

Prioritizing the Nation's Dropout Factories

By Tara N. Tucci

The Need for Federal Policy That Targets the Lowest-Performing High Schools

The crisis is neither silent nor invisible: one in three high school students do not graduate,¹ and more than half of those dropouts are produced by just 12 percent of high schools^a—schools commonly known as “dropout factories,” where just 60 percent or fewer of entering freshman progress to their senior year three years later.² Although it's a concentrated problem, with a small number of schools producing a large share of dropouts, it is not a localized one. Dropout factories are located in every state; in urban, suburban, rural, and small-town America; in large high schools and small. Their one unifying characteristic, however, is that they disproportionately serve our nation's poor and minority students.

Triage (n) — the assigning of priority order to projects on the basis of where funds and other resources can be best used, are most needed, or are most likely to achieve success

The nearly two thousand dropout factories,^b which together produced an estimated 470,000^c dropouts from the class of 2007 alone by the start of their senior year, are considered by many to be the lowest-performing high schools in the nation. As such, they should be a clear focus for federal policymakers who are looking to improve the nation's low-performing schools and ease the dropout crisis. Just as response workers in the throes of a major disaster perform triage by prioritizing the treatment of the most severely injured, in the midst of the national dropout crisis the nation must turn its attention first to the

schools that bear the greatest responsibility for the crisis.

In an era of diminishing financial resources it makes good sense to target these lowest-performing schools and focus attention, commitment, and resources on improving or replacing them. Directing strategic efforts at slightly more than 10 percent of high schools could significantly reduce the nation's dropouts.

Yet federal policy has not responded to the crisis despite the growing awareness, leaving too many of the nation's youth to deal with the lifetime of negative consequences that comes with failing to earn a

^a Unless otherwise noted, figures are calculated based on data from the Center for Social Organization of Schools (CSOS) at Johns Hopkins University and the Common Core of Data from the National Center for Education Statistics.

^b For this brief, a count of dropout factories was conservatively developed by CSOS from the set of all regular and vocational high schools with one hundred or more students enrolled in the 2006–07 school year that had a promoting power of 60 percent or less. Dropout factories were identified based on their three-year-average promoting power for the classes of 2005, 2006, and 2007 to filter out inaccurate identifications due to enrollment anomalies. Because of this, data in this brief may be slightly different than, but still comparable to, those in other recent reports on dropout factories.

^c Counts of dropouts are attributed to dropout factories based on their Class of 2007 promoting-power rate.

high school diploma. For decades, the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has sought to close the achievement gaps between students of different racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds in part by supporting the improvement of low-performing schools. Glaringly, the legislation fails to directly target the country's lowest-performing high schools for improvement or replacement in the school accountability and improvement system of its most recent version, No Child Left Behind.

Dropout factories are largely left out of school improvement efforts under ESEA for two major reasons. First, many of these schools are not eligible for funds under Title I of ESEA,^d which triggers schools' participation in the accountability and improvement system. Only 61 percent of dropout factories are eligible for—and, many analysts believe, even fewer actually receive—these funds, which are designed to give extra support to high-need schools. Even if they receive Title I funds and are required to participate in the system, many dropout factories will likely still not be addressed under ESEA for a second reason: they are often not identified as in need of improvement despite their dismal graduation rates, because these rates are not significantly factored into the determination of a school's success or failure. For example, in the 2004–05 school year, 41 percent of dropout factories made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP),³ the measure by which schools are identified for improvement under ESEA. Presently, the Department of Education has taken steps to rectify this problem by issuing regulations in 2008 that require states to phase in more meaningful inclusion of graduation rates into AYP calculations.

“The fact that ... high-poverty, high-minority high schools do not receive Title I funding, *the* federal program designed to offset the impact of poverty, is outrageous.”

—R. Balfanz and N. Legters,
codirectors, Everyone Graduates
Center

Measure of School Performance Misses the Mark

Despite having extremely low graduation rates, 41 percent of dropout factories made Adequate Yearly Progress for the 2004–05 school year.

