



# Dare County Schools



**Reducing  
Dropouts &  
Increasing  
On-time  
Graduates:  
A Systemic  
Approach**



# Dare County Schools

## Presenters

Sue F. Burgess, Ed. D., Superintendent

Nancy Griffin, Director of Secondary Instruction



# Focus: Reduce Dropouts

	<u>Dare Rank</u>	<u>Dare Rate</u>	<u>NC Average</u>
2000-01	96	7.2%	5.72%
2001-02	53	5.3%	5.25%
2002-03	34	4.3%	4.78%
2003-04	4	2.6%	4.86%
2004-05	5	2.8%	4.74%
2005-06	6	3.3%	5.04%
2006-07	3	2.07%	5.24%
2007-08	2	1.68%	4.90%
2008-09		2.03%	



## *Everybody's Job!*

- *Long-term School Board goal*
- *Systemic and systematic approach*
- *Analyze who and why*
- *Multi-faceted problem & solutions*
- *Not "a program" or "a person"*
- *Strategic emphasis*
- *Continuous monitoring and adjustment*



# Overview of Presentation

- *Characteristics of typical dropouts*
- *Policies to support reducing dropouts*
- *Programs with immediate impact*
- *Long-range interventions*





# Characteristics of Dare County Dropouts

***Definition: A dropout is a student who is not a transfer & leaves school before earning a diploma***

- Ability to complete course requirements
- High absentee rate
- Struggled in or failed some subjects in high school
- Works 20+ hours a week
- Wants a faster, more flexible route to finishing high school
- Nearly 60% age 17 or 18
- Over 60% left to enroll in GED program

# A Dropout's Perspective: Competing Priorities

- High School Diploma (28 credits)
- On-campus social and extracurricular activities
- 7-hour school day, 5 days/week
- Classroom pace
- Unexcused absences & tardies punished
- Less time for paid work

- Adult HS Diploma (20 credits) or GED (pass 5 tests)
- Off-campus social and extracurricular activities
- Shorter school day/week
- Individualized pace
- Come-and-go schedule
- More time for paid work



# Early Strategies for Dropout Prevention

- Slow down process for releasing dropouts for enrollment in GED program
- Revise Attendance Policy/Procedures
- Offer a 20-credit Diploma for Alternative School students
- Increase substance abuse prevention and intervention services
- Provide flexible credit recovery programs at all high schools



# *Revise Attendance Policy*

Based on District with Best Attendance Rate

- Time-for-time consequences for unexcused absences
- Requirement to make up work for all absences
- Definitions of excessive absences
- Incentives, including exam exemptions





# Revised Attendance Policy: Outcomes

- Increased average daily attendance rates
- Decreased rates of truancy
- Decreased course failures
- Increased rate of students earning Honor Roll and Principal's List recognition
- Decreased number of dropouts





## *20/21-Credit Diploma Option*

- Major difference between NC and Dare County graduation requirements was the number of electives required:
  - NC: 20-21 credits (with 2-3 electives)
  - Dare: 28 credits (with 10-14 electives)
- More electives do not necessarily equal increased rigor





