

# Lieutenant Governor's Statewide Graduation Summit The Promise of New Mexico's Youth

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# **Graduating More New Mexico Students**

**Data, Practices, Policies  
and Partnerships**

# Zeroing In

- What's unique about New Mexico, the system of schooling, and the communities?
- How can learning from national reform efforts best be adapted to meet New Mexico needs?
- How can youth voice effectively inform school improvement?
- How can adult wisdom best inform school improvement?

# The National Challenge

70% graduate from high school

65% of graduates go on to college

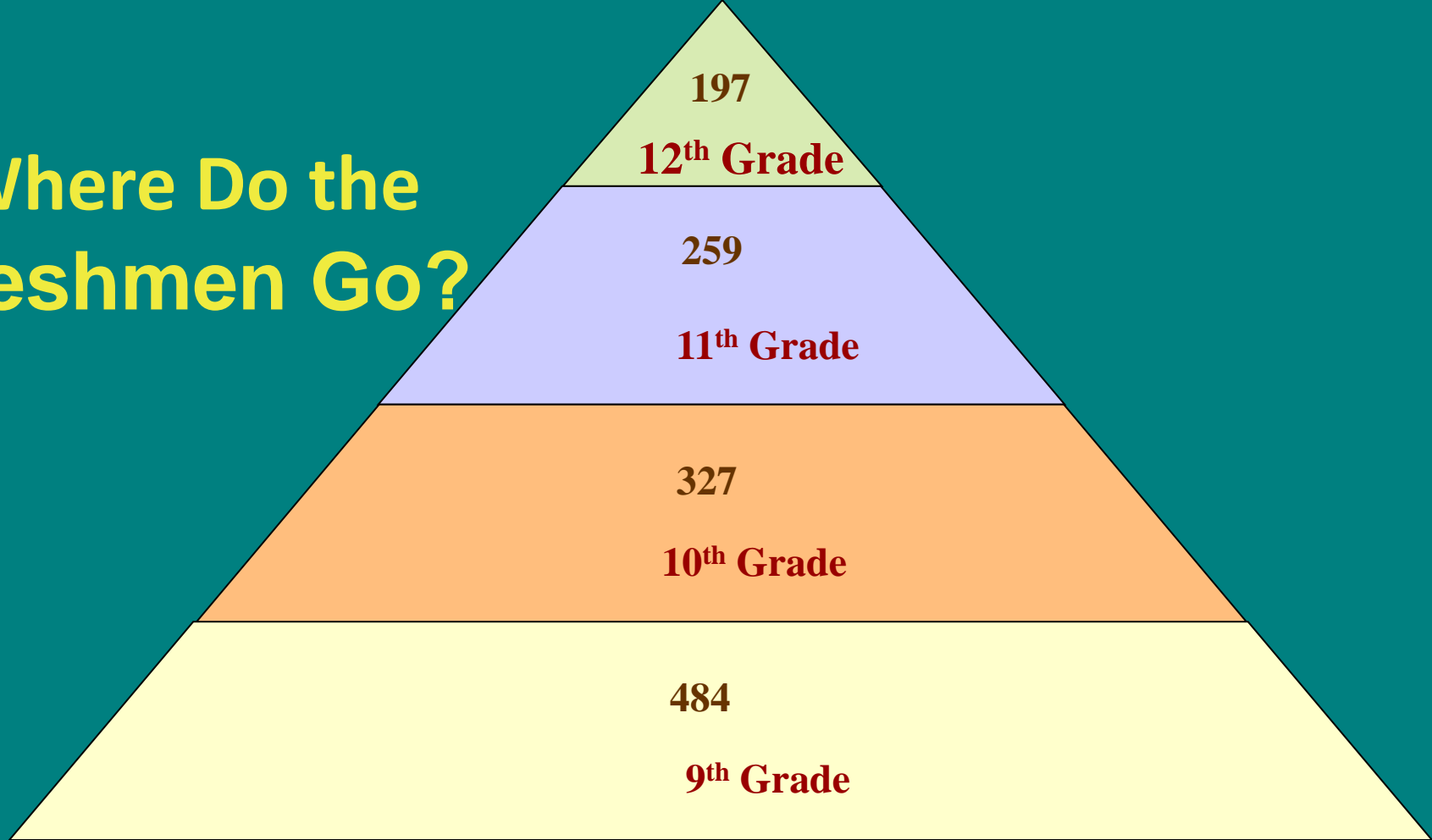
40-50% of college entrants finish college

About 25% of the age cohort gets a college degree

**Yet 70% of jobs involve “knowledge work” requiring specialized higher education, and many high-tech jobs are filled by workers trained overseas**



