



ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

Arlington, Texas

Presentation of an Action Plan to Help More of its Young People Graduate from High School, Ready for College, Work & Life

- Name of Summit State or Community
 - **Arlington, Texas**

- Date and Location of Summit:
 - **Saturday, November 1, 2008**
 - **Fielder Road Baptist Church**
1323 W. Pioneer Parkway
Arlington, TX 76013

- Geographical Area Covered by this Action Plan:
 - **Arlington Independent School District**
 - **Mansfield Independent School District**
 - **City of Arlington, Texas – Tarrant County**

- Date Submitted: **February 27, 2009**

Main Points of Contact:

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

1. **What are your current state and/or community current graduation rates? (please cite the source and methodology)**

Source: Texas Education Agency - Academic Excellence Indicator System 2007-2008

- **Arlington Independent School District**
 - **2007** Graduated 75.2% (Graduated with GED Completion Rate 2007 - 88.5 percent)
 - **2006** Graduated 78.7% (Graduated with GED Completion Rate 2006 - 93.3 percent)

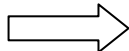
- **Mansfield Independent School District**
 - **2007** Graduated 85.0%
 - 1.1% Received a GED
 - 6.9% Continued in High School

- **Area Graduation Rates - 2007**

Arlington ISD	75.2%
Mansfield	85.0%
Kennedale	90.3%
Fort Worth ISD	72.1%
Dallas ISD	62.5%

Annual Dropout Rate (Grades 9-12)

This measure shows the dropout rates for the high school grades. It is a report-only measure and is not used in determining accountability ratings.



Methodology

Number of dropouts in grades 9 through 12 divided by the number of grade 9-12 students who were in attendance at any time during the 2006-07 school year

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?**

Graduation Rate Comparisons

	Graduation Rate 2007	Graduation Rate 2006	Graduation Rate 2004	Graduation Rate 1998
U.S.		73%		
Texas	78.0%	80.4%	84.2%	91.4%
Region 11	81.9%	84.4%	85.9%	92.1%
AISSD	75.2%	78.7%	81.9%	92.2%
MISD	85.0%	89.8%	88.3%	81.7%

Source: Cities in Crisis Report 4/1/2008 (50 largest Metro areas)

College Readiness

	College-Ready Graduates 2007	College-Ready Graduates 2006
U.S.		
Texas	37%	35%
Region 11	42%	39%
 AISD	39%	39%
 MISD	40%	33%

Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System 2007-2008

Methodology for College-Ready Graduates:

To be considered college-ready as defined by this indicator, a graduate must have met or exceeded the college-ready criteria on the TAKS exit-level test, or the SAT test, or the ACT test. The criteria for each are noted below.

Subject	Exit-level TAKS		SAT		ACT
ELA	>= 2200 scale score on ELA test AND a "3" or higher on essay	Or	>=500 on Critical Reading AND >=1070 Total	Or	>= 19 on English AND >= 23 Composite
Math	>= 2200 scale score on mathematics test	Or	>=500 on Math AND >=1070 Total	Or	>= 19 on Math AND >= 23 Composite

Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) Report - The Education Trust (Nov 2008)

Three values are calculated for this indicator:

- English language Arts**
This shows the percent of graduates who scored at or above the criterion score on the TAKS, SAT, or ACT English language arts tests.
- Mathematics**
This shows the percent of graduates who scored at or above the criterion score on the TAKS, SAT, or ACT mathematics tests.
- Both Subjects.** This shows the percent of graduates who scored at or above the criterion score on both the TAKS, SAT, or ACT ELA and mathematics tests.

Methodology

Number of graduates who scored at or above the College-Ready criterion for ELA divided by number of graduates (class of 2007) with ELA results to evaluate

Number of graduates who scored at or above the College-Ready criterion for mathematics divided by number of graduates (class of 2007) with mathematics results to evaluate

Number of graduates who scored at or above the College-Ready criteria on both ELA & mathematics divided by number of graduates (class of 2007) with results in both subjects to evaluate

- 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?**

Arlington uses a variety of methods to understand why students are not successful in school:

- 21st Century grant funds helped the District create community learning centers at all six high schools to provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for youth. The program helps

students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children. Faculty assigned to administer the grant contact students, meet with them and try to determine their reasons for dropping out. Staff then tries to develop a plan with the student to reengage them with school.

- The school district tracks and analyzes student data monthly on each campus. This student information system helps to predict and track the number of dropouts. A dropout database, maintained by each school, documents recovery efforts. Attendance Officers with Student Services determine which students have a high rate of absenteeism, and they actually visit student homes to decide where they are. When questioned about the desire to drop out, many students indicate they are too far behind in their schoolwork or they feel no one cares.
 - During the summer of 2008, the Arlington School District formed a Community Gang Intervention committee to discuss gang activity and make recommendations to the School Board. The makeup of the committee included Faith Based Leaders, Non Profit Service Organizations, School District Officials, City of Arlington Youth Development Leaders, Police Department, Parents of Drop Outs and Parents of Gang members. This group evaluated various issues along with the effectiveness of current resources for affected parents and youth. After several presentations, the committee endorsed a program concept called Our Community, Our Kids.
 - The City of Arlington held a focus group discussion with youth members of the Mayor’s Youth Commission to gain an understanding on the inner workings of the schools based on student perspectives. This discussion also indicated some reasons successful students felt other students might struggle.
 - The Arlington Police Department created an ongoing committee of youth service agencies, from the Greater Arlington area to network and share resources. The idea is to improve awareness of all youth serving agencies and create a well connected group to serve our youth and their families. This has allowed each agency to develop relationships and a stronger understanding of other agencies, which has increased the number of referrals and cross-partnering opportunities.
 - Champion Education, a joint initiative of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce and the Arlington ISD, is focused on aligning the resources of the Chamber and the business community to increase student attainment levels and decrease dropout rates by working in three strategic areas;
 1. Community awareness
 2. Integration of Arlington ISD with higher education and the publicly funded workforce development system
 3. Student achievement. Our vision is “every child in Arlington deserves the opportunity to learn in a great school with a great teacher, preparing them for life; in a crime-free and drug-free environment, supported by parental involvement”.
2. The National Dropout Prevention Center notes 15 effective strategies that are necessary to address student dropout rates, AISD and MISD show progress in each of these areas.

