

North Dakota Dropout Prevention Summit June 8-9, 2009



April 8, 2009

School Superintendent, High School Principal or NDEA Local President,

During the 2006-2007 school year, the most recent school year for which relevant statistics exist, 778 North Dakota students dropped out of school. That's four to five students leaving for good each and every school day. Put another way it's the equivalent of 20 busloads of kids forfeiting the privilege and advantage of a North Dakota education.

What's more, over the course of a lifetime each dropout will earn about \$260,000 less than he/she would have earned with a high school diploma. For our group of 778 that equals a whopping \$200 million. They will also cost the state about \$2 million per year in public health care assistance.

By several measures North Dakota is a national leader in student graduation, but it seems we can all agree that 778 dropouts are simply too many. In the interest of reducing this troubling number we are convening the first ever **North Dakota Dropout Prevention Summit** June 8-9, 2009 at the Radisson Inn in Bismarck. We sincerely hope you will accept this invitation to participate.

The North Dakota Education Association Foundation and its Ready Child initiative have received a \$25,000 grant and technical assistance from America's Promise Alliance to support the Dropout Prevention Summit. Other summit partners include the North Dakota School Boards Association, the North Dakota Council of Education Leaders, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, the North Dakota Chamber of Commerce, and the Governor's office.

Experts in dropout prevention have for years maintained that effective intervention endeavors must draw on the efforts of both school personnel and other caring citizens. Civic leaders, businesspersons, parents, policymakers, religious leaders, and even students can be key players. That is why we're encouraging schools and communities to form diverse Dropout Prevention Teams (please see the "Dropout Prevention Team Guidelines" form) that will attend the summit together and develop plans to help their youth experience greater success.

Copies of this invitation are being sent to three parties associated with each invited school--the school superintendent, the school principal, and the local North Dakota Education Association affiliate president. Composition of each school's DPT (Dropout Prevention Team) is to be approved by the superintendent and president (see the "Dropout Prevention Team Roster").

Three weeks ago we mailed special early invitations to parties affiliated with several North Dakota high schools possessing high potential to lower their dropout numbers and dropout rates. A large portion of our \$25,000 grant will be used to help those particular schools with travel expenses associated with attending the summit. **We are now opening summit attendance to all North Dakota schools.** We'd love to have you join us in being a part of the solution for North Dakota's kids! Please note, however, that those schools who did not receive the early invitation are not eligible for the travel stipends. Sorry!

North Dakota Dropout Prevention Summit Partners

North Dakota Chamber of Commerce North Dakota Council of Education Leaders North Dakota Department of Public Instruction
North Dakota Education Association North Dakota Governor's Office North Dakota School Boards Association