# U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security

# State of Emergency

## Addressing Gang Violence and the High School Dropout Problem

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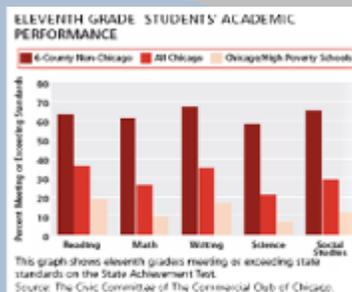
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# A State of Emergency: "Youth Violence, Trends, Myths, and Solutions"

## *Because We Care About Our Nation's Youth (Slide 1):*



**Figure 1: A State of Emergency (Slide 1)**

For many of our nation's school-age children violence at school is far too commonplace, this is especially true in many inner-city school systems that tend to be located in some of the most impoverished, socioeconomically disadvantaged, and high-crime areas. According to a 2007 report published by the Institute of Education Sciences[1], an estimated 54.8 million students attended K-12 public schools in school year 2005-06.  The report provided the following crime related statistics, for school violence, during the period July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006:

- Students ages 5–18 were victims of 14 homicides and 3 suicides, or about one homicide or suicide of a school-age youth at school per 3.2 million students enrolled during the 2005–06 school year.
- Students ages 12–18 were victims of about 1.5 million nonfatal crimes at school, including thefts and violent crimes.
- Students ages 12–18 were generally more likely to be victims of theft at school than away from school. In 2005, 33 thefts per 1,000 students occurred at school and 23 thefts per 1,000 students occurred away from school.

These numbers are reflective of violence that takes place on K-12 school campuses, if we expand this analysis to include violence committed against school-age children—both on and away from campus—the picture is a chilling reminder of the dangers facing K-12 students in some of our largest urban school systems.  An example of this is the Chicago Public School (CPS) system, where gang violence contributed to a record number of murders of CPS students, 34 in all, during school year 2007-08.

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[1] Source: Last accessed at http://www.ojp.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/iscs07.pdf

While public officials called for tougher gun laws, additional video surveillance cameras, increased street patrols, and other gang suppression activities, thousands of mourning CPS students said the solutions are more complicated and need to include school-based solutions such as getting truants and dropouts off the streets and back in the classroom.[2]

## *African-American Dropout Crisis (Slide 2):*



**Figure 2: There Is a National State of Emergency (Slide 2)**

A dropout crisis exists for minority and economically disadvantaged children in every state. African-American males are incarcerated at a rate six times that of White males and Hispanic males more than double that rate according to recent studies published by the U.S. Department of Justice. The significance of this statistic is that African-American males have the lowest graduation rate of any ethnic group. In more than a dozen states, and in the nation's largest urban areas where most African-Americans reside, only 30-40 percent of African-American males graduate from high school. A troubling statistic is the number of high school dropouts that disproportionately comprises the nation's prison and death row population. According to a study released in 2000 by the National Dropout Prevention Network, 80 percent of prisoners are high school dropouts. African-American males make up the largest prison population—by ethnic group—and only represent four percent of all students at American colleges and universities. (This percentage does not represent degree-holders only students registered with full-time status.)

The Schott Foundation for Public Education tracked, for five years, the performance of African-American males in public education systems across the nation. This report documents that states and most school districts—with large African-American enrollments—educate their White, non-Hispanic children, but do not similarly educate the majority of their African-American male students. More than half of African-American males did not receive diplomas with their peer group in 2005-06. This is not a phenomena isolated to economically challenged states. New York State, which is not an economically deprived region, is home to three school districts with the lowest graduation rates for African-American male

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[2] Source: Last accessed at the Chicago Tribune's achieve site
http://archives.chicagotribune.com/2008/apr/02/news/chi-chicago-school-protest_02apr02

students in the country. The one million African-American male students enrolled in the New York, Florida, and Georgia public school systems are twice as likely not to graduate with their class, as they are to graduate with them. A similar situation exists in others sates such as Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, South Carolina, and Wisconsin where fewer African-American males graduate with their peer groups than that of the national average. Illinois and Wisconsin have nearly a 40-point gaps between how effectively they educate their African-American and White non-Hispanic male students.[3]

These numbers represent a grim reality that students entering ninth grade each year, over one million do not graduate with their peers four years later, and fail to receive a regular diploma. This means that approximately 7,000 students drop out every school day—low-income and minority students fare the worst in the dropout epidemic. Nationally, about 71 percent of all students graduate from high school on time with a regular diploma, but barely half of African American and Hispanic students earn diplomas with their peers. In many states, the difference between White and minority graduation rates is stunning; in several cases, there is a gap of as many as 40 to 50 percentage points. A sixteen- to twenty-four-year-old coming from the highest quartile of family income is about seven times as likely to have completed high school as a sixteen- to twenty-four-year-old coming from the lowest quartile.[4]

## *Disproportionate Rates of Dropout and Incarceration for African-Americans and other Minorities (Slide 3):*



### Trapped in a Cycle of Disengagement

This table shows nearly 500 of every 100,000 African-American youth in the general population were committed to residential placement in 2003. This is almost four times the rate of White youth and first among all race/ethnic groups. Also shown is how this correlates to dropout rates.

| State* | Asian and Pacific Islander | Latino | African American | White | Native American |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **US Total** | 113 | 348 | 754 | 190 | 496 |
| **Dropout %** | 27% | 63% | 68% | 30% | 70% |

More than two-thirds of African-American, male children aged 7-14 are trapped in a *Cycle of School Disengagement*—the intimate link between school failure, truancy, dropout, drugs, violence, gangs, and prison.

**Figure 3: Trapped in a Cycle of Disengagement (Slide 3)**

A correlation exists between the dropout and incarceration rates nationwide—68.1 percent of state prison inmates in 2003 did not have a high school diploma.[5] Approximately 1 in 3 African-American and Native-American males are likely to go to prison during their lifetime. The chances of going to prison are

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[3] Source: Last accessed at http://www.blackboysreport.org/node/106

[4] Source: Last accessed at U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2006* (NCES 2007- 017)

[5] Source: Last accessed at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/ecp.htm

highest among African-American males (32.2 percent) and lowest among White males (5.9 percent), while two-thirds of Native-American and African-American children experience drop out compared to less than one-third of Whites. Among the more than 1.38 million sentenced inmates at the end of 2002, an estimated 442,000 were African-American males between the ages of 20-39.[6]

## *Disproportionate Educational Opportunities for Minority and Economically Disadvantaged Children (Slide 4):*
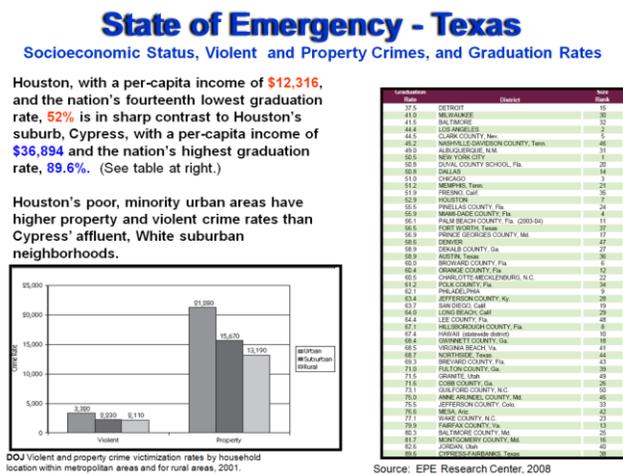


**Figure 4: State of Emergency - Texas (Slide 4)**

In his 1935 discourse on Desegregation of the Nation's Schools, Dr. W.E.B Dubois described the challenges—as he saw them—with the public education system with respect to educating African-American and economically disadvantaged students.  Dr. Dubois wrote, *"Just as long as Negroes are taught in Negro schools and Whites are taught in White schools, the poor in the slums and the rich in private schools, we shall lack in America the sort of public education that will create the intelligence basis of a real democracy."*

Dr. Dubois argued that the efforts of civil rights organizations would be incomplete if they did not address the fact that African-American schools received one-tenth to one-half of the funding received by predominantly White schools for the education of their children. [7]

The state of equal educational opportunities for all children is still very much in doubt today with millions of African-American, Hispanic, and Native-American children forced to attend sub-standard and underfunded schools often referred to as "dropout factories" instead of institutions of learning.

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[6] Source: Last accessed at http://users.law.capital.edu/fweatherspoon/Speaking/GAOct2005.txt

[7] Source: Last accessed at
http://books.google.com/books?id=dQeav1Lw_yEC&pg=PA133&lpg=PA133&dq=dubois+color+line+in+education&source=bl&ots=DqpYI8JvRZ&sig=Hx9IZWNfL4ZuGK0tTCRQg9OQ15I&hl=en&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=2&ct=result#PPA135,M1

## *Disproportionate School Funding, Socioeconomic and Graduation Rates (Slide 5):*



**Figure 5: City of Chicago School District 299 (Slide 5)**

Chicago, like many other U.S. cities, has a high concentration of poverty and one of the highest crime rates in the nation. The city spends far less on its neediest schools then its counterparts in its wealthier suburbs. For example, Chicago Public Schools spent $10,409 per pupil compared to the $16,856 that New Trier Public Schools spends per pupil in the 2005-06 school year. In that same school year, New Trier Public Schools—with an 88 percent White population and only 1.4 percent of students eligible for "free or reduced" lunch—had a 98.5 percent graduation rate. While the Chicago Public Schools with an 8 percent White population and 85.4 percent of students eligible for free or reduced lunch had a 41 percent graduation rate. Just as in many districts across the country, public school funding in Illinois is tied to revenues from local property taxes and land valuations. The higher the property value within the school district, the greater the likelihood that schools in that district will receive the needed funding.

