



Keeping Students on Track to Graduation

**INCREASING
OUR
GRADUATION
RATES**



The Mid-Atlantic Equity Center (MAEC) at
The George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in
Education (GW-CEEE)

<http://maec.ceee.gwu.edu/>

&

The Everyone Graduates Center
at the Johns Hopkins University (JHU)
Center of Social Organization of Schools

<http://www.every1graduates.org/>

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Keeping Students on Track to Graduate

Keeping Students on Track to Graduate is a collaborative effort by the Mid-Atlantic Equity Center (MAEC) at The George Washington University's Center for Equity and Excellence (GW-CEEE) and the Everyone Graduates Center at the Johns Hopkins University's Center of Social Organization of Schools.

The goal of the presentation is to impart the knowledge and skills needed to share with and train colleagues in the implementation of an integrated model for keeping students on track to graduation. The presentation encourages participants to use this learning experience to analyze procedures, policies, and protocols and to make systemic changes to districts and schools.

The presentation is comprised of four modules.

Module 1: The Dropout Problem

- Understand the dropout situation and the use of data to address it
- Explore influences on student success
- Recognize indicators of student disengagement from school

Module 2: Developing an Early Warning System (EWS)

- Explore the purpose and strategies to implement an EWS
- Understand the roles of EWS team members
- Consider support needed from the district

Module 3: The Intervention System

- Practice using data to assign appropriate interventions
- Apply interventions for each drop out indicator at targeted and intensive levels
- Integrate all aspects of the EWS intervention model into the school's operation

Module 4: Evaluating Effectiveness

- Address how to evaluate and implement individual school's intervention plans

The materials provided in this folder relate to Module 1 and Module 2.

Agree or Disagree?

1. Dropping out is a personal decision that has nothing to do with how schools operate.

Reality: Dropouts are more than twice as likely to say they left for reasons related to school than because of family or personal circumstances. Students' educational experiences are more accurate warning signs of whether they will drop out than demographic characteristics like gender, race, age, or poverty. High schools vary widely in their holding power above and beyond the individual risk factors students bring with them. The factors that contribute most to students' decision to drop out are "alterable," meaning there are things schools can do to change them. These include creating environments where students have supportive relationships with teacher and peers, and they are both challenged and supported academically.

2. Students drop out because they are bored, not because they struggle academically.

Reality: Researchers in Chicago and Philadelphia have found that most dropouts fail courses and get behind in credits before leaving high school, and failing just one class the first semester of ninth grade can cause a downward spiral that ends with dropping out. Academic performance and educational engagement are both important, and students can drop out because of either one—or, more often, both.

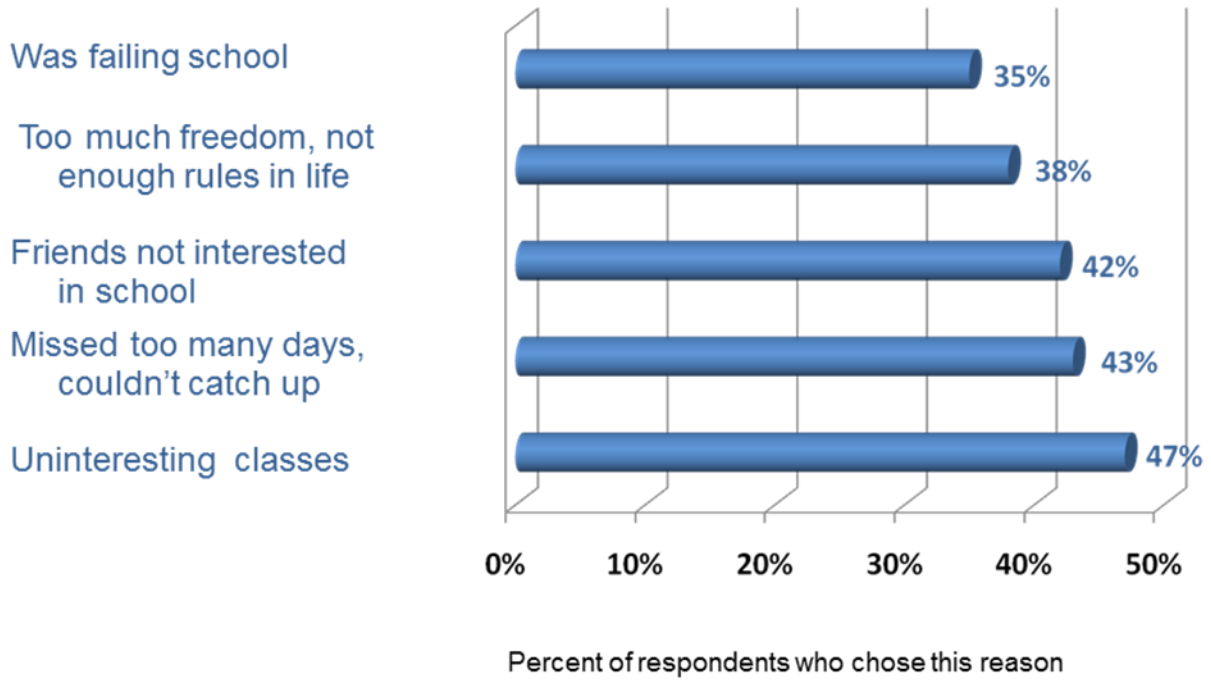
3. Dropping out is predictable event, the result of a gradual process.