Source: R. Balfanz et al., “Are NCLB's Measures, Incentives, and Improvement Strategies the Right Ones for the Nation's Low-Performing High Schools?” *American Educational Research Journal* 44 (2007): 559–93.

Even the small share of dropout factories that are identified for and participate in improvement under ESEA are likely not effectively addressed through the law's school improvement system. ESEA's lack of differentiation among low-performing schools as well as its limited school improvement strategies results in a largely ineffective approach to improving or replacing dropout factories.⁴ What these low-performing schools require most—urgent action tailored to the specific conditions in the individual school and its surrounding community—is, unfortunately, not what the current system offers.

Recently, President Barack Obama and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan have shined a spotlight on dropout factories, recognizing that improving them could be the tipping point for significantly raising graduation rates. They have called on policymakers at all levels to focus school improvement efforts on these schools. This brief is a call for federal policymakers to take advantage of the immediate opportunities in front of them to adopt a systemic approach to target resources and attention toward the nation's lowest-performing high schools—the dropout factories that currently fall under the radar of existing federal education policies, losing out on necessary funds and support for improvement efforts. Failing to act will come at a severe cost to the nation and to the millions of students around the country who are at risk of dropping out today and in the future.

^d Eligibility for the funds is determined by the percent of students in a school who are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch. At the high school level, this poverty information is self-reported by students and is therefore frequently underreported.



Johns Hopkins University's Promoting-Power Estimate

In 2004, Dr. Robert Balfanz and a team of researchers at the Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University alerted the nation that a number of high schools were producing dropouts at such an alarming rate it was as if they were “dropout factories.” Using a seemingly simple measure—promoting power—the researchers provided a way to compare high schools even when the graduation rates of the schools were calculated using different methods. The Johns Hopkins team found that high schools with low promoting power are extremely likely to also have a low graduation rate.

Promoting power is calculated by comparing the number of students enrolled in ninth grade to the number enrolled in twelfth grade three years later; this estimates the share of a single class of students who dropped out of school before their senior year. Schools that routinely have 60 percent or fewer seniors than freshman are identified as dropout factories.^e

While the rate has limitations, until accurate and uniform graduation rate calculations are available nationwide it is a useful proxy. For most schools, promoting power is estimated to fall within five percentage points of the graduation rate. It is hoped that the 2008 Department of Education regulations requiring all states to report uniform graduation rates will make the need for analyzing promoting power as a proxy for graduation rates unnecessary.

Today, Dr. Balfanz serves with his colleague Dr. Nettie Legters as the codirector of the Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins (<http://www.every1graduates.org>). The center continues to monitor the promoting power of the nation's high schools and serves as a source of information for how to address these and other low-performing schools, with the goal of graduating more students prepared for success in college and careers. The center has recently partnered with Jobs for the Future to publish “Graduating America: Meeting the Challenge of Low Graduation-Rate High Schools,” a paper on addressing low-performing high schools in the states that contribute the most to the dropout crisis. The report presents a framework for grouping states according to several factors pertaining to the dropout crisis in each. For each cluster of states, the authors suggest ways to develop strategies to address dropout factories and the appropriate roles for federal, state, and local players based on school, district, and state characteristics.

The Alliance for Excellent Education is grateful to Dr. Balfanz and his team for generously providing data and information to support this brief.

