

# OVERCOMING COVID ERA CHALLENGES TO EMPLOYMENT READINESS

**A Facilitated Discussion**



**What is the end  
goal for high  
school?**



?

Unfortunately,  
these two goals  
may be at odds.

44%

of executives said a lack of soft skills was the biggest proficiency gap they saw in the U.S. workforce

67%

of HR managers said they'd hire a candidate with strong soft skills even if his or her technical abilities were lacking

High school graduation rates  
dipped in at least 20 states  
after the first full school year  
disrupted by the pandemic.



Why are schools  
so focused on  
graduation  
rates?

# EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA)

- Main education law for public schools in the United States
- Signed into law 12/10/2015
- Requires states to hold schools accountable for how students achieve
- Each state is responsible for identifying schools that are underperforming
- Requires states measure school performance through:
  - Academic achievement
  - Academic progress
  - English language proficiency
  - High school graduation rates
  - Any of the following areas:
    - Kindergarten readiness
    - Access to and completion of advanced coursework
    - College readiness

# REQUIRED ACTIONS IN NEW YORK STATE

- Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) Schools and Target Support and Improvement Schools (TSI) must:
  - Participate in an on-site Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) needs assessment completed by NYSED
  - Review additional data and documentation to identify needs to be addressed in the school's annual improvement plan
  - Conduct annual surveys of parents, staff, and students
  - Develop, in consultation with parents, school staff, and for secondary schools, students, an annual School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) that is submitted to NYSED for approval
  - Identify an evidence-based intervention to be included within the annual improvement plan
  - Establish a participatory budgeting process to increase parent and student participation in decision-making

RECEIVERSHIP

# WHAT HAPPENS TO A SCHOOL IN RECEIVERSHIP?

- The school is being operated under the management of a receiver
- The receiver oversees the turnaround of the struggling school
- Under the receivership law, a school receiver is granted new authority to, among other things:
  - develop a school intervention plan
  - convert schools to community schools providing wrap-around services
  - Remove staff and/or require all staff to reapply for their positions
  - Review and make changes to the school budget
  - Create/change school program and curriculum
  - Supersede a decision made by the Board of Education
  - Implement professional development for staff
  - Expand the school day or year
  - Convert the school to a charter school, pursuant to the law
  - Request changes to the collective bargaining agreement

# DEMONSTRATED STUDENT BEHAVIORS

Action/Reaction by School

Rationale/Root

Unintended  
Workplace  
Outcome

# DISRUPTIVE/EXPLOSIVE BEHAVIOR

## Action/Reaction by School

- Given the opportunity to meet with a counselor to discuss their feelings
- Given the opportunity to go to an alternate location to cool down
- Given access to fidget toys or a physical activity to cool down

## Rationale/Root

- Goal is to keep students in class
- Suspended students are not earning academic credit

## Unintended Workplace Outcome

- Limited ability to self-modulate emotions
- Reliance on others for assistance in controlling emotions
- Expectation of excessive accommodations to deal with emotional challenges
- Expectation of a “fresh start” each day without any repercussions from prior incidents

# EXCESSIVE ABSENCES/TARDIES

## Action/Reaction by School

- No formal consequence
- Student may be spoken to by administrator and reminded about the importance of attending school and arriving on time

## Rationale/Root

- If students anticipate a consequence following an absence or late arrival, they may continue to avoid school altogether

## Unintended Workplace Outcome

- No understanding of the need for punctuality in the workplace
- No realization that there are consequences for excessive absences/late arrivals in the workplace
- Feeling of justification for absences related to minor incidents
- Lack of understanding that excessive absences/tardies



# LACK OF TIME MANAGEMENT

## Action/Reaction by School

- Assignment deadlines do not exist
- Students may turn in any assignment at any time and receive at least partial credit

## Rationale/Root

- If students complete the work, they are entitled to at least some credit
- A student with failing grades cannot graduate
- Achievement of credits is required by the state, but the determination of how those credits are earned is at the discretion of the school district

## Unintended Workplace Outcome

- No understanding of deadlines
- Expectation that work to be accepted now matter how far the submissions is past its initial due date
- True shock that lack of completion of assignments in a timely manner may be grounds for termination