# Process for 20/21-Credit Diploma Option

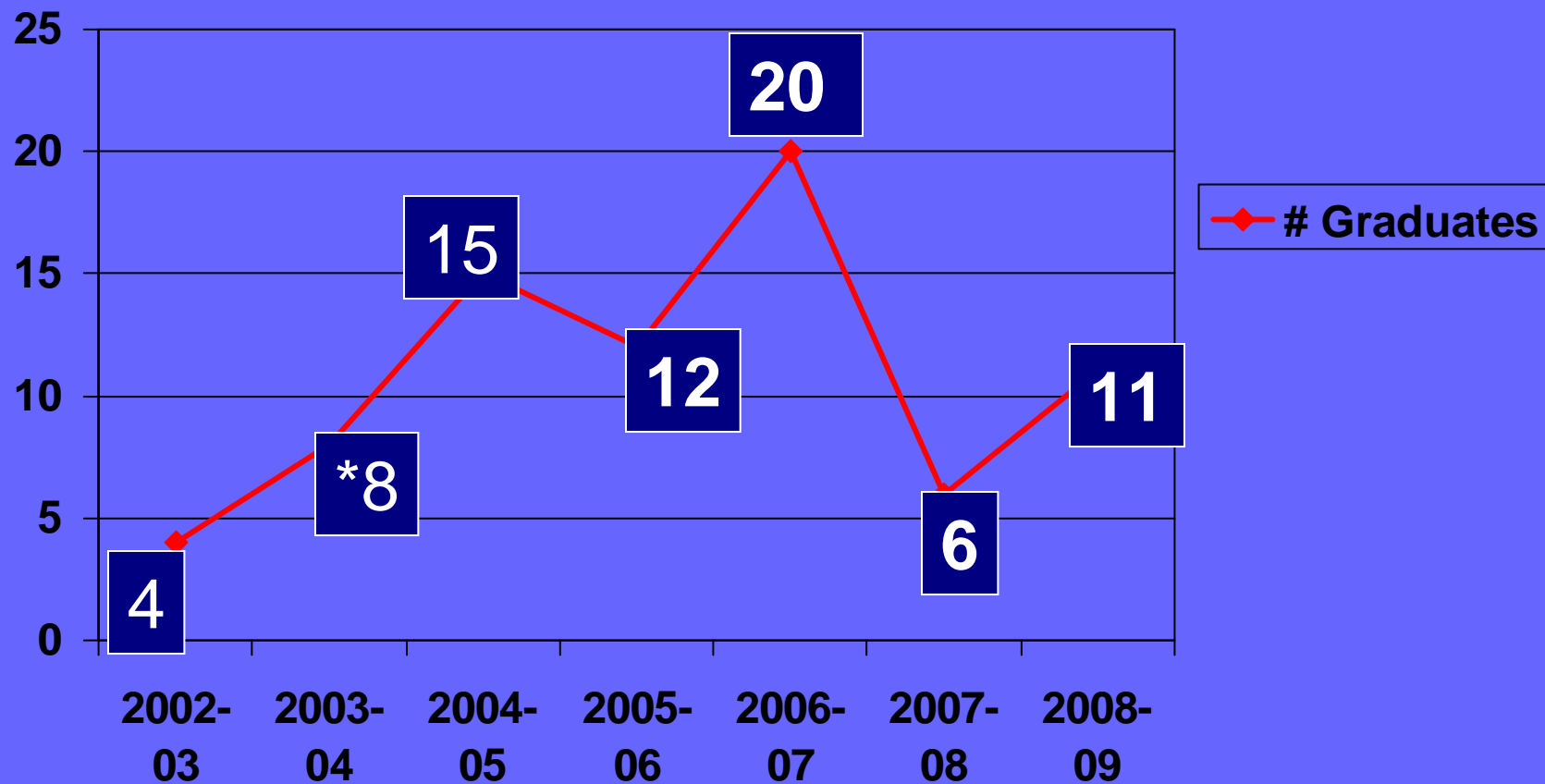
- Expectations
  - All begin with 4-year plan for 28-credit diploma
- Screening/Referral Process
  - Slow/reduce dropout decisions
  - Advisement regarding options
  - Formal application
  - Student Assistance Team input
- Screening Criteria
  - At-Risk Profile
  - At least 16
  - Cannot graduate ahead of class





# Number of Graduates

## Dare County Alternative School



**\*20-Credit Diploma Policy Implemented**



# *Random Drug Testing Policy*

- Students in grades 7-12 who participate in “privileged activities”
  - Extracurricular activities
  - Interscholastic athletics
  - Campus parking privileges
- Any other student whose parents “opt in”