This disparity did not go unnoticed by the parents of Chicago Public School students; at the beginning of the 2008-09 school year, thousands of CPS students boycotted the schools and attempted to register instead in the affluent—and higher academically achieving—suburban school system. According to the boycott organizer, the all minority Chicago Public Schools are underfunded compared with affluent fully-funded schools in suburban districts that have much fewer minority students.

## *Correlation between Graduation Rates, Literacy and Socioeconomic Status (Slide 6):*
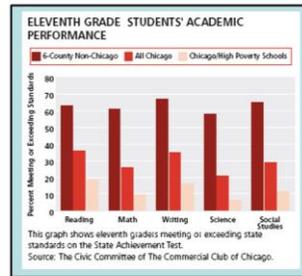


**Figure 6: Eleventh Grade Students' Academic Performance (Slide 6)**

African-Americans (43.1 percent) and Hispanics (39.6 percent) make up the largest percentage of impoverished children living in large cities. Economically disadvantaged minority children are much more likely to have school experiences that have damaging circumstances as part of their life experiences than are children born into White middle class families. Low-socioeconomic students are at a greater risk for having substandard levels of academic achievement.  Studies show that this group of students drop out of school at a higher rate than that of their higher-socioeconomic counterparts. Over one million at-risk students drop out each year from American public schools.

In Chicago, high schools with the highest concentration of minority and economically disadvantaged students, less than 20 percent reach proficiency in math and reading, compared to the 60 percent of the affluent White counterparts in the neighboring white affluent suburban school districts. Despite the rhetoric of equal opportunity, there is a striking imbalance between the funds available to high-poverty schools and those serving its affluent counterparts.[8]

There is a direct correlation between the poverty and school performance and student achievement levels. Children in high-poverty schools tend to be less healthy, have weaker preschool experiences, live in a single-parent household, move frequently, have unstable educational experiences, and have friends and classmates with lower levels of achievement. In addition, the high-poverty schools these children attend often employ less experienced and/or unqualified teachers, have higher teacher turnover, and offer fewer pre-collegiate courses and more remedial courses.[9]

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[8] Source: *North Central Regional Educational Laboratory: Taking on the Achievement Gap; "A Stacked Deck?"*

[9] *Source: B.A., and Smith, T.M. (1997), The Social Context of Education. The Condition of Education, 97-991;*
*Freeman, C., Scafidi, B., & Soquist, D.L. (2002). Racial Segregation in Georgia Public Schools, 1994-2001: Trends,*
*causes and impact on teacher quality. Paper presented at the Desegregation of Southern Schools Conference,*

Students with low socioeconomic status tend to be clustered in schools that are grossly underfunded compared to students with higher socioeconomic status. A study of 84 academic high schools in New York found that for each additional $100 spent on classroom instruction, students gained as much as 18 points on the combined mathematics and verbal sections of the SAT.[10]

The average 2008-2009 public education expenditure in districts serving the students in the nation's poorest communities is approximately 36 percent lower than in districts serving students in the nation's richest communities. Using a "buying power" concept of school district spending takes into account the variation in cost of living across the nation; however, the gap in this expenditure per student measure between the richest and poorest districts is still 36 percent.[11]

## *Trends: Disproportionate Levels of Unemployment and Incarceration for African-American and White High School Dropouts (Slide 7):*

### State of Emergency
#### Academic Achievement, Employment, and Incarceration

The racial achievement gap in reading stopped closing in the late eighties.

In 1970, 2% of Whites and 4% of African-American male high school dropouts were incarcerated. By 2000, that number had increased to 19% for African-American males and just 4% for Whites.

In 1970, 71% of African-American male dropouts were employed compared to 80% of Whites, while in 2000, 34% of African-American males dropouts were employed compared to 59% of Whites.

Reading Scores (National Assessment of Educational Progress) Age 17

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2008

|  | Black males | | | | White males | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
| **All** | | | | | | | | |
| Employed | 0.73 | 0.64 | 0.63 | 0.57 | 0.82 | 0.80 | 0.80 | 0.79 |
| NILF | 0.20 | 0.29 | 0.30 | 0.33 | 0.13 | 0.17 | 0.17 | 0.18 |
| Armed forces | 0.04 | 0.04 | 0.03 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.01 |
| Institutionalized | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.04 | 0.08 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 |
| **Less than high school** | | | | | | | | |
| Employed | 0.71 | 0.57 | 0.46 | 0.34 | 0.80 | 0.69 | 0.63 | 0.59 |
| NILF | 0.23 | 0.38 | 0.44 | 0.47 | 0.17 | 0.28 | 0.34 | 0.37 |
| Armed forces | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Institutionalized | 0.04 | 0.05 | 0.10 | 0.19 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.03 | 0.04 |
| **High school graduate** | | | | | | | | |

Source: Figures are tabulated from the 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 Public Use Microdat Samples from the US Census of Population and Housing
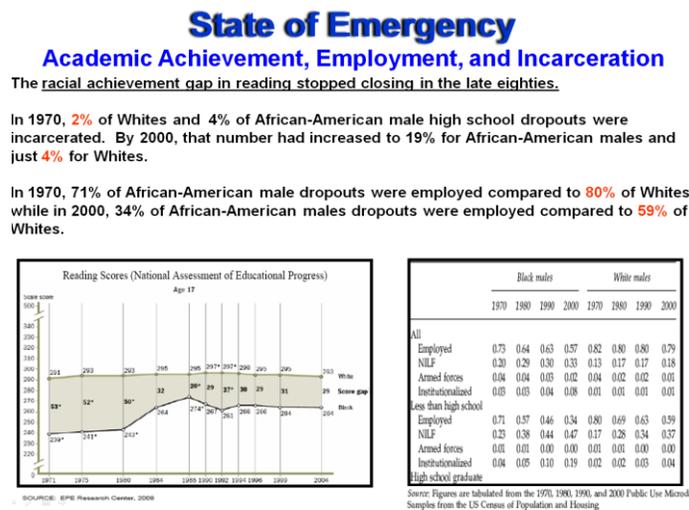
**Figure 7: State of Emergency - Academic Achievement, Employment, and Incarceration (Slide 7)**

According to numerous studies, relative to dropouts, high school graduates earn more, pay more in taxes, and reduce the pressure on spending for law enforcement, health and other social services. These differences hold even when we control for other attributes associated with dropping out, such as family disadvantage. The net result is that each new high school graduate saves the taxpayer money and benefits society.

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*University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Orfield G. and Eaton, S. (1996) Dismantling Desegregation. New York: New Press, Chapter 3*

[10] Source: *Lonnie Harp in **Education Week**, March 31, 1993. Ron Renchler, **"Poverty and Learning"**, ERIC Digest, Number 83, 1993*

[11] Source: *Do Rich and Poor Districts Spend Alike? National Center for Education Statistics, December 1996*

There is a direct correlation between employment and incarceration rates for African-American and White high school dropouts. According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, from 1960 to 2000, the incarceration rate of African-American high-school dropouts rose roughly 23 percentage points from 1.4 to 25.1 percent, while there was a .1 percent rise for White high-school dropouts in incarceration rates. During this same period, the employment of African-American high school dropouts fell by nearly 33 percentage points, from 88.6 percent to 55.7 percent compared to just a 7 percent decrease for White high school dropouts.[12]

During the thirty-year period of 1970 to 2000, the number of African-American dropouts, who were not in the labor force (NILF), grew dramatically; as did the disproportionate number of African-American school dropouts incarcerated compared to their White counterparts who managed to find employment and stay out of prison.[13]

## *School Readiness, Minority Achievement Gap and Dropout (Slide 8)*
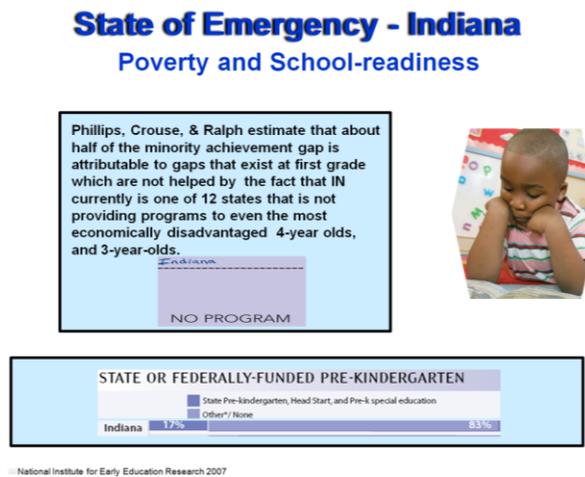


**Figure 8: Poverty and School-Readiness (Slide 8)**

A number of medical and educational research studies performed over the last thirty-years indicates that the major development of intelligence, personality, and social behavior in people occurs in the first few years of life. Studies show that half of all intellectual development potential occurs by age four,[14] that the human brain develops more rapidly between birth and age 5 than during any other time in a person's life; that children who participate in quality early education programs tend to be better prepared for school.

