NC Dropout Prevention Committee
Model Programs
(Revised)

Overview

In 2007, the General Assembly of North Carolina began approving annual funding for dropout prevention programs throughout the state. Since the program's inception, North Carolina's dropout rate has steadily declined. In the 2008-2009 school year, the dropout rate fell to 4.27% (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2010). In the most recent report, the dropout rate fell to 3.75% - the lowest dropout rate ever recorded in North Carolina (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2011).

In 2010, the North Carolina General Assembly required the North Carolina Committee on Dropout Prevention (NCCDP) to "identify a minimum of three additional recipients of dropout prevention grants that the Committee feels show promise as statewide models for dropout prevention interventions." Additionally, the NCCDP is required to report its selected grantees and the reasons why they were chosen to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and the Joint Legislative Commission on Dropout Prevention and High School Graduation.

Given this charge, the Committee developed a procedure for selecting three programs for the Commission to consider. As criteria for potential replication, the committee examined evidence of

- Internal validity
  Which programs have the clearest descriptions of interventions and have implemented programs with the most fidelity?
- External validity

Which programs have best met their benchmarks and have provided the strongest evidence of impact?

Why Model Programs Matter: Consequences of Dropping Out

Research depicting the consequences of high dropout figures indicates that the dropout prevention program is money well spent. Not only do the students themselves benefit from high school graduation, but entire communities are better served when its citizens are educated and able to live more secure lifestyles.

Students who drop out are more likely to need public assistance and to spend time in and out of the prison system than are graduates. Graduates commit fewer crimes, are typically healthier, and contribute more to the community—not only to the community coffers; graduates are also more likely than dropouts to vote and to volunteer their time. One report estimates that if the male graduation rate were increased only 5%, the nation would cut nearly $5 billion in crime-related costs. North Carolina invested $11.7 million in dropout prevention grants in 2009. This investment will be recovered if only 670 fewer students drop out. The following chart shows the cost of 670 students dropping out, over their lifetime (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007).

Figure 1. Savings Over Lifetime for 670 Fewer Dropouts
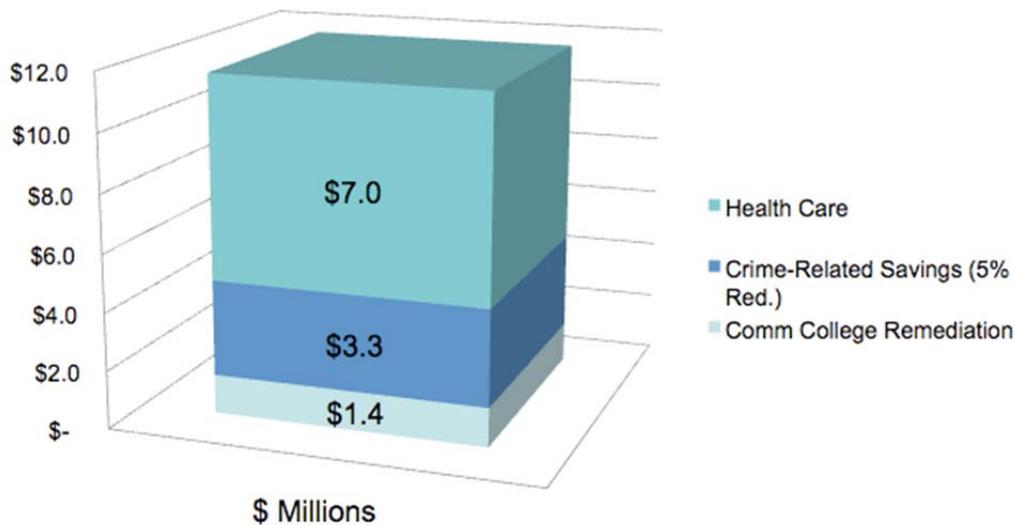
The 2009 dropout prevention grants are serving 9,492 students who have demonstrated risk factors, and are providing preventative services to over 25,000 students. The program evaluation has documented success for many programs. Throughout the North Carolina's Dropout Prevention Program, evaluations have allowed us to examine programs to determine what is working. At the close of the program's third year, it is important to assess strengths and weaknesses, and to highlight successful programs with activities and standards that others can replicate.

