FY 2014

APPLICATION
FOR
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY/EVERYONE GRADUATES CENTER RESEARCH STUDY—THE ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL PROMOTION COACH AND PROMOTION TEAM INITIATIVE

PREVENTING SCHOOL DROPOUTS AND INCREASING GRADUATION RATES

Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE)
Office of Learning Support
Prevention and Support Services
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LEA FUNDS SUMMARY
ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL PROMOTION COACH FY 2014 FUNDS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPLICANT AGENCY</th>
<th>SYSTEM CODE</th>
<th>BEGINNING DATE</th>
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<td>7/1/2013</td>
<td>7/30/2015</td>
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CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: ____________________________________________
Title: _____________________________________________
Telephone: ________________________________________
Fax: ______________________________________________
E-mail: ___________________________________________

ADDRESS

BUDGET: LEA Award Allocation

        ___________________________
        Total

CERTIFICATION: To the best of my knowledge, the information contained herein is complete and correct. The FY 2014 program(s) will be implemented as described in the application. The Applicant Agency, ________________________________________, is responsible for complying with all applicable state requirements including the resolution of any audit exception, and the grantees must not supplant previously existing local, state, or federal funds currently utilized for any part of the proposed program.

It is further assured that all LEA program personnel have attended an intensive planning session to ensure that all local, state and federal funds are maximally used to ensure broad service delivery and no duplication of services.

I have reviewed the attached application/budget. The proposed expenditures will be coded properly upon receipt of the grant. Letters of participation and agreements are signed and attached to this application.

Signature of Chief Financial Officer/Finance Director ____________________________ Date __________________

Signature of LEA Superintendent ____________________________ Date __________________

FOR SDE USE ONLY

______________________________ Date __________________

Thomas R. Bice
State Superintendent of Education

Return applications by April 26, 2013, to the following address:

Alabama State Department of Education
Prevention and Support Services Section
5227 Gordon Persons Building
P.O. Box 302101
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101
ABSTRACT

Provide an abstract incorporating the abstract guidelines not to exceed five pages. Briefly and clearly describe the school cohort/graduation rate and drop-out rate, including program goals, strategies/action steps, and methods of evaluation currently in place.
ABSTRACT

GUIDELINES

1. Interview Process for the employment of the Johns Hopkins Research Grant School Promotion Coach will result from a collaborative process between the ALSDE, Johns Hopkins University, LEA/School representatives.

2. Eligibility for School Participation
   - School’s 2012 Graduation/cohort rate below 75%.
   - School is currently not receiving ALSDE intervention assistance in the areas of SIG grants (used for graduation coaches), state intervention team, and court decrees.
   - Minimum number (100) of students enrolled in the ninth grade.
   - LEA commitment to the two-year study as evidenced in the Abstract of the Application.

3. Rationale and Purpose of the Promotion Coach is to ensure students’ successful promotion to tenth grade and eventual graduation from Alabama’s public school system.

4. Roles and Responsibilities as specifically related to the student population and school to be served to include, but not be limited to, the following:
   - Identifying students at risk.
   - Developing and/or sustaining schoolwide support and interventions that include guiding students in meeting graduation requirements.
   - Generating school support.
   - Providing direct service.
   - Developing a local Collaborative Promotion Team.
   - Developing family, community, and other relationships.
   - Sharing success stories in various forms of media.
   - Evaluating and reporting.
   - Ensuring the Promotion Coach will not be a teacher during the day but rather work with school personnel, families, and other agencies to ensure students’ success in school.
   - Providing and/or submitting reports to the Alabama State Department of Education/John Hopkins University as scheduled or requested.

5. Professional Qualifications, Experiences, and Abilities as specifically related to the student population and school to be served to include, but not be limited to, the following evidence of:
   - Valid licensure and/or certification in his/her chosen professional field.
   - Appropriate background check.
   - Successful experience working with students at risk (not restricted to the classroom).
   - Knowledge of appropriate strategies for reducing at-risk student behaviors.
   - Ability to effectively communicate with students, families, and other adults, including teachers, counselors and school and district administrators.
• Ability to develop, analyze, implement, and track prevention and intervention strategies and plans.
• Knowledge of and the ability to utilize data to effectively impact student progress.
• Knowledge, understanding, and ability to access available alternative education opportunities and community resources to further improve students’ ability to succeed.
• Ability and willingness to advocate for each student at risk of becoming a dropout to stay in school.
• Willingness to accept part-time position as Promotion Coach.

6. **Projected Timeline/Matrix of Responsibilities** that clearly establishes the onset and completion (employment dates) of the Promotion Coach’s roles and responsibilities associated with the requirements of the research study and grant requirements. This information will be shared during training.

7. **Evaluation (Formative and/or Summative)** of the Promotion Coach position and corresponding action plan will be directly related and reflect a definite correlation to the LEA’s and school’s data related to, but not limited to, dropout rate, graduation rate, retention and promotion, attendance, and other appropriate data sources. Guidance for summative and formative evaluations will be shared during the training.

8. **Budget** - Budget forms will be provided for accurate reporting of all funding amounts to clearly and accurately reflect appropriate expenditure of local, state, and federal funds in keeping with all laws, rules, policies, and regulations.

Each school selected as an Implementation School/Group 1 will receive $36,000.00 to pay for the salary, employer and personnel fringe benefits and travel required for the Promotion Coach. The Promotion Coach will work part time each week for a minimum of 31 weeks and be paid on the local salary schedule commensurate with degrees held and experience. Training will be provided for all Promotion Coaches and will be conducted in early fall.