Reality: For most, dropping out is the culmination of a long-term process of educational withdrawal preceded by years of poor academic performance and disengagement from school. Most dropouts show clear warning signs by ninth grade and many well before that. In Philadelphia, researchers can identify fifty percent of eventual dropouts as early as sixth grade and an additional thirty percent by ninth grade.

4. If all students were academically prepared to handle high school coursework, the dropout problem would disappear.

Reality: Poor academic preparation puts students at greater risk of dropping out, but simply raising eighth grade test scores will not solve the problem. Even high-achieving students can have a rocky transition to ninth grade, especially in large high schools that provide little social and academic support.

Reasons students give for dropping out



Source: *Silent Epidemic Report (2006)*

Analyzing the Data

As a team, discuss answers to the following questions. Choose what you believe your school is doing well, and why. Also, identify areas for improvement. Assign a reporter to share your team's thoughts with the whole group.

1. What data does your school currently disseminate to teachers, administrators, and parents?
2. How does your team share these data with stakeholders (parents, community, students)?
3. How often are data reviewed and shared?
4. What data would you like to see collected and analyzed that are not currently available?
5. How do staff members currently use data?
6. List examples of changes in practice, policy, or procedures that resulted from studying current or trend graduation and dropout data.
7. What additional ways could data be used to improve your school or district's graduation or dropout rates?

Early Warning Indicators of Eventual Dropout Outcome

Early Warning Indicator	Grade Level	
	Middle School	High School
Attendance	<p>Less than 80 percent attendance is a strong predictor of dropping out and requires intensive intervention</p> <p>Missing more than two days of school per month (less than 90 percent attendance) should prompt targeted intervention (even though many students with this level of attendance manage to graduate in urban districts)</p>	
Behavior	An unsatisfactory behavior grade or suspension	Suspension in ninth grade
Course Failure	<p>Failing mathematics</p> <p>Failing reading or language arts</p>	<p>Any two semester course failures in ninth grade (particularly in core academic courses required for graduation)</p> <p>Any one semester failure probably should prompt intervention and, ideally, a pattern of course performance likely to lead to a failing report card grade would prompt intervention from the classroom teacher to prevent failure and off-track credit status</p>

