Dropout Prevention Everyone's Problem

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Overview

I.   Understanding the Problem

II.   Strategies That Work

III.   Ideas for Planning Mentor Programs

IV. Trends and Tips

Types of Dropout and Graduation Rates

According to NCES, its indicators of school dropout and school completion include the following:

- Event dropout rate

- Status dropout rate

- Status completion rate

- Averaged freshman graduation rate
  (Cohort rate)

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2010. *Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 1972-2008)*

Dropout Prevention
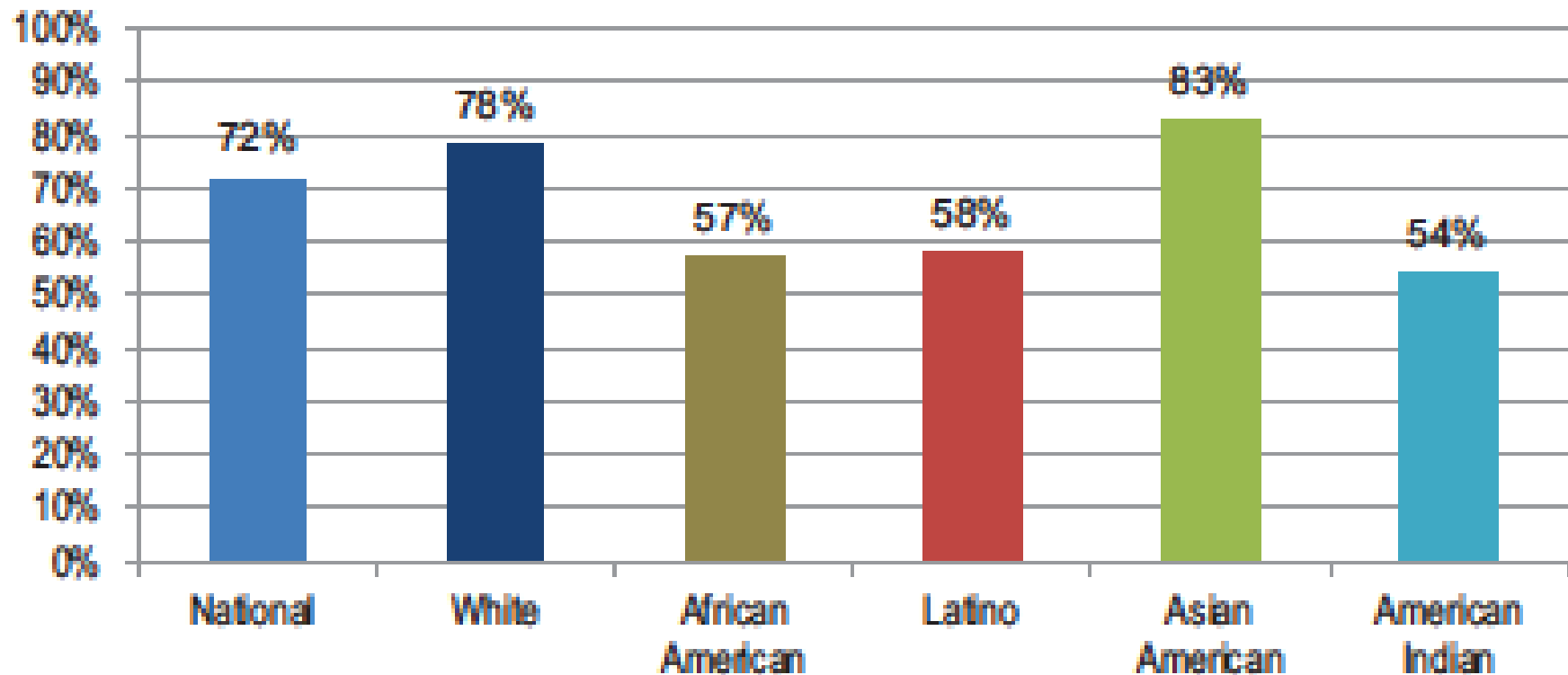# A National Issue

Background Characteristics

Race/Ethnicity	Dropout Rate
■ White, non-Hispanic	7.3%
■ Black, non-Hispanic	10.9%
■ Hispanic	27.0%
■ Hispanic, immigrant	44.2%
■ Asian/Pacific Islander	3.8%[1]
■ Native American Dropout	57.0%[2]

[1](National Center for Education Statistics, 2002. *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2000)*
[2](Manhattan Institute for Policy Research. *Civic Report 31 Public School Graduation Rates in the U. S., 2000*)

National Graduation Rate for Class of 2008

Source: Editorial Projects in Education, "Diplomas Count 2011: Beyond High School, Before Baccalaureate: Meaningful Alternatives to a Four-Year Degree," special issue, *Education Week* 30, no. 34 (2011).

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Dropout Prevention
A National Issue

- American Indian and Alaska Native students have a dropout rate twice the national average - the highest dropout rate of any United States ethnic or racial group

- Native American students drop out of school before graduating from high school both on reservations and in cities

Plans for Dropout Prevention & Special School Support Services for American Indian & Alaska Native Students prepared for the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force in 1992

Dropout Prevention
A National Issue

Students with Disabilities

- Nationwide, dropout rates among students with disabilities for all categories of disability combined is approximately double that of general education peers.

- Dropout rates vary substantially among the various categories of disability.

Economics of High School Dropouts

- Earn less
- Pay less in taxes
- Rely more on public health
- More involved in criminal justice system
- More likely to use welfare services

(Rotermund, *California Dropout Research Project*, Statistical Brief 5, September 2007)

Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment

- Doctoral degree...................... 1.6%
- Master's degree...................... 2.8%
- Bachelor's degree................... 3.1%
- Associate's degree.................
  4.0%
- Some college 4.8%
- High school degree................. 5.3%
- Less than high school............8.5%

(Stotland and Davis, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2004)

Diversity of Influences/Factors Contributing to School Dropouts

A   B behavior   C

L   M   N nutrition

X   Y   Z zero tolerance

Reasons for Dropping Out of School

Students who considered dropping out of high school gave these reasons for considering this option:

- I didn't like the school…………………………………………….. 73%
- I didn't like the teachers …………………………………………. 61%
- I didn't see value in the work I was being asked to do…….. 60%
- I had family issues ……………………………………………….. 42%
- I needed to work for money……………………………………… 35%
- I was picked on or bullied………………………………………. 28%
- No adults in the school cared about me…………………….... 24%
- The work was too easy…………………………………………… 19%

(Yazzie-Mintz, "Voices of Students on Engagement: A Report on the 2006 High School Survey of Student Engagement")

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Dropout Rates Related to Socioeconomic Status

Family Income Level	Dropout Rate
▪ Quintile 1	38%
▪ Quintile 2	22%
▪ Quintile 3	15%
▪ Quintile 4/5	8%

(Jobs for the Future, 2006)

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Grade Retention and School Dropout

- **Retention of one grade** – increases risk by 40%

- **Retention of two grades** – increases risk by 90%

(Roderick, M. PDK Research Bulletin, No. 15, 1995)

Barriers and Risks for Girls

- **Pregnancy and family responsibilities**
  - 33% of dropouts are pregnant before exiting

- **Attendance rates**
  - 9% more girls than boys cite attendance as a factor

- **Academics**
  - African American, Hispanics & Native Amer./Alaskan Natives drop out at a higher rate than males or Caucasians

- **Discipline**
  - 12th grade Hispanic females' dropout rate skyrockets

- **Family structure and rules**

(When Girls Don't Graduate, We All Fail, 2007)

What key indicator is the best predictor of a school dropout?

