REACH HIGHER

Complete your education. Own your future.

COLLEGE SIGNING DAY KIT

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A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRST LADY

"I am thrilled to know you are developing a Signing Day Program in your community. These events offer a unique opportunity to celebrate graduating seniors, showcase our student leaders and inspire more young people to take the first steps on their journey to higher education.

One of my greatest joys as First Lady is learning of the remarkable students across our country who are taking charge of their future and committing to higher education. That is why we launched the Reach Higher initiative to help achieve the President's "North Star" goal—that by 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world.

I hope this kit will provide you with a range of resources and ideas to make your Signing Day a tremendous success, and I wish you the very best for a wonderful event."

Michelle Obama

Watch the video online.

THE COLLEGE CHALLENGE

Education after high school is a critical part of a successful future. College graduates have more opportunities than those who choose not to pursue their education past high school. In fact, according to Georgetown's Center on Education and Workforce, college graduates are set to make 84% more over their lifetimes than high school graduates.

That said, an education is worth way more than just a higher paycheck—it's the most valuable asset a person can ever have. It is something they will have their entire life, helping them understand the world around them and giving them the tools they need to adapt to challenges and changes they encounter. Yet, many young people today aren't choosing to pursue higher education.

America once led the world in college graduates and we can do so again by getting two things right:

1. Supporting and encouraging young people to reach higher
2. Creating a framework for young people commit to higher education, share their stories and inspire others to reach higher

REACH HIGHER + BETTER MAKE ROOM

Reach Higher, an initiative from First Lady Michelle Obama, is centered around providing encouragement and activating educators, counselors and other adults to help young people see college as an option, whether at a traditional 4-year college, a 2-year community college or through an industry-recognized training program. Reach Higher focuses on four components: college affordability, exposing students to college, academic and summer planning, and supporting school counselors.

Better Make Room is the student-facing campaign supporting Reach Higher, giving young people a space to declare their commitment to their future and engage with others. It's a peer-to-peer encouragement model that speaks to students in their own language—because they're the ones doing the talking. Better Make Room aims to elevate college students to the level of celebrities and says to the world, "These young people are about to do something great. We Better Make Room."

Together, these initiatives create a community around higher education, giving everyone a way to participate that resonates with them.

BETTER MAKE ROOM

SIGNING DAY

Deciding where you're going to college is exciting. It's a major step toward a person's future and it should feel like an epic occasion.

Enter: Signing Day, a chance to celebrate students for making a commitment to higher education. Hosted by schools, organizations, community leaders and influencers, Signing Day is a chance to rally around local students and show them your support.Created as part of the First Lady's Reach Higher initiative, this movement is a way for educators, counselors and parents to encourage those heading to college, but as part of Better Make Room it's also a way for students to inspire and encourage others, too.

SIGNING DAY SUCCESS

With over 600 events throughout the country, Signing Day is taking off, but we need your participation to make it a true success. **Watch the video** of Secretary Arne Duncan at YES Prep Senior Signing Day 2010.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

There are opportunities for everyone to host a Signing Day, whether as a partner with your mayor for a citywide celebration or a small, school-based or neighborhood day of action.

- Partner with schools, community organizations and nonprofits to host a Signing Day Celebration in your city.
- Challenge the high schools in your city to encourage students to wear t-shirts from the college they plan to attend.
- Challenge teachers, principals, and city officials/employees to wear t-shirts from their alma maters or a local college or university.
- Make an appearance at a local high school wearing paraphernalia from your alma mater or a local college or university.
- Encourage local businesses to support college efforts by offering incentives to students that commit to higher education and displaying a Signing Day poster to promote the event.
- Share your activities with the media and your social networks with #CollegeSigningDay, #ReachHigher and #BetterMakeRoom.

SIGNING DAY

"The day when you've publicly declared where you're going to college, this day should be as glamorous and as exciting as those athletic signing days. This day should be on TV with fireworks, and celebrities, and folks sitting around just dying to know where you're going to college." —The First Lady on College Signing Day

SIGNING DAY EVENT IDEAS

- Get students involved in the planning process—they know how to best inspire and engage their peers.
- Invite parents and families to join the fun.
- Bring in outside speakers, like local celebrities, influential community members or prominent alumni—you can even request a speaker from the White House!
- Celebrate with a citywide picnic, party or carnival.
- Expand an existing school celebration that honors graduates.
- Encourage sharing on social media with hashtags prominently displayed at the event.
- Create a social media photobooth with Better Make Room-themed props—you can involve your art department to make a backdrop or props that feature their interpretation of campaign graphics.

REQUEST A SPEAKER FOR SIGNING DAY

1. Take the College Signing Day pledge at www.reachhigher.gov.
2. Plan your College Signing Day event.
3. Complete the Signing Day Speaker Request form.

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Twitter

#BetterMakeRoom for these incoming freshmen. #CollegeSigningDay #ReachHigher!

To the class of 2020: Here's to what happens next! #ReachHigher #CollegeSigningDay

Facebook

Happy #CollegeSigningDay to all the high school seniors! We are so proud of you for choosing to #ReachHigher.

#BetterMakeRoom for the Class of 2020—here's to all the students who #ReachHigher on #CollegeSigningDay.

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Instagram

[Photo of Signing Day Event] Our students are making big plans for the future! The world #BetterMakeRoom for what they'll do next. #ReachHigher #CollegeSigningDay

[Photo of Signing Day Event] We're looking for the country's next leaders. Apply and #ReachHigher #CollegeSigningDay #BetterMakeRoom

SOCIAL COVERAGE

SOCIAL COVERAGE

SAMPLE TALKING POINTS

- May 1st is the deadline for students across the nation to send in their commitment to the college or university that they will attend the following academic year.
- A lot of media attention goes to promising athletes when they select the college of their choice. We want every student to receive as much attention and have that same feeling of importance so that they too can feel special about this big day.
- Thanks to the First Lady and her efforts, this is now a growing tradition that we hope will take place in cities and schools across the nation.
- After Signing Day, students can keep putting their dreams for the future out there on BetterMakeRoom.org and share their journey with the world using the hashtag #BetterMakeRoom.

FOR UPDATES AND MORE INFORMATION:

ReachHigher.gov

Twitter: @ReachHigher

Instagram: @ReachHigher2020

BetterMakeRoom.org

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