



PROVIDENCE
Alaska
Medical Center



ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT PROJECT **2011 ACTION REPORT ON EDUCATION**



ENVISION ANCHORAGE

In a recent survey of
ANCHORAGE ADULTS,

72%

said the current graduation rate is
a **serious or very serious** problem.

When asked whose responsibility it
is to improve the graduation rate:

44% said children & their families

12% said the school system

41% said the whole community

Ivan Moore Research telephone survey of 337 Anchorage residents, June 2011.

The Community Assessment Project (CAP) is an important tool in helping make Anchorage the city of our dreams.

By periodically collecting data, United Way of Anchorage and its partners keep a finger on Anchorage's pulse. The information gathered is used to set shared community goals, drive coordinated action and investments, and measure whether we are getting the results we want.

This Action Report on Education addresses the shared community goal of increasing the high school graduation rate.

You can find this report, previous community assessments and learn more about the Anchorage Community Assessment Project at LIVEUNITEDANCHORAGE.ORG.



OUR BOLD GOAL FOR EDUCATION

It takes strong families, excellent schools and supportive communities to help our youth make good choices, stay on track and graduate on time. High school graduation is a critical milestone for a youth and his or her family and a predictor of individual financial success.

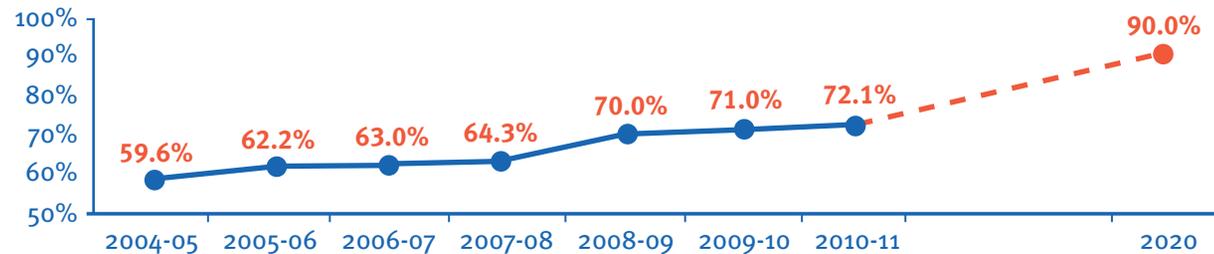
As a community we, too, have to make good choices and stay on track to make sure our next generation of workers and leaders graduate ready. Educational achievement is a community bellwether and an important engine for economic growth.

United Way of Anchorage and its partners in Anchorage United for Youth have adopted a bold goal: increasing the percentage of Anchorage high school students who graduate on time from the current rate of 72% to 90% by 2020.

This report presents data that show why each of us in the community has a stake in achieving that 90% graduation goal. Why does graduation matter? Who will drop out? What helps? How will we reach 90%?

It takes the whole community to help our kids succeed and each of us has a role.

High School Graduation Rate: Where We Are & Where We Want to Be



2004-05 graduation rate, Anchorage School District, *Profile of Performance, 2008-09*, p. 188; 2005-06 through 2009-10 graduation rate, Anchorage School District, *Profile of Performance, 2009-10*, p. 140; 2010-11 graduation rate, Anchorage School District, Assessment and Evaluation Department, by email Oct. 4, 2011.
Notes: In 2011 the Anchorage School District changed how it calculates the graduation rate. The rates for the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years were calculated using the new method and establish the baseline for future comparison. The 2020 graduation rate is a goal, not actual data.



WHY DOES GRADUATION MATTER?

High school graduation is associated with **HIGHER INCOMES**, **BETTER HEALTH**, **LOWER CRIMINAL ACTIVITY**, and **LOWER WELFARE RECEIPT**. This produces significant public benefits.¹

In 2002, 61% of inmates in the nation's state and federal prisons and local jails lacked a high school diploma.

James, D. "Profile of Jail Inmates 2002." U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (2004).

In one California study, high school dropouts were twice as likely to commit crimes as high school graduates.

Belfield, C.R. & Levin, H.M. "High School Dropouts and the Economic Losses from Juvenile Crime in California." California Dropout Research Project, University of California-Santa Barbara, 2009.

A 2007 Columbia University report estimated that moving just one student from dropout status to graduate status would yield a public benefit of \$209,100 in higher government revenues and lower government spending. It also estimated that if the number of high school dropouts that year were cut in half, the government would reap \$45 billion via extra tax revenues and reduced costs of public health, of crime and justice, and in public assistance payments or subsidies.²

Total Lifetime Economic Benefit Per Expected High School Graduate (U.S.)

