New York State Education Department
Office of Special Education
Educational Partnership

Evidence-Based Practices for Improving Graduation Rate and Decreasing Dropout

New York State Education Department
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Produced by the Technical Assistance Partnership for Transition at Cornell University.

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Disclaimer

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Today's Facilitators

Agenda

- Welcome
  - Introduction, Inclusion, and Virtual Norms
- Purpose and Objectives
- Pathways to Graduation/School Completion
- Understanding more about Dropout
- Overview of the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition the Collaborative (NTACT:C) School Completion Toolkit
- Overview of Risk Calculators and Dropout Data Tools
- Strategies for Local Education Agencies (LEAs)
- Wrap-up and Survey

Introductions

- Name
- Role
- District
- School
- Population served

Training Objectives

Participants will gain a deeper understanding of:

- Available resources aimed at increasing school completion
- What data can be used to identify a student's dropout risk
- Using data to make programmatic changes
- Strategies to consider to increase school completion

Materials

- **NTACT:C School Completion Toolkit**
  - This toolkit will help you understand the ABCs of dropout prevention and the critical elements needed to increase graduation rates; it offers many resources to help you in your efforts.
- **NTACT:C Risk Calculator Users Guide**
- **NTACT:C Transition Gradebook**

Meeting Norms

- Take care of your needs (water, food, restroom, etc.)
- Speak your truth; use "I" statements
- Ask what you need to understand and contribute
- Listen with respect
- Push your growing edge
- Participate and struggle together
- Expect a lack of closure
- Respect each other's needs

Blueprint for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities

Self-Advocacy

Students engage in self-advocacy and are involved in determining their own educational goals and plan.

Family Partnership

Parents, and other family members, are engaged as meaningful partners in the special education process and the education of their child.

Specially-Designed Instruction

Teachers design, provide, and assess the effectiveness of specially-designed instruction to provide students with disabilities with access to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.

Research-Based Instruction

Teachers provide research-based instructional teaching and learning strategies and supports for students with disabilities.

Multi-Tiered Support

Schools provide multi-tiered systems of behavioral and academic support.

Inclusive Activities

Schools provide high-quality inclusive programs and activities.

Transition Support

Schools provide appropriate instruction for students with disabilities in career development and opportunities to participate in work-based learning.

Definitions

The federal definitions:

- **State Performance Plan Indicator 1: Graduation (results indicator):** Percent of youth with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) exiting special education due to graduating with a regular high school diploma.

- **State Performance Plan Indicator 2: Dropout (results indicator):** Percent of youth with IEPs who exited special education due to dropping out.

New York State: Graduates include students who received a local diploma or a local diploma with Regents endorsement (Regents diploma). All students who received a Regents diploma (with or without Advanced Designation or Career and Technical Education (CTE) Endorsement) are included in the number of students with Regents diploma.

Assumption Activity
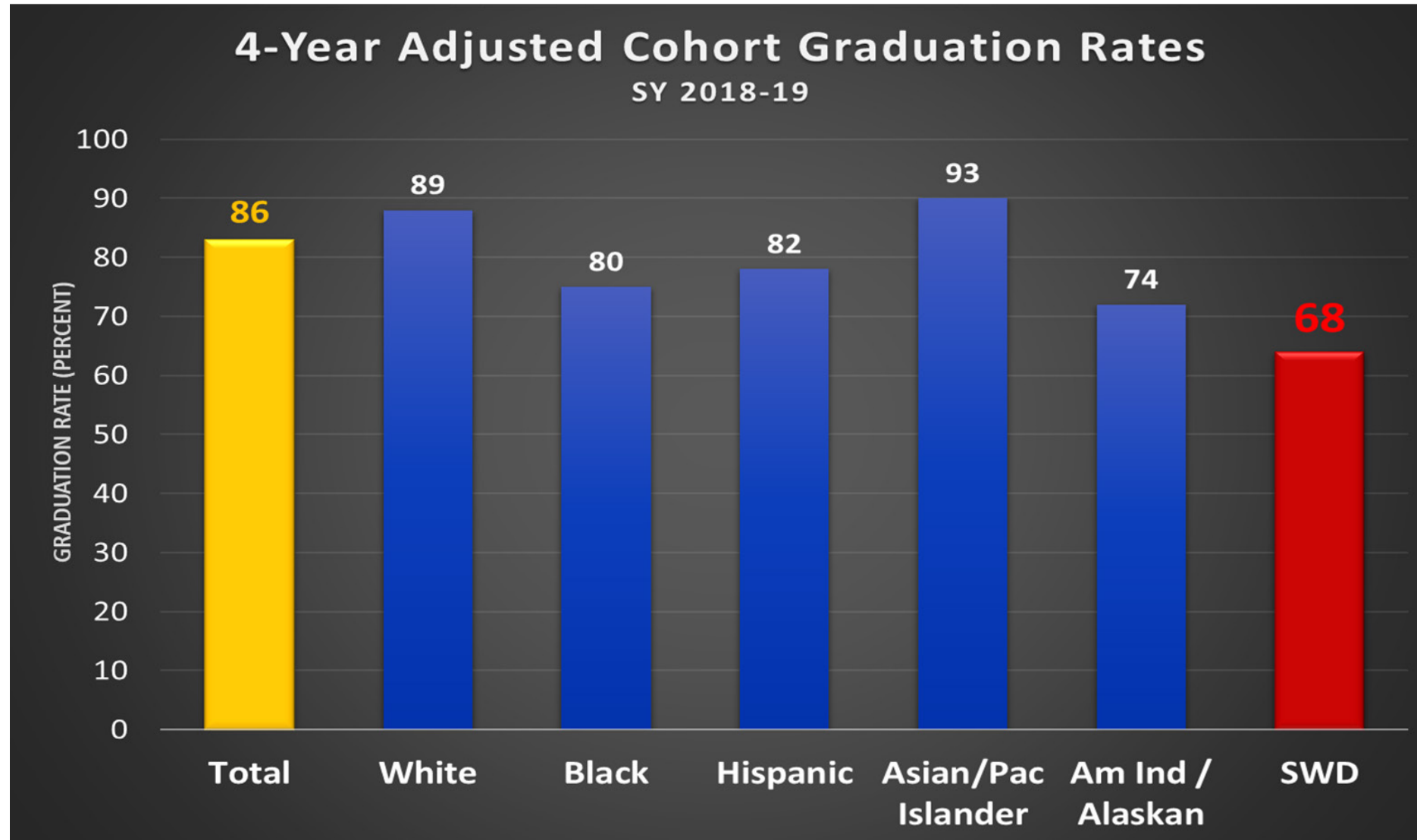
Take a few minutes and reflect:

