

**NATIONAL DROPOUT PREVENTION CENTER
FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**
Staying the Course

Moderator: Sandra Covington Smith
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Operator: Today's seminar is titled Staying the Course, brought to you by the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities. And now it's my pleasure to introduce Dr. Sandra Covington Smith, who holds a Ph.D. in Special Education and Behavior Disorders from the University of Missouri-Columbia. She is a certified Positive Behavior Support Trainer as part of the University of Missouri-Columbia collaborative partnership with the National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. At the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities, Sandra serves as the Co-principal Investigator and Coordinator of Technical Assistance and Training, and has been with the Center for approximately seven years, and presently serves as the National Coordinator and Trainer for Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Welcome, Sandra.

Sandra Covington Smith: Thank you. Thank you, Bobby. Good morning, colleagues. It's so happy to have you join us today. We are pleased that you were able to find the time to come with us and have this discussion about Staying the Course. We're pleased about this opportunity for numerous reasons.

First and foremost, as you all know, is we have our trainings, we have our discussions. All of our TA that's based from providing webinars, writings, our publications, our conversations with each and every one of you, we always start with looking at the data, to look at a causal analysis that then provides us with our contextual fit. Then at that time, we're able to determine our interventions and match interventions to needs.

So as you take a look and start to walk with us today, along the journey, along the road of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, as Miss Morrison will very vividly describe for you, but also answer questions for you. So as you join us today, take a look very clearly, and what you will see are the steps that led through that causal analysis within a contextual fit, then set within finding what interventions were needed based upon demographics, based upon needs and other indicators and predictors.

So again, we look forward to having this discussion with you. And on behalf of the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities at Clemson University, again, we're pleased to have you.

Operator: All right. Thank you very much. And now it's my pleasure to introduce your presenter for today. Miss Robin J. Morrison is the Instructional Supervisor for Clinical Behavioral Services for Miami-Dade County Public Schools. She oversees the development of academic, behavioral and clinical services for programs for students with emotional/behavioral disabilities. Miss Morrison is responsible for the coordination of functional assessment of behavior, physical restraint, response to intervention for behavior, and school-wide positive behavior in her district.

In addition to the above areas, she is in charge of monitoring activities for SPP Indicator 1, graduation, Indicator 2, dropout for students with disabilities, and Indicator 4, suspension and expulsion for students with disabilities. In 2010, Miss Morrison was awarded the National Dropout Prevention Network Crystal Star Award for individual achievement in dropout recovery, intervention and prevention. Robin, welcome to the program.

Robin J. Morrison: Thank you, Bobby. Good afternoon, and thank you for the warm welcome and introduction. We're going to jump right in and then let me talk about my focus for today for you.

We're going to focus on sustainability. That's your basic. What have we done in Miami-Dade County Public Schools to look at our data, to look at our performance data for dropout, and in those other indicators also? We want to talk about teaming and how to bring people together for the basic goal of keeping our kids in schools and to increase our graduation rate. I also want to talk to you about training and action, and that training and action planning, and what we did in Dade County in the past years and our work with National Dropout Prevention Center. Once we've had our action plans and talking about how we implement it, how we evaluate it, and then also how do we do celebrations, since celebrations, of course, are extremely important.

So let's talk about sustainability. For those of you who are not in Florida, you know that Miami-Dade County Public Schools is the fourth largest school district in the United States. And in the state of Florida, we are the largest school district. So you will see our student population, you will see our number of students enrolled in ESE courses and receiving ESE services.

In addition, you will see our student population and the breakdown for ethnicity, not white, non-Hispanic, black non-Hispanic, Hispanic and then

other areas, American Indian, Asian, multi-races and categories. In reference to this part, we have over two hundred languages that are spoken in Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Next slide shows you our number of schools. So we're talking about over four hundred and thirty-five schools in our district, and you see our breakdown from elementary, K-8 centers, middle schools, senior high, any combination that we may have, and alternative or either specialized centers.

So let's look at our data. Usually in discussing dropout and usually in doing presentations, I kind of leave the data for last, but I wanted you to see where we started and when we got started in looking at certain elements in our district that our state basically told us that we needed to look at, and then where we are now. And then it's like taking you through the story. So if you look at Indicator 2, dropout rates for students with disabilities in our district, I started looking at this back in 2005-2006. So you can see where we were from ten percent, dropping down to nine and seven and then we said, 'Oops.' We hit a little bump in the road and went back up to eight percent, and then dropped down again.

Then looking at dropout again for one of my areas, students with emotional/behavioral disabilities, looked at that at the same time just to see how we were doing, and going from fourteen percent from 2005-2006 and dropping down to eleven percent in 2010-2011. And you saw we did have some bumps in the road. We went up and down a little bit, but we'll talk about that and how those happened.

Then let's look at Indicator 4. For Indicator 4, for us is our suspension rates for students with disabilities. This is one of the first indicators that our district had to look at. So really we have data even before 2005, but I wanted to kind of keep this the same. So looking at our risk ratio from four point four percent in 2005-06, and then dropping it down to three point four percent in 2010-2011. And we need to get this at three percent for the district, so, per the state, so the state is saying we're making some strides, but it's more baby strides, but we're making our strides.

And the last chart I wanted to show you with data is in reference to graduation rates. And graduation rates, we are very pleased. And you can see from 2005-06, starting with thirty-six percent of our students with disabilities graduating, and then moving to 2010-2011, with fifty-seven percent of our students with disabilities graduating. So data looks good for us. We still have a lot to do in all of those areas, but we are moving in the right direction.

The next area I would like to talk about is teaming. And with teaming and developing teams and looking at how do you pull people together to work along with you? If you are given something, either by your district to work on in reference to graduation and dropout, or you're given something by your state to work on, like we were, how do we do this? How do we pull people together? What common goals and common beliefs, or people that have information that we don't even know about? So how do we do this?

So based on this, we in Miami-Dade County, back in 2005, we were told that we needed to look at our dropout rates for students with disabilities. And then we received an email, we received some notifications and then we were told to go to a dropout conference and we got a lot of data from the state, basically breaking this data down and telling us, you know, what your schools are looking like, what your district is looking like in reference to students with disabilities. Taking all this information back, discussing it with our directors and then saying, okay, we need to come up with a plan of action and how we're going to do this.

So we pulled a team together, and with me being the supervisor over E/BD, emotional/behavior disabilities, my first and foremost team would be my district team. And also, with me being the PBS Coordinator for the district, pulling people from the PBS Leadership Team together also to look at Indicator 2 and to look at our dropout rates.

In looking at this, we said, okay, we need to get other people involved. And it was really funny in this next bullet where it said we brought National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities in for planning. That was not something that was planned. It kind of fell in my lap because Dr. Covington Smith, Sandra, I had known her through PBS, saw her and just said, 'Oh, wow. We need to plan. This is what you're doing now, this is what I'm doing now. I need your assistance.' So we brought Dr. Covington Smith in and we had a planning session with her and our PBS person also. And basically looked at and decided, you know, what do we need to do here? What do we need to focus on?

So Dr. Covington Smith gave us an overview of National Dropout Prevention Center, what they do, and how they can assist us. So our question there was, okay, we got all this. We've got a team now. We've got a leadership team, more so. We got some information about Dropout Center. So what should we do now? What should we do with just the information that we have now?

So our first step was to create a task force, and we did. We created a Special Education Dropout Prevention Task Force. And the task force basically consisted of different offices. We looked at Student Services, we looked at

Alternative Ed, we looked at our counselors, our social workers, our Psychological Services office. We pulled people together. Our Attendance Office. We just pulled people together and definitely we said, 'We need your help. We need your knowledge, we need information from your area.' We then met with our Office of Assessment and Research, and Data Analysis office to start looking at what did our district have to show in reference of dropout data?

Because I need to say one thing so you can understand. This assignment was given to me, and at that time, my background was dealing with just behavior, your suspension, your discipline piece, and your E/BD and clinical and all the other stuff, and the PBS pieces. But for me and my team at that time, we needed to go out there and just find information. So finding out from what data was there from our district, and being able to look at that. And then also it was really good when the state basically had Regional Dropout Prevention meetings. So we got to meet other people throughout the state, we got information from them. So we're talking about gathering district information, gathering information from the state, gathering information also from within our district from different offices also. And then researching and looking at all of these documents and coming up with some answers, possibly, and what need to do.

