders:
 - i. State agencies (including the departments of Education, Health, Labor & Industry, and Welfare)
 - ii. State level commissions (including the Governor’s Commission for Children and Families, Governor’s Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs, Governor’s Advisory Commission on African American Affairs and the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency)
 - iii. State and regional workforce development partners
 - iv. Non-profit organizations
 - v. Services delivery organizations
 - vi. Postsecondary education leaders
 - vii. Regional education leaders
 - viii. Business leaders
 - ix. Parents
 - x. Youth
 - b. A priority will be creation of an inventory of state, regional and local dropout prevention and re-engagement work already being done so stakeholders can understand what others are doing and to better identify gaps and areas where more coordination is needed.
2. Continue to support the dropout prevention and re-engagement work throughout the state on a regional level through:
 - a. Providing technical and financial support to each of the 501 public school districts.
 - b. Strengthening the relationships between school districts and surrounding community support systems.
 - c. Increasing the opportunities for those students who have already dropped out of school to become re-engaged and successful in postsecondary education and the workforce.
 - d. Strengthening the pre-existing Pennsylvania Youth in Transition (PAYT) initiative (described above).
 - i. PAYT has been incorporated into the commonwealth's network of youth intermediary organizations called Regional Career Education Partnerships for Youth (RCEP) that cover the entire commonwealth and support Pennsylvania's high school reform agenda and career preparation strategies.
 - ii. The PAYT / RCEP coordinators will become the state level work group’s point-of-contact for each region’s dropout re-engagement work moving forward.

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

(See Part 1 of Grad Nation, pp. 7-19, for help with this area of planning.)

1. What key data and message points have you developed around the issue to secure commitment from your community's and state's leaders? What's the impact of the crisis 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?

Please see Part I, questions 2 and 3 for the list of data and message point resources that are available to use in securing commitments from community and state leaders.

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 spokespersons are needed, which leaders – elected officials, business leaders, other local influentials – will be recruited?

The PA Dropout Summit on November 13, 2008 in Harrisburg highlighted the type of spokesmen in PA who are already bringing attention to this issue. Speakers at the summit included Pennsylvania Governor Edward G Rendell (via video); Pennsylvania Secretary of Education Gerald Zahorchak; Pennsylvania Secretary of Labor & Industry Sandy Vito; and AT&T Pennsylvania President J. Michael Schweder. The summit was attended by over 100 participants including state legislative staff, leaders from high school and post secondary education, business and industry, local government, community organizations, workforce development and foundations.

Young people themselves are among the most powerful spokesmen to convey the message about the dropout crisis. The youth panel at the summit provided clear evidence of this. PA is committed to continuing to give young people opportunities to participate in policy and program planning and to provide leadership in their communities in the implementation of dropout prevention and re-engagements strategies.

In addition to the leaders who have already taken part in the summit planning group, the dropout summit planning committee will be expanding into a state level work group that will include representation by the following stakeholders:

1. State agencies (including the departments of Education, Health, Labor & Industry, and Welfare)
2. State level commissions (including the Governor's Commission for Children and Families, Governor's Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs, Governor's Advisory Commission on African American Affairs and the Governor's Commission on Crime and Delinquency)
3. Regional workforce development partners
4. Non-profits
5. Services delivery organizations
6. Postsecondary education leaders
7. Regional education leaders
8. Business leaders
9. Parents
10. Youth

The members of the state level work group will also serve as chief spokesmen for the dropout prevention and re-engagement work across the state.

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. 5-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: That every student in Pennsylvania earns a high school diploma or its equivalent that represents that he or she is prepared and supported to enroll in postsecondary education or training or secure a job that pays a living wage.

Goals: One of the first tasks of the state level work group will be to determine specific, short-term and long-term goals regarding the dropout prevention and re-engagement work in the state. Many of the agencies in state government already have specific goals related to this work and can be viewed in Governor Rendell's most recent *Report on State Performance* at http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_113914_346363_0_0_18/2007-08%20Gov%20Performance%20Report.pdf.

The state level workgroup will look at these agency goals, as well as receive input from the PA Youth In Transition/ Regional Career Education Partnership coordinators, to develop challenging goals surrounding the dropout issues in PA. The group will also determine benchmarks in order to monitor the progress in each area.

III. Identifying Solutions: Considering and Prioritizing Potential Solutions to Comprehensively Address Your Local Dropout Challenge Each person should add input on strategies for each of the section below depending on their initiatives.

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** through wraparound services, **developing effective policies**, and **employing data systems** as a dropout prevention tool.

(See Part 3 of Grad Nation, pp. 39-71, for help with this area of planning.)

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.)

Transforming high schools and providing support to struggling schools have been significant priorities of Governor Rendell's administration. Several research-proven strategies are already in place to increase the rigor of high school education across Pennsylvania and to enhance the academic performance of all schools. These strategies are ongoing.

