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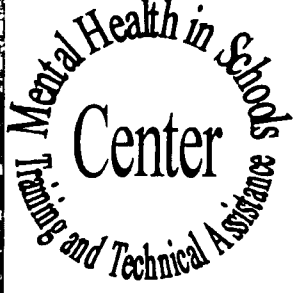
ABSTRACT

This packet contains materials and lists resources to help those concerned with preventing students from dropping out of school. The packet begins with excerpts from a report prepared by the American Institutes for Research (Robert J. Rossi and others) on the "Evaluation of Projects Funded by the School Dropout Demonstration Assistance Program." The report highlights the topic and implications from the work carried out by the various projects. A quick overview of some basic resources follows, with selected references, organizations and advocacy groups, Internet resources, brief descriptions of 34 model programs, and some consultant names grouped by region. Order forms for publications from the National Dropout Prevention Center and related newsletters and journals are also included. A sample digest from the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) discusses dropout intervention and language minority youth. This digest illustrates the kinds of materials available from ERIC. A brief article by L. Taylor and H. Adelman, titled "School Avoidance and Dropout: Motivational Underpinnings and Intervention Implications," follows. Also supplied are excerpts from "Dropping Out: How Much Do Schools Contribute to the Problem?" (Gary Wehlage and Robert Rutter, "Teachers College Record," n87 p374-92). (SLD)



*From the Center's Clearinghouse ...**

An introductory packet on

Dropout Prevention

The Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563 -- Phone: (310) 825-3634.

Support comes in part from the Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Office of Adolescent Health.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Public Health Service
HRSA
Health Resources & Services Administration
Maternal & Child Health Bureau
Office of Adolescent Health

UCLA CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS*

Under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project in the Department of Psychology at UCLA, our center approaches mental health and psychosocial concerns from the broad perspective of addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. Specific attention is given policies and strategies that can counter fragmentation and enhance collaboration between school and community programs.

MISSION: *To improve outcomes for young people by enhancing policies, programs, and practices relevant to mental health in schools.*

Through collaboration, the center will

- enhance practitioner roles, functions and competence
- interface with systemic reform movements to strengthen mental health in schools
- assist localities in building and maintaining their own infrastructure for training, support, and continuing education that fosters integration of mental health in schools

Consultation Cadre *Clearinghouse*

Newsletter *National & Regional Meetings*

Electronic Networking

Guidebooks *Policy Analyses*

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*In 1996, two national training and technical assistance centers focused on mental health in schools were established with partial support from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Office of Adolescent Health. As indicated, one center is located at UCLA; the other is at the University of Maryland at Baltimore and can be contacted toll free at 1-(888) 706-0980.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Public Health Service
HRSA
Health Resources & Services Administration
Maternal & Child Health Bureau
Office of Adolescent Health

What is the Center's Clearinghouse?

The scope of the Center's Clearinghouse reflects the School Mental Health Project's mission -- to enhance the ability of schools and their surrounding communities to address mental health and psychosocial barriers to student learning and promote healthy development. Those of you working so hard to address these concerns need ready access to resource materials. The Center's Clearinghouse is your link to specialized resources, materials, and information. The staff supplements, compiles, and disseminates resources on topics fundamental to our mission. As we identify what is available across the country, we are building systems to connect you with a wide variety of resources. Whether your focus is on an individual, a family, a classroom, a school, or a school system, we intend to be of service to you. Our evolving catalogue is available on request; eventually it will be accessible electronically over the Internet.

What kinds of resources, materials, and information are available?

We can provide or direct you to a variety of resources, materials, and information that we have categorized under three areas of concern:

- Specific psychosocial problems
- Programs and processes
- System and policy concerns

Among the various ways we package resources are our *Introductory Packets, Resource Aid Packets, special reports, guidebooks*, and *continuing education units*. These encompass overview discussions of major topics, descriptions of model programs, references to publications, access information to other relevant centers, organizations, advocacy groups, and Internet links, and specific tools that can guide and assist with training activity and student/family interventions (such as outlines, checklists, instruments, and other resources that can be copied and used as information handouts and aids for practice).

Accessing the Clearinghouse

- E-mail us at **smhp@ucla.edu**
- FAX us at (310) 206-8716
- Phone (310) 825-3634
- Write School Mental Health Project/Center for Mental Health in Schools, Dept. of Psychology, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563

Check out recent additions to the Clearinghouse on our Web site
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu

All materials from the Center's Clearinghouse are available for a minimal fee to cover the cost of copying, handling, and postage. Eventually, we plan to have some of this material and other Clearinghouse documents available, at no-cost, on-line for those with Internet access.

If you know of something we should have in the clearinghouse, let us know.

Preface

Any student who is doing poorly in school is a dropout risk. So are those who come into conflict with authorities or who do not have a home situation that supports schooling. Teen pregnancy and gang involvement also increase the risk.

It is tempting to view dropouts as a categorical problem and develop dropout prevention as a separate program for "at risk" individuals. This is an unfortunate trend. Most dropouts are the ultimate example of the failure of our social and educational systems. This is reflected in the large number who "dropout." Because of variations in criteria and reporting, estimates range from 15 to 40% in some large urban districts. One recent and controversial national estimate suggests that 15% of 19-20 year olds have not completed high school (National Governor's Association, 1992). The 15% figure makes the matter a significant concern for school and society. The 40% figure reflects the scope of the problem experienced by schools serving economically impoverished families and indicates a breakdown of the system. It underscores the need for systemic reforms and restructuring that weave together the efforts of schools, families, and communities..

The decision to dropout of school is related, in part, to the type of transactions a student has with teachers and administrators. Some troubled and troubling students who leave school do so with the implicit encouragement of the school and are as much "push outs" as they are dropouts.

Therefore, interventions to *prevent* students from becoming dropouts require a focus on

- *organizational/systemic changes in schools* (e.g., upgrading teacher inservice programs to enhance classroom efficacy in working with students with mild-to-moderate learning and behavior problems; flexible scheduling and grouping; increasing the ability of schools to address barriers to student learning)

- *specific interventions* for designated individuals and groups (e.g., enhanced support in the form of tutoring, enrichment, counseling, and advocacy; facilitated access to health and human services; paid jobs for older students; incentives to graduate -- especially valued post-secondary opportunities).

Should these efforts fail, dropout *recovery* requires the ability to outreach to individuals and offer them valued opportunities for improving their lives now as well as in the future.

By way of introduction to the topic, this packet begins with excerpts from a report prepared by the American Institutes for Research on the *Evaluation of Projects Funded by the School Dropout Demonstration Assistance Program.* The School Dropout Demonstration Assistance Program was federally funded and ran from 1988-1996. Given the limitations of program evaluation, the report does a nice job in highlighting the topic and implications from the work carried out by the various projects.

Dropout Prevention

Each year school got harder and I got more behind- I went to school less and less so when I stopped going hardly anyone noticed.

This introductory packet contains:

- Excerpts from: Final Evaluation Report: Findings and Recommendations--Evaluation of Projects Funded by the School Dropout Demonstration Assistance Program
- A Quick Overview of Some Basic Resources
  - Selected References
  - Agencies, Organizations, and Advocacy Groups
  - Internet Resources
  - Some Model Programs for Dropout Prevention
  - Some Names from Our Consultation Cadre
- The National Dropout Prevention Center: Resources and Publication Order Forms
- Order forms for subscription to the *National Dropout Prevention Newsletter* and *Journal of At-Risk Issues.*
- Sample ERIC Digest: Dropout Intervention and Language Minority Youth
- A brief article: School Avoidance and Dropout: Motivational Underpinnings and Intervention Implications
- Excerpts from: Dropping Out: How Much Do Schools Contribute to the Problem?

Dropout Prevention

Excerpts from -- Final Evaluation Report: Findings and Recommendations Evaluation of Projects Funded by the School Dropout Demonstration Assistance Program

(U.S. Department of Education; published by the Government Printing Office, 1995; 399-956/40230)

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Dropping out represents not only lost opportunities for education and personal enrichment for the individual young men and women who leave school early, it also means loss for the society as a whole in reducing the pool of skilled workers, increasing welfare and unemployment costs, and creating a less informed citizenry. In dollar amounts, it is estimated that dropping out of school costs about $100,000 in lost lifetime earning for each dropout. With about 500,000 students leaving secondary school each year, this translates to $50 billion in lost earnings alone (Barro & Kolstad, 1987), without factoring in social costs.

. . .

Barro and Kolstad found that racial or ethnic group and socioeconomic status are factors associated with premature exit from school, with members of minority groups from poor, non-English speaking homes more likely to drop out (see Table).

Table 1
High School Dropouts as a Percentage of the Population, by Age, Race or Ethnic Group, and Gender*
(October 1991)

	All Races			White			Black			Hispanic		
Age range	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
16-17	6.0%	5.6%	6.3%	4.6%	4.1%	5.2%	7.3%	8.1%	6.5%	15.8%	15.1%	16.5%
18-19	13.3%	13.7%	13.0%	10.1%	9.9%	10.3%	14.0%	12.3%	15.6%	32.7%	38.7%	26.7%

* Dropouts are persons who are not enrolled in school and who are not high school graduates. Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, *U.S. Digest of Educational Statistics*, 1992. Data for 18- to 19-year-olds are for October 1989 and based on data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, Nos. 222 and 429; and unpublished data.

...in 1987, superintendents from 32 major urban public school districts set forth six strategies for ameliorating dropout problems: intervene early, create a positive school climate, set high expectations, select and develop strong teachers, provide a range of instructional programs, and initiate collaborative efforts involving families and community agencies (OERI Urban Superintendents Network, 1987). Similarly, in the mid-to-late 1980s, researchers began to synthesize apparently effective program elements in several key areas of focus for educating youth at risk of failure, e.g., academic and remedial strategies; integration of academic instruction into vocational education, and provision of a wide range of counseling and social services (e.g., GAO, 1987; Orr, 1987). Along with this increased study of instructional approaches, researchers began providing insights into the aspects of school structure and climate that can affect students' willingness to identify with and participate in school activities. These insights have led to calls for flexible scheduling, cooperative as opposed to competitive learning approaches, and positive teacher and administrative attitudes toward shared school goals (see, for example, Wehlage & Rutter, 1986; Lipsitz, 1984).

. . . .

In 1988 the U.S. Congress, recognizing the seriousness of the dropout problem in this country and the lack of rigorous information about effective dropout prevention programs, authorized demonstration programs.... The legislation created the School Dropout Demonstration Assistance Program (SDDAP).... Eighty-nine projects across the U.S. were awarded ... grants.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the dropout prevention strategies that these projects used, the Department of Education funded a two-part evaluation.... 1.) Annual description .... 2.) In-depth studies of selected projects....

The major policy question addressed by both parts of the evaluation were the following

- what are the organizational characteristics of effective dropout programs
- what program strategies are most effective in preventing students from dropping out of school? Encouraging dropouts to reenter school?

. . .

Based on our observations and consideration of previous research findings, we have formulated *five recommendations* related to the implementation of dropout prevention projects.... It is important to stress again that these recommendations are the result of generalization from individual results at particular sites, and so must be regarded with appropriate caution.

Recommendation 1: Put the services in rather than pull the students out

...In (our) in-depth evaluation, the dropout demonstration projects that utilized pull-out strategies achieved less convincing patterns of desired student outcomes than did other projects. In each case, one or two students were pulled from their regularly scheduled classes for all or part of an instructional period. In two of the three cases there was the issue of stigma associated with the pull-out process, and in the one case where students seemed to look forward to being pulled, at least some of the teachers reportedly resented the tutors who called for students. At one site, pulled students did not receive credits for their special classes, and at all sites utilizing this strategy the question was raised concerning what the students were missing during the periods they were taken from their regular classrooms.

this is apt to be quite difficult to accomplish. At the same time, putting special services into the classroom does not by itself entirely solve the problem of stigma. In any number of ways, the most well-intentioned teacher can call attention to the fact that he or she is providing tailored instructional assistance to one student or to a small group of students in the midst of the larger classroom, which may spur teasing or increase the resentments on the parts of peers. What is needed in classrooms in these situations, ideally, also is a sense of community among teachers and students, such that every student understands and respects the learning-related needs of others and the learning opportunities that are provided. Short of this, schools must explore various unobtrusive ways of introducing opportunities to learn that are appropriate to the learning-related needs of students.

