

IES Practice Guide

Dropout Prevention

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What Works Clearinghouse

US Department of Education

(<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>)

- Reviewed 84 studies of 22 dropout interventions
- Only 23 studies of 16 interventions had rigorous evaluations
 - Seven effective in reducing dropout rates
 - Six effective in improving student progress toward graduation
 - Four effective in improving completion (inc. GED) rates
 - Zero effective in improving graduation rates

Overview of Practice Guides

- Provide guidance to practitioners on best-practices
- Based on wide array of evidence from rigorous evaluations to expert opinion
- Level of evidence determined for each recommendation

IES PRACTICE GUIDE

WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE

Dropout Prevention



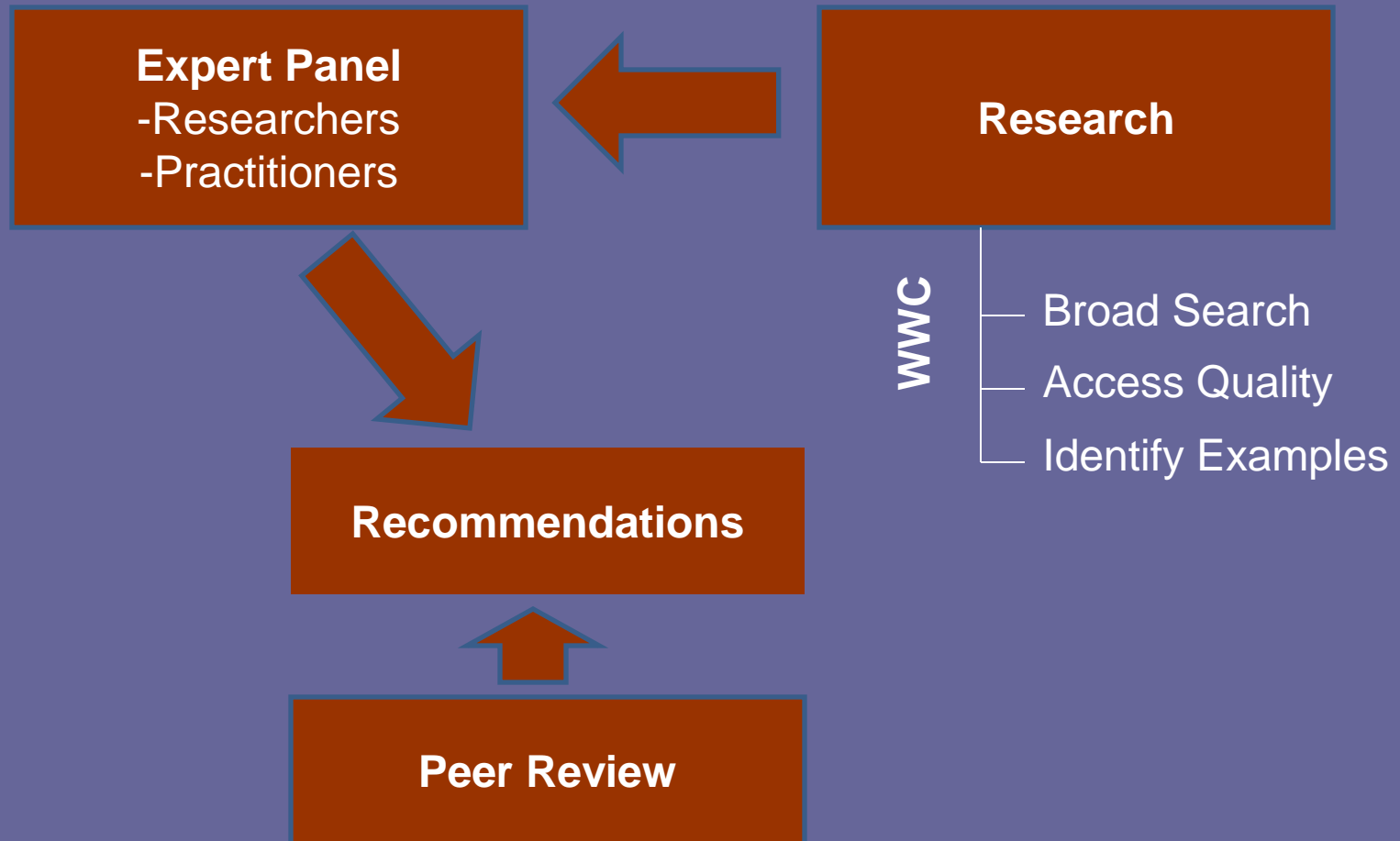
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Panel Members

