

Teen Success Summit Youth Workshops  
Youth Merchandise Workshop

**STEP 1 Brainstorm ideas**

<b>Idea- What are five reasons the group feels causes students to drop out?</b>	<b>What young people in our group want out of school?</b>
<p><b>Academic Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Many teachers do not support their students to go to college.</li> <li>▪ School is boring</li> <li>▪ Bad teachers</li> <li>▪ Classes are too long.</li> </ul>	<p><b>What we want in Academics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Motivation- from adults on campus</li> <li>▪ More programs (academies) that students would be interested in</li> <li>▪ Variety in school programs</li> <li>▪ Better opportunities- in academics and school programs</li> <li>▪ Students would be more likely to get more involved in school if they enjoy it</li> </ul>
<p><b>Discipline and Safety Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Zero tolerance discipline policies cause students to drop out.</li> <li>▪ “If you do something wrong the automatically target you.”- Administrators treat you as a bad kid and you get harder punishments more often. Eventually you just drop out.</li> <li>▪ Students become intimidated</li> <li>▪ Dress code</li> <li>▪ Tardy policy is unfair</li> <li>▪ Students feel teachers are more interested in punishing than education</li> <li>▪ Gangs</li> <li>▪ Peer pressure to do drugs</li> </ul>	<p><b>What we want for discipline and safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Less restrictions on students</li> <li>▪ Greater freedom for students</li> <li>▪ Students need to feel safer in school</li> <li>▪ More time during the passing periods</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lack of Respect between students and adults on campus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No doors on the bathroom stalls</li> <li>▪ Racist teachers</li> <li>▪ Teachers who do not care about the students</li> <li>▪ We don’t have a voice in school</li> <li>▪ Too many security cameras.</li> <li>▪ Many teachers are racist to their students for no reason.</li> <li>▪ “It’s our voice against them” (teachers and students)</li> <li>▪ Teachers don’t listen to their kids</li> </ul>	<p><b>What we want- respect that goes both ways</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Help to jump start their career</li> <li>▪ Teachers who attempt to speak with their students more about their lives.</li> <li>▪ If students feel heard and respected they will attend</li> <li>▪ Many teachers should change from a negative to a positive attitude about their students</li> </ul>
<p><b>Personal Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Some students become pregnant</li> <li>▪ Student do not feel comfortable</li> <li>▪ Students get aggravated</li> <li>▪ Students get frustrated</li> <li>▪ Students leave school for senior skip day</li> <li>▪ Students have better things to do</li> <li>▪ Students don’t want to show up</li> </ul>	<p><b>What we want- support for our lives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Better sex education programs in school</li> <li>▪ Better food for students at school</li> <li>▪ Need freedom to express yourself</li> </ul>

**STEP 2 Name five recommendations you or your school or your community could do which would help solve some of the above problems and increase the graduation rate?**

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>How would it increase the graduation rate?</b>
Ensure students have a voice in campus and district decisions through such things as Principal/Student Advisory Cabinets, Youth Councils and Stand Up Clubs.	Students would feel a sense of ownership over their school and it would increase respect for students on campus. Students who feel a stronger connection to their school will be more likely to stay in school.
Work to build stronger relationships between teachers and students.	If students know the teachers care about them they will be more likely to do better in school and graduate.
Fire racist teachers (Big concern for Akins)	If racist teacher are fired they will not be present to make Hispanic and black kids feel inferior and want to drop out. If they are replaced with teachers who are not racist Hispanic and black students will be more likely to want to stay in school, graduate and go on to college.
Safer sex programs to reduce pregnancy rate	If students got information on contraception and the responsibilities to pregnancy they would be less likely to have unprotected sex. If they pregnancies more girls would be able to stay in school and graduate.
A verbal warning- or case by case policy for discipline	Students would feel more comfortable going to school.
Need teachers who stay at school for many years	Students would be able to build relationships
Students need to hear verbal support from teachers concerning college.	College day, support to apply for college will encourage students to attend higher education.

**Step 3 Answer the following questions about your recommendations.**

- How does your recommendation build on positive things currently happening in the schools and/or community?
- How can people from the neighborhood or school or school district help plan the project, get it started, and sustain it?
- Will the project help the schools and community continue to find innovative ways to increase graduation rate?

#### **STEP 4 Put your recommendations into a creative format.**

Your co-facilitators will help you express one or more of your recommendations in one of the six following ways: On t-shirt or button, through a short video, in an improvisational theater skit, through a spoken word or hip-hop piece, through a mural, or through youth organizing.

#### **Youth Merchandise Slogans**

“Don’t be a Statistic”

“Stop Harassment and Start Enlightenment”

“Schools not for Fools”

“School is Cool”

“Sweat a Little Now or Cry a Lot Later”

“Make a Difference”

“Less Time, More Freedom”