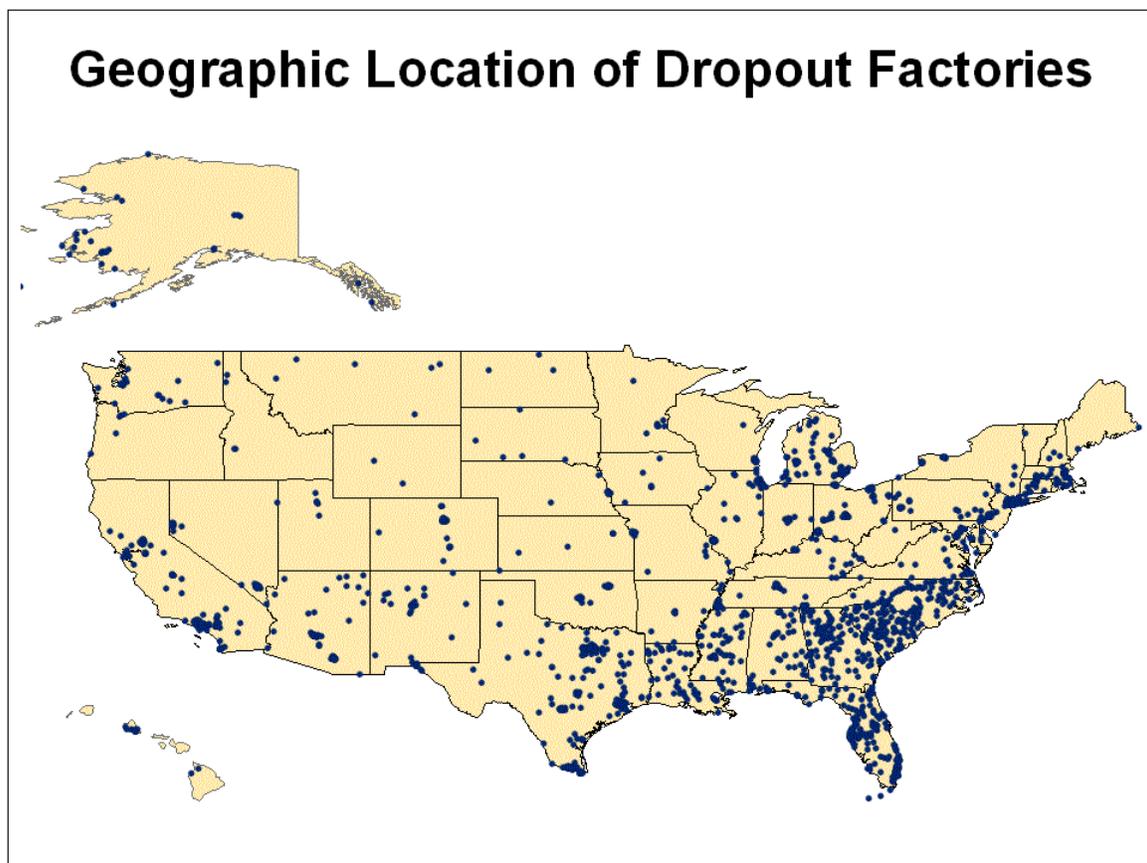
^e Research suggests that promoting power can be utilized to accurately identify a count of dropout factories at the national and state levels. At these levels, the rate of error is very small—within just a few percentage points or, in smaller states, within just a few schools of the total number of schools identified. In identifying individual dropout factories, promoting-power data should be cross-referenced with local data to ensure that the school's promoting-power levels are not the result of school closures, consolidations, or significant shifts in regional population due to factors such as the loss of a major employer.



A nationwide problem

While much media attention has characterized dropout factories as large high schools located in big cities, it would be a mistake to assume this is the full range of those schools. There are hundreds of dropout factories that do not match this description. In order to effectively address these schools, it is necessary to understand the variation in where they are located and what they look like.

Dropout factories are scattered throughout the country. Every state in the nation and more than 350 congressional districts, or 82 percent of the total, have at least one dropout factory located within their boundaries.^f (See the appendix for a chart providing state-by-state dropout factory data.) In most of these areas, dropout factories are not an isolated problem. Over half of states have dropout factories that serve 10 percent or more of their high school students. Thus, while this is a concentrated problem, in that a small percent of high schools are producing a majority of dropouts, it is not a localized one.

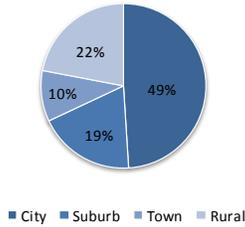


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007; Johns Hopkins University, 2009; National Center for Education Statistics, 2007.

^f Information about the location or characteristics of dropout factories is from the 2006-07 school year.



