

PROGRAM STRATEGIES FOR DROPOUT PREVENTION

- **Accountability Block Grants**

The Accountability Block Grant (ABG) provides Pennsylvania school districts with financial assistance to implement effective educational practices and initiatives to improve student achievement.

www.pde.state.pa.us/abg

- **After-School Programs**

After-School programming such as 21st Century Community Learning Centers builds student resiliency and increases student academic performance, which often results in improved school attendance. After-school programs are critical to children and families today, and unfortunately the need is not being adequately addressed. In communities today, 14.3 million children take care of themselves after the school day ends, including almost four million middle school students in grades six to eight. Just 6.5 million children are in afterschool programs - but the parents of another 15.3 million children say their children would participate in afterschool - if a program were available.

www.afterschoolalliance.org

- **Alternative Education**

Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth Programs, funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, are designed to provide intense, individualized instruction and behavior counseling to students who are "disruptive" in the regular classroom. The program can include many program interventions - such as counseling - to help pinpoint the cause of behavior issues, such as truancy, and provide supports or assistance to the students and their families. Alternative education programs provide an individualized academic program for each student. Much of the curriculum is self-paced and students can learn at their own ability rate and method. They are more rapidly engaged because teachers make accommodations with multiple teaching styles that may include experiential learning and community service.

http://www.pde.state.pa.us/alt_disruptive/site/default.asp

- **Bullying Prevention**

Bullying or victimization can be generally defined in the following way: A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. Bullying is characterized by the following three criteria: (a) it is aggressive behavior or intentional "harmdoing;" (b) it is carried out repeatedly and over time; and (c) it occurs within an interpersonal relationship characterized by an imbalance of power. In the context of school bullying, the victim is usually a single student, who is generally harassed by a group of two or three students, often with a "negative leader." A considerable proportion of the victims, 20-40 percent, report, however, that they are mainly bullied by a single student. The negative effects of bullying, such as students feeling unsafe and unwelcome in the school environment, can result in both truancy and dropout.

www.center-school.org/bullyingprevention

- **Career Development/Exploration**

Students at the middle or high school level explore career options in various career fields, examine requirements for a variety of careers, demonstrate knowledge of careers, examine the relationship of educational achievement to career opportunities, identify personal strengths and weaknesses, investigate a variety of careers, analyze findings in terms of interest and abilities, and develop a preliminary individual graduation plan.

- **Club Ophelia**

Club Ophelia is an afterschool program that takes place once a week for 90 minutes over a twelve week time period. Two adult directors with counseling backgrounds, a community volunteer, 5-6 high school junior mentors, and 30 middle school girls participate in an arts based curriculum designed to overcome relational aggression.

*1) The first step is to **EDUCATE** about relational aggression using stories that illustrate female bullying. Girls then share bullying situations from their own lives, and create role plays that act out the hurtful behaviors they have seen or been involved in.*

*2) The next step is having girls **RELATE** the information on relational aggression to their own lives, by examining the relationships the girls have or want to develop, looking at what makes someone a friend, and discussing what qualities each girl brings into her relationships with peers. Each group of girls is asked to “replay” their original situations using two alternative endings that show a positive outcome.*

*3) The final step is to ask the girls to **INTEGRATE** what they have learned into their lives, and to think about how they could help another girl who is a victim or a bully.*

www.clubophelia.com

- **Cyber-schools**

Dedicated parents in Pennsylvania are giving their children the academic advantage they need to succeed by enrolling them in the Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School. The goal is to provide students with an excellent education that will help them achieve their full academic and social potential. Working with their children at home, families enrolled in this virtual public charter school get:

- Complete curriculum from K12 Inc.
- Textbooks and materials
- Education tools
- Online School
- Guidance from a certified teacher
- Loaner computer ... all at **no cost** to the family.

