

Dropout Prevention

The Dropout Prevention Department continued providing support to students who were most in jeopardy of dropping out, to those who had dropped out, and to their families. Research indicates that dropping out is highly correlated with chronic absenteeism, high mobility, failing grades, insufficient credits, and student disengagement.

Dropout Prevention Specialists

During SY2021-22, Dropout Prevention Specialists worked regionally, using the District regional organization structure: five regions, each with 14-17 schools. Due to continuing COVID-19 concerns, a portion of this work was done virtually. However, if the student did not respond using a virtual approach, specialists did attempt home visits.

During this time, the elementary school level required the most attention from specialists. As pandemic concerns calmed, high school numbers increased. All schools were encouraged to request services from dropout prevention specialists using the Student Equity and Intervention Request for Services online referral process.

Specialists supported students through one-to-one conferences, attendance monitoring, referrals to other District departments and district services as needed, identification and monitoring through the MTSS process, and home visits. They also provided alternative options for students to complete school and connect students with community resources, as necessary.

Steps to Success

In SY 2021-22, high schools continued quarterly, site-based Steps to Success practices. Principals, counselors, and teachers visited the homes of their students in-person. They spoke with students who may have dropped out of school, were failing classes, demonstrated poor attendance, or were credit deficient. Dropout Prevention assisted by creating the effective procedures, guiding schools during implementation, and joining visits to provide real-time professional learning.

Step By Step

In SY 2021-22, the District revived Step By Step — a program for 8th-grade

students to help facilitate the transition from middle to high school. This initiative gives students tools to work with, should they need assistance academically, and explains many nuances of high school. For SY2021-22, the highly interactive, audience-driven presentation was converted to a virtual presentation. By using Zoom, we were able to convey this important message to 8th-graders across the District.

Home Visits

Despite continuing COVID-19 concerns, the Dropout Prevention Specialists continued to visit student homes for those who were experiencing habitual absenteeism or were in jeopardy of dropping out. In SY2021-22, eight dropout specialists made over 500 in-person daytime and evening home visits, both scheduled and spontaneous. For students of legal age, the specialist directed the conversation toward the student. For students under the legal age, the specialists spoke with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and encouraged them to include the student in the conversation and resolution.