

# Educating the Whole Child: The New Learning Compact

## Whole Child Resolution Tool Kit

2008



ASSOCIATION FOR SUPERVISION AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT  
[WWW.ASCD.ORG](http://WWW.ASCD.ORG)

## INTRODUCTION

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Our world is changing rapidly, and our education system is struggling to keep pace. Demand for a highly skilled and educated workforce is growing, 20th-century jobs are falling by the wayside, and the global marketplace is a reality.

To be prepared for success in the 21st century, our students need a well-rounded, challenging education — and more. We need to ensure that each child is **healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged**.

Please join us in asking policymakers in your community to support a resolution that addresses these five basic needs. Our rationale is straightforward. If students are to master world-class academics, they need to be physically and emotionally healthy. They need to be well fed and safe. They

need to be intellectually challenged and have supportive adults who know them well and care about their success. And they need to be interested and engaged in what they're learning.

Whether you are a parent, educator, or community member, you can help turn political rhetoric about "investing in the future of our children" into reality. This tool kit has the information you need to pass a whole child resolution in your community — an important first step in raising awareness about this timely initiative and building support across the country, one community at a time.

Inside this tool kit, you will find:

- A sample resolution.
- Tips for passing a resolution in your community.
- Messages and talking points.
- A sample letter to advocate for a resolution.
- Sample letters to the editor.
- A sample petition.
- A feedback form.
- FAQs about ASCD's whole child initiative.

The tool kit is designed to make you effective with a minimal investment of your time. However, it's only one part of a major movement. At the time of this printing, more than 10,000 people are supporting the education of the whole child, and the number is constantly growing. In addition, more than 24 national organizations support this idea. Visit [www.wholechildeducation.org](http://www.wholechildeducation.org) for more information about the whole child initiative or contact ASCD at 1-800-933-2723 or [wholechild@ascd.org](mailto:wholechild@ascd.org).

Please use the feedback form on page 12 to let us know the results of your efforts.

## WHOLE CHILD RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS**, the children of *(state/district/city name)* are our future who will provide the leadership, creativity, and productivity to strengthen and sustain the quality of life in our communities;

**WHEREAS**, *(state/district/city name)* must ensure our children have the community supports and educational opportunities to succeed in our universities, workplaces, and neighborhoods;

**WHEREAS**, each child in *(state/district/city name)* has the right to enter school healthy and ready to learn;

**WHEREAS**, each child in *(state/district/city name)* has the right to learn in a safe environment;

**WHEREAS**, each child in *(state/district/city name)* has a right to be actively engaged in learning and in the community;

**WHEREAS**, each child in *(state/district/city name)* has a right to access and support from adults who can serve as mentors and advisors;

**WHEREAS**, each child in *(state/district/city name)* has the right to learn 21st-century skills — including art, music, and foreign languages — in an intellectually challenging environment;

**WHEREAS**, we the people of *(state/district/city name)* want to do better for our children;

**THEREFORE**, *(state/district/city name)* resolves to support the whole child initiative to ensure that all of our children are safe, healthy, engaged, supported, and academically challenged.

This *(day)* of *(month, year)*.

*(Signature)* \_\_\_\_\_

*(Name, Title)* \_\_\_\_\_

## FIVE STEPS FOR PASSING A RESOLUTION

Getting your community to pass a resolution is an important first step in raising awareness and building support for the whole child initiative. Once a resolution is in place, it becomes easier for your community to institute policies and raise funds to ensure each child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.

This section offers step-by-step advice for passing a whole child resolution in your community. Each of the five steps includes tasks for you to check off once you've completed them. Helpful tips to guide your efforts are included in boxes.

### 1. Take one small step for the whole child.

- ❑ Ask your local school board members to pass a resolution supporting education of the whole child. Share a copy of the resolution on page 3 of this tool kit and have informal meetings with school board members to garner support for the resolution (see the messages and talking points on page 6).
- ❑ Have your friends and neighbors ask their local school board members to pass the same resolution. (It is all right if they approach the same

### FORM A GOOD WORKING GROUP

On just about every issue, policy, or campaign, you will find enthusiastic supporters. Take note — they are your future leaders and the ones you want to keep in the loop and work with continually.

