



# Dropout Survey Report

## 2016

Oregon Department of Education

Salam Noor, Deputy Superintendent



## Foreword

Oregon leaders are committed to ensuring that each Oregon student graduates from high school with a plan for the future—whether it’s college, post-secondary job training or the world of work, and the tools to succeed in their post-secondary goals. Recognizing the landscape in which individual legislative reports and strategic investments are positioned promotes critical alignment and coordination needed in Oregon to support student transitions, particularly across Grades 11-14.

In the 2015 session Governor Kate Brown and the Oregon Legislature made significant investments in the future of Oregon students served by the state’s cradle to career education system. For the 2015-17 biennium, the state not only made key investments in the schools, colleges, and universities that serve our students, but also took strategic actions to foster improved and seamless pathways between each sector of the public educational enterprise. In addition to this report on dropout prevention (HB 3319), work is underway on numerous bills related to the important transition years for students in grades 11-14, work that is of key and continuing importance to the Chief Education Office, Oregon Department of Education, and Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

Specifically, the Legislature directed strategic focus on high school graduation, requiring reports on: dropout prevention, graduation, attendance (HB 3319), and training for school districts and educational services district staff for reporting high school graduation data (HB 5016). Key investments were made in student financial aid to improve access to college, and in the redesign of the state’s need-based grant for college, the Oregon Opportunity Grant (HB 2407). The Oregon Promise grant program was created to offset tuition at community colleges (SB 81). Additional actions addressed academic alignment and transferability between sectors, expanded services in the state’s GED Program, improved college readiness through accelerated learning (SB 418), continued work on the Transfer Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities (HB 2525), and processes for placing students in community college courses (HB 2681).

Improving access to a high quality education for historically underserved students was also a priority. The Legislature required the development of statewide education plans for African-American students (HB 2016), American Indian/Alaskan Native students, and English Language Learners (HB 3499), addressing educator equity (HB 3375), expanding eligibility for undocumented students who would otherwise qualify for in-state tuition at public universities to apply for OOG funds (SB 932) and directing the HECC to address disparities in higher education (HB 3308).

No one strategy promises to be a singular solution for Oregon, but working in concert, these efforts are setting the stage for students to have the access and support they need to graduate high school with the skills and opportunity to move on to higher education or the world of work.



## **HB 3319 Dropout Survey Results**

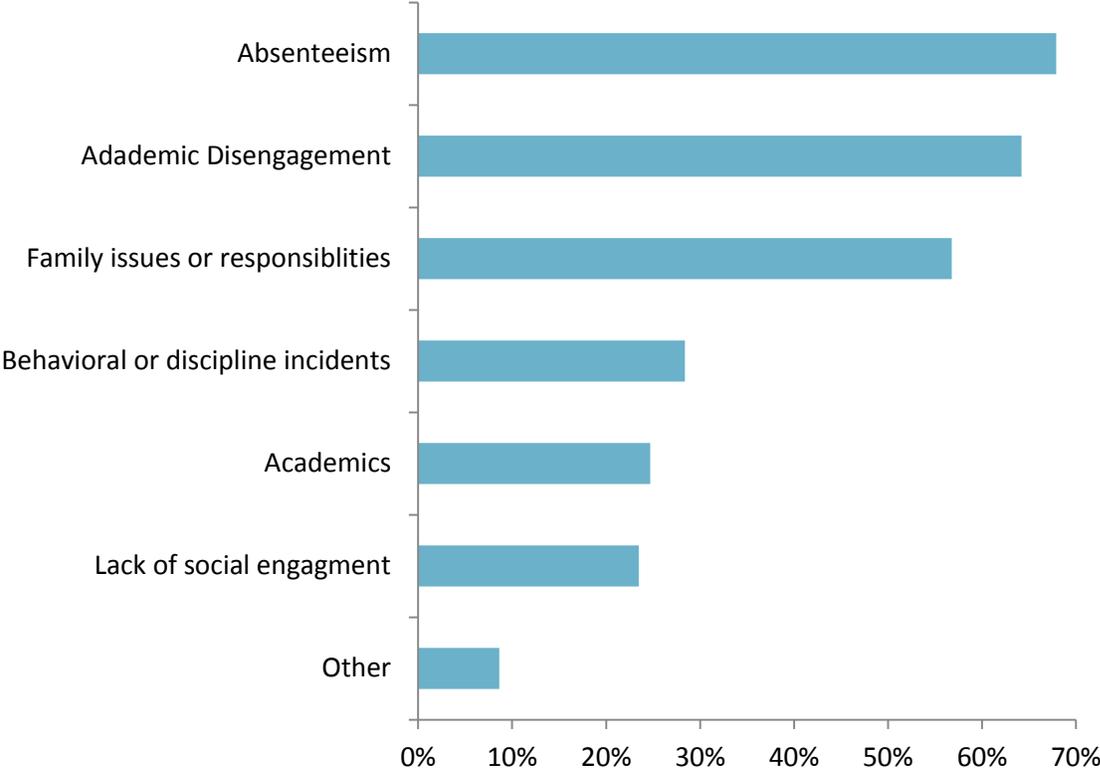
House Bill 3319 from the 2015 Legislative Session directed the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to produce a report that describes best practices school districts use to reduce dropout rates, including best practices to increase high school graduation rates and to reduce chronic absenteeism. The bill directed ODE to survey all school districts to collect this information. Under the provisions of HB 3319, responding to this survey was voluntary.

ODE conducted the survey in December 2015. Eighty-eight of Oregon's 197 school districts responded to the survey for an overall response rate of 45 percent. Not all of the 88 districts responded to each survey question, so the response rate varies by question. For each question we provide the number of respondents below the graph. The following pages present the results of the survey.



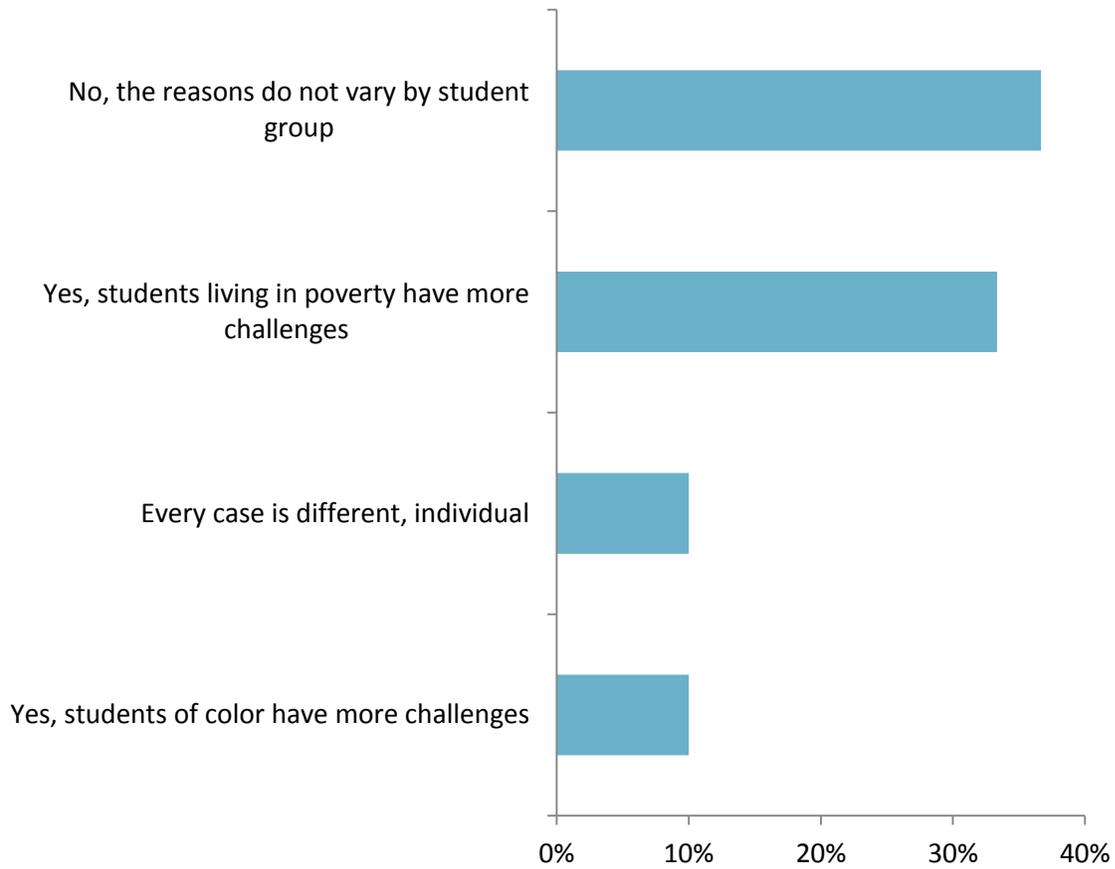
# Section I: Graphical Results

Top three reasons that high school students drop out as observed by district personnel



Number of Respondents: 81  
\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

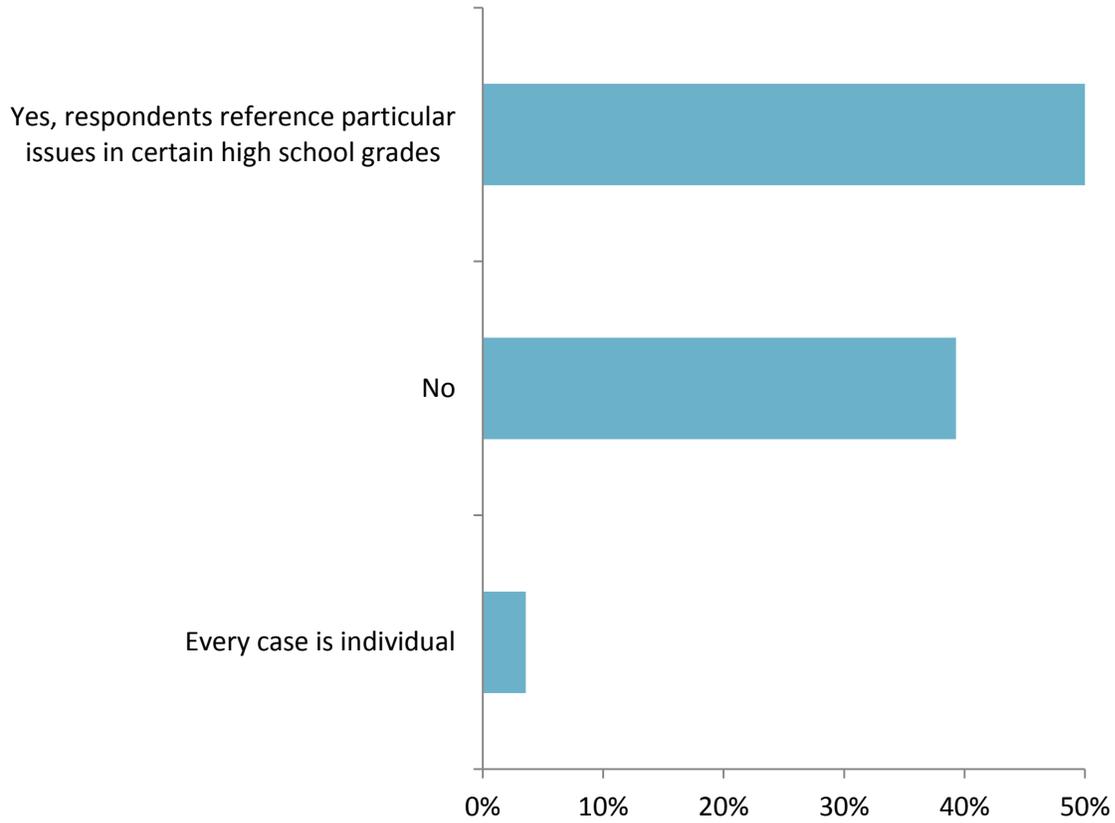
### Do the reasons that students drop out of school vary by student group?



Number of Respondents: 60

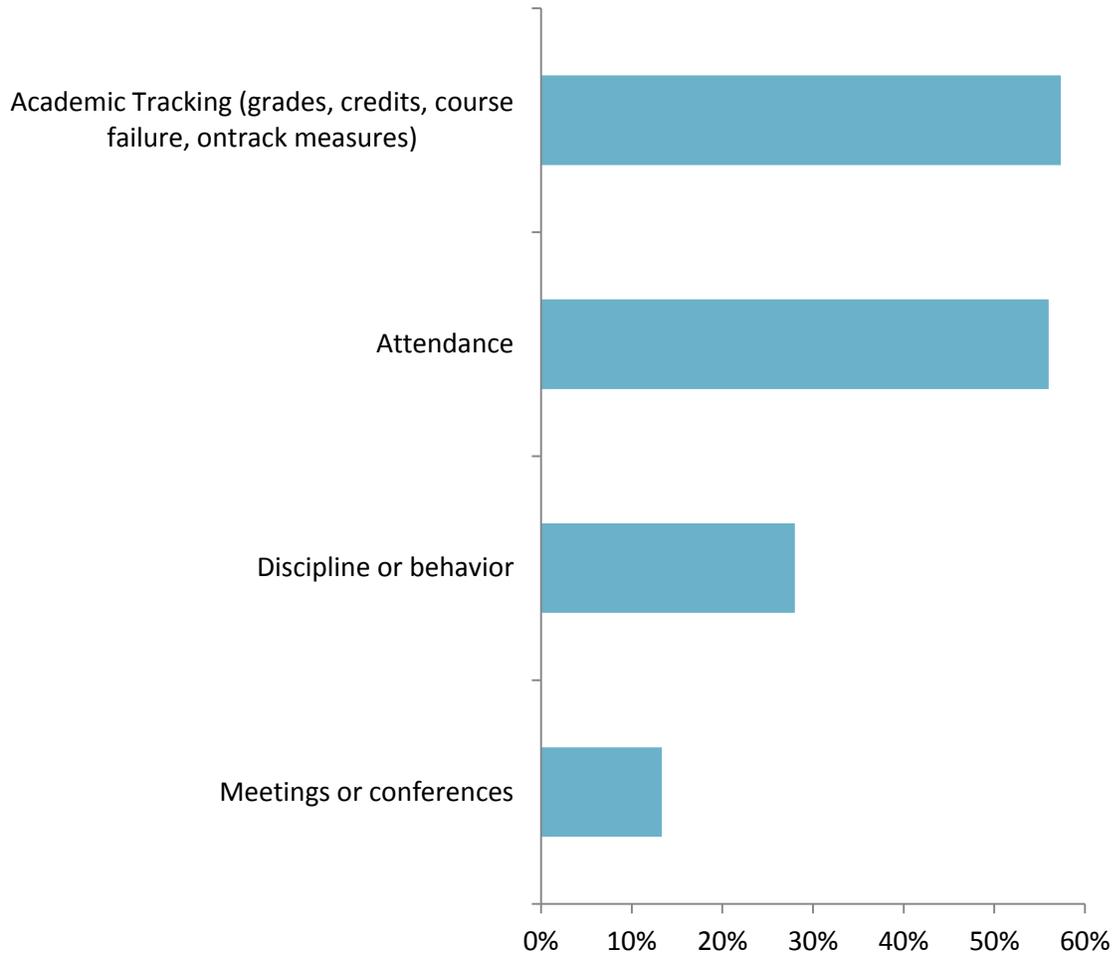
\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

Do these reasons that students drop out of school vary by student age and grade?



