

## Technical Assistance Response on Dropout Prevention

### *Question:*

What are some examples of states, districts, and communities that use high school graduation coaches?

Though “Georgia is the only state in the nation that provides graduation coaches for every high school in the state” (see the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Web site: <http://www.sreb.org/main/Publications/PressRel/news1.asp?Code=1199>), a few other states are using or exploring the use of graduation coaches in select schools. Additionally, many districts and communities use them at the local level. Examples are provided below.

### State Examples

Alabama recently began using graduation coaches in 25 high schools (for more information, see <ftp://ftp.alsde.edu/documents/55/NewsReleases2008/GraduationCoachVNR1-28-2008.doc>).

“Twenty-five schools in Alabama were identified in September for implementation of the pilot program. All schools with any combination of grades 9 through 12 and a graduation rate lower than 95% during the 2006-07 school year were eligible to compete for more than \$1.7 million in state grants. Graduation coaches were hired by local school systems to help ensure students’ successful graduation by, but not limited to, the following:

- ◆ Identifying students as being ‘at-risk’ of dropping out.
- ◆ Developing schoolwide support to guide students in meeting graduation requirements.
- ◆ Developing family and community relationships and ensure overall success of students.
- ◆ Developing transitional programs and vertical teams.
- ◆ Evaluating and reporting.” (Author description)

In Oklahoma, the governor’s proposal for graduation coaches is currently in the legislature (for more information see [http://www.muskogeephoenix.com/local/local\\_story\\_068234629.html](http://www.muskogeephoenix.com/local/local_story_068234629.html)).

Mississippi hired 9 graduation coaches through GEAR UP (for more information see [http://www.gearupms.org/forms/student\\_e\\_newsletter\\_fall\\_07.pdf](http://www.gearupms.org/forms/student_e_newsletter_fall_07.pdf)).

"Mississippi recently hired nine regional Senior Graduation Coaches. Their mission is to ensure that GEAR UP students and parents navigate the senior year successfully and transition from high school into college. Each coach has extensive professional classroom teaching experience." (Author description)

Louisiana is exploring the possibility of using graduation coaches through a recent survey of principals. Principals are asked which two additional staff persons they would choose to add to their school; one of the options is a graduation coach ([http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/initiatives/princsurvey\\_test.aspx](http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/initiatives/princsurvey_test.aspx)).

## Local Examples

In Indianapolis (Marion County), as part of a 4-year initiative headed by the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, graduation coaches will be placed in high schools "to support specific small cohorts of identified at-risk students, through individual graduation plans, coordination of social services, facilitating college and career planning, creating support teams, and identifying and resolving barriers to graduation" (for more information see <http://www.commongoalindy.org/about.aspx>).

Gulford County Public Schools in North Carolina placed 15 graduation coaches in all its high schools this school year (for more information see [http://www.gcsnc.com/boe/2008/3\\_20/academic\\_memo.html](http://www.gcsnc.com/boe/2008/3_20/academic_memo.html)).

New Hanover County schools in North Carolina recently received a grant from the state to work with students who recently dropped out and at-risk middle and high school students. The district will collaborate with other programs "to identify these students through graduation coaches and offer community resources and re-enrollment options" (for more information see <http://www.nhcs.net/news/support.htm>).

Memphis, Tennessee's seven public high schools received graduation coaches this year to improve graduation rates (for more information see <http://www.memphisdailynews.com/editorial/Article.aspx?id=33506>).

In Rutherford County, Tennessee, Oakland High School, with help from the district, introduced a graduation coach (for more information see <http://www.murfreesboropost.com/news.php?viewStory=7353>).

**NOTE:** Since the original technical assistance response was developed, other more recent news on local and state legislation may be available through state Web sites, and more recent resources may be available on the National High School Center's Web site: [www.betterhighschools.org](http://www.betterhighschools.org).