- **What do you think dropout "looks like" in your local context?**
  - Who drops out in your district?
  - When do your students most often drop out (e.g., a particular grade level, at a certain age)?
- **Why do you think students fail to graduate in your schools?**
  - Are there common barriers to graduation that your students experience?
  - Are there school-related events that can trigger students to leave school?
- **How do you know? What "evidence" do you have regarding:**
  - How many students are dropping out for each sub-group?
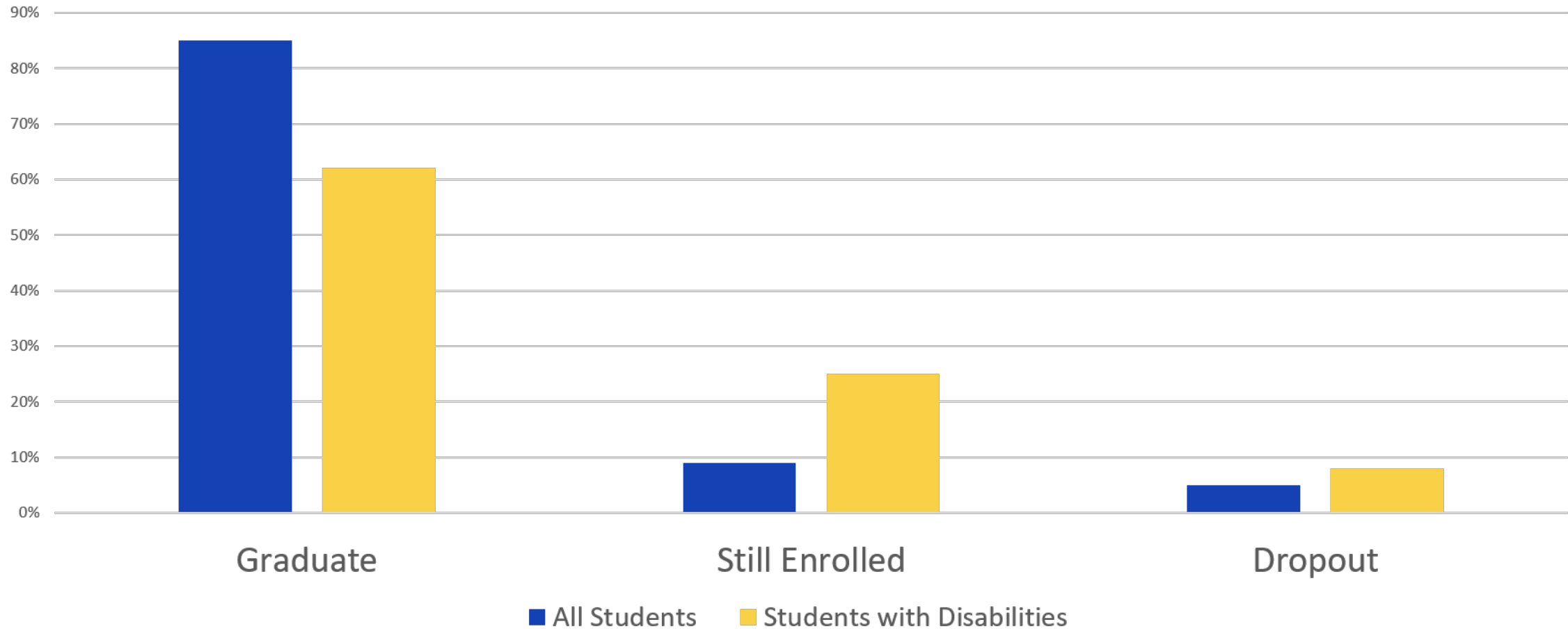 - Why students drop out?

Graduation

United States and

New York Data and
Requirements

United States Graduation Rates

4-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates
SY 2018-19

Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pac Islander	Am Ind / Alaskan	SWD
86	89	80	82	93	74	68

NYS Graduation Rate Data 4-Year Outcome August 2020

Bar chart showing percentages for Graduate, Still Enrolled, and Dropout categories. Legend: All Students (blue), Students with Disabilities (yellow).

- Graduate: All Students ~85%, Students with Disabilities ~62%
- Still Enrolled: All Students ~9%, Students with Disabilities ~25%
- Dropout: All Students ~5%, Students with Disabilities ~8%

NYS Graduation Credit Requirements

This table shows the number of credits required for each subject. It's important to note that, in most subjects, students choose the courses they want to take to meet the minimum requirements.

	Minimum number of credits
English	4
Social Studies	4
Distributed as follows:	
Global History and Geography (2)	
U.S. History (1)	
Participation in Government (½)	
Economics (½)	
Science	3
Distributed as follows:	
Life Science (1)	
Physical Science (1)	
Life Science or Physical Science (1)	
Mathematics	3
Languages Other than English (LOTE)	1*
Visual Art, Music, Dance, and/or Theater	1
Physical Education (participation each semester)	2
Health	0.5
Electives	3.5
Total	**22**

* Students with disabilities may be excused from the requirement for 1 unit of credit in LOTE if indicated on their IEP, but they must still earn 22 units of credit to graduate.

Multiple (4+1) Pathways

4

All students must pass
4 required assessments
(one in each discipline)

Math   English   Science   Social Studies
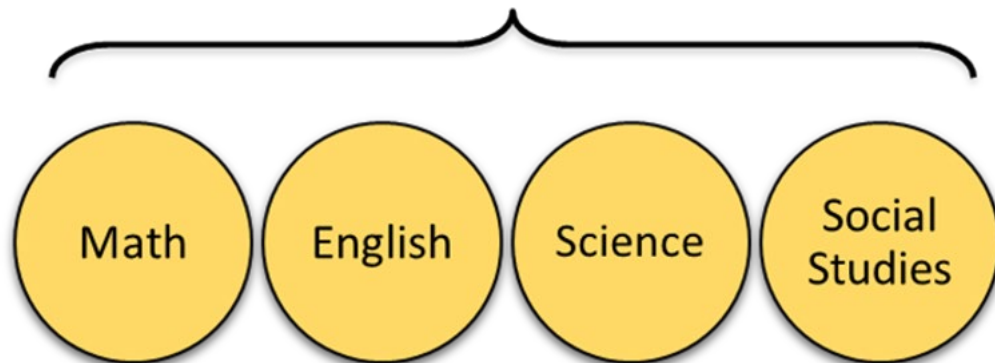
+1

Pathways

STEM

Humanities

Arts

LOTE

CTE

CDOS

Types of Diplomas

Local

22 Units of Credit

- Used appeals, safety nets to meet assessment requirements or

- Superintendent Determination of Local Diploma

Regents

22 Units of Credit

- Earned passing scores (65+ for Regents exams*) on all required assessments (4+1)

* Student can appeal one Regents exam score within 5 points of passing and still receive a Regents Diploma
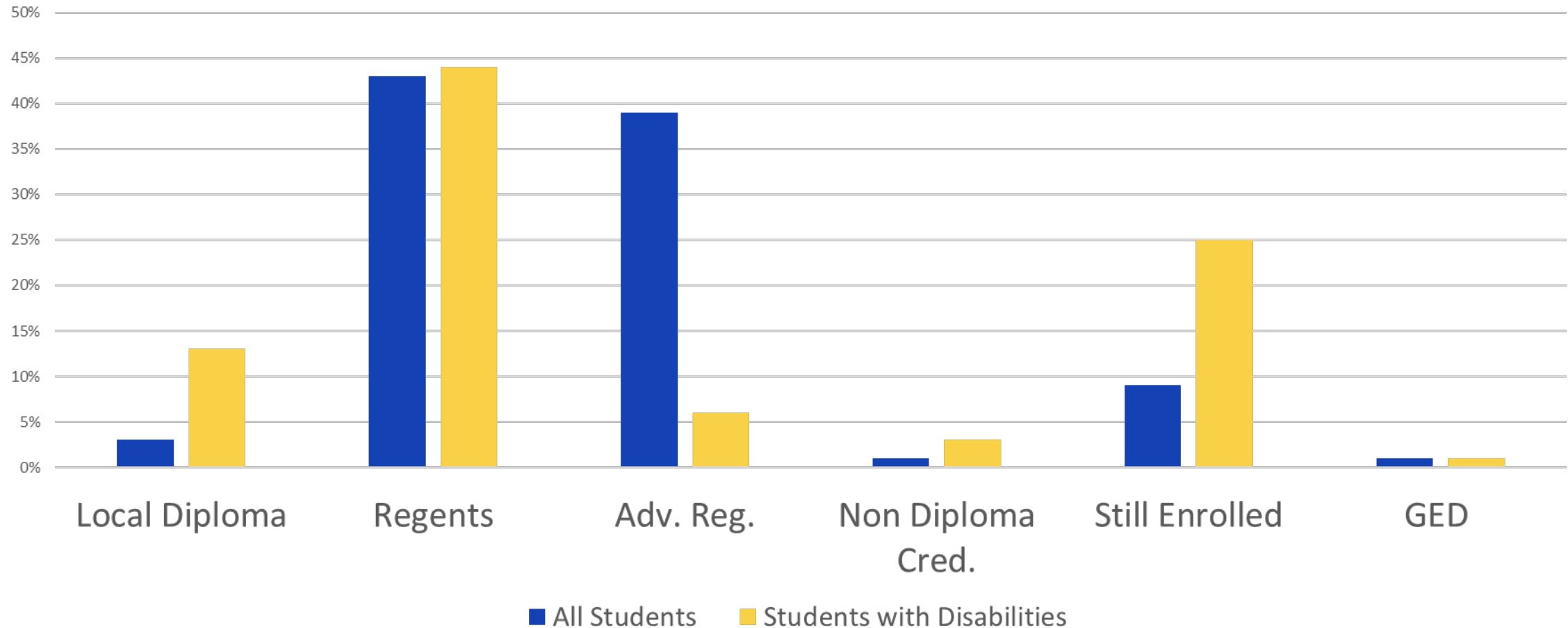
Regents with Advanced Designation

