

NDPS Certification Program Field Project Report

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Key words: Promotion, Matriculation, Graduation

Funding Sources

Shelby County Schools

Project Cost and Budget Narrative

There is no budget associated with the Over-Age for Grade (OAG) Assessment Process. The process involves staff already in the budget, which include school counselors, school counseling managers, and the Executive Director of Student Equity, Enrollment, and Discipline.

Project Description

The Over-Age for Grade (OAG) Assessment Process provides an opportunity for students in grades K-8 who are more than two or more years behind grade level to be assessed to the next grade level. Dating back more than 30 years, the OAG Assessment Program involves a committee of stakeholders convening to review data and decide if assessment will help the student. The stakeholders include the School Counselor, teachers, school administrator, and parents/guardians. Data reviewed includes past grades, achievement test scores, attendance, and discipline records.

If, after reviewing all data, the team members agree that assessment is in the best interest of the student, an application is submitted for Central Office referral. School Counseling Services review that data to determine if applicants qualify for assessment. Once School Counseling Services has determined the student qualifies for assessment, the application is forwarded to Executive Director for approval.

Staffing Pattern

Standard Shelby County Schools staffing patterns apply.

Population Served

Students in grades K-8 who are two or more years OAG are eligible for assessment.

Project Origination

The OAG Assessment Project dates back to the 1980's. The exact date this process was implemented is not known.

Issues Addressed

The OAG Assessment Project addresses students who have fallen two or more years behind in terms of grade classification. Students are retained for various reasons including, but not limited to truancy, disciplinary issues, illness, familial hardships, and academic deficiencies. The interventions provided to students who are assessed are designed to help students in areas where deficiencies exist. When utilized properly, hopefully students are successful in demonstrating proficiency in the current standards and are able to be promoted to the next grade level.

Desired Outcomes and Measurable Objectives

The desired outcome is for students who are assessed to pass the grade in which they were assessed and be promoted to the next grade level at the conclusion of the school year. The long-term objective is for students to remain in school and graduate with a regular high school diploma.

Strategies and/or Interventions of the Project

Interventions for students who participate in the OAG Assessment Project include progress monitoring of grades, attendance, and discipline by the school counselors. Interventions are provided when deficiencies exist in any of the aforementioned areas. Interventions include, but are not limited to, grade repair, after-school tutoring, conferences with parents, individual school counseling, small group counseling, Check-in/Check-out, and referrals to outside agencies.

Results (Outcomes and Achievements)

Each year, approximately 40% of all students are promoted at the conclusion of the assessed school year.

Project Timeline

The timeline for OAG Assessment is from the start of the school year until the last week of August. Students are informed by their school counselor once the required approval of their referral is obtained. This usually takes approximately three (3) days. Approved students are then promoted at their school and provided with a new schedule. When promotion involves the student moving to a different school, such as elementary to middle or middle to high, the school counselor who initiated the referral for OAG Assessment consults with the school counselor at the receiving school to ensure the student receives the necessary supports to increase the likelihood the student is successful. Progress monitoring occurs throughout the school year and reports are submitted to the School Counseling Manager at the conclusion of both first and second semester.

Outcomes Related to School Completion, Dropout Prevention, and/or Graduation Rates

The OAG Assessment Project only monitors student progress for the duration of the assessed school year. No additional data on student progress is available.

Special Conditions, Expertise, and/or Skills Required to Carry Out Project

Students may only be assessed two (2) times throughout the duration of their elementary and middle school career. In addition, in order to qualify for an assessment, students must have been retained two (2) or more times during grades K-8.

Current Status of Project

This project is on-going. At this point in the school year (mid-February) school counselors have submitted first semester progress monitoring reports to their School Counseling Managers. School counselors will continue to provide interventions in hopes of ensuring promotion for each participant at the conclusion of the current school year.

Role in Project as a NDPS Certification Program Participant

I serve as the High School Counseling Manager. It is my job to oversee the facilitation of the OAG Assessment Project. I monitor the enrollment of participants who are transitioning from 8th grade to 9th grade and ensure all 9th grade school counselors are aware of who their OAG Assessment participants are. The initial list is provided in September. In December, the list is updated to reflect enrollment changes that may have occurred during first semester. The list is updated and sent to high school counselors in May to account for enrollment changes that may have occurred during second semester.

Additionally, high school counselors submit progress monitoring reports to me at the conclusion of first semester and again at the conclusion of second semester. I calculate the percentage of students on track for promotion at the end of first semester and again at the end of second semester. These percentages are reported to the executive director.

Lessons Learned:

Although only 40% of participants are able to be promoted at the conclusion of the 9th grade year in which they were assessed, that is 40% more than would be promoted had the students remained in the grade in which they were retained. Success depends heavily on the student's willingness to participate. Students have been most successful when consistent interventions in grade repair, attendance, and behavior are provided.

Advice for Dropout Prevention Practitioners about the Project:

Assessment programs work best when school districts provide guidelines. Assessments must be completed within the first few weeks of school. Waiting longer will impede assessed students' ability to be successful in the assessed grade level. Students should be provided consistent interventions in the areas of grade repair, attendance, and behavior.