

graduates

REDUCING
THE
DROPOUT
RATE

One in three students are likely to drop out of school ... You can be the change these students are waiting for



Understanding the Issue of Dropping Out in America's Schools

What is a Dropout?

NC State Board Policy HSP-Q-001 defines a dropout as "any student who leaves school for any reason before graduation or completion of a program of studies without transferring to another elementary or secondary school."

How are Dropouts Measured?

Some statistics state there is a 3.5% dropout rate while others claim one out of every three students will dropout of high school. Who is right? The short answer is both. Dropout rates are measured in four ways: Event rate, status rate, completion rate, and cohort rate.

The Truth in Numbers

About 2,000 high schools (approximately 12% of all high schools in America) produce over 50% of the nation's dropouts. These "dropout factories" account for 69% of all African-American dropouts and 63% of all Hispanic dropouts. In addition 80% of "dropout factories" are found in only 15 states, mostly northern and western cities and throughout the southern states. (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009).

Where are the Gaps in Dropout Rates?

In Wake County, during the 2008-2009 school year, there was almost a 20% gap between male and female dropouts. In addition over 6% of all Hispanic, African-

American, and American Indian males fell into the dropout rate. This is compared to about 4% White males and 2% Asian males. These trends in Wake County are echoed in North Carolina and the United States.

Dropout Data '08-'09

(event rate)

National Dropout Rate (2007)	3.5%
NC Dropout Rate	4.3%
Wake Co. Dropout Rate	3.5%
Number of NC Dropouts	19,184
Number of Wake Co. Dropouts	1,430

NC Resources for Dropout Information



2010

Dropout Prevention and Intervention –
NC Public Schools
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/dropout/>
College Foundation of North Carolina
<http://www.cfnc.org>
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
<http://www.nces.ed.gov>

Everyone Graduates Center
<http://www.every1graduates.org/north-carolina.html>
Communities in Schools- North Carolina
<http://www.cisnc.org>
Achieve, Inc.
<http://www.achieve.org/north-carolina>



Research-supported approaches can increase the graduation rate at your school.

Research-Supported Approaches

Emphasize personalized education, rigor and relevance in the classroom, close monitoring of school performance, adult advocacy or mentoring, and academic support and enrichment, including tutoring. Many programs exist to help economically disadvantaged students and families (see What Works Clearinghouse, “Resources for Help”).

Established Working Programs

- Big Brothers and Big Sisters
- Families and School TOGETHER
- Coca Cola Valued Youth Program
- Good Behavior Game
- Keepin’ It Real
- Check & Connect

Individual-Level Approach

Assign committed adult advocates to meet with at-risk students on a regular basis. Caseloads should not exceed 15. Adults should be trained on resources available to at-risk youth, and academic and behavior struggles. In addition advocates should have belief in student’s success and be willing to work with their families.

Systemic-Level Approach

Small learning communities and team teaching lend themselves to smaller classes,

extended time in the classroom, and increased student participation in extracurricular activities. This approach could be implemented for one grade level or the school as a whole.

Examples are block scheduling, team teaching, and smaller academies within schools.

Intervention Considerations

- School-community collaboration is key
- Successful interventions require administrative and district support
- Career and academic development
- Attendance policies and programs
- Positive school climate
- Use local strategies to suit the needs of the population

WCPSS Dropout Prevention Strategies

The overall goal of the Wake County Public School System is to graduate all of their students within four years. To accomplish this goal several preventative strategies have been put into place to help ensure an increased graduation rate.

Some of these strategies include block scheduling, needs-based instruction based on NCSCOS standards, teacher collaboration, monthly team meetings, transition to high school, interventions for at-risk students, professional development, career education, academic support, school climate, and partnerships with family and community.

Major Predictors of Student Dropout:

Systemic/Self-Reported

1. Low Grades in Core Subjects

Student who are performing below average in core subjects like reading and math are more likely to drop out of school than students who are passing their core subjects.

2. Low Attendance

Students who attend school less than 80% of the time are more likely to drop out of school. This can occur as young as elementary-aged children.

3. Retention Rates

Retention during elementary school increases the risk of dropping out later; retention during middle school is an even stronger predictor.

4. Lack of Engagement/Motivation

When a student has no connection to someone/something in school they can become less motivated and engaged, being more likely to drop out.

5. Abuse/Neglect

Abuse, neglect, and being raised in foster care increase the likelihood of dropping out.

5. Low Parental/Family Involvement

Children of families who are not involved in their education are more likely to drop out of school.

Resources for Help

The National Dropout Prevention Association

<http://www.dropoutprevention.org/>

U.S. Department of Education: School Dropout Prevention Program

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/dropout/index.html>

American’s Promise Alliance

<http://www.silentepidemic.org>

National High School Center

<http://www.betterhighschools.org/>

Alliance For Excellent Education

<http://www.all4ed.org>

What Works Clearinghouse

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/>