
Chapter 10 At-a-Glance

Chapter 10 is filled with practical suggestions on how to address the needs of highly mobile students. Migrant students face many daunting challenges on the road to getting a high school diploma. Two of the primary ones are limited proficiency in English and inability to accrue the credits necessary for graduation. A third challenge has emerged in recent years—the requirement that a student pass a standardized test or series of tests before he or she can graduate.

Some of the highlights of Chapter 10 are

- Approaches that promote high school completion
- Strategies tailored to the needs of highly mobile students
- Case studies showing how you as a teacher can make a difference

A number of the approaches outlined in this chapter are national in scope and are designed specifically to benefit migrant students. Programs such as the Portable Assisted Study Sequence (page 198) and a variety of distance learning options (page 199) are examples of innovative strategies that address the needs of migrant students.



*My life, my heritage
has been a cycle of
poverty, of goals that
were never achieved;
I want to break that
cycle. I want to achieve
for my family so that
my parents can be
proud of me.*

—Student interviewed by the
Hispanic Dropout Project

CHAPTER 10:

The Challenge of Meeting Graduation Requirements

1. Approaches that Promote High School Completion

Counseling Approaches

Counseling programs attempt to enhance students' self-esteem by making the school environment more friendly and supportive, thereby developing greater social and self-awareness in students. The following are strategies included in some counseling approaches:

Peer counseling

Students develop a sense of responsibility and usefulness. Peer counselors help other students to become self-aware and to develop their academic, social, and personal potential. They can also help newly enrolled students learn about daily school life and academic expectations such as changing classes, participating in extracurricular activities, navigating the cafeteria, and seeking help.

Teachers as advisers

Students are assigned to a teacher who provides guidance in academic and other school-related activities. This is a strategy used to reduce the sense of alienation experienced by many students, especially those enrolled in large schools. For LEP students, assigning teachers who know their language may be particularly helpful. Hispanic students almost unanimously identified “someone caring” as the most important factor that contributed to their academic success.

Parent counseling

Parents receive counseling on how the American school system works and what they can do at home to support the academic progress of their children. Most parents want to help their children succeed, but due to their own limited schooling background, they may need to be provided with specific suggestions, tools, and strategies. Through early intervention, parents and students can begin to believe that higher education is important and within their grasp.

Secondary student mentor/adviser

Secondary students can benefit from having an adviser, a role model, and an advocate who is identified with the school and is on a first-name basis with the family. This person, who is often a migrant education staff member or a bilingual home-school liaison, needs to be conversant with the cultures of both the home and the school and be able to gain the support and trust of the students and their families.

Incentive and Tutorial Approaches

Due to frequent school interruptions, financial responsibilities, limited English proficiency, and other factors, migrant students may have little motivation to attend school regularly, which results in low academic achievement. Both a lack of motivation and academic failure can be addressed by the following activities:

Attendance incentives

Provide awards or prizes to students or homerooms with the most improved or best attendance. Assign chronically absent students to work in the attendance or administrative offices or as group leaders within the classroom to monitor and follow up on classmates' absences.

Teachers and mentors/advocates can also play a key role by monitoring closely each student's attendance and contacting him or her immediately to find out the cause, demonstrating that "someone cares" whether he or she is attending school.

Achievement incentives

Promote measurable, short-term successes that encourage low-achieving students to accept responsibility for their progress, which is regularly monitored, recognized, and rewarded. Techniques may include meeting frequently with counselors, teachers, or mentors to review progress; systematic goal setting; and individual or group tutoring utilizing parents, peers, computers, or community members such as senior citizens, successful graduates, or career mentors.

Environmental incentives

Encourage students to recognize the importance of attending school regularly and graduating as an integral part of attaining economic, career, and personal goals. Activities may include inviting successful graduates or role models to interact with and address the students in class, individual conferences, or workplace settings. Organizing formal and informal activities with local universities, community colleges, or technical schools may also be an effective strategy.

Social incentives

Organize peer support groups or service clubs to encourage a deeper commitment to school. Activities may include agreements between students to attend school regularly, provide academic assistance to each other, and encourage participation in extracurricular activities. Older students or former migrant graduates may serve as volunteers or be employed as mentors.

