

GRADUATE GREENVILLE

High School Success for *All* Students



Community Action Plan

June 9, 2006

A partnership of
Greenville County Schools
United Way of Greenville County
The Alliance for Quality Education

GRADUATE GREENVILLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION: Why is this a Community Effort?	3
CALL TO ACTION	4
COMMUNITY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS: Four-Year Action Plan	10
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	15
APPENDIX A: Greenville County High School Data	17
APPENDIX B: Development of the Community Action Plan	18
APPENDIX C: Community Action Plan Participants	20
APPENDIX D: Overview of Knowledge Base	21
- Action Plan Measures	
- Benchmark Sites	
- Voices	
- Strategies	
- Research	
- Excerpts from State and National Studies	
- References	
APPENDIX E: Why Should I Stay in High School?	22

GRADUATE GREENVILLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2005, almost four out of every five high school students in Greenville County Schools (GCS) graduated within four years, 79.3% according to the measure used by the State Department of Education. GCS high schools are implementing a wide variety of reform initiatives such as the twilight schools included in next year's budget by the School Board of Trustees. The success of these efforts is reflected in the fact that 86 per cent of GCS high school graduates plan on pursuing postsecondary education.

However, the Greenville community wants to ensure that *all* of our students succeed, graduate from high school, and go on to live highly productive lives. We recognize that the community as a whole must work together to ensure that a greater percentage of our young adults succeed in high school, and that we must work with the schools to achieve that goal. The successful implementation of the Action Plan is critical for our community—vital to improving our economic competitiveness, reducing crime and other social costs to our community, and increasing chances for lifetime success for students.

Consequently, in the spring of 2005, Greenville County Schools, United Way of Greenville County, and The Alliance for Quality Education formed a partnership to initiate and support a community-wide effort to improve high school success and increase the graduation rate. The partnership established a steering committee consisting of community and school leaders to guide the development of this document—the **GRADUATE GREENVILLE** Community Action Plan.

Many elements went into developing the Plan. Aided by individual members of the steering committee, a staff work group reviewed the Greenville County Schools strategic plan, current practices and programs in our high schools, and the State Education and Economic Development Act. Extensive time was spent researching national models and effective practices, which included visiting best practice sites and attending conferences on improving high school achievement. In addition, community forums were held throughout Greenville County with participation from nearly 800 persons from all sectors of the community.

The goal of **GRADUATE GREENVILLE** is to increase the percentage of GCS high school students graduating within four years to 85 percent by 2010. The increase of 6 percentage points will be reached by graduating 300 additional students in the class of 2010 throughout the fourteen high schools in Greenville County. This will be accomplished by embracing a vision of high schools focused on the Three R's for high school success: **Rigor, Relevance and Relationships**. These three R's are embraced in the Strategic Plan of the Greenville County Schools for 2005-2010. Components of the Community Action Plan include the following strategies and major actions:

STRATEGY 1: A culture of high expectations for all students

- Action 1: Strengthen and expand "high expectations" effective practices in our high schools.
- Action 2: Strengthen and expand student early warning systems in high schools and their feeder middle schools. (Early warning means both identification and follow-up action.)

STRATEGY 2: A commitment to extra help and options for potential dropouts

- Action 1: Strengthen and expand extra help practices starting with low-performing ninth graders.
- Action 2: Promote flexible learning options such as credit recovery, distance learning, internships, and flexible student schedules.
- Action 3: Advocate for continued funding of existing ninth grade academies (small learning communities) and expansion of this program into all high schools.
- Action 4: Promote implementation of alternative school programs for high school students with different needs regarding family, work, career interests, or ability to fit into a traditional high school setting.

STRATEGY 3: A community that values education

- Action 1: Conduct a public education campaign on the importance of high school graduation and the need for community involvement to increase high school success.
- Action 2: Conduct community outreach to populations at risk for dropping out.

In order to accomplish the **GRADUATE GREENVILLE** Community Action Plan, the following organizational structure consisting of four major components will be implemented.

GRADUATE GREENVILLE Board

- Members: Representatives of Greenville County Schools, United Way of Greenville County, The Alliance for Quality Education
- Key Responsibilities: Make decisions on action plan implementation; design and implement a fundraising plan; oversee Coordinator; meet monthly.

GRADUATE GREENVILLE Advisory Council (GGAC)

- Members: 20 Community Leaders/Stakeholders
- Key Responsibilities: Build community awareness; enlist support and resources; advise on priorities; meet quarterly.

GRADUATE GREENVILLE Coordinator

- Full-time independent contractor to be hired by the Board
- Key Responsibilities: Implement the Community Action Plan; demonstrate leadership skills in supporting the Advisory Council; manage the workflow of the Action Teams; manage information and knowledge dissemination; support the Board's fundraising efforts; meet regularly with the Board.

