



High School Dropout Prevention and Recovery

**Presentation to Joint Legislative Education
Oversight Committee**

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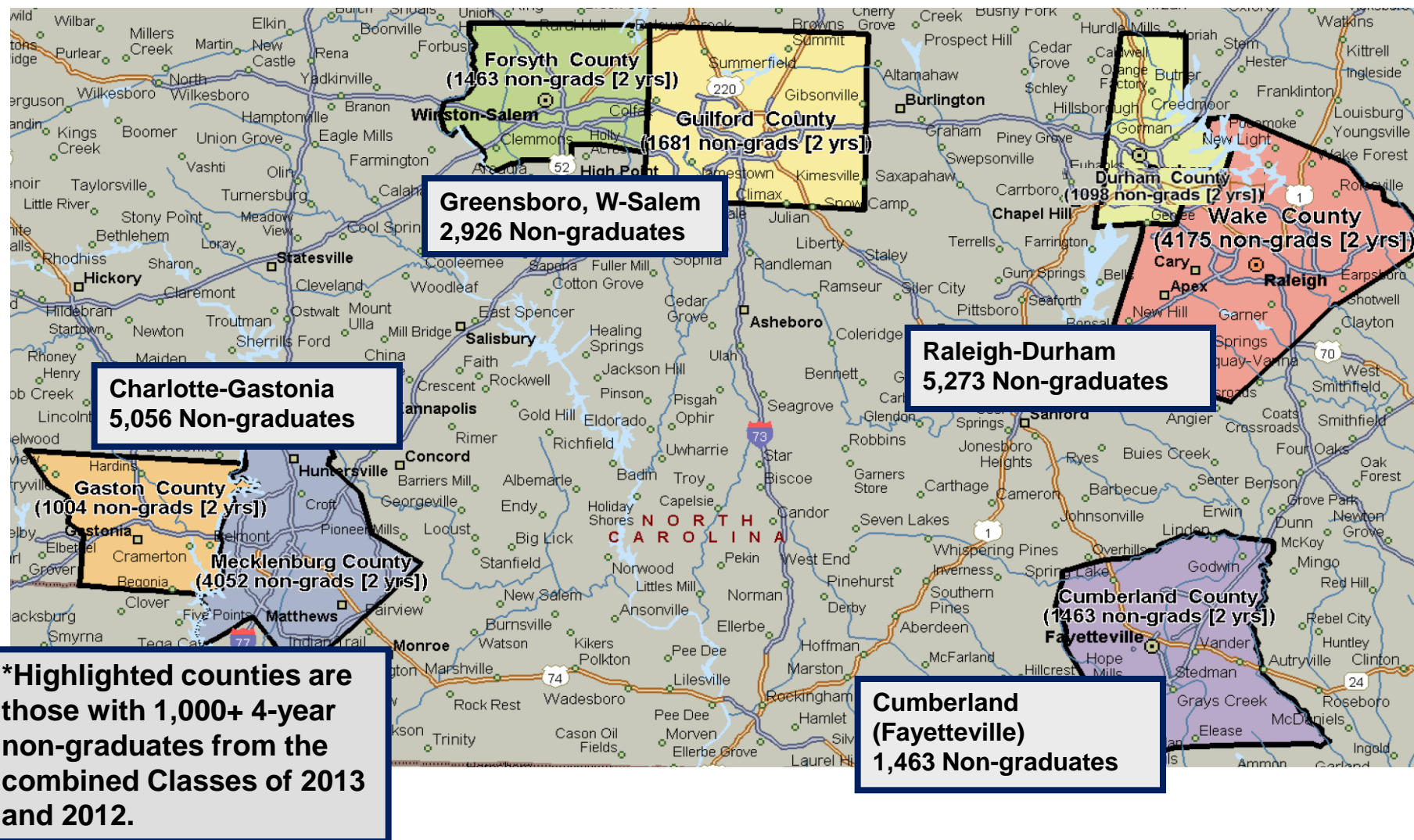


