WEBINAR SERIES
Achieving Excellence and Innovation in
Family, School, and Community Engagement

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Today’s Moderator

Samantha Wigand

Education Consultant

United Way Worldwide
Webinar 7: Successful Transitions to High School: Promoting High School Success and Facilitating College Readiness

Presenters:

- **Samantha Wigand**, *Education Consultant*, United Way Worldwide
- **Joanna Hornig Fox**, *Deputy Director*, Everyone Graduates Center, Johns Hopkins University
- **Ben Martinez**, *National Program Director*, Breakthrough Collaborative
- **Carol Myers**, *Consultant*, Indiana State PIRC, Indiana Partnerships Center

*June 23, 2011*
Family Engagement for High School Success

United Ways, school districts, and community partners in:

1. Brownsville, TX
2. Cape Girardeau, MO
3. Gainesville, FL
4. Gurnee, IL
5. Las Vegas, NV
6. Reno, NV
7. San Francisco, CA
8. York, PA

Framing Impact Strategies as Investment Products 2011
Family Engagement for High School Success

The Issue

• Ninth grade is a pivotal year for dropping out.
• We must engage and support students AND families as students transition into ninth grade.
Family Engagement for High School Success

Challenges

• Students want more independence.
• School work is getting increasingly complex.
• Students are not necessarily bringing communications home.
• Communications to parents are sometimes hard to understand and not happening until there is a problem.
Family Engagement for High School Success

Solution 1

Communicate directly with families:

- Texting
- E-mail
- Phone calls
- Parent liaisons

The more personal and timely the better
Family Engagement for High School Success

Solution 2

Communicate before there is a problem:

• What’s going on during the school day
• What their students are supposed to be learning
• Provide some tips on how to support that at home
Family Engagement for High School Success

Solution 3

Support families in monitoring their student’s academic progress:

- Summer orientation sessions for incoming freshmen and families
- Workshops on graduation requirements, college entrance requirements, etc.
- Accessible computer kiosks to track student data
- Parent liaisons to build relationships with families
Trends in High School Completion and Dropout Rates

Joanna Hornig Fox
Deputy Director
Everyone Graduates Center
Johns Hopkins University
Nationally, 1.23 million students drop out of school each year. This translates into 3,000 students dropping out of school every day of the week (or about 7,000 each school day)
Dropping Out is a Challenge Across the Country: Class of 2006
Promoting Power of High Schools by County
Progress is Possible: Changes in Dropout Factory High Schools 2002 to 2009

<table>
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<th></th>
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<th>2009</th>
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<td>GA</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2022</td>
<td>1627</td>
<td>-395</td>
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</table>
Enrollment Trends and Graduation Gaps for 2006 U.S. Public School Cohort

Current Graduation Gap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>9th Graders to Diploma Gap</th>
<th>12th Graders to Diploma Gap</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,294,740</td>
<td>370,269</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diagram showing the total number of students and graduates from 1st grade to diploma recipients for the 2006 U.S. Public School Cohort.
Indicators and Influencers of Student Disengagement

- **Poor Attendance**
  - Overage: 1–2 years, 2 years+

- **Course Failure**
  - Core Courses
  - Elective Courses

- **Behavior**
  - Repeaters
  - Ninth Grade Repeaters

- **Behavior Marks**
  - Suspensions

- **Special Education, ESL**
  - Standardized Test Scores

- **Gender**
  - Socio-economic Status
  - Parental Education
Early Warning Indicators of Student Disengagement

- Attendance
- Behavior
- Course Performance

Student Engagement
Chronically Absent Sixth Graders Have Lower Graduation Rates

Dropout Rates by Sixth Grade Attendance
(Baltimore City Public Schools, 1990–2000 Sixth Grade Cohort)

- Severely Chronically Absent: 56.3%
- Chronically Absent: 41.6%
- Not Chronically Absent: 25.7%

Source: Baltimore Education Research Consortium  SY 2009–2010
Graduation Outcomes for Students with One or More Suspensions in Sixth Grade: Philadelphia

- 81% Graduates on time
- 16% Graduates after one extra year
- 4% Does not Graduate
**Ninth Grade Indicators of Dropout Risk**

- Ninth graders with less than a C - average are more likely to drop out than to graduate.

- Ninth graders with GPAs in the C – to D+ range (about ¼ of all ninth graders) who miss 1 to 2 weeks of school per semester need extensive support.

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The Current Situation

How can we as school, district, and community leaders use what we know about our current dropout trends and the cost of dropping out of school to motivate greater change in our own school or district?