- Attendance
- Reading Level
- Free and reduced lunch
- Academic achievement
- Discipline referrals

Research Domain Factors
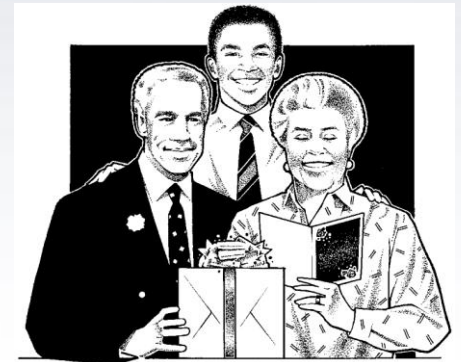
- Individual

- Family

- School

- Community

Individual Factors...contributing to students dropping out

- Lacks future orientation
- Inadequate peer relationships
- Drug abuse
- Pregnancy
- Special learning needs
- Depression

Family Factors...contributing to students dropping out

- Poverty
- Low expectations
- Abuse
- Mobility of family
- Parent level of education
- Language and literacy levels

School Factors...contributing to students dropping out

- Lack of program for challenged students
- No significant, interested adult
- Lack of alternatives for learning
- Lack of active learning instruction
- No individual learning plans
- Behavior and discipline issues
- Retention policies

Community Factors...contributing to students dropping out

- Lack of involvement with schools
- Lack of support for schools
- Non-caring environment
- Low expectations
- Violence
- Few recreational facilities
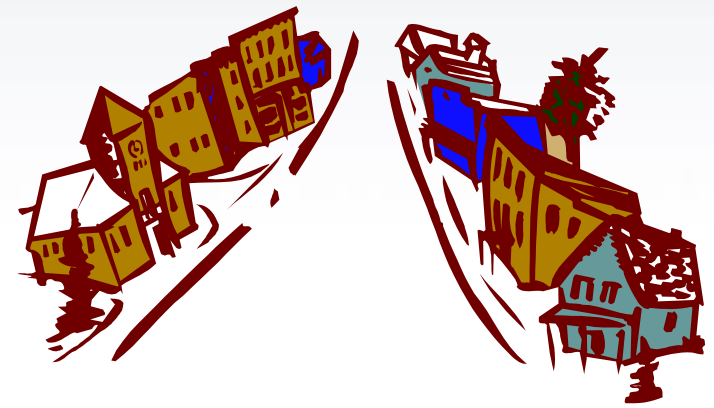
Risk Factors by School Levels

Individual Factors	Elem.	Middle	High
Has a learning disability or emotional disturbance		✓	✓
High number of work hours		✓	✓ ✱
Parenthood			✓ ✱
High-risk peer group		✓ ✱	✓
High-risk social behavior		✓ ✱	✓
Highly socially active outside of school			✓
Low achievement	✓ ✱	✓ ✱	✓ ✱
Retention/overage for grade	✓ ✱	✓ ✱	✓ ✱
Poor attendance	✓ ✱	✓ ✱	✓ ✱
Low educational expectations		✓ ✱	✓ ✱
Lack of effort		✓	✓
Low commitment to school		✓	✓ ✱
No extracurricular participation		✓	✓ ✱
Misbehavior	✓	✓	✓ ✱
Early aggression	✓	✓	

Risk Factors by School Levels

Family Factors	Elem.	Middle	High
Low socioeconomic status	✓ ✱	✓ ✱	✓ ✱
High family mobility		✓ ✱	
Low education level of parents	✓	✓	✓ ✱
Large number of siblings	✓		✓
Not living with both natural parents	✓	✓	✓ ✱
Family disruption	✓		
Low educational expectations		✓ ✱	
Sibling(s) has dropped out		✓	✓
Low contact with school		✓ ✱	
Lack of conversations about school		✓ ✱	✓

Key: ✔ *One (1) research study*
      ✔ ✱ *Two (2) or more research studies*

Hammond, C., Smink, J., & Drew, S. (2007). *Dropout risk factors and exemplary programs: A technical report,* pg. 6. Retrieved from www.dropoutprevention.org/major-research-reports/dropout-risk-factors-exemplary-programs-technical-report

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Risk Factors Supported Across All School Levels

- Low achievement

- Retention/overage for grade

- Poor attendance

- Low family socioeconomic status

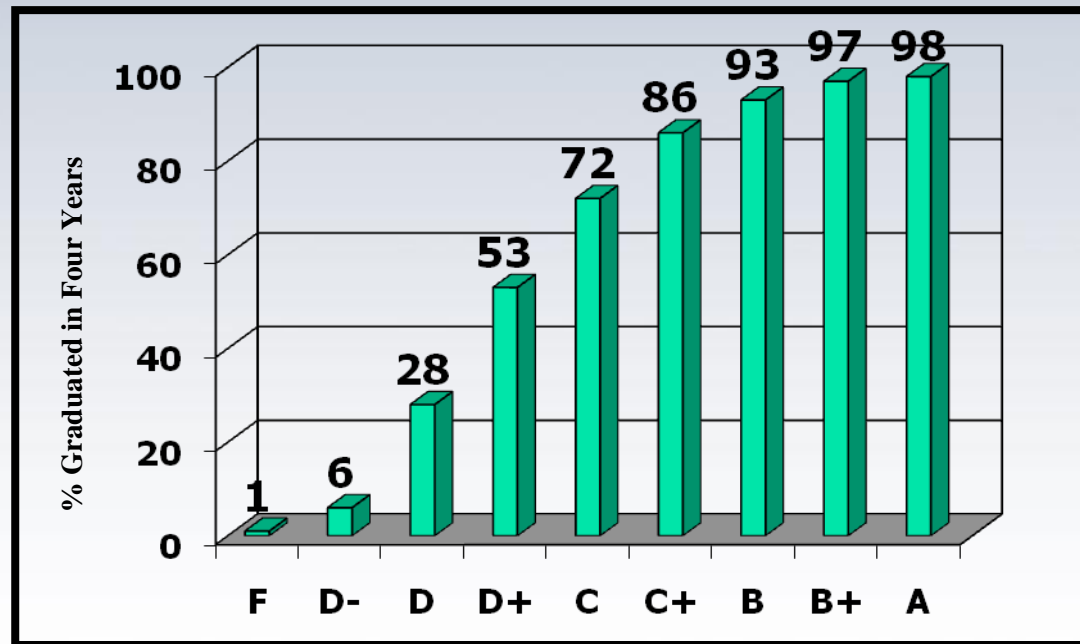# What Really Matters?