22 Units of Credit

- Earned passing scores (65+) on all required assessments (7+1)

- Additional exams required
 - +2 math
  - +1 Science

Completed a sequence

NYS School Completion Data 4 Year Outcomes August 2020

Bar chart comparing All Students (blue) and Students with Disabilities (yellow) across completion categories:

Category	All Students	Students with Disabilities
Local Diploma	3%	13%
Regents	43%	44%
Adv. Reg.	39%	6%
Non Diploma Cred.	1%	3%
Still Enrolled	9%	25%
GED	1%	1%

NYS Graduation Pathway Data 4 Year Cohort—August 2020

Pathways	Students with Disabilities	General Education Students
Humanities	90%	94%
Humanities Alternative	0%	0%
Career Development and Occupational Skills	3%	1%
Language Other than English	1%	1%
Art	0%	0%
Math	1%	1%
Science	3%	2%
Career and Technical Education	2%	1%

NYS Graduation Pathways Data Dashboard
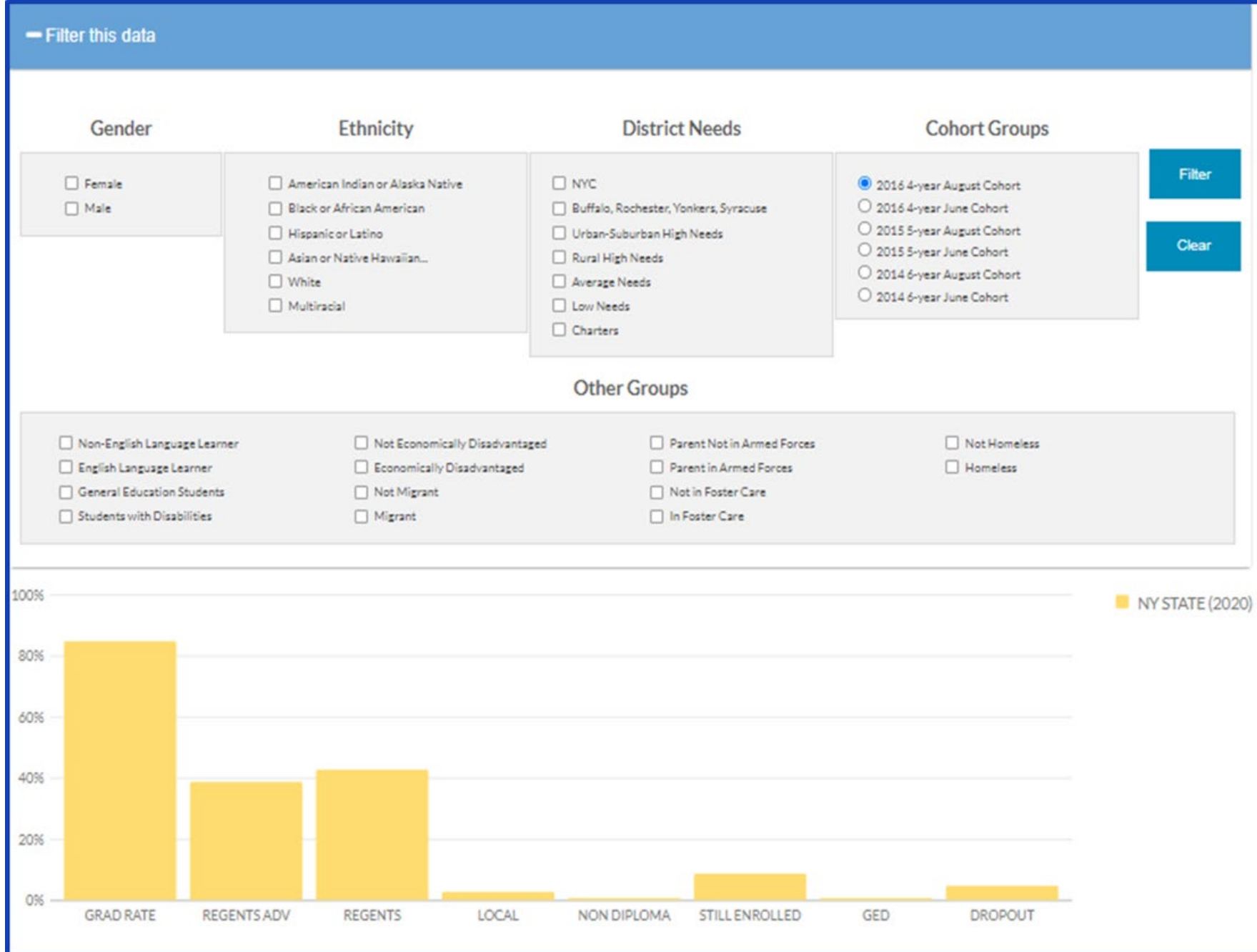
School Completion Research

- One of the most important factors in keeping a child from dropping out is the presence of a caring adult in their life—someone who believes in that child and provides encouragement, guidance, and support for staying in school.

- Relating and linking academic subjects to a youth's interests and vocational choices will help improve academic engagement.

Dropout

Overview of dropout rates and who drops out

What Is Dropout?

- Dropout is not a simple problem with a simple solution.

- Dropout is not a single moment in a child's life.

- Attendance, behavior, and course proficiency are key to identifying the risk of dropping out.

