

# A+ Plan for Success



Communities of Color Define Policy  
Priorities for High School Reform



# Introduction

Across the United States, parents, teachers, business owners—entire communities—share a common desire for their children to receive a quality education that prepares them for success in college, the twenty-first-century workplace, and life. Yet, an unequal education system leaves many of their dreams unrealized. Each year, thousands of students, the majority of whom are students of color and low-income students, advance through our nation’s school system, but fail to receive the high-quality education they deserve. And nowhere is this education crisis more acute than in our nation’s high schools, where appalling dropout rates, disproportionately high representations of students of color in low-performing schools, and persistent achievement gaps threaten the prosperity future generations could enjoy, both individually and as a nation.

Every school year, about 1.3 million high school students drop out, leaving almost one of every four freshmen without a high school diploma four years later (U.S. Department of Education 2010). While roughly 70 percent of high school students graduate on time, only 55 percent or less of African American, Latino, and American Indian students graduated on time in the class of 2007 (Swanson 2010). In addition—and contrary to the “model minority myth”—many Asian Americans also face barriers in education. For example, nearly 50 percent of Cambodians and Laotians and 40 percent of Hmong aged twenty-five and older in the United States do not have a high school diploma (Reeves and Bennett 2004). At the same time, students living in low-income families are far more likely to drop out of high school than their wealthier peers (U.S. Department of Education 2010).

Research shows that the drop-out problem is concentrated in a subset of high schools across the country that predominantly serve students of color and low-income students. Nearly 1,900 of America’s approximately 16,000 high schools are considered “dropout factories”—schools where



“Quality education is a civil right. However, many of our nation’s children, overwhelmingly those of color or from low-income backgrounds, are being denied the education they deserve, trapped in under-performing, under-funded, and often segregated schools. It is both a moral and economic imperative that we close the opportunity gap and ensure that all children have access to the high quality education they will need to succeed in life.”

—Wade Henderson, counselor, Leadership Conference Education Fund, and president and CEO, Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

less than 60 percent of ninth graders are enrolled as twelfth graders three years later (Balfanz et al. 2010). These 12 percent of high schools produce nearly half of the nation's dropouts. Students of color make up three-quarters of the total enrollment at these high schools and are also almost six times as likely to attend them as their white peers. In fact, a national snapshot of the Class of 2008 shows that nearly 60 percent of all African American and 50 percent of all Hispanic dropouts attended one of these lowest performing schools (Alliance for Excellent Education 2010b). These staggering statistics make one thing clear: In communities across our nation, far too many students of color, Native (American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian) students, and low-income students attend schools with such poor track records; it is more common for them to leave than to graduate.

The results of these inequities in education can be seen in National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) statistics, which show that 43 percent of African American and 39 percent of Latino twelfth graders fall below basic reading levels for their grade, compared to only 19 percent of white twelfth graders (U.S. Department of Education 2009). The consequences are even more severe for English language learners (ELLs), 78 percent of whom fall below basic reading levels (U.S. Department of Education 2009).

The effects of large gaps in achievement and high dropout rates are borne by all Americans. Research suggests that dropouts are more likely than high school graduates to experience poverty, poor health, and incarceration

during their adult lives (Alliance for Excellent Education 2010a), and the financial impact of the high dropout rate on our society is staggering. For every \$500 of wealth that households headed by a high school dropout accumulate, households headed by high school graduates accumulate approximately \$5,000. Similarly, a single high school dropout costs the nation approximately \$260,000 in lost earnings, taxes, and productivity over the course of their lifetimes (Amos 2008). Economic effects of the dropout crisis are cumulative; if the high school dropouts from 2010 had graduated, their collective lifetime earnings would have added approximately \$337 billion to the U.S. economy (Alliance for Excellent Education 2010a). And if high schools and colleges are able to raise the graduation rates of Latino, African American, and Native students to the levels of white students by 2020, the potential increase in income across the nation would add, conservatively, more than \$310 billion to the U.S. economy (Amos 2008). The societal cost savings and the increases in tax revenue and personal purchasing power that could be realized if we are able to alleviate the dropout crisis is an important consideration as we grapple with strategies for stabilizing and growing the U.S. economy.

In particular, the challenges of fewer resources and lowered expectations serve as barriers for these low-performing districts and schools that are struggling to improve their students' achievement and prepare them for college and career. The problem plaguing high schools is often defined by several factors, including inadequate human and material resources, widely varying achievement standards, and ineffective instruction, often resulting in staggering numbers of dropouts. Often, these challenges are felt most strongly in schools serving students of color—the same students who now represent the fastest growing segment of public schools and the future of the American workforce (Plotts and Sable 2010). If left unaddressed, these blatant inequities threaten to establish a permanent underclass in America, posing a serious threat to democracy and stability.