A budget narrative that provides a brief description of how funds are to be utilized by major categories (personnel salary, fringe benefits, travel, employer benefits, etc.) will be requested upon selection.
## ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL PROMOTION COACH

### Budget Summary FY 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation School Promotion Coach</strong></td>
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<td>(One per selected school - TBD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Promotion Coach Salary</td>
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<td>b. Personnel Fringe Benefits</td>
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<td>c. Employer Benefits</td>
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<td>d. Travel for project related activities</td>
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<td>e. Materials</td>
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<td><strong>$36,000.00</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comparison School</strong></td>
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<td>(One per selected school – TBD)</td>
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<td><strong>$ 5,000.00</strong></td>
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APPLICATION FOR PARTICIPATION
SY 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 (Cohort 2)

School Name: ________________________________

School Mailing Address: ________________________________

School Telephone: ________________________________

School System: ________________________________

Principal’s Name, E-Mail Address, and Telephone: ________________________________

Alternate Contact Person’s Name, E-Mail Address, and Telephone: ________________________________

Superintendent’s Name, E-Mail Address, and Telephone: ________________________________

We wish to be considered for participation in the 2013-2015 Cohort 2, Alabama High School Promotion Coach/Team Initiative.

____ We understand the process of randomization and if selected agree to participate in the 2013-2015 Cohort 2, Alabama High School Promotion Coach/Team Initiative as either a Group 1 (Implementation) or Group 2 (Comparison) School.

____ We have read the Sample Agreements for both Group 1 (Implementation) and Group 2 (Comparison) Schools and if selected agree to meet the conditions outlined as for either Group 1 or Group 2 Schools and commit to participating up to a three-year period as outlined.

Signature of School Principal Date

Signature of LEA Superintendent Date
AGREEMENT FOR COHORT 2: GROUP 1
(Implementation School)
SY 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2016-17 (Years 1, 2, 3 and 4, respectively)

LEA and School Agreements with Alabama State Department of Education and Johns Hopkins University/Everyone Graduates Center

This Alabama High School Promotion Coach and Promotion Team Agreement, dated __________, sets forth the respective obligations of __________ School System, __________ School, Johns Hopkins University/Everyone Graduates Center, and the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) in connection with the Alabama High School Promotion Coach/Team initiative being established in this school with the support of U. S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences Grant R305A120677.

In consideration of the mutual promises stated herein and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, the parties agree to work together in support of the Alabama High School Promotion Coach/Team model and, more specifically, to execute the commitments stated below for each of the parties:

I. Terms of Agreement

In light of the financial and other resources expended in establishing a Promotion Coach/Team model in this school and the requisite data collection, it is the present intent of the parties that this Agreement remains in effect for two years for the Promotion Coach and Team, starting July 2013-July 2015, and for one additional year, starting July-August, 2015, for data collection unless sooner terminated by mutual agreement.

II. Target Group of Students

The primary target group of students is ninth graders in Year 1 and Year 2. In Year 2, tenth graders (the previous year’s ninth graders) are also supported. Quantitative data will be collected in Years 1 through 3, and survey data (teachers, other adults and students) will be collected in Years 1 and 2.

III. Obligations of the School System and School Partner Selected to Have a Promotion Coach

The School System and School Partner Agree to:

A. Fully support the Promotion Coach in the School Partner by providing time (the equivalent of two and a half days a week minimum for predetermined number of weeks) for the Promotion Coach to serve as a Promotion Coach only, without other instructional or administrative duties. The expectations for the Promotion Coach are outlined beginning on page 14. LEAs will receive a grant award of $36,000.00 per year for two years to spend as specified.
B. Provide current information to ALSDE to maintain an accurate contact database.

C. Fully support the Promotion Team (composed of teachers, counselors, social workers, dropout prevention specialists, other student support staff, and administrators as deemed appropriate) and enable the Promotion Team to meet with the Promotion Coach during scheduled time once a week or once every two weeks to consider data and other matters related to student success.

  o Review the school partner’s master schedule and enable scheduled time for the Promotion Team to hold an On-Track meeting once a week (30-45 minutes) or every other week (60 minutes) to consider the list of students in need of support (“support list”) and design, propose, monitor, and improve on interventions.

D. Collaborate with Johns Hopkins University/Everyone Graduates Center, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), and the ALSDE Promotion Coach on creating a process for introducing the Promotion Coach/Team model to the faculty and staff, communicating its purpose and expectations for enhancing promotion from ninth and tenth grades, and eventually increasing the graduation rate. The process is expected to begin with an initial presentation to the school administrators, faculty, counselors, and staff.

E. Collaborate with Johns Hopkins University/Everyone Graduates Center, the ALSDE Promotion Coach, and local Promotion Coach in creating a positive school culture and climate supporting the Promotion Coach/Team and incorporating the Team’s recommendations for student support, especially for ninth graders, into their daily work. The enhancement to school culture is expected to continue after the initial presentation to the school administrators, faculty, counselors, and staff and to be sustained throughout school years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015.

F. Include the Promotion Coach in school leadership team meetings as appropriate. Include the recommendations of the Promotion Coach and Team in the writing of the school’s continuous improvement plan/RTI Plan for this school year and the following school year, with the aim of institutionalizing a supportive infrastructure for promotion and graduation improvement in the school.