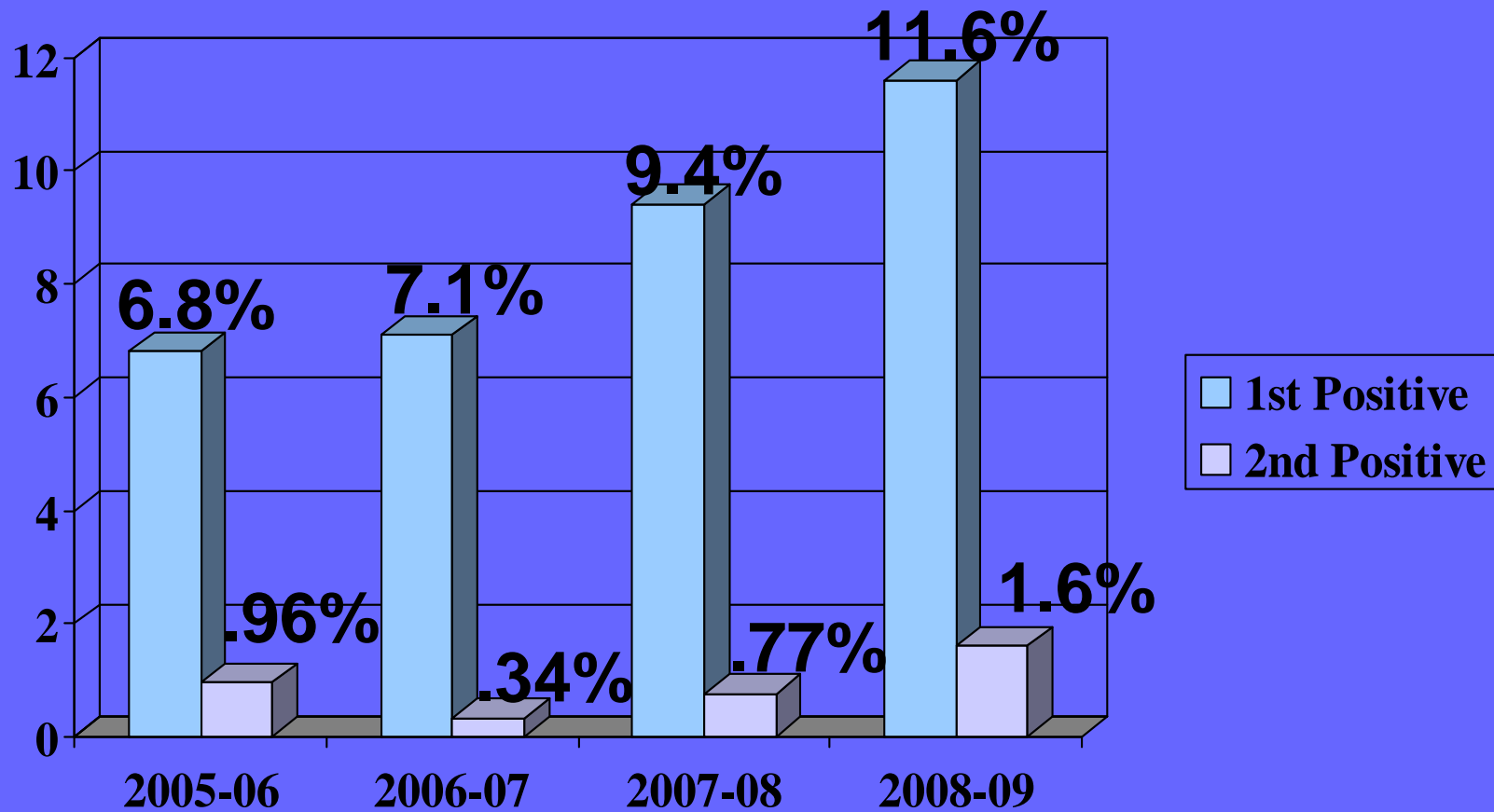


# Random Drug Testing Policy: Unique Features

- **First Positive Test**
  - Only parents notified
  - Parent gets physician's note
  - Student not excluded from activities
  - List of substance abuse resources given to parent
  - Mandatory retest between 30 and 90 days



# Drug Testing Outcomes: Comparison of 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Positive Rates





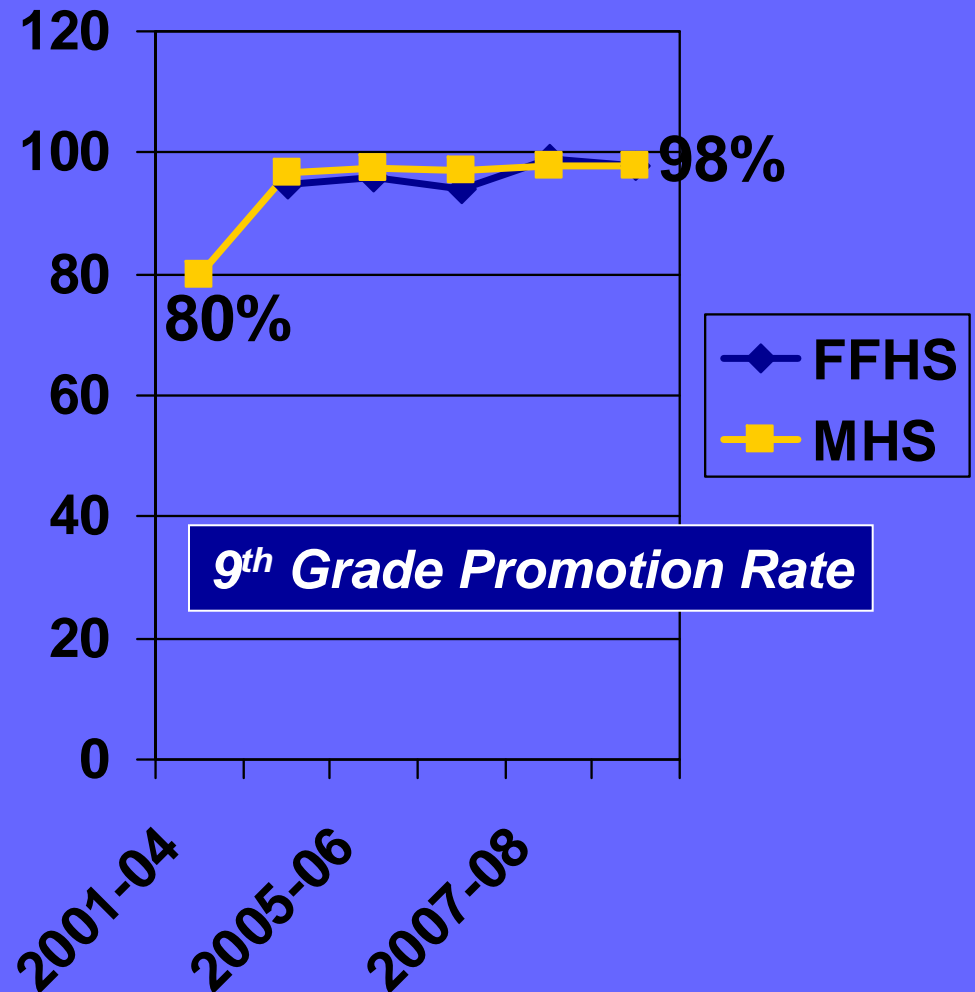
# High School Strategy: Increase Freshman Success Rate