Process for Selecting Model Programs

1. The committee and EDSTAR, the external evaluators, reviewed EDSTAR evaluation reports from grant recipients to identify programs that had met or approached their SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) and accomplished the related benchmarks for at least two years.

2. The committee and the external evaluators then checked to ensure that programs met the applicable U. S. Department of Education PART standards. The Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) system assigns scores to programs based on

services being related to goals, showing that the goals are appropriate for the individuals served, and student success measured against quality standards and assessments. Criteria addressed include:

- Does the program address a specific and existing problem, interest or need?

- Is the program designed so that it is not redundant or duplicative of any other federal, state, local or private effort?

- Does the program have a limited number of specific long-term performance measures that focus on outcomes and meaningfully reflect the purpose of the program?

- Does the program have ambitious targets and timeframes for its long-term measures?

- Does the program (including program partners) achieve its annual performance goals?

- Are independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality conducted on a regular basis or as needed to support program improvements and evaluate effectiveness and relevance to the problem, interest, or need?

- Are budget requests explicitly tied to accomplishment of the annual and long-term performance goals, and are the resource needs presented in a complete and transparent manner in the program's budget?

- Does the program use strong financial management practices?

- Has the program demonstrated adequate progress in achieving its long-term performance goals?

- Does the program demonstrate improved efficiencies or cost effectiveness in achieving program goals each year?

3. For each of the potential model programs remaining in consideration, the committee and the external evaluators reviewed their most recent evaluation report to be sure that the intervention demonstrates many of the seven characteristics of effective dropout prevention programs identified by the What

Works Clearinghouse (What Works Clearinghouse, 2007). Common characteristics of effective programs include those in which program leaders:

- Monitor students closely

- Increase partnerships with families

- Establish career-focused academies in schools

- Offer additional support for academic and behavioral success and college entry

- Use data systems that identify individual students at high risk of dropping out

- Assign adult advocates

- For non-targeted programs, provide rigorous and relevant instruction (Dynarski & Gleason, 1999)

4. From the programs that met the first three criteria, the committee requested the following additional information:

- Current data regarding the number of students served, continuation in school, attendance, academic progress

- Specific explanations of programs and procedures

- Recommendations for replication

5. Using these expanded reports, the committee rank ordered the programs by the extent to which they

- demonstrated internal and external validity

- represented distinct types of interventions (for example, programs in high schools, middle schools, alternative schools) that could benefit other communities in North Carolina

6. A member of the committee and a representative from NC Department of Public Instruction conducted a site visit with each of the programs selected and added their report to the data collected.

Use of the above-stated procedures yielded the identification of three model programs: Beaufort County Schools, Edenton-Chowan Schools, and Harnett County Schools. Details for these programs follow.

12622 Beaufort County Schools "Pathways"

Beaufort County's Pathways Program (Grant no. 12622) has been selected as a NCCDP grant recipient with a model program that could be replicated. It has been selected for the grant all four years, since its inception in 2007. Throughout the three years the Pathways program has existed, it has been managed basically the same way, with some changes to improve outcomes based on feedback during the first years.

SMART Outcomes

Although all grantees are required to write SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) outcomes, Beaufort County's Pathways Program's fit all the criteria in the acronym, and they address factors which are known to affect retention. Since 2008 when SMART Outcomes were first required, Beaufort County's Pathways Program's SMART Outcomes have been:

Beaufort County Schools SMART Outcome 1
By the end of the current school year, 75% of students participating in Pathways who previously failed a required math course will earn credit for a required math course and make progress toward meeting graduation requirements.

Beaufort County Schools SMART Outcome 2
By the end of the current school year, 75% of students participating in Pathways who previously failed a required English course will earn credit for a required English course and make progress toward meeting graduation requirements.

Beaufort County Schools SMART Outcome 3
By the end of the current school year, 75% of students participating in Pathways who previously failed a required course other than math or English will earn credit for a required course other than math or English and make progress toward meeting graduation requirements.

