

[The Cowen Institute releases high school disconnection report](#)

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The [Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives](#) at Tulane University released an extensive report, *High School Disconnection: Insights from the Inside*, which explores the causes of high school disconnection by youth and potential solutions to address it.

The study uses information gathered in interviews with high school administrators and staff, leaders of supporting youth development intermediaries, as well as focus groups with youth, to understand the root causes of youth disconnection and current practices and interventions targeting dropout prevention in New Orleans. The discussions centered around the issues of academic preparation, school culture, building relevant and rigorous curricula, and relationships with adult mentors and peers.

“We are very excited to release this report,” says John Ayers, executive director of the Cowen Institute. “We hope to serve our schools and nonprofits by providing

them with a helpful resource as they work to address the critical needs of our at-risk and "opportunity youth."

Also known as disconnected youth, "opportunity youth" are 16- to 24-year olds who are disconnected from school and work. "Opportunity youth" cost the country \$93 billion and the New Orleans metro area \$195 million in 2011 due to lost tax revenues and increased spending on social services.

This report confirms that youth want to succeed and, with support, they can. In the words of one of the young adults in the study: "If you put your mind to it, you can do it. You got to believe it to achieve it. So do what you got to do, focus on school, pay attention and make it worth your while."

The Cowen Institute is an action-oriented think tank that informs and advances solutions, through policies, programs and partnerships, to eliminate the challenges impeding the success of K-12 education in New Orleans and beyond. The institute's work is in applied research, policy, college and career readiness, and reconnecting "opportunity youth."

The entire executive summary and report can be found [here](#).