We sat down and we met in reference to the task force, and we basically asked, bring it. Bring in your procedures. Bring in whatever truancy procedures you have. Bring in your exit interview procedures. Bring in any dropout reports that you created from your specific offices, also. We pulled all of this together.

We looked at the Attendance Office. And the Attendance Office, when they met with us, they actually told us, and I didn't even know this, that they actually train their registrars twice a year, and the registrars were trained on procedures that they needed to do and these are the registrars in all of our schools. Also, I talked about that our district Attendance Office monitors W22s, W15s, and DNEs. That is monitored on a regular basis by that particular office. That was news to us. We didn't know.

We looked at, after we had that first meeting where all the different offices sat together and pulled in, and we created a core group, and we started looking at everything everyone sent us. And the core group, of course, was our E/BD staff group and PBS leadership group. And looked at that and said, okay, we have some loopholes. We have some things that we really need to look at.

We looked at the 2006-2007 dropout data later on, and we started looking at W15s. We looked at what the state had sent us, and at that time, Miami-

Dade had five thousand, one hundred and seventy-one students that were shown with a W15. And that is, you know, being withdrawn from a school due to nonattendance. We had students that were sent to Alternative Ed and did not register and didn't show up after thirty days. That's a W15. We had students in Adult Education that didn't register, and that's a W15.

So we started digging to find out, you know, where all these W15s are coming from, and this is what we found out. We even had kids that were going to Juvenile Justice and looking at that and our Juvenile Justice school within the district, and of course that was a W15 also. So those were loopholes.

And the loopholes for us basically said, okay, we needed to clean up these loopholes. We needed to basically find out, you know, how are kids moving from one location and another? And then we needed to educate people, and educate people in the school and say, you know, we're not using this. We're trying to make sure we're cleaning up these codes, especially the W15s because we were high in that.

So the education piece came next with the training and action planning. In our training and action planning, we first started with working with Dr. Covington Smith and her team and basically talking about the intervention framework that came through, through National Dropout Prevention Center. The framework was the first thing that she brought to our attention that was developed by the National Dropout Prevention Center, and the framework came in five phases: developing of state and local leadership teams, analyzing our data, identifying target areas for interventions, developing improvement plans, and implement, monitor and evaluate.

Sandra Covington Smith: Robin?

Robin J. Morrison: Yes.

Sandra Covington Smith: If you don't mind, could you please clarify, give our colleagues an example of what your W15, your W22s are?

Robin J. Morrison: Okay. I'm going to get to that point with—in reference to the W15s. For example, one for a W15, where if a student left one particular high school and moved to another high school, but something could have happened. The child could have been sick and he didn't show up, or something like that. That is a loophole. What happens when a child moves from one school to another school, and how to clean it up? So that's why I used the examples of mainly, most of our W15 at that time was dealing with students that moved from traditional high schools to Adult Ed centers, or traditional high schools to Alternative Ed centers, or just moving from traditional high

schools to either Juvenile Justice in our school that we have in our district. So whereabouts not sure, they did not enter into another school, your W15s.

Next slide, dealing with problem solving. And you're probably wondering, why am I putting the problem solving slide? And you may have seen this problem solving slide before. And the problem solving slide, I've seen it and we've used it for numerous things, whether it's for a response intervention, whether it's for PBS. But I'm putting the problem solving slide up, and if I was able to put the problem solving and the framework side by side with each other, you'll see that they fit together. They fit together. When you're talking about the steps for problem solving and you're talking about the framework, defining the problem, analyzing the data, developing a plan, implement, then monitor and then evaluate the action plan. And this is something within our district, if we're using a problem solving method for one particular area, why not show staff how that problem solving method and how the framework work together? And you're going to hear me talk about a little later.

Sandra Covington Smith: Robin?

Robin J. Morrison: Yes.

Sandra Covington Smith: Also at this moment, if you could—so for example, as you've described to us what the W15s, W22s, what those codes mean, can you talk first about the importance of having that information? As we always says, go back and look at the data. And as I remember specifically, when you and the district team received that data, even with some of your superintendents present, as you looked through the data and started to say, you know, we have some discrepancies here. So how important was it to find those discrepancies, change that information? So as you talked about what they are, how important was that?

Robin J. Morrison: Oh, very important. At the beginning, when we first started this, and it was really funny, that first conference that we had to go to, to the state, and we went, and we started looking at the data that the state gave us. And then we said, 'No, this is not right. Okay? These numbers are extremely too high.' We ended up calling our people in our assessment office, and they said, 'Oh, no. The state is incorrect.' We went back and forth. Of course, the state told us they are not incorrect, you need to check your data. It took us a while to kind of figure out, and it took our district a while to figure out how we, in our district, was calculating dropout, comparing to how the state was calculating dropout.

So looking at just those calculations and being able to say, okay, our numbers were incorrect based on what we were doing here in the state, that

was one thing. In reference to the dropout codes and how the dropout codes were being given out to students, and even though registrars were being trained, staff were being trained at schools, still codes were being given out to students and incorrect codes were being given out to students. So in that case, that is one area that we definitely needed to look at and we needed to work on. Work on basically cleaning up these codes.

Sandra Covington Smith: Okay. Thank you, Robin. And also, one more point because what you've done, you've laid out your very beginning steps, those initial steps. Looking at your data because that allowed you to move forward. Even discrepancies in data to find out truly what are your data showing you? What are they yielding? And so as you walked us through that piece, as you simply were getting started, and as you say, you had to go out and seek knowledge, seek information.

So if you could, if you had to give three recommendations, okay, first to a state team, the state leadership team, that design team, what would they be as states get ready to prepare as for the very first time, or as they come back, I think, each and every year, as we kick off school years, school terms, grading periods? What are those recommendations? And also, since you have this really hands on approach to your school teams, then what would be also three recommendations that you would give to your local teams as well, your school teams? What would those be? Because you've talked about the big picture of getting started, but I think what is interesting to [inaudible] what you continue to do, is what you did at the beginning. It still continues sustainability, and it's mirroring as you continue each year, gearing up to get ready, but then also ending on a high note to get ready to come back again to [indiscernible] of a year. Could you share that with us?

Robin J. Morrison: Well, I think the first thing goes back to the data. And it goes back to data and reviewing your data and your basic—what I call summaries. Looking at your academic scores from the previous year, looking at your behavioral data, your referrals, your suspensions, in school suspension, out of school suspensions. Also looking at your attendance. How did you do the previous year? Going back and looking at that. How did you do per quarter? And looking at those attendance rates for your school.

Looking at your School Climate Survey. A lot of people don't look at School Climate Survey, and they don't think School Climate Survey basically gives you information, but it does because here you're looking at, you know, how do your parents feel about your school? How do your students feel about your school? How do your staff feel about your school? And we do School Climate Surveys annually in our district.

Then looking at the summaries of what happened with parent involvement the previous year. How do we get our parents in? Do we get a lot of our ESE parents in versus our General Ed parents? And if we didn't, what do we need to do differently? And then looking at our student activities to keep our kids engaged in school and keep our kids in schools. So I would say that is one thing to do.

Your second thing I would say, basically I would have your personal staff, because me, I would have my staff right now contact the schools. So contacting their assigned schools and basically scheduling a day to meet with these assigned schools that they have. So if you have a district team that's working with schools, then they need to contact these schools. They need to find out, do these schools have a new administrator? Is there a new team there? Who's working on this plan or working in this area, and how are they pulling all of this together?

And then the last thing I would say, look and review last year's action plan, okay? So if you didn't have an action plan, you had some ideals of things and goals that you were putting together. But if you did have an action plan or your school had an action plan, go back and review that action plan. Look at your timelines. Did you meet your timelines? Look at your interventions that were used. Look at the outcomes that were made. And review that so you'll be able to set the goals that you need for this year coming in.

