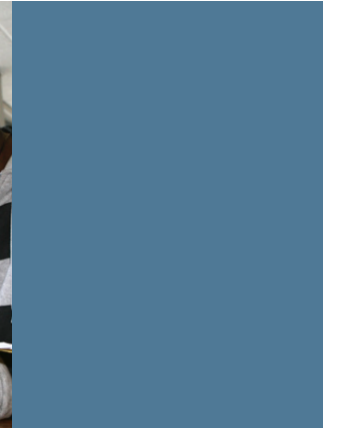




2017

# Building a Grad Nation: Annual Update



## Progress & Challenge in Raising High School Graduation Rates



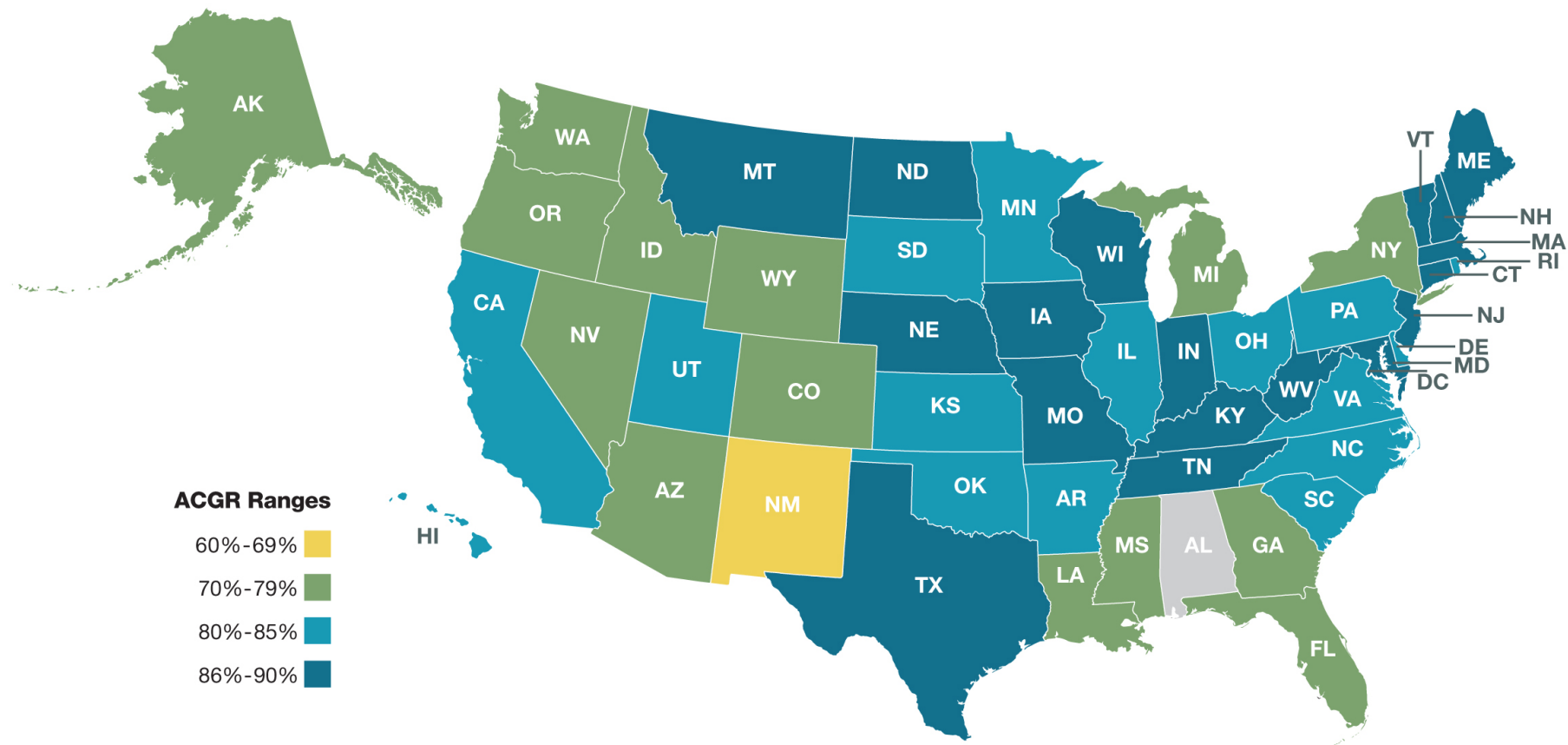
# The National Playing Field



- **Large Gains Over Last Decade-83.2% HS Grad Rate in 2015, up from 79% in 2010-11 and 71.7% in 2001**
- **As a Result, 2.8 M more students graduated rather than dropped out**
- **Progress has been uneven across states and tempered by slowing rates of improvement and persistent grad rate gaps**