A. After School Opportunities

- **Mentoring/Tutoring**
Mentoring is a one-to-one caring, supportive relationship between a mentor and a mentee that is based on trust. Tutoring, also a one-to-one activity, focuses on academics and is an effective way to address specific needs such as reading, writing, or math competencies.
- **Service Learning**
Service learning connects meaningful community service experiences with academic learning. This teaching/learning method promotes personal and social growth, career

development, and civic responsibility and can be a powerful vehicle for effective school reform at all grade levels.

- **Alternate Schooling**
Alternative schooling provides potential dropouts a variety of options that can lead to graduation, with programs paying special attention to the students' individual social needs and the academic requirements for a high school diploma.
- **After School Opportunities**
Many schools provide after-school and summer enhancement programs that eliminate information loss and inspire interest in a variety of areas. Such experiences are especially important for students at risk of school failure.
- **Early Childhood Development**
Birth-to-three interventions demonstrate that providing a child educational enrichment can modify IQ. The most effective way to reduce the number of children who will ultimately drop out is to provide the best possible classroom instruction from the beginning of their school experience.

B. Early Intervention

- **Family Engagement**
Research consistently finds that family involvement has a direct, positive effect on children's achievement and is the most accurate predictor of a student's success in school.
- **Early Literacy Development**
Early interventions to help low-achieving students recognize that focusing on reading and writing skills is the foundation for effective learning in all subjects.
- **Professional Development**
Teachers working with youth at high risk of academic failure need to feel supported. They will also require an avenue by which to continue to develop skills, techniques and learn about innovative strategies.

C. Making the Most of Instruction

No sustained and comprehensive effort to keep students in school can afford to ignore what happens in the classroom. Strategies that produce better teachers, expand teaching methods to accommodate a range of learning styles, take advantage of today's cornucopia of technological resources, and meet the individual needs of each student can yield substantial benefits.

- **Active Learning**
When educators show students that there are different ways to learn, students find new and creative ways to solve problems, achieve success, and become lifelong learners.
- **Educational Technology**
Technology offers some of the best opportunities for delivering instruction that engages students in authentic learning, addresses multiple intelligences, and adapts to student's learning styles.
- **Individualized Instruction**
A customized individual learning program for each student allows teachers flexibility with the instructional program and extracurricular activities.
- **Systemic Renewal**
Systemic renewal calls for a continuing process of evaluating goals and objectives related to school policies, practices, and organizational structures as they impact a diverse group of learners.

D. Making the Most of the Broader Community

Students who come to school bring traces of a wider community; when students leave school, either before or after graduation, they return to that community. It's impossible to isolate "school" within the walls of the school building. Effective efforts to keep students in school take advantage of these links with the wider community.

- **School – Community Collaboration**

When all groups in a community provide collective support to the school, a strong infrastructure sustains a caring environment where youth can thrive and achieve.

- **Career and Technical Education**

A quality guidance program is essential for all students. School-to-work programs recognize that youth need specific skills to prepare them for the larger demands of today's workplace.

- **Safe Schools**

A comprehensive violence prevention plan, including conflict resolution, must deal with potential violence as well as crisis management. Violence prevention means providing daily experiences at all grade levels that enhance positive social attitudes and effective interpersonal skills in all students.

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 community and state leaders? What is 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?**

The State of Texas recently committed to the dropout issue by hosting a State Summit on November 10, 2008. And current work underway with the 81st Legislature indicates a need to aggressively address a growing awareness about the impact of decreasing student graduation rates.

The Arlington and Mansfield communities recognize the adverse impact to our overall economic health relative to increasing student dropout rates. In today's competitive global economy, effective education is more important than ever before. Yet more than 25% of American students do not finish high school. The figure is nearly twice as high for African American and Latino students.

Various community groups have been discussing the formation of an umbrella organization for over a year to assist in the development of youth strategy and implementation. One of the first efforts leading up "Our Community, Our Kids" was the City of Arlington's adoption of a youth strategic theme in February 2008. According to the Arlington Police Department, youth face a number of challenges in Arlington and in other communities throughout the Dallas/Fort Worth area:

- **Gang activity** – This can consist of crimes such as graffiti, theft, assault and murder. Recruitment of gang members is typically between the ages of 11 and 14.
- **Drugs** – Illegal drug use can cause serious physical and mental problems in users. It is extremely dangerous and can result in death.
- **Alcohol** – Its use can contribute to risky and dangerous behaviors in teens.
- **Runaway youth** – These children are susceptible to criminal activity and drug and alcohol abuse.
- **Domestic violence** – Youth can be the victims and/or perpetrators of violence in the home. This can consist of crimes such as threats, assaults and murder.
- **Homelessness** – A significant number of Arlington youth are homeless or living a transient lifestyle.
- **Lack of medical care** – Youth that go without medical care may suffer from illnesses and diseases

that are otherwise effectively treatable with proper medicine.

- Lack of positive role models – These are important to encourage educational success.
- Peer pressure – This may lead to poor grades, higher potential for drop out as well as sexual and criminal activity.