Sandra Covington Smith: Okay. So this would be your recommendations for your state teams. First look at your data, look for what the story is presently. Where are you now, how far have you come? Looking at areas of need, look at your areas of strength as well. And then you would connect with your state team to making certain that you're reaching out and that you're connecting with the local team that you're concerned about what's happening, what's going on. And then the action plan, because we know that's why it's called an action plan. What actions are being taken place? What interventions we will continue with and what interventions they may not continue with. So that would be summing up, if you agree, your three top recommendations for your state teams, your leadership teams?

Robin J. Morrison: That's good.

Sandra Covington Smith: Okay.

Robin J. Morrison: I think so. And that's something that has helped us at the beginning of the school year. That is something that helps us at the beginning of each semester also. So basically going back to review, find out who's at the schools, and then look at those action plans. Definitely.

Sandra Covington Smith: Okay. So for your local teams, you would say, you know, we reach out them. Even the local teams who need to look at their action plans and start finding evaluations of yes, these interventions worked well, and then look at the numbers because the numbers will tell you if they worked well. And then also you have that piece you talked about with staff. Are we looking at staff thought that interventions were feasible, they thought they were socially valid and seeing that they made a difference. And that's going to come out also at our clients in our School Climate Surveys also.

Robin J. Morrison: Most definitely, Sandra. Most definitely.

Sandra Covington Smith: Okay, thank you.

Robin J. Morrison: So in our next piece, in reference to training and looking at what we did with training and implementation and action planning, let's start off with training and action plan. And I'm going to take you through the story, I'm going to take you through the years. In year one and looking at Indicator 2, dropout training and monitoring, we started with twenty-four schools that we identified. Based on what the state had gave us and referenced to our high schools, they gave us the dropout percentage rates. We looked at what we had in the district, and we identified and we put a criteria there to identify the twenty-four schools with high dropout rates for students with disabilities.

In reference to the next step, we started a two-day training which was basically conducted by National Dropout Prevention Center. So Sandra and her group came down in October 2007 and they trained our school teams. Twenty-four schools, and the teams consisted of three people. Now, in our teams, we said it is a must to have in any team, an administrator must be there. We had also one Special Ed teacher, and then I'm jump back to the General Ed teacher. Because a lot of people kept saying, 'Well, why would you bring a General Ed teacher or General Ed staff member to come in?' We wanted to hear from General Ed. We wanted for them to be able to discuss what was going on in the building with our Special Ed students, and we wanted to have some comparisons there of what we're doing with Special Ed students versus what we're doing with General Ed students.

The team—each school team, at the end of the two-day training, or really throughout the two-day training and then at the end, they had completed a dropout prevention action plan. And this action plan was—we took them through the steps on how to create this action plan.

In year two, we did a follow-up. And each year you're going to see how we built upon this, starting off with twenty-four schools and then now in year two, following up with the twenty-four schools for a one-day follow-up,

basically reviewing what we've been doing for the past year and then adding pieces to our professional development, adding pieces to the training.

Each school team created four Dropout Prevention Attributes. So during this training, they had training on what is academic engagement, what is attendance, what is behavior, what is the parent and family piece and how is all of that tied in, in reference to this training?

Schools received also resources from us. So you're going to see throughout the years we change up on the resources. But the first resource we did, we looked the National Dropout Prevention Center, and in that resource, we looked at providing them with resource strategy booklets and administrative booklets that was also called 'Graduation for ALL: A Practical Guide to Decreasing School Dropout.' So we looked at both of those, we went through those, we talked about how to use the booklets and how to use the book as an administrator guide.

Year three, still building upon year one and two. In 2009 we did something different. We looked at our data, as always do, but then we looked at criteria and we saw that there were ten additional schools that we needed to pull in. So here now we have two cohorts. We have the first cohort, which was twenty-four high schools, and then we had a second cohort of ten additional high schools. So now we had a total of thirty-four high schools that we were working with. Each of the school teams came in and this was where we changed and we went back to just asking for one administrator, as usual, but then we only had one Special Ed. And the Special Ed person could have been a teacher or a counselor or a behavior person.

Each team, this time, had five attributes that they had to develop. So that meant four attributes that had been discussed in a previous year, and behavior, student engagement, academic engagement, attendance, parent and family. But the student engagement was the new area. And they had an action plan also, so that meant five attributes plus an action plan.

Schools did receive more resources again from National Dropout Prevention Center, posters—and I loved the posters—posters, we found out when we did follow-up and went out to schools, posters were all over the schools. We had to even order more posters. They had posters in the front office, they had posters in Student Services, and we told them we wanted these posters to be out and about and we wanted them to be seen and discussed, and why are we having all of this information?

We went into 2010, conducted a two-day training for thirty-four high schools, and talked about school climate and did a presentation. We also had

our Attendance Office come in and talk about coding and monitoring procedures. We did a second day. Our second day dealt with behavior strategies. So resources again were focused on, and any time when we do resources and we give schools resources, we make sure that we train on those resources. So schools did receive 'Secondary Behavior Strategies.' They received what we call our documentation binders at that time also, which I'll talk about further.

We talked about monitoring of action plans, and we talked about how our district was going to monitor and how they should be monitoring on a quarterly basis also.

In year five, in November 2011, we did a one-day training, a follow-up, and now you notice that the numbers have changed. We moved from thirty-four to twenty-four high schools again. Thirty-four to twenty-four for a reason. Looking at our data, we looked to see what schools had made improvements. We celebrated their improvements. When district staff went out, gave out their binders back again, and they said, 'Wow, we did that great?' People were excited. They still wanted to come to the training, they still wanted information. We told them they really didn't have to, but we were still going to be monitoring them. But we still focused only on twenty-four high schools.

And then you see something new. We had a Charter School Rep that participated last year with us. And we found out that we need a Charter School Rep to participate, mainly because after looking at our data, we saw a lot of our kids moving over into charter schools, so we were seeing [ENP] kids moving over into charter schools, and then we were seeing from that movement from one charter school to another, or from coming to a regular school, going to a charter school, we saw numerous dropout codes, and those 15s or 22s or even DNEs that were basically used. So we said we need to pull in somebody from charter school.

We reviewed the framework again with them, going back, even though they've had this before, still reviewing that. We focused this time on the action plan and asked them to focus on three areas: attendance, behavior, and student engagement. Schools again received our 'Reentry Programs for Out-of-School Youth With Disabilities' from National Dropout Prevention Center. We trained on that. And then we talked about our documentation binders.

Now, we have an overlapping with PBS. And it says year five, but really the overlapping with PBS started at the beginning when we first started doing training with dropout prevention. And we've had PBS schools that were trained also on dropout, and they had a three-day training on dropout and

then some schools had a two-day training. And throughout the years that we were working with our dropout schools, we were also working and collaborating with our PBS schools, whether they were high schools, whether they were middle schools or whether they were elementary schools, they received training and dropout prevention.

But in year five, we had some changes within our district, and ten of our twenty-four high schools were PBS schools already, and then they had a PBS action plan and now they had a dropout action plan. So we said no. We wanted to kind of infuse both action plans together. We want to make it easier for schools, see how things tie in together, so we did this. And that was last year.

The ten out of these twenty-four schools were our low performing schools, and each of the schools through their region received an internal coach for PBS which was a Dean of Discipline. They had Team Leaders in reference to their PBS team, and then of course they had PBS team members with an administrator on the team. So all of this was tied in together with the dropout prevention action plan also stated.

We went back to our 'Behavior Strategies' book, we did additional training on how to use, and we gave out another resource also, 'Teacher Encyclopedia – 100 Problems, 500 Plans' for specific students that will need some specific plans in reference to behavior. So this year we focused a lot on looking at behavior, of course, because this is PBS, and dropout, but also in year five, looking at the climate and looking at student engagement.

Are there any questions?

Sandra Covington Smith: Robin, while we're waiting for our colleagues to send some questions or to reach out to you for any clarification, I wanted to ask you something. You mentioned the posters and oftentimes as we talk to teams and talk to colleagues, at state level, our local level, we talk about keeping it visible. And I think that's, you know, part of the literal piece of keeping it visible because you did ask those posters to be posted, you know, throughout the school, campus-wide, but not only to post those but also to discuss those. So that's part of what we talk about, you know, rolling out, getting prepared to start your implementation.