Developing an Early Warning System

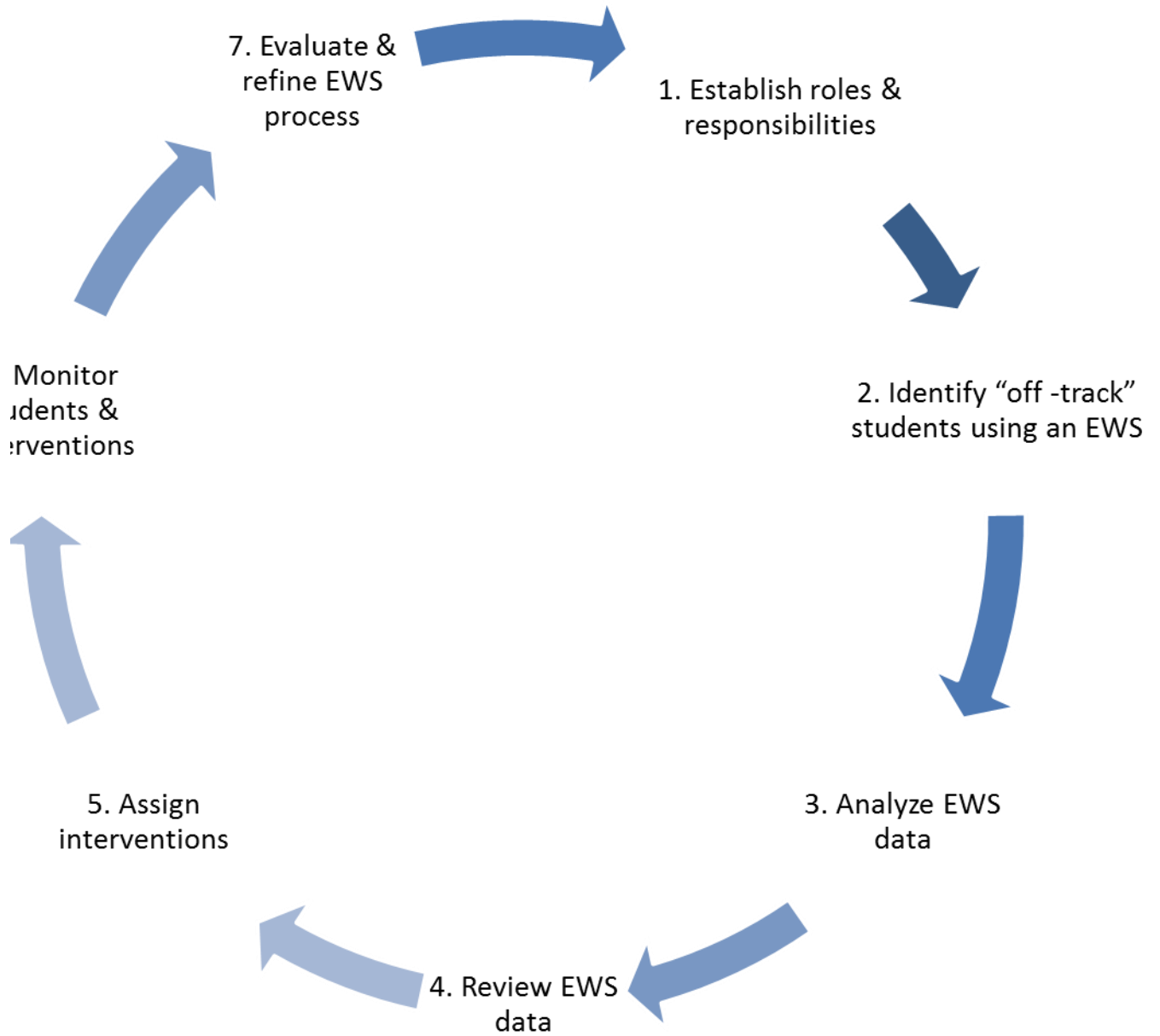
Questions to Consider

- Who needs to be represented on the EWS team?
- What types of knowledge would team members bring?
- Who will monitor EWS data entry and management?
- When will the EWS team meet?
- What professional development do school- and district-level team(s) require?
- What additional resources need to support the team(s)?