### Campaign for High School Equity

Those working on issues of social justice and civil rights are aware of the critical role education equity plays in fostering a strong foundation for economic growth and civic engagement in communities nationwide. However, it is imperative that policymakers and advocates working on education understand the importance of this issue and incorporate the knowledge and perspectives of communities of color and underserved communities in the national discussion about secondary school reform.



“Full civic participation is the key to strong communities, yet most surveys show that high school dropouts are not as actively involved in their communities. A quality high school curriculum that promotes civic learning and engagement alongside vital skills such as strong reading, writing, and critical thinking will strengthen our democracy.”

—Arturo Vargas, executive director,  
National Association of Latino Elected and  
Appointed Officials Educational Fund

The **Campaign for High School Equity (CHSE)** is a diverse coalition of national organizations primarily representing communities of color that believe that high schools should have the capacity and motivation to prepare every student for graduation, college, work, and life. CHSE's partners include the Leadership Conference Education Fund, the League of United Latin American Citizens, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund, the National Council of La Raza, the National Indian Education Association, the National Urban League, the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center, and the Alliance for Excellent Education. These organizations have long been involved in addressing the education policy issues facing the nation. Their experiences and specialized understanding of the impact of education policy issues on students of color and underserved communities are critical to national efforts to effectively reverse the dropout crisis and close the achievement gap.

This Plan for Success outlines CHSE's collective vision for advancing the policies that are necessary if our nation is to be successful in ensuring that all young people graduate from high school ready to work, ready for college, and ready to be productive citizens. The coalition's intent is to acquaint policymakers, advocates, educators, and the general public with ideas about high school education reform that, in policy and practice, have the potential to increase high school graduation rates as well as improve the college and workforce readiness of every graduate.



“Parental engagement is key to the improvement of a student’s education regardless of a child’s age, their economic status or whether their parents completed high school. Federal programs should provide adequate resources to increase programs that enhance parental participation, leadership, and understanding of the educational system.

The needs of Latino parents are especially critical when considering the large number of Hispanic children who drop out of school and end up in detention and penal programs.”

—Margaret Moran, national president, League of United Latin American Citizens



# Defining Policy Priorities

As the nation struggles in its attempts to be competitive in a global economy, there has been a strong call from businesses, policy leaders, and educators to identify strategies to improve the academic performance of our students. Attempts to close the achievement gap that exists in the country's public schools have had nominal success, and graduation rates for students of color, Native students, and low-income students continue to lag far behind their white peers. Some states and school districts have made progress in efforts to raise graduation rates, and most often success has been connected to efforts to raise performance standards, demonstrating the real possibility of closing this achievement gap if smart solutions are pursued (Balfanz et al. 2010). As many as four in ten students of color fail to graduate on time with a regular diploma, left without the skills they need to become active participants in the future of our nation. Without action from every community and leadership from the federal level to prioritize high school education reform in this country, our students and our communities will continue to struggle.

Some progress has been made, however, to improve education opportunities available to students of color and Native students. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) helped to shine a spotlight on the needs of students of color, Native students, and low-income students through stronger accountability requirements, and the progress made by many schools and districts demonstrates the need to learn from the lessons in NCLB as we consider future changes to the education system.

Amidst these federal strides toward reform, academic standards defined by states have proved challenging for parents, teachers, and advocates working to provide students with a high-quality education. Current practices that allow each state and territory to establish individual academic standards lead to variations in academic quality, depth of curricula, and

alignment to assessments, which perpetuate gaps in achievement from coast to coast. Evidence shows that students of color, Native students, and low-income students are disproportionately affected by a lack of standardized achievement goals across states and districts. In an effort to address this challenge and introduce higher standards, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers coordinated a state-led effort to evaluate the process by which states and territories set their own academic standards, and proposed a set of common core state standards in English, language arts, and math intended to establish benchmarks for student success. The resulting Common Core State Standards Initiative is a voluntary, state-led initiative to establish a clear set of educational standards for K–12.

The initiative creates an opportunity for states to ensure that all students, regardless of ZIP code, income, race, or ethnicity, will be taught to and held to the same, high standards—a step forward in efforts to close the achievement gap if implemented effectively, fairly, with the necessary resources and supports, and with the input of communities of color.

Regardless of the opportunities that exist at the federal and state levels to reform high school education, transforming this system will require a comprehensive approach that not only establishes high standards for every student, but also ensures that educational policies are aligned to these standards and communities of color are involved in the transformative process. Only with the input of communities of color and the implementation of necessary policy reforms, along with the necessary resources and supports, will high schools be able to effectively achieve higher standards and begin to graduate students ready for college and career.