G. Assign an administrator (at both the system and school level) to be an additional liaison and point of contact with the ALSDE and with Johns Hopkins University/Everyone Graduates Center at least on a monthly basis and to attend identified meetings.

H. Create and sustain clear lines of communication among the Promotion Coach, Team, administration, and any “wrap around” support providers engaged in providing student support interventions. This will involve active participation of a school-based administrator on the Promotion Team, including his/her participation in team meetings as much as possible.
I. Support the Promotion Coach, the ALSDE Promotion Coach, and Johns Hopkins University/Everyone Graduates Center representatives, in accord with the IRB and Alabama Research Board agreement, in having access to students’ and the school’s baseline and outcome data, including attendance, behavior, grades, promotion, and standardized testing records for this school year and the following two years.

J. Support the impact evaluation process by allowing the Promotion Coach, the ALSDE Promotion Coach, and Johns Hopkins/Everyone Graduates Center representatives to have access to students’ data from cohorts who attended this school for two prior years, as well as to school data for two prior years.

K. Support the present evaluation process by assisting in collection of student data in this school, agreeing to bi-monthly site visits by JHU researchers involving observation of team meetings and interviews with team members (including school-based administrators) and helping to facilitate administration of end-of-year surveys of students and school staff members (in accord with all requirements and approvals of ALSDE and Johns Hopkins University review boards) for Years 1 and 2.

L. Provide a suitable office space for the Promotion Coach (computer, desk, file space, telephone, printer, internet with access to In-Focus STI rights, etc.) and for meeting space in the building to include tables, desks, and chairs to deliver services and activities.

M. Allow access to copier, office supplies, and other materials agreed upon.

N. Collaborate to raise awareness for key community stakeholders (parents, community organizations, wrap around service providers) regarding the Promotion Coach and Promotion Team’s work that will help to support students and implement, monitor, and sustain interventions that support promotion and graduation improvement.

O. Encourage volunteers and other community partners to work with students and faculty to support the recommendations of the Promotion Coach and Team for supportive student interventions and to provide “wrap around” supports in the school as recommended by the Promotion Team.

Signature of LEA Superintendent

Date

Signature of School Principal

Date

Signature of Chief Financial Officer/Finance Director

Date
AGREEMENT FOR COHORT 2: GROUP 2
Comparison School

LEA and School Agreements with Alabama State Department of Education and Johns Hopkins University/Everyone Graduates Center

This Agreement, dated ___________, sets forth the respective obligations of ___________ School System, ___________ School, Johns Hopkins University/Everyone Graduates Center, and the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) in connection with the selection of the school to participate as a Comparison School for the Alabama High School Promotion Coach/Team Initiative, with the support of U. S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences Grant R305A120677.

In consideration of the mutual promises stated herein and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, the parties agree to execute the commitments stated below for each of the parties:

I. Terms of Agreement

It is the present intent of the parties that this Agreement remains in effect for three years, starting July 2013 for data collection.

II. Obligations of the School System and School Partner Selected as a Comparison School

The School System and School Partner agree to:

A. Designate a contact person who will serve as liaison with the ALSDE and Johns Hopkins/Everyone Graduates Center and facilitate the data collection processes described below, including preparation for visits, scheduling, etc., and participation in Webinars, conference calls, etc., for planning purposes. Provide current information to the ALSDE to maintain an accurate data base.

B. Support the impact evaluation process by allowing Johns Hopkins/Everyone Graduates Center representatives to have access to students’ data from cohorts who attended this school for two prior years, as well as to school data for two prior years.

C. Support the present evaluation process by assisting in collection of student data in this school related to attendance, behavior, course-passing; agreeing to bi-monthly site visits by JHU researchers involving interviews with school-based administrators; and helping to facilitate administration of end-of-year surveys of students and school staff members (in accord with all requirements and approvals of ALSDE and Johns Hopkins University review boards).

D. Receive a small grant award of $5,000 per year for Years 1 and 2, half at the beginning of the year and half at the end of the year.

E. Enable access to student data relating to attendance, behavior, grades, course-passing, and credit accrual for Years 1 and 3.
Signature of LEA Superintendent  

Signature of School Principal  

Signature of Chief Financial Officer/Finance Director
GENERAL INFORMATION

Contact Information and Technical Assistance

If you have questions and/or need assistance, please contact:

Dr. Kay Atchison Warfield
Alabama State Department of Education
Prevention and Support Services Section
Telephone: (334) 242-8165

On-Line Access

To download the application and supporting documents electronically, go to the ALSDE Web site at www.alsde.edu. Click on Learning Support Office, Prevention and Support Services, Dropout Applications, and then select the Local Education Agency (LEA) Application for Johns Hopkins Research Grant School Promotion Coach.

