

# **The Importance of Serving At-Risk Youth & Alternative Education Programming**

**Sherry Holly**

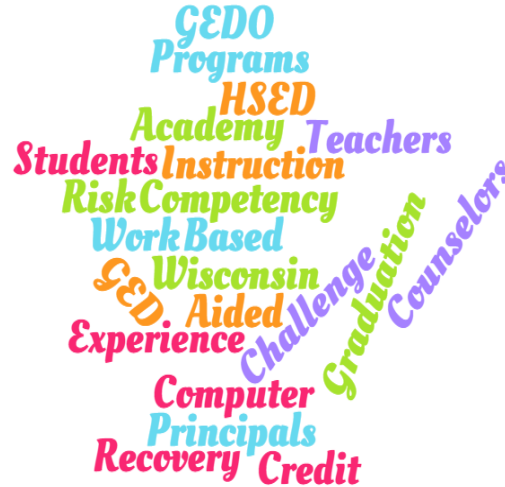
**Alternative Education  
Consultant/GED Administrator**

**February 2020**



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**  
Carolyn Stanford Taylor, State Superintendent

# Welcome Everyone!



A word cloud shaped like a diamond, containing various educational terms and roles. The words are arranged in a cluster, with some appearing more frequently or in larger fonts than others. The colors of the words vary, including shades of blue, green, orange, red, and purple.

CEDO  
Programs  
HSED  
Academy Teachers  
Students Instruction  
Risk Competency  
Work Based  
Wisconsin  
CEA Aided  
Experience Challenge Graduation Counselors  
Computer  
Principals  
Recovery Credit

# What is at Stake?

*"Dropping out of high school culminates a long-term process of disengagement from school and has **profound social and economic consequences for students, their families, and their communities.** Students who drop out of high school are more likely to be **unemployed, to earn less than those who graduate, to be on public assistance, and to end up in prison.**"* Christle, C. A., Jolivette, K., & Michael Nelson, C. (2007).

# Agenda

- What defines an at-risk youth
- Why educating at-risk youth in Wisconsin is critical
- Prevention Strategies
- Look at interventions
- Alternative education options that lead to a high school diploma
- Postsecondary options for students who exit high school without a diploma



# Who am I?

- **Sherry Holly, MS Ed – UW Madison**
- **Alternative Education Consultant & GED Manager at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction**
- **Associate High School Principal**
- **Special Education Teacher**
- **Air Force Officer (Retired)**





# Every Child a Graduate

**Vision:** **Every** Child a Graduate, College and Career Ready

**Mission:** An agenda aimed at helping **all** of our kids succeed

**Educational Equity:** That **every** student has access to the educational resources and rigor they need at the **right moment** in their education, across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income.



# What defines an at-risk youth?

**Students in grades 5-12 who are dropouts or two or more of the following §118.153:**

- **One year or more behind their age group in the number of credits attained**
- **Two or more years behind in basic skill levels**
- **Habitual Truants**
- **Parents**
- **Adjudicated Delinquents**
- **8th grade pupils whose below the basic level and/or 8th grade pupils who failed to be promoted to the 9th grade.**

# Why Serving At Risk Students is So Important?

***"Our challenge is not to educate the children we used to have or want to have, but to educate the children who come to the schoolhouse door." H. G. Wells***

Human history becomes  
more and more a race between  
education and catastrophe.

