



Our Nation's
DROPOUT CRISIS
Is Everyone's Problem

Why Boys & Girls Clubs Are Part of the Solution

GREAT FUTURES START [HERE.](#)



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**

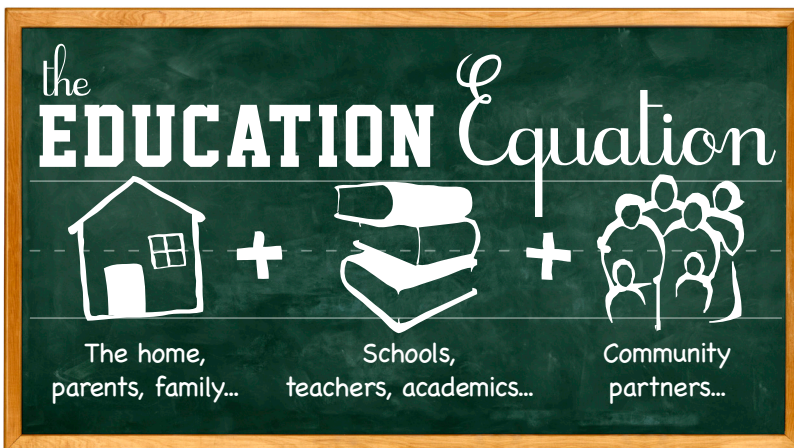
INTRODUCTION

THERE IS A WIDENING GAP IN AMERICA BETWEEN MILLIONS OF YOUTH WHO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL AND THEIR PEERS WHO DON'T. Nationally, 1.3 million students in the class of 2010 failed to graduate with a high school diploma¹. The implications of this staggering statistic are dire for youth, communities and the nation.

It goes without saying that schools are a critical part of the “education equation.” Parents and family members are also integral to children’s success. There is, however, a third, and often overlooked, crucial piece of the education equation: community-based organizations that can serve as partners in providing access to the programs and resources that both youth and families need to succeed. Now more than ever, community partners play a critical role in shaping the lives of America’s young people. This is where Boys & Girls Clubs are uniquely positioned to make a significant difference. Given our history, our proven successes, our nationwide network and the fact that the youth we serve are among those most at risk of dropping out, Boys & Girls Clubs stand ready to play an active leadership role in helping to reverse this disturbing, unacceptable situation.

*The dropout crisis is not just a school, youth or parent issue –
it’s a community and societal issue.*

A crisis of this magnitude involves ALL of us.



**= Reversing
the high school
dropout crisis.**

THE VALUE OF EDUCATION

In 2006, the U.S. Census Bureau reported the following annual average earnings estimates:

\$17,299	Less than a high school diploma
\$26,933	High school diploma
\$36,645	Associate's degree
\$52,671	Bachelor's degree
\$66,754	Graduate degree

BY THE NUMBERS

IT IS MANIFESTLY CLEAR THAT OUR NATION IS FACING A DROPOUT CRISIS. The national graduation rate currently stands at a dismal 69 percent. Every school day, 7,200 young people give up on school²; nearly half of African-American, Hispanic/Latino and Native American students fail to graduate on time with their class. If these students had graduated, our nation's economy would have benefitted from more than \$335 billion in income over their lifetimes.³ Merely cutting the dropout rate in half would yield \$45 billion annually in extra tax revenues and cost savings.⁴

THE GRADUATION RATE IS NOT ONLY AN EDUCATIONAL CRISIS; IT IS A FINANCIAL ONE THAT IMPACTS OUR NATION'S ECONOMY. Statistics show that over the course of their lifetime, a high school dropout will earn approximately \$260,000 less than a high school graduate, and will contribute about \$60,000 less in taxes.⁵ If the male graduation rate were improved by only five percentage points, our nation would save \$4.9 billion in crime-related costs annually.⁶ Moreover, if all high school students graduated, the U.S. would save more than \$17 billion in healthcare for the uninsured and in Medicaid costs.⁷

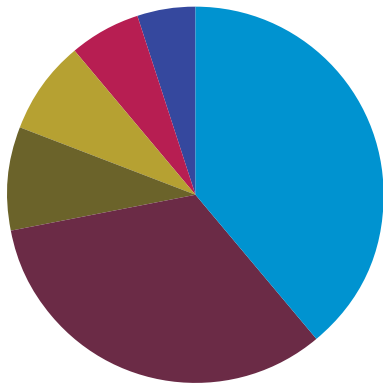
OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

