The Hidden Factor of Low Performance: Improving Low-Performing Schools by Tracking and Tackling Chronic Absenteeism in Transitional Grades

This session will start at 12:00 p.m. Eastern

To join the audio portion of this webinar, please click on the "Info" tab above this screen and follow the instructions. All attendees will be automatically muted to ensure the best sound quality during the presentation.

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IMPROVING LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

The Hidden Factor of Low Performance: Improving Low-Performing Schools by Tracking and Tackling Chronic Absenteeism in Transitional Grades

Robert Balfanz, Ph.D. and

Kay Warfield, Ed.D

June 25, 2013

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- Welcome and Goals

  1. Increase knowledge of early warning systems and their role in identifying chronically absent students.

  2. Increase knowledge of effective approaches for supporting students at risk of school failure.
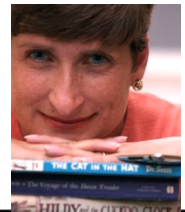
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This information is being provided as part of a Research to Practice Bridge Event administered by the Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast. Information and materials mentioned or shown during this presentation are provided as resources and examples for the viewer's convenience. Their inclusion is not intended as an endorsement by the Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast or its funding source, the Institute of Education Sciences (Contract ED-IES-12-C-0011).

In addition, the instructional practices and assessments discussed or shown in these presentations are not intended to mandate, direct, or control a State's, local educational agency's, or school's specific instructional content, academic achievement system and assessments, curriculum, or program of instruction. State and local programs are free to use any instructional content, achievement system and assessments, curriculum, or program of instruction they wish.

- The U.S. Department of Education and REL Southeast want your feedback about today's Bridge Event. At the conclusion of this webinar you will be redirected to a very brief online survey. Please take a few minutes to respond to the questions. Your feedback is very important.

- Registered participants will receive a follow-up email with a link to the evaluation.

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- Overview

  12:10 – 12:30   *Data on Chronic Absenteeism*

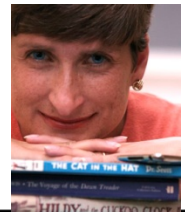 12:30 – 12:40   *Q & A #1*

  12:40 – 1:00   *Implications for Policy & Practice*

  1:00 – 1:10   *Overview of Alabama Work*

  1:10 – 1:25   *Q & A #2*

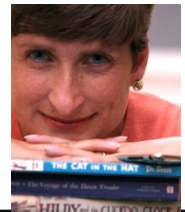 1:25 – 1:30   *Wrap Up & Resources*

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- ## Submit Your Questions!

  Questions will be collected during and after the presentations for discussion during the Q & A sessions.
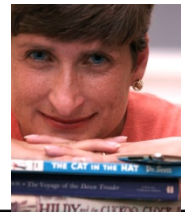
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- ## Take Our Poll!

   ### In which state(s) do you work?

   ### What is your role?

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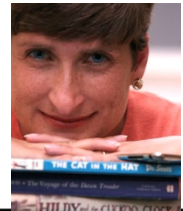RMC Research

- Poll Results

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What Is A Regional Educational Laboratory (REL)?

The Regional Educational Laboratories

- Network of 10 RELs across the country

- REL Southeast serves Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina

- Funded by the US Department of Education (ED), Institute of Education Sciences from 2012 to 2017

- Help states and districts use research and data to inform policy and practice with the goal of improving student outcomes
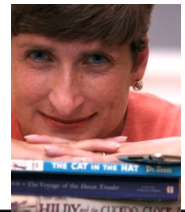
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- # Introduction to Dr. Robert Balfanz

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**IMPROVING LOW-
PERFORMING SCHOOLS**

What is Chronic Absenteeism?

O Definition 1)
  O Missing 10% of School

O Definition 2)
  O Missing a Month or more of School (20/21 Days)

Why Don't Students Go to School?

O *Can't-*

   O something prevents them from going to school

O *Won't-*

   O avoiding something at school
or on the way to/from school

O *Don't-*

   O decide they would rather be elsewhere

How Prevalent is Chronic Absenteeism ?

Chronic Absenteeism Rates in Five States

State	Percent Chronically Absent	Number Chronically Absent
Oregon	23% (2009-10)*	129,190
Rhode Island	18% (2010-11)**	30,168
Maryland	11% (2010-11)***	85,188
Florida	10% (2009-10)***	302,382
Nebraska	6% (2010-11)***	18,100

* Missing 10% or more of enrolled school days

** Missing 10% of enrolled school days, for those who attended at least 90 days

*** Students absent 21 or more days-of those enrolled all year

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What is the Magnitude at the Most Impacted Schools?

Maryland 2010-2011
Number of Schools with Large Numbers of Students Chronically Absent

Chronically Absent Students	50 or more	100 or more	500 or more	Greatest Number
Elementary	58	3	NA	137
Middle School		26	NA	152

| Chronically Absent Students	100 or more	250 or more	500 or more	Greatest Number
High School	161	61	12	807

What is the Cumulative Impact of Chronic Absenteeism?

Florida 6th Grade Cohort
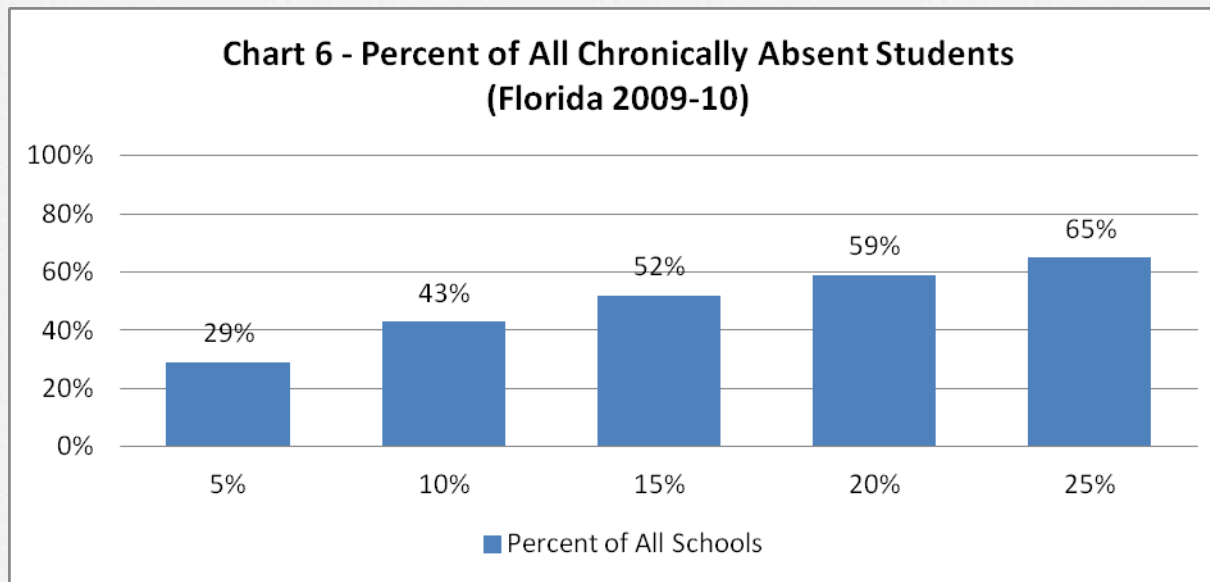Cumulative Days Absent Over Seven Years of Middle and High School by Quintile

	Mean Number of Days Absent	Mean Days Absent Per Year
Top 20%	13	3
Upper Middle 20%	35	6
Middle 20%	58	9
Lower Middle 20%	90	15
Bottom 20%	171	28

How Does Chronic Absenteeism Vary by Grade?