### THINK AND ACT LOCALLY

After working with your local school board members, you can focus on other public officials, such as your representatives on town/county councils and municipal legislative bodies. Just remember, the larger the scope of the legislative body, the greater the number of supporters needed to pass the resolution.

school board members; having many people ask for the same resolution increases the chances that school board members will support it.)

- ❑ Approach school board members who already support a whole child approach to sponsor the resolution.
- ### 2. Share the journey.
- ❑ Make sure your local school board members and elected officials know you are willing to work hard to support their efforts to sponsor and pass the whole child resolution.
  - ❑ Ask them to suggest other allies, both elected officials and members of local interest groups, whom you can tap for support (see the sample letter for elected officials on page 7). Ask for advice about other ways you can drum up support and launch a successful campaign.

## USE MULTIPURPOSE TOOLS

Petitions (see page 11) can help you build and demonstrate support; they also provide a ready-made list of supporters for future steps. Letters to the editor (see pages 8–10) will inform your community about the whole child and may bring forward supporters you have not yet reached.

### 3. Spread the word.

- ❑ Ask your friends and neighbors to sign a whole child petition (see the sample petition on page 11). Attach the resolution to your petition and bring it to local town meetings, soccer games, school events, supermarkets — anywhere you run into friends, neighbors, and community members.
- ❑ Submit letters to the editor to your local newspaper (see the sample letters on pages 8 and 9).

### 4. Make friends.

- ❑ Tap into groups of community stakeholders with ready-made audiences who are interested in helping to advance the whole child cause. Some possible groups from which to solicit support:
  - Parents
  - Businesses
  - Doctors and health care professionals
  - Education groups (e.g., parent-teacher organizations)

- Community leaders and organizations (e.g., the Rotary Club or Kiwanis Club)

- ❑ Contact community stakeholder groups:
  - Give them a copy of the resolution to share with their members and audiences.
  - Have them ask the local school board and municipal governing body to pass the whole child resolution.
  - Have them circulate the resolution and a petition at meetings or in their businesses.

### 5. Know that you may win some and lose some.

- ❑ Even though educating the whole child is an important goal, not everyone will agree. Work with your allies to learn why some people may or may not support this cause.
- ❑ If you have tried unsuccessfully to convince an elected official to sponsor or support the whole child resolution, ask someone else to speak with this official using a different approach. He or she may change his or her opinion. If not, agree to disagree and move along.

## THANK THE HELPERS

Officials, especially elected officials, love to see the phrase “thank you for helping” combined with their name. Take every opportunity to thank them personally and publicly. In addition, send the third sample letter to the editor (page 10) to your local newspaper, publicly thanking school board members and elected officials for their action.

## MESSAGES AND TALKING POINTS

### CORE MESSAGES

All children deserve an education that fully prepares them for college, work, and citizenship. That means more than reading, writing, and math. It means promoting the development of children who are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and academically challenged.

#### Talking Point One:

Our education system is struggling to keep pace with the world around it.

#### Talking Point Two:

Our communities are losing too many kids and wasting too much talent.

#### Talking Point Three:

We need a new learning compact to ensure our kids become productive, engaged citizens.

#### Talking Point Four:

Educating the whole child means promoting emotional and physical well-being as well as creativity and critical thinking.

### NEED MORE INFORMATION TO CONVINCE YOUR POTENTIAL SPONSORS?

Frequently asked questions (FAQs) are included starting on page 13. More background materials are available at [www.wholechildeducation.org](http://www.wholechildeducation.org). Click on the Resource Clearinghouse for lots of helpful materials to help you make your case. *Be sure not to overwhelm officials with too much information, though. Talk with your sponsor and network of supporters for ideas on what materials would be most helpful to share.*



## SAMPLE LETTER TO SOLICIT SUPPORT FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS

Dear [INSERT NAME OF ELECTED OFFICIAL]:

The future of our economy and our democracy depends on today's young people, but our world is changing rapidly and our education system is struggling to keep pace. Demand for a highly skilled and educated workforce is growing, 20th-century jobs are falling by the wayside, and the global marketplace is a reality. We must ensure that our students get the 21st-century education they need to be productive adults and active citizens.