Texas Troubles

Source: Texas State Comptroller of Public Accounts – Year End Fiscal Notes 2006

- Almost 1.3 million students did not graduate from U.S. high schools in 2004, costing the nation more than \$325 billion in lost wages, taxes and productivity over their lifetimes, according to the Alliance for Excellent Education, an advocacy group working to improve college attendance rates for at-risk students.
- More than 81 percent of Texas prison inmates are dropouts, and 56 percent of needy families receiving government assistance report a family member has dropped out of school, according to the Texas Education Agency (TEA).
- Rates of high-risk behaviors, such as teen pregnancy, delinquency, substance abuse and crime, are also significantly higher among dropouts, according to Editorial Projects in Education, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit organization.
- In 2004-05, the dropout rate of grades nine through 12 in Texas public schools was 0.7 percent for whites and 2 percent for Hispanics, according to TEA, which said the total number of dropouts in 2004-05 was about 17,000 students.
- The 2003 Texas Legislature responded to concerns from children's advocacy organizations, members of the Texas Legislature and state agencies about TEA's dropout methodology by passing Senate Bill 186, which requires TEA to use the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) definitions and methods to calculate dropout rates beginning in 2005-06.
- A December 2004 special report by the Comptroller's office, estimated 45,000 to 50,000 students drop out of Texas public schools each year, a significantly higher number than the Texas education Agency's estimate and one that is more in line with NCES' report of 46,973 Texas high school students who dropped out during the 2000-01 school year. At current rates, the report said 10 years' worth of dropouts will cost Texas \$114 billion in long-term economic output, and 20 years will cost the state's economy \$228 billion.
- The Alliance for Excellent Education said President Bush's 2002 No Child Left Behind Act mostly focuses on younger students, but it is just as important to reach out to high school dropouts.
- The high school completion rate in Texas need not drop if, as a state, we can address the challenges and barriers to Hispanic educational success. Studies indicate family and individual commitment to the value of education, but economic pressures and deficiencies in preparation are challenges that still need attention.
- With a growing Hispanic population in Texas--a 2006 report by state demographer Steve Murdock predicted that by 2040, Hispanics will comprise 59.2 percent of Texas' population--the need to improve Hispanic completion rates is a mounting challenge to educators.

Potential Economic Impacts of Improved Education on Texas

Source: Alliance for Excellent Education, 1201 Connecticut Avenue, NW · Suite 901 · Washington, DC – June 2008

“Approximately one-third of the students who enter ninth grade each year drop out of school; that’s over a million each year. Another third of students graduate without the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college or the workplace. These individuals are likely to face serious economic challenges throughout their lives, but the country’s low graduation rate also has a negative economic impact on communities, states, and the nation.

To help policymakers and the public understand the extent of the economic costs to society of an educational system that is serving two-thirds of its students poorly, the Alliance for Excellent Education conducted national and state-level analyses of some of the economic and social benefits of increasing high school graduation rates. The Alliance's analyses are based on a number of national research studies and the methodology, along with figures for all fifty states and the District of Columbia, are detailed in a series of briefs (www.all4ed.org/publication_material/issue_policy_briefs). The data and assumptions are not necessarily consistent across different research studies so the figures should not be added together. The "total" economic impact is not a sum of the numbers, but the figures below help illustrate the potential economic benefits to individuals and the state of investing in an improved high school system that better prepares all high school students for graduation.

- More than 118,000 students did not graduate from Texas' high schools in 2008; the lost lifetime earnings in Texas for that class of dropouts alone totals more than \$30.7 billion.
- Texas would save more than \$1.5 billion in health care costs over the course of the lifetimes of each class of dropouts had they earned their diplomas.
- Texas households would have over \$7 billion more in accumulated wealth if all heads of households had graduated from high school.
- More than \$46 billion would be added to Texas' economy by 2020 if students of color graduated at the same rate as white students.
- If Texas' high schools graduated all students ready for college, the state would save more than \$282 million a year in community college remediation costs and lost earnings.
- Texas' economy would see a combination of savings and revenue of more than \$691 million in reduced crime spending and increased earnings each year if the male high school graduation rate increased by just 5 percent."

2. **Who is serving or can serve as your state or community champion and chief spokesperson around the high school dropout issue? If you need multiple spokespeople, which leaders are needed, i.e. elected officials, business leaders or other local persons of influence? Whom will you recruit?**

- **Texas State Representative, Diane Patrick** addressed participants at the Success in School Summit on November 1, 2008. Representative Patrick is highly regarded as champion of education, and she has participated in or hosted several education-based programs throughout the state.
- **City of Arlington Mayor, Robert Cluck** has already received endorsement from the City Council to take an active role in community efforts to reduce student drop out rates.
- **Arlington Independent School District Superintendent, Jerry McCullough** has aligned staff resources and briefed his School Board on efforts to expand the scope of community involvement and support.
- **Arlington Chamber of Commerce President and CEO, Wes Jurey** has offered support through the dedication of a staff member to serve on the Success in School Summit organizing committee along with personal time as a presenter at the November 1 event.
- **Members of the Success in School Summit organizing committee** are all working as leaders in their respective areas and collaborating for a united and strategic outcome.

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?**

Success in School Summit Mission Statement:

The Success in School Summit mission is to lay a strategic planning foundation focusing on community prevention and intervention efforts that support student success.

Arlington Alliance for Youth

The Arlington Alliance for Youth (www.arlingtonalliance4youth.org) will continue efforts to build relationships with community partners to promote the five promises of America's Promise through the following signature programs: Arlington's Annual Youth Collaboration Breakfast, the Small Grants Program, Global Youth Service Day, the Extra Mile Awards, the Sheris Growe Youth Service Leader of the Year Awards and the bi-weekly Little Red Wagon Express newsletter.

Arlington Youth Initiative (City Strategic Theme)

"To support the implementation of the America's Promise Alliance Five Promises in Arlington and to ensure that action is taken to engage individuals, families and organizations toward a positive change in our community. We believe every child has rights and privileges that entitle them to the Five Promises which will allow children in Arlington to be more successful."

Our Community, Our Kids (Under Development)

Vision: "Arlington's youth will receive the support they need to become productive, responsible and caring adults."

