

TARGETED STRATEGY PLAN—MCD OUTCOME 4

INTRODUCTION

The following strategies will be used by the District to target the barriers to achievement of Outcome 4:

1. Continue emphasizing dropout prevention and recovery programs at middle and high schools to reduce the number of youth dropping out of school by focusing the prevention, intervention, and recovery efforts on potential student dropouts and addressing personal and academic needs of these at-risk youth and their families;
2. Implement a graduation module with edits and oversight in the Integrated Student Information System that enhances the accurate collection of student data including classes taken, grades, and credits earned towards the graduate diploma;
3. Target local districts and individual schools regarding drop out prevention, intervention programs, and accurate data maintenance in respect to graduation and completion rates.

These primary strategies have been developed from (a) an analysis of graduation and completion rate data including the report *Outcomes for Students with Disabilities and Their Non-Disabled Peers in the LAUSD Class of 2007*, Melissa Barnhart, Ph.D., Research and Planning Publication No. 2009-06; (b) ongoing District initiatives focused on dropout prevention and increased graduation rates; and, (c) a review of research in the area of increasing graduation rates.

PERFORMANCE

Graduation and Completion Rate

Performance on Outcome 3/4 is based on graduation and completion rate data for the 2007-2008 school year. The District met the target for graduation rates for students with disabilities as part of Outcome 3/4 for 2007-2008 with a graduation rate of 41.66%. This exceeded the target rate of 39.79% which had been determined using the State of California methodology for calculating the graduation rate for students with disabilities.

During the Fall of 2008, the Office of the Independent Monitor (OIM) conducted a study to validate the accuracy of the District's graduation data for 12th grade students with disabilities. The study had two primary purposes: (1) determine the actual graduation rate of students with disabilities within the District by conducting site verification of students; and, (2) identify sources of error associated with the data reported by the schools. This study indicated a pattern of ongoing errors within the data systems and graduation data as reported by schools. Weakness in the observed processes include: diplomas issued by schools and not the District; a variety of data sources and fields used for capturing the data; and, District data systems lacking edits and oversight to prevent the erroneous granting or withholding of diplomas.

The report from the OIM also analyzed special education drop out data for 2007-2008. According to this report, over 67.17% of the special education drop outs are young males. The majority of the drop outs at 78.48% are students identified with Specific Learning Disabilities who participate in the core curriculum. Data indicates that a large number of students with disabilities drop out each of the high school years. However, the percentage of students with disabilities who drop out in the 12th grade is approximately 43.35%.

Outcome 4 which requires that the District's completion rate increase based on an increase in the number of students who graduate with a diploma, receive a certificate of completion, or age out, as compared to the total number of students with disabilities who graduate with a diploma, receive a certificate of completion, age out, or drop out is the only outcome in which performance has declined since 2004-2005.

There are several factors that influence this decline in the percentage of completers: (1) additional requirement that all students pass the high stakes California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) in order to earn a graduate diploma (no exemptions); (2) an improvement in the quality of graduation and drop out data from year to year; and, (3) new course requirements for graduation including A-G requirements that may discourage students with disabilities from continuing their education.

In a study conducted by the Office of the Independent Monitor, 2007-2008 graduation data was analyzed. The percentage of students with disabilities receiving a diploma varied greatly across local districts with a high of 49.35% in Local District 1 and a low of 27.31% in Local District 8. Similarly, the percentage of students receiving a certificate of completion or aging out also varied from a high of 40.50% in Local District 5 to 24.88% in Local District 7. In the area of drop outs, Local District 1 had a rate of 3.90% while Local District 6 had a high rate of 12.82%. This data indicates the need to specifically target local districts and schools for training and support in ensuring that students with disabilities receive a graduate diploma, a certificate of completion, or age out of school and that appropriate leaver data is maintained by these schools.