We know children must be healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and academically challenged in order to be successful students. Common sense and extensive research tell us hungry kids can't learn, scared kids can't think, and bored kids don't thrive. Putting students at the center and aligning resources to their needs engages them in learning and prepares them for a bright future.

Schools can't do this work alone. Every corner of our community must help educate the whole child.

Please join us in this effort by supporting a resolution now before the [INSERT SCHOOL BOARD, CITY COUNCIL, LEGISLATURE, ETC.] introduced by [INSERT TITLE AND NAME OF OFFICIAL]. The resolution is an important first step to demonstrate the value our community places on educating the whole child. Please help us spread the word among your colleagues and other leaders in our community.

Together, we can turn political rhetoric about "investing in the future of our children" into a reality. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this issue. To learn more about the whole child initiative, visit [www.wholechildeducation.org](http://www.wholechildeducation.org).

Sincerely,

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[INSERT NAME AND ADDRESS]

## SAMPLE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### **LETTER 1: To spread the word about the whole child initiative using a local example**

Dear Editor:

Our world is changing rapidly, and our education system is struggling to keep pace. Demand for a highly skilled and educated workforce is growing, 20th-century jobs are falling by the wayside, and the global marketplace is a reality. But, as [INSERT YOUR PROFESSIONAL ROLE], I know we are losing too many kids and wasting too much talent. Nationwide, about one in three students drops out of school before graduation, and many graduate unprepared for college and work.

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, a nonprofit education organization, proposes a whole child approach that ensures each child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. Common sense and research tell us hungry kids can't learn, scared kids can't think, and bored kids don't thrive. Putting students at the center and aligning resources to their needs engages them in learning and prepares them for a bright future.

Good work is underway. [PROVIDE LOCAL EXAMPLE OF WHOLE CHILD APPROACH.]

Schools can't do this work alone. All community members, from parents to business leaders, must help educate the whole child. Join me in this effort and go to [www.wholechildeducation.org](http://www.wholechildeducation.org) to learn how you can help.

Sincerely,

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[INSERT NAME, PROFESSIONAL ROLE, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER]

*Note: Before submitting your letter to a newspaper, check that newspaper's submission requirements for letters to the editor. Pay particular attention to the word count limit and the specific contact information you are requested to provide. Another option for customizing your letter is to reference a previously published article or column of relevance and connect it to the theme of your letter.*

**LETTER 2: To spread the word about the whole child initiative and describe how the local community can support it**

Dear Editor:

Our world is changing rapidly, and our education system is struggling to keep pace. Demand for a highly skilled and educated workforce is growing, 20th-century jobs are falling by the wayside, and the global marketplace is a reality. But, as [INSERT YOUR PROFESSIONAL ROLE], I know we are losing too many kids and wasting too much talent. Nationwide, about one in three students drops out of school before graduation, and many graduate unprepared for college and work.

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, a nonprofit education organization, proposes a whole child approach that ensures each child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. Common sense and research tell us hungry kids can't learn, scared kids can't think, and bored kids don't thrive. Putting students at the center and aligning resources to their needs engages them in learning and prepares them for a bright future.

Schools can't do this work alone. All community members, from parents to business leaders, must help educate the whole child. [IF APPROPRIATE, DESCRIBE HOW YOUR COMMUNITY COULD SUPPORT THIS INITIATIVE.]

Join me in this effort and go to [www.wholechildeducation.org](http://www.wholechildeducation.org) to learn how you can help.

Sincerely,

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[INSERT NAME, PROFESSIONAL ROLE, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER]

*Note: Before submitting your letter to a newspaper, check that newspaper's submission requirements for letters to the editor. Pay particular attention to the word count limit and the specific contact information you are requested to provide. Another option for customizing your letter is to reference a previously published article or column of relevance and connect it to the theme of your letter.*

**LETTER 3: To thank school board members or local elected officials for supporting the whole child initiative**

Dear Editor:

I would like to recognize and thank [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER OR ELECTED OFFICIAL] for [SUPPORTING/INTRODUCING] a [INSERT SCHOOL BOARD, CITY COUNCIL, LEGISLATURE, ETC.] resolution to ensure each child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and academically challenged.