Mission: "To strengthen our community's support for youth through the power of collaboration"

Arlington Chamber of Commerce

Center for a Competitive Workforce

- The focus of the Center for a Competitive Workforce is to ensure that businesses have access- today and tomorrow- to an educated skilled workforce, through policy initiatives, business outreach, and a strong network of strategic partners; including Arlington ISD, Tarrant County College, UT-Arlington, and Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County. The Center promotes high educational standards and effective workforce training systems so they are aligned with each other and today's rigorous business demands.
- Champion Education, a joint initiative of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce and the Arlington ISD, is focused on aligning the resources of the Chamber and the business community to increase student attainment levels and decrease dropout rates by working in three strategic areas; (1) community awareness; (2) integration of Arlington ISD with higher education and the publicly funded workforce development system; and (3) student achievement. Our vision is "every child in Arlington deserves the opportunity to learn in a great school with a great teacher, preparing them for life; in a crime-free and drug-free environment, supported by parental involvement".
- The Center for a Competitive Workforce works closely with the University of Texas at Arlington and Tarrant County College SE Campus by serving on advisory committees and engaging in collaborative effort to aid employers with training needs for their existing or emerging workforce.
- Partnering with the University of Texas at Arlington, the Chamber assisted in the development of the Center for Continuing Education and Workforce Development Arlington's Center for Continuing Education and Workforce Development has been recognized nationally as a participant in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and National Association of Manufacturer's Workforce Innovations Network II (WINSII). The Center for Continuing Education and Workforce Development resides on the campus of the University of Texas at Arlington and houses the following partners on site:
 - Texas Workforce Commission
 - Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County (Workforce Board)
 - University of Texas at Arlington Continuing Education & Human Resources Dept.
 - Tarrant County College Small Business Development Resource Center
 - Tarrant County College Adult Education
 - Fort Worth ISD
 - The Women's Center
 - Goodwill Industries

— Fort Worth Boys & Girls Clubs

This is a model for the rest of the nation exemplifying how an employer-driven workforce system should operate. The Board of Directors for the Center for a Competitive Workforce will serve as an advisory group to help align the services and programs to meet the region's employer needs.

- In the spring of 2007, the Chamber secured a \$1 million grant from the Texas Workforce Commission for Advanced technology and manufacturing. By partnering with Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County, The University of Texas at Arlington, Tarrant County College, Arlington Independent School District and the National Association of Manufacturers, the Chamber is currently developing regional plans for the development of job training for and recruitment of businesses active in advanced technology and manufacturing.

Arlington Independent School District

Vision - Our District and its schools will be known for the exceptional academic achievements of our students, the value we bring to the community and its families, the excellence of our staff and leadership and the support given by our diverse constituents.

Mission - We teach our students to be reflective thinkers, lifelong learners and productive citizens. We support our employees as they assure the best educational experience for each student. We need parental involvement and community engagement because they are essential in maximizing this experience.

AISD Beliefs

- We believe our students are more successful with the active support of their parents, AISD employees and community members.
- We believe high expectations of our students yield positive self-worth, responsible behavior and superior performance.
- We believe all school environments must be safe, secure, and positive places to learn, grow and work.
- We believe our students need an educational experience of diverse academic courses and extracurricular activities.
- We believe that people of all backgrounds have inherent value and worth.
- We believe in accountability to ourselves and to our community

4) What is your quantifiable long-term goal (e.g. 5-year) for your dropout and college-readiness challenges?

AISD has established increasing student completion rates by 0.5% per academic year along with an 85% community graduation rate to become a recognized school district as its most pressing five-year goal. This correlates with the district's five year goals of reducing the dropout rate by 2.5 percent. Everyone is hopeful results will exceed expectations. Recent AISD efforts to push this goal ahead include:

- A Hispanic Mentoring Grant
- A Dropout Prevention Grant
- A 21st Century Grant to serve all six high school campuses
- Increasing student participation rates in AVID
- Participation in the Texas Academy of Language Arts

AISD is also working hard to develop and strengthen student and community relationships.

The Mansfield Independent School District long range plan calls for exemplary performance in all state measures. Exemplary is one percent or less relative to dropout rates.

Texas College Readiness Standards

Source: Texas College Readiness Standards Report - January 24, 2008

The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that 90 percent of 21st-century skilled workforce jobs will require some form of post-secondary education. If America is to remain competitive in tomorrow's global workforce, our students must first be able to successfully complete the first year of college without the need for remedial or developmental education. That is why it is up to us as concerned educators, parents and citizens to ensure every child within our respective states graduates from high school college-ready, equally prepared to meet the challenges of a college curriculum or the demands of an increasingly knowledge-based workforce.

Texas has recognized the need to dramatically increase the levels of expectation and achievement for its students by recently adopting across-the-board College Readiness Standards (CRS) in the critical areas of English/language arts, social sciences, mathematics and science. Once fully implemented, the CRS will pave the way to better alignment between the public and higher education curriculum, thereby allowing students a more seamless transition between high school and college or the workforce.

Texas is now among the first states in the country to begin to implement such standards. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board will continue to work with the TEA through the implementation process to ensure teachers as well as students will be ready to meet the challenges of the CRS. We also encourage our regional and national higher education partners to learn more about the CRS.

III. Identifying Solutions: Considering and Prioritizing Potential Solutions to Comprehensively Address Your Local Dropout Challenge

- 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?**

Some information follows to address a portion of the questions in this section. However, it is important to call note that work is still underway with the development of a plan to address youth success from a community perspective. "Our Community, Our Kids" anticipates a formal introduction before the start of the 2009-10 school year based on the following steps:

- Build Community Support
- Community presentations
- Secure start-up funding
- Establish Executive Board
- Identify Policy Committee Leadership
- Hire Youth Policy Manager
- Begin strategic planning
- Establish action plans

The Arlington Independent School District has been in uncertain times since September 2008 when the superintendent left abruptly after approximately six months of service. Another superintendent was not hired until January 2009.

AISD established five district-wide goals as part of their FY 2008-09 work plan to address student success.

Goal #1

To develop and implement a system of academic interventions.

