



Failing Forward:

Too many students not being successful in passing their classes

Whether you think you can
or you think you can't,
you're right.
Henry Ford

Presenter:

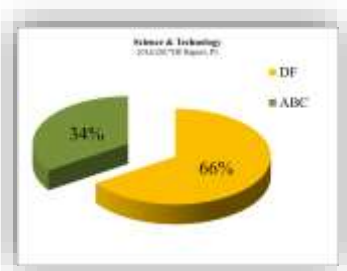
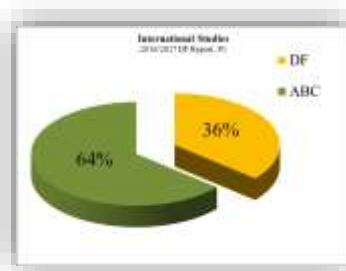
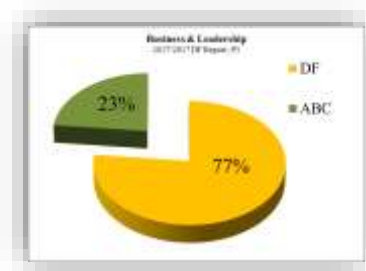
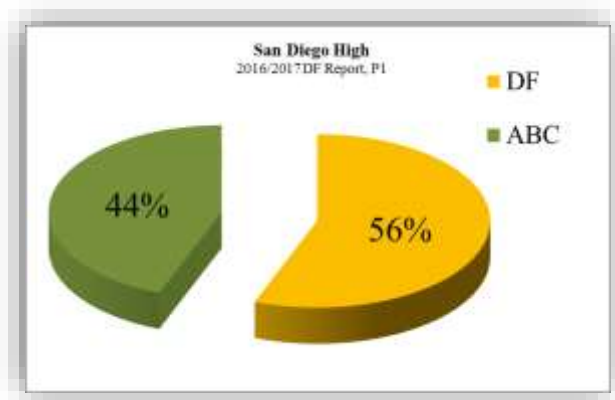
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Project Overview:

Essential Question: Too many students are not being successful in passing their classes. What might be causing this problem? What barriers/obstacles may be impeding students from having success in the classroom and passing their classes?

Target Population:

- 9th – 12th grade students who are currently enrolled in the extended day program.
- 9th – 12th grade students who dropped out of the extended day program recently.
- 9th – 12th grade students who are currently high performing students with no D or F grades.



Project Goals:



- By working collaboratively, facilitate communication between different student groups to identify and address issues of equity and diversity around student's academic success in the classroom.
- To gain a better understanding from the students perspective of why students fail classes in high school.
- To identify barriers/obstacles that may be impeding students from having success in the classroom.
- Engage staff and stakeholders in a collaborative process that will promote a commitment and a collective sense of responsibility for addressing San Diego High's academic at-risk student population.
- Work collaboratively with teachers/staff to develop a range of communication strategies that will better inform families about student achievement and progress, resulting in better outcomes for students.



Project Design:

Focus Group Questions: Too many students are not being successful in passing their classes.

- What might be causing this problem?
- What barriers/obstacles may be impeding students from having success in the classroom and passing their classes?
- What could we change in order to better support students so that more can be successful?
- If you were to design a new high school, one where all students learned, what would this new high school look like?

Group #	#	GPA	GPA
Group 1	82	0.00%	2.49%
Group 2	26	2.50%	2.99%
Group 3	10	3.00%	
Group 4	103	3.85%	
Group 5	25	Drop Extended Day	

Participants:		2016	2017	2018	2019	B & L	IS	ST	Avg. GPA
17	Group 1	0	19	30	33	17	13	52	1.69
12	Group 2	0	10	7	9	8	10	8	2.68
10	Group 3	1	6	1	2	4	2	4	3.50
10	Group 4	0	103	0	0	3	83	17	4.17
0	Group 5	0	5	11	9	9	3	13	1.71
Total		1	143	49	53	41	111	94	2.75



Results & Findings:

Top 3 Reasons or Causes:

- Mental Health & Anxiety
- Lack of Motivation
- Time Management

Possible Solutions:

- Quiet place to study
- Hotline for students to call
- Mandatory for all students to talk to their counselor regularly

Build/Design:

- Unexpected classroom visits by administration
- Teacher training
- Strengthen student/teacher relationships via smaller class sizes
- Get teacher input
- Have teachers/students come together to problem solve

“Do all teachers care that students are actually learning?”