# Where Do the Freshmen Go?

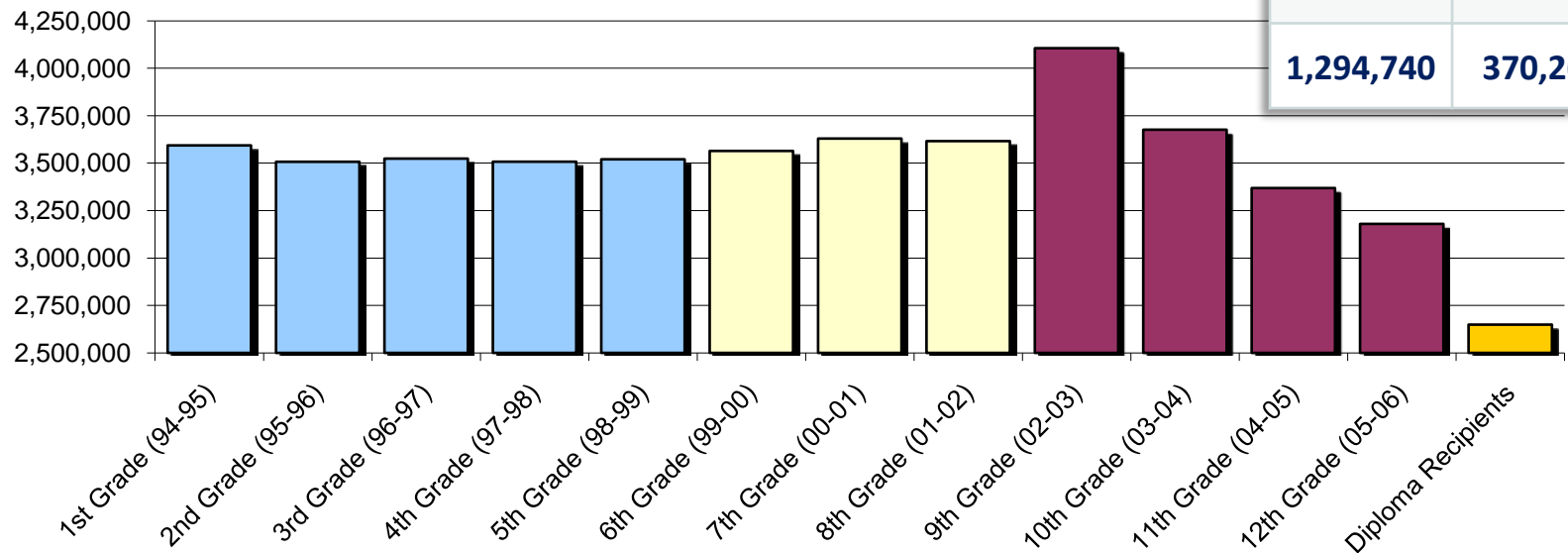


Nationally, 1.23 million students drop out of school each year. This translates into 3000 students dropping out of school each day (or about 7,000 each school day)

# Enrollments By Grade & Graduates

## U.S. Public Schools, Class of 2006

Total Number of Students and Graduates



### Current Graduation Gap

9th Graders to  
Diploma Gap

**1,294,740**

12th Graders to  
Diploma Gap

**370,269**

- Weak Promoting Power High School

0-60%

61-70%

71-80%

81-89%

90% or more

## Graduation Rate Indicators



Top 10%



Top 25%

Averaged Freshman  
Graduation Rate  
(05-06)

**67.3**

Class of 2006  
Promoting Power Ratio

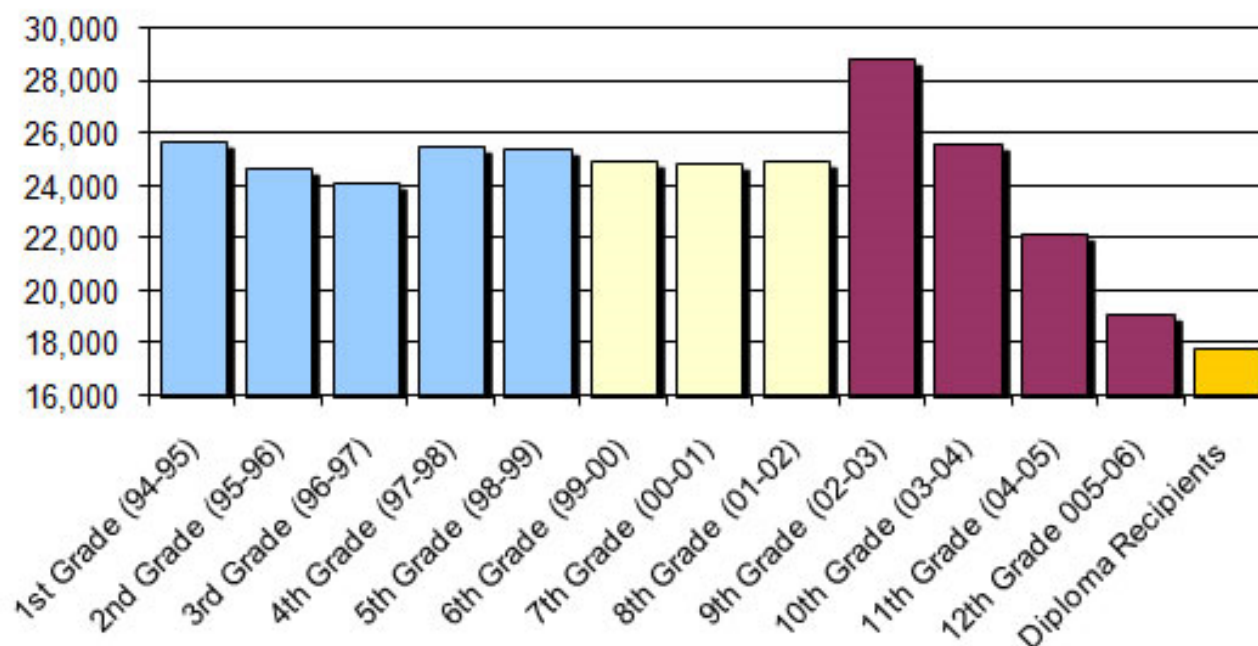
**66.2**

12<sup>th</sup> Grade to Diploma  
Ratio (05-06)

