

I.D.vi
Graduation Rates

Table 6.1: Percentage of Students Graduating From High School					
Subgroup	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
<i>Annual Measurable Objective (AMO):</i>	80.99%	80.99%	83.24%	83.24%	83.24%
All students (Counts toward AYP)	76.9	73.8	81.8	72.91	75.46
American Indian/Alaskan Native	----	----	----	----	----
Asian/Pacific Islander	----	----	----	*	----
African American	73.3	74.0	82.6	76.92	82.69
White (Not of Hispanic Origin)	79.8	74.3	80.8	69.44	69.72
Hispanic	----	----	----	*	33.33
Free/Reduced Meals (FARMS)	77.0	74.5	72.6	66.67	69.00
Special Education	72.2	76.2	61.5	47.06	54.84
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	----	----	----	----	----
Male	69.4	65.4	76.9	62.0	66.02
Female	82.7	82.2	86.6	83.5	84.07

Graduation Trend Data by School

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
CHS-ALL	82.19	76.19	78.82	67.09	63.51
CHS-Sp Ed	90.00 (10)	66.67 (9)	66.67 (6)	25.00 (8)	0 (8)
WHS- ALL	73.77	72.31	83.70	76.61	81.69
WHS-Sp Ed	50.00 (8)	83.33 (12)	57.14 (7)	66.67 (9)	73.91
SCPS- All	76.9	73.8	81.8	72.91	75.46
SCPS- Sp Ed	72.2	76.2	61.5	47.1	54.84

**I.D.vii
Dropout Rates**

Table 7.1: Percentage of Students Dropping Out of School					
Subgroup	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
<i>State satisfactory standard:</i>	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
All students	5.62	5.13	5.36	7.27	5.28
American Indian/Alaskan Native	*	-----	-----	*	0.00
Asian/Pacific Islander	20.0	0.0	6.67	0.0	20
African American	5.96	2.67	3.64	7.16	4.45
White (Not of Hispanic Origin)	5.26	7.43	6.55	7.79	6.16
Hispanic	0.0	0.0	14.29	0.0	0.0
Free/Reduced Meals (FARMS)	6.37	5.76	5.84	9.03	4.50
Special Education	1.92	6.65	12.93	15.22	9.48
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	0.0	*	*	*	0
Male	7.71	6.41	7.98	9.80	6.77
Female	3.72	3.91	2.81	4.87	3.83

Drop Out Rate Trend Data by School

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
CHS – ALL	6.70	8.29	5.76	5.90	6.11
CHS – Sp Ed	4.26	10.00	19.51	18.75	13.89
WHS – All	4.74	3.05	4.99	7.99	4.70
WHS – Sp Ed	0.00	4.17	90.09	13.19	7.50
SCPS – All	5.62	4.13	5.36	7.27	5.27
SCPS- Sp Ed	1.92	6.56	12.93	15.22	9.48

Special Education vs All Students

	Drop Out Rate				Graduation Rate		
	AMO	Spec. Ed.	All Students		AMO	Spec. Ed	All Students
CHS	3.00	13.89	8.66		83.24	0.00	63.51
WHS	3.00	7.50	4.70		83.24	73.91	81.69
SCPS	3.00	9.48	5.28		83.24	54.84	75.46

A. PROGRESS IN MOVING TOWARD GRADUATION/DROPOUT TARGET BY SUBGROUPS:

1. The graduation rate for Somerset County Public Schools has increased for the aggregate and all subgroups.

The graduation rate has increased for every subgroup and as an aggregate measure with a rate of 75.46% in 2007. This is a 2.55 percentage point increase over 2006. A comparison of the two county high schools shows one in a steady decline over the past five years and the other with an overall increase since 2003. There is a disparity of over 10 percentage points between the two high schools. The larger high school had an increase of 5.08 percentage points resulting in an aggregate rate of 81.69%.

Reviewing the graduation rate by subgroup revealed an increase for every group. The Female subgroup had the highest rate (84.07%) which exceeds the AMO target. The African American subgroup has the second highest graduation rate (82.69%) among all subgroups, although it did not meet the AMO target, it was a 5.77 percentage point increase over 2006. The White, FARMS, Hispanic, and Special Education subgroups also showed a small increase in 2007.

