

Our Story

Written by MPB

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Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB) is on a mission to combat the high school dropout rates in Mississippi. As an education leader in the state, MPB has taken the challenge of impacting dropout rates seriously. To its longtime support of early literacy programs such as *Between the Lions*

Literacy Initiative, MPB has committed to address the issue among high school students. Beginning this effort in 2009, MPB conceived the idea of video mentoring to be available to schools and students in Mississippi. The videos were developed using individuals whose success stories could inspire students to continue with school. This mentoring program was introduced as

"Can I Kick It?"

and is accessible on the MPBonline.org.

The following year, MPB received a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) to support our dropout efforts through the *American Graduate* program. MPB orchestrated a major awareness event, the

Drop—Dropout Prevention Summit.

The summit was held in Jackson, Mississippi on November 15th. It was attended by students, parents, and educators. Community leaders joined in by providing a panel discussion and breakout sessions. The event was streamed online.

"Can I Kick It?"

interviews were showcased in the breakout sessions. The summit was covered by local media on television and in the newspaper.

In addition to the summit, MPB held Town Hall meetings at three key high schools in the Jackson area. The high schools were "key" because of extremely low graduation rates. The meetings featured speakers, breakout sessions, and youth led discussions. MPB facilitated as the "peer-to-peer" solution took hold.

Through another grant, this time from the National Black Programming Consortium, the Public Media Corps (PMC), MPB expanded its program to include a media institute, *"Can I Kick It?": Youth Movement Through Media Institute*

. The institute took 50 at-risk students through a course in leadership, digital literacy and video storytelling. The students were divided into 10

"Can I Kick It?"

teams to research, script and produce mini-documentaries. These videos will be showcased at the 2012

Stop the Drop—Let's Make It Happen Summit

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MPB participated in American Graduate's Teacher Wall project. The Teacher Wall provided teachers with an opportunity to talk about what's important to them. MPB interviewed 5 teachers and asked 5 different questions. The topics tackled on the Wall showcase a wide range of voices and provide teachers with a chance to interact, share and learn from one another, all while contributing to the conversation on American education.

American Graduate Day, September 22, 2012, was an unprecedented broadcast and outreach event dedicated to engaging the country around the dropout crisis. MPB participated in this event with a 7-hour broadcast of the American Graduate television programming and additional radio support.

On November 13, 2012, MPB will host another summit, *Stop the Drop-Let's Make it Happen*. This summit is funded through a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). There will be a special place on the agenda for the *"Can I Kick It?" Crews*

to present their videos and share experiences. Breakout sessions will provide discussion opportunities on various topics. A panel discussion will wrap up the summit. The panel is made up of public officials and educators versed on the dropout situation.

Dropout prevention does not have a quick or easy solution. MPB is committed to make a difference over the long term through continued efforts for community engagement.