Attendance Affects Graduation
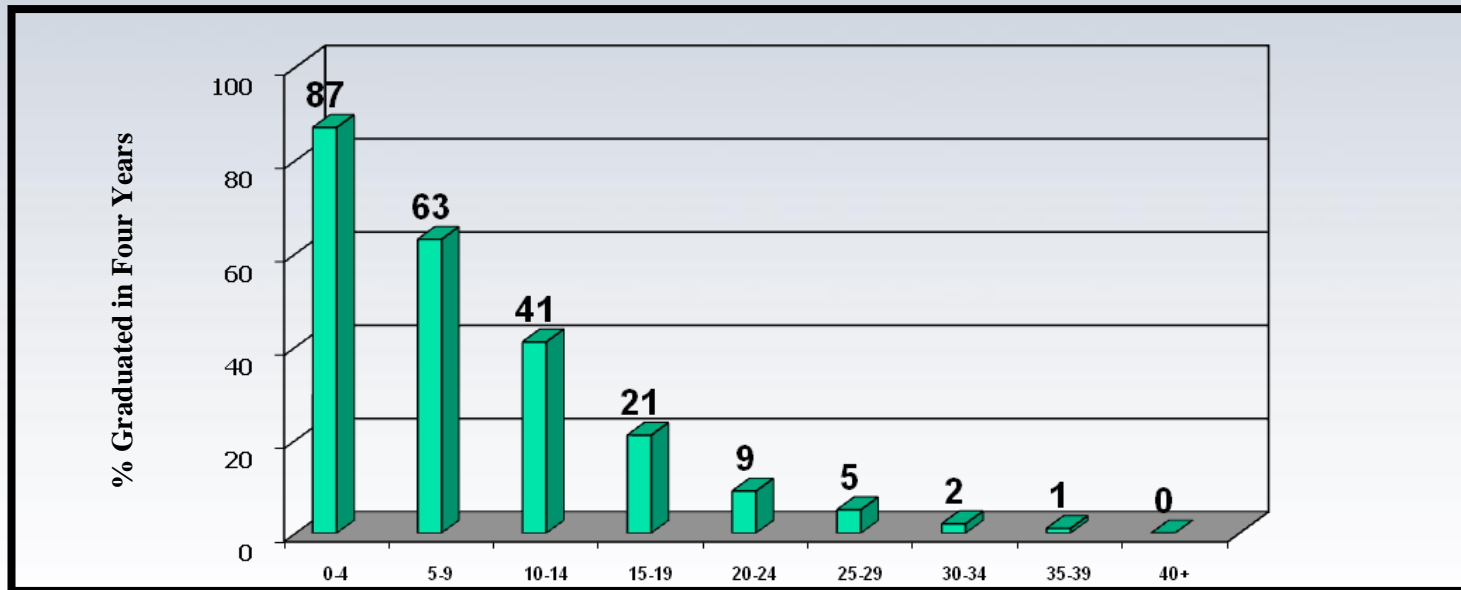
Days Absent Per Semester
Course cutting counted as partial days

(The Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago, 2007)

What Really Matters?

Grades Affect Graduation

Average Freshman Grades
Rounded to the nearest 0.5

(*The Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago*)

While no one factor (or even several factors) assures students will not graduate; multiple factors can help identify potential dropouts.

DEWS

Institute of Education Sciences Practice Guide Recommendations

1. Utilize data systems that support a realistic diagnosis of the number of students who drop out and that help identify individual students at high risk of dropping out (diagnostic)

2. Assign adult advocates to students at risk of dropping out (targeted intervention)

3. Provide academic support and enrichment to improve academic performance (targeted intervention)

4. Implement programs to improve students' classroom behavior and social skills (targeted intervention)

5. Personalize the learning environment and instructional process (schoolwide intervention)

6. Provide rigorous and relevant instruction to better engage students in learning and provide the skills needed to graduate and to serve them after they leave school (schoolwide intervention)

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Global Perspective of IES Recommendations

1	2	3	4	5	6
Districtwide Interventions	**Targeted Interventions**			**Schoolwide Interventions**	
Student, grade-level, school and district analyses	Staff actions for student improvement			Broad-based actions to improve school environment, instruction, and career information	
1. Analyze student data	2. Assign adult advocates 3. Provide academic support 4. Improve behaviors, social skills, and relationships			5. Personalize the learning environment 6. Provide rigorous and relevant instruction with multiple pathways to graduation and beyond	

15 Strategies That Help Prevent Students From Dropping Out

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Dropout Prevention: Everyone's Problem
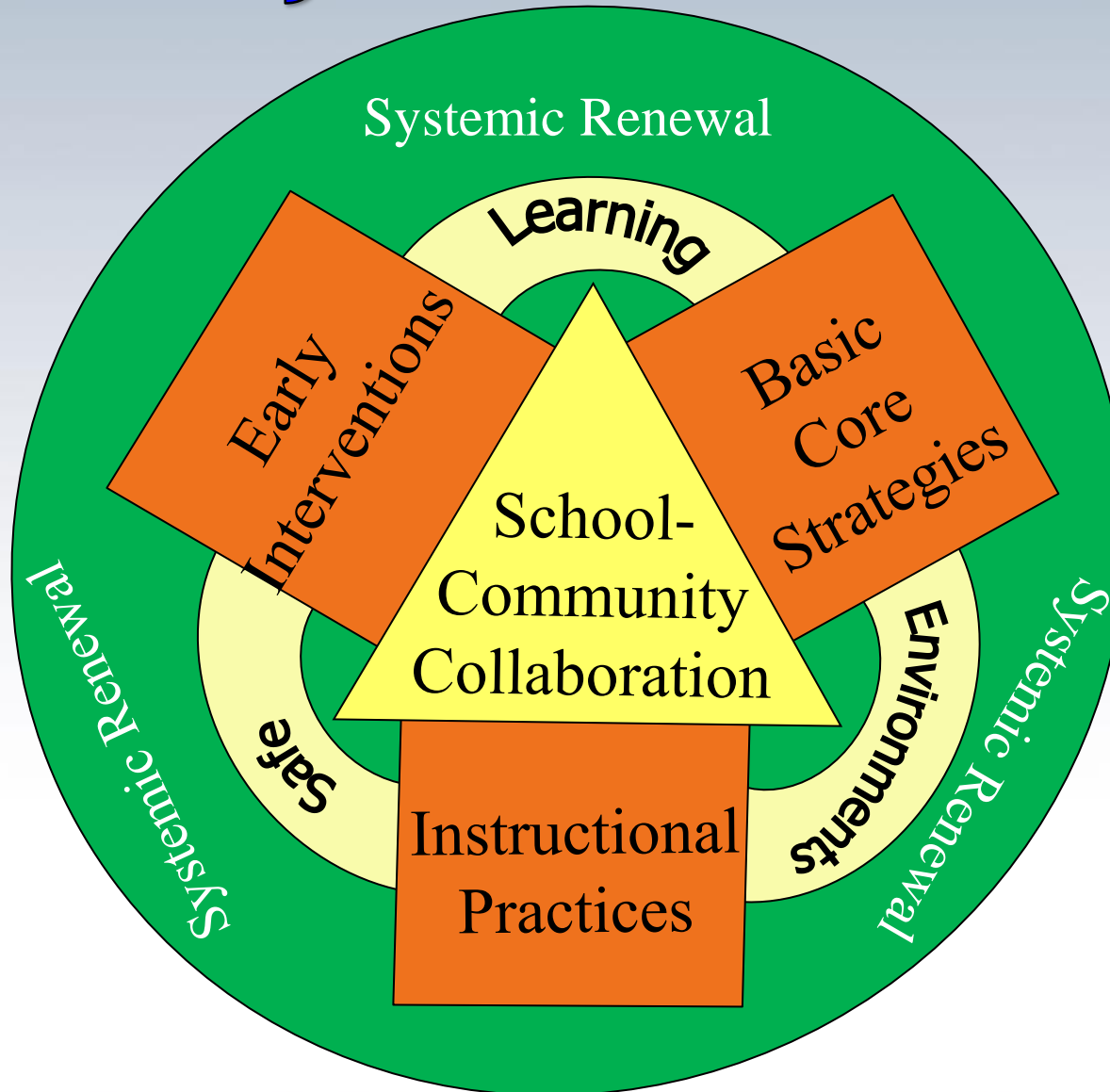
A School and Community Perspective