H.G. Wells



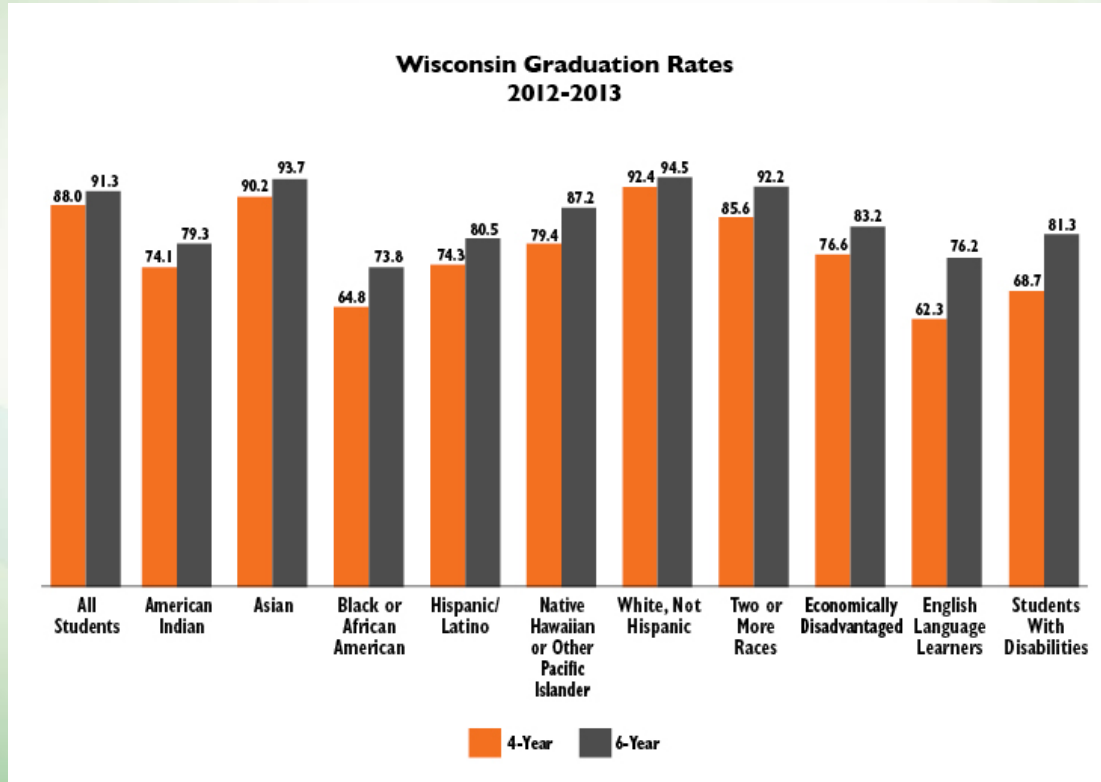




# Why Serving At Risk Students is So Important?

- Every school district in Wisconsin is required to identify and serve students who meet the statutory definition of being a child at risk of not graduating from high school under §118.153 (1), Wis. Stats.
- Annually each school board must approve the district plan that establishes how the school district will identify and serve children who meet the statutory definition and district definition of being a child at risk of not graduating from high school § 118.153, Wis. Stats.
- Except as provided ...unless the child is excused or has graduated from high school any person having control over a child who is between the ages of 6 and 18 shall cause the child to attend school regularly...until the end of the term, quarter or semester of the school year in which the child becomes 18 years of age § 118.15, Wis. Stats.

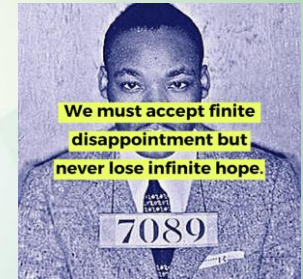
# Wisconsin's Achievement Gap



# Inequity in Wisconsin

**Wisconsin ranked in the top five for Least Amount of Racial Integration in a January 2019 study by WalletHub. This study measured the gaps between blacks and whites across 22 key indicators of equality and integration in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia.**

- Income Gap
- Labor Force Participation
- Highest Unemployment
- Highest Poverty Rate
- Highest Gap in % of Adults with at least a high school diploma
- Highest Standardized Test Score Gap
- Highest Voter Turnout Gap (2016 Presidential Election)
- Highest Infant Mortality Rate Gap



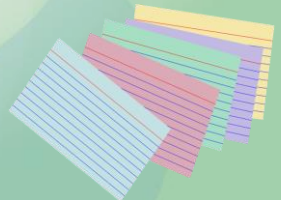


# Reflection



**Think of a student who is at-risk, vulnerable, or disengaged:**

- 1. What factors led to the student becoming at-risk or disengaged?**
- 2. What programs or supports are in place that are successfully supporting that student?**
- 3. What are the barriers that are getting in the way of that at-risk student being successful?**