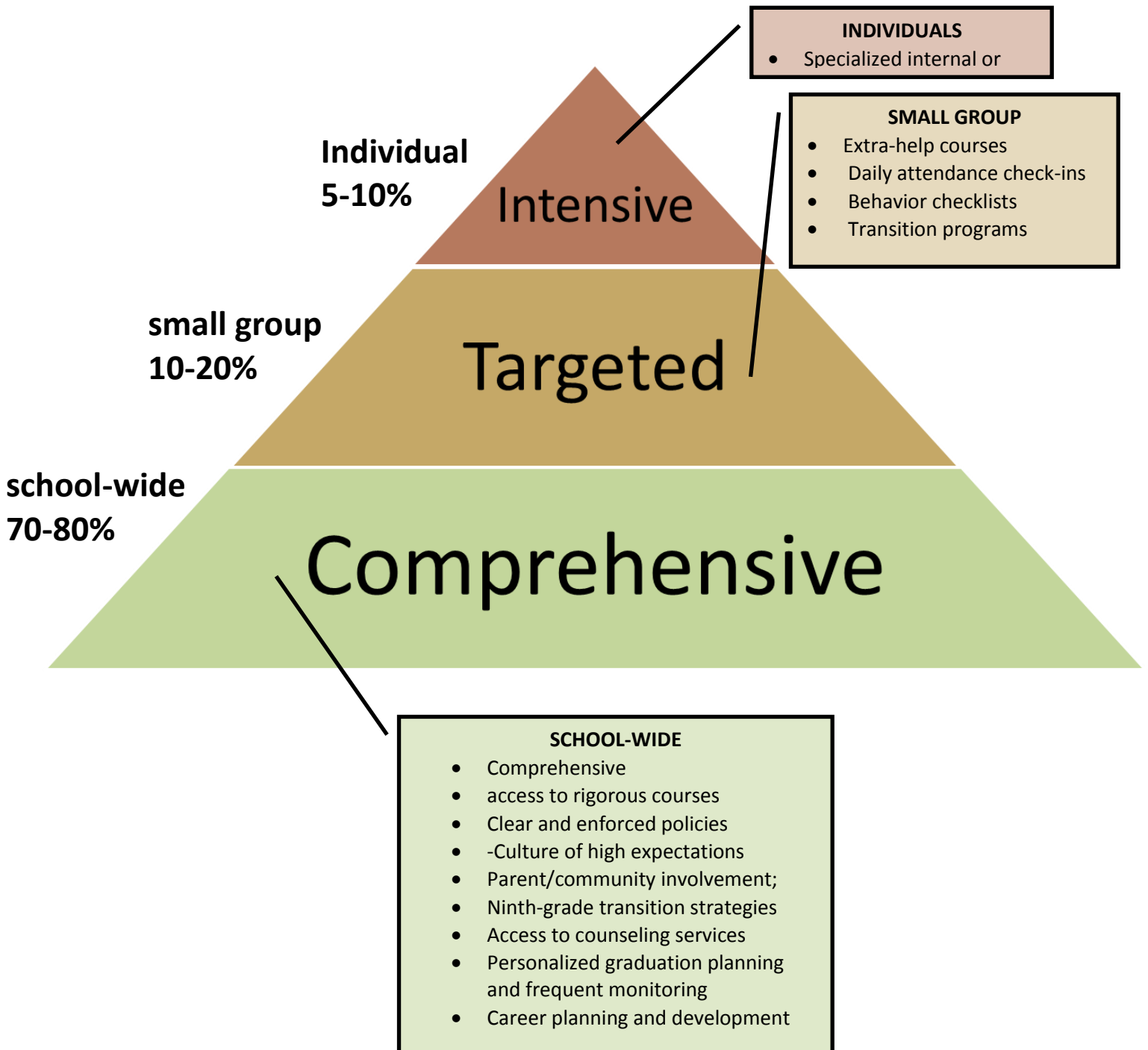
Responsibilities to Consider

- Teach the integrated model to school staff
- Attend the professional development on the integrated model
- Gather data on current state of school dropout situation (from what sources)
- Disseminate data on current state of school dropout situation
- Receive data on current state of school dropout situation
- Make assessment of current state of school dropout situation
- Compile ABC data (How often?)
- Disseminate ABC data to school staff team members
- Organize school staff teams (members, students assigned)
- Schedule and facilitate school staff team meetings
- Gather data from school staff teams (what will be communicated, how often?)
- Assess if intervention and prevention strategies are working
- Contact potential community “second team of adults” members
- Coordinate community involvement
- Send intervention evaluation data to administrators

Seven Steps to Developing an Early Warning System



Three-Tiered Integration Model



Suggestions for Planning Team Meetings

First, the team meets as soon as the early warning system data becomes available. Team members will review student needs and plan interventions for the coming school year, which most likely will begin with the ninth grade.

Second, the team reconvenes at the beginning of the school year to verify student information, especially enrollment status, and review new students' records to determine their needs. At this meeting, the team makes certain that interventions, like ninth grade transition programs, and intervention supports, like course schedules, are in place.

Third, the team meets after the first 20 or 30 days of the ninth-grade year. At this meeting, the team should review and interpret student- and school-level reports, identify new needs for interventions, monitor students' initial response to interventions, and revise students' intervention assignments, as needed. Team members have student data current and visible throughout the year.

Fourth, the team meets after each grading period to import and study new data such as students' absences, behavior difficulties, and course progress. They review and adjust interventions as needed.

Fifth, the team meets at the end of the school year to review and interpret student-and school-level progress data, review students' interventions for the summer and for the next academic year, evaluate the EWS process, and plan further changes.