- Monitoring certain indicators can help a school identify youth who are at risk of dropping out in the short and the long term and can be used to inform an individual student's IEP.
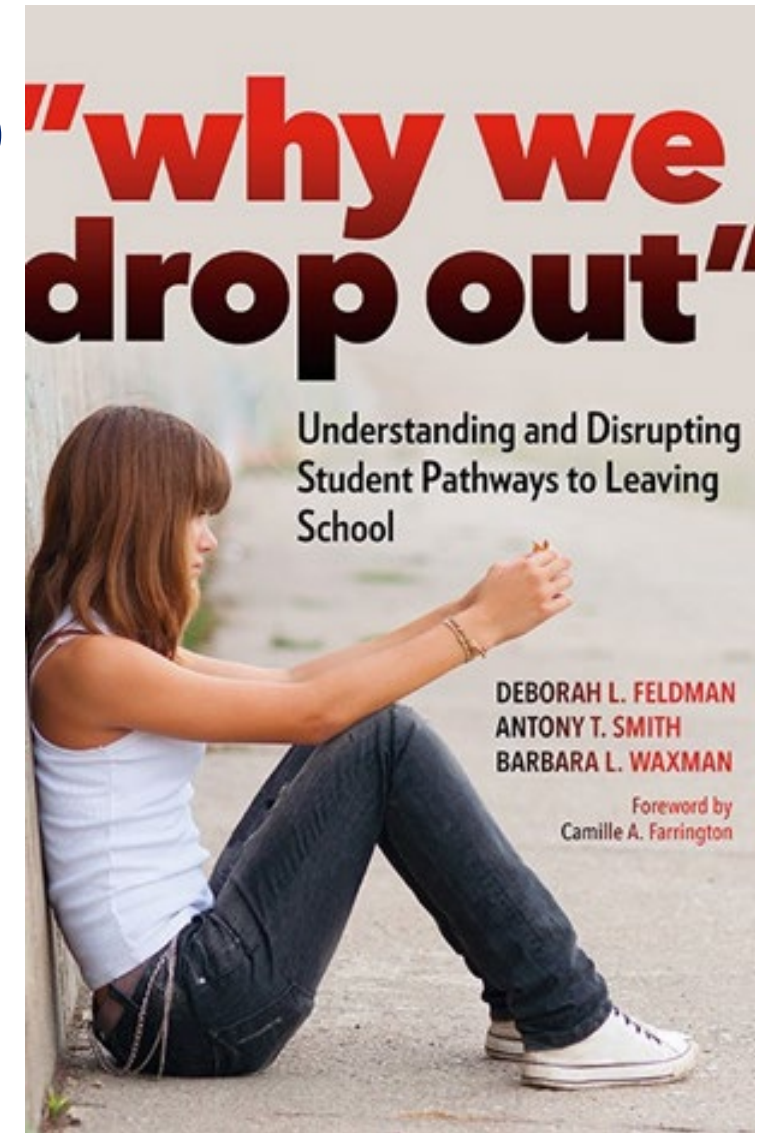
US Dropout Data

US Dropouts	Data
Annual number of high school dropouts	3,030,000
Average number of high school students who drop out each day	8,300
Percent of all dropouts that happen in the ninth grade	36%
Percent of students who repeat the ninth grade that go on to graduate	15%
Percent of US jobs for which a high school dropout is not eligible	90%
Amount a high school graduate will earn more than a dropout in a lifetime	$260,000
Percent of US crimes committed by high school dropouts	75%
Percent of students in the largest 50 US cities that graduate high school	59%

Profile of a Dropout

The authors of this 2017 book interviewed a diverse group of more than 50 youth ages 16–22 who had dropped out before graduating from high school.

These in-depth interviews focused on the youths' perspectives on their school experiences and how these experiences may have influenced their disengagement and dropping out process.

What do you think they found?

"why we drop out"

Understanding and Disrupting Student Pathways to Leaving School

DEBORAH L. FELDMAN
ANTONY T. SMITH
BARBARA L. WAXMAN

Foreword by Camille A. Farrington

Profile of a Dropout

Almost **all** youth interviewed:

a. Had a bad experience in elementary school

b. Were bullied in elementary school

c. Had positive relationships with their elementary teachers

d. Had thoughts of quitting school in elementary grades

(Feldman et al., 2017)
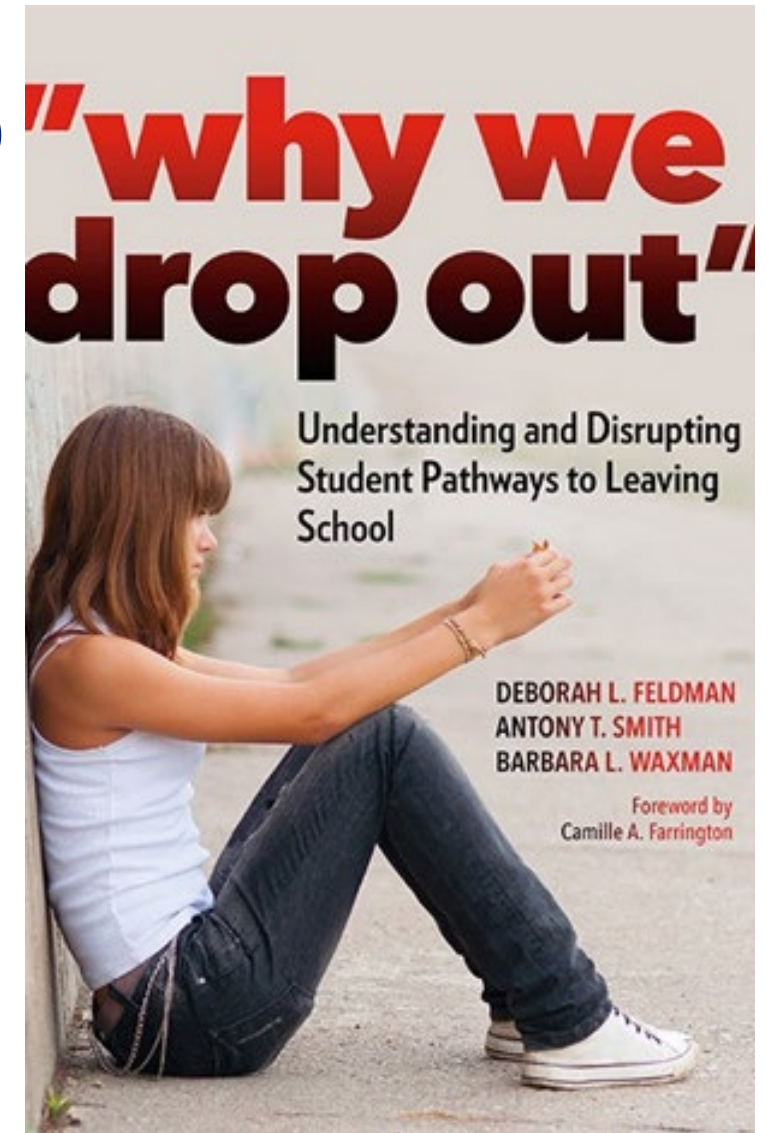
Profile of a Dropout

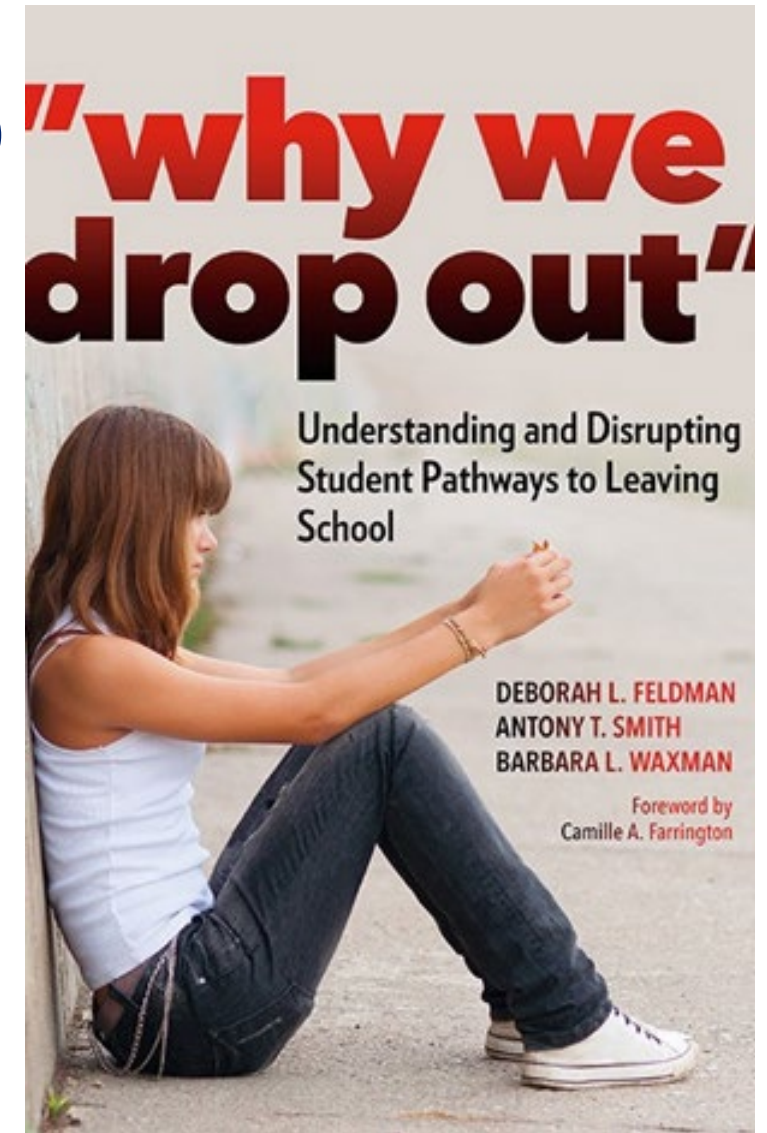What subject dominated youths' conversations about their academic experiences after elementary school?

