

"Stay in school 'cause once you start working you'll be working the rest of the life."

"Try to find someone to help you if you need help with classwork. If you need someone to take care of your baby, find someone to do that."

"I would suggest that you try your best to stay in school because it's so hard to live in today's world without any kind of training. This is a big concern of mine."

"I would tell youth to do their work and don't give up - it ain't fun in the real world."

Tell them: "If you're not in school it is a big mistake - you can't get a job -either have to sell drugs or rob, females go into prostitution; don't get in wrong crowd - stay out of gangs, teacher shouldn't put too much pressure on kids."

"Don't quit school - there ain't anything out here without an education. It's not worth it - you can't get the best out of leaving school - you need a diploma."

And from a juvenile in a detention center: "Just tell them they don't want to end up here - locked up."

Suggestions for Schools to Help Students Stay in School

Along with advice to students who might be thinking about leaving high school, respondents had a number of suggestions for how the schools could be more supportive of at-risk students to help them want to stay in school. Their suggestions focused on being more flexible, having greater respect for the students, making more effort to understand these students and to talk with them, reducing exposure to conflict, and providing a variety of classes, academic support, and practical living skills. A selection of their comments and the general themes they reflect are included below.

Increase Flexibility:

"I know some people who quit school because they needed to work and earn money. If they could go to school part-time and work part-time maybe more people would stay in school."

"Help people who are having economic problems - the schools don't take family situation into consideration; work laws for minors are a problem."

"Make school more interesting. Too much competition for grades - get rid of that."

"Get home tutors."

Respect Us as Individuals: