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Using Technology to Track Sub- Group Graduation Rates and AYP

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Introductions

- Brian Schoonover, Ph.D. is the St. Johns County School District Coordinator of Federal Programs and author of *Zero Tolerance Discipline Policies* (2009).
- Brian Elliott is St. Johns County School District's Systems Analyst responsible for tracking all student academic data.
- Audience introductions...



Focus of this Presentation

- Using technology to carefully track the progress made by not only an entire cohort population in each high school, but specifically the four subgroup populations, will help raise a schools graduation rate and place it on course to reach AYP.



- This presentation will offer suggestions on using data to better track sub-group graduation rates.
- Highlight strategies that aide in preventing dropping out.
- Explain how tracking admission/withdrawal codes increased St. Johns County's graduation rates.
- Share effective means of electronically tracking "at-risk" students by cohort/sub-group.



Why school districts are required to track sub-group graduation rates:

- The *No Child Left Behind* revisions of 2008 now require every high school to track the graduation rates of the four major sub-groups (English Language Learners, Students With Disabilities, Minorities, and those receiving Free and/or Reduced Lunch).
- The first cohort of incoming freshman that will be monitored are those that entered high school in the fall of 2008 and will graduate the spring of 2012.



Current Graduation Rates:

- The national graduation rate currently hovers around 70%, with the four subgroups generally graduating 50% of students within four years.
- The Department of Education would like to see school districts obtain a graduation rate *for all students* closer to 90%.
- This standard will be the same for all high schools, whether they receive federal funding or not.



Graduation Rates and AYP

- The graduation rate will be incorporated into the rating system known as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).
- High Schools have to reach AYP for all of their subgroups by 2012 based on achievements made using standardized tests.



No Child Left Behind: Florida's Differentiated Accountability

An A, B, C, or ungraded school enters Differentiated Accountability (DA) after missing Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two consecutive years.

A school must make AYP (100%) two consecutive years to exit DA.

To re-enter DA, a school would need to miss AYP for two consecutive years.



Disparity between School Grades & Federal Guidelines:

State Status:

Federal: Status:

2009: Highest Performing District in the State of Florida

2009: Out of 34 schools, 22 are in Differentiated Accountability (DA) because they didn't make AYP for the past two consecutive years.

#1 out of 67 school districts

*64% of our schools are in some form of corrective action according to DA.

*78% of the schools in Florida are in some form of corrective action.

Adequate Yearly Progress in Sub-groups

■ **HB 991 – School Improvement /**

Differentiated Accountability

□ Criteria for determining sub-group category

- 30 or more students representing more than 15% of the school's population in tested grades, or at least 100 students
- For example: in a school that has 439 students in 3rd-5th grade, there would have to be at least 66 of one sub-group to represent the 15% OR at least 100 students.



- With the high school graduation rate becoming part of the high school determination for AYP, even if a high school has students that are proficient in both reading and mathematics, but fails to graduate enough students in each subgroups, then the high school will fail to make AYP for that year.



A child does not decide to drop out of school overnight...

- Technology can aide administrators, teachers, and parents in identifying which children are at-risk of failing and dropping-out.
- In St. Johns County, children labeled “at-risk” for dropping-out are identified as early as 6th grade based on prior retentions and FCAT.



- Previous middle school retentions and 8th grade FCAT scores, as well as a pattern of non-attendance in relation to truancy is all tracked and provided to the high school principal prior to the 9th grade cohort entering high school.



- For example, Creekside Retained List from July 2009



Tracking each “at-risk” student

- Research shows that there is a statistical correlation between the hours of school that a student misses because of truancy or out-of-school suspensions and the increased risk of dropping-out of school.
- Now Mr. Elliott will explain how we track our data.



Tracking data in SEVEN Ways increased St. Johns County's graduation rates.

- The FLDOE provides state report F63494 in May after survey 5 closes.
- The report looks at the withdraw code, who received a diploma and type, certificate type, and end of year withdrawal reason (Mr. Elliott's example).



Data Tracking: Number 1

Monitoring “nongrad” status

- Once we see the report, our State reporting office reviews each student’s final status by hand to verify the report, looking for any “nongrad” reports.
- Then eSIS is used to find out where the student went and to see if the code was updated.
- The school’s registrar is directly contacted by the district office.