The Dropout Challenge

- 1,000,000 students¹ in the US did not graduate with their 9th grade cohort in 2013
- 40,000 NC students² did not graduate with their 9th grade class in the 2012 and 2013 cohort years.
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS)
 - 4,052 CMS students (21.3%)² did not graduate with their 9th grade cohorts in 2012 and 2013.
 - 4,172 CMS high school students (11%)³ were repeating a grade in 2011-12.
- Wake County Public School System (WCPSS)
 - 4,175 WCPSS students (19%)² did not graduate with their 9th grade cohorts in 2012 and 2013.
 - 3,751 WCPSS high school students (9%)⁴ were repeating a grade in 2012-13.



Overview of North Carolina High School Dropout Data*





Impact of Dropouts on North Carolina

- \$128,000 lower earnings per NC dropout¹ over a career compared to high school graduates (\$5.1 billion lower earnings statewide from the students who did not graduate with the NC Classes of 2012 and 2013²)
- \$48 million per year in lost NC state and local revenues due to lower incomes earned by the students who did not graduate with the Classes of 2012 and 2013³
- \$121 million per year in increased social services expenditures for food stamps, Medicaid and other social program costs to support non-graduates⁴
- 17,000 NC prison inmates (46%) are high school dropouts⁵ and cost \$27,820 per prisoner per year⁶

1/ Source: *Issue Brief: The High Cost of Dropouts...*, Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011. 2/ Source for non-graduates: *Disaggregated Graduation Rates, 2006-2013*, NCDPI, September 2013. 3/ Ibid, Alliance for Excellent Education (adjusted for updated non-graduate statistics.) 4/ North Carolina High School Dropout Rates: An Econometric Analysis, by Dr. Osei-Agyeman Yeboah, NC A&T University, 2010. 5/ Source: *Corrections Statistical Analysis Tool – Prisoners*, Bureau of Justice Statics, Department of Justice, 2012. 6/ Source for cost per medium security prisoner: *Prisons Statistics*, NC Department of Corrections, 2012.



Who We Are – *Our Mission*

Our Schools' Mission

The mission of our schools is to help at-risk students earn a standard high school diploma and prepare for post-secondary success

Who We Are

- We currently manage twenty-one dropout prevention and recovery schools accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)
- Schools are governed by non-profit, IRS tax-exempt organizations with contracts to serve over 10,000 students
- We are working with non-profit boards in Charlotte and Raleigh to implement five schools in 2014 and 2015 that will serve 3,000 students, if approved by the North Carolina Board of Education



What We Do – *Our Role*

What We Do

- Contract with non-profit charter holders to provide services to high school students that help them build basic academic skills and meet the state requirements for graduation
- Offer a teacher-led, technology enhanced learning environment that is self-paced and has flexible scheduling options for our students
- Provide nine discrete community-based support services to address the life issues that prevent our students from achieving academic success
- Support students with extensive career and college readiness counseling to help each transition to his/her post-secondary choice



Who We Serve

Typical Students enrolling in our Florida schools are:

- Average age of 17 with 10.5 high school credits earned.
- 88% were referred by their home schools because they were identified as being at-risk of dropping out or were long-term absent. The remaining 12% were from out of district.
- **70% are behind their 9th grade cohort. These students are an average of 2 years behind.**
- **80+% are reading below grade level and performing at the lowest levels on the State standardized exams upon entry to the program.**
- 12% require special education accommodations, 10% are English language learners, 82% are members of low income families and 10% are parenting, pregnant or caring for other children.



Students Enrolling in ALS-managed Florida Schools have already Fallen behind their Peers

Measure	Students Enrolling in ALS Schools ¹	Florida Statewide High School Students
Percent scoring Below Satisfactory on FCAT Reading	88%	47% ²
Average years over-age for expected grade	2	Less than 1 ³
Percent of Class of 2012 students who enrolled AFTER their cohort had already graduated	55%	Not reported
Percent of students who have changed schools at least once between October and February	32%	5% ⁴

1/ Source: *Student Tracking and Reporting System (STARS)*, Accelerated Learning Solutions, Inc., 2013. 2/ Source: *2013 Florida Statewide Assessment Scores* webpage, FLDOE website, accessed July 2013. 3/ Source: (calculated from) *Non-Promotions in Florida's Public Schools, 2011-12*, AEIS webpage, FLDOE, 2013. 4/Source: *Stability Rate, 2011-12*, AEIS webpage, FLDOE, 2013.



