Push, Pull, or Falling Out: Catch ‘Em Before they Fall
Strategies for School Completion

Courage to Risk

January 31, 2020
Setting the Stage

• Today, we will discuss the importance of school completion
• Why students dropout
• The role of student engagement
• Identifying students who are at risk of dropping out
• Give you some tools (strategies and resources)
• 3-2-1 Reflection tool
Earn more
Pay more in taxes
Decreased needs in healthcare
Rely less on public assistance/food assistance
Less likely to be involved in criminal justice system
Less likely to use welfare services

(Rotermund, California Dropout Research Project, Statistical Brief 5, September 2007)
Why focus on dropout prevention/school completion?
Serious negative outcomes for youth

- Unemployment
- Underemployment
- Dependent on welfare
- Poor health
- Homelessness
- Incarceration

- What Works Clearinghouse, Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools, Practice Guide Summary
Implications for Employment

Dropouts aren’t qualified or eligible for 90% of all jobs.
Economic Implications of Students Dropping Out

- Earn less
- Pay less in taxes
- Rely more on public health
- More involved in criminal justice system
- More likely to use welfare services

(Rotermund, California Dropout Research Project, Statistical Brief 5, September 2007)
• Cutting the number of high school dropouts in half nationally would save $7.3 billion in annual Medicaid spending – looking at overall spending and particularly spending on four key afflictions:

• Alcoholism
• Heart Disease
• Obesity
• Smoking

College graduates have better health, and lower medical costs, than high school graduates, while high school graduates have better health, and lower medical costs, than high school dropouts.

On average, a high school graduate lives six to nine years longer than a high school dropout.

July 2013 Alliance for Excellent Education
Secondary Transition planning provides opportunities for students to experience positive post-school outcomes:

- Increase graduation rates
- Decrease dropout rates
- Increase enrollment in colleges and universities
- Increase rate of competitive employment
- Increase levels of independence
Why Students Drop Out
Not a single event
Push, Pull or Falling Out
• Issues from within the school environment that lead to dropout
• Standardized tests
• Attendance or discipline policies for suspensions & expulsions
• Poor teaching
• Not getting along with teachers
• Counseled out
• Lack of physical and emotional safety
• Lack of cultural and linguistic competence
• Factors from within the students’ environment that lead to dropout
• Financial worries of the family
• Employment
• Family Needs
• Pregnancy/child responsibilities
• Medical needs
Falling Out

• Student gradually disengages over time, a “side-effect of the insufficient personal and educational support” that leads to dropout
• Poor study habits
• Dislikes school
• Lack of a sense of belonging to the school
• Hard time adjusting to school routine
• Changing schools, not liking new school
Watch This Video: Categorize the reasons given by the students as Push, Pull or Falling Out.

- [https://youtu.be/vpFG6mNAkAc](https://youtu.be/vpFG6mNAkAc)

Drop Out Factors

Many of the students from the video gave reasons for dropping out. Categorize the reasons as Push, Pull or Falling Out. Tip – 2 reasons are not used.

Sort elements

- Adult mentor
- Felt like no one in the school cared
- Incarceration
- Inability to focus
- Family support

- **PUSH**

- **PULL**

- **FALLING OUT**
Understanding Student Engagement
Student Engagement

- All aspects of a student:
  - Attending school
  - Paying attention during class
  - Exhibiting appropriate behaviors
  - Feeling included and safe at school
  - Setting personal goals
  - Maintaining academic coursework
Four Types of Student Engagement

• Academic
  • Focuses on learning, completing class assignments, and focusing on schoolwork

• Behavior
  • Observable behaviors occurring during class

• Cognitive
  • Occurs within the student in order to comprehend academic concepts

• Affective/emotional
  • When students feel a part of the school
• Time on task
• Credits earned towards high school graduation
• Attendance or discipline policies for suspensions & expulsions
• Homework completion
Behavior

• Behavior
• Attendance
• Suspensions
• Paying attention during class
• Extra-curricular activities
• Getting to class on time
• Interacting appropriately with teachers and staff
• Applying learning to future goals
• Self-regulation
• Setting personal goals
Affective/Emotional

- Involvement in the school
- Sense of belonging
- Feeling safe at school
- Build relationships with teachers and peers
Tips to Increase Student Engagement

• Later start times
• Flexible scheduling
• Afterschool programs
• Internship or service learning opportunities
• Online or blended learning options
• Work based learning
• Career and Technical Education courses (CTE)
• Summer school options

• Source: The National Center for School Engagement
• Watch for the 4 types of student engagement.