Work-Related Approaches

Work-related issues, including economic necessity and career and vocational development, should be addressed to encourage migrant students to stay in school. Often, secondary migrant students make the decision to drop out and work to help support their families. They are too inexperienced to realize that by trying to address immediate needs, they are closing the door on a future with broader opportunities for them and their families. Employment realism is an important focus point—learning about potential jobs, their requirements, and salary ranges. When parents are informed that there are options other than dropping out, they frequently support their children’s staying in school. Several suggestions are provided below that enlist the support of local businesses and industries:

Career education

Comprehensive programs that provide career exploratory activities at the middle school level and placement and follow-up at the high school level are an important option for students who are work oriented. Implementing such a program entails assessing student needs and talents, developing individual student career guidance plans, establishing time lines, providing career activities, and integrating these activities with the regular academic curriculum. Parental involvement is necessary since parental approval and encouragement affect students’ career plans.

Business community-school collaboration

Local businesses sponsor individual middle and high schools or help them implement learning activities by sharing expertise and providing needed supplies. Students may become involved in the host businesses through volunteer work and special events. In addition, some businesses may elect to sponsor a student with financial needs, enabling the student to pursue his education rather than dropping out. The business may offer to provide funds for supplies, uniforms, tools, extracurricular needs, or after-school employment.

Career shadowing

These programs allow students to observe employees who work in a job or career that might be of interest to them. Students learn first-hand the requisite skills, training, education, and potential salary for their career choices.

Career fairs

At these fairs, local business or industry representatives display information to students learning about their career choices. A related activity is a job fair in which recruiters from these businesses provide high school seniors with experience in resume writing, interviewing, and job hunting.

Work-study programs

On the job training (OJT), Work-Study, and apprenticeship programs are increasingly serving as educational programs that provide career options rather than solely as opportunities to fill students’ economic needs. A wide variety of programs schedule students for classes part of the day, and they report to a job for the rest of the day. This is a particularly good option for migrant students who are either tempted or forced to quit school in order to contribute financially to their families.

Excerpted from Limited English Proficient Students at Risk: Issues and Prevention Strategies, R.C. Gingras & R.C. Careaga, 1989, NCBE.

2. Individual Plan of Action

Have a discussion with your students with the aim of setting goals for the school year, as well as defining some long-term goals that will guide them in the coming years. The discussion should focus on the student's interests, priorities, and educa-

tional and career goals. Each IPA should be as detailed as possible in terms of the goals each student chooses and the specific steps that will be required to accomplish them.

Student's Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Target Date of Graduation: _____

Grade Level for 2000-01 School Year: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Parents' Names: _____

Name of High School: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Goals and Objectives for the 2000-01 School Year

A. Goal: _____

Objectives:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

B. Goal: _____

Objectives:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Long-Range Goals and Objectives

A. Goal: _____

Objectives:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

B. Goal: _____

Objectives:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Recommendations for Follow-up

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Name of Student's School Counselor: _____ Phone: _____

Name of Support Person: _____ Phone: _____

Student's Signature

Parent's Signature

Guidelines for Goal-Setting

In our role as educators, we can be instrumental in providing our students and their parents with the information and tools they'll need to pursue the continuing education option of their choice. The three major areas of concern are:

1. Ensuring that the students are taking the courses that they need to pursue their education goals.
2. Providing the students with the information that they need to apply to the college or program of their choice.
3. Providing the students and their parents with the information that they need to obtain financial aid.

Goal Setting

The Individual Plan of Action (IPA) will include:

1. Goals and Objectives for the 2001-02 school year
2. Long-Range Goals and Objectives
3. Recommendations for Follow-up

Here is an example of an IPA:

1. Goals And Objectives for 2001-02 School Year

A. Goal: Increase GPA to a 3.5.

Objectives:

1. Add 30 minutes daily to study time.
2. Sit in the front of all classes.
3. Seek opportunities for extra credit assignments.
4. Participate more in class particularly in discussions and group activities.

B. Goal: Become involved with school and/or community organizations.

Objectives:

1. Talk with migrant advocate about clubs, teams, or agencies that would suit my talents, interests, and personal schedule.
2. Speak with individuals at the organizations I've selected in order to determine which is the most suitable.
3. Consult with my parents to help make the selection and to obtain their permission.