As What Works Clearinghouse suggested, these outcomes address academics. With their three SMART outcomes, they cover all subject areas, with specific emphasis on math and English. Although behavior is not addressed in the SMART outcomes, Pathways program includes activities that address behavior. Mentors serve as role models for the students, and students are also taught about appropriate behavior and making good choices.

The Pathways program specifically targets students who have already dropped out of school, or who have earned 50% or fewer of the credits they've attempted since they entered high school. (The staff is working to be more proactive rather than reactive, and address more current students who have risk factors that could cause them to drop out.) The staff is very clear about the students they target; criteria for service was initially based only on objective data. Beaufort County's Pathways Program reported using NC WISE, EOC scores, and report card grades to determine which students to target. Because of the success of their program, they now have a waiting list and have had to introduce an interview process to select students to target for services. Thus, some subjectivity is used, only because not enough staff and resources are available to serve all of the applicants, but all applicants meet the objective criteria.

Pathways exists as an option for students who, for various reasons, failed to succeed in a traditional educational setting. Many Pathways students lack only a few credits toward earning a high school diploma, but they may have failed due to attendance policies, or dropped out for any number of reasons. Some students have had one or more children during their high school years and have struggled with the challenges of teen parenthood. Others have spent time in jail and lost semesters of credit. Some students have been caregivers to ailing family members or lost their own parents/guardians during high school. Others have not lived in one location long enough to complete courses in which they were enrolled.

The students may apply for the Pathways Program on line, at the Ed Tech Center, or at any of the three participating high schools. The program can now serve up to 100 students. Academic services include after-school tutoring, North Carolina

Virtual Public Schools, and Plato courses. Online courses are provided with a supervisor. Transportation is also available to any student who needs it. Tutoring is based on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

In addition to the academic services provided, student members can participate in many other enriching activities. A jazz band practices two nights each week, and performs at several events. A choir was recently added, as were many extra-curricular clubs. The Food Program teaches students to cook, and the students cater the winter and spring gala affairs. This year, they have added a Theater Arts program. During the winter gala, the students performed the play "A Candy Kane Christmas." There are plans for the theater group to perform more productions. A grant from the North Carolina Arts Council has enabled the program to offer after-school art classes on Wednesdays. During these seven-week courses, students can learn how to create jewelry, pottery, scrapbooks, and films. Students can share with family members the techniques they learn in the after-school art program.

The program has a strong family component. Staff members contact family members often, and family members participate in many events. Students must have good attendance and be working hard academically to participate in extracurricular activities. These activities have instilled pride in the students. Staff believe this sense of belonging in the school is a contributing factor to the success.

We consider Beaufort County's Pathways program successful because it:

- Is designed to serve students who have factors which may put them at risk for dropping out

- Uses objective data to determine whom to serve

- Provides services that have been proven to improve the factors it addresses.

Regardless of its components, ultimately, the results are what make a program successful. Beaufort County's Pathways Program yields impressive results. In its first

year, 74 students participated regularly and passed at least one course they were deficient in; 56 passed two or more courses, and 23 students earned enough credits to graduate. Of the original 74 students, 47 who did not graduate that year remained in the program for the second year.

In the second year, directors developed a more selective procedure for admitting students into the program. They interviewed prospective participants, asking them about their reasons for wishing to participate in the program. They selected 56 additional students to participate, for a total of 103 students (continuing students plus new students). Of these students, 62 passed at least one course; 52 passed two or more courses; 14 earned enough credits to graduate; 40 of these students continued the program for the third year. In the third year, directors found they had more students who wanted to participate than they could serve and had to begin a waiting list. They selected 33 additional students to participate, for a total of 73 students (continuing students plus new students). Graduation is held twice each year (in December and June). In 2010, 16 students graduated in December. In June 2011, 19 more will graduate.