Finally, the team determines the best meeting schedules beyond these critical meetings. Some schools and districts find they need to monitor student progress often to preempt potential obstacles from accumulating. These teams might meet every two weeks to discuss students on the early warning list. A team member facilitates to make certain meetings run efficiently.

**Team Meeting Activity Idea:
Getting Everyone on Board**

1. *Find a partner.* Find someone who has a birthday in the same month as yours. The person with the birthday that is earliest in the month shares his or her experience first.
2. *First partner shares.* The first partner shares a description of an action he or she took (or that the partner has knowledge about) that helped a student(s) decide to stay in school and/or stay on track). Be as specific as possible, but don't reveal names of individuals.
3. *Second partner probes for reasons for success.* The partner probes by asking two or three questions such as "Why do you think what you did was successful?" "Would you think this idea would have value to a colleague? Why or why not?"
4. *Trade partner roles.* Repeat steps two and three.
5. *Share out.* Participants return to home tables. Volunteers share stories from the activity with the whole group. Participants look for commonalities across stories. The workshop facilitator records the identified commonalities.
6. *List characteristics of success.*

Guiding Evaluation Questions

- What aspects of your intervention system do you want to evaluate?
- How will you evaluate them?
- How often will you need to evaluate?
- What will you do with the resulting data?
- How will these data translate into changes?
- How can evaluation of results be used to leverage resources?
- Are there benefits to both an internal and external lens for our evaluation?

Tool Settings

MORE INFO

Main Menu

Grading Periods (GPs):

Period	Days	Start of Period (mm/dd/yyyy)	End of Period (mm/dd/yyyy)
Quarter 1	45	9/1/2009	11/15/2009
Quarter 2	45	11/16/2009	2/1/2010
Quarter 3	45	2/2/2010	4/15/2010
Quarter 4	45	4/16/2010	6/30/2010

GPA Scale:

Number of Credits to Graduate:

Disabilities	Race/Ethnicities	ELL Status
Autism	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Yes
Deaf-blindness	Asian or Pacific Islander	
Emotional disturbance	Black, Not Hispanic	
Hearing impairment (including deafness)	Hispanic	
Learning disability	White, Not Hispanic	
Mental retardation		
Orthopedic impairment		
Other health impairment		
Specific learning disability		Disadv. Status
Speech or language impairment		Yes
Traumatic brain injury		
Visual impairment (including blindness)		

Initial Attendance Time Period:

Risk Indicator Thresholds		
Indicator	Default	Custom
First 20 day absence rate	10%	
Grading period absence rate	10%	
Annual absence rate	10%	
# of course fails (per grading period)	1	
# of course fails (annual)	2	
# of core course fails (annual)	4	
GPA	2.00	
# of credits earned (annual)	5	

Advanced Settings (LOCKED)

Unlock

To enable the advanced filter settings in the reports control panel, please enter the password in the space above and click the 'Unlock' button.

Source: National High School Center

Reports Control Panel

Detailed Student Report MORE INFO

Main Menu

Student Details Date: September 23, 2010

ID:	1122103
First Name:	Katherine
Last Name:	Barkauskas
Current Age:	14
Grade:	9
Race/Ethnicity:	Asian or Pacific Islander
Disability:	Learning Disability

Guardian(s):	Janice Schwartz
Phone #:	703-555-6015
Email:	Janice.Schwartz@email.com
ELL status:	--
Disadvantaged:	--
Enrollment Status:	Enrolled
Date of Change:	--

Flags

Pre-HS:	Yes	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	End of year
First 20 Day Attendance:	Yes	Yes	--	--	--	--
Attendance:	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Course Fails:	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
GPA:	No	No	No	No	No	No
CCSR End of Year:	--	--	--	--	--	No

Interventions

Intervention ID	Intervention	Type	Tier	Start	End
3	Attendance Monitoring	Attendance	II	01/09/2009	15/04/2010
4	Double-Dosing: Algebra	Academic	II	02/02/2010	15/04/2010
9	Summer Bridge Program	Academic	III	01/07/2009	15/10/2009
--	--	--	--	--	--
--	--	--	--	--	--
--	--	--	--	--	--
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--	--	--	--	--	--

Source: National High School Center

Keeping Students on Track to Graduate

Student Interventions

[MORE INFO](#)

Main Menu

To assign an intervention to a student, either 1) enter the student's ID number below, or 2) go back to the Student Risk Status page, right-click the student's name, and select "Assign to Intervention".