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[12] Source: Last accessed at http://magazine.uchicago.edu/0701/investigations/fortunes.shtml

[13] Source: Figures and tabulated from 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 Public Use Microdata Samples from the U.S. Census of Population and Housing

[14] The Case for Early Intervention," Early Child Development:  Investing in the Future, Chap. 1 at 2 (www.worldbank.org/children/ecd/book/1.htm).

The data indicates seems to indicate that minority and impoverished children are at a disadvantage, academically, then their more affluent counterparts before they enter kindergarten.  By the time African-American, Native-American, and Hispanic children enter kindergarten, they are on average already far behind their peers in reading and math readiness. These disparities in achievement persist and are among the most important related risk factors or early predictors for academic failure, truancy, dropout, and gang involvement. The Early Childhood Education Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K), a nationally representative sample of nearly 23,000 kindergartners, shows that African-American and Hispanic children score significantly below white children at the beginning of kindergarten on math and reading achievement.

Christopher Jencks of Harvard and Meredith Phillips of UCLA, using nationally representative data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth–Child Data, found that about 85 percent of African-American three- and four-year-olds scored lower on a vocabulary test than did the average white child in the same age group.  Disparities such as these represent a serious failure in the nation's commitment to equality of opportunity because children who score poorly on tests of intellectual skills during the preschool years are at the highest risk for dropout or other negative behaviors.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, an estimated 800,000 three- and four-year-olds nationwide are not participating in state-funded school readiness programs. Behind these growing disparities, a dozen states still provide no state-funded preschool education to even their most disadvantaged families. State spending ranges from nothing in 12 states to more than $10,000 per child in New Jersey.

The table below, from *The State of Preschool 2007* and the National Institute for Early Education Research, shows only 12.5 percent of the combined three- and four-year-olds are participating in state funded prekindergarten programs.

| ACCESS FOR 4-YEAR-OLDS RANK | STATE | PERCENT OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN STATE PREKINDERGARTEN (2006-2007) | | | NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN STATE PREKINDERGARTEN (2006-2007) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 4-year-olds | 3-year-olds | Total (3s and 4s) | 4-year-olds | 3-year-olds | Total (3s and 4s) |
| 1 | Oklahoma | 68.4% | 0.0% | 34.2% | 34,375 | 0 | 34,375 |
| 2 | Florida | 56.7% | 0.0% | 28.3% | 124,390 | 0 | 124,390 |
| 3 | Georgia | 53.3% | 0.0% | 26.6% | 74,155 | 0 | 74,155 |
| 4 | West Virginia | 45.8% | 5.1% | 25.5% | 9,586 | 1,073 | 10,659 |
| 5 | Texas | 45.2% | 4.4% | 24.7% | 170,313 | 16,925 | 187,238 |
| 6 | Vermont | 44.9% | 15.6% | 30.1% | 2,908 | 1,028 | 3,936 |
| 7 | South Carolina | 37.8% | 0.6% | 19.3% | 21,367 | 349 | 21,716 |
| 8 | Wisconsin | 36.1% | 0.8% | 18.4% | 24,878 | 550 | 25,428 |
| 9 | New York | 34.6% | 0.5% | 17.5% | 83,505 | 1,155 | 84,660 |
| 10 | Maryland | 34.0% | 1.2% | 17.6% | 24,825 | 849 | 25,674 |
| 11 | Kentucky | 29.3% | 10.7% | 19.9% | 15,808 | 5,815 | 21,623 |
| 12 | Illinois | 26.7% | 18.5% | 22.6% | 47,108 | 32,711 | 79,819 |
| 13 | New Jersey | 25.3% | 15.1% | 20.1% | 28,240 | 17,259 | 45,499 |
| 14 | Louisiana | 24.4% | 0.0% | 12.3% | 14,543 | 0 | 14,543 |
| 15 | Arkansas | 21.4% | 10.8% | 16.1% | 8,148 | 4,068 | 12,216 |
| 16 | Michigan | 16.9% | 0.0% | 8.5% | 21,801 | 0 | 21,801 |
| 17 | Maine | 16.3% | 0.0% | 8.1% | 2,263 | 0 | 2,263 |
| 18 | Connecticut | 15.6% | 4.5% | 10.0% | 6,625 | 1,907 | 8,532 |
| 19 | Kansas | 15.6% | 0.0% | 7.8% | 5,971 | 0 | 5,971 |
| 20 | Tennessee | 15.6% | 1.0% | 8.3% | 12,293 | 753 | 13,046 |
| 21 | North Carolina | 14.8% | 0.0% | 7.4% | 17,961 | 0 | 17,961 |
| 22 | Colorado | 14.6% | 3.1% | 8.8% | 9,784 | 2,084 | 11,868 |
| 23 | Virginia | 12.5% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 12,501 | 0 | 12,501 |
| 24 | California | 10.8% | 5.0% | 7.9% | 56,254 | 26,318 | 82,572 |
| 25 | Massachusetts | 10.3% | 9.2% | 9.8% | 8,047 | 7,153 | 15,200 |
| 26 | New Mexico | 8.9% | 0.9% | 4.9% | 2,497 | 242 | 2,739 |
| 27 | Delaware | 7.6% | 0.0% | 3.7% | 843 | 0 | 843 |
| 28 | Pennsylvania | 7.2% | 2.2% | 4.7% | 10,329 | 3,255 | 13,584 |
| 29 | Washington | 5.8% | 1.4% | 3.6% | 4,671 | 1,163 | 5,834 |
| 30 | Arizona | 5.5% | 0.0% | 2.7% | 5,076 | 0 | 5,076 |
| 31 | Oregon | 4.8% | 2.6% | 3.7% | 2,235 | 1,203 | 3,438 |
| 32 | Missouri | 4.3% | 2.2% | 3.3% | 3,262 | 1,710 | 4,972 |
| 33 | Iowa | 4.0% | 1.4% | 2.7% | 1,515 | 518 | 2,033 |
| 34 | Nebraska | 4.0% | 2.0% | 3.0% | 977 | 496 | 1,473 |
| 35 | Ohio | 3.4% | 1.3% | 2.3% | 4,979 | 1,870 | 6,849 |
| 36 | Nevada | 2.2% | 0.4% | 1.3% | 799 | 140 | 939 |
| 37 | Minnesota | 1.9% | 1.3% | 1.6% | 1,245 | 864 | 2,109 |
| 38 | Alabama | 1.8% | 0.0% | 0.9% | 1,062 | 0 | 1,062 |
| No Program | Alaska | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No Program | Hawaii | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No Program | Idaho | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No Program | Indiana | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No Program | Mississippi | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No Program | Montana | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No Program | New Hampshire | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No Program | North Dakota | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No Program | Rhode Island | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No Program | South Dakota | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No Program | Utah | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No Program | Wyoming | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 50 States Population | | 21.8% | 3.2% | 12.5% | 877,139 | 131,458 | 1,008,597† |

**Table 1: State Rankings by Pre-K Access for 4-year-olds**

## *Chronic Elementary School Absenteeism as an Early Warning Sign for Academic Failure, Truancy, Dropout, Violence, and Gangs (Slide 9):*
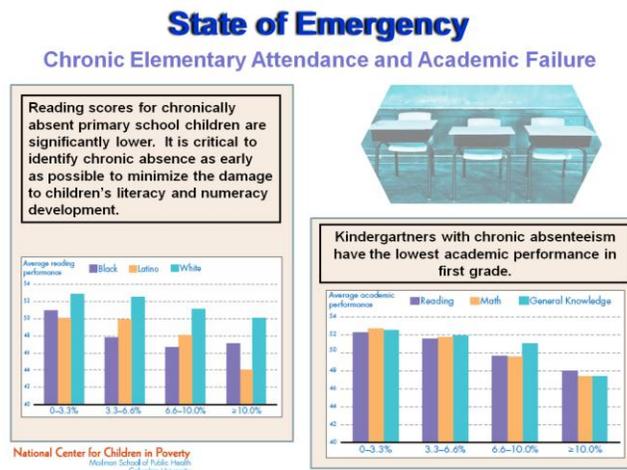


**Figure 9: Chronic Elementary Attendance and Academic Failure (Slide 9)**

A significant level of absenteeism in the early school years, especially among minority and low-income children, has detrimental effects on their future school success. According to a 2008 study conducted by the National Center for Children in Poverty, Native-American children have the highest absenteeism rates in elementary school among all ethnic groups.
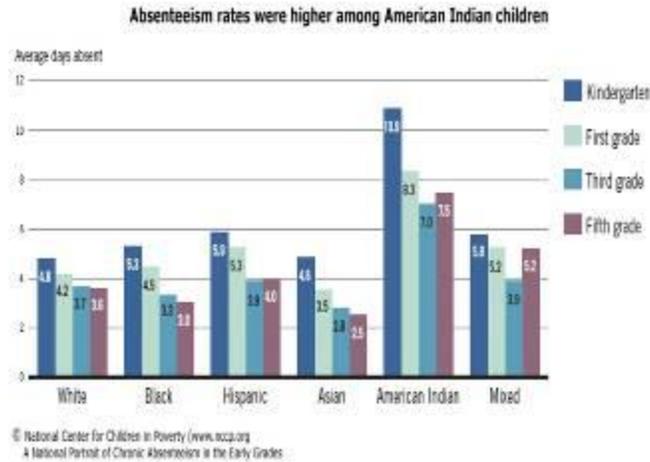


**Figure 10: Absenteeism rates**

In 2007, more than 90,000 of New York City's elementary school students—roughly 20 percent—missed at least a month of classes during the previous school year, with attendance problems most acute in central Brooklyn, Harlem, and the South Bronx. Chronic absenteeism in elementary schools is disproportionately a problem in poor and minority communities, and it immediately puts students behind their White and middle-class peers, concludes the report, by the *Center for New York City Affairs* at the New School. The academic pressures build over time and build quickly.[15]

As a result of these and other related studies, school systems are now monitoring elementary school students for chronic absences because the absenteeism rate among younger students worsens over time and is a strong predictor for habitual truancy, and dropout.