# LACK OF QUALITY WORK PRODUCT

## Action/Reaction by School

- Students are allowed unlimited opportunities to re-submit sub-par work
- Floor grades exist ranging from 55-64
- Elimination of zero as a grade

## Rationale/Root

- The goal is mastery - let students keep trying until they master material
- Lack of floor grades may make it impossible for a student to pass after only one semester

## Unintended Workplace Outcome

- Misperception that deadlines are flexible
- Tasks often completed with minimal initial effort
- Lack of pride in work product
- Expectation that work can be revised and resubmitted if unsatisfactory
- Expectation of compensation/reward even when a job is incomplete/poorly done

# NO ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CHAIN OF COMMAND

## Action/Reaction by School

- As a result of electronic platforms, students have access to every administrator in their district
- Students having an issue with a teacher will immediately reach out to teacher's supervisors (e.g. principal, superintendent)

## Rationale/Root

- Respond to student concerns at whatever level they are addressed rather than redirecting
- Allowing for student voice

## Unintended Workplace Outcome

- Lack of respect for institutional hierarchy
- Feelings of entitlement to contact top level management, circumventing direct supervisors
- Perception of "peer" status with supervisors

# DIFFICULTY INTERACTING WITH PEERS

## Action/Reaction by School

- Encourage students to engage socially
- Allow students to limit interactions with non-preferred classmates (with the exception of discriminatory behaviors)
- Allow parents to dictate work groups

## Rationale/Root

- Students may have anxieties preventing them from engaging socially
- Students may not have the ability to engage socially
- Preference for social distancing

## Unintended Workplace Outcome

- Difficulty making connections in the workplace
- Lack of contentment in the workplace
- Demonstrated lack of tolerance with colleagues
- Unwillingness to interact pleasantly with others may hamper job performance

7,000

students drop out of high school every day in the U.S.

# What does the future look like for a h.s. drop out?

- More likely to live a life of periodic unemployment
- Higher rate of using government assistance
- High school dropouts account for 67% of inmates in state prisons and 56% of federal prisons
- Lower annual income
- High school dropouts are almost three times as likely to be unemployed than college graduates
- Among women aged 16 to 24, high school dropouts are the most likely to be single mothers

# What causes a student to drop out?

- 27% say it is because they are failing too many classes
- 25% say they are bored
- 26% say they had to become a caregiver for a family member
- 20% said that school wasn't relevant to their lives