**93.2**

## Class of 2006 Grade Enrollments and Graduates for New Mexico Public Schools

Total Number of Students and Graduates



### Current Graduation Gap

9th Graders  
to Diploma  
Gap

12th Graders  
to Diploma  
Gap

11,039

1,297

## Improvement Gauge



Top 10%



Top 25%

Change in Averaged Freshman  
Graduation Rate

1998-06

2002-06

↑ +4.1 ★

↓ -0.1

Change in Promoting Power

1998-06

2002-06

↑ +2.9

↑ +2.8

Change in 12<sup>th</sup> Grade  
to Diploma Ratio

1998-06

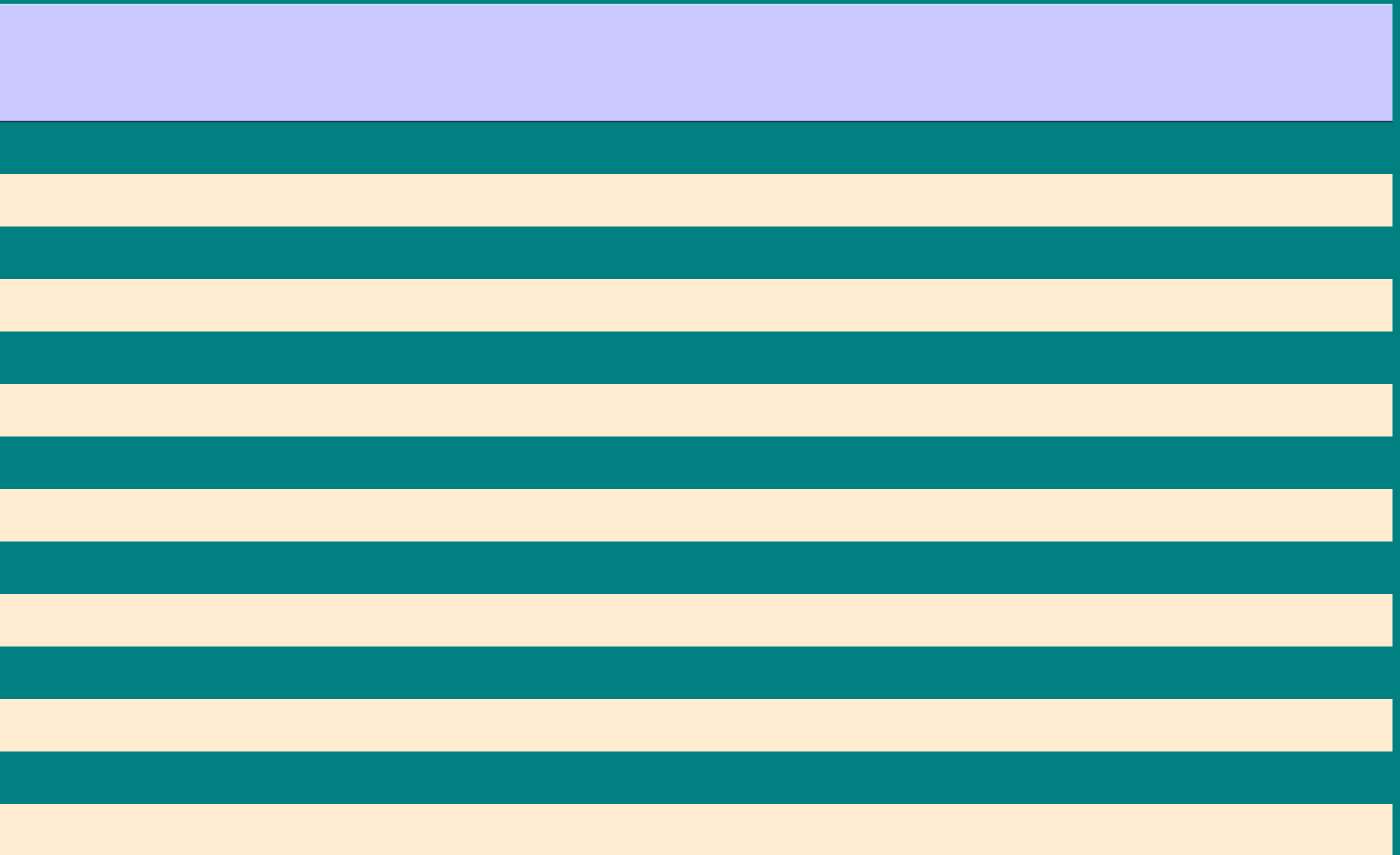
2002-06

↑ +1.8 ★

↓ -3.8



## Top 25%: Raising Graduation Rates (2002-06)



# Falling Off the Graduation Path

# Why Do Students Drop Out?

- Take a few minutes to list the 3 or 4 top reasons you think students drop out of high school. Discuss.
- Do you all agree? If you do not, do you perceive that your differing views may reflect your different roles in the community?