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[15] Source: Last accessed at http://www.newschool.edu/milano/nycaffairs

## *Disproportionate Learning Disabilities and Behavior for Dropout and Incarceration (Slide 10):*



**Figure 11: Disparities and Inequalities (Slide 10)**

The importance of education to an individual's life opportunities is undeniable. Those with more education earn more, and are healthier and they are less likely to be involved in criminal activities or on welfare. Individuals with disabilities who do not complete high school are at greater disadvantage, regardless of ethnic group, then other members of society. Disadvantages include higher levels of unemployment, underemployment, and higher rates of incarceration. The following statistics illustrate the problems facing students with disabilities who drop out of school:

- In the 2001-02 school year, only 51 percent of students with disabilities exited school with a standard diploma.
- Arrest rates are relatively high for students with disabilities who drop out. Overall, at least one-third of students with disabilities who drop out of high school have spent a night in jail; this rate is three times that of students with disabilities who have completed high school.
- Of those who do not complete high school, about 61.2 percent are students with emotional or behavioral disabilities, and about 35 percent are students with learning disabilities.[16]

According to the Office of Special Education of the U.S. Department of Education, 46 percent of African-American students with disabilities dropped out of school.

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[16] Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Office of Special Education Programs. (2006, April). *26th Annual (2004) Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Vol. 1.* Washington, D.C.: Author. Retrieved October 10, 2006 from http://www.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/osep/2004/26th-vol-1-front.pdf.

| Race/Ethnicity | Percentage of Group Who Dropped Out |
|---|---|
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 52.2% |
| Black (not Hispanic) | 44.5% |
| Hispanic | 43.5% |
| White (not Hispanic) | 33.9% |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 28.0% |

Figure 12: Dropout Rates by Cohort[17]

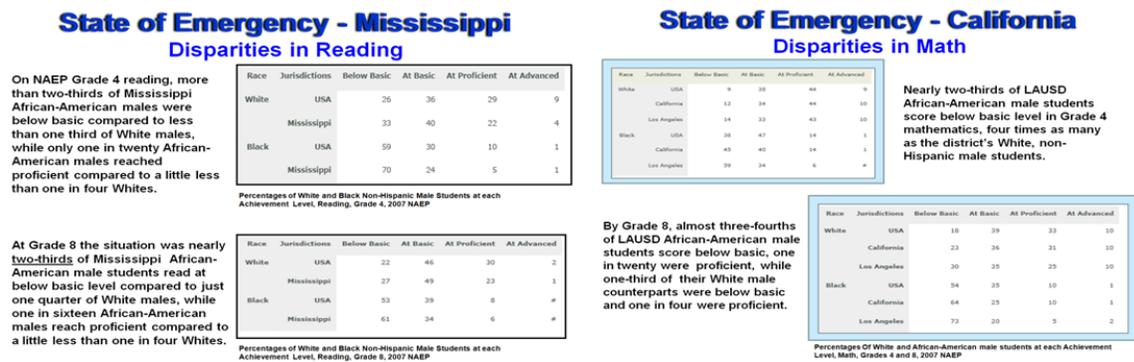## *State of Emergency in Mississippi and California (Slides 11 and 12):*



Figure 13: Disparities in Reading and Math (Slides 11 and 12)

The "Cycle of School Disengagement" begins for most children in elementary school and often transitions into dangerous adolescent behaviors such as truancy, dropout, violence, substance abuse and gang membership. Nearly three fourths of our school's minority and economically disadvantaged children find themselves trapped in a cycle of school disengagement that begins with their highest levels of reading and math proficiency in second or third grade followed by declining levels of academic achievement, attendance, and behavior during their secondary school years (middle and high school).

In almost every large urban school district, African-American and other minority low-income students move through elementary and middle school, they fall so far behind in reading and math proficiency that they have little, if any chance, to perform at level or accumulate the necessary credits needed to graduate. Moreover, as the cycle of chronic school failure worsens, minority youth experience a loss of self-esteem and a growing sense of alienation and powerlessness.

Frustrated with their inability to succeed academically and maintain healthy school status with their peers often fuels the minority child's desire to obtain support outside of traditional institutions and turn

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[17] Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Office of Special Education Programs. (2006. April) 26th Annual (2004) Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Vol. 1. Washington, D.C.

to gang affiliation. Gangs often give alienated youth a sense of belonging and become a major source of identity for these at-risk children. Membership affords a sense of power and control, and for many students, gang activities become an outlet for frustration due to their lack of success in school.[18]

## *State of Emergency – Alabama (Slide 13):*
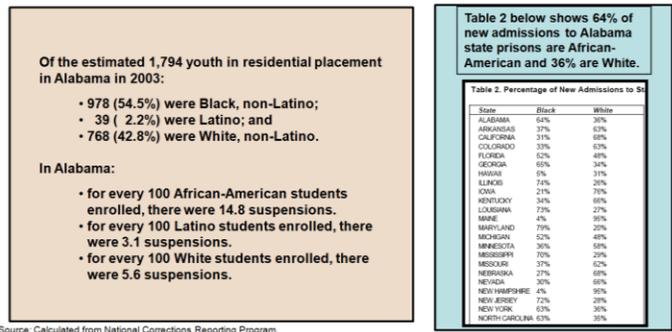


**Figure 14: African-American Suspension Rates in Alabama (Slide 13)**

The minority dropout crisis fuels the school-to-prison pipeline, the disproportionate flow of African-American and other minority children from schools into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Although the school-readiness of many African-American youngsters is within the normal range when they begin school, educational disparities result in disproportionate levels of school suspension and incarceration.[19]

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[18] Source: Last accessed at http://ericweb.tc.columbia.edu/digests/dig99.html.

[19] Source: Last accessed at
http://www.naacpldf.org/content/pdf/pipeline/Dismantling_the_School_to_Prison_Pipeline.pdf

**FEEDING THE PIPELINE: EDUCATION DISPARITIES FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS IN FLORIDA[18]**

- % of Student Population
- % of Standard Diploma Recipients
- % of Certificate of Completion Recipients
- % of Retained Students
- % of Students Identified as Mentally Handicapped
- % of Gifted Education Students

In nearly every aspect of the education system, African-American students are over-represented in negative categories (such as sub-standard high school completion and retention) and under-represented in positive categories (such as standard diplomas).

**Figure 15: Education Disparities for African-Americans in Florida**

In the past quarter-century, incarceration rates have risen precipitously and racial disparity has remained high. The Bureau of Justice Statistics figures for 2005 indicate that nearly 2.2 million inmates are in the nation's prisons and jails, representing an increase of 2.7 percent (58,500) over the previous twelve-month period. These new figures represent a record 33-year continuous rise in the number of inmates in the U.S. The current incarceration rate of 737 per 100,000 residents places the United States first in the world in this regard.  Of the 2.2 million people currently in our nation's prisons African-Americans face incarceration rates more than seven times that of Whites. From 1986 to 1997, the percentages of African-Americans under correctional supervision—in jail or prison or on probation or parole—rose from 5.7 percent to 9 percent, whereas the percentages of Whites rose from only 1.4 percent to 2 percent.[20]

## *State of Emergency Gangs and Schools (Slide 14):*
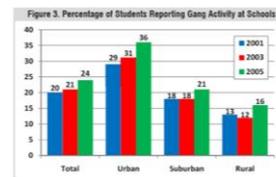


**Figure 16: Gangs and Schools (Slide 14)**

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[20] Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002a

In his 2009 State of the City Address, Omaha Mayor Mike Fahey, commented that even though Omaha's overall crime has fallen 24 percent the annual number of homicides has gone from a low of 20 in 2004, to last year's high of 44. As a community, it is our responsibility to work together to put our youth on a positive path by preventing the allure of gangs and drugs.[21]

Although once thought to be an inner-city problem, gang violence has spread to communities throughout the United States. There are more than 25,000 different youth gangs around the country, and by 2008, the FBI said more than one million teens and young adults were members of gangs. Youth gangs are linked with serious crime problems in elementary and secondary schools in the United States. Students report much higher drug availability when gangs are active at their school. Schools with gangs have double the likelihood of violent victimization at school compared to those without a gang presence. Teen gang members are much more likely to commit serious and violent crimes. For example, a survey in Denver found that while only 14 percent of teens were gang members, they were responsible for committing 89 percent of the serious violent crimes.[22]

When gangs are part of a community, children are exposed early to drug use, violence, and other negative influences. This early exposure can be detrimental to the life of a young person. Even preschool age children, four- and five-years-old, are exposed to many negative influences in their environment when gangs are present—putting them at a higher risk for gang involvement.