Evidence of Need with Supportive Data:

Academic excellence indicators and disaggregated TAKS results indicate need to improve TAKS passing rate for students in all subgroups and for all subjects.

Performance Objective/Summative Evaluation Data: By the end of the 2008-2009 school year the TAKS passing rate for students in all subgroups and for all subjects will improve by 3%.

Goal #2

To reduce course/subject failure rates.

Evidence of Need with Supportive Data:

Academic excellence indicators and student report card results indicate need to reduce the course/subject failure rates for students in all subgroups and for all subjects.

Performance Objective/Summative Evaluation Data: By the end of the 2008-2009 school year, the failure rate for students in all subgroups and for all subjects will be reduced by 5%.

Goal #3

To develop subject area vertical alignment.

Evidence of Need with Supportive Data:

Academic excellence indicators and disaggregated TAKS results indicate need to improve subject area vertical alignment.

Performance Objective/Summative Evaluation Data: By the end of the 2008-2009 school year, subject area vertical alignment will be planned and implemented as evidenced by documentation provided by each subject area. In addition, the TAKS passing rate for students in all subgroups and for all subjects will improve by 3%.

Goal #4

To engage parents and the community in the educational process.

Evidence of Need with Supportive Data:

Parent surveys, Drop-Out Summit summary, parent conference/contact records, and Academic excellence indicators indicate the need to engage parents and the community in the educational process.

Performance Objective/Summative Evaluation Data: By the end of the 2008-2009 school year, parent and community engagement will improve according to parent contact records, records of AISD website visits, and survey results.

Goal #5

To prevent campus violence and ensure appropriate methods of intervention.

Evidence of Need with Supportive Data: PEIMS 425 Report indicates the need to prevent campus violence and ensure appropriate intervention.

Performance Objective/Summative Evaluation Data: By the end of the 2008-2009 school year, the campus violence rate for campuses will be reduced by 1%.

In order to transform schools, new approaches will be necessary to

- Create quality relationships with students
- Improve transitional moves from grade level to grade level (with a focus on 6th and 9th grade) for vertical alignment for elementary, middle and high schools
- Create a career curriculum focused on the future of students and possible college enrollment.

Strategies for transforming schools include

- Improving and expanding current programs to provide more mentors to students
- Creating relationships and improving grades for students involved with pivotal grade levels (6th and 9th grade)
- Improving the referral base for services to students and increasing the counselors to student ratio
- Implementing new strategies for parental development and involvement

Current student mentoring programs are in place with select corporate sponsors and local organizations that work with the local school districts. However, a specific program is needed to more effectively connect with the feeder middle schools and the highest priority high schools. Parent/Teacher Associations and Parent Booster Clubs are infrequent visitors at these locations and this is an opportunity for a local partner to assist.

The Arlington Independent School District will develop and deploy an early warning system called “Response to Intervention”. At the point of first alert for reasons such as not passing a course or not passing the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test, a team of teachers, counselors and administrators will meet to plan a support system for academic success. A computer-based information management system (TRIAND) will provide ongoing academic success data that actually provides critical information to teachers on a daily basis.

The failure rate of our students has become a top priority and AISD is developing a long-range staff development map for teacher trainings to ensure that teachers remain current on best practices. The district is also developing a cultural sensitivity course for implementation with every employee.

We currently have an active collaboration with Tarrant County to offer three John Peter Smith (JPS) health clinics at three Arlington schools. Healthcare is available at no cost or at a reduced rate. AISD also employ a registered nurse on every traditional campus. The McKinney-Vento grant offers a program for students in transition, which works with assisting homeless students with needed social services and school supplies. The district PTA board provides a district clothing closet to assist students in need of clothing. The Safe and Drug Free department offers drug counseling and education to students from elementary to high school. The PEP program offers assistance to pregnant and parenting teens including parenting classes, social services, and day care. We have full day pre-kindergarten with transportation.

Other:

- Community outreach efforts are under way to increase collaborative efforts between parents and schools for student success, and to involve our community and businesses to become a part of the educational support system.
- Creating safe school environments is a state goal to provide students an environment for learning without the distracters created by the outside world.
- Alignment of curriculum horizontally and vertically is a top priority of the district to ensure that all students are receiving the same curriculum and there is a seamless transition from one grade level to the next.
- Our schools desire to improve counselor to student ratios.

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?**

- Members of the Summit organizing committee concur that a top priority is identification of support systems to improve the parental and family view of the importance of education. Current programs are active, but an adjustment in this strategy is necessary to bring new programs and resources to the community, versus the community going to the resources. Current efforts include John Peter Smith Hospital Medical Services, Hope Tutoring of East Arlington, Arlington Library tutoring and a 21st Century grant targeting after school and tutoring programs at six high school campuses.

The Arlington Independent School District's early warning system will be referred to as "Response to Intervention". At the point of first alert (i.e., not passing a course, not passing the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), etc., a team of teachers, counselors and administrators will meet to develop a plan of support for academic success. A computer-based information management system, TRIAND, provides ongoing academic success data for teachers on a daily basis.

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?**

Texas School Dropout Prevention and Reentry Program

Texas was awarded a \$2.5 million grant from the U. S. Department of Education to address the needs of students who are at risk of not completing high school and students who dropped out and are re-entering high school. TEA will collaborate with Communities In Schools, Texas' regional education service centers, and Big Brothers Big Sisters. Offering a comprehensive set of support services through partnerships with government and community-based organizations will allow schools to more effectively address both the academic and social pressures shown to influence dropping out. The program's four major objectives are:

1. To expand current personal graduation plans by replicating comprehensive models;
2. To increase partnerships between high schools and other organizations to leverage dropout prevention and reentry resources;
3. To develop statewide capacity for implementing specific intervention strategies; and
4. To evaluate the effectiveness of the state's school dropout prevention program and inform state dropout prevention policy.

