



Public Schools of North Carolina  
State Board of Education  
Department of Public Instruction

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# Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

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Interim Evaluation Report of  
2009 Dropout Prevention Grants

*S.L. 2009-451, sec. 7.13(c)(9)*

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**Date Due: March 15, 2011**  
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2010-2011

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**2009**

**Dropout Prevention Grant Recipients  
Program Evaluation  
Interim Report**

**Presented by**

**The North Carolina Committee on Dropout Prevention**

**Prepared by**

**EDSTAR, Inc.**

**February 2011**

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# **2009 Dropout Prevention Grant Recipients Program Evaluation**

## **Final Report**

### **Executive Summary**

#### **Description**

In 2009, the General Assembly of North Carolina approved additional funding for dropout prevention, continuing Session Law 2007-323, which established the North Carolina Committee on Dropout Prevention (NCCDP). The funding level was approximately \$11.8K allocated to 83 agencies, including 37 of the original 2008 grantees. Twenty-three of the grantees received the grant in 2007, 2008, and 2009.

Although eager to deliver services to students, some 2007 and 2008 grantees experienced difficulty with program management and capacity issues. Monitoring visits conducted by the NCDPI documented that some agencies were unaware of processes required for program implementation. Technical assistance calls to EDSTAR by many grantees revealed that they had no processes for information management, and staff turnover often resulted in loss of critical information, or failure to communicate accountability requirements to new staff.

EDSTAR created a Capacity Checklist for grantees to use to help guide them toward practices required by NCDPI, and processes that would promote good information management. The Capacity Checklist was not required for accountability, but rather, provided by EDSTAR to the grantees to help them put procedures in place for managing information for accountability. (See Appendix.)

#### **Program Descriptions**

Each grantee's information is posted to EDSTAR's website, which has improved accountability and transparency. This also allows staff to collaborate and share information from each other's reports. NCDPI has provided a link so that the reports can be read by the public as well.

## **Staff**

Using regular teachers from students' schools in curricular programs outside of school times is one of the most efficient strategies to improve academics (Fashola, 1998). Appropriately, most of the permanent staff who work directly with students are teachers. Community members are the largest volunteer component. Some of these are one-time guest speakers, although many are ongoing contributors. Parent volunteers make up another large component of regular staff members. Students, including participants, peers, and college students, provide the second largest cadre of volunteers (after community members). Services provided

Most of the services were provided directly to the students. Programs could be classified into three primary types: targeted to specific students or groups, school-wide, and larger than school-wide, although some grants supported both a targeted component and a larger component. The school-wide and larger categories are considered "non-targeted" services and, although beneficial, can be more difficult to gauge directly, as many students may reap benefits that are not measured.

Actual services provided to students vary, although some are more common than others. Academic skill help and the integration of social and behavioral skills (e.g., leadership, self-confidence, etc.) are the two most common services provided. Of the 230 SMART outcomes, 140 (61%) address reading, math, general academics, or include academic course recovery. Nearly all (77) of the agencies of the 81 who submitted SMART outcomes included at least one which addressed academics.

All grantees were asked to describe any non-targeted services they provide, and how many students benefit from them. Fifty-three percent provide non-targeted services. Often, grantees have no way of gauging exact participation, and determining how many students benefited is conjecture. Across all the grantees, approximately 16,305 students are benefiting from non-targeted services. Benefits from non-targeted

prevention services will be measured by comparison of course failures and discipline incidents with previous cohorts of similar students.

Additionally, services were provided to staff, usually as professional staff development. Families are also involved. Many services are provided to them, such as workshops and orientations.

### **Students served**

Of the 9,492 targeted students being served, 54% are male and 46% are female. The majority of students served are in 9th grade. Some grantees also include services for pregnant girls and teen parents. A total of 418 pregnant girls and teen parents are served.

### **Budgets**

Last year, new budget forms were designed and procedures set in place to improve budget reporting. Standardization and technical support for budgets significantly increased the accountability for the funds, and provides standardized information. For the 83 grant recipients submitting evaluation reports, the NCDPI indicates that a total of nearly \$11.8M was distributed.

### **Conclusions**

The 2009 dropout prevention grants are serving approximately 25,797 students in 69 counties with prevention services. A total of 9,492 students were targeted for documented risk factors that the services are designed to diminish or eliminate. Together, these two kinds of services should decrease the dropout rate and increase the four-year cohort graduation rate. The prevention services may impact the four-year cohort graduation rate, while the intervention services will have a greater impact on the dropout rate. Grantees focus on holding targeted students to quality standards, and preparing them to both graduate and to be career and college ready. For students who are already off track, these quality services with high standards are not likely to result

in on-time graduation, but they may result in well-prepared successful students who graduate later than their cohorts.

The framework now exists for documenting fidelity of program implementation, whether targeted students successfully meet program benchmarks, and how many students benefit from preventative components of these programs. The move toward using academic and behavior data to target students for intervention services may in and of itself contribute to reducing the dropout rate. We have also found that aligning services to needs using academic and behavior data can have immediate positive effects.

As the practice of using academic data to target students for academic interventions becomes more routine, and access to the most challenging courses opens up to students who are predicted to succeed, students who have been traditionally referred to as “at-risk” may begin connecting with school and developing an increased sense of self-worth. The academic opportunities that we give students are the greatest indicators of what we think they are worth and what we convey to the students.

## **Recommendations**

**1. Whenever possible, programs funded by the NC Committee on Dropout Prevention should use EVAAS® data to help identify students and assess progress.** Although some evidence exists for identifying who drops out, it is not clear that all targeted groups are at risk of dropping out. EVAAS (Education Value-Added Assessment System) can predict which students are not likely to be successful in core courses if they do not receive additional help. Some of the 2009 grant recipients indicated use of EVAAS to determine which students to target, but many more could benefit from this resource. The NCDPI is partnering with SAS® to develop Graduation Resiliency, a software program designed to facilitate the early identification via an examination of research-based risk factors of students who may be at risk of dropping out of school. We could gain valuable information by identifying programs that were



successful with students identified by EVAAS® as needing academic help to succeed, or who are identified by the Graduation Resiliency software as being at risk of dropping out.

**2. The NC Committee on Dropout Prevention should continue to pursue funding for a commissioned study to identify programs and practices that “beat the odds” in encouraging school completion.** The Quality Standards and Assessments pillar of education initiatives include quality academic standards to ensure students are prepared for graduation and entrance into society as adults in a 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. North Carolina currently has in place quality academic standards in its *Standard Course of Study* (NC SCOS). Meeting these academic standards are requirements currently necessary for students to graduate. It is fitting then, for most programs to help students reach the benchmarks as defined in NC SCOS. If a study is conducted to determine what services help students who are predicted by EVAAS® or by the Graduation Resiliency software to fail to meet these standards, valuable information could be gained. The NCCDP could use the information to provide clearer guidelines about what applications they would fund based on evidence of effectiveness for the students we can identify as needing help. The grant application process would be simpler, yet more effective, and might increase the level of innovation among the existing and partnering leadership that support the grant award process. Once finished, the study could be made an integral part of determining which areas to address toward dropout prevention. Funding for such a study is not forthcoming at this time, however.

Meanwhile, granted agencies should be required to strive to achieve academic benchmarks. With guidance and appropriate data, most agencies could design programs to specifically address these areas. Assistance with data retrieval, interpretation, and setting reasonable benchmarks would improve the integrity of the grants.

