



# Missouri Association of Rural Education

*“21 years of Service to Missouri Rural Schools”*

Spring 2009

*Our goal is to work in cooperation with all other education organization, but our programs and effort will be designed to meet the specific needs of schools in rural Missouri.*

Please copy and share this newsletter with board members and other school staff.

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## **MARE Calendar** **2009-2010**

August 1, 2009  
Board Meeting  
Resort at Port Arrowhead  
Lake Ozark, MO

### **Federal Formula Skews against Rural Schools**

**By: Caitlin Howley**

*(The original publication source – The Daily Yonder – [www.dailyyonder.com](http://www.dailyyonder.com))*

President Obama used the rural school district in Dillon, South Carolina, as an example of a place that could benefit from federal stimulus. He's right, but under current guidelines, rural school districts like Dillon are at a disadvantage.

The new federal stimulus spending bill – officially, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) – provides an unprecedented, one-time infusion of education funding for states and schools.

Over \$100 billion, \$44 billion of which is now available, will be distributed by the U.S. Department of Education through a variety of existing and new programs. However, small rural districts may not benefit from this opportunity as much as their larger, urban counterparts – even if the rural districts serve needier student populations.

Here's how it works.

The largest existing federal funding mechanism for poor districts and schools through which additional ARRA monies will be distributed is Title I, Part A of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, or the Title I program. The program has been called “compensatory” because it provides funds to supplement education services to students at risk of failure because of the disadvantages associated with poverty.

The Department of Education distributes Title I funds to districts with large concentrations of impoverished students – but the method the Department uses tends to disadvantage rural districts.

The culprit is a provision in the Targeted Grant Program and the Educational Finance Incentive Grant Program that determines a district's share of Title I funds. Districts may elect to use either the percentage of students or the absolute number of students who are eligible in their application for funds. Larger, non-rural districts often choose to count the number of students they have who qualify rather than using the percentage of students who qualify. Why? Because they receive a higher score – and more money – by reporting their large numbers of eligible students.

But the system also works in the other direction, to the detriment of smaller districts that have fewer students. The way the formula works, a small school district with a high percentage of poor students earns less per student than the large school district with a smaller percentage of poor students. As a result, small rural districts receive a far smaller share of Title I funds, even if they serve larger percentages of impoverished students.

Because ARRA funds for Title I will be distributed via existing formulae, poor rural school districts will continue to receive smaller shares of the stimulus money than larger (and often richer) districts. Rural districts sometimes tax themselves at higher rates in attempts to catch up to the funding levels of wealthier localities. But many are unable to raise additional local monies due to eroded tax bases and other economic constraints. In these cases, Title I funds are vital to poor rural districts.

One of the reasons Title I is so important to small rural districts is that some federal and state dollars are allocated on a per-pupil basis. In small districts with few students, these funds may not accumulate enough to support high quality programs. For example, although many rural districts serve increasing percentages of students who are just learning English (English Language Learners, or ELL), the total numbers of ELLs may still be so small that the per-pupil allocation to support ELL programming is negligible. Schools and districts in this situation struggle to offer the additional services ELL students need to thrive academically.

There is a fix to the Title I allocation issue: Eliminate weighting by the number of eligible students and distribute funds according to the percentage of Title I eligible students. Title I funds would then go to districts with high poverty rates, regardless of their size. This fix requires a change to the federal policy, guiding the program. The upcoming reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Law is an opportunity to educate legislators about the effect of Title I weighted grants for small rural districts.

For now, rather than ameliorating funding inequities, the President's stimulus package may exacerbate disparities by relying on existing distribution methods. But when Congress takes on the nation's most important federal education policy, rural education advocates will have a chance to balance the scales so that the neediest rural districts get the support they deserve.

## Missouri Association of Rural Education

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- Secretary            Philip C. Dorth
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## MARE Board Training Schedule

