

AT-RISK WORKING GROUP: MEETING 3

April 25, 2017
Working Group
Meeting

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WHERE WE LEFT OFF

On our last WG call, we began looking at data on off-track secondary students:

We have a graduation problem:

40% of 9th graders in DC schools (DCPS and charter) today won't graduate on time.

Signs of trouble emerge early:

26% of the total variation in students' high school outcomes is observable by the end of 8th grade, with several measurable factors in middle school predictive of dropout and off-time graduation.

High-school quality matters:

There is a 70% point difference in the on-time graduation rates of top-quartile grade 8 students between the highest and lowest performing high schools.

Let's focus on what works and make it widely available:

Some schools are achieving graduation rates 14% points higher than what's expected, but these schools enroll only 9% of the highest-risk students.

GOALS FOR TODAY'S MEETING

- Presentation from Raise DC on Graduation Pathways work
- Discuss data on off-track secondary students and discuss possible theories of action
- Discuss DME-provided data/information related to previous WG discussions

OFF-TRACK SECONDARY STUDENTS

GRADUATION PATHWAYS PROJECT

*Working Together,
So Every Youth Has a Path to Graduation*

DC Cross-Sector Task Force Briefing

April 25, 2017

April 25, 2016

SESSION OVERVIEW

- 1) What do we know?
- 2) What are we already doing?
- 3) What's next?

What is Raise DC?

Raise DC's **mission** is to spur citywide action to improve educational outcomes for DC's children and youth, from cradle-to-career:



With over 150 partners across government, nonprofit, education, philanthropic, and private sectors, Raise DC **collectively accomplishes this mission by:**

- Using data as a flashlight, not a hammer;
- Applying research and practitioner expertise to defining **policy** solutions, opportunities for smarter **planning**, and effective **practices**; and
- Aligning partner contributions (time, talent, treasure) to fill gaps, scale what works, and sustain efforts over time.

What is the Graduation Pathways Project?

SHARED CHALLENGE

Although DC's four-year graduation rate continues to increase (61% SY11-12 to 69% FY15-16), still far too many young people are "off track" to graduation.

SHARED VISION

The Graduation Pathways Project widely engages education agencies, schools, and civic leaders to act on a shared vision that every young person in the District of Columbia, no matter how far off track they may be, has a path to graduation.

SHARED GOALS

Dramatically reduce the number of off-track youth in our city over the next five years (2022):

- 1) Increase four-year on-time graduation rate
- 2) Increase five-/six-year graduate rate
- 3) Increase rates of educationally disengaged youth reconnecting to educational programs

The Graduation Pathways Project is driven by tremendous need...

High school diagnostic

- 8th grade early warning indicators
- Student HS segmentation & distribution across schools

"Recovery Student" focus groups

- Staff and student perspectives on "what works"

Educationally disengaged analysis

- Supply & demand analysis of "seats" for off-track & educationally disengaged students

- 26% of the variation in students' chances of graduating explained by 8th grade characteristics; seven key factors (comprehensive *and* predictive) include SPED, ELL, and overage status; math and reading proficiency levels; absences; and course performance
- Six distinct high school student segments; ~50% of first-time 9th graders are "off track" after Year 1; only 5% of whom "recover" to graduate on time
- 25% of all 9th graders across the city are "immediately disengaged" – accumulating, on average, just 1.9 credits and attending just 62% of school days; more than half of these students concentrated in just seven schools

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- Staff systematically identified students who were falling behind
- Supports in place to minimize feelings of disorientation (e.g. including not feeling prepared for heightened rigor, unfamiliar with role of GPA and credits, inexperience with managing personalized schedules and competing deadlines, etc.)
- Students empowered to track their own academic progress and provided multiple opportunities to revise assignments, access needed courses, and timely credit recovery
- Positive adult relationships provided social and emotional anchor in school

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"Recovery Student" focus groups