Chart 3 - Chronically Absent Students By Grade
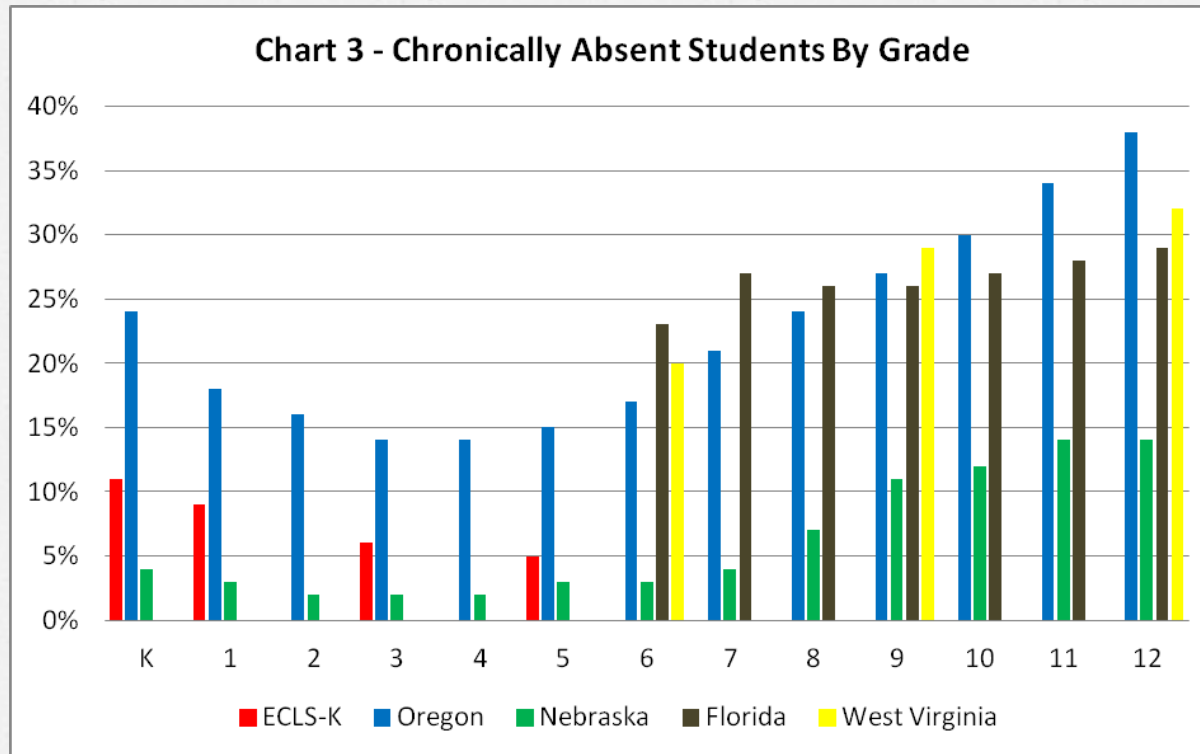
Chronic Absenteeism is Concentrated in a Sub-Set of Schools

Chart 6 - Percent of All Chronically Absent Students (Florida 2009-10)

Chronic Absenteeism widens the achievement, graduation and post-secondary enrollment gaps.
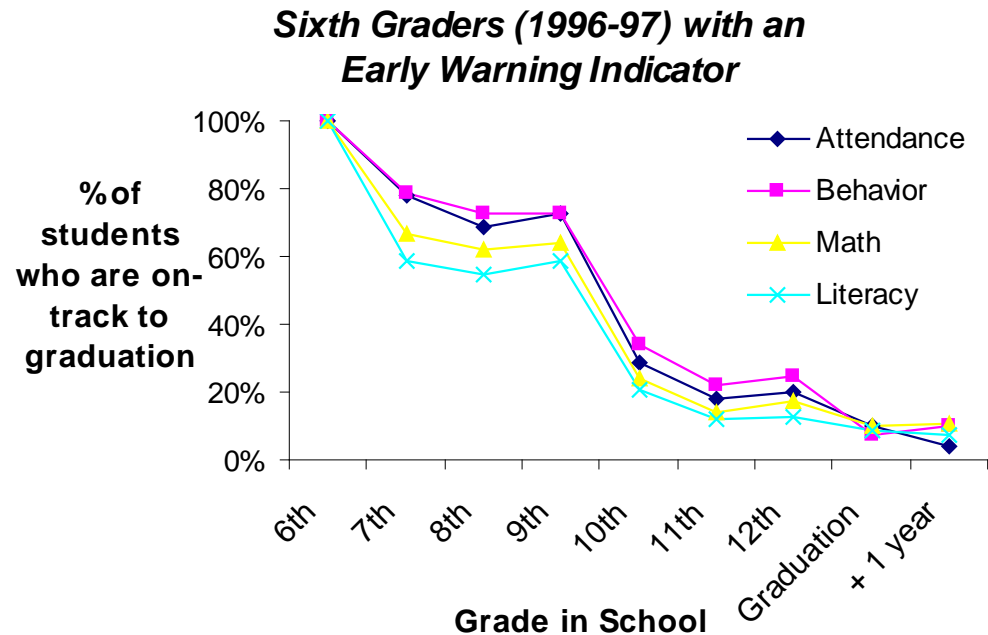
Low Income Students Benefit the Most from Regular School Attendance

In Elementary School Chronic Absenteeism Helps Drive Achievement Gaps

Impact in Middle Grades on Staying on Track to Graduation

The Primary Off-Track Indicators for Potential Dropouts:

- **A**ttendance - < 85-90% school attendance

- **B**ehavior - "unsatisfactory" behavior mark in at least one class

- **C**ourse Performance – A final grade of "F" in Math and/or English or Credit-Bearing High School Course

Sixth Graders (1996-97) with an Early Warning Indicator

% of students who are on-track to graduation

Legend: Attendance, Behavior, Math, Literacy

Grade in School: 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, Graduation, + 1 year

Sixth-grade students with one or more of the indicators may have only a **15% to 25% chance of graduating** from high school on time or within one year of expected graduation

Note: Early Warning Indicator graph from Philadelphia research which has been replicated in 10 cities.
Robert Balfanz and Liza Herzog, Johns Hopkins University; Philadelphia Education Fund

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Impact on Achievement

Chart 7 - Impact of Days Absent on Achievement Scores Florida 1st Time 9th Graders, 2000-01
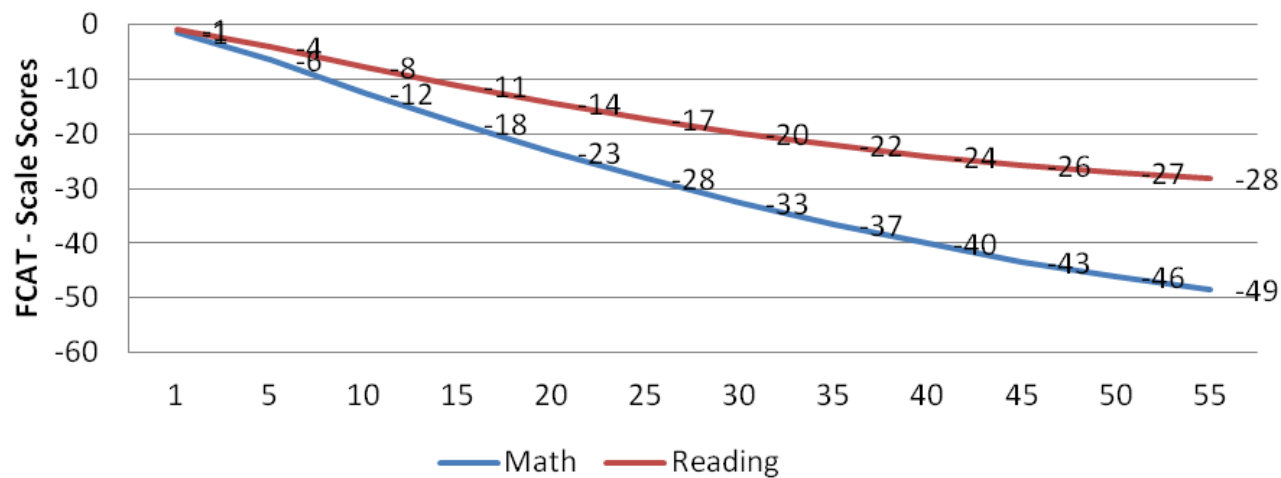
Impact on
High School Graduation
and Post-Secondary Enrollment