Number of Respondents: 56  
\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

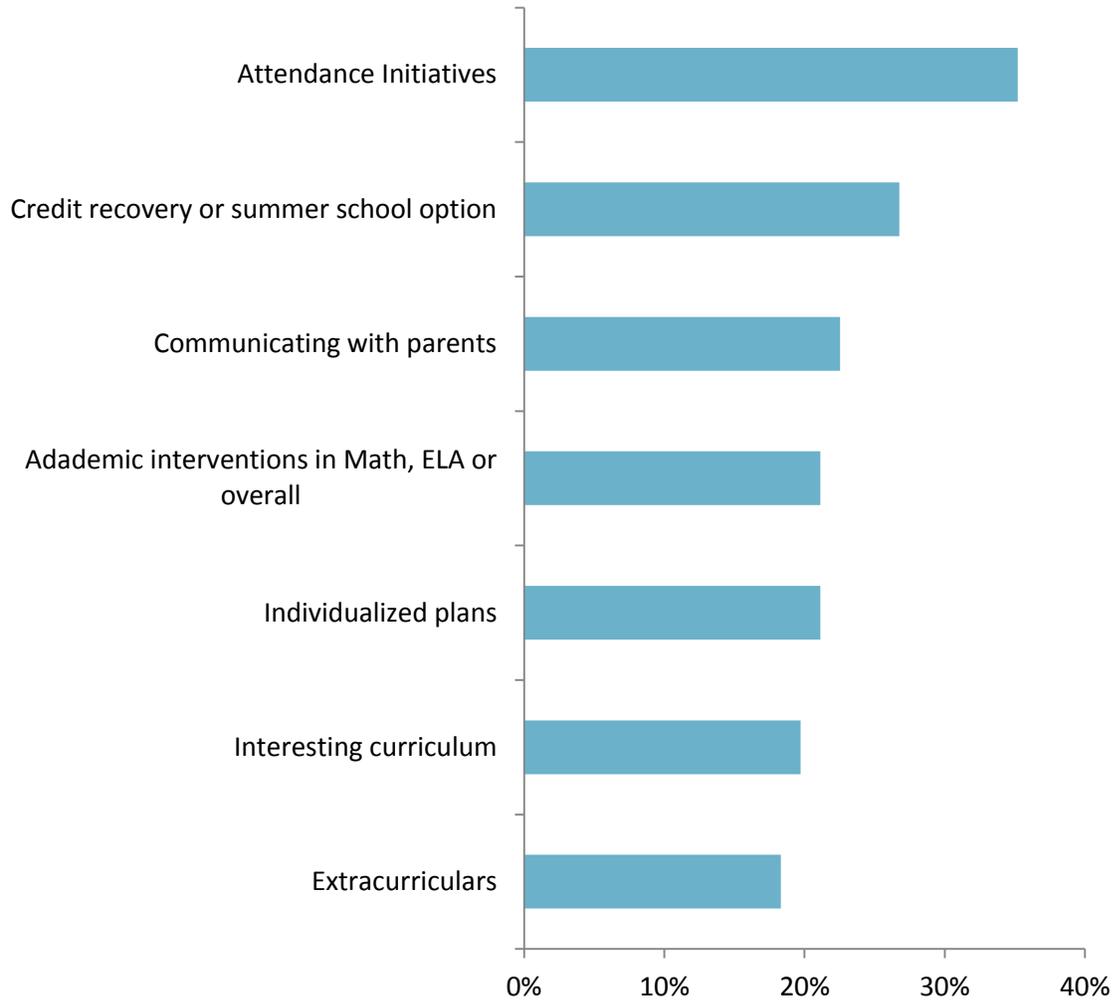
## Elements included in early warning systems



Number of Respondents: 75

\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

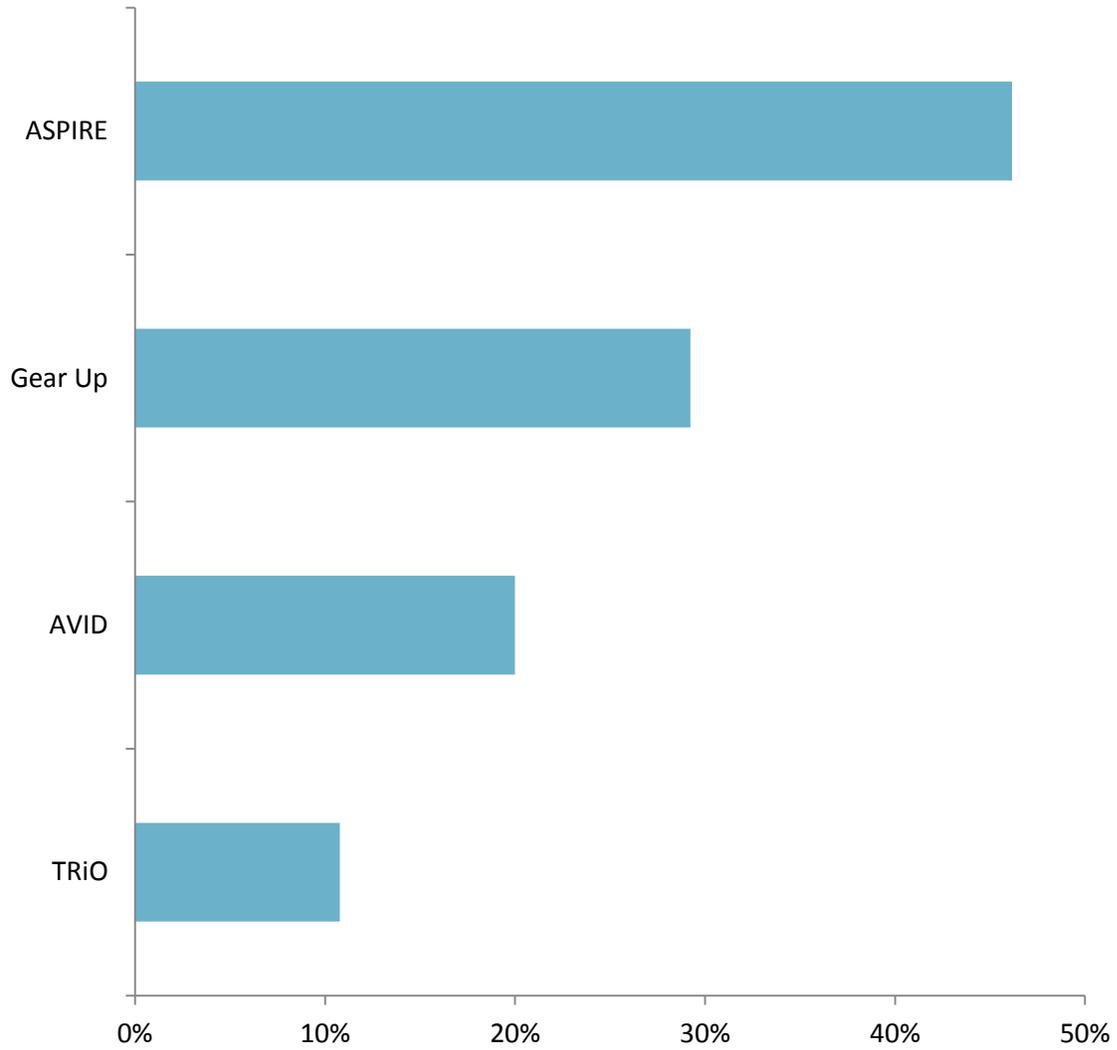
What are your district's 'best practices' to reduce the number of students who drop out of school?



Number of Respondents: 71

\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

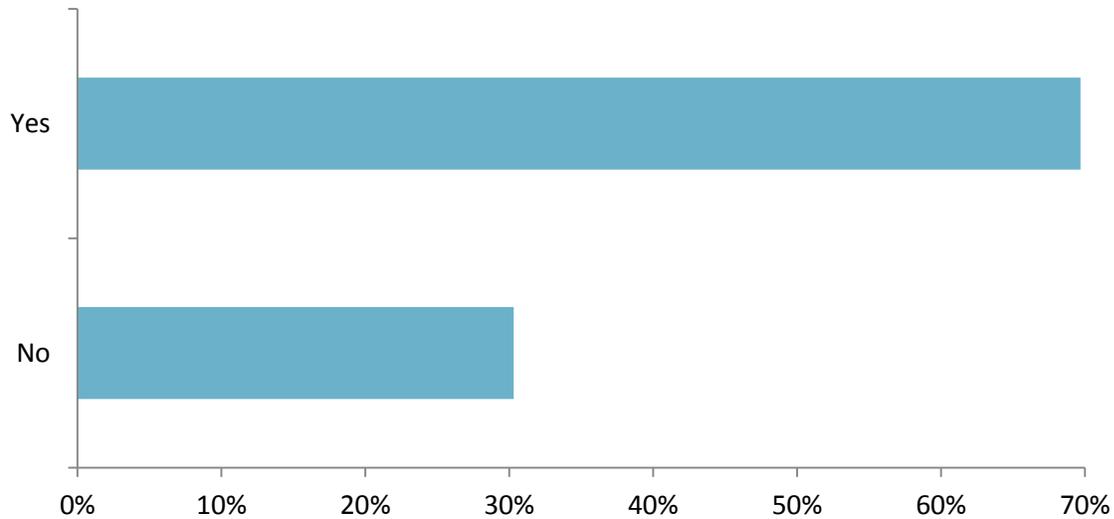
### What programs do you use to decrease the number of students who drop out?



Number of Respondents: 65

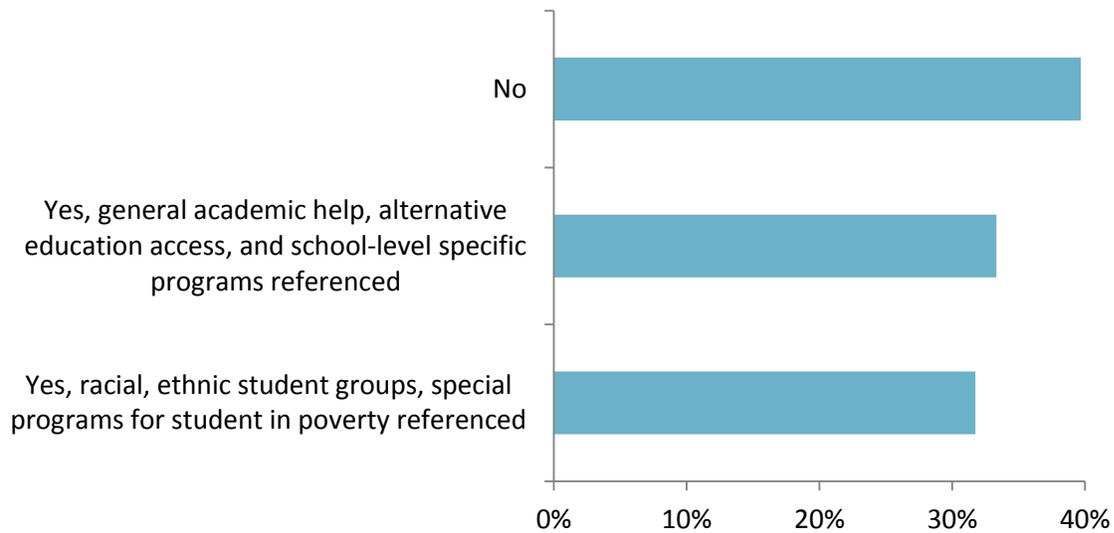
\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

Does your district have specific activities or programs to reduce the likelihood that students will drop out at all levels of schools?



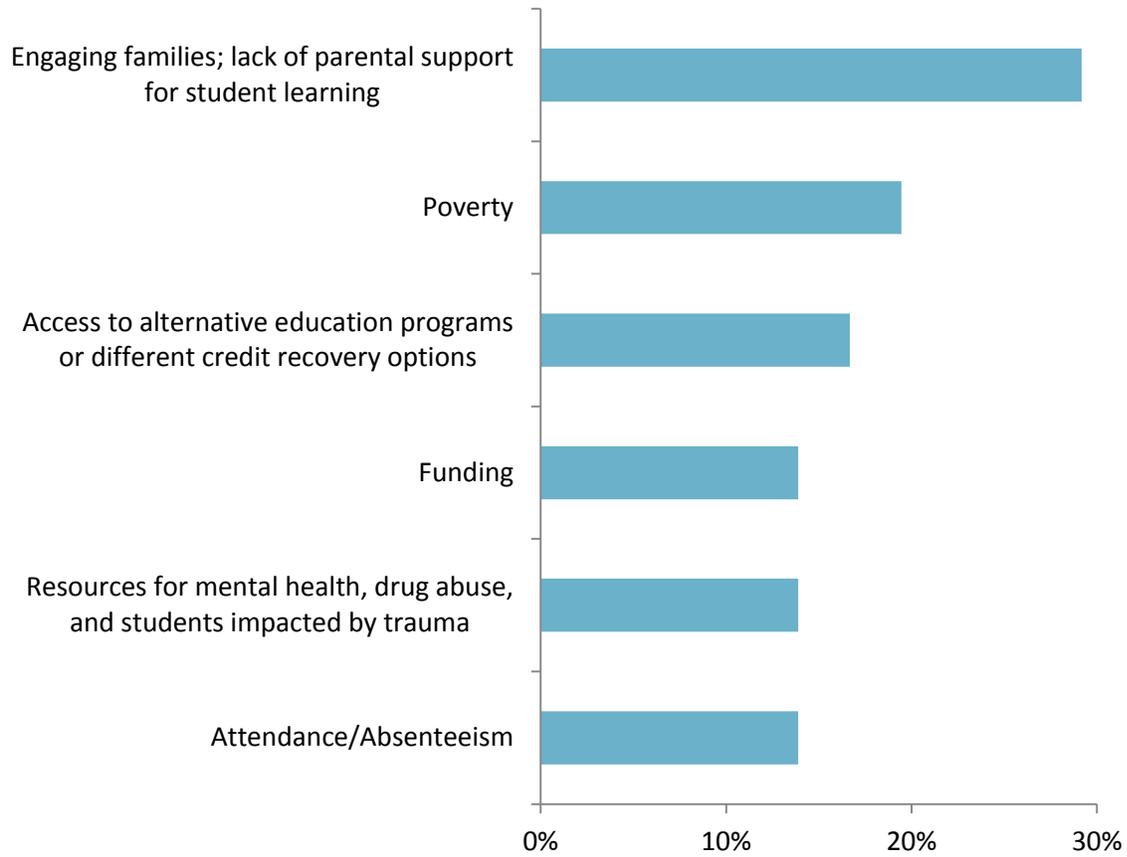
Number of Respondents: 66  
\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

Follow-up: Do you have specific activities or programs for different student groups?