GRADUATE GREENVILLE Action Teams

- Strategy 1 "*High Expectations*" Action Team, to be led by Greenville County Schools
- Strategy 2 "*Extra Help & Options*" Action Team, to be led by United Way of Greenville County
- Strategy 3 "*Valuing Education*" Action Team, to be led by The Alliance for Quality Education
- Key Responsibilities: Communicate and meet regularly with the Coordinator, implement the Community Action Plan; enlist community members as needed.

INTRODUCTION: Why is this a Community Effort?

The **GRADUATE GREENVILLE** Community Action Plan is a road map for actions the Greenville County community can take to partner with Greenville County Schools (GCS) to increase high school success and dramatically improve the high school graduation rate in Greenville County. Our public high schools and the performance of our students are only as good as the public—our community—wants them to be. ***Increasing the high school graduation rate is a community issue requiring a community solution.***

The Community Action Plan works in tandem with the GCS's 2005-2010 Strategic Plan. The GCS strategic plan directs school personnel on their responsibilities and goals. Currently, GCS is leading the way in many exciting high school programs and initiatives including distance learning, credit recovery, and ninth-grade academies. The Community Action Plan directs the community on the needed actions that will strengthen and support these and other programs and initiatives. The community strategies and action tasks in this document were selected because they are proven strategies that add value to the current work being done in our high schools to improve high school success for all students.

Implementing the Community Action Plan requires a partnership between the community and Greenville County Schools. Communication and collaboration are the keys. Knowing the direction of GCS in implementing its strategic plan, the community can implement its action tasks in a way that complements GCS initiatives leading to maximum positive outcomes for our high school students.

Across the nation, high-achieving high schools and high graduation rates occur in communities that are actively involved in improving their schools. Communities provide services that improve student learning. Communities bring volunteers and other additional resources including foundation and government grant support. Communities develop partnerships and coordinate activities to achieve greater results for students. Communities advocate and develop consensus for needed changes. Communities communicate actions, results, and opportunities that promote greater community involvement and support.

As a community, Greenville County citizens have shown a great ability to identify community needs and problems and work together to achieve success in improving our quality of life. The challenges our community high schools face are no different. ***This is a community issue requiring a community solution.***

CALL TO ACTION

Purpose

GRADUATE GREENVILLE is the result of a community-wide initiative to determine the best strategies to improve the education and development of high school youth in Greenville County so that a higher percentage of students succeed and graduate from high school. The initiative was led by three partner organizations—Greenville County Schools, United Way of Greenville County, and The Alliance for Quality Education—and had three objectives:

1. Increased community awareness, understanding, and support of the issue of improving high school success.
2. Community-developed strategies for improving high school success leading to increased graduation rates in Greenville County.
3. An action plan and the necessary community partnerships to successfully implement the strategies.

79% of our youth in Greenville County currently graduate within 4 years

The goal of Greenville County Schools is to increase that percentage to 83% by 2010

With community involvement as set out in this action plan, our goal is 85% by 2010

Increasing high school success is a community priority

Increasing high school success and the graduation rate is vital to our community for several reasons:

- All youth in our community should have the best possible opportunity to succeed in high school so they can live a healthy, productive life.
- Increasing the graduation rate will reduce the long-term social costs to our community of crime, incarceration, drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, unemployment, poverty, and welfare dependency.
- Increasing the number of high school graduates will improve our community's economic competitiveness by reducing the costs of re-education and job training and improving our ability to attract and keep talented people and high-paying jobs in Greenville County.
- Our schools reflect our community's values and priorities. As a community, our children are our most valuable resource. They are our future workforce and our future leaders. For better or worse, they will shape our community's future direction and quality of life.

Greenville County cares about our youth because...

Students who graduate greatly increase their chances for lifetime success

- *The average annual salary of a dropout is \$9,200 less than for a high school graduate.*
- *A male dropout, working full-time, earns 35% less (in real dollars) than in 1971.*
- *Dropouts in Greenville County are twice as likely to be unemployed.*
- *Dropouts in Greenville County are 2.5 times as likely to live in poverty.*
- *High school dropouts are 3.5 times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested and 8 times as likely to be in jail or prison.*
- *Dropouts have a life expectancy that is 9.2 years shorter than that of a graduate.*
- *A higher percentage of minority students are “lost.” More than 35% of African-American and Hispanic students in Greenville County fail to graduate within four years and most are males.*

Increasing the number of graduates reduces crime and other social costs to our community

- *61% of convicts in South Carolina state prisons are high school dropouts.*
- *It costs more than twice as much per year to incarcerate a prisoner in our state (\$13,590) and in our county (\$17,213) than to educate a student in Greenville County (\$6,498).*
- *40% of young-adult dropouts receive some type of government assistance.*
- *Nationally, crime and welfare benefits associated with dropouts cost the public \$24 billion annually.*
- *Higher rates of illness among high school dropouts cost communities an average of \$100,000 in health care costs for each dropout.*
- *A one-year increase in average years of schooling for dropouts would reduce murder and assault by almost 30% and motor vehicle theft by 20%.*

