

REACH FOR THE TOP MOVING STUDENTS UP NOT OUT

SUPERINTENDENT'S DROPOUT CHALLENGE

MICHIGAN'S 2009-2010 CHALLENGE TO SCHOOLS

In every elementary, middle and high school, identify 10-15 students who are nearing or in a transition year with multiple dropout risk factors and provide research-based supports and interventions

POSSIBLE IMPACT 37,000–55,500 STUDENTS

- ★ Reduce Dropouts
- ★ Increase Grades and Test Scores
- ★ Meet AYP
- ★ Attract and Retain Students
- ★ Engage Parents and Community



TURNING THE TIDE

Research shows most students send distress signals years before they drop out of school. In fact, key early warning signs displayed by students nearing or entering transitional school years, such as 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th grades, have been proven to be strong dropout predictors.

Because schools and districts now can predict early-on which students are most likely to drop out, they also can intervene to prevent dropout.

Early Warning Signs

- **Poor grades in core subjects**
 - ◇ Sixth graders who fail math have a one-in-five chance of making it to the 12th grade on time and often repeat the 9th grade. Those failing English have a one-in-eight chance.
 - ◇ 33% of 8th grade students scoring in the lowest mathematics achievement quartile fail to graduate.
- **Grade retention**
 - ◇ 64% of students who had repeated a grade in elementary school and 63% of those who had been held back in middle school left school without a diploma.

- **Low attendance**

- ◇ In one study of the eighth graders in Philadelphia who attended school less than 80 % of the time, 78% eventually dropped out.

- **Disengagement in the classroom, including behavioral problems**

- ◇ Sixth graders who receive a poor behavior mark have a one-in-four chance of making it to the 12th grade on time.

IMPLEMENTING THE CHALLENGE

Step 1: Commit to the Superintendent's Challenge by registering online at www.mi.gov/dropoutchallenge.

Step 2: Review previous year's attendance, grades, disciplinary actions, credit accumulation, grade promotion, and test scores of students nearing or entering transition years.

Step 3: Identify 10-15 students with multiple early warning signs by September 30, 2009. A free dropout data calculation tool for schools is available [National High School Center](#).

Step 4: Provide identified students with research-based supports and interventions.

Step 5: Engage the community in identifying an adult advocate, mentor or transition coach for each student.

Step 6: Involve students and families in the discussion and solutions.

Step 7: Monitor student academic, social and emotional progress.

To support educators, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) will partner with school districts and education associations across the state to provide a variety of professional development opportunities to administrators and teachers on how to use existing data, resources and supports to reduce dropouts.

RECOGNIZING PROGRESS

To recognize the substantial effort by schools who commit and register for this challenge, school and district names will appear on a special Dropout Challenge web page within the Michigan Department of Education website at www.mi.gov/dropoutchallenge.

This web page also will include the latest research and resources on Early Warning and Dropout Prevention.

All dropout challenge schools will be invited to submit information to MDE on their efforts and student progress in spring 2010. Buildings demonstrating the most student progress will be part of a special recognition and awards program.

Establishing an Early Warning System is a highly recommended dropout prevention strategy that can be funded with Title II-D funds. Supplementing services to support students at-risk of dropping out of school can be funded through Title I-Part A.