The nation is at a critical juncture in education reform. Past efforts to address poor educational performance and inequities in education have offered hope for what's possible. However, much remains to be done to engage communities of color in the process of closing the achievement gap and providing every student with an education that prepares them for a future of social and economic prosperity. The role of fostering educational equity has historically been one for federal government, from school desegregation to Title IX to Federal Pell Grants and Title I, and this role must continue. The responsibility for transforming this system into one that graduates every

student prepared for college, work, and life is one that also falls to state and local policy makers, parents, community leaders, teachers, and school administrators—everyone with a stake in improving the prosperity of the nation. However, as we evaluate how best to strengthen the economy, we cannot afford to wait to engage every community in determining how best to bolster the country's human capital.

The following policy recommendations are designed to spur changes that, if implemented in a holistic fashion, would improve the academic and socioeconomic outcomes for students of color, Native students, and low-income students.

### Make All Students Proficient and Prepared for College and Career

Access to equal opportunity can only exist if all students are challenged to reach the same high expectations. Nearly three-quarters of students taking the American College Testing (ACT) exam are not academically prepared for college in all four core subjects—English, math, reading, and science (ACT 2010). According to a 2011 analysis of data from the Alliance for Excellent Education, college students' need for remediation costs the nation an estimated \$5.6 billion per year. This figure includes \$3.6 billion in direct remedial education costs for students who do not have the skills to succeed in postsecondary coursework. It also includes an additional \$2 billion in lost lifetime wages, since students who take remedial courses are more likely to drop out of college without a degree. Further, surveys of employers indicate that many high school graduates do not have the skills necessary for success in the workplace (Conference Board et al. 2006).

“Quality schools—making sure that each child has access to a quality education—is the civil rights struggle of this century.”

—Benjamin T. Jealous,  
president and CEO, NAACP





“Our schools cannot be considered successful until they address the needs of all students. This includes English language learners, who have a long history of being overlooked. It is vital to the future of our nation that all children be able to achieve success so they are prepared for college and the 21st century workforce.”

—Janet Murguía, president,  
National Council of La Raza

States and districts should work in partnership with schools and communities to restore the value and utility of a high school diploma. Raising standards, whether through the Common Core State Standards Initiative or in partnership with organizations that are working to align state standards with college- and work-readiness benchmarks, is critical if we are to ensure that students graduate prepared to participate in the twenty-first-century workplace. Yet these standards cannot be implemented successfully without considering curriculum, teacher professional development, assessments, and policies to ensure effective teaching. All elements of comprehensive education reform must be aligned with high standards that correlate with international benchmarking standards to help ensure that students are prepared to compete globally.

Policies to promote proficiency and preparedness should include the following:

- Align high school standards, assessments, curriculum, and instruction with college- and career-readiness standards;
- Require states to publicly report on access to college preparatory classes and course-taking patterns by income, gender, race, and ethnicity, both among and within schools;
- Promote culturally relevant content knowledge and teaching that will prepare students to be effective in a global economy; and
- Ensure that all students, especially those in under-resourced schools primarily serving students of color and Native students, have access to rigorous and engaging classes in core subjects.

## Hold High Schools Accountable for Student Success

The purpose of high school is to prepare students for college, work, and life. Therefore, high schools should be held accountable for meeting this expectation for all students equally. By adopting fewer, clearer, higher standards and aligning curriculum to those standards, teachers can effectively and efficiently teach, students can learn, and parents can better understand performance metrics. Currently, there are few mechanisms for making sure that high schools are held accountable for student success, but the establishment of clear, concise, and high standards will create measurable benchmarks to evaluate performance.

High school accountability is essential to ensuring academic success and lowering dropout rates. A well-designed accountability system that includes specific academic, graduation, and dropout data will help communities make certain that schools are serving their children well. Policies to ensure accountability in high schools should include the following:

- Develop state longitudinal data systems with individual student identifiers that align student data with teacher data and school performance and resource data;
- Calculate graduation rates according to a common and accurate definition and use longitudinal data systems and individual student identifiers to follow every child’s path to graduation;
- Develop an Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) accountability system that requires schools to increase their disaggregated graduation rates over time and to consider graduation rates on an equal footing with high-quality assessments aligned to college- and work-readiness in determining school quality;
- Publicly report disaggregated racial and ethnic data to highlight subgroups of students;
- Use high-quality valid and accurate assessments for all students; and
- Disseminate high school data and other information through media and other information distribution vehicles specifically serving communities of color.

## Redesign the American High School

It is not enough for states, districts, and schools to raise expectations; they must also provide sufficient support to help their students reach and surpass high academic standards. Currently, American high schools are doing a

poor job of adequately preparing students for tomorrow's jobs. In order to address students' diverse needs, states and districts must provide their schools with the means to explore and implement new educational models, as well as other effective interventions, including literacy programs, personal graduation plans, and expanded learning opportunities. Additionally, some categories of students, such as those who have learning disabilities or are ELLs, may need more specialized support (Short and Fitzsimmons 2006).

