I. Rallying Your Community to End the Dropout Crisis

☐ **DEMONSTRATE A DROPOUT CRISIS EXISTS**
  - Every 26 seconds a student drops out of high school, resulting in 1.2 million dropouts, nationwide, every year
  - Gather local data

☐ **DEMONSTRATE THE CRIPPLING COSTS OF CRISIS**
  - Economic Impact
    - Wage Earning Gap
    - Social Services Cost
  - Idleness
  - Productive Citizenry

☐ **DEMONSTRATE CRISIS IS SOLVABLE**
  - We know who drops out and why
  - We know what helps kids stay on the path to graduation
  - Proven interventions and reforms, with accountability for results

☐ **DEMONSTRATE YOUR COMMUNITY MUST TAKE ACTION**
  - Identify crucial role of community in ending dropout crisis
    - Diverse pool of stakeholders: educators, parents, business leaders, nonprofits, students themselves
  - Confront skeptics who claim either the crisis doesn’t exist, or that all students don’t need to graduate from high school
    - Get accurate data in their hands
    - Explain the necessity of a diploma in economic and civic terms

II. Understanding Your Community’s Dropout Crisis

ACCURATE, LOCAL DATA:

☐ How big is your problem?
  - What percentage of students who start ninth grade in your community do not graduate from high school in four years?
  - Each year, how many students drop out?
  - What schools in your community have the biggest problem?
  - During what grade(s) are students most likely to drop out?
  - How early can you reliably identify a significant number of students who absent effective intervention have high odds of dropping out?

☐ **WHEN AND WHY ARE STUDENTS DROPPING OUT?**
  - Consider all the points students begin to disengage, and eventually drop out – for some it’s 9th, 6th, or even 3rd grade
  - Look at transcripts to determine:
    - How many credits were dropouts shy of graduating?
    - Failure in which courses was most associated with dropping out?
  - What schools have the biggest problem?
  - Why are students dropping out?
    - Possibilities include: life events, fade outs, push outs and a failure to succeed in school
    - Surveys to get local perspective

☐ **HOW DOES YOUR COMMUNITY RESPONSE MEASURE UP?**
  - Are existing supports directed to right students at the right time?
  - Are current supports comprehensive and effective?
  - What other responses are needed?
  - What current efforts need to be reformed, modified or abandoned because they aren’t working?

☐ **POLICY AUDIT: WHAT POLICIES NEED TO CHANGE?**
  - Attendance Policies
III. Solutions for Comprehensively Addressing Your Community’s Dropout Crisis

- DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE SET OF SOLUTIONS
  - Increase number of skilled and committed adults providing supports to students
  - Increase parental support
  - Launch and maintain community campaign to improve student attendance
- CREATING SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION
  - Organizational/Structural Reform
  - Instructional, Curricular, Assessment Reforms
  - Leadership Reforms
- IMPROVING COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS
  - Provide Rigorous College & Work Preparatory Curriculum for ALL Students
  - Expand college level learning opportunities in HS
  - Provide supports for students to make transition to college
- DEVELOP DROPOUT PREVENTION AND RECOVERY SYSTEMS
  - Establish early warning systems
  - Multi-tiered response system
  - Multiple pathways to success and alternate recovery programs

IV. Moving Forward to Create Lasting Change

- IDENTIFY LEADERS & BUILD TEAMS
  - Bring together community leaders who will be engaged over a sustained period of time to address this crisis
  - Organize leaders around a measurable, specific plan for your community that they can help execute and keep the community accountable for
  - Tap into existing assets in your community
- ORGANIZE A SUMMIT TO INSPIRE & MOBILIZE SUPPORT
  - Build community by-in
  - Report on new/accurate local data
  - Foster dialogue among key constituencies
- DEVELOP COMMUNITY GRADUATION COMPACT
  - Put your community’s shared vision down on paper with real benchmarks, goals and timelines
  - Carefully identify partners whose collaboration will help achieve these goals on time, and with accountability
  - How local assets can be best leveraged to increase the graduation rate
- PREPARE FOR LONG-TERM ACTION AND SUCCESS
  - Keep key constituencies engaged with a mechanism for checking in on actual benchmarks and timetables
  - Celebrate incremental successes and work to address gaps as they present themselves

NOW IT’S TIME TO USE GRAD NATION

BEGIN WITH THE GRAD NATION ACTION TOOL TO ASSESS PRESENT STATUS:

- IDENTIFY GOALS
- IDENTIFY PARTNERS & ROLES
- IDENTIFY TIMELINE & BENCHMARKS
- ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY

DRAW ON VAST RESOURCES IN THE TOOLKIT, PAIRED WITH ALL ACTION STEPS IN GUIDEBOOK, TO BEGIN THE WORK IN YOUR COMMUNITY.