If you could, briefly, could you speak more about that? If you were to take one example at one school. I know there are some of your alternative settings that have some very unique pieces that they rolled out, and I know you're probably going to share some examples a little later of specific programs and some celebrations also.

But when we often talk about the keeping it visible and what's there we're talking about, it's on our plate. When I heard you mention [indiscernible] the action plans, reviewing the framework, continue with ongoing training, those are pieces of keeping it visible. Are there any other things right now that you think of that you did that were unique? And how did they—how did you see them to be, you know, as you alluded to, to be very, very important to move forward and keep this, you know, front and center?

Robin J. Morrison: I think one thing that—and we focus this on any PD, but especially with this particular training and initiative that we did—we focus on administrators. We focused on making sure that administrators were involved as much as possible. We had school teams with administrators, very strong administrators, that had an understanding of what their role was in and guiding their team, and looking at what they needed to look at in reference to their data, in reference to their activities and so on.

And talking about the posters, and I can give you a couple of examples with schools, we had a group that came down, I remember, from—god, I think it was Denmark. And they came down and they were speaking to us and they needed information in reference to E/BD. And we chose a high school and we talked about this and told them that this school also was one of our dropout prevention schools that we're working on for students with disabilities. We walked into the school, and the first thing we saw were posters. And we said, 'Oh, my god, it's in the front.' We couldn't believe it. You know, we tell people to do things, and you know, we kind of basically say, 'Make sure your posters are up, make sure you're discussing them,' whatever. But they were actually there.

And the principal said, 'Of course. Why wouldn't they be there?' Okay, we talk about with our kids importance about graduation. We talk about—and on the posters, you saw different types of posters that this National Dropout Prevention Center basically created. So in discussing them, we talk about it with our girls, we talk about with our guys, we talked about it. What are your goals? Where do you want to go with this? How do you get to where you want to get to? And you saw with some of the posters and how students are graduating and they had that focused goal of, you know, 'I want to get to that job. How do I do that?'

So this principal actually told me, 'Yes, we have discussions. Our counselors have discussions in reference to this.' So yes, we see that. So the guiding piece with this is administrators also. What do administrators do? Because people can take posters, they can take all of this information back. If you don't have that administrator to guide the this team and basically tell a team, 'Hey, this is what we're going to focus on and we're going to do it and we're going to make some changes here.' Yeah. This is what you have.

Sandra Covington Smith: Yeah. Robin, yes. We have a question specifically, so I think the very first one. I know you were going to talk about this in a moment. You're going to talk about some challenges and some barriers and what your next steps are, or how you've planned and how your vision—you know, your vision and your team's vision to move through those barriers or how you have done so. But there's one question specifically that says, 'Did you have any setbacks throughout the implementation of this action plan?'

Robin J. Morrison: Oh, yes. If you notice in our data and you saw through the years and we started doing well and then we had, like, a hiccup. We went back up again. And that was something in, I think, when—and you'll hear me talk about it—the data piece was important to us because if we started seeing things that our state was sending to us, and they were saying, 'Oh, you're doing a good job,' or whatever, or what's called our local agency, educational agency profile, LEA profile came out, and we would be on pins and needles. Okay, how we're going to do, how we're going to do? That was one thing.

Other setbacks? Basically, our biggest one, where every year—and remember I had said that teams need to go out and meet the administrators? Our biggest setback was once we had a team in place at a school, that team could change. And that meant you may have a new administrator, so that means new administration, new teams, we're starting all over again. Hopefully, maybe some—one person may be on that team from the previous year. So that was, like, our biggest setback. But we always said that that's out of our control. And how are we going to handle it? We just do the best that we can.

And our last setback, and you're going to see these same things on the slide again, talking about staff, district staff, if our district staff was cut. So that meant the number of people that we had working on this for the district to be able to go out and monitor and work with these schools, how do we handle that? And that's out of our control also, so that means more reassigning. There were people that were not a part of this initiative on our team. We had to pull them in immediately and basically say, 'Hey, we need you, and this is what you need to do and you're going to be given some schools now.' So yeah, we had setbacks, but we just kept pushing because we knew we needed to do what we needed to do for [inaudible].

Sandra Covington Smith: Okay. And also, I think this would speak to leveraging resources, you have a question specifically that asks about your internal coaches, your team leaders, and it mentions here specifically PBS, but also if you don't mind at the local level, but also talk about, you know, your dropout prevention staff, your leaders, your team, that task force that I met with, that task force that you still have going today, even though you've had a change in members. Talk about that. I think that's more leveraging resources

because I think as you've spoken many times before, don't—as you have all these many titles and responsibilities, don't your—even from your PBS leader in your shop at the leadership team level, but also at your graduation staff, aren't these filling many roles?

Robin J. Morrison: Oh, of course. One thing my staff basically always hears me say, and you'll see if on the slide, 'You wear many hats.' If you were chosen to do this, okay, our team was chosen. I was chosen, okay? You have a leadership role. But you are not hired. I wasn't hired to be a dropout person to work on this. I was hired to be the supervisor for E/BD, so that's the main hat that I wear. But with that main hat, you end up having numerous other hats that you're working on. And it's the same with your smaller core team, it's the same with that task force.

When we pulled all the people in, in reference to creating a task force, we pulled people in that we knew had information for us. And we kind of threw it out there and said, okay, we need information to answer these particular questions. So we pulled in people from Student Services who worked with high school counselors. We pulled in supervisors from those areas. We pulled in our Alternative Ed person who basically also had procedures. We pulled in Attendance. So these were people who came to us willingly and said, okay. They were bringing binders and binders of different things that they needed us to kind of review and they wanted to present to tell us, this is procedures that the district always had in place.

In reference to school teams, your school teams, we tell them the same thing because we tell them, 'Hey, we are a team that was put together for one reason, mainly for E/BD, but we have many hats also. So yes, we work with you in reference to your dropout initiatives. Yes, we work with you if you are a school that has dropout and PBS with both initiatives. And our curriculum support specialist will wear many hats.'

Our curriculum—I can give you an example of how I assign curriculum support specialists to work with schools. For example, we have one person, she may work with a school because there's an E/BD program at that school. Okay. This is the same school that could be a PBS school, and that's the same school that could be a dropout school. So when she visits the school, she's looking at three different areas that she's going to be looking at.

So pulling people together like that, that's a part of the teaming piece. And how you wear your different hats, you have different initiatives, but how you pull this together as a team for yourself, district or state or school—because even on a school level, we tell them, all of you were chosen, okay? You were chosen to be on this team, but you weren't hired to be a dropout

person. You were hired to be a psychologist or a counselor or whatever. And how do you pull all of that together to work on your initiative for dropout?

Sandra Covington Smith: Excellent. Okay. So it's all about having that buy-in, that dedication because there are no, you know, extra funds or set aside funds for them to serve in those roles. [inaudible].

Robin J. Morrison: Oh, no. No. Let me just say one thing. Let me say one thing, Sandra. We did not have extra funds to say, okay, we're going to now create a dropout team for our district. No, no. Okay, we had to look at existing, what we had within our district. This is your assignment, and take that assignment and how are you going to work it? Okay? So we had to look at existing staff. And I need everyone to understand that because I know they're going through the same thing. How are we going to do this? We don't really have a dropout.

And then there's some schools that may be—or some districts or states that may be lucky enough to have a dropout team. And they have a separate team or a separate office that's working on this. For students with disabilities, we have a large Students with Disabilities office, but in reference to that, how does that work? We have to look at what we do and how we can pull all of this together to still work on dropout.

Sandra Covington Smith: Okay. Excellent. So again, leveraging resources. And there are couple more questions, but I think this one would piggyback, you know, very well to the part about resources because you mentioned those books, for example, and of course the posters you received from the Center. But the specific question states, are there resources for getting a diverse collection of poster, books and materials on staying in school? So I think it's a two part here, you know, so where did you get your materials per se? Are you seeing a diverse collection of that information out there? But then are there resources?