In March 2009, Research and Planning issued a report entitled *Outcomes for Students With Disabilities and Their Non-Disabled Peers in the LAUSD Class of 2007*. In summary, this report indicated that over 20% of students

with disabilities reported to be in the 12th grade lacked the minimum number of credits to be in the 12th grade. Further, over 10% of the students with disabilities (SWD) in the Class of 2006 had fewer than 230 credits in their SSIS record. The researchers also were unable to determine the graduation status for 10% of the SWD in the Class of 2007 due to missing records and/or inconsistent or contradictory information. These issues speak to the importance of establishing a data system that is user friendly for schools and facilitates the accurate tracking of student data including credits.

Data indicates that the District faces two challenges: (1) maintaining students with disabilities in school particularly at the 12th grade level; and, (2) improving graduation, completion, and drop out data systems to accurately reflect student status annually.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2007-2008 TARGETED STRATEGY PLAN—OUTCOME 4

Dropout Prevention and Recovery Program

The District's dropout prevention and recovery program, the Diploma Project, continued to have a significant impact on dropouts returning to complete graduation requirements and generally improving graduation and completion data collected to determine the District's status of Outcomes 3 and 4. Although the Dropout Prevention and Recovery Program did not disaggregate student data by categories such as English learners or students with disabilities, the program did influence an increase in the graduation rate across the District from 66.3% in 2005-2006 to 69.5% in 2006-2007.

The Diploma Project Advisors coordinated resources at select middle and senior high schools to reduce the dropout rate and increase the graduation rate. They used student lists, including students with disabilities, generated by the District to identify students at-risk of dropping out or eligible to return to an education setting. They also addressed the needs of all at-risk students by: facilitating parent informational meetings regarding graduation requirements, recovering students who appear on the potential dropout lists; participating on Coordination of Services Teams (COST) and Student Success Teams (SST); providing professional development on dropout prevention and recovery strategies; and, collaborating with feeder schools.

Although outcome data for schools with Diploma Project Advisors show a consistent pattern of positive results on student achievement and behavior, the Diploma Project will not continue in the same format for 2008-2009. Diploma Project Advisors will no longer be funded centrally. Schools will be receiving a

larger per student allocation for 2009-2010 and will purchase programs and services such as these advisors that most meet the needs of their students and school community.

An analysis of the 2007/2008 dropout data provided from the Independent Monitor was used to develop the Targeted Strategy Plan for the 2009/2010 school year. The data indicated that 1654 students were identified as dropouts using district data. Of the 1654 students, 35 of them were considered 6th grade students during the 2007-2008 school year and should not have counted in the total. In addition, 6 students were 22 years old and 21 were 21 years old. Many of these students had completed school even though they may have been entitled to remain until age 22. This is an approximate error range of 4%.

The data indicated that the highest dropout rates occurred between the ages of 17 and 19 years of age (Table 1). Approximately 79% of the students who leave school prematurely do so in this age range. There are several causes for this. Many of these students do not have the appropriate number of credits to be considered a 12th grade student and thus are not eligible for graduation (Table 3). Some students have not passed the CAHSEE and are continuing in Adult School or community college to complete this requirement. Other students have transferred to other schools or adult school and have not enrolled. There are a myriad of other reasons students disengage from school that are not mentioned here but are factors just as well. Table 2 identifies the dropout data by grade according to the Student Information System (SIS). The number of 12th grade students is deceiving as some of these students do not have the prerequisite A-G classes or credits to be considered a true 12th grade student.

14	17
15	76
16	128
17	356
18	562
19	261
20	60
21	21
22	6

6th grade	40
7th grade	62
8th grade	64
9th grade	307
10th grade	240
11th grade	224
12th grade	717
	1654

Table 3 analyzes the data based on age and grade. This allows us to see the number of students who are age appropriate for graduation yet have not meet the requirements in credits to actually graduate. This reinforces the conclusion that the majority of students are dropping out between the ages of 17 and 19 years of age but also demonstrates that some of them seem to have made no progress in the accumulation of credits since entering high school.

