

America's Promise Alliance Illinois State Drop Out Prevention Summit Overview

Background: Every school day nearly 7,000 students drop out of high school in the United States. Each year that number adds up to about 1.2 million students who will not graduate from high school with their classmates. In Illinois, 42,200 students dropped out of high school resulting in a 77% graduation rate. The estimated loss of lifetime earnings for those dropouts is \$11 billion. Additionally, without a high school diploma, these students are much more prone to be unemployed, incarcerated, and on government assistance at a significant cost to society.

America's Promise Alliance has committed to convening partners from every sector of American life, including education, business, nonprofit, elected officials, faith groups, media, healthcare, and students, to help improve the lives of young people. The Alliance is supporting more than 100 state and local Dropout Prevention Summits across the country within a five-year period. The Illinois Dropout Prevention Summit is November 4, 2009 at the Illinois State University in Bloomington, Illinois.

At the summit, attendees will complete the first three steps of a six-step community stakeholder alignment and integration process, with the completed work documented in a shared web portal that forms the basis for an integrated action plan. Follow-up meetings will take place after the summit to support regions as they continue through this process and establish key statewide measures to provide the foundation for common assessment across the state. Presenters slated to appear include America's Promise chair Alma Powell, Illinois State Superintendent of Education Dr. Christopher Koch, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn, and State Farm Insurance Companies Chairman and CEO Ed Rust.

Supported in part by the Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Principals Association, Illinois Business Roundtable, Advance Illinois, Center for the Advancement and Support of Educational Initiatives at Illinois State University, REL Midwest at Learning Point Associates, Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center at Learning Point Associates, the Boeing Company, and State Farm Insurance Companies, the objective of the Illinois Dropout Prevention Summit is to create a framework (including common language, values, vision, and measure of success) by the attendees organized by regions that correspond to the more than 40 Regional Offices of Education. This summit will lead to actionable plans resulting in a quantifiable reduction in the high school dropout rate for each region represented.

Success in society mandates that citizens successfully complete high school as the minimum level of education. Much of the efforts associated with improving high school graduation rates are focused on what happens "inside schools" independent of what goes on around schools. Education is not about knowledge transfer. Education is a system that involves the entire community and must result in citizens who are able to / capable of

1. Defining problems

2. Quickly assimilating relevant data
3. Conceptualizing information and reorganize it
4. Make inductive and deductive leaps with it
5. Ask hard questions
6. Discuss findings with colleagues
7. Work collaboratively to find solutions
8. Convincing others

Currently, Illinois is not producing this skilled workforce, nor is there the infrastructure in place to produce such a workforce for the future. We need to look beyond providing a band-aid approach to addressing this issue – no one group can shoulder the burden. This is a complex issue requiring a complex, systems-thinking approach to working towards solutions.

Key Summit Activities: The goal of the summit is to help communities implement a process to develop a common understanding of the local drop out problem, develop a common vision, establish measures of success, and mobilize support to develop and implement action plans to achieve the identified goals and measures of what will be considered success.

Key elements/activities for the summit:

1. Welcome and Introduction by Key National and Illinois State Leaders
2. Panel of Key Leaders
3. 40 Facilitated Breakout sessions that will:
 - a. Help community stakeholder leaders use a proven process to develop the following key products associated with the high school dropout crisis:
 - i. Common language
 - ii. Shared Values
 - iii. Vision for Success
 - iv. Measures of success
 - b. Establish a foundation for developing a broader plan to address the high school drop out rate and begin the process for creating communities of the future.
4. Share top level results with all summit attendees from each of the breakout sessions.

Some Key Issues:

Connecting The Dots

- Students are involved in formal classroom education 12% of their life.
- In school today, we remove kids from the normal course of life, thus most students don't see a relationship between education and the "real world."
- SAT Scores are on the rise, yet 1.2 (out of 4) million students fail to complete high school each year.