Of those demonstrations participating in the in-depth study that recorded gains for students relative to the comparison groups, all found ways to subtly introduce special services by either (1) entirely avoiding ability grouping as a prerequisite for receiving special services or (2) increasing the perceived benefits to students of receiving the special services to such an extent that the negative perceptions of grouping were effectively canceled. At some of these sites, the roles of adult mentors in the classroom and counselors on campus were defined carefully to make it appear as if these individuals were there for all students. One project randomly assigned students to the demonstration condition and then altered the regular instructional program for all these student-participants. When certain participants in this project were provided bilingual instruction to build their English skills, for example, other participants received bilingual instruction to further develop their verbal skills in Spanish. In those cases where apparently effective projects did engage in clustering at-risk students, attempts were made to create alternative school environments that would be perceived as providing opportunities for learning and work that were simply unavailable in the regular school situation. These opportunities included paid-work and the chance to rely on project staff to help with the full range of personal problems.

Recommendation 3: Deliver the services within a supportive climate that includes adults as student advocates

Many researchers have noted the importance of building supportive, caring climates around students at risk, and the results from the SDDAP demonstration confirm previous findings. In several of our in-depth study sites, students' reliance on their teachers and counselors to help with personal problems evidenced the sort of close, caring relationships that appear to be necessary for achieving successful results in terms of school performance. In most of the more effective projects, developing especially close relationships among staff and students was a priority, and, in two cases, these efforts resulted in documented student perceptions of the improved quality of their school climates. At two other sites, the counselors and outreach specialists also served as student advocates, interceding on behalf of students with teachers and sometimes with their parents. This theme of care, concern, and advocacy, which also runs consistently through the literature on working with students at risk, was a common thread among the SDDAP demonstrations that achieved positive student outcomes.

Recommendation 4: Provide students with substantive incentives to participate

The SDDAP demonstrations seem to provide rather consistent evidence of the salience of student incentives for achieving outcomes related to dropout prevention. No matter whether students were required to apply for the dropout prevention programs or simply were selected by school officials to receive the services, substantive incentives appeared to be effective. At the elementary level, these incentives for students included help in seeing that their assigned homework was completed correctly and in timely fashion. At the middle school level, these incentives included counselors serving students as adult friends, with whom students could share any problems and ask any questions at any time. Finally, at the secondary level, the projects that retained students in school provided paid-work and vocational training opportunities for students who remained enrolled or completed their project commitments in good standing.

... In the absence of ... internal motivations, substantive incentives provided by school officials may provide the initial encouragement necessary for many students to begin to understand and to internalize school-related values. At the same time, incentives must be integrated with the instructional program and, in the cases of secondary students in particular, preparation and follow-up activities are likely to be needed to ensure the desired results of such strategies as providing paid work experience.

Recommendation 5: Carefully select, train, and support the staff persons providing the services

In the 1990-91 survey of the SDDAP grantees, 85% at the K-8 level reported having some staff with special training; 26% reported these staff had received training prior to working on the project, and 67% reported staff had received training while working on the project. At the same time, almost 30% of these grantees reported that the shortage of trained staff was their greatest obstacle to providing services to students. Successful dropout prevention efforts are ones that select staff carefully and provide initial staff orientation that is more than description of the project aims and staff roles. Following orientation, these projects continue to provide skill building opportunities, counseling, problem-solving sessions, and motivational aids to staff to maintain necessary focus on key goals and necessary interests and abilities in providing services. These types of staff supports appear particularly important when the prevention program involves the combination of various services (e.g., when the program is comprehensive), and they seem to become critical when the program represents a new direction from the more traditional, regular school program.

In one of the more successful sites, for example, only teachers with experience in working with students at risk were asked to apply for positions. Upon application, these teachers were required to visit the alternative school and to talk with the project director and other staff already selected about the work environment and the project purpose. Only after teacher-candidates were debriefed following these visits and expressed themselves still interested in positions were they advanced to the actual selection pool. In addition, orientation at this site was really a group affair, with teachers sharing their ideas as they welcomed new staff into the family. Further, all staff associated with the project were actively encouraged to attend skill-building workshops related to methods and curricula for students at risk, and periodic meetings of staff throughout the year were specifically arranged to promote the sharing of problems and group brainstorming about possible solutions.

Sustaining Dropout Prevention Programs

Factors related to sustaining innovative approaches were identified in visits to three projects that had evidenced patterns of success in working with students at risk sometime during the grant period. From these visits, three aims were identified that appear to be important in sustaining dropout prevention initiatives, and the projects offered several strategies that relate to achieving these aims.

Aim 1: Reinforcing Staff Commitments to the Program (Team Spirit)

Staff of the projects developed a camaraderie that helped encourage and sustain their commitments to the projects. Whatever the energy levels or conflicting concerns of individual staff members on particular days, the sense of being part of a team was likely to have helped in focusing attention on the shared aims of the project. The individuals who worked at these three sites came from a variety of backgrounds, with varying types and levels of experiences in teaching and working with students. They all volunteered to be part of the programs, however, and knew from the outset they were participating in special efforts. During the first two years of the SDDAP grant period at each of these sites, considerable attention was devoted to building team spirit.

The most common strategy used in building staff teams was to *provide the staff with time* -- the time to talk with one another, to plan activities and compare notes.

A second strategy used in team-building was to *instill a sense of joint ownership* in the projects. Given that the staff persons were involved in special dropout prevention efforts, they were enlisted as planners and evaluators of the program.

A third strategy was to *attend to the performance of the team as a team.* Specifically, project managers or principals monitored how well their teams were functioning, were careful to praise and characterize project successes as products of team efforts, and did not hesitate to make staffing changes when problems arose. Teachers who didn't fit were reassigned, and new teachers or counselors were typically brought into the projects after consultation with resident staff.

Aim 2: Keeping Staff Fresh in Pursuit of Dropout Prevention Goals (Challenge)

Staff at these three sites clearly were challenged to make a difference for students at risk. At one site, two programs that had independently assisted students generally for several years were called upon to integrate their operations. Similarly, another of the sites was created as the last resort for the most at-risk or endangered youth of seven other school districts. Finally. the third project set out to remake the middle school experience at a time when 6th-graders, for the first time, were to be assigned to middle school campuses. This sense of challenge also characterized project efforts to keep staff motivated in their work with students.

One strategy used to challenge staff was *to provide release-time (or travel costs) for training and staff development sessions.*

A second strategy was *to publicize program achievements,* using these achievements to build community support and expectations for the projects.

A third strategy was *to introduce new staff to the projects by rotating existing staff into other positions.*

Aim 3: Establishing Connections to Existing Programs (Bridging)

... The experiences of these three projects suggest three strategies that may be important in bridging new education-related activities with current programs.

First, *the aims of a new program should be related* to *ongoing activities, and the connections should be communicated to all parties.*

Second, *other staff should become familiar with the workings of* the *new program* so that they may appreciate its challenges and be able to share in program-related discussions.

Finally, *new educational projects should* be actively integrated with ongoing school *program.* Specifically, the danger lies in permitting new programs to become isolated.

Replicating Dropout Prevention Programs

Three SDDAP sites attempting three distinctive types of replications were studied: adaptation of a program developed locally in new sites within a district, implementation of a nationally known school restructuring process (i.e., Accelerated Schools), and adaptation of a nationally recognized model program (i.e., the Diversified Educational Experiences Program). ...

Three factors importantly affected the replication activities at various of the sites and may have inhibited the effectiveness of the projects for students. These factors included:

- the fit of the models to the replication sites
- the extent of principal buy-in to the replications
- turf considerations

A Sampler of Replication Strategies

Rossi and his colleagues conclude that: "The experiences of these projects in replicating model programs suggest several strategies that may be useful for future replication efforts,

First, there is the need to *bring together district-level and school personnel at the outset of planning* for replication efforts. The choice of the program to be replicated should, ideally, be discussed and agreed upon by all parties to be involved in the effort, and the choice of the replication site should probably be a product of these discussions.

A second strategy is to *encourage regular and ongoing interactions involving district-level and school personnel* throughout the life of the program-perhaps in the form of a general steering committee.

Third, special efforts must be made to *make the program especially meaningful to the principals at the replication sites.* For example, these principals should be encouraged to attend training sessions related to the model program, and, whenever possible, they should be encouraged to think of the ways they can use or expand upon the replication experience to gain support for their schools generally.

A fourth strategy for enhancing a replication effort, when more than a single school is to be involved in that effort, is to *decide upon a mechanism for coordinating activities* across the sites. For example, a district coordinator for these sites can take the lead in organizing cross-site meetings, training sessions, and more informal discussions without fear of turf problems; for example, he or she can always say 'It's just part of my job....'

Finally, a fifth strategy is to *promote continual improvement in the replication effort.* Specifically, persons with experience in the model to be replicated should be identified as special "resources," and ways should be found to encourage their visiting the replication sites on a regular basis over the life of the effort.

Clearly there is overlap among these five strategies and their intended aims. These types of strategies are especially critical, however, in efforts to move beyond the *copying* of model programs to their further development. Indeed, one important goal of replicating any model dropout prevention program must be to enhance the robustness of that model through adaptation and extension of its features."

A Quick Overview of Some Basic Resources

Dropout Prevention: Selected References

I. *A Broad Perspective*

Modeling the school dropout phenomenon: School policies and prevention program strategies.
R.A. Baker. (1991). *High School Journal*, 74(4), 203-210.

Assessment of middle class youth at-risk to dropout: School, psychological and family correlates.
C. Franklin & C.L. Streeter. (1995). *Children & Youth Services Review*, 17(3), 433-448.

Staying in school: Partnerships for educational change.
I.M. Evans, T. Cicchelli, M. Cohen, N.P. Shapiro, (Eds.). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 1995.

Preventing school failure and dropout.
S. Carnahan. (1994). In: *Risk, resilience & prevention: Promoting the well-being of all children.*; R.J. Simeonsson, (Ed.). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., p. 103-123.

School dropouts: Characteristics and prevention.
T. Oakland. (1992). *Applied & Preventive Psychology*, 1(4), 201-208.

Development of methods for identifying students with potential to drop out of school.
J. Trusty& K. Dooley-Dickey. (1993). *Special Services in the Schools*, 7(2), 21-33.

Collaboration: The case for indigenous community-based organization support of dropout prevention programming and implementation.
B.A. Jones. (1992). *Journal of Negro Education*, 61(4), 496-508.

II. *Dropout Prevention Approaches*

School avoidance behavior: Motivational bases and implications for intervention.
L. Taylor & H.S. Adelman. (1990). *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, 20, 219-233.

An evaluation of the High Point, North Carolina Cities in Schools Program.
A.W. McCauley. (1992). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 52(9-A), 3184-3185.

Intervention strategies for counseling at-risk adolescents in rural school districts.
M.S. Rose-Gold. (1991). *School Counselor*, 1991 Nov, v39 (n2):122-126.

Recently enacted programs to address the dropout problem in New York State.
J.R. Curley. (1991). *Urban Review*, 23(3), 159-172.

Restructuring the ecology of the school as an approach to prevention during school transitions: Longitudinal follow-ups and extensions of the School Transitional Environment Project (STEP).
R.D. Felner, S. Brand, A.M. Adan & P.F. Mulhall. (1993). *Prevention in Human Services*, 10(2), 103-136.

Mentoring to prevent school drop outs.
L.H. Einolf. (1995). *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 5(4), 447-459.

Academic growth group and mentoring program for potential dropouts.
D. J. Blum & L.A. Jones. (1993). *School Counselor*, 40(3), 207-217.

A dropout prevention program for at-risk high school students: Emphasizing consulting to promote positive classroom climates.
G.R. Mayer, L.K. Mitchell, T. Clementi, & E. Clement-Robertson. (1993). *Education & Treatment of Children*, 16(2), 135-146.

Effects of a ninth-grade dropout prevention program on student academic achievement, school attendance, and dropout rate.
L.C. Pearson & M. Banerji. (1993). *Journal of Experimental Education*, 61(3), 247-256.