a. Language Arts
b. Math
c. Science
d. Social Studies
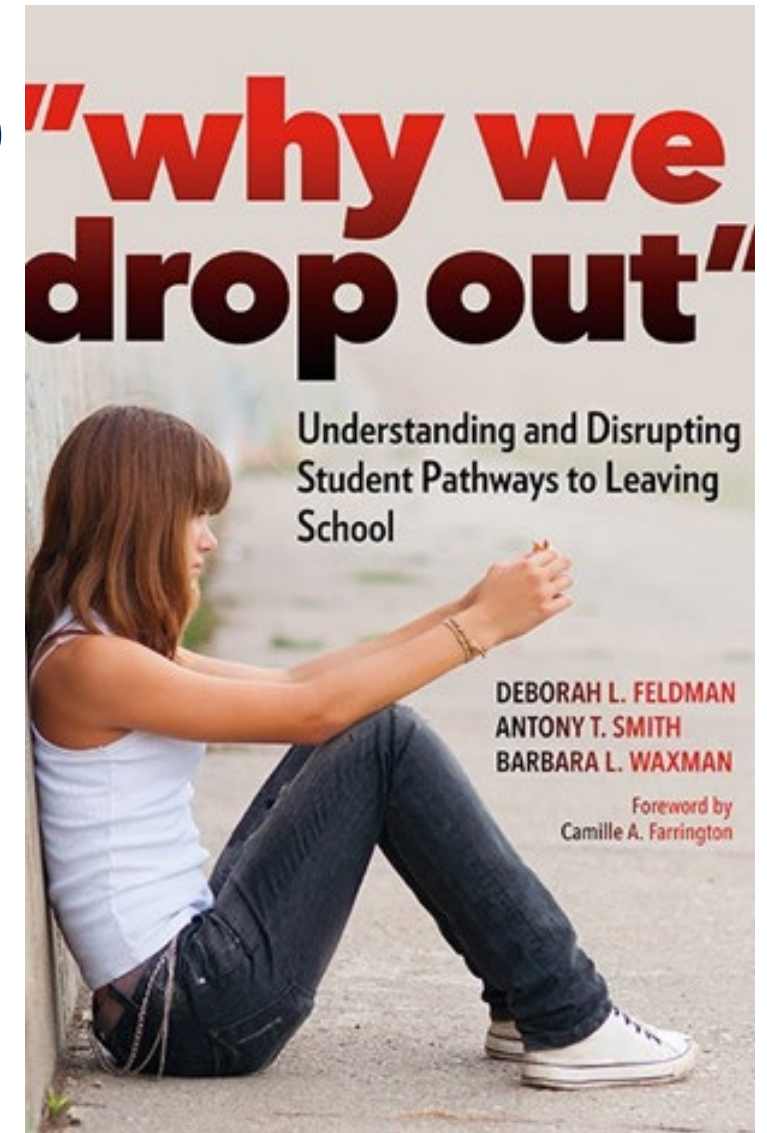
Profile of a Dropout

Almost ALL youth interviewed said they experienced early disengagement because:

a. They had a negative view of their academic capabilities

b. The other students made fun of them

c. The teacher(s) made them feel stupid

d. They were always in trouble for bad behavior

"why we drop out"

Understanding and Disrupting Student Pathways to Leaving School

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Foreword by
Camille A. Farrington

(Feldman et al., 2017)

Who Drops Out?

- Children chronically absent in preschool through 1st grade are much less likely to read on grade level by 3rd grade; from there, they are 4x more likely to drop out.

- By high school, attendance is a better dropout indicator than test scores.

- Students chronically absent between the 8th and 12th grade are 7x more likely to drop out.
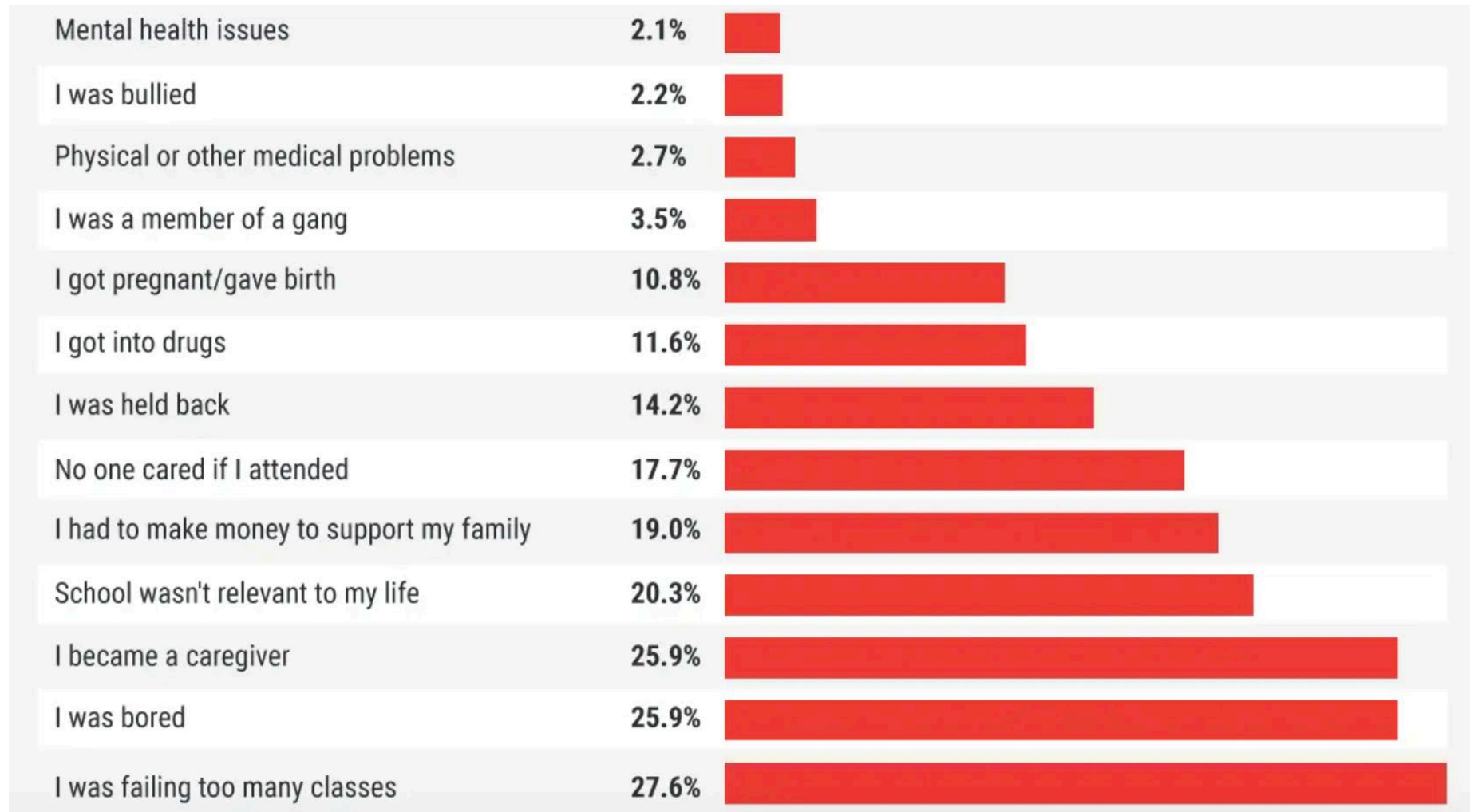
A Process of Disengagement