2. The dropout rate for Somerset County Public Schools decreased.

The 2007 dropout rate (5.28%) was the lowest rate in five years, with the exception of 2004 (5.13%). The aggregate rate dropped almost 2 percentage points from 2006 ending a three year upward trend. A comparison of the two county high schools shows one steadily increasing over the past three years. The larger high school decreased its dropout rate by 3.29 percentage point in 2007. This rate was responsible for the system rate decrease, since the other high school dropout rate increased by .21 percentage points.

The subgroup with the highest dropout rate (Asian, 20%) and the lowest dropout rate (Hispanic and LEP, 0%) are the smallest subgroups in the school system. Each of these groups has less than 5 students. Each of the other represented subgroups dropout rates decreased in 2007. The largest decrease was shown by the Special Education subgroup which had a dropout rate of 15.22% in 2006 and dropped to 9.48% in 2007. The dropout rate of other subgroups which decreased were FARMS (4.5%), Males (6.77%), African American (4.45%), White (6.16%) and Female (3.83%). There were no dropouts in the small LEP or Hispanic subgroups in 2007.

B. IDENTIFY PROGRAMS, PRACTICES, OR STRATEGIES AND THE RELATED RESOURCES THAT APPEAR RELATED TO THE PROGRESS

1. Individual Plans for At-Risk Students

The school counselors at each high school began writing individual plans for identified students who were at risk for graduation in the fall of 2006. These plans were monitored throughout the year by the counselors and the Supervisor of Workforce Development. Monthly progress reports were provided to students, parents and administrators. Intervention

strategies addressed below were introduced as necessary. There were 172 students with individual plans, 97% graduated in June 2007.

Specific Implemented Master Plan Action Steps in this area are:

- 1.3.9 Implement identified school improvement team strategies to raise expectations for all students.
- 1.7.4 Provide support for non-achieving students with individual achievement plans.
- 1.8.4 Monitor progress of 12th grade students with individual graduation plans.

2. Intervention Strategies for Students At-Risk

Students with individual graduation plans that were not progressing as expected were provided intervention in the form of academic tutoring and/or counseling. The University of Maryland Eastern Shore and community volunteers provided tutoring for students in their coursework. Counseling was also available for students for both academic issues and non-academic issue which affected their school work. Each school used the services of the Learning Support Specialist to work with students to overcome barriers to academic success and the Behavior Intervention Specialist to work with students to improve behaviors that were negatively impacting their success.

Specific Implemented Master Plan Action Steps in this area are:

- 1.1.27 Maintain Learning Support process for identifying the appropriate services and strategies for struggling students
- 1.3.3 Develop and implement a plan to maximize the use of *PLATO* at the high schools to improve student achievement.
- 1.7.2 Enrich tutoring program with incentives
- 1.7.4 Provide support for non-achieving students with individual achievement plans
- 1.7.5 Monitor the impact of multiple opportunities for students to improve their work
- 5.2.11 Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of Learning Support Specialist role.

3. Strategies for Parental Involvement

Individual graduation plans were monitored on a monthly basis by school counselors. Parents were given reports of student progress each month and were notified of any areas that were not satisfactory. Individual conferences were then held by the school counselor for the parent and student.

The *GEAR-UP* project provided career information and experiences for students and families as well as activities emphasizing the importance and value of continuing education.

Specific Implemented Master Plan Action Steps in this area are:

- 1.7.4 Provide support for non-achieving students with individual achievement plans.
- 1.8.4 Monitor progress of 12th grade students with individual graduation plans.

RELATED RESOURCES FOR GRADUATION/DROPOUT TARGET	
Staffing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff each high school with a Behavioral Intervention Specialist and a Learning Support Specialist who work with students at risk. 	Cost: \$ 131,169 Source: Local (\$ 88,669) SS/HS (\$ 42,500) <i>*Duplicated Reference</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff each high school with two school counselors 	Cost: \$ 121,880 Source: Local
Core Program	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Individual Graduation Plans for At Risk students. 	Cost: \$0 Source: Staff Time
Intervention	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide career information and experiential events for students and families stressing the importance and value of continuing education 	Cost: : \$11,000 Source: <i>GEAR UP</i> Grant 2006-2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate tutoring in academic coursework by UMES students and community volunteers 	Cost: \$0 Source: Volunteer Time
Materials, Supplies & Equipment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials to produce Individual Plans. 	Cost: \$ 200 Source: Local
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community volunteers are used to provide tutors for high school students at risk. 	Cost: \$0 Source: Volunteer time

C. CHALLENGES BY SUBGROUP IN MOVING TOWARD THE GRADUATION/DROPOUT TARGET:

1. The graduation rate for 6 of the 7 represented subgroups and the aggregate did not meet the AMO target.

Somerset County's graduation rate was 75.46% which did not meet the 2007 AMO target of 83.24%. The school system has not met the 83.24% target for the past three years; one concern is that the target will become more and more difficult to reach as it advances in 2008 and in the future.

