

Ninth Grade Counts

Understanding the Pivotal
Impact of 9th Grade

Project Directors Meeting
November 9-10, 2011

Presenters

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Session Outcomes

Grantees will...

1. Understand the pivotal impact of 9th grade and the need to maximize efforts to ensure that students are *on-track* to graduation
2. Develop understanding of the Study of Promising Practices for Supporting the Transition to 9th Grade, including special attention to the Framework and Rubric noted in the paper
3. Reflect on current home district/school characteristics, policies and practices supporting 9th grade student success by locating themselves on the Rubric
4. Identify ways to increase student achievement and persistence by shifting to more proactive approaches meeting the needs of all students
5. Clarify possible roles of the Project Director in 9th grade efforts, especially focused in getting the most systemic supports in place that can remain beyond the life of the SLC grant.

Opening Reflection

- ❖ Please record your thoughts in response to one of the following questions and then discuss responses with your table:
- ❖ What is your most effective 9th grade strategy supporting all 9th grade students' success, AND what measureable outcomes do you collect to assess its effectiveness?
- ❖ What is your most effective practice supporting off-track 9th grade students, AND what measureable outcomes do you collect to assess its effectiveness?

The Freshman On-Track Measure

- ❖ Developed by the Consortium on Chicago School Research at The University of Chicago
- ❖ Now part of the Chicago Public School's district accountability framework
- ❖ Adopted by many other districts nationwide

On-Track: What it takes

Students are “on-track” if they:

- ✓ have not failed more than one semester course AND
- ✓ have accumulated the credits for promotion to 10th grade

Number of <u>semester Fs</u> in <u>core</u> courses	Number of credits accumulated freshman year	
	Fewer than 5	5 or more
2 or more courses	Off-track	Off-track
0 or 1 course	Off-track	On-track

CPS 9th Grade Promotion Policy

- ✓ Pass at least three core subject courses during *both* semesters
- ✓ Successful completion of a minimum of 5 credits

Why Ninth Grade Counts

- ❖ Ninth Grade Success is highly predictive of graduation
- ❖ Lost ground in ninth grade is difficult to regain later in high school
- ❖ Ninth grade reflects the “equity culture” of the school and assumptions about who is likely to succeed
- ❖ Ninth grade needs to move from being a *gatekeeper to opportunity to a springboard to success*

Resources: Why Ninth Grade Counts

Resources:

- 1. Applying the on-track indicator for high school graduation: adapting the Consortium on Chicago School Research indicator for five Texas districts.* REL Southwest
- 2. Freshman Year: The Make-it or Break-it Year.* The Consortium on Chicago School Research

Additional Suggested Reading

- 1. The On-Track Indicator as a Predictor of High School Graduation.* The Consortium on Chicago School Research.
http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/content/publications.php?pub_id=10

Consider: Continuum of Ninth Grade Models

Gate-Keepers

- ❖ Assume students arrive ready for high school
- ❖ Believe some students are college material, others not
- ❖ Believe it's up to the students to take advantage of what is offered
- ❖ Resources to prestige classes and older students
- ❖ Teacher focus: own class and curriculum

Springboards

- ❖ Meet students where they are
- ❖ Believe high school prepares all for postsecondary success – student makes the choice
- ❖ Believe adults adjust to student needs
- ❖ Resources are balanced with a 9th grade emphasis
- ❖ Teacher focus: collaboration

At this point, where is your district in its approach to 9th grade and why?

Ninth Grade Study: The Background

- ❖ Motivated by recent research identifying ninth grade transition as a vulnerable point in the educational pipeline
- ❖ Research conducted in six high schools, all former SLC recipients, serving sizeable disadvantaged populations
- ❖ Methods consisted of: site visits, school-level interviews, district-level interviews and informal observations of the school environments

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Ninth Grade Study: The Outcomes

- ❖ District-supported, comprehensive, systematic program of supports for ninth grade transition are essential for a successful approach
- ❖ Program of supports must be a complementary, multi-pronged approach supported at both the school and district level
- ❖ Time and support for collaboration, including the regular collection, review and response to available data, is necessary
- ❖ Schools that took a *proactive* rather than *reactive* approach to their ninth grade work saw better outcomes

Ninth Grade Study: Conceptual Framework for Supporting the Ninth Grade Transition

School-level

Advance or early preparation for HS entry

Universal

- Data provided to HS for rising 9th graders
- Orientation for students about HS expectations

Targeted

- Identification of the rising 9th grade students most at risk of not graduating
- Targeted summer workshops for at-risk entering 9th grade students



Improve 9th grade for all students

Provide a more personalized & supportive environment for 9th grade students

- Create 9th grade academies or SLCs
- Provide separate 9th grade space
- Dedicated 9th grade teacher teams
- 9th grade advisory or guidance supports

