LAYING TRACKS TO GRADUATION

System- and School-level Continuous Improvement of the Diplomas Now Model

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• Partnership between Talent Development Secondary, City Year and Communities In Schools

• Multidimensional secondary school reform model designed to support all students to graduation and preparation for postsecondary success
• Expanded Model to 32 Schools in 11 Urban School Districts
• Random Assignment study (commenced in 2010)

• Schools in study represent some of the most challenged urban secondary schools in the country.
• **School-level**
  – Interdisciplinary teams of teachers, DN staff, and school leadership take part in constant “cycles of inquiry”

• **System-level**
  – Explores what it takes to implement the model, the fidelity of implementation, and how the model has changed school practice
• EWI Data System and Meetings
• Collaborative Leadership Teams
• Diplomas Now National Team Efforts
EWI teams ("First Responders")

- PLAN interventions based on individual EWI data and on subgroup trends in EWI data,
- DO the interventions,
- STUDY the results so far, and
- ACT further based upon those results.

and then, in a subsequent meeting,
An Example from a DN HS

- Identified 20 Level 1 ESL students struggling with attendance

- Invite parents and students to meal/orientation meeting to discuss the school’s expectations of and supports for students and parents
An Example from a DN HS

- Reviewed data and found that most of the Level 1 ESL students were now attending but that many were often tardy.

- Sent out a very brief survey to this smaller subset of Level 1 ESL students to explore the reasons they were chronically tardy.
An Example from a DN HS

• Survey showed many of these students had not obtained city bus passes and were walking long distances or waiting for rides

• Team obtained and distributed bus passes for these students
An Example from a DN HS

• Data showed tardiness stopped so team shifted focus to these students’ poor performance in writing

• Created targeted intervention: After-school writing tutoring
• Creation of the Diplomas Now Logic Model

• Implementation Fidelity

• Service Contrast
• Majority of the model was implemented as designed during first two years.
• Overall fidelity score remained consistent from Year 1 to Year 2, but:
  – Significant improvement was seen in Diplomas Now staffing and training.
  – DN School met fewer goals in Student Case Management from Year 1 to Year 2.
• In the first two years, DN schools became different in their organization and practices than non-DN schools

  • 26 indicated a positive difference made by DN
  • 16 of those were statistically significant (at least with 90% confidence)
• Overall Fidelity remained consistent while Service Contrast grew from Year 1 to Year 2

- Service contrast was often driven by stability in DN schools and declines in non-DN schools
- Teachers and administrators may have grown more understanding and accepting of DN by Year 2
• School-level improvement

• System-level research

• Impact reports will test assumptions in the Diplomas Now model’s theory of change
Thank you!

Program webpage:
www.diplomasnow.org

Evaluation webpage:
www.mdrc.org/progress/diplomas-now

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