The ABCs of Graduating At-Risk Students on Time

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NYKids
(Know Your Schools~for NY Kids)
Our Objectives Today

• Share findings about how some schools support their at-risk students to graduate in four years
• Answer your questions
• Provide links to resources you and your colleagues can use
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The Basics

• Performance over time
• NYS Report Card Data
• Consistently higher or average performing
• Find the differences in practice
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2005-2014 – 6 studies

• Elementary schools (2005)
• Middle schools (2007)
• High schools (2008)
• Middle school science (2009)
• Critical needs at the elementary level (2011)
• High school graduation (2013)
High School Grad Study Sample

- High school 4-year graduation rate
- Cohorts of 2004 - 2006
- At least 2/5 at-risk groups
- Regressed against school size, stu stability, ethnicity, SES
- 8 higher performing, 5 average performing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Z Score, Higher Performers (HPs)</th>
<th>1.23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Z Score, Average Performers (APs)</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High School Sample cont.

- Favor poverty (F/RL)
  - HPs high needs; APs average needs
- Open admissions
- ~NYS average per pupil expenditures
- Primarily rural, exurban HPs (APs ~)

Approximate location, average performers

[Map of New York State with stars indicating higher performers]
HP High Schools

- **Amityville Memorial HS**, Amityville UFSD
- **Brookfield HS**, Brookfield CSD
- **Downsville HS**, Downsville CSD
- **Eastridge HS**, East Irodequoit CSD
- **Elmont Memorial HS**, Sewanhaka HSD
- **Otselic Valley J/SH**, Georgetown-S. Otselic CSD
- **Prattsburgh HS**, Prattsburgh CSD
- **Whitesville HS**, Whitesville CSD
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th># Stu 9-12</th>
<th>% F/RL</th>
<th>% EL</th>
<th>% AA</th>
<th>% H/Latino</th>
<th>% Wht</th>
<th>% Other</th>
<th>4-Year Grad Rate</th>
<th>N/R Ratio</th>
<th>PPE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amityville</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>81</td>
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<td>$26,032</td>
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<td>Brookfield</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>85</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>H</td>
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<td>Eastridge</td>
<td>989</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elmont</td>
<td>1307</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>97</td>
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<tr>
<td>Otselic V.</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>53</td>
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<td>99</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>95</td>
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<td>$22,602</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>95</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>98</td>
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<td>$20,161</td>
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<td>Whitesville</td>
<td>86</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>$23,025</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HP average</strong></td>
<td><strong>630</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>71</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>93</strong></td>
<td><strong>H</strong></td>
<td><strong>$23,812</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AP average</strong></td>
<td><strong>947</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>58</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>85</strong></td>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td><strong>$24,138</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NYS</strong></td>
<td><strong>49</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>49</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>77</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>$20,410</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Methods

• Made 2-day site visits (2-person teams)
• Interviewed teachers, administrators, and specialists (special ed, guidance, social workers); 144 total
• Collected documents
• Analyzed, wrote a case study for each site*
• Analyzed, wrote cross-site analysis*
• Analyzed, created best practice framework*

* Available at: www.albany/nykids
The ABCs of Graduating At-Risk Students on Time

Best practices from higher-performing high schools
Overall Findings

**A**lignment of goals and curriculum,

**B**ridging divides within the school and between school and community,

**C**rafting engaging instruction, and

**D**riving a whole-child intervention loop.
Alignment of goals and curriculum,

- Working toward mastery and post-secondary education
- Teacher Leadership for Common Core alignment
- Using evidence to inform goal setting and curriculum development
- Beyond-the-school networking

We set higher goals locally.
- Prattsburgh teacher
Success is about changing the attitude of students to strive for excellence, not just passing.  
- Amityville administrator

I can’t say enough about the three Common Core ambassadors that have gone to Albany . . . then come back and turnkeyed the information.  
- Brookfield administrator

We have senior projects and job shadowing – those are helpful in guiding the students for their futures.  
- Whitesville teacher
## Alignment of goals and curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AP</th>
<th>HP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher collaboration limited to a department or grade; does not routinely cross boundaries</td>
<td>Faculty continuously seek to network locally and beyond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting students to reach mastery seen as limited by lack of resources</td>
<td>High expectations promoted through ambitious, student-centered goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical decision making</td>
<td>Shared leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrequent goal setting, data analysis, and curriculum revision</td>
<td>Constant, collaborative, systemic evidence-informed goal setting, data analysis, and curriculum revision.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We are all in this together.

- High Needs
- 53% FR/L
- Rural
- Isolated
Bridging divides within the school and between school and community

- Collaborating with colleagues
- Connecting home and school
- Developing school and community relations
- Linking social and academic support for students

*Our strength is having to pull together as a community.*

- Otselic valley teacher
Find out what the barriers are. Is it financial? Living arrangement? The social workers and counselors work closely with kids and families and teachers to find out what the barrier is. Do you need to be evaluated for [special ed] and never were? Are there vision issues?

– Elmont guidance personnel

All success has to come from establishing a relationship with your students. Creating a culture of support. I think students, even in the roughest times, have at least a handful of adults that they can go to. There’s safety, both physical and emotional.

- Eastridge teacher
# Bridging Divides

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to new mandates</td>
<td>Teachers and administrators work together to enact new mandates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators work mostly independently of one another</td>
<td>Shared leadership and collaboration around social/emotional and academic supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty surmounting barriers to partnering with families</td>
<td>Friendly, systemic approaches to reaching out to families in place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication disconnects hamper staff trust building</td>
<td>Pride in student success pervades school and community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brookfield Central High School

- 77 students
- 45% F/RL
- SES diverse
- P-12 building

We teach our kids to think. Always remember that.
- Retired teacher quoted by multiple current educators.
Crafting engaging instruction

- Instruction designed to promote higher-order thinking
- Evidence-informed and technology-enhanced instruction
- Strategies for active and broad participation
- Experiential opportunities

*A good teacher is someone whose students are engaged, involved in the learning activities, thinking, responding, . . . challenging themselves. It’s the engagement of students in the learning activities that marks the good teacher.*

— Brookfield principal
A priority is keeping current with the types of instructional strategies that will engage the students we have.