Six (6) of the seven (7) represented subgroups did not meet the AMO target in 2007. Although the African American subgroup (82.69%) had the highest rate of the six groups and increased by 5.77 percentage points over 2006, the rate was .28 below the target. Other subgroups not meeting the AMO target were White (69.72%), FARMS (69%), Male (66.02%), Special Education (54.84%) and Hispanic (33.33%).

Further examination of the subgroup data indicates males are graduating at a rate 18.05 points below the females and special education students are graduating at a rate 20 percentage points below that of the overall population. The Hispanic subgroup is graduating at a rate of 50 percentage points lower than the overall rate.

Of greatest concern is the graduation rate for the smaller of the two high schools in the school system. The rate has been steadily declining over the past five years. It has decreased by 19 percentage points since 2003. In 2006 the graduation rate was 63.5% which is 20 percentage points below the AMO target. The school is now in Year 1 of improvement due to this declining graduation rate.

1. We are challenged to engage our students in learning, assure their success, and sell the advantages of a high school diploma.

2. The dropout rate for the aggregate and 7 of the 9 subgroups did not meet the state satisfactory standard.

The school system dropout rate was 5.28% in 2007 and did not meet the state satisfactory standard. A review of the trend data shows the aggregate dropout rate has been above the state standard for the past 5 years.

In 2007, seven of the nine represented subgroup had dropout rates greater than the state satisfactory standard of 3%. Further examination of the subgroup data shows the dropout rate for males is nearly twice that of females. This is a significant concern for the school system because it impacts the graduation status of these students. The female subgroup had the lowest dropout rate; however it did not meet the state standard. The Special education dropout rate decreased by 5.74 percentage points over 2006, but it was the highest dropout rate (9.48%) of all the subgroups and 6.48 percentage points above the state standard. All of the remaining subgroups also had rate above the state standard: Male (6.77%), White (6.16%), African American (4.45%) and Asian (20%, this is only 1 student).

1. We are challenged to encourage and train staff to employ proactive instructional strategies that engage students in learning and promote their attachment to the school.

3. Many Somerset County Public School students come from families who do not value a diploma and lack high school graduate family models.

As a county where many families still make their living on the water and where significant numbers of students live in dysfunctional families with serious problems of drug and alcohol abuse and tremendous economic limitations, students often have several strikes against them when they begin school. It is incumbent for the county to provide a safe haven and concrete vision of education as a viable ticket to success.

The realization of the lack of educational opportunity for some students has sparked the county's interest in a Residential Charter School. Beginning plans for the school include locating the school on the campus of University of Maryland Eastern Shore under a charter granted by Somerset County Public Schools. This school will be a residential academic

program for children of families in poverty that provides rigorous academic studies, a healthy social environment, and support for sound emotional development. The plans include three purposes for the charter: 1: to serve students in realizing their potential by offering a premier educational experience that removes them from the limitations their families' poverty status; 2: to serve as a active training center for teachers in unleashing the potential in each student; and 3: to support education and counseling research.

1. We are challenged to provide for the physical, social, and emotional well being of students necessary for their academic engagement.
2. We are challenged to motivate parental and guardian valuing of educational achievement.

D. CHANGES OR ADJUSTMENTS ALONG WITH THE CORRESPONDING RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS AND A TIMELINE:

We are challenged to engage High School students in learning, assure their success, and sell the advantages of a high school diploma.

To engage students in learning and promote the achievement of a diploma, services will be provided to students that address attendance, academic achievement, and career planning. Attendance clerks have been hired at the two high schools to maintain attendance and contact parents. This not only sends the message of the importance of school attendance which is being tracked, but it also personally says to the student and his family that he is missed and someone cares. Being unable to find infant care, can prevent teen mothers from returning to school after the birth of their child. Collaboration with Faith-Based community organizations has made it possible to direct teen parents to safe, reliable, and affordable child care while they attend school. Some students have no vision or goal for life after high school. Beginning Ninth grade students are participants in *GEAR UP* sponsored activities such as job shadowing, college visits and "Reality Store," – a real life financial planning activity that will provide a tangible look see at what their life might be. Individual Graduation Plans that outline and plot completion of a sequence of courses leading to a diploma will be developed for all students in grades 10-12.