Location	Date	Time(s)
<b>Princeton R-V</b> 1008 E. Coleman Princeton, MO 64673	June 10	6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
	June 17	6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
	June 24	6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
	July 1	6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
<b>Concordia R-II</b> 1008 E. Coleman Princeton, MO 64020	June 11	6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
	June 12	6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
	June 13	8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
<b>Salem R-80</b> 1409 W. Rolla Rd. Salem, MO 65560	June 25	6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
	June 26	6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
	June 27	8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
<b>Resort at Port Arrowhead</b> 3080 Bagnell Dam Blvd. Lake Ozark, MO	July 31	8:15 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.
	August 1	8:15 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.
<b>Dexter R-XI</b> 1031 Brown Pilot Lane Dexter, MO 63841	August 6	6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
	August 7	6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
	August 8	8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
<b>Stockton R-I</b> 906 South St Stockton, MO 65785	September 10	6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
	September 11	6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
	September 12	8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
<b>Tipton R-VI</b> 305 E. Hwy 50 Tipton, MO 65081	February 4, 2010	6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
	February 5	6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
	February 6	8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
<b>Resort at Port Arrowhead</b> <u>Annual MARE Conference</u> 3080 Bagnell Dam Blvd. Lake Ozark, MO 65049	March 5, 2010	8:15 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.
	March 6	8:15 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.

**(Reminder) Certificates are issued following completion of 16 hours of board training with the board trainers. Video instruction for certification, no longer an option.**

## Controlling Visitors: How to Maintain Order and Keep Students Safe

By

Betsey A. Kruse & Thomas A. Mickes

Mickes Goldman O'Toole, LLC

You have seen it before: a parent is upset at the way their child's coach is coaching, and they let him know about it. They yell and scream, threaten the coach, disrupt the game, and in your opinion, go too far. This is not the first time you have seen the parent act this way. In fact, you have given this parent multiple warnings about their behavior. Now you feel that something needs to be done. Pursuant to Board of Education Policy, you inform the parent that due to their disruptive conduct, they are prohibited from entering district grounds or attending district activities for six months. Naturally, the parent is upset and lets you (and anyone else who will listen) know that you are violating their rights by banning them from district property. This raises the question: *does* a parent/school district patron have a right to access school district property?

The answer, in general, is no – members of the public do not have an unfettered right to access public schools. The Supreme Court of the United States has recognized that the, "First Amendment does not guarantee access to property simply because it is owned or controlled by the government." Perry Educ. Ass'n v. Perry Local Educators' Ass'n, 460 U.S. 37, 46 (1983) (citing United States Postal Service v. Greenburgh Civic Ass'n, supra, 453 U.S. 114, 129 (1981)).

Schools are generally considered non-public forums, and therefore, access can be restricted, provided that the restrictions are reasonable and are not an effort to suppress viewpoints. Embry v. Lewis, 215 F.3d 884 (8th Cir. 2000). Accordingly, as long as restrictions to school district access are reasonable and content neutral, the district has the right to control disruptive behavior in its schools, and at school activities, by banning parents/patrons from district property if necessary. The key is to fairly and reasonably implement such restrictions to access.

If a visitor to your school or to a school activity displays physical or violent behavior, the first step is to immediately contact law enforcement. The superintendent, principal, or district designee also has the right to request that the visitor leave district property immediately. Then, if the conduct so warrants, and when the timing is appropriate depending on the gravity of the situation, notify the visitor that they are banned from school premises and district activities for up to (1) year, or a time prescribed in your Board policies. For visitors who are creating a disruption, but whose behavior does not rise to the level of physical behavior or conduct warranting an immediate ban, warn this visitor in writing, and with a copy to local law enforcement, that further disruptions may lead to a ban. If their behavior does not improve, rely on your Board policies to limit his/her access to prevent further distractions to the school environment. Law enforcement will arrest violators for criminal trespass if you give them advance notice.

The district may also control the time and manner of visits by parents and patrons during the school day. The first step in maintaining the safety of your students during the school day is to insist that all visitors follow district rules. If a parent or patron visits during the school day, they need to sign-in and follow all policies regarding visits to the school, regardless of whether or not the parent is a regular visitor to the school, or if the teacher already knows that they are coming to visit. If you feel a parent is visiting too often and their visits are creating a distraction to the learning environment, try at first to work with the parent to minimize surprise visits. Request that the parent call you when they plan to come by the school to visit their child. Or, set parameters for when their visits can occur (ie. one visit per month) and clearly articulate these parameters to the parent.

When the decision has been made to ban a parent or patron from the district and district activities, provide notice of this decision: (1) either verbally or by first-class mail, and (2) by certified mail with return receipt requested. The notice should contain: (1) a description of the conduct warranting the restriction, (2) the proposed time period for which admission to district events or property will be denied, and (3) instructions or district Board Policy regarding the procedure for requesting a time to address the Board of Education regarding the ban. Also, depending on the nature of the conduct, it may be appropriate to inform the parent/patron that if he/she wishes to access school grounds for a legitimate purpose, such as to attend their child's parent-teacher conference, or to pick their child up from school, they should contact the superintendent to discuss the matter.