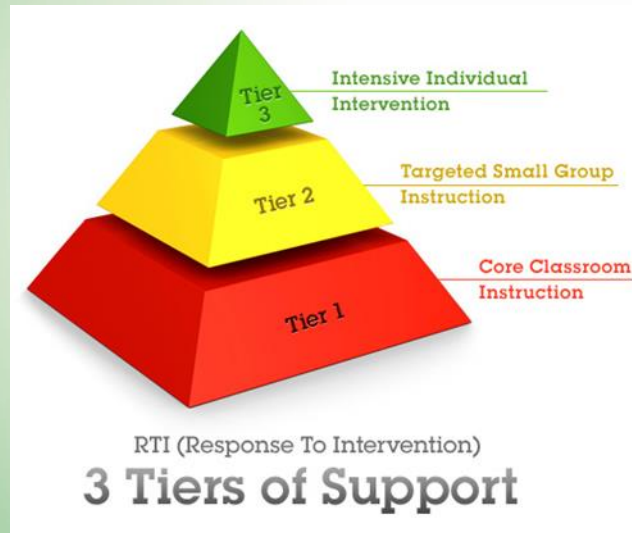
# What Can We Do?

- **Pathways to Graduation**
- **Alternatives to Graduation**
- **Alternative Education Programs**
- **Prevention Strategies to Support At-Risk Students**
- **Intervention Strategies to Support At-Risk Students**
- **Re-engagement Strategies to Support At-Risk Students**



# At Risk Plans

## District Plan



## Individual Plan

**Example:** Interventions are documented in a student information system and reviewed every 6-10 weeks by the appropriate team to ensure responsiveness to the intervention.

### Non-Exhaustive List of Interventions and Programs - Grade 5 - 12

- Summer School
- Math interventions
- Reading
- Attendance interventions
- Alternative education programs

# Students

- **Career Exploration & Planning**
- **Academic Support & Planning**
- **Comprehensive School Counseling Programs**
- **Early and Middle College High Schools**
- **Career & Technical Education**
- **College and Workplace Readiness**
- **Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports**
- **Service Learning**
- **Wisconsin Employability Skills Certificate**
- **National Career Readiness Certificate**
- **Hands-on/relevant education experiences within your community**



# DPI Supports for At-Risk Youth

[Subscribe to our Newsletter](#)

[Trauma Sensitive Schools](#)

[What Schools and Teachers can do to Build Resiliency](#)

[School-Based Mental Health Service Grant Program](#)

[Best Practices for Supporting LGBTQ Youth](#)

[ACP Program Evaluation Toolkit](#)

[Human Trafficking in Wisconsin: What Educators Need to Know](#)

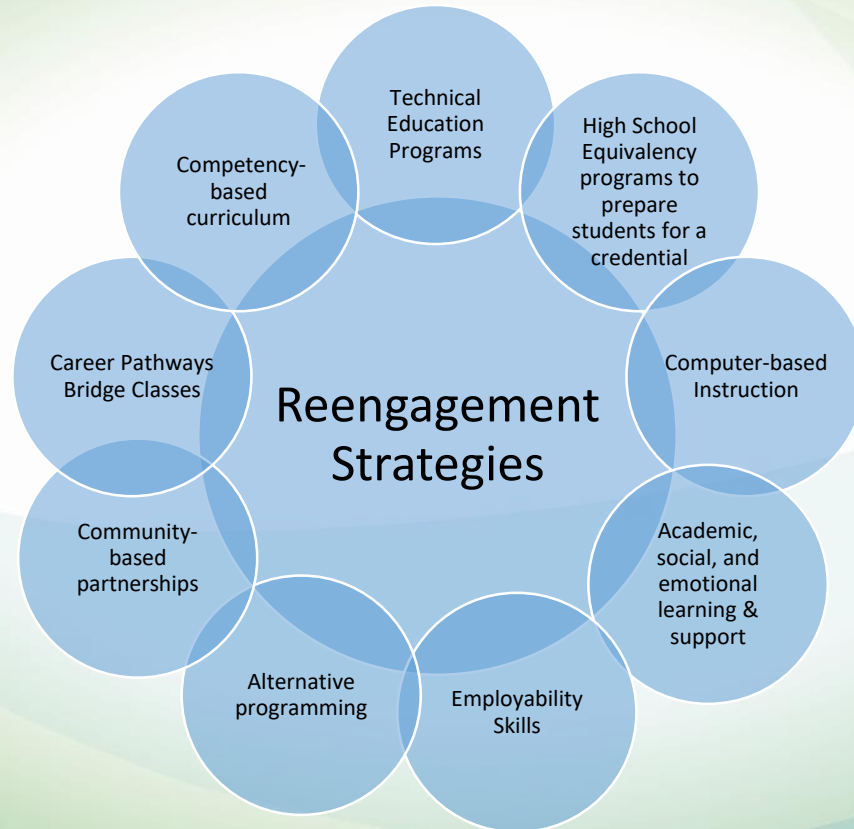
[Building Resiliency in Youth](#)