Timelines for Submission

APPLICATIONS should bear a legible post-mark of April 26, 2013, or earlier or be hand-delivered by 5 p.m. (CSTD) on April 26, 2013 to:

Dr. Kay Atchison Warfield
Alabama State Department of Education
Prevention and Support Services Section
5227 Gordon Persons Building
P.O. Box 302101
Montgomery, AL 36130-2101

Checklist of items to submit:

☐ Signed LEA Funds Summary
☐ Signed Participation Letter
☐ Signed Agreement for Cohort 2, Group 1: Implementation School
☐ Signed Agreement for Cohort 2, Group 2: Comparison School
☐ Completed Application with School Information
PROMOTION COACH

Contact Information Sheet

Name: _________________________________ System: ________________________________

Contract Beginning Date: _____________ Contract Ending Date: ________________

Type of Certification and/or Licensure: _____________________________________________

Telephone Number: _____________________________ Fax Number: ________________

E-mail: ____________________________________________

Assigned School: _______________________________________________________________

School Address: ________________________________________________________________

Telephone Number: _______________ Fax Number: ______________________________

Home Address: ________________________________

When the LEA School Promotion Coach has been selected and LEA confirmed,
please submit this form by fax to Ms. Cheryl Brazzell at 334-353-5962.

Grant Award: Alabama High School Promotion Coach and Promotion Team Initiative
LOCAL PROMOTION COACH

Job Description

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), Office of Learning Support, Prevention and Support Services Section, in Montgomery, Alabama, in collaboration with a Johns Hopkins University Research Grant intends to fill up to ten (10) new Promotion Coach positions that will require two to three days per week for a minimum of 31 weeks.

1. PURPOSE: The Promotion Coach is to ensure students’ successful promotion from ninth and tenth grades to develop the foundation for graduation from Alabama’s public school system for students at risk of non-graduation.

2. PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCES, AND ABILITIES: As specifically related to the student population and school to be served to include, but not be limited to, the following evidence:

   - Education and valid licensure and/or certification in his/her professional field.
   - Successful experience working with students at risk (not restricted to the classroom).
   - Knowledge of appropriate strategies for reducing at-risk student behaviors.
   - Deep knowledge of young adolescents.
   - Ability to work collaboratively and organize other school adults including administrators, teachers, and counselors.
   - Ability to communicate effectively with high school and middle school administrators, school adults (teachers, counselors, and student support personnel), students, families, and community members, including those in local agencies.
   - Demonstrate ability to build, manage, and get results from groups of collaborating adults.
   - Ability to develop, analyze, implement, and track prevention and intervention strategies and plans.
   - Knowledge of and the ability to analyze, communicate, and utilize data to effectively impact student progress.
   - Knowledge, understanding, and ability to access available alternative educational opportunities and community resources to further improve students’ ability to succeed.
   - Ability and willingness to advocate for each student at risk of becoming a dropout to stay in school.

3. SELECTION: The employment of the Johns Hopkins University Research School Promotion Coach will result from a collaborative process between the ALSDE, Johns Hopkins University, local education agency (LEA), and school representatives.

4. SUPERVISOR: Principal

5. CONTRACT: Nine months
6. **SALARY:** Salary, employer/personnel benefits and travel not to exceed $36,000. Salary commensurate with JHU/ALSDE grant salary schedule.

7. **GENERAL DUTIES:** Specifically related to the student population and school to be served to include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Implement the Johns Hopkins University (Everyone Graduates Center) model for keeping more ninth graders on the path to promotion and graduation.
- Develop a local Promotion Team working with school leadership.
- Work with school leadership to align the Promotion Team with existing school teams and/or creating a new team.
- Identify ninth graders (first priority) likely to eventually drop out using the Alabama Graduation Tracking System (GTS) and other sources of data available at the school level and in accord with Johns Hopkins University research requirements.
- Convene the Promotion Team regularly (bi-weekly or more frequently) to reach consensus on the needs of individual students identified through data analysis.
- Assist the Promotion Team in identifying existing interventions and designing new ones, individualized, for groups and for the whole school:
  - Identity existing programs, evaluating effectiveness for different student audiences and refining them.
  - Generating school and community support.
  - Aligning school-based and community-based agency support.
  - Developing transitional programs.
  - Develop vertical teams as appropriate, middle to high school and within the high school.
- Guide the Promotion Team in matching interventions with students.
- Organize the interventions, monitoring the outcomes of interventions and redesigning interventions as needed.
- Follow up on and support students identified in ninth grade in later years, identifying new students and incorporating them into the Promotion Team analysis process.
- Generate school, family, and community support.
- Organize and manage site visits by Johns Hopkins University Implementation and Research teams.
- Maintain ongoing communications with the ALSDE Promotion Coach and with Johns Hopkins University.
- Collect, organize, and submit all data as requested by the ALSDE and Johns Hopkins University.
- Maintain daily, weekly, and monthly logs as requested by the ALSDE and John Hopkins University.
- Document interventions and outcomes as requested by Johns Hopkins University.
- Provide and/or submit reports to the ALSDE and Johns Hopkins University as scheduled or requested.
8. OTHER SKILLS/ATTRIBUTES:

- Strong motivation skills.
- Effective verbal and written communication skills.
- Effective computer skills, including the ability to develop and utilize spreadsheets, databases, EXCEL, and PowerPoint.
- Organizational and data management skills.
- Ability to use problem-solving skills to generate solutions.
- Ability to interpret budgets and contracts.
- Team-oriented, flexible, and attentive to details.
- Able to travel overnight.

9. HOW TO APPLY: Send resume and letter of intent by April 29, 2013 to Dr. Kay Atchison Warfield at the following address:

Prevention and Support Services
Attention: Dr. Kay Atchison Warfield
P. O. Box 302101
Montgomery, AL 36130
Telephone: 334-242-8165
Fax: 334-353-5962
E-mail: kaw@alsde.edu
DOCUMENT LIBRARY

This information, provided by Johns Hopkins University (JHU), Everyone Graduates Center (EGC), explains in detail the logistics, eligible school lists, description of the initiative, and projected summary calendars for Group 1 (Implementation) and Group 2 (Comparison) Schools. Review this document for additional information.

