



Looking for Clues... Identifying Youth Who Are at Risk of Dropping Out

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 National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities
NDPC-SD

Session Focus

- ★ Dropout risk factors
- ★ School-level factors
- ★ Identifying at-risk youth
 - ★ 8th grade factors
 - ★ 6th grade factors
 - ★ NDPC-SD risk calculator



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Why Students Drop Out

- ★ **Push effects** – situations or experiences within the school environment that aggravate feelings of alienation, failure and dropout (e.g., raising standards without providing supports, suspension, negative school climate)
- ★ **Pull effects** – factors external to the school environment that weaken or distract from the importance of school completion (e.g., pregnancy, need to support family or care for a family member)

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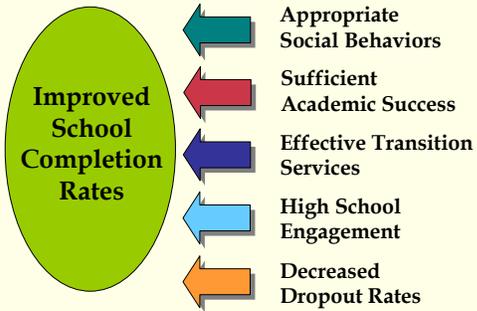
Characteristics of Dropouts

- ★ Absent more than 10 days
- ★ Participated few or no school activities
- ★ Disliked school
- ★ Failed 3 to 5 classes
- ★ Retained one or more years including 9th Grade
- ★ Received 5 to 9 discipline referrals
- ★ Were identified in middle school for lack of academic progress
- ★ Did not return for their Sophomore year

(Huffman, K.L., WVU Dissertation, 1999)

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What Factors Contribute to Better School Completion Rates?



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Looking for the Signals at the School Level

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Monitor Risk Factors

Academics
Attendance
Disciplinary infractions

These are good indicators of risk for present and future dropout problems

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Dig into Your Local Data

- ★ Graduation and dropout rates
- ★ Academic achievement – test data, grades
- ★ Course-completion and credit accrual data
- ★ Attendance rates
- ★ Discipline rates (referrals, suspensions, expulsions)
- ★ Retention rates
- ★ Parental factors (involvement, level of education)
- ★ Secondary transition data
- ★ Post-school outcomes
- ★ School climate
- ★ District and school policies and procedures
- ★ Staff development

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Guiding Questions: Graduation Rates

- ★ What percentage of **all students** (including SWD) graduated from your school?
- ★ What percentage of **students with disabilities** graduated from your school?
- ★ Is there a disparity—a graduation gap—in your school?
- ★ What is the trend in graduation rates for your school over the last 3 years?

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Graduation Gap

All student rate – Special Ed rate = ?

★ Do the math for your school...

A positive gap value means that special-ed students have a lower graduation rate than all students

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Guiding Questions: Dropout Rates

- ★ What percentage of *all students* (including SWD) dropped out?
- ★ What percentage of *students with disabilities* dropped out?
- ★ Is there a disparity—a dropout gap—in your school?
- ★ Does the school have a dropout prevention initiative? Does it specifically address SWD?
- ★ Did the school meet its targeted dropout rate last year? ...what about the last two years?

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Dropout Gap

Special ed rate – All student rate = ?

★ A positive gap value means that special-ed students have a higher dropout rate than all students

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Guiding Questions: Academics

- ★ Assessment data
 - ★ Is your school meeting its AYP targets?
 - ★ What percentage of your students passed the Math portion of the high school graduation assessment? ...the Reading portion?
 - ★ Are test data consistent between all students and students with disabilities?
 - ★ What academic needs do diagnostic tests show?
- ★ Student Grades
 - ★ How are students' academic grades in your school?
 - ★ Are patterns apparent within grades?
 - ★ Are there patterns or trends from grade to grade?

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Activity

On the Dropout Prevention Data Summary Sheet, fill in your school's information about Graduation, Dropout and Academics

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Guiding Questions: Attendance

- ★ What is the attendance rate for each grade?
- ★ Have these rates changed over time?
- ★ Does your district or school have an attendance policy?
- ★ What are your district or school attendance-rate targets?
- ★ Does your district or school have a program to boost attendance? Does it include incentives for good attendance?

