

## AMERICA'S PROMISE ALLIANCE

1. Dropouts: They're Our business  
Cincinnati, Ohio
2. Summit Date: June 25, 2009  
Cincinnati State Technical and Community College  
3520 Central Parkway  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45223
3. The main emphasis was the City of Cincinnati and the Cincinnati Public Schools.  
Due to political and funding streams, the Summit included Hamilton County (Ohio) and the cities of Newport and Covington, Kentucky.
  - Cincinnati
  - Covington (Kentucky)
  - Finneytown
  - Forest Hills
  - Indian Hill
  - Lockland
  - Loveland
  - Maderia
  - Mariemont
  - Mt. Healthy
  - Newport (Kentucky)
  - North College Hill
  - Northwest
  - Norwood
  - Oak Hills
  - Princeton
  - Reading
  - Southwest
  - St. Bernard
  - Sycamore
  - Three Rivers
  - Winton Woods
  - Wyoming
4. Main Point of Contact:  
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5. Date submitted

August 31, 2009

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1. **Building Knowledge: Understanding your community's dropout & College Readiness Challenges.**

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

Cincinnati Public Schools reported a graduation rate of 82% (State of Ohio Report Card 2008/09) however the State does not use the cohort method to report graduation. The Casey Foundation reports that 24.5% of 18 to 25 year olds in our county do not have a high school diploma.

Cincinnati Public Schools has a large percentage of African-American students (70%). In 2002, the Schott Report established Cincinnati as having an African American male retention rate of 19%, the lowest in the nation. We have since brought our African-American male rate up to 29% (2004-05) and 38% in 2005-06). It is an improvement, but the graduation rate is still extremely low.

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.)?

From 2003 to 2007 32% of Cincinnati Public School students enrolled in college in Ohio. More than one third required remediation. In a study done by the Institutional Research Office at Cincinnati State, 228 CPS graduates attended in fall 2007. By Spring 08, 114 or 50% were no longer enrolled. 141 of the students have a grade point average below 1.75. Of the number who did not complete their first term, 68 students received all F's or W's.

The graduation rate for Cincinnati Public Schools was shown on the State report card as 58% in 2004 and is now shown as 82%.

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 to 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?

- A. Several years prior to the Summit, the GED Testing Center at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College began collecting data from Official GED Test candidates and persons taking the practice GED Test. Over 1,600 persons were surveyed as to why they left school early. Results are available by gender, ethnicity, last school attended, age, and SES. Prior to the Summit, data from Cincinnati Public School students was disaggregated and presented at the Summit. (See below). Eighty percent of the respondents were 25 or under.

These statistics are based on surveys completed by persons taking either the Official GED Practice Test or the Official GED Test at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College in 2007 and 2008. These numbers are limited to students who attended a Cincinnati Public or Hamilton County Public Schools.

Demographics by race and gender:

Reason Dropped Out	African American Female	African American Male	Caucasian Female	Caucasian Male	Other Female	Other Male	Total
Child	60	16	24	7	4	0	111
Family	31	21	14	12	7	3	88
Personal	28	23	10	17	1	6	85
Economic	11	14	5	11	2	3	46
Job	14	11	4	10	0	1	40
School	37	33	17	37	1	4	129
Behavior	34	33	12	28	0	0	107
Social/Peers	8	14	9	8	1	0	40
Attendance	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Fell Behind	2	0	0	0	0	1	3
Legal	2	4	0	0	1	1	8
Health	4	7	2	3	0	1	17
Moved	12	7	9	3	1	0	32
Not enough credits	5	3	0	3	3	0	14
Not motivated	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Proficiency Testing	15	6	1	2	0	1	25
Retained	3	3	0	2	0	0	8
Army	0	1	0	2	0	0	3
All Computer	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Home Schooled	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Political	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Left Foster Care	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Too Old	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Bad Attitude	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
No/Answer	2	21	4	8	0	0	
Totals	274	222	114	159	21	21	811

- B. A comparison of three studies on why students dropout spanning the 1950's to 2006, showed that the reasons students drop out has not varied much over the years.

The following chart illustrates the reasons by order of frequency that students dropout out of high school. One study dates from the 1950's, one from 1988 and one from a study done in 2006. It is interesting to note that reasons for dropping out have not changed drastically during the past 50-plus years.