- Then adjustments are made on eSIS as well as programmatically adjusting it online to the FLDOE state reporting site.
- The DOE site has a Student Locator and a Student Dropout Match that can find students who are still in Florida. This is used when a student jumps counties.



- For every nongrad code, the district office follows up with a phone call to the school's computer operator to verify why the student left and where the student was going.



Graduation Rate Increases

- Manually verifying accurate withdrawal data helped increase the SJCS D graduation rate to its current level of 90.8%
- In 2005-06, the rate in SJCS D was only 78.4%.
- The Florida average for all 67 school districts is 78.6%.



Data Tracking: Number 2 Attendance and Truancy

- The 20 day eSIS reports generate withdraw codes.
- We look every 20 days to see if a student withdrew from one school and was supposed to enroll in another. Even if a child withdraws into home ed, we review to see if he or she actually did enroll (Mr. Elliott's example). .



Data Tracking: Number 3

Data pull of drop-out codes

- Upon a student filing a formal declaration of intent to terminate school, the SJCS D Coordinator for Academic Success meets with the student individually to review enrollment possibilities into adult education.



- The Coordinator for Academic Success then reconnects with the individual a week later to see what educational path has been chosen.
- If the student chooses adult ed, the Coordinator for Academic Success contacts the state reporting office to certify or change the withdrawal code.



Data Tracking: Number 4

Tracking of senior cohorts

- Those students that are in a senior cohort but not currently on grade level based by GPA and credit level, are encouraged by guidance counselor and the Coordinator for Academic Success to look at adult education as an option (Mr. Elliott's example).



Data Tracking: Number 5

Dropping out starts in truancy

- The District Data Analyst pulls a monthly report on of students that have greater than 5 or more unexcused absences in the past 45 calendar day period, and also 15 absences from the start of school.
- The list is shared with the Coordinator for Student Services.



- The Coordinator for Student Services looks at the reports and works with the school truancy contacts to encourage the Response to Intervention (RtI) team to establish an attendance contract with the student and parents.
- If any of those identified students hit the 10 or more unexcused absences, then the school files a truancy petition.



- At the school level, all middle and high school teachers monitor attendance on a period-by-period level, contacting the dean if a student was present in the day then later absent that same day.
- No student absence goes unaccounted.



Tracking Data: Number 6

Students who are not learning

- The district has committed resources to fund Odyssey Ware computer labs for course recovery in an attempt to provide an alternative place for these students to go during the day.
- The labs can provide course recovery so that students do not feel disenfranchised.



- The Coordinator for Academic Success monitors the Odyssey Ware lab usage district-wide as well as individual progress.
- The Coordinator of Federal Programs works with the principals to ensure that the labs are fully funded.



Tracking Data: Number 7

Monitoring sub-group process

- The district has contracted ThinkLink to administer progress monitoring probes three times a year (baseline, midyear, and end-of-the-year) in math, science, and reading for all 3rd-10th graders.
- FAIR is used for all sub-groups not making AYP.



Preventing drop-outs through academic interventions

- The ThinkLink data disaggregates the students by AYP subgroups so that the principal and instructional / literacy coach can target their interventions to the students that are most at-risk of dropping out.



Minority graduation rate in SJCS D

- During the past year, the SJCS D graduation rate for black students grew from 78.4% to 81%, an increase in 2.6%.
- The graduation rate for Hispanic students showed a 3% increase, from 88.6% to 91.6%.



Department of Accountability and Intervention Services

- Principals meet with the Coordinator of Federal Programs to discuss their SIP and what strategies are in place to meet the needs of students not on track to graduate or labeled “at-risk” of dropping-out.
- All data is reviewed at this time.



School Improvement Plan (SIP):

- During the SIP process, strategies are highlighted that aide in preventing dropping out.
 1. Alternatives to Suspension.
 2. Course recovery options.
 3. Truancy monitoring.
 4. Use School-Wide Information System (SWIS) to track all student discipline referrals.



In conclusion, this presentation

- Offered suggestions on using data to better track sub-group graduation rates.
- Highlighted strategies that aide in preventing dropping out.
- Explained how tracking input codes increased St. Johns County's graduation rates.
- Shared effective means of electronically tracking "at-risk" students by cohort/sub-group.



Contacts

- For more information, all references, or for a copy of this PowerPoint, please log-on to www.ZeroToleranceReform.com
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Thank you for coming today and God Bless you and your cause.

