



64TH CONFERENCE ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

**WORKING TOGETHER
TO ACHIEVE STUDENT SUCCESS**

**Dropout Prevention
for Rural Counties**

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PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

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Agenda

- Why high school graduation matters
- About the Rural Dropout Prevention Project
- Connections between dropout prevention and multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS)



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North Carolina's Dropout Challenge

About how many of North Carolina's 131,515 students who started in the class of 2008 failed to graduate by 2012?

- A) 21,215
- B) 28,587
- C) 26,303
- D) 23,985

Source: Stetser and Stillwell, 2014

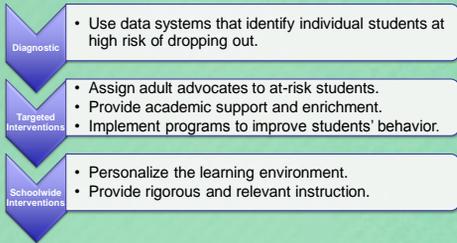
The Economic Impact of Students Not Graduating for North Carolina

If North Carolina increased its overall graduation rate to 90 percent, the economic benefits from the additional graduates would likely include as much as:

- A total of \$333 million in increased annual earnings and \$34 million in annual state and local tax revenues
- A total of 2,950 new jobs and a \$444 million increase in the gross state product
- A total of \$654 million in increased home sales and \$34 million in increased auto sales

Source: Alliance for Excellent Education, 2013

Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Practice Guide on Dropout Prevention Recommendations



Source: Dynarski et al., 2008

Dropout Prevention Practices

- Are good for all students, not just those at risk of not graduating
- Are interconnected to other student engagement practices
- Require leadership
- Might require professional development for school staff
- Require partnerships with the community

Rural Dropout Prevention Project

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About the Rural Dropout Prevention Project

- **Goal:** Provide technical assistance as determined through collaboration with the state education agency (SEA) to states, districts, and schools, particularly those in rural communities, to support dropout prevention efforts.

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Participating States



 15 Targeted States

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Projects Priority Areas

1. Reengaging out-of-school youth
2. Assigning adult advocates to at-risk students
3. Implementing early-warning indicator systems
4. Implementing effective credit recovery and acceleration opportunities
5. Instituting "summer bridge" transition programs
6. Improving services and instruction for English language learners (ELL) and new immigrants
7. Improving services and instruction for migrant, American Indian, Alaska Native, minority, and at-risk students and youth
8. Supporting in-service leadership and professional development programs
9. Addressing other topics suggested by the SEAs that relate to or enhance the other priority areas

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Rural Context: North Carolina

- The number of students enrolled in rural schools is one of the highest in the nation.
 - More than 700,000 students are enrolled in rural schools and districts within North Carolina.
- A total of 116 districts (49.2 percent of all districts in North Carolina) are identified as rural codes 41 (rural fringe), 42 (rural remote), or 43 (rural distant).

Source: Johnson, Showalter, & Klein, 2014

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Gathering Input to Drive TA Planning

- Asked for input about:
 - Unique challenges faced by rural communities
 - What dropout prevention looks like in rural areas and what approaches are successful
 - Types of support that would be helpful

Examples of What We Heard: Challenges

- Transportation
- Parent and community involvement
- Lack of clarity around state policies
- Technology access

Examples of What We Heard: Challenges

- Using data to inform practice (not collecting data for data's sake)
- Support transitions starting in early grades
- Ensuring the use of cultural responsiveness practices
- Supporting a new ELL population
- Supporting the most at-risk students

Examples of What We Heard: Approaches to Dropout Prevention

- Supporting relationships (e.g., peer mentors to support transitions, student liaisons, graduation coaches, adult mentors, community mentors)
- Partnering with the community, universities, and businesses
- Providing alternative credit program to some students
- Using tiered frameworks (e.g., MTSS, PBIS)
- Developing programs to support over-age eighth graders transition into high school
- Conducting site visits to colleges starting in middle school
- Providing access to dual enrollment with community colleges for enrichment and career and technical education (CTE) opportunities

Examples of What We Heard: Types of Support

- Dropout prevention support needs to:
 - Connect with other efforts.
 - Start early and include a range of stakeholders.
 - Utilize concrete examples and show successful examples and approaches.
 - Draw on support from regional training leads.
 - Connect to state conferences.

North Carolina TA Goals: Goal 1

- Make connections between dropout prevention and current efforts and initiatives across the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and local education agencies (LEAs) across the education continuum from early grades through college and career transitions.



North Carolina TA Goals: Goal 2

- Share examples of practices and approaches to dropout prevention from LEAs (including rural LEAs) across the state, and discuss implementation considerations and challenges.

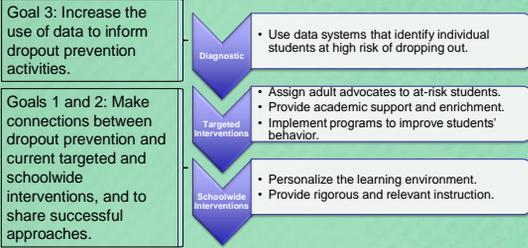


North Carolina TA Goals: Goal 3

- Increase the use of data to inform dropout prevention activities in North Carolina, including a focus on understanding data sources, looking at data reports within Home Base, root cause analysis, linking data to interventions, and monitoring progress.