1950's*	1988**	2006***
Dissatisfied with school	Did not like School	School Problems
Lack of funds	Failing School	Personal
Lure of a job	Does not get along with teachers	Had child/Childcare
Family Support	Problems with school work	Family Problems
Inability to relate school to work	Pregnant	Economic
Too old for grade	Felt I did not belong	Behavior
Inability to get along with teachers	Could not get along with students	Social/Peers
Inability to learn	Suspended too often	Moved away
		Job
School did not offer suitable subjects	Had to get job/Found job	Health
	Friends dropped out	
Insufficient graduation credit	Became parent	Army
Too poor to fit in	Expelled	Computer
Inability to get along with the principal	Did not like School	Transportation
	Got married	Political
	Support family	
	Care family member	
	Wanted family	
	Wanted to Travel	

During that same time period 1,619 participants in GED and Practice Testing were asked to answer the following question: **Thinking back to when you, yourself, left high school was there anything that the school could have done to convince you to stay in school?**

NO	1,003	(62%)
YES	589	(36%)
N/A	27	(02%)

- C. As part of the Summit over 100 students enrolled in grades 9 to 12 in Cincinnati Public Schools, Norwood and Mt. Healthy Schools participated in a two day leadership conference where they identified both problems and solutions to the dropout problem. The seven groups competed with their presentations. The winning group closed out the Summit. The second place group presented at the first Follow-up meeting and other groups will be available to present at other events in the area.
- D. Finally with the help of the College's audio-visual department, a DVD was produced featuring three young people who had dropped out of high school and were re-engaged in education. These young people were available at the Summit to answer questions from the audience. These videos are being broadcast on our PBS affiliate.

## 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 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?**

The theme of the Summit was **DROPOUTS: THEY'RE OUR BUSINESS**. The toll that dropouts take on the economic stability of the community is huge.

According to Hamilton County Coroner, Dr. O'Dell Owens, 85% of all victims are high school dropouts. **Dr. Owens said, "If you compare the rise in the homicide rate, you'll see a corresponding decrease in the graduation rate."** (WLWTV.com)

Seventy percent of inmates in the Hamilton County jails do not have a GED or a high school diploma and one third of all TANF recipients do not have a GED or a high school diploma.

The percentage of unemployed residents of Hamilton County: Unemployment in Hamilton County was 9.6% in July and the unemployment rate in Cincinnati was 10.6%. This only shows those who have looked for employment within the last four weeks so it is actually much higher. Studies collected by the National Education Association show that high school dropouts are 72% more likely to be unemployed and will earn \$260,000 less in their lifetime than someone with a high school diploma.

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

Leading the effort will be Dr. John L. Henderson, President and CEO of Cincinnati State Technical and Community College. Dr. Henderson is a leading educator in the area having retired as president of Wilberforce University, a stalwart of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities system. Two county commissioners, David Pepper and Todd Portune have consistently supported Connect2Success. C2S was

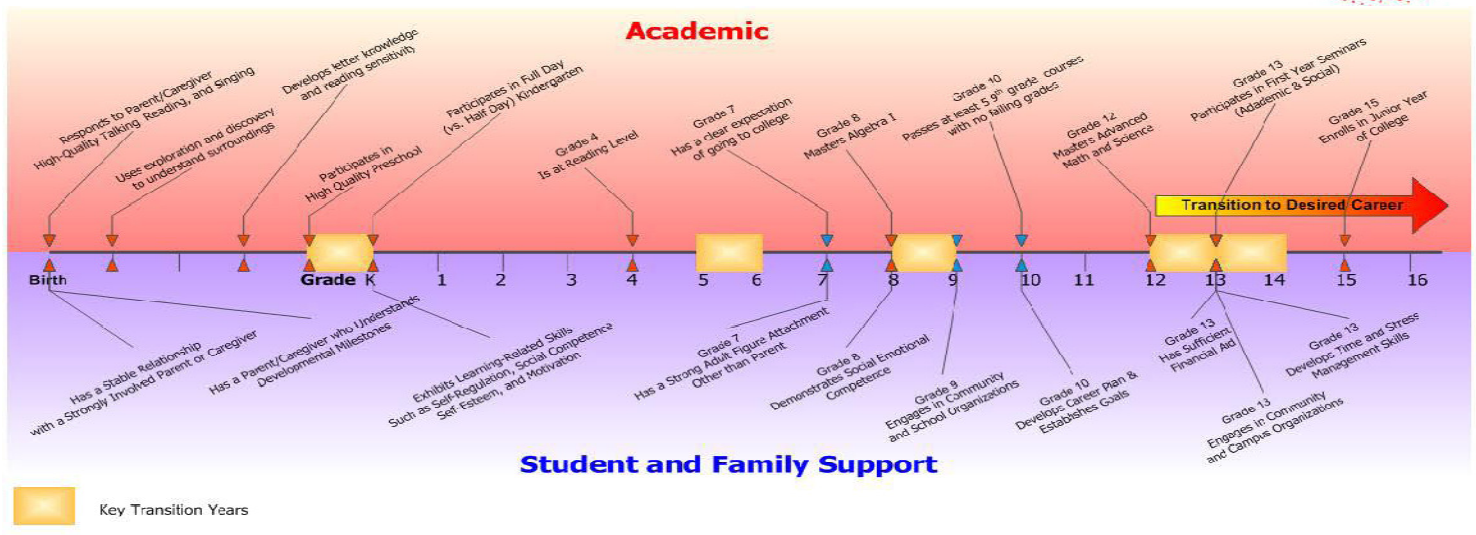
included in the State of the County report. In addition, representatives from the steering committee will be participating in a collaborative fashion and spokespeople will be utilized as needed.

