

2009



FRANKLIN-ESSEX-HAMILTON BOCES

Graduation Rate Initiative Newsletter



Drop Out Prevention

Why Do Student's Drop Out?

There is a high school dropout epidemic in America. Each year, almost 1/3 of all public high school students – and nearly 1/2 of all blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans – fail to graduate from public high school with their class. Many of these students abandon school with less than 2 years remaining to complete their high school education. This tragic cycle has not substantially improved during the past few decades when education reform has been high on the public agenda. During this time, the public has been almost entirely unaware of the severity of the dropout problem due to inaccurate data. The consequences remain tragic. The decision to drop out is a dangerous one for the student.

WWW.SILENTEPIDEMIC.ORG

Reasons for Dropping Out: Cited by the Students

- Nearly half (47%) reported that a major reason for dropping out was that they did not find their classes interesting.
- Nearly 7 out of 10 respondents (69%) said they were not motivated or inspired to work hard, 80% did one hour or less of home-work each day in high school, 2/3 would have worked harder if more was demanded of them (higher academic standards and more studying and home-work), and 70% were confident they could have graduated if they had tried.
- Many students gave personal reasons for leaving school. Nearly one-third (32%) said they had to get a job and make money; 26% said they became a parent; and 22% said they had to care for a family member.
- 35% said that "failing in school" was a major factor for dropping out.
- 45% said they started high school poorly prepared by their earlier schooling.
- 32% were required to repeat a grade before dropping out and 29% expressed significant doubts that they could have met their high school's requirements for graduation even if they had put in the necessary effort.

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Prevention: What are We Doing Locally?

BOCES' District Superintendent, Mr. Shafer, presented a task to the Student Council at the North Franklin Educational Center, to create posters about the benefits of students being at school and being on time. His hope was to have the contest run district wide.

As well as the contest, we have had the pleasure of having Julie Reagan, Clinical Faculty Professor, host professional development opportunities to our districts on the topic of Drop Out Prevention. Her presentations address current research, an analysis of practices that typically exist in most rural schools and strategies to initiate a district-wide holistic approach for all students.



Districts from around the regions sent their Superintendent's to the NYS Drop Out Prevention Summit where Governor Paterson's *Contract for Excellence* ensures a commitment to improving quality & increasing accountability among educators as we push forward & attempt to meet the needs of an evolving populace & ensure that more children succeed in the academic world, graduate & move on to productive adult lives.

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AMERICA'S PROMISE ALLIANCE

The nation's largest multi-sector collaboration dedicated to the well-being of children and youth. Our Alliance partners are schools, corporations, nonprofit service organizations, foundations, policymakers, advocacy organizations, and faith groups that work collaboratively to ensure that America's young people experience the *Five Promises*:

- Caring Adults
- Safe Places
- A Healthy Start
- Effective Education
- Opportunities to Help Others



NYS Drop Out Prevention Summit

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FEHB's Action Planning to Achieve America's Promise

BOCES Principals, Transition Services and Coordinators are currently working to connect students with mentors in the workforce through on the job experiences. These opportunities promote one on one healthy relationships between students and adults that will provide support and guidance to students in need of positive role models. The coordinators will collect data from mentors, mentees and employees. Meanwhile, Principals, students, faculty advisors, business partners, and PBIS Team Members are actively seeking to engage youth with adults through leadership programs (i.e., Student Council, Skills USA) as an integral component of the PBIS program. This will address the behavioral and discipline systems needed for successful learning and social development of students. This will be tracked through discipline referrals, attendance rates, and performance at Regional, State, and National Levels.

Medaille College Virtual Round Table on Drop Out Prevention April 6 – June 1, 2009

This nine week event will feature weekly resources and video presentations by a variety of presenters on dropout prevention. Highlights of topics covered include: "Customer Satisfaction", "The Reasons Students Dropout" and "Dropout Rates Due to Poor Curriculum Decisions". For more information, please contact:

Leslie LaRose, Director of Special Services
Franklin-Essex-Hamilton BOCES
23 Huskie Lane
Malone, NY 12953
(518) 483-5230

The Franklin-Essex-Hamilton BOCES' Regional Graduation Rate Initiative is the local effort aligned with the State and National initiatives

The Goal:

- **To have 90% or more of the 2008 cohort achieve high school graduation by June of 2012**

FEHB's Graduation Rate Initiative

Goal 1: The educational community will be knowledgeable about the G.R.I. and will commit to its success.

Action Steps:

- Issue information to staff on G.R.I.
- Participate in the on-line discussion on Graduation Rates hosted by Medaille College.
- Participation in the Professional Development hosted by Julie Reagan of SUNY Potsdam on March 20, 2009.
- Present to all area Boards of Education and school districts on current data and the G.R.I.
- Post G.R.I. link on FEHB's web-page and encourage other districts to do the same.

Goal 2: Students will be knowledgeable about the G.R.I. And a concerted message will be provided on the importance of high school completion.

Action Steps:

- Prevention posters will be displayed in all secondary schools including AEC and NFEC.
- Student poster contests will be encouraged and posters will be displayed.
- Information will be disseminated to all students regarding the G.R.I.
- Student Focus groups will be convened to elicit student input.

Goal 3: Parents will be knowledgeable about the G.R.I.

Action Steps:

- A letter outlining the initiative will be sent to all parents.
- Materials will be available at www.fehb.org and school district sites.
- Press outreach will be undertaken.

Goal 4: Community Agencies will partner with schools to promote high school completion:

Action Steps:

- Topic to be addressed by Community Intervention Partnership.
- Superintendents to discuss rates with Commissioner of DSS.

Drop Out Prevention Newsletter
Editor: Leslie A. LaRose
(518) 483-5230
E-mail: llarose@mail.fehb.org

Published By:
The Franklin-Essex-Hamilton BOCES
Office of Special Services
23 Huskie Lane
Malone, NY 12953

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