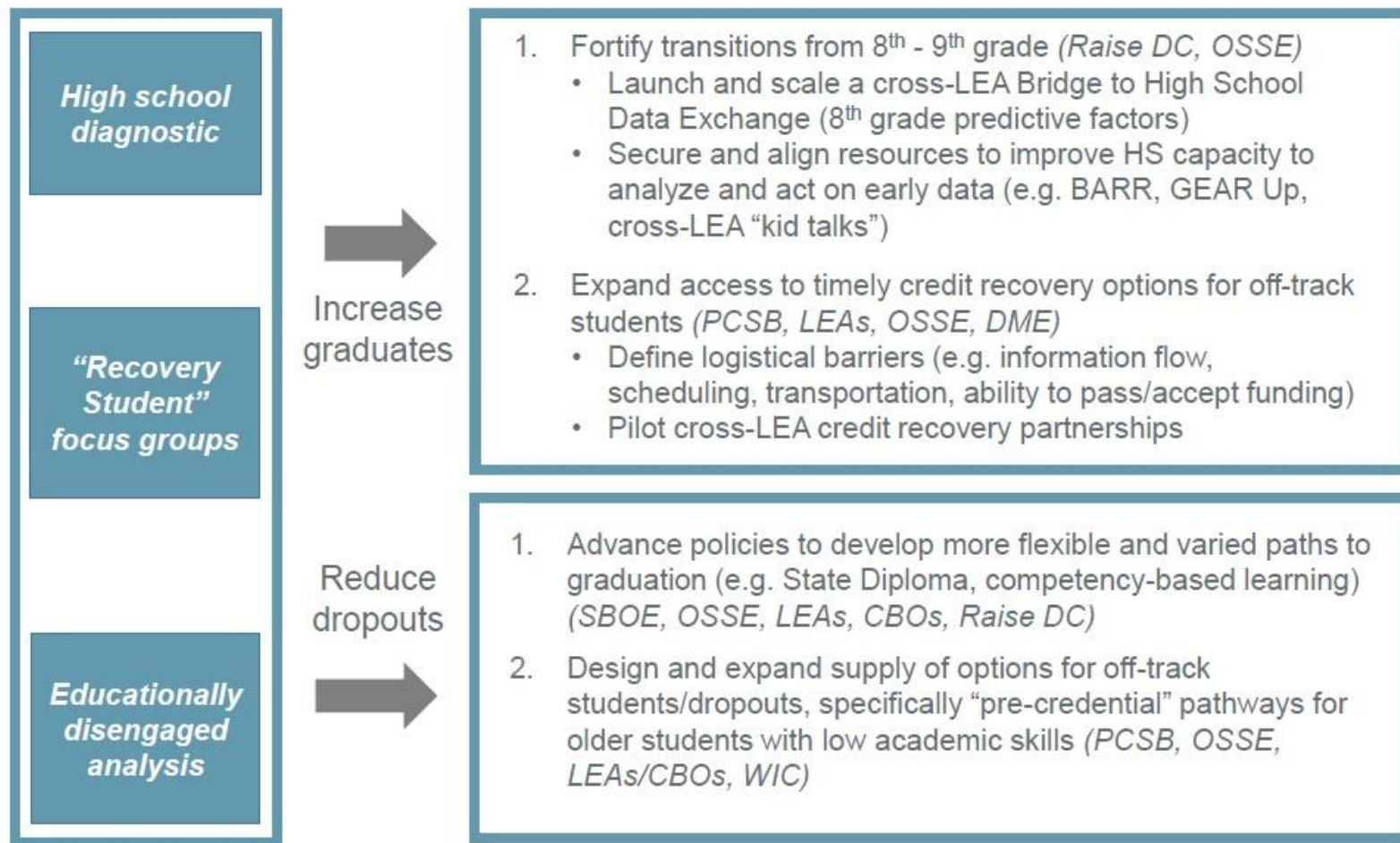
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- Supply & demand analysis of "seats" for off-track & educationally disengaged students

- Most recent dropouts are "old and far" and will require a new education pathway
- From each cohort, ~1,000 students leave high school without a diploma
- ~ 8,100 youth between the ages of 16 and 24 have not attained a secondary credential and are not enrolled in school
- Among 16-24 year olds who re-enroll, ~60% perform below 6th grade skills level
- DC has ~8,500 "seats" serving non-traditional students of all ages; most programs are at capacity, with limited growth projections

... and a coordinated effort among key partners to dramatically reduce the number of off-track students over the next five years.



Future considerations...

Feedback from stakeholders highlights several possibilities for enhancing and deepening current efforts, including, but not limited to:

- Replicating cross-LEA data exchange at additional parts of the educational continuum (e.g. 5th-to-6th grade transition)
- Launching a middle school-focused diagnostic to unpack what's happening across 6-8th grades
- Defining common elements of school design and program offerings at “highest value-added” high schools, including costs and availability
- Publish geography-focused supply-demand analysis as guide for school and program operators interested in opening new sites serving off-track/educationally disengaged students
- ...