CONTENTS OF SCHOOL APPLICATION PACKET

- Timetable for Application and Notification
- List of Eligible Schools and Respective LEAs
- Application
- Description of the Initiative
- Summary Calendar, Implementation Schools, Year 1
- Detailed Calendar, Implementation Schools, Year 1
- Summary Calendar, Comparison Schools, Year 1
- Sample Agreement Between Implementation School/LEA and EGC
- Sample Agreement Between Comparison School/LEA and EGC

TIMETABLE FOR APPLICATION AND NOTIFICATION

2013 All Eligible Alabama High Schools

March Applications distributed to LEA superintendents and principals of eligible high schools

March Informational Webinars and/or conference calls for superintendents, principals, and leadership teams

April 26 School/LEA approved applications to be returned to ALSDE, 5 p.m. CDT

April Random Selection of 10 schools as Implementation Schools (Group 1) and 10 schools as Comparison Schools (Group 2)

April LEA superintendents and school principals notified of their school’s selection as a Group 1 or a Group 2 school

July Initiative begins
DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

WHAT is the Alabama High School Promotion Coach/Team Initiative?

The Alabama High School Promotion Coach/Team Initiative is a four-year project funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences to learn more – in a rigorous, data-based way – about the in-school factors and the best work that administrators, teachers, and counselors do to help more ninth-graders to be promoted and move through high school on time, passing meaningful, relevant, standards-based courses on the path towards graduation. Lessons learned will inform Alabama and national policy and practices. This project “tests” a “model” of school organization for promotion and graduation rate improvement for student success developed at the Everyone Graduates Center (EGC).¹

WHAT is the “model” for promotion and graduation rate improvement?

In the EGC model, a Promotion Coach reviews the school’s attendance, behavior, and grading data frequently (every two weeks, using the Alabama Graduation Tracking System where possible) and looks for the overall patterns as well as individual challenges. From this data the Promotion Coach develops a “support list” of students who face the greatest challenges in staying on the promotion (and eventual graduation) path unless adults do something to help them and makes some conjectures about types of help needed, whether individual, for groups, or school-wide. Then, with a Promotion Team that is appointed by the principal and leadership team, the Promotion Coach and Promotion Team study the support list and connect struggling students with behavioral and academic interventions designed by teachers, counselors, and other student support staff. They may also recommend implementation of whole-school “interventions” in terms of improvements in school climate, practices, and policies; new courses; tutoring; mentoring; and connections with local agencies. The Promotion Coach monitors the effect of the interventions and designs new ones, with input from the Promotion Team. The Coach and the Team work closely with the principal and leadership team at all times.

WHO does the “model” target?

In the EGC model on which the Alabama project is based, the focus is primarily on ninth graders.

WHEN does the Alabama initiative occur?

Overall, from July 2013, to June 2017

HOW will the “model” be tested?

In each of the first two years of the grant (2013-2014 and 2014-2015) 10 schools will be randomly selected (Cohort 1, 2012-2013, and Cohort 2, 2013-14) from the group of eligible Alabama high schools to be Group 1 (Implementation) schools and 10 schools will be randomly selected to be Group 2 (Comparison) schools. Overall, this means that there will be 20 schools participating in Cohort 1 and another 20 schools in Cohort 2. “Random selection” means that the equivalent of a coin is flipped to determine assignment into Group 1 or Group 2. Schools and their LEAs must indicate interest in participating in the initiative BEFORE the random selection process occurs. Agreement to accept the results of the random selection is part of the application process.

¹ See the Attachment, Everyone Graduates Center, for background on the Everyone Graduates Center’s experience on working with states, districts, and schools in reducing dropouts and improving promotion and graduation.
WHY should my school be interested in participating?

Across the nation, educators and communities are alarmed at the number of students who drop out of high school. There is a growing body of research that suggests some of the “whys” about students dropping out, there are many ideas about how to improve the situation, and there are an increasing number of schools and communities that have undertaken efforts which demonstrate good results. The challenge is that so far, very few of these efforts and ideas have been tested in a way that produces statistically meaningful numbers about why they work and whether they are likely to work in most schools that try them.

In the Alabama High School Promotion Team Initiative, we are looking for schools that wish to become part of an effort for the common good, to aid in rigorously learning more about what works in one approach that many people feel is key to keeping students on track for graduation. Schools that become part of Group 1 have the opportunity to implement the EGC model with assistance from the grant for a coach, professional development, and technical assistance. Schools that become part of Group 2 have the opportunity to continue implementing or enhancing their best ideas and practices and receive a small grant for data-collection work related to the project. Does the EGC model enable a school to keep significantly more students on the graduation path, gaining credits towards graduation each year? Ultimately, all schools that participate in the project will have made a major contribution to the national and Alabama knowledge base about “what works” in keeping students on the graduation path.