What is the role of families in facilitating these changes?
Reframing Family Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Lens</th>
<th>Current Lens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Responsibility</td>
<td>Shared Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deficit-Based/ Adversarial</td>
<td>Strength-Based/ Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random Acts</td>
<td>Systemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add-On</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events Driven</td>
<td>Outcome Driven</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>Ownership &amp; Continuous Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-Time Project</td>
<td>Sustained</td>
</tr>
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</table>

This is excerpted from an August 2010 meeting of the National Family, School, and Community Engagement Working Group.
Districts’ Role in Enhancing Family Engagement

- Be goal oriented.
- Plan and act systematically and systematically.
- Build family engagement into district and school improvement plans.
- Engage community organizations.
School- and District-Level Efforts to Increase Family Engagement

- Lay the foundation for understanding the issues.
- Do what’s easy first.
- Teach parents how important attendance is.
- Understand parents and their constraints.
Revisit College-Readiness

Moving away from the traditional approach…

- Course-taking and completion
- Remedial course needs in college

To a more comprehensive approach

- Cognitive development/growth in high school
- Subject-specific content knowledge
- Attitudes and behavioral traits
- Contextual knowledge

Grad Nation Reports and Tools

• To access the Grad Nation Report please go to
  www.every1graduates.org/gradnation.html

• To access the 2011 Annual Update please go to
  www.every1graduates.org/gradnation2011.html

• To access the Grad Nation Guidebook and tools
  please go to
  www.every1graduates.org/gradnationguide.html
Going Beyond Prevention

• Rigorous college- and career-oriented curriculum for all, organized around high standards, with built-in student supports

• Multiple pathways/alternative educational opportunities, especially for over-age and under-credited students, distinguishing between those students needing many credits and those needing only a few
Postsecondary Readiness

• Ensure students graduate high school prepared for postsecondary and career success

• College on-track goals
  • During junior year, students take college placement exams.
  • During the first semester of senior year, students apply to a postsecondary institution.
  • By spring deadline, grade 12 students complete the FAFSA application for financial aid.
Family Engagement is:

**A Shared Responsibility**

Schools and other community organizations and agencies are committed to working with families in meaningful and culturally respectful ways, and families are committed to actively supporting their children’s learning and development.

**Cradle to Career**

From birth to college and career

**Across Contexts**

Throughout contexts in which children learn – at home, in schools, in afterschool programs, in faith-based institutions, and in community programs and activities.

Relevant Publications

- Graduating America (2009)
- Grad Nation (2008)
- What Your Community Can Do to End the Dropout Crisis (2007)
- Locating the Dropout Crisis (2005)

All publications available at www.every1graduates.org
Everyone Graduates Center
Center for Social Organization of Schools
Johns Hopkins University
www.every1graduates.org
Inspiring Students Through Supportive Transitions into College Preparatory High Schools

Ben Martinez
National Program Director
Breakthrough Collaborative
Breakthrough Collaborative Mission

Founded in 1978, Breakthrough Collaborative has changed the lives of tens of thousands of students, utilizing a unique dual mission to:

- increase the academic opportunity for highly motivated, underserved students and put them on the trajectory of a successful college path; and
- inspire and develop the next generation of teachers and educational leaders.
Student Realities

The gap starts early.

• Children in low-income communities are 2–3 grades behind their wealthier peers by fourth grade.

It widens as students progress to high school.

• Only 65% of African American and Hispanic students in low-income communities will earn a high school diploma.
Student Realities, continued

The costs (moral, human, and economic) are significant.

- Only 1 in 10 students from low-income communities graduates from college.
- The achievement gap between low-income students and their higher-income peers costs the U.S. around $500B annually.

Even the highest-performing low-income students are affected.

- Highest-performing low-income students graduate from college at about the same rate as lowest-performing high-income students.
Breakthrough Student Profile

• 92% students of color
• 65% qualify for free or reduced lunch
• 58% will be first in family to attend college
• 39% live in single-parent households
• 34% speak English as a second language
Middle School Program

Breakthrough starts in middle school, when students are making key decisions about their futures.

Intensive 6-week summer session in the summers following sixth and seventh grades

• “Students teaching students” model
• Small class sizes in the summer sessions and school-year Breakthrough programming
• Accelerated learning in English, math, science, social studies, and foreign language
• Academic electives such as African American history, debate, and astronomy
• Enrichment electives such as athletics, music lessons, study skills, and public speaking
• 2–3 hours of nightly homework
• Field trips
• Family-outreach events
Middle School Program, continued

Year-round support

- Individualized afterschool academic tutoring support for students
- Skill building in math and writing
- Individual family high school options counseling
High School Program

Breakthrough offers continued support during students’ high school years and partners with local organizations to help students achieve their goal of graduating from a 4-year college.