3. What is your community’s vision statement for your young people, related to their successful completion of high school and preparation for college and/or work? What are your quantifiable long-term goals?

The Cincinnati Community is united around the STRIVE roadmap from birth to career with the following goals for every child:

- Be prepared for school
- Be supported in and out of school
- Succeed academically
- Enroll in college or career training
- Graduate and enter a meaningful career

### Student’s Roadmap to Success: Critical Benchmarks and Transition Years



Researched by the University of Cincinnati, Center for Urban Education 2006

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### 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 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 underway locally to support it? What support or information would help you make better progress?

Our highest priority, consistent with Grad Nation, is to improve the academic preparation of the youngsters in the districts we serve. As noted in the report of a survey of dropouts who had applied for a GED (Ewing, 2009), students often left the educational system due to a lack of academic preparation.

The University of Cincinnati in collaboration with the Cincinnati Public Schools, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative, Greater Cincinnati Parents for Public Schools secured a Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEARUP) partnership grant from the U. S. Department of Education that includes a cohort of more than 4,000 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders from 30 K to 8 schools in the district. This grant will run through August 31, 2014. Academic issues are being addressed with the assignment of academic tutors specifically in math and science to each identified school. As a partner in the GEARUP initiative, Cincinnati State hired dropout prevention specialists who will use the Attendance, Behavior, and Academic Excellence as markers for at risk students. Proactive intervention will create fewer dropouts.

Progress will be measured by promotion, decrease in expulsion/suspension rate, increase in attendance, a positive parent involvement index score, quarterly grades, and scores on standardized achievement tests. Much of the required data is uploaded from CPS to the GEARUP web-based student data tracking system: Student Access. GEARUP staff has access to each student's records and also input GEARUP activity data directly into the system. GEARUP is also measuring progress by the implementation of rigorous academics.

In total, the GEARUP Partnership supports 31 full-time employees 29 of whom spend their entire work day serving students who attend 30 of the neediest schools in the district. The GEARUP staff includes 16 Academic Specialists, 6 Dropout Prevention Specialists, 1 Parent Involvement Specialist, and 6 College Access Specialists. The GEARUP schools were chosen because of their low performance according to the Ohio Report Card and because of the low-income status of more than 50% of the students in the targeted grades.