U.S. Average \$209,100

Levin, H., Belfield, C., Muennig, P. & Rouse, C. "Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for All of America's Children." Teachers College, Columbia University, 2007. Note: Benefits are gross; they do not account for the costs of additional educational attainment.

The economic benefit includes considerably greater tax payments by high school graduates than by dropouts. The additional estimated lifetime tax revenue per expected high school graduate is \$139,100.

Extra Lifetime Tax Payment Per Expected High School Graduate (U.S.)

U.S. Average \$139,100

Levin, H., Belfield, C., Muennig, P. & Rouse, C. "Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for All of America's Children." Teachers College, Columbia University, 2007.

¹ Levin, H., Belfield, C., Muennig, P. & Rouse, C. "Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for All of America's Children." Teachers College, Columbia University, 2007.

² Levin, 2007

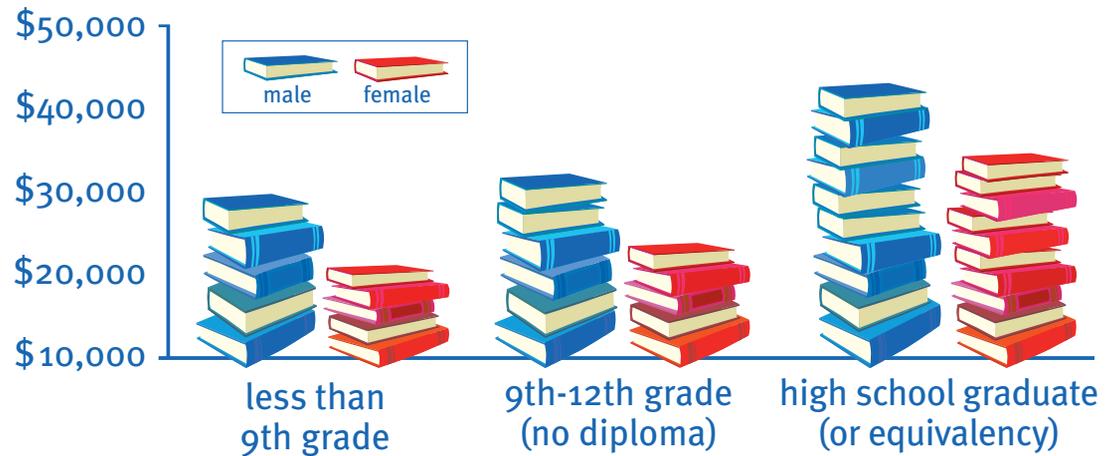
An adult without a high school education is twice as likely to live in poverty as one with a high school diploma. In 2007, median personal earnings of Americans over 25 who did not complete high school were about 40% less than those who did.

Reported in "Goals for the Common Good: Exploring the Impact of Education." American Human Development Project and United Way. http://measureofamerica.org/file/common_good_forecaster_full_report.pdf (retrieved Aug. 22, 2011)

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION ALSO PRODUCES SIGNIFICANT PERSONAL BENEFITS. Failure to graduate has negative consequences that are lifelong.

Average Annual Earnings (U.S.)

Average annual earnings are greater for graduates than for dropouts.



U.S. Census Bureau, "Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the U.S.: 2008, Current Population Reports, P60-236(RV)" and Detailed Tables-Table PINC-04, Sept. 2009. Note: In this chart, earnings are mean earnings of full-time year-round workers in 2008.

The Columbia University study estimates additional lifetime earnings per new high school graduate, on average, of \$200,000. Male graduates earn \$117,000–\$322,000 more than dropouts; female graduates earn \$120,000–\$244,000 more.³

And the additional lifetime earnings may be much higher. A report by Northeastern University estimates that, over a working lifetime, high school dropouts in the U.S. will earn \$400,000 less than those who graduate.⁴

³ Levin, H., Belfield, C., Muennig, P. & Rouse, C. "Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for All of America's Children." Teachers College, Columbia University, 2007.

⁴ Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University. "Left Behind in America: The Nation's Dropout Crisis," 2009.

WHO WILL DROP OUT?

A University of California review of the past 25 years of research on dropouts yielded the following insights:

- **No single factor** can completely account for a student's decision to continue in school until graduation.
- The decision to drop out is not simply a result of what happens **in school**. Students' activities and behaviors **outside of school**—particularly engaging in deviant and criminal behavior—are also influential.
- Dropping out **is more of a process than an event**. For many students, the process begins in early elementary school.
- A number of factors within **families, schools and communities** affect whether students are likely to drop out or graduate. They include access to fiscal and material resources, as well as social resources in the form of supportive relationships in families, schools and communities.⁵

IT TAKES 18 YEARS TO PRODUCE A GRADUATE.
There is no single magic solution or point in time.

