Understanding School Discipline and Dropout

Natalie Hoff, MA, RBT, PLMHP & Elisabeth Kane, MA, PLMHP

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Hello!

- Where are you working?
- How long have you been a para?
- Are you working with special education students?
- How many of you are one-on-one paras?
  - What types of students do you work with?
- Experience with dropout?
  - Personally (yourself, friends, family, etc.)?
  - Students?
  - What factors were contributing?

Session Overview

- Why is dropout a problem?
- What are Nebraska's policies on dropout?
- Why do students drop out?
  - Personal factors for dropout
  - School-level barriers that impede school completion
- What can schools do?
  - Dropout Screening -- Early warning systems
  - Preventative strategies
- Case Examples

Middle Schooler

A 6th-grade student just transferred to the Middle School where you work. He is having a hard time adjusting to the new school environment socially and is demonstrating withdrawal during class. He is also below grade level in math and is not turning in homework.

Why is Dropout a Problem?

Problems for the Individual

- Dropout leads to a host of detrimental outcomes for students later in life:
    - Higher levels of unemployment
    - Lower wages
    - Greater health concerns
    - Higher risk of incarceration

(Christle et al., 2007)

Photo credit: http://www.truthrevolt.org/news/study-democrats-are-americas-high-school-dropouts

Problems for the Community

- Effect on our prison system:
  - 82% of prisoners are high school dropouts

- Effect on our communities and nation as a whole:
  - National income
  - Taxes
  - Crime rates
  - Political participation
  - Employment

Photo credit: http://interactive.wxxi.org/highlights/2015/12/graduation-effect-greater-rochester-economy

Nebraska's Dropout Policy

- Students are required to attend school between the ages of 6 and 18 years old (legal age was 16 years old prior to 2012)

- Exceptions:
  - Students ages 16-18 can withdraw from school with parental consent for either of two reasons:
    1. Financial hardship that necessitates withdrawal
    2. Student has an illness that affects attendance
  - Students can be withdrawn from school not meeting accreditation or state approval requirements

(Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-202(1))

Why do students drop out?

Individual Factors

- Poverty/ Financial hardship
- Transportation issues
- Drug/alcohol dependency
- Mental health problems
- Interpersonal relationship distress
- Low motivation
- Familial responsibility (e.g., child care)
- Pregnancy
- Illness
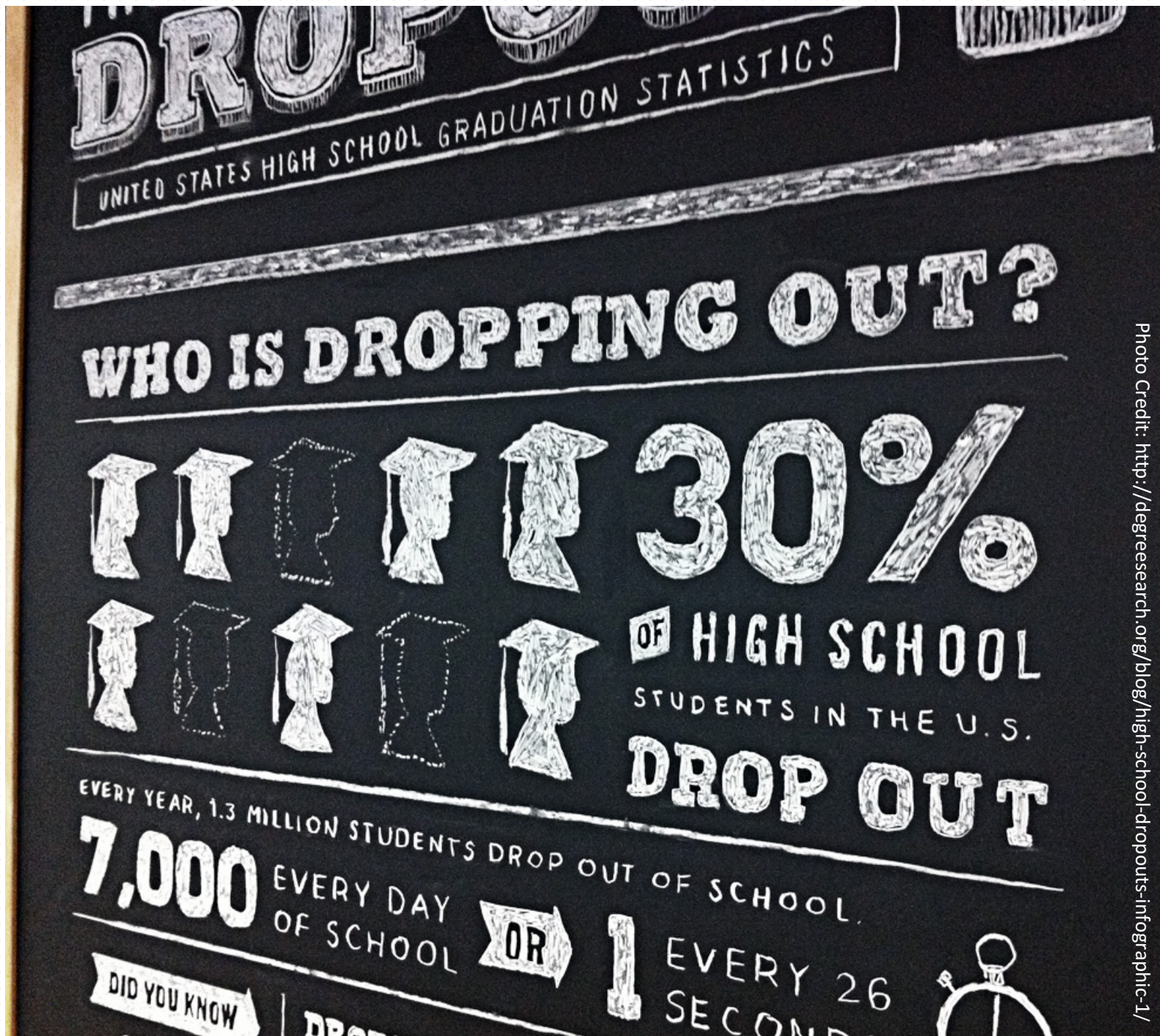
School-related Barriers to Success