**3. Subsequent funding cycles should provide opportunities to replicate effective practices.** Model programs have been identified. Rather than fund only new and innovative programs, the NCDPC should consider funding agencies or LEAs whose data show a high number of students with needs similar to those served by the model programs, who are willing to replicate the model program.

# 2009 Dropout Prevention Grant Recipients Program Evaluation

## Interim Report

### Description

In 2009, the General Assembly of North Carolina approved additional funding for dropout prevention, continuing Session Law 2007-323, which established the North Carolina Committee on Dropout Prevention (NCCDP). The funding level was approximately \$11.8K, allocated to 83 agencies, including 37 of the 2008 grantees. Twenty-three of the 2009 grantees also received both the 2007 and 2008 grant. The 2009 grant is awarded for the 2010-2011 school year, which is currently underway. Although many outcomes are not yet available, even in this interim stage, improvements in programs are readily evident.

North Carolina's steadily increasing dropout rate finally began to decline as programs were implemented through the grant. The dropout rate fell from 5.24% in 2006-2007 to 4.97% in 2007-2008. More than half of North Carolina's Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) (57%) reported decreases, and every high school grade (9-12) was able to report a reduction in the number of dropouts. With the exception of multiracial students, all races and ethnic groups saw declines in the numbers and percentages of dropouts (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2008). In the 2008-2009 school year, the dropout rate fell again from 4.97% to 4.27%--the lowest dropout rate ever recorded in North Carolina. A decrease in the dropout rate was reported in 84% of all school districts. North Carolina schools also saw a decrease in acts of crime and violence, and both short-term and long-term suspensions. The decrease in long-term suspensions was dramatic—from 5,225 incidents to 3,592—down 31.3% (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2010). (For specific details on the dropout incidents, see

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/research/discipline/reports/consolidated/200>

8-09/consolidated-report.pdf.) Although one cannot necessarily attribute a causal relationship between the funding of the dropout prevention grants and the reduction in dropout numbers, nevertheless, the S. L. 2007-323, the subsequent S.L. 2008-0107, the NCCDP, and the NCDPI have increased awareness and understanding of dropout prevention in North Carolina. Additionally, the programs implemented very likely had some impact on the decline in dropout numbers. Many programs included services designed to improve behavior and reduce suspension, both of which may be attributable to the decline in those numbers as well. Also, the majority of programs devised to improve academic achievement may have indirectly affected student behavior, thus contributing to the declines in crime and suspensions, as well as the dropout incidents. Although the corresponding figures for the 2009-2010 school year are not yet available, we anticipate a continuing trend, and are optimistic about the final report.

### **Dropout Prevention Leadership and Collaboration**

The collaboration and successful implementation of funding for the dropout prevention grants involves the well coordinated efforts of the North Carolina General Assembly, members of the NCCDP, members of the Joint Legislative Commission on Dropout Prevention and High School Graduation, and the NCDPI. The General Assembly allocates funding and specifies the priorities to be addressed in awarding grant funds. The members of the NCCDP are appointed and serve the General Assembly's interests in making sure dropout funds and the process of awarding grants have appropriate oversight and leadership, adhere to the legislation, and receive a thorough evaluation to determine effectiveness. The Joint Legislative Commission on Dropout Prevention and High School Graduation reviews the grant evaluation and decides whether expanding or replicating dropout prevention funds will improve graduation rates. Additionally, the Commission examines research on student success, school reform efforts, and the suitability of required courses for graduation. The

Commission also determines strategies best suited to help students remain in school when they are at risk of dropping out.

The NCDPI is the fiscal agent of the dropout prevention funds. The NCDPI also provides tremendous leadership to funded programs and hosts the necessary technical training and centralized communication that are essential to documenting the work being done with dropout prevention funds.

The partnership of these entities is both innovative and effective. It is a unique collaboration of governing elected officials, state-wide community members and advocates, and the state department providing leadership for educational and public school initiatives throughout North Carolina. Responsibilities among the respective partnering entities are clear, and positive and consistent communication about dropout prevention efforts are addressed with grant funds.

Grantees for General Assembly of North Carolina's dropout prevention grant included LEAs, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), including non-profit and faith-based agencies; and universities or government agencies. Some grantees used their funding to enhance existing programs; others began new programs. Many grant-funded projects are part of a larger initiative paid for with a variety of resources. School systems, community volunteers, and other agencies provide resources to support programs. These resources range from full-time teachers and social workers to one-time guest speakers.

### **Improvements as the grant evolves**

The 2008 grants had already been awarded when EDSTAR was hired to be the evaluator, but most grantees had not yet begun providing services. Some agencies had not articulated which students they were serving in terms of individuals with characteristics that could be changed. EDSTAR provided technical assistance to help the grantees write SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound)

outcomes and target individuals. Grantees did not change the services they were providing, but articulated more specifically which students to target for those services, and how they would measure success. For example, they may have originally written that they would help at-risk students pass Algebra I with a goal of lowering the dropout rate of at-risk youth. This may have been changed to indicate that they would target 9<sup>th</sup> graders who had scored below grade level on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade math EOG, with the goal that they would pass Algebra I. They described how they intended to change the students, how the changes would be measured, and in what timeframe. A few agencies had planned to raise self-esteem, or increase students' ability to create goals. Most rewrote these goals in terms of SMART outcomes, and success was measured against whether they met them, even though these goals do not directly relate to meeting quality standards for graduation.

Through professional training provided through from NCDPI and EDSTAR, grantees have been provided with research depicting factors that improve the probability of students remaining in school, and how to use that information to develop programs conducive to reducing the dropout rate. EDSTAR's one-stop website provides grantees with a panoply of useful materials, including a budget form, attendance and student information rosters, forms for documenting program implementation activities, forms for describing staffing information, interim and final reporting forms, dropout-prevention research, pre- and post-surveys to determine changes in more subjective factors such as academic confidence and self-esteem, rigorous lessons, and many other resources to ease compliance with grant regulations and allow grantees to concentrate efforts toward helping the students stay in school. EDSTAR provides technical support for using this information management system, and collects periodic data to ensure that grantees are complying with the grant.

The clarity in the administration of the dropout prevention program has allowed shortcomings to be identified and addressed. From the first year of the dropout

prevention grant to the present, much has been learned to improve the grants. In the first year of the grant, when EDSTAR entered at its conclusion, many agencies were conducting laudable services, but ignoring the Data Pillar – a component of the 21<sup>st</sup> century data system which replaces the at-risk model, employed by Race to the Top and other recent programs. The four components of the Data Pillar are:

- Determine what the data indicate are the greatest problems and possible solutions.
- Decide how to use data to align services for individuals.
- Create an Information Management System that will document what services were provided, and provide accountability for program implementation.
- Decide how to measure student success against quality standards and assessments.

Many of the first grant programs (73%) lacked baseline data to measure outcomes. Although this situation improved for the 2008 grants with the advent of required SMART outcomes, some agencies continued to treat students based on their membership in a subgroup rather than their performance. Additionally, many programs included components designed to address areas not directly related to academic achievement, which is ultimately the prerequisite for graduation.

The improvements made throughout the years of the grant have been extraordinary. We have seen the programs evolve so that students targeted for services have been found to be lacking in an area that may affect retention in school – such as academics or attendance – and the improvement in the students is measurable. Although these factors may seem elementary, they are not. Many programs, including federal programs such as *No Child Left Behind*, have components which cast a wide net over groups of students and remediate all of them – whether or not they need the intervention. Some

students may be helped, but many more are harmed. Because the net is usually cast over students based on their parents' income or their race, the gap in achievement grows wider, and dropout rates increase as capable students are denied rigorous academics that would help them excel.

