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**WGBH and WBUR collaborate to examine the Massachusetts high school dropout crisis with Project Dropout**

*Unique programs and features include a live television special; personal video diaries from students at risk; radio series on WBUR; dedicated series of television segments on WGBH's Greater Boston; Maria Hinojosa: One-on-One broadcast; and related material on the WGBH Forum Network.*

**For more information, visit [www.projectdropout.org](http://www.projectdropout.org).**

Public broadcasters WGBH and WBUR-FM announced today that they have joined forces to present Project Dropout, a multi-media journalistic examination of the high school dropout crisis in Massachusetts.

According to the research report "Cities in Crisis" conducted in April 2008, a student drops out of high school every 29 seconds, translating into 1.1 million students in a single year. Students in Boston are graduating at a rate of just under 58 percent, according to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's "2007 Graduation Rate Report for All Students." In Massachusetts overall, the graduation rate is just over the national average of 75 percent.

Project Dropout aims to raise public awareness of this crisis and encourage public dialog. All content will be posted at [projectdropout.org](http://projectdropout.org), a web site blog that invites viewers and users to comment, engage and share their own stories. The blog's central feature is a collection of ongoing video diaries posted by area students at-risk; their personal journeys unfold online from September to the end of the school year.

On radio and television, Project Dropout launches in February with the first of nine weekly reports on WBUR, 90.9 FM, Boston's NPR news station. Starting on February 9, and airing every Monday, WBUR examines the high school dropout rate from a variety of perspectives, including the economic and social impact. Produced by Monica Brady-Myerov and Deborah Becker, the series will be reported by Bianca Vazquez-Toness, *Morning Edition* host Bob Oakes, *Radio Boston* host David Boeri, Becker and Brady-Myerov.

"This collaboration reflects our desire to shed more light on a widespread but hidden problem that is undermining the education of thousands of the students each year in the Commonwealth," said WBUR's News Director/Managing Editor John Davidow.

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Starting the first week of March, and airing every Tuesday, WGBH's nightly news and public affairs program, *Greater Boston*, kicks off a six-part series. Hosted by Emily Rooney, *Greater Boston* examines how the Massachusetts dropout rate affects everyone in the Commonwealth, from students and their families to state citizens and their communities. On March 31 at 7:30 p.m., *María Hinojosa: One-on-One* premieres a half-hour special featuring Fernando Reimers, the director of Global Education and International Education Policy at Harvard University.

"Massachusetts is one of the toughest places in the country to survive as a dropout," said WGBH Senior Producer Hillary Wells. "Our hope is that this collaboration will help raise awareness about a critical issue with ramifications far beyond the classroom walls."

Project Dropout culminates with a one-hour live broadcast in front of a studio audience with Rooney, Boeri and contributions from Hinojosa. The special airs on WGBH 2 at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, April 7, and will be simulcast on WBUR. The broadcast also will be carried in western New England by Springfield public television station WGBY, and on 88.5 FM WFCR Amherst, the area's NPR news and music station. The broadcast will stream live online on [www.projectdropout.org](http://www.projectdropout.org). Viewers at home are invited to watch and chat online as well as respond to poll questions.

Funding for Project Dropout is generously provided by The Boston Foundation.

### **About WGBH**

WGBH Boston is America's preeminent public broadcaster, producing such celebrated national PBS series as *Masterpiece*, *Antiques Roadshow*, *Frontline*, *Nova*, *American Experience*, *Arthur*, *Curious George* and more than a dozen other award-winning primetime, lifestyle and children's series. Boston's last remaining independent TV station, WGBH produces local TV productions (among them, *Greater Boston*, *Basic Black* and *María Hinojosa: One-on-One*) that focus on the region's diverse community, while WGBH 89.7 FM is Boston's NPR Arts & Culture station, offering a rich menu of classical, jazz, blues, news programming and more. WGBH is the leading producer of online content for pbs.org—one of the most-visited dot-org sites on the Internet—a major producer for public radio and a pioneer in developing educational multimedia and new technologies that make media accessible for people with disabilities. For its efforts, WGBH has been recognized with hundreds of honors, including Oscars, Emmys, Peabodys and duPont-Columbia Journalism Awards. Visit WGBH on the Web at [www.wgbh.org](http://www.wgbh.org).

### **About WBUR**

One of New England's leading sources of news and information, WBUR, 90.9 FM, is owned and operated by Boston University and is a member of National Public Radio. WBUR also broadcasts a selection of BBC programs and locally produced programs such as "Here & Now," "Only a Game," "On Point," and "Car Talk." WBUR has won more than 100 major awards for its news coverage, including several George Foster Peabody Awards, the Associated Press News Station of the Year for 2003-05, and three prestigious Edward R. Murrow Awards in the 2007 Radio-Television News Director Association's (RTNDA) annual national electronic journalism competition.