# Teachers' and Principals' Views\*

	Teachers	Principals
• Not enough home support	61%	45%
• Missed too many days	45%	42%
• Too much time with others who are unengaged	37%	27%
• Unprepared for high school	22%	18%
• Bored/finds school work uninteresting	20%	21%

\* Factors in most cases in which student drops out of school, from

, Bridgeland, J. Dilulio Jr., and R. Balfanz, 2009

# Students' Reasons for Leaving School Early (early dropouts)

• Didn't like school	58%	44%
• Couldn't get along with teachers	52%	17%
• Felt didn't belong at school	31%	14%
• Couldn't get along with peers	18%	22%
• Suspended too often	19%	13%
• Failing school	46%	33%
• Couldn't keep up with work	38%	25%

Consult

Tool 12 for further data. Source of table is  
National Center for Education Statistics

# Students' Reasons for Leaving (Late dropouts, ELS:2002)

School-related reasons predominate

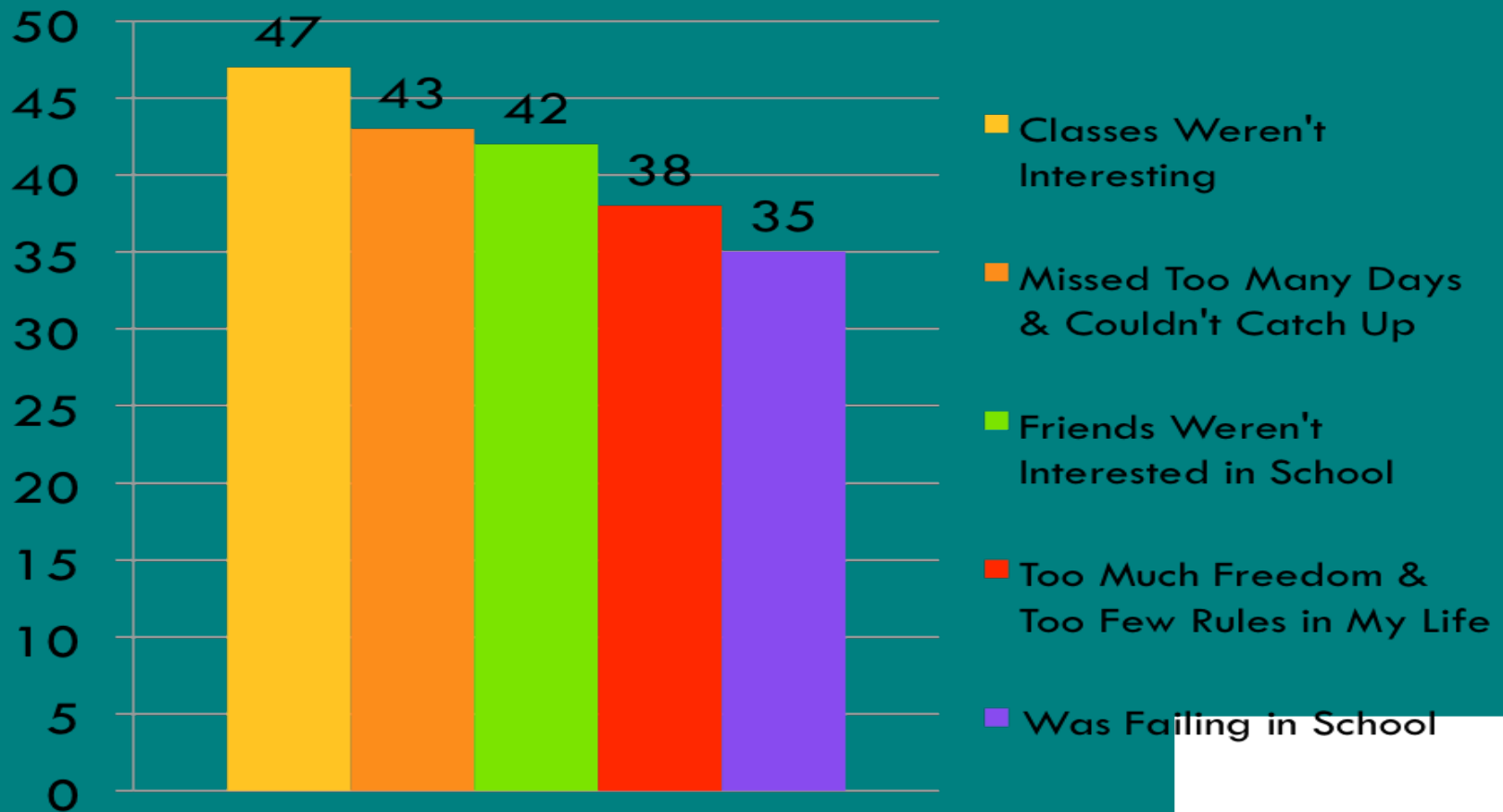
- Missed too many days
- Easier to get a GED
- Getting poor grades
- Don't like school
- 55% of students who had not accumulated 10 credits by the end of 10<sup>th</sup> grade dropped out, compared to 4% who did