House Bill 2237 - Dropout Prevention Programs

House Bill 2237 passed by the 80th Texas Legislature (2007) established the following requirements and programs to increase the number of students who graduate Texas high schools on-time and prepared for success in colleges and careers.

Dropout Prevention Strategy Plans

Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.918 requires district and charter schools with high dropout rates to submit dropout prevention strategy plans to the commissioner describing how districts will use their high school allotment and compensatory education allotment in the following school year to develop

research-based strategies for dropout prevention. Letters will be emailed in October to the school districts and open-enrollment charter schools identified by the commissioner to meet this requirement.

The indicator used to determine high dropout rates was the Grade 7-12 annual dropout rate for 2006-2007, the latest year for which this indicator was available. School districts and open-enrollment charter schools were grouped with other districts and open-enrollment charter schools with comparable student enrollment sizes. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) identified school districts and open-enrollment charter schools for inclusion in this requirement if the school district's or open-enrollment charter school's Grade 7-12 annual dropout rate ranked it among the highest 10 percent within its student enrollment category. Those school districts and open-enrollment charter schools with fewer than five dropouts were eliminated from consideration for this requirement.

The district's or charter school's dropout prevention strategy plan must be submitted to the TEA Division of Education Initiatives no later than December 1, 2008. Districts may not spend more than 25 percent of their high school allotment and compensatory education allotment funding in the following school year until the plans have been approved by TEA.

Dropout Prevention Strategy Plan Proposed Rules

Intensive Summer Programs

The Intensive Summer Programs (ISP) initiative is a program to be operated in coordination with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to create three types of programs, as required by Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.098.

1. College level programs administered by an institution of higher education to provide intensive academic instruction in English Language arts, mathematics, and science to facilitate the student's transition from high school to a postsecondary institution.
2. High School level programs administered by a school district in partnership with an institution of higher education (IHE) to provide intensive instruction in English language arts, mathematics, and science to promote high school completion and success.
3. Middle School level programs administered by a school district in partnership with an IHE to provide intensive instruction in reading and mathematics in grades 6-8 to promote high school completion and college readiness.

It is anticipated that both the THECB and Texas Education Agency-administered programs will be available for application in the spring of 2008.

Intensive Technology-Based Academic Intervention Pilot

This pilot program will be designed to provide intensive technology-based supplementary instruction in English, mathematics, science, or social studies for students in grades 9 through 12 identified as being at risk of dropping out of school. Approximately \$3 million has been set aside annually for this program. More information about a Request for Applications for this program will be coming in Spring 2008.

Mathematics Instructional Coaches Pilot Program

This pilot program will provide grants to contract with approved service providers to develop the knowledge and expertise of secondary mathematics teachers. Approximately \$2 million is available annually to fund this program. Recipients of funding must select a provider from the TEA-generated list of approved service providers for the program.

Grant for Student Clubs

This pilot program will provide grants for public school districts and open-enrollment charters to fund academic or co-curricular (not athletic) student club activities for students at risk of dropping

out of school. The design plan for the student club must be approved by the appropriate campus-planning committee. The grant applies only to students in grade 9 and above or any combination therein. Each grant award can be no more than \$5,000 and must be matched dollar-for-dollar (in-kind donations are allowed). Approximately \$2 million is available annually to fund this program.

Collaborative Dropout Reduction Pilot Program

The goal of this pilot program is to coordinate services and programs among local entities to provide proven, researched based intervention services to reduce the number of students that dropout of school. An additional goal of this program is to increase job skills and continuing education opportunities thru offering paid employment or internship opportunities for students at risk. The grant also requires an outreach coordinator to serve as a liaison between the entities involved in the collaborative program (note: grant funds may be used to pay a portion of this individual's salary). Approximately \$4 million is available annually to fund this program.

Other Strategies

- The State of Texas provides an allotment to each school district to fund efforts to prepare students for college. Funding levels are based on \$275 for each student in 9th through 12 grades.
- AISD is employing a concept called OFSD (Optional Flexible School Day) as part of a first year goal to assist students with college readiness plans.
- MISD and AISD are employing better computer systems to assist students with general computer skill building and on-line course completion. The City of Arlington has computers available in several locations to assist students with homework needs.
- AISD administers a 21st Century grant to provide before and after school programs at six high school campuses.
- AISD is considering the feasibility of developing a 3-10 pm "twilight school" to assist non-traditional students
- MISD is heavily involved in working with students on a track other than college through extensive vocational and technical opportunities at the Ben Barber Career Technical Academy. AISD faculty indicates a strong desire to introduce a stronger technical/vocational outlet for students who do not feel that college is the right path for them.
- AISD has established vertical and horizontal alignment as a goal relative to student transition between critical grades (6th to 7th grades and 8th to 9th grades. The purpose of this effort is to ease transition difficulties for students entering new learning and facility environments.
- AISD has established a long range strategic plan to improve student education and retention.

All children need the intellectual development, motivation and skills that prepare them for successful employment and lifelong learning. These result from having quality learning environments, challenging expectations and consistent guidance and mentoring.

Desired Outcome 1 - Arlington supports quality learning environments within the community

- Youth deserve to receive preparation and support that will ensure their success through high school. Arlington also believes it is important for graduating seniors to continue their education into college or a skill-based training center so they can become successful, independent and responsible adults.

Desired Outcome 2 - Arlington offers educational assistance and guidance

- Youth need outside assistance for their education from sources other than the school district, such as, access to computers and tutoring. Youth need to be aware of the available resources that will support their education.

Desired Outcome 3 - Arlington offers mentoring opportunities

- It is essential for youth to see public and private organizations, including businesses, working together to provide resources and contacts for character development, career counseling, internships and apprenticeships.

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?

The national Data Quality Campaign recommends ten elements as the start of a robust P–12 longitudinal data system. AISD and MISD note a 90 percent rate of compliance with these standards.