Chart 9 - Final High School Outcomes by 10th Grade Absenteeism
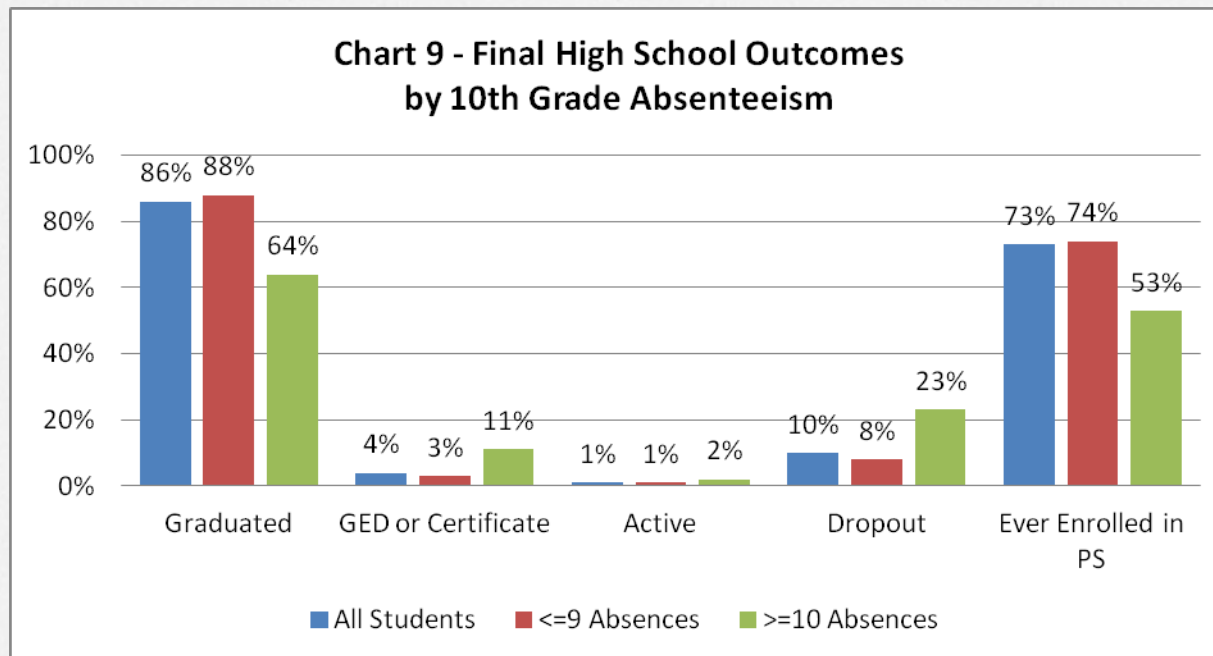
School Suspensions and Chronic Absenteeism

O In a recent study of Florida, 20% of Students Suspended in the 9th Grade, had no prior history of chronic absenteeism, many went on to become chronically absent after being suspended

- ## Q & A Session 1

Elizabeth Bright, Ed.D.
RMC Research

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- Overview
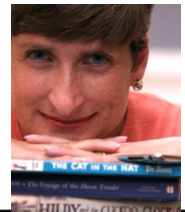
  12:40 – 1:00   *Implications for Policy & Practice*

  1:00 – 1:10   *Overview of Alabama Work*

  1:10 – 1:25   *Q & A #2*

  1:25 – 1:30   *Wrap Up & Resources*

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What Can We Do to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism?

Solution Step **1**-Measure

O Ask School District/State to publish school-level chronic absenteeism rates

O Schools with high rates should track on weekly basis

O Add to US Department of Education
    Office of Civil Rights Survey*

O Include as required data reporting element in
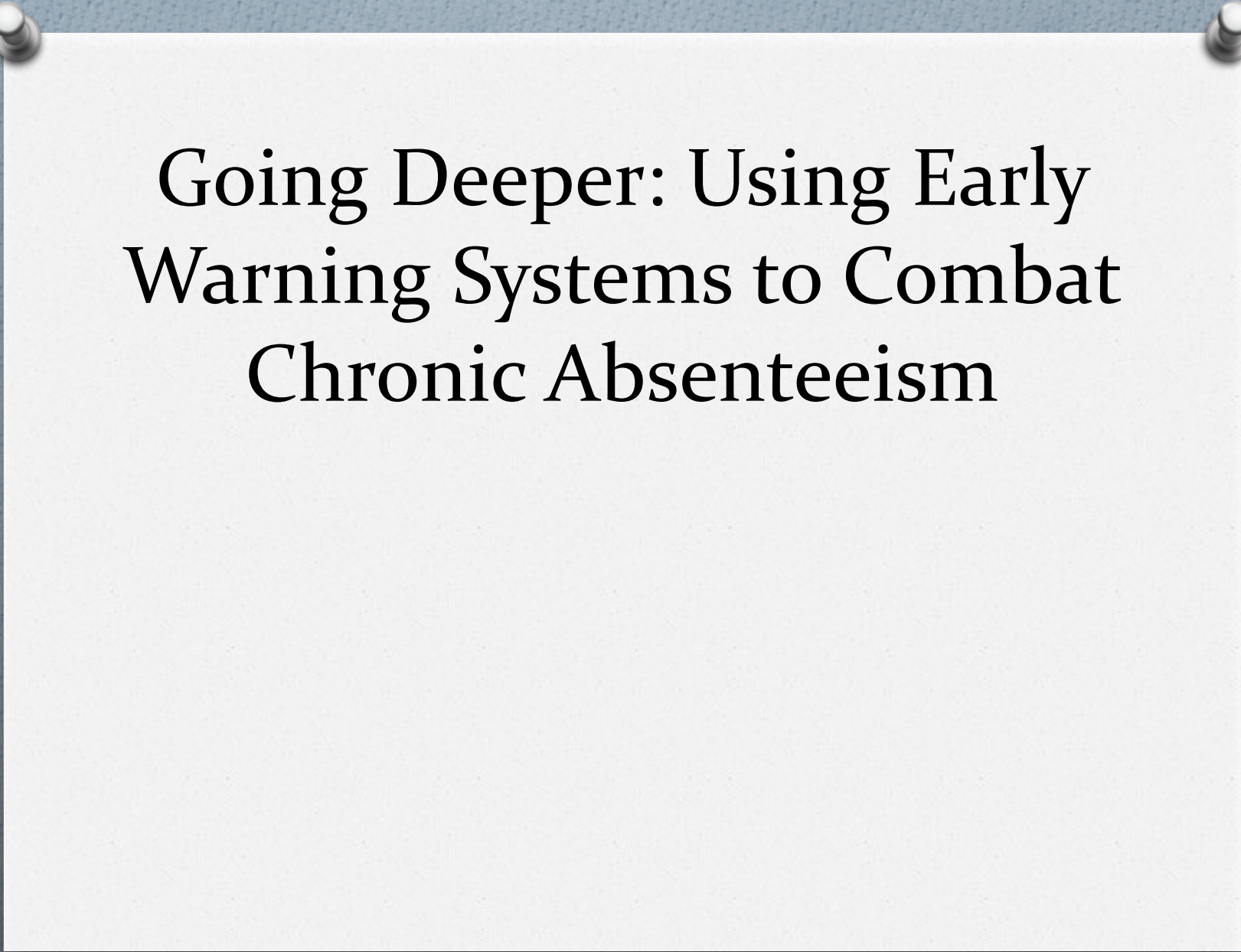   re-authorization of ESEA*

Personal recommendation of presenter

Solution Step 2-Monitor

O Facilitate the spread of early warning systems at state and school district level

O Schools with high levels should use early warning systems and monitor weekly

O Make early warning systems a key component of school improvement grants

Solution Step 3-Act

O Inter-agency efforts at state and local level
  led by Governors and Mayors

O In highly impacted schools principals should lead weekly
  data meetings to analyze success of interventions at school
  and individual level

O Infuse second shift of adults into highest need
  schools as success mentors
           (Americorps, United Way, etc.)