Number of Respondents: 63  
\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

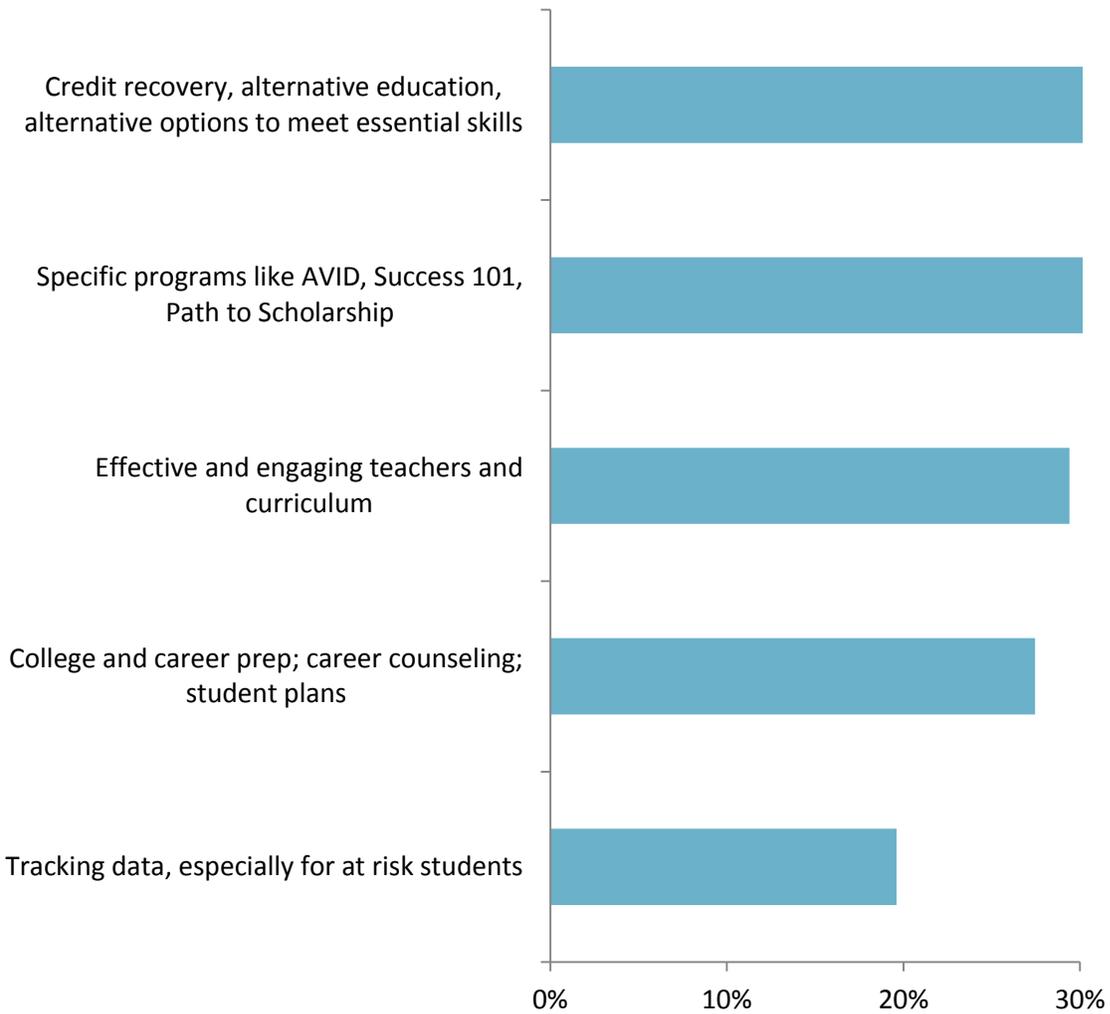
## What are your district's greatest challenges in reducing the dropout rate?



Number of Respondents: 72

\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

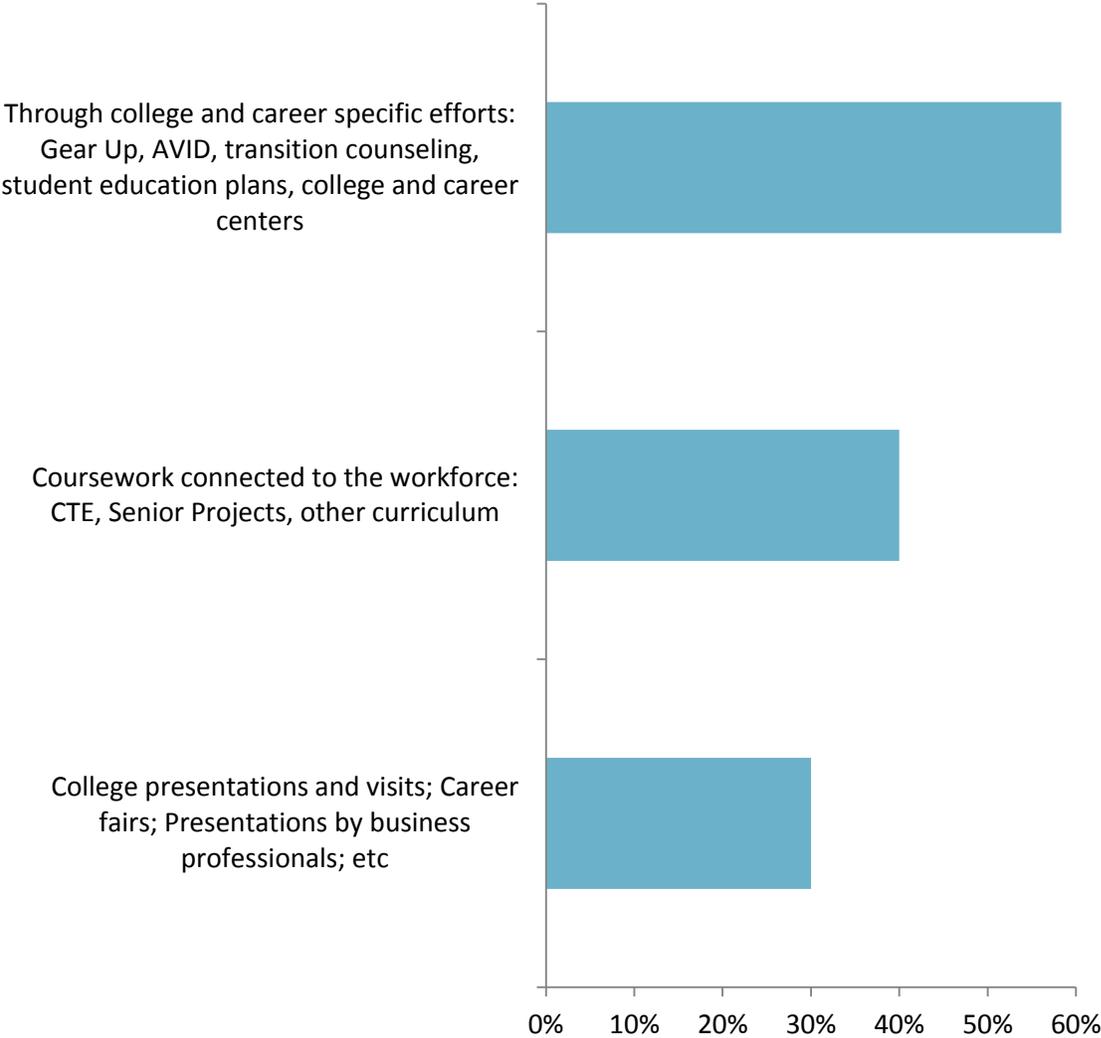
## What are your district's 'best practices' to increase graduation rates?



Number of Respondents: 51

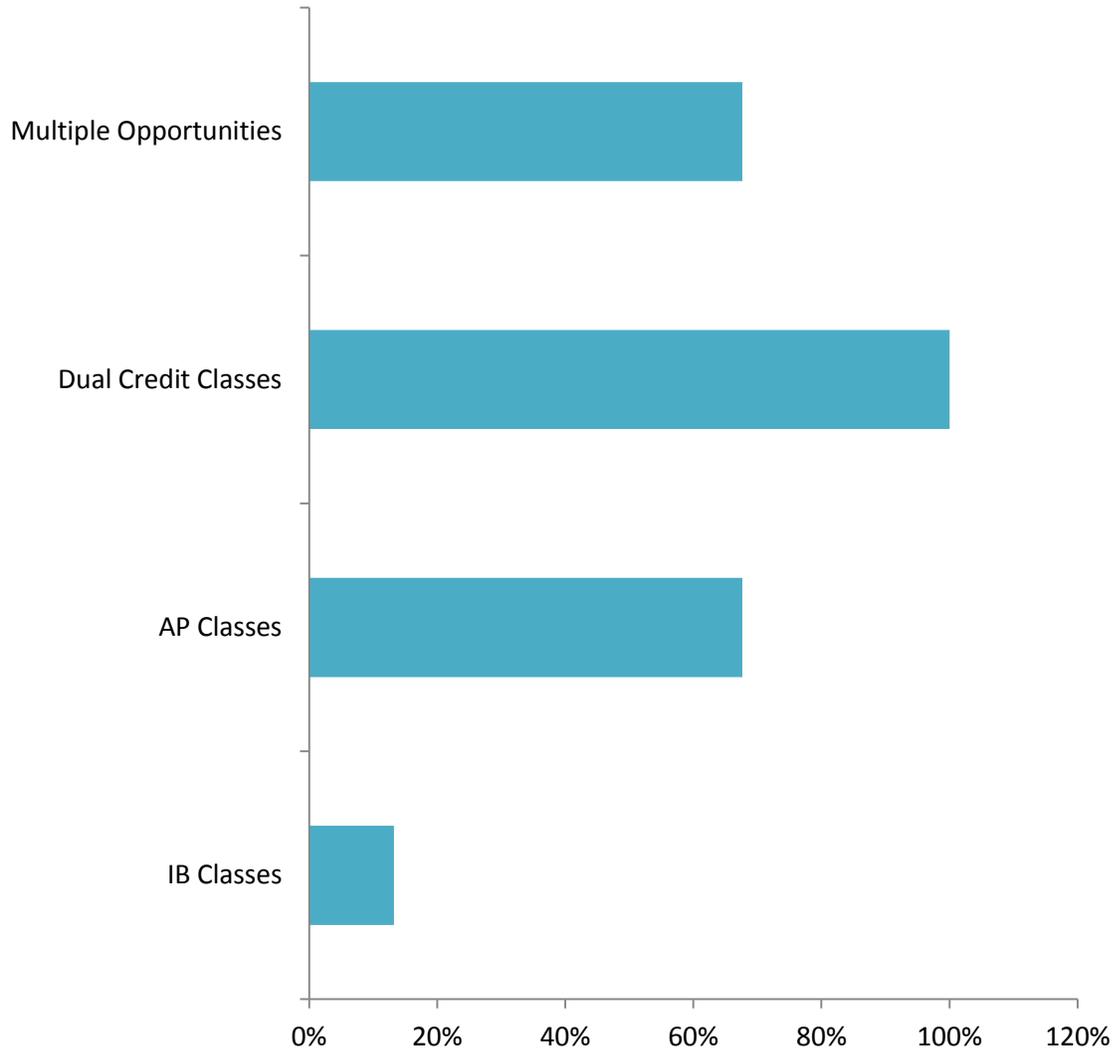
\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

How do you educate students on the benefits of graduating from high school, even if they don't intend to go to college?



Number of Respondents: 60  
\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

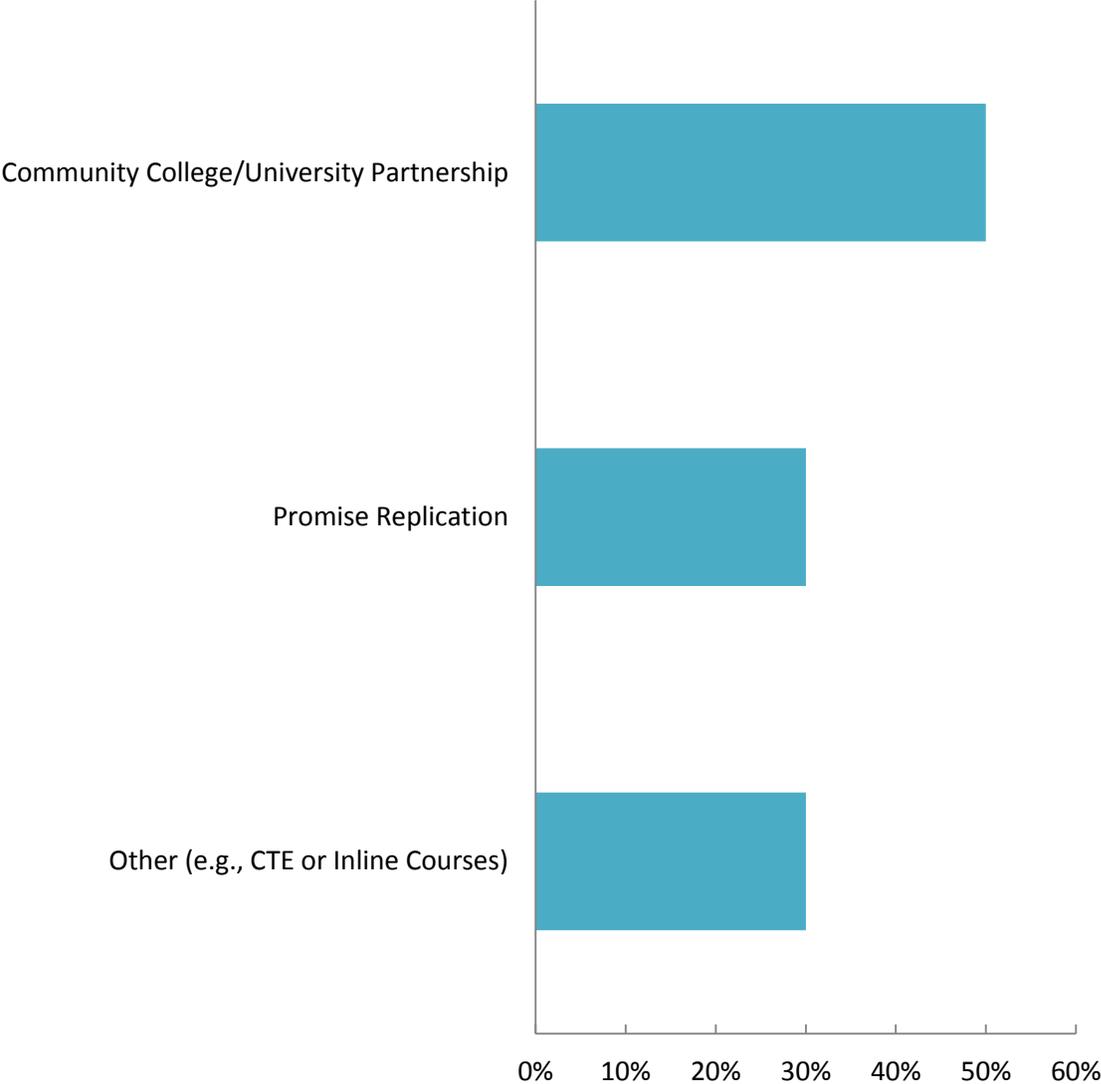
### Does your district offer AP, IB, or dual credit classes?