Robin J. Morrison: Well, our first resources was in your Center, National Dropout Prevention Center. If you notice in the first or second year, I said that there were little booklets and there were curriculum booklets, and the booklets basically talked about what is dropout, prevention, what are the activities, da, da, da, da, da. And we had schools that used these booklets. And the booklets were used mainly—and we had a team that actually showed how they used the booklets, and they developed a curriculum using the booklets, and used it as a part of their courses. It could have been social skills courses, it could have been something that they tied it into, literature or whatever. But first and foremost, our resources came from National Dropout Prevention Center.

When we started switching off and going into the behavior realm and tying in your PBS and your dropout together, for behavior, which was my first background, we started looking at Sopris West and Randy Sprick. So you'll see a lot of Randy Sprick books that we've looked at. But then we just did research. And we looked at what's out there for administrators, what's out there for school staff, and utilizing what we found out that was out there, plus making sure that what we were using and what we were giving out to school teams was evidence-based also. Because that was something that our district basically told us, if you're doing interventions within your building, they should be evidence-based interventions. So definitely.

Sandra Covington Smith: Okay. And Robin, there's one question. There are two again that are very similar. So for example, we have one question that asks about students with special needs in adult jails that are receiving special education services, are they considered dropouts when it's within the state of Florida, those who are under twenty-two and still receiving a free appropriate public education?

Robin J. Morrison: Now, we went back and forth with this. This is one of the things in reference to—through our research, finding out because one of our supervisors here basically said, okay, we have kids and we have our InD kids, which is our name for mentally handicapped. So looking at that particular area and then looking at the kids that were in the adult jails, are they considered? And we looked at what the state has said, we went and did research. And our state, I believe, had said yes, we are, and how do we work around that? And we are still—I'm going to be honest, we're still trying to work around this.

So I'm looking at—I think this was Melody [ph], our students with special needs in jails are still—yeah, I'm looking at the question. Yeah. How can we still receive FAPE for these children under age twenty-two? We still do this. We still do this. And we work very closely with our Juvenile Justice center also. We look—even the adult center that we work very closely with. We look at this also for any student going up to age twenty-two to make sure that they do receive FAPE. But are they considered a dropout after that? We're still looking into that and we're saying yes, they are.

Sandra Covington Smith: Okay. Thank you, Robin. As you can see as well, I think you have additional questions. Regarding your monitoring—because you do have that progress monitoring piece in place about the binders, as your staff, they go out and they collect the binders. And I think also if you could give details because I know there's a piece where administrators sign the binders or the action plans. But specifically the question is, regarding monitoring, what consequences, if any, were there if it was determined that there were no changes, or poor outcomes or just, you know, lack of implementation based

upon, you know, what they had been trained on?

Robin J. Morrison: Okay. In reference to that, let's go back to one part that you said. First, getting administrators involved, having administrators to sign off on action plans first, to review the action plans also. But even before that, making sure if we have a school that we determined had high dropout rates, one, making sure that they came to our training. And how do we make sure? Sometimes people just send out something and just say, 'Here, here's the training.' We go over and above. If we don't hear from you when we send it out in writing, we pick up the phone and we call. And we call, and we keep calling just to make sure that we get a team from your school.

And then sometimes we've gotten teams and then they'll say, 'Oh, okay, so-and-so and so-and-so is coming.' I said, 'Who's the administrator?' 'Oh, our administrator can't come.' I said, 'Do not send a team unless you have an administrator.' So first, we make sure that an administrator is there at the front in reference to the training. They cannot walk in without an administrator.

Second thing, once they start developing and they develop that action plan, the administrator, before the action plan is sent back to us for us to review, the administrator has to sign off and basically say, okay, we reviewed this. We've had some administrators tell us, 'Oh, we looked at this. We asked our team to make some changes to outline it and to keep in align to some of our missions and what we're working on for other initiatives within our school.' So we knew right there, when they signed off, that they saw it. That principal saw what that team was working on.

The other thing that we did also in reference to this, throughout the time of monitoring, we would send data. And if you remember I talked about the data from our office and we created dropout data reports in reference to our codes. Those reports also went to our district supervisors for Special Education, and then some of those district supervisors for Special Education who were aligned to regions within our district. So then, they had staff that reviewed the reports that we sent out, and then they worked also with the regions and worked also very closely with the schools.

So making that alignment from okay, now we have trained the schools, we have made sure that administrator was a part of that training, we had made sure the principal reviewed the action plan and signed off and approved that. Then making sure that we have region and district level administrators that work very closely with these schools, have looked at their data, and then also said, hey, we need to clean up here. We have some codes that need to be cleaned up in your school. We have some things that need to be done within your schools.'

Also, our last thing that we did, and we did this, I think, within our third year, we started hooking up the action plans to the SPED director, Special Ed directors for those regions to say, okay, here are your schools that we're working with. Here are the twenty-four to thirty-four school. Let's break it down. Here's yours and here are their action plans. So now we have a supervisor over that particular region that knows what that school is putting in an action plan. So now when their staff can go out, they get to look not just at, you know, cleaning up and correcting those codes. They get to look at those initiatives that are put together. They get to look at what interventions are used so they can start asking questions also.

So it's not just looking at a little group like ours. We have to pull in other people. We have to go from different levels, from the school with the administrator to the regions being involved, and then through our district office also, looking at being involved.

Sandra Covington Smith: Okay. And Robin, as we prepare to move forward because of time, but not only, but just I know much of what you're saying and much of the questions that are being asked really do fall into what you're about to elaborate and to discuss with us next.

So for example, just to make a couple of points, when you mentioned about, you know, just the continuation of all the support, the continuing monitoring to make certain that I think first and foremost, though, if there are some consequences, we want to make certain that there's a reason because we give them all the support that they need so there's no reason why they should not be implementing, there's no reason why the actions plans should not be complete and that evidence-based strategies are being utilized.

And so with that piece being said, do you have provided later on as you discuss with us, remember the two tiers certain school are able—are off a certain monitoring list because they did follow through, and then there are some that are continuing to be monitored. Is that correct? Will you [inaudible]—

Robin J. Morrison: Oh, we still do that. If you remember the slide that I showed you, how we went from thirty-four and we went back to twenty-four, and the criteria that we put in place.

Sandra Covington Smith: Yes. Highlight just one of your consequences, if you do not mind? Highlight that as one of the consequences.

Robin J. Morrison: Say that again, please.

Sandra Covington Smith: Yes. Just highlight that as being one of the consequences, if you will.

Robin J. Morrison: Oh, definitely. Definitely. When we did that and we told schools during our trainings that yes, we are monitoring, yes, we are here to assist you and everything else, but we did put a little piece in there that if we saw improvement, we would continue to monitor, but there may be times where you may not even have to come back to our trainings, that we would still work with you.

But then on the other end also, if we saw that people were still not working, and we've had this before. We did. I don't want you to think that, you know, everything was just great and whatever, all of our schools were just participating. No. We've had some schools where it had gotten to the point where I had to get my directors involved and just basically say it. You know, they said they were going to do an action plan. We haven't seen it. You know, it's now a couple months later. I still don't have it. So now we had to put something in writing and just say, you know, based on this and whatever, cc their region staff and whatever, to get other people involved. So we had to go that route. You will always have maybe a couple schools that'll just say, 'Hey, you know, we have all these other things that we need to work on.'

But the majority of our schools, and I can say this based on what our district had put in place also, our district had looked at attendance. Our district had told our principals to start looking at suspensions, start looking at those referrals and looking at your attendance, and definitely looking at your academic achievements within your school. So we reminded them, and then their reasons reminded them how all of these are tied in together, so they needed to be doing this for our students with disabilities.

Sandra Covington Smith: Excellent. Excellent. Okay. So we can continue now.

Robin J. Morrison: Okay. Thank you.

Sandra Covington Smith: You're welcome.