- Disciplinary actions
- Credit requirements (or other graduation requirements)
- Lack of appropriate materials
- Lack of staff
- Poor training
- Lack of funding
- Lack of work experience programs
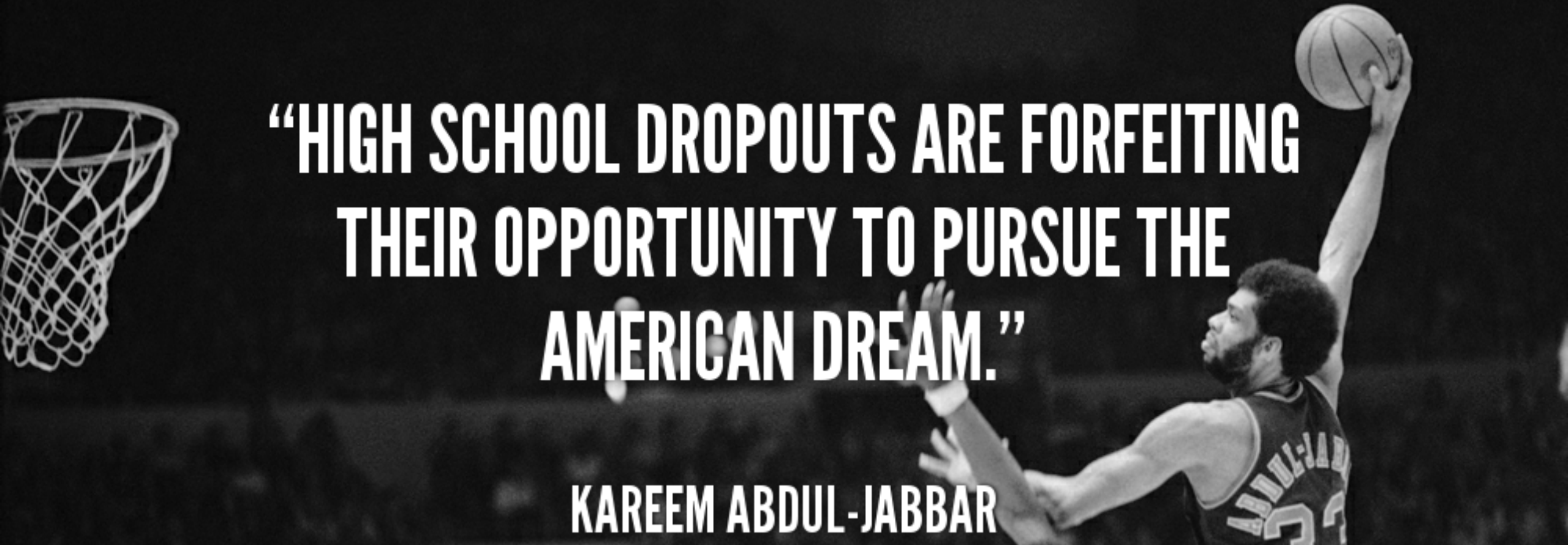
"HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS ARE FORFEITING THEIR OPPORTUNITY TO PURSUE THE AMERICAN DREAM."

KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR

What can schools do?

Dropout Screening -- Early Warning Systems

- Dropout screening refers to the practice of collecting data on students to decide whether more intensive intervention is warranted
  - The key idea is that these factors would go unnoticed without screening

- Schools have adopted data-tracking systems to identify students who are at-risk for dropping out
  - Warning signs as early as 1st grade

- Allow schools to intervene appropriately for students when flagged on a key indicator rather than waiting for student to drop out

ABCs of Dropout

THE ABC'S OF IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL DROPOUTS

Attendance: 62% of dropouts surveyed had been skipping school at least once a week*

Behavior: 25% of 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders had been suspended at least once*

Classwork: More than 40% of dropouts had failed at least 2 classes*

*According to 2009 report, "Youth Voices on the DC Graduation Crisis," by S.T.E.P. UP DC

- System flags students when they meet cut point for an indicator:
  - Attendance = missed 10% of school days (~20 days)
  - Behavior = 2+ office discipline referrals
  - Course Performance = changes based on age of student (e.g., 1+ F's, GPA < 2.0)

Demographic Variables

Graduation Rates by Subgroup of Students					
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	*Change from 2010-2011 to 2014-2015*
Total	79	80	81.4	82.3	83.2	4.2
American Indian/Alaska Native	65	67	69.7	69.6	71.6	6.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	87	88	88.7	89.4	90.2	3.2
Hispanic	71	73	75.2	76.3	77.8	6.8
Black	67	69	70.7	72.5	74.6	7.6
White	84	86	86.6	87.2	87.6	3.6
Low Income Students	70	72	73.3	74.6	76.1	6.1
English Learners	57	59	61.1	62.6	65.1	8.1
Students with Disabilities	59	61	61.9	63.1	64.6	5.6

