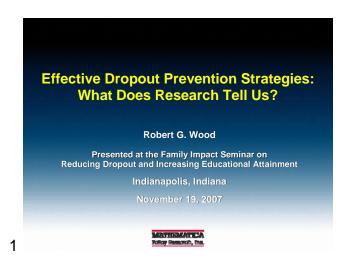
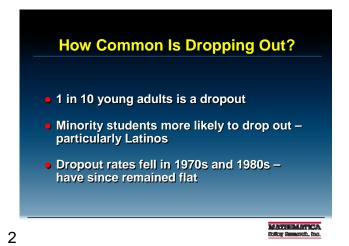
Effective Dropout Prevention Strategies: What Does Research Tell Us?

Robert Wood Senior Economist Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.





Poor labor market prospects:

More likely to be unemployed

Lower wages (and gap is growing)

More criminal involvement, public assistance receipt

Makes high dropout rates a pressing policy concern

3

Why Do Youth Drop Out?
 Many factors contribute
 Gradual process of disengagement
 Commonly cited reasons:

 High school overwhelming, impersonal
 Poor early academic preparation
 School boring or irrelevant
 Lack of home support

Indiana Family Impact Seminars – November 2007

What Is Known About Effective **Prevention Strategies?**

- These results draw on findings from the What Works Clearinghouse:
 - Systematic assessment of research on the effectiveness of education interventions
 - Dropout prevention one of several review areas
- Supplemented with additional information

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6

WWC Dropout Reviews

- Ongoing effort: Reviews of more than 20 interventions completed or under way
- Assessed 70+ studies so far—less than a third met WWC standards:
 - Weak research designs
 - Do not examine relevant outcomes (staying in, progressing in, and completing school)

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Four Basic Approaches Have Been Tested

- Adding services to the standard curriculum
- Whole-school reform
- Alternative schools
- Second-chance approaches intervening after dropout

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Close Monitoring and Quick Response Shows Promise

- Two similar interventions Check & Connect and ALAS - have positive evidence
- Of all programs reviewed, these show strongest effects on staying and progressing in school
- Key feature: Close monitoring of attendance, behavior, and school performance
 - Quick intervention when problems arise
 - Begins in middle and early high school
- Includes mentoring, case management, and family outreach

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Not All Supplemental Strategies Are Effective

- Example: Quantum Opportunity Program (QOP)
- Intensive, expensive—but no impacts
- Shares common elements with Check & Connect and ALAS (case management and mentoring)
- But differs in important ways:

 No attendance or performance monitoring
 No family outreach
 Less narrowly targeted
- Differences point to elements of Check & Connect and ALAS that may have contributed to success

Whole-School Reform: Some Evidence of Success

- One model—Talent Development—had positive effects on progressing in school:
 - Many other approaches not tested
- Reform model for large schools with attendance, discipline, and dropout problems

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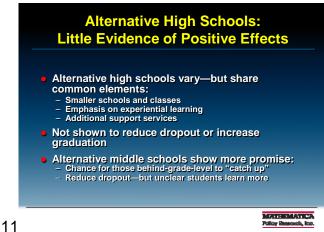
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14

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5



Second-Chance Approaches Can Promote GED Receipt

- Common elements of enhanced GED programs:

 - Basic education, GED preparation Occupational skills training, other supports
- Consistently shown to increase high school completion:
- Through greater GED attainment
 In some cases, reduces diploma receipt somewhat
- More limited evidence of success improving college going and employment

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Choosing an Approach: Consider Your Goals

- Transforming a struggling school or supporting high-risk students?
- Preventing dropout or re-engaging those who have already dropped out?

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Also Consider Costs Per-student costs vary substantially:

- Check & Connect: ~\$6,000

- Talent Development: ~\$1,500

- Enhanced GED: ~\$9,000 So do costs per dropout prevented:
 Check & Connect: ~\$30,000
 Talent Development: ~\$20,000
 Enhanced GED: ~\$75,000 Early intervention may be more cost-effective

14

12

13

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To Sum Up

- Supplemental approaches:
 - Close monitoring/rapid intervention shows
- Whole-school reform:
 - Evidence of effects-but research is limited
- Alternative high schools:
 - Generally found not effective
- Second-chance approaches:
 - Enhanced GED programs can increase GED attainment—but at relatively high cost

Marie Marie

To Learn More

Visit the What Works Clearinghouse website: www.whatworks.ed.gov

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15

16