Increasing the number of graduates improves our economic competitiveness

- *The number of jobs requiring education beyond high school is growing twice as fast as jobs that only require on-the-job training.*
- *American business spends more than \$60 billion each year on training, much of that on remedial reading, writing, and mathematics.*
- *Cutting the dropout rate in half in South Carolina would increase income in the state by \$108 million.*
- *America loses 1.6% of gross domestic product every year for each group of 18-year-olds who never complete high school.*
- *School districts in regional competitor communities such as Charlotte, Atlanta, Chattanooga, and Raleigh are leading the way in effective high school reforms.*
- *The South Carolina Competitiveness Initiative strategic plan calls for reducing dropout rates and improving “articulation from K-12 to post-secondary options.”*

Note: Data sources can be found in the accompanying Knowledge Base document (see Appendix D).

Our Vision for High School Success: *The “Three R’s”*

Society and our economy have changed enormously in the past 100 years, and our high schools need to change as well. Both Greenville County Schools and national organizations working to transform our high schools recognize that the status quo is not sufficient. Our school district and organizations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation agree that a new vision for our high schools is needed to improve high school success and increase graduation rates, particularly for low-income and minority students.

Our action plan embraces this new vision for our high schools—a new vision focused on Three R’s for high school success: ***Rigor, Relevance and Relationships***.

In Greenville County,

Our Three R’s for High School Success

Rigor – High expectations for every student and a challenging curriculum prepares them for college or a career.

Relevance – Student coursework and their school schedule clearly relate to their lives and goals.

Relationships – Every student has a number of caring adults who know them, look out for them, and can push them to achieve.

A high school diploma is no longer sufficient preparation for the high-growth, knowledge-driven jobs of the future. All jobs, including positions in manufacturing, construction and auto mechanics, now require higher level thinking skills than before. These and other jobs that pay good salaries require training and education beyond high school. Thus, our first “R,” ***Rigor***—high expectations for all students and a challenging curriculum that prepares them for college or a career—is essential to preparing every student to succeed and prosper in our highly competitive economy. When we say rigor and high expectations for all students, ***all means all***.

Many high school students—even the college-bound—find school boring. We must continue to make the high school curriculum more challenging and engaging so that students are able to connect their studies with their lives and futures. High schools serve youth who are in transition to adulthood—jobs, college, careers. Knowing they must prepare for this transition, students seek hands-on, active learning and experience that they see relates to their future.

In addition, many students have important responsibilities beyond their schoolwork. Many must work to help support their families. Others care for sick and elderly parents and grandparents or take care of younger siblings. A growing number of students must be available to translate for their non-English speaking parents at their workplace, doctor’s appointments, and with government and community agency representatives.

Thus, the need for our second “R,” **Relevance**—student coursework that clearly relates to their lives and goals as well as flexible scheduling and alternative learning options that meet the schedules and needs of these students.

No student starts high school wanting to be a dropout. However, all youth need, and deserve, the attention and support of adults—at home and in school. Unfortunately, many students do not feel they have an advocate. All high school students need an adult who cares, supports, prods, and guides them to be successful in high school. *All* high school students need the third “R,” **Relationships**—a number of caring adults who know them, look out for them, and can push them to achieve.

Increasing the graduation rate requires a community solution

Increasing the high school graduation rate is a community issue requiring a community solution. Every dropout is a potential burden to our community. Every student we lose reduces our economic prosperity and quality of life. Each of our students deserves the best possible opportunity to succeed. Our public high schools and the performance of these students are only as good as the public—our community—wants them to be.

As a community, Greenville County citizens have shown a great ability to identify community needs and problems and work together to achieve success in improving our quality of life. The challenges our community high schools face are no different. **This is a community issue requiring a community solution.**

