Graduation Success Toolbox

District-Focused Strategies

1. Maintain or increase rigor increases student engagement and deters student drop out. "Research-Based Interventions to Improve High School Graduation Rates" https://decisioncenter.asu.edu/sites/default/files/dcedex_white_paper_-_high_school_graduation_interventions_2.pdf

2. Review Project 10's "Student Engagement Best Practice Checklist", which includes creating a positive school climate/culture: http://project10.info/Documents/Student_Engagement_Checklist_FINAL_11.26.18.pdf

3. Using Data Well: Know Your Schools and Know Your Data: Compare Size-a-like and Demographic Similar School Districts and Schools to learn from those that are performing well.

4. Everyone knows the district graduation/dropout rate, their individual school's graduation/dropout rate (common goal – together to improve). One source is the "Know Your Schools Data" ("High School Graduation Rates") on the FDOE's website: https://edudata.fldoe.org/AdvancedReports.html. Project 10 RTRs can provide TA regarding accessing the data and creating reports.

5. Educating everyone at the district and school level about graduation and dropout rates, setting goals to increase/decrease.

6. Use your ESSA Data to help determine which schools need the most support including using this data to learn from the schools that are performing well in each of the ESSA point areas.

7. Run your current EWS data for at least 3 cohorts and Run your dropout report for SWDs ages 14-21 for the school year to present every 9 weeks. Add the end of 1st Semester – add a Freshman Cohort EWS Team.

8. Preventing Dropout in Secondary School
   a. Recommendation One: Monitor the progress of all students, and proactively intervene when students show early signs of attendance, behavior, or academic problems.
   b. Recommendation Two: Provide intensive, individualized support to students who have fallen off track and face significant challenges to success.
   c. Recommendation Three: Engage students by offering curricula and programs that connect schoolwork with college and career success and that improve students' capacity to manage challenges in and out of school. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/WWC/Docs/PracticeGuide/wwc_dropout_092617.pdf#page=15

9. Dropout Prevention and Trauma: Addressing a Wide Range of Stressors that Inhibit Student Success (A National Dropout Prevention Center/Network White Paper) Respond with Effective Trauma-Informed Interventions: https://www.dropoutprevention.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/dropout-prevention-and-trauma-2017-10.pdf

    a. Recognize the Connection Between Trauma and School Dropout: Many students who experience trauma that creates challenges with "attention, memory, executive functioning, emotional self-regulation, and relationship formation, all of which can have tremendous effects on a child's ability to be successful in a school environment."

    b. Systemic Approach: Addressing dropouts as a school, community, family, and individual, system-wide issue and using data for systemic renewal.

    c. School-Community Collaboration: Engaging the greater community in the dropout issue.

    d. Safe Learning Environment: Making schools places where students want to be.

    e. Professional Learning: Educators learning at-risk student issues and strategies.

    f. Individualized Instruction: Flexibility in teaching methods and motivational strategies.

10. For 9th graders, if credit is not achieved for a course, discuss how it will be made up as quickly as possible. It should not be a discussion that is put on hold until Junior/Senior year.

11. Combine Meetings Meaningfully – MTSS/RtI, Child Study Teams and EWS Teams (review 3 cohorts of data)

12. Put a mechanism in place to track students in residential programs (DJJ, Psychiatric, etc) who will be transitioning back into your district.

13. Master Schedule Design – the model is for a student to have a Learning Strategies Class with Support Facilitators in his/her core subjects that can be re-emphasized in Learning Strategies – the same person is the student's case manager / helps in writing the IEP. The Florida Inclusion Network (FIN: https://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/) can provide support in Master Schedule design.

14. Grade Floor – Use a grade floor so that students cannot earn a zero (grade floor for testing, assignments, etc. is set at 50% or 55%). Students may still earn an "F" with a score of 50 – 59, but the grade floor prevents the possibility that the student cannot recover from a score of zero.

15. Restorative Practices – ISS, OSS, Placement. The Florida Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS: https://flpbis.cbcs.usf.edu/) Project can assist with training and technical assistance regarding restorative practices.

16. Attendance Policies – Credit and Grade Impact. What procedures are in place? Is everyone aware of these procedures in the district? Helpful national resource- "Attendance Works": https://www.attendanceworks.org/ .

17. Professional Learning for Teachers on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Differentiated Instruction (DI), and Strategic Instruction Model (SIM). Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System (FDLRS: https://www.fdlrs.org/) and FIN can assist.

18. Professional Learning on withdrawal codes for ALL personnel that work with students on graduation success/dropout prevention. 2023-24 Student Information System, Appendix A: Attendance Recordkeeping Required Codes for Grades PK-12 Students.

19. Is there a process in place before a dropout code is entered into the system? Are students required to meet with a school counselor and/or an administrator first?

20. Mandatory review of grade point average (GPA) and credits during every annual IEP, and immediately calling an IEP meeting if students with disabilities have an EWS indicator concern (attendance, behavior, course performance).
21. Schools/districts will identify ways to support families from other cultures.