Beaufort County's program has essentially transformed the entire community. Ed Tech was once derisively known as "the Black school," and considered a punitive place for delinquent youths. The school was a large, desolate building where students were loath to go. Now, the program has a waiting list of students who want to attend, and hours have been extended. The school is bustling with activity, and the students are gaining the credits they need to graduate. The venue for graduation has been moved to larger areas for each successive event to accommodate the many friends and family members who want to honor and celebrate with the graduates. Staff members place no limit on the numbers who attend, as the large celebration and ceremonies encourage the students and make the event more visible throughout the community.

Program replication

Beaufort County staff had many recommendations for other agencies that would want to replicate their programs. Strong leadership and support from the district are

imperative. Programs that actively solicit participation by highly at-risk students or returning dropouts expose their LEAs to the possibility of elevated dropout rates and suppressed four-year cohort graduation rates, as candidates for the program are, by definition, lagging behind their cohort in the number of credits earned. The Beaufort County Board of Education supports Pathways despite the potential negative impact of the program on critical indicators.

The staff recommended the following for implementation of a similar program:

- Design the program and define parameters: target population, number of students, student/teacher ratio, instructional approach, etc.

- Secure adequate funding to support the model.

- Establish support for the program among district leadership, including the Board of Education.

- Recruit school leadership, instructional, and support staff that are committed to the vision of the program.

- Establish clear and functional procedures for admission and termination, as well as realistic and enforceable conduct/discipline policies.

- Publicize the program and recruit students.

- Celebrate success and continuously reexamine and refine policies, procedures, and practices.

Edenton-Chowan Schools

Edenton-Chowan Schools (Grant no. 12662) has been selected as a NCCDP grant recipient with a model program that could be replicated. It has been selected for the grant all four years, since its inception in 2007. Throughout the three years Edenton-Chowan Schools' program has existed, it has been managed basically the same way, with some changes to improve outcomes based on feedback during the first years.

SMART Outcomes

Although all grantees are required to write SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) outcomes, Edenton-Chowan Schools' fit all the criteria in the acronym, and they address factors that are known to affect retention. Since 2008 when SMART Outcomes were first required, Edenton-Chowan Schools' SMART Outcomes have been:

Edenton-Chowan SMART Outcome 1
By the end of spring semester 2011, 80% of students enrolled in the Life Coach Program for a minimum of one semester, who had passed less than 75% of their courses in the semester prior to enrolling in the program will have increased the percentage of courses passed.

Edenton-Chowan SMART Outcome 2
By the end of spring semester 2011, 75% of the participants enrolled in the Life Coach Program for a minimum of one semester, who were absent 15 or more days the semester prior to enrolling in the program will be absent fewer than 11 days.

Edenton-Chowan SMART Outcome 3
By the end of spring semester 2011, 75% of the participants enrolled in the Life Coach Program for a minimum of one semester, who had 2 or more OSS in the year

prior to enrolling in the program will have fewer out-of-school suspensions in the 2010 school year.

As What Works Clearinghouse suggested, these outcomes address academics and behavior. They also are very clear about the students they target; criteria for service is based on objective data. Although such a process may seem standard, initially many grantees provided services to serve students who needed academic or behavioral interventions, yet they served students based on race or economic status. Edenton-Chowan reported using NC WISE, EOC scores, report card grades, and SWIS disciplinary reports to determine which students to target.

Services they provide include:

- Checking attendance, calling absent students and, if necessary, picking them up to bring them to school.

- Checking progress reports and ensuring students complete assignments and turn them in.

- Tutoring after school and offering transportation home, as well as offering incentives.

- Staying in close contact with teachers and parents to establish education as a priority.

Commercial curriculum used includes Check & Connect, a research based program from the University of Minnesota that concentrates on building relationships with students to establish a caring, nurturing adult who supports them through their middle and high school years. Edenton-Chowan refers to its program as the "Life Coach Program," because of the important role the adult mentors assigned to students and their families play. Each Life Coach receives 10 hours of formal Check & Connect

training. They also receive training in "Why Try?" which is a research based motivational "Reality Ride" curriculum of activities that facilitate discussions and revelations regarding decisions about life and how to make appropriate choices that will impact future decisions. The Edenton-Chowan staff provides a summer motivational workshop experience for targeted students in their program.