Graduation rates, overall, have been improving nationally! However, still represent issues for certain groups of students.
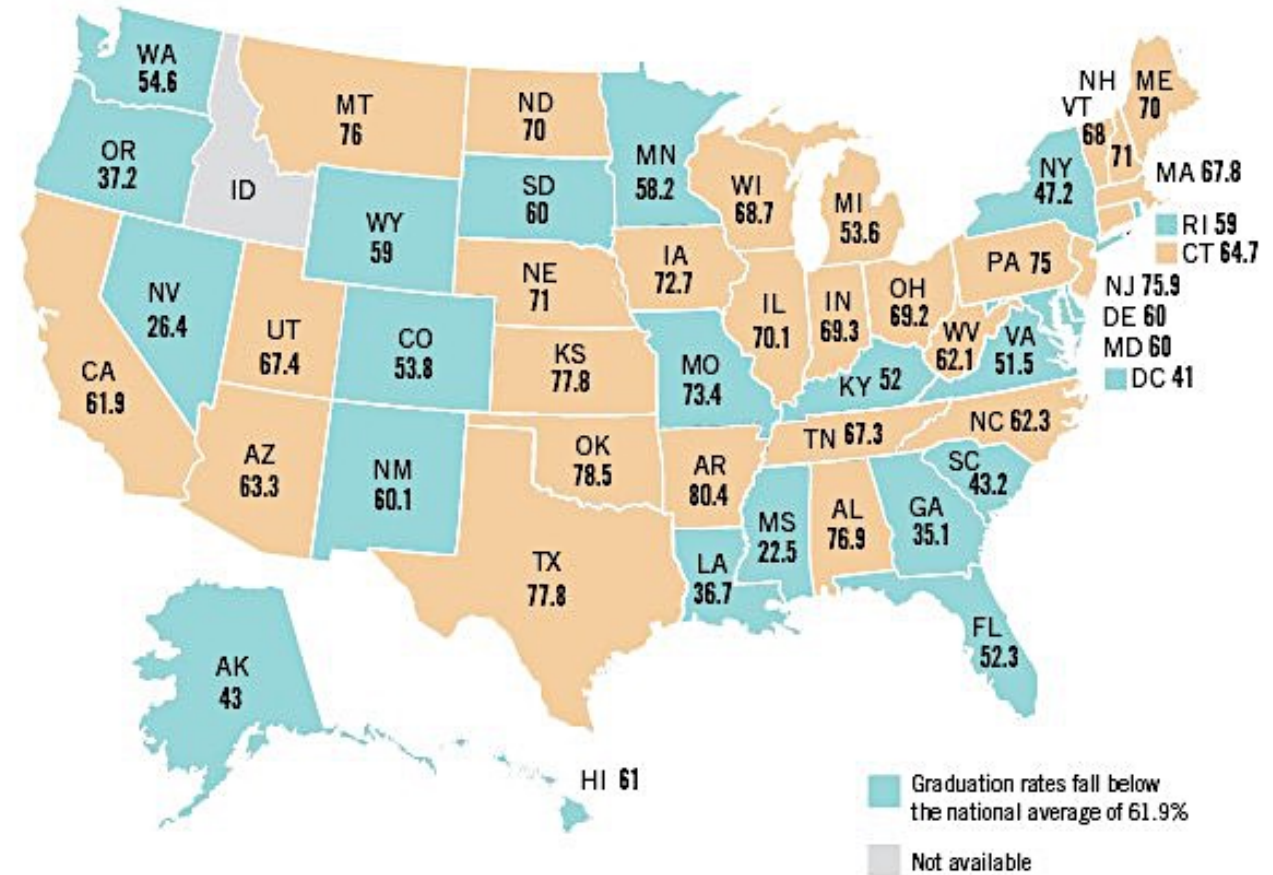
- Race/Ethnicity
  - Black and Hispanic students drop out more than White and Asian students
  - When SES is controlled for, these rates actually reverse!

- Socioeconomic Status (SES)
  - Students from low SES families drop out at higher rates
  - Academic tracking, negative peer relationships, fewer protective factors, and poor neighborhood environments contribute to increased dropout

Disability Status

- Graduation rate has increased to 64.5%!
  - http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/speced/2016/10/grad-rate_rise_for_those_with.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news2-RM

- ~22% of students with disabilities drop out

- This group has lowest enrollment in post-secondary education

GRADUATION RATES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Overall, close to 62 percent of students with disabilities graduated in 2012–13 after four years in high school. However, the graduation rate average masks large differences among the states.

WA 54.6
MT 76
ND 70
MN 58.2
WI 68.7
MI 53.6
OR 37.2
ID
SD 60
NH
VT 68 71
ME 70
NY 47.2
MA 67.8
RI 59
CT 64.7
WY 59
IA 72.7
PA 75
NJ 75.9
DE 60
MD 60
DC 41
NV 26.4
NE 71
IL 70.1
IN 69.3
OH 69.2
WV 62.1
VA 51.5
UT 67.4
CO 53.8
KS 77.8
MO 73.4
KY 52
CA 61.9
AZ 63.3
NM 60.1
OK 78.5
AR 80.4
TN 67.3
NC 62.3
SC 43.2
MS 22.5
AL 76.9
GA 35.1
TX 77.8
LA 36.7
FL 52.3
AK 43
HI 61

Graduation rates fall below the national average of 61.9%
Not available

SOURCE: ED*Facts*/Consolidated State Performance Report, SY 2012–13

Other Factors

- Grade Retention
  - One retention increases risk of dropout to 78%
  - Another increases to almost 100%