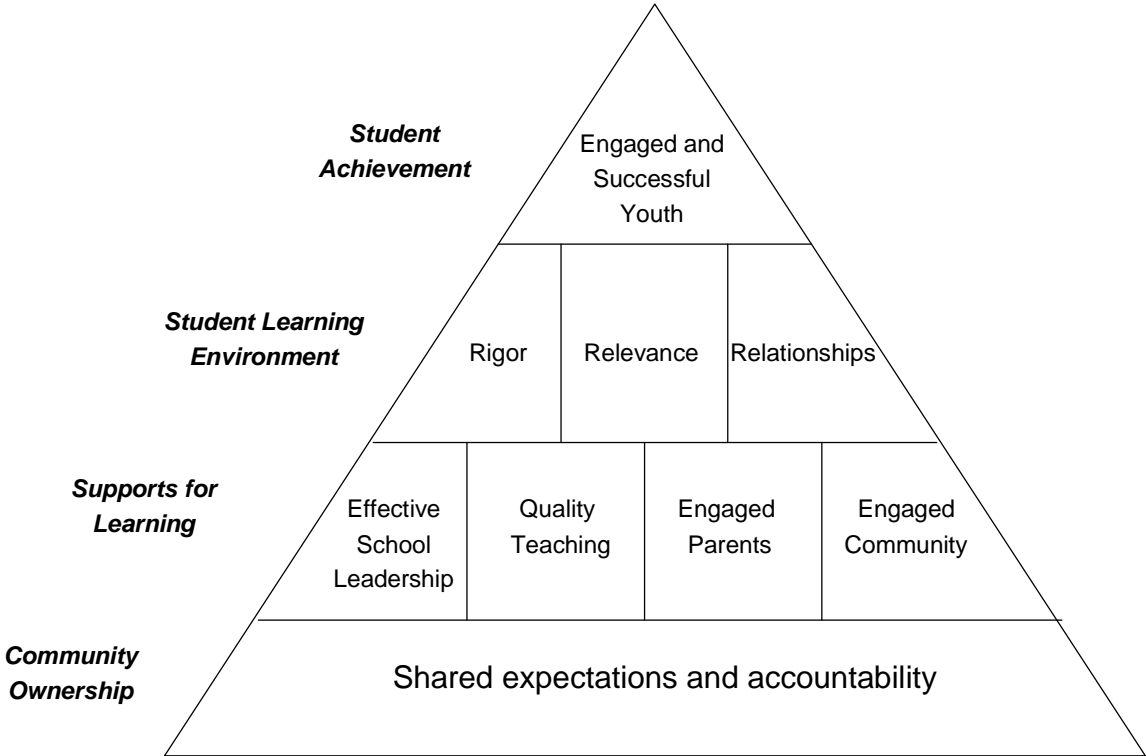
And we can succeed! We can reach our goal of 85% of ninth-grade students graduating on time by 2010. The **GRADUATE GREENVILLE** community coalition can work to ensure that, on average, 22 more ninth-graders graduate on time at each of our fourteen high schools. The resulting 300 additional graduates countywide will allow us to reach our goal.

<p>To reach an 85% graduation rate by 2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>22 more graduates per high school</i>• <i>300 more graduates countywide</i>

This action plan lays out a road map for how **GRADUATE GREENVILLE**—the community in partnership with the school district—can achieve our 85% goal by 2010. The diagram below shows the building blocks of community responsibility and involvement required to increase our graduation rate by six percentage points in four years.

As shown in the following diagram, the foundation for increasing high school success is a community that takes ownership of the issue. With the school district, the community must share responsibility and accountability for increasing the graduation rate. Secondly, the community must act to provide the necessary supports for learning that enhance and improve the opportunities and experiences our high schools can provide for all students. Only through community involvement can our high schools create a learning environment that incorporates all three essential elements for student success: **Rigor, Relevance and Relationships**. At the top, the focus of all efforts should be the student with the result that *all* students are engaged, successful, and achieving at a high level.

Community Building Blocks for Increasing High School Success



Community Measures of Success

The following table displays six community measures of success. Achieving the goals for these indicators will drive the action of **GRADUATE GREENVILLE**. The baseline data provides our current achievement level for each measure. Changes in the indicators will measure our overall success and tell us on an annual basis whether our partnerships and initiatives are the right ones and are sufficient to attain our objectives. Progress will be tracked and reported during each year of the action plan.

The six community measures of success were chosen based on three standards: 1) Is the measurement simple and easy to understand? 2) Is the data for that measure “clean” (is the data available and computed and presented in the same way every year)? and 3) Is the measurement valued by educators, parents, business leaders, and the general community?

<i>Measure</i>	<i>2005 Baseline Data</i>	<i>2010 Goal</i>
Percent of second-year students who passed both subtests of the High School Assessment Program (HSAP)	72.6%	80%
Percent of ninth-graders promoted to tenth grade in one year	Not currently reported; To be estimated.	95%
High school out-of-school suspensions and expulsions for violent and/or criminal offenses, as a percentage of high school enrollment	2.7%	2.0%
High school attendance rate	94.7%	95%
Graduation rate (<i>State definition</i>)	79.3%	85%
Percent of graduates attending postsecondary education	86.4%	88%

In addition, each of the community actions (discussed in the following section) will have its own measures and goals. These are listed in Tab 1 of the accompanying Knowledge Base document (see Appendix D). The action-specific measures will direct the community in enhancing or modifying each action in order to achieve our overall, community-level measures of success.