- Tutoring
- Grade monitoring
- Ongoing college prep and assistance
- College test preparation (SAT, ACT)
- Admissions counseling
- Campus tours
- Financial aid workshops
- Scholarship opportunities
- Internship placements
Success Factors

Factor 1: Belief in the Need for College
Students who believe they need a bachelor’s degree to pursue the career of their choice are 46% more likely to obtain a bachelor’s degree.

Factor 2: Peer Group
Students are four times more likely to enroll in college if a majority of their friends also plan to attend.

Factor 3: Rigor of High School Coursework
A rigorous high school curriculum has greater impact on bachelor’s degree completion than any other pre-college indicator of academic preparation, regardless of socioeconomic status or race.
Success Factors

Addressing Factor 1: **Belief in the Need for College**
- Recruitment visits that stress the need for college
- A rigorous application for students and their families, including interviews and reference checks
- Talking with students and families about college aspirations during the interview process

Addressing Factor 2: **College-Going Peer Group**
- All teaching during middle school program is performed by high school- and college-aged students to create a transformational relationship and learning environment
- An environment where it’s “cool to be smart” and where college is seen as the goal
Success Factors

Addressing Factor 3: Rigorous Breakthrough Curriculum

- Two-year, year-round middle school program including intensive 6-week summer sessions, afterschool and weekend tutoring, and enrichment that prepares students for rigorous high school study

- High school course planners that help students and families understand the requirements to access college
Coaching Families on the High School Transition

1. Understanding the Landscape

- **High School Options**
  - **Public Schools Are Free**
    - District Schools
      - Traditional District: *Examples*
      - Magnet Schools: *Examples*
    - Charter Schools: *Examples*
  - **Private Schools Charge Tuition**
    - Independent Schools
      - Day Schools: *Examples*
      - Boarding Schools: *Examples*
    - Catholic/Parochial
      - Co-Ed: *Examples*
      - All Girls: *Examples*
      - All Boys: *Examples*
## Coaching Families on the High School Transition

### 2. Defining College-Preparatory High School Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School:</th>
<th>School Liaison:</th>
<th>Contact Information:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does this school rank among its peers?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What is this school's graduation rate?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is this school's college application rate?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is this school's college acceptance rate?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What percentage of students take the SAT®? ACT? PSAT/NMSQT®? PLAN?</td>
<td>PSAT/NMSQT _________%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SAT _________%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PLAN _________%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACT _________%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the average test scores for students at this school?</td>
<td>SAT _________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACT _________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many AP or college-level classes does the school offer?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is academic rigor encouraged for students?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name(s) of Breakthrough Student(s) and Teacher(s) Attending This School:
Coaching Families on the High School Transition

3. Defining College-Preparatory Coursework

- Emphasize the importance of adhering to proper course sequencing and ensuring necessary prerequisite courses are taken at the correct time (e.g., Algebra II or Geometry during ninth grade to allow student to complete full college-prep math sequence)

- Ensure that families understand the full scope of recommended college-preparatory coursework:
  - 4 years/units of English
  - 3-4 years/units of math
  - 3 years/units of science
  - 3 years/units of history or social studies
  - 3 years/units of foreign languages
  - At least 1 year/unit of computer science or other college-preparatory elective
Breakthrough Student Results

The percentage of Breakthrough students that attend college-prep high school programs is more than twice the national average for low-income students.*

*From exemplary sites
Breakthrough (BT) Commitment

Student’s Role

• Remain committed to the goal of attending a 4-year college or university.
• Maintain a B average and adhere to the BT Path to College.
• Submit transcripts twice a year to allow BT to track grades throughout high school.
• Contact BT when struggling in a class.
• Meet with a BT staff member immediately when receiving a grade of C or below on any quarterly report card or progress report.
• Update BT on academics, extracurricular activities (changing schools, beginning a new program, etc.) and/or changes in contact information.
Breakthrough Commitment, continued

Breakthrough’s Role

- Help students access support services to aid with any academic challenges encountered.
- Help identify and support students in applying to academic programs and enrichment opportunities.
- Help students create resumes and find afterschool and summer jobs as needed.
- Help with the college application process.
- Provide a strong, personalized letter of recommendation to send to prospective colleges.
- Advocate on behalf of students to guidance counselors, teachers, school officials, college admissions officers, program directors, etc.
Key Lessons for Educators

• Be a source of information for students and families on the importance of college, on high school options and required coursework, on college affordability, and how to access financial aid.