To truly serve the needs of America's diverse learners, states, districts and schools will need to reevaluate how well their current school model is preparing students and, in some cases, will need to redesign their curriculum to meet higher performance standards. Specific actions include:

- Implement a variety of effective high school models shown to support different learning styles and academic settings;
- Provide integrated student supports that use both in-school and community-based services;
- Promote strategies and targeted interventions that improve student numeracy and literacy skills without sacrificing access to high-level academic subjects;
- Promote instructional practices designed to meet the needs of diverse learners such as reflexive learning and culturally competent learning techniques;
- Ensure that legally and educationally valid criteria are used to appropriately inform decisions regarding student eligibility for services in special education, services for ELLs, college preparatory curricula, and gifted and talented programs;
- Develop consistent standards and practices, such as improved identification and assessment systems, to facilitate ELLs' integration into the public education system; and
- Provide access to computers and other learning technologies.

### Provide Students with the Excellent Leaders and Teachers They Need to Succeed

When it comes to achievement, quality teaching outweighs students' social and economic background as the single most important factor influencing student academic outcomes, including graduation (Carey 2004b). Research has shown that teacher effectiveness accounts for the large achievement gaps that exist between African American and white students, and having

“Contrary to the ‘model minority myth’—the idea that all Asian Pacific American (APA) students are achieving above and beyond—APA students face tremendous challenges in education. The plight of APA immigrant, refugee, and English language learner students are often obscured and overshadowed and only when data is disaggregated do some of the needs of this population become more apparent. Education reform must emphasize the need for disaggregated data, which will highlight some of the real barriers for all students, including APAs.”

—Dona Thor, executive director, Southeast Asia Resource Action Center



access to an effective teacher for three years in a row can alter a student's achievement by as much as 50 percentage points (Sanders and Rivers 2005). In particular, lack of access to highly effective teachers is most acute in high-need communities that serve predominantly students of color and low-income students. Teachers in these communities are generally less qualified on just about every measure, including subject area certification, pedagogical training, preparation program completion, pass rate on licensure exams, and years of experience. The problem is exacerbated in high schools, where large numbers of out-of-field teachers, limited support for professional learning, and unfavorable working conditions combine with large, factory-model schools to create even more challenging learning environments (Alliance for Excellent Education 2008).

The presence of a teacher who incorporates effective teaching methods outweighs almost every other intervention—including class-size reduction—in improving student outcomes (Jerald et al. 2009). A study that used student test scores and graduation outcomes to evaluate teaching effectiveness found that the ability of schools to hire and keep high-quality teachers has the potential to significantly reduce student dropout rates (Koedel 2008). At the same time, principals with the experience and skills necessary for effectiveness are less likely to be working in high-poverty and low-achieving schools (Rice 2010)—

the very schools that are most likely to be serving students of color and Native students. Since principals have a critical role in managing the school environment and setting high expectations for teacher and student academic performance, it is important to adopt policies that attract and keep effective leaders, as well as effective teachers, in low-performing schools.

It is often difficult to recruit effective teachers to low-performing schools for many of the same reasons that make attracting effective principals a challenge. Teachers in these schools generally do not have the benefit of mentoring, and professional development opportunities are scarce. These teachers also are often stressed by trying to make sure their students reach standards that, with the previously mentioned lack of resources, may seem impossible to attain. As a result, low-performing schools disproportionately attract teachers who are new to the profession or are teaching out of their field of expertise (Peske and Haycock 2006). Research indicates that having content expertise is an important factor in the effectiveness of teaching (Ball et al. 2008).

Effective teaching not only encompasses teachers' knowledge of content areas, but also teachers' abilities to understand and relate to the cultural needs of diverse students.

Given the positive impact of effective teaching, it is critical that schools and teachers work to ensure effective teaching in every classroom. These teaching environments are necessary for all students, especially those most at risk of dropping out of high school, such as students of color and Native students. Teaching effectiveness is a critical component to ensuring



“Given how critical Latino youth are to our economic and political future, closing the achievement gap must be our nation’s most important education goal. Eliminating differentials in high school success is an absolute policy imperative.”

—Thomas A. Saenz,  
president and general counsel, Mexican  
American Legal Defense and Educational Fund

all students graduate prepared for college and career, and while local stakeholders will continue to decide their own curriculum, they will need to ensure that it is aligned with high standards while meeting the individual needs of their students.