**COMMUNITY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS:
Four-Year Action Plan
2006-07 through 2009-10***

During the next four years, *GRADUATE GREENVILLE* will implement three strategies for increasing high school success and improving the graduation rate. All three strategies address our three “R’s” for high school success: *Rigor, Relevance* and *Relationships*.

STRATEGY 1: A culture of high expectations for all students

Strategy 1 will ensure our high schools are learning environments where school administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers have high expectations for all students. This includes the low-performing and special needs students. *All* means *all*. All students are expected to succeed and not only graduate from high school, but leave high school prepared for a career or additional education in a two- or four-year college program.

STRATEGY 2: A commitment to extra help and options for potential dropouts

Strategy 2 will build the necessary student support and options to keep potential high school dropouts in school. High school staff members take responsibility for ensuring that low-performing students are matched with mentors/tutors and other needed assistance. In addition, for students who find that the traditional high school and the regular class schedule do not meet their needs, alternative and flexible ways of completing coursework are available that keep these students in school.

STRATEGY 3: A community that values education

Strategy 3 will increase the value our community places on successfully educating our children and youth. The importance of education in our homes, our neighborhoods, and our community has tremendous impact on the ability of principals, teachers, parents, and students to succeed. Our high schools will be high-achieving schools because all sectors of our community, from our most vulnerable to our community leaders, will recognize that successfully educating our youth is the greatest single factor that will determine our future economic prosperity and quality of life.

**This four-year period aligns with Greenville County Schools current 2005 – 2010 Strategic Plan.*

Actions	Community Action Tasks	Timelines	Team Leads and Members
	2b. Develop collaborative networks between schools and community organizations to identify and assist at-risk students.	Years 1 - 4	

ACTION PLAN for STRATEGY 2: A commitment to extra help and options for potential dropouts

Actions	Community Action Tasks	Timelines	Team Leads and Members
1. Strengthen and expand extra help practices starting with low-performing ninth graders.	1a. Share knowledge of effective practices for extra help. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear expectations for frequency of contact ▪ Ongoing program monitoring ▪ Structured activities for mentors and students. 	Year 1	<u>Lead: United Way of Greenville County</u> <u>Potential Members</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenville County Schools • United Way of Greenville County • The Alliance for Quality Education • PTSA's • Higher Education partners • Community agencies and organizations • Community centers • Faith-based organizations • Young professionals groups • Senior adult groups • Business partners • www.mentorplace.org • High school students
	1b. Implement a community campaign to increase awareness and seek community support for mentors and academic tutors for low-performing ninth-grade students. Examples of campaign partners include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employers ▪ Faith-based organizations ▪ Community organizations. 	Years 1 - 4	
	1c. Support implementation of extra help in the high schools and in community organizations serving those students.	Years 1 - 4	
2. Promote flexible learning options such as credit recovery, distance learning, internships and flexible student schedules.	2a. Help the school system communicate the availability of student options.	Years 1 - 4	
	2b. Meet with key employers to solicit internship, service-learning, and project-based opportunities for low-performing students.	Years 1 - 4	
	2c. Support student use of these options (such as by providing financial and transportation assistance).	Years 1 - 4	

Actions	Community Action Tasks	Timelines	Team Leads and Members
<p>3. Advocate for continued funding of existing ninth grade academies (small learning communities) and expansion of this program into all high schools.</p> <p><i>(Federal funding for 6 of these programs expires at the end of the 2006-07 school year.)</i></p>	<p>3a. Publicize results from the ninth grade academies in Greenville. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in number of students who progress directly from the ninth to the tenth grade ▪ Decrease in ninth-grade suspensions. <p>3b. Advocate for, and help secure, funding for continuation of existing ninth-grade academies.</p> <p>3c. Advocate for, and help secure, funding for expansion of ninth-grade academies to all high schools.</p>	<p>Years 1 - 4</p> <p>Years 1 - 2</p> <p>Years 2 - 4</p>	
<p>4. Promote implementation of alternative school programs for high school students with different needs regarding family, work, career interests, or ability to fit into a traditional high school setting.</p>	<p>4a. Share knowledge of effective alternative school practices based on recent research. Examples of effective practices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Flexible schedule: Twilight, night, and Saturday options; full day and partial day; four-day school week; late-start day ▪ Low student-teacher ratio (10:1) ▪ Innovative teaching practices ▪ Total school enrollment of 250 students ▪ Support for families ▪ Community involvement. <p>4b. Advocate for, and support implementation of, alternative school programs.</p> <p>4c. Facilitate and support the establishment of a middle college (a dual-credit high school program for at-risk students).</p> <p>4d. Explore transitioning the four career centers into comprehensive high schools that meet diverse student needs.</p> <p>4e. Explore establishing small learning environments such as “schools within a school.”</p>	<p>Year 1</p> <p>Years 1 - 4</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>Years 2 - 4</p> <p>Years 2 - 4</p>	

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The chart on the following page provides an overview of a proposed organizational structure for implementing the **GRADUATE GREENVILLE** Community Action Plan. The structure is composed of four major components: Board, Advisory Council, Coordinator, and three Action Teams.