Dropout grantees were shown the benefits of using achievement data to target students for achievement, attendance data to target students for truancy, etc., as well as the pitfalls of doing otherwise. With the 2009 grants, most of the SMART outcomes were articulated in such a way that made this apparent. With few exceptions, most of the grantees used objective data such as previous achievement or behavior to determine which services to offer and how they would measure success of their programs. Indeed, the four components of the Data Pillar of Race to the Top are on display in the Dropout Prevention program in a way that could be emulated in many ways; the grantees have determined where the greatest problems are and aligned services appropriately. The Information Management System in place makes documentation easy – so much so that 83 diverse agencies throughout the state have turned in the required information for this interim report. And finally, the fourth Data Pillar is fulfilled, because student success will be measurable against quality standards and assessments.

Grantees stated up to three SMART outcomes; of the 239 outcomes presented, 230 can be classified as SMART. Among these 230, there are some problems, but most are well articulated and will allow evaluators to determine whether grantees met the benchmarks set as their SMART outcomes, and how many individuals met the benchmarks set for them. The clarity provided by having the proper information, well-articulated goals, and interim reports also allows us to identify areas of weakness that can be improved in the future.

## **Grantees**

Of the 83 agencies awarded the 2008 grants, 35 are LEAs, 13 are schools (including 2 colleges), 22 are non-government agencies, 7 are faith-based, and the other



6 include agencies such as social services and a local police department, as well as YMCAs and other institutions. Most grantees work in collaboration with other agencies to provide a wider variety of services than grantees could provide alone. They solicit familiar institutions as partners such as 4H, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, YMCAs, YWCAs, and scout troops, as well as local churches and other organizations. Additionally, local agencies such as police departments were solicited for single lectures, and grantees that include career information often enlist the services of local businesses for lectures, job shadowing, and internships. The armed forces have also played a role in this year's programs.

## **Goals and objectives**

In early 2009, EDSTAR was contracted to provide general support to the NCDPI, as well as many specific resources and services for grantees. This collaboration between EDSTAR and NCDPI came on the cusp as the 2007 grant programs had concluded and the funds had been recently distributed for the 2008 grants. EDSTAR was asked to provide an evaluation that would identify effective practices that could serve as promising programs to be replicated.

As evaluators, we knew we would not be able to document program effectiveness or provide information to be used for replicating promising programs if any components of the Data Pillar were missing. We have worked to eliminate incongruities through mandatory staff development, support, and data-management resources. As previously discussed, EDSTAR created the Information Management system necessary for implementing the 21<sup>st</sup> century Data Pillar, and helped the 2008 grant recipients write SMART outcomes that described which group of students they were targeting, how they intended to change the students, how the changes would be measured, and in what timeframe.

For 2008 grants, EDSTAR came aboard as evaluators after programs were underway. SMART outcomes were then articulated for many previously designed

goals. This retro-fitting revealed problems with programs which could sometimes be corrected, although in some cases they could not. For the 2009 grants, however, grantees were required to submit SMART outcomes with their applications. Although EDSTAR provided assistance in articulating the SMART outcomes, applicants were responsible for identifying the appropriate students to target for services. This requirement up front should eliminate the problems of agencies carrying out programs in which the results cannot be demonstrated.

### Accountability

EDSTAR, the NCCDP, and NCDPI have worked together to support the grantees as they move toward this higher level of accountability, and building the Data Pillar. As previously indicated, the NCCDP now requires grants be written with SMART outcomes. Logic models must also be included in the application package. The NCDPI provides technical assistance during the application process. For grantees, EDSTAR has created the information management systems that support this accountability. EDSTAR also provides a tremendous amount of technical support throughout the year to help grantees make the shift to outcome based accountability. Nearly all of the 2009 grantees have outcome-based programs that will be evaluated for effectiveness. This speaks to the collaborative efforts of the NCDPI, the NCCDP, and EDSTAR working to support the grantees to make this transition.

As it has since the beginning of the program, NCDPI is working closely with EDSTAR to ensure agencies provide data when requested, and that the intent of the program is being followed, i.e., reducing the dropout rate in North Carolina. So far, with the 2009 grants, programs appear to be running smoothly. NCDPI and EDSTAR are ever diligent, however, and NCDPI will continue to conduct site visits if problems arise indicating program implementation deviates from approved plans. The required data submissions facilitate NCDPI's ability to oversee the program, while also allowing

the program coordinators to monitor their own progress throughout the course of the program.

### **How agencies acquired data**

Grantees acquired data from a variety of sources. Most data sources were appropriate for students targeted and for outcomes staff hope to achieve. NC WISE and standardized tests were common sources of data to determine students to target for academic and disciplinary factors. Some agencies used SAS® EVAAS®. For SMART outcomes which sought to make subjective changes – such as student attitudes or self-esteem – most grantees used pre- and post-surveys to determine improvement. EDSTAR has included these on the website where grantees can find many of the resources they need to conduct their programs.

Of the 83 agencies with grant-funded programs, 239 SMART outcomes were submitted. Grantees indicated some difficulty obtaining data for 18 of these, or 7.5%. One school was just making the transition from SIMS to NC WISE (a common complaint last year). Several non-LEAs indicated that coordinating with school staff members was sometimes difficult. In each case, the school staff members understood the importance of providing the data; their busy schedules simply precluded them from obtaining the data as timely as the program staff had hoped. About three program staff members indicated that obtaining data from students in their district was easy, but transient student data from other counties presented problems. One agency encountered problems with a mis-printed attitude survey they had based on a survey provided by Duke University. Obtaining parent permission was another complaint. One agency relied on students to bring their report cards to them. Some students were reluctant to do so, especially if they hadn't fared well academically. Most grantees expounded on how cooperative personnel who provided data were. Others who were able to obtain the data themselves through NC WISE, EVAAS®, or other programs indicated that retrieving the data was simple.

The task of retrieving the pre-data each year of the grant is progressively simplified by the improvement in data systems and user technological experience. Having a specific plan that will measure differences in objective data has also facilitated data retrieval; most agencies know exactly what they need. If they are trying to improve absenteeism, they need only find students with excessive absences. Agencies no longer complain that they cannot determine whom to target for academic deficiencies, truancy, or excessive suspensions because they have no access to the free/ reduced lunch list. No agencies determine who needs math tutoring based on which bus the students ride. With few exceptions, having specific SMART outcomes has swept aside much of the haze, providing a clear vision of what is needed to determine whom to target and provide appropriate services.

### **Program descriptions**

Accountability and transparency have been greatly increased by organizing each grantee's information and posting it to EDSTAR's website. Each agency's staff has filled out a form briefly describing the program, listing SMART outcomes, describing what data were used and how they were obtained (including obstacles encountered), and any highlights of the programs. With each SMART outcome that provided targeted services, agencies report the number of students served, and they will report the number of students who met the benchmark outlined in the SMART outcome when the data are available. They also describe staffing, budget, how families were involved, and prevention services provided.

Most of the grantees included highlights with their reports. These are some component or effect of their program they are particularly proud of. Examples include Halifax County (grant no. 12742), which held a Community BBQ and Fun Day, and over 100 families attended, along with many local businesses and the Enfield Police Department. They also held a seminar for parents and students to teach them what they could both do to help the students improve their EOG scores.

