

Project U-Turn engages and re-engages young people through collaborative efforts to support secondary and post-secondary success.

OUR WORK OVER 10 YEARS

In 2006, despite slight increases over the years, Philadelphia's high school graduation rate was among the lowest in the nation at 52 percent. Project U-turn was launched to address Philadelphia's dropout crisis by raising awareness, creating specific solutions and monitoring accountability through implementation, and evaluating impact.

This citywide collaborative effort is led by a steering committee with cross-sector representation from the School District of Philadelphia, the Mayor's Office of Education, the city's Department of Human Services, Community College of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Youth Network, Public Citizens for Children and Youth, William Penn Foundation, as well as practitioners and young people. In addition, the collaborative includes action teams to advance the agenda and top level officials to support the strategies. Philadelphia Youth Network staff provides convening, evaluation and management support for the collaborative, ensuring that partners' efforts are maximized to accomplish shared goals.

While its efforts are multifaceted, Project U-Turn has focused on reconnecting young people to a wider array of pathways leading to a secondary credential and postsecondary education and/or training.

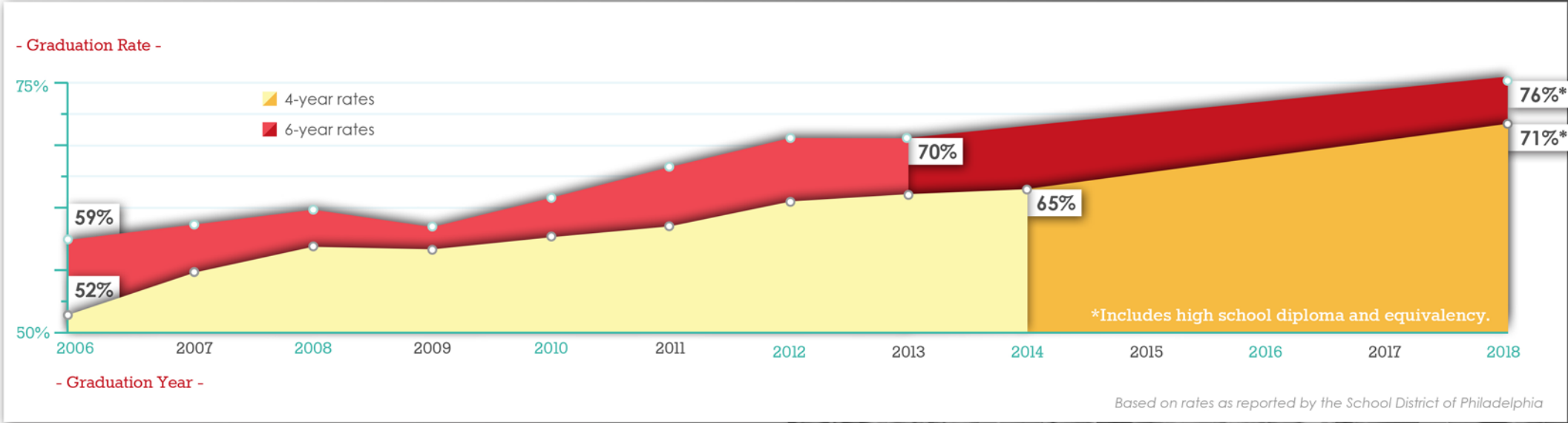
Some of the greatest successes in Project U-Turn's first ten years include:

1. **Using data to guide practice**, beginning with *Unfulfilled Promise* (2006), which revealed the alarming graduation rates among student groups (including students of color, pregnant/parenting and system-involved youth). *A Promise Worth Keeping* (2015) revealed the continued need to focus on supports for targeted populations that saw lesser degrees of growth.
2. **Creating multiple pathways educational options for Philadelphia students** by providing access for disconnected students to alternative high school programs through the School District of Philadelphia's Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation and the Re-Engagement Center.
3. **Mobilizing funding totaling \$272 million** in public and private resources to support dropout prevention and re-engagement.