Addressing gang behavior in elementary school is crucial to preventing gang involvement.  The combination of early academic failure in learning to read and write, chronic attendance problems, English language difficulties and/or the feeling of non-acceptance by students, teachers and principals leads students to school disengagement and the need to seek a group that will accept them.  Affiliation with a gang can help meet personal needs. In some cases, students do not actively seek out gang affiliation but are bullied into the lifestyle. It is not uncommon for gangs to begin recruitment of school-age children as early as elementary school.

Today the United States Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Protection (OJJDP) is looking for anti-gang strategies that identify evidence-based risk factors associated with the probability that a young person will join a gang. The OJJDP Gang Prevention Coordination Assistance Program recommends prevention programs intended to decrease the likelihood of joining a gang among youth who have already displayed early signs of problem behavior or who are exposed to multiple risk factors known to be precursors to gang activity. These include some form of individual risk assessment and often focus on youth 7- to 14-years-old.[23]

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[21] Source: Last accessed at http://www.omaha.com/index.php?u_page=2798&u_sid=10548824

[22] Source: Gangs in Schools. Juvenile Justice Bulletin. National Youth Gang Survey Trends from 1996 to 2000. OJJDP Fact Sheet
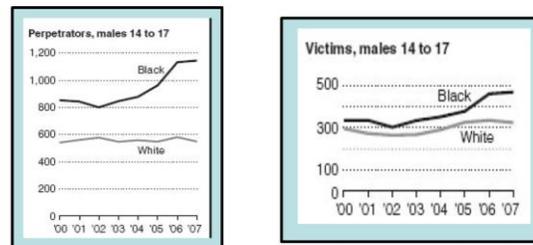
[23] Source: Last accessed at http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/funding/FundingDetail.asp?fi=116

## *State of Emergency – Racial Homicide Gap (Slide 15)*



**Figure 17: Racial Homicide (Slide 15)**

The nation's crime rate declined in 2007, in spite of this, most urban police departments have highlighted the disturbing uptick in youth violence that claimed the lives of hundreds of school-age children and teenagers that year. While the number of White juveniles committing murder has changed little since 2000, the number of African-American male juvenile involved in homicides has grown by over a third in seven years. Escalating tensions and gun violence between rival gangs has lead to an increase in the murders at Chicago Public Schools from 34 in 2006-07 to 39 in 2007-08—representing a 15 percent increase.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Vince Lombardi, an anti-gang coordinator, has said the gun violence is also frustrating to federal investigators. "Kids in gangs are not a new thing," Lombardi said during an interview in November 2008, "juveniles committing crime is not a new thing. What surprises me is how heavily armed they are and how quickly they are to go for a gun."

One veteran gang member, in an interview with a detective, said he kept a bulletproof vest and a rifle under his bed, "to protect my house", because rivals know where he lives. "Everyone's shooting. ... Ain't nobody fighting no more."

There is a clear connection between the soaring dropout rates for minority and economically disadvantaged students with rising youth homicide and violent assault rates in the nation's 50 largest cities. According to Fight Crime Invest In Kids researchers, increasing the nation's graduation rates from an estimated 71 percent to 81 percent would yield 400,000 more graduates annually and prevent more than 3,000 murders and nearly 175,000 aggravated assaults each year.
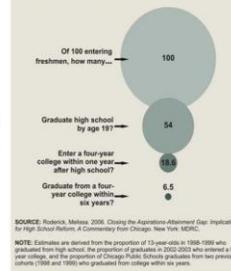
## *State of Emergency – Illinois (Slide 16):*
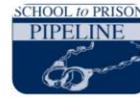


**Figure 18: School to Prison Pipeline (Slide 16)**

A State of Emergency for African-American males exists in almost every one of the 63 urban school systems currently struggling to graduate more than a third of their African-American male students. According to the Urban Institute, the four lowest state graduation rates for African-American males are New York, Ohio, Florida, and Wisconsin.  The Harvard Civil Rights Project 2005 Report (See Table 2 Graduation Rate of African-American Students), *Losing Our Future*, states that Wisconsin leads the nation with a 41 percent racial achievement gap between White and African-American high school graduates, with not a single state showing the opposite racial gap.

|  | Black % of Student Population | Black Graduation Rate | Race Gap White–Black (within State) |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NATIONAL AVERAGE* | *17.0* | *50.2* | *-24.7* |
| ALABAMA | 36.4 | 54.0 | -11.8 |
| ALASKA | 4.6 | 66.3 | 0.0 |
| ARIZONA | 4.6 | ---* | --- |
| ARKANSAS | 23.3 | 62.7 | -11.7 |
| CALIFORNIA | 8.4 | 55.3 | -20.4 |
| COLORADO | 5.7 | 49.0 | -26.2 |
| CONNECTICUT | 13.2 | 60.7 | -21.2 |
| DELAWARE | 30.4 | 53.4 | -16.3 |
| DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA | 84.6 | 60.4 | --- |
| FLORIDA | 25.1 | 41.0 | -16.9 |
| GEORGIA | 38.2 | 43.7 | -18.7 |
| HAWAII | 2.3 | 60.7 | -4.0 |
| IDAHO | 0.7 | ---* | --- |
| ILLINOIS | 21.0 | 47.8 | -35.1 |
| INDIANA | 11.7 | 52.9† | -22.0 |
| IOWA | 4.0 | 48.0† | -31.3 |
| KANSAS | 8.9 | 52.1 | -26.8 |
| KENTUCKY | 10.5 | 47.5 | -21.0 |
| LOUISIANA | 47.7 | 57.7† | -10.3 |
| MAINE | 1.2 | ---* | --- |
| MARYLAND | 37.1 | 64.8 | -15.1 |
| MASSACHUSETTS | 9.6 | 49.4 | -24.3 |
| MICHIGAN | 19.5 | ---* | --- |
| MINNESOTA | 6.6 | 51.0† | -30.4 |
| MISSISSIPPI | 51.1 | 52.6 | -10.7 |
| MISSOURI | 17.6 | 52.3 | -23.8 |
| MONTANA | 0.6 | 71.4† | -7.9 |
| NEBRASKA | 6.7 | 45.2 | -36.5 |
| NEVADA | 10.2 | 40.5 | -21.5 |
| NEW HAMPSHIRE | 1.1 | ---* | --- |
| NEW JERSEY | 17.4 | 62.3† | -24.1 |
| NEW MEXICO | 2.4 | 55.9† | -11.9 |
| NEW YORK | 20.2 | 35.1 | -40.2 |
| NORTH CAROLINA | 31.2 | 53.6 | -15.6 |
| NORTH DAKOTA | 1.0 | 72.1† | -12.0 |
| OHIO | 15.7 | 39.6 | -36.3 |
| OKLAHOMA | 10.8 | 52.8 | -19.3 |
| OREGON | 2.8 | 58.0 | -13.4 |
| PENNSYLVANIA | 14.7 | 45.9 | -35.4 |
| RHODE ISLAND | 7.8 | 84.1 | 10.3 |
| SOUTH CAROLINA | 42.1 | ---* | --- |
| SOUTH DAKOTA | 1.2 | ---* | --- |
| TENNESSEE | --- | ---* | --- |
| TEXAS | 14.2 | 55.3 | -18.2 |
| UTAH | 1.0 | ---* | --- |
| VERMONT | 1.1 | ---* | --- |
| VIRGINIA | 27.0 | 62.8 | -13.3 |
| WASHINGTON | 5.3 | ---* | --- |
| WEST VIRGINIA | 4.3 | 58.0 | -13.3 |
| WISCONSIN | 10.0 | 41.1 | -41.3 |
| WYOMING | 1.2 | 67.7† | -5.6 |

**Table 2 Graduation Rate of African-American Students**

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of jobs offering livable wages for individuals without high school diplomas grows fewer each year as demonstrated by the rapid shrinkage of the industrial work force, which lost 4.3 million jobs since 1991. In today's economic recession, high school dropouts are forced out of the labor force and into criminal activities in order to survive. Data from the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics shows that approximately two-thirds of all state prison inmates have not completed high school.

Cellblocks or Classrooms, a joint release from the Justice Policy Institute and Policy Matters Ohio, found that there are more African-American men in jail or prison than in college. At the end of 2000, some 791,600 African-American men were behind bars and 603,032 were enrolled in colleges or universities. By contrast, in 1980—before the prison boom–African-American men in college outnumbered African-American men behind bars by a ratio of more than 3 to 1, the study found.

The life chances of an African-American male going to prison are greater today than the chances of him attending college.