- HS Reform Research:  
*Start with 9th Grade*
- 2004-05: Established  
Freshman Academies

## Promotion Rates

2001-04: 80% avg. promotion rate

	<u>FFHS</u>	<u>MHS</u>
2004-05	94.6%	96.6%
2005-06	96.0%	97.4%
2006-07	94.0%	97.0%
2007-08	99.1%	98.0%
2008-09	98.0%	98.0%

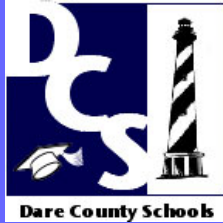




# 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy Features

- Common Planning Time (PLC) for 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Teachers
- Student Assistance Teams Emphasize Early Interventions
  - Attendance, discipline, academics & personal concerns
- Core Academic Courses Switch to Year-Long from Semester – Now Hybrid Schedule for All
- Note-taking & Study Skills –  
Now Cornell Note-taking for All
- Summer Jump Start for At-Risk Rising 9<sup>th</sup> Graders





## High School Strategy:

### *Individual Advancement Centers in all schools*

- Staffed by teacher and assistant
- During and after school
- Serve at-risk students needing individualized instruction and pacing:
  - Limited English Proficient students
  - Exceptional Children
  - Students not proficient on NC tests
- Services include:
  - Exit Test Remediation
  - Testing Modifications
  - Online Accelerated Credit Recovery





*Key Strategy:*

*Enrichment/Intervention During School Day*

## **2008-09 Empower Hour Pilot at First Flight High**

- Students with grades below C assigned to 30 minutes targeted intervention with teacher
- Enrichment opportunities
- Departmental PLCs meet weekly
- Outcomes:
  - **29% reduction in overall course failures**
  - **47% reduction in 9<sup>th</sup> grade course failures**

