



# Post Summit: Building a Local Team



Once you have raised public awareness about dropout issues through your Greater Graduation Summit, it is time for action planning to address your local needs. It is critical that a strong leader or leaders be identified that will champion the problems or gaps in services that need to be addressed. They will need to believe strongly that the “crisis” is real, that the community has to do something about it, and that they are willing to do whatever it takes to make it happen. This person or persons must be someone that has respect in the community and someone that the community will trust and assist. Obviously, this person(s) may be the “Champion” identified earlier in rallying others to attend your local summit.

However, this person will need assistance in truly understanding the local dropout issues and making the necessary plans to address these issues. A “leadership team” is needed that consist of individuals who are willing to head up “workgroups.” It is important that this leadership team be composed of a cross section of the community that has the skill sets and/or interest in the various workgroup topics. Communities may have different issues to address, therefore the workgroups may look different from community to community. Much of the work done by these workgroups should shed insight into the local dropout issue and set the stage for action planning and implementation.

Some possible workgroups are as follows:

- Student, Parent, School Perceptions
- Financial Resources Team
- Community Data and Resource Team
- School Practices Team
- Media and Communications Team

### Perception Team

This team should use surveys and/or interviews to gain insights as to who is at risk of dropping out, why, and what might be done to increase graduation rates.

Input directly from students, parents, and school personnel can be invaluable in understanding school dropout issues at your school.

### Financial Resource Team

This team will be responsible for looking at present funding at the school that might impact the students’ success or failure in school. Which programs are being funded, what are the funding streams, is it possible to fund dropout prevention programs out of these funds? What funds are

**Arkansas Department of Education**  
Four Capitol Mall  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
501-682-4475

available at local, state and national level to meet your dropout prevention needs. What funding might be available in the local community to assist the potential dropout?

#### Community Data/Resource Team

This team will be looking at ways to access, compile, and analyze information that will assist in understanding posing challenges to graduation. The range of topics may range from existing barriers to graduation in the community to present programs in place in the community that can be partnered with or on behalf of students. This team can also look at gaps in services and gain an understanding of which students are being served and which students are being left out and why.

#### School Policy and Practice Team

This team will look at internal school policies and practices that might cause students to not succeed in graduating. Possible topics include: policy/practices related to grading, absenteeism, tardiness, behavioral issues, in-school & out-of-school suspension, interactions with local court systems, class scheduling, and incentives, recognitions & reward systems. Are students being “push out” and why? The team may also look at the school environment in relation to being “parent friendly” and practices that might include or exclude parental involvement.

#### Media and Community Team

School personnel should be assigned to this team to insure a constant source of current information pertaining to graduation issues and programming. The team will not only constantly share information on progress being made on the graduation/dropout issue, but also will have the responsibility of creating a wellspring of supports and ,if needed, change attitudes and beliefs in the community regarding the need for students to stay in school.

These workgroups can be the “backbone” for the local dropout prevention initiative. The information and insight into what is really happening locally and what needs to be changed or improve on is vital to solid action planning. These workgroups can become the change agent and the catalyst for change.

#### **Reference**

Balfanz, R, Fox, J.H., Bridgeland, J.M., & McNaught, M. (2008). *Grad nation: A guidebook to help communities tackle the dropout crisis*. America’s Promise Alliance.

---

#### **Collecting Post Summit Data**

These surveys are recommended to collect post summit data:

[Community Personnel Survey](#)

[Parent Survey](#)

[Principals and Teachers Survey](#)

[Students Survey](#)

**Arkansas Department of Education**  
Four Capitol Mall  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
501-682-4475