- Systemic renewal

- School and community collaboration

- Safe learning environments

Systemic Renewal

What is systemic renewal?

- Continuous, critical inquiry into current practices

- Identifying needed educational improvements

- Removing organizational barriers

- Providing a system structure that supports change (Schwartzbeck, 2002)

Systemic Renewal

- Policies

- Populations

- Personnel

- Perpetual

- Performance

- Pathways

- Partners

- Pennies
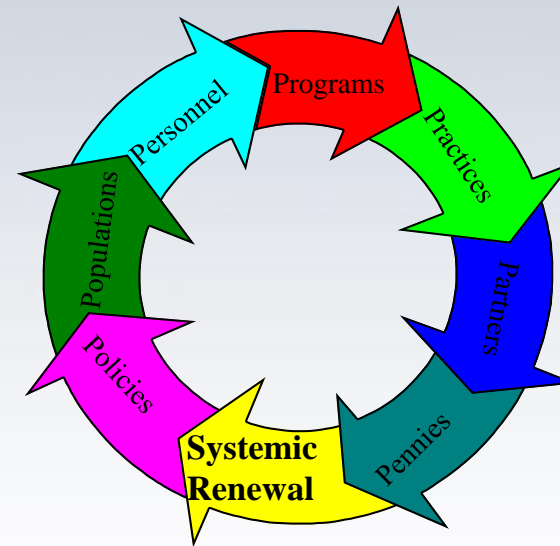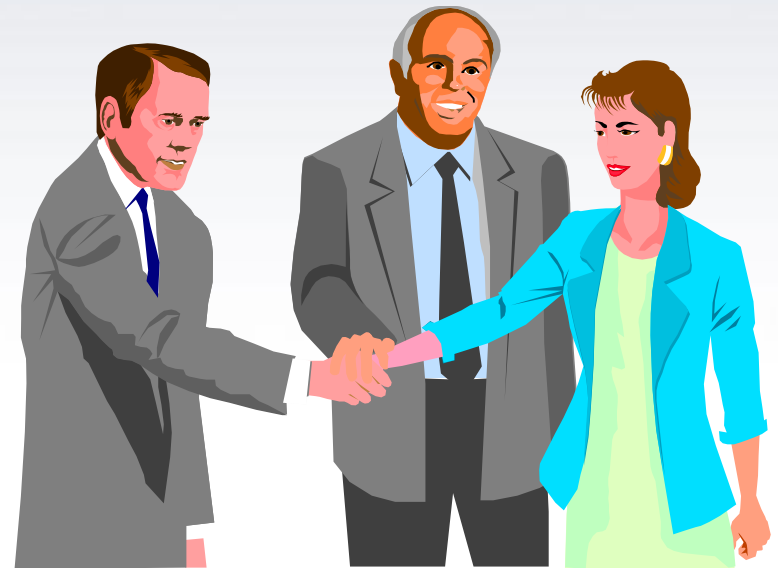
Systemic Renewal

Processes for Continuous Improvement

- Involve all stakeholders
- Share decision-making
- Map assets
- Identify problems
- Allocate resources
- Evaluate program

School-Community Collaboration

Schools Cannot Do It Alone

- Community agencies
- Faith-based community
- Business/Industry
- Volunteers
- Parents

Creating Safe Learning Environments

A safe learning environment:

- Provides a warm and welcoming atmosphere that fosters a spirit of acceptance and caring

- Is free of intimidation, violence, and fear

- Clearly communicates behavior expectations consistently enforced and fairly applied
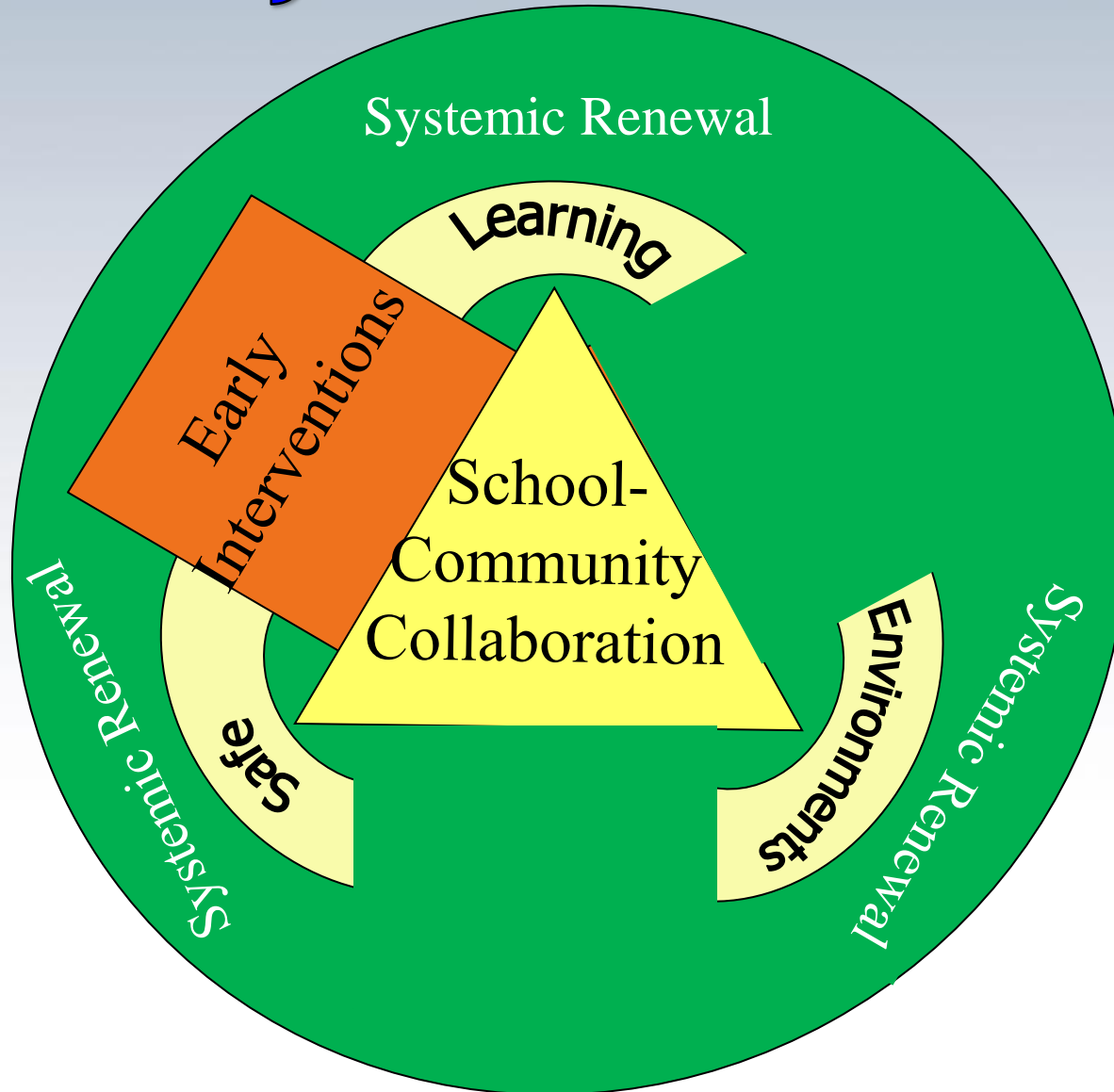
Creating Safe Learning Environments