www.pavcs.org

- **21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC)**

The 21st CCLC Program provides an opportunity for students and their families to continue to learn new skills and discover new abilities after the school day has ended. The focus of this program, re-authorized under Title IV, Part B, of the No Child Left Behind Act, is to provide expanded academic enrichment opportunities for children attending low performing schools. Tutorial services and academic enrichment activities are designed to help students meet local and state academic standards in subjects such as reading and math. In addition 21st CCLC

programs provide youth development activities, drug and violence prevention programs, technology education programs, art, music and recreation programs, counseling and character education to enhance the academic component of the program.

www.ed.gov/programs/21stccle

- **Educational Assistance Program Tutoring**

EAP Tutoring provides extended learning opportunities and is designed to boost student achievement and help all students succeed.

www.pde.state.pa.us/tutoring

- **Education Mentoring**

Education Mentoring grants, through the Pennsylvania Department of Education, enable community-based organizations to link students with caring, responsible mentors to improve students' academic performance and increase their school attendance.

www.pde.state.pa.us/mentoring and www.center-school.org/mentoring

- **ELECT/Student Works**

ELECT - Education Leading to Employment and Career Training

In 1990, a unique partnership was established between the Pennsylvania Departments of Public Welfare and Education which resulted in the creation of the ELECT Initiative. This initiative was designed to expand the services of existing teen parent programs and provide comprehensive support services to students who meet the income eligibility requirements. The programs are voluntary and the duration of program enrollment extends to graduation or age 22.

ELECT Family Works (FW)

The Family Works program serves any custodial/non-custodial pregnant or parenting teen, under the age of 22, enrolled in school or a GED program, with a personal income that is less than 235% of the Federal Poverty Income Level.

EFI - ELECT Fatherhood Initiative

In response to the challenge of promoting responsible fatherhood, the Elect program was expanded to make custodial and noncustodial young fathers eligible for services. Efforts were focused on helping fathers complete their education, establish or reestablish positive relationships with their children, improve their parenting skills and become job ready. This program is a mirror of the ELECT program but has additional required services that are malefocused.

ELECT Student Works (ESW)

In January of 2002, with additional federal funds from DPW, four pilot sites began implementing ELECT Student Works (ESW). The primary purpose of ESW is to assist Local Education Agencies (LEA) in developing prevention focused comprehensive after school activities for at-risk youth in grades four through eight.

www.center-school.org/ppt-elect

- **Homeless Children and Youth**

Homeless Children and Youth programs keep homeless students in their schools of origin when possible and coordinate educational services to increase academic performance and school attendance.

www.ed.gov/programs/homeless or www.pde.state.pa.us/homeless
or www.nationalhomeless.org

- **Learn and Serve America**

Service-learning offers a unique opportunity for young people to get involved in a tangible way by integrating community service projects with classroom learning. Service-learning engages students in the educational process, using what they learn in the classroom to solve real-life problems. Students not only learn about democracy and citizenship, they become actively contributing citizens and community members through the service they perform. Learn and Serve America supports and encourages service-learning throughout the United States, and enables over one million students to make meaningful contributions to their community while building their academic and civic skills. By engaging our nation's young people in service-learning, Learn and Serve America instills an ethic of lifelong community service.

www.learnandserve.org

- **Mentoring**

According to MENTOR/The National Mentoring Partnership, responsible mentoring:

- *Is a structured, one-to-one relationship or partnership that focuses on the needs of the mentored participant.*
- *Fosters caring and supportive relationships.*
- *Encourages individuals to develop to their fullest potential.*
- *Helps an individual to develop his or her own vision for the future.*
- *Is a strategy to develop active community partnerships.*

www.mentoring.org or www.nwrel.org/mentoring

- **Migrant Education**

The division of Migrant Education assists local school districts in improving and coordinating the educational community for the children of the nation's farm workers who have had their schooling interrupted. The emphasis of the federal legislation is helping migratory children to meet the same high standards expected of all children by coordinating and supporting services that help their progress in school. Funding provides after school and summer academic and other skill building activities, which can prevent truancy and school dropout.