- Offer school districts financial support for programs proven to improve academic rigor and raise student achievement in high schools.
 - The Pennsylvania Department of Education provides school districts with targeted resources to implement proven programs such as Classrooms for the Future; Dual Enrollment; Career and Technical Education; and Project 720. More information about these and other programs is available on the department's webpage, www.pde.state.pa.us
- Assist schools and districts with the implementation of a standards-aligned system.
 - The Pennsylvania State Board of Education has adopted Academic Standards in 12 core areas. These standards are benchmark measures that define what students should know and be able to do at specific grade levels beginning in grade 3. The standards are codified as state regulations and are to be used as the basis for curriculum and instruction in Pennsylvania public schools. Pennsylvania's Academic Standards are also available on the department's webpage.
- Providing extra support for struggling schools.
 - The Department of Education has tiered levels of support providing those schools that are struggling most with academic achievement with targeted, research-proven interventions. These interventions are described in detail at http://www.pde.state.pa.us/k12/lib/k12/PA_SSOS Document.pdf
- Increase the quality of instruction and rigor of curriculum in core subject areas across the commonwealth.

- The Department of Education has many initiatives that help improve instruction and curriculum within schools including professional development for school leaders and teachers; new teacher certification requirements for Pennsylvania teachers; and the development of a voluntary model curriculum and diagnostics in all academic areas.
 - Increasing academic rigor has been a focus in career and technical education as well as in traditional comprehensive high schools. Regulations governing career and technical education have been revised to require curriculum rigor and proficiency in academic standards as well as CTE coursework.
 - Decrease the funding gap between what school districts currently spend and what they should spend so that all students can achieve by increasing state funding to schools in a fair and equitable manner.
 - The legislature authorized independent research to identify the level of funding necessary to educate all students to Pennsylvania’s Academic Standards. The resulting Costing Out Study was delivered in December 2007 and identified the “adequacy gap” in spending in every district in Pennsylvania based on the data and spending formula identified in the report. The report is available at http://www.pde.state.pa.us/stateboard_ed/lib/stateboard_ed/PA_Costing_Out_Study_rev_12-07.pdf
 - As a first step in funding the state’s share of the adequacy gap identified in the Costing Out Study, Pennsylvania’s 2008-2009 budget provided the largest increase in Pennsylvania basic education funding in at least two decades and – most importantly – implemented a real school funding formula in Pennsylvania for the first time since 1992.
 - Track the status of all public school students
 - Pennsylvania implemented an individual student identification system in the 2006-2007 school year and continues to strengthen and expand this system in order to accurately track the movement and success of Pennsylvania’s students.
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.)*

PA has been developing the following strategies to ensure that all PA youth are supported in and out of school:

- Implementation of quality programs in schools, described in more detail above.
- Fostering connections between schools and their surrounding communities to ensure coordinated services for students.

- Increasing school district accountability for the academic and behavioral outcomes of students in Alternative Education Programs, in the juvenile justice system, and in the child welfare system.
- Increasing the use of evidence-based positive youth development programs in schools statewide.
- Raising academic standards in alternative education settings including disciplinary programs and programs in residential facilities for delinquent and dependent youth.
- Increasing schools' use of evidence based programs to promote positive youth development and positive social/emotional development.
- Adjusting state law, policy and practice to support educationally disrupted students.
- Increasing mentorship programs so that each child is supported, especially during difficult transition times.
- Increasing communication among systems on a regional level through the PA Youth In Transition/ Regional Career Education Partnerships initiative, coordinated through the Department of Labor & Industry.

The state level work group will review existing policies and strategies and learn from the work of the PA Youth In Transition / Regional Career Education Coordinators to determine where service gaps exist across the state for particular groups of youth and create a plan to address these gaps.

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?
(Example 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. Require teacher training to include mentoring, with the process to go from observation, to mentoring, to student teaching, to teaching. 4. Provide universal health care, including mental health. 5. Short of that, ensure that 90% of all children without health care are enrolled in Child Health Plus. 6. Engage advocates to support NY participation with Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT), a federal law since 1967 that reimburses for screening services. 7. Provide full-day Pre-K with transportation. 8. Support fiscally 18-21 year old GED/High school completion programs. 9. Develop Regents policies and regulations for meaningful student involvement in decision making in schools. 10. End out of school suspension in the next year. 11. Recommend that county governments promote volunteerism and create a public planning process to make that happen. Other example: We will work with our state legislature to raise our maximum compulsory schooling age from 16 to 18 years old.)