Many agencies tell stories of individual students who come into the program sullen, or with attitude problems and no intention of changing. Caring adults and mentors are able to chip through these students' barriers. These success stories usually end in the students coming to after-school programs beaming, while holding up honor-roll report cards. Many students emerge as leaders, helping others so that they, too, will see hope in their future if they apply themselves. Some of these students graduate and return as volunteer mentors.

One student at Central Haywood High School (grant no. 15028) lived with his father in the mountains and could barely read or write. He was on the verge of dropping out to go work in a local plant. A program staff member talked to him and learned he had a knack for working with cars and computers. The student ended up assisting the staff and other students with computer issues, and even designed a brochure for their program. They found him a job at an auto shop, and he now attends a community college studying auto mechanics. He returns to the program to encourage other students to remain in school.

Several programs have included field trips to college campuses, which inspire students to think about college as an option—sometimes for the first time. As a student in the Juntos Program (grant no. 15039) told the others in her group, "Participating in the Juntos Program has helped me see that going to college is possible. If I have friends and people in my life to support me like Juntos and this club, then it doesn't matter the obstacle. If I want it, I can do it. We'll do it together."

Several staff members have commented on how well community members embrace the students when the students are performing services or on a field trip. At one trip to a local waterway, nearly all of the people fishing stopped to talk to the students and let them fish. They taught them to bait hooks, hold poles, and know when a fish is on the end (grant no. 15070).

At West Craven Middle School (grant no. 15071), the students were featured in a newspaper article after they painted a mural for their work area. Several student groups made videos, and one group will be featured in an HBO documentary about obesity in America. Dillard Academy students (grant no. 12966) will be featured for their community gardening project and their work in nutrition education. The HBO filming crew learned of the Dillard Academy through the Center for Environmental Farming Systems, and stayed two extra days in the area to include the students in their documentary. The students were interviewed and reportedly very excited by the attention.

Many of the highlights include statistics to indicate how well the programs were doing, with previous dropout rates compared to current ones. These will be verified when official dropout rates are published, but many of the program staff members see firsthand the impact that the program has had on individuals who would have dropped out but remain in school, and in some cases, students who have already dropped out and return. As one staff member reported, "A single parent of two boys in the program waited outside my door for thirty minutes to tearfully show me her certificate of completion from GED class. She told me how she had always felt like 'less than a person' because she was a high school dropout and now she felt like she could be someone her boys could look up to."

Many highlights include stories of parents of the students dropping by the school to profusely thank the staff for the work they have done with their children. Sometimes, the students themselves provide the highlight, describing how some aspect of the dropout prevention program has motivated them to stay in school or abandon some debilitating aspect of their lives.

Because each agency's forms are available to all grantees on EDSTAR's website, staff can collaborate and share information from each other's reports. NCDPI has provided a link so that the reports can be read by the public as well.

## Staff

As previously discussed, research shows that using regular teachers from students' schools in curricular programs outside of school times is one of the most efficient strategies to improve academics (Fashola, 1998). Appropriately, most of the permanent staff who work directly with students are teachers. Community members are the largest volunteer component. Some of these are one-time guest speakers, although many are ongoing contributors. Parent volunteers make up another large component of regular staff members. Students, including participants, peers, and college students, provide the second largest cadre of volunteers (after community members).

Figure 1 shows the type of staff that worked with the dropout prevention grants.

**Figure 1: Types and Numbers of Staff**

Type of Staff	Number Paid With Grant Funds	Number Paid With Other funds	Volunteers	Number Who Work Directly With Students
Teachers (including retired)	391	253	138	621
College Students	58	36	125	195
High School Students	7	3	195	213
Participants' Parents	1	0	243	151
Youth Development Worker	62	44	21	99
Community Members	49	11	486	372
Other	147	129	7	206
Total	715	476	1215	1857

### **Services provided**

**Services provided to staff.** Many of the agencies provide professional staff development. Most professional development is provided to supplement or train staff for the programs implemented for the students. Very few programs include staff development as a main component of the program, i.e., as an outcome to aspire to. Grantees were instructed to consider SMART outcomes that were designed to help students improve in ways that would keep them in school. All staff were trained, of course, to learn the goal of the program and what is expected of them. Many programs that instituted commercial programs such as AVID, or computer credit recovery programs, include staff development to ensure assigned staff members are able to operate the activities required in the program. Volunteers are sometimes provided training, such as those who tutor or mentor students.

**Services provided to families.** Although all grantees provide services to help students, many services are provided to families. In fact, nearly every participating grant recipient includes parents in their program to some degree. Across programs, parents are involved at every turn, from planning programs to actually providing services to the students. Grantees made concerted efforts to communicate with families through progress reports, frequent telephone calls home, email, etc. Orientations were common at the onset of dropout prevention programs, and parents were often encouraged or required to attend.

Some services are provided directly to parents to help them help their children succeed. Many programs offer workshops for parents to teach them parenting skills conducive to their children's success, or how to help their children choose and apply to colleges. This year, military programs are prevalent, and some programs have had military members talk to parents and students about opportunities available in the armed services. Several programs helped families of participating students through



troubled times, providing clothing and provisions for the holidays. At least one agency also helped parents fill out employment applications and find jobs. Some grantees offer transportation, childcare, and incentives such as dinner or door prizes at their events. Some encourage parents to attend field trips and orientations with their children. Others made some parent activities mandatory. For example, programs that offer ninth grade academies frequently require parents to attend orientations with their children. Some parents participate in fund-raising events. Other events involving parents include celebrations, or family nights, in which students perform or are recognized for success and parents are invited to join in the celebrations.

Communication with parents appears to be more common this year than in the past years of the grant. Many of the grantees indicate they communicate often with parents of the students. Some of the communication is casual; some is scheduled meetings. Email is a common form of communication. Some agencies' staff members make home visits.

**Services provided to students.** Grantees were given autonomy to provide services they believed would best suit their students. Many programs provide multiple services while some concentrate on academic support or career resources required to graduate.

Programs can be classified into three primary types: targeted to specific students or groups, school-wide, and larger than school-wide, although some grants support both a targeted component and a larger component. The school-wide and larger categories are considered "non-targeted" services and, although beneficial, can be more difficult to gauge directly, as many students may reap benefits that are not measured.

**Targeted services.** Because of the SMART outcomes, it is easier to discern which students are targeted, what is expected to change, and how it will be measured. Targeted services are components of programs designed for students with specific

factors that presumably may make them more apt than students without those factors to drop out.

Actual services provided to students vary, although some are more common than others. Academic skill help and the integration of social and behavioral skills (e.g., leadership, self-confidence, etc.) are the two most common services provided. Of the 230 SMART outcomes, 140 (61%) address reading, math, general academics, or include academic course recovery. Nearly all (77) of the agencies of the 81 who submitted SMART outcomes included at least one which addressed academics.

Academic skill help was usually in the form of tutoring, which may be in small groups or one-on-one. Tutoring is performed by teachers from the schools, volunteers from other agencies such as universities or local businesses, or from other students. Nearly half of the agencies (43%) allow more senior students to serve as peer tutors, usually after passing through a short training session or academy.

Many activities are done to integrate social and behavioral skills. Adult mentors are used in two thirds (67%) of the programs. These adult advocates were carefully chosen for the guidance they could provide students. Other examples of integrating social and behavioral skills involve instruction in making good choices and being responsible for one's behavior. Anti-bullying, drug abuse, pregnancy prevention, and making sound choices are many of the topics addressed.