Student ID:	<input type="text"/>	First Name:	<input type="text"/>	Assign Intervention to Student
		Last Name:	<input type="text"/>	
		Disability:	<input type="text"/>	
		Disadvantaged:	<input type="text"/>	
		ELL:	<input type="text"/>	
		Interventions Found:	0	

Import Data

Flags

Pre-HS:	--	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	End of Year
First 20 Day Attendance:	--	--	--	--	--	--
Attendance:	--	--	--	--	--	--
Course Fails:	--	--	--	--	--	--
GPA:	--	--	--	--	--	--
CCSR End of Year:	--	--	--	--	--	--

Delete Selected Intervention

Enter the start and end dates of the student's participation in the intervention. If the start date of the intervention occurs before the first day of grading period 1, the tool recognizes this as a pre-high school intervention.

Intervention Details						
Student ID	First Name	Last Name	Intervention	Start	End	Comments
1122101	Greta	Andrews	Attendance Monitoring	9/1/2009	2/1/2010	
1122101	Greta	Andrews	Behavior Monitoring	9/1/2009	2/1/2010	
1122103	Katherine	Barkauskas	Attendance Monitoring	9/1/2009	4/15/2010	
1122103	Katherine	Barkauskas	Double-Dosing: Algebra	2/2/2010	4/15/2010	
1122105	Denise	Boyles	Attendance Monitoring	2/2/2010	6/30/2010	
1122106	Mimi	Cao	Double-Dosing: Language Arts	4/16/2010	6/30/2010	
1122107	Claire	Cartwright	Attendance Monitoring	5/15/2010		
1122108	Andrea	Crowder	Summer Bridge Program	7/1/2009	10/15/2009	
1122103	Katherine	Barkauskas	Summer Bridge Program	7/1/2009	10/15/2009	
1122109	Linda	Day	Summer Bridge Program	7/1/2009	10/15/2009	
1122110	Bradley	Dietrich	Double-Dosing: Algebra	2/2/2010	4/15/2010	
1122110	Bradley	Dietrich	Check and Connect	9/15/2009		
1122113	Sharon	Fanning	Check and Connect	9/15/2009		

Source: National High School Center

Reports Control Panel

Risk Indicator Summary Report

[MORE INFO](#)