Recommendations to ensure that schools have strong, effective leaders and teachers include the following:

- Support policies that are based on growth toward college- and career-readiness for all students;
- Improve classroom instruction and leadership decision making;
- Equip and train school leaders and teachers working in under-resourced schools by supporting in-school clinical training, effective induction and mentoring programs, and other professional development opportunities designed to better enable school leaders and teachers to teach students effectively, as well as to understand the students' school, family, and community environments;
- Support principal and teacher diversity recruitment and preparation programs in schools of education that diversify the gender, socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and linguistic composition of the nation's principal and teacher pool, integrate culturally competent school and classroom instructional leadership methods with effective management techniques, and provide additional financial incentives to teacher candidates;
- Develop and support education centers of excellence at minority-serving institutions to strengthen their capacity to recruit and train a diverse pool of teachers;
- Promote the development of principals and teachers from the community by creating a pipeline that draws from sources such as teacher aides and current high school students, and by recruiting highly qualified traditional and nontraditional professionals;
- Ensure that teachers and school leaders are culturally competent;
- Ensure teachers of diverse learners are prepared and well-resourced; and
- Invest in research.

### Invest Communities in Student Success

Every high school needs a safe and supportive environment, both inside and outside the classroom, so the focus can be on student learning and achievement. The school environment is critical to student success, but it is not



the only factor that impacts secondary school students' academic and social success. At the same time, communities—including parents and families—play an important role in influencing student success and must be involved in the process of establishing and implementing high standards. Engaging tribes, Native communities, community-based organizations, and states on the topics of language, culture, and sovereignty will be critical to ensuring that the best interests of every student are served by schools as they strive to meet higher standards.

Students in low-performing schools often do not receive the same exposure to outside learning opportunities as their more affluent counterparts. As a result, they start the academic race steps behind other students, and many never catch up. Too often these students do not have access to community support services that can contribute to their overall health, well-being, and development. Measures should be taken to harmonize the incentive and disincentive structures of the external and internal environments to support each student's ability to stay in school, excel academically, and develop into a healthy and productive individual.

Recommendations to help coordinate these structures include the following:

- Create and support multilingual parent centers to train parents and other caregivers in interpreting school and student performance data, advocating on behalf of their children, working with their children and school personnel to develop personal graduation plans, and selecting courses their children need in order to graduate from high school college- and career-ready;
- Provide more support for community-based organizations and Native tribes offering expanded learning opportunities, and coordinate these programs to ensure alignment with college- and career-readiness;
- Improve access to community-based and Native tribe resources that support students' ability to learn by locating services, such as health clinics and child-care centers, within or near schools; and
- Create business and community partnerships that support student enrichment opportunities (such as internships) and facilitate community and college linkages.

### Provide Equitable Learning Conditions for All Students

Persistent disparities in the allocation of key education resources often create barriers that prevent low-income and students of color from receiving

the high-quality education they deserve. Research demonstrates that, across states, school districts that enroll the highest percentage of students of color and low-income students receive fewer resources (Carey 2004a). Resource inequity affects schools in areas such as staffing, facility quality, textbook and equipment availability and adequacy, and access to challenging academic coursework. It is critical that all students—including ELLs, students with diverse learning needs, and students in alternative school settings—have equitable access to high-quality educational content, supports, and opportunities that research demonstrates are essential to post-secondary success.

For secondary school students, these inequalities are exacerbated because the federal funding that should make up for the lack of resources in low-income communities, such as Title I, is disproportionately allocated to grades K–6. While nearly 25 percent of the nation's low-income students attend high schools, only 10 percent of Title I funding is directed to them (Riddle 2011). Resources must be distributed equitably and adequately; they should be directed to where they are most needed, and a significant portion should be invested in research-based practices that have been proven to help student learning for middle and high school advancement.

Policy recommendations that support these objectives include:

- Create a new federal secondary school improvement fund that would be used to turn around low-performing middle and high schools;

“Young African Americans will not be able to achieve economic and social success if they are not given the opportunity to receive a quality high school education. A high school diploma is the passport that will facilitate success in the world of work and postsecondary education.”

—Marc Morial, president and CEO,  
National Urban League





“Native students have the civil right to a first-class education that enables them to reap all of the opportunities of a twenty-first-century U.S. citizen. Their education should foster a strong sense of their unique Native identity, and should be grounded in their language, culture, and traditional values.”

— Colin Kippen, executive director,  
National Indian Education Association

- Provide sufficient additional resources to appropriately serve ELLs and other diverse learners;
- Offer federal incentives to encourage states to develop alternative school-finance formulas that minimize heavy reliance on local property taxes and increase resources for the students and schools that need it most;
- Require states to compare and publicly report available resources to achieve a college- and career-ready education at every school; and
- For states where inequities appear, develop five-year plans for equalizing resources and require a publicly reported biannual report that evaluates progress toward the five-year goal(s).