The key in implementing bans or restrictions to district property is consistency and reasonableness. If other disruptive parents/patrons only received a thirty day ban from district premises for similar conduct, only issue a 30 day ban for this parent/patron. By implementing consistent restrictions, the district will limit the chance that a parent/patron will claim that they were discriminated against because they received a harsher restriction than others.

If the parent/patron wishes to address the Board of Education about their restricted access or ban from district grounds, provide the parent/patron a copy of your Board Policy relating to the procedure for requesting an audience before the Board of Education. Ensure that the parent/patron follows the proper procedures to be placed on the Board agenda. Also, the parent/patron may be interested in providing a written statement for the Board to consider in lieu of addressing the Board in person.

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## 2009 Outstanding Rural Education Award Winners



*Rural Senior High Student  
Cassandra Kay Wight, Santa Fe R-X*



*Rural District Administrator  
Doug Wight, Santa Fe R-X*



*Rural Building Administrator  
Greg Dias, Stanberry R-11*



*Rural School District  
North Shelby School District*



*Rural Middle School Teacher  
Nancy Hartman, Clarksburg C-2*



*Rural Support Staff Member  
Sonja Buse, Louisiana R-11*



*Rural Elementary Teacher  
Colleen Shuler, Stockton R-I*



*Rural School Board Member  
Tom Oelrichs, Cole Camp R-I*

### How Television impacts Children

Nina Chen, Ph.D., CFLE, human development specialist, Jackson County, University of Missouri Extension

Many parents are concerned about their children's television habits. Are they watching too much? What are they watching? How is TV affecting them? These are the kinds of questions parents should ask when making decisions about their children's TV viewing.

Here are some facts about TV that can give parents more information:

- American children watch an average of three to four hours of television every day.
- The average child witnesses 45 acts of violence on TV every day.
- Children watching TV may see 50,000 TV commercials every year.
- Most 2- to 5-year-old children watch TV an average of 31 hours each week or more than four hours each day.
- Children's programming has an average of 26 violent acts every hour.
- Ten percent of children's TV time is spent watching children's programs and 90 percent of their time is spent watching programs intended for adults.
- The average American family has the TV on for 6.2 hours every day.
- Children are more likely to be obese when they watch TV four or more hours per day.

Many studies found that TV violence impacts children and teens negatively. For example, children learn that violence is an acceptable way to solve problems. Children may develop strong emotional fears, imitate the violence they see on TV, become less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others, and identify with certain characters, both good and bad. Studies also show that children who watch too much television may be more aggressive and violent, perform poorly in school, use drugs or alcohol, and become sexually active at an early age.

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The Board of Education is charged by statute with the responsibility of "making all needful rules and regulations for the organization, grading and government in the school district", and therefore has the power to uphold or amend the terms of the ban. RSMo § 171.011. When the patron addresses the Board, the Board members should not make promises to the patron regarding the ban or give affirmations. Rather, the Board should take the matter under advisement and then make the determination that is fair and in the best interest of maintaining order and safety in its schools.

In conclusion, a parent or patron of a school district does not have an unfettered right to access school district property. A school district can regulate parent/patron visits and attendance at district activities if such visits disrupt the learning process, or if the behavior exhibited by the patron/parent is inappropriate. When implementing a ban to district property or restrictions on parent/patron visits, the district should act fairly, consistently, and provide adequate notice of the ban and its parameters. By taking consistent and judicious action against visitors who act inappropriately, the district will send the message that it does not tolerate patron/parent behavior that disrupts the learning environment or threatens the safety of its students.

1. Restrictions or limitations from the classroom as discussed in this section should not be applied to parents exercising their right to an independent educational evaluation under the IDEA.

## Letter From Langdon: What's at the Root of a 'Stimulus' for Rural Schools

By Richard Oswald

*(The original publication source, The Daily Yonder, [www.dailyyonder.com](http://www.dailyyonder.com))*

At schools in Kansas City, I saw indoor pools, multi-lingual classes and even a fencing coach from Russia.

Shawn Poynter It's hard for rural communities to raise money for new schools — especially if voters continue to turn down bond issues. Here's the old high school building in Lynch, Kentucky.

The federal stimulus isn't trickling down to rural schools in Missouri where state and local tax dollars still fund the majority of school operations. Over the hill from Langdon, in Rock Port, our small school is seeking local stimulus of its own in order to head off job cuts.

