Attachment 7

Strategies for Preparing At-Risk Youth for Postsecondary Success
Program Manager Protocol

Documents to request from program manager (or applicable respondent) prior to site visit ONLY IF NOT AVAILABLE PUBLICLY.
Note: *Please ensure you tailor your request to the items that will be relevant to your specific intervention.*
- *School report cards for the last five years including disaggregated data on:*
  - o *AYP status*
  - o *Enrollment*
  - o *Attendance Rates*
  - o *Behavior Issues*
  - o *Dropout Rates*
  - o *Graduation Rates*
- *School improvement plan*
- *School or district policies on graduation requirements*
- *District strategic plan*
- *Most recent annual report or report from an evaluator*
- *List of project partners*
- *Course catalog or curriculum outlines*
- *Documents outlining program recruitment policies (e.g., program applications, brochures)*

I. Background

1. Tell me a little about your professional background leading up to this position.
2. What are your main responsibilities as Program Manager of *[insert name of program]*?
3. How long have you been involved with *[insert name of program]*?

II. Program Description

A. Vision/Goals

4. [Confirming details from screening call] Please confirm some general program characteristics:
   a. Years in operation
   b. Number of students (2011-12)
   c. Charter status
5. [For stand-alone programs/charters] What local schools/district do you operate in?
6. What are your program's major goals/priorities? How, if at all, has this vision evolved or changed since you have been involved?
7. How did the program/school begin? What factors led to the creation of the program/school?

B. Target Population

8. What are the characteristics of the target students for your program? Probe for: demographics, achievement levels, motivation
   a. How did you determine what your target population would be?
   b. Has your target population changed over time? If so, how and why?
9. How do you identify students who are in need of academic and social supports?
   a. What data/specific indicators (e.g., an "early warning system") does the program use to identify students at risk of dropping out of high school or at risk of not going to college?
10. What is the process for determining which services should be provided and how/by whom?
11. Is participation in your program compulsory for certain students? What is your student recruitment strategy?

    a. Specifically, what recruitment activities does the program engage in (e.g., trips to feeder schools, open houses, etc.)?

    b. Have these activities and/or recruiters changed over time? If yes, how and why?

12. Are there requirements to enter the program? To stay in the program? If so, how do these requirements affect students' access to program services?

C. Program Strategies and Practices [Section will be tailored based on program's focus.]

13. What specific strategies is the program implementing to **prevent dropouts**?

    a. Once at-risk students are identified, how do you ensure that they are getting the right types of supports given that their needs could be both academic and social?

    b. Can you provide some concrete examples of curricular and pedagogical strategies that you use to engage students at risk of dropping out of high school?

    c. Can you provide some concrete examples of how you make instruction rigorous?

    d. Do you use any non-academic strategies to keep students engaged in school?

    e. What challenges and barriers do you face in implementing these strategies?

    f. Is there a system and/or person in place to monitor student use of academic and support services on an ongoing basis?

    g. Are students at different risk levels monitored differently, and if so, in what ways?

    h. Does the district/CMO/school/program use a case management program? If so, please describe how it works.

14. **[FOR DROPOUT RECOVERY PROGRAMS:]** What specific strategies does the program implement to engage students who have dropped out of the traditional school system?

    a. Once students are identified, how do you ensure that they are getting the right types of supports given that their needs could be both academic and social?

    b. Can you provide some concrete examples of curricular and pedagogical strategies that you use to engage students in dropout recovery??

    c. Can you provide some concrete examples of how you make instruction rigorous?

    d. Do you use any non-academic strategies to keep students engaged in school?

    e. What challenges and barriers do you face in implementing these strategies?

    f. Is there a system and/or person in place to monitor student use of academic and support services on an ongoing basis?

    g. Are students at different risk levels monitored differently, and if so, in what ways?

    h. Does the district/CMO/school/program use a case management program? If so, please describe how it works.

15. Does the district/CMO/school/program have a **credit recovery** system in place to enable students who lack sufficient credits for grade promotion or on-time graduation to make up those credits?

    a. Describe the main provisions under the credit recovery program.

    b. What are the main successes of the credit recovery program and evidence thereof? Main challenges?

16. What specific strategies is the program implementing to improve at-risk students' chances of **graduating college and/or career-ready** after high school?

    a. Once students are identified, how do you ensure that they are getting the right types of supports given that their needs could be both academic and social?

    b. Can you provide some concrete examples of curricular and pedagogical strategies that you use to engage students in meeting college and career readiness expectations?

    c. Can you provide some concrete examples of how you make instruction rigorous?

    d. Do you use any non-academic strategies to keep students engaged in school?

    e. What challenges and barriers do you face in implementing these strategies?

    f.   Is there a system and/or person in place to monitor student use of academic and support services on an ongoing basis?

    g.   Are students at different risk levels monitored differently, and if so, in what ways?

    h.   Does the district/CMO/school/program use a case management program? If so, please describe how it works.

17. What specific supports and services are available to students to help them make **postsecondary plans** (e.g., college fairs, campus tours, speakers; help with resumes, job applications, getting references)?

    a.   What challenges and barriers do you face in providing these supports?

18. If you use online learning as a strategy to serve at-risk youth, what are some of the benefits and challenges to this approach?