Risk factors identifiable in the elementary years:

- Highly aggressive in first grade

- Poor 3rd grade attendance

- Poor elementary school performance

- Children who repeated a grade were 5x more likely to drop out

Common Reasons High School Students Drop Out

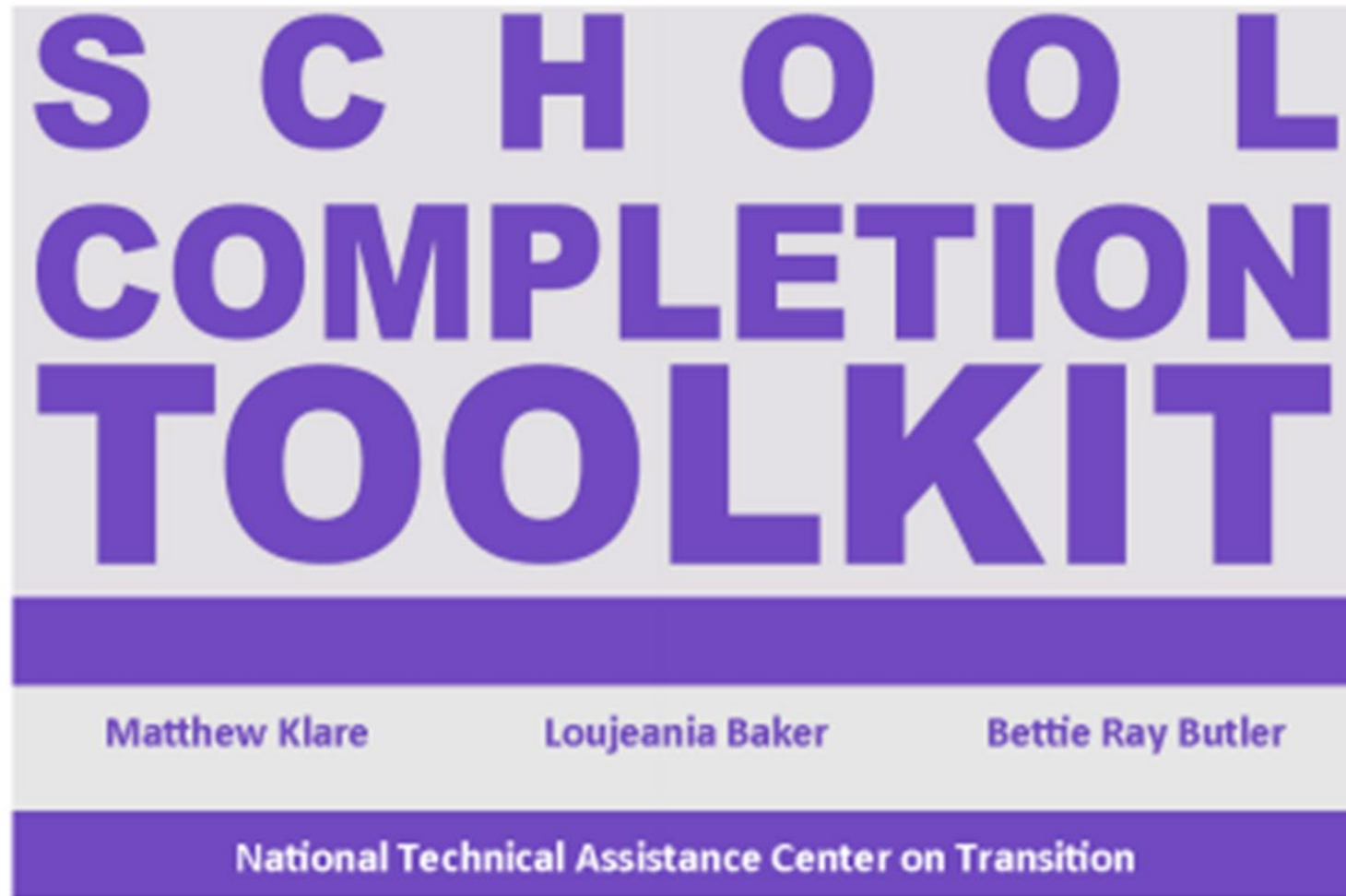| Reason	Percentage
Mental health issues	2.1%
I was bullied	2.2%
Physical or other medical problems	2.7%
I was a member of a gang	3.5%
I got pregnant/gave birth	10.8%
I got into drugs	11.6%
I was held back	14.2%
No one cared if I attended	17.7%
I had to make money to support my family	19.0%
School wasn't relevant to my life	20.3%
I became a caregiver	25.9%
I was bored	25.9%
I was failing too many classes	27.6%

Alterable Dropout Variables

- High rates of absenteeism
- Behavior problems
- Course failure
- Grade retention
- Negative attitudes toward school
- Low participation in extracurricular activities

School Completion

Information, strategies, and resources

NTACT School Completion Toolkit

SCHOOL COMPLETION TOOLKIT

Matthew Klare   Loujeania Baker   Bettie Ray Butler

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition

Contents of the Toolkit

Handout

Dropout Data Tools

Early Warning Systems

Using Dropout Data Tools

- Help a school organize, examine, analyze, and share its data related to school completion.

- Support the school in identifying needs and developing a local intervention plan as well as implementing and evaluating the plan.

- Help the school identify groups of students who have potential needs for additional supports and tiered interventions.

Dropout Data Tools

Early Warning Systems

Examples include:

- District's Student Management System

- NTACT Core Data Tool

- Additional NTACT tools that dig deeper:
  - Graduation and Dropout Tool
  - Attendance Tool
  - Academics Tool
  - Discipline Tool

NTACT Risk Calculator

Identifying Individual Student Needs

- A web-based early warning intervention system (also in Excel)

- Examines 16 individual student data elements

- Looks *beyond* the A, B, Cs to provide information about each student's needs for intervention and support

- Helps identify students for intervention groups

- Estimates each student's risk of dropping out (low-ultra)

While you may have a different tool, these are the data you will want to gather for your own analysis

NTACT Risk Calculator (continued)

- Provides a student-level roster report that indicates each student's risk level and areas of need.

- Provides a building-level report showing overall risk-level distribution and other summary information.

