Igniting Potential: High School Dropout Prevention using the MTSS Framework
Today’s Agenda

- Review High School dropout characteristics
- Review the MTSS model
- Discuss preventions within each tier
- Discuss the role of the School Psychologist
- Implications for future research and practice
Objectives

➢ Learn current evidence-based practices for High School dropout preventions within the MTSS model.

➢ Define preventative efforts for all at-risk students.

➢ Implement supports for all students at-risk of dropping out of high school.
History of Conceptualization

School then and now
To understand dropping out of school, think about the history of education itself:

- In 1870 - only 2% attending high school actually graduated.
  - ...And just over 6% in the year 1900 (30 years later).

- Attending high school was not only optional but also selective:
  - Only students with “capital, social, and intellectual means” would attend.

(Gonzalez, Kennedy, & St. Julien, 2009)
History of Conceptualization

- By the year 1940 (70 years later), over 50% of the students enrolled in school were earning their high school diploma.
  - Why the jump from 6%-50%?? **To obtain employment**.
  - At this time, the high school diploma was given extreme value.

- Come the year 1960, graduating from high school was the new norm and the trend to dropout was not yet conceptualized.
- Education became “comprehensive”, rather than “selective”.

(Gonzalez, Kennedy, & St. Julien, 2009)
Why are the rates so high?
What *leads* to school dropout?

3 risk-factors related to school dropout:

- Family
- School environment
- Personal

(Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006)
Understanding *why* students dropout: **PULL . PUSH . FALL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pull-out theory</th>
<th>Push-out theory</th>
<th>Fall-out theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>(family)</em></td>
<td><em>(school)</em></td>
<td><em>(personal)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student is “pulled out” because of family or financial responsibilities.</td>
<td>- Student is “pushed out” because of low attendance or inadequate support.</td>
<td>- Student becomes disconnected or disinterested in school because of low or a mismatch of supports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Within student’s environment.</td>
<td>- Within school’s environment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High School Dropout

The numbers
U.S. GRADUATION rates, by **race**, **ethnicity**, and **disability** in 2017

(The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, 2018)
Status dropout rates of 16- to 24-year-olds, by gender (2000 through 2015)

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2017)
Consequences of dropping out
High School Dropout: **Consequences**

Youth who drop out of high school face ongoing challenges.

Higher rates of:
- Unemployment
- Incarceration

(Freeman, 2015; Millenky, 2016; Alliance for Excellent Education, 2018)
U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics survey:

Inmates in America’s state prisons: 67%
Federal inmates: 56%
Inmates in local jails: 69%

are high school dropouts.

(Alliance for Excellent Education, 2018)
SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE
High School Dropout: **Consequences**

These youth also face:

**Lower** rates of:
- Overall lifetime earnings
- Life expectancy

(Freeman, 2015; Millenky, 2016; Alliance for Excellent Education, 2018)
Prevention programs typically focused on individual counseling & work preparation.

2000: The Educate America Act was formed.
- States modified their academic standards ... demanding higher performance on standardized tests.

(The Center for Labor Market Studies, 2007; Dorn, 2003)
Ironically,

this created more challenges for struggling students to succeed and graduate.
High School Dropout

- Many high schools are not meeting the needs of our nation’s next generation of leaders, who are fueled by knowledge, skills, and innovation.

- Instead of cultivating young minds, America’s high school students are dropping out at the rate of more than 5,000 students every school day—estimating to more than 1 million dropouts each year.

(Alliance for Excellent Education, 2018)
Times have changed.

Today, jobs that require relatively little education are increasingly done by machines or shipped overseas, leaving individuals who fail to earn a high school diploma at a great disadvantage.
Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Connection with school dropout
MTSS Model

(Haynes, 2012)
Tier One

Universal Prevention
Tier 1

- Prevention
- For ALL students
- Goal
  - Foster student engagement
  - Positive social interactions
  - Academic achievement
- Three Key Indicators
  - Attendance, Behavior, and Course Performance

(Brown-Chidsey & Steedge, 2010; Balfanz, 2009)
Tier 1: Universal Dropout Preventions

- Universal Screening / Progress Monitoring
  - Screen students in essential areas for academic and behavior difficulties
  - Early screening is key
  - Allows to intervene and prepares as early as possible
  - How do we monitor students’ progress?