Number of Respondents: 68

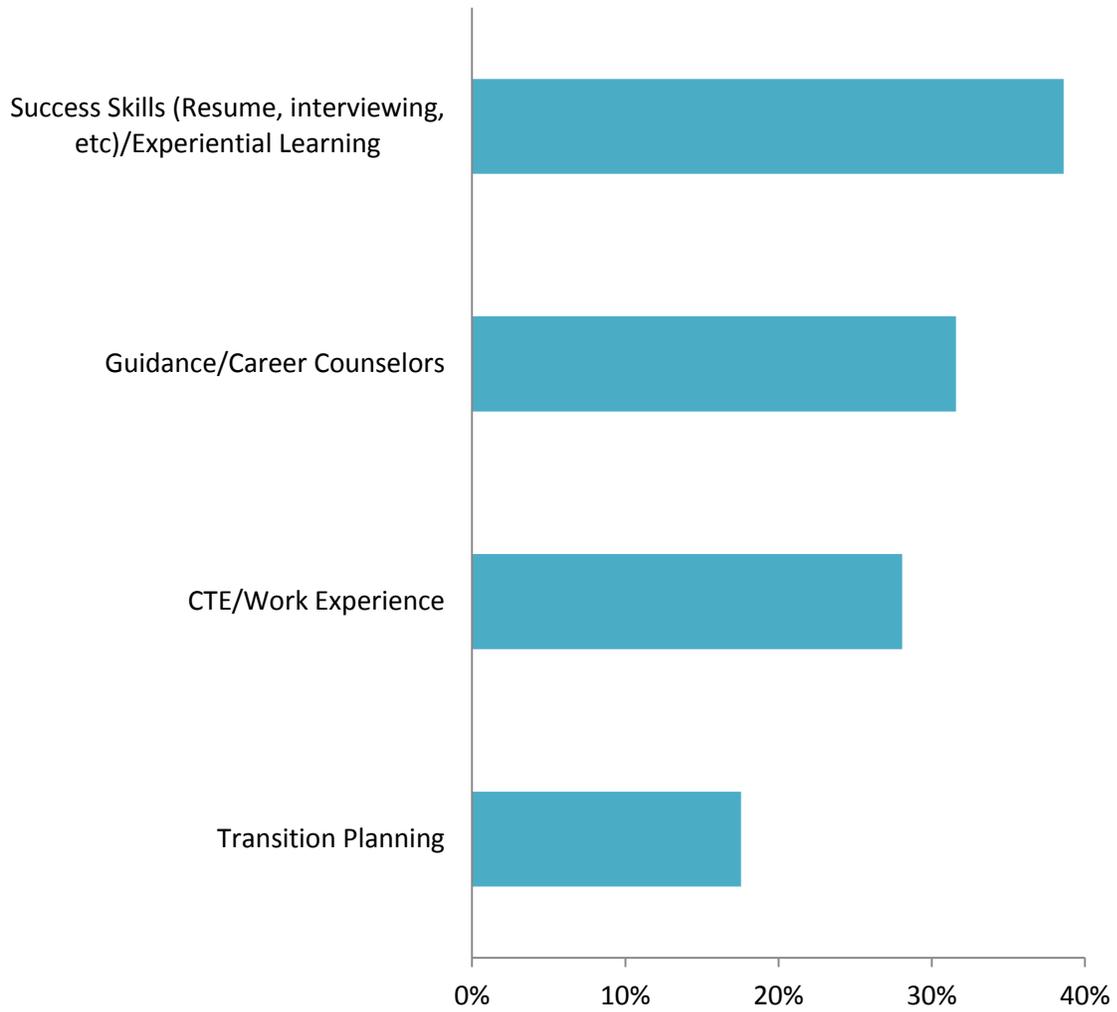
\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

### Other Opportunities for Students to Earn College Credits



Number of Respondents: 30  
\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

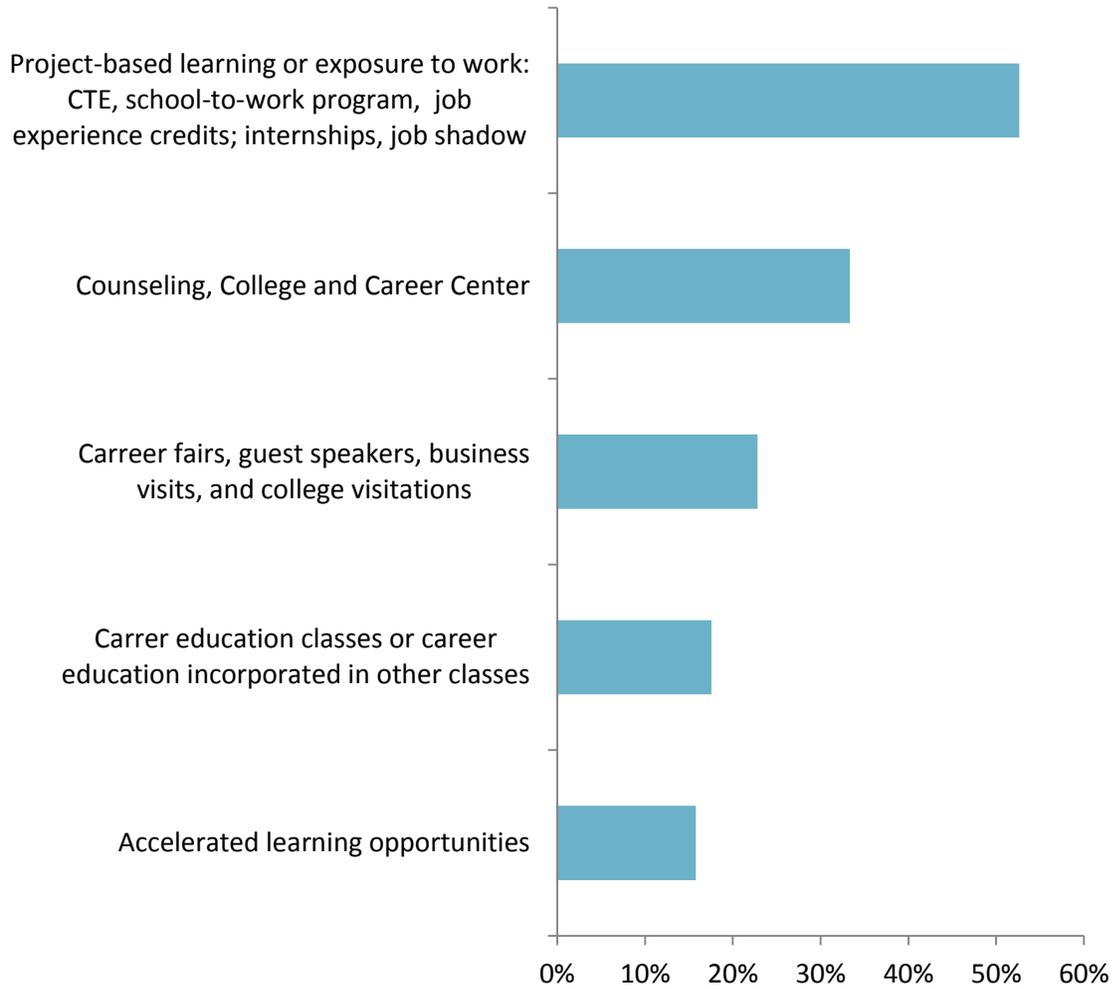
## How do staff help students prepare for life after high school?



Number of Respondents: 57

\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

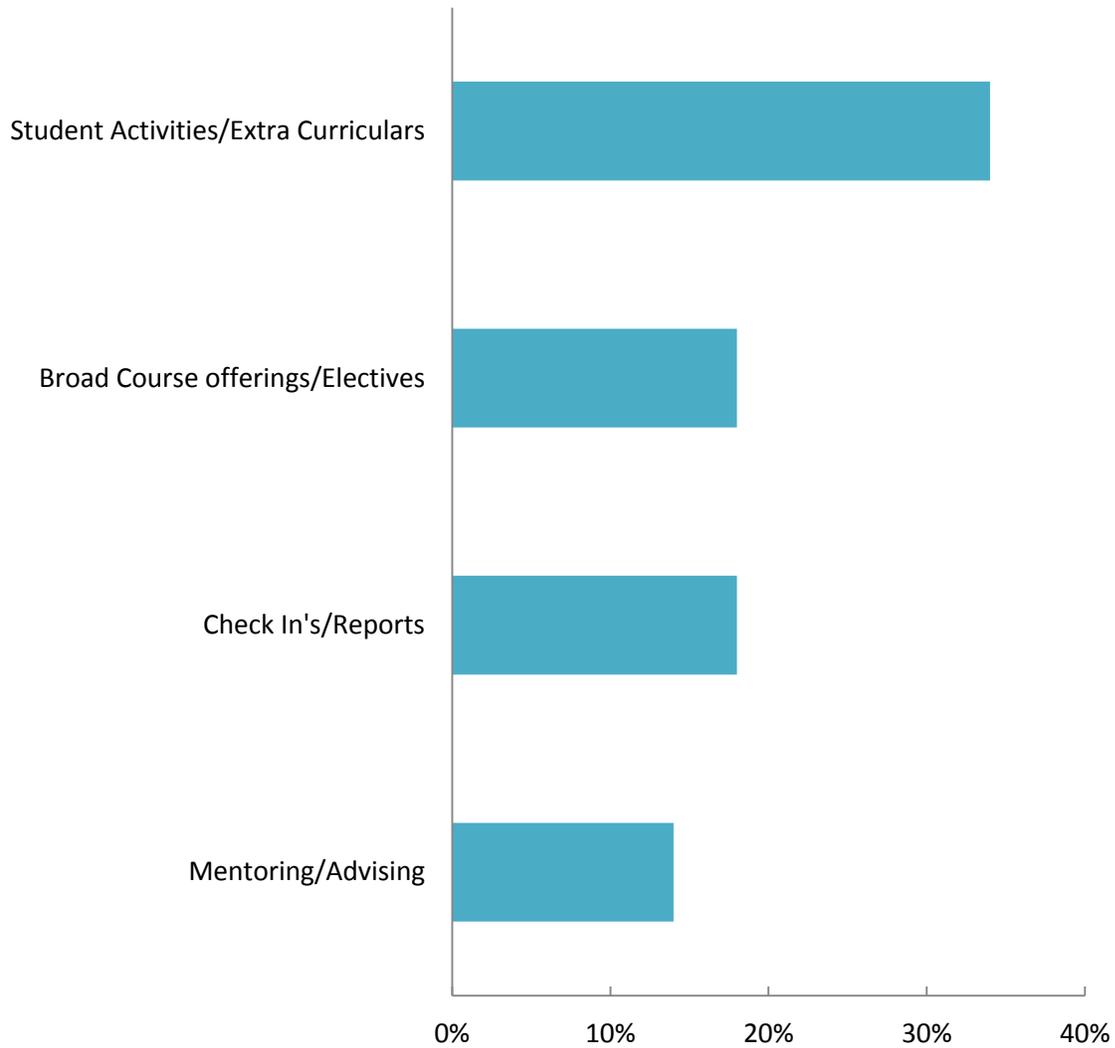
## Activities staff undertake to inform students of job opportunities and career paths



Number of Respondents: 57

\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

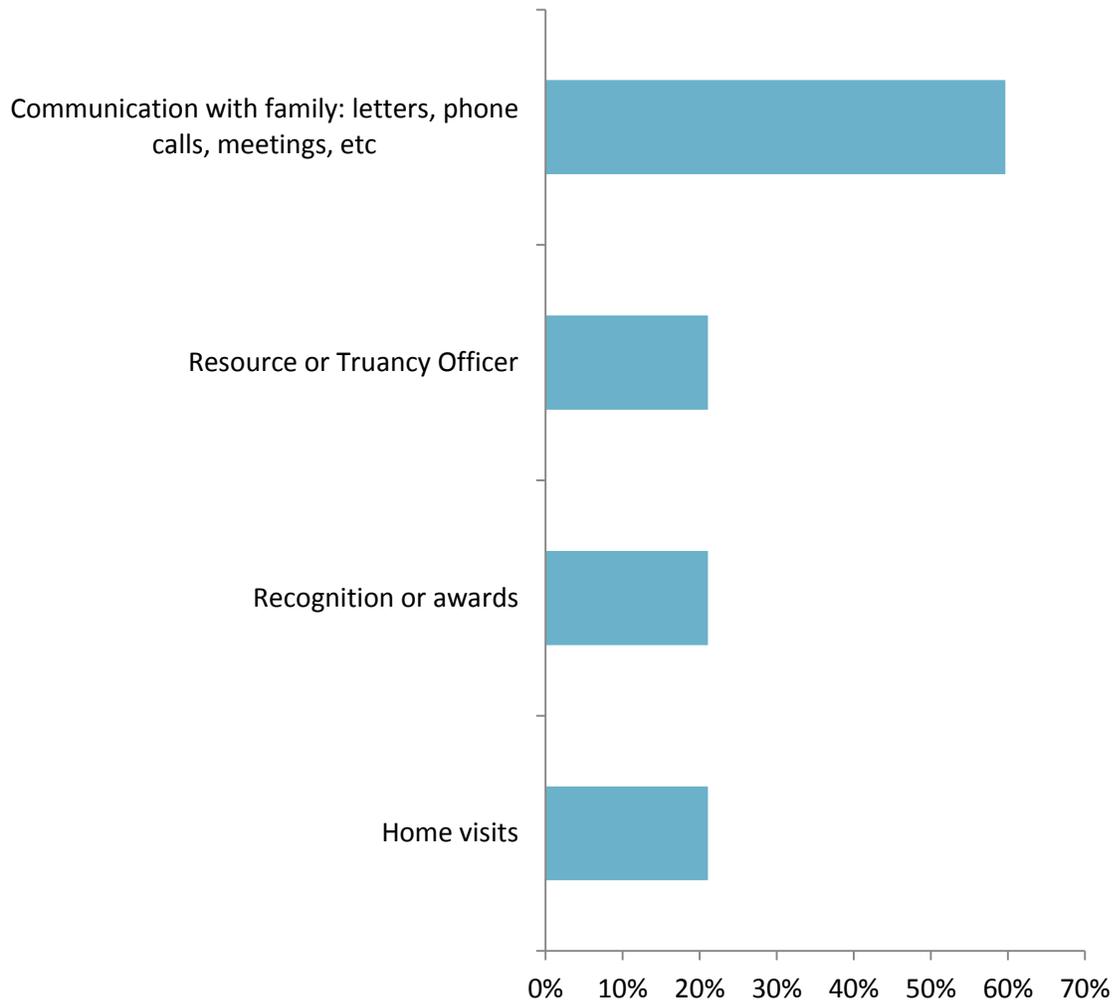
## What strategies does your district use to keep students engaged in school?