A comprehensive plan includes:

- A caring, cooperative, cohesive culture with respect for diversity

- Character education coupled with a fair discipline program

- A conflict resolution curriculum, anger management techniques, bullying prevention, and peer mediation
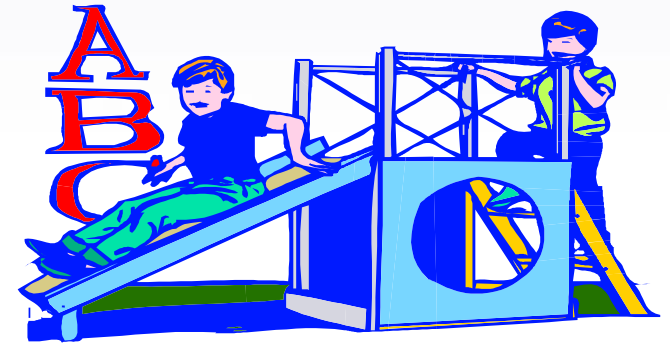
Dropout Prevention: Everyone's Problem

Early Interventions

- Early Childhood Education

- Early Literacy Development

- Family Engagement

Early Childhood Education

Best Practices in Early Childhood Education

Infants (Birth to three years)

- Encourage conversations by parents and adults

- Exposures to different social settings (Stegelin, 2004)

Early Childhood Education

Best Practices in Early Childhood Education

Preschool Children (3-5 year olds)

- Use all sensory experiences

- Provide print-rich environments

(Stegelin, 2004)

Early Childhood Education

Best Practices in Early Childhood Education …

K-Primary Children

- Provide hands-on and exploratory activities

- Encourage reading and small group work

(Stegelin, 2004)

Early Childhood Education

Impact of Early Childhood Education…

Perry Preschool Study – High-quality Head Start programs

- Decreased level of school dropouts

- Lowered truancy

- Reduced teen pregnancy

- Lessened need to be in Special Education
  (Barnett, 1995)

Early Childhood Education

One dollar invested in high-quality early childhood education programs by policy makers results in a return of *thirteen dollars* in preventative costs associated with incarceration, truancy, school dropout, and teen pregnancy.

(Belfield et al. *The Journal of Human Resources*, 2006)

Early Literacy Development

Research

- At-risk students who have a strong reading teacher for two consecutive years can be successful readers. (Wren, 2003)

- Reading aloud to children is the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for success in reading. (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2002)

Early Literacy Development

Best Practices

- Book-rich environment

- Teacher and/or parent read-alouds

- Phonic awareness, letter knowledge, and concepts of print

- Written expressions, spelling, and handwriting

(Learning First Alliance, 2000).

Early Literacy Development

Closing the Gap in 3rd Grade Reading Level

- Quality program and start early

- Use child's affinity for technology

- Use data to drive instruction

- Extra support of disadvantaged

- Engage entire community
  (*Education Week,* p 23, R. Lauer, May 7, 2008)

Family Engagement

When families are engaged in children's learning, students are more likely to:

- Attend school regularly

- Display more positive attitudes about school

- Graduate from high school and enroll in postsecondary programs

- Refrain from destructive activities such as alcohol use and violence

(Henderson & Mapp, 2003)

