2009 Graduation Taskforce   Conclusions Worksheet

Conclusions Committee:

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What conditions are supportive of successful graduation for every student?

1. Positive relationships between students and school.

2. Home and school collaboration.

3. High expectations for students.

4. Quality and effective teaching.

5. Academic interventions, safety nets, and support.

6. Variety and flexibility in academic offerings.

7. Physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of students.

What conditions cause students to drop out of school?

1. The feeling of needing or desiring to enter the adult world (serious relationships, work, automobiles and other financial obligations, etc.).

2. Some students do not see the value or necessity of a high school diploma in order to pursue their career or life goals. The GED is perceived as an easier route to obtain those goals. Some students withdraw to home school in order to avoid the short term consequences of dropping out of school.

3. Local economic conditions (access to service sector or family business employment not requiring a diploma) decrease the incentive to stay in school.

4. Lack of identified success and a Early and repeated failure (lack of feeling successful, grade retentions, lack of progress toward graduation, not keeping up with same age class, etc.).

5. Some family values which perceive a child's education as a threat to keeping children nearby.

6. Lack of academic success and/or social assimilation for students who transfer from outside the school district.

7. Substance abuse, both by students and others in the home.

8. Lack of expectations from family or peers.

9. Repeated suspensions from school.

10. Difficulties for pregnant and parenting youth (lack of child care, community resources, family support, etc.).

11. A pattern of transient enrollments (from county to county, or school to school, or home school to public school).

Identify the full spectrum of existing services which support success for all students.

1. Student support services at school (school counselors, social worker, nurses, student advocates, child psychologists, etc.)

2. After school and student support agencies (Boys and Girls Club, Rise and Shine, Communities in Schools, Community Educational Resrouces Team, Village Keepers, El Centro Communitario, etc.)

3. Mediation and youth support programs from Center for Dialogue

4. Mental health and behavioral services (Families Together, Appalachian Counseling, Sylvan Valley Counseling Services, etc.).

5. Religious communities and faith based outreach programs.

Recommendations for needed and do-able changes in practice given our existing resources.

1. We need more early prevention and intervention services.

2. Community attention is needed in improving school readiness skills by improving access to early childhood education.

3. Elementary grade level expectations need to be evaluated to ensure a developmentally appropriate curriculum focused on readiness for the next grade level.

4. We need more intervention for students with excessive absences and chronic truancy in order to correct attendance problems before they lead to failure.

5. We need education and support programs for parents to help them to better support school success for their children. Schools should give special attention to building positive relationships with families who are not engaged in the school.

6. We need to expand the opportunity for appropriate students to take advantage of the 21 Plus alternative track to graduation as an alternative to dropping out of school.

7. Additional attention and support is needed for students who transfer into the school system. This is especially true of high school students transferring from out of state.

8. Students and families need greater access to mental health services.

9. Additional alternatives to out of school suspension are needed. Also, we need to reduce the behaviors which lead to suspensions.

10. We need to evaluate grading practices to ensure that grades reflect true knowledge and skill and do not discourage student progress and motivation.

11. High schools should evaluate and investigate scheduling options (modified block, year long courses, etc.) to provide the most ideal learning conditions for students who struggle academically.

12. Additional opportunities for summer credit recovery and course work should be provided.

13. Opportunities for teaching study skills and life skills for struggling students should be provided.

14. Evaluate school and teacher communications with parents (attendance letters, progress reports, retention letters, etc.) to ensure a positive tone and to reduce unnecessary conflicts with parents.