Number of Respondents: 50

\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

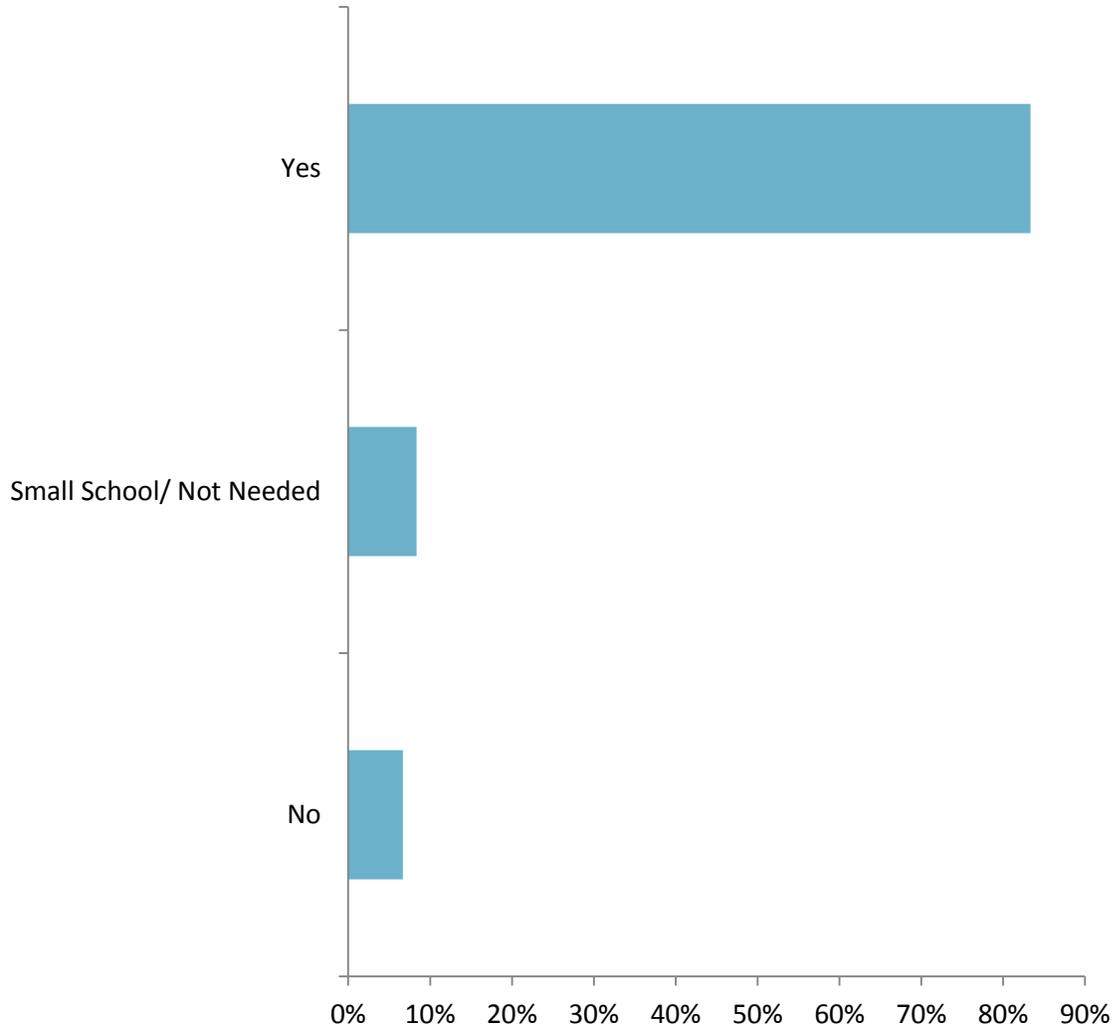
What are your district's 'best practices' to help students who are struggling with attendance?



Number of Respondents: 57

\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

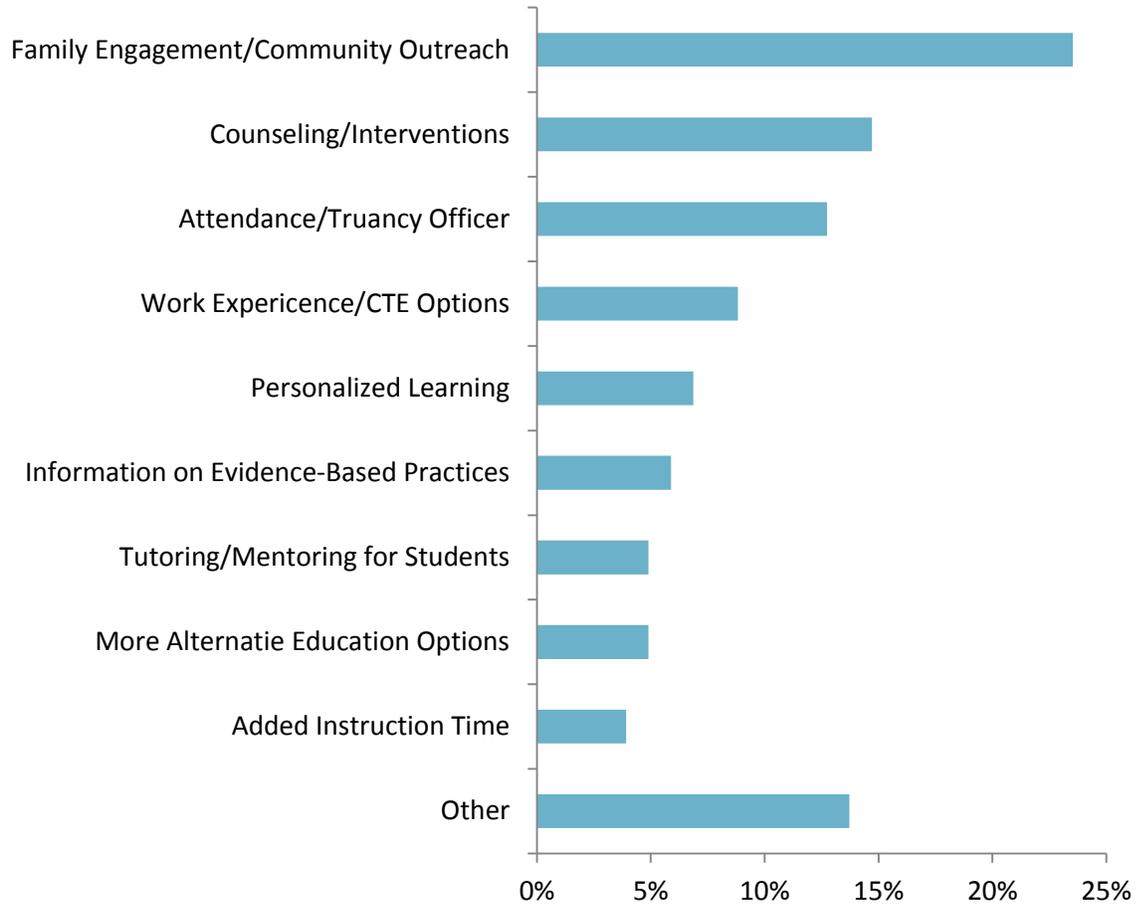
Does your district review attendance data in a way that allows staff to identify individual students who may be struggling with attendance?



Number of Respondents: 60

\*Respondents may be counted in Small School/ Not Needed and an additional category.

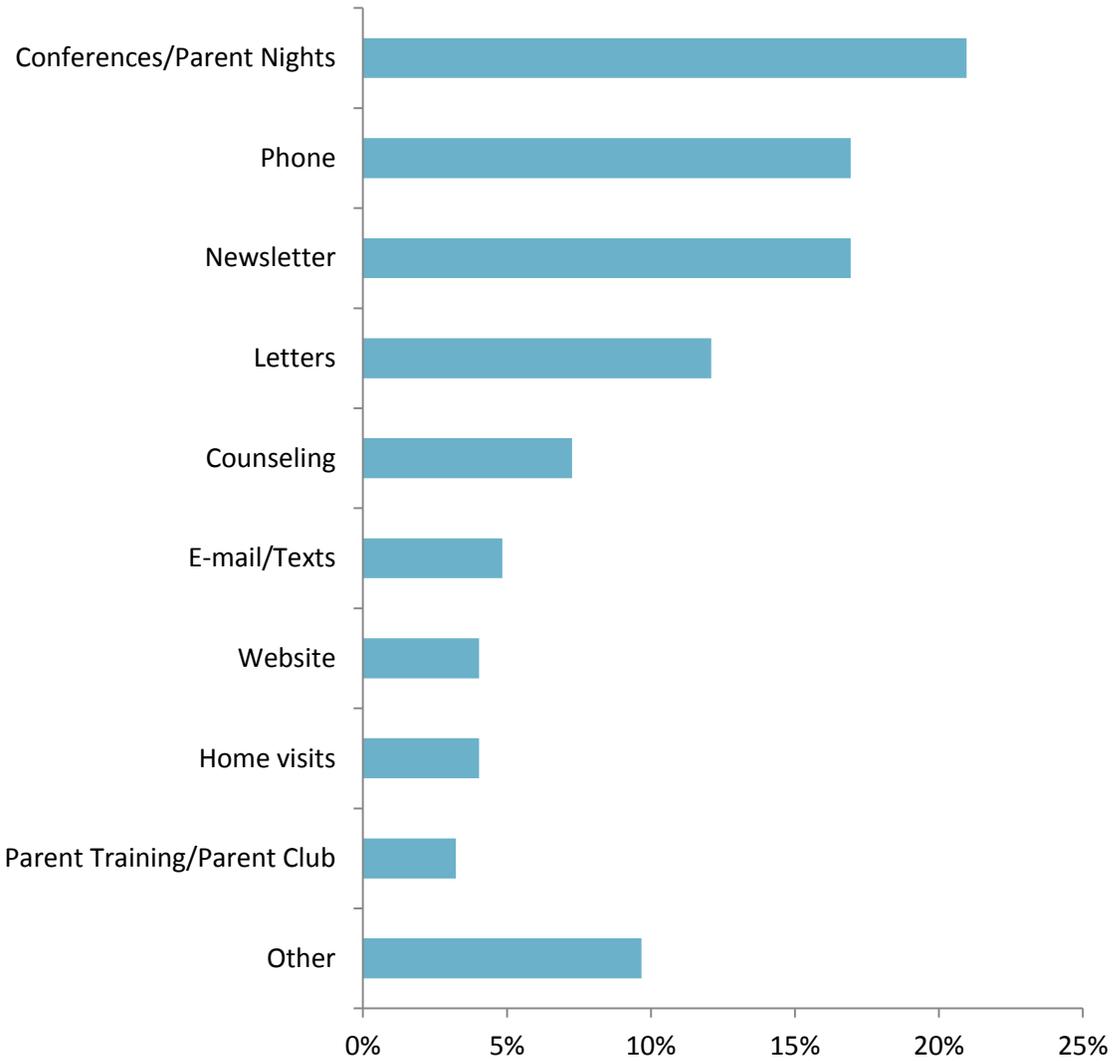
What resources or strategies that your district currently lacks would you like to have to help improve attendance and reduce dropouts?