# Improving the K-12 Graduation Rate

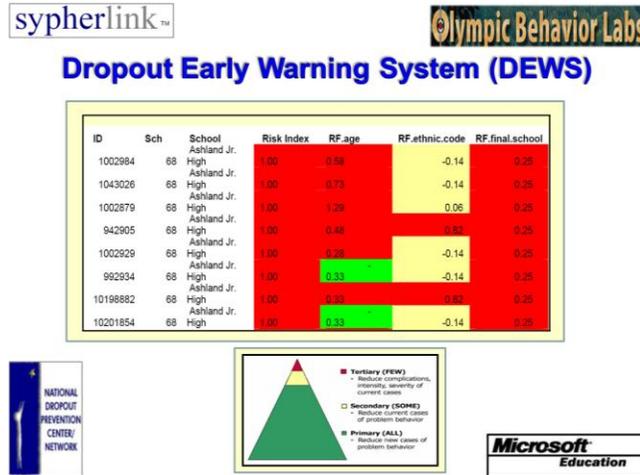## *Dropout Early Warning System (Slide 1):*



**Figure 19: DEWS Cover Slide (Slide 1)**

Legislation such as the 2007 Draft H.R. 3846, the Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education ("Youth PROMISE") Act, called for specific data collection to assess the needs of school-aged children who are at risk of becoming involved in gangs or the juvenile or criminal justice system. Using this legislation as the basis, local community action councils composed of law enforcement, court services, schools, social service, health and mental health providers are developing plans that include a broad array of evidence-based prevention programs. One approach is to put in place an automated, school-based, dropout early warning system (DEWS); that provides a non-intrusive, economical, systematic and persistent way of universally screening school-age children for evidence-based risk factors (or predictors) of truancy, dropout, violence, delinquency, and gang involvement.

This type of approach provides community stakeholders to early identify individual children based on their level of risk and particular needs; local community action councils can then implement the most effective—evidence-based—interventions plans to reduce the factors of risk.

## U.S. Department of Education Recommended Practices (Slide 2):



**Figure 20: Attacking the Dropout Problem (Slide 2)**

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the U.S. Department of Education publishes practice guides that target school and community practitioners and leaders struggling with critical social and education-related issues. Released in 2008, the IES Practice Guide for Dropout Prevention provides recommendations to state and local school leaders and policymakers for planning and implementing interventions in schools to increase high school graduation rates and relieve the very high social costs of dropout. Developed by a small group of national leaders with expertise in various dimensions of dropout indicators, the Practice Guide describes successful program interventions targeted to middle and high school students struggling with the possibility of school failure.

The guide presented six recommendations for reducing the dropout rates that are divided into three categories:

- Emphasize the importance of utilizing data systems that support realistic diagnosis of at-risk students and their issues.
- Identify the need for targeted interventions for students at risk of dropping out of school.
- Identify the need for targeted schoolwide reforms and interventions designed for engaging all students in successful learning environments with relevant instruction and preparation to develop the skills needed after they leave school. The guide also made a clear point to school and community leaders that it is important to continue monitoring and evaluating all strategies and program interventions.

## Automated, Non-Intrusive, Persistent, Data Sharing Integration, and Monitoring (Slide 3):
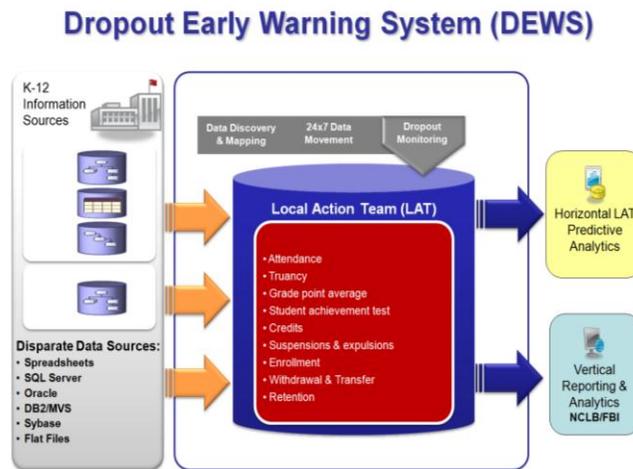


**Figure 21: DEWS Data Collection Process (Slide 3)**

Establishing and maintaining programs to enhance school safety requires both schools- and community-based automated, persistent and non-intrusive risk and needs assessments that facilitate the earliest possible interventions to address risk factors for truancy, dropout, bullying, cyber bullying, and gang prevention.

Juvenile and criminal justice systems, schools and social services agencies all have their own respective data stored in a wide array of disparate and legacy data repositories. Integrating these disparate data sources into a common data model such as the National Information Exchange Model[24] is economical, scalable, and provides 24 x 7 horizontal and vertical reporting necessary for educational and community stakeholders to make informed decisions based on data. Traditionally, the data discovery and mapping effort is manual, time-consuming, and prone to human error. Modern methods suggest that automated, heuristic-based, and non-intrusive discovery and mapping techniques are necessary to perform this function on a broad scale.

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[24] Source: www.niem.gov
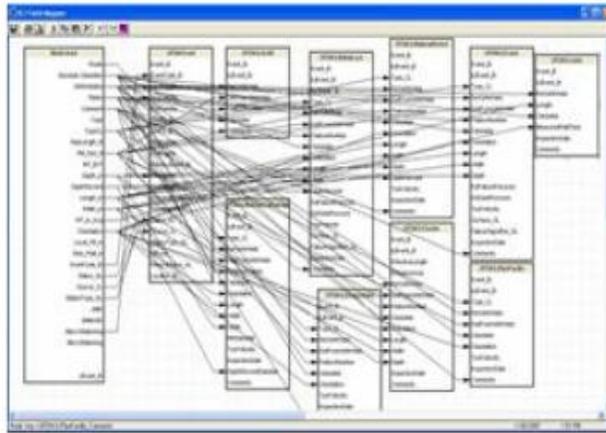
**Figure 22: Collecting data from multiple disparate data sources**

Any data collection system put into place must be capable of mapping data from many disparate data sources such as schools, juvenile justice, and social services agencies to a common data-sharing model. This will give stakeholders (e.g. educators, law enforcement officials, social workers, etc.) greater access to information that exist in multiple data repositories, managed by multiple agencies, affording them greater insight into the behavioral patterns of the student.

Automated data integration must also supply data monitoring and capture capability. This capability allows for tracking of all changes and/or deletions, from the source systems, and stores these changes into the student's own risk index, enabling the system to perform predictive analytics against the most up-to-date and available information. Providing quicker intervention possibilities for students at high-risk for violence and other gang activities. This type of automated approach to data integration reduces the time-to-value for time sensitive analytical risk assessment, thereby, increasing the usefulness to intervention professionals, law enforcement, and schools as well as for timely vertical reporting to state and federal agencies.

## Risk Assessment with Predictive Analytics (Slide 4):
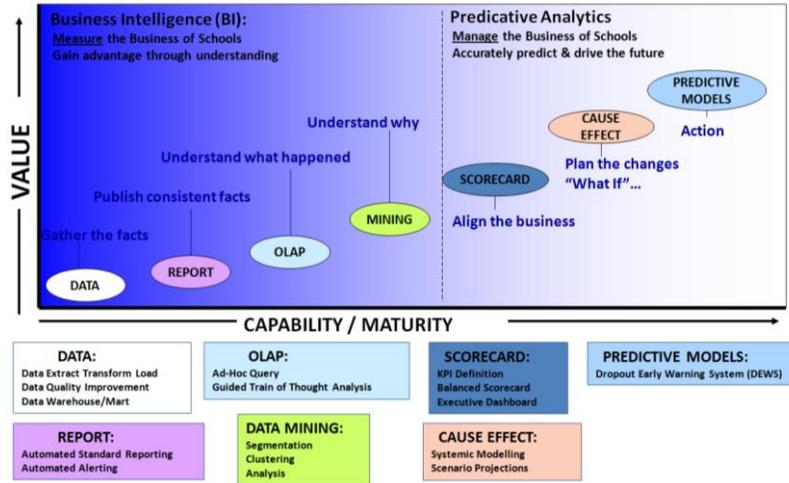


**Figure 23: The value of Predicative Analytics (Slide 4)**

Many districts/agencies currently use longitudinal data systems to track youth behaviors and provide the vertical reporting infrastructure for No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the FBI's National Gang Intelligence Center, and the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Protection. This type of horizontal analysis and vertical reporting infrastructure falls under the category of information technology solutions commonly referred to as business intelligence (BI), which provides a historical view of the underlying data sets. The challenge with this type of reporting approach is that while it provides educators, law enforcement, juvenile justice and social services with a forensic view of past behaviors of the individual child, it does not provide any insight into possible future behavioral outcomes.

One of the best methods for determining the probability of future behavior outcomes is by using predictive analytic (PA) models to identify and exploit behavior patterns that may exist in past performance data stored in historical and/or transactional databases. PA behavior models examine the relationships among the different performance indicators and risk factors to determine the potential, within a defined set of conditions, of an event occurring at some point in the future.

The DEWS system uses PA models to determine the likelihood of a child engaging in truant, dropout, violent, or gang related behaviors. This is the principal advantage of predictive analytics versus business intelligence—its ability to examine multiple indicators, identify patterns/trends in the data set and provide a mathematical probability of a future event occurring based on a set of predefined conditions.