- School Climate
  - "Feel" of the school
  - Schools with low dropout rates have higher climate ratings
  - Schools w/ higher climate → cleaner, more supervision, lower student-teacher ratio, staff dressed professionally, more positive staff-student interactions, lower turnover rates, higher rates of parent engagement
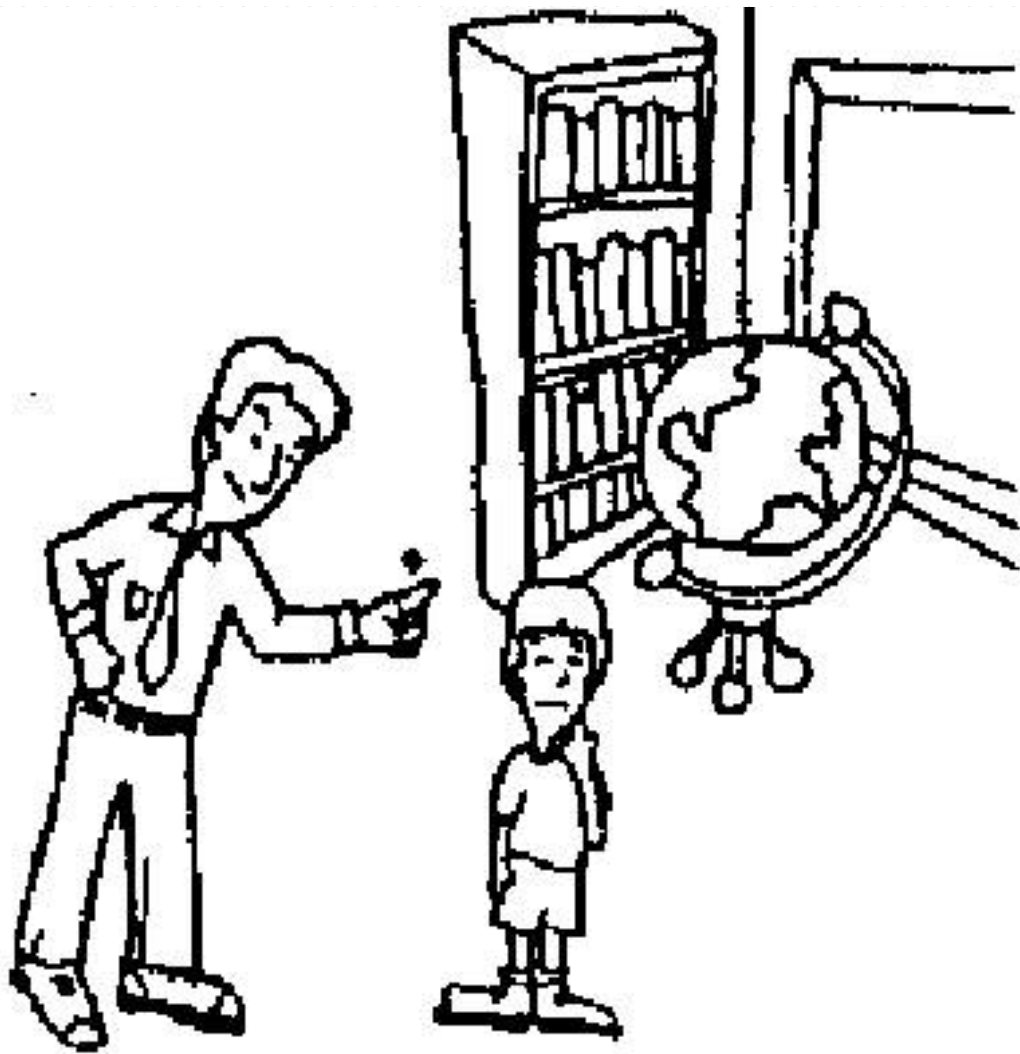
Other Factors (cont'd)

- Engagement
  - Quickly becoming the most important variable related to student dropout
  - Relationships with teachers and parents largely influence motivation and engagement
    - Peer views also play a role
  - 40-60% of low-income, minority, urban students are chronically disengaged

- Mobility
  - Changing schools can disrupt peer and teacher relationships
  - Leads to disengagement, social stress, and poor academic outcomes