III. ***Brief Research Syntheses Available from the ERIC Clearinghouses.***

The following is a brief sampling of ERIC Digests (research syntheses) related to Dropout Prevention. They are available in libraries, over the Internet, or directly from the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) by phone, 1-800-LET-ERIC.

For information on searching for and accessing ERIC documents over the Internet, see the Internet Resources section of this introductory packet.

An example of a complete digest is at the end of this Introductory Packet.

- ED355311 (1993) Career Academies: Educating Urban Students for Career Success
- ED355455 (1993) Vocational Education's Role in Dropout Prevention
- ED350377 (1993) Are Hispanic Dropout Rates Related to Migration?
- ED335177 (1990) School Completion 2000: Dropout Rates and Their Implications for Meeting the National Goal
- ED334309 (1993) Meeting the Goals of School Completion
- ED335179 (1990) Migrant Students Who Leave School Early: Strategies for Retrieval
- ED339092 (1990) Identifying Potential Dropouts

Agencies, Organizations, and Advocacy

Many agencies and organizations and advocacy groups that are working on the problem of school dropout. A few are listed below.

National Dropout Prevention Center and Network
205 Martin Street
Clemson, SC 29634-5111
(864) 656-2599
WebPage:http://www.coedu.usf.edu/atrisk/membership.html

National Learning Center
800 3rd Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 543-8600

National Parent Information Network
A service of:

ERIC/EECE, University of Illinois
805 W. Pennsylvania Ave.
Urbana, IL 61801
(800) 583-4135
FAX (217) 333-3767
Email: ericeece@ux1.cso.ucuc.edu

ERIC/CUE, Columbia University
Institute fo Urban and Minority Education
Main Hall, Room 303, Box 40
525 West 120th St.
New York, NY 10027
(800) 601-4868
FAX (212) 678-4012
Email: eric-cue@columbia.edu

Prepared by the School Mental Health Project/
Center for Mental Health in Schools, UCLA
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Internet Resources

The following is a list of sites on the World Wide Web that offer information and resources related to the problem of school dropout and dropout prevention. This list is not a comprehensive list, but is meant to highlight some premier resources and serve as a beginning for your search. Also, at the end of this section is a guide to using the ERIC Clearinghouses on the Internet.

The Internet is a useful tool for finding some basic resources. For a start, try using a search engine such as Yahoo and typing in the words "school dropout", or "dropout prevention". Frequently if you find one useful Webpage it will have links to other organizations with similar topics of research.

Listed below are some Websites that contain information related to dropout prevention.

Sage (Skills and Academic Grant Education) Alternative Education Program
http://www.metrotech.org/campuses/

This website describes a dropout prevention program that has been a joint project of the Oklahoma City Public Schools and Metro Tech since 1981. Metro Tech is an educational institution that provides vocational-technical training. Students join the program voluntarily after a referral from high school counselors and are provided an alternative educational with a mix of scholastic classes and vocation-technical training.

Address: Metro Tech Skill Center, 201 N.W. 28th st. in Oklahoma City.

The National Dropout Prevention Center and the National Dropout Prevent Network
http://www.coedu.usf.edu/atrisk/membership.html

This website describes the resources of the National Dropout Prevention Center at Clemson University and the Network, based at the University of South Florida. Resources include a newsletter, a searchable database, publications and a consultants and speakers file.

Address: The National Dropout Prevention Center/Network; 205 Martin Street, Clemson, SC 29634-5111; (864) 656-2599.

Innovative United States Retention/Dropout Prevention Programs
http://susie.stemnet.nf.ca/~coop9011/models/us.htm

This website describes 19 innovative programs selected from the U.S. Dropout Prevention Database: FOCUS (see attached printout). For information about the Dropout Prevention Center at Clemson University, see the previous entry.

Institute for At-Risk Infants, Children & Youth and Their Families
http://www.coedu.usf.edu/atrisk/sponsors.html

This website describes the Institute, created by the 1989-90 Florida Legislature and located at the College of Education, University of South Florida (USF). The institute aids in policy development, conducts research, develops and provides training, and

provides technical assistance and educational strategies. It provides information and services to legislators, other Florida educational decision-makers, school leaders, teachers and related professionals to help them meet the needs of at-risk populations and their families.

The Achieve Program, Middle School Dropout Prevention
http://www.pan.ci.seattle.wa.us/SEATTLE/DHHS/YOUTH/achieve.htm

This website describes a middle school dropout prevention program located in Seattle. The program includes the following components: Individual Needs Assessment, Student and Family Counseling, Information and Referral to Community Organizations, Student Support Groups and Counseling Family and Parenting Education, Student and Family Advocacy, Tutoring and Academic Support, and Transition Assistance for Students Entering or Graduating from Middle School.

Latinos and the Dropout Crisis: The Community Solution.
http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/abstracts/ed328639.html

This webpage contains a description of the ASPIRA Association, Inc., a community-based Hispanic American organization dedicated to improving the economic status of Hispanic Americans by reducing the high school dropout rate.

Address: ASPIRA Association, Inc., 1112 Sixteenth St. N.W., Suite 340, Washington, DC 20036 ($3.00)

The National Learning Center
http://www.rbs.org/currents/s95/national.html

This website describes the dropout prevention activities of The National Learning Center. Among their projects is the Options School, a full-time dropout prevention program for seventh-graders and over-age sixth-graders whose academic performance is two or more years below grade level. The school emphasizes basic skills and teaches an interdisciplinary curriculum that includes radio production, video animation, and theater arts.

Address: The National Learning Center, 800 3rd Street, NE,
Washington, DC 20002; (202) 543-8600.

The National Parent Information Network: Dropout Prevention Strategies
http://inet.ed.gov/CommInvite/dropouts.html

This website provides information about what parents can do to prevent school dropout. This page is embedded in a series of pages created by the National Parent Information Network that discuss school reform and grassroots efforts to improve schools.

Prepared by the School Mental Health Project/
Center for Mental Health in Schools, UCLA
June, 1996

Innovative United States Retention/Dropout Programs

Selected from "Effective Strategies for Dropout Prevention," National Dropout Prevention Centre, Clemson University, SC.,1990

U.S. Dropout Prevention Database: FOCUS

Programs, Resources, Consultants Listings

For information on more than 400 US dropout prevention programs, conference and workshop information, consult the FOCUS database at the National Dropout Prevention Centre, Clemson University, South Carolina.

Contact: National Dropout Prevention Centre, (803) 656-2599

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1. **Parents Teach**

   Selected teachers and guidance counsellors meet one night a week for 10 weeks with parents and their children. Guidance is provided to parents (especially those who had trouble in school) on how to help their child improve academic achievement and make wise career choices. Parents learn how to teach their children good study habits, how to take tests, and how to find resources to solve problems.

   Contact: Carla Hawkins, Metropolitan Detroit Youth Foundation, 11000 W. McNichols, Suite 222, Detroit, MI, 48221, (313) 872-4200

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2. **Parent Outreach Program**

   This program begins at the elementary school level and expands into the middle school. Strategies include parent meetings, classes, group activities, resource kits, and home visits all designed to teach parents how to help their children in school.

   Contact: Carolyn Sheldon, Assistant Director, Student Services, Child Services Centre, 531 S.E. 14th Av. Portland, Oregon, 97214. (503) 280-5840.

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3. **Project SEED - Mathematics and Technology**

   Project SEED is a program in which mathematicians and scientists teach abstract, conceptually oriented mathematics to full-sized classes of elementary school students as a supplement to the regular mathematics program in order to raise the achievement levels and academic self-confidence. SEED instructors use the discovery method, in which students play an integral role in educating themselves.

Contact: Helen Smiler, National Projects Coordinator, Project SEED,2530 San Pablo Avenue Suite K, Berkeley, California, 94702- 2013, (415) 644-3422

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4. **Early Prevention of School Failure**

Four-, five-, and six-year old children found to score one year below the norm of language, auditory, visual and motor skills are given special programs daily. Teachers are trained to match appropriate curriculum with developmental levels of students.

Contact: Lucille Werner, Curriculum Services, 114 North Second Street, Peotone, Il. 60468, (312) 258-3478.

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5. **GIVE Program: (Grandpersons Interested in Volunteering for Education)**

This program provides opportunities for senior citizen volunteers to share their knowledge and skills with school children and to provide extra assistance to teachers and other school staff. Working one half day per week, participants in GIVE become tutors, classroom assistants, preschool or kindergarten assistants, and special education assistants. Working under the direct supervision of the classroom teacher, they give individualized instruction, care and attention to students.

Contact: Anne Szumigala, Toledo Public Schools, Administration Building, Room 206, Manhattan & Elm Sts., Toledo, OH. 43608, (419) 246-1321.

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6. **HOSTS (Help One Student to Succeed)**

Mentors in this national program help students with reading, writing, student skills, vocabulary development and higher order thinking skills. Each student is matched with a trained mentor who provides individualized attention, motivation and support. Mentors, adults from the community and older students are given carefully designed individualized lesson plans. These plans are tailored to each student's learning style, reading level and motivational interests. Since 1977, HOSTS has involved more than 150,000 students and 100,000 mentors in more than 400 programs.

Contact: Dr. Jerald Wilbur, HOSTS Corporation, 1801 D Street, Suite 2, Vancouver, WA, 98663-3332, (206) 694-1705.

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7. **"70001" Training and Employment Institute**

The goal of 70001 is to help school systems design and implement dropout prevention programs and to provide pre-employment training and related services to at-risk youth. The 70001 model is made up of the following components: competency based pre-employment training, remedial education instruction, motivational development

services, job placement, and follow-up services. The 70001 model operates programs in 23 states.

Contact: Kim McManus, 70001 Training & Employment Institute, 501 School Street, Suite 600, Washington, DC, 20024, (204) 484-0103.

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8. **SMART - Summer Motivation and Academic Residential Training**

In this program, 14-15 year old students spend eight weeks during the summer on a university campus. Students are involved in academic, recreational, work, career exploration and community service activities. Half the day is spent in academics and the other half is work, tutorials, electives and recreation.

Contact: Terry Pickeral, Westem Washington University, Bellingham, WA, 98225, (206) 676-3322

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9. **River Valley Alternative School**

River Valley Alternative seeks to raise student aspirations, provide an alternative for those students for whom the high school experience was not working and to provide a means for dropouts to return to school and earn their diploma.

The structure of the school rests on five concepts: (1) credit by objective, (2) individualized, self-paced instruction, (3) advisor- advisee model, (4) flexibility, and (5) community involvement. This school has had notable success with "difficult" dropouts.

Contact: Mark Bechtel, MSAD #52 Alternative School, Turner, Maine, 04282, (207) 225-3406.

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10. **Learncycle: Responsive Teaching**

This is an intensive training program to help teachers develop flexible, effective skills for managing and teaching mainstreamed special education and other at-risk students. Through structured class activities, teachers learn a simple problem solving method to define, analyze and solve common student problems. Then they develop a plan to implement in their own classrooms.

Contact: Keith Wright, Washington State Facilitator, 15675 Ambaum Blvd., Seattle, WA, 98166, (206) 433-2453.

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11. **Project Intercept**

The Intercept Project is a highly individualized approach to dealing with problems of

at-risk students. A master trainer provides a one-week training program and then makes periodic in- week visits to the school for on-line critiquing and demonstration teaching.

Contact: James E. Loan, 1101 South Race St. Denver, Colorado, 80210, (303) 777-5870.

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12. **In-service Training**

This program provides teacher in-service training, utilizing on- site and satellite programming. It helps teachers on all levels to teach in a more practical and experimental manner, addresses teacher attitudes and provides adaptive teaching techniques adjustable to learning styles.

Contact: Sylvia Olesen, Project Advantage, 123 East Broadway, Cushing, Oklahoma, 74023, (918) 225-1882.

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13. **School Development Program**

A collaboration between Yale University and the New Haven Public Schools, this program is attempting to understand the underlying problems of low achieving schools, correct them and prevent future problems. A comprehensive school plan covers academics, social activities and special programs. A key component of this plan is a governance and management team composed of parents, teachers and administrative support staff. Specific activities are building- level goals.

Contact: Dr. James P. Comer, Child Study Centre, Yale University, 230 South Frontage Road. New Haven, Connecticut, 06510-8009, (203) 785-2513.

