Building a Grad Nation: Annual Update

Progress & Challenge in Raising High School Graduation Rates
The National Playing Field

- **Large Gains Over Last Decade** - 83.2% HS Grad Rate in 2015, up from 79% in 2010-11 and 71.7% in 2001

- As a Result, **2.8 M more students graduated** rather than dropped out

- Progress has been **uneven across states** and tempered by **slowing rates of improvement and persistent grad rate gaps**
The National Playing Field

- **About half of states** with grad rates of 85% or more -- on pace to reach 90% by 2020

- Large Low Grad Rate High Schools (300 or more students) dropped from 2,007 in 2002 to 954 in 2015

- Some **Big Cities** have **double digit gains** – a challenge to all cities

- Need to **double rate of gain over next 5 years and close state, district, and equity gaps** to reach 90% goal for all students
Visualizing the remaining challenge

To reach a 90% high school graduation rate by 2020
310,000 more graduates per year are needed

THAT’S 3 ROSE BOWL STADIUMS
90% with a level playing field requires

- Four out of five to be Low-Income
- One out of three to be African American
- One out of three to be Latino
- One out of Five to be English Language Learners
- Two out of five to be Students with Disabilities
To close post-secondary opportunity gaps between lower and upper income students

Need four more Rose Bowls of low income students per year who graduate high school college ready with access to post-secondary

4 ROSE BOWL STADIUMS
Remaining Challenge-
Low Performing High Schools

1,000 High Schools with Graduation Rates of 67% or Less*

A third of the nation’s dropouts come from 1,000 high schools

Low Performing HS’s are disproportionally clustered in a small number of urban, suburban & rural districts

Half of off-track African American and Latino students are in 800 schools in just 70 districts

Half the students experiencing extreme poverty are in just 68 districts

*Adjusted cohort graduation rates for 2014
Diplomas Now: Keeping Every Student on the Path to High School Graduation, College Readiness and Adult Success
Diplomas Now-
Creating a School Reform Model to Address the Dropout Challenge
For the highest need schools – those that educate only students living in poverty – we need to simultaneously build adult capacity and provide students with the additional support they need to succeed.

Even with the best teachers, curriculum, standards and assessments in place, some students living in poverty will still struggle.

By getting students the support they need when they need it, while also enhancing a school’s curriculum, use of data and teacher coaching, we can transform schools and keep more students on track to graduation.
The Diplomas Now Model

Diplomas Now combines improvements for entire schools with enhanced student support guided by early-warning system. It brings together three nonprofits to partner with highest-need schools and districts to build the capacity required to meet the scale and intensity of student need:

Johns Hopkins University’s Talent Development Secondary provides curriculum/instruction support and early warning system.

City Year’s “near peer” AmeriCorps members provide individualized and whole-class academic and social-emotional support.

Communities In Schools provides case-managed support to students with the highest needs.
Diplomas Now
Secondary School Transformation Model in Action

High intensity Support for Neediest Students

Targeted Student Support at Scale

Whole School Reform

Baton Rouge
Boston
Chicago
Columbus
Detroit
Los Angeles
Miami
New York City
Philadelphia
San Antonio
Seattle
Tulsa
Washington, DC

14 Cities
26000+ Students

32 Total Schools
16 Middle Schools
14 High Schools
2 6-12 buildings

Bold cities implementing Randomized Control Trial by MDRC

Investing in Innovation Fund Winner

1,700 Applicants
49 Grantees
Surrounding Teachers and Students with Support

**Instructional Support**
- Double dose math & English
- Extra help labs
- Common college preparatory or high school readiness curricula

**Organizational Support**
- Inter-disciplinary and subject focused common planning time
- Bi-weekly EWI meetings
- On-site school transformation facilitator

**Data Support**
- Easy access to student data on the Early Warning Indicators
- Benchmarks tied to national and state standards
- On-site facilitator to leverage EWI data

**Professional Development Support**
- Job-embedded coaching - Math & English instructional coaches
- Professional learning community
- Professional development linked to grade/subject instructional practice

**Student Support**
- Multi Tiered Response to Intervention Model
  - 8 to 20 City Year AmeriCorps members: whole school and targeted academic and socio-emotional supports
  - Communities In Schools site coordinator: case managed supports for highest need students
- Interventions to address early warning indicators of:
  - Attendance
  - Behavior
  - Course Performance
- Whole school attendance, positive behavior, college-going culture
- Strengthening student resiliency
Early Warning Systems Meetings

What’s EWS Meeting?
A structure used to regularly monitor student progress and a collaborative effort to:
• Monitor student progress—rapidly flag students falling off track
• Identify students in need of intervention
• Looks for data trends to identify most strategic level of intervention (student, class, grade, school etc.)
• Monitor if intervention is improving student outcomes

What Happens during an EWS meeting?
• Examine relevant student data (attendance, behavior and coursework)
• Collaborate and problem-solve to identify reason for outcome
• Agree upon interventions to be taken and
• Identify “champion” and document each intervention

Process:
[Diagram showing steps: Student Name is Called, Everyone Analyzes the Student Data, Problem Solving Conversation, Intervention Action(s) Agreed Upon, Intervention Documented]
# Four Pillars of Evidence Based Secondary School Improvement

