

Attachment 8

Strategies for Preparing At-Risk Youth for Postsecondary Success Principal/Assistant Principal Protocol

Italicized questions should only be asked of school administrators who are in charge of the program's implementation activities.

I. Background

1. Tell me a little about your professional background leading up to this position.
2. What are your main responsibilities as principal/AP?
3. How long have you been involved with insert name of program and how, if at all, has engaging in the program affected your role?

II. Program Description

A. Vision/Goals

4. What are the program's major goals/priorities? How, if at all, has this vision evolved or changed since you have been involved?
5. What are the school's overall priorities? How does dropout prevention fit into those priorities?

B. Target Population

6. What are the characteristics of the target students for the 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?
 - c. Do you believe the "right students" are being targeted for support?
7. How do you identify students who are in need of academic and social supports?
 - a. What data/specific indicators [such as an "early warning system"] does the school use to identify if a student is at risk of dropping out or at risk of not going to college?
8. What is the process for determining which services should be provided and how/by whom?
9. Is participation in insert name of 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?
10. 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

11. What kinds of academic and social supports are in place for at-risk students? Probe for: counselors, social workers, advisories, supplemental services, differentiated instruction, summer school/additional periods, credit recovery.
12. What specific strategies is the program implementing to prevent dropouts?
 - a. Can you provide some concrete examples of curricular and pedagogical strategies that the school uses to engage students at risk of dropping out of high school?
 - b. Can you provide some concrete examples of how the school makes instruction rigorous for students at risk of dropping out?
 - c. Does the school use any non-academic strategies to keep students engaged in class?
 - d. What challenges and barriers do you face in implementing these strategies?

Attachment 8

13. In what ways, if any, could curriculum better engage students at risk of dropping out?
14. 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.
15. 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?
16. What, if any specific instructional strategies do you implement to improve at-risk students' chances of **graduating college and/or career-ready** after high school? Can you provide some concrete examples of curricular or pedagogical strategies that you use to engage students at risk of not graduating college- and or career-ready after high school?
 - a. Can you provide some concrete examples of curricular and pedagogical strategies that the school uses to engage students at risk of dropping out of high school and help them achieve college readiness?
 - b. Can you provide some concrete examples of how the school makes instruction rigorous for students who are at risk of dropping out or of not going on to postsecondary education?
 - c. Does the school use any non-academic strategies to keep students engaged in school?
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 this support?
18. 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?
 - a. Is there a system and/or person in place to monitor student use of academic and support services on an ongoing basis?
 - b. Are students at different risk levels monitored differently, and if so, in what ways?
 - c. Does the district/school/program use case management program? If so, please describe how it works?
19. 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

20. Once individual students are identified, what data do you use to track their progress (e.g., attendance, grades, course failures, timely submission of assignments)?
21. **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?**
22. Describe your school/district's electronic data system for maintaining student data.
 - a. What kind 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)?
23. 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?

Attachment 8

E. Capacity and Sustainability

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

III. Outcomes

29. In what ways do you think the academic and social supports at your school are effective in addressing individual student needs?
30. In your opinion, in what ways does the program need to improve?
 - a. What ways can the district/CMO be more effective in addressing individual student needs across the district/CMO?

Middle School

31. Do you work with your feeder middle schools to identify at-risk students before they begin their transition to high school?
32. [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

33. Has the program had any effects on students':
 - a. Attitudes towards academics
 - b. Attendance
 - c. Engagement in schoolwork
 - d. Persistence
 - e. Expectations to attend college
 - f. Course-taking patterns
 - g. Achievement
34. Are you able to track the progress of students once they enter a postsecondary institution (*e.g., enrollment, persistence and graduation*)?
35. Are you able to identify program graduates who have attained industry-recognized certification or employment at a living wage?

Attachment 8

IV. Partnerships

Community-Based Organizations

36. What kinds of community partnerships does your program currently have? How did the partnerships form?
37. What has the partnership been successful in accomplishing? What have been the challenges to developing or maintaining these partnerships?
 - a. How has the partnership 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 have? How did the partnerships form?
 - a. What are the responsibilities of the postsecondary partner? Do they support the program in other ways?
 - b. What factors support a productive partnership with postsecondary institutions? What have been the challenges to developing or maintaining these partnerships? How has the partnership changed over time?
41. Do high school students have opportunities to take advanced coursework at or through these postsecondary institutions(e.g., dual enrollment)?
 - a. Can high school students earn college credit or certification?
 - b. Are there eligibility requirements (e.g., GPA, assessments) for dual enrollment?
 - c. 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? Does this coordination happen around specific topic areas?

Social Services

45. What social service organizations, if any, does the program work with? How?
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?

Attachment 8

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.
51. Is the state working towards an integrated K-12 and postsecondary data system? If so, when will that data become available? What's your understanding of how such a system might help you in running your program?

VI. Wrap-Up

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