Figure 2. US ACGR Ranges by State, 2014-15



Source: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

# + The National Playing Field

- **About half of states** with grad rates of **85% or more** -- **on pace** to reach 90% by 2020
- Large Low Grad Rate High Schools (300 or more students) dropped from **2,007 in 2002 to 954 in 2015**
- Some **Big Cities** have **double digit gains** – a challenge to all cities
- Need to **double rate of gain over next 5 years and close state, district, and equity gaps** to reach 90% goal for all students

# Visualizing the remaining challenge

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To reach a 90% high school graduation rate by 2020  
310,000 more graduates per year are needed



**THAT'S 3 ROSE BOWL STADIUMS**

## 90% with a level playing field requires

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- Four out of five to be Low-Income
- One out of three to be African American
- One out of three to be Latino
- One out of Five to be English Language Learners
- Two out of five to be Students with Disabilities

# To close post-secondary opportunity gaps between lower and upper income students

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Need four more Rose Bowls of low income students per year who graduate high school college ready with access to post-secondary



## 4 ROSE BOWL STADIUMS

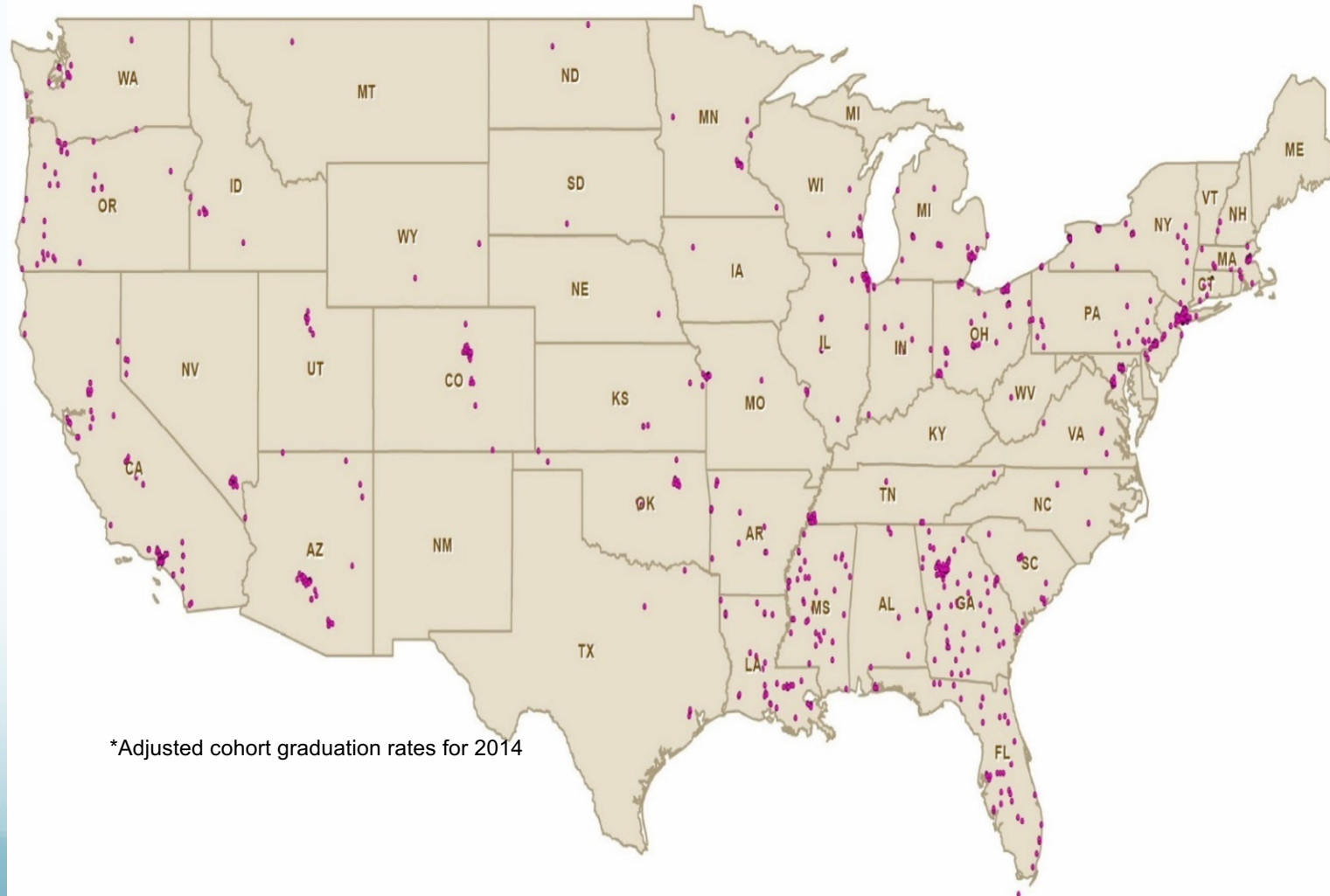


# Remaining Challenge- Low Performing High Schools

1,000 High Schools with Graduation Rates of 67% or Less\*

A third of the nation's dropouts come from 1,000 high schools

Low Performing HS's are disproportionately clustered in a small number of urban, suburban & rural districts



\*Adjusted cohort graduation rates for 2014

Half the students experiencing extreme poverty are in just 68 districts

Half of off-track African American and Latino students are in 800 schools in just 70 districts





*Diplomas Now: Keeping Every Student on the Path to High School Graduation, College Readiness and Adult Success*



Diplomas Now-  
Creating a School Reform  
Model to Address the  
Dropout Challenge



# Diplomas Now Theory of Action

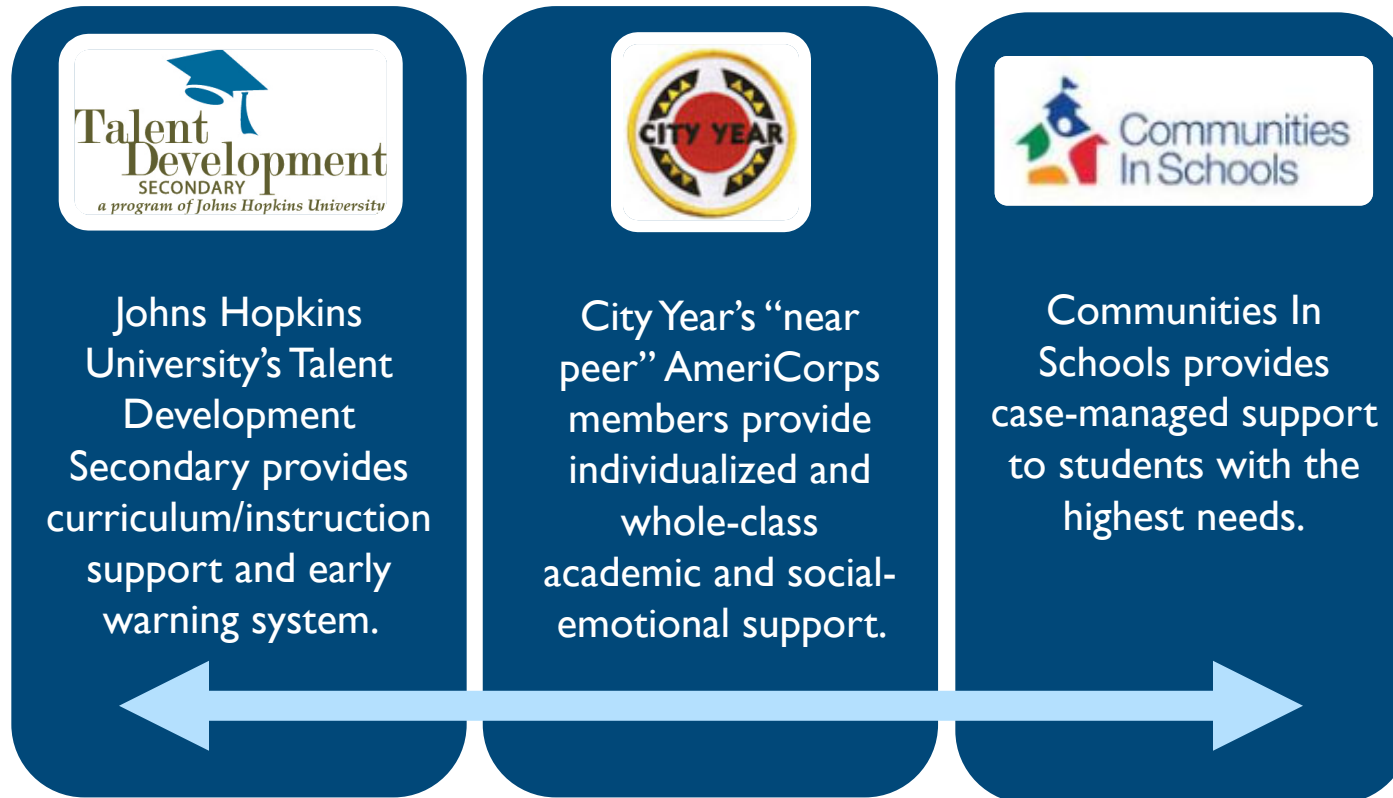
For the highest need schools – those that educate only students living in poverty – we need to simultaneously build adult capacity and provide students with the additional support they need to succeed.

