



Inviting un-enrolled young people to “Come Home to Minneapolis” and choose a path to graduation

Newsletter Article

Citywide Youth Campaign Hopes to Attract 200 Un-Enrolled Young People Back to School this Fall

Minneapolis Public Schools and the Youth Coordinating Board have joined forces to raise public awareness about the dropout crisis and graduation gap in Minneapolis and enlist the entire community’s help to resolve it. “We Want You Back” invites un-enrolled young people to come back to school, complete their credits and get their diploma. The program’s ambitious goal is to attract back 200 youth and put them on a path where they can be successful. Minneapolis Public Schools is working with its Area Learning Centers, alternative schools and online classes to create attractive programming for un-enrolled young people. Connections are being made among the many existing community resources in a citywide effort to do whatever it takes to help youth graduate.

Many Minneapolis students leave school before graduating for a host of reasons. While some eventually may re-enroll in another district, others do not and Minneapolis Public schools often finds it difficult to locate them. Some of these former students are very close to earning their diploma, lacking only a few credits or a passing grade on one of the state’s tests.

The Youth Coordinating Board plans to mobilize and train as many as 1,000 volunteers to connect with young people who want to return to school. The campaign’s strategy includes a summer-long push of community outreach at more than 30 events to generate awareness, culminating in a citywide door-knocking event the second Saturday after school starts, September 11, 2010. Minneapolis Public Schools staff will be available that day to re-enroll students on the spot.

While the door-knocking event is likely to generate tremendous awareness at the critical “back to school” time of the year, We Want You Back is not a one-time event. The schools, City, County and others are committed to an ongoing partnership that will deliver the ongoing support young people need to be successful.

We Want You Back is based on a successful model that is working in cities like Houston and Philadelphia. Superintendent Bernadeia Johnson, Mayor R.T. Rybak and Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman are jointing chairing the campaign. The campaign is also seeking support and sponsorships from a host of public, private and nonprofit organizations.

How You Can Help

The We Want You Back campaign is looking for volunteers to help reach young people who did not finish school.

Connect young people with school programs and services at the following:

- Summer neighborhood fairs and events. Volunteer for 2-4 hours.
- Saturday, August 14 and Sunday, August 15 Empower Me! Conference for young people at Minneapolis Convention Center.
- Saturday, September 11
Join hundreds of people walking together, dropping information fliers, and talking to neighbors around the city.
- Bilingual volunteers who can speak Spanish, Hmong or Somali are needed.

To sign up to volunteer, please visit www.wewantyoubackmpls.org

To find out more about volunteer and sponsorship opportunities, contact Jo Haberman, Youth Coordinating Board, 612-673-2720 or wwyb@ycb.org.

If you know a young person who would like to re-enroll or to find out more about Minneapolis school programs and services, contact Mary Barrie, Minneapolis Public Schools at 612-668-0721 or mary.barrie@mpls.k12.mn.us.