

WE WANT YOU BACK

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

Fact Sheet

What

- We Want You Back focuses public attention on the dropout crisis and graduation gap in Minneapolis and combines effective strategies with community resources to resolve it.
- Minneapolis Public Schools piloted We Want You Back in 2009 with the goal of identifying recent school dropouts and doing whatever it takes to bring them back to school.
- With the support of the Youth Coordinating Board, we are building a citywide campaign to mobilize volunteers and let our young people know: WE WANT YOU BACK!

Goals leading up to September 11, 2010, Citywide Door-Knock:

- **1,000 school and community volunteers** are trained and mobilized to connect with young people by door knocking, phone or text message.
- **2,000 young people** are contacted with the message: WE WANT YOU BACK.
- **200 students** re-enroll in a school that puts them on a path to graduation.

Why

- For a variety of reasons, many students leave school before graduating. In some cases, MPS is unable to determine if they ever re-enroll in another school district.
- Some of these students are very close to earning their diploma, lacking only a few credits or a passing grade on one of the state’s tests.
- Others are middle school age, not even old enough to be considered a dropout and legally required to be in school.
- Connecting with un-enrolled students and encouraging them to return to school is a job MPS cannot do alone. YCB and its community connections are critical to mobilizing the citywide effort needed to reach young people and put them on a path to graduation.

How

Students and needs vary:

- **Middle school students, ages 12-15;** preferred approach may be a return to their traditional middle school.
- **High school students, ages 16-18;** may be a few credits short or need to pass a state test; a traditional high school may not be the right fit. The preferred approach may be online learning or an alternative school. Several options will be available for these students.
- **Transition-age students, ages 18-21;** language barriers and challenging life situations may require multiple pathways for academic and other needs.



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We Want You Back is not a one-time event. It is a partnership between the schools and the broader community and a commitment to our young people that we will support them on the path to graduation.

- Who**
- Minneapolis Public Schools is committed to the vision, “Every Child College Ready.” Reaching out to *every* student and doing whatever it takes to help them complete high school and get their diploma is a moral imperative. Area Learning Centers and alternative schools are critical to this work, forging strong community connections that support students’ progress.
 - The Youth Coordinating Board is ideally suited to mobilize community volunteers and to link efforts among the schools, the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, the Minneapolis Park Board, the Hennepin County Library and a wide range of youth-serving agencies, nonprofits, congregations and community and business organizations.
 - We Want You Back Campaign Chairs are Superintendent Bernadeia Johnson, Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak and Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman.
 - The campaign will be supported by a host of public, private and nonprofit organizations.

- Citywide Door Knock Sept. 11**
- Trained volunteer teams will blanket the city to send a clear message: WE WANT YOU BACK!
 - Teams will receive instructions for connecting with targeted groups of young people (e.g., depending on language needs, age, etc.).
 - We Want You Back Central, a one-stop shop of wrap-around services and resources, will be open for drop-ins and phone calls from students interested in re-enrolling in school ON THE SPOT.
 - MPS Staff at We Want You Back Central will be able answer students’ questions:
 - How many credits do I need to graduate?
 - What school programs will work for me?
 - What other requirements do I need to get back in school today?
 - What other job and community supports are available to help me as I work toward graduation?

We Want You Back awareness is building now through September, with volunteer community outreach opportunities available monthly.

To learn more about the We Want You Back campaign or to volunteer: Jo Haberman, Youth Coordinating Board, 612-673-2720 or wwyb@ycb.org.

To learn more about school programs and options: Mary Barrie, Minneapolis Public Schools 612-668-0721 or mary.barrie@mpls.k12.mn.us.