Table 3: Dropouts by Age and Grade

Age	9th	10th	11th	12th
14	17	0	0	0
15	67	9	0	0
16	83	34	11	0
17	73	82	51	150
18	61	83	94	324
19	6	26	53	176
20	0	5	13	42
21	0	0	2	19
22	0	0	0	6
	307	239	224	717

Further analysis of the data indicates that only 9% of students are unaccounted for in the middle school grades. Of these students, 31% were last enrolled in Widney or Carlson. Approximately 8% last attended a special education center and 59% attended a comprehensive middle school (n=92). The students at the comprehensive middle schools ranged across 43 schools with most having 1 student who was considered a dropout (Table 4).

Table 4: Middle School-154 students- 9% of total dropouts			
School		Number of students	%
Widney/Carlson		48	31%
Comp MS	43 schools	92	59%
Other schools	(Sp Centers/CDS)	12	8%
Unknown		2	

Removing the students served in middle school left 1,500 students of high school age who have been reported as dropouts. Of the 1,500 students, 25% came from 11 comprehensive high schools. The highest 28 comprehensive high schools accounted for 56% of the dropouts. Of the 1500, 18% were enrolled in some type of Option program putting them at higher risk from the start. Approximately 3% were last enrolled in special education centers. (Table 5)

Table 5: High School-1,500 students			
School	Number of students	%	
Top 11 Comp HS	375	25%	
Top 28 Comp HS	847	56%	
Options	267	18%	
Special Schools	39	3%	

CONCLUSION

The District submits these primary strategies— use enhanced data systems to identify students at risk of dropping out of school; develop and monitor intervention plans to support students at risk of dropping out; and improve the documentation of reasons for leaving school within the District data systems to improve the collection of accurate data. The District’s proposed targeted strategy plan for Outcome 4 follows.

Approved By The Independent Monitor September 14, 2009

OUTCOME # 4: Completion Rate—The District's completion rate shall increase based on an increase in the number of students who graduate with a diploma, receive a certificate of completion, or age out, as compared to the total number of students with disabilities who graduate with a diploma, receive a certificate of completion, age out, or drop out (grades 7-12).

4-1	<p><i>STRATEGY: Targeted schools will identify students at risk of dropping out and immediately implement a prevention/intervention plan to address student need.</i></p> <p>Targeted High School Criteria: Targeted schools are determined based on any of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High schools with a history of high dropout rates for students with disabilities. • High schools with a disparity between SWD and Non-SWD in the percent of students dropping out (within four years) that exceeded 15 percentage points.
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4-1.1: *Using the existing District “At-Risk System” twice a year, schools will be required to identify and implement an intervention plan with 9th – 12th grade students who demonstrate at least one risk indicator in attendance, behavior, or academics. Intervention plans are developed based on the risk indicators identified for individual students and may address issues such as increasing attendance, implementing positive behavior supports, and providing opportunities for academic acceleration and /or intervention.*

Accountable Personnel:

Diploma Project Office & Planning Assessment Research

- Issue to secondary school administrators a written District communication outlining the process for identifying at risk students and recommended evidence-based potential interventions for supporting students in completing school.

District Counseling

- Coordinate monitoring of at risk students with site-based counselors.
- Provide training to counselors in the process of monitoring at risk-students and implementing interventions.
- Ensure that the Individual Graduation Plans for students with disabilities are held annually.

Division of Special Education

- Issue to secondary school administrators a written District communication outlining the process for conducting a COST meeting.

Targeted School Principals

- Within the first month of each semester or once in the fall and once in the spring (for schools on alternate schedules) identify the 9th–12th students with disabilities who demonstrate at least one risk factor using the At Risk System.
- Within the first month of each semester or once in the fall and once in the spring (for schools on alternate schedules) schools will hold a COST team for all students with disabilities who are identified at risk by the combined risk indicators in attendance, academics, and behavior.

- Ensure implementation and monitoring of appropriate interventions to address the identified at risk factor.
- Track student progress.
- Monitor 5-week grades of all targeted students (counselors and/or special education teachers).