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14. **Accelerated School Program**

School-based governance is a major component of this program to increase the overall pace of learning for at-risk students by increasing capacity, effort, time and quality of learning resources. Ideally, the governance body is supported by a steering committee and task-oriented committees with particular assignments. These groups should be composed of instructional staff, other staff, parent representatives and the principal. Choice of curriculum, instructional strategies and other school policies are designed by the instructional staff of the school within guidelines set by the school district. The principal provides leadership and is responsible for obtaining and allocating resources to implement group decisions.

Contact: Henry M. Levin, Center for Educational Research, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, 94305, (415) 723-4717.

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15. **Exodus, Inc.**

A public-private partnership, this fully-accredited alternative education program uses the Cities-In-Schools service delivery system to improve the academic achievement of at-risk high school students by helping them with non-educational problems such as finding employment, child care and court matters. Counselling and social services are important components of the program. The program shifts to an employment emphasis in the summer.

Contact: Neil Shorthouse, Exodus, Inc. 96 Pine Street NE, Atlanta, Georgia, 30308, (403) 873-3979.

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16. **The Greenley Dream Team, Inc.**

Leaders from all segments of the private sector organized to coordinate this community-wide school dropout prevention program. Efforts include early identification and computer accounting of at- risk students, an alternative delivery system and staff development in cooperative learning. The organization also sponsors a mentoring program and scholars program.

Contact: Dr. Tim Waters, Superintendent of Schools, 811 15th St., Greenley, Colorado, 80631, (303) 352-1543.

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17. **Options for Youth (OFY)**

OFY is a dropout recovery program combines home independent study with self-esteem and leadership development. Former dropouts enrol in courses which prepare them for high school diplomas, GED testing or reentry at grade level in a comprehensive or alternative school. Twice weekly students visit one of three conveniently located centres in high-risk neighbourhoods. They turn in and pick up assignments, receive instructional assistance and attend leadership development groups. Field tutors see students at home or at the local library in cases such as a "school-phobic" or gang leader. Program features include: open entry, flexible self-paced learning, and independent study programs tailored to meet personal or work schedules. Students enrol in only one or two subjects at a time.

Contact: Dr. Elizabeth B. Buck, Options for Youth, 1717 N. Gramercy Place, Los Angeles, CA. 90028, (213) 957-4280

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18. **Project Succeed**

This program focuses on those students who have already left the system but wish to acquire a high school diploma. Classes are held twice weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:00 to 9:30 p.m. Tuesday classes are devoted to math and English while Thursday classes cover science and social studies. All students must fulfil a

Community service component of 30 hours minimum. Health and physical education are performed on a contract basis. Community service and word processing are offered as electives. Students may earn letter grades of A, B, or C with the opportunity to retake tests in which minimal requirements have not been met.

Contact: Mr. Joel Venucci, Keystone Oaks High School, 1000 Kelton Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA. 15216. (412) 571-6035

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19. **Norwalk Mentor Program**

The Norwalk Mentor Program, first established in 1986, now has 550 Mentors, including corporate CEO's, middle managers, secretaries, other agencies and civic organization volunteers. Mentors spend one hour each week with a needy, deserving youth in an elementary or middle school. The goal of the program is to instill self-esteem, improve attendance, attitude and prevent dropouts at an early age.

Mentors read to and with Mentees, take them to the school library, play games, sports, talk and become trusted, reliable role models and friends. Many spend time together after school and on weekends. The effort is a team approach. Support staff (social workers, guidance counsellors, school psychologists) and principals work closely with Mentors to achieve desired results. Classroom teachers meet with Mentors frequently to discuss progress and strategies for success. Parent involvement is a program goal.

Contact: Susan G. Weinberger, Public Affairs Officer, Norwalk Public Schools, 125 East Avenue, P.O. Box 6001, Norwalk, CT 06852- 6001. (203) 854-4011.

Last updated: February 29, 1996

Some Model Programs Focused on School Dropouts

Across the country schools are working to address the problem of student dropout. There are many models. From 1988 through most of 1996, the federal government supported about 100 demonstration projects aimed at improving school and community approaches to dropout prevention and reintegration of those who already have left school. What follows are brief abstracts of a handful of these models.

I. Beginning in the Elementary Grades

The St. Louis Consortium for Dropout Prevention

This mentoring model is a school district partnership with businesses and community organizations. Adult mentors work closely with 1,230 students in grades 3 through 11 to increase their interest in school and keep them from dropping out. In addition to mentoring, the program provides other services that support school retention, including job counseling, development of job-seeking and job retention skills, and transportation and attempts to strengthen home/school/community collaboration for dropout prevention and increase city-wide awareness of the severity of the dropout problem and of the need for students to complete their high school education.

Contact: Lynn Beckwith, Jr., Project Director, (314) 361-5500

Step 2 Learning Project (Success Through Educational Programming)

Advocating "Success Through Educational Programming," the Step 2 Learning Project is a dropout prevention, intervention and recovery system. It begins with preschoolers and continues through successful completion of high school. This project replicates effective techniques found in Project Advantage and Parents as Teachers, two programs documented in the National Diffusion Network. The techniques include counseling, extended day enrichment and alternative education components, with an emphasis on academic, economic, cultural and personal factors. Increased parent participation in learning activities is achieved through the Parents as Teachers program. By working with students and parents prior to school entry, parents' become more effective first teachers. In addition, parent involvement in schooling is increased through parent training. Finally, the Step 2 Learning Center, a satellite high school offering an alternative approach to educational programming provides an educational environment for at risk students and to bring dropouts back.

Contact: Richard A. Sloan, Project Director, (405) 257-5475

Colonial School District Project

This comprehensive, four component, Pre-K through Adult program emphasizes (1) prevention curriculum for all students, (2) specialized intervention programs and services for at-risk students, (3) recovery and reentry programs for early withdrawal students, and (4) administration, monitoring operations, and evaluation. Key to these components are Student Intervention Teams composed of an administrator, counselor, nurse, and support staff. These

teams are responsible for identifying, placing, and providing intervention to at-risk students and parents. The After Hours Program serves students re-entering an educational setting, and the Bridge Program provides assistance to at-risk students and their parents who are scheduled to transfer to a new school within the district (grades 3, 6, 9). Once the transfer is complete, a "buddy" system assigns the at-risk student to a staff or student "buddy" trained to facilitate student success in the new environment. Other interventions include drug and alcohol counseling, In-School Suspension Program, Teen Parenting Program, summer intervention classes, family support services, and the Grove/William Penn Partnership Program. The Recovery/Reentry Component actively locates, interviews, counsels, and encourages dropouts to reenter school.

Contact: Ron L. Gottshall, Project Director, (302) 323-2845

Public/Private Partnerships to Benefit Youth At Risk of Dropping Out: A Comprehensive Community Approach

Cities in Schools (CIS) of Miami, in partnership with Dade County Public Schools, numerous businesses, and other public and private agencies, provides for comprehensive educational, health, and human services for at-risk youth and their families. The model includes the use of accelerated learning strategies with special emphasis on reality-based curriculum; careful attendance monitoring; a high degree of family involvement; use of case workers; and a variety of counseling services. Career awareness and preparation are emphasized and supplemented with a mentor program and a variety of social support services.

Contact: Marion S. Hoffman, Project Director, (305) 358-0717

Restructure And Keep Students (RAKS)

Restructure And Keep Students uses a comprehensive vocational technical curriculum as a tool to help at-risk students make the connection between remaining in school and the world of work, careers and self sufficiency. RAKS operates in a K-12 cluster of schools that encompasses a high school Vocational Technical Center, two of its feeder middle schools and two feeder elementary schools. This context involves school-wide reform activities aimed at the following: (1) achieving autonomy for principals and teachers; (2) providing an interesting and challenging curricula for students; (3) improving school climate; (4) systematically monitoring attendance; (5) instituting alternatives to standard retention practices; (6) coordination of support services; (7) development of between school transition policies and procedures; (8) parent and community involvement; and (9) staff training. Certain activities are implemented at all participating schools, while other activities are unique to schools according to grade level.

Contact: Stanley Walden, Project Director, (313) 494-1128

Early Intervention Program for At Risk Youth in Grades

The Centerville At Risk Program (CARP) is for at-risk youth in grades K-5 at Centerville Elementary School. Its components are Early Prevention of School Failure (for kindergarten), Reading Recovery (for first graders), and Taking At Risk Ahead (TARA) (for fifth graders). These three approaches are coupled with alternative learning strategies, computer assisted

instruction, and a summer camp and with Parents As School Supporters (PASS), which includes home visits, conferences, parenting classes, workshops and a literacy program that provides child care and transportation. Fifth-grade at risk students feed into Keeping At Risk Enrolled (KARE 6-8) which offers previously retained middle school students an opportunity to accelerate the pace of language arts and math skills mastery beyond grade level.

Contact: Linda Vaughn, Project Director, (803) 260-5100

Washington Coordinated Service Initiative for At-Risk Youth and Families

The focus is on early intervention and dropout retrieval. Individualizing instruction is provided to at-risk students using variations of accelerated learning strategies. The program uses a computer-based tracking system and emphasizes promotion of cultural relevancy, parent involvement, and a professional training curriculum. The project has been a partnership among five school district-communities, local businesses, two universities, one community-based organization, and the State's Department of Social and Health Services.

Contact: Albert J. Smith, Project Director, (206) 543-3815

II. For Middle and Secondary Schools

Accelerate Academic Achievement Program

This is a comprehensive school-based early intervention program. The intervention is conducted after regular school hours and provides "support modules" which include tutorial and homework assistance, enrichment and career exploration. At the elementary level, the academic "support module" is centered around a tutorial design in reading, writing, and math. Seventh grade students are followed through the crucial high school transitional years of 9th and 10th grades. The high school component includes career exploration, college preparatory information, academic assistance and if needed, opportunities to complete unsuccessful course work. At both elementary and secondary levels, students participate in Parent Support and Saturday Enrichment Modules. The Parent Support Module is designed to increase parents' ability to assist their child academically. The Saturday Enrichment Module, which incorporates academic and cultural activities, supports school/student/parent interaction around a non-threatening, non-competitive educational agenda.

Contact: Grace Dawson, Project Director, (312) 535-8435

The Expansion of a Successful Dropout Prevention Program in a Rural Alternative School District

The focus of this project is on expanding an existing quality Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program into a comprehensive model School Dropout Demonstration Program. The primary focus of the existing program is on three Alternative Schools which provide basic skills for academically disadvantaged and disaffected youth who fail to achieve in a regular school setting or who have dropped out of school. The purpose is to reduce the number of youth who

do not complete their elementary and secondary education. This is achieved through prevention activities, early intervention services, diagnostic procedures, and remediation services for seventh through twelfth grade at-risk youth and dropouts by a highly qualified and experienced staff. The program receives recommendations from an advisory council comprised of legal, social, and educational agencies. Activities include attendance incentives, home visits, counseling, tutoring, credit make-up, life skills, work experiences, extended day, summer program, and parent inservice and involvement. These activities are based on student assessment including consideration of the youth's learning environment and learning styles.

Contact: P.E. Cross, Project Director, (618) 244-8040

Development of Junior High School Community Resource Centers

An extended partnership with local agencies, businesses and area colleges (known as the Access Center) that operates a community resource center within the high school is being extended to establish centers at four junior high schools. The focus is on economically disadvantaged, handicapped and minority students; the aim is to help in-school students and their family-members find jobs and to help recent school dropouts continue their education or secure full-time employment. Job skills classes, a speakers' program, a tutoring program, parent workshops and opportunities to visit college campuses are provided. Through each school's Parent Advisory Council, parents work with school staff to implement these programs and initiate others as needed. The high school provides increased support to incoming 9th graders by implementing a Tutoring Program and Teacher Mentors. By using volunteers from community agencies, local businesses and three local colleges, the Center is minimizes the costs of providing programs that increase academic performance and encourage students to remain in school.