Common sense and extensive research tell us hungry kids can't learn, scared kids can't think, and bored kids don't thrive. Putting students at the center and aligning resources to their needs engages them in learning and prepares them for a bright future.

Schools can't do this work alone. Every corner of our community must help educate the whole child. This resolution is an important first step to demonstrate the value our community places on the whole child approach. I thank [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER OR ELECTED OFFICIAL] for turning political rhetoric about "investing in the future of our children" into a reality. To learn more about the whole child initiative, visit [www.wholechildeducation.org](http://www.wholechildeducation.org).

Sincerely,

---

[INSERT NAME, PROFESSIONAL ROLE, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER]

*Note: Before submitting your letter to a newspaper, check that newspaper's submission requirements for letters to the editor. Pay particular attention to the word count limit and the specific contact information you are requested to provide. Another option for customizing your letter is to reference a previously published article or column of relevance and connect it to the theme of your letter.*

## SAMPLE PETITION TO SOLICIT COMMUNITY SUPPORT

We the undersigned respectfully request that you sponsor and pass the attached resolution supporting the education of the whole child. If our students are to master world-class academics, they need to be healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and academically challenged.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Contact Number/E-mail</b>
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
etc. _____	_____	_____



## FEEDBACK FORM

We want to know whether you were successful in introducing and passing a whole child resolution in your community and/or state. With your permission, we will post success stories on the whole child Web site ([www.wholechilddeducation.org](http://www.wholechilddeducation.org)).

Please fill out this short form and e-mail it to [wholechild@ascd.org](mailto:wholechild@ascd.org) or fax it to the attention of Andrea Palmiter at 1-703-575-5406.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Web site (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

1. Were you successful in your efforts to pass a whole child resolution in your community and/or state? If so, what strategies worked well? If not, what challenges did you face?
2. May we share your story with others at [www.wholechilddeducation.org](http://www.wholechilddeducation.org)?
3. Do you have additional comments or insights you would like to share to help others?

Thank you!

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ASCD'S WHOLE CHILD INITIATIVE

### **WHAT IS THE WHOLE CHILD INITIATIVE?**

The whole child initiative is about turning political rhetoric about “investing in the future of our children” into a reality. The rationale is straightforward. If students are to master world-class academics, they need to be physically and emotionally healthy. They need to be well fed and safe. They need to be intellectually challenged and have supportive adults who know them well and care about their success. And they need to be interested and engaged in what they’re learning. It is common sense — a hungry student can’t learn, a scared student can’t think, and a student who is bored or intimidated by schoolwork will just slip through the cracks. The 175,000-member Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) is coordinating the initiative.

### **WHAT ARE WE ASKING SCHOOLS TO DO? PARENTS? COMMUNITIES? POLICYMAKERS?**

We’re calling on all parents, educators, policymakers, and communities to join forces to ensure our children become productive, engaged citizens. We are asking schools and communities to examine how well they address students’ five basic needs — to be healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and academically challenged — and how they might do better. We are asking schools, parents, and communities to become partners in helping prepare students to learn and grow into fulfilled, productive adults. We are asking policymakers to support policies that address each of these critical areas.

### **WHY IS A WHOLE CHILD APPROACH NECESSARY?**

First, educating the whole child is the right thing to do morally. We often hear talk about how children are our future, but we need to act on that premise if we are serious about nurturing the next generation of leaders and citizens. It also is the right thing to do economically. If our students are to be competitive on a global scale, in a digital world where the only constant is change, we must make sure they are engaged and prepared. The U.S. position as a world leader in education is neither a guarantee nor a right. We must do more to ensure our students get a 21st-century education.

### **WHAT SPECIFICALLY IS ASCD DOING TO HELP ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THE WHOLE CHILD?**

Advocacy for the whole child is at the heart of our mission. We convened the Commission on the Whole Child to examine what it means to be a successful learner and published its report in March 2007. We developed a five-part Whole Child Compact that asks local, state, and national policymakers to ensure conditions that support comprehensive approaches to learning and engaging the whole child. We are reaching out to stakeholders — including educators, parents, communities, and policymakers — to provoke more meaningful discussion. We have developed an online grassroots campaign at [www.wholechildeducation.org](http://www.wholechildeducation.org) to build support for whole child education. We will be hosting a series of community conversations and forums in multiple states to allow local stakeholders to explore and discuss the best ways to support the whole child.