O Make implementing a comprehensive plan
  combating absenteeism a part of required
  activities in school improvement grants

Going Deeper: Using Early Warning Systems to Combat Chronic Absenteeism

Building a Strong Intervention Systems
Key Idea

O Need to Understand Scale and Scope of Challenge at School Level-How Many Students are chronically absent?

O If its 30 or less-a student support team or graduation coach can lead the effort

O If its closer to 50 or more, teacher teams will need to play a critical role

O In both cases investments in mission building, professional development, coaching and networking are critical to success

Building a Strong Intervention Systems Key Idea

O Combine ready access, at the classroom level, to on and off-track indicators (the ABC's), with regular time to analyze the data and an organized response system that can act upon early warning data in both a systematic and tailored manner.

Two Key Questions

O What is the most effective level of intervention-student, classroom, or school level?

O Does the school have the scale and scope of interventions needed to reach all students effectively?

Successful Examples

The Diplomas Now Partners Harness and Combine their Unique Assets to Keep Students On Track College and Career Ready

On-Track Indicator and Intervention System: Research-based and validated interventions of increasing intensity are employed until student is back on track to graduation. Interventions are constantly evaluated for their effectiveness.

	Core Function	Means and Methods	Additional Roles
Talent Development (a program of Johns Hopkins University)	Whole School	• Research based instructional, organizational and teacher support • On-track indicator data system • On-site implementation and mission building support • Scheduling, Staffing, and Budget supports	• Extra Academic Supports • Extra Behavior Supports • National Training and Tech Assistance Partner (Phil. Ed. Fund)
City Year — give a year. change the world.	Targeted Supports	• Whole-School, Whole-Child program • 8-15 full-time, full-day corps members serving as near-peer role models to mentor, tutor, provide behavior and attendance coaching and extended day learning	• Positive School Climate • Service Learning • After School
Communities In Schools	Intensive Supports	• School-based professional Site Coordinator • Highly specialized and intensive interventions via case managed student supports and referral to outside agencies • Brokered services through CIS partners	• Episodic Whole School Prevention Supports

NYC Chronic Absenteeism Interagency Task Force

1. **New Lens** **for Viewing Attendance**
   - Link to achievement and reducing social costs-City wide campaign; WakeUp! NYC; Chancellor's letter; 311 Electronic Help Center

2. **Success Mentors** **to Personalize School and Solve Problems**
   - Three models; Matched to target students; Integrated in school community

3. **School-Wide Infrastructure** **to Promote Attendance & Parent Engagement**
   - Principal's Weekly Student Success Meetings; Collaboration between principals, school staff, mentors, and CBOs; Parent Summits; Daily attendance calls

4. **User-Friendly** **Data**
   - Data Dashboard for Success Mentors; New ways of viewing CA for principals and administrators

5. **Interagency/Community Support** **to Connect the Dots**
   - Connecting schools to Libraries; Healthcare providers; Tutoring

Using Data to Maximize Impact

- **Identifying and Tracking CA Schools and Students**
  - Monitoring students at-risk for CA, exiting CA, and remaining CA

- **Data Sharing & Training**
  - Success Mentors have access to student-level data (Data Dashboard); Collaboration with city agencies like Department of Homeless Services

- **Measuring, Monitoring & Acting**
  - School-level report for principals to see CA rates in detail

Where Can I Learn More

O www.every1graduates.org

O www.getschooled.com

O www.attendancematters.org

- # Introduction to Dr. Kay Warfield

Elizabeth Bright, Ed.D.
RMC Research

High School Dropouts and Truancy Issues: Major Impacts on Alabama Economic Growth
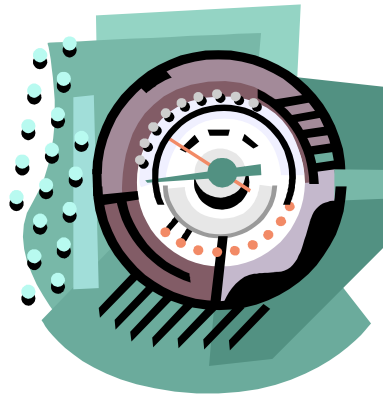
Kay Atchison Warfield, Ed.D
Alabama State Department of Education
Prevention and Support Services Section

#1 Indicator of Students Off-track:

ATTENDANCE

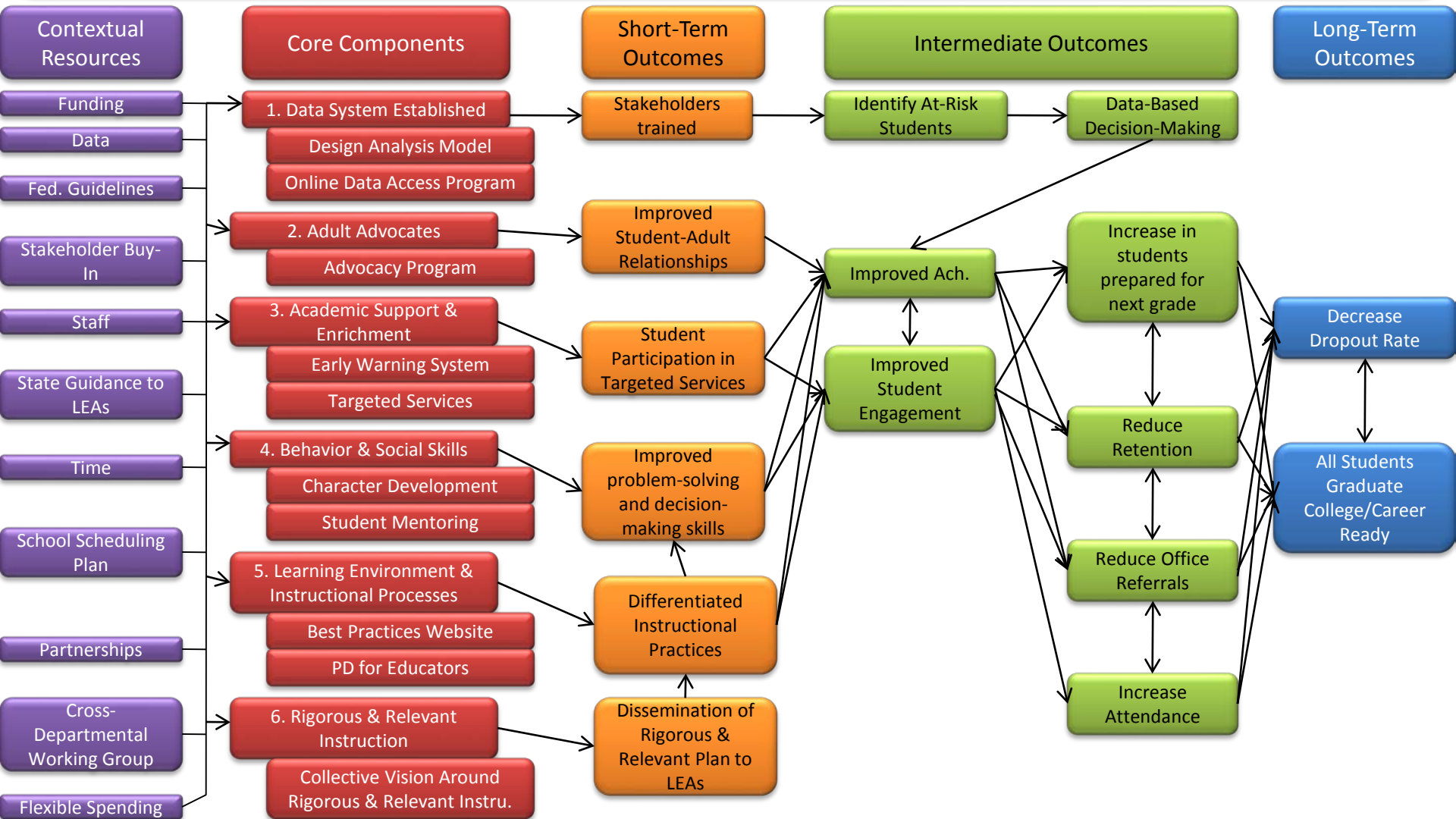**is the key barometer of a student's connection with schooling.**