# Students' Reasons for Leaving (Late dropouts, ELS:2002)

	Boys	Girls
• Suspended	22%	9%
• Expelled	15%	3%
• Family reasons	25%	45%
• 28% of females left because of pregnancy and 12% for marriage. Hispanic students left school for family reasons much more frequently (45%) than white students (27%)		

(27%)

# Students' Reasons For Leaving School Without a Diploma (Silent Epidemic)





# Students' Reports

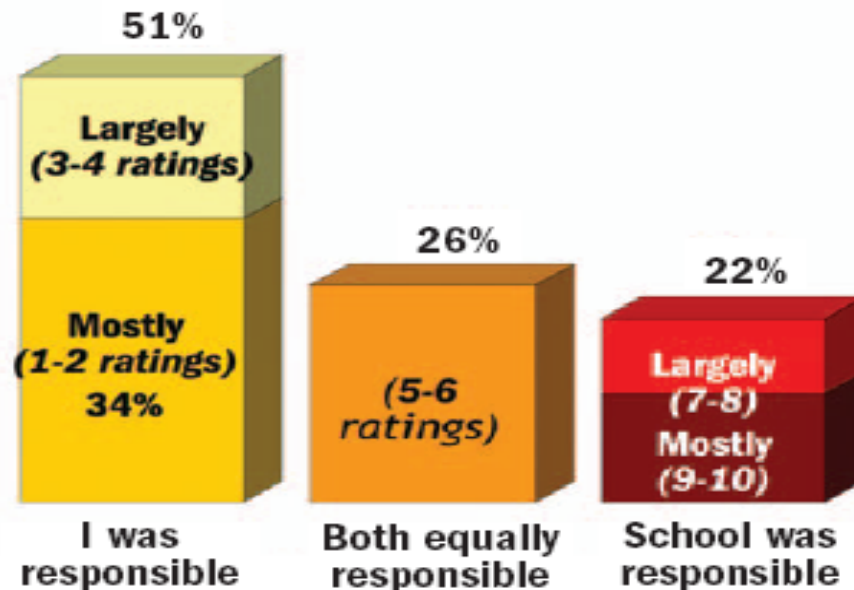
- Big dreams, ambition to graduate, attend some college
- 88% had passing grades, with 62 percent having Cs and above
- 58% dropped out with just two years or less to complete high school
- 66% would have worked harder if expectations were higher
- 70% were confident they could have graduated
- 81% recognized graduating was vital to their success

# Dropouts Own Their Decision

## Young People Accept Responsibility For Not Graduating

Who was responsible for your leaving school: mostly the school, mostly you, or both?\*

\* Ratings on ten-point scale: 10 = I did everything I could to stay in school/the school failed me; 1 = I alone was responsible/school did everything it could to keep me there



### Mean Ratings

All dropouts	4.4
Afr. Americans	4.9
Whites	4.0
Hispanics	4.0
City	4.3
Suburbs	4.9
Small town/ rural	4.1

# Who is Helping? (Late dropouts)

- 73% of dropouts said their parents tried to talk them into staying in school; 37% reported that their school did this.
- 53% of dropouts said their parents offered to help them with personal challenges; 24% said their school did this.
- Most (75%) did not participate in an alternative program

# Listening to Students – The High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE)

Have you ever been bored in class?

- 

Why were you bored?

- 

- 

- 

- 

-

# Grad Nation

A Guidebook to Help Communities  
Tackle The Dropout Crisis



November 2008

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Commissioned by



# How Can

# Be Useful?

- Gives access to ideas, resources and tools
- Shares valid research studies about what has worked in other schools, districts and communities
- Provides tools to collect data – for discussion, coming to consensus, further local research, and to tell the story and make your case to others
- Shares organizing strategies

# Tool 12

## 12 | National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS:88) Dropout Survey and Findings

A follow-up to the National Educational Longitudinal Survey of 1988 (NELS:88), “Two Years Later: Cognitive Gains and School Transitions of NELS Eighth Graders” (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=95436>), explored the reasons students dropped out of school early. The study disaggregated reasons for leaving school by gender. Apparently, young men often leave school for reasons related to lack of engagement, foreshadowing *The Silent Epidemic* survey of a decade later.

Consider using the NELS:88 questions, and discuss them with last year’s dropouts and the students you consider to be potential future dropouts. With this new learning, you will be better able to design a support system to keep students in school. (Note: categorizations were added by authors of *Grad Nation*.)

