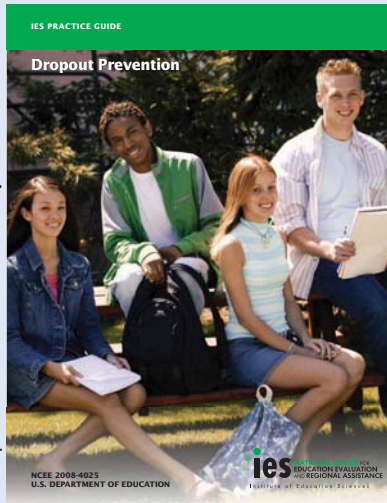


A Tool You Can Use: Six Recommendations Checklist

FACTS ON DROPOUT PREVENTION

A panel of leading researchers in dropout prevention worked together to produce a practice guide for educators, policymakers, advocates and others charged with dropout prevention. Published by the Institute of Education Science in September 2008, *Dropout Prevention*¹* provides evidence-based recommendations on preventing dropout. The 72-page guide provides a detailed report of the validity of the recommendations listed here. It also details further questions to consider and a literature review for obtaining a deeper understanding of these practices. The checklist that follows is a ready tool to use when considering how to implement a dropout prevention program at your school. Further information is provided in the guide itself. The following checklist, from the guide, provides a snapshot of what is covered more in-depth.



Ready for Download! This guide is available at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/www/publications/practiceguides/>

Recommendation 1. Utilize data systems that support a realistic diagnosis of the number of students who drop out and that help identify individual students at high risk of dropping out

- Use longitudinal, student-level data to get an accurate read of graduation and dropout rates.
- Use data to identify incoming students with histories of academic problems, truancy, behavioral problems, and retentions.

- Monitor the academic and social performance of all students.
- Review student-level data to identify students at risk of dropping out before key academic transitions.
- Monitor students' sense of engagement and belonging in school.
- Collect and document accurate information on student withdrawals.

Recommendation 2. Assign adult advocates to students at risk of dropping out

Longitudinal Data Collection in Arkansas

January 2006 marked the start of the Longitudinal Data Systems grant awarded by the Institute of Education Sciences to the Arkansas Department of Education. Arkansas is one of 14 states awarded the three-year grant, which, for Arkansas, totals \$3.3 million.

Using two database tracking systems—Cognos and Triand—the state is equipped with the technology to track student characteristics, transcripts and transfer status better. Triand is a student transcript system and allows transcripts for student transfers to be sent between schools electronically. Transcripts may also be sent to the Department of Higher Education electronically.

The new systems allow the state to keep track of active students and college students with the option to match employment. These abilities allow the department to more readily identify dropout at the state level.

Choose adults who are committed to investing in the student's personal and academic success, keep caseloads low, and purposefully match students with adult advocates.

Establish a regular time in the school day or week for students to meet with the adult.

Communicate with adult advocates about the various obstacles students may encounter—and provide adult advocates with guidance and training about how to work with students, parents, or school staff to address the problems.

Recommendation 3. **Provide academic support and enrichment to improve academic performance**

Provide individual or small group support in test-taking skills, study skills, or targeted subject areas such as reading, writing, or math.

Provide extra study time and opportunities for credit recovery and accumulation through after school, Saturday school, or summer enrichment programs.

Recommendation 4. **Implement programs to improve students' classroom behavior and social skills**

Use adult advocates or other engaged adults to help students establish attainable academic and behavioral goals with specific benchmarks.

Recognize student accomplishments.

Teach strategies to strengthen problem solving and decision-making skills.

Establish partnerships with community based program providers and other agencies such as social services, welfare, mental health, and law enforcement.

Recommendation 5. **Personalize the learning environment and instructional process**

Establish small learning communities.

Establish team teaching.

Create smaller classes.

Create extended time in classroom through changes to the school schedule.

Encourage student participation in extracurricular activities.

Recommendation 6. **Provide rigorous and relevant instruction to better engage students in learning and provide the skills needed to graduate and to serve them after they leave school**

Provide teachers with ongoing ways to expand their knowledge and improve their skills.

Integrate academic content with career and skill-based themes through career academies or multiple pathways models.

Host career days and offer opportunities for work-related experiences and visits to postsecondary campuses.

Provide students with extra assistance and information about the demands of college.

Partner with local businesses to provide opportunities for work-related experience such as internships, simulated job interviews, or long-term employment

The Panel

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Linda Clarke is the education and special projects director for the City of Houston and Mayor Bill White. She leads a citywide dropout program, Expectation Graduation, which is nationally renowned.

Brian Cobb is a professor of education at Colorado State University. His research focuses on secondary special education in transition and on quantitative research methodology.

Jeremy Finn is a professor of education at the State University of New York—Buffalo. He has long been concerned with issues of educational equity. His work on student engagement began with the publication of “Withdrawing from School” (Review of Educational Research, 1989).

Russell Rumberger is a professor of education in the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education at the University of California—Santa Barbara and director of the UC Linguistic Minority Research Institute (UC LMRI).

Jay Smink has been the executive director of the National Dropout Prevention Center at Clemson University since 1988 and serves as executive director of the National Dropout Prevention Network.