2. Long-Range Goals and Objectives

A. Goal: Take as many college prep courses as possible.

Objectives:

1. Meet with guidance counselor during the first week of school every year to be assured that requirements are being met.
2. Maintain a 3.5 GPA by attending and participating in all classes and submitting all assignments.
3. Seek help when necessary from classmates and teachers.

B. Goal: Take SAT at least once during senior year.

Objectives:

1. Meet with guidance counselor during the first week of school regarding test dates and applications.
2. Complete and mail necessary documents by deadlines.
3. Purchase prep. books if desired.

Recommendations For Follow-up

1. Monitor student's academic progress through regular teacher conferences.
2. Assist student with accessing and interpreting information about post-secondary education opportunities.
3. Assist student with accessing scholarship/financial aid information and applications.
4. Facilitate and monitor student's participation in school/community organization(s).

3. Strategies Tailored to the Needs of Highly Mobile Students

Flexible School Calendars

Some states with large, mobile populations accommodate students' annual migration pattern by allowing students to complete their assignments and end-of-term exams prior to their migration. A date is designated, approximately one month to six weeks before the end of the traditional school calendar that coincides with families' needs to migrate to other locations to work in agriculture. Affected students are scheduled into an extra period for tutorial or a computer lab, often during lunch or before or after school. They receive assignments early and are responsible for completing those, along with all requirements for their regular courses. Upon successfully completing all work and final exams, they receive an official letter from the school stating that they have completed all necessary assignments and that as of the designated date they are no longer required to attend school and are free to migrate and work.

Flexible Testing Schedules and Locations

In some instances, schools agree to administer end-of-term exams prior to a student's withdrawing close to the end of the grading period. If keeping the contents of a test secure is a concern, the exam administered can be an alternate one.

Some schools elect to collect and send the final exams to the student's next school of enrollment rather than administering the exams early. This can become complicated if the receiving school system is on a different calendar and has already closed for the summer. However, if arrangements are made prior to the student's departure or once the student enrolls in the next school, then exams are sent from the home school, proctored by the new school, and returned to the home school for grading and the awarding of semester credit. This approach is generally used when the student withdraws from the home school too late in the term to be able to adjust to the new school's final days of operation and exam schedule.

If students withdraw prior to the end of the term without notifying the home school, it may be diffi-

cult to facilitate the completion of course requirements in a timely manner. In these instances, some schools allow students to complete assignments and take final exams if they return in the fall. If this method is used, students are generally provided with the necessary books and a reasonable amount of time to complete missing assignments and prepare for exams.

For students who do not reside in the state they plan to graduate from during the administration of required standardized or "graduation" testing, various accommodations can be made. Some states offer make-up test dates for absent students. Other states determine where the majority of their students move and train school system personnel in these states to administer the tests. Through interstate coordination, students are located and tests are sent and proctored and then returned to the home school for grading.

Correspondence Courses

Mobile students are provided access to semi-independent correspondence courses, often through a state university or through the migrant education program-sponsored Portable Assisted Study Sequence program, PASS. Correspondence courses are generally used to help students earn additional credits to get back on grade level, make up failed credits if they cannot attend night or summer school, or to complete a course for which they had earned only partial credit prior to moving. In many states PASS courses are provided free-of-charge to migrant students. Not all states accept correspondence course credits, so it is important to assure that the credits earned will count toward the diploma.

It is generally advisable to assign a school employee to administer correspondence courses, setting reasonable time frames for completion. Generally, students who are successful in taking correspondence courses on top of their regular class schedules are motivated, average-achieving students who are passing their current classes. This approach is not as successful with students unable to keep up with their regularly scheduled courses.

For further information about PASS, contact the National PASS Center at:

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Mt. Morris, NY 14510-1096
(800)245-5681
FAX (716)658-7969
E-mail: pass@migrant.net

Distance Learning

Technology can be a useful tool for schools with highly mobile populations. Courses can be broadcast via satellite to students residing temporarily out of state. These courses can also be captured on video cassettes and sent to locations without access to satellites. Work units and tests generally accompany broadcast units and are returned to the student's home school for grading and the awarding of credit. They may be courses required by certain states for graduation that are unlikely to be offered in other states, such as state history classes. Texas is an example of a state where the migrant education program has dedicated a lot of time and effort to meeting the needs of their migrating students through its innovative technology-based Project SMART. To find out more about Project SMART, go to their website at: www.tea.state.tx.us/migrant/documents/smartopguide.pdf.

