Check & Connect
www.ici.umn.edu/checkandconnect

Check & Connect is based on the assumption that effective dropout prevention must focus on indicators of school engagement. A key assumption of the model is that dropping out of school is a long process, preceded by truancy and other indicators of school withdrawal. The process of changing a student's educational trajectory also requires a long-term commitment. This program was researched and developed by the University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration. Initial implementation took place in Minneapolis Public Schools (OSEP/Persistence Plus, 1990-2001) and in collaboration with Dakota County Human Services (1996-2002) servicing students in grades k-5 (Early Truancy Prevention) and truant youth ages 12-17 (School Success). Check & Connect is currently being implemented in three Minneapolis High Schools with funding provided by the Bush Foundation (2002 - 2006).

Check & Connect:

- Is based on building a relationship with each student. Trust and familiarity are developed over time through ongoing efforts like checking on students' attendance and grades, providing regular feedback to students, communicating with families and schools and initiating efforts to keep the youth engaged in school.
- Monitors the indicators of school engagement and early warning signs of school withdrawal, such as chronic absenteeism, course failure, behavior in school and in the community.
- Provides interventions directed at preventing students from dropping out. Focus is on the individual needs and personal development of the student, on empowering the families to provide educational and emotional support to their adolescents, or on making changes with the school that will keep the youth engaged in school.
- Responds on a regular basis to students' educational needs and according to their type and level of risk for disengagement from school. The student knows that a monitor will be checking on them regularly regardless of their behavior - positive or negative.
- Uses a collaborative approach across the spheres of home, school and community.

Key Features of Check and Connect:

- **Preventive:** Focuses on risk factors that can be altered through intervention.
- **Builds capacity:** Promotes the acquisition of skills and successful school habits.
- **Efficient:** Builds upon existing resources and networks within systems of home, school, and community.
- **Outreach:** Structured to create long-term trusting connections between schools, youth and families.
- **Individualized:** Systematically focuses on the individual needs of high-risk youth.
- **Adaptable:** Uniquely designed to incorporate the goals and strengths of a local community.

Basic Considerations:

- Recognize dropping out is a process of disengagement.
  Students at risk of dropout based on status variables are not destined to be dropouts.
  Promoting student engagement in school is the goal.
- Alterable variables can be impacted by educators (attendance, behavior, grades, belonging, school policies, school climate).

2|8|05

Check & Connect

A Model Designed to Promote Student
Engagement in School

Research Team: S. Christenson, D. Evelo, C.
Hurley, C. Kaibel, C. Lehr, M. Sinclair, M.
Thurlow (with assistance from many others)

Key Points

What is national dropout rate? (NCES, 2001)

- 5% event dropout rate – 5 of 100 who were enrolled Oct. 1999 were not enrolled nor completed HS program in Oct. 2000 (ages 15-24)
- 10.9% status dropout rate – 11 of 100 youth ages 16 to 24 years not enrolled nor graduated (3.8 millions youth)

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Key Points

- Dropping out is the outcome of a long process of disengagement and alienation.
- Dropping out is preceded by less severe types of withdrawal, including *truancy, suspension* and *failing classes.*
- Early recognition of indicators of disengagement is critical for both prevention and intervention efforts.
- Some indicators or risk factors are within the power of schools to change. (Finn, 1989, 1993)

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Key Points

Predictors of Dropping Out (Finn, 1989, 1993)

Status Variables	Alterable Variables
Socioeconomic status	Attendance, suspensions
Ethnicity	Extracurricular participation
Metro status and region	Grades, accrual of credits
Gender	Age to grade level
Family structure	Parental supervision
Disability	School outreach
IQ	Access to community resources

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A Road Map

- Provide opportunities for success in school work.
- Communicate the relevance of education to future endeavors.
- Create a caring and supportive environment.
- Help students with personal problems.

(McPartland, 1994)

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Origins of Check & Connect

- Began as a partnership between the University of Minnesota and Minneapolis Public Schools.
- OSEP funded grant to develop and field test dropout prevention strategies for middle school youth with disabilities (1990-1995).

IDEAS that work.

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C. Kaibel, Minneapolis Public School
C. Lehr, University of Minnesota

Origins of Check & Connect

Conceptual Components of School Engagement
⌘ Participation in school
⌘ Identification with school
⌘ Student initiative and responsibility
⌘ Academic performance
⌘ Social/behavioral performance
⌘ School support for learning
⌘ Home support for learning
⌘ Home-school collaboration

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Origins of Check & Connect

⌘ Began with urban 7th graders receiving special education services for mild to severe learning and emotional/behavioral disabilities.
⌘ 94 students were randomly assigned to treatment or contrast conditions and were followed from 7-9th grade:
– 91% of treatment students were still enrolled in school compared to 68% of students in the contrast group.
– 85% of treatment students persisted in school compared to 64% of students in the contrast group.
– 68% of treatment students were on track to graduate in five years compared to 29% of students in the contrast group.

(Sinclair, Christenson, Evelo, & Hurley, 1998)
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Program Description

⌘ A model designed to promote student engagement with school.

⌘ Approach is based on enhancing the strengths and connections between home, school, and community through relationship building, problem solving, and persistence.

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Program Description

Check & Connect Components
⌘ **Check** – to systematically assess students' connection to school.
⌘ **Connect** - to regularly respond to students' educational needs according to their type and level of risk for disengagement.
– All targeted students receive basic interventions
– Students showing high risk behaviors receive additional intensive interventions

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Program Description

Role of the Monitor
⌘ *Neutral* person responsible for helping a student stay connected to school.
⌘ Cross between a mentor, advocate and case manager.
⌘ Primary goal is to keep education a salient issue for the students, their family members, and their teachers.

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Program Description

"Check" risk factors
⌘ Alterable predictors of school completion
– Tardiness
– Skipping
– Absenteeism
– Other Behaviors
– Out-of-School Suspension
– Failing Classes
– Behind in Credits

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C. Lehr, University of Minnesota

Program Description

"Connect" Basic Interventions

⌘ A regular structured conversation (preferably on a weekly basis)
  – Student's progress in school
  – Relationship between school completion and check indicators of engagement
  – Importance of staying in school
  – Review of problem-solving steps

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Program Description

"Connect" Intensive Interventions

⌘ Individualized interventions, age appropriate, used when students are disengaged – not participating.
⌘ For example…
  – **Participation** – look for patterns in attendance problems or identify strategies with youth or parent that will get youth out the door and to the bus on time.
  – **Identification** – hook youth up with school-based activity or placement in classes that emphasize the relevancy of learning and instruction.