### Students’ Reported Reasons for Dropping Out of High School Early

SCHOOL REASONS	Boys	Girls	Categorization
Didn’t like school	58%	44%	Fade-out
Couldn’t get along with teachers	52%	17%	Fade-out
Felt didn’t belong at school	31%	14%	Fade-out
Couldn’t get along with peers	18%	22%	Fade-out
Suspended too often	19%	13%	Push-out
Expelled from school	18%	9%	Push-out
Changed schools and didn’t like new one	11%	16%	Fade-out
Failing school	46%	33%	Failing
Couldn’t keep up with work	38%	25%	Failing

### ECONOMIC REASONS

# Summing Up The Reasons for the Final Act of Dropping Out

- Fade outs – frustrated and bored and see no point, though at grade level
- Failing to succeed – persistent tries and retries but eventually give up
- Life events – something happens out of school
- Push outs – difficult, dangerous and detrimental to the school's success



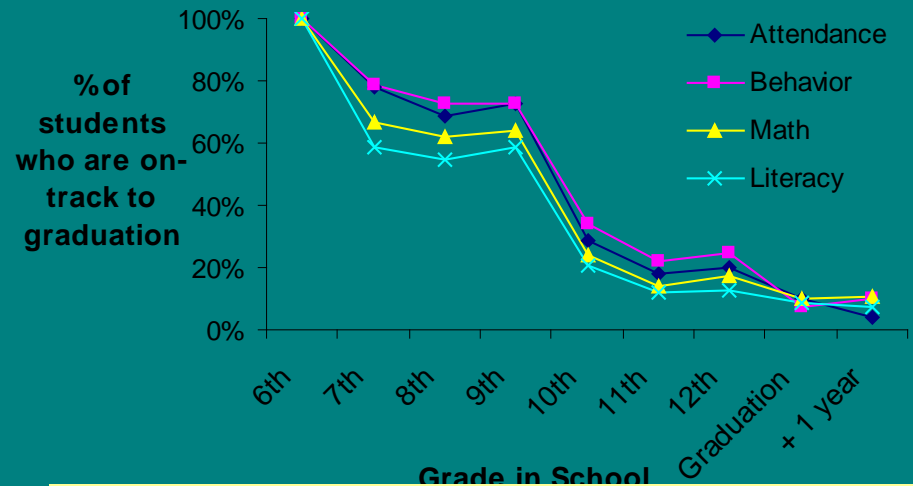
# Indicators of Falling Off the Graduation Path

# What Are The Indicators That Students Are Falling Off-Course?

- Attendance (A)
- Behavior (B)
- Course-Passing (C)

# Dropouts can be identified in 6<sup>th</sup> grade

1. Attendance - <80% school attendance
2. Behavior - “unsatisfactory” behavior mark in at least one class
3. Course Performance – A final grade of “F” in Math and/or English



# The Middle to High School Transition

# Do We Need To Change Adults' Perceptions?

- 1/3 of dropouts do so in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Repeat several times – want to stay in school.
- Success in academic course work is a better indicator than demographic factors, prior preparation or previous test scores
- 9<sup>th</sup> grade attendance predicts course failure 8x more than 8<sup>th</sup> grade test scores (Philadelphia and Baltimore, CSOS studies, and Chicago studies)

# More 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Indicators

- Missing 2 or more weeks per semester usually = flunking at least two classes, even if students come to 9<sup>th</sup> grade with high test scores.
- More than one “F” in one semester can lead to dropping out, without interventions
- Nearly 90% who miss less than a week per semester graduate and half end 9<sup>th</sup> with a “B” or higher (Allensworth and Easton, 2007, Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago)

# The Students in the Middle

- 9th graders with less than a C- average are more likely to drop out than to graduate
- 9<sup>th</sup> graders with GPAs in the C- to D+ range (about ¼) who miss one to two weeks of school per semester need major support if they are not to drop out

# What We've Learned

- Struggling students don't "self-correct" without help
- Immediate interventions and immediate care – right away, that morning, that day, that week – are essential
- The most common and very harmful response to struggling students is that "they'll grow out of it" – and so we wait.
- Typically, youth don't recover. They drop out.



**Staying on the  
Graduation Path  
or Getting Back  
On**

# America's Promise: 5 Promises

- **Caring Adults**
- **Safe Places**
- **A Healthy Start**
- **Effective Education**
- **Opportunities to Help Others**

# What Works?

- **Students attend school every day, behave well, gain earned credits and promotion to the next grade, maintaining a B or higher average**
- **Learning is relevant, participatory and experiential**
- **School builds bridges to adulthood**

# Community Engineering Challenge

- The right strategies
- Targeted to the right youth
- At the right time
- With the required intensity
- With the most strategic community partners

# Tool #16

## 16 | Comprehensive Community Solutions Diagram

IA, IB. Ensure that Policies and Resources Enable Accomplishing Goals		
2. Enact Across-The-Board Strategies for Accomplishing Goals		
<b>2A. Offer a College- and Career-Ready Curriculum</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A rigorous college and work preparatory curriculum for all secondary school students</li> <li>• College-level learning opportunities</li> <li>• Strong teacher and student supports for achieving high expectations, including service learning</li> </ul>	<b>2B. Support a Multi-Tiered Dropout Prevention, Intervention, and Recovery System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early warning/On-track indicator system</li> <li>• Positive support and recognition systems</li> <li>• Transitional support systems that help students cross from middle grades into high school and from high school into college and careers</li> </ul>	<b>2C. Develop Human Capital</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective and informed leadership</li> <li>• Highly trained and supported teachers working collaboratively</li> <li>• Good ratio of skilled adults to struggling students</li> </ul>
3. Create Effective Student Support Systems		
<b>3A. Organize Student Support Systems</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiate by students' needs</li> </ul>	<b>3B. Supplement School and District Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have community adults serve as advocates, mentors, and tutors</li> </ul>	<b>3C. Complement the Work of the Community Adults</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand or add governmental- and external organization-based</li> </ul>