Block Scheduling

Schools must bear in mind the needs of mobile students as they consider moving from traditional to block scheduling. Students should not be penalized by the loss of credits due to a mobile lifestyle. All efforts must be made to match the incoming transfer student's schedule, and withdrawal grades from the previous school must be averaged in to determine final grades. Incoming students with more transfer classes and grades than can be matched in the new schedule may be allowed to complete the partially completed courses through correspondence courses, night school, a computer lab program, or during the next semester. Students entering a traditional schedule from a block, with too few transfer classes and withdrawal grades, may also make up assignments and tests in tutorial programs, in computer labs, at night school, or with correspondence courses.

Alternative Educational Programs

For a fairly small percentage of students, the realities of their lifestyle make graduation from a traditional high school program extremely difficult. Factors such as multiple-year age-grade discrepancy, being the eldest child in a large family, being an integral part of the family economic structure, experiencing frequent school interruptions, being non or extremely limited English proficient, having large gaps in previous educational experiences, and being an unwed or teen parent, all place students at risk of dropping out of school. With timely interventions and referrals to appropriate alternative education programs, these students need not become failures or additions to the growing list of dropout statistics.

Adult, Evening, or Alternative High Schools often provide students unable to attend traditional day school with options to earn a diploma. These programs are often self-paced, enabling students to earn credits at a faster rate. They may also provide supportive services such as childcare. Factors to consider when referring students to these programs are the number of existing credits accrued toward a diploma, age, maturity, and motivation level. Students in these programs are generally considered as adults and self-starters; therefore, immature, unmotivated students may be more successful in a structured, traditional academic program.

Vocational or technical programs may be viable options for students not seeking a high school diploma or those wishing to learn a trade in addition to meeting graduation requirements. Usually offered both during the day and evening, these programs provide students with opportunities to learn important job skills. Upon successful completion, a certificate is awarded, and employment placement services may be available.

The High School Equivalency Program (HEP) is for migrant students who are at least 16 years old and who are not enrolled in school. The program helps them obtain their high school equivalency certificate and continue on to postsecondary education, job training, or the workplace. Students reside on campus at one of 20 colleges and universities around the country and programs may be residential or commuter. GED exams may be offered in English or

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What Choices Do High School Students Have?

Students may need more than four years to complete high school. College is not an impossible dream in the U.S. There are often scholarships available. Community colleges are relatively low cost, and there are many types of student loans.

Some common choices are:

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
High School Diploma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get a good job • Enter colleges of two or four years or technical school • Be bilingual 	
GED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter most two-year colleges • Get a job requiring manual labor • Be bilingual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No advancement
Technical School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers in: Automotive Carpentry Masonry Electronics Computers Etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn specific job skills • Get actual job experience during high school • Be bilingual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits choices and prospect for advancement

¿Que Opciones Tienen los Alumnos de la Escuela Preparatoria?

Es posible que un alumno esté en “high school” por más de cuatro años para ganar los créditos necesarios para obtener un diploma. Ir a la universidad no es sueño imposible en los Estados Unidos. Por ejemplo, hay una gran variedad de becas que ayudan con el coste de una universidad.

Unas opciones son:

Opciones	Ventajas	Desventajas
Diploma de “High School”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtener un buen trabajo • Ir a una universidad de dos o cuatro años o a una escuela técnica • Entrar en las fuerzas armadas • Ser bilingue 	
GED (Certificado que se gana independientemente)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oportunidad de ir a una universidad de dos años • Obtener un trabajo manual • Ser bilingue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difícil de adelantar en el trabajo
Escuela Técnica <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Se ofrecen carreras de: mecánico carpintero electricista cosmetólogo operador de computadoras 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominar una carrera técnica • Tener experiencia en un trabajo verdadero durante “high school” • Ser bilingue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limita las opciones de cambiar trabajo o adelantar

Spanish. Student factors that lead to greater chances of success include an entrance reading level no lower than sixth grade, emotional maturity, high motivation, and an ability to be freed up from traditional family or financial responsibilities while attending the HEP program. For students who test below the recommended reading level, remediation in a local

Adult Basic Education or literacy program may prepare them for future success at HEP. Some HEP programs provide support services such as tutoring, counseling, follow-up, and stipends. The HEP program has a 70 percent GED completion rate, and 29 percent of students enroll in postsecondary institutions (Biennial Evaluation Report, 1995).