PROGRAMS, PRACTICES, & STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE GRADUATION AND DROPOUT RATES	
Staffing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance Clerks have been hired for each secondary school to monitor attendance and contact parents. 	<p>Amount Budgeted: \$ 40,000* Source: Thornton Timeline: 2007-2008 <i>* Duplicated Reference</i></p>
Core Program	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute "Zero Period." which provides before school tutoring for every student on a rotating schedule through the 5 day week which is aligned with the school's 5 period day. 	<p>Amount Budgeted: \$0 Source: Staff Time Timeline: 2007-2008</p>

PROGRAMS, PRACTICES, & STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE GRADUATION AND DROPOUT RATES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Graduation Plans for students in grades 10-12 outlining the sequence of courses leading to a diploma with supports identified for areas of concern 	Amount Budgeted: \$0 Source: Staff Time Timeline: 2007-2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold a <i>Reality Store</i> program for ninth graders to demonstrate the need to have a high school diploma. 	Amount Budgeted: \$ 1,000 Source: <i>GEAR-UP</i> Timeline: Spring 2008
Intervention	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide After School Tutoring 2 days per week with transportation home from each high school 	Amount Budgeted: \$2,700 Source: <i>GEAR UP</i> ; Nexus, <i>Upward Bound</i> , <i>Project Achieve</i> Timeline: 2007-2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint a mentor from school staff or community volunteers for At-risk students 	Amount Budgeted: \$0 Source: Staff time Timeline: 2007-2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide <i>GEAR UP</i> activities to strengthen students' math skills and to enhance their knowledge of career options, college choices 	Amount Budgeted: \$11,000 Source: <i>GEAR UP</i> Timeline: 2007-2008 <i>*Duplicated Reference</i>
Community Involvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold student/parent/teacher conferences to complete HSA intervention plan. 	Amount Budgeted: \$0 Source: Staff time Timeline: Sept. 30 Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaison with community public and faith based groups' work to provide child care for students who have begun their family early. 	Amount Budgeted: \$0 Source: Staff time Timeline: 2007-2008

We are challenged to encourage and train staff to employ proactive instructional strategies that engage students in learning and promote their attachment to the school.

A wide range of strategies will be employed to increase the graduation rate and decrease the drop out rate at all schools. One strategy under consideration is *Invitational Schools*. A secondary task force will investigate the philosophy and strategies of the Invitational School Movement. This is a national movement that encourages school systems to evaluate each of its policies from the point of view of whether each "invites" students to participate and attend, or to the contrary actually discourages students from becoming actively engaged. A subgroup that certainly seems to need encouragement and support to stay in school until graduation, is the African-American male. In an effort to boost morale, Mr. David Miller a local consultant with the Urban Justice Institute was invited to address the staff on the achievement of male minorities. He will also be working with each secondary school staff on successful strategies.

A second professional development effort to engage students in learning and discourage dropping out is through two principles of the *Coalition of Essential Schools*. The first principle, establishing a “tone of decency” ensures a positive environment that provides comfort to both students and staff. The second principle, “personalizing instruction,” will ensure that the needs of diverse learners are met so that all students have the opportunity for success. Students who are at risk of success are appointed mentors through *Project Achieve*, a partner organization’s Federal Grant designed to serve Somerset’s students. A third support toward personalizing is through the addition of attendance clerks who monitor every student’s high school daily attendance by day and by period. The clerk contacts parents and meets with students. If child care is an issue keeping a young teen mother at home and unable to return to school, the leadership team will work with the Faith Based organizations to provide sitter care.

Interventions must be in place to provide necessary supports to students who are struggling with some requirements and may doubt their capacity to be successful. Every student who fails an HSA assessment will participate in a collaboratively developed intervention plan to help in the passing of an HSA Retake. The committee developing the Individual HSA Plan will include the student, parents, past and present teachers, and the guidance counselor. Information on the HSA requirements and the individual student’s progress will be used in determining the specific intervention. A slightly different form of planned intervention is *Characademics*, a process of using the “big ideas” and key concepts from core area instruction to engage the kids in a life application of great interest and meaning to them. All 8th Grade teachers, support staff, and administrators will be trained in *Characademics* and be able to develop personally relevant lessons that will promote mastery of core content.