## Targeted Intervention Plan for Individuals (Slide 5):



**Figure 24: Intervention Plan (Slide 5)**

The actual use of individual child data that identifies the risk factors and the intensity of the need for the individual student or other identified groups are extremely critical in the early warning framework by providing solutions to the problems. The framework has four components:

- Identify at-risk students.
- Determine the specific needs of the students/cohorts.
- Determine the level of the need.
- Recommend the most effective interventions.

The utilization of the data for risk assessment and the selection of program interventions have several dynamic dimensions. For example, the starting point is to focus on the identification of the most critical risk factors for the individual from a potential list of risk factors across several ecological domains; namely, individual, school, family, and community. This process is capable of identifying risk factors in any number of categories including: low academic achievement scores in math, social economic status, history of delinquency, and truancy to determine the child's risk level—high, medium, or low.

As illustrated in Figure 24: Intervention Plan (Slide 5), the focus of identification can be an individual or a cluster of children with similar patterns of risk or with similar rating levels. These layers of individual information are reviewed with other qualitative information to determine the strategies and program interventions to be recommended for each student or cohort. A local action team in each community can utilize the data to determine the appropriate targeted interventions or actions to implement.

# Early Warning System for Truancy, Dropout, Violence, and Gangs (Slide 6):



**Figure 25: Developing Targeted Intervention Plans (Slide 6)**

An early warning system uses easily extracted risk factors to build locally representative predictive behavior models that give a risk score for each and every elementary and middle school student's probability of dropping out of school and/or becoming a candidate of gang membership in adolescence.

The table below, taken from a South Carolina school district, demonstrates DEWS ability to access individual student for their probability of dropping out of school based on a risk index or score which is automatically computed based on risk factors such as the child's age and grade level, unexcused absences or truancy, total school suspensions, and reading proficiency level.



**Table 3: South Carolina LEA data**

## Targeted Intervention Plan for Schools and Communities (Slide 7):



**Figure 26: Schoolwide Intervention Plan (Slide 7)**

The early warning risk assessment framework provides value beyond the identification of risk for the individual student. For example, following a similar identification process as described for an individual, the data could illustrate that the focus of identification should be at a community level because of a high concentration of children with risk factors for gangs or violence. Similarly, a large percentage of children could be identified with attendance and truancy issues in middle school; therefore, schoolwide interventions to increase attendance would be targeted at the school level.

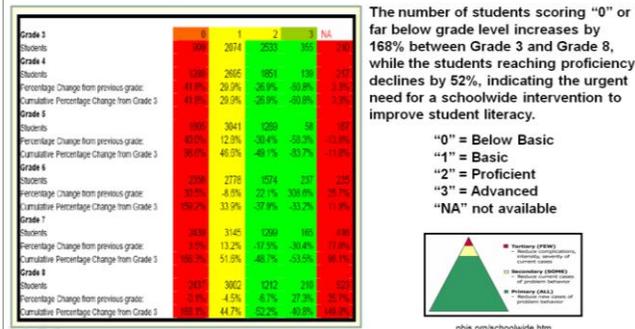## Early Warning for Systemic Weakness (Slide 8):



**Figure 27: ELA Assessment (Slide 8)**

The dropout crisis and the increasing school and gang violence throughout the country have many educators concerned with prevention and solutions. Although most of the emphasis of dropout prevention has focused on high schools, the breakdown in reading and literacy development and the

sizeable minority achievement gaps in secondary schools begin in elementary school and accelerate in the transition to middle school and high school. One way to determine the scope of the dropout problem in a school district is to look for systemic weakness in a cohort's reading development over an extended period.

An example of this is the data from the quantitative analysis of 3rd-8th grade cohorts from a South Carolina school district with a very large African-American population show that while 909 students in 3rd grade were reading below grade level, the number of students reading below grade level had increased by 168 percent to 2,437 students in 8th grade.

The table below summarizes the Reading Proficiency scores of multiple cohorts from the 3rd-8th grade as:

| Grade 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | NA | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 909 | 2074 | 2533 | 355 | 210 | "0" = | Below Basic |
| **Grade 4** | | | | | | "1" = | Basic |
| Students | 1289 | 2695 | 1851 | 139 | 217 | | |
| Percentage Change from previous grade: | 41.8% | 29.9% | -26.9% | -60.8% | 3.3% | "2" = | Proficient |
| Cumulative Percentage Change from Grade 3 | 41.8% | 29.9% | -26.9% | -60.8% | 3.3% | | |
| **Grade 5** | | | | | | "3" = | Advance |
| Students | 1805 | 3041 | 1289 | 58 | 187 | | |
| Percentage Change from previous grade: | 40.0% | 12.8% | -30.4% | -58.3% | -13.8% | "4" = | Not Available For Testing |
| Cumulative Percentage Change from Grade 3 | 98.6% | 46.6% | -49.1% | -83.7% | -11.0% | | |
| **Grade 6** | | | | | | | |
| Students | 2356 | 2778 | 1574 | 237 | 235 | | |
| Percentage Change from previous grade: | 30.5% | -8.6% | 22.1% | 308.6% | 25.7% | | |
| Cumulative Percentage Change from Grade 3 | 159.2% | 33.9% | -37.9% | -33.2% | 11.9% | | |
| **Grade 7** | | | | | | | |
| Students | 2439 | 3145 | 1299 | 165 | 416 | | |
| Percentage Change from previous grade: | 3.5% | 13.2% | -17.5% | -30.4% | 77.0% | | |
| Cumulative Percentage Change from Grade 3 | 168.3% | 51.6% | -48.7% | -53.5% | 98.1% | | |
| **Grade 8** | | | | | | | |
| Students | 2437 | 3002 | 1212 | 210 | 523 | | |
| Percentage Change from previous grade: | -0.1% | -4.5% | -6.7% | 27.3% | 25.7% | | |
| Cumulative Percentage Change from Grade 3 | 168.1% | 44.7% | -52.2% | -40.8% | 149.0% | | |

**Table 4: Reading Proficiency 3rd-8th Grades**

It is during this transition between elementary and middle school that data shows the sharpest divide between minority and economically disadvantaged students' literacy and numeracy proficiencies and their more affluent White classmates. As chronic academic failure becomes commonplace in many school systems, the behavioral patterns of truancy, dropout, violence and gangs are established. Rather than academic success and college, these alienated students face academic failure, joblessness, and incarceration and for some—even premature death; if something is done.

By identifying systemic weakness very early in a student's literacy development process and effectively reversing it, educators can stop the school alienation process before it grows. Increased literacy and achievement among America's elementary school age, economically disadvantaged, minority males can lead to higher levels of high school graduation and college enrollment, lower levels of unemployment and a reduction of gang activity, crime, violence, and substance abuse.

## Targeted Schoolwide Interventions (Slide 9):



**Figure 28: DEWS PA Models (Slide 9)**

In order to gain a better understanding of how schools are succeeding or failing to teach reading we can look at a single cohort of children over a five-year period, and track each child's progress toward reaching proficiency in reading. The Reading Proficiency scores of two elementary schools, 3rd grade classes, are summarized in Figure 28: DEWS PA Models (Slide 9). While both school reading proficiency scores decline over five years, the children who are most at risk are at Mary Wright Elementary school because the scores for each of the children in the cohort have declined from reading near or above basic grade level to reading below grade level. In this sense, the school itself becomes a risk factor for each of the individual children in the cohort because the child's reading development at Mary Wright Elementary School is stunted in 3rd grade and then declines sharply by the 8th grade.

## Correlation between NCLB and Systemic School Wide Weakness (Slide 10):



**Figure 29: Reading and Math proficiency mandate (Slide 10)**

One of the primary goals of No Child Left Behind **(NCLB)** is that all children are to be **"proficient"** in both reading and math. An inherent weakness in the implementation of NCLB is the inability to track the progress of individual students over the course of their K-12 academic career. Although many school systems have student data systems in place, these systems typically provide only the most basic of reporting capabilities. It is these schools—on the fifth, sixth or seventh year of failing to make AYP on NCLB—that have some of the worst truancy, highest dropout rates, and greatest participation by students in violence and gang activities.

Because of a lack of systematic and comprehensive quantitative data on individual students, we are blaming many things on schools and teachers, which are not necessarily their fault. For example, in June 2008 the Texas Commissioners of Education shut down the Houston Independent School District's Sam Houston High School because the school received an academic rating of unacceptable for the sixth consecutive years from the state. Some educators believe, NCLB AYP test scores are insufficient and do not tell the entire story. Even though Sam Houston's performance on Reading Proficiency tests had improved so much that they moved to the "Recognized" level, the state's second-highest academic grade, and the failure of one or two groups of students in math were enough to force the school to close.[25] The current NCLB process does not take into account children are fed from underachieving middle schools each year into high schools long "under the gun" from NCLB AYP. These incoming students can bring with them many years of academic failure, truancy, and serious behavior problems.