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Program Description

"Connect" Intensive Interventions (con't)

⌘ For example…
  – **Social/behavioral performance** – role play using problem-solving steps to manage and resolve conflict or establish behavioral contract.
  – **Student initiative** – helping students regularly apply organizational strategies.
  – **School support** – negotiate with school administrators for alternatives to out-of-school suspension

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Program Description

Key Features of the Model

⌘ **Relationship Building** – mutual trust and open communication, nurtured through long-term commitment focused on students educational success.
⌘ **Routine Monitoring of Alterable Indicators** – systematic check of warning signs of withdrawal (attendance, grades, suspensions) using data readily available to school personnel.

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Program Description

Key Features of the Model (continued)

⌘ **Individualized and Timely Intervention** – support that is tailored to individual student needs, based on level of engagement with school , associated influences of home and school, and the leveraging of local resources
⌘ **Long-term Commitment** – committing to students and families for at least 2 years, including the ability to follow mobile youth from school to school.

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Program Description

Key Features of the Model (continued)
⌘ **Persistence Plus** – persistent source of academic motivation, continuity of familiarity with youth and family, and consistency in the message that "education is important for your future".
⌘ **Problem-solving and capacity building** – promote the acquisition of skills to resolve conflicts constructively and to look for solutions vs blame.
⌘ **Affiliation with School and Learning** - facilitate student's access to and active participation in school-related activities and events.

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Replications and Evidence

⌘ J. Crane (1998) criteria – anchor for success without comparison group.
  – A substantial effect on the lives of participants was defined as a reduction in the incidence of a serious social problem by more than 20 percent – a 20 *percent* change, not a 20 *percentage point* change.
  – For example, reducing the proportion of individuals who drop out of school from 30 to 20 percent reflects a 10 percentage point change (30-20=10) and a 33 percent reduction in a target behavior (30-20/30=33).

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Replications and Evidence

⌘ **Persistence Plus** (1996-2001, US DOE, OSEP study)
⌘ Targeted 100 treatment and 100 contrast, urban high school youth with emotional and behavioral disabilities (with 25% attrition).
⌘ Predominately African American males, living with single parent, eligible for free/reduced lunch, urban setting.
⌘ Intervention in grades 9-12 from 7 high schools (followed for 4 years).

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Replications and Evidence

⌘ **Persistence Plus** (continued)
⌘ Students who received Check & Connect were
  ▱ Less likely to dropout (68% vs. 41%).
  ▱ More likely to persist in school each year.
  ▱ More likely to attend alternative programs.
  ▱ More likely to have an IEP written during high school, transition goals, parents attend, and their preferences reflected in the IEP.
  ▱ More likely to have completed high school at the end of five years.

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Replications and Evidence

⌘ **School Success** (1996 to 2002) adopted Check & Connect as part of their larger truancy prevention initiative.

⌘ Targeted most chronically truant youth (ages 11 –16, across 10 districts) referred through the judicial system, for whom first line prevention strategies (school outreach, diversion meeting) have not been successful.

⌘ Over 360 students have been served (June, 2001).

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Replications and Evidence

⌘ **School Success** (continued)

⌘ Selected findings include:

  – Absences were reduced.

  The % students absent more than 15% of the time was reduced from 59% at referral down to 37% after 2 years with C & C (reduction of 37%).

  The % students present at least 95% of the time increased from 10% at referral to 32% after 2 years with C & C (improvement of 220%).

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Replications and Evidence

⌘ **Early Truancy Prevention** (1997 to 2002).

⌘ Includes 5 metro-ring school districts selected for their concentration of low-income families for the county (30-40% participation in free/reduced lunch).

⌘ Targeted children who are absent and/or tardy to school on average 12% or more of the year and months prior to referral.

⌘ Over 360 students grades K-6 have been referred (June, 2001):
  – 33% open to a county social worker
  – 65% have siblings with educational challenges

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Replications and Evidence

⌘ **Early Truancy Prevention** (continued)

⌘ Absences and tardies to school decreased

- Percent of students absent more that 10% of the time was reduced from 63% at referral down to 42% of students after 2 years with C & C (<u>reduction of 33%</u>).
- Percent of students arriving to school on time (no tardies) increased from 42% at time of referral to 86% after 2 years with C & C (<u>improvement of 105%</u>).

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Implementation Issues

⌘ **Staff:**
- Hire staff at "district/community" rather than building level
- Partner with community organizations to staff program
- Pilot project staff have been from community (paraprofessional background) and graduate students in educational programs

⌘ **Professional Development:**
- Set aside time to meet regularly to review cases, learn about resources, crisis procedures
- Be prepared for large learning curve first year
- Clarify overlap in roles with other professionals

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Implementation Issues

⌘ **Administrative Support:**
- Demonstrate approval and value of program
- Willing to address systemic issues (punitive discipline)

⌘ **Data Collection:**
- Allow time for documentation - intervention and evaluation
- Decide what information is most important to collect on a regular basis - be selective

⌘ **Costs:**
- Year round program
- Estimated at $1,200 to $1,400 per student annually

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Cammy Lehr   lehrx001@umn.edu
Mary F. Sinclair   sincl001@umn.edu

Websites:

www.dropoutprevention.org
www.negp.gov
www.nces.ed.gov
www.air.org/cecp/safetynet (or preventionstrategies)
www.ici.umn.edu/checkandconnect

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C. Kaibel, Minneapolis Public School
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Quantum Opportunities is a after-school, community-based effort that creates success for at-risk high school students

WHAT WE DO: Our Promise
Eliminating the Achievement Gap for Students of Color in North Minneapolis
- Graduated students of color at risk of not graduating at a rate of 88% vs. 32% in Minnesota high schools
- 63% of graduating seniors enrolled in higher education, vs. 44% of African American seniors
- Posted student suspension rates that are less than half that of similar demographic (12% vs. 29%)
- Currently, 100% of participants are on track for graduation (only 47% of North High students who do not drop out enter their senior year credit-ready for graduation)
- Student pregnancy rates that are 1/3 demographically similar youth

We will provide direct benefits to students, families, schools and the community that build academic abilities, economic vitality, improved school and social service systems, decreased taxpayer and social service burdens for troubled youth, and a citizenry that is ready to learn, earn and be contributing community members.

