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Ways to Keep At-Risk Students Engaged

Over more than a decade of partnerships with school districts across the nation, Graduation Alliance has developed numerous strategies for keeping at-risk students engaged. Here are five you might want to consider implementing in your school community.

1

24-7 Support

Many at-risk students don't have access to parent-based academic support; with many other responsibilities, they also often must work on schoolwork during off hours. Students who are able to access academic support at any time are less likely to fall behind.

3

Social Proof

Students who are in alternative educational settings, and particularly online settings, often lack the opportunity to easily "look around" to see other students who are having success. Because social proof is an exceptionally powerful motivating force for young people, initiatives that simply ensure these students see *other* students making progress can be particularly influential.

5

Support Network Building

One of the most important social-emotional learning skills is the ability to identify a variety of individuals who can provide support for myriad problems. At-risk students who are given an opportunity to systematically map out a support network — for everything from math struggles to parenting advice to job references — are better equipped to engage that network when they need it.

2

Proactive Engagement

Students who are most likely to disengage from school are often the ones who are least likely to ask for help. That's why a systematic initiative to engage these students is so important. They often won't voluntarily come to a school representative if they have a problem; but you might be surprised how many will disclose their problems if you simply ask.

4

Scheduling Support

Many young people have no experience making a schedule, let alone keeping one. By helping at-risk students learn this vital life skill — and showing them that school work has a place on it — you can make an immediate impact on their ability to engage in and complete school work.

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