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KciknRw5B40
Identifying Students At Risk of Dropping Out

• Attendance
• Behavior
• Course Completion
ABC Indicators

Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% of school for any reason including: excused and unexcused absences, suspensions, expulsions, in-school-suspensions, and time out of the classroom.
Attendance Strategies

• Welcome students as they enter school
  • School should be an inviting, safe place for students, welcoming them into the building supports this idea.

• Recognize good and improved attendance
  • It is important to acknowledge students and provide rewards (e.g. gas gift cards, free entrance to sporting events, and front row parking) to students with improved attendance.

• Engage students and parents
  • Teaching students and parents about the importance of attendance. Parents may not realize that excused absences can negatively impact their child’s success.

• Monitor attendance data
  • “Attendance Works” (resources in English and Spanish) [https://www.attendanceworks.org](https://www.attendanceworks.org)
Tips to Improve Attendance

• Students who attend school all week receive a free ticket to the school’s Friday night football game.

• Set up alerts through high school student information system to notify staff when students missed a certain number of days and notify parents.

• Set up a shared drive so that all personnel have access to attendance information.

• Create a “Welcome Night” for parents & students to attend to learn about the school and the importance of attendance.

• Recognize improved attendance, not perfect attendance.
Behavior Strategies

• Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS)
• Social Emotional Learning
• Afterschool Programs
• Family Engagement
• Behavior Screening Tools
• Check In, Check Out (CICO)
• Check and Connect
Course Completion Strategies

- Visual Displays – using words and graphics
- Technology – computer based tools to facilitate instruction
- Family Engagement
- Mnemonics – memory connectors
- Self-Management – students monitor, record or evaluate their own academic status or behavior
- Peer Assistance – cooperative learning environment
- Career Academics – tying career related courses with academic courses (making classes relevant to post school goals)
Family Engagement Strategies

• Create a welcoming environment
• Communicate with families
• Provide incentives for attending events
• Host engaging events for families
• Utilize parents and student supports

• CDE Resource: State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education (SACPIE)
  • http://www.cde.state.co.us/sacpie
• Were you able to identify a student who might be facing some of the challenges discussed today?
• What is at least one thing you would like to do differently as a result of the information shared today?
Resources
• How can we improve school completion for students with disabilities in our schools?

• The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) has developed this free module to provide you with information and materials you need to make a difference!

Attribute Worksheets

Resources to guide action planning by a school or district by topic:
• Student Engagement
• School-Community Partnerships
• School Climate
• Family Engagement
• Behavior
• Attendance
• Academic Engagement

• Source: NTACT https://transitionta.org/graduation
Attribute Worksheet – Academic Engagement

Focus Area: Academic Engagement
Attributes:
1. Academic engagement, which includes such common indicators as credits earned, homework completion, and time on task, is the most visible form of engagement within the classroom and is frequently tracked by school personnel.
2. High rates of academic learning time (i.e., student completion of relevant tasks with a high degree of success) are a positive correlate of academic achievement.
3. Instructional quality and delivery, supplemental support, and classroom structures to enhance students’ substantive interaction – encompass most interventions for enhancing academic engagement and achievement. Teacher training on effective instructional strategies is beneficial.

Goal:

Strategy:

Some Effective Strategies
1. Ensuring an appropriate instructional match, providing explicit directions for task completion, providing variety in learning activities, helping students perceive classroom tasks as valuable, and assisting students in setting reasonable goals are associated with higher rates of time on task and are ways teachers foster academic engagement.
2. Early intervening services and additional supports for students who struggle in reading and math is another means to enhance indicators of academic engagement and achievement.
3. Use principles of effective instruction (e.g., direct instruction, scaffolding, guided practice; informed feedback; pacing of lessons). Provide support for learning strategies to fit content area.
4. Ensure the instructional match is appropriate for the students and clear directions of what is expected are provided.
5. Increase time on task and substantive interaction through cooperative learning, whole class or group instruction, and peer-assisted learning strategies.
6. Enhance critical thinking through project work and ungraded writing assignments.
7. Use supplemental program within school, i.e., Academic Coaching Team to assist students with moderate to high risk of dropping out.
### Attribute Worksheet – Action Planning

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Time for Questions
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