Percent of Dropout Factories by Locale



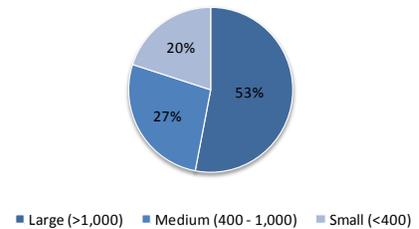
Dropout factories are not solely an urban problem.

Perhaps the most common image of a dropout factory is the large, urban high school that suffers not only from its own systemic challenges, but also crime, unemployment, poverty, and other social problems common in an urban environment. Although cities are the single largest locale category into which dropout factories fall—49 percent are urban schools—more than half of dropout factories are located outside urban areas. Rural schools account for 22 percent of dropout factories, while one in five is suburban, and one in ten is located in a town.

Many dropout factories are not large, traditional high schools.

On average, dropout factories enroll 1,200 students—almost three hundred students more than the typical high school. But not all dropout factories are large schools. One in five is a small school of just four hundred students or less, and over one quarter are medium-sized schools between four hundred and one thousand total students. Nor are all dropout factories traditional high schools—over 150 dropout factories, or one in twelve, are charter schools.

Percent of Dropout Factories by School Size



A poor- and minority-centered crisis

Although dropout factories are spread throughout the country and vary greatly in size and locale, the one unifying characteristic among them is the prevalence of poor and minority students attending them. The vast majority of students in dropout factories are students of color, and dropout factories typically serve a larger number of students living in poverty than the average high school. This high concentration of poor and minority students in schools with a poor track record in preparing them to be college or career ready demands the attention of policymakers.

Most of the minority dropouts in the country come from dropout factories.

Students of color make up the majority of the nation’s dropouts each year, and dropout factories account for a large portion of these minority dropouts. An estimated 62 percent of minority students who dropped out of the class of 2007 attended dropout factories. In contrast, just a third of the white dropouts from the same class left dropout factories.

Targeting Dropout Factories Is Especially Important for Students of Color

Minority students make up three quarters of the total enrollment in dropout factories—almost twice the rate for students of color in all high schools nationwide.

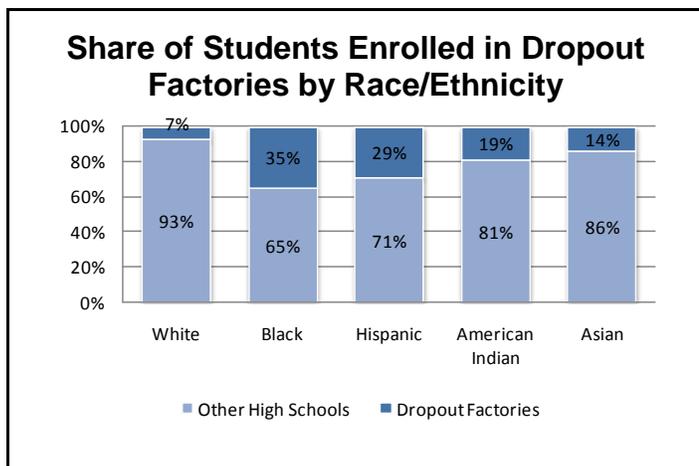
Unfortunately, these schools fail to address the needs of these students. As a result, a staggering share of minority dropouts comes from these schools—72 percent of all black and almost 60 percent of all Hispanic dropouts from the class of 2007 are estimated to have left dropout factories.

Therefore, targeting improvement efforts at these schools could significantly impact the national dropout rate for students of color, allowing thousands more from each class to graduate college and career ready.