Some grantees help students look to the future with graduation plans, college, vocational, and career opportunities. Local businesses provide interesting lectures on job possibilities, and some even provide internships for high school students. Parents are sometimes involved in career and vocational information seminars. Field trips to college campuses and businesses are common activities to promote these outcomes. Information regarding the armed forces as a possible option after graduation is also being presented. Several schools indicated students were part of JROTC programs, and some had military members talk to the students and parents about military careers.

The following figure shows the activities provided and the percentages of grantees that provide each activity.

**Figure 2: Services Provided**

Services	Percentage of grantees offering (N = 83)
Personal skills (e.g. leadership, self-confidence, etc.)	87%
Academic skill help	84%
Adult mentoring	67%
Recreational activities	51%
Peer tutoring	43%
Service learning	43%
Counseling groups	40%
Transition to high school programs	40%
Credit recovery	39%
Primary adult advocate	37%
Customized graduation plans	34%
Peer-based mentoring	31%
Other	30%
School-wide reform (e.g., professional development)	23%
Preparation for vocational or applied skills certificate programs	13%
On and off campus employment opportunities	7%

*Note: Figures may add to more than 100% because agencies offer more than one service each.*

Coordination of existing services from multiple agencies such as health, mental health, social work, parent education, and after-school programming is an important component of several research-based programs. These programs tend to target students with more severe needs such as truancy, chronic absenteeism, and court involvement. The programs provide rapid intervention and wrap-around services, often on the school site, with the goal of keeping students in school.

Other types of services provided include summer camps (with academic instruction as well as outdoor sports and educational activities), summer classroom settings with academic instruction and orientation, service learning projects, pregnancy prevention, job placement and career days, field trips (to educational settings such as museums, to college and high school campuses, and to recreational settings), and lessons on attitudes and making good choices. Services take place during and after school, on weekends, and in the summer.

Figure 3 shows risk factors for which grant recipients provide specific services. These were calculated from the SMART outcomes. Of the 83 agencies, 73 submitted at least three outcomes and 10 submitted two, for a total of 239 outcomes. Nearly all (230) of the outcomes were SMART, meeting all criteria of the acronym (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound). The nine that were not SMART were submitted by five agencies.

**Figure 3: Percent of Grantees With These Categories of SMART Outcomes  
(Each grantee submitted up to three.)**

Category	Percentage of grantees addressing (N = 83)	Percent of outcomes addressing (N = 239)
General Academic Support	58%	26%
Attendance	43%	16%
Math	24%	8%

Category	Percentage of grantees addressing (N = 83)	Percent of outcomes addressing (N = 239)
Reading	28%	10%
Suspensions	33%	12%
Connections/Personal Social	23%	9%
Credit Recovery	19%	9%
Other	19%	7%
Not SMART	6%	4%

*Note: Figures in the first column may add to more than 100% because agencies had more than one SMART outcome.*

**Non-targeted services.** All grantees were asked to describe any non-targeted services they provide, and how many students benefit from them. Fifty-three percent provided non-targeted services. Often, grantees have no way of gauging exact participation, and determining how many students benefitted is conjecture. For example, many agencies acquired computer programs that allow course recovery. Often, targeted students are coached with a facilitator to use the program, but the program may be available to all students. Some of these programs offer online tutoring, as well, which may also be available to all of the students, though the agency doesn't necessarily track the number of users. Sometimes, programs are put in place that improve the atmosphere in a school, such as Johnston County Schools "Caught Doing Good" program, which was instituted last year and continues this year. This reward program, which began as a targeted program, has since spread to include all students and creates a positive atmosphere school-wide.

Ninth grade academies, orientations, and other transition services are some of the non-targeted services provided. The transition from middle to high school is

commonly fraught with anxiety, and students are most likely to be suspended or leave school altogether during this time (Hertzog & Morgan, 1998; Newman, Lohman, Newman, Myers, & Smith, 2000). Schools that address this time of upheaval do much to quell the anxiety of the students as they make the transition, but, like other non-targeted programs, measuring success directly can be difficult.

Some activities affect not only the students, but other community members as well. Many students help people who are less fortunate through community service programs, usually helping out in thrift shops or food banks. Students benefit from these programs, as does the community at large.

Across all the grantees, approximately 16,305 students are benefitting from non-targeted services. The non-targeted services, such as those described here, are more likely to affect the four-year cohort graduation rate than are the targeted services. The four-year cohort graduation rate reflects the students who graduate “on time” with the cohort in which they entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade. These preventative services are designed to keep students on track to graduate on time. Targeted services are often for students who are already off track and have a specific factor that is more prevalent in dropouts than in the general population of students. If they get back on track and finish, they may not graduate “on time,” yet they may graduate instead of dropping out. We would expect success with targeted students to improve dropout rates, even if they do not improve four-year cohort graduation rates. The services for students who were already off track are primarily focused on preparing students to be successful if held to quality standards. Many grantees expressed concern to EDSTAR that holding students to higher standards, rather than helping them overcome lost credits quickly, was not likely to impact the four-year cohort graduation rate. The Dropout Committee has stressed that they support holding students to quality learning standards to prepare them for careers or college, with high school diplomas. This has been a priority over reducing the four-year cohort graduation rate.

## **Effective services**

### **Research**

Education, now in a transition stage, is moving toward data-driven interventions and providing services based on what data tell us are the needs of individuals. Nationally, fewer programs are being designed to serve students based on demographic characteristics with accountability consisting of documenting how many students were served who met demographic criteria, such as low-income or minority status. The field of education is beginning to move toward designing programs with measurable academic or behavioral outcomes, such as helping failing students become academically successful. Accountability is changing to document whether students served ultimately meet benchmarks based on a change in the students.

Among the programs that the What Works Clearinghouse has reviewed as having positive or potentially positive effects for reducing the dropout rate are those that monitor students closely, increase partnerships with families, establish career-focused academies in schools, and offer additional support for academic and behavioral success and college entry (Haslam, Salvatore, Kessler, & Reicher, 2008). More recently, for diagnostics dropout prevention, What Works Clearinghouse recommended using data systems that support a realistic diagnosis of the number of students who drop out and that help identify individual students at high risk of dropping out. For targeted interventions, they recommend assigning adult advocates to students at risk of dropping out, providing academic support and enrichment, and implementing programs to improve students' classroom behavior and social skills. For non-targeted programs, they recommend providing rigorous and relevant instruction (Dynarski et al., 2008).

### **Students served**

Of the 9,492 targeted students being served, 54% are male and 46% are female. In 2008-2009, 59% of North Carolina dropouts were male. Figure 4 shows the races of the

targeted students served, as compared with North Carolina 2008-2009 dropouts. (Dropout rates for 2009-2010 are not available at the time of this report.)

**Figure 4: Unduplicated Count of Targeted Students**

Race	American Indian		Asian		Black		Hispanic		Multi racial		White	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
K-5	0	0	0	0	87	93	13	20	1	8	115	102
6-8	9	8	8	13	896	786	179	171	82	32	627	483
9-12	85	75	12	8	1470	1127	406	375	64	55	1116	966
% of served	2%		0%		47%		12%		3%		36%	

The majority of students being served are in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. This is expected, as the transition to high school is frequently problematic and is where data can clearly identify which students are less likely to graduate.

#### Pregnancy or parenting responsibilities

Many of the grantees include services for teen parents or pregnant teens. A few agencies designed their programs specifically for teen parents and pregnant girls — providing parenting lessons, health care, counseling, and academic assistance. The majority of the programs to date have had no students leave school due to pregnancy or parenting responsibilities. A total of 418 pregnant girls and teen parents are being served.