High School Equivalency Program (HEP) Projects and Contacts for 1999-2000

New HEP programs are constantly being added, so please check with the office of Migrant Education for an updated list (202-260-1164).

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Excerpt from Article, “Against All Odds”

(Subject: Program in Dropout Prevention for Hispanic Students)

Beginning in 1990-91, in a Los Angeles school district, 100 students in the treatment group received the ALAS (Achievement for Latinos through Academic Success) program’s intervention services for all three years of middle school. One hundred students in the control group received the traditional secondary school program.

In designing the program, the researchers set out to have interventions address the four spheres of influence on students’ lives and school performance—teachers, school, parents, and other students.

ALAS has three main focuses: (1) problem solving with students and families; (2) close monitoring—even hour-by-hour—of attendance, tardiness, homework, grades, behavior, and notes home; and (3) training for parents in everything from child-rearing skills to how to get what they need from school officials and teachers.

In doing so, ALAS has tried to overcome the barriers thrown up by the school culture, the student culture, and the prevailing Mexican-American culture. “The goal is to empower both the parents and the kids,” project director Larson says. And to help them “have the skills to achieve a different vision for the future.”

Now completing the fourth year of the five-year project, the ALAS staff can document success after three full school years. Just five percent of the ALAS students, compared with 25 percent of the control students, were absent from school one-fourth of the time or more in ninth grade. During ninth grade, 15 percent of the ALAS students, compared with 31 percent of the control students, failed English. In other subjects too, ALAS students failed at rates much lower than the control students.

Not a single ALAS student dropped out during middle school compared with 13 percent of the control group who didn’t stay in school.

A school’s culture and policies can also push its dropout rate up. Researchers identify several ways to change schools to make them better able to serve at-risk students such as Hispanics. Several experts suggest turning large, anonymous schools into smaller units—schools within schools. Researchers have found that Hispanic students respond well to smaller school communities. Also, Hispanic students in bilingual programs—which effectively function as smaller school communities—have a much higher rate of staying in school than their peers.

Guidance and career counseling in many schools foster “the lack of connection between the world of work and the world of study.” “It’s like leading double lives for a lot of these students. They work and they go to school, but it doesn’t meet.” Neither the teacher nor the employer tries to draw on the student’s experiences in the other sector. One researcher looks to apprenticeship programs as one solution especially helpful to Hispanics. “Already Hispanics do need money for their family income, or at least to take care of their own needs. They are already working to a great extent, so why not try to do more with that?”

Also, more emphasis should be placed on thinking about careers, not just a job to make money. If a student is working at a hamburger joint, he ought to be thinking about managing the restaurant someday. Often, children of working-class families or working-poor families just don’t know what it takes to be a nurse. If you hear a young woman say she wants to be a nurse, and you ask her if she has taken a biology class or advanced math class, it is likely that she has not.

Recommendations from the Hispanic Dropout Project (1998)

1. Frequent (in some cases, hourly, but generally, daily or weekly) and ongoing (sustained throughout the school year) monitoring of the student's school performance is suggested.
2. Close teamwork with parents is recommended, including parent training in being an effective educational consumer and raising a teenager.
3. A case manager is essential to coordinating services provided and linking school, home, and community together into a cohesive structure for the student.
4. The intervention must respond to the individual needs of the student and must be sufficiently flexible to personalize the educational experience.
5. A social cognitive problem-solving approach that teaches the student and parents how to effectively handle short- and long-term challenges is highly effective in making high-risk youth less impulsive, more independent, and goal-oriented.
6. The intervention must actively attempt to change the student's expectations and vision of the future probably from one of failure and hopelessness to one of hopefulness and possibility. For more on this topic, see the *Handbook of Hope* (Academic Press) by Rick Snyder, who teaches at the University of Kansas.

Check out the many informative features of the Hispanic Dropout Project at www.ncbe.gwu.edu/miscpubs/hdp/index.htm

4. But What Can I Do? I'm Only A Teacher!!!

When you get to know your ELL students personally and learn a bit about the students' journey, their stories of how they and their family came to be here, and how they live and work, a greater understanding and respect is developed for all. Below are suggestions for addressing some of the concerns described in Chapter 2.