Robin J. Morrison: Okay, let's start talking about implementation and some of the questions that you asked, you're going to see some of the answers to this. So now, throughout the years have done the trainings, we've had the action plans, we've had the attributes, we've assisted in the development of these action plans with our schools and the attributes. And now we say, basically, we give them rein to tell us, okay, how are you doing with this? So staff are going out and we're getting information from them, either through our binders, which I'm going to explain in a minute how these binders work, or

either through going out, staff actually visiting and seeing what their data looks like, what activities and everything that's being used.

I'm going to break up the next couple of slides and you're going to see they're going to be broken up into how we broke up our monitoring pieces. So the first one is basically looking at attendance. And these are still those same attributes that we trained on also with our monitoring pieces. So what you're going to see, you're going to see sample things that schools told us that they did in reference to attendance. And we had them to get up and they got to be able to present and tell us, these are things that we did last year, or these are things that we're planning on doing, whatever, these are things that worked for us.

So for attendance, they had interventions and we even have a report in our district that's called Attendance Interventions. They had attendance policies and procedures. Even though our district had policies and procedures, we had schools creating their own policies and procedures for attendance.

We had schools that were calling home for unexcused absences. We have what's called Connect Ed., where you can send a message out to all the parents in your school or all the parents in the district also, 'In reference to your child has been absent today, blah, blah, this, blah, blah, that. I wanted you to be made aware of this, da, da, da, da, da,' and having some kind of statement in reference to that. That's our Connect Ed. Letters went home. Home visits from our social workers.

Reinforcements were giving in reference to attendance parties. We went into schools and we were able to see schools that had teams competing with each—grade level teams. And we saw big banners or big posters that were up or basically walls that were painted and showing, okay, the graph from each of the grade levels and how these teams were working and how they were competing on a weekly basis.

Schools made sure that they told their teachers and told their students, you know, how their attendance was improving on a weekly basis also, so we had student recognition, schools told us, and how kids were recognized for improved attendance. Random weekly spotlights where kids didn't even know they were going to be called on the PA system for having improved attendance. And then some schools did it in reference to behavior and had points and they earned points for attendance also.

Next area we looked at, we looked at behavior. So of course we have PBS schools and some of those schools who are PBS and dropout, our PBS schools at that time were looking at their SWIS Data, and they were looking at their big five and they were looking at our suspension reports within our

district that our district creates. And we have a huge service that's called our COGNOS, where there are numerous reports and they look at some of those reports that dealt with behaviors.

We looked at referrals and the number of schools, and they said are the number of referral students received, but not just looking at those referrals, what happened after those referrals and the follow-ups to those referrals?

A lot of schools talked about Saturday schools and how they did this in lieu of an outdoor suspension, also using in school suspension in lieu of also an outdoor suspension. Also talking about Alternatives to Suspension Program that we have within our district and that works with the parents and training parents and working with students also, in lieu of an outdoor suspension. Social skills, conflict resolution training. So these were some things that were discussed in reference by schools in behavior.

Then we looked at parent and family. That's another area that we had for an attribute but we used also for monitoring. So what do we do with our parents in bringing them in for career day or parent participation, FCAT Family Night, our Town Hall meetings that our superintendent does in each of the regions? And having in any of these meetings, whether it's career, FCAT, Town Hall meetings, they're in the language of the parents, English, Spanish or Haitian Creole, translators were there.

Monthly parent workshops that schools gave on specific topics. And surveys went out to parents asking them what areas should we work with you on? Community involvement specialists. Some schools had that and were able to bring in people from the community to work with schools. Churches, businesses, to work with schools. And parent newsletters, again, in different languages if needed, to basically showcase what is going on in their school, and to provide information to parents about due dates in reference to testing dates or any information in reference to student career or what's needed for student graduation.

Next area is academic engagement and how do we keep academic engagement flowing within our schools? And even though yes, these are initiatives for the district, but what did we do differently here? What did we do differently with our students with disabilities? Weekly learning strategies, Saturday tutoring within incentive coupons. Okay, the schools gave incentives to get our kids in. Even our ESOL tutoring on Saturdays or after school. Looking at what types of materials are needed for our teachers and making sure our teachers receive technology or smart boards or computer-based research.

Data chats is the big issue, and data chats were started in our district and they are still going and pulling teachers together and pulling teachers with students in reference to data chats. And I want to say one other thing about data chats. We have one school that is one of our PBS dropout schools also that does data chats not just for academic, they do data chats for behavior also. Educational portfolios and course recovery. So these are just some highlights in reference to academic engagement.

The next couple slides you're going to see is something that I asked one of my counselors to do. And this is a counselor that provides counseling and therapy for students with emotional/behavioral disabilities. But I said in addition to providing that counseling, what do you do and how do you work very closely with our E/BD students? So what are some strategies that you do?

So we pulled this out, and these are the some of the things that she said. 'Yes, I do provide counseling and therapy, but I also talk to our students about their credits, their GPA, their community service hours, courses for graduation, frequently throughout the year working with the parents and working with the students.' And you're going to probably say, well, yes, you have other counselors within the building that should be doing that. But sometimes schools are so big, our kids may not go to those other counselors. So our counselors that provide the therapy to these students work with their grade level counselor and say, 'Okay, we're going to pull them in, we're going to work with you, we're going to ask some of these questions to make it a little bit more intimate for our students, our E/BD students.'

Reviewing students' grades from the electronic grade book frequently through the year also. Also looking at career and your interests and getting feedback from them, also in reference to their responses, www.facts.org, you see there. Looking at our seniors, meeting with our advisors.

I've had one of my counselors actually said, you know, one of their kids never even went to their assigned counselor and didn't even know about what they needed to do, and they're a senior. So they had to walk them over. They had to start working with them intimately and then actually walking them over and just saying, 'Okay, here's your counselor here. The two of us will work together with you in reference to helping you apply to those colleges in the area or outside of the area, or either a university or even a tech school.' So here you have a word from a counselor that is a Special Ed counselor working along with other counselors for the better of the child.

So let's talk about now—we talked about the implementation piece. What we do for monitoring? And I know this a lot of questions that came in in

reference to evaluation and how do we monitor. And we do progress monitoring, and we call it our Far Measures. And you see within our Far Measures there are five areas, and these are the same five areas that we worked on, that we trained on: academics, attendance, behavior, parental involvement, and student engagement.

In looking at these five areas, we broke the five areas down and after we trained and we said, okay, this is how you are going to monitor yourself and look at what you're going to do. And we started looking at, what do we have in our district, and how does it fit into those five areas? So looking at academics, what do we have in our district? And you see some of the things that we put down. And even the schools came up with even more. These are just a sample of things that you would look at in reference to monitoring how well a school is doing in reference to academics.

And then looking at our early warning system also for at-risk students in reference to the attendance pieces. What interventions are used there also? Looking at also for behavior, looking at in school and out of school suspensions and looking at those ODRs or referrals or what we call in our district our scants [ph]. And then looking at what do we do about it? You know, we have kids revolving, going in and out of indoor suspensions. What are we going to do? What are we doing differently with this?

Looking at our parent involvement, how can we get our parents involved more with our schools? How can we get them in, whether for IEP meetings or just coming in for trainings or just being—just understanding what is needed for their child to graduate and to keep that child in school?

And then there's a part here that says define the criteria. At that point in time, when we put this in for monitoring, we had to say we needed to define it as a district team. You know, what would be the criteria for parent involvement? And then we asked the schools and told them that they needed to develop their own criteria within their school. And what is considered parent involvement within your school and what is that criteria and is it being met?

And the same thing, what, in defining also student engagement and how do you look at student engagement? What are the interventions that go with student engagement within your school? And we needed to look at that also and define it as a district team also.

In reference to our monitoring, you heard us and you heard me talk about a binder. There is a binder. What we had decided, I think, a couple years into our training, that we had action plans, we monitored, we supported, we helped the schools write action plans, we went out and we saw what they

did. And we saw that schools were pulling things from here and pulling things from there, and in certain cases, they weren't really giving us the information that we needed. So we put what was called a book of products together. And in that book of products, we had those five areas that I just went over. And we had a binder with dividers and saying, okay, this is what you're going to have to give us in that binder.