GRADUATE GREENVILLE Board

- Members: Representatives of Greenville County Schools, United Way of Greenville County, The Alliance for Quality Education
- Key Responsibilities: Make decisions on action plan implementation; design and implement a fundraising plan; oversee Coordinator; meet monthly beginning July 2006.

GRADUATE GREENVILLE Advisory Council (GGAC)

- Members: 20 Community Leaders/Stakeholders
Key Responsibilities: Build community awareness; enlist support and resources; advise on priorities; meet quarterly beginning in September 2006.

GRADUATE GREENVILLE Coordinator

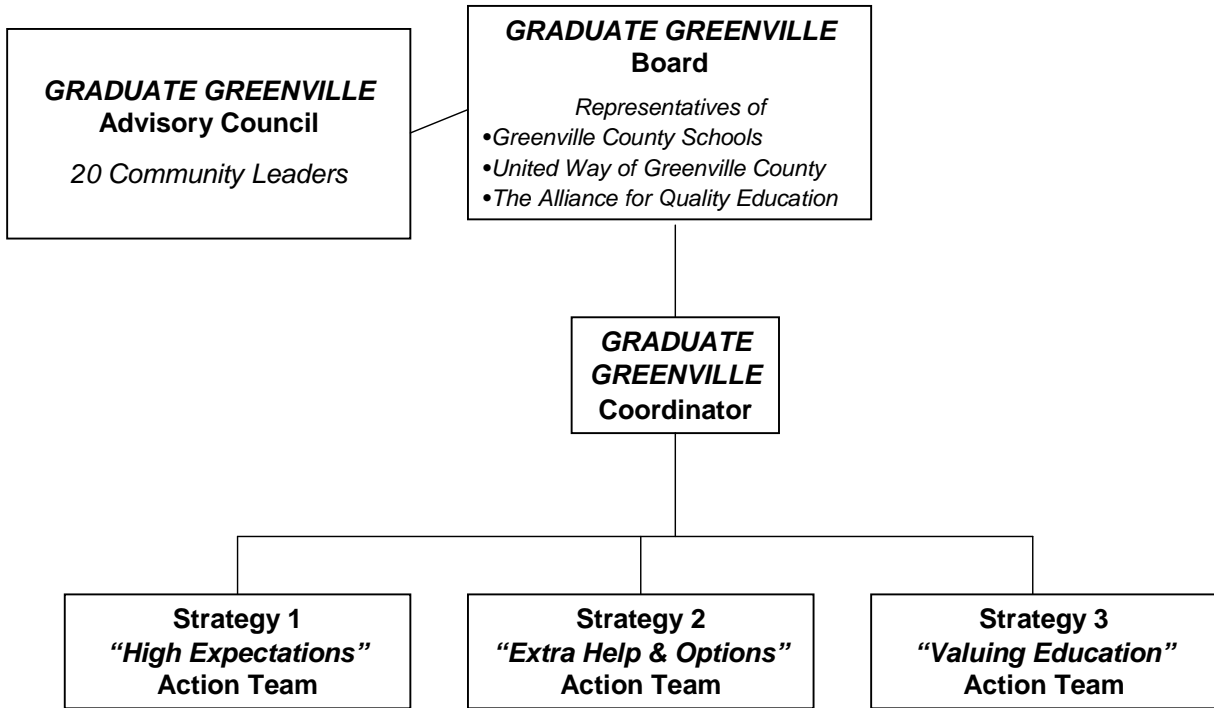
- Full-time independent contractor to be hired by the Board by August 2006.
- Key Responsibilities: Implement the Community Action Plan; demonstrate leadership skills in supporting the Advisory Council; manage the workflow of the Action Teams; manage information and knowledge dissemination; support the Board's fundraising efforts; meet regularly with the Board.

GRADUATE GREENVILLE Action Teams

- Strategy 1 "*High Expectations*" Action Team, to be led by Greenville County Schools
- Strategy 2 "*Extra Help & Options*" Action Team, to be led by United Way of Greenville County
- Strategy 3 "*Valuing Education*" Action Team, to be led by The Alliance for Quality Education
- Action Teams communicate and meet regularly with the Coordinator
- Key Responsibilities: Implement the Community Action Plan; enlist community members as needed.
- As shown in the four-year action plan, the Action Teams will involve diverse representation from key sectors of the community. This includes high school students. For the teams to succeed, it is critical that they listen to student voices on how to improve high schools.
- Action Teams to be established by September 2006 with implementation of one or more action tasks begun in the fall of 2006.