- Help mobile students by assigning a “partial” or withdrawal grade when a student transfers. This grade is based on the work and grades generated during the time enrolled, regardless of the length of enrollment. The class schedule and averaged grades at time of withdrawal will enable the receiving school to properly place the student. The new school will average the partial grades awarded by the previous school(s) along with the current grades earned during the remainder of the grading period to generate a final grade.
 - Be aware that students are entitled to their high school credits earned in other countries. Transcripts should be translated and credit for the appropriate courses awarded. Students or family members may be helpful in translating school transcripts.
 - Graduation requirements are increasingly complex. For students with highly mobile lifestyles, partial knowledge of English as a second and not fully acquired language, and parents who may have little formal education, graduation requirements seem as though they are written in a foreign language!
 - Incorporate graduation requirements, student code of conduct, postsecondary opportunities, and other important life skills into lesson plans. Those documents can serve as the content for reading, problem solving, writing, questioning, debating, etc.
 - Teach students how to track their own credits on guidance sheets, updating them every grading period, and covering the same information during parent conferences, meetings, home visits, and phone calls.
- Talk with students and parents regularly about the importance of education, regular school attendance, exams, proper withdrawal, and postsecondary planning.
 - Establish a system to follow up on frequently absent students.
 - During the first two weeks for a new student, require that he or she complete only 75 percent of the current assignments, allowing the student to adjust and begin tackling any important missed assignments which need to be made up.
 - To enhance educational continuity, call previous schools for further clarification on course of study, transcript, etc. The local Migrant Program may be of assistance with this.
 - Send end-of-course exams and assignments needed to complete course and earn credit to student's next school for completion.
 - Be available to proctor exams and assignments sent from student's previous schools enabling the completion of courses and receipt of credit.
 - Provide take-home textbooks and resources for students who may need or want more time to explore and digest the material.
 - Arrange for tutoring and other needed resources to be available before and after school and during the day (lunch hour) for students who cannot come to school early or stay late.
 - Find within the existing system, or create, policies and procedures that will lessen the disruption that occurs when mobile students must relocate.

Helping Daniel to Graduate

(Remember Daniel? You first heard about him in Chapter 2, page 23.)

Here is a recap of Daniel's story:

Daniel turned 17 during his second year of high school. He had earned only five out of a possible 9.7 credits, resulting in his being reclassified as a freshman. Daniel migrated with his family each June to Virginia, returning to Florida in late October. He was retained in third grade due to his lack of English proficiency and again in seventh grade because of poor grades. Although his family's annual migration pattern often resulted in late enrollments, school interruptions, and poor attendance, these factors did not affect his grade promotion seriously until he entered high school.

Daniel enrolled in school in Virginia each fall, but he attended for such a short time that his teachers found it hard to grant him credit for the work done while in their classes. He then would return to Florida with no transfer grades to be averaged with the remaining semester grades. One year, he was placed in a course that he had already passed, causing him to lose one-half unit of credit. U.S. History offered in ninth grade in Florida was called American History and offered in tenth grade in Virginia. Although the error was brought to light, his guidance counselor was unable to grant him credit for passing the same course twice.

Finding himself several years older than his classmates, with little hope of ever catching up, Daniel began to seriously consider dropping out of school.

A Teacher Can Make a Difference!

As Daniel fell further behind, his attendance worsened. Some teachers felt there were too many odds against him, but his math teacher decided to intervene. When referrals to the Attendance Officer did not result in improvement, Mr. Dunn had the Spanish teacher write a note to Daniel's parents in Spanish. Due to continued poor attendance, Mr. Dunn asked Migrant Program staff to translate on a home visit to Daniel's parents.

Mr. Dunn brought a copy of Daniel's transcript to the home visit. He discussed graduation requirements, credits earned and needed, the attendance policy, and the importance of enrolling in school while migrating. He provided the family with copies of everything and a credit-tracking sheet to be completed each semester. He called staff in the school Daniel attended while migrating and sent copies of Florida's graduation requirements, Daniel's transcript, his current schedule, and recommended schedule for the following year.

Mr. Dunn then tried to reconstruct the dates enrolled, assignments and tests completed, and grades earned during the six weeks Daniel attended school in Virginia. He spoke with the three teachers who had not submitted withdrawal grades, asking them to review the work Daniel had completed while in their classes, even though his attendance was sporadic. Although Daniel had been enrolled an average of only 21 days, his teachers were able to compile grades for the work done and assign a withdrawal grade.