(Kurns & Tilly, 2008)
Tier 1: Universal Dropout Preventions

- **Early Warning Systems (EWS)**
  - Utilize a data system to analyze student data is a critical first step
  - Early identification and warning signs (ABC’s)
  - Detects risk indicators
  - Tailor intervention and prevention efforts based on data
  - Evaluate and monitor

(Goss & Andren, 2014)
Tier 1: Universal Dropout Preventions

- **Effective Teaching Instruction and Practices**
  - High quality and evidence-based instruction
  - Expectations
  - Positive school climate
    - Enhance student engagement
  - Professional development
  - Promote positive behaviors through school-like structures
    - Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)

(Reed, Wexler, & Vaugh, 2012; Kennelly & Monrad, 2007)
Tier 2

Targeted interventions for struggling students
Tier 2: Targeted Interventions

- **Academic Interventions**
  - Provide academic support
    - E.g., Tutoring, study skills, life skills
  - Credit recovery programs
    - E.g., Online programs, after-school courses, summer school

- **Behavioral Interventions**
  - Mentoring
    - E.g., *Check and Connect*, Check-In Check-Out

- **Family/School Collaboration**
  - Family engagement
  - Psychoeducation
Tier 2: Academic Interventions

- **Student Skills Courses (TDS)**
  - Mastering Middle Grades
  - Freshman Seminar

- **Tutoring**
  - Classroom instructional support
  - After-school homework and test-prep support

- **Credit Recovery Programs**
  - Summer school, evening classes, online classes, blended courses
Tier 2: Behavioral Interventions

- **Talent Development Secondary**
  - “Near Peer” Mentors

- **Check and Connect**
  - Structured mentoring focused on student success and engagement

- **Peer Assistance Leadership (PALS)**
  - Peer tutoring/mentoring - peers are matched based on skill need and appropriate fit
Tier 2: Family/School Collaboration

- Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS)
  - Interactive assignments allow students to share what they learn in class with family while parents provide motivation, encouragement, and celebration

- Parent Leadership Training Institute
  - Teaches parenting skills and helps parents become change agents in their community

- The Parent-Child Home Program, Inc
  - A school readiness, early literacy and parenting program that utilizes home visits to help families overcome barriers to school success
Tier 3
Intensive intervention for Individual students
Tier 3

- **Mental Health Supports**
  - Wraparound
  - Individualized services
    - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
    - Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT)

- **Out-of-School Opportunities**
  - JobCorps
  - National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program
Tier 3: Mental Health Services

Wraparound Process

- Emerged from the concept known as system of care
- Elements of Wraparound Process
- 4 phases to Wraparound Process implementation

**Purpose:** To identify and support high-risk youth’s individual strengths, and to encourage personal goal setting

(Eber, Breen, Unizycki, & London, 2008; Fries, Carney, Blackman-Urteaga, & Savas, 2012)
Tier 3: Mental Health Services

4 Phases

- Phase 1: Engagement and Team Preparation
- Phase 2: Initial Plan Development
- Phase 3: Ongoing Plan Implementation and Refinement
- Phase 4: Transition from Wraparound

(Eber, Breen, Unizycki, & London, 2008; Fries, Carney, Blackman-Urteaga, & Savas, 2012)
Tier 3: Mental Health Services Cont.

Individualized services

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT)

**Purpose:** To improve the physical and psychological safety of our schools and our students, as well as academic performance and problem-solving skills

(Newsome, 2004; Pina, Zerr, Gonzalez, & Ortiz, 2009)
Tier 3: Out-of-School Opportunities

JobCorps

- A large, national comprehensive program with more than 100 sites around the country
- Serves approximately 62,000 individuals a year
- Serves low-income youth between the ages of 16 to 24

**Purpose:** To help youths becomes responsible, employable, and productive citizens

(Schochet, Burghardt, & McConnell, 2008)
Tier 3: Out-of-School Opportunities Cont.

National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program

- Developed in 1993
- Community-based program that leads, trains, and mentors students who have dropped out of high school
- Three different phases

**Purpose:** Intervene in and reclaim the lives of 16 to 18 year olds, who have dropped out of high school, producing graduates with values, life skills, education, and self-discipline

(Millenky, Schwartz, & Rhodes, 2014)
Role of the School Psychologist

What you can do
Role of School Psychologist

Advocate for all students

Link the student’s home and school environments

Carry reliable and valid data monitoring systems

Use effective screeners

Evaluate the effectiveness of programs aimed for dropout prevention

Push for school-wide reforms
Implications

Future Research & Practice
Implications

For Further Research
- Invest in longitudinal studies
- Continue to explore dropout crisis and shifting needs
- Evaluate dropout prevention and intervention programs

For Practice
- Recognition of warning signs
- Perform needs assessment and program evaluation
- Implementation of effective and practical strategies


Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology V* (pp. 1099-1119). Bethesda, MD: National Association for School Psychologists.