**2009-10: All Dare County Schools have daily enrichment/intervention during school day**



## *Middle/High School Strategy: Alternative to Out-of-School Suspension*

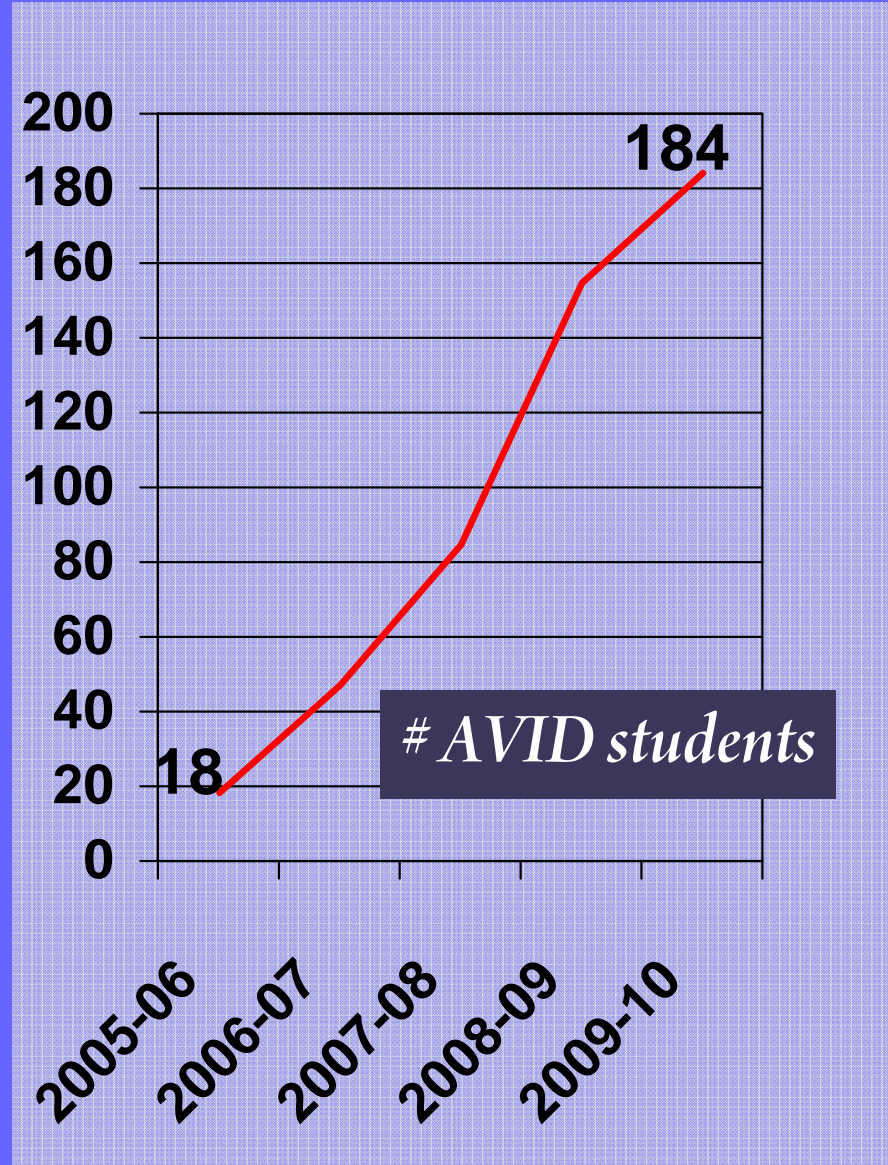
- Spring 2008: Pilot for high school students
  - **Served 25 students/3 repeaters**
  - **167 instructional days preserved**
- 2008-09: Expanded for middle school students
  - **Served 116 students/11 repeaters**
  - **636 instructional days preserved**
  - **Intensive academic & counseling intervention at off-campus supervised setting**
- 2009-10: Differentiated services
  - **Reduce cost**



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# Middle and High School AVID Program (begins grade 7)

- AVID program targets first generation college-goers, “average” students
- All AVID students take honors courses; receive support and tutoring
- The number of minorities taking Honors/AP classes at Manteo High School increased from 27 in 2005 (pre-AVID) to 147 in 2009.





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## *Key Elementary Strategy:*

### *Increase % of elementary students who read on grade level*

- READ 180 program piloted at MES in 2007-2008 in grades 4 and 5
- Research-based program for struggling readers in grades 4-12
- Vanderbilt University
- Three Components:
  - **Direct Instruction**
  - **Computer Component**
  - **Individual Reading by Lexile Levels**  
(lexile - a score that helps identify reading material that is at an appropriate difficulty level for an individual student)



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*Key Indicator:*

## **READ 180 – 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Results**

Expected lexile growth per year is 75-100 lexile points

- **Fourth grade English Language Learners (ELL)**  
15 students  
average lexile gain: 131 points per student
- **Fifth grade ELL**  
14 students  
average lexile gain: 123 points per student