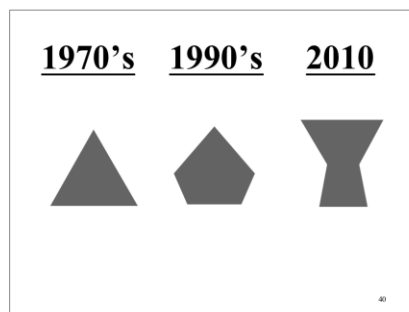
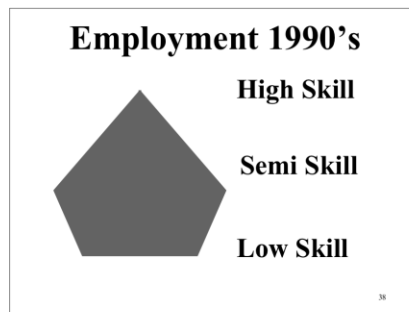
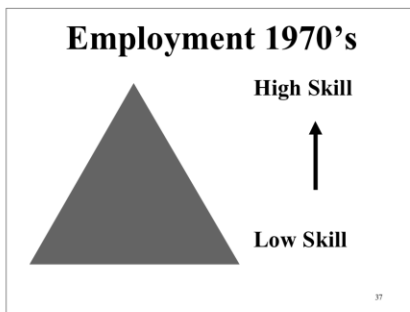
- Excellence in the future workforce will be defined not by memorized data and information, but by capacity and capability, driven by imagination, innovation, and creative intelligence.
- Not every student needs to attend a “live in” college or university . . . And that’s OK! . . . But, *everyone* needs post secondary education.
- Six key items affect student test scores:
 1. Attitude of teachers toward test taking
 2. Attitude of students/administrators/parents toward testing
 3. Quality of program
 4. Demographics
 5. Environment
 6. Test Taking Skills
- We spend more on K-12 education in total and per-student than any other nation, but the results don’t show it.
- Because someone can be involved in 16 chat rooms at the same time doesn’t mean that they can apply that technology to solve problems.
- Information (what used to be “owned” by a few) is now available to anyone.
- Youth spend 6-8 hours a day with media or electronics, more time then they spend in school or with their parents...the two groups most often targeted as being responsible for youths and their behaviors.
- Pediatricians have initiated “media diets” among their patients.
- Jonas Salk didn’t find a solution to polio by studying people who had polio, but rather looked at those who *didn’t* and asked “why not?”
- Physical movement enhances respiration and increases oxygen to the brain, resulting in improved brain function.
- Physical movement develops vision.
- Physical therapists report a critical increase in early motor delays of babies citing lack of tummy time as the number 1 contributor to the escalation.
- Babies who don’t get enough tummy time and spend a lot of time in products that keep them on their backs have significant developmental delays.
- Pediatricians are overwhelmed with requests for child rearing support.
- Children’s Memorial Hospital in Chicago reports a change since 1994 from a dozen cases of misshapen skulls to 750 in 2008 (5.5% of the cases...an increase of 625 times).
- Between 1952 and 1994 the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual grew from 112 disorders/diseases to 374.
- ADHD grew from 150,000 US school children in 1970 to 6 million in 2000 (12-13% of US school children).

Conclusions:

1. The first 5 years of a child’s life are critical to educational attainment and success later in life.
2. Education is not about test taking...it’s about preparing for life.
3. Environment AND experiences play a key role in educational success.

Education Must Produce Different Results

- The education system we use today is based on a model that depended on the community for success....communities are different today.
 - Many students worked after school in town or on the farm and, thus, developed additional skills and applied skills learned in the classroom in the “real world.” Today those “developmental jobs” are full-time jobs for part of the population.
 - Outdoor activities were a key element of a child’s environment. Those activities have been replaced by the media (computer, TV, cell phones, iPhones, iPods, etc).
- In 1960, most jobs required no college or post secondary education and employers expected to train their employees for low skill jobs that would employ people for most of their lives (manufacturing, assembly, transportation, office/clerical). Today, most jobs require post-secondary education, many including college.
- We need to educate students today so that they will be ready to solve future problems that have not yet been identified, using technologies not yet invented, based on scientific knowledge not yet discovered.



America's Most Successful High Schools – What Makes Them Work?

1. Focusing instructions around student interests, learning styles, and aptitude through a variety of learning approaches - most commonly academies.
2. Unrelenting commitment by administrators and teachers to excellence for all students with a particular emphasis on literacy across the curriculum.
3. A laser-like focus on data at the classroom level to make daily instructional decisions for individual students.
4. An extraordinary commitment of resources and attention to 9th grade students.
5. A rigorous and relevant 12th grade year.
6. High quality curriculum and instruction that focuses on rigor, relevance, relationships, and reflective thought.
7. Solid and dedicated leadership.
8. Relationships driven by guiding principles.
9. Sustained and supported professional development.

Integrated Community Stakeholder Development Process: Birth2Work has developed a process to lead and support a community from ground zero to developing a successful Integrated Community Stakeholder Team (ICST) committed to working together to address the community's workforce needs. As outlined the book, The System: Igniting the Soul of Commerce, the necessary steps begin with 1) identifying community stakeholder leaders, 2) developing common language and shared values 3) creating a shared vision and measures of success 4) establishing a plan and set of relationships to meet the vision and measures of success, 5) agreeing on resource needs and align resources that are available, and 6) implementing a management process to ensure implementation. Unlike many other approaches where stakeholders come together to define the problem, offer solutions, and then select the solutions that they believe are the best to solve the program, the Birth2Work process starts with aligning leaders around language, values, vision, and measures of success. This alignment ensures that all stakeholder voices are heard, understood and stakeholders develop plans that are based on agreement and alignment, not about the power of the strongest or "most powerful" leader in the room. Action plans are best when they are understood, supported and sustainable even when individual community stakeholder leaders change or transition in their respective community. Along the way, team members will move from a one-sector focus to a more complex, integrated perspective on living and working in their own community. Articles, research, data and facilitated team discussions will support team alignment, integration, and unification.

Facilitated Breakout Sessions: From 10:30 to 2:30 there will be forty facilitated breakout sessions. Each summit attendee will participate in one of the breakout sessions according the geographic region they represent. A trained facilitator will manage the time and lead activity. Products from the sessions will be an agreed-to set of values, vision, and measures of success for reducing the high school drop out rate. These meetings provide the foundation of actions that will occur in each high school and surrounding community that they are part of.

“What will it take to change the lives of children – not one by one through heroic interventions and occasional miracles, but in big numbers, and in a way that can be replicated nationwide.....you need to change everything in their lives – their schools, their neighborhoods, even the child rearing practices of their parents”

Geoffrey Canada

“We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

Dr Martin Luther King, Jr.