Family Engagement

Best Practices in Family Engagement

- Recognize that *all* parents want their children to do well

- Link family and community engagement efforts to student learning

- Support family involvement from preschool through high school

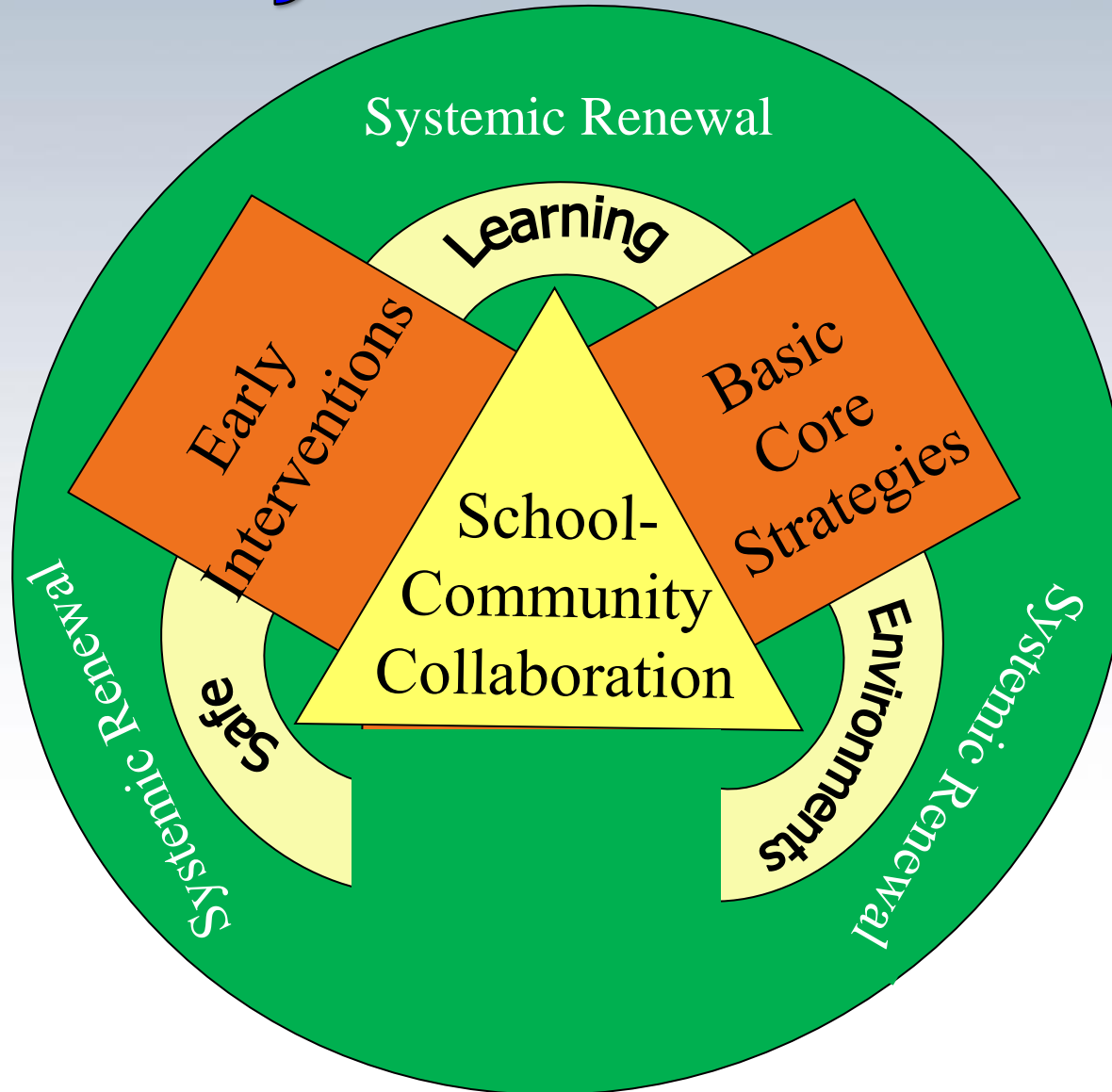- Develop and support capacity of school staff to work with families

Research: Dropout Pathway

Dropping out of school is the result of a long process of disengagement that may begin before a child enters school.
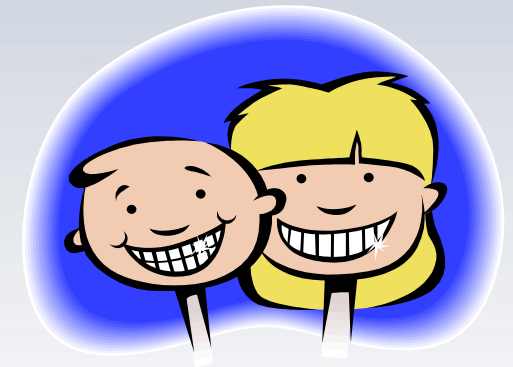
Dropout Prevention: Everyone's Problem

Basic Core Strategies

- Mentoring

- Service-Learning

- Alternative Schooling

- After-School Program Experiences

Mentoring

Mentoring is …

A caring and supportive relationship between a mentor and mentee that is based on trust.

Mentoring

Mentoring has many formats …

Traditional: One adult with one student

Peer: One older youth with a younger youth

Group/Team: One or more adults with several youth

Telementoring: One adult with one youth using the Internet

Mentoring

Impact of Mentoring Formats

- 66% improved reading and math grades (Waits, 2003)

- 80% improved study skills (Waits, 2003)

- 89% improved attitude toward life
  (AmeriCorp, 2000)

- 93% parents favorable comments
  (Youthfriends, 2001)

Service-Learning

Service-learning programs involve students doing meaningful service—usually a project they select based on real community need—linked to academic and personal learning.

(Shumer & Duckenfield, 2004)

Service-Learning

Essential Elements of Good Service-Learning Programs…

- Is integrated into the curriculum

- Utilizes active learning

- Is interesting and exciting

- Is connected to community

Alternative Schooling

Traditional schools can no longer meet the diverse needs of every student.

Alternative Education is a perspective, not a procedure or program.

Alternative School Elements

- Maximum Teacher/Student Ratio of 1:10

- Small student base not exceeding 250

- Caring faculty and ongoing staff development

- High expectations from school staff

- Flexible school schedule with community involvement and support

- Heavy emphasis on credit recovery and catching up

After-School Program Experiences

Students involved in after-school programs are three times as likely to continue their education and receive an award or honor at graduation
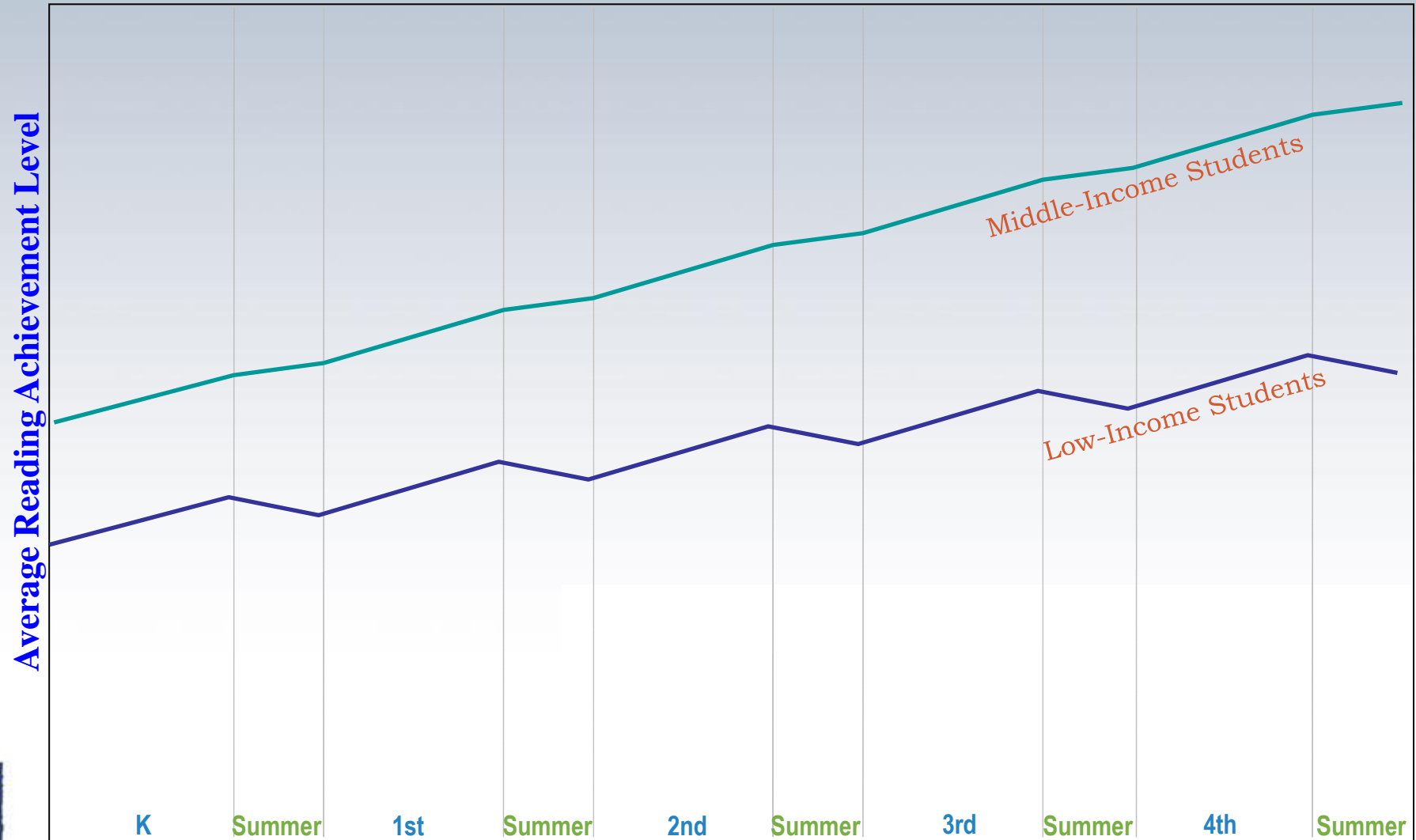
(Newman, Fox, Flynn, and Christeson, 2000)