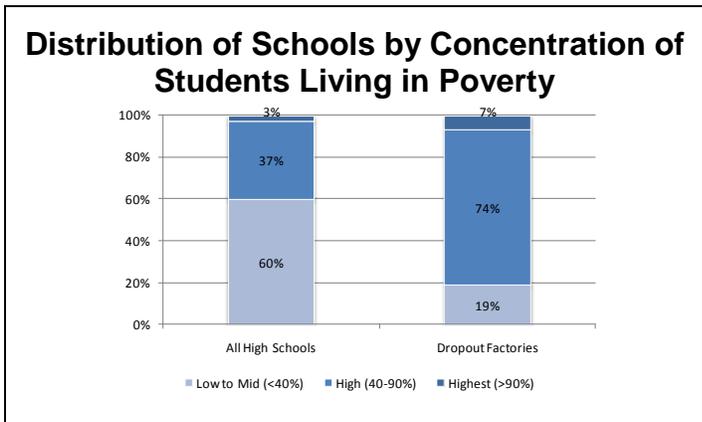


Minority students are much more likely than white students to be enrolled in dropout factories. In all, 29 percent of the nation’s students of color are enrolled in dropout factories. Broken down, the figures are 35 percent of all black, 29 percent of all Hispanic, 19 percent of all American Indian, and 14 percent of all Asian students. In comparison, just 7 percent of all white students attend these same

schools. That means that minority students are up to five times more likely to attend one of these low-performing high schools than their white counterparts. In a handful of states, the likelihood of a minority student enrolling in a dropout factory is extremely high: in four states, 40 percent or more of students of color attend dropout factories, and in two states that rate is over 50 percent⁹—a crisis level by any standard, since these high numbers of minority students attend schools that fail to meet their needs and do not prepare them for success in college and careers.



Dropout factories comprise high numbers of students living in poverty. Researchers have found poverty, more than minority status, to be highly linked to low graduation rates.⁵ As a result, high-poverty schools are greatly overrepresented among dropout factories—81 percent of dropout factories are considered to be high-poverty schools, where 40 percent or more of students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, a common measure of poverty among students.



The opportunity for federal attention

By not graduating from high school, dropouts are much more likely to experience poverty and face other negative consequences that, collectively, add up to a huge cost to themselves and the nation. Individuals who drop out of high school face a range of personal costs, including having far less accumulated wealth,⁶ a higher likelihood of unemployment,⁷ and a shorter life expectancy.⁸ The individual cost amounts to a staggering impact on the nation’s economy: the 13 million students projected to drop out in the next decade will result in a massive loss to the nation of \$3 trillion in lost income over the lives of these students.⁹ This impact also echoes throughout the country in decreased tax revenue and increased crime-related expenditures, health care costs, and other spending on need-based assistance.¹⁰

⁹ New Mexico, Michigan, New York, and Florida have a minority dropout factory enrollment rate of between 40 and 50 percent. In South Carolina and Nevada, that same measure is over 50 percent.



As awareness grows that these human, social, and economic costs are too immense to be ignored, federal policymakers, from the Obama administration and Secretary Duncan to members of Congress, are increasingly looking for effective ways to address the crisis. Federal policymakers must take a page from emergency responders arriving at the scene of accident and perform legislative triage, devoting attention to dropout factories and immediately improving or replacing the most severely “injured” schools, which also hold the greatest promise of significant results.

To prioritize these high schools effectively, federal policy must become consistent, coherent, and focused on the issue through a variety of opportunities presently in front of policymakers. These immediate opportunities to act include

“I want to challenge the country to think about ... the schools that are absolutely at the bottom nationally ... Schools that have become dropout factories—where 50, 60, 70 percent of students are dropping out.”

—Secretary Arne Duncan
National Press Club
May 29, 2009

- **The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).** ARRA, the largest influx of education funds in history, is an unprecedented opportunity for federal policymakers to make an impact on the dropout crisis. This is the case not simply because of the \$100 billion available to improve education, but also because much of these stimulus funds are not tied to traditional funding formulas, like those for Title I funds, which often overlook high schools. In order to maximize the impact ARRA has on the dropout crisis, federal policymakers must take advantage of this freedom in directing stimulus funds and ensure that they be spent in a way that supports the effective improvement of low-performing high schools, especially dropout factories.