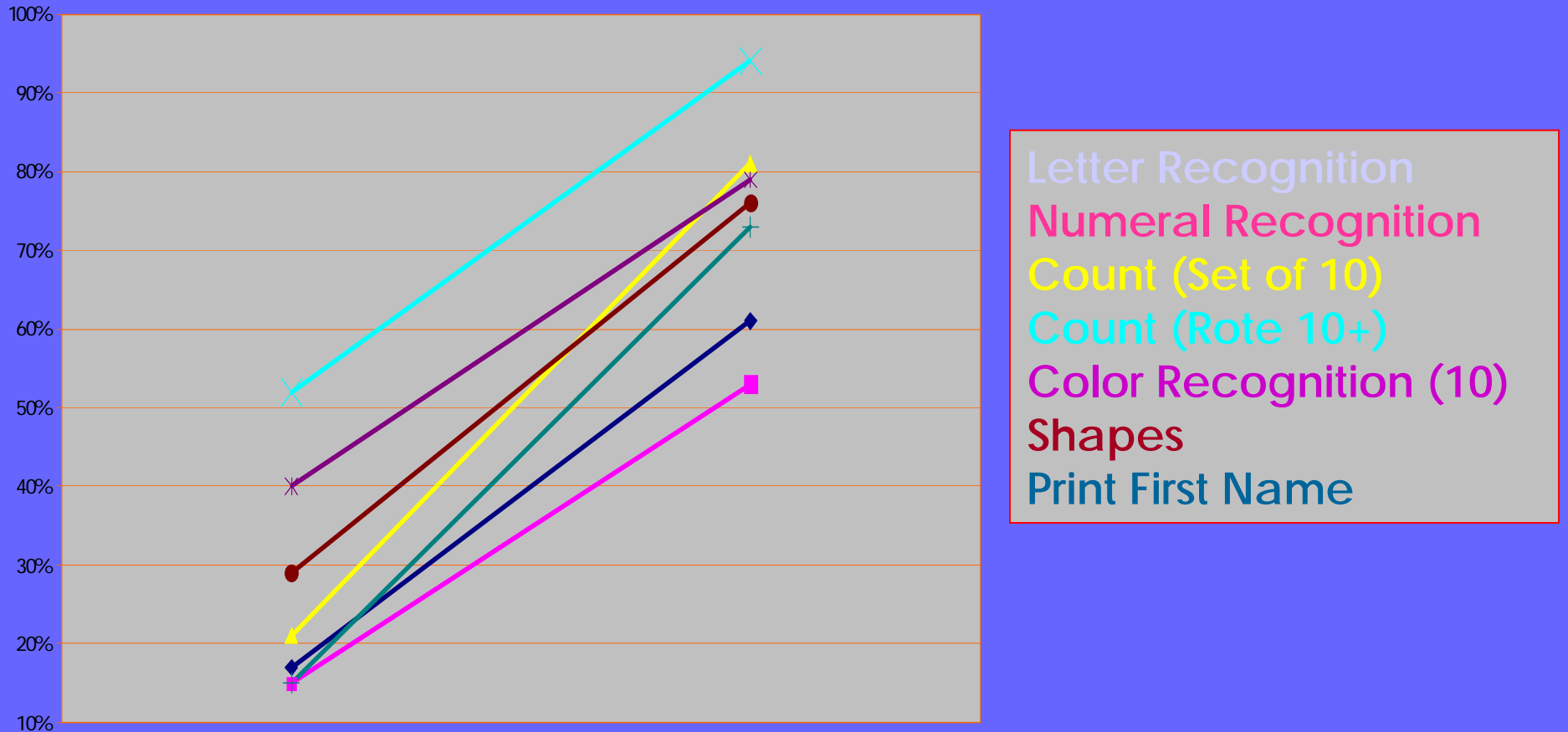
*Key Strategy:*

## Dropout Prevention *Begins* with More at Four

- Research Based Pre-Kindergarten Program Serves at-risk students
- Increases Kindergarten Readiness
- Began in the fall of 2003 at Manteo Elementary
- Expanded to six classrooms at four sites
- 7<sup>th</sup> year in Dare County Schools
- 378 students served through June 2009
- To date, 99% of all MAF students have been promoted in each successive grade



