



**URBAN  
CONGRESS**  
ON AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES

**EBR**  
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH SCHOOL SYSTEM



**AN  
EARLY  
WARNING  
SYSTEM  
PILOT**

**MetroMorphosis®**  
*Transforming Urban Communities from Within*

# GRADUATION RATES & EARLY IDENTIFICATION

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Although the graduation rate of black students in Louisiana has increased significantly in the past few years, there is still room for growth amongst black males in East Baton Rouge Parish, a population that has been grossly underserved and over-disciplined within our school system. There are several factors that contribute to the lowered graduation rates of black males which makes increasing graduation rates challenging. Part of our response to the challenges surrounding this issue has been the implementation and execution of an Early Warning System Pilot in a number of East Baton Rouge Parish schools.

The purpose of the early warning system is to:

- 1) Identify students at risk for dropping out of high school before they even enter high school;
- 2) Target transition-assistance services and interventions and dropout-prevention measures and to identify students early (Kennelly and Monrad 2007) and provide them with support so that they can get back on track for promotion to the next grade level and eventually graduate from high school (Therriault et al. 2013).

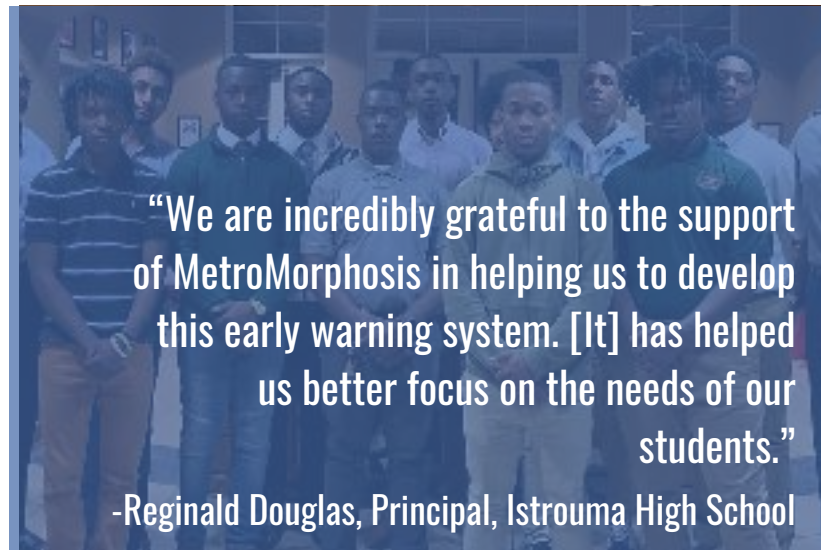


# INDICATORS & INTERVENTIONS

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The Early Warning System Pilot was implemented out of a joint desire between The Urban Congress on African American Males and East Baton Rouge Parish School System to improve the high school graduation rates of Black boys in East Baton Rouge Parish. The program officially began in fall 2018 after two months of planning by Urban Congress Delegates, EBR School Board Representatives, and Istrouma High School (IHS) administrators during the preceding summer. These planning meetings focused on reviewing available evidence on best practices, understanding necessary infrastructure, data collection procedures and current intervention strategies. Urban Congress Delegates, MetroMorphosis representatives, and IHS administrators met throughout the semester to discuss the progress of black male 9th grade students.

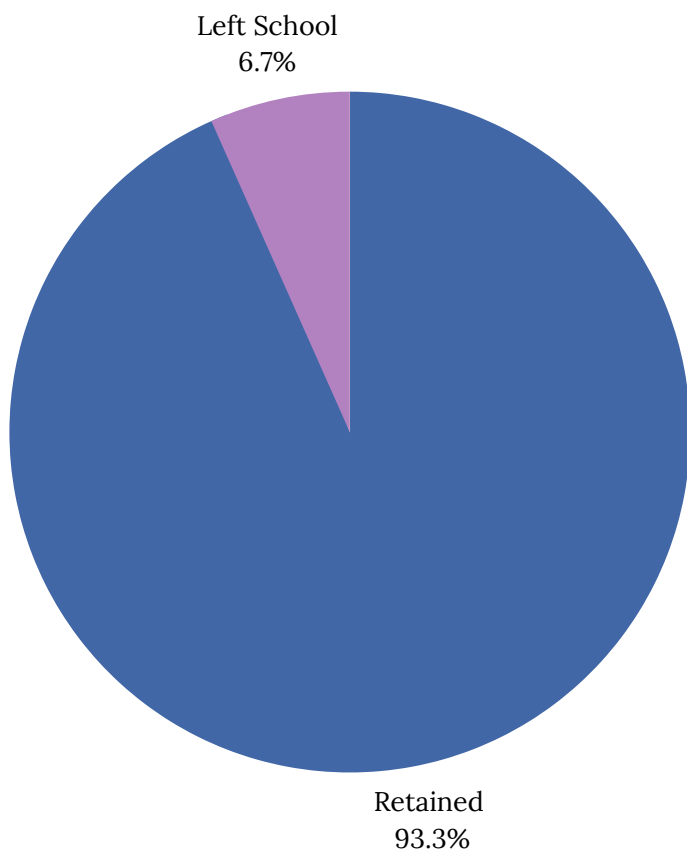
The progress was reviewed through a framework attentive to 3 of the factors that are most predictive of early separation from high school: attendance, behavior (discipline referrals), and core subject performance or, simply ABC. Utilizing this framework, the IHS Leadership Team identified 30 students to receive school-level interventions. The interventions were individualized based on each student's identified area(s) of concern and delivered by the Leadership Team.