### Provide Students with Expanded Learning Opportunities

High-quality expanded learning opportunities—including programs sponsored by schools, community-based organizations, and Native tribes working alone or in partnerships—are vital to efforts to reverse the achievement and graduation gaps in our nation’s high schools. Expanded learning opportunities help to create a foundation for a positive shared culture that promotes learning, developing skills, and contributing to society. Research suggests that participation in expanded learning programs may reduce many problems students face that are linked to low academic achievement, including low teacher expectations, students’ alienation from school, lack of enrichment activities, poor quality education, and lack of a structured and supervised environment during after-school hours. At the same time, expanded learning opportunities can promote student engagement in academic and enrichment

activities, provide more time for academic learning, and lead to greater preparedness for college and the modern workforce.

A 2005 RAND study found that expanded learning programs have a clear, positive impact on high school credits earned and on graduation rates (Bodilly and Beckett 2005). Another study found that participation in after-school programs is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores, improved work habits, and reduced behavioral problems (Afterschool Alliance 2008). Expanded learning programs promote student engagement in academic and enrichment activities, provide more time for academic learning, and can lead to greater preparedness for college and the workplace. However, the students most likely to benefit from these activities, especially students of color and Native students, currently do not have equitable access to effective programs.

To maximize the benefits of expanded learning programs for high school students of color and Native students, policies should be created that support the following:

- Highly effective expanded learning must be made available to more high school students and students of color than are currently being served by such programs;
- The needs of communities of color must be addressed when developing, implementing, and evaluating expanded learning opportunity programs;
- Programs must be developed with built-in assessments and evaluations to ensure high-quality services and accountability; and
- Additional funding is required for school districts, public schools, minority-serving community-based organizations, and Native tribes so that they can engage in meaningful and innovative practices that can enhance and inform future programs.



# Conclusion

# References

The state of the nation’s high schools and the young people they educate should be of concern to each and every person in America. Today’s students are America’s future, and the country’s collective economic and social well-being rests on their shoulders. As a nation, we cannot wait to end the inequities in the current education system. The fabric of our society and the health of our economy require action now.

While the Common Core State Standards Initiative and reauthorization of ESEA are examples of opportunities at the state and federal levels to continue the process of transforming our education system, creating a true paradigm shift in the nation’s public school system will require that all education policies are reconsidered, aligned to higher standards, and implemented fairly and with input from communities of color. Higher standards cannot be met if students do not have equitable access to effective teachers; rigorous curricula; and safe, high-quality educational environments that are conducive to learning.

The public must demand changes in policy and practice that will support the transformative redesign of secondary schools into centers of engaged academic learning that prepare every student—regardless of race, ethnicity, ZIP code, or socioeconomic status—for success in life. This will not be an easy task, but it is a crucial one that requires community participation and leadership from us all.

ACT. (2010). *The Condition of College and Career Readiness*. Washington, DC: ACT, Inc. <http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/cccr10/pdf/ConditionofCollegeandCareerReadiness2010.pdf>

Afterschool Alliance. (2008). *Afterschool fosters success in school*. Issue brief. Washington, DC: MetLife Foundation. [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue\\_briefs/issue\\_sch\\_success\\_31.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue_briefs/issue_sch_success_31.pdf)

Alliance for Excellent Education. (2006). *Paying double: Inadequate high schools and community college remediation*. Issue brief. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. <http://www.all4ed.org/files/archive/publications/remediation.pdf>

Alliance for Excellent Education. (2008). *Improving the distribution of teachers in low-performing high schools*. Policy brief. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. [http://www.all4ed.org/files/TeachDist\\_PolicyBrief.pdf](http://www.all4ed.org/files/TeachDist_PolicyBrief.pdf)

Alliance for Excellent Education. (2009). *The high cost of high school dropouts: What the nation pays for inadequate high schools*. Issue brief. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. <http://www.all4ed.org/files/HighCost.pdf>

Alliance for Excellent Education. (2010a). *The Nation’s High Schools*. Statistics Card. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. <http://www.all4ed.org/files/UnitedStates.pdf>

Alliance for Excellent Education. (2010b). *Prioritizing the nation’s lowest-performing high schools*. Issue brief. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. <http://www.all4ed.org/files/PrioritizingLowestPerformingSchools.pdf>

Amos, J. (2008). *Dropouts, diplomas, and dollars: U.S. high schools and the nation’s economy*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. <http://www.all4ed.org/files/Econ2008.pdf>

Balfanz, R., Bridgeland, J.M., Moore, L.A., & Fox, J.H. (2010). Building a graduation: Progress and challenge in ending the high school dropout epidemic. Washington, DC: Civic Enterprises, Johns Hopkins University, and America's Promise Alliance. <http://www.civicerprises.net/pdfs/gradnation.pdf>

Ball, D.L., Thames, M.H., & Phelps, G. (2008). Content knowledge for teaching: What makes it special? *Journal of Teacher Education*, 59(5), 389–407.