GRADUATE GREENVILLE

High School Success for *All* Students



**APPENDIX A:
Greenville County Schools High School Data**

School Name	2005 Enroll.	2005 P.I.*	2005 Grad. Rate	Absolute Ratings			Improvement Ratings		
				2005	2004	2003	2005	2004	2003
Berea High	1,094	64.7	72.3	Average	Average	Average	Below Average	Excellent	Unsatisfactory
Blue Ridge High	1,095	35.4	82.0	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent
Carolina High	692	78.7	60.5	Unsatisfactory	Average	Average	Unsatisfactory	Average	Excellent
Eastside High	1,301	25.4	90.8	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent
Greenville Senior High	1,258	47.1	79.0	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Average	Unsatisfactory	Excellent
Greer High	1,201	44.5	65.5	Good	Good	Good	Below Average	Average	Average
Hillcrest Senior High	2,280	32.0	84.8	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good	Unsatisfactory	Average
J L Mann High	1,309	32.2	80.2	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Mauldin High	2,158	25.0	83.6	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Good
Riverside High	1,348	15.8	93.6	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good
Southside High	834	67.6	71.0	Average	Average	Below Average	Average	Excellent	Below Average
Travelers Rest High	1,227	46.9	81.3	Good	Excellent	Good	Below Average	Excellent	Below Average
Wade Hampton High	1,216	38.0	71.5	Average	Good	Excellent	Below Average	Unsatisfactory	Good
Woodmont High	1,019	59.5	67.2	Average	Below Average	Average	Excellent	Unsatisfactory	Good

*Poverty Index: Percentage of students eligible for Federal Free/Reduced-Price Lunch program and/or Medicaid. Source: State Education Oversight Committee web site (<http://www.sceoc.com/>).

APPENDIX B: Development of the Community Action Plan

Beginning in the spring of 2005, United Way of Greenville County, Greenville County Schools, and The Alliance for Quality Education worked as partners to develop the Community Action Plan to improve high school success and increase the graduation rate.

Development of the plan was guided by a steering committee of community leaders. Dr. Phinnize Fisher, Superintendent of Greenville County Schools, and Mr. Frank Holleman, past chair of United Way of Greenville County, co-chaired the twenty-person steering committee consisting of leaders from the business community, the school district, higher education, the faith community, and community service agencies. *(See a list of steering committee members in Appendix C.)* Staff and volunteers from the three partner organizations worked with two nationally-recognized consultants, Dr. Gloria Frazier and Ms. Kerry Flanagan of the International Center on Collaboration, to facilitate, design, and staff the work of the initiative.

Aided by individual members of the steering committee, the staff work group completed the following tasks in developing the action plan:

- Reviewed the Greenville County Schools strategic plan
- Reviewed current practices and programs in our high schools
- Reviewed the State Education and Economic Development Act
- Researched national models and effective practices
- Visited best practice sites and attended conferences on improving high school achievement
- Conducted community forums with persons from all sectors of the county.

In addition, United Way conducted a survey of after-school programs and other extended learning opportunities for high school students in Greenville County and found that very few exist.

With the involvement of nearly 800 members of the community, forums were held and a web survey was conducted with persons from all sectors of the county. Participants included high school dropouts; current high school students; parents; high school teachers, guidance counselors and principals; members of the African-American and Hispanic communities; representatives of community service agencies; and business leaders.

Participants in Community Forums	
High school dropouts	65
Current high school students	173
African-American parents and community members	113
Hispanic parents and students	74
PTA, SIC, and other parents	136
District staff and high school administrators	69
High school teachers and teacher coordinators	105
Non-profit board members	44
Other	<u>12</u>
Total	791

Forum and web survey participants were asked four questions:

- What do you value most about our high schools?
- What occurs in our high schools that keep students from being successful?
- What would be the most important thing you would change in our high schools?
- What could the community do to help bring about and implement improvements in our high schools?

The ideas and concerns of the participants are summarized in the chart “Community Voices.”

Greenville County Community Voices
Common Themes for Improving High School Success

- Improve discipline, respect, and student behavior
- Better teaching
- Reduce class size
- Greater parent involvement in the child's education
- More community involvement in supporting student learning, such as mentoring and providing real life experiences
- Teachers who care about students and their learning and treat students with respect
- Higher expectations for middle- and low-performing students
- Greater student connection to school by connecting learning to career and life interests and through extra-curricular involvement for at-risk students
- Increase options and flexibility of student schedules
- Transform schools from a rigid environment based around rules and testing to a positive, engaging learning environment
- Reduce negative peer influence (gangs and drugs)

After five months of start-up planning and nine months of collecting and analyzing information and developing community strategies based on that information, the Community Action Plan, with the input and approval of the steering committee, was completed.

As a community, the time is now to move these ideas and strategies into action. A quality future for our youth and for our community depends on it.