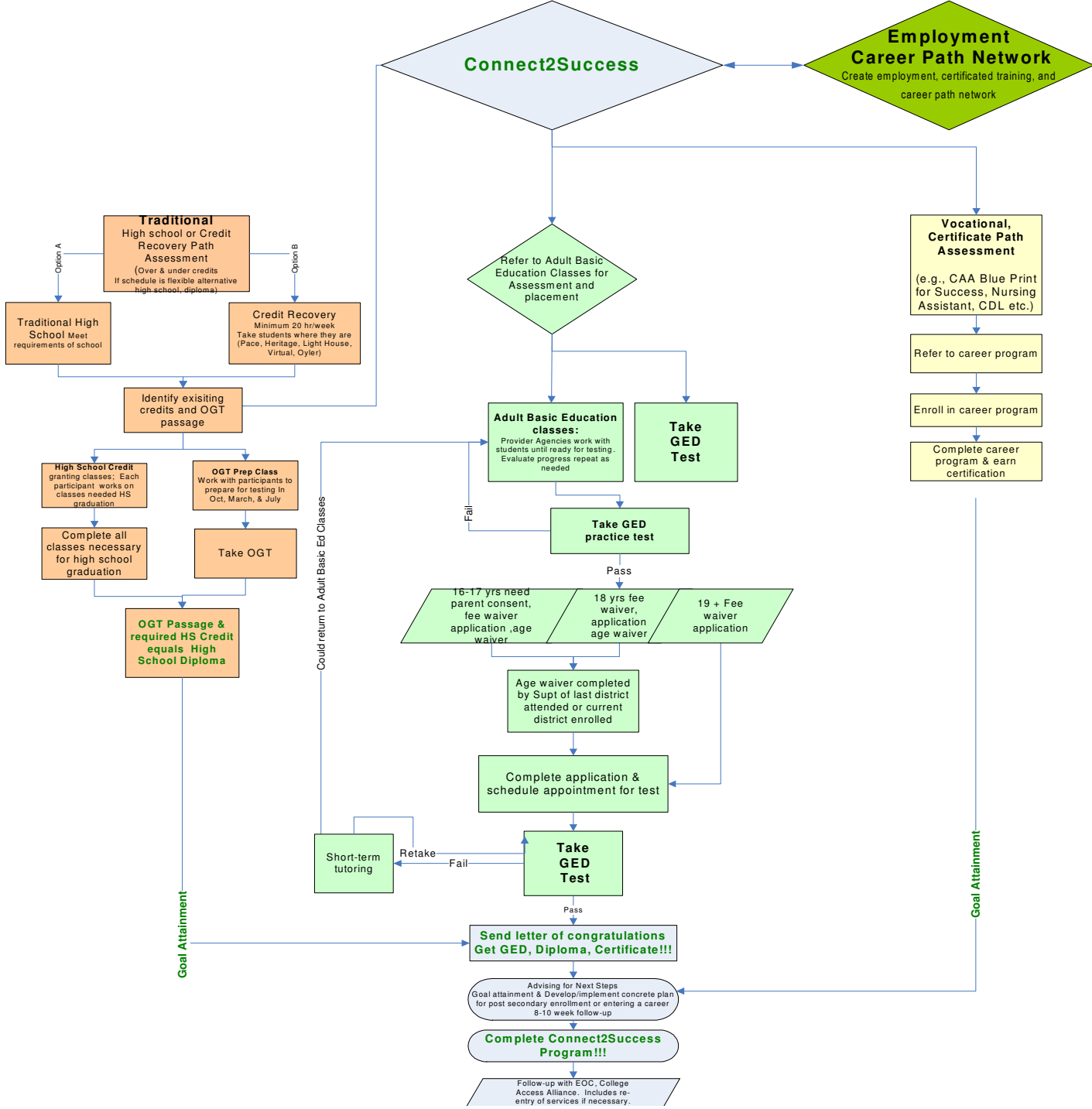
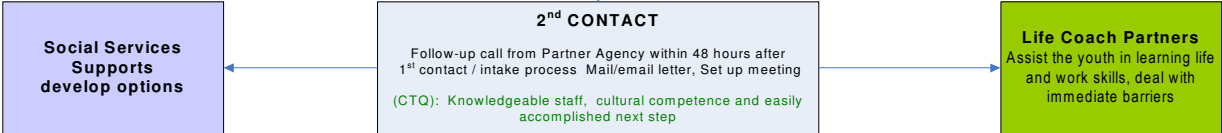
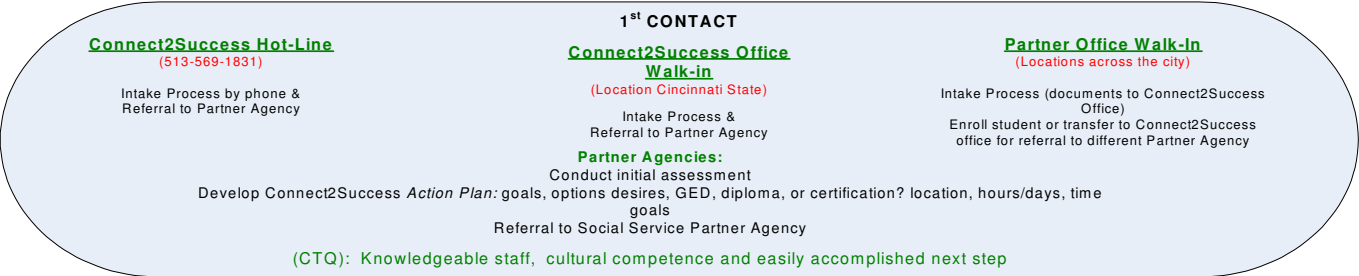
GEARUP leaders participate in the Strive College Access and Awareness (CAA) Student Support Network (SSN). Other groups and programs represented on the Strive CAA SSN work in collaboration with CPS to provide college awareness and success include:

- Project Grad
- Upward Bound Programs
- Talent Search
- Jobs for Cincinnati Graduates
- Tech Prep
- Junior Achievement
- YMCA Black and Hispanic achievers
- Cincinnati Public School Counselors
- Ohio Scholars
- Council for Opportunity in Education
- Cincinnati and Hamilton County Community Action Agency

Working both as in-school collaborations and management level collaborations, this SSN provides a myriad of services to enhance the college going rates for CPS students.

2. Please identify your highest-priority strategies, programs, policies, and/or reforms consistent with Grad Nation that your 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?

In Cincinnati, we are approaching the dropout problem from both sides. Dropout Prevention is, of course, the major goal, but Connect2Success a collaboration of schools, social service agencies, workforce development and other partners have united to re-engage high school dropouts. The program whose core values are no wrong door so that each participant 15 to 25 can get (1) reengaged with education, (2) needed social services to negate barriers, and (3) started on the next step to career or post-secondary education. The pathway is mapped out in the diagram below.



3. Please identify your highest priority policies or reform consistent with grad nation that your 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 of information would help you make better progress?

Prior to the Summit, a group met to discuss policy issues. The following were brought forth with the approval of the Cincinnati Public School superintendent. These are as follows:

- Create state incentives (not sanctions) for school systems to attract drop outs and create drop out recovery programs.
- Create state incentives to bolster Dropout Prevention Programs that show promise.
- Create greater flexibilities in Career Technical programs that will attract students at risk of dropping out.
- Eliminate barriers to promote attendance and success for students at risk-Work Study Opportunities, Transportation subsidies, etc. All of these supports are dependent on student performance and accountability.
- Foster meaningful and caring relationships with adults in the educational (institutional) settings-this provides a system of personal accountability and support for students. This has to do with the structure of educational programs and how advising students works and it confronts the reality of large student-teacher ratios or teacher case loads.
- Create policies/incentives that encourage community involvement with educational institutions.
- Create and support programs that encourage early identification of and intervention with dropouts.

4. Please identify your highest priority strategies, programs, policies and or reforms consistent with Grad Nation that your 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.

The following Data Plan was devised for C2S. (Please note the original name of C2S was Aim High).

<b>❖ SSN:</b>	<b>❖ Connect2Success Out of School Youth Initiative</b>
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**❖ Worksheet M.9 Develop a Data Plan**

❖	❖ Measurement	❖ Data	❖ Frequency	❖ Source of Data
❖ Short Term ❖ Project start date pending	❖ Demographics	❖ name, address, DOB, last grade completed, last school attended, Social Security Number	❖ Monthly	❖ Aim High Office ❖ Intake form or Agency Partner Intake form
❖	❖ Contact Information	❖ phone number/s, email address, best time to reach	❖ Monthly	❖ Aim High Office ❖ Intake form or Agency Partner