Reinforce the ninth grade academic program

- Strengthen instruction in core academic areas
- Provide explicit literacy instruction for 9th grade to strengthen higher level thinking skills
- Introduce students to high school study skills
- Use data to monitor 9th grade student progress & behavior for early signs of failure, and to target additional academic support



Provide more supports for high-need students

Environmental changes

- Small group instruction for targeted 9th grade students
- In-school &/or community social/psychological supports for targeted 9th grade students

Academic changes

- Tutorial assistance for struggling 9th grade students
- Targeted or companion skill 9th grade classes
- Afterschool and weekend classes for 9th grade students
- Credit recovery options to make up /complete courses



District-level

Timely data about incoming ninth graders provided to HS	High Schools monitored and held accountable for their 9 th grade results	Support provided for students entering high school with academic gaps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Written school district policy on improving the transition into high school •Required strategies for students entering high school with academic gaps •Professional development provided to teachers to implement new approaches 		

Better 9th grade outcomes

Stronger foundation for postsecondary success

Ninth Grade Study: The Matrix Tool

- ❖ Developed by the researchers and based on: what was observed or missing during site visits; outcomes from additional high school reform efforts; research on supporting the ninth grade transition
- ❖ Asks users of the matrix to identify their work in a variety of areas as being proactive, reactive or passive in the approach
- ❖ The following areas are included in the matrix:
 1. Overarching elements
 2. Advance planning for entering ninth graders
 3. Personalized and supportive environment
 4. Instructional program
 5. Monitoring progress
 6. Targeted supports for high-need students
 7. District supports

Table Discussion: The Matrix Tool

1. Overarching elements
2. **Advance planning for entering ninth graders**
3. Personalized and supportive environment
4. Instructional program
5. Monitoring progress
6. Targeted supports for high-need students
7. District supports

- ❖ Review section 2: *Advance planning for entering ninth graders* of the matrix in your packet on pg. ##
- ❖ Decide where *your* district/school is and what evidence supports this choice. Be prepared to share your decision.
- ❖ Repeat with other selected sections of the rubric

In Closing: The Reality of the Work

	Valley Stream	Fillmore	Hawthorne	McMahon	Cheshire	Lakewood
1a. Culture	Passive	Proactive	Reactive	Passive	Proactive	Reactive
1b. Resource Allocation	Passive	Proactive	Reactive	Passive	Proactive	Reactive
1c. Common Planning Time	Reactive	Proactive	Reactive	Passive	Proactive	Reactive
2a. Data on Rising Ninth Graders	Passive	Reactive	Reactive	Passive	Passive	Passive
2b. Orientation	Reactive	Reactive	Reactive	Reactive	Reactive	Reactive
2c. School-Based Summer Bridge Program	Reactive	Proactive	Reactive	Passive	Proactive	Passive
3a. Physical Setting	Passive	Proactive	Reactive	Passive	Proactive	Passive
3b. Dedicated Teaching Staff	Passive	Reactive	Reactive	Reactive	Proactive	Reactive
3c. Advisory	Passive	Proactive	Passive	Passive	Proactive	Passive
3d. Guidance	Reactive	Reactive	Passive	Passive	Reactive	Reactive
4a. Rigorous Standards-Based Curriculum	Passive	Proactive	Passive	Passive	Proactive	Reactive
4b. Literacy	Passive	Proactive	Passive	Passive	Proactive	Reactive
4c. Academic Behaviors	Passive	Proactive	Passive	Passive	Proactive	Passive
4d. Data Driven Instruction	Passive	Proactive	Reactive	Passive	Proactive	Proactive
5a. Regular Progress Monitoring	Passive	Proactive	Reactive	Reactive	Proactive	Proactive
5b. Links to Academic Supports	Passive	Proactive	Reactive	Passive	Proactive	Reactive
6a. Instructional Support Systems	Passive	Reactive	Reactive	Passive	Proactive	Reactive
6b. Social Support Systems	Reactive	Proactive	Reactive	Passive	Reactive	Reactive
7a. Timely Matriculation Data	Reactive	Reactive	Reactive	Passive	Passive	Passive
7b. Ninth Grade Accountability	Reactive	Reactive	Reactive	Passive	Passive	Passive
7c. District Supported Summer Bridge	Proactive	Proactive	Proactive	Passive	Passive	Passive

KEY	
Proactive	
Reactive	
Passive	
Insufficient Data	

In Closing: The Return Home

- ❖ After today's reflections – what are your assets and how do you get them 'into the water of your district'?
- ❖ What high-leverage next steps are necessary to strengthen your ninth grade work?
- ❖ Who are your key contacts in the ninth grade work that need to review these session materials with you?

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