

Before this school day is over, nearly 7,000 students will drop out of school



Before this year ends, more than a million students will be lost. As more Americans are coming to recognize, we don't simply have a dropout problem,

**we have a dropout crisis:**

- >> 30% of our students will fail to complete high school.
- >> Among African American and Hispanic youth, the dropout rate is closer to 50%.
- >> Students from lower-income families are six times more likely to drop out than those from higher-income families.

Meanwhile, far too many young people who graduate are poorly prepared for college and work.

It's increasingly clear that America's future competitiveness and prosperity depend on ensuring that our young people graduate ready for college or work.

**BY 2010, TWO-THIRDS OF ALL JOBS WILL REQUIRE POST-SECONDARY INSTRUCTION. YET TODAY, MILLIONS ENTER THE WORKFORCE LACKING EVEN BASIC SKILLS FOR SUCCESS.**

**When students aren't equipped to succeed, we all pay the price.**

**Ensuring that our children graduate from high school ready for college, the workforce and life is both an economic and moral imperative. Why?**

Dropouts are twice as likely to be unemployed. They're three times more likely to live in poverty — and eight times more likely to wind up in prison. And children of dropouts are twice as likely to become dropouts themselves.

Dropouts from the class of 2006-07 will cost the nation an estimated \$329 billion in lost wages, lost taxes and lost productivity over their lifetimes.



Meanwhile, colleges and employers are expending huge amounts of time and resources providing remedial training for young people who graduate from high school without enough of the knowledge and skills they need for the 21st century workforce. This inadequate preparation, in turn, increases costs for businesses and weakens our nation's ability to compete in a global economy.

**Strengthening our schools is critically important.** But, when more than 1 million children drop out every year — the majority with passing grades — simply improving education is not enough. We must involve communities, schools and families in finding other workable solutions to keep students engaged and supported. More time, energy and resources must be invested in the whole child.

What's also clear: The more that children experience the Five Promises — caring adults in all areas of their lives, safe places, a healthy start, an effective education that builds marketable skills and opportunities to help others — the more likely they are to graduate and succeed in life.

Through the nation's largest cross-sector alliance of national and local partnerships, America's Promise is mobilizing a nationwide movement to bring more Promises to 15 million disadvantaged young people in the next five years.

If we are to secure our nation's economic future, revitalize civic vibrancy in our communities and ensure the social justice that makes our democracy sustainable, we must reverse the dropout and college-preparedness crisis.

It will take all sectors to rally around our children to ensure that more young people graduate from high school and are ready for college and work.



**We must all be part of the solution.**