Even with the best teachers, curriculum, standards and assessments in place, some students living in poverty will still struggle.

By getting students the support they need when they need it, while also enhancing a school's curriculum, use of data and teacher coaching, we can transform schools and keep more students on track to graduation.

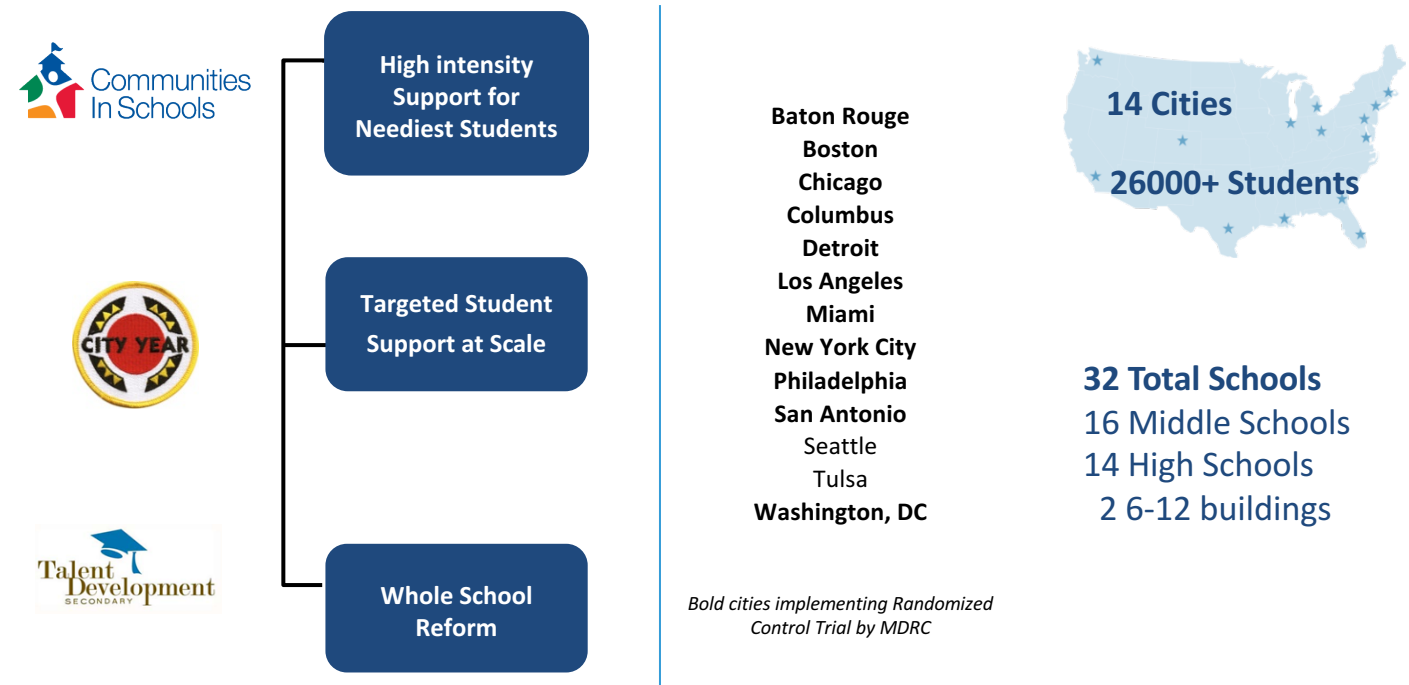
# The Diplomas Now Model

Diplomas Now combines improvements for entire schools with enhanced student support guided by early-warning system. It brings together three nonprofits to partner with highest-need schools and districts to build the capacity required to meet the scale and intensity of student need:



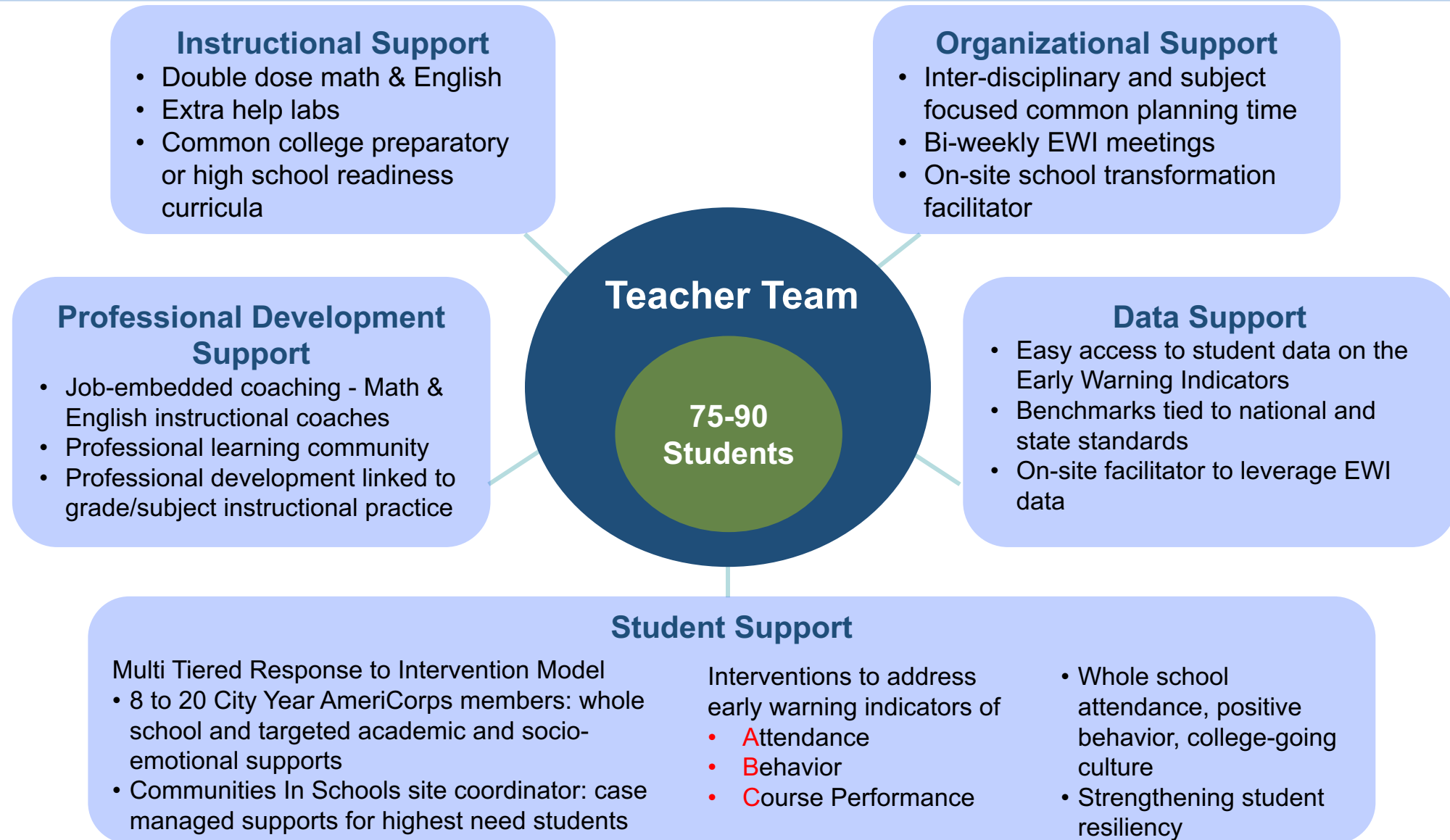
# Diplomas Now

## Secondary School Transformation Model in Action



Investing in Innovation Fund Winner  **1,700 Applicants**  **49 Grantees**

# Surrounding Teachers and Students with Support





# Early Warning Systems Meetings

## What's EWS Meeting?

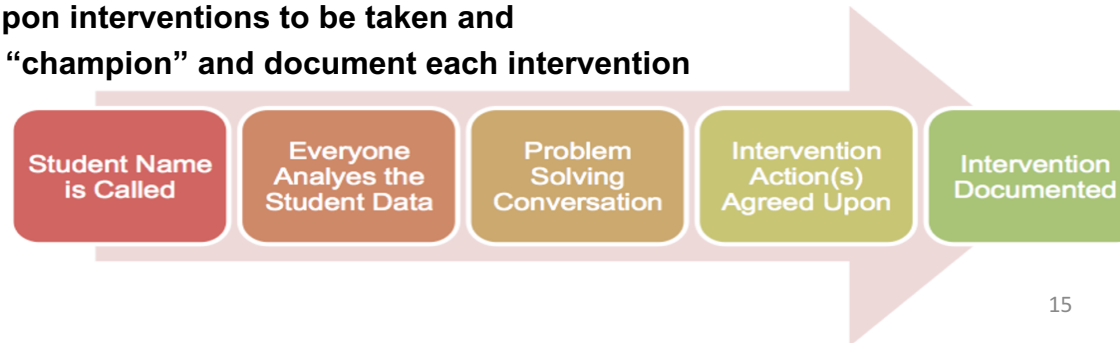
*A structure used to regularly monitor student progress and a collaborative effort to:*

- Monitor student progress-rapidly flag students falling off track
- Identify students in need of intervention
- Looks for data trends to identify most strategic level of intervention (student, class, grade, school etc.)
- Monitor if intervention is improving student outcomes

## What Happens during an EWS meeting?

- Examine relevant student data (attendance, behavior and coursework)
- Collaborate and problem-solve to identify reason for outcome
- Agree upon interventions to be taken and
- Identify “champion” and document each intervention

Process:

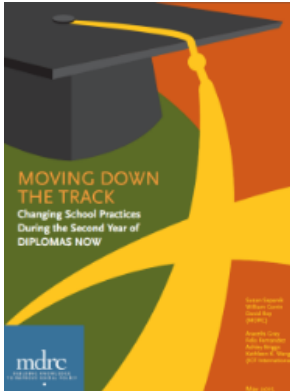


# Four Pillars of Evidence Based Secondary School Improvement

Small Learning Communities			
Pillar 1: Teacher Teams & Small Learning Communities	Pillar 2: Specialized Curriculum & Coaching	Pillar 3: Tiered Student Supports	Pillar 4: Can-Do Culture & Climate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distributed leadership</li> <li>• Collaborative work time</li> <li>• Shared cohort of manageable number of students (75-90)</li> <li>• Grade level &amp; content area teacher teams</li> <li>• Access to real-time data about shared students' Early Warning indicators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common instructional core for all students</li> <li>• Instructional materials that use evidence based practice to close student skills gaps and build their advanced thinking skills</li> <li>• Accelerated learning opportunities for students below grade level</li> <li>• Job embedded professional development via instructional coaches</li> <li>• Professional learning communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early warning and tiered response system</li> <li>• Attendance initiatives</li> <li>• Academic tutoring &amp; interventions</li> <li>• Social-emotional skill development support</li> <li>• Expanded teacher roles/ second shift of adults</li> <li>• Parent &amp; family engagement</li> <li>• Student case management</li> <li>• Coordinated school &amp; community partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supportive school environment with clear pathways to success</li> <li>• Highly engaging &amp; relevant learning experiences</li> <li>• Formal vehicles for student &amp; teacher voice</li> <li>• Initiatives to recognize student progress and teacher accomplishments</li> </ul>

# Evidence of Impact

# Diplomas Now Research Study



- In 2010, Diplomas Now won a federal **Investing in Innovation (i3) grant** to validate its impact on students through a randomized control trial led by MDRC
- Largest randomized control study of secondary school improvement in the nation



- Tracking data on early warning indicators and academic achievement of successive cohorts of students through middle and high school
- Implementation study on the necessary design elements to maximize impact in schools (studying 111 program elements)
- Supports movement toward **“evidence-based”** practices and budgeting in education to show ROI
- Provides an unprecedented national documentation on the conditions for school turnaround to influence policy at the federal, state and local levels

# Major National Research on Diplomas Now's Evidence of Impact

The Diplomas Now collaboration had a **positive, statistically significant increase** in percentage of sixth- and ninth-graders with no early warning indicators (poor attendance, poor behavior and failing math and English) over the course of just one year

Diplomas Now also had a **positive, statistically significant impact** on increasing attendance and reducing chronic absenteeism in middle schools