Contact: Susan Dukess, Project Director, (508) 580-7531

Latino Stay in School Project

This project serves a population of predominantly Puerto Rican students, creating multiple short term opportunities for academic success and demonstrations of positive student behavior in a supportive, culturally sensitive educational environment. There are seven components: teaching teams including a social worker; active parent involvement; integrated minicourses based on experiential learning/grounded knowing; development of alternative assessments; comparative cultural contexts for examining values, beliefs and perspectives; the "no failure"/work to success model; and an extended school year. To accommodate transiency, students are offered integrated curriculum units for which they receive final grades at flexible four to nine week intervals. These hands-on, inquiry units are assessed through alternative strategies. The "no failure" approach involves students working cooperatively in teams to support each other to complete each unit successfully (i.e., achieving at least a grade of C).

Contact: Thomas C. Rosica, Project Director, (215) 299-7842

Youth Experiencing Success (Y.E.S.) Plus Program

With vocational education as its core, the program features hands-on learning and career preparation to enable students to graduate with entry level technical skills. It provides challenging options and alternatives to accelerate learning; students earn credits through

partnerships with business and community groups. Early identification of potential dropouts is done through focused articulation in the feeder systems. Family outreach and parent training are central to the approach, as is team-based case management designed to ensure each student develops a personalized plan for success. Innovative methods are used to contact students who have dropped out.

Contact: Jill Gann, Project Director, (301) 224-5491

Metropolitan Youth Academy School Dropout Demonstration Assistance Program

This project serves low-income and academically underprepared secondary school level dropouts. It is a partnership between the Human Development Corporation of Metropolitan St. Louis (a nonprofit community based organization), the St. Louis Public School system, the St. Louis Community College and other community-based service providers. Special features are direct student support services, accelerated (computer-based) integrated learning, and a comprehensive range of education, counseling, skills training and employability development services.

Contact: Janice 0. Washington, Project Director, (314) 652-5100

Project Achieve Transition Services

This dropout prevention, attendance improvement project of the New York City Public Schools, is a partnership with United Way of New York City. The goal is to enable late-entry, high-risk students make a successful transition to their high school and begin to earn credits toward high school graduation. The project provides supportive services, instructional enhancements, and family outreach to support at-risk students and their parents. It operates in seven high schools with large numbers and percentages of late-entry students -- students who enter school for the first time in high school, often from other countries and with little or no prior formal education, many of whom speak little or no English. Other late-entry students with unmet needs are long-term absentees with a pattern of extended absences and erratic attendance, and youth from correctional institutions with poor basic skills and few high school credits for their age. Its major components are: (1) Case Management, (2) Family Outreach, (3) Instructional Services, (4) Counseling, and (5) Staff Development.

Contact: Hilda Gore, Project Director, (718) 935-5515

III. Part of School Restructuring

Santa Ana 2000

As part of its school restructuring, the Santa Ana school district has integrated comprehensive dropout identification, prevention, intervention, and recovery activities in preschool through grade 12 and provide early intervention and prevention programs for preschool through grade 6 students. The focus incorporates high performance expectations and critical/creative thinking for students preschool through grade 12.

Contact: Linda Marie Delgiudice, Project Director, (714) 558-5786

Dropout Prevention Consultation Cadre List:

Note: Listing is alphabetized by Region and State as an aid so you can find and network with resources closest to you.

Our list of professionals is growing daily. Here are a few names as a beginning aid.

Central States

Iowa

Arthur Carder
Executive Director
Heartland Center
320 Tucker Building
Clinton, IA 52732
Phone: 319/243-5633
Fax: 319/243-9567

Phillip A. Mann
Director
Seashore Psychology Clinic
Department of Psychology, E11SH
University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242
Phone: 319/335-2468
Fax: 319/335-0191
Email: philip-mann@uiowa.edu

Vine Van Roekel
Educational Consultant
Area Education Agency 4
1382 4th Ave. NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250
Phone: 712/722-4378
Fax: 712/722-1643

Illinois

Thom Moore
Director Psych. Service Center
University of Illinois
Department of Psychology
Champaign, IL 61821
Phone: 217/333-0041
Fax: 217/333-0064

Michigan

Debra Martin
Administrative Officer
Genesee County CMH
420 West Fifth Avenue
Flint, MI 48503
Phone: 810/257-3707
Fax: 810/257-1316

Karen Williams
Supervisor- School-Based Health Centers
Mott Children's Health Center
806 Tuuri Place
Flint, MI 48503
Phone: 810/767-5750
Fax: 810/768-7511

Ohio

Dianne Herman
Director, Children and Youth Services
South Community Inc.
349 West First Street
Dayton, OH 45402
Phone: 513/228-0162
Fax: 513/228-0553

East

Connecticut

Thomas Guilotta
Child & Family Agency
255 Hempstead Street
New London, CT 06320
Phone: 860/443-2896
Fax: 860/442-5909
Email: tpgullotta@aol.com

District of Columbia

Ronda Talley
425 Eighth Street, NW, #645
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: 202/393-0658
Fax: 202/393-5864
Email: rct.apa@email.apa.org

Maryland

Lawrence Dolan
Center for Res. on the Education of Students
Placed at Risk / Johns Hopkins University
3505 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
Phone: 410/516-8809
Fax: 410/516-8890
Email: larryd@jhunix.hcf.jhu.edu

Maine

Ellen Bowman
LCPC-Clinical Counselor
Maranacook Community School-Student
P.O. Box 177
Readfield, ME 04355
Phone: 207/685-3041

New Jersey

Susan Proietti
Director
School Based Youth Services
189 Paulison Avenue
Passaic, NJ 07055
Phone: 201/473-2408

New York

Christopher Cinton
Project Director
Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center
1650 Grand Concourse
Bronx, NY 10457
Phone: 718/960-1328
Fax: 718/583-0460

New York (cont.)

Deborah Johnson
Director of Community Services
Primary Mental Health Project
685 South Avenue
Rochester, NY 14620
Phone: 716/262-2920
Fax: 716/262-4761
Email: djohnson@psych.rochester.edu

Laura Perry
Public Education Assistant
NY State Office of Alcoh. & Subst. Abuse
1450 Western Avenue
Albany, NY 12203-3526
Phone: 518/473-3460
Email: perryl@emi.com

Pennsylvania

Patricia Welle
Student Services Coordinator
School District of the City of Allentown
31 South Penn Street
P.O. Box 328
Alllentown, PA 18105
Phone: 610/821-2619
Fax: 610/821-2618

Rhode Island

Robert F. Wooler
Executive Director
RI Youth Guidance Center, Inc.
82 Pond Street
Pawtucket, RI 02860
Phone: 401/725-0450

Vermont

Brenda Bean
Program Development Specialist
Dept. of Dev. & Mental Health Services
103 South Main Street
Waterbury, VT 05671
Phone: 802/241-2630
Fax: 802/241-3052
Email: brendab@dmh.state.vt.us

Northwest

Idaho

Julie Johnson
School Psychologist
Moscow (Idaho) School District
410 East Third Street
Moscow, ID 83843
Phone: 208/882-1120
Fax: 208/883-4440

Washington

Elizabeth McCauley
Adolescent Health Training Program
University of Washington
P.O. Box 357920
Seattle, WA 98195
Phone: 206/685-1242
Fax: 206/543-5771
Email: eliz@u.washington.edu

Washington (cont.)

Rosie Moore
Mental Health Counselor
SWYFS/Chief Seattle High School
2600 SW Thistle Avenue
Seattle, WA 98126
Phone: 206/938-1360
Fax: 206/281-6704

Southeast

Florida

Howard Knoff
Professor and Director
School Psychology Program / Univ of S. FL.
4202 East Fowler Avenue, FAO 100U
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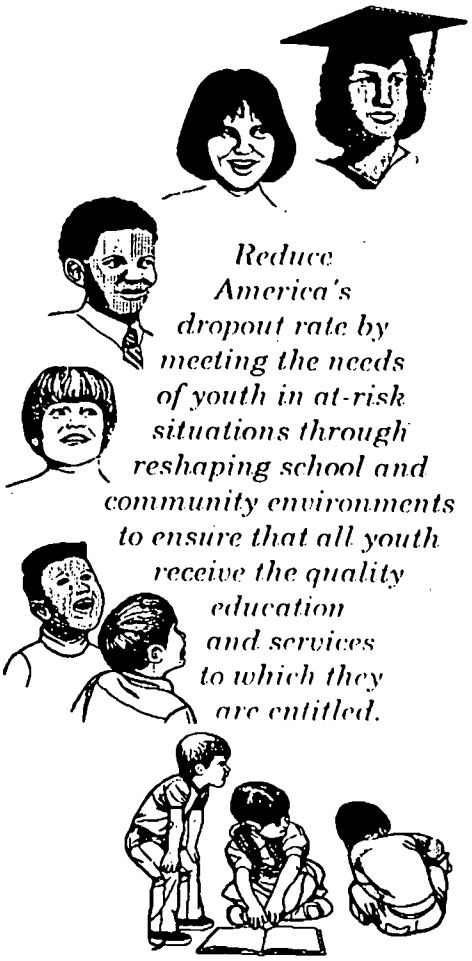

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Research Corner

Earning Without Learning

by Alice Presson

It's a fallacy to say that students who are not pursuing high school college preparatory studies can't work hard. According to a survey conducted by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) in 19 states of 12,000 seniors pursuing vocational studies, 68% are working. Yet, of that sub-group of working high school students, 70% do not work in areas that interest them as career pathways and 76% receive no training on the job. When that 70% finish high school, most will lack the communications, mathematics, and science skills to enter either college or a job that provides a career pathway. High school dropouts fare worse. It is not a surprise then that the average American high school graduate reaches age 27 before settling into a job regarded as a career.

A structured work-based learning program linked to high-status school-based learning is an important way to motivate many potential dropouts to pursue a career parthway in high school that can lead to both employment in a career area and further learning. There are many types of work-based learning—job shadowing, internships, youth apprenticeships, and even the old-fashioned "co-op" program. Developing a high school work-based learning program that focuses more on learning than on earning is not easy, takes time, and involves several constituencies. SREB's survey findings suggest that, at the most, only 30% of seniors completing a vocational concentration are in some type of work-based learning program.

How can high school leaders develop work-based learning programs that motivate potential dropouts to complete high school with a solid academic and technical foundation that will lead them into a career? They need to spend sufficient time up front to develop a well-planned program that will have credibility for employers, teachers, students, and postsecondary education leaders. Consider the following steps for developing such a program.

Form a Partnership

- Develop a partnership that includes employers, teachers, workers, students, parents, civic and local government leaders to plan a program.
- Determine the roles and responsibilities of the partners.
- Select occupational areas of combined study and work.

Create Work-based Learning Opportunities

- Secure employer participation.
- Identify technical, academic, and personal competencies.
- Design a progressive work-based curriculum and work placements.
- Design a work-based curriculum that supports its progressive components (mentoring, shadowing, internships, structured apprenticeships, etc.).
- Identify workplace mentors.
- Develop a plan for supervising on-the-job learning.
- Design and provide both common and separate, long-term staff development for workplace and school-based staffs.
- Settle issues of liability, insurance, and workers' compensation.

Create School-based Opportunities

- Design learning objectives for each program.
- Determine school-based curriculum and instruction supporting and related to the workplace curriculum.
- Integrate organization and administration of program into school plan so that the work-based learning program is not a fragment of the school curriculum, but instead an important feature.
- Identify school staff.

Connecting Work-based with School-based Learning

- Design and integrate career awareness and exploration in eighth, ninth, and tenth grades.
- Develop a strong advisement system that involves parents and their children working one-on-one with counselors and/or teachers to develop a four-year plan of high school study that includes a technical or academic major and that prepares the student for further learning in the workplace and in a postsecondary setting.
- Recruit, select, and orient students.
- Plan school and work schedules for students.
- Require each student, beginning in the ninth grade at the latest, to engage in journal writing, doing challenging and authentic projects, and developing a portfolio containing the best examples of his or her work produced thoughout high school and at work.
- Involve teachers and employers in developing standards and assessments for each work-based program and to identify industry or nationally-recognized credentials for which students must work to complete their programs.

Work-based learning can help potential high school dropouts find an important "hook" in life. To enable the student to identify and pursue a career pathway, however, high school leaders need to take much care to create a program that has strong learning components both in the classroom and at related worksites.