Number of Respondents: 57

\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

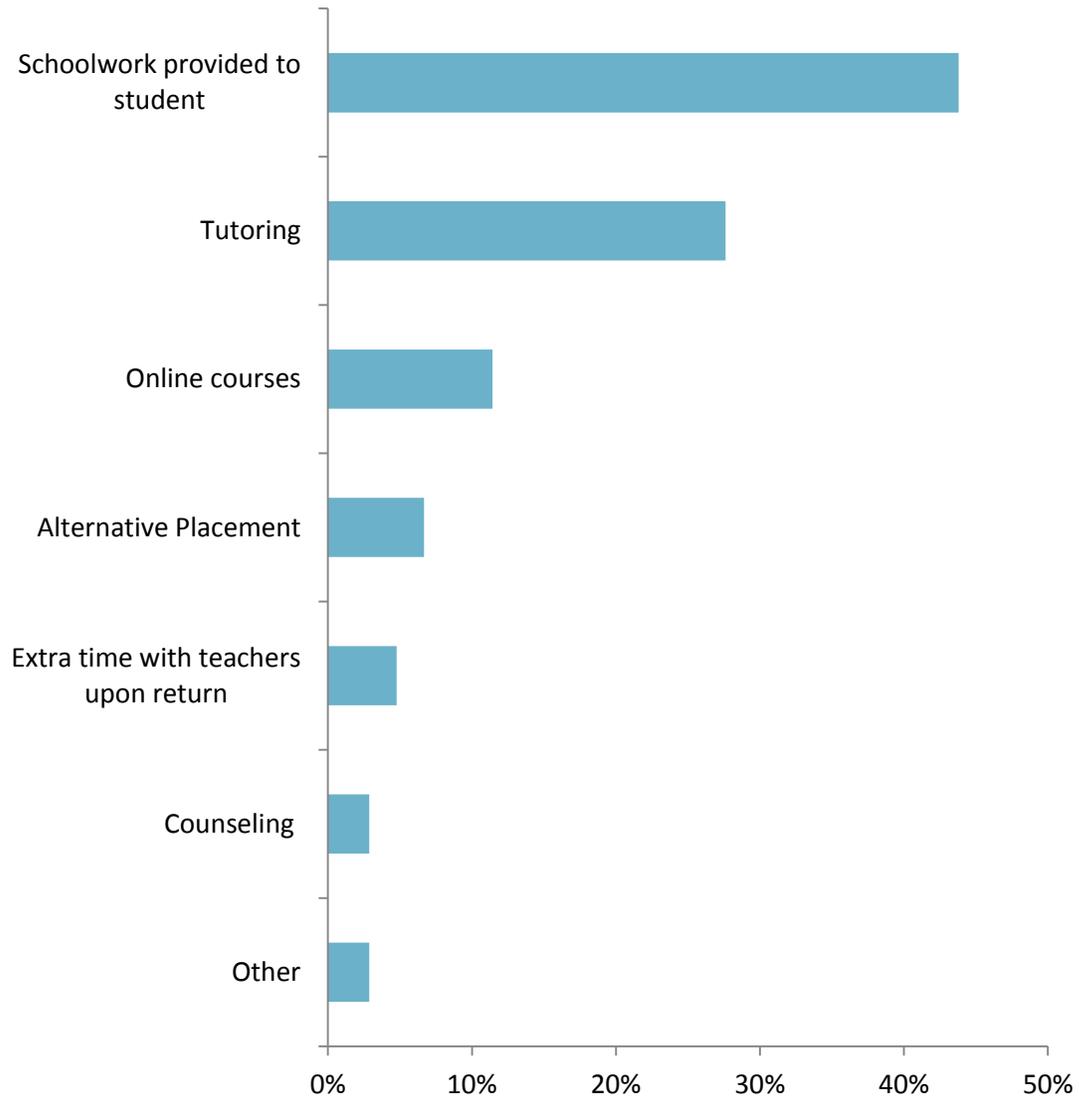
## How do you engage with parents to educate them on the importance of good attendance?



Number of Respondents: 57

\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

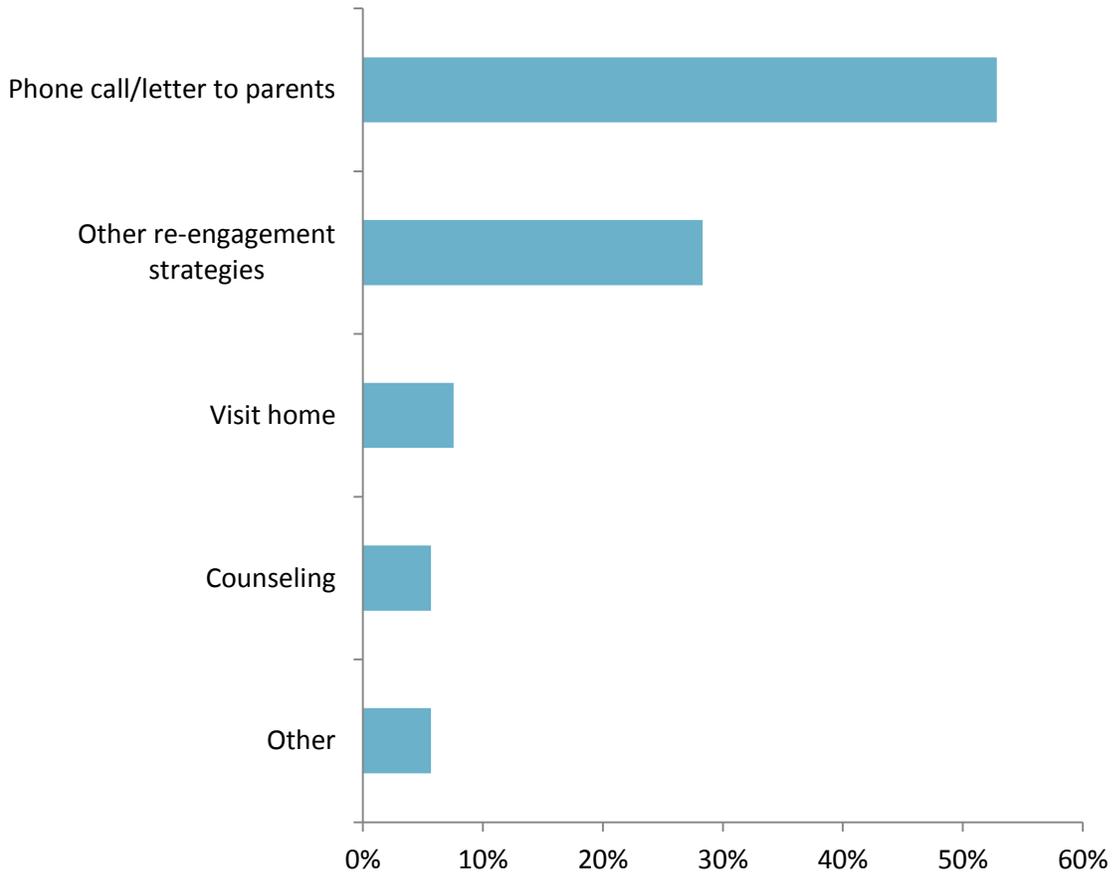
Describe the services you provide to students who are temporarily not attending school because of a suspension



Number of Respondents: 59

\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

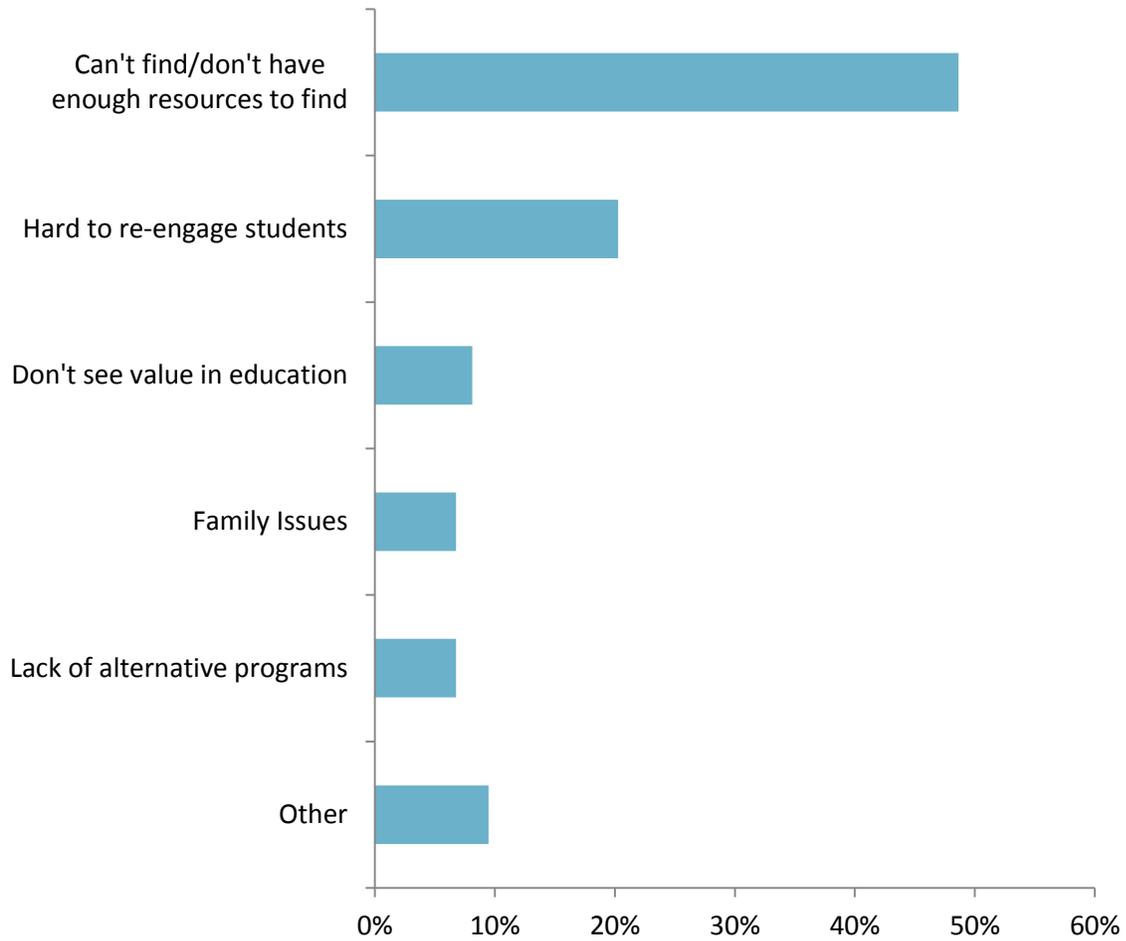
Do you have a program to contact students (or their families) who appear to have left school permanently? If yes, please briefly describe the program.



Number of Respondents: 53

\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

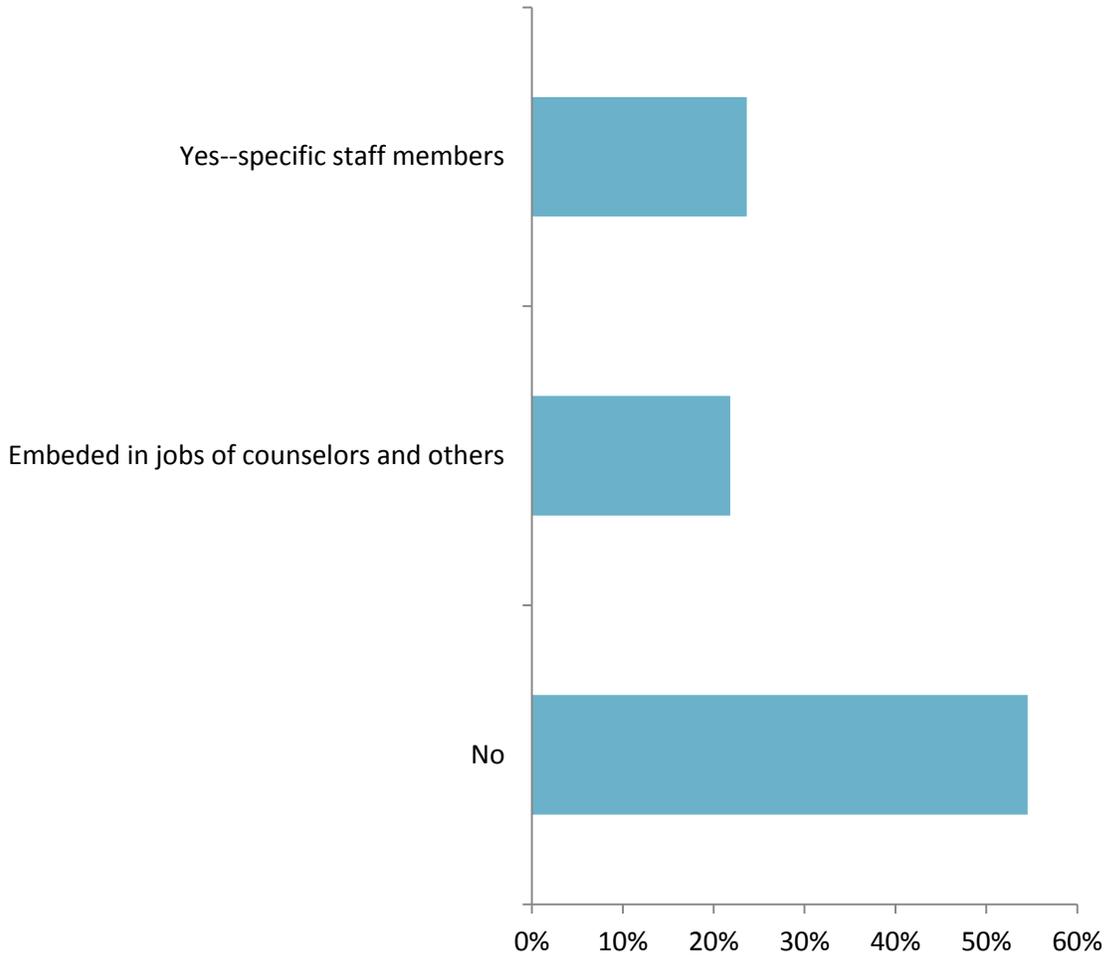
What are the barriers to serving students who appear to have left school permanently?



Number of Respondents: 54

\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

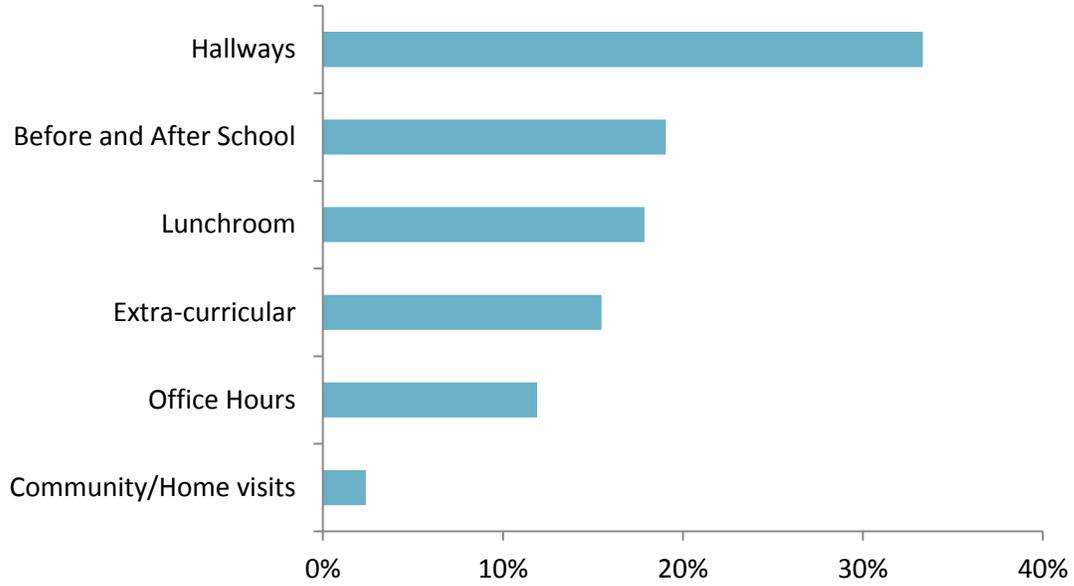
Other than teachers, do you have staff at the school level whose job explicitly includes dropout reduction?