Students in Check & Connect participate in community projects: Adopt A Street, Freedom Writers, and Nursing Home Easter Baskets. The students do fundraisers for the money to support these projects. All of the students also belong to a school club. Some of the clubs and activities include: Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), Basketball, Football, Baseball, Why Try, Student Government Association, Band, Cheerleading and Guitar Club. Additional relationship building and school connection activities focus on trips to post-secondary educational institutions and family engagement programs.

What Works Clearinghouse explains that although little research has been done on Check & Connect, two studies indicate that the program may be effective at keeping students in school. The program has two main components. The adult mentor is assigned to students in the program. The adults monitor the students' progress and provide support (check). The adults also help the students "connect" with the community and their families (What Works Clearinghouse, 2006). All of these components are included in What Works Clearinghouse Criteria for effective programs (Dynarski et al., 2008).

We consider Edenton-Chowan's program successful because it:

- Is designed to serve students who have factors which may put them at risk for dropping out.

- Uses objective data to determine whom to serve.

- Provides services that have been proven to improve the factors it addresses.

Edenton-Chowan's program yields impressive results. The following table provides an overview of the students served and changes seen throughout the years of the grant. For each of the categories listed, students had been in the program for at least one semester.

Table 1. Edenton-Chowan Progress of NCCDP Dropout Grant through the Years, by Semester

Incidents in the most recent previous semester	January 15, 2008 (Fall Semester 2007-08 Prior to Program)	June 10, 2008 (Spring Semester 2007-2008 - Enrolled first students March 17)	January 16, 2009 (Fall Semester 2008-2009)	June 20, 2009 (Spring Semester 2008-2009)	January 16, 2010 (Fall Semester 2009-2010)	June 10, 2010 (Spring Semester 2009-2010)
Students served in Life Coach Program	0	85	108	102	117	182
Coaching Contacts	0	1,792	3,196	3,776	2,180	3,658
Remained in school after at least one semester in the program	NA	98.3%	98.6%	88.3%	86.7%	94.8%
Missed 10 or fewer days	45.8%	45.8%	75.7%	70.0%	67.2%	73.4%
Passed at least 75% of their courses	32.2%	52.5%	52.9%	60.0%	53.2%	63.7%
Higher GPA	NA	44.8%	50.0%	58.8%	59.3%	44.0%
Had two or fewer office referrals	74.6%	78.0%	58.0%	60.0%	69.4%	69.1%
Had no Out-of-School Suspensions	62.9%	69.5%	73.2%	65.0%	75.9%	72.3%
Are involved in a school engagement activity	N/A	72.9%	68.1%	73.3%	64.8%	52.7%

Life Coaches collaborate with teachers, counselors and administrators, assisting in making sure students are performing academically, behaving well, and attending school regularly. A School Resource Officer steps in to mediate when students may be suspended. They can eliminate an out-of-school suspension by working with school staff, parents, and the students.

Life Coaches take an intensive interest in the success of each student by meeting and interacting with them and their parents regularly. If parents cannot meet at home or at the school, coaches will meet parents at their jobs. When asked about parent participation, staff replied, "Working one-on-one with parents is a major component of the Life Coach Program. Since March 17, 2008 our Life Coaches have conducted 1,894 conferences with parents. The essence of these contacts is to build relationships, provide support in dealing with difficult situations, reinforce the importance of school attendance and assist in setting school related family expectations."