Summer Learning & the Achievement Gap
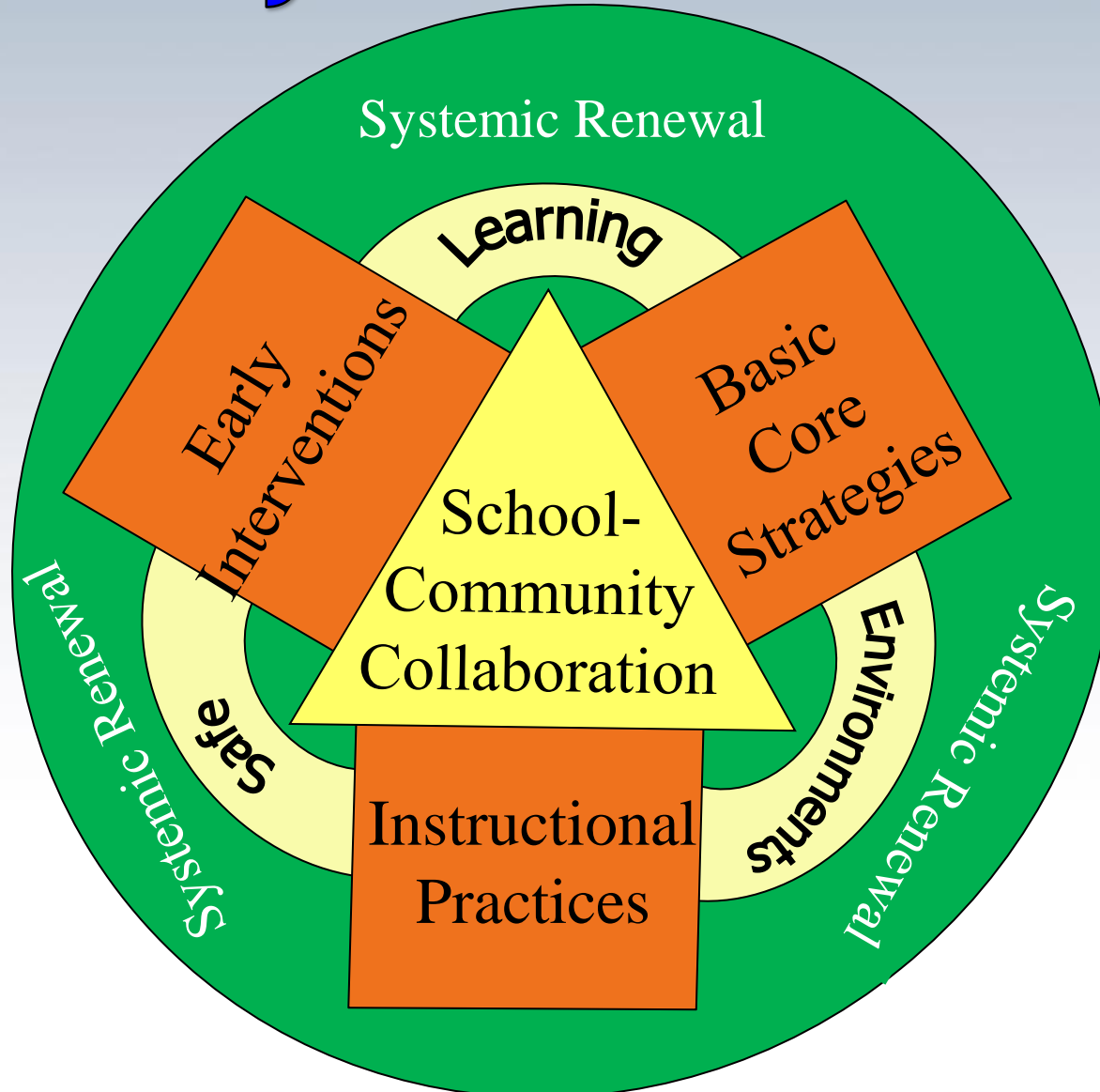
Summer Reading Achievement

After-School Program Experiences

Components of Successful Programs

- Academic focus

- Enrichment and accelerated learning

- Supervised recreation

- Community service

- Collaboration and partnerships

- Active family involvement

Dropout Prevention: Everyone's Problem

Making the Most of Instruction

- Professional development

- Active learning

- Educational technology

- Individualized instruction

- Career and technical education

Professional Development

The single largest factor affecting the academic growth of students is the difference in the effectiveness of individual classroom teachers.

(Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System, Sanders, 1998)

Professional Development

Effective Professional Development Strategies....

- Sustained, rather than one-shot presentations (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Kwang, 2001)

- Tied to student achievement and school improvement goals (U.S. Department of Education, 2003)

- Focused on deepening teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical skills (Sparks, 2002)

Active Learning

. . . Teaching and learning strategies that engage students by providing opportunities for students to listen, speak, write, construct, and reflect as they solve problems, perform new skills, and work in teams.

Active Learning

Differentiated Learning Strategies:

- Cooperative learning

- Multiple intelligences/learning styles theory

- Project-based learning

Multiple Intelligences

Key Elements of MI

- Verbal/linguistic
- Logical/mathematical
- Musical
- Visual/spatial
- Bodily/kinesthetic
- Interpersonal
- Intrapersonal
- Naturalist

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Educational Technology

Research on the Use of Technology in schools…

- Is a positive influence on students at risk of failure (Day, 2002)

- Teaches "real-world applications" to help students succeed outside the classroom

- Increases student motivation, raises the success rate of students performing complex tasks, and changes classroom roles and organization (Means, 1997)

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Educational Technology

Best Practices

- Activities are student-centered, not teacher-controlled

- Technology is integrated into the curriculum, not an add-on or reward

- Engaged learning that helps students acquire critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Schmitz, Prescott, & Hunt, 1996)

Individualized Instruction

Encourages the learner to be the producer of knowledge with...