• **Group 1 Schools are the “Implementation” Schools.** Each Group 1 school will receive a half-time, grant-funded Local Promotion Coach for two years along with professional development and technical assistance to help guide promotion improvement efforts, with an initial focus on ninth grade. These schools must commit to forming and enabling the activities of a Promotion Team, with dedicated meeting times on a scheduled basis, and empowerment to connect with other efforts within the school and community. Schools must also commit to facilitating data collection efforts throughout the two years in which the Promotion Coach is assigned to the selected school. Professional development and technical assistance from a grant-funded ALSDE state Promotion Coach and EGC senior staff (the Implementation Team) will provide external support for the Promotion Coach and Promotion Team for the first two years. The JHU Research Team will similarly visit the school three to four times annually. Coaches from Group 1 schools will be convened quarterly and administrators’ input will be sought on a regular basis, with two planned meetings.

• **Group 2 Schools are the “Comparison” Schools.** Each Group 2 school is expected to continue implementing and even expanding best ideas and practices to improve student achievement, promotion, and graduation. Group 2 schools will receive a small grant ($5,000) for each of two years, will be expected to participate in teacher and student surveys for these two years, and will augment other data collection efforts if needed. Contact persons/project liaisons from Group 2 schools will be trained during initial selection. EGC senior staff/Research Team members will visit Group 2 schools twice or more a year. The ALSDE Promotion Coach will not visit.

HOW do schools become eligible for the Alabama Promotion Team Initiative?

Schools that are eligible for this initiative have graduation rates that are 75% or less under the four-year adjusted cohort graduation calculation method released by the ALSDE in June 2012. Eligible schools also serve Grades 9-12 (rather than Grades 7-12 or Grades 8-12) and have ninth grades with 100 or more students. The 9-12 criterion is necessary to ensure that all ninth graders are encountering the same challenge of a transition from Grade 8 (a school transition from Grades...
8 to 9 is the most common pattern in the U.S.), and the 100 ninth-grader limit is set so that there are enough students in the study overall for the results to be statistically meaningful.

HOW are schools identified for Group I and Group 2?

First, eligible schools that are interested submit applications that say, “We are interested in becoming part of the study.” The inference is that schools – and their LEAs – know that they have an equal chance of being Group 1 or Group 2 and that whatever assignment they receive, the data that is collected and analyzed from this study will advance the cause of promotion and graduation in Alabama and the nation. (We’re all in the effort to raise student achievement together!) From the pool of interested schools (identified through self–expressed interest from the eligible schools), symbolically, a coin is flipped (not quite so simple, actually a random number generator is used) and 10 Group 1 and 10 Group 2 schools are selected to join the project.

WHAT next?

The schools that are selected to participate for school years 2013-2015 (Cohort 2, both Group 1 and Group 2) become part of the study for four years.

• Group 1 schools have an assigned Promotion Coach for two years and are expected to continue the Promotion Team for this period of time

• For Group 1 and Group 2, the data collection efforts occur for two years at the school level.

WHO are the Promotion Coaches?

There are two types of Promotion Coaches. The first, the ALSDE Promotion Coach position, will be filled by one or two highly qualified Alabama individuals, depending on the geographic distribution of the Group 1 schools after randomization is complete (substantial travel to visit the Group 1 school sites is required as Alabama is a large state). The ALSDE Promotion Coach position works closely with and is trained and frequently coached in the EGC model by EGC personnel.
The local Promotion Coach positions, also grant-funded and also filled by highly qualified Alabama individuals, will be hired on a half-time basis after the positions are advertised by the ALSDE and LEAs. Both the ALSDE and EGC will review all applications, and the EGC will provide substantial initial training and monthly support for the local Promotion Coach in implementing the EGC model. Local Promotion Coaches will be assigned to Group 1 sites; they may or may not be from within the school to which they are assigned; however, a requirement in the job description is that the local Promotion Coach know the local community, that the two are mutually respectful, and that the principal and leadership team are comfortable with the Promotion Coach to be located in their school.

WHO are the EGC personnel who will work with Alabama schools?

EGC has assembled two permanent teams to work with Alabama schools for the four years of the grant: the Research Team and the Implementation Team. The Research Team, which will be conducting the data collection, surveys, and interviews, consists of research specialists with experience in using data to understand student outcomes in multiple large districts and states as well as schools and districts that have been or are part of current EGC school achievement efforts, including the U.S. Department of Education’s recent $35M I3 awards to the EGC partnership with Diplomas Now and its special emphasis on improving promotion and graduation rates Grades 6 – 9. One member of the Research Team, now an assistant professor, additionally has ten years of experience in teaching in Tennessee schools.

The Implementation Team, responsible for coaching the coaches at both the state and local levels and working with principals, leadership teams, and promotion teams, is experienced in technical assistance, professional development, and consulting/coaching for school improvement and early warning systems in states, districts, and schools, stretching from the mid-Atlantic through the south to Arizona and California. One team member has also investigated and written extensively about case studies of best practices that work in raising graduation rates in different types of schools and early warning systems. From time to time the Implementation Team will be augmented by EGC facilitators with special expertise in solving specific school-level challenges gained from their work in Diplomas Now schools across the country.
### SUMMARY CALENDAR