• Teach parents to recognize and demand high-quality education. Parents at independent schools expect the best, and are successful advocates for their children. Public school parents must do the same.

• Help cut through the smog of low expectations.
Key Lessons for Families

- Recognize how influential peer culture becomes in middle school. Monitor friendships and encourage connections with peers who plan to attend college.

- Make college a tangible part of your child’s world by visiting a college campus together. This type of active involvement in college preparation is more important than simply discussing college applications and requirements.

- Don’t be intimidated by costs. Financial aid is available.
For More Information

www.breakthroughcollaborative.org
Engaging Schools and Families in College Readiness and Success

Carol Myers
Indiana State Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC)
The Indiana Partnerships Center (IPC)
The Purpose of this Partnership is to

• Increase communication with and engagement of families.

• Increase staff awareness of challenges and best practices for college access and success.

• Develop shared responsibility among staff for helping students graduate on time and be prepared for successful postsecondary experiences.

• Increase staff awareness and utilization of existing resources.
Context of Collaboration Between The Indiana Partnerships Center and Indianapolis Public Schools (with support from Central Indiana Community Foundation)

- Have an established 10-year relationship with district to promote family engagement.
- Created Parent Liaison Certification Program.
- Receive support from the Central Indiana Community Foundation.
- Collaborate with major partners: Asst. Superintendent for Secondary Schools, Title I Dept., Central Indiana Community Foundation.
- Built initiative linking community partners with liaisons and principals.
Key Components of the Work

- Ongoing communication and regular monthly connection with parent liaisons
- College pathway teams with structured time for planning and cross-school collaboration
- Professional development with liaisons and pathway teams
- Systems of data gathering and analysis
- External partnerships to drive problem solving
- System of positive reinforcement and recognition
Year 1

- Introduced parent liaisons to Beating the Odds research
- Local colleges (hosting meetings at local colleges and connecting them with college admissions representatives)
  - Academic rigor
  - A network of timely supports
  - A culture of college access
  - Effective use of data

Year 1, continued

• Expanded role of secondary school parent liaisons to introduce families to college information through focus groups, home visits, workshops, and college visits.

• College pathways teams officially mandated by asst. superintendent, which included parent liaisons, principal, counselors, and teachers.

• Implemented college visits with families and students.
Year 2

- Introduced Beating the Odds research and rubric to new pathway teams.
- Introduced community partners from College Access Network.
- Began data-collection processes.
  - Pathway team self-assessment of current practices
  - Student surveys by schools and district
  - Parent focus groups
  - Student focus groups
Key Findings from Beating the Odds Student Survey

Over 3,000 students in 14 middle and high schools completed the student survey focused on college interest, understanding, and use of resources to support success.

- 70% of students surveyed indicated awareness of academic supports, while 30% used these services.
- 91% plan to go to college, with 66% of middle school students and 79% of high school students indicating awareness of what is needed to graduate.
- The students were articulate in describing what they need to succeed (in optional open-ended questions).
Year 3

- College readiness and success teams directed to focus on attendance
- Mini-grants to engage families in attendance efforts
- Support for district data tracking system
- Creation of best practices rubric integrating Beating the Odds and PTA National Standards
- Awards for best practices in family engagement
Challenges and Lessons Learned for Working with Parent Liaisons

1. It is important to help parent liaisons shift their perspective and recognize that:
   - parents/families are interested in college readiness,
   - they need to reach out to families in multiple ways,
   - home visits need to include college readiness info, and
   - they need to work collaboratively with school staff.

2. School staff may help in determining what college-readiness information to share with families.

3. Parent liaison job descriptions and performance factors may need to be changed to include college readiness work with families.
Key Things All Families Should Know Related to Student Readiness and Success

• Three A’s: Attendance, Attainment, Achievement (tracking, asking, talking, and supporting)

• Importance of your child taking high-level math

• College can be affordable for your child (completing 21st Century Scholars and FAFSA)

• Connecting your child to school and community resources for academic support

• Being an active part of the college search experience

“Every worthwhile accomplishment, big or little, has its stages of drudgery and triumph; a beginning, a struggle and a victory.” Mahatma Gandhi
Key Insights from Collaboration with District

- Frame work within the largest context and priority of district.
- Use data to drive work.
- Provide space for families to be at the table, and for staff to work together.
- Be the bridge for community resource connection with schools.
- Realize the power of building relationships—the inspiration of staff like Angela Short, director of College and Career.
- Realize the value of recognition.
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