D. Use of Data

19. Once individual at-risk youth are identified, what data do you use to track their progress (e.g., attendance, grades, course failures, timely submission of assignments)?

20. Who is responsible for tracking the data on identified students? How are the data analyzed? To what extent does that analysis influence decisions about the services that students receive?

21. Describe your program's/district's electronic data system for storing student data.

    a.   What kinds of data does the system capture (e.g., attendance, test scores, demographics, schedules, grades, ELL status, intervention program participation)?

    b.   Is the same system used for both middle and high school students? Do you have access to incoming 9th-graders' data before they start high school?

    c.   Who has access to these data (e.g., district staff, school leaders, teachers)?

22. What are the benchmarks or accountability measures that assess the effectiveness of your program? Could you give an example of changes you have made to the program because of the accountability measures?

E. Capacity and Sustainability

23. How is the program funded and what is the program's annual budget/cost? Probe for general funds; local, state, or federal funding streams; grants, etc.

    a.   Is the program funded adequately? If not, what approximate percentage increase in funding would you need to provide the appropriate level of services?

    b.   What challenges exist in funding the program? Probe for flexibility in funding sources.

    c.   If applicable: How will the program be sustained when the _insert name of funding source_ funding ends?

24. How does your program work to build a common vision and buy-in among students, families, school personnel and program staff?

25. How are staff (counselors, adult advocate) recruited?

    a.   What characteristics do you look for in hiring? (Pay attention to characteristics that make a candidate multi-functional - e.g., qualified to teach college courses, has college-level teaching experience, guidance or college counseling background, etc.)

    b.   How successful or challenging has it been to recruit and hire the appropriate number and type of personnel?

26. How many people do you have on staff? What are their roles?

27. Do you have the appropriate number and type of staff you need to implement the program? Sustain the program's support strategies?

    a.   If not, what gaps in staffing remain? How do you plan to address or fill those gaps?

III. Outcomes

28. In what ways do you think the academic and social supports provided by your program are effective in addressing individual student needs?
29. In your opinion, in what ways does the program need to improve?

Middle School

30. Do you work with your feeder middle schools to identify at-risk students before they begin their transition to high school?
31. *[For programs that include MS students]* Are most at-risk middle school students in the program able to successfully transfer to high school? Probe for evidence.

High School

32. Has the program had any effects on students':
    1. Attendance
    2. Attitudes towards academics
    3. Engagement in schoolwork
    4. Persistence
    5. Course-taking patterns
    6. Achievement
    7. Expectations to attend college
33. Are you able to track the progress of students once they enter a postsecondary institution*[e.g., enrollment, persistence and graduation from a 2-year or 4-year college]*?
34. Are you able to identify program graduates who have attained industry-recognized certification or employment at a living wage?

IV. Partnerships

Only ask questions pertaining to the particular type of partnership in which the program is engaged:

Community organizations

35. What kinds of community partnerships does your program currently maintain? How did the partnerships form?
36. What is the role of the community partnership?
37. What have these partnerships been successful in accomplishing? What have been the challenges to developing or maintaining these partnerships?
    1. How have these partnerships changed over time?
38. Are there any policies or funding requirements that have facilitated or impeded these partnerships?
39. Are there ways you wish that partners were more involved with the program?

IHEs

40. What kinds of postsecondary partnerships does your program currently maintain? How did the partnerships form?
    1. In what ways does the postsecondary partner support the program? *Probe for primary responsibilities and services, financial support, help with networking, etc.*
    2. What factors support a productive partnership with postsecondary institutions? What have been the challenges to developing or maintaining these partnerships? How have the partnerships changed over time?

41. Do high school students have opportunities to take advanced coursework at or through these postsecondary institutions (e.g., dual enrollment)?
    1. Can high school students earn college credit or certification?
    2. Are there eligibility requirements (e.g., GPA, assessments) for dual enrollment?
    3. How are students informed of access to college courses? How are they supported academically while taking those courses?
42. Are there any policies or funding requirements that have facilitated or impeded your partnerships?
43. Are there ways you wish that the IHE was more involved with the program?
44. How does the K-12 system typically coordinate with IHEs and around what goals/purposes?

Social Services and Family Education

45. What social service organizations, if any, does the program work with?
    1. In what ways does the program benefit from partnering with this social service organization(s)?
    2. What, if any, have been some challenges of working with this social service organization(s)?
46. What types of activities, if any, does your program provide to educate families on supporting their children in school and preparing them for college?
47. What are some successes and challenges the program has faced working with families?

Local Employers/Businesses

48. What type of support, if any, does the program receive from local businesses?
    a. If part of their support includes internships/employment, how are students held accountable for their participation and/or performance?
    b. In what ways does the program benefit from working with local businesses?
    c. What, if any, are some challenges of working with local businesses (e.g., their capacity to provide quality work experiences to a sufficient number of students, matching student interests to available local opportunities, etc.)?

V. Policy Contexts

49. Do specific district or state policies or structures hinder or facilitate the program's ability to achieve its goals? Please provide examples of the impact.
50. Are specific policy changes necessary to improve the program's effectiveness? Are efforts underway to create those changes? Please be specific.

VI. Wrap-Up

51. Is there anything else about the program and its successes or challenges that you think we should know?