PRIMARY TARGET GROUP FOR PILOT: 400 youth in North Minneapolis public schools
- Student in North Minneapolis elementary and middle schools not performing to NCLB standards;
- 9-12 graders who:
  - Are not performing up to NCLB standards or who have not passed the MBST
  - Are not on track to graduate
  - Are involved with the juvenile justice or child welfare systems
  - Who have passed basic requirements and who are on track for graduation but who could easily bet sucked into or become victims of dangerous environments and who need support to make sure they are ready to compete at the post-secondary academic level.

*Only 20% of North High Freshmen students are ready for high school
*Schools facing financial challenges do not have resources or time to remediate students who should have grade-appropriate skills upon reaching high school.

WHAT THE INITIATIVE WILL DO:
The Innovation: Provide a community-oriented, "customer"-based, market-driven service that is directed at academic achievement, parental support, network integration and career orientation: Community, business and post-secondary system are **customer** of high school--High school is customer of K-8.

How will we do it: We will be in the schools during the school day and after school with an on-call staff to serve the schools, parents and the community—Staff and college tutors in high school and three feeder schools that complement and supplement the work of teachers and principal: Taking care of an array of student needs so teachers are free to teach, administrators are free to a manage and students are free to learn.

We will begin to work with students before they reach high school, making sure that students at each level will have the necessary skills for the next phase in their academic or vocational lives.

THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE: The Value of our Work and the Value of Your Support
We will create a population of youth who are *ready for the world* and *ready to compete*.
- We will keep youth in school. Reduced truancy→ improved academics, reduced involvement with criminal justice (Estimated yearly cost of jail: $36,000): Community-based school effort with high and clear expectations for youth
- We will create more students who are academically and socially ready for post-secondary education (More than 30% percent of students entering higher education in Minnesota's post-secondary institutions require remedial help)
- We integrated system of learning and resources for youth that improves system efficiencies
- We reduce involvement with child welfare, child protection and criminal justice systems, and the associated costs
- Reduce teen pregnancy, and associated costs (Approximate cost per year for one person with a child on MFIP or General Assistance: $36,000)
- Meeting the economic and social challenges of tomorrow: Our aging population means that we will need every working person to be as productive as possible to maintain our economic competitiveness. An educated population will create this: Creating better workers, higher wages, more productive economy, stronger tax base

Today's request: Support for a pilot project of $750,000 in each year of the next biennium to bring our proven methods in bridging the achievement gap to 400 youth in North Minneapolis.
- Pilot will demonstrate how we can create academic and vocational success in economically challenged regions of our state
- Provide a key strategy to eliminate one of the largest academic achievement gaps in the country

Students of color and low-income students will be an increasing percentage of this pipeline, and their current achievement in high school and higher education is uneven and often inadequate. Our success in higher education depends on their success. (From the Citizens League report TROUBLE ON THE HORIZON: Growing Demands and Competition, Limited Resources, & Changing Demographics in Higher Education

Our Quantum Opportunities Program reached a major milestone last year as it celebrated its first class of 25 high school graduates. Not only did we prove that we could **triple the expected graduation** rate in our students' demographic, **18 have gone on to college**, with others making plans to do so in the future. Last year, we also doubled basic standards test success and more than doubled school attendance rates.

Our successes continue. This school year, we had 15 of 17 (88 percent) seniors graduate from high school. Our students continue to outperform their peers in Minnesota schools in graduation rates, standard test performance and academic achievement. The results for each of our sites are listed below.

Indicators	Success Rates for Students: Minneapolis Public Schools	QOP	What Our Successes Mean
Four-year Graduation Rates	31% of African American students graduate on time	88% eligible seniors 15 of 17 94% on track, 72 of 77	We have nearly tripled the graduation rate for students of color through our program. Currently, all students are on track for graduation. We are keeping them in school and preparing them for jobs and higher education.
Passing Writing BST	66% of African American kids/72% of all students (given in 10th grade)	72% have passed	Beating expectations for youth of color, performing to standard with entire school population
Passing Math BST	30% of African American kids/48% of all students (given in 8th grade)	55% have passed	Beating expectations for youth of color and entire school population.
Passing Reading BST	39% of African American kids/52% of all students (given in 8th grade)	69% have passed	Beating expectations for youth of color and entire school population.
Enrollment rate in Postsecondary Option (Many QOP students still in enrollment process)	44% of African American students who graduate from Minnesota H.S. attend a post secondary option[*]	63% 10 of 16	The percentage of Minnesotans age 18-24 enrolled in higher education but not yet graduated *declined* from 43 percent to 36 percent between 1992 and 2002.[†] Recommendation: Improve marketing and promotions of higher education, including the value of higher education to individuals and Minnesota, Raising expectations to K-14, and the desperate need to address the achievement gap in high school.[‡] We have entered a new economic era where some form of higher education is necessary for a person to successfully participate in the economy.[§]
Suspensions From the Minneapolis Public School System	29% of African American kids account for 75% of all suspensions.	12% 9 suspensions	Keeping kids in school, reducing truancy, improving academic performance and improving behavior
Pregnancy Rates (male and female participants with a child)	Minneapolis birth rate for African American females aged 15-19, 2000[**] 11.6%	4% 3 of 77	Approximate cost per year for one person with a child on MFIP or General Assistance: $36,000

While there have been improvements in some indicators of success among students of color in Minnesota, the percentage who pass the basic standards tests has not improved.[††] According to the Education Trust in Washington, DC, Minnesota's achievement gaps between White and African American students in the areas of math and reading are among the highest in the nation. In math, Minnesota ranks second to last in the achievement gap, lagging behind only Wisconsin.[‡‡] Our results demonstrate that we are closing the achievement gap for African American students and outperforming other demographically similar students.

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[*] *State of Students of Color: Building Alliances for Student Success: 2004*, Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, Inc. p. 27. This represents the percentage of students who enrolled in a postsecondary option immediately after graduation from a Minnesota high school in 2002.
[†] TROUBLE ON THE HORIZON: Growing Demands and Competition, Limited Resources, & Changing Demographics in Higher Education THE 2004 CITIZENS LEAGUE REPORT ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN MINNESOTA. **November 2004**
[‡] Ibid.
[§] Ibid.
[**] *Health Disparities in Minneapolis: Racial and Ethnic Groups,* "Table: Minneapolis Teen Birth Rate per 1,000 females Aged 15-19, Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support, March 2003. p. 2.
[††] *State of Students of Color*, p. 21.
[‡‡] *Education Watch: MINNESOTA: Key Education Facts and Figures, Achievement, Attainment and Opportunity From Elementary School Through College,* Education Trust, Inc., Washington, DC, Spring 2004, pp. 5-6.

