



DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

Don't Quit on Me explores what young people say about how relationships with adults and peers affect their decisions about staying in, leaving and returning to high school. The young people we interviewed and surveyed told us that the strength, number and nature of relationships in their lives are important factors that influence their engagement with school.

What can schools, and the adults working in them, do to help? Here are some questions to explore with your colleagues.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How do the findings in *Don't Quit on Me* reinforce or challenge what you believe about young people who interrupt their high school education? What surprised you?
- What are the formal and informal ways that young people encounter supportive relationships in your school? How could you and your colleagues make these kinds of encounters more intentional and more frequent?
- Moving homes and changing schools can be disruptive to success in high school. How do you welcome new students to your school or your classroom?
- Suspension and expulsion are among the statistically significant threats to graduation. How are students in your school affected by these? What steps could you take to reduce the incidence of exclusionary discipline?
- What relationship does your school have with community-based organizations or public agencies that can provide support to students who are affected by one or more of the adverse circumstances listed at right? How could your school shift how you use existing community and school resources to provide more academic or social support to young people?

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER READING

- Download the user-friendly 2-page [Developmental Relationships Framework](#) from Search Institute and choose one aspect of the framework as your focus. What specific actions could you take over the next month?
- Read [this blog](#) from Search Institute: "Does Your School or Program Really Value Relationships? Six Questions to Ask." In about 500 words, it invites individuals to explore how their organizations invest time, people, money and other resources in building relationships.

Seven Threats to Graduation

Students experiencing any of these adverse situations are less likely (statistically speaking) to stay continuously enrolled in school, and more likely to need additional social support.

- Suspension or expulsion
- Giving birth or fathering a child
- Being part of a peer group in which most friends didn't graduate
- Experiencing a major mental health issue, e.g., depression or anxiety
- Not feeling academically prepared for school
- Homelessness
- Moving homes (mobility)

Leaders in community and school settings can make extra efforts to prevent these threats to graduation (e.g., expulsion, homelessness) or to provide tangible resources to help young people handle them.