FOLLOW-UP DATA AND INFORMATION

DME WORKING ON THESE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- At what point does the concentration of at-risk students adversely affect school performance?
- Where are our at-risk students by Ward of school attendance (versus Ward of residence)?
- Who are our at-risk students by grade or grade band?
- What's the relationship between at-risk status and school quality?
- What do we know about the fixed and variable costs for serving an at-risk student, particularly in those schools with high concentrations of at-risk students?
- What are the most in-demand educational models (e.g., dual-language, Montessori)? Which models have been shown to be particularly effective in serving at-risk students?
- What's the relationship between teacher retention and at-risk status?

HOW DOES THE CONCENTRATION OF AT-RISK STUDENTS AFFECT SCHOOL PERFORMANCE?

In DC¹

- Within charter schools, the average performance of at-risk students is largely not affected by changes in a school's at-risk concentration. The performance of non-at-risk students, however, decreases slightly as the concentration of at-risk students increases.
- Within DCPS schools, the performance of both at-risk and non-at-risk students in decreases through peer effects as the percentage of at-risk students increases.

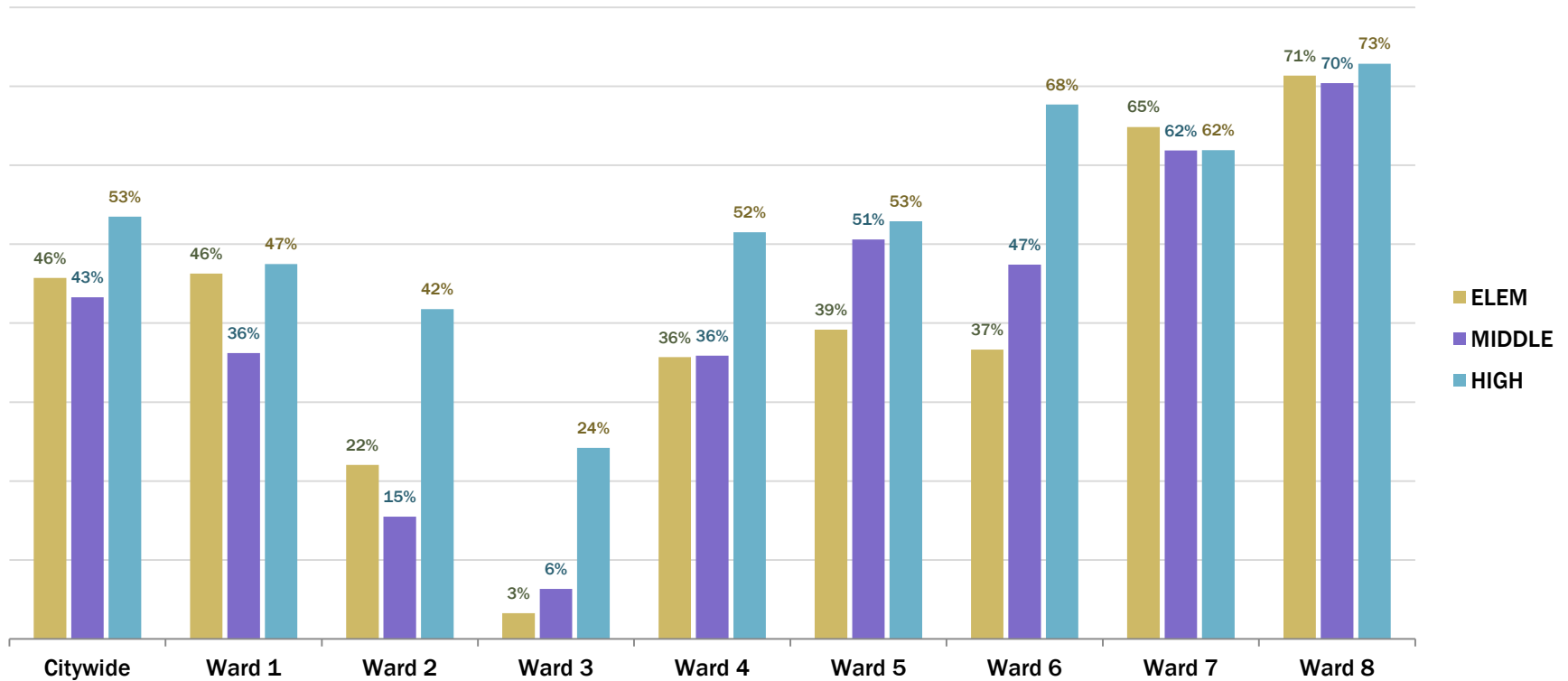
Nationally

- Research going back twenty years points to the strongest benefits of socioeconomic integration being found in schools that are no more than 50 percent low-income. See, e.g., Kahlenberg (2001).
- Anecdotally, we have heard from other jurisdictions (e.g., Denver), that a 1/3 threshold is important for students and families (i.e., a student from a higher-income family will be less likely to choose to attend a school that is more than 2/3 low-income).