Categories of
State Approved Alternative Programs

- ## Area learning centers (ALC) -- 77

  123a.05 subdivision 1. Governance. A district may establish an area learning center either by itself or in cooperation with   other districts, a service cooperative, an intermediate school district, a local education and employment transitions partnership, public and private secondary and post-secondary institutions, public agencies, businesses, and foundations. Except for a district located in a city of the first class, a center must serve the geographic area of at least two districts

- ## Alternative learning programs (ALP)-- 49

- ## Contract alternatives -- 28

  124d.68 subdivision 3 (d) A pupil who is eligible under subdivision 2, may enroll in any nonpublic, nonsectarian school that has contracted with the serving school district to provide educational services

All state approved alternative programs must adhere to applicable
Minnesota statutes and guidelines

2/8/2005

Number of Learners Served in State Approved Alternative Programs

Learning Year	Number of Students Served
1988/89	4,050
1989/90	4,200
1990/91	13,800
1991/92	15,400
1992/93	18,900
1993/94	28,200
1994/95	44,575
1995/96	52,300
1996/97	60,500
1997/98	81,332
1998/99	112,939
99/2000	133,520
2000/2001	152,361
2001/2002	174,996
2002/2003	167,387
2003/2004	155,075

State Approved Alternative Programs

Area Learning Centers	Alternative Programs	Contracted Alternatives
77	49	28

January 18, 2005

Graduation Incentives Criteria (M.S.124D.68)

(a) any pupil under the age of 21 who:

(1) performs substantially below the performance level for pupils of the same age in a locally determined achievement test;
(2) is at least one year behind in satisfactorily completing coursework or obtaining credits for graduation;
(3) is pregnant or is a parent;
(4) has been assessed as chemically dependent;
(5) has been excluded or expelled according to sections 121A.40 to 121A.56;
(6) has been referred by a school district for enrollment in an eligible program or a program pursuant to section 124D.69;
(7) is a victim of physical or sexual abuse;
(8) has experienced mental health problems;
(9) has experienced homelessness sometime within six months before requesting a transfer to an eligible program;
(10) speaks English as a second language or has limited English proficiency; or
(11) has withdrawn from school or has been chronically truant; or