Even after securing transfer grades, Daniel was still behind his classmates in Florida. Mr. Dunn collected assignments from the other teachers and allowed Daniel to make up work during lunch. He also arranged for after-school tutoring by the Honor Society to help Daniel adjust to his new algebra class. By mid-semester, all assignments were made up, and Daniel had passing grades in all his classes, earning all his credits for the first time!

When Daniel migrated in June, he took a copy of his transcript, recommended schedule, and Mr. Dunn's phone number. Although unable to attend school daily due to financial responsibilities, Daniel communicated regularly with his teachers and attended tutoring to make up missed assignments. Daniel did not graduate until he was almost 20 years old, but because of his perseverance and the support of his family and a very special teacher named Mr. Dunn, he received his hard-won diploma.

Case Studies

Dora

Dora is a tenth-grader who wants to study to be a nurse after she graduates. Her grade point average is about a 3.5, and she is very motivated to learn. She still requires some ESL assistance because she has only been in the U.S. for three years, and many of her courses are difficult for her. Her family is only marginally supportive of her aspirations to be a nurse—they wonder if she wouldn't rather find a nice young man, get married, and have a baby. They don't understand why she feels so strongly about pursuing a career after high school.

Extend a Helping Hand

As Dora's teacher, you can support her by

- Providing Dora with opportunities to research and report on her interests
- Referring Dora to available tutoring services
- Inviting her parents to school to express your support of Dora's aspirations
- Setting up an appointment with Dora's guidance counselor to ensure that she is taking the right courses

David

David is a tenth-grader who has been struggling in school ever since he arrived in the U.S. three years ago. He would like to graduate high school and perhaps attend some kind of vocational school. His attendance is erratic, and he doesn't always complete his homework and/or study for tests. His teachers (including his ESL teacher) sense that David is filled with untapped potential. They say that if he could only learn to believe in himself and apply himself more diligently to his studies that he could really go places. All of his older brothers have dropped out of school and David—when he becomes discouraged—sometimes talks of doing the same.

Extend a Helping Hand

As David's teacher, you can support him by

- Talking to David about his absences and erratic performance to determine if there is a problem you can help with (for example, he may have an after-school job that depletes his energy, or he may be struggling with English more than he is willing to admit)
- Making yourself available to David to answer questions, assist with homework, or help him review for tests outside of class time (before and after school, during lunch)
- Referring David to his guidance counselor and suggesting a field trip to a vocational school
- Allowing students to study in groups for tests

Claudia

Claudia is a tenth-grader who has lived in the U.S. on and off for most of her life. She is completely bilingual and applies herself in school. Claudia has had difficulty piecing together credits because her family moves frequently. For example, in her ninth-grade year, she didn't earn all of the credits she should have because her family went to Mexico for two months during the second semester, and the school wouldn't give her partial credit for attending from April through June. Claudia would really like to study to be a lawyer and help her people, but she is worried that she won't be able to get enough credits to graduate anytime soon.

Extend a Helping Hand

As Claudia's teacher, you can support her by

- Explaining and reinforcing the attendance policy both in class and during a parent meeting
- Allowing Claudia to make up assignments and tests that were missed while she was in Mexico
- Providing some sort of real-life experience as part of your curriculum to support her interest, such as a guest speaker or a job shadowing experience
- Referring Claudia to her guidance counselor regarding her problem with accruing credits

Felipe

Felipe is a conscientious and talented eleventh-grader who excels in all areas. He has a 3.8 grade point average and is the star of his soccer team. He intends to go to college but needs help with financial assistance as well as the other hoops that he must jump through in order to apply to a university. He is sometimes overwhelmed by the amount of paperwork that his counselor tells him will be required, and his family can't help him with any of it.

Extend a Helping Hand

As Felipe's teacher, you can support him by

- Making yourself available to help Felipe with college papers outside of class time
- Allowing Felipe to incorporate some of his college paperwork requirements into assignments for your class, such as writing the essay for his application(s)
- Informing Felipe of any help available for college applicants, such as post-secondary seminars, financial aid seminars, and assemblies with college scouts
- Discussing Felipe's needs and interests with his guidance counselor

References

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