Matt Klare's Dropout Risk Calculator

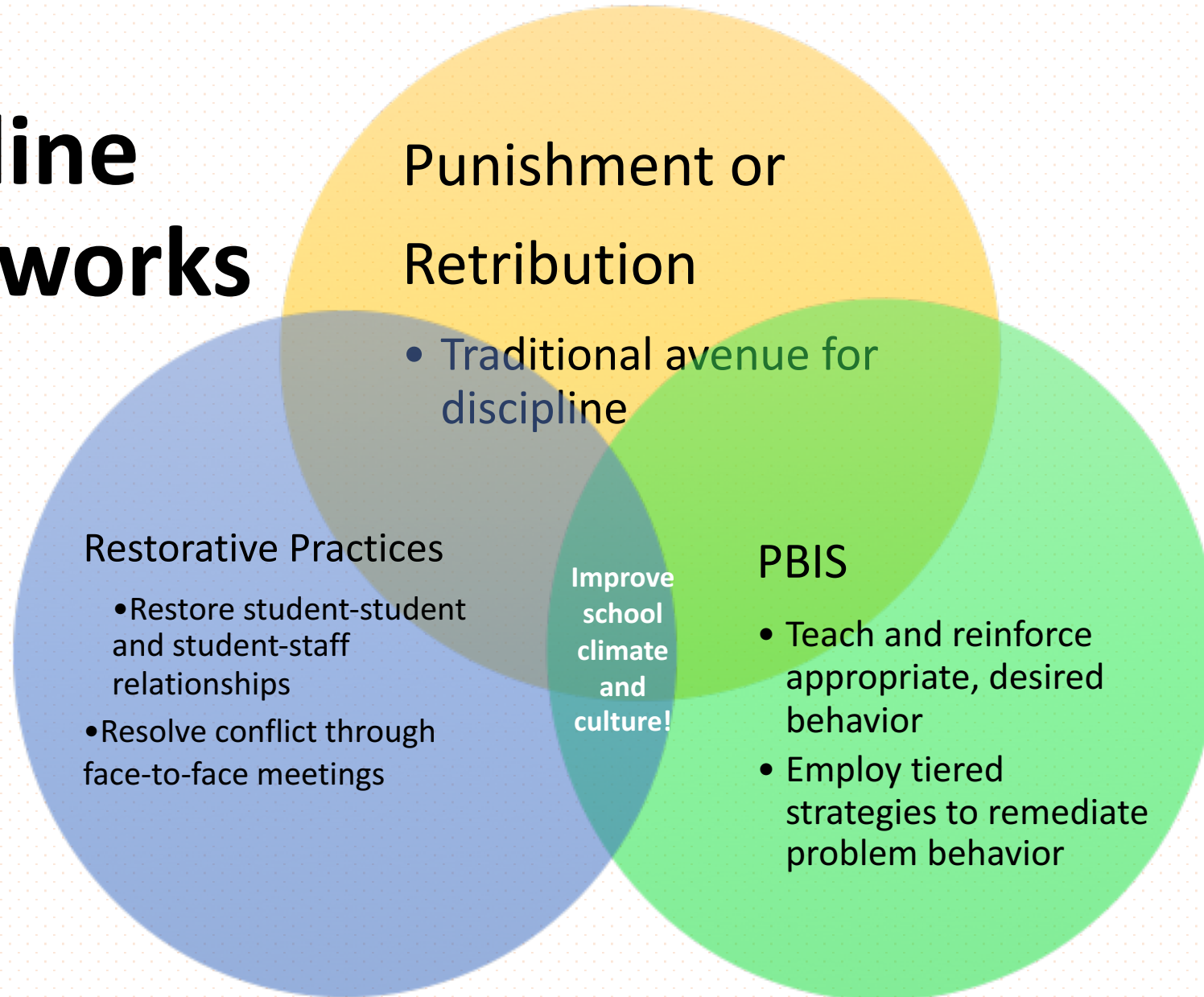|	Data point	Format
	Student's ID number	Numeric; no decimal
	First name	Character
	Last name	Character
Disability Status	Does student have an IEP? (No, Yes)	No, Yes
	Exceptionality category	Numeric; no decimal
	Student's score on 8th grade State Math test	Numeric; no decimal
Course Performance	Student's score on 8th grade State English test	Numeric; no decimal
	Student's grade in 8th grade Math (0 to 100 scale)	Numeric; no decimal
	Student's grade in 8th grade English (0 to 100 scale)	Numeric; no decimal
Attendance	Student's attendance rate in 8th grade (% of instructional time present)	Numeric; no decimal
Behavior	Number of office referrals in 8th grade (all offenses - including suspensions)	Numeric; no decimal
	Number of suspensions in 8th grade (ISS and OSS)	Numeric; no decimal
Grade Retention	Number of times student was retained in grades K - 8	Numeric; no decimal
Demographics	Gender: (M, F)	Character
	Race / ethnicity (uses the new 7 codes)	Character
SES	Lunch assistance? (0, RPL, FL)	Character
Mobility	Number of different schools the student attended from K to present (0 to 10)	Numeric; no decimal
	Number of times the student has registered in a school (i.e., switched schools)	Numeric; no decimal
Engagement	Involved in a school club, sports , band, or choir in 8th grade? (No, Yes)	No, Yes
	State Ward Status	No, Yes

Dropout Risk Calculator
Matthew Klare (2013)

NDPC-SD 6th Grade Dropout Risk Calculator Report

|	Middle School - All students at midyear of SY 2012-13				Student may need intervention in these areas:				
Student ID	IEP?	Disability Category	Ethnicity	Risk Level	Math	English	Attendance	Behavior	Engagement
291871	N	0	WH7	High	X	X			
266205	N	0	BL7	Low					
219267	Y	550	WH7	Low		X			
215943	N	0	WH7	Low	X	X			
215531	N	0	WH7	Low		X			X
216279	N	0	AS7	Medium	X	X	X		X
216876	N	0	WH7	Low					
249827	N	0	WH7	High		X	X	X	X
228224	N	0	AS7	Medium	X	X	X		X
251552	N	0	HI7	Low					
251551	N	0	WH7	Low					

Three Discipline Frameworks

Punishment or Retribution

- Traditional avenue for discipline

Restorative Practices

- Restore student-student and student-staff relationships
- Resolve conflict through face-to-face meetings

PBIS

- Teach and reinforce appropriate, desired behavior
- Employ tiered strategies to remediate problem behavior