⁵ Rumberger, R. & Lim, S.A. "Why Students Drop Out of School: A Review of 25 Years of Research." California Dropout Research Project, University of California-Santa Barbara, 2008.

Learning readiness starts well before kindergarten.

A 2011 Issue Brief by the Pew Center on the States cites three evaluative studies that demonstrate the relationship between high-quality, voluntary prekindergarten and youth success. Children who attended the Perry Preschool Program were nearly 50% more likely to graduate high school on time and about 40% less likely to become repeat criminal offenders. Participants in the Chicago Child-Parent Center program were 25% less likely to drop out of high school.

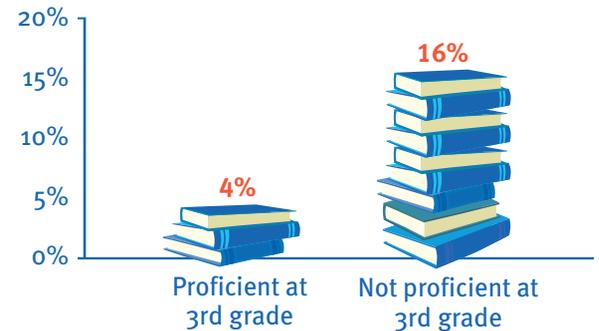
Weiss, E. "Paying Later: The High Costs of Failing to Invest in Young Children." The Pew Center on the States, Jan. 2011.



Learning to read, reading to learn go hand in hand.

A recent study by the Annie E. Casey Foundation on the influence of 3rd grade reading skills found that only 4% of proficient readers fail to graduate, compared to 16% of those who are not reading at grade level in 3rd grade.

US: Percentage of 3rd Graders, Proficient vs. Not Proficient at Reading, Who Fail to Graduate by Age 19



Hernandez, D.J. "Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation." Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011.

Anchorage: Percentage of 3rd Graders Reading Proficiently

In Anchorage in 2011, 84% of 3rd graders were reading proficiently.



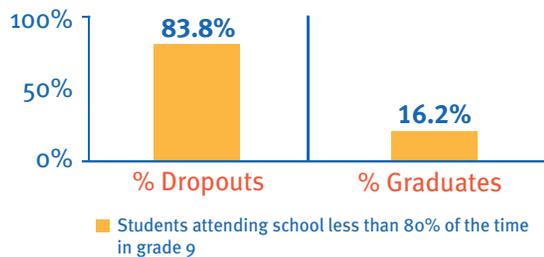
State of Alaska, Department of Education and Early Development, *Standards Based Assessment: Total Number and Percentages of Students Scoring Above and Below Proficiency*, Spring 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011. www.eed.state.ak.us (retrieved Aug. 16, 2011)

Attendance + Grades + Credits = Graduation

A study conducted by the Anchorage School District found that an early warning system, based on readily accessible data, can predict during students' first year in high school (9th grade) whether they are on the right path to eventual graduation. The school district studied a single cohort, 8th graders in 2003-04, and tracked the cohort from 2003-04 to 2007-08. The study identified three top predictors of students dropping out, related to 9th grade **attendance, grades and credits.**⁶

Relationship Between Attendance in Grade 9 & On-Time Graduation (Anchorage)

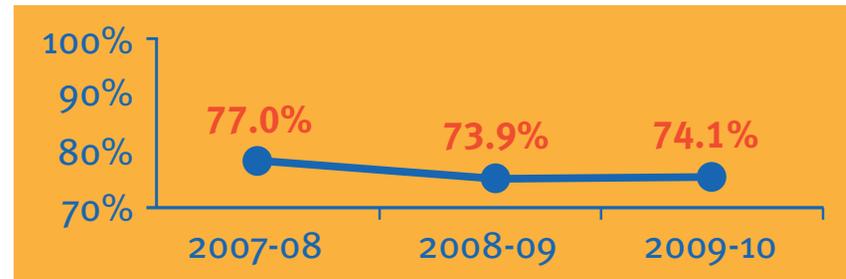
A student who attends school less than 80% of the time he/she is enrolled in grade 9 is 6.8 times more likely to drop out than a student who attends school at least 80% of the time.



⁶ Anchorage School District Assessment and Evaluation Department. *Comprehensive Study of Predictors of High School Outcomes: Why Some Students Graduate on Time While Others Drop Out*, 2009.