TO SERIOUSLY ADDRESS THE HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT CRISIS, IT IS IMPERATIVE TO REDEFINE THE EDUCATION EQUATION TO INCLUDE COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS. These critical pieces of the puzzle – organizations like Boys & Girls Clubs – provide refuge for youth during the critical out-of-school hours. We know that juvenile violence peaks in the hours immediately following the end of the school day, between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. A report from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention suggests that out-of-school time programs have more potential to reduce juvenile crime than curfews for juveniles.⁸ Providing youth with a place where they can continue to learn and grow as individuals is essential to producing generations of adults who will become productive, caring, responsible citizens.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS COMPRISE ONE OF THE LARGEST COMMUNITY-BASED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS IN THE WORLD. Not only do we have Clubs in virtually every major metropolitan city, our Clubs are strategically located in areas where we can serve the youth who need us most. Of the some 4,000 Boys & Girls Clubs across the country, one-third are located in schools. This physical, school-based presence enables Clubs to work closely with teachers and parents to improve the academic success of members. Clubs are also located in public housing, on Native American lands, in severely distressed communities and on U.S. military installations worldwide. We have the infrastructure – buildings, staff, proven youth development expertise, legions of volunteers – to provide quality support for youth and teens during the out-of-school hours.

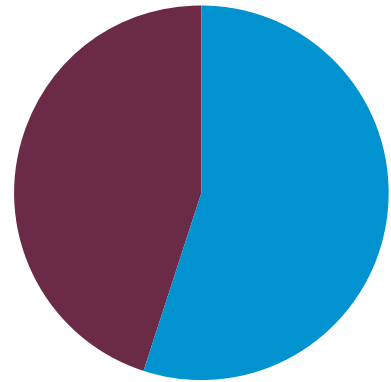
BOYS & GIRLS CLUB NETWORK AT A GLANCE

As community-based facilities – in some of the most distressed communities in our country – Clubs provide access to programs, professionals and resources that enable youth and families to succeed. Not only are our Clubs located in underserved, urban neighborhoods, but our reach also extends into our country’s suburban and rural areas.



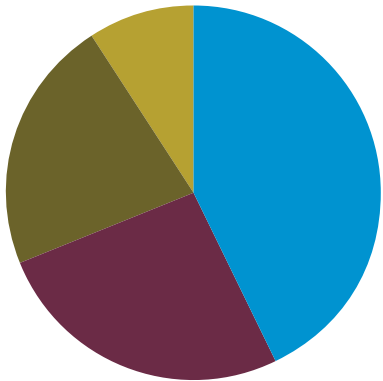
Boys & Girls Club Facility Types

- 39% Traditional
- 33% Schools
- 9% Military Installations
- 8% Public Housing
- 6% Other
- 5% Native American Lands



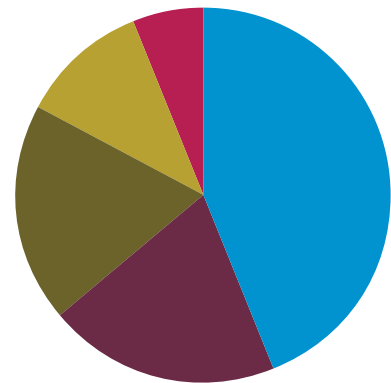
Our Members: Gender

- 55% Male
- 45% Female



Boys & Girls Club Community Locations

- 43% Urban
- 26% Rural
- 22% Suburban
- 9% Military Installations



Our Members: Ethnicity

- 35% Caucasian
- 30% African American
- 22% Hispanic/Latino
- 7% Multi-racial
- 3% Asian
- 3% Native American

Our Members: Ages

- 44% Ages 6-10
- 20% Ages 13-15
- 19% Ages 11-12
- 11% Ages 16 and older
- 6% Ages 5 and under

ONLY 15 PERCENT OF YOUTH (8.4 MILLION CHILDREN) PARTICIPATE IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS. Of this number, 1 million youth are in kindergarten through fifth grade and 4 million are in grades six through eight.⁹ Research shows that youth participation in quality out-of-school time programs is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits, as well as reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students.¹⁰ While participation in out-of-school time programs demonstrates educational benefits, there are also associated positive health outcomes. A study that measured the health and social benefits of out-of-school time programs found that controlling for baseline obesity, poverty status, and race and ethnicity showed that the prevalence of obesity was significantly lower for those involved in out-of-school time programs than non-participants (21 percent versus 33 percent, respectively).¹¹