[Social and Emotional Learning](#)





# Re-Engaging At-Risk Students



# What is Alternative Education

**§115.28 (7) (e), Wis. Stats., as "an instructional program, approved by the school board, that utilizes successful alternative or adaptive school structures and teaching techniques and that is incorporated into existing, traditional classrooms or regularly scheduled curricular programs or that is offered in place of regularly scheduled curricular programs. Alternative education program does not include a private school or a home-based private educational program."**

# Program vs School

- **An alternative school is a public school that has at least 30 pupils and no more than 250 pupils and has a separate administrator or teacher in charge of the school and offers a non-traditional curriculum**
- **An alternative program, whether on-site or off-site, is operated by the school district(s) and students remain connected for purposed of enrollment, testing, school performance and reporting**

# Graduation Requirement: s.118.33(1)(a), Wis. Stats.

- 4 English
- 3 Social Studies
- 3 Math
- 3 Science
- 1.5 Physical Education
- .5 health (grades 7-12)
- **15 credits**
- + 8 electives  
(recommended)
- 23 credits + citizenship test



# Alternative pathways to a diploma

- **Individual Education Plans**
- **High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED)**
- **Competency based curriculum**
- **GED Option #2 - can supplant GED test(s) in core area(s) where the student is credit deficient.**
- **118.15 Contract: HSED based on a student taking GED tests at a technical college**
- **118.153 contract between a high school and a community based organization**
- **Youth in juvenile correctional facilities**
- **Students enrolled in the Challenge Academy**
- **Students who complete the GED tests through Job Corps**



# PI 5 High School Equivalency Diplomas

- **5:04: GED with the addition of the state civics test**
- **5:05: HSED based on passing the GED with additional requirements of the civics test, health, career awareness and employability skills**
- **5.06: HSED based on attainment of high school credits**
- **5.07: HSED based on post-secondary education**
- **5.08: HSED based on a foreign diploma or degree**
- **5.09: HSED based on completion of an approved program (can be a combination of competency courses and GED assessments)**

# A Featured School: Rock River Charter School

- **GED Pass Rate 97%**
- **Time Card**
- **CPR Certification – Health Credit**
- **300 Students/Year**
- **Youth Options**



# NTC Alternative High School

- [Podcast Script Interview with Stakeholders](#)
- [NTC Facebook Page](#)





# Wisconsin Challenge Academy

- **16-18 year olds**
- **HSED**
- **Character Development**
- **Community Service**
- **Mentor Component**
- **Post-Residential Phase**



# Accepting the Challenge

- **Reach and engage at-risk students in your community, district, school, or program**
- **Take account of the demographics of the at-risk population in deciding where to target resources**
- **Focus initiatives on the forward progress of at-risk students on the pathways that lead to graduation**
- **Maximizing student engagement and participation**



# Thank You



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# Resources

<https://dpi.wi.gov/statesupt/every-child-graduate>

<https://dpi.wi.gov/graduation/resources>

[https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/alternative-education/AEP\\_Q\\_and\\_A\\_070318.pdf](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/alternative-education/AEP_Q_and_A_070318.pdf)

<https://dpi.wi.gov/excforall/data>

<https://www.cesa2.org/>

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