When we ask for that binder back at the end of the year, we should see your final school action plan, whether you tweaked it or you changed it or whatever, it's signed by your principal. So that's the first thing. We should see samples of data reports that you use and a summary. We even changed that, I think, last year. We said because we get to see those data reports, so give us a summary of those data reports and how has your data changed throughout the years, and even breaking it down by quarters.

Then we asked to look at academic, and the academic interventions that were used. So we—this book was mainly as a framework or a structure for them to be able to give us that information based on the action plan, and telling us this is what we did for those areas. What we did for our academics, what we did, what were our outcomes and behaviors? What did we do? What did we do for attendance and parent engagement? Did we have parent meetings? Do we have a sign-in sheet? I'm to the point where if someone tells us, 'Yeah, okay, we did this and that,' prove it to me. Show it to me. Show me that you did it. How did I know that you had a parent meeting? Send me the sign-in sheet. Send me the agenda. I get down to the real nitty-gritty and ask for certain things.

And so this is what the book of products basically did. And it gave them that structure to be able to give us information so when we would come out, we would see, okay, these are the things that we're putting in there. And then that books of products at the end of the year was turned into us. We even had a system that we looked at and how we kind of graded the book of products and we gave them comments on certain things that we felt that they needed to work on. We gave them celebration type things. 'Wow, look at your data here,' and whatever. So we had a comment sheet on there in one year.

So the book of products throughout the years had changed and certain things that with our monitoring, what we saw that needed to be changed and how we improved it.

The school documentation, again, those are some of the same things and how the dividers were broken up in the same information. Action plan, data reports, school information, results. So we had dividers. We put all of that in there for all of this. We told them what needed to be in each of those areas.

This next slide that you're looking at, I love this because I did not create this. This is one of my staff, they created this. I have to do evaluations for my staff, so they tied into their personal evaluation for the district, they tied in dropout prevention. Since they're working on this, let's use this as one of our goals and what we're going to do. So they created a dropout prevention progress monitoring chart.

Yes, they go out through the year and they work with their teams and work with their schools, but they use this progress monitoring chart two times out the year. Mid-year, around January, and then at the end of the year also, when they're collecting the binder.

If you look at each area, you'll see those same five areas again, attendance, academics, behavior, parent involvement, and student engagement. In each of the areas we looked for, did they have goals? Did they have smart goals? And we had trained them on what is a smart goal, and we use that term, a smart goal, because that was something that was built into something that we had in the district, how to develop a smart goal.

We looked at also were there at least two or more activities per each goal for that area? We looked at that. We looked at was there data available in their binder showing how they implemented that particular area? Okay, and that—and we looked at basically the data from the second grading period at that time because we went out at the end of the second grading, going into the third in January.

And we did this for each of the areas. This is what we were looking at. We came up with a criteria and we came up with how we were going to do this criteria and how we were going to score them. We had explained all of this to them ahead of time so this is not an 'I got you.' And we had the administrator that signed off in January. You see how the importance of the administrator, the administrator signed off in April, and who was the district support that did these visits, and they signed off also.

And this was a part also of something that we kept to be able to show that this is our monitoring procedures and how we were going in and out and working with them and how they were doing. And this was a part that they got a copy of also, that they kept at their school site to show what they were working on for their regions or anyone that would come in to see.

In reference to all of this and the action planning and the attributes and the monitoring, we took it a step further and I would say about two years ago, even though we talked about the negative withdrawal codes, we really were aggressively going after these negative withdrawal codes. And that happened for the last two years, that we sent out monthly reports. I

remember I think I just sent out something yesterday. Quarterly reports.

And we looked at, and I think somebody had a question in reference to negative dropout codes and what they are, no show for DNE, your W05, your W13, W15 and so on and so on. We looked at all of these also, and we created a report. And I think the next slide shows you what this report looked like. Remember I said within your team you need to have people that have these common goals? So we had one person within our team, he was our data person and he loved data. He still loves data. He's not even with us anymore, and he still creates this report for us and sends it to us.

This is a report that we have through our larger system where we were able to pull out students' ID numbers, school names, exceptionality codes, and when a certain withdrawal date was used. We only put in the negative withdrawals, okay? The ones that were counted against us by the state. So we wanted to know when a school used this, on what student, at what time, and what was the exceptionality of that student? We put down the name, we put down the region, so then when we sent this out—and the grade, ethnicity—so we could start tracking it, also with truancy flags and everything else.

The reason we had specific information, especially for regions, because then the region knew, oh, wow. When we sent this to them on a monthly or quarterly basis, they knew, okay, these are the schools that I need to focus on. They're in my region. Or if we sent it to SPED supervisors that were over different Special Ed areas, then say there is someone that's over specific learning disabilities, let me look at all our Ks here. Then our group, let's pull out all our Js here. Let's look at that, Js meaning our E/BD, Ks meaning our SLD students. And so on. Our ASD students or our InD students.

So we wanted enough information on here so we could have various people starting to look at this report and say we need to get out there as a team and start working with these schools to clean it up. When we sent it out to regions, regions started sending emails to principals saying, 'Look at this report. You need to review this report. You need to have your people start working.' And we had certain regions that would actually say, 'I need a response letting me know that this has been cleaned up.'

So that goes back to a question where someone had asked, you know, how do you get this participation? How do you get people to work with you? Here you go. You've got to have this. You've got to have your regions, you've got to have your schools, you've got to have different people within your district working with you and assisting you. You can't do this by yourself.

Sandra Covington Smith: Thank you, Robin. Since you made that point and we have questions here, we do have so many questions left that we want to share with you, but we do want to move through the PowerPoint, if you will. But since you answered that question or started to, let's answer that and then move forward.

So that specific question did relate to, do you have any administrators who were reluctant participants? If so, how did you convince them that they needed to get onboard and lead? So could you give additional information? Now, you talked about the tiered support, it seems like, from your office and then above your office and then without, in the region. So we're looking at between and within support [variables] if you will, and looking both at the qualitative and the quantitative numbers. So the data from both. So how they're describing, you know, their input. Are they—is it feasible? Are people showing up at these events which is proven by the artifacts in the books of [products]? But then also, what are the numbers showing? So you're not, you know, using, you know, any one data set or a type of data over another. So how do you bring those people onboard and keep them onboard and energized?

Robin J. Morrison: Ooh, it's interesting. It's very interesting. First part where—and I think I had said this before—yes, we've had a couple principals that were just tough. And I'm not their boss so I had to go to higher ups, to my bosses and to their bosses, and to say we need this information. And basically just say, 'This is an indicator. This is a state indicator, and the state is telling us this is what we need to do. And that's the bottom line. We need to do this. We need to correct this. We need to look at this. We need to look at these codes. We need to do something to keep our kids in school and to improve our graduation rate.' So that was first and foremost right there, okay? It's not a Robin Morrison thing, it's not something that I'm asking you to do. It's something that the state is requiring and telling us that we have to do this.

Other things, the creative pieces of this, as I look at the trainings that we've done throughout the years, and sometimes we bring in different people. And we've done that in the past where we've brought in—I remember once, and if you remember, Sandra, how we brought in an attorney who used to be an E/BD student and who was on the verge of actually dropping out. And he is highly respected within our city and our county, and he came in and he's a spokesperson to students. And he spoke to our staff and talked about his life and where he came from, and if it wasn't for teachers and everything else. So we try to get creative in our trainings. We try to pull in resources that we need. We try to pull in other people that we need also.

And as I said, one particular year, we had people calling and saying, 'Hey, I thought we were having a training. What happened? I thought we were supposed to be sharing with you our action plan.' So people started calling us and saying, 'When is that training? When are we doing this,' and this and that and whatever because we moved it from October to November. As we speak now, we are still being creative—because I wanted to end with this, but I'll bring it up now—we're being creative enough where we're still pulling our PBS and dropout together and we're creating a Share Fair.

So that means now we've pulled in PBS schools and dropout schools, and we have roughly about forty-nine schools that have registered to come in and spend the day with us, and a hundred twenty-seven people, I believe, and these are school teams from forty-nine schools, that some of these schools will be presenting, some of these schools will have poster displays, talking about their data, talking about their initiatives that they put together for their students or for their parents and basically talking about those five areas that we trained them on.