Grading Period: Quarter 1

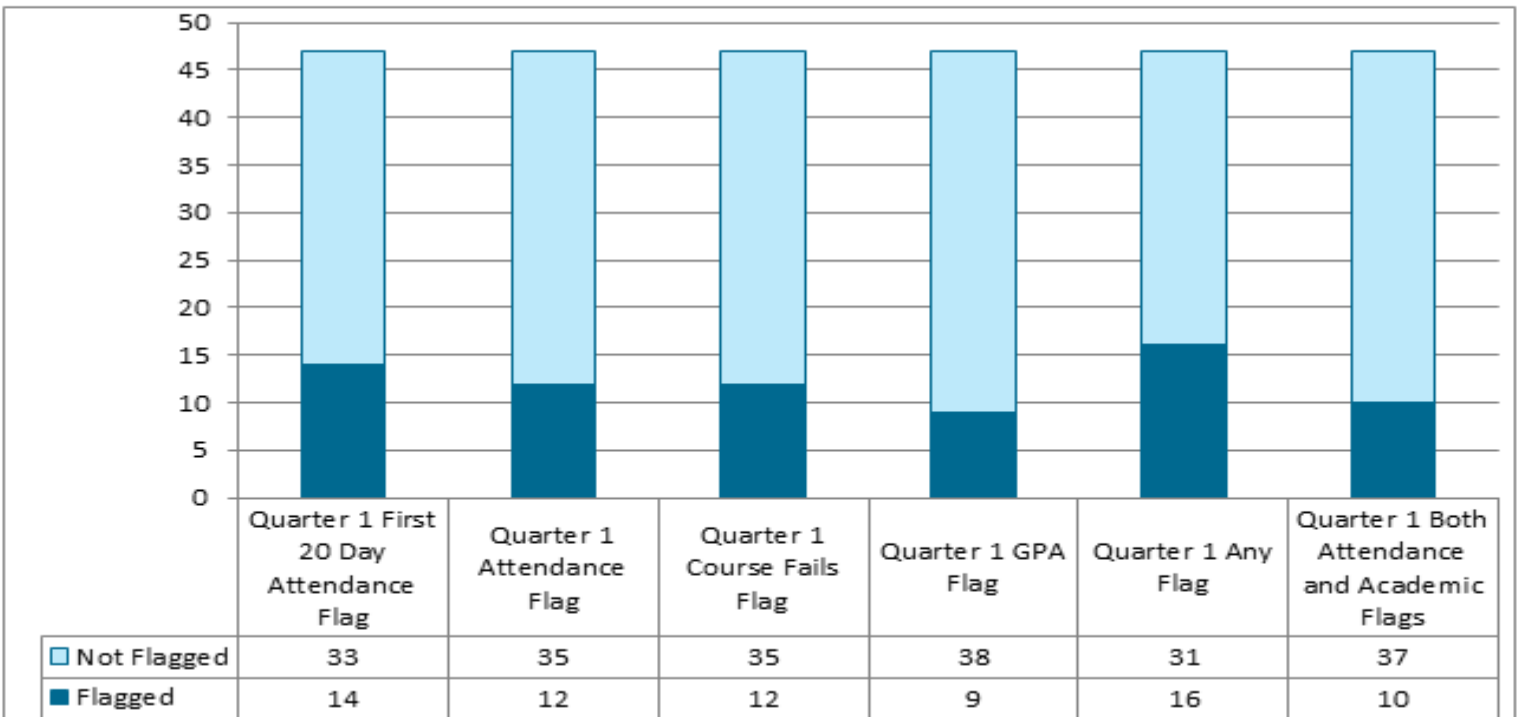
Filter: No

Date: September 23, 2010

Drop Outs: 1
 Transfers Out: 0

Start Date: 9/1/2009
 End Date: 11/15/2009

This report shows the number of students who are flagged and not flagged for each indicator of risk for the selected grading period or time frame.



Source: National High School Center

Keeping Students on Track to Graduate

Franklin City School Graduation Plan—A Sample

- Rigorous and Relevant Instruction
- Personalized Learning Environment and Instructional Process
- Data Systems
- Adult Advocates
- Programs to Improve Students’ Classroom Behavior and Social Skills

Strategies/Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Resources	Timelines	Evidence of Effectiveness
Additional math courses are available for students who need extra help/extra support (2 semester algebra; 2 semester geometry)	FHS administrators FHS teachers	Class schedule Teacher/inst. materials Cortez lab	School year	Process: Impact:
Expanded learning time (for example, after school, summer school, instruction for expedited SOL retakes) is offered for students who need more time to master standards	Assoc. Dir. of Inst. FHS administrators FHS teachers 21 st Learning Coordinator	21 st Century Learning Grant Funds for summer school Funds and time for instruction to prepare for expedited SOL retakes	School year, after school, and summer	Process: Impact:
Extended study time is built into the instructional day to provide needed remediation, as determined by data analysis, for core subjects.	Extended Studies/Advisory (ESA)	FHS teaching staff/materials Remediation tracking sheet	School year	Process: Impact:
Credit recovery programs are offered to students who need to recapture credits lost from failed courses	Assoc. Dir. of Inst. Ed Options manager/facilitator FHS administrators	Funding	School year Summer school	Process: Impact:
Classroom instruction includes frequent assessment of student learning and progress. Results are used to plan and deliver differentiated instruction.	Assoc. Dir. of Inst. FHS administrators FHS teachers	“Train the trainer” professional development program; I Can Do It; Curriculum resources; Item test bank; classroom and benchmark assessments	2011-13 Ongoing	Process: Impact:

Keeping Students on Track to Graduate

SAMPLE 1: School Improvement Plan for High School Graduation
 School: Cameron High School Date: _____

Team Members

Name	Role	Name	Role	Name	Role

GOAL: To increase the graduation rate to meet the state benchmark (80%)

Factor 1: Assist students who enter high school with poor academic skills so they can pass classes needed for graduation.