To do so, federal policymakers must ensure that districts and states place a particular focus on dropout factories when using the funds to turn around low-performing schools. For example, states and districts should be required to include dropout factories in the group of lowest-performing schools whose improvement efforts are supported by the grants. In addition, graduation rates should be used consistently by states as a measure and accountability tool to identify and direct support to the lowest-performing high schools. This will not only increase the likelihood that dropout factories are identified as schools to be addressed using these funds, but also that their progress and performance can be meaningfully measured.

Federal policymakers must also ensure that states and districts use stimulus funds to effectively support the improvement of dropout factories. This will require that states utilize these funds to build and use data systems that can not only help to inform teaching and learning in classrooms, but also allow for data-driven and differentiated approaches to addressing dropout factories based on their individual challenges and needs. In addition, states should use these funds to implement a plan for the equitable distribution of highly qualified and effective teachers across schools in their state, even in hard-to-staff dropout factories. Finally, it is essential that there be a significant focus on evaluation in the stimulus. The unprecedented funding driven through ARRA will be accompanied by an unprecedented level of scrutiny over the spending of the funds and their impact on student achievement. It is critical for meaningful evaluation to be included in implementation of ARRA so that the high level of scrutiny can be met with results.

- **Reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Act.** While the stimulus funds will provide a onetime infusion of money that can support the improvement of dropout factories, it is also necessary to develop a systemic approach to addressing the dropout crisis and ensure sustained



attention to it. A reauthorization of ESEA must address high schools and place a particular focus on dropout factories in order to do so.

Historically, ESEA has failed to address dropout factories and other high schools for the reasons discussed previously, primarily because they are not included in the formulas that distribute Title I funds, and also because measures of school performance do not fully represent the performance of a high school. A reauthorized ESEA must rectify these shortfalls to ensure that dropout factories no longer fall under the radar of the school accountability and improvement system.

In part, this will require the establishment of a separate stream of money targeted to dropout factories. A new funding stream to these schools will ensure that the lowest-performing high schools no longer fall outside of the federal accountability system nor are passed over for federal funds and other support for improvement as a result of their ineligibility for Title I funds. In addition, the accountability system must be changed to better address high schools and their unique challenges. Specifically, this will require codifying the Department of Education's regulations on the use of graduation rates in determining AYP. Legislation to do just that, the Every Student Counts Act, has already been introduced in both the Senate (S. 618) and the House (H.R. 1569) during the 111th Congress.

ESEA's school improvement system must also be changed in order to be more effective for low-performing high schools. This requires the creation of a differentiated and data-based approach to address dropout factories so that school and district leaders can quickly engage in the most effective strategies to turn around dropout factories. Several members of Congress have already introduced legislation that outlines ways in which a new stream of federal funding could be structured to leverage data-driven school improvement in the nation's lowest-performing high schools. The Graduation Promise Act, introduced in the 110th Congress (S. 1185 and H.R. 2928), is one such piece of legislation, offering a framework for targeting dropout factories and leveraging improvement efforts that are the most effective for those schools.

Effectively addressing the dropout crisis requires a rich combination of approaches to address low-performing schools and the students who are most at risk of dropping out that extends far beyond the federal school accountability and improvement system. A reauthorization of ESEA should therefore ensure that federal policy fully supports the efforts undertaken by schools, districts, and states. Supporting states' and districts' efforts to reduce dropout rates by improving literacy among high school students who are struggling to read at grade level is one way that federal policymakers can do this. Legislation that outlines how federal policy can support this work, such as the Striving Readers Act (S. 958 and H.R. 2289), has been introduced in the past, and it is expected that a similar bill combining the adolescent literacy focus in the Striving Readers program and support for literacy work in earlier grades into a comprehensive piece of K–12 legislation will be introduced soon. In addition, the creation and effective use of data systems is extremely important in school improvement efforts. Not only do these systems allow schools and districts to identify and intervene with students who are at risk of dropping out, but they also house valuable data that can drive school-turnaround efforts. The METRICS Act (H.R. 3253) and its accompanying bill in the Senate (S. 2014), both introduced during the 110th Congress, provide an example for ways that federal support for these data systems can be included in a reauthorization of ESEA. Finally, there is still much room for innovation and research on what the most effective approaches to turning around low-performing high schools look like. The federal government can spur the research and development necessary by



supporting innovation in school improvement and design and the evaluation of this innovation to identify best practices. Legislation seeking to provide this support has already been introduced, most recently with the Secondary School Innovation Fund (S. 968 and H.R. 2239).