**Implementation School, Group 1: Year 1**

**2013-2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Notification of selection into Group 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Superintendent and principal return signed agreements to ALSDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July – August</td>
<td>Training for Group 1 Local Promotion Coaches (2-3 days, location TBD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotion Coach begins work at the school to which he/she is assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Deadline for selecting Local Promotion Team members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August – October</td>
<td>Promotion Coach on-site, 2-3 days/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First school visit by ALSDE Promotion Coach and EGC Research and Implementation Teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Coaching meetings with Local Promotion Coach, Team, and Administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussion with teachers, counselors, administrators regarding data, school climate, efforts, and initiative implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October – May</td>
<td>Promotion Coach on-site 2-3 days/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotion Team meets weekly or bi-weekly and plans student support</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School(s) visits by ALSDE Promotion Coach and/or EGC Implementation Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>Promotion Coaches meet from all sites after initial training (location TBD)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(September, November, February, April, June)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice a year</td>
<td>Administrators meet at a central location TBD (January, June, July)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EGC Research Team visits (August-May)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>EGC Research Team Visit: Discussions with teachers, counselors, and administrators regarding data, school climate, efforts, and initiative implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher/administrator/student support staff/student surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Final data collection and reporting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**SUMMARY CALENDAR**

**Comparison School, Group 2: Year 1**

**2013-2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Notification of selection into Group 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Superintendent and Principal return signed agreement to ALSDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April – May</td>
<td>Identify internal contact person(^2) at school and central office staff and notify ALSDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April – May</td>
<td>Telephone conversations/Webinars with contact persons/planning and data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August – May</td>
<td>School visit by EGC Research Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November - January</td>
<td>Mid-year phone conversations with point persons related to data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March - April</td>
<td>Phone conversations/planning surveys and interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>School visit by EGC Research Team, support for data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teacher/administrator/student support staff/student survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Return end of year data to EGC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Collection Requirements**

This project will require:

1) Individual student-level administrative data from the ALSDE longitudinal database (or support from ALSDE to obtain additional required data from the LEAs of participating high schools) to be delivered yearly to the research team at Johns Hopkins University
2) Support from ALSDE in providing documentation and responses to clarification questions regarding the administrative data
3) Support from ALSDE to encourage participating high schools to cooperate with site visit and complete administration of a yearly spring survey of cohort students and all teachers (which will be coordinated by the JHU research team)

**Specific Administrative Data Requirements**

Student-level data (linked by the student state identification number) for variables specified below for each of the following years and grade levels in all Implementation and Comparison schools:

2010 – 2011 Ninth grade for all Cohort 1 Implementation and Comparison schools (historical comparison)

\(^2\) The contact person is a school employee who serves as chief liaison with ALSDE and EGC
2011 – 2012  Ninth grade for all Cohort 1 Implementation and Comparison schools (historical comparison)
            Eighth grade for all Cohort 1 Implementation and Comparison schools (prior covariates)
2012 – 2013  Ninth grade for all Cohort 1 Implementation and Comparison schools (outcome data)
            Eighth grade for all Cohort 2 Implementation and Comparison schools (prior covariates)
2013 – 2014  Ninth grade for all Cohort 2 Implementation and Comparison schools (outcome data)
            Tenth grade for all Cohort 1 Implementation and Comparison schools (outcome data)
            ALSDE database data for all Cohort 1 students by ID number (outcomes for transfer students within the state)
2014 – 2015  Tenth grade for all Cohort 2 Implementation and Comparison schools (outcome data)
            Eleventh grade for all Cohort 1 Implementation and Comparison schools (outcome data)
            ALSDE database data for all Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 students by ID number (outcomes for transfer students within the state)
2015 – 2016  Eleventh grade for all Cohort 2 Implementation and Comparison schools (outcome data)
            Twelfth grade for all Cohort 1 Implementation and Comparison schools (outcome data)
            ALSDE database data for all Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 students by ID number (outcomes for transfer students within the state)

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3 Yearly data updates of cohort students by student number needed to capture students who did not progress to the next grade
Demographic Variables
- Race/ethnicity
- Gender
- Age or date of birth
- Free and reduced price lunch eligibility

Status Variables
- Grade level
- School
- Entry code and date
- Withdrawal code and date
- Special education status
- English language learner status

Behavioral Variables
- End-of-year attendance data (number of days absent and number of days present or number of days enrolled). If possible, data disaggregated by excused vs. unexcused.
- End-of-year behavior data (number of days suspended). If possible, disaggregated by in-school and out-of-school suspension.
- For H.S. grades: Course grades or number of credits accumulated each year. Semester grades needed if course credit given by semester (either full course credit or 0.5 credit that requires credit recovery for semester failing grade).
- For Grade 8 only: Scale scores and proficiency levels on state reading and math tests.
Local Promotion Coach Job Description

Note: Up to ten (10) of these positions will be filled. They are grant-funded consulting positions, and the number and location of positions funded will depend on the geographic location of the LEAs and schools to be served as selected through the randomization process outlined below.

Mission: The mission of the Alabama High School Promotion Coach and Promotion Team Initiative is to test a model that combines use of data—early warning indicators (attendance, behavior, course-passing and credit accrual, or the ABCs)—with a model for organizing a team of teachers, counselors, and other student support staff to increase on-time promotion of ninth graders to tenth grade (and to set the stage for their continued on-time progress in future years).

Background: The Initiative is a four-year research study, funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education, based on a 2012 award to the Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University and to the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE).

Schools in the study: There will be two sets of schools in the study—ten (10) Group 1 schools that will be randomly selected to be Implementation Schools and ten (10) Group 2 schools that will be randomly selected to be Comparison Schools. All of the schools, both Implementation and Comparison, will be randomly selected from the pool of schools that have 75% or lower cohort graduation rates (for 2012-2013 based on the data released by ALSDE in June 2012) AND that have 100 or more ninth graders. The latter requirement is so that the eventual outcomes of the study are statistically meaningful. It is expected that there will be approximately 70-80 schools in this group. The randomization within this group of eligible schools will be carried out by an independent researcher at SERVE, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, so that there will no question of bias in any direction. The list of ten (10) Group 1 and ten (10) Group 2 schools will be released in April 2013.