# Sample Results More at Four Academic Skills



**Skills demonstrated from beginning to end of school year 2008-09**



# *Sample Results*

## *More at Four*

**Percent on Grade Level (End of Grade Tests)**

***Cohort #1 Manteo Elementary 4<sup>th</sup> Grade***

***Math***      89% MAF      87% non MAF

***Reading***   89% MAF      74% non MAF

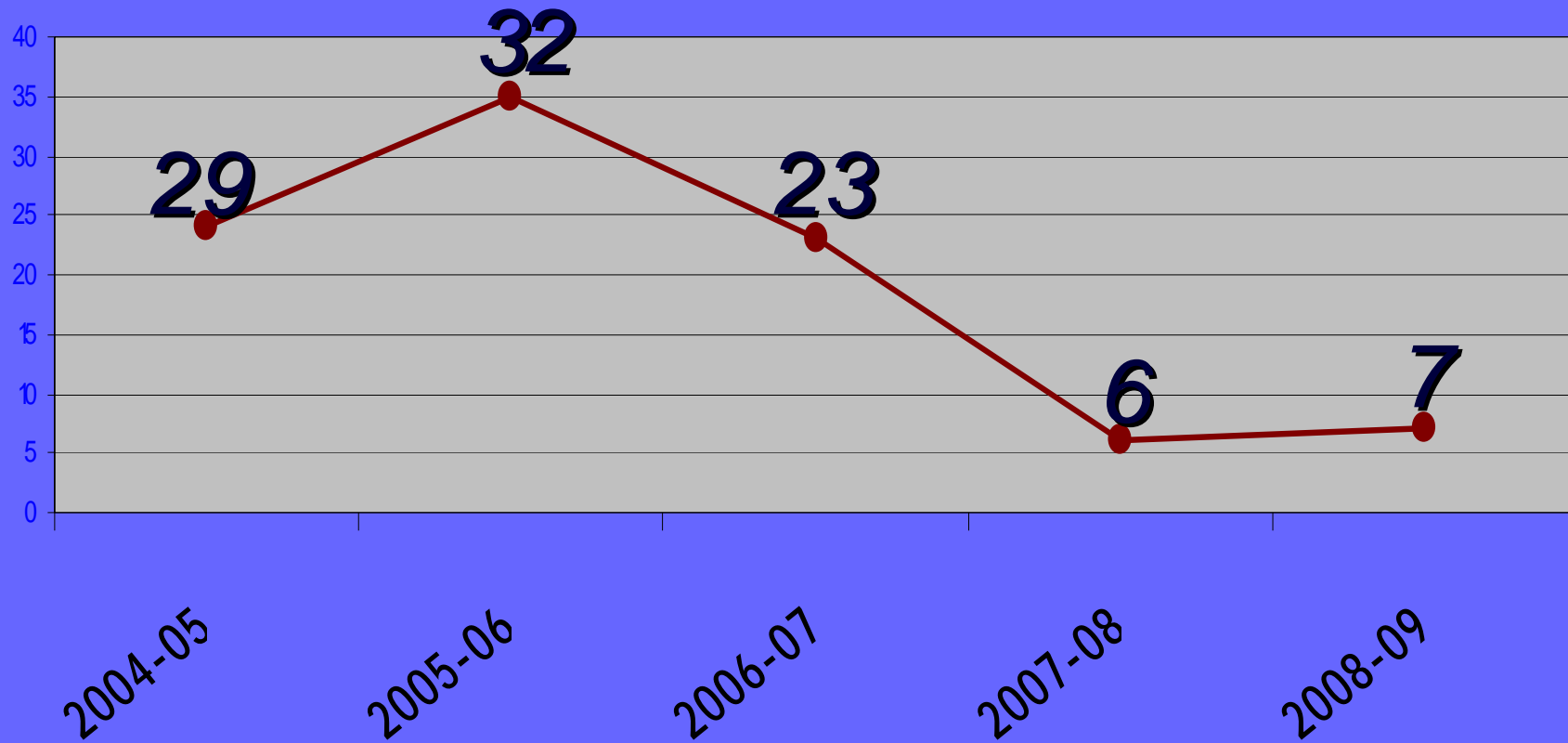


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# ***Result: District K-5 Retentions***

## ***Dare County Schools***





# Maintaining the Focus: Future Strategies

- Increase Year-long Classes in High School
- Reduce Required Electives
- Increase Dual Enrollment
- Start Early College High School
- Expand *Read 180*
- Introduce AVID Elementary
- Implement Positive Behavior Support in Secondary Schools
- Provide 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Jump Start
- Open Language Acquisition Center





# Covering Costs

- Reorganize resources at no additional cost
- Curb costs with efficiencies
- Collaborate with other agencies
- Seek grant support
- Identify in-kind assistance
  - Donated space
  - Volunteers