Bodilly, S.J. & Beckett, M.K. (2005). Making out-of-school-time matter: Evidence for an action agenda. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND\\_MG242.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG242.pdf)

Carey, K. (2004a). The funding gap 2004: Many states still shortchange low-income and minority students. Washington, DC: Education Trust. [http://www.edlawcenter.org/ELCPublic/AbbottvBurke/Resources/History\\_FundingGap2004.pdf](http://www.edlawcenter.org/ELCPublic/AbbottvBurke/Resources/History_FundingGap2004.pdf)

Carey, K. (2004b). The real value of teachers: Using new information about teacher effectiveness to close the achievement gap. *Thinking K-16*, 8(1), 3-32. <http://www.cgu.edu/PDFFiles/The%20Real%20Value%20of%20Teachers%20-%20Ed%20Trust%20K-%2016.pdf>

Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and the Society for Human Resource Management. (2006). Are they really ready to work? Employers' perspectives on the basic knowledge and applied skills of new entrants to the 21st century U.S. workforce. New York: Conference Board. [http://p21.org/documents/FINAL\\_REPORT\\_PDF09-29-06.pdf](http://p21.org/documents/FINAL_REPORT_PDF09-29-06.pdf)

Jerald, C., Haycock, K., & Wilkins, A. (2009). Fighting for quality and equality, too: How state policymakers can ensure the drive to improve teacher quality doesn't just trickle down to poor and minority children. Washington DC: Education Trust. [http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/publications/files/QualityEquity\\_4.pdf](http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/publications/files/QualityEquity_4.pdf)

Koedel, C. (2008). Teacher quality and dropout outcomes in a large urban school district. *Journal of Urban Economics*, 64(3), 560–572.

Peske, H., & Haycock, K. (2006). Teaching inequality: How poor and minority students are shortchanged on teacher quality. Washington, DC: Education Trust. <http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/publications/files/TQReportJune2006.pdf>

Plotts, C., & Sable, J. (2010). Characteristics of the 100 Largest Public Elementary and Secondary School Districts in the United States: 2007–08

(NCES 2010-349). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/2010349.pdf>

Reeves, T.J., & Bennett, C.E. (2004). *We the people: Asians in the United States*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/censr-17.pdf>

Rice, J.K. (2010). Principal effectiveness and leadership in an era of accountability: What research says. Washington, DC: National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research, The Urban Institute. <http://www.caldercenter.org/upload/calder-research-and-policy-brief-8.pdf>

Riddle, W. (2011). Title I and high schools: Addressing the needs of disadvantaged students at all grade levels. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Short, D., & Fitzsimmons, S. (2006). *Double the work: Challenges and solutions to acquiring language and academic literacy for adolescent English language learners*. (A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York.) Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. <http://www.all4ed.org/files/DoubleWork.pdf>

Swanson, C.B. (2010). Diplomas Count 2010: Graduation by the numbers: Putting data to work for student success. *Education Week*, 29(34), 22–23, 30. <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/06/10/34swanson.h29.html?intc=ml>

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2010). Employment projections: Education pays.... Washington, DC: Bureau of Labor Statistics. [http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep\\_chart\\_001.htm](http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm)

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2009). *The nation's report card: Reading 2009*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. [http://nationsreportcard.gov/reading\\_2009](http://nationsreportcard.gov/reading_2009)

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2010). *Trends in high school dropout and completion rates in the United States: 1972–2008*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011012.pdf>

Wirt, J., Rooney, P., Choy, S., Provasnik, S., Sen, A., & Tobin, R. (2004). *The condition of education 2004* (NCES 2004-077). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/2004077.pdf>



# Campaign for High School Equity

## Partner Organizations

### Alliance for Excellent Education

Launched in 2001, the Alliance for Excellent Education is a national nonprofit policy and advocacy organization that works toward a national goal of making every child a high school graduate, prepared for postsecondary education and success in life. It focuses on the needs of the six million secondary school students in the lowest achievement quartile who are most likely to leave school without a diploma or to graduate unprepared for a productive future. To inform discussions about education policies and options, the Alliance produces reports, convenes conferences and meetings, briefs policymakers and the press, and provides timely information to a wide audience via a number of publications, including *Straight A's*, its widely distributed biweekly newsletter, and regularly updated Web site.

### Leadership Conference Education Fund

Founded in 1969, the Education Fund builds public will for federal policies that promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States. The Education Fund's campaigns empower and mobilize advocates around the country to push for progressive change in the United States. The Education Fund is the education and research arm of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 200 national organizations to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States. Through advocacy and outreach to targeted constituencies, the Leadership Conference works toward the goal of a more open and just society.