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME DOES NOT JUST MEAN THE HOURS AFTER A SCHOOL DAY ENDS – IT ALSO INCLUDES THE SUMMER MONTHS WHEN SCHOOL IS NOT IN SESSION. Not only are some 15 million youth unsupervised after the school day ends, an additional 24 million are in need of supervision during the summer.¹² These crucial weeks and months spent outside of the classroom represent a major opportunity to enhance a child’s academic achievement, including preventing summer learning loss. Studies spanning more than 100 years illustrate that students typically score lower on standardized tests at the end of summer vacation than at the beginning of the summer. Most students lose about two months of grade-level equivalency in math during the summer months; by the end of grammar school, lower income students can fall more than three grades behind.¹³ This is precisely where Boys & Girls Clubs and other community partners can use their role as out-of-school time providers to help boost the academic performance of America’s youth and work together to raise the graduation rate in our country.

Boys & Girls Clubs Work

Programs focusing on preventing summer learning loss make a difference. On average, youth lose up to one-quarter of grade-level knowledge during the summer; these losses are even greater for low-income youth. Many Clubs have begun providing summer programs to combat this loss. Programs such as the Summer Reading Camp conducted at the Boys & Girls Club of Benton County, Ark., not only eliminated the loss but helped participants realize a small gain.

WHY BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS CAN MAKE A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE ACCESS TO CARING ADULTS – something every child deserves – who can provide the support needed to address issues associated with poor academic achievement. Youth who participate in out-of-school time programs improve in key areas that foster success in school, including social and emotional development, increased interest and engagement in school, and avoidance of risky behaviors.¹⁴

OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS CAN PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN CONNECTING SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES. Successful models embrace and actively seek community partnerships. Boys & Girls Clubs embrace working with others to capitalize on resources and assets that will close the achievement gap for students. Clubs serve as the hub between parents and schools, better equipping families to address academic issues. Staff are also able to identify young people who are disconnected from their studies, and connect with their school/teacher to re-engage them. By collaborating with schools and families to more holistically address the behaviors, attitudes and skills that lead to graduation, the community at large is strengthened.

MORE KIDS, MORE OFTEN

A 2009 study conducted by Public/Private Ventures found that youth who came to the Boys & Girls Club with greater frequency (at least 50 times per year) reported:

- higher levels of community service involvement;
- increased levels of integrity;
- decreased number of times skipping school;
- increased academic confidence and school effort;
- increased levels of future connectedness; and
- decreased numbers of negative peers as friends.¹⁵

Partnership in Action

Earlier this year, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee was the recipient of a coveted Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The Club received \$4.14 million to work closely with Milwaukee Public Schools to provide intensive literacy tutoring and instruction to youth in kindergarten through third grade. The Milwaukee Community Literacy Project will support 300 struggling readers in reaching proficiency through support in three spheres – the school sphere, the community sphere and the family sphere. The school sphere will provide select students with reading intervention through one-on-one tutoring. The community sphere will provide one-hour supplementary reading sessions three times per week after school. The family sphere will include regular contact with parents, including home visits, to increase parents' skills in supporting their child's literacy education. These efforts will reach 1,050 youth over the five-year grant period. The Club's existing SPARK Early Literacy Initiative already boasts remarkable results; among the 400 youth who participated in SPARK during the 2008-09 school year, those reading at grade level went from 23 percent to 84 percent, while comprehension rose from 19 percent to 75 percent.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA (BGCA) HAS MADE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION A PRIORITY FOR EVERY MEMBER SERVED BY CLUBS. Our goal is that every Club member graduates on time, prepared with a plan for the future. We are focusing our efforts to ensure that Club youth are engaged in targeted programs in three key outcome areas – academic success, good character and citizenship, and healthy lifestyles. By encouraging young people to do well in school, motivating them to serve their community and charging them to take responsibility for their well-being, Clubs are preparing youth for real-world success.

