Sunday, April 27

WELCOME RECEPTION  | 6 – 7:30 pm | Main Street (Washington)
Sponsored by State Farm

MONDAY, April 28
BREAKFAST  | 7:30 – 8:15 am | Marriott Ballroom

OPENING GENERAL SESSION  | 8:30 – 10 am | Marriott Ballroom
Where We Are, Where We Are Going
Sponsored by AT&T & Target

Featured Speakers:
• Alma J. Powell, Chair, America’s Promise Alliance
• John Gomperts, President and CEO, America’s Promise Alliance
• Arne Duncan, United States Secretary of Education (Invited)
• John Bridgeland, President, Civic Enterprises
• Dr. Robert Balfanz, Everyone Graduates Center, Johns Hopkins University

First, the good news: 80% of our nation’s students are graduating from high school, the highest rate in America’s history. The collective efforts of students, families, educators and elected officials determined to better educate our young are beginning to pay off.

While we celebrate this milestone, we must accelerate our efforts on behalf of the millions who are living in circumstances that prevent them from completing their education and finding a career that sustains them. Every one of these represents a dimming of the American dream, a loss of opportunity for the nation, a promise unfilled for the youth.

Becoming a GradNation means that by the time today’s middle schoolers graduate high school, the dropout crisis will have passed, and the generations following are on the road to graduation, prepared, engaged and thriving.

Alliance Chair, Alma Powell, will open the session and focus on why achieving the GradNation
2020 goals are so important and what it will take to reach them. We will release the 2014 *Building a GradNation* report, which interprets the nationwide data to identify where we should focus our resources and accelerate our efforts.

**CONCURRENT SESSIONS | 10:15 – 11:30 am | rooms listed below (choose 1)**

**Interactive Lab 1 | Narrative Boot Camp | Maryland**
- Andy Goodman, The Goodman Center
- Master Teacher from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting’s *American Graduate*

How many times have you heard, “the problem is just too big,” or “it’s not my fault so it’s not my problem,” or “I can’t make a difference.” This is the narrative against which we’re competing when we’re engaging allies in the GradNation campaign. While the data tell us that we can indeed improve educational outcomes, the reality is that narrative trumps data. People still hear, “It can’t be done.” However, stories can win hearts, change minds and strengthen connections. This lab will help you tell a good story, hone your skills to humanize the message, localize the challenge, personalize the solution, and emphasize progress.

**Interactive Lab 2 | Pointing Us in the Direction of Impact: Practice, Research, and Policy | Virginia**
- Dr. Amy Gerstein, Executive Director, John W. Gardner Center for Youth, Stanford
- Dr. Jonathan Zaff, Director, Center for Promise, Tufts University, America’s Promise Alliance
- Master Teachers from communities and research institutions

Community collaborative initiatives, by whatever name, are showing great promise in improving the outcomes for children and youth. At the same time, pre-eminent researchers in the fields of developmental science, economics and public health are sharpening their understanding of what it takes to make a sustained and quantifiable impact on child wellbeing. And the public sector has made significant investments in better data, education innovation, and collaborations across education, housing, health, and justice. Are these three sectors talking with each other? This lab brings together research, community practitioners, and public policy experts in a lively discussion about what we actually know about the evidence, what we need to learn, and how to access community wisdom upon which success depends. The objective is to point us all in the
direction of impact with informed opinions and common understandings of what it means to be ‘proficient and prepared’, how we can show we are making an impact, and what it will take to achieve long-term academic economic and civic success.

Session 1 | Digging Deeper: What the Building a GradNation Report is Telling Us | Hoover
Sponsored by AT&T & Target
- John Bridgeland, President, Civic Enterprises
- Dr. Robert Balfanz, Everyone Graduates Center, Johns Hopkins University

What do the numbers mean? Where do they tell us to focus our attention? Where are the needs most urgent? Where are we finding success? The Building a GradNation Report is the annual assessment of the latest education data, showing us where we have made progress and where acceleration is needed to reach the GradNation goals. This session is an opportunity to dig deeper into the data and its implications outlined in the report just released at the GradNation Summit. Its focus will be on the nature of the opportunity gaps, the contributing factors that cause them to persist, and an exploration of the latest thinking in how to bridge them.