Positive and statistically significant effects in the education field are rare: **only 9% of randomized control trials commissioned** by the U.S. Dept of Ed Institute of Education Sciences **produce positive effects\*\***

*\*Statistically significant at 95% confidence – What Works Clearinghouse level*

*\*\* Coalition for Evidenced-Based Policy*

*Source: Addressing Early Warning Indicators: Interim Impact Findings from the Investing in Innovation (i3) Evaluation of Diplomas Now. MDRC. (June 2016)*

# Diplomas Now Creates Strong Learning Environments

The Diplomas Now model led to **statistically significant “service contrasts”** for students and teachers compared with schools without Diplomas Now

For teachers, increased frequency of:	For students, increased frequency of:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using data to drive instruction and target struggling students</li> <li>Teacher collaboration</li> <li>Support from instructional coaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinated academic and non-academic services</li> <li>Math/English academic help</li> <li>In-class behavioral support</li> </ul>

*Contrasts emerged in first year and increased in second year*

Students at Diplomas Now schools\*:

- were more likely to report a **positive relationship with an adult at school who was not a teacher**
- were more likely to **participate in academically-focused after-school activities** than students in non-Diplomas Now schools

Additionally, Diplomas Now had positive and statistically significant impacts on teachers’ perceptions of school climate during the second year of implementation.

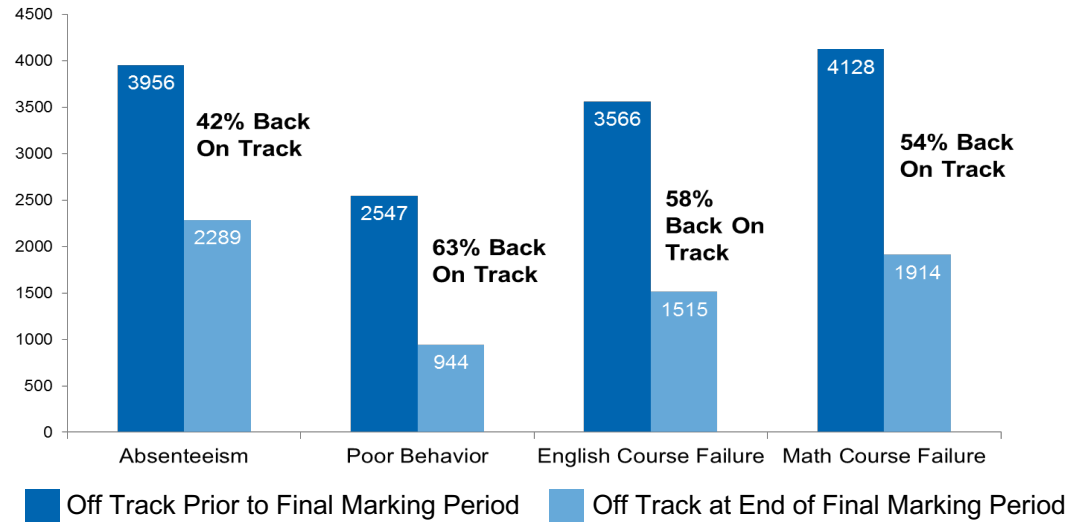
\*Based on student surveys



# Diplomas Now 2015-2016 End-of-Year Results

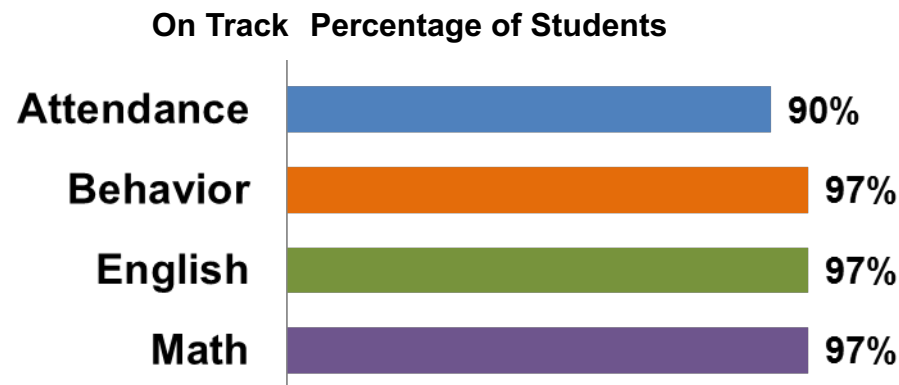
## Getting off-track students back on track:

The progress of students flagged with an off-track indicator prior to the final marking period of the 2015-2016 school year in all Diplomas Now schools.