- Tool can be used one time or longitudinally to follow changes over time at the student and building levels.
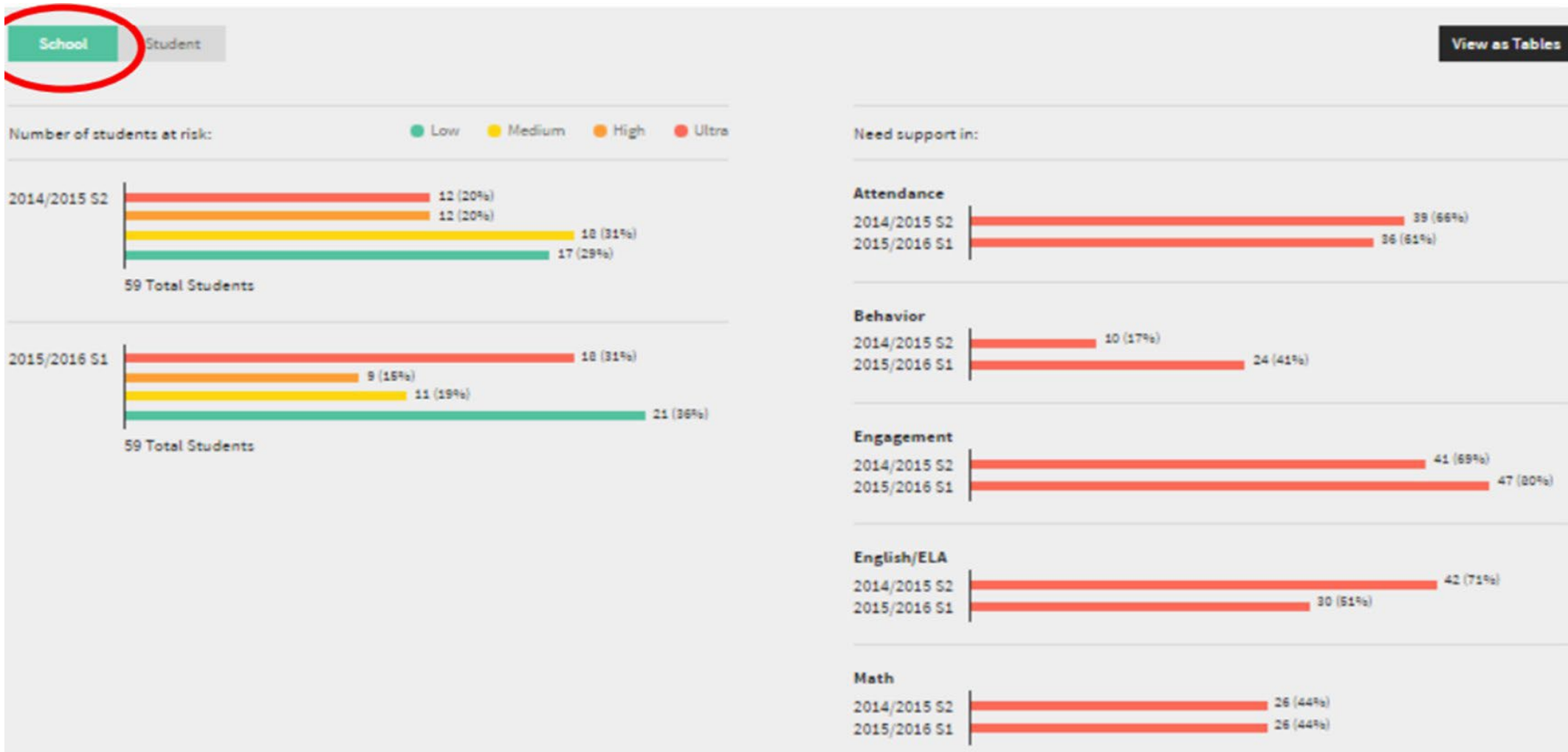
Features of the Standard Report

Longitudinal Summary Report

Handout

Transition Gradebook

Tracking transition activities

The Transition Gradebook

- A database tool to track transition-related data for individual students from 6th grade through age 21

- Tracks transition-related activities based on NTACT's Predictors of Post-School Success

- Tracks risk and protective factors associated with school completion

- The tool can also record individual student's

  - Involvement in IEP meeting
  - Specific skills training
  - Post-school outcomes

The Transition Gradebook

- Supports student-focused planning

- Tracks all transition activities the staff has delivered to each child

- Helps identify students needing support or interventions in key areas

- Provides a summary of the Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) delivered

- Informs administrators about summarized areas of risk and provision of activities for use in planning for program development

- Capable of trend analysis related to graduation and dropout

The Transition Gradebook

(3 of 6)

Summary Report
for one term

Risk Roster Report
for one term

Risk Summary
over time

Number of Students
by disability, risk level, IEP role, support need, skills training, post-school outcomes (chart)

Pre-ETS Activities
for one term

On Track to Graduate Report
for one term

The Transition Gradebook

On Track to Graduate Report | School Name | School Year 2018-20

ID/NAME	GENDER	RACE	GRADE/AGE	CATEGORY	ELL	ON TRACK TO GRADUATE
123456744 **Ronaldo Armbruster**	M	HI7	10	ID	No	
id-52 **Elmore Bashirian**	M	AS7	8	TBI/OHI	No	✖
id-23 **Shayna Bashirian**	M	BL7	age 20		No	✖
id-144 **Shaina Bechtelar**	F	AS7	12		Yes	✖
id-161 **Berniece Bednar**	M	WH7	8		Yes	

NUMBER OF STUDENTS

13	who are absent 10% or more of the time	7	who are failing Math class
11	who have 1 or more behavior marks	9	who are failing another course(s)
9	who have 1 or more suspensions this term	96	who are on-track for grade level
14	who have less than 2.0 GPA	4	who were retained one or more years
7	who are failing English / ELA class	103	who participate in extracurricular activities

May need support/intervention in:

13	Attendance
20	Behavior
27	Engagement
7	English
7	Math

490	CAREER AWARENESS ACTIVITIES	One Time	Occasionally	2-4x/week	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Every Semester	Annually
46	Career/Transition Fair (CW)	7	3	2	4	5	4	5	7	9
49	Career Exploration Online (CW)	3	7	3	8	6	8	4	3	7
36	Career Interest Inventory (CW)	3	6	9	0	1	5	6	0	6
50	Career Aptitude Assessment (CW)	3	5	4	3	6	13	6	6	4
45	Career Awareness Unit in Course (CW, CTE)	5	8	7	0	7	6	3	4	5
34	Industry Tour (CW, CTE)	9	0	6	2	3	5	3	3	3
35	Job Shadowing (CW)	6	2	1	10	5	3	2	1	5
59	Career Mentor (CW, SS)	8	6	7	12	3	9	3	2	9
42	Mock Interviews (CW, PW)	1	6	5	4	2	5	2	11	6
45	Job Search Support (CW, PW)	3	15	3	3	5	5	6	3	2
49	Resume Writing (CW, PW)	3	3	5	5	9	4	5	10	5

Page 2/5 December 10, 2018 6:36PM

536	WORK EXPERIENCE ACTIVITIES	One Time	Occasionally	2-4x/week	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Every Semester	Annually

The Transition Gradebook

TRANSITION GRADEBOOK

**Pre-ETS Activity Report** | School Name | School Year 2019-2020

Name	Student ID	Race/Ethnicity	Engaged with VR	On-track for graduation	Job Exploration Counseling	Work Based Learning	Counseling on Transition Programs or PSE at IHEs	Training in Workplace Readiness, Social Skills, Independent Living	Instruction in Self-Advocacy
Amy Ada	66269121	WH7	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
And Ada	96103566	WH7	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Nik Add	65269861	MU7	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

- [The Transition Gradebook](#)

Strategies for Educational Organizations

Where should we start?