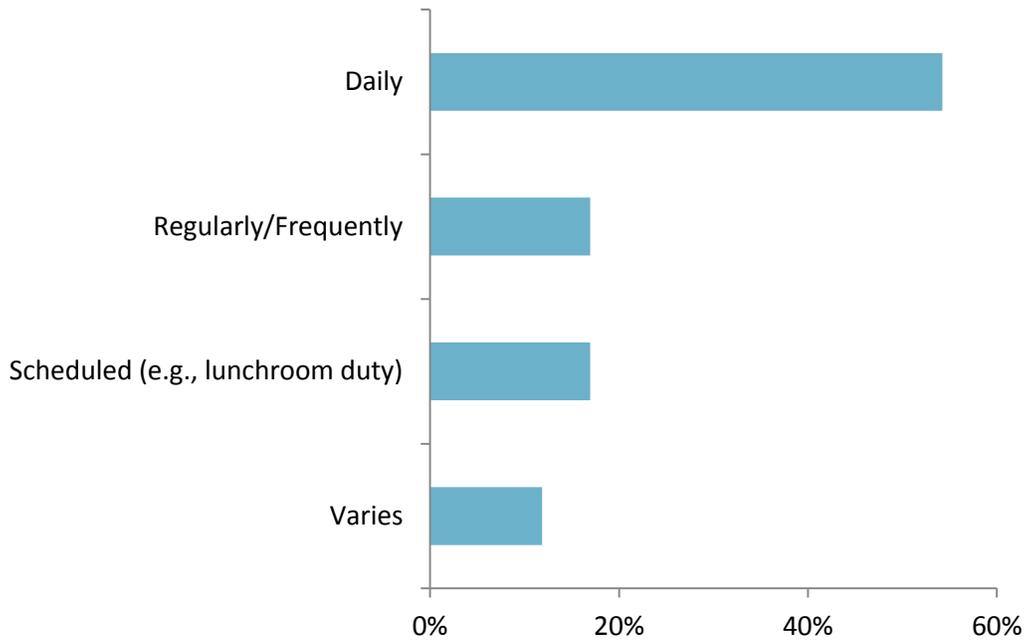
Number of Respondents: 58

\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

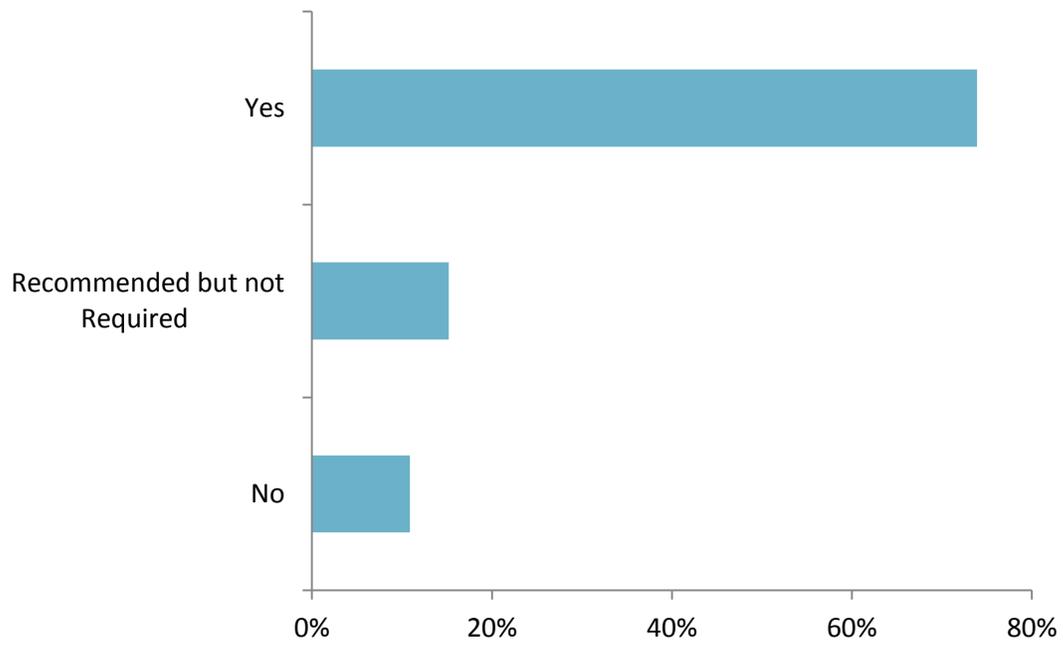
In what ways do staff interact with students outside the classroom (for example, greeting them in the halls, mingling in the lunchroom, holding office hours)?



Follow-up: How Often?



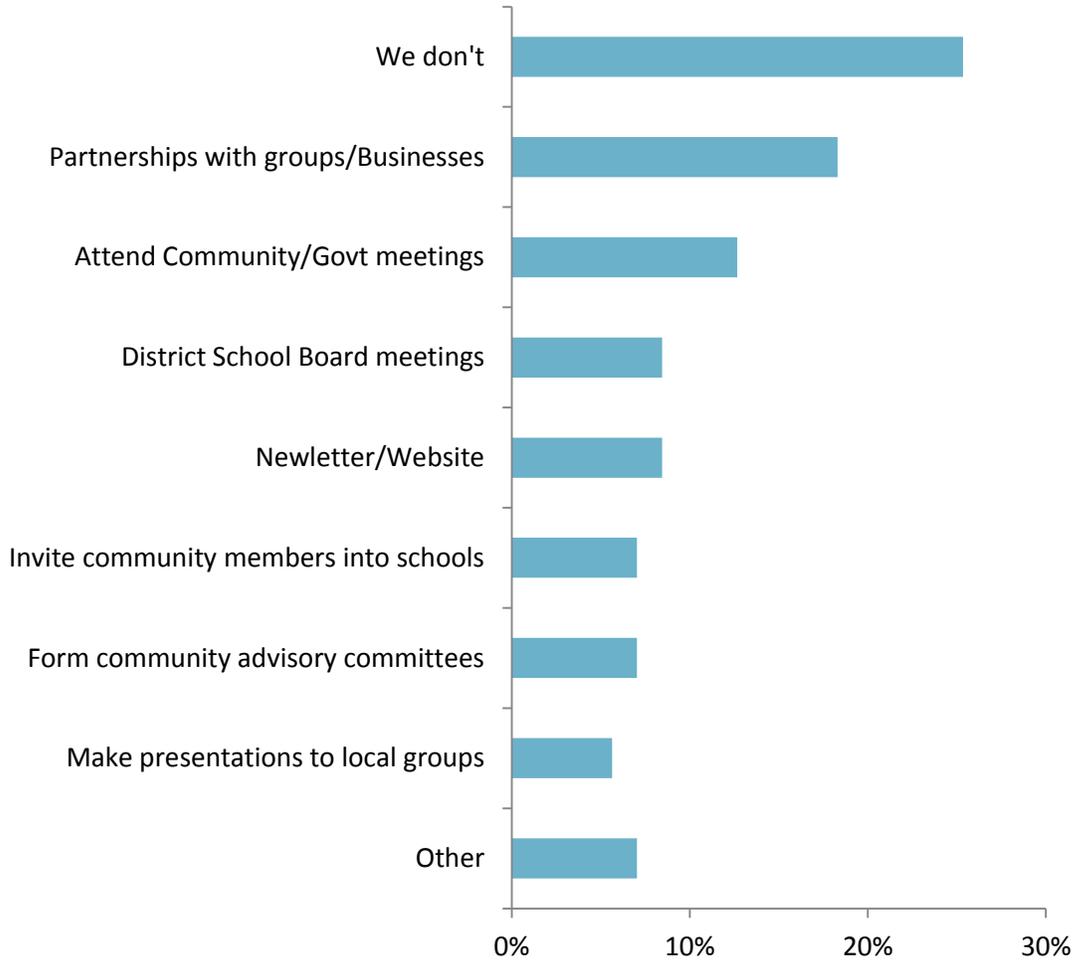
Follow-up: Is this an expectation of all staff members?



Number of Respondents: 60

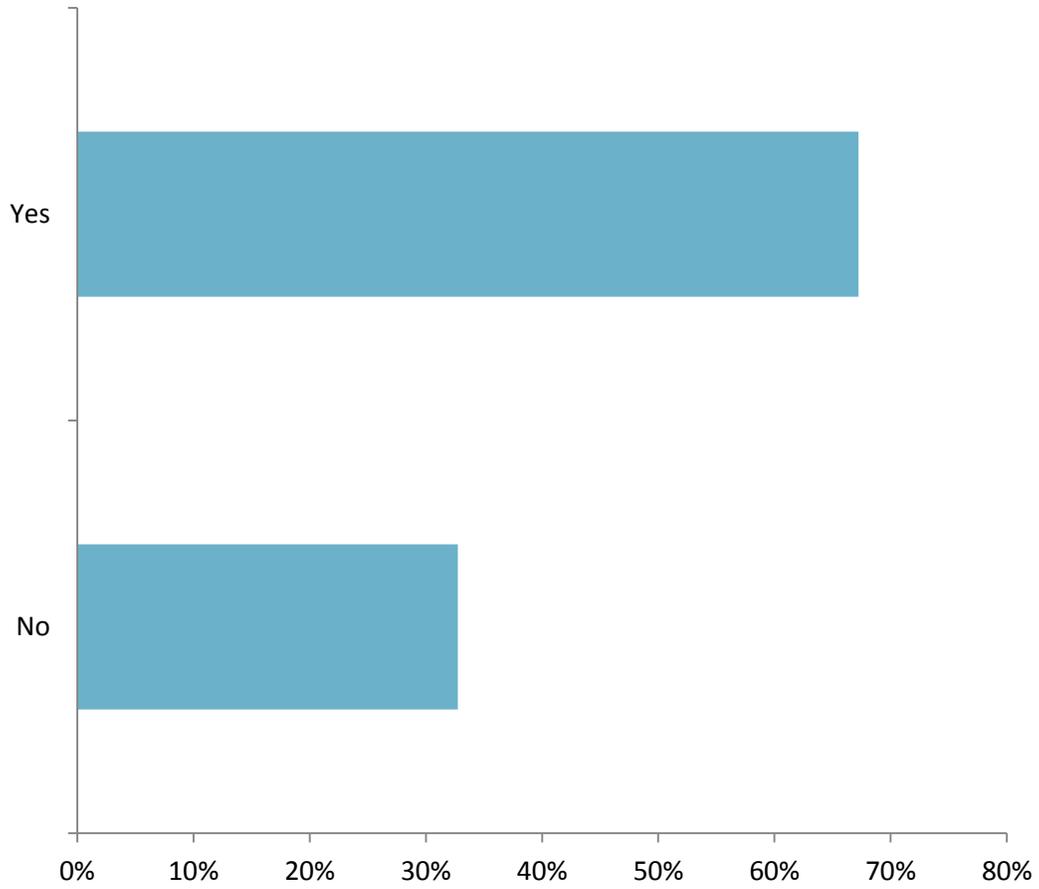
\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

How do you engage with the broader community on the issues related to students dropping out?



Number of Respondents: 56  
\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

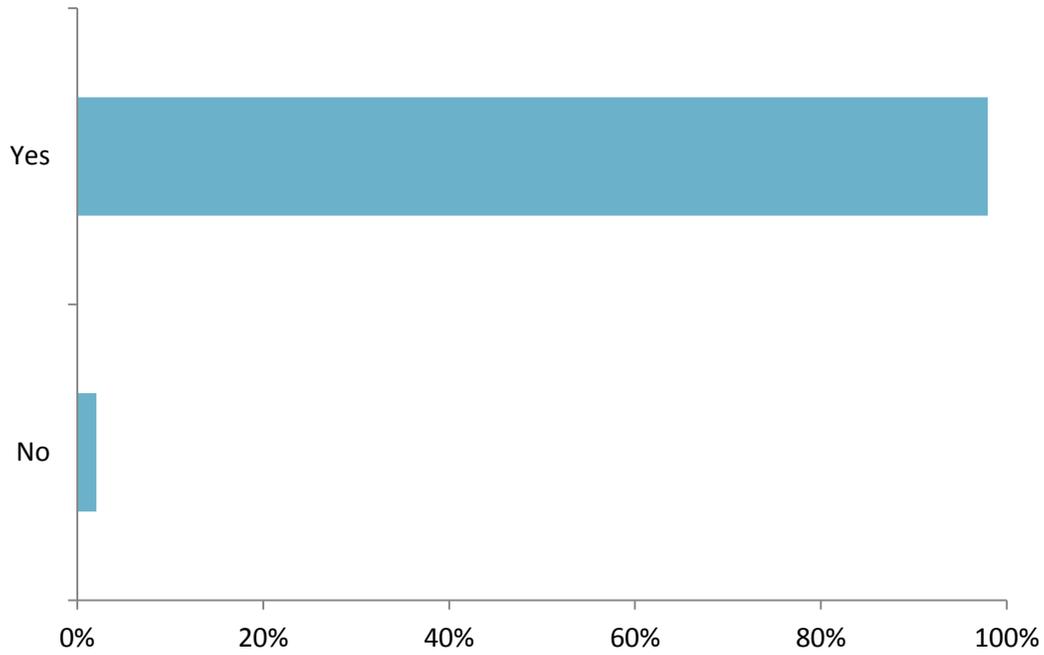
Do you have programs that connect members of the community as mentors for students?