Families are supportive of Edenton-Chowan's program. The following two quotes are examples of feedback they have received from parents:

"The Life Coach Program had a positive impact on my son. My son graduated June 12, 2009. I don't believe he would have made it if it wasn't for Miss Bond staying on him. She believed in him which made all the difference. The Life Coach Program is a great asset to Edenton-Chowan Schools."--M. W. (Parent)

"My grandson told me that he was getting ready to quit school until Miss Bond saw him in the hallway and invited him in her office. The Life Coach Program gave James a second chance. He graduated June 12, 2009."--C. J. (Grandmother)

Harnett County Schools: A Model Program

Harnett County Schools

Harnett County Schools Program (Grant no. 13062) has been selected as a DPI Dropout Grant recipient with a model program that could be replicated. It has been selected for the grant all four years, since its inception in 2007. Throughout the three years the Harnett program has existed, it has been managed basically the same way, with some changes to improve outcomes based on feedback during the first years. One major change was made last year to accommodate overage repeat offenders who lack enough credits to graduate. Harnett County Schools worked in conjunction with the Police Athletic League to create the Star Academy for these students. Many of these students have already dropped out and are returning to finish school. NovaNet, an online credit recovery course, has been made available in the Star Academy, the Success Academies (for students with short-term suspensions), and in all four Harnett County high schools.

SMART Outcomes

Although all grantees are required to write SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) outcomes, Harnett County Schools Program's fit all the criteria in the acronym, and they address factors which are known to affect retention. Harnett County Schools Program's SMART Outcomes are:

SMART Outcome 1

By the end of the school year, 85% of the students who have taken Algebra I or Geometry and failed will pass Algebra I or Geometry.

SMART Outcome 2

By end of school year 2010, 90% of the students who had failed one or more courses will recover the credits back and be on track for graduation.

As What Works Clearinghouse suggested for effective programs, these outcomes address academics. Although behavior is not addressed in the SMART outcomes,

Harnett's program includes many activities that address behavior, including a strict discipline protocol and character education with a focus on goal development and career options. Students in the program can be dismissed for unexcused absences, and a waiting list of applicants helps ensure compliance. Mentors serve as role models for the students, and students are also taught about appropriate behavior and making good choices.

The Harnett program specifically targets students who are in danger of not graduating due to a lack of credits, or students who have already left school. Staff reports student selection is based on EOC scores, EVAAS reports, ClassScape reports, student transcripts, information from NC Wise, and teacher and principal recommendation. Students must fit objective criteria to be eligible for a recommendation.

Two Success Academies are available for middle school and high school students who have an out-of-school suspension of three to ten days. While students attend, their regular classroom teachers provide their academic work so that the students will not fall behind. Tutoring is provided for students who need it, and students may also use NovaNet to recover courses while attending. Students are also taught computer applications, and lately a course in Character Education was added which emphasizes respect, honesty, and perserverence. These students are also exposed to career opportunities and visit college campuses in the area to help them begin thinking about higher education.

Students with longer suspensions, or who have already dropped out, attend the Star Academy. A team of staff members visits the homes of students who have dropped out to discuss their options with them and their parents. Harnett County Schools Star Academy's primary service is credit recovery, although it offers many services to ensure students are given resources to help them graduate and become productive citizens. Services offered include graduation plans, tutoring (from peers and adults), adult

advocates, credit recovery, academic skill help, preparation for vocational or applied skills certificate programs, employment opportunities, person skills, peer-based mentoring, adult mentoring, and counseling. Credit Recovery is offered through NovaNet, an online courseware system designed for grades 6-12 that meets the curriculum needs of the students. Teachers facilitate the program, monitor the progress and success of the students, interpret assessments, and prepare student documentation and for EOC proficiency.

Parent participation is a strong component of the Harnett County Schools program. Staff maintain regular contact with the parents. Two Dropout Prevention Coordinators/ Parent Involvement Coordinators have been hired to assist students and parents in identifying the barriers for staying in school and problems in schools. A Dropout Prevention Mediator also works to mediate issues when conflicts arise between students, along with parents, and track and maintain data pertaining to mediation. For all students, home visits are conducted to help keep parents informed of the progress and intervention strategies with their child. Parents are required to meet with Credit Recovery Facilitator once every six weeks to discuss the progress and other opportunities for their child. Families are also encouraged to join the PTA/PTO.

Harnett County Schools Success

We consider Harnett County Schools program successful because it:

- Is designed to serve students who have factors which may put them at risk for dropping out.

- Uses objective data to determine whom to serve.

- Provides services which have been proven to improve the factors it addresses.

- Provides mentors.