Connecting North Carolina Goals to IES Practice Guide Recommendations



Source: Dynarski et al., 2008

Reflection

- Consider
 - How could this work benefit you?
 - Are there foci we should consider?

Additional Support from Rural Dropout Prevention Project

- Live and archived webinars with accompanying products and tools
- Examples of topics
 - Recovery and reengagement strategies
 - Ninth grade transitions
 - Cultural responsiveness
 - Connections with school boards
 - Family and community support
 - Alternative education

Goal 1: Making Connections

Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Dropout Prevention

What is MTSS?

- NC MTSS is a **multi-tiered framework** which promotes school improvement through engaging, **research-based academic and behavioral practices**.
- NC MTSS employs a systems approach using **data-driven problem-solving** to maximize growth for all.

Source: NCDPI <http://mtss.ncdpi.wikiqccac.net/>

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THINK-PAIR-SHARE

- In what ways do you see connections between MTSS and dropout prevention?
- How are they:
 - Similar?
 - Different?
 - Synergistic?

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How Does MTSS Connect to Dropout Prevention?

- Importance of improving academic and behavioral outcomes (may focus on specific subjects, grade levels)
- Screening to identify risk
- Early intervention to prevent later failure
- Early intervention to ensure students have the foundational skills necessary to excel in later courses

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Connecting MTSS Components to Dropout Recommendations from IES Practice Guide

Screening: Identifying students as at risk for dropping out of high school

Diagnostic

- Use data systems that identify individual students at high risk of dropping out.

Tiered framework: Continuum of supports from schoolwide to more targeted and intensive supports

Targeted interventions

- Assign adult advocates to at-risk students.
- Provide academic support and enrichment.
- Implement programs to improve students' behavior.

Schoolwide interventions

- Personalize the learning environment.
- Provide rigorous and relevant instruction.

Source: Dynarski et al., 2008

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How Does MTSS Connect to Dropout Prevention at the Elementary Level? An Example

- Research suggests that children who do not read proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma than proficient readers

Total Students

■ Students with Lowest Reading Scores

Students that Don't Graduate

■ Students with Lowest Reading Scores

Source: Hernandez, 2011

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How Does MTSS Connect to Dropout Prevention at the Secondary Level?

- Most of the research on MTSS/RtI focuses on elementary schools; only a few studies target middle schools.
- The essential components of MTSS/RtI may be the same for elementary schools and high schools, but...
 - Translation of the framework and essential components into effective practice in high schools may differ from elementary schools due to structural and organizational differences.
- At the secondary level, we may specifically identify and intervene to support students at risk of dropping out rather than solely targeting academic skills or remediation.

Source: National High School Center, National Center on Response to Intervention, and Center on Instruction, 2010.

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Screening

- Identify students at risk for poor outcomes (e.g., learning, behavioral, graduation).
- Identify students who need additional assessment (i.e., progress monitoring) and instruction (i.e., targeted or intensive).
- Provide data on the effectiveness of the core instruction, curriculum, and schoolwide supports.

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Example of how MTSS might look at the Secondary Level Focused on Dropout Prevention

- An Early Warning System is an example of a screener that can be used to identify whether a student is at risk of dropping out of high school.
 - Research-based (e.g., Allensworth and Easton, 2007; Balfanz, 2009)
 - Typically includes attendance, behavior, and academic indicators
 - At-risk reports available in Home Base

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Example: Student Level Report

Student Report

Year: 2011 | Period: All Periods

Student ID	First	Last	Grade	Trimester_1				Trimester_2					
				Incoming Flag	Initial Attendance	Attendance Rate	# of Course Fails	GPA	Behavior	Attendance Rate	# of Course Fails	GPA	Behavior
1212011	Olga	Posner	9	Yes	No	No	100%	No	No	No	No	No	No
1212012	Tina	Fay	9	No	No	No	100%	No	No	No	No	No	No
1212013	Amy	Posner	9	No	No	No	100%	No	No	No	No	No	No
1212014	Sarah	Sherman	9	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
1212015	Kristen	Wing	9	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
1212016	Heaven	Sublett	9	No	Yes	No	100%	100%	No	No	No	No	No
1212017	Eric	Duganov	9	No	Yes	No	100%	100%	No	No	No	No	No
1212018	Portia	DeBened	9	No	Yes	No	100%	100%	No	No	No	No	No
1212019	Alex	Shawwal	9	No	No	Yes	100%	100%	No	Yes	100%	No	No
1212020	Amy	Schwartz	9	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Source: Sample report from American Institutes for Research EWS Tool

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Tiered Interventions

Tier Three Intensive

Tier Two Targeted

Tier One Universal

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Measuring Progress at the Secondary Level