“How do we train staff to not give up on students?”



Results & Findings:

Top 3 Reasons or Causes:

- Mental Health
- Lack of Motivation
- Transportation

Possible Solutions:

- Grading system: Tests/exams bring down grade, weighted too heavy
- Later start time
- Classes on how to balance everything

Build/Design:

- Qualified teachers: Interaction with and care for students
- Better learning environment: Smaller class sizes
- Having options on what is taught

*"High school doesn't define
how smart you are!"*

"Where to go for resources?"



Results & Findings:

Top 3 Reasons or Causes:

- Teacher relationship
- Influence from other students: Separation of schools
- Time Management

Possible Solutions:

- Students from all three schools share at least one class together
- Parents getting involved
- Dependable source for information and changes
- Students stay with the same teachers: Student/teacher relationship



Results & Findings:

Top 3 Reasons or Causes:

- Too much confidence: Thinking that you don't need to do a lot of the work and still get by
- Students don't care (some students): Thinking only about the now, not the future
- Family problems

Possible Solutions:

- Praise & encouragement to participate in AP and Advance courses
- More teacher support
- Teach them (students) how to deal with life

Build/Design:

- More counselors: Psychologist and therapists
- One-on-one advising

"Students have to think about their future!"

"How a student is taught at home is important!"

"Family life & Parent involvement is important!"



Results & Findings:

Top 3 Reasons or Causes:

- Classroom environment: How teachers teach, student engagement
- Overwhelmed, lots of information
- Students not focused on the future, don't see the importance

Possible Solutions:

- Smaller class sizes
- Collaboration of teachers i.e. assignments, tests quizzes, projects.
Common calendar
- Student support in the classroom and out. Peer tutors
- AVID beginning in 9th grade: Pre-planning important topics, eliminate the busy work, projects, and assignments that aren't directly connected to the "must haves" that students need in high school.

"Teachers not stressing the connection of what they do in class and how it connects to future careers!"

"More support from teachers. Instead of blaming the students, I taught it, why didn't they learn it!"

"Students not knowing that counselors are available for emotional support!"



Implications & Outcomes:

Focus group results and the connection to research:

- Importance of the 8th to 9th transition & 9th grade year
- Decline in academic effort explains decline in grades
 - Set aside time for homework and studying
 - Work hard
 - Prioritize study habits
 - Prepare for test/exams
- Less adult monitoring in high school contributes to reduced student effort
- Student/teacher relationship. Research shows teacher support can sustain grades.

Academic support being defined as:

- Clear expectations
- Regular updates on progress
- Help with specific academic problems

"The vast majority of students (83%) who received no semester F's in core courses during the freshman year graduated within four years".

"Course grades and overall performance in grade 9 is 80% accurate in predicting on-time high school graduation".

Research Articles:

Consortium on Chicago School Research: *The On Track Indicator as a Predictor of High School Graduation*

University of Chicago research Brief. *Free to Fail or On Track to College: Why Grades Drop*

Educational Leadership: *The Human Factor*

Educational Leadership: *Getting Your Message Out (and Why It's Not Enough)*



Next Steps:

- ✓ Share results!
- ✓ Build a site-based collaborative intervention team. Team will:
 - ❑ Identify actionable items based on the findings from the focus group sessions.
 - ❑ Prioritize order of importance.
 - ❑ Choose 1-3 objectives that will be implemented this year.
 - ❑ Develop an action plan around the chosen objective(s).

“We can develop better, more practical, more long lasting education reform if we widen the circle of dialogue to include students, teachers, parents, and community”.

Project Goals:

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Reflections:

Lessons Learned

- Students know more than we think
- Doing right is hard work.
- Buy-in is critical
- *Call to Action* is the real value in the data

Start where you are!

Do what you can!

Use what you have!

“Just 12% of Americans say they have a great deal of confidence in the public schools. That’s a precipitous drop from the mid-1970’s, when roughly 60% of Americans voiced solid confidence in public education”. Gallup, 2014