



Event Organizer Packet

Welcome!



Thank you for your interest in doing an *I Pledge to Graduate* event at your school! This packet will help you plan your school's event.

Here's what's in your packet:

- 1.** Steps to launching an *I Pledge to Graduate* event in your school
- 2.** Sample event planning tool
- 3.** Graduation Matters Montana press release example

Questions? Great ideas? Contact us!

Email: graduationmatters@mt.gov

Phone: (406) 444-5643 Fax: (406) 444-2893

Mailing address:

**Graduation Matters Montana
Montana Office of Public Instruction
PO Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501**

Find us online!

Website: <http://graduationmatters.mt.gov>

Twitter: GradMattersMT

Facebook: Graduation Matters Montana



This toolkit uses information from DoSomething.org and the Global Youth Service Day Toolkit

4 steps to launching an *I Pledge to Graduate* event

1. Prepare and Plan

Build a team (3-5 members) or ask an existing school group (Student Council, Business Professionals Association, etc) to work with you

- A successful team will include students as co-leaders, at least one school staff member and a community member.
- Identify responsibilities for each member (see planning tool on page 4).

Set your goal for target

- Contact Andy Boehm, OPI Dropout Data Coordinator, at 444-0375, aboehm@mt.gov, to obtain data information on dropout rates in your school and district.
- Commit to 100% of your targeted student population signing the pledge.
 - a. Groups to consider: freshmen class, all high school students, seventh or eighth graders, elementary students

Determine event details

- Event ideas: pep-rally or assembly, pizza party, at end of freshmen orientation, table in cafeteria, at an Open House or sporting event, Spirit Week .

Get permission and confirm space for event

Identify incentives for students

- Seek donations from local businesses: free coffee with pledge card, gift certificates, free night of bowling, iTunes cards, t-shirts, food discounts and more.
- Use incentives to encourage ongoing Pledge activities: weekly drawings, prizes at graduation, new business discounts, etc.
- Each student who makes the pledge will be entered into OPI's incentives drawing (gift cards and iPods awarded each month).

Order pledge cards and signage from OPI

- Contact GMM at 444-5643 or graduationmatters@mt.gov to order Pledge cards, wristbands and signage for your event.

Get local "celebrity" involvement

- Graduation Matters Missoula invited the city mayor to participate. He sent a letter to every incoming freshman asking each student to commit to graduating from high school.
- Some local "celebrities" you might invite to join your initiative: elected official, tribal elders, local musician, athlete or artist, high school alumni or someone who overcame odds to graduate.

Publicize event with fliers, press release, social media and media outreach

- Issue press releases, invite media to your event and continue to update them.
- Make sure someone is ready to answer questions and media requests.

2. Day of event coordination

Set up and prepare for student attendance

- Have supplies on hand: pencils, scissors, and signage.

Have students sign pledge cards and then give them a wristband

Collect cards from students

- Students take the small cut off card to use for incentives and to remind them of their pledge to graduate.

Tally number of pledges received

After event, send signed cards to OPI

- Send to OPI, Attn: Office of the Superintendent, PO Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620.
- OPI will then create certificates for each student and mail them to the school; students will also be entered into a monthly drawing for an iPod Touch or gas cards.

3. Celebrate and Recognize

Share number of pledges made with school and community

- Use social media, school newspapers and press releases to local media to share the number of students who took the pledge.

Announce incentive winners

Volunteer Appreciation

Distribute Pledge Certificates

- Distribute in homeroom or have a school-wide assembly.

4. Next Steps

Identify ways to continue support for students to reach goal of graduating

Sample *I Pledge to Graduate* event planning tool

Use this planning tool to make sure you think through all the details.

	Task	Volunteer	Start Date	Deadline	Completed (Y/N)
I Pledge Coordinator					
	Identify 3-5 team members including one school staff member and students as co-leaders				
	Hold a meeting with everyone interested in helping to plan the event to share the goals and discuss ideas				
	Create a master timeline for all tasks needed to carry out the event to use it to monitor the team's progress				
Volunteer Management					
	Create a list of volunteer tasks or roles for the event				
	Determine how many volunteers are needed & begin to recruit!				
Materials & Supplies					
	Create a list of supplies and materials needed to complete the project				
	Draft letter to businesses to solicit incentive prizes and discounts				
	Order pledge cards and wristbands from OPI				
Event details					
	Identify where you want the event to occur; confirm space				
	Designate someone to coordinate speakers/presentations				
	Talk to your school about engaging a local public official or celebrity				
Public Relations, Outreach, & Media					
	Talk to your school office about inviting the press to your event				
	Identify someone to take photographs (Remember to create a photo release form if your school hasn't already)				
Celebrate & Reflect					
	Bring everyone together afterwards to celebrate and identify what will improve the event for next time!				
	Send all event materials, media and success stories to OPI; OPI will send Pledge certificates to the school				