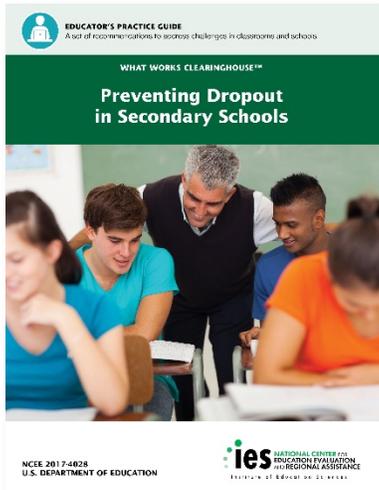


FACTSheet

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Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools: Recommendations from a recent WWC practice guide

WHAT IS A WWC PRACTICE GUIDE?

The *What Works Clearinghouse* (WWC), an initiative of the Institute of Education Sciences within the U.S. Department of Education, produces practice guides geared toward helping educators and administrators address specific challenges in classrooms and schools. The recommendations in practice guides are based on reviews of research, experiences of practitioners, and expert opinions of a panel of nationally recognized experts.

WHAT DOES THIS PRACTICE GUIDE COVER?

The *Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools practice guide*, released in September 2017, provides school educators and administrators with four evidence-based recommendations and actionable strategies for reducing dropout rates in middle and high schools and improving high school graduation rates.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE?

The recommendations can be implemented in conjunction with existing academic curricula and student-support services.

Recommendations 1, 2, and 3 are designed to complement one another and are most effective when implemented simultaneously in all types of schools.

Recommendation 4 should be implemented primarily in schools with high dropout rates to facilitate implementation of the other three recommendations.

WHAT ARE THE RECOMMENDATIONS?



Monitor the progress of all students, and proactively intervene when students show early signs of attendance, behavior, or academic problems.

- ❖ Organize and analyze data to identify students who miss school, have behavior problems, or are struggling in their courses.
- ❖ Intervene with students who show early signs of falling off track.
- ❖ If data show high rates of absenteeism, take steps to help students, parents, and school staff understand the importance of attending school daily.
- ❖ Monitor progress and adjust interventions as needed.

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Provide intensive, individualized support to students who have fallen off track and face significant challenges to success.

- ❖ For each student identified as needing individualized support, assign a single person to be the student's primary advocate.
- ❖ Develop a menu of support options that advocates can use to help students.
- ❖ Support advocates with ongoing professional learning opportunities and tools for tracking their work.



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.

- ❖ Directly connect schoolwork to students' options after high school.
- ❖ Provide curricula and programs that help students build supportive relationships and teach students how to manage challenges.
- ❖ Regularly assess student engagement to identify areas for improvement, and target interventions to students who are not meaningfully engaged.



For schools with many at-risk students, create small, personalized communities to facilitate monitoring and support.

- ❖ Decide whether the small communities will serve a single grade or multiple grades.
- ❖ Create teams of teachers that share common groups of students.
- ❖ Identify a theme to help build a strong sense of identity and community and to improve student engagement.
- ❖ Develop a schedule that provides common planning time and ample opportunities for staff to monitor and support students.

ENDNOTES

Note: The level of evidence conveys the WWC's assessment about whether rigorous research studies that relate to the recommendation consistently demonstrate that the recommended practices improved outcomes, and reflect the contexts and students that the guide is meant to apply to.

Source: Rumberger, R., Addis, S., Allensworth, E., Balfanz, R., Bruch, J., Dillon, E., Duardo, D., Dynarski, M., Furgeson, J., Jayanthi, M., Newman-Gonchar, R., Place, K., & Tuttle, C. (2017). Preventing dropout in secondary schools (NCEE 2017-4028). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. <https://whatworks.ed.gov>