What Works Clearinghouse Educator's Practice Guide: Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools

- [Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools](#)
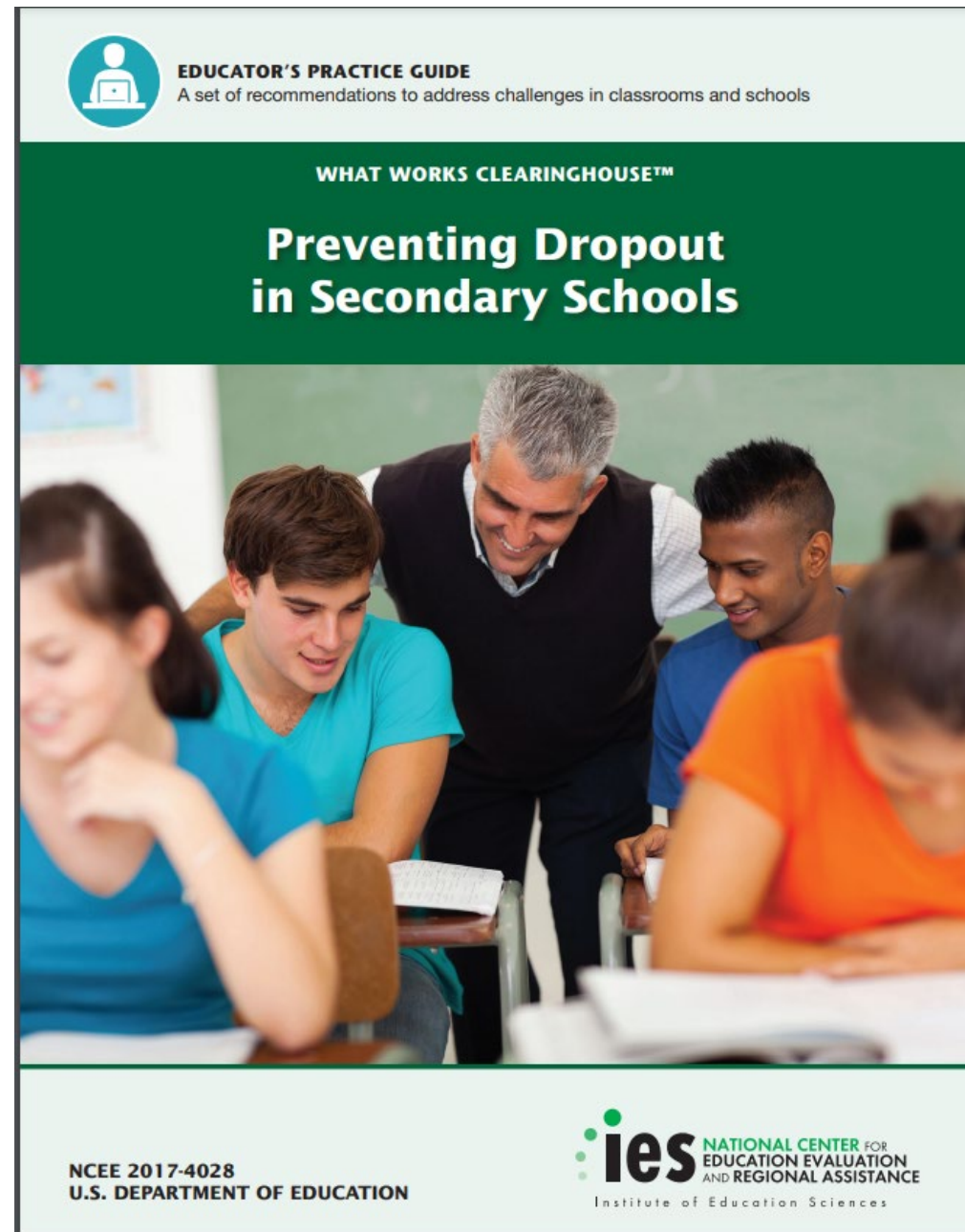
Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Recommended Practices for Dropout Prevention

- **Recommendation 1**: Monitor the progress of all students, and proactively intervene when students show early signs of attendance, behavior, or academic problems.

- **Recommendation 2**: Provide intensive, individualized support to students who have fallen off track and face significant challenges to success.

IES Recommended Practices for Dropout Prevention, continued

- **Recommendation 3**: Engage students by offering curricula and programs that connect schoolwork with college and career success and that improve students' capacity to manage challenges in and out of school.

- **Recommendation 4**: For schools with many at-risk students, create small, personalized communities to facilitate monitoring and support.

NTACT:C School Completion Toolkit Recommended Steps

- **Secure local stakeholder buy-in and support**

- **Develop local leadership teams**

- **Thoroughly examine system- and student-level data related to school completion**

- **Use program improvement planning tools to:**

  - Identify areas of strength and need
  - Prioritize the needs and choose 2 or 3 target areas for intervention
  - Develop a local action plan
  - Implement and evaluate the interventions

Possible Target Intervention Areas

- **Attendance – Implement attendance programs that employ a balance of rewards and sanctions**
  - Review and revise local attendance policies (e.g., don't tie attendance to grades or participation in activities)
- **Behavior – Adopt a school-wide behavior plan**
  - Environmental modifications: create environments to support the use of pro-social behaviors
  - Individual student need/self-management
    - Instruction in social skills and problem-solving skills
  - Classroom
  - School-wide

Possible Target Intervention Areas

- **Academic interventions**
  - Implement increasingly intensive, evidence-based methodologies, strategies, and interventions through high-quality instruction.
  - Increase academic engagement
- **Mentoring programs–provide that caring adult!**
  - Student checks in with the adult advocate regularly
  - Adult provides stability, guidance, and some oversight (e.g., check and connect and do it yourself versions)

Possible Target Intervention Areas

Student and family engagement–belonging to and participating in the school community

- **Look at student and faculty participation in extracurricular activities**
  - As time and budgets allow, **tailor activities** to student and faculty interests

- **Build on partnerships between the community and school to get students and families involved**

- **Develop supports for parents**
  - Get parents into the school
  - Provide ways for them to get involved in whatever capacity they can and want to

Possible Target Intervention Areas

School climate

- **Within the school, students must:**
  - Feel physically safe
  - Feel social and emotional security
  - Believe they are supported in their learning and goals (both short and long term)
  - Believe their social and civic learning and activities are important and supported
  - Believe they are respected, trusted, and connected to the adults and the learning environment

Next Steps for Addressing School Completion in Your District

Your Turn

Exit ticket:

Based on what you've heard today, please share two goals you have for this year to improve school completion for students with disabilities in your school(s).

References (1 of 4)

EDUImages (2021). Free library of photos celebrating students—and the educators who teach them. https://images.all4ed.org/

Feldman, D. L., Smith, A. T., & Waxman, B. L. (2017). *"Why we drop out": Understanding and disrupting student pathways to leaving school.* Teachers College Press. https://www.tcpress.com/why-we-drop-out-9780807758625?page_id=31.

- Gould, S. & Weller, C. (2015) The most common reasons students drop out of high school are heartbreaking. https://www.businessinsider.com/most-common-reasons-students-drop-out-of-high-school-2015-10

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National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (2018). *School Completion Toolkit*, Klare, M., Baker, L., & Butler, B.

Pyle, N. & Wexler, J. (2011). Preventing Students With Disabilities From Dropping Out. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 47*(5), 283–289. https://doi.org/10.1177/1053451211430118

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Smith, E. & Burrow, C. (2020). *Effective Dropout Recovery Strategies and The Graduation Alliance Approach.* Graduation Alliance. https://www.graduationalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2020-Effective-Dropout-Recovery-Strategies_Grauation-Alliance-White-Paper.pdf

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US Department of Education. (2016). Every student, every day. Initiative to address and eliminate chronic absenteeism. https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/chronicabsenteeism/index.html

Resources

- Attendance works www.attendanceworks.org
- For access to the Dropout Data Tools, and The Risk Calculator http://transitionta.org
- Education Week, Children Trends Database, 2017 https://www.edweek.org/
- New York State Student Information Repository System (SIRS) Manual http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/sirs/documents/2020-21SIRSManual16-0.pdf
- Urban Collaborative https://www.urbancollaborative.org

Questions and Answers

Contact Us

TAP for Transition

Amber McConnell, Director
TAPtransition@cornell.edu

New York State EDUCATION DEPARTMENT — Knowledge › Skill › Opportunity

New York State Education Department Office of Special Education **Educational Partnership** — Technical Assistance Partnership for Transition

Cornell University

Meeting Evaluation Survey

Link here