## Small Learning Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pillar 1: Teacher Teams &amp; Small Learning Communities</th>
<th>Pillar 2: Specialized Curriculum &amp; Coaching</th>
<th>Pillar 3: Tiered Student Supports</th>
<th>Pillar 4: Can-Do Culture &amp; Climate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Distributed leadership</td>
<td>• Common instructional core for all students</td>
<td>• Early warning and tiered response system</td>
<td>• Supportive school environment with clear pathways to success</td>
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<td>• Collaborative work time</td>
<td>• Instructional materials that use evidence based practice to close student skills gaps and build their advanced thinking skills</td>
<td>• Attendance initiatives</td>
<td>• Highly engaging &amp; relevant learning experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Shared cohort of manageable number of students (75-90)</td>
<td>• Accelerated learning opportunities for students below grade level</td>
<td>• Academic tutoring &amp; interventions</td>
<td>• Formal vehicles for student &amp; teacher voice</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Grade level &amp; content area teacher teams</td>
<td>• Job embedded professional development via instructional coaches</td>
<td>• Social-emotional skill development support</td>
<td>• Initiatives to recognize student progress and teacher accomplishments</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Access to real-time data about shared students' Early Warning indicators</td>
<td>• Professional learning communities</td>
<td>• Expanded teacher roles/second shift of adults</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Parent &amp; family engagement</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Student case management</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Coordinated school &amp; community partnerships</td>
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Evidence of Impact
Diplomas Now Research Study

- In 2010, Diplomas Now won a federal Investing in Innovation (i3) grant to validate its impact on students through a randomized control trial led by MDRC
- Largest randomized control study of secondary school improvement in the nation

- Tracking data on early warning indicators and academic achievement of successive cohorts of students through middle and high school
- Implementation study on the necessary design elements to maximize impact in schools (studying 111 program elements)

- Supports movement toward “evidence-based” practices and budgeting in education to show ROI
- Provides an unprecedented national documentation on the conditions for school turnaround to influence policy at the federal, state and local levels
Major National Research on Diplomas Now’s Evidence of Impact

The Diplomas Now collaboration had a positive, statistically significant increase in percentage of sixth- and ninth-graders with no early warning indicators (poor attendance, poor behavior and failing math and English) over the course of just one year.

Diplomas Now also had a positive, statistically significant impact on increasing attendance and reducing chronic absenteeism in middle schools.

Positive and statistically significant effects in the education field are rare: only 9% of randomized control trials commissioned by the U.S. Dept of Ed Institute of Education Sciences produce positive effects**

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*Statistically significant at 95% confidence – What Works Clearinghouse level
**Coalition for Evidenced-Based Policy

Source: Addressing Early Warning Indicators: Interim Impact Findings from the Investing in Innovation (i3) Evaluation of Diplomas Now. MDRC. (June 2016)
Diplomas Now Creates Strong Learning Environments

The Diplomas Now model led to statistically significant “service contrasts” for students and teachers compared with schools without Diplomas Now.

For teachers, increased frequency of:
- Using data to drive instruction and target struggling students
- Teacher collaboration
- Support from instructional coaches

For students, increased frequency of:
- Coordinated academic and non-academic services
- Math/English academic help
- In-class behavioral support

Contrasts emerged in first year and increased in second year

Students at Diplomas Now schools*:
- were more likely to report a positive relationship with an adult at school who was not a teacher
- were more likely to participate in academically-focused after-school activities than students in non-Diplomas Now schools

Additionally, Diplomas Now had positive and statistically significant impacts on teachers’ perceptions of school climate during the second year of implementation.

*Based on student surveys
Getting off-track students back on track: The progress of students flagged with an off-track indicator prior to the final marking period of the 2015-2016 school year in all Diplomas Now schools.

Preventing students from falling off-track: Percentage of students in Diplomas Now schools not flagged with an off-track indicator prior to quarter 4 who stayed on track.

Overall Success: Percentage of students who ended the year on track in Diplomas Now schools.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>On Track</th>
<th>Percentage of Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>97%</td>
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<td>92%</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>86%</td>
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Diplomas Now Equals Real Improvement

- Since Diplomas Now began partnering with the following schools, they have seen impressive graduation rate increases:
  - Cardozo Education Campus (Washington, DC) has increased its graduation rate by 17 percentage points, from 42% to 59.2%, the second largest gain of any school in the district, outpacing the overall district graduation rate growth (13% points).
  - Gage Park High School (Chicago) has increased its graduation rate by 23% points, from 39.4% to 62.6%, outpacing the overall district graduation rate growth (15.8% points).
  - Newtown High School (New York City) has increased its graduation rate by 8.5% points, from 62% to 70.5%.

- By partnering with Diplomas Now, high schools are seeing gains in student on track rates:
  - In Chicago, the Freshman On-Track Rate has increased since DN began partnering with schools there:
    - Gage Park HS – nearly 10% point increase, from 73.9% in 2011-2012 to 83.1% in 2015-2016.
    - John Hope College Prep HS – 15.9% point increase, from 68.5% in 2011-2012 to 84.4% in 2015-2016.
  - At Newtown High School (New York City), the percentage of 9th and 10th graders earning enough credits to be on track for graduation has grown substantially:
    - 9th grade – 12% point increase, from 70% in 2010-2011 to 82% in 2015-2016.
    - 10th graders – 14% point increase, from 62% in 2010-2011 to 76% in 2015-2016.
Lessons Learned
Lessons Learned Through Diplomas Now Implementation & Research

1. Schools desire the additional human capital and data-driven intervention systems Diplomas Now provides
2. Multiple partners can collaborate to achieve greater impact
3. Effective school organization structures and training unlock the potential of human capital
4. AmeriCorps is a high-impact, cost-effective source for the additional human capital required in our nation’s struggling schools
5. Whole-school transformation requires district support and dedicated funding
6. Planning time and leadership buy-in are critical
7. Conducting large-scale randomized control trials in schools requires sufficient time and significant financial and human resources