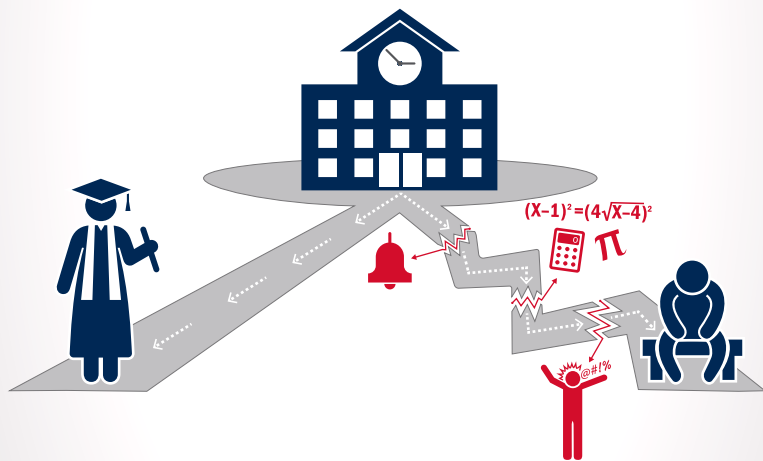


## WHEN DO STUDENTS BEGIN TO SHOW SIGNS OF NOT GRADUATING?

Dropping out of school is a process that often begins long before a student enters high school. The earlier students show signs of being off-track, the lower their graduation odds become. Students who show signs of being off-track to graduate in middle grades are more likely to be retained in their freshman year (Grade 9), and a large number of students who are held back in Grade 9 later drop out of high school (Balfanz, 2009; Neild & Balfanz, 2006).



Failing to graduate may affect the student's education and career opportunities. However, with the right tools and supports parents, guardians, and schools can work together to help students stay on track toward graduation.



## ABOUT REL MIDWEST

Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest, administered by American Institutes for Research, is part of a network of 10 RELs funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES). REL Midwest focuses on the national priority of helping states and districts use data and analysis to address important policy and practice issues, with the goal of improving student outcomes.

This product is part of the IES REL program's learning series on implementing and using early warning systems for dropout prevention. For more resources please visit <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/ews.asp>

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# KEEPING YOUR STUDENT IN SCHOOL

## A Parent Guide



**REL**  
Regional  
Educational  
Laboratories



## WHY IS GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL IMPORTANT?



Nearly one in five high school students will **NOT** graduate from high school in four years (Stetser & Stillwell, 2014).



# \$7,840

per year

A high school graduate earns on average \$7,840 more per year than a high school dropout (Snyder & Dillow, 2011).



A high school graduate is less likely to be unemployed, engage in criminal activity, and experience health challenges (Christle, Jolivet, & Nelson, 2007; Hayes, Nelson, Tabin, Pearson, & Worthy, 2002).

## WHAT ARE COMMON SIGNS OF BEING OFF TRACK TO GRADUATE?

Students who exhibit the following signs may be at risk of being off track for graduation (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007):



Low attendance



Poor grades in core subjects



Failure to be promoted to the next grade



Disengagement in the classroom, including behavioral problems



Concerned your child might have been incorrectly identified as being off-track? Reach out to your child's school and discuss whether concern is warranted.

## HOW CAN I HELP GET MY STUDENT BACK ON TRACK TO GRADUATE?



Students with involved parents, no matter their income or background, have better attendance, attain higher grades, pass more classes and are more likely to graduate and go on to postsecondary education (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

- Talk to your student about the importance of earning a high school diploma and remind him or her that effort and persistence are more critical for success than ability.
- Keep track of your student's attendance and academic performance.
- Develop a relationship and keep in touch with your student's teachers and guidance counselor.
- Help your student explore career options and understand the admission requirements and education needed (e.g., certification or associate's, technical, bachelor's, or professional degrees) needed to achieve goals beyond high school.
- Encourage your student to get involved with extracurricular activities (e.g., afterschool or summer programs).



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## ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Post pamphlet to school website.

Mail pamphlet at the beginning of the school year or with report cards.

Make pamphlet available during parent-teacher conferences.

Make pamphlet available in school main office.

Supplement pamphlet with ways parents can partner with your schools or district.

Supplement pamphlet with your school- or district-specific student supports or programs.

Supplement pamphlet with your school or district criteria (e.g., indicators and cut points) for identifying students at risk of dropping out.