—For information on workshops on planning work-based learning initiatives, contact Alice Presson, Associate Director of High Schools That Work, The Southern Regional Education Board, 592 Tenth St., Atlanta, GA 30318, (404) 875-9211.

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An Example of an ERIC Digest
Dropout Intervention and Language Minority Youth

ERIC Digests are brief research syntheses available at libraries, over the Internet or by contacting ERIC. For more information about ERIC, see the *Selected References* and *Internet* sections of this introductory packet.

Youth from non-English-language backgrounds are 1.5 times more likely to leave school before high school graduation than those from English-language backgrounds (Cardenas, Montecel, Supik, & Harris, 1992). High dropout rates among students from economically disadvantaged and non-English-speaking backgrounds are among the major concerns of middle and high school educators in the United States. Though dropout rates have declined overall in recent years, especially among Blacks and Whites, the trend for Hispanic students is quite the opposite. According to the Census Bureau, in 1992 roughly 50% of Hispanics ages 16 to 24 dropped out of high school, up from 30% in 1990 (GAO, 1994).

By the year 2010, Hispanics are expected to be the largest minority group in the United States, making up 21% of the population (OERI, 1993). Thus, the increase in dropout rates among Hispanic high school students is cause for growing concern. Various dropout prevention programs have emerged as one response.

This digest describes three programs for middle and high school students at risk of dropping out of school. The first two programs are specifically geared toward limited-English-proficient Hispanic youth. The third, a vocational program, involves African-American students as well.

COCA-COLA VALUED YOUTH PROGRAM

Developed by the Intercultural Development Research Association in Texas, Coca-Cola Valued Youth Programs (VYP) have been implemented in 60 schools in 8 states. The goals are to help Hispanic middle and high school students achieve academic success and improve their language skills. Other goals are to strengthen students' perceptions of themselves and school and to form school-home-community partnerships to increase the level of support for these students (Cardenas et al., 1992).

Middle and high school students are paired as tutors with elementary school students identified as being at risk of dropping out of school. Tutors are paid minimum wage for their work. The program's philosophy is that the tutors, by being placed in paid positions of responsibility and treated as adults, will improve their self-esteem and academic performance. As one tutor claimed, "When I'm helping these kids, I'm helping myself. I'm learning things when I'm tutoring them" (Claiborne, 1994). In turn, the student being tutored will grow both academically and personally under the attention of the tutor and will be encouraged to remain in school until graduation.

Cross-age tutoring, the main component of the VYP, takes place at the elementary school one hour a day, four days a week; on the fifth day, the tutors take a class on effective tutoring strategies (Robledo & Rivera, 1990). In addition to conducting the tutoring sessions, tutors must adhere to the employee guidelines of their host school and report to a teacher coordinator, who monitors and evaluates their progress. Student tutors also attend classes in English as a second language and content areas.

Field trips, conducted at least twice a year, are designed to broaden students' horizons by exposing them to cultural and professional possibilities in their communities. A student recognition component serves to instill a sense of self-worth in both tutors and tutees. This takes the form of a celebratory lunch or dinner, media attention, or presentation of merit awards for student efforts to stay in school and help others do the same. Finally, adults who are successful in their field, have the same language and cultural background as the students, and have overcome similar obstacles act as role models and provide guidance to both the tutors and the tutees.

PROJECT ADELANTE

Project Adelante, established in 1988 at Kean College, NJ, is currently implemented in three New Jersey school districts. The project's goals are to improve the high school graduation rate of Hispanic students (especially those still learning English), increase their opportunities for college admission, and increase the number who enter the teaching profession (CAL, 1994).

Hispanic middle and high school students receive academic instruction, career and personal counseling, peer tutoring, and mentoring by Hispanic professionals. This takes place on the Kean College campus during an intensive five-week Summer Academy and at Saturday Academies during the academic year. Students usually enter the program in middle school and are encouraged to remain with it until they complete high school.

Academic courses include English as a second language, science, and math. Class size is kept at around 15 students. Teachers are free to design courses that are interesting and appropriate for the students, to use both English and Spanish in the classroom and in social settings, and to adjust their class schedules as needed to accommodate special projects or field trips.

Personal and career counseling are key aspects of the program. Program counselors, like teachers, come from participating schools and participate in all events, so they know the students well. Students meet regularly with their counselors in one-on-one and small-group settings and take a full course taught by a counselor, which covers social and academic issues. The counselors also sponsor daytime and evening sessions for the parents to come to the campus and discuss issues selected by the parents.

Peer tutoring furthers Adelante's goal of encouraging students to enter the teaching profession. Tutors are Hispanic and African- American high school juniors and seniors and Kean College freshmen and sophomores, many of whom are former Adelante students. Each tutor is assigned a small group of students to meet with, work with in class, and interact with in written dialogue journals. The tutors serve as role models. At the same time, tutors receive intensive and ongoing training. They learn the tasks and responsibilities of teaching and are often inspired to pursue teaching careers. <p>

The mentoring program involves a collaboration with HISPA, a service organization for Hispanic employees at AT&T committed to promoting the education of minority youth and children. Students meet with mentors regularly to socialize or to focus on academic and professional activities, such as visiting the mentor's office, doing school work, or filling out college applications.

CALIFORNIA PARTNERSHIP ACADEMIES

The California Partnership Academies Program represents a three-way partnership among the state, local school districts, and supporting businesses. Grants from the state are matched by direct or in-kind support from the participating business and school district to set up an academy. Goals are to provide academic and vocational training to disadvantaged students and to decrease youth unemployment.

Participation in the program is voluntary. To qualify, students whose past records put them at risk of failing or dropping out of school must show that they "want to turn themselves around" (Stanford Mid-Peninsula Urban Coalition, 1990). Students apply and are interviewed in the second semester of 9th grade. Academy staff (teachers, administrators, counselors) and representatives from the participating business then meet with parents of applicants to explain the goals of the program, answer questions, address concerns, and get permission for the students to participate. Selected students enter the program in the first semester of 10th grade.

Partnership Academies function as a school within a school (Dayton & Stern, 1990). Through block scheduling, students enroll as a group in one technical class (designed with the collaborating business) and three academic classes (English, math, and social studies or science). Students spend the morning in their vocational/technical and academic courses then join the rest of the student body in the afternoon for extracurricular activities (Raby, 1990). Teachers invite outside speakers to share information on career selection, employment skills, and the importance of getting an education.

In 11th grade, each Academy student is matched with a mentor from the business community, who serves as a role model and offers guidance and information on succeeding in the workforce. In the summer following 11th grade, Academy students in good academic standing are given jobs with the participating business, with the goal of improving their employment skills and increasing their chances for gainful employment after graduation.

Other aspects of the program are student recognition (awards for student of the month, excellent attendance, and academic and personal achievement) and parental involvement, sought through questionnaires to parents regarding meeting and workshop topics, invitations to accompany students on field trips, a newsletter, and constant personal contact with Academy staff.

California Partnership Academies have had a positive effect on participating students. They report that being able to see the connection between an education and work makes school more interesting. As one student reported, "I'm 18 and I've had three jobs--all of them at major companies. I've never tossed a fry or slapped a burger, and thanks to the Academies I won't have to" (Raby, 1990). The goal is for 94% of Academy students to focus on long-range plans, such as continuing their education, pursuing careers, or both.

CONCLUSION

Dropping out of school results from many complex factors and long-term individual experiences (OERI, 1993). Successful dropout prevention programs for

language minority students, like those described here, must have the following components: respect for the language and cultural backgrounds of the students they serve and for the positive qualities students bring to school; the possibility of long-term involvement, from middle school through high school; a well-designed academic curriculum, developed by committed and experienced professionals who facilitate movement through the program and provide assistance in pursuing academic opportunities beyond high school; substantive work experience that promotes mature choices and access to high-quality jobs; a tutoring and mentoring component that provides intense personal attention and encouragement from successful and caring role models; and family and community involvement. For language minority students, programs must also include appropriate components for native language support and English language development.

Dropout prevention demands attention from school and district staff in collaboration with local businesses, community colleges and universities, community-based organizations, and policymakers for any lasting impact to be made on reducing dropout rates among the nation's language minority students.

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California Partnership Academies: Stanford Mid-Peninsula Urban Coalition, 430 Sherman Avenue, Suite 305, Palo Alto, CA 94303.

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School Avoidance and Dropout: Motivational Underpinnings and Intervention Implications[1]

School avoidance is a warning sign for many problems, including subsequent dropping out. Far-reaching discussions of the problem of school avoidance are found in the psychodynamic and behavioral literature on school reluctance, refusal, phobia, and dropouts.[4,6,11,12,14,15,16,19,20,22-24] This literature has contributed significantly to understanding the problem and how it should be treated. Our purpose here is to discuss additional concepts related to understanding the motivational underpinnings for such behavior and to explore some intervention implications derived from this understanding.

An Intrinsic View of Motivation

The extensive and rapidly growing literature on human motivation aids in understanding avoidance behavior. Many professionals have learned to think about such behavior exclusively from the perspective of behaviorist and cognitive behaviorist models. As a result, the most common strategies for dealing with avoidance behavior involve manipulation of reinforcement contingencies and use of behavioral self-management.

To highlight a contrasting perspective, the focus here is on concepts from cognitive-affective theory relevant to understanding the relationship of intrinsic motivation to school avoidance behavior. We draw primarily on the work of Deci and his colleagues because their theoretical ideas are consistent with a large body of theory and research findings, and they have made a consistent effort to apply their thinking to clinical settings and schools. The intent is not to summarize Deci's theory but only to underscore several basic concepts germane to the following presentation.

Deci's group[7-10,21] postulates three fundamental psychological needs motivating human activity -- self-determination, competence, and relatedness. These are seen as intrinsic motivating forces that lead individuals to seek out challenges. Seeking and conquering challenges are viewed as fundamental to development of the internal structures that guide subsequent action.

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[1]This material is excerpted from work by L. Taylor & H. Adelman entitled "School avoidance Behavior: Motivational Bases and Implications for Intervention" published in *Child Psychiatry and Human Development, 20,* 1990, 219-233.

Differentiating School Avoiders

To work with school avoiders from a motivational perspective, we think it essential to distinguish motivational subgroups. The motivational underpinnings for a substantial portion of school avoidance behavior can be viewed in terms of students' proactive or reactive attempts to act in ways that make them feel in control, competent, and connected with significant others. An understanding of proactive and reactive school avoidance from the perspective of such intrinsic motivational concepts has major implications for identifying subgroups and ameliorating the problem. Based on this perspective, we have come to distinguish five not mutually exclusive groups of school avoiders and have redirected intervention and research strategies. Of the five, four involve proactive and reactive motivation; the fifth reflects a variety of needs related to family dynamics and events that may or may not result in a student wanting to avoid school.

1. *Proactive attraction to alternatives to school.* There are many aspects of a student's life at home and in the community that compete with school. For instance, we find there are children who miss school primarily because they want to stay home to be with a parent, grandparent, or younger sibling or because they have become hooked on TV programs or other favorite activities. And, of course, among junior and senior high students, there often is a strong pull to hang out with peers (truants and dropouts). From an intrinsic motivational perspective, such proactive attraction can occur because a youngster finds these circumstances produce feelings of relatedness, competence, or control over one's life that are much greater than those experienced at school.

2. *Reactive avoidance of experiences at school that lead to feelings of incompetence or lack of relatedness (including lack of safety).* In contrast to proactive avoidance, reactive avoidance (in its many forms) is to be anticipated whenever a student expects events to be negative and to result in negative feelings. Two specific areas of concern in this respect are events that lead to feelings of incompetence or lack of relatedness (including lack of safety) in the school context. In particular, it is not surprising that students who expect to encounter significant failure/punishment in their efforts to meet others' or their own academic and social standards come to perceive school as a threatening place. Such expectations may arise not only for individuals who have actual disabilities and skill deficits, but for any student who experiences standards for learning, performance, and behavior that exceed her or his ability. These youngsters report feelings of embarrassment, of being different, of not being liked, of being left out, of being abused. Some avoid school whenever kickball is on the schedule because they know no one wants them on their team. Some refuse to attend because another student has singled them out to bully. And there are some who have moved to a new school and find they are not accepted by the peer group with whom they identify.