Ninth-Grade Absences
Dramatically Reduced Graduations

- 0-4 – 87%
- 5-9 – 63%
- 10-14 – 41%
- 15-19 - 21%
- 20-24 – 9%
- 25-29 – 5%
- 30-34 – 2%
- 35-40 – 1%

AL Dropout Prevention Logic Model

Need:
- Current data system does not allow for identification of students at-risk of dropping out.
- Data Examples: 32% of students from single-parent homes; 12,0000 homeless children in AL; Not all districts are using a student-adult mentor model; 23% below basic in math in grade 3; 34% below basic in math in grade 8; 20% of students using alcohol; 34.1% not involved in EC activities; Students disengaged from school

Contextual Resources	Core Components	Short-Term Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes

Contextual Resources:
- Funding
- Data
- Fed. Guidelines
- Stakeholder Buy-In
- Staff
- State Guidance to LEAs
- Time
- School Scheduling Plan
- Partnerships
- Cross-Departmental Working Group
- Flexible Spending

Core Components:
1. Data System Established
   - Design Analysis Model
   - Online Data Access Program
2. Adult Advocates
   - Advocacy Program
3. Academic Support & Enrichment
   - Early Warning System
   - Targeted Services
4. Behavior & Social Skills
   - Character Development
   - Student Mentoring
5. Learning Environment & Instructional Processes
   - Best Practices Website
   - PD for Educators
6. Rigorous & Relevant Instruction
   - Collective Vision Around Rigorous & Relevant Instru.

Short-Term Outcomes:
- Stakeholders trained
- Improved Student-Adult Relationships
- Student Participation in Targeted Services
- Improved problem-solving and decision-making skills
- Differentiated Instructional Practices
- Dissemination of Rigorous & Relevant Plan to LEAs

Intermediate Outcomes:
- Identify At-Risk Students
- Data-Based Decision-Making
- Improved Ach.
- Improved Student Engagement
- Increase in students prepared for next grade
- Reduce Retention
- Reduce Office Referrals
- Increase Attendance

Long-Term Outcomes:
- Decrease Dropout Rate
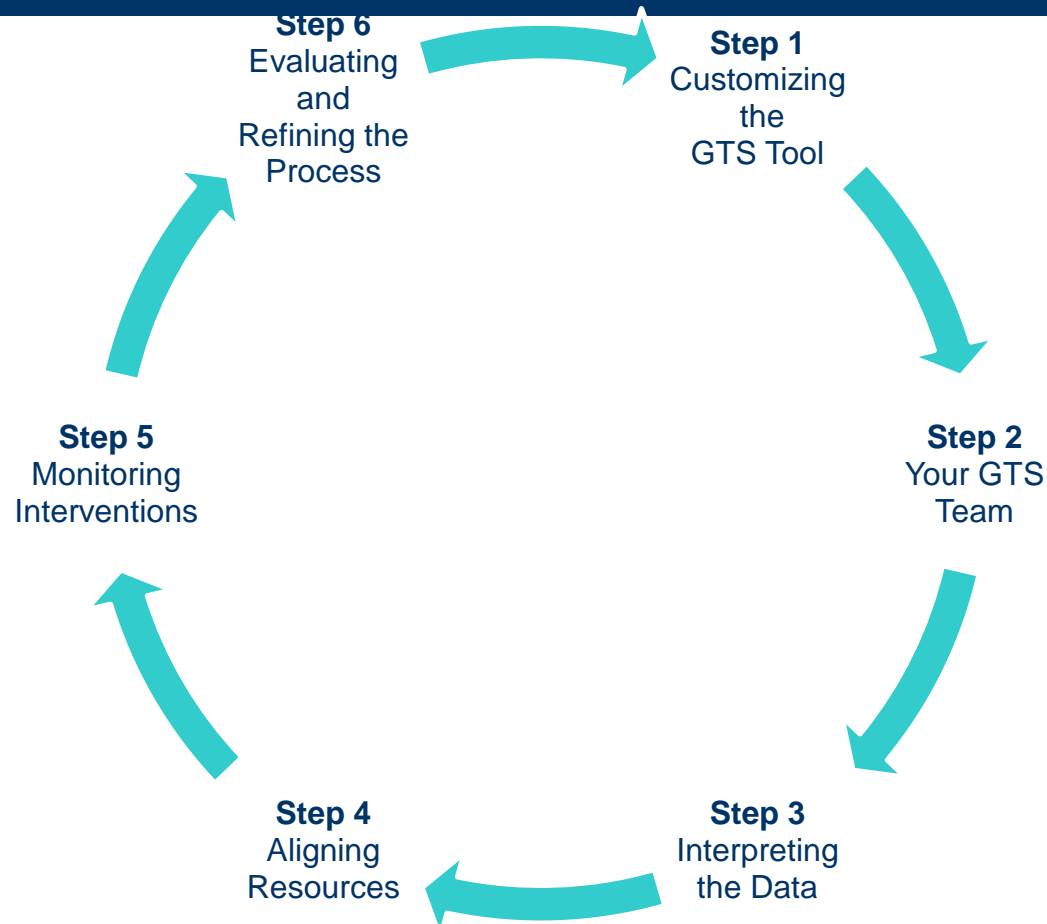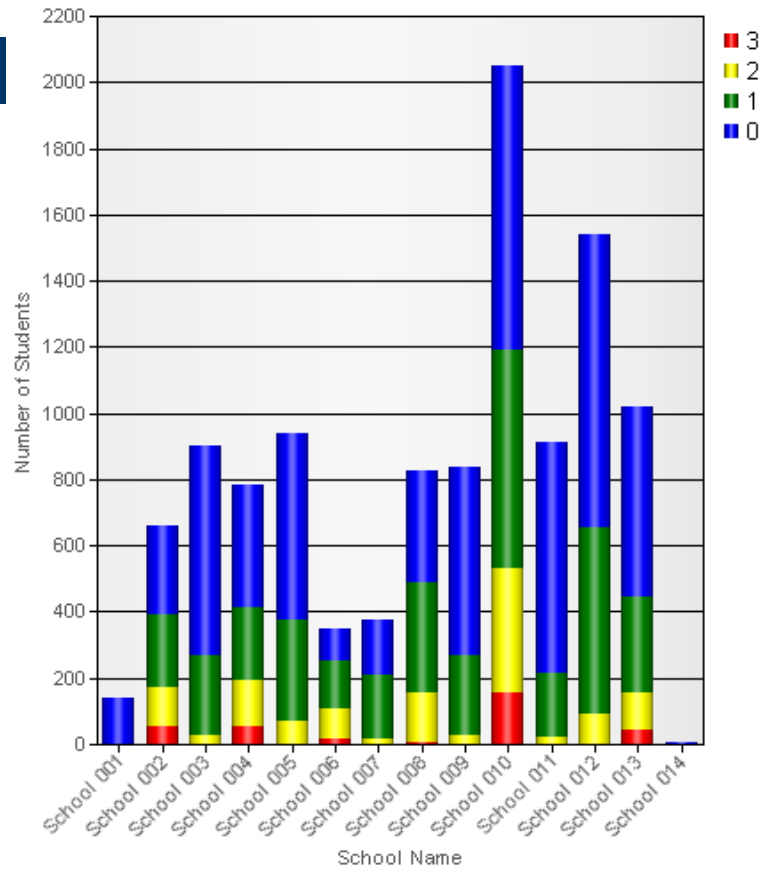- All Students Graduate College/Career Ready

The Alabama K-12 Graduation Tracking System (GTS)

It is now possible to identify who among **3rd**, **6th**, and **9th** grade students will likely drop out of high school unless on-going interventions occur.