PROGRAMS, PRACTICES, & STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE GRADUATION AND DROPOUT RATES	
Core Program	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the <i>Invitational Schools Movement</i> in search of strategies that may help teachers reach more students in Somerset County. 	Amount Budgeted: \$0 Source: Supervisors time Timeline: Fall 2007
Intervention	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint a mentor from school staff or community volunteers for At-risk students 	Amount Budgeted: \$0 Source: Staff time Timeline: 2007-2008
Professional Development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide Afternoon Professional Development through Coalition of Essential Schools concentrating on <i>Tone of Decency, Personalizing instruction, and Helping Students Use Minds Well.</i> 	Amount Budgeted: \$ 24,000* Source: Thornton Timeline: 2007-2008 <i>* Duplicated Reference</i>

PROGRAMS, PRACTICES, & STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE GRADUATION AND DROPOUT RATES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide training in <i>Characademics</i> for administrators and teachers to develop teacher's skill in connecting relationship and ethical thinking discussions as a direct means of core content mastery 	Amount Budgeted: \$ 20,000 Source: Thornton Timeline: 2007-2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract with the <i>Urban Justice Institute</i> to provide professional development on cultural sensitivity and the achievement of African American males. 	Amount Budgeted: \$ 12,000 Source: SS/HS Timeline: 2007-2008
Community Involvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold student/parent/teacher conferences to complete HSA intervention plan. 	Amount Budgeted: \$0 Source: Staff time Timeline: Sept. 30 Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaison with community public and faith based groups' work to provide child care for students who have begun their family early. 	Amount Budgeted: \$0 Source: Staff time Timeline: 2007-2008

We are challenged to provide for the physical, social, and emotional well being of students necessary for their academic engagement.

In order to be successful in school, the students basic needs must be met. Safe Schools/Healthy Students funding provides resources to help students overcome physical, social, and/or emotional barriers to successful school performance. By continuing with interagency collaboration, students and families are linked to services which assist with this process. SCPS continues to pursue funding for School Resource Officers at the Secondary Level.

PROGRAMS, PRACTICES, & STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE GRADUATION AND DROPOUT RATES	
Staffing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate on-going interagency collaboration to meet the physical, social and emotional needs of struggling students and their families. 	Amount Budgeted: \$1,171,245 Source: SS/HS Grant Timeline: 2007-2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff all schools with School Resource Officers 	Amount Budgeted: \$0- <i>Request to Commissioners for Funding costs determinant upon police agencies</i> Source: Commissioners Timeline: 2007-2008

PROGRAMS, PRACTICES, & STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE GRADUATION AND DROPOUT RATES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain an active presence as a key player on the Core Service Board, Local Management Board, and Multi-D Council. 	Amount Budgeted: \$0 Source: Staff Time Timeline: 2007-2008
Community Partnership	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name a Task Force group representing UMES, SCPS, and the LMB to develop the plan, communicate the plan, and seek supportive legislation in the 08 Session for an Eastern Shore Residential Charter 	Amount Budgeted: \$0 Source: Staff Time Timeline: November, 2007

We are challenged to motivate parental and guardian valuing of educational achievement.

To encourage parents or guardians to raise their level of educational expectations for their children requires continuous dialogue and support. Parent/community Advisory Councils will be established at each school which did not initiate one last year, and those that were initiated will continue and seek additional members. A system wide Parent and Community Advisory Council will also be formed. The purpose of the Council is to increase active communication between the school system and the school community for the good of the student. All parents will continue to be encouraged to communicate with and visit their child's school. Periodic meetings with the NAACP will be held to discuss topics related to minority students' school performance.

PROGRAMS, PRACTICES, & STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE GRADUATION AND DROPOUT RATES	
Staffing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a system Parent and Community Advisory Council as well as individual site Parent and Community Councils through the support of the Family and Community Coordinator. 	Amount Budgeted: \$6,200 Source: Local Timeline: 2007-2008
Core Program	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet periodically with the NAACP to discuss chronic needs of youth and collaborative efforts to meet their needs. 	Amount Budgeted: \$0 Source: Staff Time Timeline: 2007-2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain active communication with parents and guardians 	Amount Budgeted: \$0 Source: Staff Time Timeline: 2007-2008

