



# The Principal's Role in Rural Dropout Prevention

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# Presenter

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### 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





# 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?
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THANK YOU !!