**Improve school climate and culture!**

PBIS Framework

1. Administrative leadership
2. Team-based implementation
3. Defined behavioral expectations
4. Teaching of behavioral expectations
5. Acknowledging and rewarding appropriate behavior
6. Monitor and correct behavioral errors
7. Use data/information for decision making
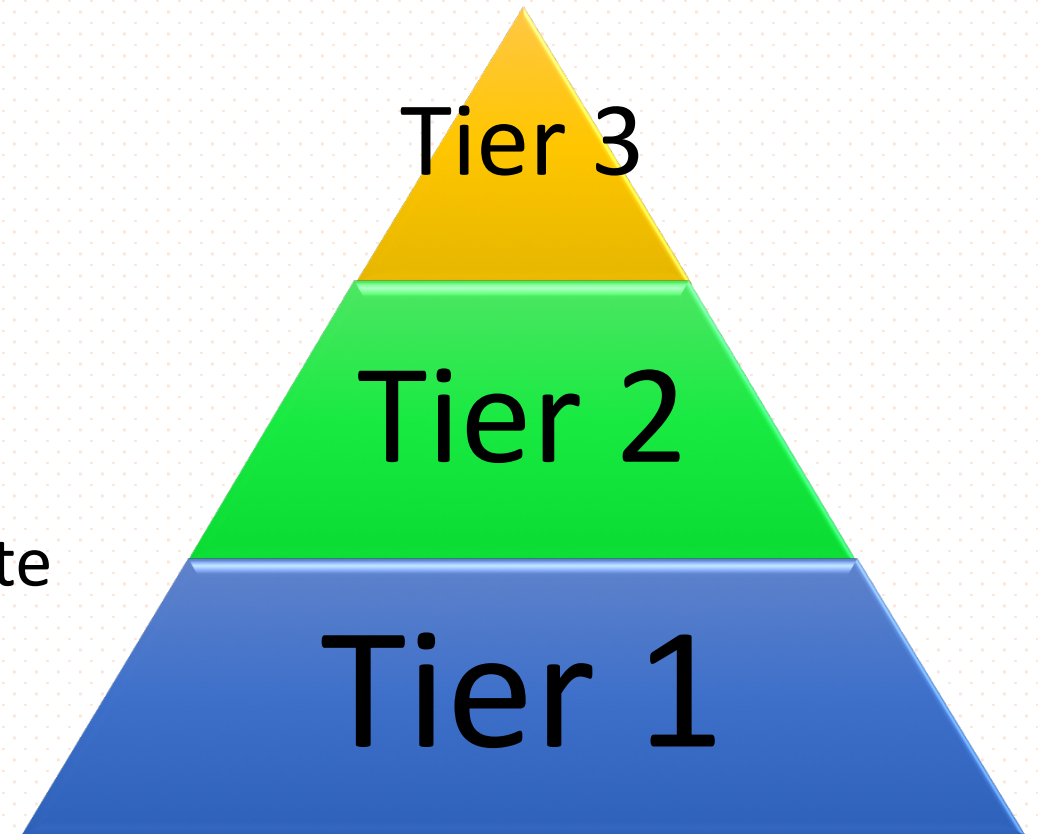
Restorative Practices Framework

- As a positive alternative to individual punishment, restorative practice focuses on healing (Chmelynski, 2005), education, and community restoration (Wearmouth, McKinney, & Glynn, 2007).

- The challenge of restorative practice is to reintegrate the student who committed the wrong back into the school community while protecting the right of the victim to a safe and secure learning environment (Varnham, 2005).
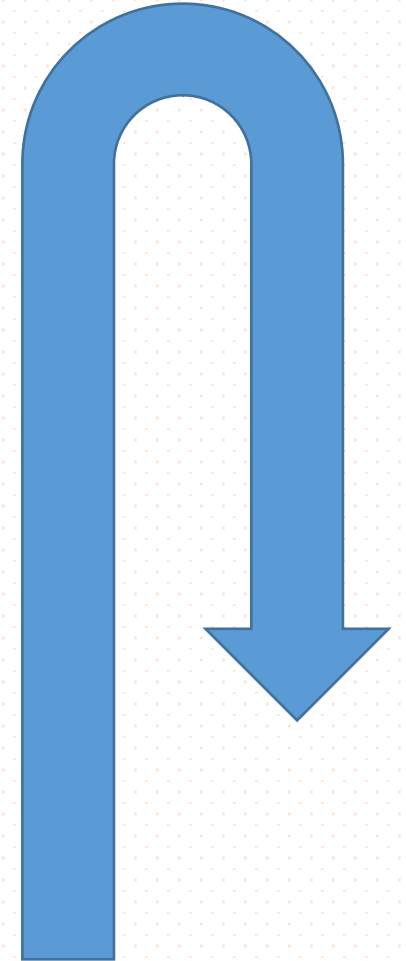
What Can **YOU** Do?

Strategies

- Academic Supports and Tutoring
- Counseling Intervention
- Dropout Recovery Strategies
- Mentoring
- Motivation
- Out of School Time

- Programs Parent & Family Involvement
- Reinforcement
- School climate & culture
- Staff-student relationship building
- Student engagement

k12engagement@unl.edu

Academic Supports and Tutoring

- Using EWS data, students at risk for dropout based on academic performance might benefit from additional academic support
- **What can you do?**
  - Assist students with homework
  - Work at homework clubs
  - Help students during resource times (study hall)
  - Bring academic skill problems to attention of classroom teacher

Mentoring

- **All staff in school serves as models for:**
  - Appropriate behavior
  - Conflict resolution
  - Problem solving
  - Interpersonal communication
  - And more!!

- **What can you do?**
  - Follow staff expectations and school rules
  - Model appropriate communication and behavior
  - Interact with students in a positive way
  - Show genuine interest in student well-being
  - Communicate your gratitude for their efforts each day at school

MENTORING
Successful people never reach their goals alone.

Reinforcement
Catch em' being good

- Reinforcement = consequence that **increases** frequency of behavior in the future

- Reinforcers can be:
  - **Objects/Edibles**
  - **Tokens** (checkmarks, stars, etc. to be exchanged for tangibles later)
  - **Activities**
  - **Social** (attention/praise)

- **What can you do?**
  - Reinforce **immediately** after the behavior and after **every** occurrence
  - Strive for **5:1 ratio** of positive reinforcement to corrective feedback
  - Ignore inappropriate behavior if possible (i.e., extinction)
  - Provide behavior-specific praise
    - e.g., "I love how you are sitting quietly," "Great job keeping your hands to yourself!"

Reinforcement

"It's a special hearing aid. It filters out criticism and amplifies compliments."

This is the part that you ignore.