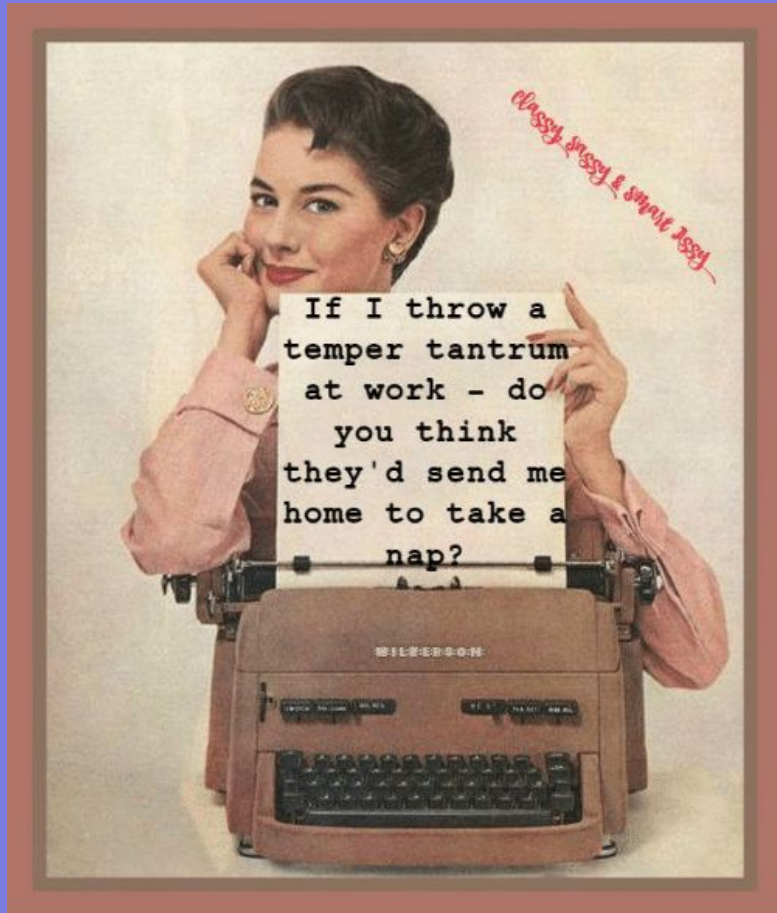


**How can schools address these two goals simultaneously?**



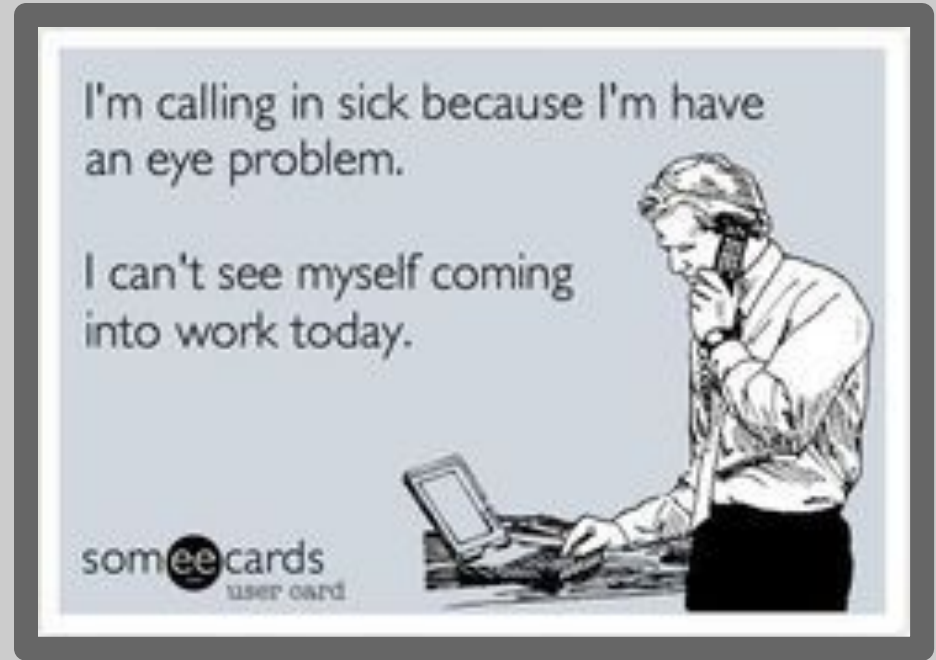


**WHAT ARE  
YOUR IDEAS?**



An employee comes to work in a foul mood almost every day. She ignores most of the people she encounters, even failing to acknowledge direct questions. The few people she does address, she snaps and snarls at. By late morning, she has usually calmed down and is at least civil. What do you do?

An employee frequently misses work or leaves early. The reasons are varied, but never serious (e.g clogged sink, mouse in the house, headache, sniffles). What do you do?





**THE PROCRASTINATION**

**IS STRONG FOR THIS  
GROUP**

An employee never makes deadlines. When questioned, he always has an excuse for the delay and a promise that it will be completed as soon as possible. What do you do?

An employee never turns in work of the expected quality the first time. Eventually, the project is acceptable, but it often takes two to three requests for revisions. What do you do?





An employee doesn't agree with your management style and/or decisions. Instead of having a conversation with you, she consistently emails your supervisor with complaints. What do you do?

An employee exhibits difficulty interacting with colleagues. He is quiet, keeps to himself, and barely speaks to colleagues. In a work group, he leaves common areas to work on parts of the project independently. The collaborative nature of the project is being compromised. What do you do?



**Questions?**

**Contact Us**

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# NEATEC

Northeast Advanced  
Technological Education Center



Northeast Advanced  
Technological Education Center

Regional Center for Semiconductor and Nanotechnology Education

# What is NEATEC?

**Kelly Fahrenkopf**

**Mary Ann Nickloy**

- Teachers - 58 years combined experience in K-12 education
- NYS Permanent Certification
  - Math, Special Education, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Reading
- Trainers - work with teachers in upstate NY
  
- NYS Master Teacher
- NYS STEM Collaborative members