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Drop Outs Plague Nevada Education Civic, Business, And Social Groups Work To Combat

It has been estimated that as many as 19,500 students from the class of 2008 have dropped out of high school in Nevada, a plague that will impact Nevada's economy for many years to come, according to the group Alliance for Excellent Education. They believe along with the economic struggles each of those drop outs will face, the state will face a workforce that has a limited education. The Nevada Public Education Foundation is working to create a Ready for Life movement in order to keep today's youth in school.

Ready for Life is a statewide movement launched by the Nevada Public Education Foundation to ensure all youth in Nevada are educated, ready to learn, experienced and ready for careers, and connected to adults and their peers. "Our economy and our future depend on our youth," said Laura Granier, chair elect of the Nevada Public Education Foundation, executive board member for Washoe Ready for Life and attorney with Lionel Sawyer and Collins. "We need to work together as a community and leverage our resources to address this critical issue that impacts everyone and every sector."

According to a report from the Heartland Organization, <http://www.heartland.org/>, "More than three out of every 10 U.S. students drop out of high school, thereby lessening their chances of becoming productive, economically successful citizens." The group says that for blacks and Hispanics, "the situation is even worse: Almost half do not complete high school." Some of their figures come from "Public School Graduation Rates in the United States," published by the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research.

The federal government requires each state to submit graduation rates for the entire student body and for various ethnic groups within the student body. Those rates vary drastically across the country, and one group, the Urban Institute, believes it is because most states do not use the same calculating methods.

“By using a reputable single method of calculation, the Cumulative Promotion Index (CPI), the Urban Institute calculated the graduation rates for each state and found differences as large as 33 percentage points between the rates reported by the states and the newly calculated rates. The results suggest that most states are inaccurately defining legislation in regards to reporting data and therefore are also reporting inaccurate data. As a result, other researchers have conducted their own independent studies and placed the true graduation rate around 68%, leaving the national drop out rate approximately 32 percent.” The complete report can be read at

http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/980464/national_dropout_rates_achievement.html

The national figures appear to be in line with what the Nevada Public Education Foundation has found in the Silver State. To address head-on the importance of today's youth staying in school and becoming “ready for life,” the Nevada Public Education Foundation has partnered with the Youth Services Development Group, Washoe County, Washoe County School District, Applied Staffing Solutions, Education Collaborative of Washoe County, Inc., Nevada State Society for Human Resources Management Council, Lionel Sawyer and Collins and the City of Reno to convene leaders, parents and other key stakeholders and members of the community to launch the Ready for Life movement. The first meeting of the group was held on October 29 in Reno. Similar meetings and groups are being established in southern Nevada at this time.

According to business leaders in the state, an educated work force is of paramount importance, and Nevada's education system is not providing that at this time. University leaders have complained regularly about students who are not fully ready for college work coming into the university system. Business oriented groups like the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada (EDAWN) have been promoting Nevada to high tech companies around the country, and while the life style of northern Nevada fits those company's needs, the lack of a highly educated work force does not.

For a look at the entire Nevada Public Education Foundation work, go to

<http://www.readyforlifenv.org/>.

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Summit seeks to decrease Nevada's dropout rate

Updated: Nov 12, 2008 04:19 PM PST

The nation's teen drop-out rate has been described as an "economic tsunami." And it's a problem that has hit Nevada hard as well.

Our state ranks worst in the percentage of dropouts, according to the Nevada Public Education Foundation. *News 3's Marie Mortera* explains that for the first time, a statewide summit aims to change that statistic, and fast.

For every 100 students, almost half don't graduate on time - a fact Edward Brown knows well. His story is played out in schools all over the state.

"I just got lazy - didn't like being in class, wasn't interested enough," says Edward.

State leaders are now on the fast track to turn things around. Welcome to the first Nevada Dropout Prevention Summit, put on by the Nevada Public Education Foundation.

"Clearly education needs to be more of a priority in funding and policies we're passing for students on behalf of our state," says Steven Horsford.

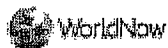
These steps could face some challenges with the budget crisis. But people here say that less money spent on education now could mean more problems with the economy down the road.

"There's a clear nexus between prisons, dropout in juvenile justice, drop out in homelessness," continues Horsford.

Edward now attends Desert Rose High and wants to major in accounting. Of all the questions surrounding dropouts, there's just one on his mind.

Edward asks, "Isn't it worth the time and money for a better future?"

Part of the agenda includes a deadline for increasing graduation rates by 2013. While this summit is the first, folks there expect many more down the road.



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October 31, 2008

Task force aims at reducing Nevada's dropout rate

By Cyndi Loza
cloza@rgj.com

Businessmen, policymakers and school officials joined a town hall meeting Wednesday aimed at establishing a network to reduce the high school dropout rate in Nevada.

"Our hope is to first bring awareness and then start a dialogue with all the key players, which includes law enforcement, community leaders and policymakers," said Laura Granier, foundation representative for the Washoe County Ready for Life steering committee that helped organize the meeting.

About 60 community leaders attended the meeting at Wooster High School on Wednesday evening.

Attendants were able to join one of Ready for Life's four workgroups, which include awareness, community services and supports; policy, sustainability and systems; education; and employment.

Ready for Life, RFL, is a statewide movement launched by the Nevada Public Education Foundation that aims to ensure "all youth in Nevada are educated, ready to learn, experienced and ready for careers, and connected to adults and their peers."

Granier, chairwoman elect of the Nevada Public Education Foundation, said the Ready for Life program differs from other anti-dropout initiatives because it is "not a project."

"What we're doing is leveraging the resources that we have," Granier said.

The group aims to work with various entities, such as the city of Reno, to address the dropout rate in the state.

"The objective of this group is to reengage youth ... so they realize they are a valuable part to this community," said Darryl Feemster Sr., youth/senior division manager for the city of Reno.

State Sen. Steven Horsford,

D-Las Vegas, addressed the town hall meeting via phone about the movement that originated in Southern Nevada.

"(Students dropping-out) is a problem that affects all our community that we have to respond to as a community," Horsford said.

Additional Facts

fast facts

- Only 62 percent of Nevada's youth graduate high school on time; only 10 percent of these young people will eventually earn a four-year degree

- High school dropouts earn less, pay fewer taxes and are more likely to collect welfare
- High school dropouts are 3.5 times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested and more than eight times as likely to be incarcerated
- In Nevada, a 10 percent increase in graduation rates translates into preventing 45 murders and more than 2,000 aggravated assault each year "" this includes 30 murders and more than 1, 300 aggravated assaults in Las Vegas and 5 murders and more than 160 aggravated assaults in Reno.

Source: Ready for Life

join a workgroup

To join one the four workgroups (awareness, community services and supports; policy, sustainability and systems; education; and employment) e-mail RFL@socialent.com before

Nov. 12. The kick-off meeting will be held from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. on Nov. 17 at the Northeast Community Center.

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KVBC-TV

updated 5:00 p.m. PT, Thurs., Nov. 13, 2008

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