- **Mark Dynarski**
(Chair)
Mathematica Policy Research
- **Linda Clark**
City of Houston
- **Brian Cobb**
Colorado State University
- **Jeremy Finn**
State University of NY, Buffalo
- **Russell Rumberger**
UC Santa Barbara
- **Jay Smink**
National Dropout Prevention Center
- **Staff: Kristin Hallgren, Brian Gill**
Mathematica Policy Research

How Practice Guides are Developed



Levels of Evidence

- Strong—rigorous evaluations (meeting What Works Clearinghouse standards)
- Moderate—less rigorous evaluations (not meeting WWC standards)
- Low—based on expert opinion

Measures of Effectiveness

- Staying in school
- Progressing in school
- Completing school

Recommendation 1

- Utilize 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 (diagnostic).
- *Level of evidence: Low*

1. How to carry out this recommendation

1. Use longitudinal, student-level data to get an accurate read of graduation and dropout rates.
2. Use data to identify incoming students with histories of academic problems, truancy, behavioral problems, and retentions.
3. Monitor the academic and social performance of all students continually.
4. Review student-level data to identify students at risk of dropping out before key academic transitions.
5. Monitor students' sense of engagement and belonging in school.
6. Collect and document accurate information on student withdrawals.

Recommendation 2

- Assign adult advocates to students at risk of dropping out (targeted intervention).
- *Level of evidence: Moderate*

2. How to carry out this recommendation

1. Choose adults who are committed to investing in the student's personal and academic success, keep caseloads low, and purposefully match students with adult advocates. Use data to identify incoming students with histories of academic problems, truancy, behavioral problems, and retentions.
2. Establish a regular time in the school day or week for students to meet with the adult.
3. Communicate with adult advocates about the various obstacles students may encounter—and provide adult advocates with guidance and training about how to work with students, parents, or school staff to address the problems.

Recommendation 3

- Provide academic support and enrichment to improve academic performance (targeted intervention).
- *Level of evidence: Moderate*

3. How to carry out this recommendation

1. Provide individual or small group support in test-taking skills, study skills, or targeted subject areas such as reading, writing, or math.
2. Provide extra study time and opportunities for credit recovery and accumulation through after school, Saturday school, or summer enrichment programs.

Recommendation 4

- Implement programs to improve students' classroom behavior and social skills(targeted intervention).
- *Level of evidence: Low*

4. How to carry out this recommendation

1. Use adult advocates or other engaged adults to help students establish attainable academic and behavioral goals with specific benchmarks.
2. Recognize student accomplishments.
3. Teach strategies to strengthen problem-solving and decision-making skills.
4. Establish partnerships with community-based program providers and other agencies such as social services, welfare, mental health, and law enforcement.

Recommendation 5

- Personalize the learning environment and instructional process (schoolwide intervention) .
- *Level of evidence: Moderate*

5. How to carry out this recommendation

1. Establish small learning communities.
2. Establish team teaching.
3. Create smaller classes.
4. Create extended time in classroom through changes to the school schedule.
5. Encourage student participation in extracurricular activities.

Recommendation 6

- Provide rigorous and relevant instruction to better engage students in learning and provide the skills needed to graduate and to serve them after they leave school (schoolwide intervention) .
- *Level of evidence: Moderate*

6. How to carry out this recommendation

1. Provide teachers with ongoing ways to expand their knowledge and improve their skills.
2. Integrate academic content with career and skill-based themes through career academies or multiple pathways models.
3. Host career days and offer opportunities for work-related experiences and visits to postsecondary campuses.
4. Provide students with extra assistance and information about the demands of college.
5. Partner with local businesses to provide opportunities for work-related experience such as internships, simulated job interviews, or long-term employment.

Implementing Recommendations

- Choosing between strategies, targeted programs, schoolwide programs
- Selecting strategies and programs that are both effective and cost effective
- Matching programs and strategies with local needs, capacity, and context
- Evaluating outcomes of locally implemented programs