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New High School Dropout Prevention Report Sheds Light on Early Warning Signs and Appropriate Interventions

Washington, D.C. — Nationally, U.S. high schools are failing to graduate approximately 30% of the country's future workforce each school year. To help meet this challenge, the National High School Center at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) announces the release of a report outlining steps that schools can take to identify at-risk students and provide the necessary support systems and relevant interventions to assist students in obtaining a high school diploma.

The report, "[Approaches to Dropout Prevention: Heeding Early Warning Signs With Appropriate Interventions.](#)" by Louise Kennelly and Maggie Monrad, outlines **four key indicators** that researchers have found to be key predictors of future dropout:

- **Poor grades in core subjects;**
- **Low attendance;**
- **Failure to be promoted to the next grade; and**
- **Disengagement in the classroom, including behavioral problems.**

Identifying warning signs during important transition years is critical for targeting resources and interventions to prevent dropout. Today, potential dropouts may be identified as early as the sixth grade and in some cases even earlier. To assist educators in the identification process, the report highlights proven high-yield predictors tailored to individual grade levels. Gleaning the latest research from national experts on dropout prevention, the report offers user-friendly, detailed tables outlining school-based indicators of high school dropouts. The information is supported by research-based facts and statistics cited for each indicator.

"Truly understanding who is dropping out and the precursors of this national epidemic are important first steps in locating and implementing effective dropout prevention strategies relevant to the needs of particular at-risk populations," commented Joseph R. Harris, Ph.D., Director of the National High School Center at the American Institutes for Research. "Consistent with what the research is telling us, school systems should focus dropout prevention efforts early and continue to monitor students on an ongoing basis so that the most appropriate resources and interventions can be targeted to the students most at risk of imminently leaving school."

Further, the report discusses the use of early warning data systems to target interventions for groups and individual students, offers a variety of best practice approaches undertaken by higher-performing high schools, and presents effective programs that are currently being implemented to stem the dropout

problem. Key characteristics of specific dropout prevention programs developed for high school age students are also provided within the text.

The report, available on the National High School Center [Web site](#), encourages continued research on dropout prevention programs and strategies.

About the National High School Center

The National High School Center (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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