

ADVOCATE FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

THE VISION:

ALL YOUTH GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL

The Problem

Approximately 25 percent of Greenville County students fail to graduate from high school within four years. Studies show when students drop out of high school, their prospects for the future are greatly dimmed without a degree.

- The average annual salary of a dropout is \$9,200 less than for a high school graduate.
- Dropouts in Greenville County are twice as likely to be unemployed.
- Dropouts in Greenville County are 2.5 times more likely to live in poverty.
- Dropouts have a life expectancy that is 9.2 years shorter than that of a graduate.

And the failure to graduate affects more than just one student's chance at a healthy, productive life. It also negatively affects the community, which must pick up the tab for increased public services charged to high school dropouts.

- High school dropouts are 3.5 times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested and 8 times more likely to be in jail or prison. It costs more than twice as much per year to incarcerate a prisoner in our state (\$13,590) and in our county (\$17,213) than to educate a student in Greenville County (\$6,498).
- The number of jobs requiring education beyond high school is growing twice as fast as jobs that only require on-the-job training.
- 40 percent of dropouts receive some type of government assistance.



The Solution

We believe all Greenville County youth should have the best possible opportunity to succeed in high school so they can live a healthy, productive life. But the benefits don't end there.

Increasing the graduation rate will reduce the long-term social costs to our community created by:

- crime and incarceration
- drug and alcohol abuse
- teen pregnancy
- unemployment
- poverty
- welfare dependency
- health care

Producing more high school graduates will also improve our economic competitiveness with other regions by reducing the costs of re-education and job training, and improving our ability to attract and keep talented people and high-paying jobs in Greenville County.

A D V O C A T E F O R HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

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HIGH SCHOOL**

The Goal

In partnership with Greenville County Schools and the Alliance for Quality Education, we will increase the high school graduation rate from 73 percent in 2008 to 85 percent by 2018.

To realize our vision that all youth graduate high school, we must ensure:

- A coordinated and effective deployment of resources aimed at building awareness of positive youth development and access to supplemental support services for middle and high school success.
- A uniform definition of “graduation” across the nation is established.
- A coordinated system of quality afterschool programs and activities is available to the community.

How We Get There

United Way of Greenville County will:

- Continue to support and enhance the work of Graduate Greenville.
- Develop and implement an After School Strategic Initiative, establishing a local network of high quality programs and future implementation of a quality rating improvement system.
- Create a system to support the education of teen mothers and their children, including parenting skills and life skills education, as well as identify other barriers to high school success.
- Increase support for early reading and intervention programs.
- Support strategies to decrease smoking and increase healthy lifestyles for our youth.
- Advocate for legislation, policies and community practices that support the vision.

How You Can Help

Contact your local, state and national elected officials. Explain the problem. Ask them to support and promote policies on the local, state and national level that will increase graduation rates and subsequent entry into post-secondary education or work training to become gainfully employed.

One Voice, Your Voice, Makes a Difference.

Elected officials love to hear from constituents. Reach out and contact:

Members of Congress:

www.capwiz.com/unitedway/dbq/officials

Governor's Office

www.scgovernor.com

SC State Representative or Senator

www.scstatehouse.gov

For More Information

- Call 864.467.4804
- E-mail advocate@unitedwaygc.org
- Visit www.unitedwaygc.org/advocate

LIVE UNITED™



United Way
of Greenville County