Of the 30 students identified over the course of the effort, 28 students remained at the school at the point of data collection in mid-April with two transferring to other schools. This statistic is a strong indicator of the overall impact of the initiative, as between 30-50 percent of these students would have likely not finished the school year based on previous experience and statistical trends. Amazingly, twelve out of thirty (40%) students improved their GPA between the first and third quarter while six out of thirty (20%) students improved their attendance. The core team continued to meet at agreed upon intervals during the intervention phase to evaluate progress and adapt interventions. These meetings throughout the semester consisted of discussions about the needs of Istrouma administrators to better support the students and updates about the progress of interventions used by school staff.

# MONITORING & EXPANSION

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**FIGURE 1.**

Of the 30 students identified over the course of the effort, 28 students remained at the school at the point of data collection in mid-April despite statistical trends that indicate between 30- 50 percent of students would have likely not completed the school year.

The next phase of the Early Warning System is moving in two directions: monitoring and expansion. Monitoring refers to the observation of the cohort of 30 males identified at Istrouma High to track progress, improvement, and ultimately the successful completion of

their diplomas. This tracking will occur via an ongoing review of data on behavior grades, attendance rate, and coursework averages by a member of the MetroMorphosis strategic team, a member of the Istrouma school monitoring team, and a member of the EBR School District when available.

The expansion phase of the Early Warning System involves the continuance of the data collection and meetings for incoming 9th grade black males while adding Brookstown (6th), Glen Oaks Middle (6th), Glen Oaks High School (9th), and Capitol Middle (6th) to the system. At these added schools, administrators from each institution have begun meeting to plan out the implementation and execution of the system. Leaders are planning the assembling of EWS site team members, the frequency with which they will pull records for identified students, how often their site teams will meet, and the methods by which they will collect, house and monitor student data. MetroMorphosis will provide infrastructure and logistics planning as well as assistance with maintenance while also representing the voices and perspectives of community education interest holders.

# WORKS CITED

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Kennelly, Louise and Maggie Monrad. 2007. "Approaches to Dropout Prevention: Heeding Early Warning Signs with Appropriate Interventions." National High School Center.

Therriault, Susan Bowles, Mindee O'Cummings, Jessica Heppen, Laura Yerhot, Jenny Scala, and Michelle Perry. 2013. "Middle Grades Early Warning Intervention Monitoring System Implementation Guide" National High School Center at the American Institutes for Research.

## About Urban Congress on African- American Males

Urban Congress on African- American Males is a strategy of MetroMorphosis purposed to help people and organizations leverage our city's assets to transform the under-performing systems impacting African-American males into high performing pathways to success. By beginning with an asset-based view and building upon what is already there, individuals and organizational representatives build stronger collaborations that lead to a more coordinated service delivery approach and develop action items that address systematic barriers to the success of Black boys and men in Baton Rouge.

Goal 4 of the Urban Congress is focused on growing the high school and college graduation rates of African-American males.

## About MetroMorphosis

MetroMorphosis is a 501c3 organization whose mission is to transform urban communities from within. At the essence of our work is helping people and organizations to transform their neglected and broken communities into thriving and vibrant places to live, work and experience success. Our theory of change is simple: if we can engage, develop, educate, and mobilize a critical mass of citizens then sustainable solutions to society's most persistent challenges will, not only emerge, but be owned by those most impacted by the challenges.