		you, preferred way to reach you, what name do you like to go by, emergency contact,		Intake form
❖	❖ Contacts	❖ #. of Students Contacts	❖ Monthly	❖ Aim C2S Office ❖ Intake form or Agency Partner
❖	❖ Assessed	❖ # of Students Assessed by assessment ❖ Test Results Specific to pathway: ❖ TABE ❖ OGT scores ❖ # Credits completed ❖ Academic goals/desires ❖ District IEP ❖ GED Practice test	❖ Monthly	❖ Agency Partner
❖	❖ Enrolled (agency specific)	❖ #. of Students Enrolled	❖ Monthly	❖ Aim High Office/ Agency Partner
❖	❖ Social Service Referrals	❖ # by type of referral	❖ Monthly	❖ Aim High Intake Form/ Agency Partner
❖ <b>Intermediate Term</b>	❖ <b>Continuous Improvement Data Collection</b> ❖ <b>IACP Academic Track:</b> Ongoing assessment, attendance, grades, milestone checks of IACP Progress Reports, establish new goals motivation, successes, Intervention of those at risk of dropping out.	❖ Attendance ❖ Progress toward goals: ❖ Practice GED ❖ TABE ❖ Credit Attainment ❖ OGT	❖ Quarterly  ❖ Varies ❖ Quarterly ❖ Quarterly ❖ Oct/March/July	❖  ❖ Agency Partner, Schools, Aim High
❖	❖ <b>Continuous Improvement Data Collection</b> ❖ <b>IACP Social Emotional Track:</b> Identify Barriers; discuss feelings, support needs, milestone checks of IACP Progress Reports, establish new goals Follow-up contacts telephone calls, us mail, drop-ins, check for life changes	❖ ❖ Self report survey ❖ Professional observations ❖ Barrier Removal	❖ ❖ Quarterly	❖ ❖ Agency Partners

❖	❖ Retention	❖ #. of Students Retained	❖ Quarterly; End of program year	❖ Agency Partners
❖	❖ Goal Attainment	❖ #. of Students Receiving Diploma  ❖ Passing GED Certification	❖ Quarterly  ❖ Quarterly	❖ Agency Partners  ❖ Cincinnati State and Great Oaks
❖ <b>Long Term</b>	❖ Progress on goal	❖ Phone, Email Survey  ❖ Based on IACP	❖ 1 year, 2 years, 5 years, 10 years	❖ National Student Clearing House ❖ EOC (Collaboration w/local universities) ❖ Agency Partners

#### **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-businesses, education, nonprofit, government, faith, etc. (Please submit the group's roster along with this plan) Who else is needed? Who convenes the group, how often and what sub-groups of committees does your effort need?

On July 30, 2009, we invited those Summit participants who volunteered for a committee to the College to participate in a Call to Action meeting. The committees consist of the following people:

##### **STEERING COMMITTEE:**

**Bari Ewing, Director of College Access Programs, Cincinnati State**  
**Juanita Bohannon, Manager, Cincinnati Human Relations Commission**  
**Isabel Brown, Cincinnati State and Community Activist**  
**Arlene Brown, Administrative Assistant, Cincinnati State**  
**Steffi Cappel, Executive Director, Partners in Achieving School Success, University of Cincinnati**  
**Khalilah Harrington-Slater, Project Manager STRIVE**  
**John Weil, President/CEO Junior Achievement**  
**Bonnie Kroeger, Grant writer and community activist**  
**Brandi Davis, Manager, Employment Career Network, Jobs for Cincinnati Grads**  
**Mary Horan, Manager, Connect2Success, Cincinnati State,**  
**Rolonda Smith, Director, Greater Cincinnati Parents for Public Schools**  
**Ennis Tait, Pastor, Church of the Living God**

Below are the results of the first meeting. The second whole group meeting will be held on November 5, 2009.

#### **FOLLOWUP**

**July 30, 2009**

##### **AMERICA'S PROMISE**

##### **FAITH BASED:**

Chairs: Rev. Ennis Tait and Antoinette "Toni" Miles

Members Present: Rev. Everett Greene; Arlene Brown; Carla Pace

Goals:

1. Contact other faith-based organizations to join the committee
2. Resource data base of faith based services
3. Faith-Based Youth Summit

## **FUNDING:**

Chairs: Brandy Davis and Dr. Steffi Cappel

Members Present: Toni Perry Gillespie (AT&T); Jon Lawhead (WSTRMy64)

The newly formed Fundraising committee was asked to do the following:

1. Determine individual and/or organizational interests of the persons on your committee related to the topic area. *This resulted in the goals of the committee.*
2. Identify 1 or 2 key achievable goals for the committee  
*Goal: Provide education, awareness and sustainability for the Prevention and Dropout programs.*
3. Identify organizations or individuals critical to achieving goals who are not a part of your group and how you will involve them.  
*Specific individuals were not identified only the need to engage the business community as well as local, regional and federal funders. Part of our task will be to identify a local passionate champion for our mission.*
4. Map out next steps and assign tasks
  - a. **Create initial list of potential local partners from which a champion would develop**  
*Assigned to: Jon Lawhead and all, Jon is going to research MY64 sponsors and identify those who have an interest in supporting education.*  
  