PA is committed to promoting policies that encourage high school completion and college readiness. Strengthening the rigor and quality of high school curriculum has been a major focus of Governor Rendell's administration. In August of 2005 Governor Rendell convened a group of educators, business leaders, and education advocates to form the Governor's Commission on College and Career Readiness (Commission). The group conducted research and interviews and formulated several key recommendations based on this work. The first recommendation made by the Commission was to have all high school graduates in PA demonstrate proficiency on state academic standards by scoring proficient or advanced on the state assessment in 11th grade or by

passing a series of graduation competency exams. The full report can be found at:
http://www.pde.state.pa.us/stateboard_ed/cwp/view.asp?A=3&Q=126857

The PA State Board of Education acted on the Commission's recommendation and proposed new graduation requirements in January of 2008. These regulations have been put on hold by the PA legislature until July 2009. Work continues on state level academic supports, which were also identified in the proposed regulations, including voluntary model curriculum and diagnostic assessments

The state level work group will support these state policies aimed at improving high school completion and college and career readiness. The PA Youth in Transition/ Regional Career Education Partnership coordinators will continue to investigate local policies and inform the state work group as to how these can best be supported or enhanced to ensure high school completion and career readiness.

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: 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.)

PA has many sources of data available to it, described in detail under Part I, Questions 2 and 3. The state level work group will investigate how to make sure that this data is being used to accurately identify young people who are most at-risk for dropping out. The work group will also research models of early warning systems and determine how this data may be used to create such systems within school districts across PA.

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

(See Part 4 of Grad Nation, pp. 72-86, for help with this area of planning.)

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?

As discussed above, the dropout summit planning committee will be expanding into a state level work group that includes representation by the following stakeholders:

1. State agencies (including the departments of Education, Health, Labor & Industry, and Welfare)
 2. State level commissions (including the Governor’s Commission for Children and Families, Governor’s Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs, Governor’s Advisory Commission on African American Affairs and the Governor’s Commission on Crime and Delinquency)
 3. Regional workforce development partners
 4. Non-profits
 5. Services delivery organizations
 6. Postsecondary education leaders
 7. Regional education leaders
 8. Business leaders
 9. Parents
 10. Youth
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? Are you setting a resource goal along with the outcome goal?

PA has already secured some funding from State Farm, which the dropout planning team has decided to use to help strengthen post-summit activities coordinated through the Pa Youth in Transition/ Regional Career Education Partnership initiatives across the state. The initial priority of the state level work group will be to assist the continuation of these regional collaborations. As the group advances in its identification of state and local needs related to the dropout crisis, it will work to secure additional resources that may be needed from various stakeholders.

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?

The state level work group will continue to utilize the multiple data sources listed in Part I, Questions 2 and 3. This data, along with the benchmarks that the group determines, will inform the group about dropout prevention and re-engagement strategies across the state. The student level

identification system for all public school students will be particularly helpful in tracking the success of this work.

The visibility of the dropout issues across PA will also be enhanced since federal regulation will soon require that a cohort graduation rate be part of school's and district's annual yearly progress reports.

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

1. Across its work, the Alliance has committed to paying special attention to 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. 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

Improving curriculum, professional development, service learning, and the development of evidence-based multiple pathways to success are definitely part of PA's strategic plan to address the dropout crisis in PA. PA is already doing significant work in these areas, much of which is described above.

- b. Improving young people's access to quality health care, including promotion of SCHIP and Medicaid public health insurance programs

So far, this has not been a major focus of the dropout prevention and re-engagement work done by the dropout summit planning committee. However, the PA Department of Health, which coordinates this work, will be asked to participate in the state level work group being formed to address dropout issues across the state.

- c. Creating community hubs (e.g. schools, afterschool programs, community centers) where coordinated wraparound supports are available to young people and their families

Creating community hubs is one of the strategies that PA will be investigating. The PA Youth in Transition / Regional Career Education Partnerships coordinators are already doing much of this work on a local level.

- d. Engaging parents and caregivers to increase graduation and college readiness rates

This is a strategy that the state level work group will pursue. Outreach to parents and caregivers are key to ensuring that all youth have caring adults to support them.

- e. Supporting young people in foster care so they graduate from high school prepared for college, work and life.

The PA Departments of Education and Public Welfare have been working closely together to address the educational needs of young people in foster care. Both departments are represented in a state work group sponsored through a National Governor's Association initiative to safely reduce the number of children in out-of-home care. The PA Youth in Transition/ Regional Career Education Partnerships initiative also focuses on out-of-school youth and youth aging out of foster care.

- f. Developing young people's financial literacy

Financial literacy is coordinated by the Office of Financial Education in the PA Department of Banking. The state level work group does not plan on this being a priority in their work.

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 the website, training & technical assistance, and other means.*

The information that the America's Promise Alliance has already provided on other state and community dropout prevention and re-engagement initiatives has been very informative to our work in PA. We welcome any additional opportunities to share best practices, strategies, barriers, and successes with other states. In addition to this, the identification of resources and support that would allow PA to strengthen and expand its dropout initiatives would also be very helpful.