

DOINGWHATWORKS



Presentation

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Providing Academic Support and Enrichment to Improve Academic Performance

April 2009

Topic: Dropout Prevention

Practice: Academic Supports

Highlights

- Academic supports have been shown to help students in danger of dropping out of school become more engaged and invested in their education.
- Leaders involved in planning supports should consider the skill selection, scheduling, staffing, learning environment, and credit recovery options available to students.
- Students who are at risk of dropping out often have extensive credit deficiencies. To help these students, schools can provide ways for students to earn credits more quickly.
- Programs can take place after school hours, on Saturdays, and over the summer. School schedules can also be adjusted to allow for advisory or study skills periods.
- Schools need to consider academic support programs that are flexible and tailored to student needs.

Full Transcript

Slide 1

Welcome to the overview on Providing Academic Support and Enrichment to Improve Academic Performance.

Slide 2

Kristi is having a rough time at Woodmere High School. She pays attention in class but struggles to keep up with homework due to her after-school jobs. Consequently, she doesn't do very well on tests. When she looks at her report card, she wonders why she even bothers to show up. She isn't learning anything.

Danny is having a rough time as well. He's doing poorly in all his classes. He knows he needs help, but he's so far behind it feels hopeless. Even if he does pass all his classes, he won't have enough credits to graduate, so why try?

Slide 3

How can targeted academic supports help students like Kristi and Danny stay engaged and prevent them from dropping out?

Slide 4

Academic supports have been shown to help students in danger of dropping out of school become more engaged and invested in their education. They can provide opportunities for targeted academic help and credit recovery.

Slide 5

Targeted academic supports can be implemented in two ways: intensive in-school or out-of-school programs and homework assistance/tutoring programs.

Slide 6

In planning what kinds of academic supports and help are needed, school or district leaders can think about key decisions that they will need to make:

What skills will the help focus on?

Can the help be scheduled during the school day or after school?

Who will provide the help?

In what format will the help be provided?

Slide 7

Academic supports can focus on a variety of areas, but they often provide students additional help in very specific skills or subject areas within reading, writing, or math. Whether a refresher elective, a test-taking skill program, or a small group tutoring session, these programs can help students reach proficiency in particular areas.

Slide 8

Programs can take place after school hours, on Saturdays, and over the summer.

Some struggling students like Kristi can't meet their current school time obligations due to family or work conflicts, let alone take on the responsibility of attending after-hours sessions.

School schedules can be adjusted to allow for advisory or study skills periods with these kinds of needs in mind. If this isn't possible, even lunch periods can be utilized. This is not advised, however, as struggling students who are even a little resistant to extra demands being placed on them are unlikely to attend tutoring or help sessions scheduled during social times.

Slide 9

Receiving individualized attention in these targeted areas, such as understanding plotlines of a book being read in English class or extra help with Algebra I foundation skills for a student in Algebra II, can help students overcome weak areas that are often obstacles to graduation.

Slide 10

Academic supports can also include enrichment programs, which typically last four to six hours per day for four to six weeks. These programs get students involved in engaging activities that may explore an interesting topic not typically taught during the school day while also targeting specific content areas or skills. For some students, enrichment programs can help keep them engaged with learning.

Slide 11

Teachers are only one way to staff such programs. Students can take on peer leadership positions, and schools can form partnerships with local community organizations, colleges, and parents. Even interested non-teaching staff can become involved.

Some schools may also be eligible for underutilized NCLB Supplemental Educational Services.

Schools can structure their academic supports in several different ways: individual tutoring, small group interactions, and/or whole class discovery sessions.

Support can be brief, such as focused tutoring on specific content, or extended, like 10-12-week enrichment sessions designed to build mathematics mastery.

Slide 12

Students who are at risk of dropping out often have extensive credit deficiencies and consequently feel disheartened about having to spend several more years in high school in order to graduate.

To help these students, schools can provide ways for students to earn credits more quickly. For example, the school's schedule could allow students to earn a full credit in one semester through two daily classes in a subject such as biology.

Schools may also implement individualized learning plans that incorporate state standards into project-based learning units. Students can complete these at their own pace, either independently or with a teacher.

Slide 13

Schools need to consider academic support programs that are flexible and tailored to student needs. One school may need to provide specialized support classes for reading comprehension while another school has a large number of students with credit deficiencies. This school can provide opportunities for credit recovery.

Slide 14

Kristi adjusted her school schedule to include a study skills period. She's learning more efficient ways to tackle her schoolwork and more effective test-taking strategies. Even while working after school, Kristi is making progress.

Danny signed up for a 10-week after-school reading and writing enrichment course. He's finding a lot of support in his small workgroup, and his teachers are already seeing an improvement in his class performance. The course also provides him additional credits to allow him to graduate on time. Danny is looking forward to graduation.

Slide 15

To learn more about providing academic supports as part of a dropout prevention program, please explore the additional resources on the [Doing What Works](#) website.