- **The appropriations process.** Reauthorizing ESEA to target and address dropout factories will not be effective unless the programs within the legislation are fully and consistently funded. While turning around high schools requires significant resources, so does sustaining that improvement over time. It is critical that federal policymakers take advantage of the opportunities provided through the annual budget and appropriations process to address the needs of high schools and specifically dropout factories.

Conclusion

The dropout crisis is a pervasive one, directly impacting the millions of students who fail to graduate from high school, while also costing the nation billions of dollars in added costs and decreased tax revenue. Dropout factories are located in every corner of the country and are the most visible and destructive contributors to this educational crisis.

Unfortunately, these schools are not the primary targets of efforts to confront this national challenge. In their groundbreaking 2004 report *Locating the Dropout Crisis*, Dr. Robert Balfanz and Dr. Nettie Legters wrote that “nothing close to a systematic plan” to address dropout factories exists.¹¹ Five years later, that is still true, despite a greater understanding of the impact of those schools, where they are located, and who they fail to serve.

Years of tinkering around the edges have resulted in little change in improving educational attainment—the national graduation rate, as measured by Editorial Projects in Education, has risen only 2.8 percentage points in ten years.¹² Federal policymakers have an obligation to their constituents and the nation to use federal policy to address the dropout crisis and prioritize these high schools for massive transformation. Effectively performing legislative triage now will yield economic benefit to the nation and to the millions of individual students who will graduate from high school with a diploma that prepares them for success in college, careers, and life.



Appendix:

State	Number of Dropout Factories ^a	Percent of High Schools that are Dropout Factories ^b	Percent of High School Students who Attend Dropout Factories ^c
Alabama	42	11.5%	11.9%
Alaska	30	26.8%	22.8%
Arizona	49	14.8%	11.8%
Arkansas	7	2.6%	3.7%
California	144	13.3%	15.9%
Colorado	23	8.7%	10.1%
Connecticut	18	8.7%	9.4%
Delaware	8	25.0%	20.4%
District of Columbia	6	21.4%	21.1%
Florida	182	38.5%	40.6%
Georgia	127	35.7%	33.8%
Hawaii	11	21.6%	25.2%
Idaho	4	3.1%	1.3%
Illinois	65	10.6%	15.3%
Indiana	15	4.2%	4.9%
Iowa	8	2.3%	6.3%
Kansas	8	2.8%	5.5%
Kentucky	17	8.1%	7.8%
Louisiana	45	15.8%	13.9%
Maine	2	1.7%	0.5%
Maryland	18	9.6%	8.4%
Massachusetts	34	10.3%	10.0%
Michigan	93	13.7%	16.0%
Minnesota	8	2.1%	2.4%
Mississippi	49	20.2%	18.2%
Missouri	25	5.4%	7.2%
Montana	6	6.7%	4.2%
Nebraska	7	3.2%	10.7%
Nevada	32	39.5%	51.5%
New Hampshire	3	3.9%	1.7%
New Jersey	12	3.2%	3.9%
New Mexico	36	31.6%	33.2%
New York	115	12.4%	21.8%
North Carolina	79	21.2%	20.1%
North Dakota	3	3.3%	3.6%
Ohio	75	9.6%	10.2%
Oklahoma	21	6.3%	10.7%
Oregon	5	1.6%	1.9%



Pennsylvania	53	7.5%	8.9%
Rhode Island	7	14.6%	15.8%
South Carolina	95	48.7%	42.9%
South Dakota	5	5.9%	9.8%
Tennessee	36	11.6%	12.8%
Texas	197	14.8%	22.8%
Utah	5	4.5%	2.0%
Vermont	1	1.6%	0.6%
Virginia	27	8.8%	10.1%
Washington	19	6.1%	7.8%
West Virginia	3	2.6%	1.3%
Wisconsin	25	5.6%	6.1%
Wyoming	2	4.2%	2.6%
National	1907	11.9%	15.7%

^a A count of dropout factories was conservatively developed by the Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University from the set of all regular and vocational high schools with one hundred or more students enrolled in the 2006–07 school year that had a promoting power of 60 percent or less. Dropout factories were identified based on their three-year-average promoting power for the classes of 2005, 2006, and 2007.