# Steps

- 1: Hear youth voice
2. Study the community-wide data and determine indicators
3. Focus on the ABCs
4. Design and use an Early Warning System
5. Link indicators to interventions
6. Respond immediately
7. Partner with the community

# Interventions

- Know who, when, where and why
- Transform schools (or re-organize)
- Develop comprehensive youth support system
- Establish supportive policies
- Re-allocate/integrate resources
- Build community will and capacity

# 3-Tiered Model

- **School-wide:** Aimed at 75-100% of youth
- **Targeted:** 1:15 to 1:20 adult/youth ratio
- **Intensive:** 1:1 to 1:5, involving specialists (counselors, social workers, tutors) for the 5 to 15% of youth who need case-managed support



# Practice and Policy Considerations

- Attendance, grading, suspension, grade promotion and credit policies can implicitly and explicitly, knowingly or unknowingly enable or work against graduation for all
- Attitudes and beliefs often shape policies
- Conduct practice and policy audits in classrooms, schools, districts and communities

# Practice and Policy Considerations

- Policies support rather than impede graduation for all
- Attendance - Every absence brings a response, problem-solve rather than punish
- Grade retention and promotion - Focus on rapid recovery
- Grading - Focus on incentives for quality work. Do not make it impossible to recover from one bad test or even several missed assignments

# A Community Graduation Compact

- Schools and districts can't do it alone
- Communities bear the costs of dropouts and need to be partners in solutions
- 5 to 10 year commitment
- Multiple sectors and partners
- Constantly use data
- Target interventions to needs



# Moving Forward to Create Lasting Change

## Develop a Community Graduation Compact

- Put your community's shared vision down on paper with real benchmarks, goals and timelines
- Carefully identify partners whose collaboration will help achieve these goals on time, and with accountability
- Assess how local assets can be best leveraged to increase the graduation rate

## Prepare for long-term action and success

- Keep key constituencies engaged with a mechanism for checking in on actual benchmarks and timetables
- Celebrate incremental successes and work to address gaps as they present themselves

# Resource Allocation

- Integrate youth development efforts towards keeping students on the graduation path
- Ensure that sufficient resources – human, social and financial – are available to provide the required student supports at scale
- Make data-based decisions on resource allocation; consider the degree of educational need as well as the concentration of students in need

# Organize Locally for Success

- Identify leaders and partners and build teams
- Share the data
- Hold a local dropout or graduation summit to inspire and mobilize support
- Prepare for long term action and success - realize that you and your community have embarked on a five or more year process

# Community Partners?

- Health, welfare, justice, family agencies
- Non-traditional medical outreach
- Faith-based organizations
- Cultural organizations
- Civic organizations
- Youth organizations
- Parent organizations
- Business organizations
- Who else is listened to in your community?

# Congratulations on recognizing the need for action in your community, and on moving forward with action plans tailored to your community.

To help you in your planning efforts, we have developed a **quick assessment tool**<sup>1</sup> that takes inventory of what you already have in place and what gaps still need to be addressed. Please feel free to use this as a way of informing and driving your action planning process.

## Grad Nation Action Tool

<i>Please use this as a helpful way to drive your action planning and address your community's drop-out challenge</i>	Answer (Yes/No)	To Do List
<b>1. Rallying Your Community to End the Dropout Crisis</b>		
a. Do you have accurate data concerning your dropout challenge? (p. 9, p. 17)		
b. Have you compared this data to other districts; to your state; to other states; and to the national rate? (p. 9-10)		
c. Have you assessed the costs of your dropouts to the local economy and community? (p. 11)		
<b>2. Understanding Your Dropout Rate</b>		
a. Do you know where the problem is the worst in your community/state? (pp. 22-24)		
b. Do you know which students are dropping out; for what reason; and at what rate? (pp. 24-27)		
c. Have you surveyed low-attendance students as to why they don't attend school regularly? (p. 28)		
d. Have you surveyed students as to how they view their classroom and school experience? (p. 29)		
e. Have you asked dropouts and those who appear close to dropping out why they are doing so? (pp. 29-30)		
f. Have you catalogued all student supports/wraparound services across the four key transitions? (p. 34)		

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.americaspromise.org/Our-Work/Dropout-Prevention/~//media/Files/Our%20Work/Grad%20Nation%20Tools/GradNation\\_ActionTool](http://www.americaspromise.org/Our-Work/Dropout-Prevention/~//media/Files/Our%20Work/Grad%20Nation%20Tools/GradNation_ActionTool)



# Roles Have Expanded

• **Traditional** roles of **parent** and **teacher** have been **redefined** and **expanded** to include **new** responsibilities

• **Parent** and **teacher** are **no longer** **separate** entities, but **interconnected** and **interdependent**