**Figure 5: Pregnancy and Parenting Responsibility**

Grade Level	Pregnant at Enrollment	Female Teen Parent	Male Teen Parent
6	0	0	0



Grade Level	Pregnant at Enrollment	Female Teen Parent	Male Teen Parent
7	0	0	1
8	0	1	0
9	34	26	10
10	40	29	8
11	49	47	16
12	62	69	26
Total	185	172	61

*Note: These students were also included in Figure 4.*

### **When services are provided**

Grantees deliver general and targeted services during the school day, after school, and in the summer. Services take place during the school day for the majority of programs (69%). One third of the grantees (34%) also provided summer programs. Many of the grant recipients' summer programs are continuations of the programs that take place during the school year, although several recipients provide different services altogether. Summer programs are more likely to include field trips, with combinations of educational and entertaining places visited.

### **Commercial components**

Many grant recipients incorporated commercial programs into their curricula – most of them online or other computer programs. *Study Island* is an online curriculum program that identifies the student level and builds a study curriculum based upon that level. *Orchard* identifies student levels in Math and Language Arts and challenges the student to increase working towards the next level cognition. *Accelerated Reader* is a program that targets the student reading grade level and supplies a range recommended for improvement. This program also tests students for reading ability

and comprehension. *NovaNET*, *ODYSSEYWARE*, *NCVPS* and other programs were used to recover credits.

Several grantees used the Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) program. AVID is a program designed for students who may be the first in their families to attend college, and who are average academic performers. The program, developed in the 1980s, maintains that by providing support while holding students to high academic standards, the achievement gap will narrow as students succeed academically and go on to successfully complete higher level education. Much of the philosophy behind AVID is sound. Research supports holding students to high academic standards as a means to academic achievement (Cooney & Bottoms, n.d.; Garrity, 2004; Hallinan, 2003; Shoffner & Vacc, 1999). Likewise, research also indicates that minority and students of low socioeconomic status are more likely to be placed in lower level classes, regardless of their academic capabilities (Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.-a, , n.d.-b; Stone, 1998; Van den Bergh, Denessen, Hornstra, Voeten, & Holland, 2010). Such placement can be detrimental to capable students, and can have a devastating effect on their education and self-worth (Abu El-Haj & Rubin, 2009; Gamoran, 2009; Van den Bergh, Denessen, Hornstra, Voeten, & Holland, 2010; Wyner, Bridgeland, & DiIulio, 2007). Although AVID has many attributes that can make it successful, its components must be strictly adhered to for desired outcomes. However, fidelity of implementation is often violated, which, as proponents admit on AVID's own website ([www.AVID.org](http://www.AVID.org)) may compromise the entire program. AVID elective courses are taught during the school day, and must be collaborative and inquiry-based. Student participants must have a GPA of 2.0-3.5. Staff and students must volunteer to participate. AVID students must be enrolled in a rigorous course of study that will make them eligible for university enrollment. Tutors are an important element, and must be available for all AVID students. Using achievement data to identify AVID participants is critical. In the past, some grantees had served students with an AVID program, and then discovered that their GPAs were well above the range for this

program. Now that grantees are using student achievement data as they identify their target populations, this should no longer be a problem.

*Check & Connect* is another program used by several agencies. What Works Clearinghouse explains that little research has been done on this program, but two studies indicate that the program may be effective at keeping students in school. The program has two main components. An adult mentor is assigned to students in the program. The adults monitor the students' progress and provide support (check). The adults also help the students "connect" with the community and their families (What Works Clearinghouse, 2006).

The *Plato Learning System* is an online, comprehensive curriculum software program that has content and curricula aligned with the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study* for all English, mathematics, science, and social studies curricula. What Works Clearinghouse has only examined research on its math component. Results indicated that the improvement index was not discernable (What Works Clearinghouse, 2010).

The *Synergistic Learning System* is a modular system for students, which also incorporates learning stations in the classroom. Each module is an intensive, seven-session exploration of a particular topic. Modules are delivered at self-sufficient workstations that accommodate everything students need to complete their activities. The classroom becomes an applied learning center, a place where students use technology to explore and apply the concepts they learn throughout the day. Math, science, communication, and language arts skills are put to practice as students complete their module activities. (This program has not been examined by What Works Clearinghouse.)

*Read 180* was another program introduced into the dropout prevention programs. This program addresses gaps in students reading abilities. No studies on *Read 180* meet What Works Clearinghouse strict guidelines, but several studies that

Other commercially available programs were used in the dropout prevention programs. Although not all programs have been shown to prevent students from dropping out of school, many provide positive reinforcement which may contribute to factors which are more likely to help students improve academically and behaviorally – both factors which the What Works Clearinghouse espouses as important for dropout prevention (Dynarski et al., 2008).

Many grant-funded projects are part of a larger initiative supported by a variety of resources. School systems, community volunteers, and other agencies provide resources to support these programs. These resources range from full-time teachers and social workers to one-time guest speakers. Volunteers serve in a variety of functions: as tutors, chaperones, drivers, activity organizers, fund-raisers, and even snack-preparers. Many grant recipients reported using community buildings to hold activities. Some received computers and other equipment from local agencies and businesses. Through the years of the grant, as the community has come to know and appreciate what these programs are doing for the future of their citizenship, many more have been willing to provide support. Figure 6 shows the types of resources frequently reported and the percentage of programs reporting these for last year and to date this year.

Resource	Percentage of programs (2008) (N = 123)	Percentage of programs (Interim 2009) (N = 83)
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Resource	Percentage of programs (2008) (N = 123)	Percentage of programs (Interim 2009) (N = 83)
Facilities	77%	84%
Equipment	67%	83%
Paid staff from our agency	61%	77%
Short-term volunteers (one-time speakers or guests)	44%	64%
Services	24%	63%
Long-term volunteers (people who came in frequently to tutor or help out in any way)	37%	43%
Paid staff from outside agencies	38%	39%
Funds	34%	37%
Program Fees	Not reported	1%

*Note: Percentages may add up to more than 100% due to programs reporting two or more of these.*

## Coordination to enhance effectiveness of existing programs

In answer to the question “Describe how the program or initiative was coordinated to enhance the effectiveness of existing programs, initiatives, or services in the community,” grantees detailed a number of ways of coordinating and a variety of synergistic effects. Some of the common ways reported as enhancing the effectiveness of existing programs are shown in Figure 7.

**Figure 7: Coordination to Enhance Effectiveness of Existing Programs, Initiatives, or Community Services**

Activity	Percentage of grantees (N = 83)
Started new programs or added services that supported old programs	68%
Multi-agency coordination	60%
Professional development opportunities for staff of existing programs	58%
Trained volunteers	43%
Changed school culture	42%
Increased transportation for after-school activities	41%
Provided computer technology or online classes used beyond the scope of the program	41%
Changed school policies	17%

*Note: Percentages may add up to more than 100% due to programs reporting two or more of these.*

## **Budgets**

After the 2007 grants, new budget forms were designed and procedures set in place to improve budget reporting. Standardization and technical support for budgets significantly increased the accountability for the funds, and provide standardized information. For the 83 grants recipients, the NCDPI indicates that nearly \$11.8M in grant funding was distributed.

Figure 8 shows the categories in which expenditures are classified. Individual budgets, showing more detail within the categories, are collected by EDSTAR and forwarded to the NCCDP to aide them with budget revision requests. Of the 83

grantees, all reported their expenditures as requested, in time for this report. What they budgeted and what they spent are also shown in Figure 8.