www.ed.gov/programs/mep or www.migrated.state.pa.us or www.center-school.org/mep

- **Parent/Family Involvement**

Schools should make every effort to engage and involve the parents/families or guardians of their students in all aspects of their education. Support and encouragement from family members can make the difference in assuring that a student experiences success in his/her educational pursuits. Early and consistent contact with parents when problems arise, or when they remain unresolved, will assist the school in identifying and addressing any underlying issues.

www.ncpie.org or www.nea.org/parents or www.pta.org

- **Peer Mediation/Conflict Resolution**

Peer mediation is both a program and a process where students of the same age-group facilitate resolving disputes between two people or small groups. This process has proven effective in schools around the United States, changing the way students understand and resolve conflict in their lives. Changes include improved self-esteem, listening and critical thinking skills, and school climate for learning, as well as reduced disciplinary actions and less fights. These skills are transferable outside of the classroom. The field of conflict resolution includes efforts in schools and communities to reduce violence and bullying and help young people develop communication and problem-solving skills.

<http://v4.crinfo.org/> or www.acrnet.org

- **Pregnant/Parenting Teens/Transition**

The Pregnant and Parenting Teens Program (PPT) is a school-based initiative of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. This program was first introduced in 1985 to keep students in school, support their attainment of a high school diploma and encourage their self-sufficiency as parents and productive members of their communities. In this effort to improve outcomes for teen parents and their children, programs are required to provide specific core education and support service components.

www.center-school.org/ppt-elect

- **Project 720 (High School Reform)**

The goal of Project 720, Pennsylvania's high school reform initiative, is to create personalized, student-centered, high school environments and provide challenging college and career preparation core curriculum.

www.project720.org

- **Re-entry Programs**

A re-entry program can serve a young person who has dropped out and wants to return to school, or students who have been removed the traditional educational setting for a period of time. Successful program examples include the following:

- *Everett PA: evening instructional program from 4:30-7:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday for former students (out of school youth and young adults) to support their individualized graduation plans.*
- *Washington PA: Washington High School Academically Customized*

Education (ACE) program. ACE provides development of an academically customized plan for each participating student following a detailed review of the student's transcript. This program is the foundation for expansion of offerings for non-traditional learners, including students returning from adjudicated placements and/or residential treatment centers.

For additional information, contact Lynda Long, Dropout Prevention Coordinator, Center for Schools and Communities, 717-763-1661 or llong@csc.csiu.org

- **Refugee Education Program**

The Pennsylvania Department of Education provides funding to school districts that have felt the impact of refugee students in their schools and communities in order to:

- 1) Enhance refugee children's educational achievement and offset the financial impact of these students on local schools;*
- 2) Build the capacity of districts to respond to the needs of refugee students and families and the community-at-large;*
- 3) Foster the development of partnerships among schools, voluntary resettlement agencies and community support/social services;*
- 4) Expand cooperation and coordination efforts among state, local and federal programs designed to meet the needs of the refugee population; and*
- 5) Facilitate students' and families' integration into the community and their access to services and resources.*

www.pde.state.pa.us/rscsia

- **Safe Schools Initiatives**

Well functioning schools foster learning, safety, and socially appropriate behaviors. They have a strong academic focus and support students in achieving high standards, foster positive relationships between school staff and students, and promote meaningful parental and community involvement. Most prevention programs in effective schools address multiple factors and recognize that safety and order are related to children's social, emotional, and academic development.