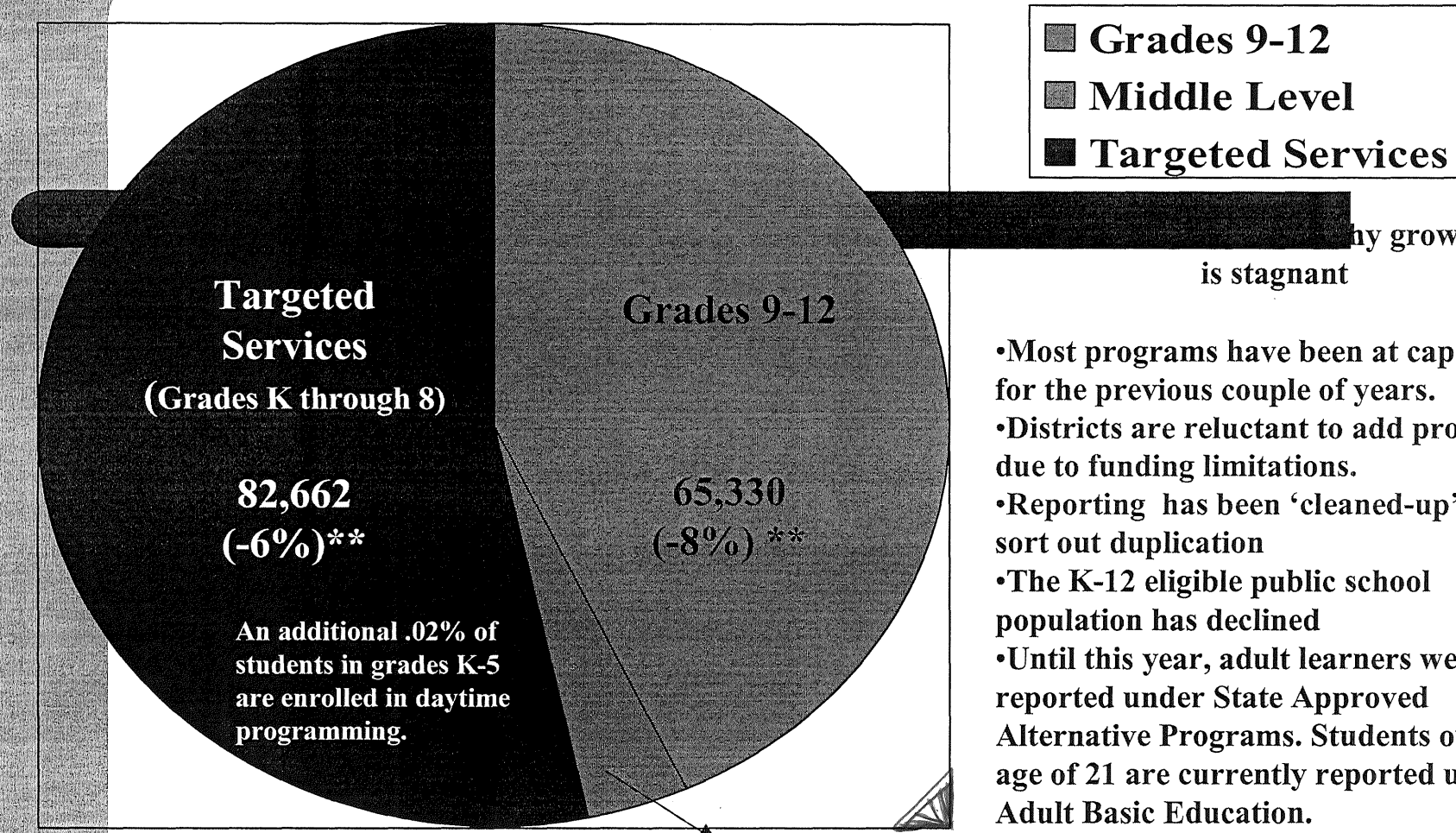2/8/2005

State Approved Alternative Programs
2004-2005
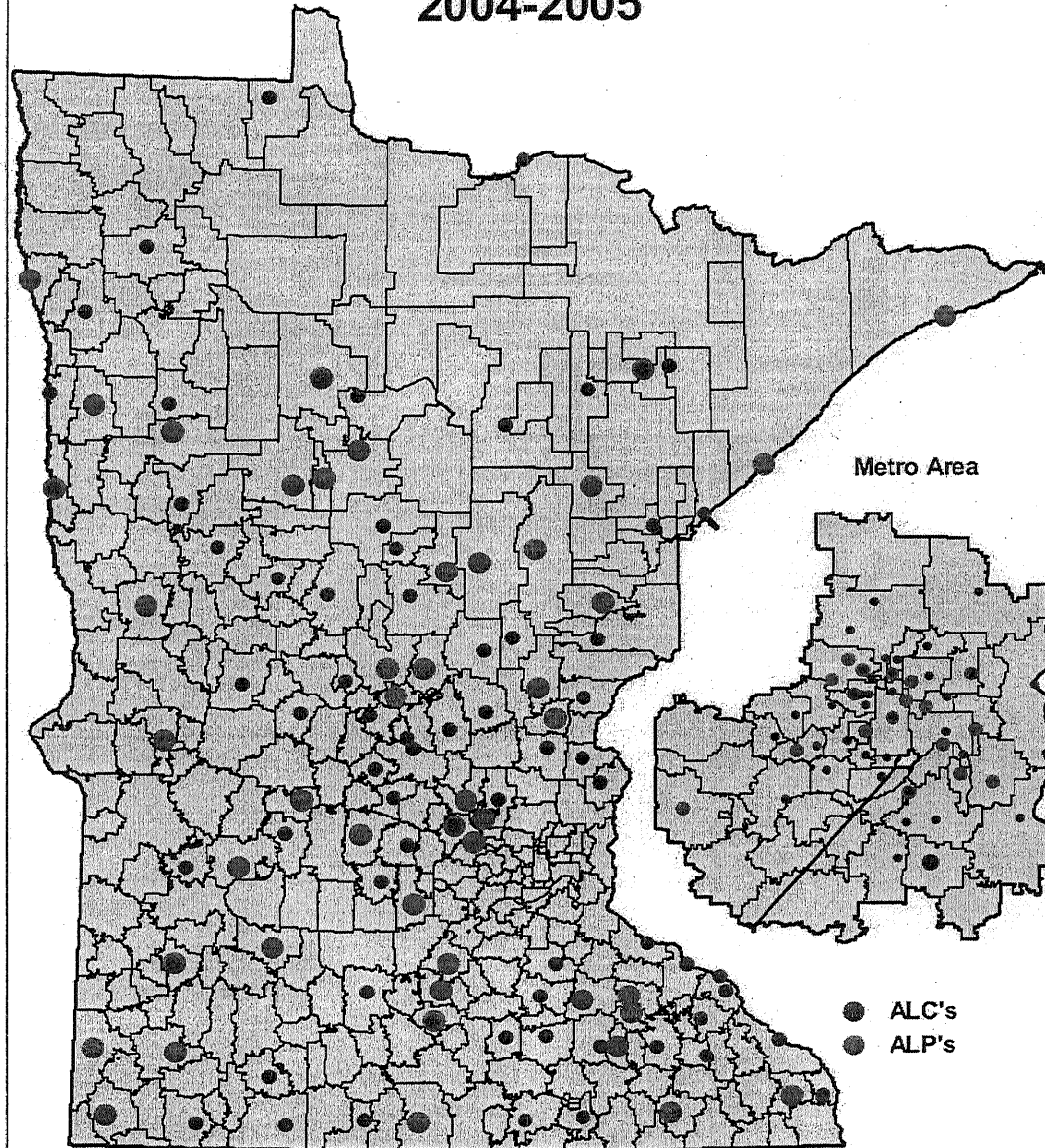
Metro Area

ALC's

ALP's

Minnesota
Department
of Education

Total Students Served in 2003/2004: 155,075*

Legend:
- ▨ Grades 9-12
- ▨ Middle Level
- ■ Targeted Services

Targeted Services
(Grades K through 8)

82,662
(-6%)**

An additional .02% of students in grades K-5 are enrolled in daytime programming.

Grades 9-12

65,330
(-8%) **

Middle level 6,791 (+8.4%)**

...hy growth is stagnant

•Most programs have been at capacity for the previous couple of years.
•Districts are reluctant to add programs due to funding limitations.
•Reporting has been 'cleaned-up' to sort out duplication
•The K-12 eligible public school population has declined
•Until this year, adult learners were reported under State Approved Alternative Programs. Students over the age of 21 are currently reported under Adult Basic Education.
• An increase in Charter Schools that are designed to serve 'at-risk' students

* The total number of students served in 02/03 was 167,387. This a net decrease of 7%
** Increase or decrease over previous year

FOREST LAKE AREA LEARNING CENTER
"LEARNING FOR EFFECTIVE LIVING"

- 1 of 4 secondary schools in ISD #831
- Student count - 165 Day School   1600 Targeted Services
- District and State standards required for graduation
- Strong support from District Office

DROP OUT PREVENTION = BUILDING RESILIENT AND CAPABLE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN MOVING INTO SOCIETY AND THE FUTURE

RESEARCH BASE: ASSET BUILDING, SEARCH INSTITUTE.
40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS
THE MORE ASSETS A YOUNG PERSON POSSESSES, THE LESS LIKELY THEY ARE TO PARTICIPATE IN AT RISK BEHAVIORS
20 INTERNAL ASSETS: CHARACTERISTICS & BEHAVIORS THAT REPRESENT INTERNAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT,
INFLUENCE DECISION MAKING AND INCREASE INDIVIDUAL COMPETENCIES
- ACHIEVEMENT
- MOTIVATION
- SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT
- BONDING TO SCHOOL
- INTEGRITY

20 EXTERNAL ASSETS: EXTERNAL FORCES THAT SUPPORT AND EMPOWER YOUTH. THE SETTING OF BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS
- SERVICE TO OTHERS
- CARING SCHOOL CLIMATE
- "OTHER ADULT" RELATIONSHIPS
- SCHOOL BOUNDARIES
- HIGH EXPECTATIONS

SUPPORT DATA
- TABLE 1   DROP OUT & COMPLETION RATES
- TABLE 4   GRADE ANALYSIS
- TABLE 5   ATTENDANCE & DAILY AVERAGE MEMBERSHIP
- TABLE 3   10TH GRADE MCA WRITTEN COMPOSITION
- TABLE 6   COMPREHENSIVE DISCIPLINE

FOREST LAKE AREA LEARNING CENTER
PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- **TRUANCY DIVERSION**
  Specific direct approach to reducing truancy and promoting attendance. Increased attendance increases academic success. Connections are built between the student, the family and the Behavior Intervention Specialist and School Social Worker. Truancy is frequently a response to a greater issue. The issue is addressed, the student is supported, and academic/social/emotional success is enhanced.