### **WHAT ROLE DOES ACCOUNTABILITY HAVE IN EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD?**

Accountability is essential. Part of what we're seeking is for communities, parents, and schools to stand up together and be accountable for the education of the children in their communities. If accountability is defined only in terms of reading and math test scores, our kids lose and we lose. The adults in the community also need to be accountable for ensuring that students are safe, healthy, engaged, and supported and that they have access to a broad curriculum that includes art, music, foreign languages, history, and social studies.

### **ISN'T SOME OF WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS AND FAMILIES?**

Families, schools, and communities must work together to ensure children are prepared to learn and receive the support they need. This is particularly important for students who do not have a strong support system at home. In these cases, we need to collectively provide it — for the sake of those children and our society. Clearly, schools cannot and should not be expected to take on these additional responsibilities by themselves. They should partner with community groups, faith-based groups, business volunteers, and government agencies to ensure students have the support they need.

### **SHOULDN'T SCHOOLS ENSURE THAT KIDS LEARN THE BASICS BEFORE TAKING ON A MORE AMBITIOUS AGENDA LIKE YOU'RE DESCRIBING?**

Educating the whole child is basic. A child simply cannot learn at his or her best if he or she is not healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. Most of us come to this whole child initiative having spent decades working to improve schools, and we understand that many schools can do better. We also know kids need support to help them be prepared to learn and encouragement to become engaged. It's hard to imagine that students who are ill, who are hungry, who are depressed or scared, or who lack caring adults in their lives will be able to read and write or tackle math problems or other subjects very well.

### **IS THERE ANY HARD EVIDENCE THAT LINKS IMPROVED STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT TO THE WHOLE CHILD APPROACH?**

Research shows that students have better grades and attendance when their health needs are met. Increased physical education time has been shown to have favorable effects on academic achievement. Students' feelings of personal connection with their school community also are associated with higher levels of achievement.<sup>1</sup>

1. California Department of Education (2005), *Getting Results: Developing Safe and Healthy Kids, Update 5: Student Health, Supportive Schools, and Academic Success*, ([www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fd/documents/getresultsupdate5.pdf](http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fd/documents/getresultsupdate5.pdf)).

## WHAT WILL THIS COST, AND WHO WILL PAY FOR IT?

Educating the whole child is an investment in our future. Like any investment, costs up front are necessary to reap future benefits. Some of what needs to be done will require significant investment, such as providing health care to all children. But that will pay off considerably in healthy students who are better able to learn and healthy adults who require less from the health care system. Much of what we're talking about is not costly at all. Ensuring all students have caring, supportive adults who know them well or establishing partnerships with existing community groups, for example, may have little or no associated cost.

We ask, instead, what is the cost of maintaining the status quo? What is the cost of inaction?

The United States has a steady high school dropout rate of nearly 30 percent, and the rate is significantly higher among Latinos and African Americans.<sup>2</sup> Researchers estimate that dropouts are far more likely to become incarcerated,<sup>3</sup> suffer poor health,<sup>4</sup> and have shorter life spans than high school graduates.<sup>5</sup>