Today, citizens in Rock Port will decide whether to increase our school tax levy for a period of 5 years. If we fail to ratify the increase, the school district will be forced to increase class sizes, lay off teachers, reduce extra curricular activities, and cut some courses completely. A similar vote is taking place in the nearby St. Joseph School District. The school board there describes [4] the vote as a "Vision for the Future."

Somebody around here needs a vision, that's for sure. In November of 2008, Missouri voters approved a ballot proposition that eliminated gambling loss limits in return for an additional 1% tax on casino earnings. When the first \$112 million worth of revenue arrived, the Missouri General Assembly promptly responded by cutting a like amount of school funding from general revenue.

We're getting nowhere fast.

Funding problems for rural schools in Missouri go back a long way, to a time when a federal judge forced the state to spend more money to integrate public schools in Kansas City and St Louis. Rather than add money to the overall budget, state legislators simply took money away from small town Missouri and gave it to the cities.

In the '90s, I toured several magnet schools in Kansas City with other rural school board members from Northwest Missouri. We saw indoor swimming pools, multi-lingual classes, and even met a Russian fencing coach. Rock Port is in the far northwest corner of Missouri.

Here around Langdon, the only fencing we know about is what keeps the cows on the back 40.

Eventually, state funded magnet schools ran their course, but it's been an uphill battle for education in some parts of our state. Now, thanks to funding formulas that don't serve all schools equally, rising energy costs, and competition for good teachers, we have a shortfall of operating money in our local school.

The Rock Port School Board has been trying for years to pass a bond that would allow modernization of the school and replacement of a one hundred year old building. It would also help to replenish our schools capital improvement fund. Currently, money for long-term improvements has to come from operating funds. If school districts like ours don't hold back enough to pay for repairs and upgrades, they're penalized.

School bonds in Missouri must be approved by a four-sevenths majority (or 57%). Some voters here don't like the idea of new buildings or debt. Every time the bond has been proposed over the last 15 years it has failed even though it would have been good for our school.

Today, with state support near all time lows and costs of education rising, and operating outlays propelled higher by unfunded mandates like "No Child Left Behind," the school board is asking voters to fund basic operations without cutting back on programs and personnel. Superintendent Alan Kerr said that adequate funding provides a chance for Rock Port students to be successful. Even with the levy increase, Rock Port would still rank in the bottom third among Northwest Missouri school districts for how much we spend on services. But low costs don't translate to sub-standard education, because Rock Port students continue to exceed state averages in attending college and technical

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Children's development and learning may also suffer from too much TV. Children watching too much TV don't get as much physical activity and aren't exposed to new experiences. One study showed that 4-year-olds who watched a lot of TV scored lower on measures of applied problem solving, language comprehension and expressive vocabulary.

Although there are negative effects of watching too much television, some studies indicate that moderate TV viewing can stimulate a child's education and creativity. Children who watched a moderate amount of TV performed better academically than children who watched TV excessively or not at all.

Television can have both negative and positive effects on children. Like anything else, moderation is best. Parents should limit the amount of time their children spend in front of TV and pay close attention to the content of the programs they are watching.

Here are more suggestions for parents to help guide children's television viewing:

- Put TV sets in family areas instead of in children's rooms.
- Monitor what your children are viewing and avoid violent or sexual content.
- Watch TV with your children and discuss the program or commercials. Ask them questions, and express your thoughts and feelings. This discussion process will help children critically evaluate programs and advertisements.
- Set limits on TV viewing. For example, restrict TV during meals and before children have finished homework or chores.
- Be a good role model for your children with your own TV viewing habits. They model what you do more than what you say.

For more information, see: <http://missourifamilies.org/features/parentingarticles/parenting83.htm>

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schools. Overall test scores are higher, too. Russell Lee [5] In 1940, photographer Russell Lee found children in Pie Town, New Mexico, going to school in a Farm Bureau building.

In fact, many Rock Port students graduate from high school and are able to enroll at a sophomore level in college. That's because we have experienced teachers accredited to teach at the college level. Our rural high school students actually earn college credits from their classes.

For communities like Rock Port, achievement is measured by how many high school graduates go on to further their education. Success rates of our students show in their achievements.

You might say we rely on strong job export markets in the cities in order for our kids to be successful. For lack of a better alternative, our next generation lives and works in the same places we compete with for funding.