Session 2 | Navigating toward Graduation: Who Am I? What Do I Want to Be? How Do I Get There? | Wilson B
Sponsored by AT&T and Apollo Education Group
- Ben Solomon, Project Manager, Curriculum, AVID Center
- Mike Marriner, Co-Founder, Roadtrip Nation
- Debbie Pyle, Sr. Project Manger, Philanthropy, AT&T

Students on the road to graduation often need help – a GPS – in order to navigate its twists and turns and to be prepared to not just begin but to succeed in their post secondary education. Hear from both an established initiative and a relative newcomer who are combining rigorous instruction and wraparound supports with an introspective learning model to combine the ‘how’ of getting to, and through, college with the compelling ‘why’. Learn how to help students put career and college planning into the context of their own lives.

Session 3 | We Need YOU! Enlisting Allies in Attendance Awareness Month | Wilson A
- Hedy Chang, Director, Attendance Works
- Rob Clark, Chief of Learning & Evaluation, Family League of Baltimore
- Jennie Johnson, Executive Director, City Year Providence
• Carrie Feliz, Director, Strategic Community Partnerships, Providence Public School Department
• Chief Monsegur, Student Participant, Youth Ambassadors from the Seattle Indian Health Board
• Marissa Dominguez, Student Participant, Youth Ambassadors from the Seattle Indian Health Board
• Greg Jensen, LCSW, ACSW, Vice President for Behavioral Health, Lone Star Circle of Care
• Elliott Attisha, DO, FAAP, Council on School Health, Executive Committee, American Academy of Pediatrics

By now it’s a well-understood fact: chronic absenteeism is a leading indicator of academic failure for kids of all ages, and can even lead to high school dropout. But this doesn’t mean responsibility falls solely to our schools. Engaging and educating parents is always a great strategy for improving attendance rates, but have you considered enlisting additional allies in your community’s efforts, such as afterschool providers, the business community, high school students, national service volunteers, even doctors? In this session learn how various communities were able to successfully engage specific key ally groups in their efforts to boost student attendance. Community-based organizations, educators and intermediaries are especially encouraged to attend this session, which will include small-group discussions with experts.

Session 4 | A Political and Policy Landscape for Children and Youth | Wilson C

This session will bring you up to date on the latest developments in the Nation’s Capital, what to expect in Congress, and where the issues relating to becoming a GradNation are playing out in the looming elections. While deciphering the politics and prose of these debates, we will highlight the policies that have the most promise for getting us to the GradNation goal and which are likely to undermine the progress made to date.

Session 5 | The Class of 2020: Betting On Middle School | Harding

• Tara James, Director of Policy and External Relations, National Human Services Assembly
• Aaron Dworkin, Executive Vice-President of National Network, After-School All-Stars
• Jason Cascarino, CEO, Spark
• Christy Murray, Project Director, Middle School Matters, Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, The University of Texas in Austin
• Middle School Administrator (TBD)

Middle School is one of the most significant transitions in a young person’s life, and where decisions are made that reverberate for a lifetime. Youth who can successfully navigate this transition into early adolescence have positioned themselves to succeed in high school and beyond. We have convened some of the leading experts who work with
this important population in a variety of ways. They will share their data and insights, how they’ve connected the dots between the systems and across silos. Their experiences are pointing the way forward. What are we waiting for - The class of 2020 is in middle school right now!

**VISIT MAIN STREET | 11:30 am – noon | Washington**

*Where attendees come together to work, play, and meet to create memories, relationships, and new networks.*

We all know where our “Main Streets” are. What they represent is universal: the big stage, the core of the community. We go to Main Street to explore our community’s culture and discover our community’s identity. Our Main Streets consist of shared memories and multi-generational meeting places where people come together to live, work and play. In short, Main Street is a powerful community network – just the sentiment we are trying to express during this Summit. On any given day, you may stop into your favorite coffee shop in the morning, grab a quick bite for breakfast or lunch, run errands on the weekends, take a walk in the park, and meet your friends or colleagues throughout the day. Main Street will be that place for Summit attendees.