- Will vary depending on areas you target with interventions (e.g., attendance, behavior, academics)
- Frequency of data collection may vary across tiers and data sources

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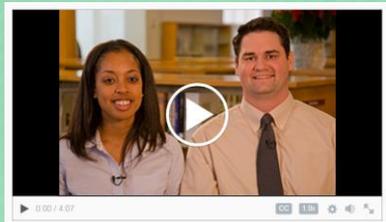
Examples of Progress Monitoring at the Secondary Level

- Ongoing formal and informal formative assessment
 - Benchmark assessments
 - Quizzes, end-of-unit tests
 - Common writing prompts
 - Grades
 - Attendance
 - Teacher-developed Curriculum Based Measures (e.g., algebra)
 - Maze passage
 - Time-sampling for behavior
 - Office referrals

More information on academic tools: The High School Tiered Interventions Initiative: Progress Monitoring <http://www.rit4success.org/video/high-school-tiered-interventions-initiative-progress-monitoring>

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Students Monitoring Their Own Progress



Source: The Doing What Works Library. (2010). *Doing what works: Taking ownership*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://dwwlibrary.wested.org/media/taking-ownership>

Considerations for Data Use Within MTSS to Support Dropout Prevention

- Make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement.
- Ensure data collected connects to your purpose and focus.
- Analyze data at all levels (i.e., state, school, Tier I, Tier II, Tier III).
- Use multiple data sources when needed to dig deeper into the root cause (e.g., is an attendance issue manifesting as poor academic outcomes?)

Considerations for Data Use Within MTSS to Support Dropout Prevention

- Involve students in collecting and monitoring data.
- Establish routines and procedures for making decisions.
- Set explicit decision rules for assessing student progress (e.g., benchmarks).



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Additional Resources

- North Carolina DPI Dropout Prevention and Intervention: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/dropout/>
- North Carolina DPI MTSS Wiki: <http://mtss.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/>
- Center on Response to Intervention at AIR: <http://www.rti4success.org/>
 - Tiered Interventions in High Schools: Using Preliminary 'Lessons Learned' to Guide Ongoing Discussion: <http://www.rti4success.org/resource/tiered-interventions-high-schools-using-preliminary-lessons-learned-guide-ongoing>

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Additional Resources

- National Center on Intensive Intervention: <http://www.intensiveintervention.org/>
- Early Warning Systems in Education: www.earlywarningsystems.org
- What Works Clearinghouse: Dropout Prevention Practice Guide: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide.aspx?sid=9>

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Thank You

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Example of Interventions Aligned with Early Warning System Indicators

Type of Intervention	Focus of Intervention (ABCs)		
	Attendance	Behavior	Course Failures
Schoolwide (all students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every absence brings a response. • Create a culture that says attending every day matters. • Positive social incentives for good attendance • Data tracking by teacher teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach, model, and expect good behavior. • Positive social incentives and recognition for good behavior • Advisory • Data tracking by teacher teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research-based instructional programs • In-classroom support to enable active and engaging pedagogies • Data tracking by teacher teams
Targeted (15 to 20 percent of students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or more unexcused absences in a month brings brief daily check by an adult. • Attendance team (teacher, counselor, administrator, parent) investigates and problem solves (why isn't student attending?). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or more office referrals brings involvement of behavior team. • Simple behavior checklist that students bring from class to class, checked each day by an adult • Mentor assigned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elective extra-help courses, tightly linked to core curriculum, preview upcoming lessons and fill in knowledge gaps • Targeted, reduced class size for students whose failure is rooted in social-emotional issues
Intensive (5 to 10 percent of students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained one-on-one attention and problem solving • Appropriate social service community supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth behavioral assessment (why is student misbehaving?) • Behavior contracts with family involvement • Appropriate social service or community supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-on-one tutoring

Source: Mac Iver, M.A., & Mac Iver, D.J. (2009). *Beyond the indicators: An integrated school-level approach to dropout prevention*. Retrieved from George Washington University, Center for Equity and Excellence in Education, Mid-Atlantic Equity Center website:

<http://maec.ceee.gwu.edu/sites/default/files/Dropout%20report%208.11.09.pdf>



Interventions Inventory Worksheet

Directions: List the existing dropout prevention interventions/strategies in your school or district in column 1. In columns 2 and 3, use the codes to indicate which best captures the intervention. In columns 4–16, mark an “X” in the column(s) that the intervention addresses.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
School/District:	Tier (I = Universal, II = Targeted, III = Individualized) A = Attendance, B = Behavioral, AC = Academic	Focus on achievement in core courses	Content recovery courses	Tiered approaches	Tutoring as an academic support	Attendance and behavior monitors	Advisories and team teaching	Counseling and mentoring	Personalization (e.g., small learning communities)	Partnerships between HS and feeder MS	Ninth-grade transition program	Support for SWD outside of school	Career and college awareness	Family engagement	
Date:															
Example: Ninth-Grade Transition Initiative	I	B, AC	X									X			