Harnett County Schools Program yields impressive results. Since its inception, the program has served 506 students. Of these, 113 took an algebra or geometry class, and 95 of these students (84%) passed. Of the 154 students who took English courses, 123 (80%) passed and recovered credits. An additional 239 students participated in other courses, and, of these, 200 (84%) passed and recovered credits.

Program replication

Harnett County staff had many recommendations for other agencies that would want to replicate their program. They emphasize that although their program's primary component is credit recovery, many of their other services are important to ensure students are actively engaged and can demonstrate evidence of the course content mastery. There is a prescribed amount of student work required for each subject, all of which is fully aligned with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Standard Courses of Study.

Staffing for the Harnett County Schools Program includes:

Academic Support Teacher: This person facilitates the program, maintains discipline in the classroom at all levels, monitors student progress, prints/interprets reports, assures students are on track to fulfill course requirements, prepares progress reports on a regular basis, prepares student documentation and work sample portfolio for EOC Proficiency Reviews, and final grade reports.

Peer Tutoring Program: The support of the school's Peer Tutoring Program helps assure that students enrolled in the Academic Support course receive one-on-one support as needed. Student Tutors have a variety of successful academic experiences and can provide peer guidance and encouragement along the way. The Peer Tutoring Program Coordinator works closely with the Academic Support Teacher to make appropriate student tutor assignments. The Coordinator also helps assure the quality and consistency of academic support delivered by student tutors.

Counselors: The student's counselor is expected to monitor student progress through regular one-on-one consultations. Consultations take place at least weekly, and may be on campus or at the student's home.

Career Counselor: A Career Counselor works with students, both individually and in groups, to help them determine where their interests lie and how to pursue them. The Career Counselor invites local entrepreneurs to speak with the students. For example, a local beauty salon operator visited and did a student's hair while talking about her career choice and the required courses one needs to become a beautician. She gave students a coupon for a free "do" when she was finished.

Court Mediator: The Court Mediator uses conflict resolution to keep students in trouble from being suspended. She also goes to court with students, working with a specific judge who meets with the student twice a month. In the current school year, she had eight students involved in court issues and meeting with the judge, as well as a steady stream of students from all four county high schools who were in danger of suspension. Through various interventions, Harnett County has saved approximately 7,000 student suspension days.

The Harnett County Schools program includes celebrations to recognize students for success. They also include a Career Day each year, as well as exposure to two- and four-year colleges for the students. Students also attend Town Hall meetings when relevant teen issues are discussed.

Although Harnett County Schools does not currently have the resources to serve all the students who would like to enroll in their program, they are able to sustain a high-quality program, and intend to continue it indefinitely. In addition to Dropout Prevention Grant funds, they receive Disadvantaged Supplemental Students Funds. Also, Title II funds are used for their professional development component.

Summary

Beaufort County's Pathways Program, Edenton-Chowan's Life Coach Program, and Harnett County Schools all have successful dropout prevention programs, as is evidenced by the results. Many of the components of their programs are easily replicated, and could be used by other agencies to prevent dropout incidents, and help students who have already dropped out return and finish school.

As suggested in this report, these three programs funded by NC Dropout Prevention Grants merit consideration as "models" that other districts may wish to examine:. Each of these programs:

- Met or impressively approached their SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) and accomplished the related benchmarks for at least two years.

- Met the US. Department of Education Program Assessment Rating Tool standards

- Demonstrated characteristics of effective dropout prevention programs identified by the What Works Clearinghouse.

- Used objective criteria to identify students to participate, and used data to determine eligibility and progress.

- Provided clear descriptions of interventions and implemented programs with the most fidelity.

- Provided the strong evidence of impact.

- Provided supervised online course recovery.

- Had strong parent involvement components.

- Recognized students for their accomplishments.

One factor evident in all three programs that is difficult to measure, but that is present in most of the more successful programs, is enthusiasm. Successful programs have staff members who are genuinely concerned about the students, and who passionately want to see the student succeed. When enthusiasm is present, and the factors outlined in this report are put into practice, programs have a high probability for success.

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