RENEWED COMMITMENT

Project U-Turn was one of the first citywide efforts to increase high school graduation rates, positioning Philadelphia as a national model for re-engaging disconnected young people.



After ten years of improving educational opportunities for disconnected youth, Project U-Turn is proud to announce renewed goals and strategies for 2017-2020.



IN THE NEXT 3 YEARS:

Goal #1: Re-Engagement

To increase the number of young people who re-engage to 70% and ensure 50% of re-engaged young people earn their high school degree/equivalency through high quality programs.

STRATEGIES

1. Establish a shared vision, measurement and accountability **process** to support high-quality youth re-engagement programs.
2. Refine existing models and develop new approaches to better meet the unique educational needs of students who have re-engaged.
3. Increase and improve connections between re-engagement and post-secondary opportunities for disconnected and re-engaged youth.

Goal #2: Dropout Prevention

To reduce the number of students who disconnect from high school to 20%.

STRATEGIES

1. Promote adoption of early warning dropout indicators and related **intervention strategies** to reduce the likelihood of disengagement.
2. Institute more high-quality options enabling students to complete high school ready for college and career success.
3. Increase access to in- and out-of-school engagement opportunities based on student input.

HOW?

Project U-Turn has developed a set of **key indicators** to track progress toward these two overarching goals. These indicators build upon data released in *A Promise Worth Keeping* (2015) and national trends. When we prevent more students from disconnecting from high school and increase the number of those who re-engage in and complete a high school diploma/equivalency program, overall high school graduation rates will rise.

Engagement: In order to reduce the number of young people who are disconnected from high school, Project U-Turn aims to reduce the percent of students (grades 6-10) who demonstrate one or more early warning indicators (attendance, behavior, coursework) and increase the percent of students demonstrating academic readiness indicators (on time grade promotion, PSSA proficiency).



Re-engagement: Among students who began high school in 2008 (2008-2009 cohort) and disconnected, 54% re-engaged in a School District of Philadelphia degree granting program. The graduation rate for those who reconnected was 35%. With increased District investments for these students and Project U-Turn's continued efforts, we have set our goal to increase the re-engagement rate from 54% to 70% and the graduation rate for those who reconnect from 35% to 50%.



Connection: Increase the percent of young people who connect to a post-secondary education, training program and/or employment.



PROJECT U-TURN COLLABORATIVE

Executive Committee

Top-level officials who convene annually to:

- Influence strategies and goals
- Leverage their positions to advance Project U-Turn's goals and strategies

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Steering Committee

System leaders who advance the collaborative's agenda to:

- Ensure goals and strategies drive work forward; develop collective activities, with PYN backbone support
- Gain insight and buy-in from the Executive Committee
- Work with Project U-Turn partners to identify primary stakeholders
- Lead at least one Action Team to outline and monitor the steps necessary to turn strategies into tangible change

STEERING COMMITTEE

Action Teams

Groups of direct service practitioners and administrators that work on teams aligned with the strategies above to implement the action plan by:

- Developing detailed action plans
- Working within their own organizations or groups to change practice
- Reporting on progress

ACTION TEAMS

PROJECT U-TURN COLLABORATIVE MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

- Brown's Super Stores, Inc.
- Center for Literacy
- Community College of Philadelphia*
- Congreso*
- Department of Human Services*
 - Education Support Center
- District 1199C Training and Upgrading Fund
- JEVS Human Services*
- Mayor's Commission on Literacy
- Mayor's Office of Education*
- National League of Cities
- Philadelphia District Attorney's Office
- Philadelphia Education Fund
- Philadelphia Housing Authority
- Philadelphia Water Department
- Philadelphia Works, Inc.
- Public Citizens for Children and Youth*
- Philadelphia Youth Network*
- School District of Philadelphia:
 - Opportunity Network*
 - Office of Early Childhood Education
 - Office of Strategic Analytics
 - Office of Truancy
- United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey
- William Penn Foundation*
- YESPhilly
- YouthBuild Philly
- Youth Commission
- Youth United for Change
- Youth/Young Adult Representatives*

As of January 2017

*Project U-Turn Steering Committee



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