APPENDIX C: Community Action Plan Participants

Steering Committee Members

Mr. Frank Holleman, Co-Chair	Past Chair, United Way of Greenville County (UWGC)
Dr. Phinnize Fisher, Co-Chair	Superintendent, Greenville County Schools (GCS)
Dr. Thomas Barton	President, Greenville Technical College
Rev. Tony Boyce	Reedy River Baptist Church
Mr. Paul Byrne	Senior Location Executive, IBM Corporation
Ms. Eve Diaz	ESOL coordinator, GCS
Ms. Ingrid Blackwelder Erwin	Chair, Helping Youth Succeed Council, UWGC
Ms. Peggy Good	Community volunteer
Mr. Ted Hendry	President, UWGC
Dr. Kathy Howard	Associate Superintendent, Student Performance, GCS
Ms. Violeita Irby	Attendance Services Coordinator, GCS
Ms. Susan McKinney	Assistant, Global Administration, IBM Corporation
Ms. Olivia Morris	Director, Closing the Gap, GCS
Mr. Seldon Peden	Vice President, Ashdon Group
Rev. Keith Ray	School Board Trustee, Area 27, GCS
Mr. Mark Reilly	Manager, Community Affairs, General Electric Gas Turbine
Ms. Lashaun Scott	Parent
Ms. Minor Shaw	Community volunteer
Dr. Susan Shi	Chair, The Alliance for Quality Education
Rev. Thomas Simmons	Pastor, Reedy Fork Baptist Church
Mr. Joseph Swann	President, Rockwell Automation Power Systems
Ms. Jennifer Whittle	Vice Chair, Helping Youth Succeed Council, UWGC

The “Work Group”

Dr. Karen Akerhielm	Community volunteer
Mr. Chris Allen	United Way of Greenville County
Mr. Leroy Hamilton	Greenville County Schools
Ms. Grier Mullins	The Alliance for Quality Education
Mr. Craig Stine	The Alliance for Quality Education

Facilitators

Dr. Gloria Frazier	International Center on Collaboration
Ms. Kerry Flanagan	International Center on Collaboration

APPENDIX D: Overview of Knowledge Base

(The Knowledge Base is a separate report containing the following materials)

Tab 1: Action Plan Measures

- Evidence of Success for Action Tasks
- Calculation of Number of Additional Graduates to Reach Goal

Tab 2: Benchmark Sites

- Benchmark Sites, by Strategy Action
- Contact Information for each Benchmark Site
- Overview of Site Visits Conducted and Conferences Attended

Tab 3: Voices

- Greenville Community Voices: Students, parents, teachers, school staff and administrators, business leaders, other community members
- Student Voices from Houston: 25 Ways to Help Students Graduate

Tab 4: Strategies

- Focus Areas
- High-Yield Strategies
- Overview of the State Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA)

Tab 5: Research

- Selected Data by High School for Greenville County Schools (GCS)
- Special Academic Programs by High School for GCS
- Extended Learning Opportunities by High School for GCS
- High Yield Strategies: Research and Results
- Data Sources for Statistics in “Greenville County cares about our youth because...” and “Why should I stay in high school”
- Principles of Effective High School Reform
- Five High School Reform Initiatives to Watch
- Strategies in the Talent Development High School Model
- High-Achieving High Schools Recommendations from Kentucky
- Review of Research from the Anne E. Casey Foundation
- Summaries of Various *Education Week* Articles

Tab 6: Excerpts from State and National Studies

- *Report of the SC High School Redesign Commission: Recommendations*
- *Whatever it Takes: How Twelve Communities are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth: Introduction and Recommendations*
- *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts: Executive Summary*

Tab 7: References

- Recommended Reading
- Recommended Web Sites
- Glossary of Terms

APPENDIX E: ***Why should I stay in high school?***

Students who graduate make more money

- *The average high school graduate earns \$9,200 more per year than a dropout. Lifetime earnings are \$370,000 higher.*
- *Those who go on to earn an associate's degree will over a lifetime earn an average of \$620,000 more than a dropout. Average lifetime earnings of those with a bachelor's degree are \$1.1 million more than for a dropout.*

Students who graduate have a better chance of getting a good job

- *The number of jobs requiring education beyond high school is growing twice as fast as jobs that only require on-the-job training.*
- *High School graduates in Greenville County are 30% less likely to be unemployed than dropouts.*
- *Compared to college graduates, high school dropouts were over three times more likely to be unemployed.*

Students who graduate live a safer, healthier life

- *High school dropouts are 3.5 times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested and 8 times as likely to be in jail or prison.*
- *High school graduates on average live 9.2 years longer than a dropout. At every age range, the more education, the healthier the individual.*
- *High school graduates in Greenville County are half as likely as dropouts to live in poverty. Those with some college education are 80% less likely to live in poverty than dropouts.*