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Guiding Questions: Discipline

- ★ How many office referrals were there last year?
- ★ What percentage of students received one or more office referrals?
- ★ What percentage of students received in-school suspensions?
- ★ What percentage of students received out-of-school suspensions?
- ★ What percentage of students were expelled?
- ★ Are the data consistent between all students and students with disabilities?

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Guiding Questions: Behavior Supports

- ★ Does the district or school have behavior supports in place?
- ★ Does every E/BD student in the district or school have a behavior support plan?
- ★ Are behavior support plans based on a functional behavior assessment (FBA)?
- ★ Who conducts the FBAs?

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Activity

On the Dropout Prevention Data Summary Sheet, fill in your school's information about Attendance and Discipline

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**Guiding Questions:
Course-Completion Rates**

- ★ What are the course-completion rates for core classes?
- ★ Do there appear to be “problem” classes?
- ★ Are Sp Ed students accruing academic credits at comparable rates to their non-disabled peers?
- ★ What % of seniors didn't earn enough credits to graduate last year?
- ★ Are students able to take courses *when they need them*?
- ★ Are credit requirements impacting students' ability to graduate in 4 years?
- ★ If so, is there disparate impact between Gen Ed and Special Ed students?

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**Guiding Questions:
Grade Retention**

- ★ What was the retention rate per grade?
- ★ Are there particular grades, classrooms, or groups of students that have higher retention rates than others?
- ★ What percent of high school students have been retained one grade?
- ★ What percent of high school students have been retained two or more grades?

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**Guiding Questions:
Policies and Procedures**

- ★ What priority does dropout receive in your district or school?
- ★ Are there written policies or procedures that deal with dropout prevention?
- ★ Is there a dropout-prevention program?
 - ★ Does it include students with disabilities?
- ★ Are particular students or groups at risk because of any policies or procedures?

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Activity

On the Dropout Prevention Data Summary Sheet, fill in your school's information about Retention and Credit Accrual. Also, list any dropout-prevention current initiatives in your school.

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What programs are currently operating in your schools now?

How well are they working?

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Based on the data you have entered so far, do any needs jump out at you?

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When You Return Home

- ◆ Continue filling in the Dropout Prevention Data Summary sheets for your school.
- ◆ When you've filled in all the information, look at the values across the three years you've listed.
 - ◆ Are there trends in the data across years?
 - ◆ What patterns show up among the data?

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Use the data from the Dropout Prevention Summary sheets to inform your school intervention plan and to help address the needs you've identified.

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Looking for the Signals at the Student Level

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8th Grade Signals

★ In Philadelphia's class of 2000, having one of these factors gave students at least a 75% probability of dropping out:



1. Failing math in 8th grade
2. Failing English in 8th grade
3. Attending less than 80% of the time

Neild - 1999

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54% of the Philadelphia dropouts sent one or more of these signals

Some students were sending these signals as early as 6th grade

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The Big Four in 6th grade

- ★ Failing Math
- ★ Failing English
- ★ Attending less than 80% of the time
- ★ Receiving at least one poor behavior mark

(Balfanz and Herzog)

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So What Are the 6th or 8th Grade Factors in Grants, Socorro or Albuquerque?

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***The NDPC-SD Risk Calculator:
A Work in Progress***

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The NDPC-SD Risk Calculator

Components

- ★ Special education status
- ★ Demographics
- ★ Academic
- ★ Attendance
- ★ Behavior
- ★ Retention
- ★ Engagement

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Additional Resources

- ★ www.ndpc-sd.org
- ★ www.dropoutprevention.org
- ★ www.nsttac.org/
- ★ <http://www.psocenter.org/>
- ★ www.pbis.org
- ★ <http://www.abt.sliidea.org/>
- ★ <http://www.sri.com/policy/cehs/dispolicy/nlts.html>
- ★ www.ideadata.org

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