The Principal’s Role in Rural Dropout Prevention

Richard M. Krise, EdD

National Dropout Prevention Center / Network
rkrise@g.clemson.edu
(706) 969-8676
Presenter

Richard M. Krise, EdD
Technical Assistance Coordinator
National Dropout Prevention Center/Network
Clemson, SC

Professional Highlights
• Principal, Haralson County High School, GA, 1998-2001
• Principal, White County High School, GA, 2001-2004
• School Improvement Coordinator and Interim Director of Pioneer Regional Educational Service Agency, GA, 2004-2013
Session Objectives

Understand the key concepts of principal leadership for dropout prevention
Understand the unique challenges of dropout prevention strategies for the rural principal
Understand unique approaches taken by principals for dropout prevention in rural settings
Share resources that may be of assistance to rural principals
Framing Questions

1) How does the principal’s role in dropout prevention differ in a rural setting as compared to an urban/suburban setting?

2) Which of the five roles identified for rural principals is your strongest? Weakest?

3) How does the principal improve his/her own performance on a weak role?
Poll

What is your current role as a educator?

1. High school principal?
2. Middle school principal?
3. District staff
4. State education agency
5. Teacher
6. Other
Background and Theoretical Overview
The National Dropout Prevention Center has identified four categories of risk factors:

- Individual risk factors
- Family risk factors
- School risk factors
- Community risk factors
Individual Risk Factors Identified by the National Dropout Prevention Center

- 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
Family Risk Factors Identified by The National Dropout Prevention Center

• Low socioeconomic status
• Low parental education level
• High family mobility
• Single-parent homes
• Number of siblings
• Family disruption

• Having a family member who has dropped out
• Low parental expectations for educational attainment
• Lack of parental involvement with the school
• Few conversations with parents about school
School Risk Factors Identified by The National Dropout Prevention Center:

• School structure
• School resources
• Student body characteristics
• Student body performance
• School environment
• Academic policies and practices
Community Risk Factors Identified by The National Dropout Prevention Center:

Location and type
- Urban communities—higher risk
- Suburban communities—moderate risk
- Rural communities—lower risk

Environment
- High drug and crime rates

Demographic characteristics
- Impoverished communities
- High minority populations
- Large foreign-born population
- High percentage of single-parent households
- High percentage of adult dropouts
- High unemployment rates
The Principal’s Role in Dropout Prevention: Seven Key Principles (2007)

Dr. Stephen Edwards & Rebecca Edwards
Urban School
7 Key Principles
- Identify students early
- Closely examine new and existing school policies and procedures
- Build strong community partnerships and personalize your school
- Reduce social isolation
- Manage student transitions
- Create options and implement creative interventions
- Build parent/family relationships
15 Targeted States

States where the MSG team has (a) past performance, (b) existing rural relationships, and/or (c) staff members
The Principal’s Role in Dropout Prevention

1. Identifying potential dropouts early
2. Examining rules and policies that “push out” students
3. Personalizing your school
4. Reducing social isolation among students
5. Managing student transitions
6. Creating options/creative interventions for students
7. Building parent/family/community relationships
The Principal’s Role in Rural Dropout Prevention

1. Reducing social isolation among students
2. Building parent/family/community relationships
3. Examining rules and policies that “push out” students
4. Creating options/creative interventions for students
5. Identifying potential dropouts early
Reducing social isolation among students
Building parent/family/community relationships
Examining rules and policies that “push out” students
Creating options/creative interventions for students
Identifying potential dropouts early
Other Principal Roles

• Creating Options / Creative Interventions for Students
• Identifying Potential Dropouts Early
• Examining Rules and Policies That “Push Out” Students
Creating Options and Creative Interventions for Students

• Career Exploration in remote areas among small populations
• Distance Learning
• Flexible Learning Time
Identifying Potential Dropouts Early

Early identification is different in rural settings.

• Data system availability
• Risk factor distribution
• Community and culture influence
Identifying Potential Dropouts Early

Early identification is more subjective in rural settings.

• First-hand knowledge is readily available
• Pre-conceived assumptions are common
• Data is still important
Examining Rules and Policies That “Push Out” Students

Attendance Policies

• Denying academic credit because of inadequate seat time
• Dropping students from enrollment based on number of absences
• Counting tardy students as absent
Examining Rules and Policies That “Push Out” Students

Make-Up Work Policies

• Denying make-up opportunity after disciplinary suspension
• Limiting time for make-up work after absence
• Imposing academic penalty for overdue work
Examining Rules and Policies That “Push Out” Students

Discipline Policies

Excessive use of out-of-school suspension
In-school suspension without academic opportunity
Disallowing submission of assignments while suspended
Poll

Which rural principal role is most applicable to your work or experience?

1. Identifying potential dropouts early
2. Reducing social isolation among students
3. Building parent/family/community relationships
4. Creating options/creative interventions for Students
5. Examining rules and policies that “push out” students
Review of our framing questions

1) How does the principal’s role in dropout prevention differ in a rural setting as compared to an urban/suburban setting?
2) Which of the five roles identified for rural principals is your strongest? Weakest?
3) How does the principal improve his/her own performance on a weak role?
THANK YOU !!