*We also need to pursue the support of the UC research department of which Toni spoke and any additional avenues such as the local Chambers of Commerce*

- b. Develop marketing materials; tell the stories of our young people, not just numbers**

*Assigned to: All – Isabel offered to provide to anyone who asked a copy of the VIP breakfast as well as the video of the young people who participated on the panel.*

- c. Submit at least one Federal proposal –**

*Assigned to: Brandy Davis*

*A collaborative proposal is in development in conjunction with the Greater Cincinnati Foundation to bid for the Pathways out of Poverty grant provided by the ARRA stimulus funds. Connect2Success expects to be a partner within this grant that would allow us to expand capacity of service with additional funding.*

- 5. Determine Communication plan for the Committee including meetings**

*The team has expressed a desire to meet via conference calls on a monthly basis initially and ultimately a quarterly basis as things settle down. A conference number needs to be acquired.*

## **JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT**

Chair: Steve Hawley

Members Present: Jeff Hilliard (College of Mt. Joseph); Bari Ewing (CS); Bonnie Kroeger (Grant writer); Marian Alsweger (Sheriff's Office)

Goals:

1. Standardized accountability for education. How do you measure success?
2. GED as a state requirement for high school graduation.
3. Model for delivering education with best practices (Teaching, Colleges, Institutional Barriers, Stake Holders, Learners)

Connect to policy reform committee.

C2S needs to have a simple online way to enroll.

Support for additional resources.

Vocational opportunities for students at Cincinnati State

## School Policy Reform

Committee Members in attendance: Sam Schloemer (Chair), Sarah Gideonse, Liz Sabo Johnson, Debbie Zorn, and Mary Horan

- I. Introduction and Discussion of Individual Interest in Committee
  - Sarah
    - a. Although focus on Cincinnati area, would like to take necessary interventions to State level
    - b. Interested in keeping kids in school
  - Debbie
    - a. Believes problem starts in grade school
    - b. Solve by starting at lower grade levels
  - Liz
    - a. Through work with CPS sees how hard teachers work everyday fighting to do right thing
    - b. Teachers need better cultural training for dealing with wide diversity
    - c. Better leveraging of resources
      - i. Partnerships and support for teachers
      - ii. Equipment for teachers
  - Mary
    - a. Need to listen to our children when they tell us what they need and stop being afraid of them
    - b. Works daily with dropouts who did not value education and now understand how the lack of can so negatively impact their lives
  - Sam
    - a. When sent children to school, got a great appreciation for teachers
    - b. Developed a passion for how schools are funded
    - c. Member of State School Board
      - i. Advocate for parents with children with disabilities
      - ii. Worked on dropout recovery task forces
      - iii. Reading mentor at Oylar
      - iv. Serves in prison ministry
- II. Initial Suggestions for Prevention
  - Better communication between teachers and students
    - a. Teachers assist students in understanding how material relates to daily life
    - b. Students feel free to communicate issues that may interfere with learning
  - Smaller class sizes
    - a. Research shows teaching style relates to size
    - b. Teachers can spend more time on subject matter and less on classroom management
  - More seamless pathways between schools, teachers and colleges of education
    - a. Future teachers have mentors in school and college that are on same page

- III. Next Steps
- Meet end of August
    - a. Date TBA
    - b. 10am – 12pm
    - c. At Cincinnati State

## **Parent Engagement**

**In attendance:** Tonya Dumas, Leonard Dean, Rolonda Smith, Myshamel Walker

Want GED for parents

Continuing Education fairs for dropouts, graduates, parents

Support groups for parents (No Parent Left Behind) and students.

Contact students who participated in the Summit to do presentations in the community.

In addition to the specific projects, each group is going to contact volunteers not able to attend the first meeting and invite other key persons to join the committee.

## **Additional Sub Committees**

There are three more sub groups that have not meet yet due to summer scheduling. These are evaluation, black male initiative and inclusion. Cincinnati is fortunate to have STRIVE as part of its collaboration and we are working together to develop the evaluation plan for the effort.

2. What financial, human and other resources are needed in order to begin acting on this plan? What resources are 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?