3. *Reactive avoidance to control by others at school.* When one feels that others are exerting inappropriate control, there may be a psychological reaction that motivates efforts to restore one's feeling of self-determination. We find a significant number of cases where school avoidance is an expression of a power struggle between teacher and student or parent and child. The more the teacher or parent tightens the limits and punishes the individual, the more the youngster seems committed to showing s/he can't be controlled. Some adopt the idea of refusing to go to school. In such cases, the more the parents threaten, take away privileges, and punish, the more the child's determination grows. The struggle often becomes a literal wrestling match to get a resistant child from the bed, into clothes, out to the car, and finally through the classroom door. Some parents and teachers end up winning a particular battle, but they usually find the struggle for control continues on many other fronts.

4. *Reactive avoidance in response to overwhelming anxiety/fear.* Although they represent a minority of the many youngsters who avoid school, for some individuals the term "phobic" is appropriate.[27,38,25] Again, in some instances, the extreme anxiety/fear may be a reaction to expectations about finding oneself in circumstances where one will feel incompetent, lacking control, or loss (separation) or lack of relatedness to significant others. In true phobias, however, even the student's assessment of objective reality does not match his or her high degree of anxiety and fear. Such students report pervasive symptoms (e.g., sleeping problems, anxiety produced vomiting, uncontrollable crying). In addition, not uncommonly they have parents who themselves report having strong fears and phobic behaviors. Even with extensive accommodations by teachers and parents, the fears of these students often continue to interfere with attending school, thus requiring major therapeutic intervention.

5. *Needs related to family members and events.* Parents have a number of reasons for keeping their youngsters home from school. For instance, we find students who are frequently absent because they have to babysit with younger siblings or be with ailing or lonely parents or grandparents. Crises in the home, such as death, divorce, or serious illness, can cause parents to keep their children close at hand for comfort and support. Under such circumstances, some youngsters are attracted to the opportunity to stay home to meet a parent's special needs or become frightened that something bad will happen to a family member when they are at school. Moreover, when life at home is in turmoil, students may feel they cannot bear the added pressure of going to school. Thus, crises at home, and a variety of other underlying family dynamics, can produce emotions in a youngster that lead to motivation for avoiding school.

Unfortunately, whatever the initial cause of nonattendance, the absences become a problem unto themselves. Of specific consequence is the fact that students quickly fall behind in their school work; grades plummet; there is a mounting sense of hopelessness and increased avoidance. Among adolescents, increasing avoidance can transition rapidly into dropping out of school.

As a note of caution, we want to stress that not all school avoidance stems from psychoeducational causes. For example, in one school avoidance case, the student complained of stomach pain. The parents, counselor, school nurse, school psychologist, and the student herself assumed this simply was a physical symptom of anxiety related to pressure at school. A thorough physical examination, however, indicated the pain was a pre-ulcer symptom. Medication controlled the symptom, and regular school attendance resumed.

Reactive and Proactive Avoidance

Research emphasizes that individuals are especially vulnerable to events that exert pressure and control or that lead to repeated failure (or negative feedback) and unpredictable or uncontrollable outcomes. For instance, circumstances perceived by individuals as controlling or pressuring them to act in particular ways can threaten self-determination. Obvious examples of circumstances that can produce such a threat are demands for conformity that are enforced with punishment for noncompliance. Less obvious examples involve situations where overreliance on surveillance and material and social rewards to control behavior result in youngsters perceiving the circumstances as efforts to exert control over them. Several reviews of research findings stress conditions under which use of surveillance, deadlines, and other measures that exert pressure and control on an individual result in undermining self-determination and lead to psychological reactance[5,10,21]

Consistent with contemporary motivational theory, then, we suggest that a substantial portion of misbehavior associated with school, including school avoidance behavior, can be understood in terms of students' attempts to act in ways that make them feel in control, competent, and connected with significant others. Some misbehavior reflects proactive efforts to do things that will lead to such feelings; other behavior reflects reactive efforts to deal with threats that interfere with such feelings. For example, students often are compelled into situations in which they feel they cannot cope effectively and, under such circumstances, may react by avoiding or protesting what is happening. Over a period of time, reactive behavior initially designed to defend against aversive situations can become established patterns of coping[1,2]

In general, the same action -- in this case school avoidance -- may reflect proactive or reactive motivation and stem from a desire to feel self-determining (in control), competent, or related to others. The action may be overt, such as a direct refusal to attend, or covert, such as passive withdrawal and feigned illness.

The importance of distinguishing the underlying motivation for school avoidance behavior can be illustrated by thinking about three students who are school refusers. All three have just entered first grade. Although others think Joan is afraid to attend school, in fact her avoidance is motivated by a desire to stay at home to be with her mother and watch her favorite TV shows. That is, she is proactively seeking to maintain her sense of relatedness with home and family. In contrast, Jeff refuses to attend as a direct protest against school rules and demands because he experiences them as a threat to his sense of self-determination; his avoidance is reactive. Joe's avoidance also is reactive; he lacks the skills to do many of the assigned tasks and becomes so anxious over this threat to his competence that he frequently runs out of the classroom.

Implications for Intervention

Our work with school avoidance cases has involved four facets: (1) assessment, (2) consultation with parents, (3) consultation with teachers, and (4) counseling/ psychotherapy with students and their families. Understanding school avoidance from the perspective of the type of motivational ideas discussed above has profoundly influenced the way we approach each of these tasks. The following examples are illustrative.

Assessment questions. With intrinsic motivation in mind, our assessment activity now includes an emphasis on finding answers to the following basic questions:

- Is the school avoidance reactive or proactive?
- If the avoidance is reactive, is it a reaction to threats to self-determination, competence, or relatedness?
- If it is proactive, are there other interests that might successfully compete with the satisfaction derived from the deviant behavior?

To answer these questions, the perspectives of teachers, parents, and the youngster are elicited. Because of attributional biases, one can expect the various interested parties to offer different perceptions. That is, the observers, parents and teachers, are likely to attribute the cause of the behavior to some fairly stable predisposition within the child (e.g., fear, willfulness). In contrast, the youngster, as actor, is likely to see the behavior as a response to situational factors.

Rather than viewing such differences as confounding the assessment, we see the data as helping us identify the student's underlying motivation, as well as finding out how others interpret that motivation. Both matters are seen as critical in planning corrective strategies aimed at affecting the student's intrinsic motivation for attending school. That is, differing perceptions must be addressed because disparate analyses of what's wrong often lead to conflicting conclusions about what should be done, and such disagreements can be counterproductive to resolving the problem.

Corrective Interventions. In general, motivationally-oriented analyses of school avoidance allow interveners to offer parents, teachers, and the student an intervention responsive to the motivational underpinnings of school avoidance behavior. For instance, based on motivational data, we help parents and teachers facilitate environment and program changes that account for a youngster's need to feel self-determining, competent, and related. Such changes may include (a) identifying activity options to attract a proactive school avoider, (b) eliminating situations leading to reactive avoidance, and (c) establishing alternative ways for a student to cope with circumstances that cannot be changed. In counseling students, first we focus on the individual's underlying motivation for avoidance (e.g., factors instigating, energizing, directing, and maintaining the motivation), explore motivation for change, clarify available alternatives with the student and significant others, and then facilitate action. It should be stressed that a motivational orientation does not supplant a focus on skill development and remediation. Rather, it places skill instruction in a motivational context and highlights the importance of systematically addressing motivational considerations in order to maximize skill development[2,10]

More specifically, the intervention focus for students behaving reactively includes reducing reactance and enhancing positive motivation for attending school. That is, we see the fundamental enabling (process) objectives as (1) minimizing external demands for performing and conforming (e.g., eliminating threats) and (2) exploring with the student ways to add activities that would be nonthreatening and interesting (e.g., establishing a program the majority of which emphasizes intrinsically motivating activities). For example, if Joe is concerned about an inability to handle assignments, steps are taken to match assignments to his current capabilities and provide help that minimizes failure and remedies deficits handicapping progress. If the problem stems from lack of interest in the current school program, the focus is on increasing the attractiveness of school by finding or creating new activities and special roles. If the avoidance truly is a phobic reaction, ongoing family counseling is indicated, as is extensive school consultation in pursuit of the type of expanded accommodation and support the student needs.

For youngsters whose avoidance is *proactively* motivated, staying home to watch TV or to hang out with friends, running around with gangs, and participating in the drug culture can be much more interesting and exciting than usual school offerings. This probably accounts for why proactive school avoidance can be so difficult to counter. Fundamentally, the objectives in trying to counter proactively motivated avoidance involve exploring and agreeing upon a program of *intrinsically* motivating activity to replace the student's current school program. The new program must be able to produce greater feelings of self-determination, competence, and relatedness than the activity that has pulled the youngster away from school. To these ends, alternatives must be nonthreatening and interesting and often will have to differ markedly from those commonly offered. For instance, we find such students most responsive to changes in program content that emphasize their contemporary culture (e.g., sports, rock music, movies and TV shows, computer games, auto mechanics, local events), processes that deemphasize formal schooling (e.g., peer tutoring, use of nonstandard materials), and opportunities to assume special, positive role status (e.g., as a student official, office monitor, paid cafeteria worker). Such personalized options and opportunities usually are essential starting points in overcoming proactive avoidance.

Starting or returning: the crucial transition phase. As avoiders are mobilized to start or return to school, it is critical to ensure the entry transition phase is positive. For instance, it is sometimes necessary to plan on only a partial school day schedule. This occurs when it is concluded that full day attendance would be counterproductive to enhancing intrinsic motivation for school. We recognize the practical, economic, and legal problems involved in cutting back on the length of a student's school day. However, these problems should be considered in the context of the costs to society and individuals of ignoring the fact that forcing certain students to be at school all day interferes with correcting their problems. It seems better to have a student's time at school temporarily reduced for positive reasons rather than because of proactive or reactive avoidance. For older students, of course, a shortened day paired with a parttime job or apprenticeship already is an accepted and often productive strategy.

It also is critical not to undermine a new or returning student's emerging hope about feeling accepted, in control, and competent at school. Such students tend to be skeptical and fearful about whether they will fit in and be accepted. Often their worst fears come true. Two system characteristics we commonly find working against successful entry for school avoiders are (1) lack of a receptive atmosphere and (2) lack of special accommodation.

It seems obvious that school avoiders need to feel welcomed when enrolling in or returning to school. Yet, students and parents often report negative encounters in dealing with attendance office procedures, personnel who are unaware of the problem and special entry plans, and students and staff who appear hostile to the plans that have been made. To counter such negative experiences, a key strategy has been to arrange for one or more on-site advocates who increase the likelihood of a welcoming atmosphere by greeting the student and guiding her or him through the transition phase. One such advocate needs to be a professional on the school staff who will provide procedural help (with attendance and new schedules) and who can sensitize key personnel and students to the importance of a positive reception. A student advocate or peer counselor also is desirable if an appropriate one can be found.

It also must be recognized that many proactive and reactive avoiders, upon first entering or returning to school, do not readily fit in. This is especially true of those whose pattern of deviant and devious behavior contributed to school avoidance in the first place. For such students, teachers must not only be willing to offer attractive and nonthreatening program alternatives, they must be willing temporarily to structure wider limits than most students typically are allowed. That is, some rules and standards must be redefined so that certain deviant behaviors are tolerated and not defined as misbehavior. In particular, for a while at least, it probably will be necessary to increase one's tolerance with respect to "bad manners" (e.g., some rudeness, some swearing), eccentric mannerisms (e.g., strange clothing and grooming), and temporary nonparticipation. Unless this is done, it is almost certain that many new and returning students will be pushed out or will drop out due to constant conflict over misconduct.

Special accommodations, however, often are not made because they are viewed as unfair to the rest of the class. Other students are held to certain standards. Therefore, teachers question why exceptions should be made for school avoiders. They worry exceptions will undermine standards and reinforce undesired behavior. They conclude there should be no exceptions.

The view that there should be no exceptions reflects only one of the several principles of fairness that are applied in society, namely, the principle that everyone should be treated the same. In dealing with individuals with special problems, however, our society promotes the fairness principle that encourages special treatment when there is exceptional need. Indeed, this is the foundation upon which all mental health and special education programs are built. Thus, to encourage acceptance of extraordinary accommodations, school personnel must be helped to appreciate the appropriateness and importance of such temporary measures, and in turn, they must help students and parents understand. When adequate explanations are given to all concerned, we find that most do accept the need for unusual actions in helping some students adjust to school.

