



Project U-Turn is a citywide campaign to resolve Philadelphia's dropout crisis. While its efforts are multi-faceted, Project U-Turn has focused on reconnecting young people to credential-bearing pathways, post-secondary education or training and workforce development. The Project U-Turn approach relies on collective impact to increase opportunity for youth.

The Reality of Graduation Rates

In 2006, despite slight increases over the years, Philadelphia's four-year high school graduation rate was among the lowest in the nation at 52 percent. As a result, Project U-Turn was launched as a collaborative, citywide response to Philadelphia's dropout crisis. Project U-Turn is committed to data-driven action and maintains public accountability through research and reports. As evidenced in the 2015 release of *A Promise Worth Keeping: Advancing the High School Graduation Rate in Philadelphia*, the city has made significant strides. Yet, Philadelphia still lags behind the state and the nation.



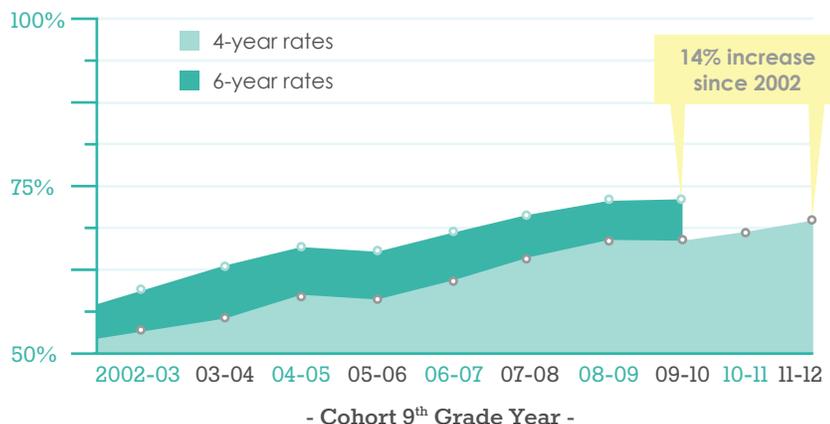
Comparison based on four-year graduation rate of 9th grade cohort 2010-11

The Impact of Project U-Turn

Since its inception:



- Graduation Rate -



Based on rates as reported by the Philadelphia Council for College and Career Success

Research to Action

Project U-Turn sponsored research has been informing the work of Project U-Turn since its launch in 2006. The reports below, published in 2015, can be read in full at www.projectuturn.net.



A Promise Worth Keeping: Advancing the High School Graduation Rate in Philadelphia

A follow-up study to *Unfulfilled Promise: The Dimensions and Characteristics of Philadelphia's Dropout Crisis* that takes a fresh look at the impacts of Philadelphia's collective strategy to increase graduation rates by examining recent dropout and graduation rates.

Key findings include:

The 2008-09 cohort graduation rate reached a high of 64 percent, an increase of 12 percentage points from the previous report's highest graduation rate. However, sub-populations are showing disproportionately smaller gains in graduation and re-engagement rates.



Separate and Unequal: A Path Forward for Neighborhood High Schools

This report on neighborhood high schools lays out recommendations for vital next steps to move our schools forward.

Key findings include:

The Philadelphia School District faces many challenges ranging from financial instability, to insufficient funds, to high staff turnover, markedly at-risk student population and epidemically low levels of performance.



From Diplomas to Degrees: Examining the Path to and through College

This report presents summary findings of data on the high school experiences and college enrollment and completion outcomes of School District of Philadelphia (SDP) high school graduates.

Key findings include:

Of the graduates from the 2003-04 ninth-grade cohort, 58 percent enrolled in college at some point between graduating high school and spring 2014. However, only 35 percent of those who enrolled in college had attained a degree or were still enrolled in college in spring 2014.

2015 Project U-Turn Highlights



Convenings

Attended and presented at local and national convenings on the topics of collective impact and the dropout crisis, including hosting the 50th GradNation Community Summit in Philadelphia. Learn more about the summit at www.gradnation.org.