Standard	In Place
1. The ability to track individual students over time	Yes
2. Student-level demographic information	Yes
3. The ability to track individual students’ test records from year to year to measure academic growth	Yes
4. The ability to know which students have not been tested	Yes
5. The ability to match teachers to students by classroom and subject	No
6. Student-level transcript information	Yes
7. Information on student performance on college-readiness examinations like the SAT, ACT, and AP	Yes
8. Student-level graduation and dropout data	Yes
9. The ability to match student records between the K–12 and higher education systems	Yes
10. System in place to evaluate data system quality	Yes

Source: Alliance for Excellent Education, 1201 Connecticut Avenue, NW · Suite 901 · Washington, DC 20036

- The Arlington Independent School District will deploy an early warning system, “Response to Intervention”. At the point of first alert (not passing a course, not passing TAKS, etc.), a team of teachers, counselors and administrators will meet to develop a plan of support for academic success. A computer-based information management system, TRIAND, provides ongoing academic success data that actually provides teachers with information on a daily basis.
- AISD and MISD will develop effective “scaffolding” strategies to reduce transition anxiety and challenges for students ascending from 6th grade to 7th and from 8th grade to 9th.

Progress will rely on concentrated and sustainable efforts on the part of community stakeholders to analyze historical and current student data and make more informed decisions relative to success strategies. Rules relative to sharing of critical information concerning student success are subject to various local, state and federal guidelines and laws. Legislative intervention will be needed to balance community needs with individual rights. In addition, economic development and sustainability indicates a need to work closer with the Texas Workforce Commission to share critical information relative to youth capabilities and interests.

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 – 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?**
 - The City of Arlington and the Arlington Independent School District are currently underway with plans to implement an umbrella service concept called “Our Community, Our Kids”. The concept plan envisions this initiative as a change agent to more effectively communicate with and coordinate various community stakeholders involved with or interested in a stronger Arlington through its youth.

Summit Organizing/Report Committee

Name	Representing	Phone	Email
Allan Crawford	Arlington Chamber of Commerce	817-543-4293	acrawford@arlingtontx.com
Bill Gilmore	Arlington Parks and Recreation	817-459-6499	bill.gilmore@arlingtontx.gov
Cary Siegfried	Arlington Library	817-459-6916	cary.siegfried@arlingtontx.gov
Dr. Claude Cunningham	Mansfield ISD	817-299-6303	cunnc1@mansfieldisd.org
Jim Walther	Alliance for Youth	817-860-0753	j.walther@sbcglobal.net
Linda Rodgers	Arlington ISD	682-867-7384	lirodger@aisd.net
Lisa Kyeremateng	Arlington Coalition for Education	817-709-9469	lisarobk@yahoo.com
Mike Leathers	Community Volunteer	817 - 991-5323	mike@mikeleathers.com
Dr. Patricia Gomez	UTA - School of Education	817-272-0148	drgomez@uta.edu
Patty Wright	United Way Arlington	817-635-4206	pwright@uwmtc.org
Steve Evans	Arlington Police Department	817-459-5321	steve.evans@arlingtontx.gov
Suzan Cogswell	Arlington Police Department	817-459-5377	suzan.cogswell@arlingtontx.gov
Wendy Parker	Arlington Parks and Recreation	817-459-5482	wendy.parker@arlingtontx.gov
Yvonne Falgout	Arlington Parks and Recreation	817-459-6499	yvonne.falgout@arlingtontx.gov

- The “Our Community, Our Kids” concept will receive direction from an executive committee comprised of community leaders including:
 - Arlington Mayor
 - AISD and MISD School Board Presidents
 - AISD and MISD School Superintendents
 - University of Texas at Arlington President
 - United Way Representative
 - Community Representatives
 - Arlington City Manager
 - Arlington Chamber of Chamber CEO

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?**

In terms of local school resources, we note the following initiatives:

- Arlington ISD has designated a Director position to coordinate dropout prevention and recovery efforts. The office staff consists of a secretary, a clerk and a part time counselor.
- Assistance in the form of grant funds from the Texas Education Agency has allowed AISD to establish Dropout Recovery Centers at each high school and alternative school. Each Center has a part time counselor whose job is to recruit students, analyze graduation requirements and enroll students in appropriate coursework, i.e., on-line, day, evening or individual study.
- The Arlington Chamber of Commerce has been awarded grant funds by the AT&T Foundation to collaborate with Arlington ISD in efforts to increase high school graduation rates, increase rates of on-time promotion to the next grade level, increase credit accumulation and completion of core courses, improve grades and test scores, improve attendance, and reduce behavioral and disciplinary problems.
- Efforts are underway to enhance dropout prevention efforts beyond the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program to include mentoring activities.
- A new Office of Juvenile Justice has recently funded a mentoring program for 8th graders moving into their first year of high school. This funding will provide additional services and youth peer mentoring coordination to assist with 9th grade dropout concerns.
- Additional funds to serve youth are available from Safe and Drug Free Schools and Community funding.
- AISD is fortunate to have received a 21st Century Grant for funding various programs including student tutoring.
- The City, AISD and other community agencies are currently working with United Way of Tarrant County to establish a family support center to focus on family health and education in a high need area of the city.
- The effort to finalize development of “Our Community, Our Kids” has identified the recruitment of a full time Youth Policy Manager that will be dedicated to the structure and outcomes.

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?

Key stakeholders involved with the Success in School Summit will contribute to reductions in student drop put rates through accountability standards and regular collaboration. Examples of these efforts will include:

- AISD and MISD will annually review the state’s Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) Report and use it for comparative analysis. Each semester and annually, the Dropout Prevention Office reviews departmental data to determine any progress relative to maintaining and recovering youth. The School Superintendent and the Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction will receive annual reports.
- The AISD Board of Trustees will receive an annual presentation on graduation and dropout rates along with school district and community efforts to improve our schools. Annual summer graduation ceremonies also celebrate and publicly highlight “stay-in-school” initiatives.
- The Arlington Alliance for Youth will continue efforts to build relationships with community partners to promote the five promises of America’s Promise through the following signature programs: Arlington’s Annual Youth Collaboration Breakfast, the Small Grants Program, Global

Youth Service Day, the Extra Mile Awards, the Sheris Growe Youth Service Leader of the Year Awards and the bi-weekly Little Red Wagon Express newsletter.

