

# 15 Effective Strategies for Dropout Prevention

A must read. The strategies were developed by the National Dropout Prevention Center in association with Franklin P. Schargel. Call Franklin for more info.

Students report a variety of reasons for dropping out of school; therefore the solutions are multidimensional. The National Dropout Prevention Center has identified 15 Effective Strategies that have the most positive impact on the high school graduation rate. Since 1986, the National Dropout Prevention Center based at Clemson University has conducted and analyzed research, sponsored extensive workshops, and collaborated with a variety of practitioners to further the mission of reducing America's dropout rate by meeting the needs of youth in at-risk situations.

These strategies, although appearing to be independent, frequently overlap and are synergistic. They can be implemented as stand-alone programs (i.e. mentoring or family involvement projects.) When school districts develop an improvement plan that encompasses most or all of these strategies, positive outcomes result. These strategies have been successful in all school levels from K-12 and in rural, suburban, or urban centers.

## The Basic Core Strategies

- Mentoring/Tutoring
- Service Learning
- Alternative Schooling
- After School Opportunities

## Early Interventions

- Early Childhood Education
- Family Engagement
- Early Literacy Development

## Making the Most of Instruction

- Professional Development
- Active Learning
- Educational Technology
- Individualized Instruction

## Making the Most of the Wider Community

- Systemic Renewal
- School-Community Collaboration
- Career and Technical Education
- Safe Schools

## The 15 Effective Strategies Explained

### The Basic Core Strategies

- Mentoring/Tutoring

Mentoring is a one-to-one caring, supportive relationship between a mentor and a mentee that is based on trust. Tutoring, also a one-to-one activity, focuses on academics and is an effective way to address specific needs such as reading, writing, or math competencies.

- Service Learning

Service learning connects meaningful community service experiences with academic learning. This teaching/learning method promotes personal and social growth, career development, and civic responsibility and can be a powerful vehicle for effective school reform at all grade levels.

- Alternative Schooling

Alternative schooling provides potential dropouts a variety of options that can lead to graduation, with programs paying special attention to the students' individual social needs and the academic requirements for a high school diploma.

- After School Opportunities

Many schools provide after-school and summer enhancement programs that eliminate information loss and inspire interest in a variety of areas. Such experiences are especially important for students at risk of school failure.

### **Early Interventions**

- **Early Childhood Education**

Birth-to-three interventions demonstrate that providing a child educational enrichment can modify IQ. The most effective way to reduce the number of children who will ultimately drop out is to provide the best possible classroom instruction from the beginning of their school experience.

- **Family Engagement**

Research consistently finds that family involvement has a direct, positive effect on children's achievement and is the most accurate predictor of a student's success in school.

- **Early Literacy Development**

Early interventions to help low-achieving students recognize that focusing on reading and writing skills is the foundation for effective learning in all subjects.

### **Making the Most of Instruction**

No sustained and comprehensive effort to keep students in school can afford to ignore what happens in the classroom. Strategies that produce better teachers, expand teaching methods to accommodate a range of learning styles, take advantage of today's cornucopia of technological resources, and meet the individual needs of each student can yield substantial benefits.

- **Professional Development**

Teachers who work with youth at high risk of academic failure need to feel supported and need to have an avenue by which they continue to develop skills, techniques, and learn about innovative strategies.

- **Active Learning**

When educators show students that there are different ways to learn, students find new and creative ways to solve problems, achieve success, and become lifelong learners.

- **Educational Technology**

Technology offers some of the best opportunities for delivering instruction that engages students in authentic learning, addresses multiple intelligences, and adapts to student's learning styles.

- **Individualized Instruction**

A customized individual learning program for each student allows teachers flexibility with the instructional program and extracurricular activities.

### **Making the Most of the Wider Community**

Students who come to school bring traces of a wider community; when students leave school, either before or after graduation, they return to that community. It's impossible to isolate "school" within the walls of the school building. Effective efforts to keep students in school take advantage of these links with the wider community.

- **Systemic Renewal**

Systemic renewal calls for a continuing process of evaluating goals and objectives related to school policies, practices, and organizational structures as they impact a diverse group of learners.

- **School-Community Collaboration**

When all groups in a community provide collective support to the school, a strong infrastructure sustains a caring environment where youth can thrive and achieve.

- **Career and Technical Education**

A quality guidance program is essential for all students. School-to-work programs recognize that youth need specific skills to prepare them for the larger demands of today's workplace.

- Safe Schools

A comprehensive violence prevention plan, including conflict resolution, must deal with potential violence as well as crisis management. Violence prevention means providing daily experiences at all grade levels that enhance positive social attitudes and effective interpersonal skills in all students.

The strategies were developed by Dr. Jay Smink, Executive Director of the National Dropout Prevention Center at Clemson University, the associates of the Center and Mr. Franklin Schargel. They have been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Education Goals Panel as "the most effective strategies to help prevent school dropouts."•

<http://www.schargel.com/2007/12/17/15-effective-strategies-for-dropout-prevention/>