- **STRIVE   Success Through Research and Investigation in Various Environments**
  A multi-aged, interdisciplinary program for students grades 6-8. Core subjects plus thematic units are taught in large group, as well as in curriculum specific/grade specific group settings. The environment supports varying learning styles through differentiated instruction, high academic and behavioral expectations, hands-on learning, and service learning opportunities.

- **CAREER PLANNING**
  A comprehensive approach to looking beyond graduation and into the future that begins at intake. Students are encouraged to focus on their dreams, passions, and strengths as they begin to think about whom they want to be in the future. The Career Resource Center is a part of our student Learning Lab. Students have scheduled times in the CRC, as well as open access. The Minnesota Career Information System is used by students throughout their tenure at the ALC to research interests, careers, and schools. The CRC also houses information on various secondary learning institutions, and assortment of post secondary testing opportunities, and financial aide information. College visits, business visits, and trips to the college fairs are initiated through the CRC.

- **"FRIENDS MAKE A DIFFERENCE" MENTOR PROGRAM**
  A community mentor program run through Fairview Regional Health Services in conjunction with United Way. Over 35 community members who volunteer to come in twice a month to spend a noon hour eating lunch, playing games, and connecting with a specific student. Volunteers include retired community members and workers from a variety of local businesses. The initial goal was to have a mentor for each of the students in the STRIVE program. Mentors are following students beyond STRIVE and the connections remain important.

- **GUIDED STUDIES**
  An independent study program for juniors and seniors who are behind in credits for graduation. Classes are broken into 9 units to replicate nine weeks of a term. Students meet with a highly qualified teacher once a week, for assistance, accountability, and connection. All classes were developed by highly qualified staff, and meet the learner outcomes of the school district.

- **TARGETED SERVICES**
  This is the early intervention portion of the Area Learning Center programming. Targeted Services includes two components. Summer School is for students in grades K-12 and serves approximately 800 students each summer. Extended Day is for students grades K-9, and is an after school program operating at the two junior highs and 8 elementary schools. Extended Day serves approximately 800 students each year.

Table 1
Drop Out and Completion Rates

DropOut Rate
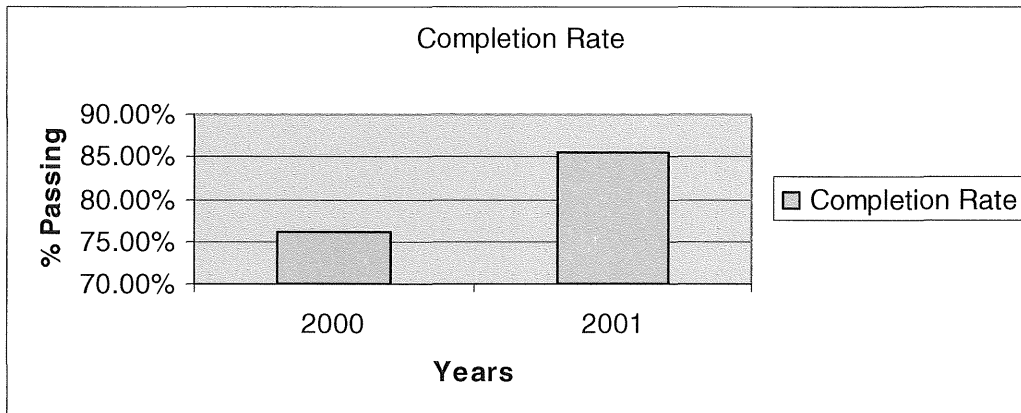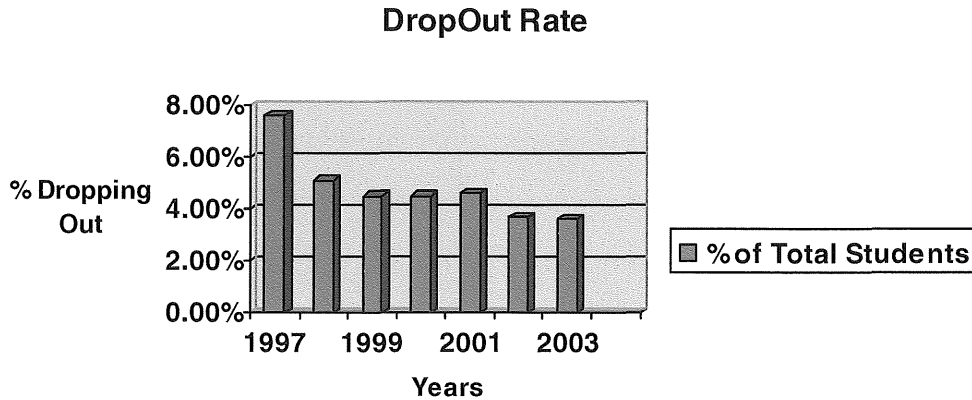
Completion Rate

The data in Table One; Drop Out Rate and Completion Rate were provided by the Minnesota Department of Education. The data is for Forest Lake Area Schools. In the first table, Drop Out Rate, 2004 is not included, as the data was not available. The rate has shown significant decrease over the last several years, due in part to efforts at the ALC, as well as at Forest Lake High School. In 2002 there is a significant decrease, from 4.6 of 2001 to 3.7 in 2002. This coincides with the changes that were instituted at the Area Learning Center during the previous school year. The second table shows completion rate. This data is no longer gathered by the state, however, from 2000 to 2001, the percent of completion rose dramatically in the district, from just over 76% to over 85%. Again, this is during a time when significant program changes were being made at the Area Learning Center.
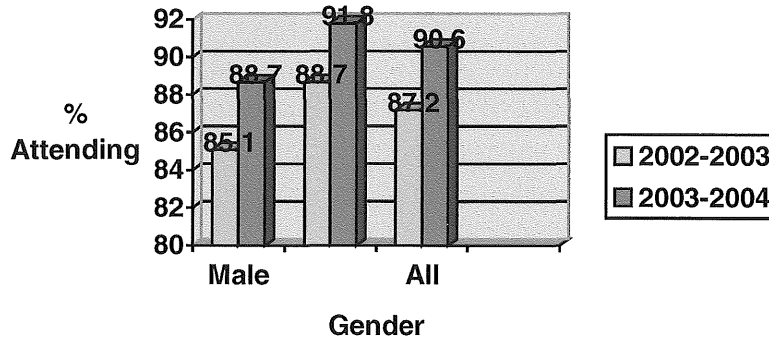
Table 4
Grade Analysis

