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### **National High School Center Releases Guidance on Dropout Prevention for Students with Disabilities**

Washington, D.C. – The National High School Center has released an issue brief, “Dropout Prevention for Students with Disabilities: A Critical Issue for State Education Agencies,” providing guidance to states as they respond to requirements presented in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) in the area of dropout prevention for students with disabilities.

The brief urges that to effectively assess outcomes for all students with disabilities and to ensure that every student is being given the opportunity to succeed, each state’s districts will need to adopt uniform data collection procedures and calculation methodology around dropout and graduation rates for students with disabilities.

The use of quality data is critical for states in looking to decrease the dropout rate and to increase their capacity for effective dropout prevention programs. The brief outlines the requirements of IDEA and highlights the role of State Performance Plans as starting points for states to develop data collection and monitoring procedures. Considerations and recommendations for states in providing a consistent method for tracking dropout data for all students are also included.

According to the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs, only 51 percent of students with disabilities exited school with a standard diploma in the 2001-2002 academic school year.

“The alarming numbers of students with disabilities who are dropping out of high school not only have individual consequences, but societal implications as well,” commented Joseph Harris, Director of the National High School Center at the American Institutes for Research. “It is essential that states, districts, and schools have the right tools in place to monitor individual student data and use it effectively to prevent students from dropping out of high school. Advancements in this area have been made, but there is still significant work to be accomplished.”

The brief, available on the [National High School Center’s Web site](#), also encourages states to develop longitudinal student data tracking systems and promotes the standardization of definitions, calculations, and indicators of drop outs.



**About the National High School Center**

The National High School Center ([www.betterhighschools.org](http://www.betterhighschools.org)), established in 2005, serves as a central source of expertise on high school-related issues for the Regional Comprehensive Centers, a national network developed by the U.S. Department of Education. The National High School Center is housed at the American Institutes for Research, located in Washington, DC. Subcontractors include Learning Point Associates, MDRC, the National Center for Educational Accountability, and WestEd.

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