- The Arlington Chamber of Commerce will continue its efforts to engage the business community to provide small grants to youth service projects.
 - Arlington Parks and Recreation Department provides leaderships for the Mayor's Youth Commission, youth scholarships for various department services and a broad array of after school and skills development programs.
 - The Arlington Library Department established a teen center at the George W. Hawkes Central Library in 2007. The department invests considerable time and staff resources to provide a variety of youth leisure, development and literacy programs in its six library locations throughout the year.
 - The Boys and Girls Clubs of Arlington, Arlington YMCA and Girls Inc. of Tarrant County operate several community centers for youth access and programming. These agencies also work closely with the Arlington and Mansfield school districts to provide after school programs at most elementary school campuses.
 - Our community is home to many other agencies (Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, Hope Tutoring, churches, etc) whose missions mandate service to youth through a variety of programs including tutoring, mentoring and after school services.
-

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

- MISD includes service learning opportunities through its Teen Leadership and AVID programs at all grades 5 -12. A recent Star Telegram article highlighted efforts on the part of the MISD high school basketball teams to assist a Dallas high school with the refurbishing of a campus locker room. Many of the district's student groups find ways to help their community. District "Interact" clubs organized and carried out on a coat and blanket drive to serve other MISD students and parents.
- The University of Texas touts a formal Service Learning Center. Service Learning is a teaching methodology that combines conventional academic instruction with participation in direct, meaningful community service. In Service Learning programs students engage in classroom activities and discussions and perform local community service related to their academic coursework. The concept is designed to develop critical and reflective thinking skills and to promote a sense of civic responsibility and commitment to the community.

Service Learning is similar to internships, field work and experiential education Programs, but seeks to go beyond the scope of these through the integration of classroom discussion and other reflection techniques. Effective Service Learning programs have been developed for K-12, high school and college students locally and throughout Texas.

AISD works regularly with the UTA Service Learning Center to identify projects that will contribute positively to student development and community health.

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

- The City, AISD and other community agencies are currently working with United Way of Tarrant County to establish a family support center to focus on family health, community referral, counseling and education in a high need area of the city. United Way has awarded a \$50,000 grant to begin the start up phase for this youth/family asset. The district accommodates three other support centers at three locations: Knox Elementary, Nichols Junior High and Workman Junior High. Participating students receive assistance based on financial need.

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

- Each MISD elementary school accommodates an after school program for students. School libraries open regularly for community and student use. The school district also hosts a John Peter Smith Pediatric Clinic at a central elementary campus.
- AISD provides after school programs at six high school campuses through a 21st Century grant.
- Arlington Parks and Recreation Department provides leaderships for the Mayor’s Youth Commission, youth scholarships for various department services and a broad array of after school and skills development programs.
- The Boys and Girls Clubs of Arlington, Arlington YMCA and Girls Inc, of Tarrant County operate several community centers for youth access and programming. These agencies also work closely with the Arlington and Mansfield school districts to provide after school programs at most elementary school campuses.
- Our community is home to many other agencies (Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Boy Scouts, Hope Tutoring, churches, etc) whose missions include service to youth through a variety of programs including tutoring, mentoring and after school services.

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

One of AISD’s priority goals is to engage parents and the community in the educational process (see page 12). The District calls attention to a number of programs designed to engage parents.

- Faculty and staff will continue to plan “College Night” for all high school students by providing post secondary planning and information from 200 colleges and universities.
- The Superintendent of Schools recently participated in an event at a local apartment complex. Staff and volunteers work with parents to develop a greater degree of knowledge and parental involvement.
- Each qualifying school has a Title 1 representative on campus.
- The district provides a number of ESL programs. The Arlington library Department offer similar programs
- The district has a high level of involvement from students participating in the AVID program.
- The district has significant levels of involvement from caring adults involved with PTA’s and Booster Clubs.
- The district provides two or more Career Days each school year at various high school campuses.

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

- The Arrow Project is a comprehensive and integrated social service agency providing quality care to children and families in the States of Texas and Maryland. Arrow Child & Family Ministries is currently the largest treatment foster care provider in Texas. The Arlington location at 2356 E. Road To Six Flags provides a variety of training and orientation programs relative to foster care.

f. Developing young people's financial literacy

- AISD, MISD, the Arlington Chamber of Commerce, United Way Arlington and the Arlington library all have variations of "Financial Fitness" classes and workshops.

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.

Although there are a number of youth strategies currently being implemented in the community, the City of Arlington and the Arlington Independent School District have agreed to continue discussions relative to a plan to move head on a community umbrella organization to address a long list of complex issues affecting our youth. Desired outcomes include:

- To ensure that our children and youth are a priority
- To develop and maintain a community strategic plan for youth
- To facilitate communication, coordination and information sharing between youth service organizations
- To strengthen public awareness regarding the risk factors affecting youth and resources available to them
- To maintain and track accurate and actionable data
- To facilitate partnerships and collaborations
- To create funding opportunities

Although stakeholders agree on these outcomes, they also agree that duplication of efforts and competition has created waste and uncertainty. Our Community Our Kids is likely to take the role as a depository of information while acting as a community program clearinghouse. The initiative has an anticipated deployment target date of summer 2009.

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.

The Arlington/Mansfield Success in School Planning Committee desires assistance from America's Promise Alliance in the form of funding, grant opportunities, information sharing and consulting services.

We believe that the rollout and sustainability of Our Community, Our Kids as a convener, change agent and provider of information will require us to lean on America's Promise for technical and research assistance as a first priority. As the initiative develops, its focus will transition into either operating capital and/or marketing/community outreach support. The key is to expand slowly and build relationships effectively, so that support needs from America's Promise slowly decrease.