Student-Focused Interventions:

1. Increase knowledge about postsecondary education opportunities: This includes activities, such as: college tours, informational meetings, and assistance filling out college admission or financial aid forms. "Research-Based Interventions to Improve High School Graduation Rates" https://decisioncenter.asu.edu/sites/default/files/dcedex_white_paper_-_high_school_graduation_interventions_2.pdf
2. Parent engagement tends to wane when their student enters high school. However, all students, particularly students with disabilities, benefit from parental support through high school. "When students know that their parents are engaged and supportive, they are more likely to communicate when challenges arise" (Chandra Williams, 2021). "Six Strategies that Will Increase High School Graduation Rates" https://www.studentachievementsolutions.com/6-strategies-that-will-increase-high-school-graduation-rates/
3. Listening to the voices of the students: When students exercise self-determination and advocate for the postsecondary education, training and/or employment that interests them and their voices are heard, students' beliefs in themselves and their future are galvanized. "Research-Based Interventions to Improve High School Graduation Rates" https://decisioncenter.asu.edu/sites/default/files/dcedex_white_paper_-_high_school_graduation_interventions_2.pdf
4. Peer Group Connection: Train twelfth grade student peer leaders to create a positive and supportive environment for incoming 9th grade students. One school used this strategy to use male peer leaders to support incoming ninth grade Latino males and found the four-year graduation rate was higher for the students who participated in the Peer Group Connection than those who did not. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3987860/
5. "Getting students on track for graduation: Impacts of the Early Warning Intervention and Monitoring System after one year" (AIR, April 2017):
    a. Early Warning Intervention and Monitoring System schools were more likely than control schools to report using an early warning system and having a dedicated team to identify and support at-risk students **but did not differ** from control schools in the self-reported frequency of data review and number and type of interventions offered; and
    b. The Early Warning Intervention and Monitoring System **did not have a detectable impact** on student progress in school (and) The Early Warning Intervention and Monitoring System **did not have a detectable impact** on school data culture. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED573814.pdf

6. Ensure that all students, especially students being monitored in an EWS, can identify at least one caring adult at the school.
7. Mentors – Peer/Adult/Community – relationship building activity (what makes you happy/sad/angry/words that best describe you; favorite fast food restaurant/food/color/sport/music/TV show or movie; who are people that are important to you at school and home; favorite teacher/subject/extracurricular activities; most challenging subject; how do you learn best visual/auditory/I do-we do-you do/group/solo; who are some of your friends).
8. Peers as Partners in Learning- there are course codes in CPALMS for Middle and High School. FIN has a curriculum and is able to provide support to develop, maintain, and enhance programs: https://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/peers-as-partners-in-learning/. The Peers as Partners in Learning mentors could be students with disabilities, and they potentially could be mentors to lower grade levels.
9. Graduation Pep Rallies
10. Graduation Pledge or Pledge with cap and gown inspirational photo (solo or call in family as well for photo) with a component of Self-Monitoring Tool re: Credits, GPA, Attendance
11. Make Up Day(s) – make up missing assignments/reports, missed quizzes/tests/exams, and opportunities for extra credit
12. Tutoring – before, during, afterschool (peer and/or adult run tutoring labs); tutoring could be provided by community partners (e.g., some districts have tutoring programs offered by the local libraries), honors students (can be potentially used towards community service hours)
13. Test/Assessment/SAT/ACT Prep or Boot Camp
    a. Credit Recovery – Platform, Teacher Support, Classroom Setup/Design (Race Track – each student is assigned a race car and first one to complete credit recovery wins the race around the track wins a Taco Bell gift card)
14. EOC Exemptions of EOCs that are NOT required for graduation for students who have great attendance and are academically performing well as a reward.
15. Summer School/ESY can be strategically used to support students to meet graduation requirements.
16. Statewide Testing Waivers – ELA, Math (Algebra and Geometry), Biology, US History = Remember, pulling out the 30% can make a world of difference for students with GPAs of 2.0 or less.
17. Consider the use of career academies in which students are given choices such as Law Enforcement Academy, Medical Academy, etc.
18. Consider teaching learning strategies (test taking skills, study skills, time management and organization skills).

Strategies to Monitor Student Interventions:

1. Preventing Dropout in Secondary School

    a. Recommendation Four: For schools with many at-risk students, create small, personalized communities to facilitate monitoring and support.
https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/WWC/Docs/PracticeGuide/wwc_dropout_092617.pdf#page=15

2. [Webinar] View Data Rich, Information Poor? Making sense of Progress Monitoring Data to Guide Intervention Decisions: AIR Monitoring Intervention Data Webinar:
https://mtss4success.org/resource/data-rich-information-poor-making-sense-progress-monitoring-data-guide-intervention

3. The Core Collaborative Learning Lab - Progress Monitoring: The Heartbeat of MTSS
https://thecorecollaborative.com/progress-monitoring-the-heartbeat-of-mtss/

4. Student Goal Setting Template from Northwest Evaluation Association/Non-profit (NWEA):
https://cdn.nwea.org/docs/Student+Goal+Setting+Template.pdf

5. Monitoring interventions requires collecting the right data in a timely manner and reviewing it regularly in teams of teachers and other school staff.
https://www.pathwaystoadultsuccess.org/tools-resources/how-to-monitor-interventions/#:~:text=~%20Make%20sure%20teachers%20and%20involved,them%20to%20address%20student%20needs

- Make sure teachers and involved support staff upload relevant data (attendance, behavior, course performance) into the system at least weekly to track trends and progress.
- Train teams to conduct "cycles of inquiry" to continually revisit the impact of interventions and refine them to address student needs. This should occur within teacher teams (for identified at-risk students) and within leadership teams (for systemic improvement interventions).
- Provide time for teacher teams to meet at least bi-weekly to discuss and review student supports; meeting agendas should include time to monitor and evaluate previously planned interventions as well as time to discuss and plan interventions for newly identified students.

6. Monitoring Student Needs And Progress In A Student-Centered Classroom
https://michiganvirtual.org/blog/monitoring-student-needs-and-progress/

7. Monitoring Student Progress for Transition: A Toolkit for Collecting Student Level Transition-Related Data
https://transitionta.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/toolkit_Student-Progress-Monitoring.pdf