Effective prevention, intervention, and crisis response strategies operate best in school communities that:

- ❖ *Focus on academic achievement.*
- ❖ *Involve families in meaningful ways.*
- ❖ *Develop links to the community.*
- ❖ *Emphasize positive relationships among students and staff.*
- ❖ *Discuss safety issues openly.*
- ❖ *Treat students with equal respect.*
- ❖ *Create ways for students to share their concerns.*
- ❖ *Help children feel safe expressing their feelings.*
- ❖ *Have in place a system for referring children who are suspected of being abused or neglected.*
- ❖ *Offer extended day programs for children.*
- ❖ *Promote good citizenship and character.*
- ❖ *Identify problems and assess progress toward solutions.*
- ❖ *Support students in making the transition to adult life and the workplace.*

www.safeschools.org or www.safeschools.info

- **SPIRIT Program**

The United States Department of Justice, Community Relations Service, developed the SPIRIT program in the mid-1980s, to assist school administrators in gaining insight into student perceptions of racial problems. SPIRIT stands for: Student Problem Identification and Resolution of Issues Together. The program was designed for use in middle and high schools to address areas of conflict/tension. CRS applies the principles of mediation, problem solving, and full engagement of the school community, to help improve the racial climate of the schools. SPIRIT brings students, administrators, teachers and parents together to identify issues, develop solutions, and take action on conflicts within their schools. SPIRIT is available to schools experiencing racial or intergroup tension free of charge.

www.usdoj.gov/crs/pubs/pubspiratlbroadchureapproved2003.htm

- **Successful Students' Partnership**

Successful Students' Partnership grants, through the Pennsylvania Department of Education, provide direct funding to schools for implementation of long-range, comprehensive dropout prevention strategies that address underlying issues leading to students' academic failure and withdrawal from school.

www.pde.state.pa.us/dropoutprevention and www.center-school.org/ssp

- **Title I (federally funded supplemental education program)**

Title I funding provides financial assistance to local educational agencies to improve educational opportunities for educationally deprived children.

- **Truancy Prevention**

The impact of truancy, locally and nationwide, is a topic of great interest to educators and youth-serving organizations. Facilitating and encouraging regular school attendance, and subsequent student achievement, may be viewed by some as the sole responsibility of the school system. The truth is that promoting the value, and necessity, of education for our youth is important for all of us. The most effective strategy for reducing truancy is possible when parents, schools, public agencies, the legal system, non-profit organizations, businesses and all members of the greater community understand the ramifications of truancy and strive together to make school a place in which all students desire to fully participate. In order to have a positive impact for truant students and their parents, this issue requires true cross-system integration of services among multiple agencies on a statewide and national level.

<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/truancy/index.html>

- **Tutoring (general)**

A tutor is a private instructor to teach a specific educational subject or skill to an individual student. Such one-on-one attention allows the tutor to improve the student's knowledge or skills far more rapidly than a classroom setting. Tutors are often privately hired and paid by the student or the student's family. Many are used for remedial students or others needing special attention; many provide more advanced material for exceptionally capable and highly motivated students.

Peer tutoring occurs when tutor and tutee are the same age. In cross-age tutoring, the tutor is older than the tutee. However, sometimes the term peer tutoring is used to include both types.

www.ntatutor.org or www.answers.com/topic/tutoring

- **Youth Development/Youth Leadership**

Youth development, an asset-building approach, has the following elements:

- *Focusing on the positive*
- *Taking personal responsibility for making a difference*
- *Proactive*
- *Mobilizing the public as well as all youth-serving organizations in a community*
- *Viewing youth as resources*
- *A vision-building perspective*
- *Cooperation within the community*
- *Unleashing the caring potential of all the residents and organizations so that public resources can be focused on areas of greatest needs*
- *Hope that change is possible*

According to the National Youth Leadership Council, to support positive youth development, programs must focus on increasing the capacity of schools and communities to engage young people in active learning and service.

www.nylc.org or www.youthbuild.org or www.nydic.org

- **Youth in Transition**

The purpose of Pennsylvania's Youth in Transition initiative is to establish community partnerships to target dropouts and students "aging out" of foster care to provide these youth with educational options such as postsecondary education and training, connections to employers and work, mentoring and financial literacy education.