Initiation Timeline: July 2009

Progress Monitoring:

Intervals	Indicators
July 2009	Written directions for use of the At Risk System and potential interventions from Diploma Project Office and Planning Assessment Research.
Fall 2009 Spring 2010	Schools generate a list of at-risk students and intervention through the At Risk System.

4-2	STRATEGY: Implement an enhanced District system to increase the accuracy of the District's graduation data.
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4-2.1: The District will implement an edit control system that prevents a school from giving a leave code of L7 if a student has not passed the CAHSEE or has not completed the credit requirements for a high school diploma.

Accountable Personnel

School Information Branch

- Develop an edit to inform schools when a leaver code does not align with the student's completion of the requirements for graduation.
- Communicate to the targeted schools information on the process for maintaining leaver data on the SIS/ISIS system.

Associate Superintendent, Division of Special Education

- Provide training to Alternative programs such as Carlson Home Hospital, teleteaching, and Secondary CDS in the process for exiting students and ensuring they enter their next placement.

Targeted School Principals

- Within the first month of each semester or once in the fall and once in the spring (for schools on alternate schedules), validate the leaver data in the SIS/ISIS system including entering the data for students who have received their diploma under the conditions of the Valenzuela Settlement.
- Cross check potential dropout with other enrollment data systems to eliminate those students who are enrolled from the dropout report provided to the California Department of Education.

- Within the first month of each semester or once in the fall and once in the spring (for schools on alternate schedules) schools will reconcile the leaver codes, withdrawal reason code and withdrawal date for students who withdrew or left school with the potential dropout list provided by SIB with SIS/ISIS.

Initiation Timeline: July 2009

Progress Monitoring:

Intervals	Indicators
September 30, 2009	Report identifying potential leavers and no-shows as of September 2009 distributed.
October 30, 2009	Reconciled list from each school

4-3	<i>STRATEGY: Targeted schools will implement intervention plans to support the successful completion of school for at risk 12th grade students.</i>
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4-3.1: Use “potential” 12th grade graduate lists compiled by the School Information Branch, to monitor current student progress in meeting graduation requirements.

Accountable Personnel:

School Information Branch

- Provide potential “12” grade graduate list to schools in September and February.
- Issue to secondary school administrators a written District communication outlining the process for reconciling the dropout data.

Local District

- Meet with the administrators of the targeted schools twice a year (September & February) to discuss plans for intervention for the students on the potential graduate list.

Targeted School Principals

- Within the first month of each semester or once in the fall and once in the spring (for schools on alternate schedules) schools will reconcile the data for all potential 12th grade graduates to include, course completion (including any courses successfully completed in summer school, adult school, or community college), successful CAHSEE completion, and other graduation requirements.
- Meet with all students and families who are on the 12th grade graduate list but do not have the correct credits, courses, or CAHSEE completion, to develop a plan for addressing each student’s deficit.

Initiation Timeline: July 2009

Progress Monitoring:

Intervals	Indicators
September 30, 2009	Report identifying potential graduates as of September 2009 distributed.
October 30, 2009	Reconciled list from each school
October 30, 2009	Student intervention plans developed for all potential 12 th grade students at risk for not completing school.

**ATTACHMENT A
Targeted Strategy Plan: Outcome 4
Targeted High School List**

Local District 1

Kennedy

Monroe

Reseda

Local District 2

Grant

San Fernando

Local District 3

Dorsey

Hamilton

Los Angeles

Local District 4

Belmont

Eagle Rock

Franklin

Hollywood

Marshall

Local District 5

Garfield

Jefferson

Lincoln

Wilson

Local District 6

Bell

South Gate

Local District 7

Foshay LC

Fremont

Jordan

Local District 8

Banning

Carson

Gardena

Narbonne

San Pedro

Washington Prep

Local District R (Charter)

Birmingham

Locke

Local District T (Partnership)

Crenshaw

Manual Arts

Roosevelt

Santee

Watch List

Local District 1

Canoga Park

Chatsworth HS

El Camino

Local District 2

Sylmar

Verdugo Hills

Local District 4

Fairfax