**Figure 8: Total Expenditures for 83 Grant Recipients by Budgetary Categories**

Category	Budgeted	Spent
Personnel & Contracted Services	\$7,895,055.25	\$3,901,544.39
Supplies & Materials	\$683,905.90	\$289,781.01
Non-Fixed Operating Expenses	\$1,041,132.20	\$318,161.90
Fixed Operating Expenses	\$665,729.18	\$394,716.03
Property & Equipment Outlay	\$694,940.12	\$534,619.80
Services/Contracts	\$578,746.31	\$328,935.03
Other Expenses	\$179,906.00	\$64,228.31
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$11,739,414.96</b>	<b>\$5,831,986.47</b>

The 2009 grantees reported that an additional \$1,933,776 is supporting these dropout prevention programs from local funds and other sources.

## Conclusions

The 2009 dropout prevention grants are serving approximately 25,800 students in 69 counties with prevention services. A total of 9,492 students were targeted for documented risk factors that the services are designed to diminish or eliminate. Together, these two kinds of services should decrease the dropout rate and increase the four-year cohort graduation rate.

The framework now exists for documenting fidelity of program implementation, whether targeted students successfully meet program benchmarks, and how many students benefit from preventative components of these programs. Nearly all of the

programs have SMART outcomes for their targeted students. Programs linked to the well-targeted promising and effective practices can be documented. We expect to see a correlation between those programs with 21<sup>st</sup> century Data Pillars in place and successful outcomes.

Most of the SMART outcomes make sense with what we currently know about who drops out in North Carolina. Further study would need to be done to obtain more information about what risk factors best predict who will drop out in different LEAs in North Carolina. The Dropout Committee and EDSTAR have designed a study; however, it has not been funded.

The move toward using academic and behavior data to target students for intervention services may in and of itself contribute to reducing the dropout rate. We have also found that aligning services to needs using academic and behavior data can have immediate positive effects.

As the practice of using academic data to target students for academic interventions becomes more routine, and access to the most challenging courses opens up to students who are predicted to succeed, students who have been traditionally referred to as “at-risk” may begin connecting with school and developing an increased sense of self-worth. The academic opportunities that we give students are the greatest indicators of what we think they are worth and what we convey to the students.

## **Recommendations**

**1. Whenever possible, programs funded by the NC Committee on Dropout Prevention should use EVAAS® data to help identify students and assess progress.** Although some evidence exists for identifying who drops out, it is not clear that all targeted groups are at risk of dropping out. EVAAS® can tell us which students are not likely to be successful in core courses if they do not receive additional help. Some of the 2009 grant recipients indicated use of EVAAS® to determine which students to target, but many more could benefit from this resource. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction is partnering with SAS® to develop Graduation Resiliency, a



software program designed to facilitate the early identification via an examination of research-based risk factors of students who may be at risk of dropping out of school. We could gain valuable information by identifying programs that were successful with students identified by EVAAS® as needing academic help to succeed, or who are identified by the Graduation Resiliency software as being at risk of dropping out.

**2. The NC Committee on Dropout Prevention should continue to pursue funding for a commissioned study to identify programs and practices that “beat the odds” in encouraging school completion.** The Quality Standards and Assessments pillar of education initiatives include quality academic standards to ensure students are prepared for graduation and entrance into society as adults in a 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. North Carolina currently has in place quality academic standards in its *Standard Course of Study* (NC SCOS). Meeting these academic standards are requirements currently necessary for students to graduate. It is fitting then, for most programs to help students reach the benchmarks as defined in NC SCOS. If a study is conducted to determine what services help students who are predicted by EVAAS® or by the Graduation Resiliency software to fail to meet these standards, valuable information could be gained. The NCCDP could use the information to provide clearer guidelines about what applications they would fund based on evidence of effectiveness for the students we can identify as needing help. The grant application process would be simpler, yet more effective, and might increase the level of innovation among the existing and partnering leadership that support the grant award process. Once finished, the study could be made an integral part of determining which areas to address toward dropout prevention. Funding for such a study is not forthcoming at this time, however.

Meanwhile, granted agencies should be required to strive to achieve academic benchmarks. With guidance and appropriate data, most agencies could design programs to specifically address these areas. Assistance with data retrieval,

interpretation, and setting reasonable benchmarks would improve the integrity of the grants.

**3. Subsequent funding cycles should provide opportunities to replicate effective practices.** Model programs have been identified. Rather than fund only new and innovative programs, the NCDPC should consider funding agencies or LEAs whose data show a high number of students with needs similar to those served by the model programs, who are willing to replicate the model program.

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# Appendix

## Organizations Funded in 2009

County	Organization	Type
Anson	Anson County Schools	LEA
Ashe	Ashe County High School	School
Avery	Avery County Schools	LEA
Beaufort	Beaufort County Ed Tech Center - Beaufort County Schools	LEA
Beaufort	Purpose of God Annex Outreach Center	Faith Based
Bladen	Bladen County School System	LEA
Brunswick	Communities In Schools of Brunswick County, Inc.	NGO
Buncombe	YWCA of Asheville	NGO
Buncombe	Buncombe County Schools	LEA
Buncombe	Asheville City Schools	LEA
Burke	Hallyburton Academy	School
Cabarrus	Communities In Schools of Cabarrus County	NGO
Cabarrus	Kannapolis City Schools	LEA
Caldwell	Caldwell County Schools	LEA
Carteret	Communities In Schools of Carteret County	NGO
Catawba	Hickory Public Schools	LEA
Chatham	Chatham County Schools	LEA
Chowan	Edenton-Chowan Schools	LEA
Cleveland	Communities In Schools of Cleveland County	NGO
Columbus	Building Bridges	NGO
Craven	Craven County Schools	LEA
Cumberland	Cumberland County Schools	LEA
Cumberland	Fayetteville State University	School
Davidson	Communities In Schools of Lexington/Davidson County, Inc.	NGO
Davidson	Thomasville City Schools	School
Duplin	DREAMS Center for Arts Education	NGO
Duplin	Duplin County Schools	LEA
Durham	Durham Housing Authority	Govt. Agency
Durham	Durham Academy	NGO
Durham	Durham Center of NC Cooperative Extension	Govt. Agency
Edgecombe	ST. Luke Total Community Outreach Ministry	Faith Based

County	Organization	Type
Forsyth	Communities In Schools of Forsyth County	NGO
Forsyth	Word of Truth Int'l Life Center	Faith Based
Forsyth, Guilford Rockingham	God's Grace Ministries	Faith Based
Franklin	Franklin County Schools	LEA
Gaston	Gaston County Schools	LEA
Gaston	Alliance for Children & Youth	NGO
Gaston	Gates County School System	LEA
Granville	Granville County Schools	LEA
Granville, Sampson Tyrrell, Yadkin	NC State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences	College/University
Guilford	Ebenezer Baptist Church	Faith Based
Halifax	Together Transforming Lives, Inc	Faith Based
Halifax	Halifax County Schools	LEA
Halifax, Warren	C.A.R.E./Child Abuse Resource and Education	Faith Based
Harnett	Harnett County Schools	LEA
Haywood	Haywood County Schools	School
Henderson	Children & Family Resource Center	NGO
Hertford	Hertford County Public Schools	School
Iredell	Iredell Statesville Schools	LEA
Iredell	Statesville Housing Authority	Govt. Agency
Jackson	Jackson County Public Schools	LEA
Johnston	Johnston County Schools	LEA
Macon	Macon County Schools	LEA
Madison	Madison County Schools	School
Mecklenburg	Urban Restoration & First Baptist Church	NGO
Mecklenburg	University of North Carolina at Charlotte	College/University
Mecklenburg	Zebulon Vance High School (CMS)	School
Mitchell	Mitchell County Schools Dept of Social Services	LEA
Montgomery	Communities In Schools of Montgomery County	NGO
Nash	Rocky Mount Family YMCA, INC.	NGO
Onslow	Onslow County Schools	LEA
Pasquotank	Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools	LEA
Perquimans	Perquimans County Schools	LEA
Pitt	Pitt County Schools	LEA
Pitt	City of Greenville Police Department	Govt. Agency
Pitt	Communities In Schools of Pitt County	NGO