Looking Beyond High School

BGCA has worked with our partners to provide scholarship awards to Club members. These opportunities not only help members become excited about graduating from high school, but encourage them to begin thinking early about college and their careers. A new partnership with Marquette University provides full tuition scholarships (renewable for four years) to three Boys & Girls Club members each year, a value of approximately \$28,000 each year per student. Our Youth of the Year program provides more than \$60,000 in scholarship money to the National Youth of the Year; Club members named regional and state Youth of the Year also receive scholarships. In 2010, the total amount of scholarship dollars provided through this program totaled more than \$350,000.

OUR GRADUATION STRATEGY – EVERY MEMBER, EVERY YEAR – AIMS TO ENSURE THAT ALL CLUB MEMBERS PROGRESS ON TIME EACH YEAR TO THE NEXT GRADE LEVEL. Staff do this by discussing the importance of school and high school graduation; recognizing academic successes, including homework completion, grade improvement and progression; and implementing educational programming that teaches members new skills and reinforces those needed to be successful in school. As part of our education strategy, we have a targeted dropout prevention program – BE GREAT: Graduate. This model identifies youth who are at risk of dropping out of school and uses one-on-one case management and close collaboration between a member's school and Club to develop the academic, emotional and social skills necessary to achieve academic success.

Community Collaboration

In Indiana for the past five years, Mitch's Kids, a program named for the state's governor, has provided more than 10,000 early elementary age Club members with tutoring to increase reading and math proficiency. In 2010 – after only one year of tutoring – the percent of Club members at or above grade level in reading proficiency increased from 41 percent to 74 percent; in math proficiency, the percent at or above grade level increased from 38 percent to 74 percent.

WHILE BGCA HAS STRATEGICALLY FOCUSED RESOURCES TO INCREASE THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF MEMBERS, WE ARE ALSO WORKING TO ENSURE YOUNG PEOPLE MOVE FORWARD FROM THEIR CLUB EXPERIENCE AS WELL-ROUNDED INDIVIDUALS. To that end, we believe it is important to engage youth in character, leadership and service learning. Studies show that young people who engage in service do better in school, maintain positive relationships with adults and peers, and avoid risky behaviors.¹⁶ Even more, youth who participate in community involvement programs demonstrate positive educational outcomes. The effects often center around improving young people's engagement in school and increasing the likelihood that they will attend school regularly and not drop out.¹⁷ BGCA's good character and citizenship strategy – Be Engaged – aims to involve more youth in service-learning activities. One such initiative, the Year of Service, provides at least seven opportunities annually for Clubs and youth to connect with partners to provide much needed services that benefit their local and/or global community.

Success through Service

Clubs work every day to integrate character and citizenship ideals into programming. In addition, opportunities to engage youth in service to their Club and community are provided year-round. In 2009, some 135,000 Club youth participated in civic engagement activities across the country, resulting in some 1.2 million volunteer service hours. Using the Economic Impact Calculator (created by the Points of Light Institute), those 1.2 million hours of volunteer service translate into \$13.4 million in contributed services for our country.

IN ADDITION TO WORKING TO ENSURE YOUTH ARE OF SOUND MIND, CLUBS ALSO INTENTIONALLY WORK TO MAKE SURE YOUTH ARE OF SOUND BODY. Live Healthy is BGCA's strategy for ensuring that youth are armed with the knowledge they need to make healthful decisions. The national programs associated with this strategy confront childhood obesity head-on. Clubs engage youth in several of BGCA's established programs that teach the importance of regular exercise, eating well and making smart decisions. In doing so, we are able to provide the next generation of adults with the information needed to make healthy decisions – for life.

Our Programs Work

Triple Play, one of BGCA's most widely used national programs, is proven to get youth moving. A 2009 study found that the Triple Play program positively impacts both nutrition knowledge and fitness behaviors of participants, which include an increase in the average amount of time young people spend engaged in physical activities in a day, and the number of days per week youth are physically active.¹⁸

OUR COMMITMENT TO THE NATION

BGCA IS COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH OUR MEMBERS AND YOUTH SERVED TO IMPROVE THE GRADUATION RATE IN OUR COUNTRY. While our long-term vision is that all Club members graduate on time, we also have a more immediate goal. We are working to lift the academic achievement of our children, and by doing so help to raise our nation's graduation rate to 85 percent. But we can't do it alone. Schools, families and community partners – institutions that are all vital parts of the education equation – must work together to improve the outlook for our nation and secure more hopeful futures for our youth.