Measurable objective: The percentage of 9th grade students promoted to 10th grade will increase 20% from the previous school year. (83%)

Activities How will we do it?	Personnel Assigned Who will make it happen?	Timeline What is our timeline for meeting our objective?	Evaluation How will we know if we've been successful?
Add a one day intensive freshman orientation to summer school. Topics covered will include attendance, organizational and study skills, schedule, academic and behavioral expectations and resources. The day will include team building exercises and presentations by general education and career and technical teachers. Parents will be invited to participate.	Administrators, teachers, counselors	Send letters in summer Convene planning team Host event on September 3	Attendance at event
After School Tutoring: Data from classroom frequent assessments will identify students not mastering standards. After school tutoring will specifically target needs and assessments of learning will continue. Students and staff will use the data to track their progress. Feedback will be provided to appropriate classroom teachers.	Classroom and after school teachers		Nine-week and semester grades End-of-course state tests
Freshman Academy: The school will continue to offer a transitional program for incoming 9 th graders.	Administrators, counselors, transition teachers		Changes in students' rankings on early warning list; nine-week and semester grades; end-of-course state tests

Intervention Recording Sheet

Today's Date: _____
 Students' Grade Level: _____
 Facilitator: _____
 Grade Group Team Members Present: _____

Team Members Not Present: _____

STUDENTS	NOTES	PRESENTING EWI FROM: [DATE]		EWI TODAY		LEVEL OF CONCERN	STUDENT STRENGTHS	(Tier) Responder Intervention	STATUS	CSAP TIER	(Tier) Responder Intervention
		CODE	NOTES	CODE	NOTES						
Student A		B	3 neg comm. In M BRL -3.5 D in math	BML	F on 2 math quiz	2	PA C T	(T)-MT=SGL			
Student B		A	78% attendance	AB	Absent 5 days	3	C	(t) hrt & cy=ch (t) hrt & cy=gbn (t) hrt & cy=p/s/t c (t) hrt & cy=ri			
Student C		Ac B	F in M & L 6 neg comm. 3&3	DPA N/IH NP NGC	Literacy	3	AS+ AC+ KBL	(t) cy=hs			
Student D		A	79% attendance BRL -3.5	LS CO AC	Behavior	3	FR	(t) hrt & cy=ch (t) hrt & cy =p/s/t c (t) cy =dc (t) cy =ri			
Student E		B Ac	12 neg comm. 8&4 F in M BRL - 3.5	LS DA AC CO LS			WG				
New Student											

Keeping Students on Track to Graduate

Groups with Graduation Research and Resources

- **Alliance for Education:** <http://www.all4ed.org/aboutthecrisis>: Provides up-to-date analysis and talking points about the crisis on the state and national levels.
- **America's Promise Alliance:** www.americaspromise.org: General Colin and Alma Powell's alliance launched GRADNATION, <http://www.americaspromise.org/gradnation>, an ambitious campaign to end the high school dropout crises and prepare young people for college.
- **California Dropout Research Project:** <http://cdrp.ucsb.edu/>: The California Dropout Research Project (CDRP) synthesizes existing research and produces new research to inform policymakers, educators and the general public about the nature of the dropout crisis in California and helps the state develop a meaningful policy agenda to address the problem.
- **Consortium on Chicago School Research:** <http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/content/index.php>: The Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) at the University of Chicago is a leader in conducting research on dropout indicators.
- **Diplomas Count:** www.edweek.org/apps/maps: Graduation rates by state and district.
- **Educational Levels by State from the Census Bureau:** http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/cats/education/educational_attainment.html
- **Everyone Graduates Center:** <http://www.every1graduates.org/>: The Everyone Graduates Center at the Johns Hopkins University works to develop and disseminate strategies for ensuring that all students graduate from high school prepared for college, career, and civic life.
- **IES Dropout Practice Guide:** http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/dp_pg_090308.pdf
Geared toward educators, administrators, and policymakers, this guide provides recommendations that focus on reducing high school dropout rates.
- **MAEC Beyond the Indicators:** <http://maec.ceee.gwu.edu/node/330>: This webinar and paper provides an integrated framework that schools and districts can use to build a foundation to prevent students from dropping out.
- **National High School Center:** www.betterhighschools.org: Based at the American Institutes for Research, the center provides research, technical assistance, and a useful Early Warning Tool, v2.0, Technical Manual and Implementation Guide.
- **National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS):** www.pgis.org. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs,
- **The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts** (March 2006) The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. <http://www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/thesilentepidemic3-06.pdf>
- **What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public High Schools: A close look at course grades, failures, and attendance in the freshman year** (July 2007) Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago. <http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/07%20What%20Matters%20Final.pdf>