## *Elementary School Behavior Models that Predict Truancy, Dropout, and Violence (Slide 11):*
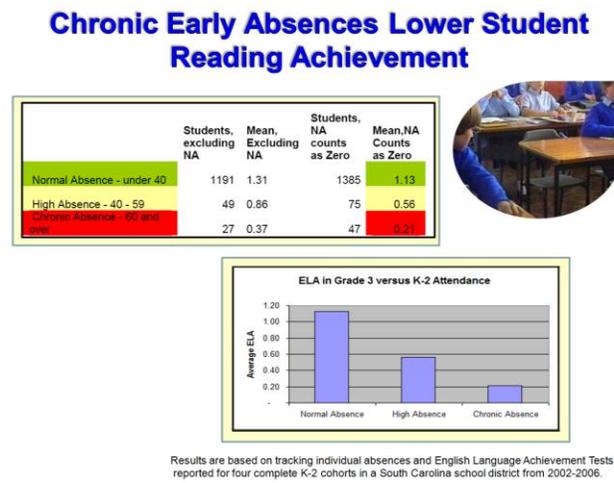


**Figure 30: The Affects of Absences Reading Achievement (Slide 11)**

Attendance and reading are among the strongest predictors of future academic failure, truancy, bullying, violence, and dropout—even in the primary grades. Those with high and/or chronic absences in

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[25] Source: Last accessed at
http://www.houstonisd.org/HISDConnectDS/v/index.jsp?vgnextoid=f1aa1e73f6a5a110VgnVCM10000028147fa6R CRD&vgnextchannel=f6d4ced1cc65e010VgnVCM10000028147fa6RCRD

K-2 show poor performance on 3<sup>rd</sup> grade standardized tests. The schoolwide attendance and reading early warning model provides the data necessary to drive aggressive truancy reduction and remedial reading programs in elementary schools to intervene at the very beginning of the truancy, dropout, violence and gang recruitment cycle.

DEWS uses data to identify the students whose attendance is affecting their reading development and then monitor targeted interventions to assess the interventions' effectiveness to help the child's reading development. In one representative example of how data can drive the required instruction to prevent future truancy, bullying and dropout behavior, a third-grade special education pupil was identified reading far below grade level. At the beginning of a literacy intervention October 3, he read only 29 words per minute. He was repeatedly tested for reading comprehension: on October 5, 12, 19, and 26, and again on November 2, 9, 16 and 23. Then, on November 30, he read 58 words per minute—twice the rate he had less than two months earlier.

## *Middle School Behavior Models as Predictors of Violence and Gang Participation (Slide 12):*
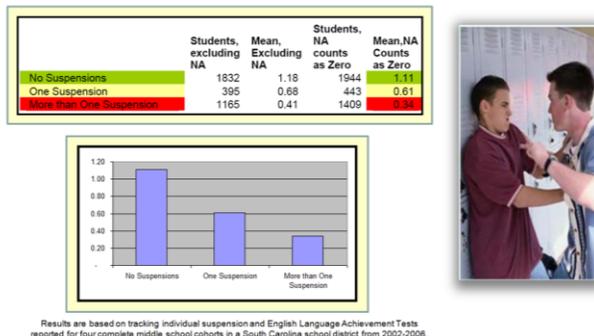


**Figure 31: The correlation between behavior problems and student achievement (Slide 12)**

The transition to middle school from elementary school brings its own set of social problems. At-risk students entering 6<sup>th</sup> grade who are reading well below grade level do not have healthy self-esteem and often feel they are not a part of the school. Many begin to experiment with anti-social or gang-related behaviors, such as graffiti, fighting, bullying, gang dress, gang talk and the use of gang hand signs.  As students' progress through middle school, guns, knives, drug usage, sex, and violence will become a part of life for the student depicted in Figure 31: The correlation between behavior problems and student achievement (Slide 12). When a middle school student decides to join a gang, academics cease to be important.

DEWS behavior models establish the relationship between academic performance and problem behavior across middle school grade levels. In 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, DEWS data demonstrates that students with disciplinary suspensions were impacted by their performance on 8<sup>th</sup> grade standardized reading

and math tests. In the case of mathematics, the deficits between behavior and academic performance in math actually increase over time.

DEWS links problem behavior and academic achievement, demonstrating with dynamic models how each affects the other. This relational deficit can be reduced by intertwining academic and behavior supports. Effective direct instruction in academic skills alone will not help students learn to read in a school or a classroom that is behaviorally chaotic. To the contrary, we need to marry interventions that provide positive behavior supports with improved data-driven instruction.

## *Truancy Behavior Models As Predictors of Dropout, Delinquency, and Gangs (Slide 13):*
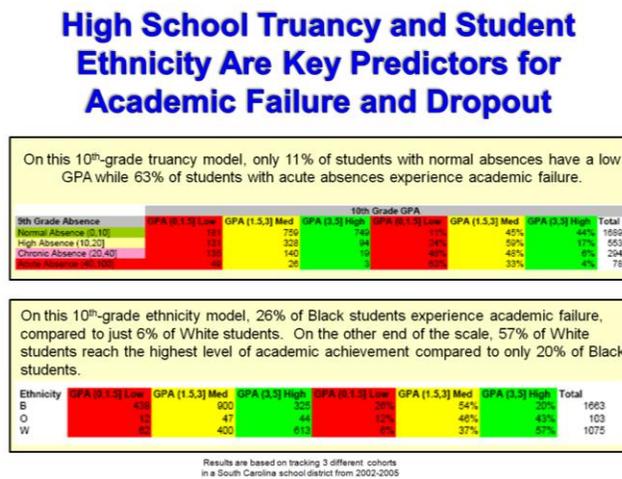


**Figure 32: Key Predicators for Academic Failure and Dropout (Slide 13)**

Elementary and middle school students who habitually miss school are likely to hop from courtroom to courtroom on petty offense after petty offense: graffiti, shoplifting, trespassing, the list goes on. As the educational gap widens between truant students and their peers, the chronically absent student becomes a dropout. Without an education, the likelihood of continued interaction with the criminal justice system is high—all that changes is the significance of the charges. Graffiti and shoplifting often give way to assault or armed robbery. Eventually, the "rap sheet" that started with truancy at the age of 13 grows to include a long prison sentence when the student becomes an adult.

The U.S. Department of Justice reports that 80 percent of prison inmates are former truants. Results from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Institute on Drug Abuse cite the efficacy of using analysis of attendance and GPA data for identifying students at high risk for truancy, dropout, substance abuse, and even suicidal and delinquency behaviors. [26]

DEWS attendance/truancy and GPA models establish the relationship between academic failure and truancy across middle and high school grade levels and allow us to predict which individual students

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[26] Source: Last accessed at http://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/abstract.aspx?ID=234667

(and in some cases schools), are at high risk for dropout and more likely to engage in substance abuse, violence, delinquency and gang behaviors.

## *Distributing and Monitoring Early Warnings for Truancy, Dropout Violence and Gangs (Slide 14):*
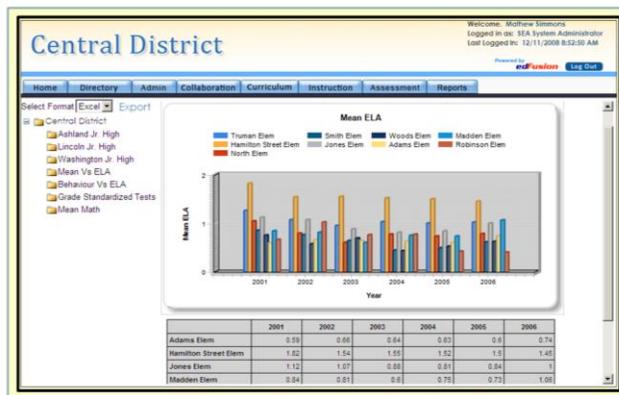


Figure 33: Data Analysis with DEWS (Slide 14)

The purpose of DEWS is turning students' behavior and performance data into actionable information on which education and community stakeholders can identify and put into practice proven intervention plans to address the needs of the student. In the past, this type of analysis and review of very large data sets was a time consuming, manual process prone to errors. The concept of having multiple stakeholders analyze and track cohort data, on a quarterly basis, was outside the realm of possibility for most school districts/agencies for any number of reasons–with the most common being the costs and complexity of deploying this type of solution.

Earlier data analytic systems were principally developed for individuals with backgrounds in statistics and/or data modeling. The tools were often difficult to use and provided little flexibility to the end-user with respect to changing the manner in which the data is visualized. The DEWS approach is to put this information in the hands of those stakeholders–as defined by the school district/agency–using common tools familiar to all computer users.

DEWS provides a comprehensive, collaborative web portal environment that allows education stakeholders access to student, cohort, and/or school performance data. We understand the sensitivity of this data and to address this concern, the DEWS approach incorporates a role-based security model where the district/agency defines the level at which an individual stakeholder (e.g. teacher, principal, juvenile justice official, etc.) would have access to information. In the example shown, an SEA administrator has the authorization to examine and compare the performance of the schools within his district. He may even have the ability to look at student cohort data at an individual school; however, this administrator does not have authorization to examine the records/data of an individual student.

No special applications are needed on the stakeholder's workstation other than a web browser.  The stakeholder would have the ability to manipulate the manner in which the data is visualized, affording the user the opportunity to move from summary information to the detailed data that created it.