Percentage of 9th Graders on Track to Meet Graduation Requirements (Anchorage)

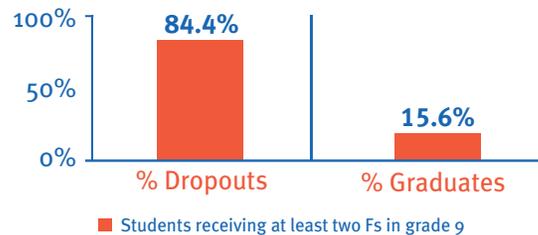
Each year, the Anchorage School District tracks the percentage of 9th graders on track to graduate. In the 2009-10 school year, 74% of 9th graders were on track to graduate.



Anchorage School District, *Profile of Performance*, 2009-10, p. 182. Note: On-track in this graph means the student had earned a minimum of 5.5 credits and failed no more than one semester of a core subject. The core subjects are language arts, math, science and social studies.

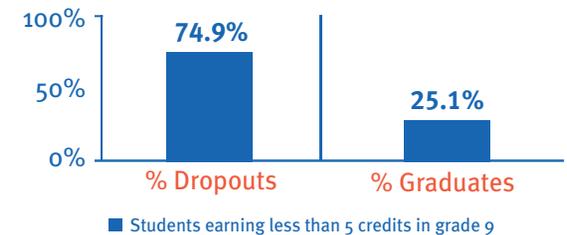
Relationship Between Number of Semester Fs in Grade 9 & On-Time Graduation (Anchorage)

A student with two or more semester Fs in grade 9 in core courses is 6.5 times more likely to drop out than a student who receives less than two semester Fs in grade 9.



Relationship Between Number of Credits in Grade 9 & On-Time Graduation (Anchorage)

A student who earns less than five credits in grade 9 is 9.5 times more likely to drop out than a student who earns at least five credits.



Anchorage School District, Assessment and Evaluation Department. *Comprehensive Study of Predictors of High School Outcomes: Why Some Students Graduate on Time While Others Drop Out*, 2009.

WHAT HELPS?

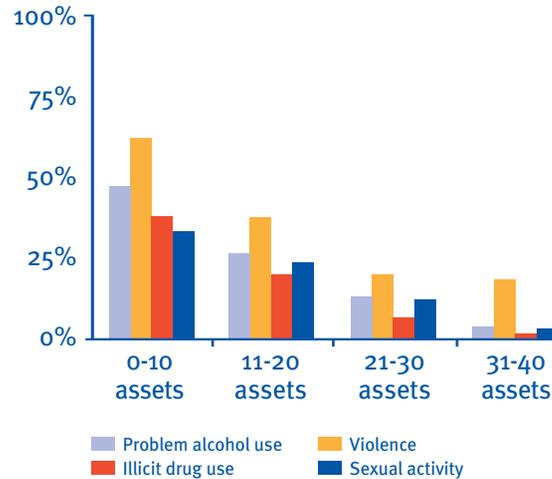
As the University of California review of research on dropouts noted, a number of factors within families, schools and communities affect student success.

Extensive research in youth development, resiliency and prevention has identified **40 developmental assets** that represent the relationships, opportunities and personal qualities young people need to avoid risks and to thrive. The developmental assets are common sense, positive experiences and qualities that help influence choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible, successful adults. Over time, studies of young people in the U.S. consistently show that the assets are **powerful influences** on adolescent behavior—both protecting young people from many different problem behaviors and promoting positive attitudes and behaviors.⁷

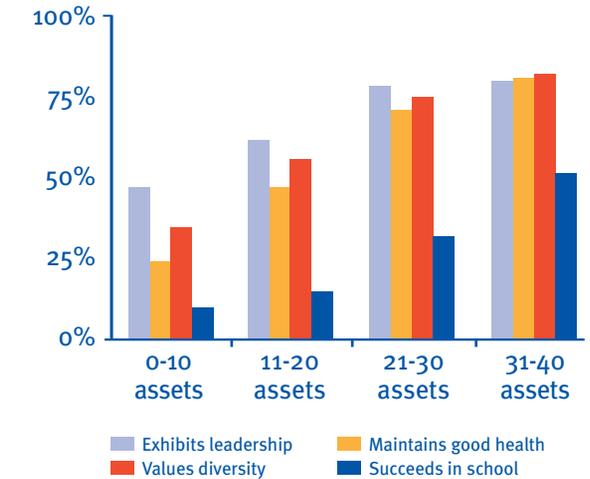
Academic support, parental involvement, a supportive community and participation in out-of-school activities help provide youth with the developmental assets that promote success. Graduation from high school is an important marker of that success.