Staff-Student Relationship Building

Strong staff-student relationships can increase:

- Student engagement
- Motivation
- Attendance
- Overall climate of the school

Supportive Environment

Measures

- Peer Support for Academic Work (MS)
- Academic Press (MS)
- School-Wide Future Orientation (HS)
- Expectations for Post-Secondary Education (HS)
- Academic Personalism
- Student-Teacher Trust
- Safety

Items

- My teachers always keep their promises.
- I feel safe and comfortable with my teachers at this school.
- My teachers always listen to student's ideas.
- When my teachers tell me not to do something I know they have a good reason.
- My teachers treat me with respect.

Photo credit: https://uei.uchicago.edu/news/article/new-report-offers-first-depth-look-statewide-school-climate-survey-results
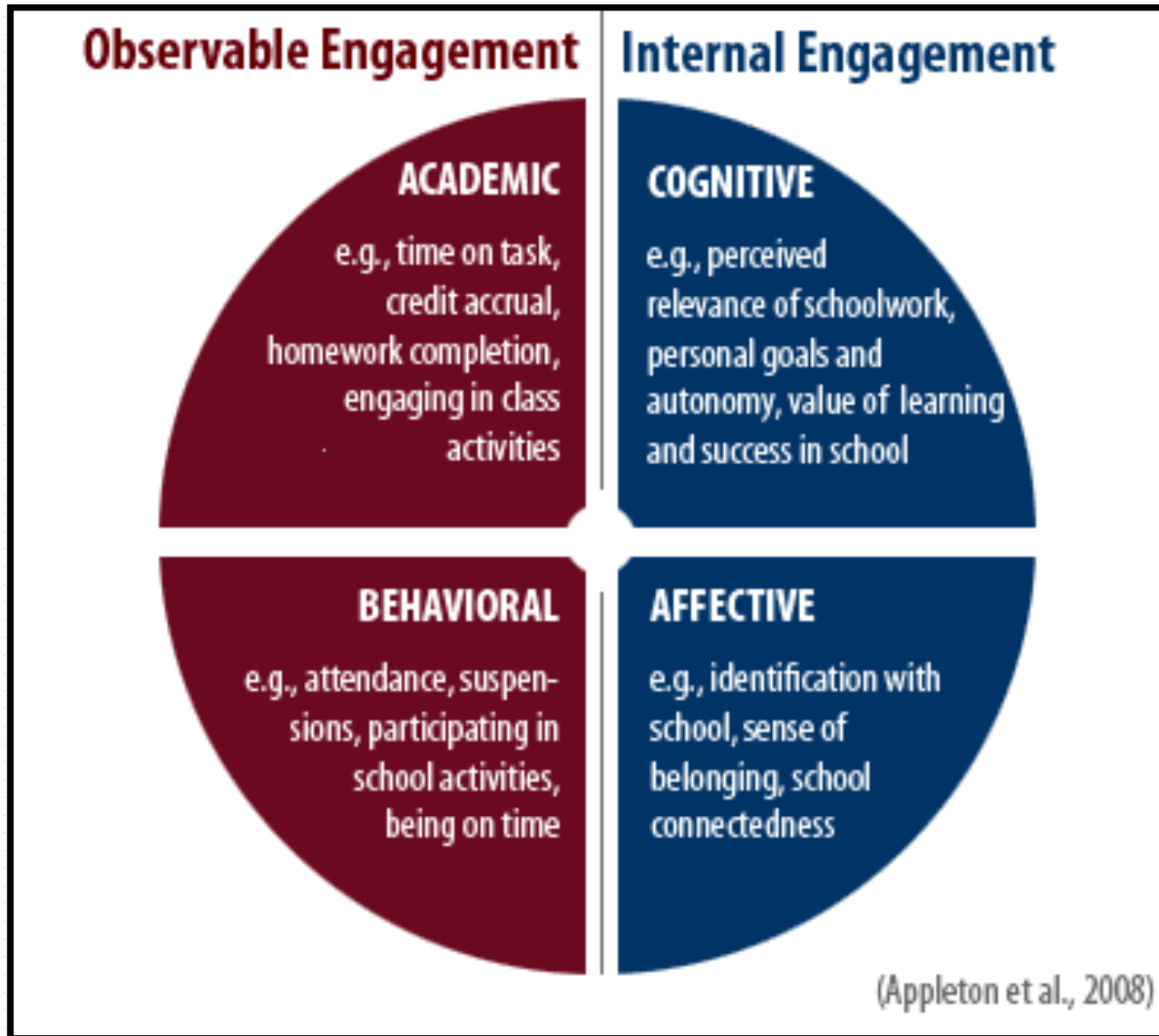
Staff-Student Relationship Building

- **What can you do?**
  - 2-by-10 Strategy → interact with student for 2 minutes, 10 days in a row
  - Listen to students carefully
  - Align body language to message
  - Seek out opportunities to make connections with students
  - Follow through with what you say you will do

  - Be consistent and fair
  - Look for opportunities to positively reinforce
  - Acknowledge changes
  - Avoid aversive demands (please and thank you)

  Para Educators = unique role that students might relate to easier than teachers or other staff!

Student Engagement

Observable Engagement | **Internal Engagement**

ACADEMIC

e.g., time on task, credit accrual, homework completion, engaging in class activities

COGNITIVE

e.g., perceived relevance of schoolwork, personal goals and autonomy, value of learning and success in school

BEHAVIORAL

e.g., attendance, suspensions, participating in school activities, being on time

AFFECTIVE

e.g., identification with school, sense of belonging, school connectedness

(Appleton et al., 2008)

Student Engagement

- **What can you do?**
  - Assist with homework
  - Communicate with students and talk about things that are going well/not going well
  - Reinforce effort and participation in classroom activities
  - Encourage involvement in clubs and activities that interest student
  - Listen and communicate meaningfully
  - Communicate importance and appreciation of student attendance
  - Seek out opportunities to develop relationships