- -Attendance
- -Behavior
- -Credits/Grade Attainment

Alabama K-12 GTS
Six-Step Implementation Process

Step 6
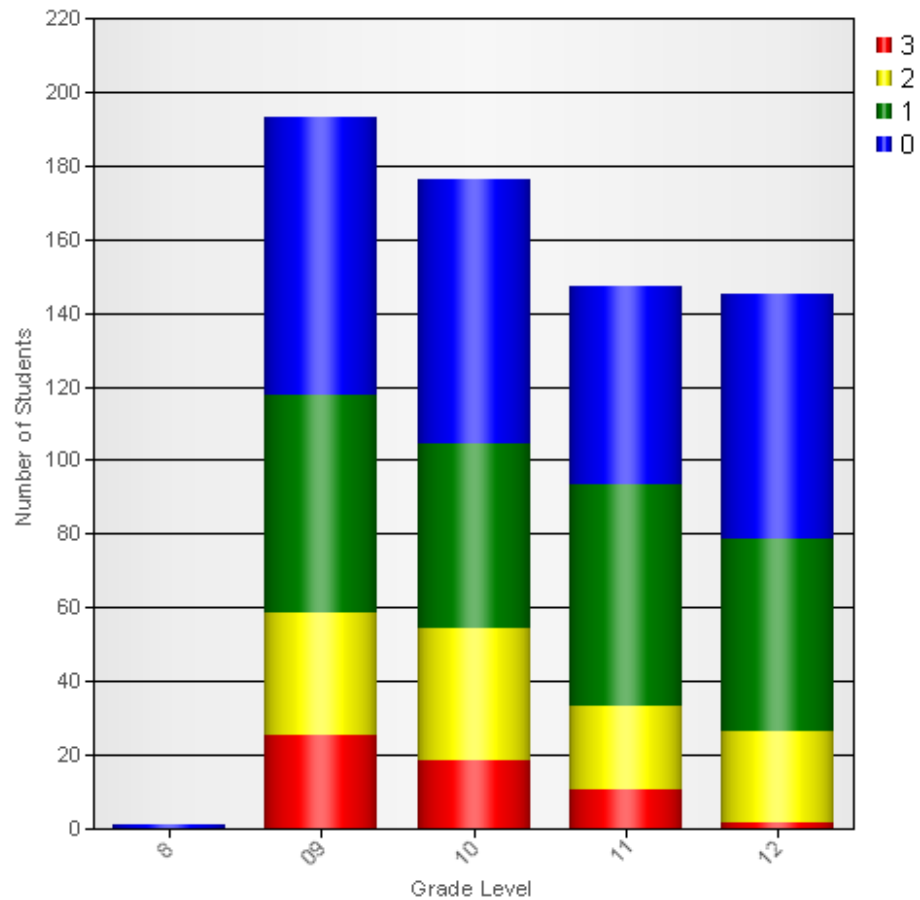Evaluating and Refining the Process

Step 1
Customizing the GTS Tool

Step 2
Your GTS Team

Step 3
Interpreting the Data

Step 4
Aligning Resources

Step 5
Monitoring Interventions

Graduate Tracking System_School Details

School 002

Graduate Tracking System_Grade Level Details

School 002, Grade 09											
Name	Status	Age	U Abs	Sus	Grade	Total Credits	Lunch Code	Gender	Primary Race	Hispanic	SpEd
3 Risk Factors											
Student A	Currently Enrolled	19	13.00	5	42	3.50	1	M	B	No	No
Student B	Currently Enrolled	18	5.00	2	43	4.50	1	M	W	No	No
Student C	Currently Enrolled	17	9.00	5	70	9.00	1	F	B	No	No
Student D	Previously Enrolled	18	6.00	2	61	10.50	3	M	W	No	No
Student E	Currently Enrolled	17	15.00	4	52	3.00	3	M	W	No	No
Student F	Currently Enrolled	18	10.00	3	54	5.00	1	M	W	No	No
Student G	Currently Enrolled	16	8.00	5	25	0.00	2	M	W	No	No
Student H	Currently Enrolled	17	5.00	3	46	5.00	1	M	B	No	No
Student I	Currently Enrolled	18	7.00	2	65	5.00	1	M	W	No	No
Student J	Currently Enrolled	16	4.00	5	67	7.00	1	M	W	No	No
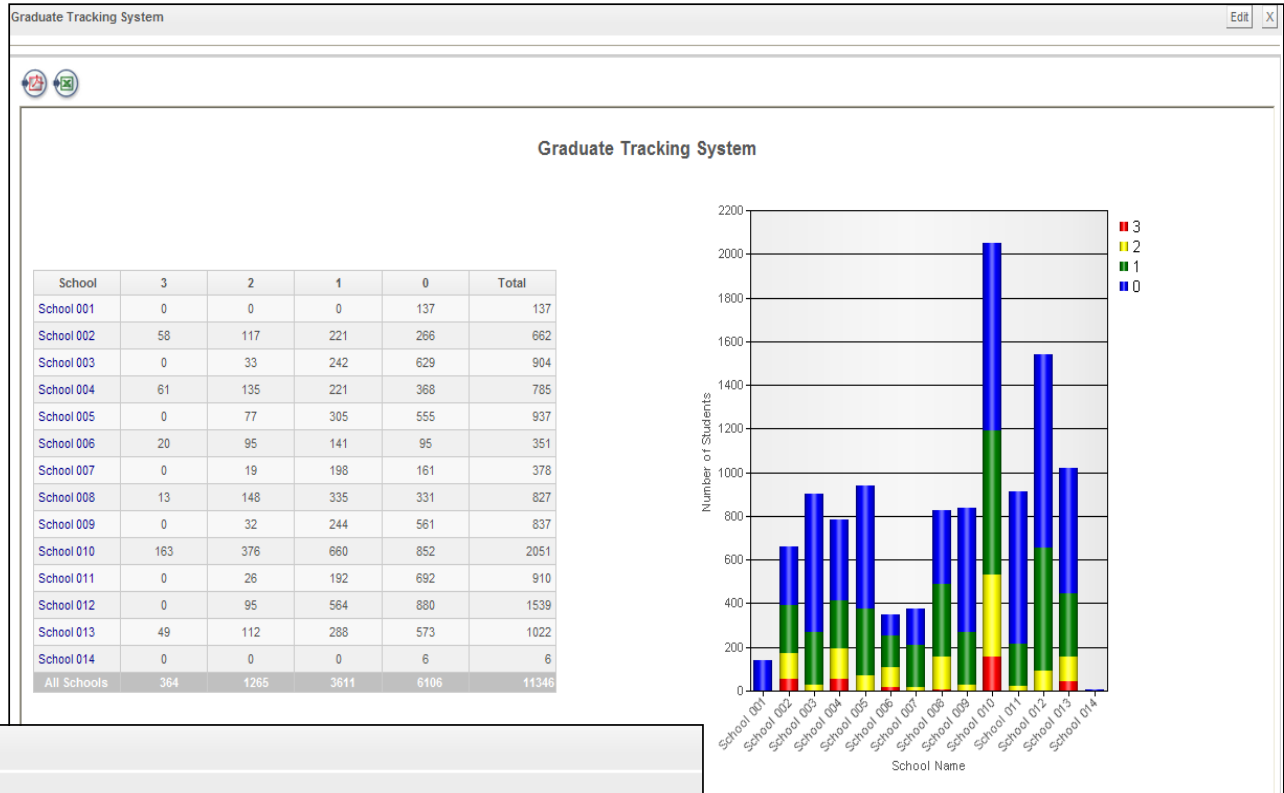
Graduate Tracking System

School	3	2	1	0	Total
School 001	0	0	0	137	137
School 002	58	117	221	266	662
School 003	0	33	242	629	904
School 004	61	135	221	368	785
School 005	0	77	305	555	937
School 006	20	95	141	95	351
School 007	0	19	198	161	378
School 008	13	148	335	331	827
School 009	0	32	244	561	837
School 010	163	376	660	852	2051
School 011	0	26	192	692	910
School 012	0	95	564	880	1539
School 013	49	112	288	573	1022
School 014	0	0	0	6	6
All Schools	364	1265	3611	6106	11346

Social/Behavioral Intervention Initiatives for Student Success

3

Recovery (Individual)

- One-On-One Mentor/Professional Resource
  - Big Harry Program
  - Graduation Center

2

Intervention

(Target and Align Students with Best Practices/Opportunities for Success)

- Innovative Pathways
- Credit Recovery
- "Teens as Parents or MOMS on Maternity" (PASS)
- Personalized Education Plan
- Student Exit Interview
- Proposed Code of Conduct Guide
- Career Clusters Dual Enrollment
- College Access Challenge Grant
- Tutoring
- The Parent Project (Juvenile Diversion)
- Graduation Centers
- ECEP
- Community Agencies/Services Collaborative
- Graduation Team (Graduation Coach, Counselor, Social Workers, etc.)
- CHAMPS with PBS
- Algebra I Intervention

1

Prevention (Universal)

- Graduation Tracking System Pre-K12 (use of data)
- Community Action: Linking Leaders (Public Awareness)
- Student Harassment/Awareness
- Graduation Team (Graduation Coach, Counselor, Social Workers, etc.)
- The Parent Project (Volunteers)
- Positive Behavior Supports (PBS)

+Critical to have advocates for at-risk kids with tiered interventions and the ability to design an innovative pathway/opportunity for success for all students.