• **Parent** and **teacher** are **no longer** **separate** entities, but **interconnected** and **interdependent**

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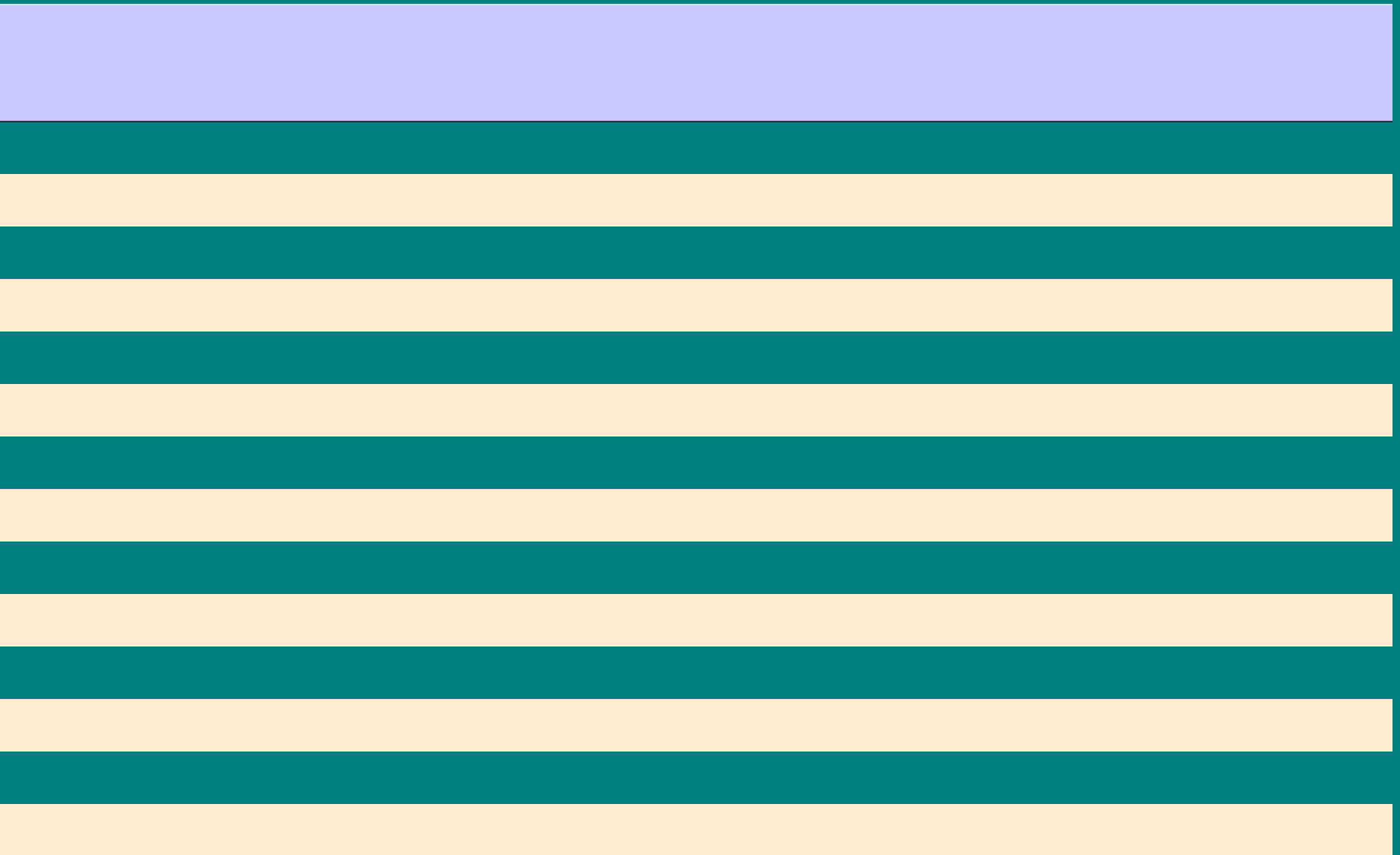
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## Top 25%: Raising Graduation Rates (2002-06)



# Possible State and District Roles

## Building the frameworks

- Common high standards
- More rigorous and higher graduation requirements
- Common assessments
- Training to help meet the standards
- Help with data systems and data interpretation
- State, district and school plans that directly address graduation rates

# Possible State and District Roles

Building human capacity for instructional improvement and for school re-organization and reform, with:

- Several-week professional developments in essential instructional areas, as well as for school reform (**boot camps for all concerned partners on teams**), with school year support and coaching by trained peers
- Learning networks among similar schools
- Creating educational extension agents

# Possible State and District Roles

- Incentivizing new ways of organizing schools that foster relationships around learning and reaching goals BUT that are specifically tailored to that state or district-- small schools, public charter schools, STEM schools, magnet schools, large schools reorganized into academies and teams, early and middle colleges, alternative pathways for older youth, combining work and learning

# Possible State and District Roles

- Setting the expectation that school reorganization solutions will be tailored to the community's students, assets, resources, and culture
- There are not yet any “one size fits all” designs in successful school improvement. But there are many common features.

# For Further Information

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