What is the need for a Local Promotion Coach? Each of the ten (10) schools that are randomly selected as Group 1 schools in April 2013 will receive a half-time Local Promotion Coach, for SY 2013-2014 and SY 2014-2015, based on applications to the ALSDE that will also be reviewed by the Everyone Graduates Center senior staff. The Local Promotion Coach may not necessarily be from the district or school that receives the coach, but will always be from the nearby area and familiar with and respectful of the community.

What support will the Local Promotion Coach be provided to best carry out his/her role and responsibility? First, the Local Promotion Coach will be trained in the expectations of the Promotion Coach role by Everyone Graduates Center senior staff who have vast experience working in districts and schools and who are deeply familiar with the ins and outs of school improvement, early warning systems, and the challenges of improving promotion and graduation rates. The position has some similarities and some differences with graduation coach positions that have been previously funded in Alabama, so it is important to the study that the purpose of this new position is well understood. It is planned that there will be an opening training in July 2013, followed by quarterly meetings of all Local Promotion Coaches at a central location or by videoconferencing and monthly support visits from the ALSDE Promotion Coach and Everyone Graduates Center personnel.
Essential Duties and Responsibilities: The Local Promotion Coach shall work to develop the local Promotion Team and with them, and in collaboration with the school administration, to implement, within the school, the Everyone Graduates Center model for keeping more ninth graders on the path to promotion and eventual graduation. The Promotion Coach will, in addition, work with the ALSDE Promotion Coach and Everyone Graduates Center staff to collect and analyze data, use data as the basis for interventions, transmit data to the EGC for further analysis in accord with all Alabama and Johns Hopkins University requirements and with respect for confidentiality, and assist in organizing the school to support data use and student support.

Building the Promotion Team: With the support, guidance, and collaboration of the school administration and leadership team, the Promotion Coach will build a team composed of teachers (primarily ninth grade teachers), counselors, and other student support staff (social workers, dropout prevention specialists, school nurses, etc). The team is expected to meet weekly or bi-weekly during scheduled meeting time, arranged by the Coach, the ALSDE Coach, and the Everyone Graduates Center in collaboration with the administration. The purpose of the Promotion Team weekly/bi-weekly meeting is to analyze data and study the “student support list” developed by the Coach, determine interventions for students, and determine who might be the best provider of those interventions. In consultation with other adults as appropriate, the Promotion Coach will organize the interventions and keep track of student progress on a weekly basis, especially as related to attendance, behavior, and course-passing. The target group of students is ninth graders in Year 1, and in Year 2 tenth graders (the previous year’s ninth graders) are also included.

Collect and Analyze Data: The Local Promotion Coach will search to understand the challenges facing individual students, especially ninth graders, and the patterns that seem to align with staying on track or falling off the promotion path. The Local Promotion Coach is charged with: collecting grade-level and school data from the Alabama Student Information System and the Graduation Tracking System relating to attendance, behavior, course-passing, and credit accrual at time intervals that are worked out with the Everyone Graduates Center and conveying this to the Everyone Graduates Center. Supplementing this is shorter-term information that is shared by teachers and counselors. All sources of information are used to construct a “student support list” that becomes the basis for the Promotion Team’s actions.

Support for Other School Staff and Community Members. In collaboration with the principal and leadership team, the Local Promotion Coach provides a whole-school and grade-level orientation to the Initiative in the first quarter of the school year and orients prospective and actual Team members and community members to the purpose of the Initiative. Such efforts are continued throughout the school year.

Management Responsibilities: In addition, the Local Promotion Coach makes all in-school (not travel) arrangements for the monthly visits of the ALSDE Coach and Everyone Graduates Center staff, enabling these persons to meet in a timely way with school administration and staff to interview them as needed and to administer, collect, and return whole-school surveys at the end of the year.

Reporting and Accountability: The Local Promotion Coach maintains a daily log of professional activities, with actions and outcomes, initialed weekly by the principal, and provides such information to the Everyone Graduates Center and to the ALSDE Coach monthly; maintains a log of Team activities (analyses, recommendations, interventions, and outcomes, on a student-by-student basis) and provides such to the Everyone Graduates Center and to the ALSDE Coach on a monthly basis; and also maintains a log of interventions, participants, recommendations, and outcomes.
Qualifications, Experiences, and Abilities:

- Valid professional licensure and/or certification.
- Appropriate background check.
- Successful experience working with students at risk (not restricted to the classroom).
- Successful experience working with ninth-graders/deep knowledge of young adolescents.
- Ability to communicate effectively with high school and middle school administrators, school adults (teachers, counselors, and student support personnel), students, families, and community members, including those in local agencies.
- Demonstrated ability to build, manage, and get results from groups of collaborating adults.
- Ability to collect and analyze data; use data to track individual and group progress; understand the patterns in numbers; use data to guide and monitor interventions; and put data into easily understood terms for others.
- Proficiency with word processing and PowerPoint required; proficiency with Excel highly desirable.
- Knowledge of community culture, resources, assets, and agencies.