So we have a lot of that going on and that is going to be a big day for us. And we as a team, we look at what can we do differently this year? Who can we bring in? And then Sandra, you're coming in for that. You're bringing in people for that. We have people from the PBS project that's coming in. So to keep these people latched in and to make sure that they understand, one making sure that it's not something that, you know, we should have to beg you, but we do, but it is something that the state has told us that we need to do.

And the second, keep it creative, keep it moving. We may get to the point where we're tired or we're busy because we have numerous initiatives going on, but we know that we have to keep this moving. And we have to make sure our administrators are a part of this and make sure that they know that their teams have to move with this.

Sandra Covington Smith: Right. So I think you really painted a really good picture in Miami-Dade County about the importance of graduation for students with disabilities, students with emotional/behavioral disorders. So that is so very apparent. So as you move now onto your celebrations.

Robin J. Morrison: We get into celebrations, and one thing I need to say, we like to celebrate anything, any little thing. We tell schools, 'Celebrate, whether it's small, large, whatever, schools, share that information with each and celebrate.'

One of our biggest things last year, on December 12th, Miami Herald, our local newspaper, put out an article in reference to our graduation rate. The schools that you see here, Jackson, Braddock, Norland, Southridge,

Northwestern, Booker T., these are dropout prevention schools, high schools that have worked with us. Some of them are also PBS schools. And you can see in reference to how their graduation rate was at one point, and how it boosted up to another point and how you could see with Braddock a twenty point increase, or you can see an eighty-two, going from sixty-five percent to eight-two point five percent. So that was a big celebration for us and for the district and for the schools. So you celebrate.

We celebrate with E/BD. And as I said also, with E/BD being my first hat and what I was hired for, I decided we needed to look at our students that had emotional/behavioral disabilities, which is the highest area for dropout when you're looking at students with disabilities. What are we going to do for them? We did training. We did training with our clinicians, psychologists, social workers, art therapists, counselors that work with our students.

But then we had something where one of our psychologists brought to our attention that they wanted to start a program. And I always say if you have something you want us to look at, bring it to our attention, come up with a proposal, and we'll look at this.

Well, we had one our psychologist, Dr. Azan, who created a proposal, a Residential Wiring Program for students with emotional/behavioral disabilities. It started about seven years ago at Barbara Goleman Senior, which is one of our schools that we work with, where we in the district contracted with one of our universities, Florida International University, to provide instruction to our students on residential wiring. So the contract basically said we provided the classroom, we provided the materials, but then FIU provided that instructor.

And we had an instructor that would come in and work with students that had emotional/behavioral disabilities in grades ten to twelve. We didn't get the ninth graders. We wanted to get them settled, we had a criteria and everything. They would come in here and it would more of a hands on approach. You had lectures, they had their notes and everything else, but mostly it was hands on. And if you walk into Barbara Goleman, you would actually see within a huge classroom that were building and doing fans, lighting fixtures, smoke detectors. And they were creating all of this right there. So you could walk in and you could see. You could see girls, you could see boys. So they were a part of this.

In 2009 of October, Dr. Azan's program and this particular program won the National Dropout Prevention Center's Crystal Star Award for Dropout Recovery for a program. In 2010, we kind of started to formalize specific criteria and specific things that we needed for our parents to understand in

reference to this program also.

Also, in going into the 2009-2010 school year, we created, because we were very successful at Barbara Goleman, so other schools started seeing this and we said, okay, we would like to see this on another end of town. So Homestead Senior was in the opposite direction of where Barbara Goleman was, so we created a Residential Wiring Program at Homestead Senior with our E/BD students there. Another school that was trained by National Dropout Prevention Center, Robert Renick Educational, a Center school for E/BD students also, which was also a PBS model school which was trained by National Dropout Prevention Center.

So we have now three programs, three Residential Wiring Programs for E/BD students. And roughly in each of those programs we have roughly about twenty students a year that go through these programs. We decided we wanted to collect data—why not?—looking at the grades, gender, ethnicity, course failures, absences, referrals, outdoor suspensions, indoor suspensions, all of this for these kids, to see if there are any improvement from grade ten through twelve. And we were tracking this also.

My next area talks about our challenges. And a lot of you asked about the challenges and what happens, you know, if you don't have certain things in place, and how did you go through with this and keep doing what we're doing and that whole sustainability piece.

Your basic thing—and how can I put this?—is continue. You need to continue to research. We never stop researching. We've been doing this since 2005. We always find anything that's out there. We look for articles, we get information definitely from Dr. Covington Smith, working very closely with our center, bringing them in, sending us stuff. We ask questions, she provides information for us.

Staying current on national information or state information and those procedures also that we have in our district. Then we try to be consistent with the implementation that we do as a district team. Also, in telling schools to be consistent, we try to be consistent also because we have our plans and our action plan and where we want to go, so we want to be consistent.

We can get frustrated at times, we can see that our data could drop down or go up. We can see that we may have a principal sometimes, or a couple or whatever, or people don't turn in things or don't follow through. But we don't stop, okay? If the data or if the people are not doing what we don't—not supposed to be doing, we don't stop. We still push and we push. We pick up the phone and we call, but we don't stop. And that's one thing that I

need to tell you. You may think that, oh, this is a lot of work, and it is. But you need to do it. You're talking kids and you're talking graduation.

You're talking teaming. Teaming is important. You're not by yourself, and we tell our school teams this, but I believe in the team in effect, in reference to our team, our leadership team that we have, and creating that, and then bringing in people from other offices to work with you or people, if you're a school team, bringing in people from different areas within your school and collaborating. But having a core team, that core team is the one that's really going to kind of run with certain things. It's going to make some final decisions.

Working closely with our Office of Assessment and Data Analysis was—really, with us, it's a joy because every time that they see us coming in, oh, here they come. Here they come. They need something else or whatever. So it was really a joy working with them. But making sure that you're getting the reports that you need. I've been out and talked to certain people in different districts and they tell me they can't get the data. And that's important. You have to get that data.

Teaming is important.

Sandra Covington Smith: [indiscernible] Robin, yes. So thank you for the [indiscernible]. We do find that data piece to be such a challenge and a difficulty. And I see now that you're bringing us back into teaming and some more implementation and evaluation. If you could go to that very last piece, that last slide and just, you know, close us out because we do have some closing remarks from our host as well, and then some final pieces we need each of our colleagues to know.

Robin J. Morrison: Okay. The evaluation and the celebrations are extremely important. Always celebrate small successes. Always share your successes with your schools. If you're a district team, do that. Schools, share with each other. It's extremely important because you think that you may not be moving in that right direction. You are.

You may have some barriers and solutions that you may have to figure out, for one thing, if your administrative team and support team changes. It's out of your control. Remember I said that. You still have to work with that team, and you still have to figure out how you're going to provide your assistance.

You may not have enough time or you may not have enough staff to implement evidence-based strategies. You still have to provide that training to show school staff or district staff what needs to be done, okay, how you

can do this.

Then you may have a reduction in your district staff or changes within your own school staff. It's out of your control. You have to keep saying it's out of your control. You still need to find another way to provide that support.

Sandra Covington Smith: Okay. So thank you, Robin, because what we're saying really is the big picture here, as you say it, stay the course. Stay the course. Hard work, implementation, our data, matching those needs, and at the very end, celebrate our successes even as we identify areas of need.

What we would like everyone to know is we do have additional questions that are in the queue, and we'll take those and pass those on to Robin and get those answered. For example, questions about data chats and examples of templates. And Robin has agreed to that she will answer every question that is sent to her. And what we can do is compile those so our other colleagues can see those questions and responses as well, and then post those on our website. But within approximately two weeks, what we will have available to you are all the materials along with presentation and transcript and also the recording in approximately two weeks. Thank you all for joining us. I think now our host would like to have some closing remarks.

Operator: All right. Thank you very much. That is going to conclude our presentation Staying the Course, brought to you by the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities and presented by Sandra Covington Smith and Robin Morrison.

In a moment, an evaluation will appear on your screen. Please take a few minutes and fill out that evaluation form for this session.

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