A History of Academic Success

Boys & Girls Club's highly focused efforts in education are not new; our Movement has been providing high-quality education programming for decades. Our significant impact on Club members' academic performance was documented in 2000 with the implementation and rigorous evaluation of BGCA's national program Project Learn. This Columbia University study, which was published in the well-known and respected journal *Prevention Research*, compared youth in Boys & Girls Club facilities who participated in Project Learn with a control group involved in other community programs that were not exposed to the program. All of the sites served youth living in public or subsidized housing. Data was gathered from participant questionnaires; teacher assessments through telephone interviews; and school records on attendance, behavior and grades. The researchers found that when compared with non-Boys & Girls Club youth, Project Learn participants increased their overall grade point average by 11 percent; increased their spelling grade point average by 22 percent; and missed 87 percent fewer days in school.

BY COMBINING THE FORMIDABLE RESOURCES OF SCHOOLS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY-BASED PARTNERS, OUR NATION'S YOUTH WILL HAVE THE TOOLS AND RESOURCES NEEDED TO SUCCEED IN LIFE. Together, we can raise our nation's graduation rate, ensuring productive, responsible lives for America's youth. Boys & Girls Clubs across America are dedicated to doing everything in our power to lift the academic achievement of our children.

Financial Implications for Our Nation

Boys & Girls Clubs serve 4.2 million youth – 2.2 million of whom are Club members – nationwide and on U.S. military installations worldwide. If we apply the national graduation rate of 68.8 percent to our membership, this would mean we could anticipate that 1.5 million Club members will graduate high school on time. However, if 85 percent of Club members graduated on time, this would result in an additional 360,000 high school diplomas earned. Using the figures established by a renowned economist,¹⁹ this would mean that over the course of their lifetimes, these 360,000 graduates from our current membership potentially represent \$72 billion in value to our nation.

WE NEED THE SUPPORT OF OUR GOVERNMENT, ON THE LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL LEVELS, TO MAKE RESOURCES AVAILABLE SO THAT BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS CAN BROADEN THEIR REACH. With added support, BGCA can develop additional targeted programs to address the needs of youth during out-of-school time. Boys & Girls Clubs can connect with more community partners to form collaborations that will impact even more young lives. Working hand in hand with schools and families, we can address the high school dropout crisis in communities large and small across the country, in turn providing a great future for our youth and our nation. Our Clubs, staff and volunteers are in place and are ready to make a difference.

Will you join us?

GREAT FUTURES START **HERE.**



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**

BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

THE EDUCATION EQUATION DOES NOT INVOLVE JUST ONE OR TWO ORGANIZATIONS; IT REQUIRES ALL OF US. WHETHER YOU ARE A PARENT, TEACHER, YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL, VOLUNTEER, DONOR, BUSINESSPERSON OR TAXPAYER, OUR NATION'S DROPOUT CRISIS AFFECTS EVERYONE.

How Can You Help? If You Are A:

Parent/Caregiver – Your children are tomorrow's leaders. Parents are the first and most important teacher in a child's life. Providing your children with a solid educational foundation, which includes graduating from high school with a plan for the future, will put them on the path to success.

Teacher – Your classroom is the epicenter of academic learning, providing access to the tools and resources all youth and teens need. Your dedication and compassion for instilling in youth the life-long desire to learn with an insatiable thirst for knowledge, is what has, and will, continue to make this country thrive.

Youth Development Professional – The time that youth spend in out-of-school time programming is critical in helping them develop a sense of belonging, usefulness, influence and competence. Use your supportive, caring relationships to undergird the positive self-esteem youth need to believe in themselves as they are guided on the path to success.

Volunteer – The time you take out of your schedule to volunteer in Clubs and other community-based organizations across the country is invaluable. We thank you for your continued selflessness and willingness to support our nation's young people.

Donor – No matter the size of your gift, it is priceless. Because of your generosity, you are contributing to the success of the next generation, and to the betterment of our nation.

Businessperson – Investing in the next generation of America's leaders is a smart business decision. Raising the graduation rate in our country not only means our youth will have brighter futures, it means our businesses will as well. America's workforce must remain competitive, especially in an increasingly global marketplace.

Taxpayer – Ensuring that the dropout rate is decreased means our country will save billions of dollars in crime-related and uninsured healthcare costs, and will see additional dollars in tax revenue. These cost savings will have an inestimable value for our society as a whole.

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