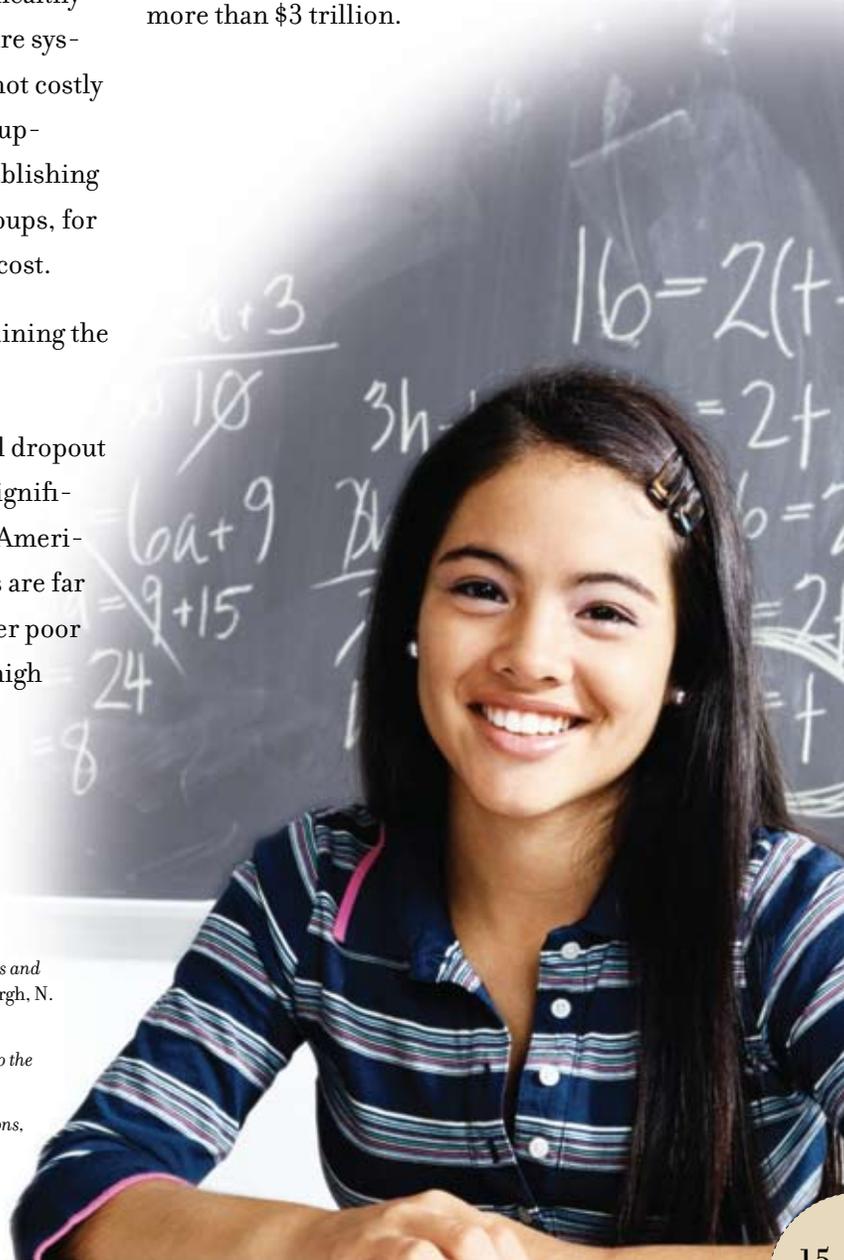
The Alliance for Excellent Education estimates that if the 1.2 million high school dropouts from the class of 2007 had earned their diplomas instead of dropping out, the U.S. economy would have seen an additional \$329 billion in wages over these students' lifetimes. And that's only for one class. If this annual pattern is allowed to continue, more than 12 million students will drop out of school during the next decade at a cost to the nation of more than \$3 trillion.

2. Barton, P. (2005). *One-Third of a Nation: Rising Dropout Rates and Declining Opportunities*. Educational Testing Service, Thornburgh, N. (2006). "Dropout Nation," *Time*, 167(16), 30–40.

3. Coalition for Juvenile Justice (2001), *From the Prison Track to the College Track*.

4. Muenning, P. (2005), *Health Returns to Education Interventions*, paper presented at Teachers College, Columbia University.

5. Alliance for Excellent Education (2003), *Fact Sheet: The Impact of Education on Health and Well-Being*.





## Whole Child Resolution Tool Kit

Go to [www.wholechildeducation.org](http://www.wholechildeducation.org) and become a whole child advocate. Sign ASCD's New Learning Compact for the Whole Child and explore other features the site offers to help you get involved.

Join ASCD's 175,000 educators from more than 119 countries and 58 affiliates who champion common-sense changes to ensure that all children get a great education.

[www.wholechildeducation.org](http://www.wholechildeducation.org)

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