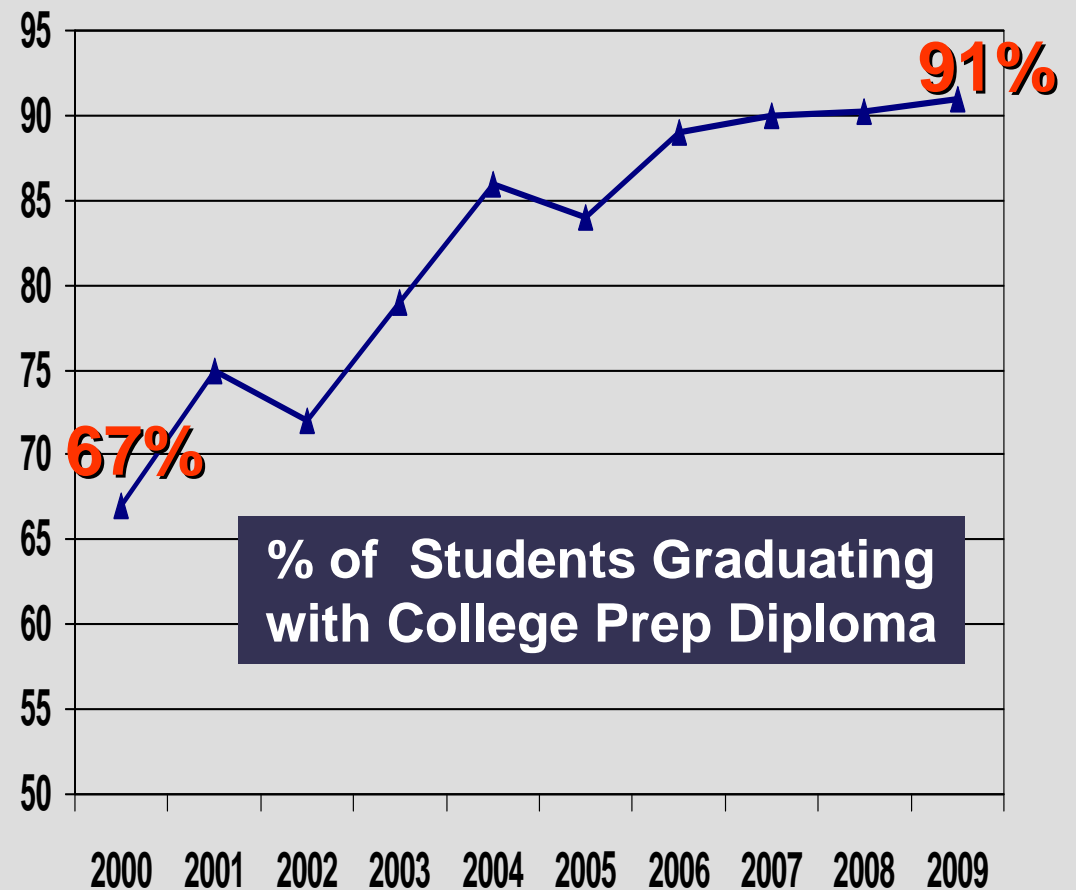




# *Changing the Mindset: They Said It Couldn't Be Done*

## Dare Rank

2000-01	96
2001-02	53
2002-03	34
2003-04	4
2004-05	5
2005-06	6
2006-07	3
<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2</b>



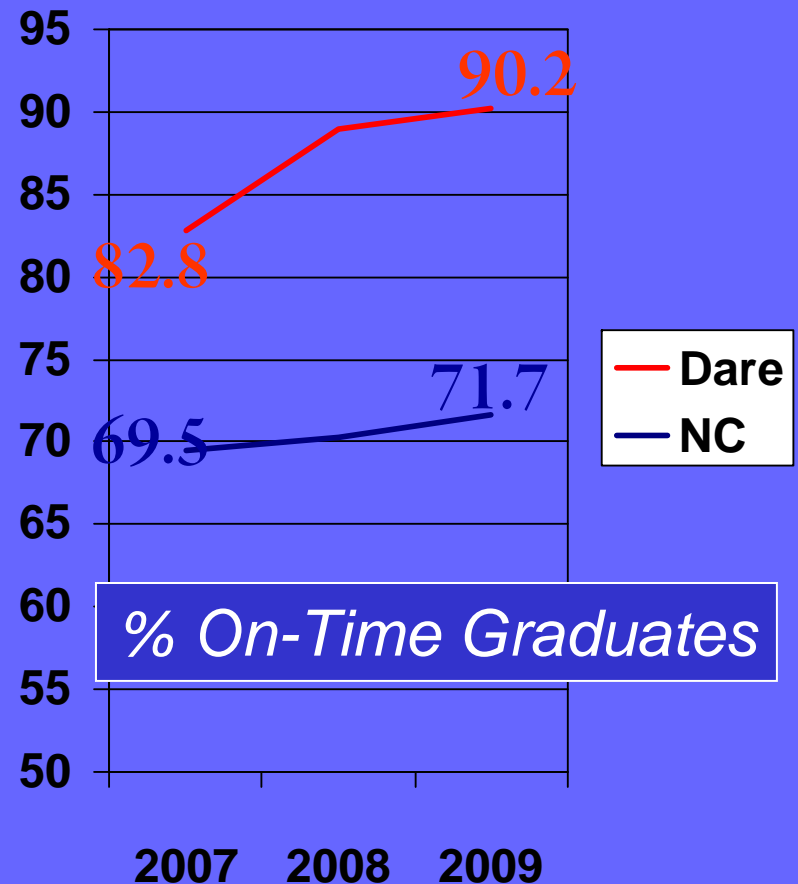


## *While increasing the On-Time Graduation Rate*

### **Dare County Schools State Rank**

- 2007 - 6
- 2008 - 2
- **2009 - 1**

***The goal is 100% !***





# Dare County Schools

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