Grade Analysis
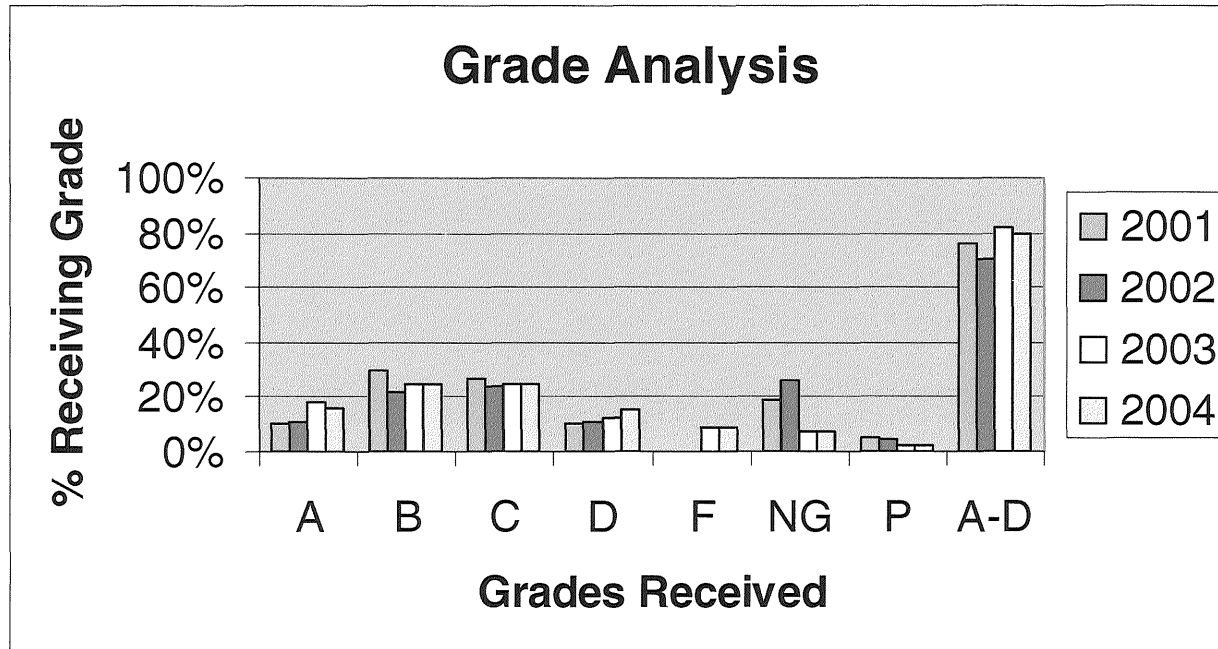
There are two significant pieces of information to be gleaned from Table 4. The first is that students receiving passing grades, in the range of A-D has risen from 75% to 80% , and in the past 2 years has been stable at 80%. A second significant piece of data concerns the NG or No Grade. Previously this was used instead of the grade F. The belief was these children shouldn't experience more failure in their lives than they already had. Under the current structure, it is believed that resilient students can learn from receiving a grade of F when they have not applied themselves to receive a passing grade. As students have begun to apply themselves, there are far less NG grades, those being used for specific, unique situations. However, students are choosing to pass classes instead of failing them.
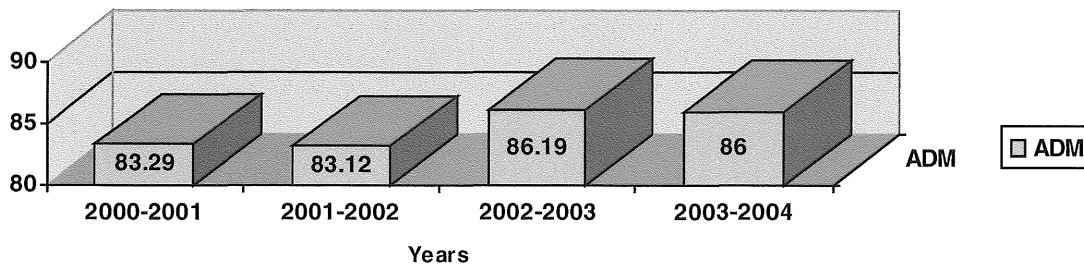
Attendance

Average Daily Attendance

The Average Daily Attendance Table shows attendance patterns over the past 2 years. Data for this chart was drawn from ISD #831 attendance data, and references individual student attendance data. Attendance data gathered before that time was gathered in another format, and was not reliable for display. The table demonstrates that attendance rates have increased significantly over the past two years. The data also demonstrates that the male student at the Area Learning Center is at greater risk for truanting behaviors. Overall, over the past two years, individual student attendance has climbed from 87% to 91%.

Average Daily Membership Minnesota State Department of Education

The State of Minnesota gathers data on average daily membership for individual schools as well as school districts. This state data reflects a similar trend to the district data on attendance. This is the trend of increased average daily membership for the Area Learning Center for the past four years averaging a 3% gain.