Each committee is developing its strategies including funding needs. A Fund Raising Committee has been created to assist in identifying and accessing financial and human resources to support the work of the committee.

3. How will your community of 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 federal mandate to switch to a cohort reporting system to track graduation rates will provide more accurate information to track the true graduation rates. Cincinnati State's GED practice Testing program also provides information on the number of students who have left school.

V [Staying Connected to the America’s Promise Alliance: Identifying Long-Term Interests, priorities, and Points of Alignment.](#)

1. [Please describe if your action plan has strategies specific to:](#)

a. [Focusing on the Middle School Years:](#)

The GEARUP Partnership will work with a cohort group of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders at all low-performing K-8 schools in the CPS District during 2009-2010. This cohort group will be followed. Making a successful transition to high school is a major focus of this project. Other grant programs, such as Project GRAD and Talent Search will have this transition as a priority.

B. [Improving young people’s access to quality health care, including promotion of SCHIP and Medicaid public health insurance programs.](#)

As part of Connect2Success barriers are identified at the beginning of the process and Life Coaches are assigned. Physical and Emotional health issues are identified and referrals and follow-ups help the youth progress. Central Clinic, Public Health Office, and SAMI provide access to medical and mental health services at various schools.

C. [Creating community hubs](#)

Cincinnati has an extensive after school program that is a Strive SSN on afterschool programs. According to (Striving Together 2009) report, more than 80 organizations are participating in After School programming in CPS and surrounding districts. These activities vary from social, emotional, health related, academic, and matching children with caring adults. In the recent rebuilding of CPS schools, community programs and after school activities were important to the design and hours of the schools.

D. [Engaging parents and caregivers to increase graduation and college readiness rates.](#)

Parents for Public Schools of Greater Cincinnati (PPS) are a partner in the GEARUP Partnership where the goal is to engage and educate parents on how to help their children access college. PPS runs a Parent Leadership Academy and the two co-chairs for Parent Engagement through America’s Promise are graduates of this academy. Many of the grant programs active in CPS, such as Upward Bound and Project Grad contain a significant parent involvement piece. The Educational Opportunity Center and GED Testing center at Cincinnati State will be available to assist parents who desire to earn their GED and/or enter College.

E. [Supporting Young People in foster care.](#)

The University of Cincinnati in collaboration with Hamilton County Jobs and Family Services and the Board of County Commissioners developed a program Higher Education Mentoring Initiative (HEMI) which targets youth who are emancipating or “aging out” of the foster care system during their senior year of high school. Pro Kids has recently formed a transition group to identify and provide for the needs of youth aging

out of the foster care system. TRIO programs, such as Talent Search, Upward Bound, are targeting foster care recipients as an important group since their college graduation rate is currently 3%. Many of the America's Promise Coalition members are connected to this project

## F. Developing young people's financial literacy

Financial Literacy is a part of many of the programs collaborating with America's 2 Promise. Monthly Workshops are held at the Super Job Center for both youth and adults.

### 2. How can the America's Promise Alliance best support your state or community with the implementation of this dropout prevention plan?

First, REL Midwest was extremely helpful in preparation for our summit. They have a wealth of services that we plan on using in the future.

Cincinnati has a unique collaboration through the Student Support Networks. We have the people on the ground able and willing to do the work. Our collaborations involve the sharing of planning, implementation and resources.

#### What do we need?

Additional funding is always helpful.

Cincinnati tried very hard to involve the business community in our Summit. The area representative from AT&T, Toni Perry Gillespie was extremely helpful and supportive. She has participated actively in both planning and follow-up. Even though we attempted to target CEO's and company Presidents for our Breakfast, we did not have a large response from either the corporate community or local business people. We understand that high level executives do not have time to spend a day identifying and suggesting solutions for community problems. There needs to be some way to market to this audience. I am wondering if a personal letter from General Powell would increase awareness and involvement. If we cannot get the CEO to participate, it would be nice to have his/her designee or community outreach office.

Cincinnati was able to get excellent media coverage for the event, but even our supportive politicians did not attend. (Part of that was due to the closing days of the state fiscal year combined with budget deficits.) Again, more lobbying efforts on the part of America's Promise would increase awareness of the problem and solutions.

Here is what I think is the bottom line. It is easy to come up with solutions if you don't have to carry them out. We know what works. We need individual people who will sit down with a youth and help.