Concluding Comments

The paradox in intervening with school avoiders is that they are unlikely to approach the process positively or even neutrally (e.g., individuals who avoid going to school are unlikely to be motivated to discuss the matter). Thus, in order to work with the student on the problem of school avoidance, first the intervener must be able to enhance the youngster's motivational readiness for such work. Then, the process must maintain and even further enhance that motivation. In terms of the motivational concepts discussed above, this means striving to stimulate in the youngster feelings of self-determination, competence, and interpersonal relatedness. Furthermore, the process should focus on intrinsic motivation as an outcome objective. That is, it should nurture the type of ongoing intrinsic motivation that results in the youngster developing and maintaining school approach behavior, even after the special intervention terminates.

Similarly, because students who avoid school tend to have extremely negative perceptions of teachers and school tasks, they are unlikely to respond to program changes that look like "the same old thing." Exceptional efforts must be made so that these students will come to view the teacher as supportive (rather than hostile and controlling or indifferent) and perceive content, outcome, and activity options as personally valuable and obtainable. To these ends, schools must be prepared to implement entry transition strategies, a variety of learning options, and a structure that facilitates the student's exploration and decision making with respect to which options to pursue. The structure also must provide ongoing support, guidance, and information about progress in response to student requests and allow for student-initiated changes in program plans. We have touched on these matters above and have discussed them at length elsewhere[1,2] therefore, we will simply summarize a few points here to underscore fundamental concerns.

- *Options.* Provision of a range of potentially valued and feasible options for the student to choose from allows the intervener to identify activities that are a good match with the student's intrinsic motivation. (By definition, a good match means the activities are not threatening.) In extreme cases, it may be necessary to deemphasize temporarily the standard curriculum and pursue only activities to which the student makes a personal commitment. Also, in extreme cases, it may be necessary to accommodate, again temporarily, a wider range of deviant behavior from a particular student than usually is tolerated (e.g., limits set by existing standards and rules may have to be widened).

- *Student decision making.* From a motivational perspective, one of the most basic concerns in dealing with school avoidance is student involvement in decision making about daily school activities and consequences for misbehavior. For one thing, people who are not included in decision making often have little commitment to what is decided. And, people who perceive themselves as being coerced to do something they don't want to do often react by avoiding in an effort to regain their sense of self-determination. Thus, decision-making processes that maximize student perceptions of having made a desirable choice are essential to interventions addressing the motivational underpinnings for school avoidance.

- *Continuous information on functioning.* Great care must be taken to guard against the potential negative impact of overemphasizing surveillance and overrelying on extrinsics in countering avoidance and in providing feedback on progress.[7,8,10] Information given must highlight success not only in terms of attending school but with respect to the student's effectiveness in making good decisions and on the relationship of outcomes to the student's intrinsic reasons for attending. Feedback, of course, also must clarify directions for future progress. Handled well, the information should contribute to, rather than undermine, the student's feelings of competence, self-determination, and relatedness.

From a preventive perspective, understanding the underlying motivation for school avoidance suggests the need for general social and school program changes. In motivational terms, the aims of such changes are to (a) prevent and overcome negative attitudes toward school and learning, (b) enhance motivational readiness for learning and overcoming problems that arise, and (c) expand and maintain intrinsic motivation for learning and problem solving processes.

Our preliminary work suggests that contemporary thinking about motivation (especially intrinsic motivation) offers important implications for the prevention and correction of school avoidance. Certainly, the intrinsic motivational bases for school avoidance behavior and its amelioration deserve expanded discussion and research.

Needed: Systemic Change

We acknowledge that the types of intervention we have outlined throughout this presentation require significant system changes in thinking and practice related to schooling. Organizational change does not come easy. It is hard and often disappointing work. Progress can be slow and frustrating to achieve. Nevertheless, it is clear from the literature on organizational change in schools that significant change is feasible. Our efforts are guided by ideas from that body of literature.[3] Thus, from the onset, we design transactions to establish a collaborative, problem solving partnership based on a shared appreciation for the problem of school avoidance behavior and its correction. As Gallaher[13] states, there is "a large body of research to support the basic assumptions underlying the pragmatic model, that is that people will more readily accept innovations that they can understand and perceive as relevant, and secondly, that they have had a hand in planning" (pp. 41-42). Moreover, as in intervening with youngsters, we find it essential to account for both the intrinsic motivational and developmental readiness of the administrators and teachers (and parents) with whom we work. This involves approaching each situation and concerned party in a personalized manner that matches key differences related to personal and socioeconomic-political considerations. And, of course, we play a role in establishing mechanisms to provide training and ongoing support. We find such actions to be minimally necessary in diffusing new ideas, and we readily acknowledge that they are often insufficient to the task. We all know too well, facilitating change at any level is a demanding business.

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Coda

From:

Dropping out: How much do schools contribute to the problem? by Gary Wehlage and Robert Rutter. *Teachers College Record, 87,* 374-392.

While most of the literature on dropouts is directed only at the deficiencies found in the marginal student, we see those same characteristics as a reflection on the institution. More precisely, we consider the possibility that certain student characteristics in combination with certain school conditions are responsible for students' decisions to leave school early. We do not want to minimize the fact that students differ markedly on a range of personal and social characteristics; how could it be otherwise? However, schools are obliged to accept these differences as a fact of life and respond in a constructive manner. We believe this stance, along with our findings, provides grounds for recommending general policy and practice reforms that would make school more responsive not only to those who drop out, but also to a large body of students who now stay in school reluctantly.

Our reform recommendations stem from several specific findings. Three of these are the perceived lack of teacher interest in students, the perception that the discipline system is ineffective and unfair, and the presence of widespread truancy. These findings form a pattern that we believe cannot be easily dismissed because they reflect a fundamental problem with the perceived legitimacy of the institution. We see them as the tip of the iceberg, indicating institutional problems that go much deeper than dropouts. The findings have implications for the degree of engagement by even those who stay to graduation.

In addition to revealing problems in the area of discipline, there is also the more general finding regarding expected school attainment for a large number of youth. Some may dismiss this finding as the product of unrealistic expectations by naive students, and there may be an element of truth in this view. On the other hand, it also suggests that schools in performing their sorting function for society may be unnecessarily harsh and discouraging to many adolescents. The sorting and selecting function does not require schools to be negative and alienating. Moreover, after the selection of those who will go to prestigious colleges is completed, there is a range of possibilities for additional education to which many youth could aspire. Selecting the college-bound elite is one task schools should be engaged in; the remaining body of students should receive the kind of attention that will allow them to pursue all the schooling they can profitably use.

Three general reforms of policy and practice are necessary if schools are to respond to these problems and perform the social mandate with which they are entrusted: (1) an enhanced sense of professional accountability among educators toward all students; (2) a renewed effort to establish legitimate authority within the institution; (3) a redefinition of school work for students and teachers that will allow a greater number of students to achieve success and satisfaction and to continue their schooling.

The enhanced sense of professional accountability speaks to the problem of providing equity in public schooling. This does not mean that all students will receive the same curriculum or achieve at the same level, but it does imply that all youth must be given an opportunity to receive some reasonably attractive benefits from a publicly financed school system. Educators must be responsible for those students who are not ideal academic performers as well as for those who are talented. There is evidence now that many students do not believe teachers are very interested in them. To the extent that those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds perceive a less than firm commitment by the institution to educate them, their school effort is not likely to be sincere. Professional accountability to those who are least

advantaged is the only responsible stance educators can take. The profession must work to establish a variety of mechanisms to ensure that such students receive all the personal and social benefits possible. Professional accountability must begin with a general belief on the part of educators that such a commitment is important and a social responsibility. In addition, specific institutional mechanisms must be developed to define this accountability and make it a matter of both policy and practice.

One implication of our study is that schools are in serious trouble with respect to the maintenance of authority when many students are skeptical of the discipline system. One can view the problem of legitimate authority as an extension of accountability. It may be that the impersonal bureaucratic structure of large high schools has created a sense of alienation among students, who feel that the adults do not care for them and that they are likely to be treated in an unfair or arbitrary manner. The comprehensive high school of today may create adult/student relationships that result in skepticism and cynicism in both parties. More personal and authentic relationships are probably necessary to reestablish widespread belief in the legitimacy of the institution.

Some reforms in the discipline system are necessary if schools are to avoid creating a sizable group of deviants who can see no alternative to resisting the school's authority if they are to retain their own dignity. At minimum schools must find ways of preventing the widespread truancy that has become a norm in many schools. The very students most at risk must not be allowed to undermine their own chances of success through either misguided permissivism or outright neglect on the part of educators. If the marginal academic student is to benefit from formal schooling, he or she must be in class. Part of the route to professional accountability is through the establishment of legitimate authority in the educational process for those who are to benefit from educators' efforts. The evidence from case studies of effective alternative programs for marginal students indicates that such students respond positively to an environment that combines a caring relationship and personalized teaching with a high degree of program structure characterized by clear, demanding, but attainable expectations.

Finally, a redefinition of school work is needed to be responsible to the broad range of youth the school is mandated to serve. A central problem with schools today is that success is narrowly defined and restricted to the few at the top of their class ranking who are destined for college. Such a restricted notion of competence and success for youth is indefensible in terms of both the individuals involved and society as a whole. While proficiency in traditional academic subjects is important and serves to stimulate some youth, there are many more who should be encouraged to develop proficiency in other domains. Unfortunately, vocational education, the most obvious alternative, is currently in a dismal state in many schools. Moreover, where there are strong vocational programs, they often exclude those students most in need of an alternative that provides success and positive roles.

Schools do not have available to them a variety of exemplars using nontraditional conceptions of curriculum and learning. Some of these have been dramatically successful with a range of students. One specific example is *Foxfire* magazine, published by high school students. In addition, we have examples of schools focused on the performing arts, health care and medicine, and human services. There are excellent programs that have youth developing and managing small businesses. There are also exemplary vocational programs that involve youth in the building trades or other skilled fields where the curriculum is based on an "experiential" conception of learning. Such diverse opportunities for success and development can change the view that many youth now have that "school is not for me."

We hope you found this to be a useful resource. There's more where this came from!

This packet has been specially prepared by our Clearinghouse. Other Introductory Packets and materials are available. Resources in the Clearinghouse are organized around the following categories.

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Systemic Concerns

- Policy issues related to mental health in schools
- Mechanisms and procedures for program/service coordination
  - Collaborative Teams
  - School-community service linkages
  - Cross disciplinary training and interprofessional education
- Comprehensive, integrated programmatic approaches (as contrasted with fragmented, categorical, specialist oriented services)
- Issues related to working in rural, urban, and suburban areas
- Restructuring school support service
  - Systemic change strategies
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  - Staffing patterns
  - Financing
  - Evaluation, Quality Assurance
  - Legal Issues
- Professional standards
- Other System Topics: _____

Programs and Process Concerns:

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  - Support for transitions
  - Mental health education to enhance healthy development & prevent problems
  - Parent/home involvement
  - Enhancing classrooms to reduce referrals (including prereferral interventions)
  - Use of volunteers/trainees
  - Outreach to community
  - Crisis response
  - Crisis and violence prevention (including safe schools)
- Staff capacity building & support
  - Cultural competence
  - Minimizing burnout
- Interventions for student and family assistance
  - Screening/Assessment
  - Enhancing triage & ref. processes
  - Least Intervention Needed
  - Short-term student counseling
  - Family counseling and support
  - Case monitoring/management
  - Confidentiality
  - Record keeping and reporting
  - School-based Clinics
- Other program and process concerns: _____

Psychosocial Problems

- Drug/alcoh. abuse
- Depression/suicide
- Grief
- Dropout prevention
- Learning Problems
- Pregnancy prevention/support
- Eating problems (anorexia, bulim.)
- Physical/Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Gangs
- Self-esteem
- Relationship problems
- Anxiety
- Disabilities
- Gender and sexuality
- Reactions to chronic illness
- School Adjustment (including newcomer acculturation)
- Other Psychosocial problems: _____

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