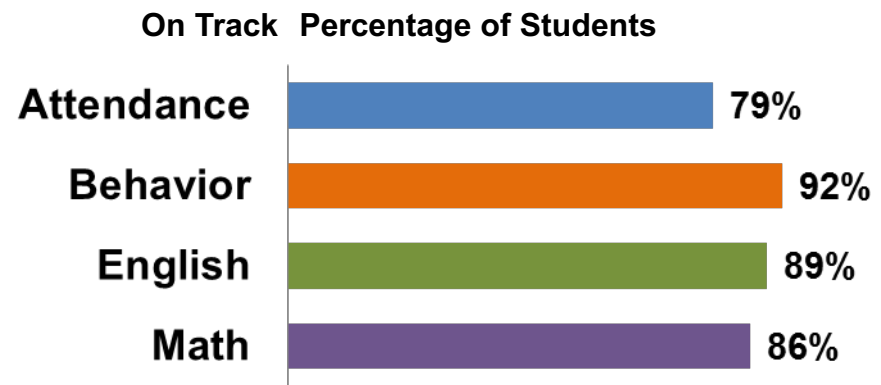
## Preventing students from falling off-track:

Percentage of students in Diplomas Now schools **not flagged with an off-track indicator prior to quarter 4 who stayed on track.**



## Overall Success:

Percentage of students **who ended the year on track** in Diplomas Now schools.

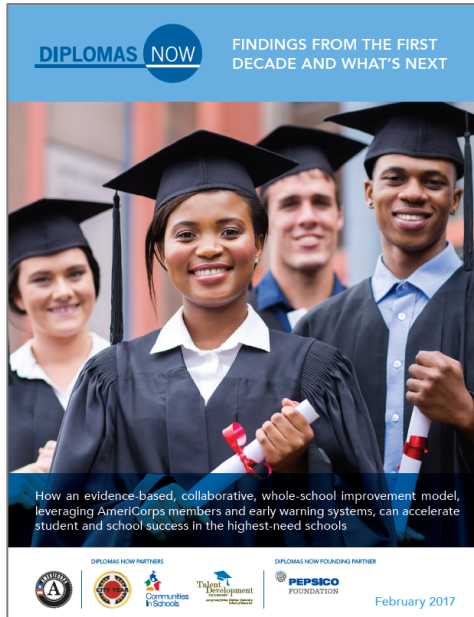


# Diplomas Now Equals Real Improvement

- Since Diplomas Now began partnering with the following schools, they have seen impressive graduation rate increases:
  - Cardozo Education Campus (Washington, DC) has increased its graduation rate by 17 percentage points, from 42% to 59.2%, the second largest gain of any school in the district, outpacing the overall district graduation rate growth (13% points).
  - Gage Park High School (Chicago) has increased its graduation rate by 23% points, from 39.4% to 62.6%, outpacing the overall district graduation rate growth (15.8% points).
  - Newtown High School (New York City) has increased its graduation rate by 8.5% points, from 62% to 70.5%.
- By partnering with Diplomas Now, high schools are seeing gains in student on track rates:
  - In Chicago, the Freshman On-Track Rate has increased since DN began partnering with schools there:
    - Gage Park HS – nearly 10% point increase, from 73.9% in 2011-2012 to 83.1% in 2015-2016.
    - John Hope College Prep HS – 15.9% point increase, from 68.5% in 2011-2012 to 84.4% in 2015-2016.
  - At Newtown High School (New York City), the percentage of 9th and 10th graders earning enough credits to be on track for graduation has grown substantially:
    - 9th grade – 12% point increase, from 70% in 2010-2011 to 82% in 2015-2016.
    - 10th graders – 14% point increase, from 62% in 2010-2011 to 76% in 2015-2016.

# Lessons Learned

# Lessons Learned Through Diplomas Now Implementation & Research



1. Schools desire the additional human capital and data-driven intervention systems Diplomas Now provides
2. Multiple partners can collaborate to achieve greater impact
3. Effective school organization structures and training unlock the potential of human capital
4. AmeriCorps is a high-impact, cost-effective source for the additional human capital required in our nation's struggling schools
5. Whole-school transformation requires district support and dedicated funding
6. Planning time and leadership buy-in are critical
7. Conducting large-scale randomized control trials in schools requires sufficient time and significant financial and human resources