A national survey of almost 150,000 6th-12th grade youth, conducted by the Search Institute in 2003, found that youth with more assets are less likely to engage in high-risk behaviors and more likely to have positive attitudes and behaviors.

Relationship Between Number of Assets & Four High-Risk Behaviors (U.S.)



Relationship Between Number of Assets & Four Positive Attitudes & Behaviors (U.S.)



Search Institute, <http://www.search-institute.org/research/assets/assetpower> (retrieved August 16, 2011)

⁷ Search Institute. <http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets> (retrieved Sept. 2, 2011)



The 40 developmental assets include:⁸

- School provides clear rules and consequences
- School provides a caring, encouraging environment

In Anchorage in 2009, 57% of high school students reported that they feel like their teachers care about them and give them a lot of encouragement.

Anchorage	2007	2009
Students who believe their teachers really care about them and give them a lot of encouragement	54.5%	57.4%

Anchorage School District Safe and Drug Free Schools, 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, p. 268.

- Parents are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school
- Parents encourage young person to do well

Only 42% reported that about every day one of their parents talked with them about school.

Anchorage	2007	2009
High school students whose parents talk with them about school about every day	49.0%	42.0%

Anchorage School District Safe and Drug Free Schools, 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, p. 262.

- Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults
- Young person experiences caring neighbors
- Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth

About 42% reported that they have three or more adults, other than parents, that they can seek help from. About 55% reported they feel like they matter to people in the community.

Anchorage	2007	2009
High school students who have 3 or more nonparent adults they feel comfortable seeking help from	47.8%	41.9%
High school students who feel like they matter to people in their community	51.6%	55.1%

Anchorage School District Safe and Drug Free Schools, 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, p. 277 and 298.

- Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs or organizations at school and/or in the community
- Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater or other arts

Roughly 40% of Anchorage high school students reported that they take part in organized activities outside of school at least two days a week.

Anchorage	2007	2009
High school students who take part in organized activities outside of school at least 2 days a week	40.3%	39.5%

Anchorage School District Safe and Drug Free Schools, 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, p. 289.

⁸ Search Institute. <http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets/lists> (retrieved Sept. 2, 2011)

HOW WILL WE REACH 90%?

We know that graduation matters for an individual and for the community. It's the reason we set 90% by 2020 as our goal. With commitment to our core strategies from United Way and its partners in Anchorage United for Youth, we're making progress as a community. The graduation rate is up 12 percentage points from 2005.



We are already making progress:

- the graduation rate is up more than 12 percentage points from 2005;
- the percent of high school students who believe they matter to people in the community is up four percentage points from 2007;
- the percent of high school students who currently use alcohol is down more than six percentage points from 2005;
- the number of juvenile arrests has decreased nine percent from 2005;
- more than 40 organizations have formally united around the core strategies—they are Anchorage United for Youth; and
- hundreds of Anchorage citizens—people like you—have pledged to help support our youth.

WE KNOW HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION MATTERS. WE KNOW HOW TO IDENTIFY WHO WILL DROP OUT. WE KNOW WHAT HELPS. WE'VE SET A GOAL. WE'RE WORKING HARD TO ATTAIN THAT GOAL.

Our core strategies are to:

- strategically support youth with opportunities inside and outside of school to promote positive development;
- find youth who need more support to be successful and connect them to what they need as early as possible in their academic career;
- mobilize an army of volunteers to encourage, guide and support our youth and their families; and
- build the community's will to join together to help our youth succeed.

WHAT WILL YOU DO TO HELP?



Supportive Community = Youth Success Join the Conversation

In August/September 2011, United Way engaged hundreds of Anchorage residents in more than 30 conversations about youth success and the role of a supportive community. From Assembly members, Chamber board members, neighbors and work groups to friends, faith groups and Rotarians, participants talked about where they interact with youth – “in my neighborhood, at church, while I’m shopping.”

Some conversation participants said they don’t interact with youth because of limited opportunities or time, or because youth can sometimes be “standoffish.” Yet in every conversation, people articulated ideas for simple ways to interact with youth and agreed in general that intentionally seeking opportunities is key.

For more information on how you can make 90% by 2020 a part of your next conversation and how you, your family, workplace, civic, neighborhood, faith-based group or organization can get behind the movement, visit www.90by2020.org or contact Sarah Sledge, United Way of Anchorage, 263.3803 or ssledge@ak.org.



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