Photo credit: http://www.wholechildeducation.org/blog/ed-pulse-poll-results-school-climate
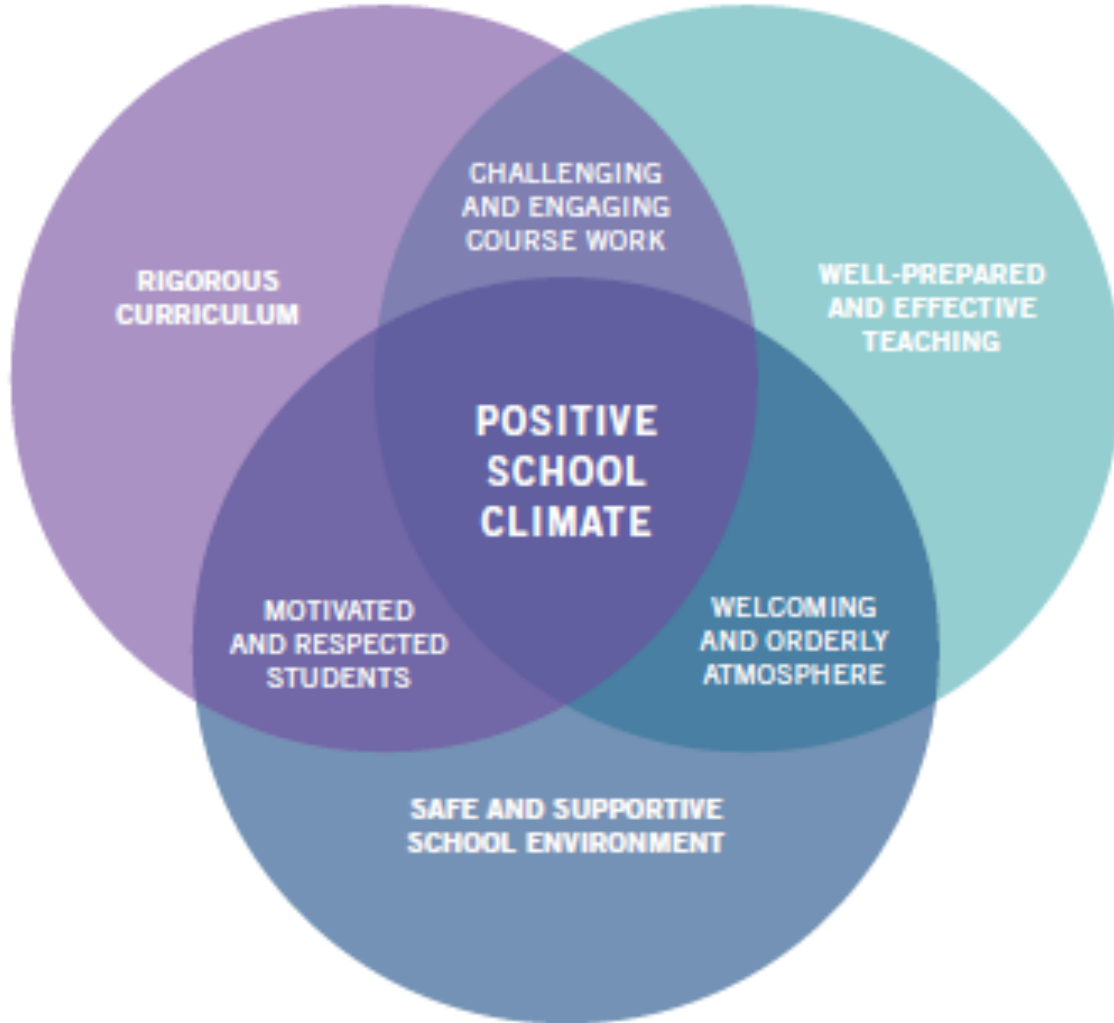
School Climate & Culture

- Every staff member contributes to the climate and culture of the school!

- **What can you do?**
  - Be present in hallways during transition times
  - Interact with students positively and professionally
  - Model appropriate communication
  - Intervene/correct inappropriate student interactions
  - Dress appropriately
  - Report concerns about students to teachers or administrators

Case Examples

Middle Schooler

A 6th-grade student just transferred to the Middle School where you work. He is having a hard time adjusting to the new school environment socially and is demonstrating withdrawal during class. He is also below grade level in math and is not turning in homework.

Discussion

- What risk factors does this student have for dropping out?

- What might happen with this student in your school?

- What could you do differently to help this student succeed?

- What barriers might prevent you from being involved?

  - How could you overcome them?

- Find out who is in charge of monitoring student data and ask how you can help!

High Schooler

A junior (11th grade) student at your High School has recently begun working to help support her family, as her mother was just laid off from one of her jobs. The student has begun to fall behind academically, with failing grades in two classes. Additionally, she often comes late to school or leaves early to catch her shifts at work.

Discussion

- What risk factors does this student have for dropping out?

- What might happen with this student in your school?

- What could you do differently to help this student succeed?

- What barriers might prevent you from being involved?

  - How could you overcome them?

- Find out who is in charge of monitoring student data and ask how you can help!

Summary

- Students drop out for a variety of reasons!
  - Once the process of disengagement has begun, it is difficult to get students back on track
  - Early prevention and detection of these warning signs is the best way to encourage school completion
- Para Educators can provide supports to students through:
  - Mentoring/modeling
  - Providing **frequent** reinforcement for appropriate behavior
  - Assisting with academics and providing additional support
  - Fostering communication and positive relationships with students
    - Increases student engagement
    - Contributes to the overall school climate!

Contact Information

- Natalie Hoff
  - nataliehoff03@gmail.com

- Elisabeth Kane
  - elisabethjkane@gmail.com

- Student Engagement Project – UNL
  - http://k12engagement.unl.edu/

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