Table 3
Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment
10th Grade Composition

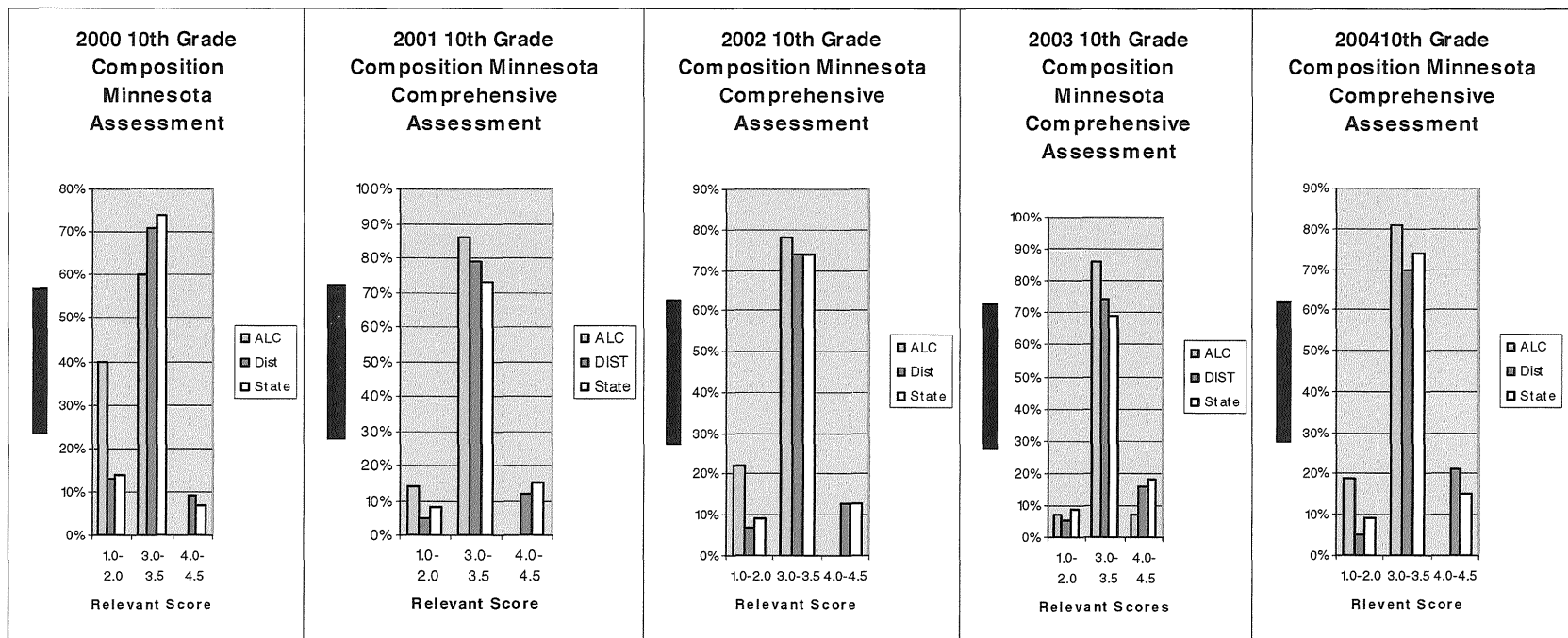| 2000 10th Grade Composition Minnesota Assessment	2001 10th Grade Composition Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment	2002 10th Grade Composition Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment	2003 10th Grade Composition Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment	200410th Grade Composition Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment

Table 3 demonstrates the trends across the years in the 10th grade Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) for Composition. The charts show the percentages for the state, the district, and ALC. A score of 3.0 is considered passing. The charts demonstrate that the percent of ALC students that have achieved passing scores has risen from 60% in 2000 to just over 80% in 2004.

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Table 6
Comprehensive Discipline Summary
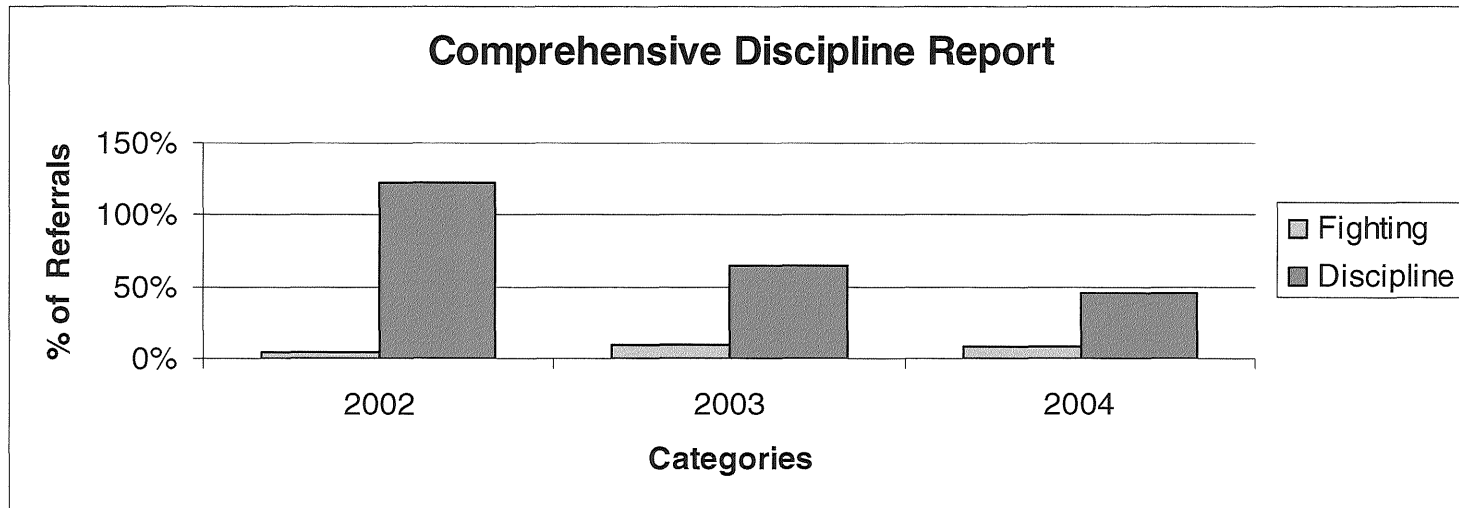
Comprehensive Discipline Report

Table 6 represents trends in acting out behaviors over the past 3 years at the Area Learning Center. Data gathered before that time was collected differently and is not reliable for reporting. The blue bar is fighting, and shows an increase in 2003 at 10%, from 2002 at 4%. In 2004, the trend is back down to 8%. The lavender bar is inclusive of harrassing behaviors, disruptive, discourteous behaviors, insubordination, willful disobedience, inappropriate language and gestures, and leaving school/class without permission. The trend has been from 123% to 45%, a very significant decrease in these behaviors. What this chart doesn't have disclose is the breakdown between males and females, which is also very significant. Males choose inappropriate behaviors far more frequently than females.