- Amityville assistant superintendent

It’s crazy how much technology I’m using in the classroom today. . . . We were working with chalkboards until we got these boards four or five years ago. What a difference!

- Prattsburgh teacher

They receive free lunch and a notation on their transcript that they did work study in a classroom, and we give them half a credit for the activity.

- Brookfield principal
Crafting engaging instruction

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional instruction, often lecture, not focused on students’ needs, interests, or 21st century goals</td>
<td>Instruction relevant to students, focused on higher-order, critical thinking, engagement, inquiry, differentiation, and technology use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators care about students but focus may not be on high quality, engaging instruction</td>
<td>Emphasis on high-quality teaching for students at risk of dropping out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most learning in traditional classroom</td>
<td>Multiple learning pathways, including beyond classroom or school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of school-wide strategies for using performance data</td>
<td>Data analysis plus personal knowledge of student guides instruction and adjustments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eastridge High School

- 989 students
- 46% F/RL
- 18% AA
- 12% Hispanic
- 95% avg. NYS PPE

I’m not going to tell a student, ‘You can’t try something that we advertise as a more rigorous program.’ It’s never too late to change your approach to scholarship.
Driving a whole-child intervention loop

- Organized and collaborative data monitoring and analysis
- Timely and targeted interventions

The spreadsheet we use is a living document on every student junior to senior year: how many credits they need, the exams they still need, PSAT and SAT scores. That’s definitely the lifeline. We have weekly meetings every Wednesday with ed services and the assistant principal who’s the head of the alternative program. We talk about students we’re worried about. We compare notes, test scores, [and updates]. – Eastridge school administrator
We do meet every Wednesday morning to talk about any student where we have concerns -- what’s being done for this kid, do we recognize the issue? Somebody steps up and helps to formulate [strategies] to make this successful. It’s not a written plan for every kid. We do have educational contracts for kids that lay out progressive steps, maybe discipline or academics, [indicating] ‘This is where you need to be by when.’ - Prattsburgh superintendent

An amazing thing happened [as] teachers saw the value of evidence-informed instruction.

– Downsville principal

We believe we need to early detect the issues and needs of our kids.

- Whitesville superintendent
## Driving a whole-child intervention loop

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extra support not frequent and not necessarily aligned with classroom learning objectives</td>
<td>Extra support closely linked to classroom learning objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic reports (e.g., report cards) issued quarterly</td>
<td>Academic reports issues every few weeks, drawing on baseline, quarterly, mid-term and other assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis and intervention based on attendance data not implemented consistently or immediately</td>
<td>Systems closely track attendance and staff intervene early</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools not a key player in helping families access needed social services</td>
<td>School teams proactively work with families to locate needed services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We need to look at different models. . . . When you ‘re talking about kids who are 16 . . . or 19 and you tell them to go to a class for remediation, it’s not going to work unless they are highly motivated.

- principal.
The ABCs of Graduating At-Risk Students on Time

Best practices from higher-performing high schools
Where to find more information:  www.albany.edu/nykids

• Case reports, all HP schools (55)
• Cross-case reports, each study (6)
• Best practice frameworks (most current 5)
• Documentary evidence (in BP framework)
• Key word searches
• Self-assessments
• **NEW** – Institutes to support school teams to use these resources to use data to plan, monitor, improve (SMART Goals)
Best Practices Case Study: Supporting High School Completion

Kathy Nickson, March 2013

Eastridge High School
East Irondequoit Central School District

School Context

The East Irondequoit Central School District, in Monroe County (NY), serves approximately 3600 students in two primary schools, two intermediate schools, one middle school, and one high school. At first glance, the district appears to encompass a suburban community of single family homes bordering two bodies of water and the north side of Rochester. A closer look, however, reveals many families struggling economically, with approximately 50% of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The district has little in the way of an industrial base and a mixed economy, which requires state support.
Organized by 5 themes

- Curriculum & academic goals
- Staff selection, leadership, and capacity building
- Instructional programs, practices, and arrangements
- Monitoring: Compilation, analysis, and use of data
- Recognition, intervention & adjustments
NY Kids

Welcome to a resource to support school improvement in New York State.

Using the links below and to the left, you can access:

- Reports about what makes elementary, middle, and high schools work well
- Details about best practices at each level, with evidence to support them
- Case studies of the higher-performing schools whose practices are featured
- Tools (e.g., surveys) to help you look at your own school's practices

You can also access one of our "collections:"

- Response to Intervention (RTI)
- English Language Learners
- Parent/Community Involvement
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- Role of the Board of Education

NEW

COMPASS - a toolkit and workshop series for school building leadership teams. Teaches a continuous improvement process drawing on research findings most relevant to a school's needs and situation.

Tell me more.
Tools to Assess, Plan Improvement

What Makes Elementary Schools Work for Critical Needs Students

What makes middle schools work

What makes high schools work

Know Your Schools—For NY Kids

COMPASS (Compare, Assess, Select Levers to Improve, Set Goals) Tool Kit

for High Schools

Kristen Campbell Wilcox

University at Albany
Questions? More info?

- jangelis@albany.edu
- swiles@albany.edu
- Cards on table
- Website on your handout