



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 10, 2015

CONTACT: Nancy Rogan, (757)889-9415, or nancy.rogan@whro.org

American Graduate Joins National Leaders at White House Summit on Next Generation High Schools

Norfolk, VA: Responding to President Obama’s call in this year’s State of the Union Address to reinvent American high schools to allow more students to seize opportunities in today’s economy, public media’s American Graduate initiative will participate today in Washington, D.C., in the first-ever [White House Summit on Next Generation High Schools](#).

The Summit is convening students, educators, philanthropists and entrepreneurs from across the country who will identify ways in which American high schools can promote personalized learning, work-based learning experiences, deeper ties to post-secondary, and include a focus on expanding science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) opportunities for girls and other groups of students who are underrepresented in these high-growth, well-paying fields.

Heeding the Summit’s call to action, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting will, through American Graduate, support stories for broadcast about new approaches to high school education across the country. Local stations will host community conversations and will provide PBS Learning Media resources to educators for use in their classrooms. Students will create digital content, including news reports, for programs such as the PBS NewsHour Student Reporting Labs.

“Organized around American Graduate, a diverse range of public media colleagues and other partners across the country has, for several years, been building a national movement committed to improving youth outcomes,” said Bert Schmidt, President and CEO of WHRO. “The Summit offers American Graduate an opportunity to expand and energize that movement, putting the U.S. on a path to achieve a 90 percent graduation rate by 2020.”

Indeed, for many years, American Graduate has been showcasing ways in which high schools can prepare more of youth for success in the 21st century workplace. In the last year and a half alone, public media stations participating in American Graduate have:

- Shared more than 38 million resources on air, online, and in the community.
- Created positive opportunities to celebrate American Graduate Champions, caring consistent adults in the lives of young people, celebrating more than 8,000 American Graduate Champions.

- Broadcast nearly 12,000 hours of content and engaged 432,088 community members in 3,281 community gatherings and events, helping communities seek solutions associated with increasing the graduation rate.
- Deployed digital platforms to spotlight relevant issues around the dropout crisis, achieving more than 7 million web views. Twitter chats, infographics, social media campaigns and more have played a critical role in encouraging communities to discuss and act on improving youth outcomes, with nearly 24,000 Tweets and Facebook posts.

At WHRO, our own American Graduate initiative has included:

- Increasing awareness around Hampton Roads' school districts' innovative programming through airing American Graduate ED Now spots.
- Launching SkillsOnline to offer compelling, contemporary and dynamic content to engage and teach the foundational, technological and professional skills today's youth need to enter the workforce ready to work.
- Providing current and relevant educational information through WHRO's American Graduate website.
- Produced two documentaries and hosted several town halls to create meaningful conversation around the issues facing youth.

###

About American Graduate: American Graduate is public media's long-term commitment to supporting community-based solutions to the dropout crisis. Supported by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), more than 100 public radio and television stations have joined forces with more than 980 partners and at-risk schools across 40 states.

About WHRO: Since its founding in 1961 to support education, WHRO has utilized creativity and technology to serve the residents of southeast Virginia in its mission to educate, inform and entertain viewers and listeners of WHRO's four public television and eight public radio stations. Owned by 19 southeastern Virginia school divisions, WHRO also delivers online educational and new media services to *25,000 Educators & 280,000 Students Locally; 155,000 Educators & over 1.2 million Students Statewide.*