Main Street is an entirely interactive destination where you can hear authors talk about their latest book and get one signed; hear the latest news and enjoy performances of all kinds in the town square; get a bite to eat at the café, recharge your electronics, and check out new technology, apps and online resources; and even catch a movie on the ‘screen on the green’ in the evening.

Come to Main Street to experience the powerful community network that is the engine of the GradNation campaign.
LUNCHEON GENERAL SESSION  |  12:15 - 1:45 pm | Marriott Ballroom
Special Feature Stage Conversation: Creating a Stronger Nation

Featured Speakers:
• Jamie Merisotis, President and CEO, Lumina Foundation
• John Gomperts, President and CEO, America's Promise Alliance

Becoming a GradNation does not end with completing high school. We are also committed to a dramatic increase in postsecondary success because that is the threshold for the knowledge economy. How do we better integrate efforts between K-12 and postsecondary education? How do we not only push students to graduate high school but also draw them toward postsecondary education and a career that sustains them? John and Jamie will discuss the current landscape of education beyond high school, and its proven and expected impact on social mobility now and in the future. Learn more about how we can work together in support of this shared goal.

Understanding Context: Low performing, High Poverty Schools

Featured Speaker:
• Dr. Pam Cantor, Founder, President and CEO, Turnaround for Children, Inc.

Neuroscience is showing us that students growing up in poverty are experiencing toxic levels of stress, physical and psychological trauma that have profound implications for the way children learn. Students bring their adverse childhood experiences with them to school, making it impossible for students to trust, connect, concentrate and learn. High poverty schools are overwhelmed by the challenges and the disparities in academic achievement persist. At the same time, educators are faced with bringing children from very different backgrounds and levels of readiness to the same high standards of learning. Learn how some schools and districts are designing interventions that mitigate the risks of poverty to academic and student growth overall.

Master Teachers:
• Mark Edwards, Opportunity Nation
• Stanislas Phanord, uAspire/Citi Foundation

MAIN STREET EVENTS  |  2 – 3:15 pm | Washington
• Special Announcements TBA
Ready for some fresh thinking? Want to flex your innovation potential? All you need is a challenge worth the struggle and a willingness to experiment. The challenge for this Rapid Innovation lab is central to becoming a GradNation -- how do we unlock the dormant potential of individuals to become more engaged in the lives of young people?. Brought to you by leaders in design thinking, this Innovation Lab is a lively, active, and creative experience that will open our eyes to new ways of approaching stubborn challenges and new tools to unleash innovation and balance risk. You will ‘smallify’, flex your mindset, experience the power of ‘thinking wrong’, and become a convert to ‘yes, and’. Together, you will formulate a portfolio of ‘small bets’ – ingenious solutions to try when we get back to our home bases. The insights and inspirations ‘prototyped’ in the Lab will be a part of the closing general session to inspire all of us to harness the untapped potential in our own communities and organizations.

Interactive Lab 4 | Practitioners Lab: Learning from the “Real” Experts | Virginia

- Dr. Jonathan Zaff, Director, Center for Promise, Tufts University, America’s Promise Alliance

This interactive lab is designed to give communities an opportunity to talk with each other about the universal challenges and the strategies and stakeholders they employed to combat them. Leaders of several of the best known and most successful models of comprehensive community initiatives and the researchers at the Center for Promise will work with participants to offer promising solutions to common challenges. This is a rare opportunity to join an active “learning community,” working together to identify actionable steps. Some advance survey work will take place before this session to ensure that the questions the model communities are addressing best answer to the highest priority questions facing the community participants.
So many undesirable educational outcomes are the result of health issues, not educational gaps. Many are treatable, many are preventable – but communities, families and schools aren’t necessarily equipped to address them. Our schools are organized to address the cognitive skills, but what do we do about the physical and psychological challenges that youth carry on a daily basis. Learn about the links between educational attainment, school attendance, behavior and health. What are the biggest health barriers in under-resourced communities? How are families, communities and professionals identifying and treating them, and what are the results that we are seeing as a product of these interventions?