County	Organization	Type
Randolph	Communities In Schools of Randolph County	NGO
Robeson	Public Schools of Robeson County	LEA
Rockingham	Rockingham County Youth Services	Govt. Agency
Rowan	Jesse Carson High School	School
Rowan	Communities In Schools of Rowan County	NGO
Sampson	Lakewood High School	LEA
Stanly	Stanly County Schools	LEA
Swain	Swain County Schools	School
Union	Union County Public Schools	LEA
Wake	Reaching Your Goals, Inc.	NGO
Wake	Kraft Family YMCA	NGO
Watauga	The Children's Council of Watauga County	Govt. Agency
Wayne	Dillard Academy Charter School	School
Wilson	Opportunities Industrialization Center of Wilson	NGO
Wilson	Getting Ready Inc	NGO
Wilson	Wilson County Schools	LEA
Yancey	Yancey County Schools	LEA



## Capacity Checklist



## Capacity Checklist

### *Instructions*

Do not fill out this form until you have saved it to your computer first. Once you have downloaded this file select "Save As" on your computer. Save the file in a folder where you know you will find it. Do NOT save the file to your Desktop. Name the file by clicking at the beginning of the file name and add your grant number to the existing file name. For example, if your grant number is 12345, name the file:

12345\_capacitychecklist\_v3adv.pdf.

Email the completed form to [dropoutprevention@edstar.biz](mailto:dropoutprevention@edstar.biz).

Include your 5-digit grant number in the subject line of all emails concerning this grant.

Please send any technical support requests to [support@edstar.biz](mailto:support@edstar.biz).

### *Contact Information*

Your Name:

Title:

Email:

Phone Number: (extension)

Grant Number:

Program Name:

Agency Name:

## Agency Type

Select your agency type:

### Organizational Structure

Do you have evidence that...?	Y/N/NA	Describe Evidence if Y	Plan/Timeline if N
Fiscal Agents either are non-LEAs and have a fidelity bond or are a Local Educational Agency and exempt from the need of a fidelity bond.			
A demographic overview of students being served is reflective of the RFP.			
Staff, student, and parent/guardian handbooks are provided and outline expectations, goals, objectives of the program, and consequences for behavior.			
Handbook signature form is signed by respective staff, parent/ guardian/ student and is on file at the site.			
Handbook for the staff covers duties and responsibilities, information on attaining fringe benefits, governance of the organization under which the program operates.			
An organizational chart of all employees.			

## Finance and Accounting

Do you have a system to account for...?	Y/N/NA	Describe Evidence if Y	Plan/Timeline if N
Receipt for and deposit of the grant funds in a bank account			
Expenditure of grant funds separately from the expenditure of other funds the organization may manage.			
Instances of payment by check being made out to "cash" or cash register receipts showing "cash" to their purpose for the grant.			
Travel describing both the departure and destination locations, mileage between destinations, and rate of reimbursement (including out-of-state travel, involving airfare, ground transportation; lodging, meals, meeting registration if applicable			
The most current approved budget and most current approved amendments with justifications.			
Authorized check signers.			

## Property and Inventory

Do you have a system to account for...?	Y/N/NA	Describe Evidence if Y	Plan/Timeline if N
Current equipment list including identification number, serial number, description, equipment location, condition, acquisition date and cost.			
Space lease rental			

## Human Resources Personnel

Do you have a system to account for...?	Y/N/NA	Describe Evidence if Y	Plan/Timeline if N
How individuals are employed			
Employees' salaries being consistent with salaries of others performing similar work, at the agency or in the community.			
Criminal record checks on employees and contractors.			
Time and effort that employees devote to specific program activities			
How individuals are supervised for their work.			

Do you have a system to account for...?	Y/N/NA	Describe Evidence if Y	Plan/Timeline if N
<p>Maintaining personnel files for each employee that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. current pay rate;</li> <li>b. signed written job description;</li> <li>c. timesheets; and</li> <li>d. acknowledgement of receipt of policies/employee handbook/criminal record.</li> </ul>			
Fully executed contracts with signatures of both parties.			
Detailed contracts providing information on the nature of the service and/or products that will be secured.			
Invoices from the contractors that are detailed, providing information on the date of service, nature of the service, and rate of the service.			

## Program Delivery

Do you have these program components in place...?	Y/N/NA	Describe Evidence if Y	Plan/Timeline if N
<p>An assessment system in place to clearly evaluate students' individual growth that may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Attendance in the program;</li> <li>b. School attendance;</li> <li>c. Portfolio of student achievement;</li> <li>d. Program-created pre- and post-assessments;</li> <li>e. EOG/EOC scale scores;</li> <li>f. EOG/EOC level of performance;</li> <li>g. Report cards; and/or</li> <li>h. Teacher-made evaluations of the student's performance.</li> <li>i. Other, specify:</li> </ul>			
<p>An assessment instrument used by the program's director to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.</p>			

Do you have these program components in place...?	Y/N/NA	Describe Evidence if Y	Plan/Timeline if N
Documentation showing the program's impact on its customers (e.g., outputs and outcomes).			
Evidence of activities that have been conducted (e.g., agendas, attendance rosters).			
Evidence to show who has received program services (e.g., participation/attendance logs).			
Evidence that the organization has created and follows SMART Outcomes and a Logic Model for the program.			
Program implementation of activities with rigorous scientific research that demonstrates the activities' ability to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Enhance student learning and</li> <li>b. Prevent students from dropping out of school.</li> </ul>			
SMART Outcomes and Logic Model communication to participants and their families.			
Activities that are consistent with the scope and objectives described with any modifications to them approved.			
Daily or weekly lesson/activity plans.			
Service to the specified number of students with a file on each.			



### *Collaboration and Sustainability*

Do you have evidence of...?	Y/N/NA	Describe Evidence if Y	Plan/Timeline if N
Maintaining collaboration with partners to promote sustainability.			
Activities that are sustainable beyond current funding.			

### *Communications*

Do you have evidence of...?	Y/N/NA	Describe Evidence if Y	Plan/Timeline if N
Organization requests and receipts of approval for RFP modifications, as required by the funding source.			
Program notification to the funding source when there are contact information changes.			

### Information Management

Do you have evidence of...?	Y/N/NA	Describe Evidence if Y	Plan/Timeline if N
<p>Written description of procedures for record-keeping that include staff responsible, instructions, and reporting timelines for managing information for completing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant attendance records</li> <li>• Evaluation interim and final report completion</li> <li>• Monthly reporting requirements</li> <li>• Budget reporting</li> </ul>			
<p>Written procedures for transfer of information management responsibilities when staff members turn over.</p>			