Community/Organization/Agency Partnerships
for
Creating a Tiered Student Learning Support System

David Mathews Center for Civic Life: Report on Alabama Issues Forum
- Forty Dropout Forums with 1000 Alabamians
- Six anti-bullying Forums

Truman Pierce Institute coordinated three Anti-bullying Summits

Mattie C. Stewart Foundation provided Inside/Out video with activity and "The Choice Bus"

Alabama Select Commission on High School Graduation and Dropout

Alabama Juvenile Justice System training for Juvenile Judges and Probation Officers

Step 5

- Inspect What You Expect

Step 6

- Evaluating and Re-defining the process 2014
  - Total absences with a dropdown box for excused and unexcused absences
 - Elementary and Secondary core academics

**Impact Report for Graduation Coaches:
Number of Total Absences per Student for Schools Reporting**

Total Absences per Student

Grade-level	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
9th	8.84	8.55	6.99
10th	7.71	7.53	7.29
11th	7.39	8.11	7.82
12th	10.58	9.90	9.53

■2006-07 ■2007-08 ■2008-09
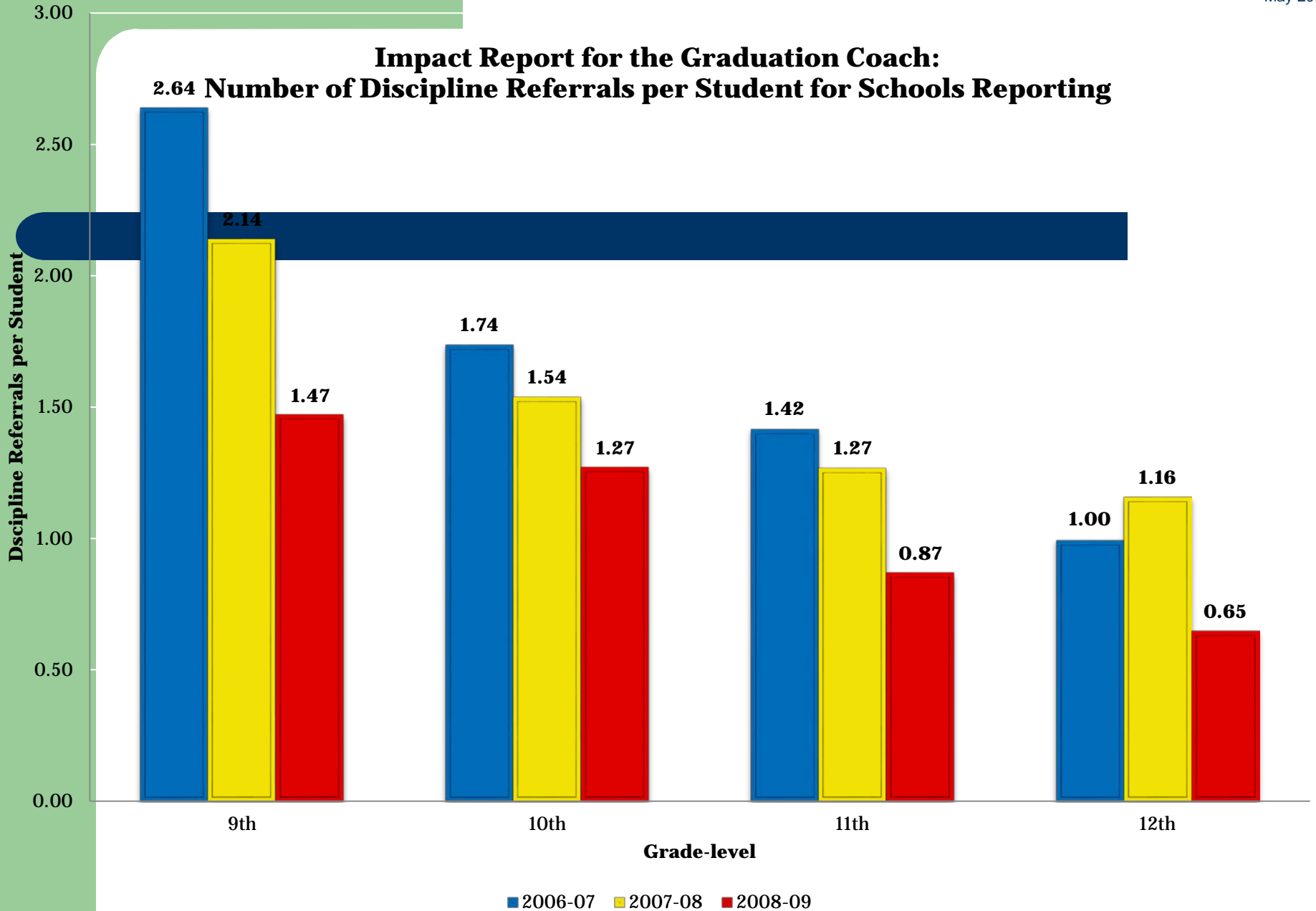
Impact Report for Graduation Coaches:
Rate of Dropouts per Grade-level for Schools Reporting
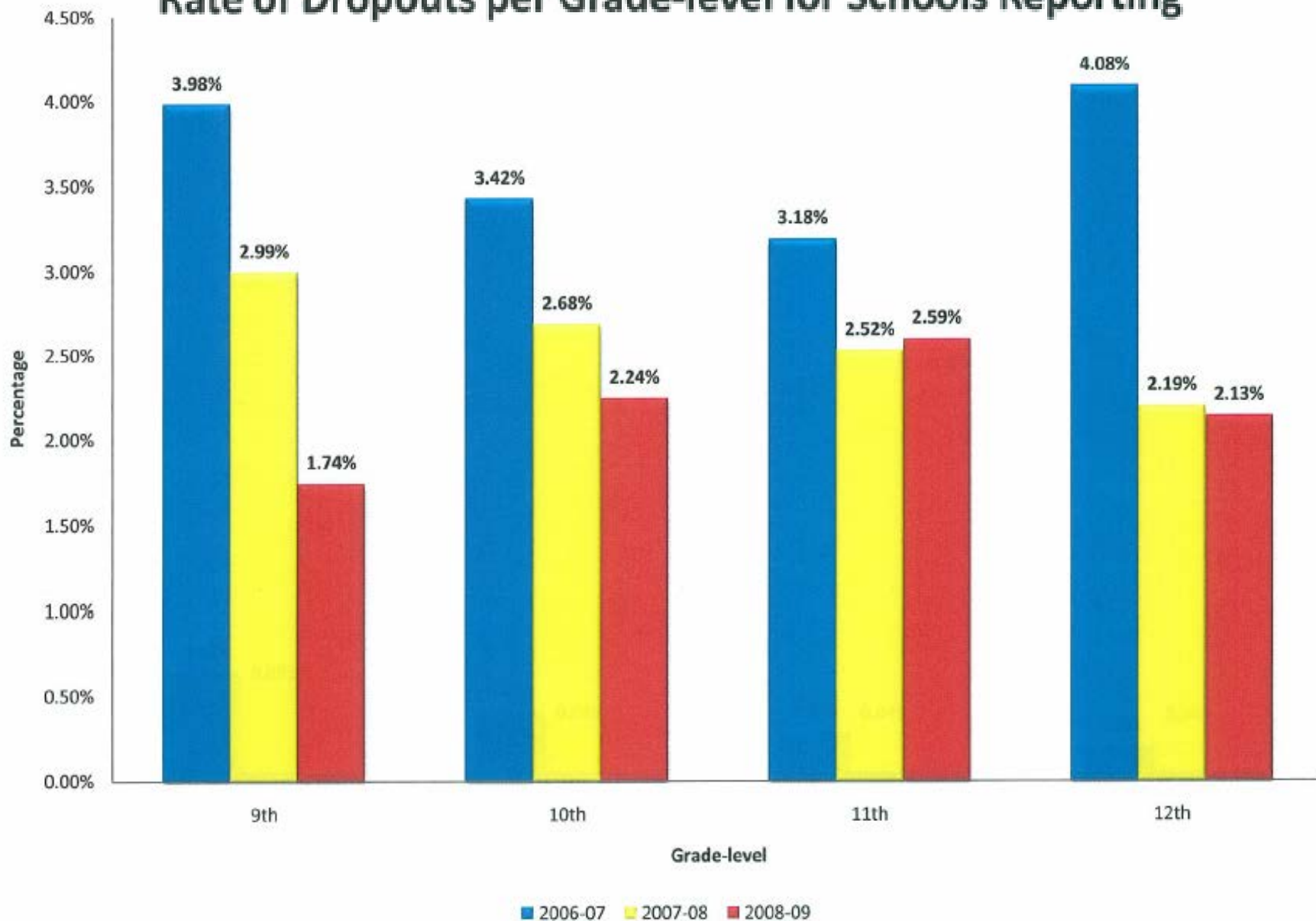
Great News:

- Alabama Ranks Third in the Nation for Reducing the Number of Dropouts in 2011 and Fourth in the Nation for the increment of improvement in the graduation rate

Shout Out

- Tuscaloosa City School System
  - 4,450 out of school suspension and 39 expulsions in 2008-2009 reduced to 3,264 out of school suspensions and 30 expulsions in 2010-2011
  - Graduation rate of 69% in 2009 increased to 80% in 2011
  - Dropouts declined from 167 in 2006-2007 to 36 in 2009-2010

Shout Out

- Dothan City School System
- Class of 2011 Graduation Rate was 67% system wide
- Class of 2012 Graduation Rate was 87% system wide
- In 2009 Dothan City had 115 dropouts and a dropout rate of 16.79%.
- In 2011 Dothan City had 3 dropouts and a dropout rate of .49%.

Dothan City

- By using the Alabama Graduation Tracking System and following the six step utilization process, Dothan City Schools was able to focus on making sure all students are graduating.

- Students are no longer just allowed to dropout of school. There is a process BECAUSE IT IS THAT IMPORTANT TO THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY!
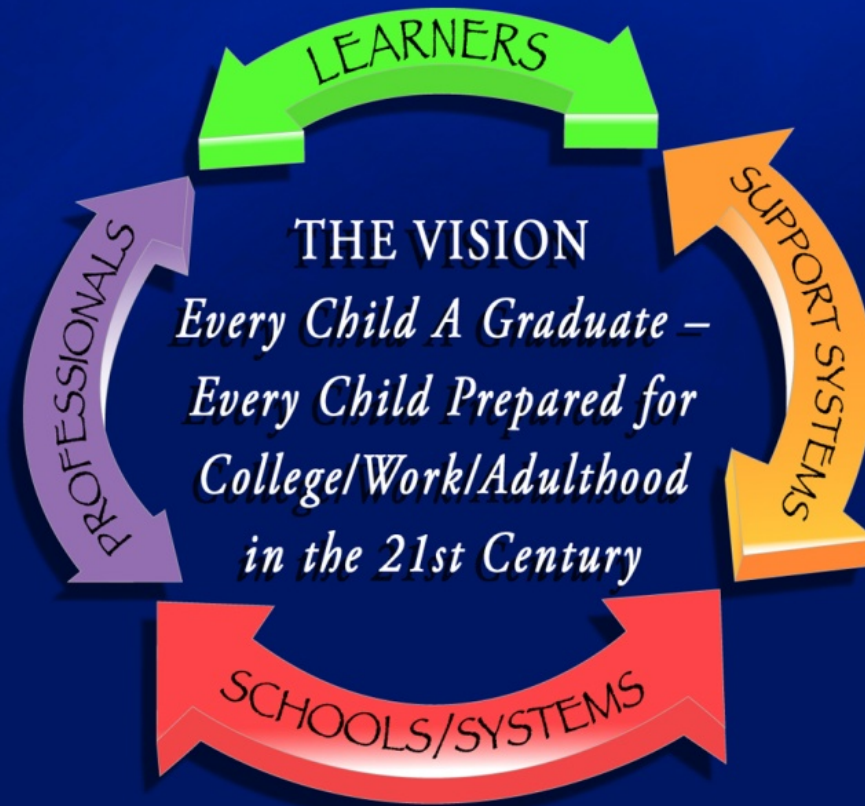
"It's about the children sitting in those chairs and desks. If we always remember what's best for the child in the chair, how can we make wrong decisions? We serve one group. That's the students. The chair is a visual reminder of why we're here ~ to serve students."

-Dr. Tommy Bice
State Superintendent of Education

Alabama Graduation Tracking System

- Q & A Session 2

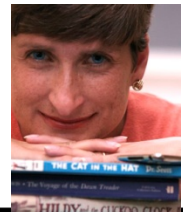Elizabeth Bright, Ed.D.
RMC Research

- Wrap Up and Additional Resources

    The Importance of Being in School: A Report on Absenteeism in the Nation's Public Schools

    http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/FINALChronicAbsenteeismReport_May16.pdf

    Grad Nation: A Guidebook to Help Communities Tackle the Dropout Crisis
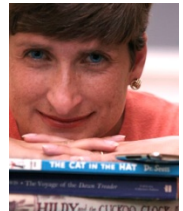
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- ## Wrap Up and Additional Resources (cont…)

    IES Practice Guide on Dropout Prevention

    IES Practice Guide on Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do

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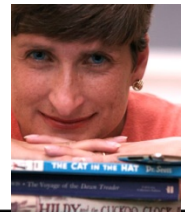RMC Research

- Wrap Up and Additional Resources (cont…)

  PBS link to "Middle School Moment," featuring Dr. Balfanz
  http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/education/dropout-nation/middle-school-moment/

  Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University
  http://new.every1graduates.org/

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- ## Wrap Up and Additional Resources (cont…)

  Two guides on early warning systems implementation for MS & HS

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- Wrap Up and Additional Resources (cont...)

National Forum on Education Statistics. (2009). *Every School Day Counts: The Forum Guide to Collecting and Using Attendance Data*

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- Wrap Up and Additional Resources (cont…)

America's Promise Alliance

http://www.americaspromise.org/

Alliance for Excellent Education

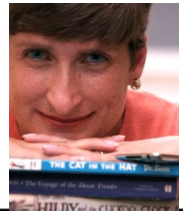http://www.all4ed.org/

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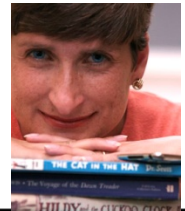
- Wrap Up and Additional Resources (cont…)

    Alabama State Department of Education Prevention and Support Services Section

    Alabama State Department of Education Power of Discipline Website
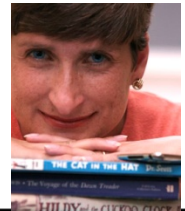
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- Wrap Up and Additional Resources (cont…)

Reminder: The U.S. Department of Education and REL Southeast want your feedback about today's Bridge Event.

Please complete the survey at the conclusion of this webinar.

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THANK YOU!

Send comments, suggestions for follow-up webinar to:

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