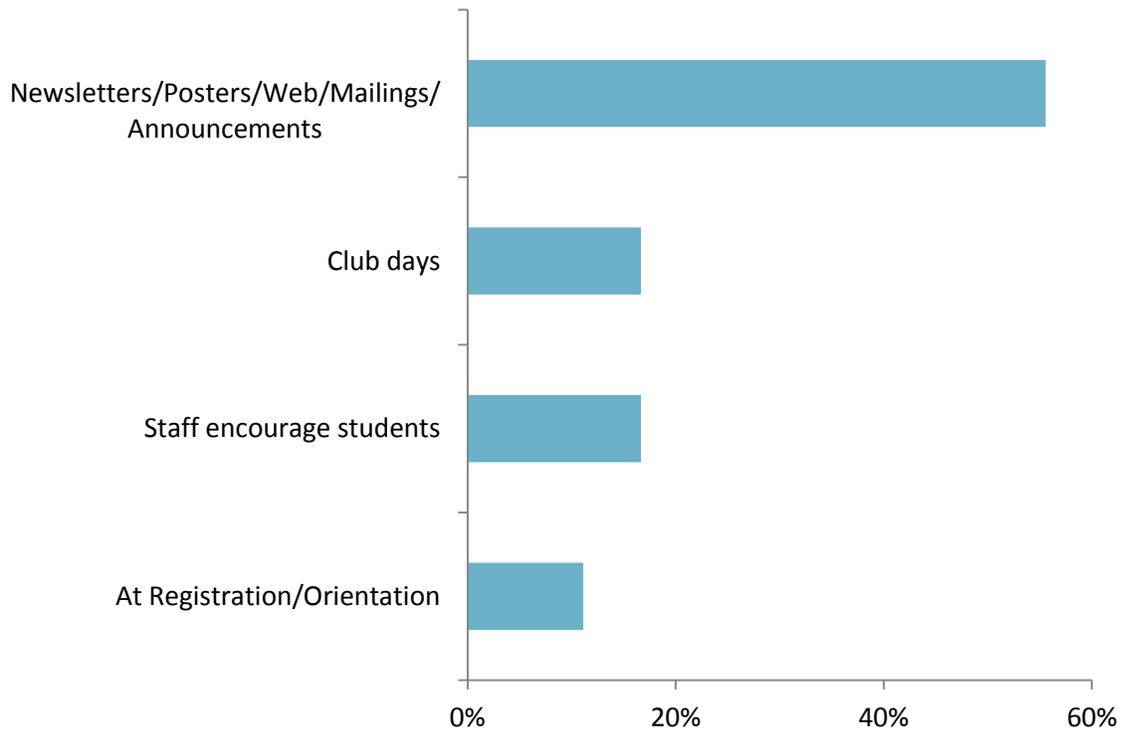
Number of Respondents: 58

\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

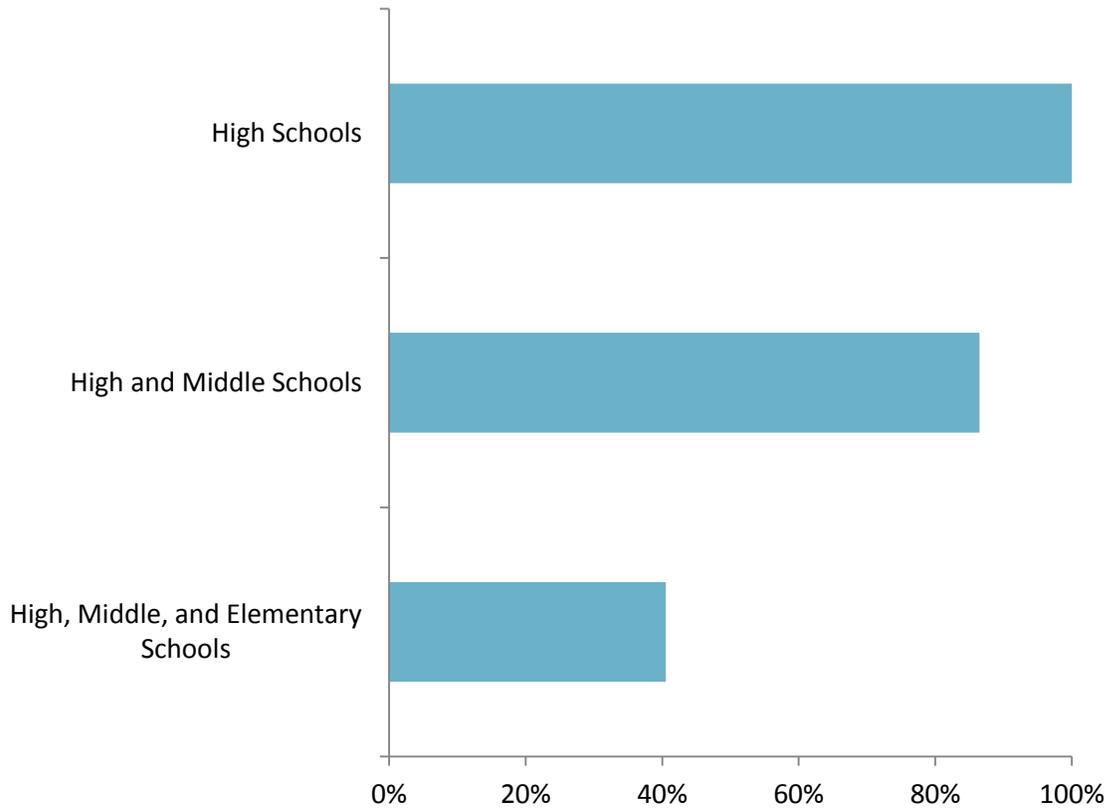
Are extra-curricular activities an effective tool to keep students engaged in school?



Follow-up: If so, how do you promote those activities?



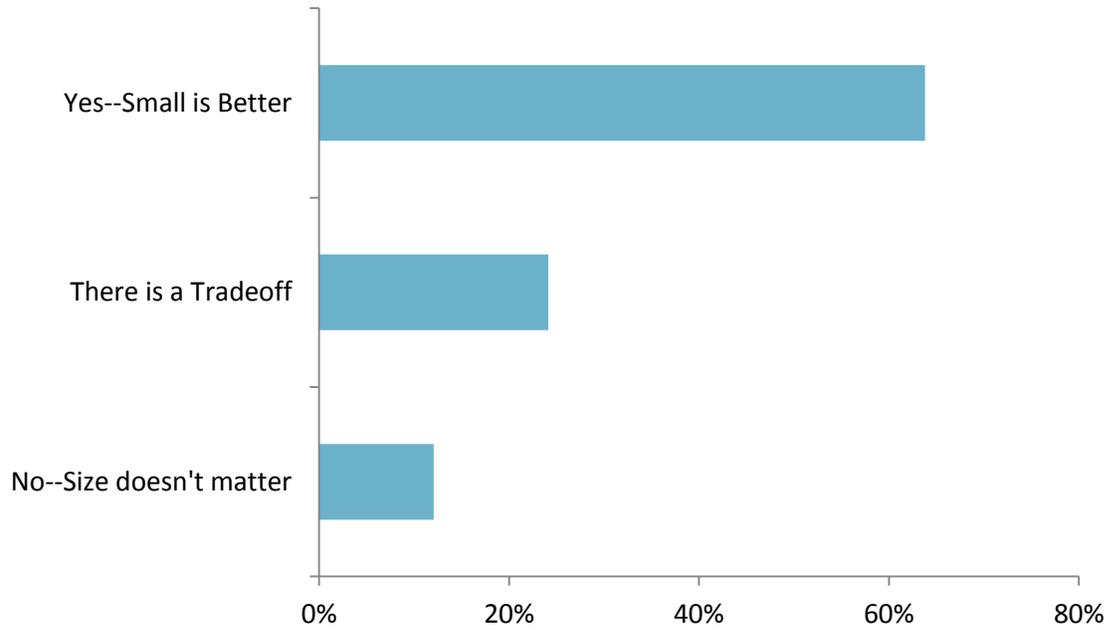
Follow-up: Are they available at all school levels?



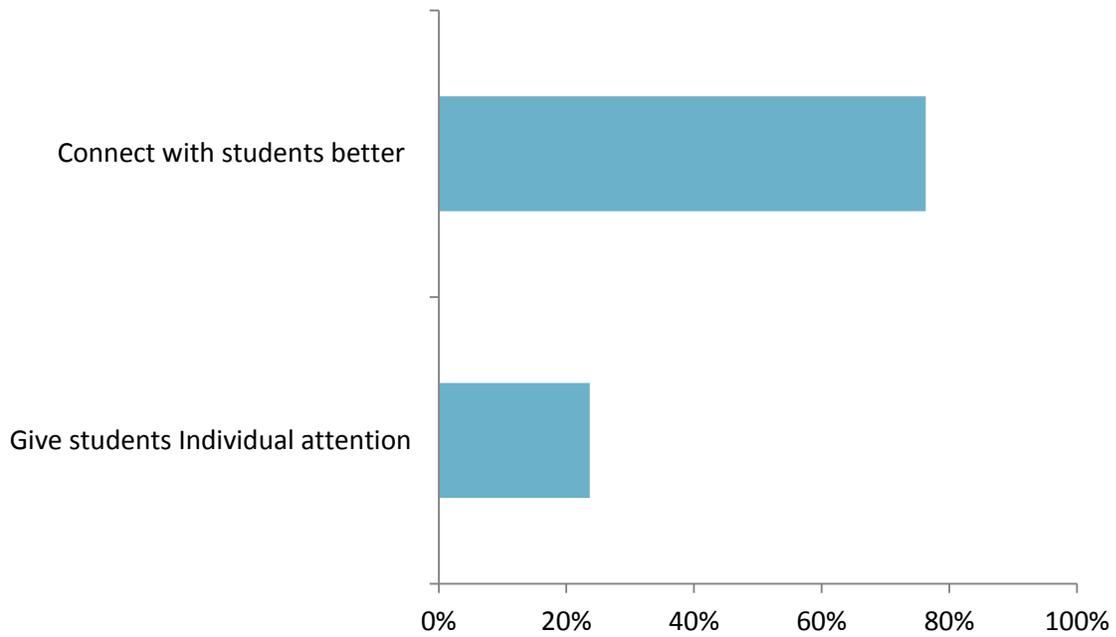
Number of Respondents: 58

\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

Do you think the size of your school makes it easier or harder to help students stay in school?



Follow-up: If so, what is it about your school size that does that?



Number of Respondents: 59

\*Respondents could choose multiple answers.

## Section II: Comments

**Do you have any additional comments or information to add that may help ODE complete a report to the legislature about what school districts are doing to reduce dropouts, increase attendance, and improve graduation rates?<sup>1</sup>**

1. Limit Class Size
2. We have a 97% graduation rate this year. We are always one of the highest around. We don't do school like everyone else. I have described some of the major differences. I am pretty sure the way we do school accounts for our low drop-out rate.
3. We do appreciate your interest in this most important subject. As a bit of feedback, we found many of the questions in this survey to be redundant, and it took nearly 90 minutes to complete, rather than the 30 minutes as advertised. Thank you. We need support from the state (resources, programs, training, etc.)
4. Funding for education is critical. We need to be able to provide FTE and funding for schools in order to support students in the higher level of rigor and expectations expected for college and career readiness for all students. Schools need financial support.
5. This is a prevalent issue in all corners of our state. It would be nice to have a work-group engage in this dilemma and make recommendations to the state board for possible considerations.
6. We are attempting to implement the many, many unfunded and contradictory laws and mandates coming from the Legislature and Feds, etc.; thankfully the ESSA law sheds some light...and yet concurrently doing the key things to reach and engage students and families to keep relevance in the educational pathway their child is on. Confusing question--I'll flip it around...what are you doing to achieve the same outcome?
7. Yes we would like a differentiated diploma with a variety of pathways tied to differing graduation requirements in the junior and senior years depending on the student's pathway. This would strengthen our dropout reduction and also strengthen our CTE/ STEAM pathways. If you would like more details of how this could work please contact me.
8. We recognize we have an issue with attendance and dropout rates and want to correct it. We need help with the process. FUNDING FUNDING FUNDING We are 25% below

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<sup>1</sup> The responses were lightly edited for spelling and punctuation.

the national average in funding and our results reflect that number. We are getting what we are paying for. As long as our state continues to give kids the leftover dollars in the budget, our results will continue to be unacceptable. Our kids deserve the first dollars, not the last ones. Stabilize our funding and watch what we will be able to achieve. Our results are very good for the funding we get.

9. Keep class size down, provide for extracurricular activities and provide meaningful electives such as art, drama and etc.
10. We try to get all staff to have a rapport with students and be the person students will come to. We will have a SRO next fall and we are looking for someone that can be trusted by students.
11. Our alternative high school should not be graded on a four-year graduation rate. By design, they keep students for a 5th year as they all come to that school already credit-deficient. Alternative methods for accountability must be considered to allow districts the flexibility to create programs that fit student need. In addition to that, this alternative high school (and we are adding a middle school model as well), is extremely expensive to run considering the staff to student ratio is 15:1 compared to our comprehensive schools at 31:1. To fund this small school, we aren't able to utilize funds in other places. Summer school is a great option for our students to get back on track for graduation as they catch up on credits. However, transportation is not reimbursed for summer programs and is cost prohibitive for us to get all the students we need to summer school. Drug and alcohol prevention specialists/counselors are key people to add to schools.
12. We know what best practices reduce the dropout rate. Our dropout rate mirrors our commitment to funding those best practices.
13. Coalition of essential schools principles, size and rigor are essential to make the environment relevant for all involved in the process of education (students, teachers, parents, students, staff and administration). Everyone has a critical part in the system and it works because we have protected the time to "be" together working toward a meaningful goal: our student's passions.
14. We are doing everything that we can; given the resources we are allocated. We will remain dedicated to the idea that we can find new ways to engage our students and keep them on track to graduate and not drop out. In the meantime, we ask that more conversations be held with state leaders to close the gap that keeps Oregon from having fully funded schools.

15. We need more opportunities for students to get high interest classes in the form of electives. This will help peak their interest in some area and keep them in school. We also need more help in the area of multi-cultural liaisons to link us to our diverse communities.
16. Something targeted from the state would be great. It is not just a Tillamook problem... it is all across the state. We need more resources and support specifically for this issue. We have been cut so much and asked to do more with less over the years. Now is the time to increase spending on targeted programs for dropout reduction.
17. Funding matters. To truly impact attendance, it takes funding.
18. I welcome the opportunity to discuss in more depth with ODE should they have a need for me to clarify any of the answers to these questions.
19. It would be nice if all schools had the resources to deal with absenteeism.
20. Tell the legislature that we have more to do in Education than just Testing and Curriculum; Behavior Specialist, Counselors and "non-core" curriculum are areas that hold HIGH VALUE for student success.... but have been limited, restricted or eliminated due to funding!!!!!!!
21. You can't keep all high school students in school because of reading, writing and math. You have to have technology and elective programs to keep them engaged. Increase the common school fund to make this happen.
22. Home district refusing to provide a transfer allowing state funding to follow a student and tuition has become a burden. We allow any transfer, some districts don't
23. Mental health issues, namely depression and anxiety. Drug use.