Session 7 | Early Warning Systems | Hoover
- Joanna Fox, Deputy Director, Everyone Graduates Center, School of Education, Johns Hopkins University
- Ayeola Fortune, Director, Education Team, United Way Worldwide

While the use of early warning system indicators to identify students at-risk of dropping out is growing in prevalence, the data are not always used to take action and support students. Learn from the experience of State Education Agencies (SEAs), districts and schools in implementing early warning systems. From general lessons that are relevant across multiple levels of the education system to specific examples for states, districts and individual schools, the session will bring to light the benefits of and the ways to effectively implement early warning systems. Participants will learn the processes of identifying, diagnosing, supporting, and monitoring students to ensure that they get back on-track for graduation. Research and practitioners will reflect on best practices and the solutions to the biggest challenges.

Session 8 | Teen Innovators: Students Incubate Positive Peer Influence Strategies | Coolidge
- Ballou High School
- Blake High School
- Norwood High School
- Renaissance High School, Global studies
• Cody Oliver, America’s Promise Alliance

A positive peer group can change behavior where fear tactics or statistics fail. We challenged four schools to select, encourage and support non-traditional student leaders to turn the message in the school hallway to something positive and find ways to support their peers on a path to graduation. Hear from students and educators on what they have developed and learned in the short time of the school year.

Session 9 | College- and Career-Ready Standards: Creating More Exciting Classrooms
Sponsored by the GE Foundation

The highly politicized debates about college- and career-ready standards have distracted from the central value of these standards: their ability to equip all young people the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. In this highly interactive session, talented teachers from several disciplines will pull from their classrooms demonstrate how the standards lead towards courses that are more challenging, more interactive and even more fun – and give students better opportunities to prepare to excel in school and at work.

Session 10 | On-ramps: Back on Track to a High School Diploma, College Degree, and Career Success | Wilson B
• Debbie Staub, Education Advisor, Casey Family Programs
• Annie Blackledge, Casey Family Programs
• Dr. Jean Rhodes, Psychology, University of Massachusetts Boston and National Guard Youth Foundation
• Leon Andrews, Senior Fellow, National League of Cities
• Robert Murphy, Specialist of School Completion and Alternative Programs, Maryland State Department of Education

While some youth need help navigating the road to graduation, many other brilliant, passionate and dedicated youth need help finding their way back onto that path. Presented by students who had dropped out of school but found an “on-ramp” back to graduation, this session examines the psychological dimensions of why teenagers leave school and the successful strategies that are helping them on their way to back to high school and beyond.

TUESDAY, APRIL 29
BREAKFAST | 7:30 – 8:15 am | Marriott Ballroom

MORNING GENERAL SESSION | 8:30 – 10 am | Marriott Ballroom

Youth Perspective: The School Day
Sponsored by Target

Featured Speaker:
- Senator Cory Booker, New Jersey

What do young people think about their education? What is their lived experience on their own road to GradNation? What do they think are the top priorities for the nation and for their communities and families? They will share with us some of the biggest barriers they’ve had to overcome. We will learn more about one of those barriers: the consequences of school discipline and suspension policies. What ‘sounds like a good idea’ often ends up becoming a dead end for millions of young people. Sen. Booker will talk about the importance of restoring opportunity and mobility for all young people, understanding the real challenges they face now and connect how the current state of affairs undermines our democracy, economy and standing in the world.

Master Teachers:
- Dan Cardinali, Communities In Schools
- Chef Greg Silverman, No Kid Hungry
- Michael Brown, City Year (Invited)
- Lashon Amado, Youthbuild USA
- David Shapiro, Mentor and Kent Pekel, Search Institute
Interactive Lab 5 | Rapid Innovation Lab: Engaging Parents and Families | Maryland

- Dave Viotti, founder of Smallify, co-founder, FuseCorps
- Lisa Solomon, founder of Innovation Studio, Moments of Impact

Want to flex your innovation potential? All you need is a challenge worth the struggle and a willingness to experiment. The challenge for this Rapid Innovation lab is a second central accelerator to becoming a GradNation -- *How do we engage parents and families more fully in their children’s education?* It’s time for some fresh thinking. Brought to you by leaders in design thinking, this Innovation Lab is a lively, active, and creative experience that will open our eyes to new ways of approaching stubborn challenges and new tools to unleash innovation and balance risk. You will ‘smallify’, flex your mindset, experience the power of ‘thinking wrong’, and become a convert to ‘yes, AND’. Together, you will formulate a portfolio of ‘small bets’ – ingenious solutions to try when you get back to your home bases. The insights and inspirations ‘prototyped’ in the Lab will be a part of the closing general session to inspire all of us to harness the untapped potential in our own communities and organizations.