Program Overview

- Our schools offer a teacher directed, technology enhanced curriculum that allows for self-paced learning and an opportunity to accelerate credit earning.
- Specially designed curricula focus on specific needs of at-risk students to include math and reading remediation, personal-social/character development, financial literacy and post-secondary and job readiness planning.
- Our classrooms are small with certified teachers providing individualized academic support across all content areas.
- Multiple daily sessions allow for flexible scheduling options for working and parenting students.
- A proprietary “My Success Dashboard” allows students to track progress daily and record personal and academic goals and post-secondary planning.
- Each school employs instructional support staff to include a Reading Teacher, Special Education Teacher, Career Coach, Bi-lingual Aide and Family Support Specialist.



Student Support Services

- A large focus on student support services is vital due to the many social and emotional factors that negatively impact the potential success of an at-risk student.
- Our schools employ a Family Support Specialist licensed in mental health counseling or clinical social work.
- Our schools partner with a broad array of local social service agencies and college/university counseling programs to ensure full wrap-around services available to all students and their families.
- Services provided in our schools include but are not limited to individual & group mental health counseling, grief support, anger management, addictions counseling, assistance with childcare needs, and full case management services (including basic needs support- food, clothing and housing).



Why We Are Different

- ***We only serve students who have dropped out of school or are at-risk of dropping out.*** Less than 10% of charter schools in the southeastern US serve this student population.
- ***Our non-profit boards partner with public schools.*** Our schools have positive relationships with local school districts because we do not compete for students who are currently successful in the school system.
- ***Our schools are located in underserved and low-income areas.*** Over 80% of our students live in neighborhoods with average household incomes below the state average.
- ***We provide extensive social services support and post-secondary coaching to students.*** Each school delivers extensive community-based support services to address the obstacles that prevent academic success.
- ***Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).*** ALS is the only SACS accredited school management company addressing dropout prevention in the state of Florida.



Our Schools' Track Record

- ***Achieving academic standards, graduating students from high school and enrolling students in their post-secondary choice.*** The credit earning rate in our schools is twice what students achieved in their prior schools. Over 60% of graduates in 2013 went on to attend a two/four-year college, trade or technical school.
- ***Meeting expectations of the school district authorizer.*** Our schools met 93% of their contractual performance targets in 2011-12. (156 of 168 contractual requirements as verified using school district, Florida Department of Education and internal data sources)
- ***Realizing positive financial results.*** Independent auditors to the charter boards have consistently issued clean financial audits. All schools are financially viable.
- ***Renewing contracts with the school district authorizer.*** The charter contracts for 9 schools in Orange, Lee, Hillsborough and Broward County, Florida were due to expire at the end of the 2012-13 school year. All contracts were unanimously renewed for terms of 5-15 years.



We Need Your Help on Two Issues That May Impact our Ability to Serve These Students

1. The current funding process for charter schools does not provide for routine state payments to charter schools beyond the schools' 20 day ADM count
 - ✓ Our students will enroll throughout the school year - beyond the 20 day ADM count
 - ✓ Exceptional, *Contingency Reserve* payments are possible beyond the 20 day ADM count but not guaranteed per advice from NCDPI
 - ✓ We recommend that the state payment process to alternative charter schools be revised to provide payment for enrollments occurring throughout the school year
2. The READY Accountability System is not designed to assess the performance of Dropout Prevention and Recovery Programs
 - ✓ READY Performance Composite is based solely on the percentage of students who are reading or performing math on grade level. Almost every student entering our schools is at least 3 years behind grade level in both reading and math skills
 - ✓ We recommend that charter schools serving these off-track, at-risk students be included under the state's alternative education accountability system



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