New Efforts

Formation of the Opportunity Network at the School District of Philadelphia, which works to bolster support services and resources specifically for opportunity youth.



New Programs

Piloted employment and education programs for opportunity youth targeted to at risk populations including employment training supports to Latino youth at high risk of disconnection, and college exposure to youth in accelerated high school programs.



National Funding

Received a Social Innovation Fund grant to support the launch and scale of a post-secondary bridging pilot. This opportunity was made possible by Jobs for the Future (JFF) and the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions.

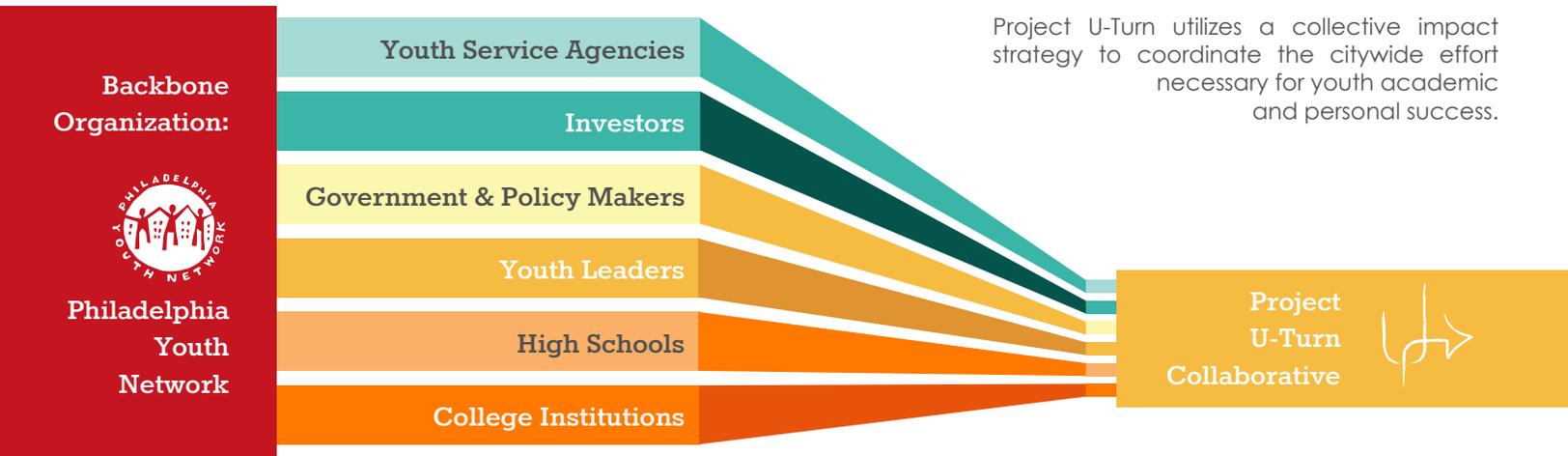


Tools/Resources

Implementation of Early-Warning-Indicators tool, "EWI-at-a-glance," available to Philadelphia district schools and their staff to help identify students who are at risk of dropping out.

Project U-Turn Collaborative

Project U-Turn utilizes a collective impact strategy to coordinate the citywide effort necessary for youth academic and personal success.



City of Philadelphia:

Mayor's Office of Education • Mayor's Commission on Literacy • Education Support Center, Department of Human Services, Children and Youth Division • Philadelphia Housing Authority • Philadelphia Youth Commission • Philadelphia District Attorney's Office • Philadelphia Water Department

School District of Philadelphia:

Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation • Office of Strategic Analytics • Truancy Office • Office of Early Childhood Education

Brown's Shoprite • Center for Literacy • Community College of Philadelphia • Congreso • District 1199C Training and Upgrading Fund • JEVS Human Services • National League of Cities • Philadelphia Education Fund • Philadelphia Works • Philadelphia Youth Network • Public Citizens for Children and Youth • United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey • William Penn Foundation • YESPhilly • YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School • Youth Participants • Youth United for Change