- Problem-based learning

- Peer tutoring

- Cooperative learning

- Journaling

- Hands-on projects

- Role playing and simulations

Individualized Instruction

Major Components

- Individualizing learning: to recognize and build upon each child's unique past experiences and prior knowledge

- Individualizing motivation: to recognize and use the keys to a child's interests, goals, and confidence
(Keefe & Jenkings, 2000)

Career and Technical Education

Career and Technical Education (CTE) includes a wide array of career-based instruction

- K-12 career education

- A comprehensive guidance program

- School- and work-based experiences

- Internships and apprenticeships

Effective Career-Technical Education: Multiple Pathways

Career academies enhance motivation and enjoyment which result in:

- Increased attendance
- Better grades
- Fewer failed courses
- Lower dropout rates
- Better college entrance rates
- A positive attitude toward school
- Increased planning for the future

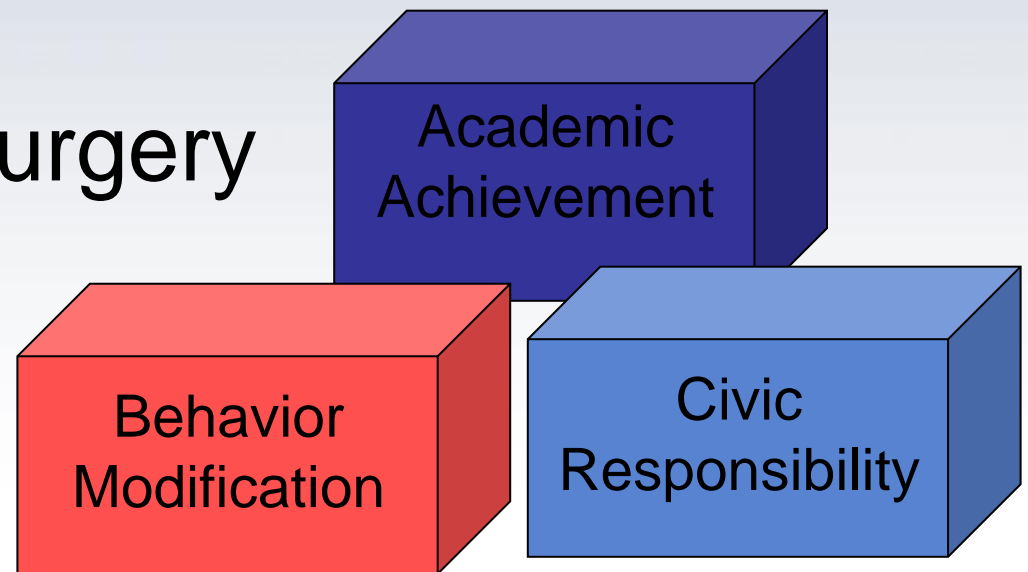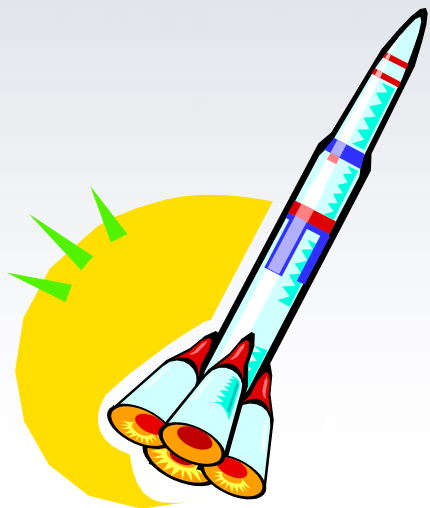(Grubb & Stern, *Making the Most of Career-Technical Education: Options for Calif., 2007*)

Dropout Prevention is Not

Rocket Science,

but it is

Brain Surgery

Academic Achievement

Behavior Modification

Civic Responsibility

National Trends and Tips

- **Alternative Schooling and Recovery Programs**
  - Virtual credit recovery
  - Private contract and charter schools

- **Attendance and Truancy Reduction Program**
  - Aggressive attendance programs by school districts and communities
  - Court-based programs aligned with school efforts

- **Increased Role of "Counselors"**
  - Graduation coaches (GA)
 - Guidance technicians (St. Paul, MN)

National Trends and Tips

- **Individualized Learning Plans**
  - Individual Graduation Plan (South Carolina)
  - Six-Year Plan (St. Paul, MN)

- **Smaller Learning Communities**
  - Ninth grade academies
  - Smaller "houses" within high schools

- **Transition Programs**
  - Formal programs between 8th and 9th grades
  - Transition counselors throughout multiple grade levels

Choices Are NEVER This Obvious

Drop Out of School

Stay in School
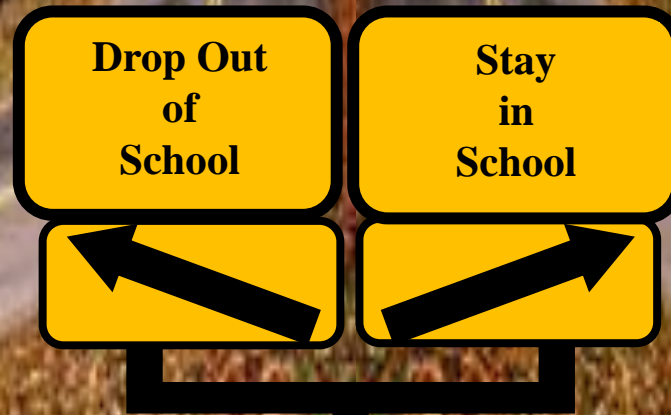
Mentoring relationships thrive if...

- **Expectations are aligned**
- **Mentors and mentees are well matched**
- **Mentors have a support system**
- **Mentors adopt a good mix of authority and friendship**
- **Mentors have a source for "advice and counsel"**

Basic Conditions for Mentoring

- **Relationship lasts long enough**
- **Realistic expectations**
- **Respect cultures and rights of families**
- **Role as coach and not parent**
- **Reactions are trustworthy, consistent and persistent**
- **Responsible judgments—"First do no harm"**

Life Cycle of Mentor Relationship

- **Introductory**
- **Relationship-Building**
- **Growth**
- **Maturation**
- **Transition**
- **Termination**

Dealing With Sensitive Issues

- **Teasing and Bullying**
- **Personal Grooming**
- **Parental Variations**
- **Obesity and Health**
- **Military Deployment**

Lasting Thought for Mentees

I don't become what <u>I</u> think I can,

I don't become what <u>you</u> think I can,

I become what <u>I</u> think <u>you</u> think I can.