^b Percentages were calculated from the total number of high schools that were included in the dropout factory analysis. This number may be slightly different than the reported total number of high schools from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which includes only regular high schools that do not serve grades lower than 7th, that are presented in other Alliance for Excellent Education publications and elsewhere.

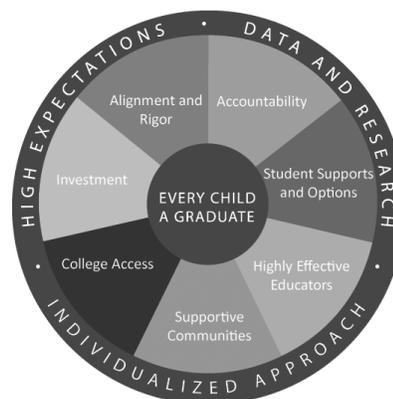
^c This figure is based on the NCES-reported total 2006-07 enrollment for all high schools included in this analysis.

The mission of the Alliance for Excellent Education is to promote high school transformation to make it possible for every child to graduate prepared for postsecondary learning and success in life.

The Alliance for Excellent Education is a national policy and advocacy organization, based in Washington, DC, working to improve national and federal policy so that all students can achieve at high academic levels and graduate high school ready for success in college, work, and citizenship in the twenty-first century.

The Alliance has developed a “Framework for Action to Improve Secondary Schools” that informs a set of federal policy recommendations based on the growing consensus of researchers, practitioners, and advocates about the challenges and solutions for improving secondary student learning.

The framework, shown graphically here, encompasses seven policy areas that represent key leverage points in ensuring a comprehensive, systematic approach to improving secondary education. The framework also captures three guiding principles that apply to all of the policy areas. Although the appropriate federal role varies from one issue area to another, they are all critically important to reducing dropouts and increasing college and career readiness.



¹ Editorial Projects in Education, “Diplomas Count 2009: Broader Horizons—The Challenge of College Readiness for All Students,” special issue, *Education Week* 28, no. 34 (2009).

² R. Balfanz and N. Legters, *Locating the Dropout Crisis: Which High Schools Produce the Nation’s Dropouts? Where Are They Located? Who Attends Them?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2004).

³ R. Balfanz et al., “Are NCLB’s Measures, Incentives, and Improvement Strategies the Right Ones for the Nation’s Low-Performing High Schools?” *American Educational Research Journal* 44 (2007): 559-593.

⁴ L. Pinkus, “Action Required: Addressing the Nation’s Lowest-Performing High Schools” (Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education, April 2009).

⁵ R. Balfanz and N. Legters, “Closing ‘Dropout Factories’: The Graduation-Rate Crisis We Know and What Can be Done with It,” *Education Week* 25, no. 42 (2006).

⁶ E. Guskova and F. Stafford, *Trends in Household Wealth Dynamics, 2001–2003* (Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 2005).

⁷ College Board and the Alliance for Excellent Education, “Facts for Education Advocates: The Economic Impact of Education” (Washington, DC: Author, 2008).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Alliance for Excellent Education, “The High Cost of High School Dropouts: What the Nation Pays for Inadequate High Schools” (Washington, DC: Author, 2009).

¹⁰ J. Amos, *Dropouts, Diplomas, and Dollars: U.S. High Schools and the Nation’s Economy* (Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008).

¹¹ Balfanz and Legters, *Locating the Dropout Crisis*, p. 22.

¹² Editorial Projects in Education, “Diplomas Count 2009.”