### League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

LULAC is the largest and oldest Hispanic organization in the United States. LULAC advances the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, health, and civil rights of Hispanic Americans through community-

based programs operating at more than 700 LULAC councils nationwide. LULAC councils provide more than one million dollars in scholarships to Hispanic students each year, conduct citizenship and voter registration drives, develop low-income housing units, conduct youth leadership training programs, and seek to empower the Hispanic community at the local, state, and national level. In addition, the LULAC National Educational Service Centers, LULAC's educational arm, provides educational services to more than 18,000 Hispanic students per year at sixteen regional centers.

### Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)

Founded in 1968 in San Antonio, Texas, MALDEF is the nation's leading Latino legal civil rights organization. Often described as the "law firm of the Latino community," MALDEF promotes social change through legislative and regulatory advocacy, community education, and high impact litigation in the areas of education, employment, immigrant rights, political access, and public resource equity. MALDEF's mission is to foster sound public policies, laws, and programs to safeguard the civil rights of the 45 million Latinos living in the United States and to empower the Latino community to fully participate in our society. Through the skills and training taught in its parent leadership programs, MALDEF provides parents with the knowledge and tools necessary to advocate for a quality education for their children.

### National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

The mission of NAACP is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination. From the ballot box to the classroom, the dedicated workers, organizers, and leaders who forged this great organization and maintain its status as a champion of social justice fought long and hard to ensure that the voices of African Americans would be heard. For nearly one hundred years, it has been the talent and tenacity of NAACP members that has saved lives and changed many negative aspects of American society.

### National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund

NALEO is the nation's leading organization that promotes the full participation of Latinos in the American political process, from citizenship to public service. Established in 1981, it carries out its mission through

programs that integrate Latinos fully into American political society, provides professional development opportunities and technical assistance to the nation's more than 6,000 Latino elected and appointed officials, and monitors and conducts advocacy on issues important to the Latino community and its political participation. The Fund created the NALEO Education Leadership Initiative (NELI) in 2001 to assist the nation's Latino policymakers in closing the educational achievement gap between Latino and non-Latino students. To date, over 2,000 Latino elected and appointed officials and their communities have benefited from NELI.

### National Council of La Raza (NCLR)

NCLR, the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans. Through its network of nearly 300 affiliated community-based organizations, NCLR reaches millions of Hispanics each year in forty-one states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. To achieve its mission, NCLR conducts applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy, providing a Latino perspective in five key areas: assets/investments, civil rights/immigration, education, employment and economic status, and health. In addition, it provides capacity-building assistance to its affiliates who work at the state and local level to advance opportunities for individuals and families.

### National Indian Education Association (NIEA)

The mission of NIEA is to support traditional Native cultures and values; to enable Native learners to become contributing members of their communities; to promote Native control of educational institutions; and to improve educational opportunities and resources for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students throughout the United States.

### National Urban League (NUL)

Established in 1910, NUL is a historic civil rights organization dedicated to economic empowerment in order to elevate the standard of living in historically underserved urban communities. The National Urban League spearheads the nonpartisan efforts of its local affiliates who provide direct services to more than two million people nationwide through programs, advocacy, and research. The mission of the NUL movement is to enable African Americans to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power, and civil rights. Through their Education and Youth Development initiatives, the NUL works to ensure that all children are prepared for college, work, and life.

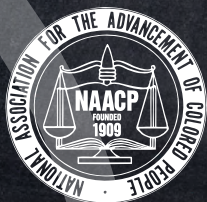
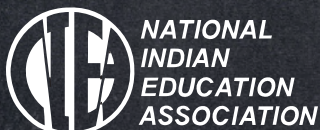
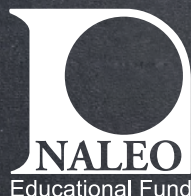
### Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)

SEARAC is a national organization that advances the interests of Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese Americans by empowering communities through advocacy, leadership development, and capacity building to create a socially just and equitable society. SEARAC was founded in 1979 to facilitate the relocation of Southeast Asian refugees into American society and foster the development of nonprofit organizations led by and for Southeast Asian Americans. SEARAC serves as a coalition-builder and leader, carries out action-oriented research projects, and strengthens the capacity of community-based organizations. SEARAC also fosters civic engagement and represents these communities at the national level in Washington, DC.

“The Campaign for High School Equity’s efforts will focus the attention of the country’s leaders on the high school crisis and involve individuals from every community in encouraging federal, state, and local governments to put policies in place that will ensure that every child graduates from high school with the knowledge and skills he or she needs for success in postsecondary education, the modern workplace, and life.”

—Bob Wise, president,  
Alliance for Excellent Education





For more information about CHSE, visit [www.highschoolequity.org](http://www.highschoolequity.org).  
Follow CHSE on Twitter @hsequity for the latest in high school  
education reform. Join the CHSE community on Facebook at  
[www.facebook.com/hsequity](http://www.facebook.com/hsequity).