¹Tembo Analytics, February 2016.

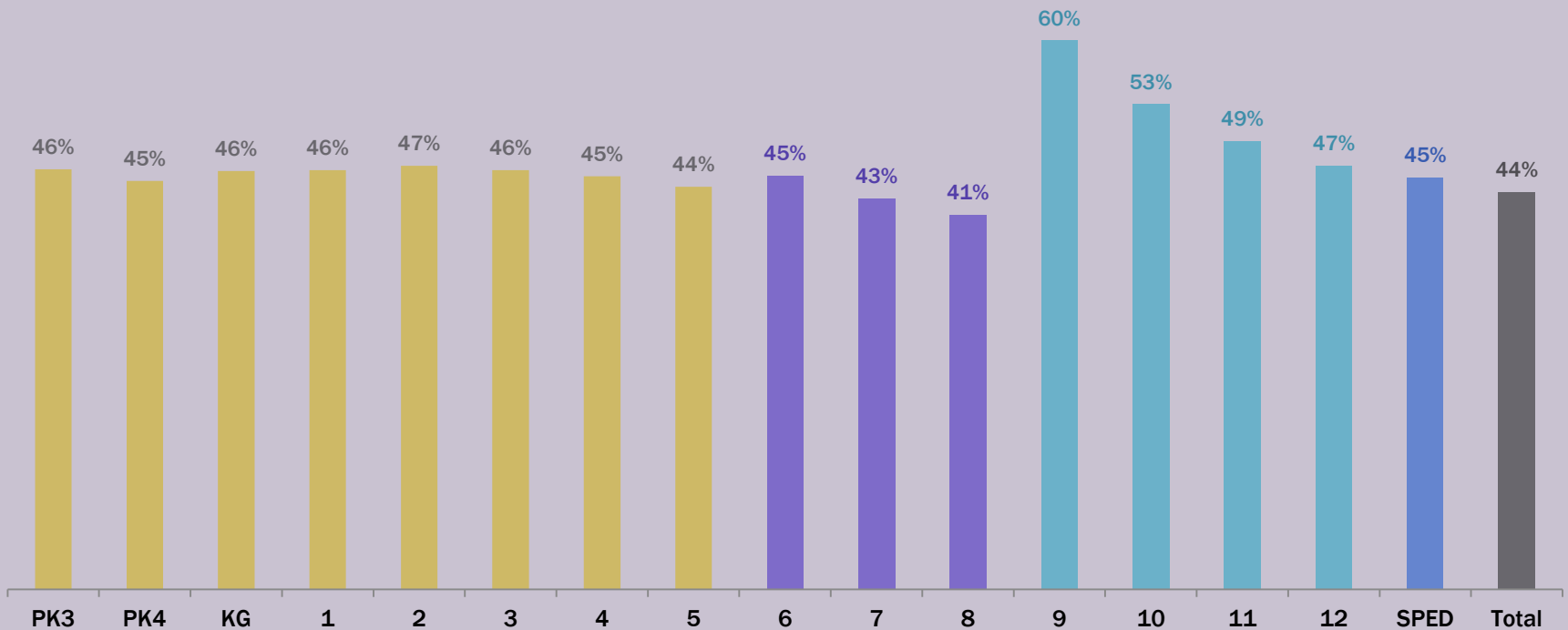
WHERE ARE OUR AT-RISK STUDENTS BY WARD OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (VERSUS WARD OF RESIDENCE)?

Share of Public School Students with At Risk of Academic Failure Status, by Ward of School Attended, SY16-17



WHO ARE OUR AT-RISK STUDENTS BY GRADE OR GRADE BAND?

Share of Public School Students with At Risk of Academic Failure Status, by UPSFF Grade, SY16-17



WHAT'S THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AT-RISK STATUS AND SCHOOL QUALITY?

What we know from our analysis of mid-year mobility:

Schools that experience “high churn” (defined as having both mid-year entry and exit greater than 5 percent of total population) are lower-performing (significantly lower median proficiency in DC CAS compared to schools with lower entry and withdrawal rates).

Schools that experience high churn serve a greater average share of at-risk students than schools with low churn.

High-churn DCPS schools have the highest average share of at-risk students.

Wards 7 and 8 have the largest number of high-churn schools compared to other wards.

NEXT STEPS