Session 11 | Bringing the Fun and Challenge of STEM Back Through Expanded Learning Opportunities | Harding

*Sponsored by The Ford Foundation*

- Forum for Youth Investment (Speaker TBD)
- Afterschool Alliance (Speaker TBD)
- National Center on Time and Learning (Speaker TBD)

High-quality science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) experiences provide young people remarkable opportunities to tap their talents, discover their passions, and build the academic and personal skills needed for success in school, work, and life. Too often in recent years, unfortunately, hands-on, project-based STEM learning has been squeezed out of students’ increasingly narrow learning days, especially in underserved communities. This session will highlight successful afterschool, expanded learning time, and summer learning projects, showing how they draw on community resources to create richly varied programs that challenge and inspire young people.
Session 12 | LISTEN: Youth Voices | Virginia

Sponsored by Target

- Craig McClay, Center for Promise
- Melissa Maharaj, Center for Promise
- Youth Representatives

In order to fully understand what a 90% national graduation rate might look like, it is important to understand why we aren’t there already. The most effective campaigns understand why students aren’t graduating in the first place. Young people are our best teachers. Through their voices, participants will understand more deeply what we can do, both beforehand and after the fact, to keep them on – or return them to -- the road to GradNation.

Session 13 | Making the Grade: Examining the Evidence and Exploring the Providers of Integrated Student Supports | Wilson C

- Dr. Kris Moore, Child Trends
- Dan Cardinali, Communities In Schools

Schools work best when they are integral parts of the communities they serve. Integrated School Services (ISS) are innovative programs that develop a system of service integration in partnership with the school and community to meet at-risk students’ health and well-being needs that are important for achieving school success. You will learn about new research that examines the effectiveness of this approach and the various models being implemented across the country. Learn first-hand from leaders of these community-based programs about their work with the youth enrolled, school administrators, teachers, parents, and community organizations, as well as from youth directly impacted by the success of one of these programs.

Session 14 | “People Power” | Wilson A

- Corporation for National and Community Service (Speaker TBD)

National service and community volunteer leaders will help you find your allies and resources along the Road to GradNation – in early learning, for reading at grade-level, to improve attendance, behavior and coursework, and reconnecting young people who have lost interest or been pushed out of traditional education. This is the people power you need to make a real and lasting impact on the future.
Session 15 | Careers as an Engagement Strategy – Helping Youth Find Work They Love | Wilson B
- National Academy Foundation (Speaker TBD)
- Cristo Rey Network (Speaker TBD)
- Dana Shumate, Jefferson County Schools, Kentucky

Career academies, work study, apprenticeships and similar programs are using career exploration and career preparation programs as key engagement strategies to not only keep students in school but to set students up to be successful after school. These programs work with a diverse subset of youth, from high achievers to those who need help finding tangible connections between school and the “real” world. The practice of ensuring that these students offer concrete lessons to young people depends largely on the partnerships developed between the educational program and their corporate partners. The relationship at the systems level as well as individually between the young person and his or her supervisor has the potential to be transformational for communities. In this session, learn the rationale behind the importance of utilizing career engaging programs, how to adopt or adapt programs that offer these connections, and the best ways to find and create partnerships to sustain them.

VISIT MAIN STREET | 11:30 am – noon

CLOSING LUNCHEON GENERAL SESSION | 12:30 – 2pm | Marriott Ballroom
“Onward”

Featured Speakers:
- Alma J. Powell, Chair, America’s Promise Alliance
- Darren Walker, President, Ford Foundation
- Gen. Colin Powell, Founding Chair, America’s Promise Alliance

The Summit wraps up with extraordinary leaders who through their creativity, persistence, optimism and ability to get things done are changing both the perception and the reality that we can become a nation of graduates for whom the American dream is achievable. We will hear reflections from young people to whom we are ultimately accountable and calls to action from across the spectrum of the GradNation campaign.