Decreasing the Dropout Rates in the United States

Terry Cash
National Dropout Prevention Center, Clemson University, SC

Sam Stringfield
University of Louisville

Stephen Plank
Department of Sociology, Johns Hopkins University
Terry Cash, Ph.D.

Assistant Director,
National Dropout Prevention Center
Clemson University
Clemson, South Carolina
www.dropoutprevention.org
Overview

- National Perspective on the Dropout Issue
- Why Do Students Drop Out?
- 15 Effective Strategies
- Research Findings On CTE Impact
- Some Major Initiatives Across the Nation
In 2002, we incarcerated our 2,000,000\textsuperscript{th} person

82\% of those incarcerated are high school dropouts

The national graduation rate is approximately 73.9\%, but in urban areas, that percentage is significantly lower

Potential dropouts are identified as early as 3\textsuperscript{rd} grade; this is not exclusively a high school problem (Long, Lane, 2002)
Reasons Students Give for Dropping Out

Dropout Focus group and survey results of young people aged 16-25 in 25 different locations throughout the US

- Classes not interesting 47%
- Not inspired or motivated to work hard 69%
- Failing 35%
- Required to repeat a grade 32%

(80% of students who fail 9th grade do not graduate from high school) (Black, 2004)

- Personal reasons 27%

The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts, March 2006
Grass Root Factors
...causing students to dropout

- **Individual**
  Lacks future orientation, inadequate peer relationships, drug abuse, pregnancy, special learning needs, depression

- **Family**
  Poverty, low expectations, abuse, single parent
Grass Root Factors
...causing students to dropout

- **School**
  Lack of plan for challenged students, no significant adult, lack of alternatives for learning

- **Community**
  Low expectations, non-caring environment, violence, lack of involvement with schools, lack of support for schools
Note: Risk factors include single-parent household, parents without a high school diploma, older sibling dropped out, 3 or more hours home alone in afternoon after school, limited English proficient, and low-income family.

Helping Students Graduate: A Strategic Approach to Dropout Prevention

15 Research-Based Strategies from The National Dropout Prevention Center/Network
Systemic Renewal
School-Community Collaboration

Systemic Renewal

Systemic Renewal

Systemic Renewal

School-Community Collaboration
Safe Learning Environment

- Systemic Renewal
- Safe Environment
- Learning
- School-Community Collaboration

Diagram showing the interconnection of systemic renewal, safe environment, learning, and school-community collaboration.
Early Interventions

Systemic Renewal

Early Interventions

School-Community Collaboration

Safe

Learning

Environments

Systemic Renewal
Basic Core Strategies
Instructional Practices

Systemic Renewal

Safe

Early Interventions

Instructional Practices

School-Community Collaboration

Basic Core Strategies

Learning Environments

Systemic Renewal
Research on CTE Impact: Pro and Con
So, Is CTE A Powerful Tool To Be Used In the Day-to-Day Work of Reducing Dropout?
City & State Initiatives

- **Arizona**: Arizona High School Renewal and Improvement Initiative.
- **Pennsylvania**: Biotechnology Lab in The Greater Johnstown Career and Technology Center
- **Massachusetts**: Environmental Technology Program (enrollment has jumped 21% in the past 11 years)
- **Ohio**: Improved Solutions for Urban Systems (ISUS) in Dayton
City & State Initiatives

- **Maryland**: Seneca Valley High School
- **Kentucky**: Corbin High School
- **South Carolina**: Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA) of 2005
- **Louisiana**: Major new legislation
- **Oklahoma**: Additional CTE funding/legislation
- **California**: Additional CTE funding
Background:

• U.S. High School graduation rates are currently hovering at around 70%. (Manhattan Institute, various dates)

• The long-term social and economic implications of educational decisions are expanding dramatically.
Median Income of Male Americans Aged 25-34, By Educational Level, 1949-2002

Source: Educational Attainment in the United States, U.S. Census Bureau, March 2002
2001 dollars (CPI-U adjusted)
Final Background Point

• Specialized CTE is the great equalizer for persons not choosing 4-year colleges.

(Jim Stone, various U.S. Dept. of Labor reports)
Individuals Drop Out, through complex systems

*Students options are complex*, especially for “At Risk” students.

Most non-college-prep. students, are under-advised. “Academies,” “Career Pathways,” and technical concentration options can provide concrete focus to options.
From “What Makes It Work?”
   (NRCCTE, Castellano, Stone & Stringfield)

• Better Middle School Preparation matters

• Taking More CTE matters

• Having a quality Academy or other concentrated Academic/CTE experience can matter.
Systems Matter, too

- Individual Teachers matter,
- Schools and school organization matter,
- CTE can matter, and
- School Systems can matter.
Figure 1: Overall: Overall Comparison of Graduation Rates Between BCPS and Maryland

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>BCPS measured by MSDE</th>
<th>BCPS measured by Maclver &amp; Farley, 2003</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>83.1%</td>
<td>83.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Maryland measured by MSDE, MacIver & Farley, 2003
Baltimore (and other urban systems) Conclusions:

- Systemic Reform is possible.
- Gains can be dramatic.
- Sustainability is perpetually in question.
Figure 5: A Static Representation of the Relationships of Educational Organization Levels and Their Potential Influences on Students
You Matter!

- Be a great teacher or coordinator.
- Embed Math, Science, and Writing.
- Insist on CTE career pathways, not just courses.
- Give strong career guidance to students, especially those at risk of dropping out.
- Get involved at the district and state levels.
- Be patient.
Dropping out of high school and the place of career and technical education.


Completed for the National Centers for Career and Technical Education.

Funded by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education.

Figure 1. Distribution of age at time of dropout event (first event after entry into ninth grade) for those who had such an event (n=379)
Figure 2. Distribution of month at which dropout occurred (relative to initial entry into ninth grade) for those who dropped out (n=379)
Figure 3. Estimated Effects of Course-Taking Ratio on Log-Hazard of Dropping Out For Two Subsamples Defined by Age at Initial Ninth-Grade Entry

- ▲ Less than 15 upon 9th grade entry
- ■ 15 or older upon 9th grade entry
Dropouts in America: Confronting the graduation rate crisis.

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Terry Cash
tcash@clemson.edu

Samuel Stringfield
sam.stringfield@louisville.edu

Stephen Plank
splank@jhu.edu