


Closing the Gap

# Closing the Gap: A National Mandate

The National Urban Technology Center  
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## Mission statement

Urban Tech provides technology resources to schools and community based organizations in low-income communities for access to broadband applications that promote comprehensive health education, academic performance, and workforce preparation.

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## Urban Tech: Reaching communities throughout the U.S.




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## Urban Tech's Programs: Reaching and Teaching

### SEEDTECH

- Established in 1995
- Partnership with DOJ for 21<sup>st</sup> century technology skills
- 750 turn-key sites through 2009
  - ✓ Broadband access for education and to address community challenges
  - ✓ Proven computer curriculum
  - ✓ Teacher training for sustainability



### Youth Leadership Academy (YLA)




- Web-based multimedia tools for the classroom
- Builds problem-solving & critical thinking skills
- Increases academic scores & graduation rates
- Content management; tracking and evaluation (APOLLO)

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## Education impacts broadband adoption



**EDUCATION**      **BROADBAND ACCESS**

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## Improvement in broadband access: 2006-2009

	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>Yearly adoption</b>				
All adults	42%	47%	55%	63%
<b>Educational attainment</b>				
Less than high school	17%	21%	28%	30%
High school grad	31	34	40	52
Some college	47	58	66	71
College *	62	70	79	83

more education → greater access

Source: Pew Internet Projects, "Home Broadband Adoption", June 2009

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## Low adoption leads to less opportunity

- U.S. economy requires more education and technology skills to remain competitive<sup>1</sup>
- Less than 50% of high school students in low-income minority communities graduate in 4 years<sup>2</sup>
- Dropouts have fewer options for employment and self-sufficiency
- Unemployment and higher social costs reduce the nation's productivity

Sources:  
<sup>1</sup> Alliance for School Choice, "America's High School Graduation Rate Crisis Calls for Immediate Solutions," Andrew Capanella, Sept. 2008  
<sup>2</sup> Strategic Plan, Declaration of Education, District of Columbia Public Schools, May 2005

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## U.S. graduation rate lags other countries: Students not prepared.

The United States Trails Most Countries in High School Graduation Rate

Rank	Reporting Country	Graduation Rate (%)
1	Germany	100
2	France	100
3	Finland	100
4	Korea	93
5	Japan	93
6	Norway	91
7	Iceland	90
8	Czech Republic	89
9	Switzerland	89
10	United Kingdom	88
11	Ireland	86
12	Denmark	86
13	Italy	86
14	Hungary	85
15	Slovak Republic	82
16	Canada	80
17	Australia	80
18	United States	77
19	Sweden	76
20	Egypt (Arabia)	76

Source: Organization for Economic Development, 2008

- U.S. is ranked 18<sup>th</sup> in high school graduation globally!
- The U.S. spends the most money on education yet is ineffective compared to countries with high graduation rates

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## What are other countries doing differently in education?

- Motivating teachers to see the benefits of using technology
- Using technology aggressively for teaching and learning
- Invest in technological equipment for schools and in training teachers to use the technology
- Providing all schools and students with the same opportunities

Source: Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies, Volume 5, Number 1, May 2007

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## Demonstrated Effectiveness

Proven outcomes:

- Promotion of IT in schools results in:
  - Improved attendance
  - Academic achievement

**IMPACT OF YLA IN THE CLASSROOM**

Metric	YLA (%)	NON-YLA (%)
IMPROVED SOCIAL SKILLS	99.3%	89.8%
IMPROVED MOTIVATION	72.8%	39.8%
IMPROVED ATTENDANCE	72.8%	54.8%
IMPROVED ON-TIME SUBMISSIONS	55.1%	23.3%
GRADE OR BETTER	29.3%	13.2%

Source: YLA in the Classroom, 2007, Newark, NJ

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## Barriers to greater competitiveness

- Lack of a national broadband mandate
  - Limited investment in broadband deployment and adoption
  - Less effective solutions for national priorities such as health care, education, public safety, job creation
- No long-term strategy for achieving sustainable broadband programs
  - Unproductive use of investment dollars
- Less access to instructional technologies in low-income communities
  - Unequal educational and economic opportunities

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## What Urban Tech is doing to close the gap in education and broadband adoption

- Integrating IT solutions for stemming the drop-out rate and promoting health education, financial literacy, career development to sell the value of broadband technology to school and CBO administrators;
- Recycling programs to give computers to classroom teachers;
- Gaining partners who are willing to make a long term investment in instructional technology;
- Developing a "digital campus" for sustainability of our programs after funding ends and to help low income minority communities navigate the web;
- Connect the school to home and resources in the community to extend education outside of the boundaries of the classroom and after school programs.

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