Sometimes it seems like the big towns win either way.

Rock Port isn't alone. Rural schools in Missouri and all over America are fighting the same battles to retain control of the type and quality of education their children will receive. While some may see the issue in simple terms of dollars and cents, my own sense is that our tax base and the revenue it produces will belong to government big or small whether we support our local schools or not. Small schools and school boards represent local control and the ability to offer our children opportunity. They are at the very root both of self-government and democracy itself.

Here around Langdon, those roots run deep.

**Editor's Note:** *The people of Langdon voted 595 to 322 Tuesday to increase the tax rate for their local schools.*

## Is your school website making the grade?

(by Foundation For Educational Services, Inc.)

*How to create and maintain an effective website on a budget*

If you're faced with limited resources and increased demands on your time, it may seem difficult to maintain a website. Even so, you need to communicate with students, their parents and the community... and in today's world, maintaining a school website is more important than ever.

But how? The answer is a SOCS content management system and here's why...

### **Personnel Time**

Many administrators believe an internal website is "free". However, when you include the time it takes to design and build a website, the time for server maintenance and software upgrades, plus the time involved in updating content and redirecting resources from other priority projects — you realize how much is actually spent on your website. *Personnel time is valuable and should be taken into account as part of the overall cost.*

### **Hosting, Hardware and Software Upgrades**

When you host your own site, you have ongoing costs associated with hardware, server maintenance and software upgrades. Not with SOCS. SOCS is hosted on clustered servers with high speed Internet access. State-of-the-art security, backup and disaster recovery are included in one bundled price and SOCS enhancements and updates are provided at no additional charge. Most agree that's a big advantage and cost savings.

### **Web Design**

A professional-looking website takes time and skill. Plus it's important to retain consistency throughout your web pages in order to establish district branding or a "look". As part of your contract, our talented creative staff will customize your site with your school colors and mascot for a distinctive look that consistent and professional.

### **Training and Support**

We offer web-based training so you save on the cost of sending personnel off-site and paying for hotels and transportation. Training and support is included with your license. Because SOCS is so easy to use, with minimal training, anyone you designate can update content from any computer with Internet access. Technical skills are not required and you never need to enter a line of code.

### **Printing and Mailing Costs**

Information that had previously been mailed can easily be posted on your SOCS site. Forms, registration for parent-teacher conferences and newsletters can be disseminated electronically. Even the minutes of your last board meeting can easily be posted and password protected for online viewing. This saves printing, assembly and addressing time, plus the cost of postage.

Become a SOCS *Superhero*. Contact our professional website consultants to find out how you can qualify for our lowest price ever and save money on your website.

SOCS. The easy choice.

## **Towards a Bargaining Framework for Teachers?**

**By Duane Martin**

On April 1, 2009, a local affiliate of MNEA sued a Missouri school district based on the bargaining policy that the district had adopted for its teachers. In the lawsuit, the Bayless Education Association claims that after ninety percent of the district's teachers signed authorization cards requesting that the Association be recognized as the bargaining representative for teachers, the district refused to recognize the Association as the bargaining representative, or in the alternative, hold an election for a bargaining representative. Instead, the district adopted a policy that included a procedure for each school building in the district to elect an individual employee to serve as a building representative for a collaborative discussion process. The Association claims that the adoption of the policy, or alternatively the refusal to hold an election, violated the teachers' right to bargain collectively under the Missouri Supreme Court's interpretation of the Missouri Constitution.

In May 2007, the Missouri Supreme Court determined that all public employees have a right under the Missouri Constitution to organize and bargain collectively. The General Assembly had previously provided these rights by statute to most public employees but had not granted such rights to certain categories of employees including teachers and police officers. The Supreme Court's decision left it to the General Assembly, or local school boards in the absence of legislation, to establish a framework for bargaining with teachers.

Since July 2008, at least three cases have been filed on behalf of unions representing employees that are not covered by a bargaining statute. These lawsuits claim that local governments are required under the Supreme Court's decision to establish a bargaining framework for such employees. These cases claim that the failure to adopt such a framework results in a denial of the employees' right to bargain collectively. Such claims are made on behalf of employees that are similarly situated to teachers in Missouri public school districts.

In the two years since the Supreme Court's decision, Missouri public school districts have struggled with the question of whether to develop a bargaining framework for teachers locally, or simply wait for the General Assembly to act. Pressure to act locally increases as each legislative session passes without legislation to address bargaining rights for teachers. Some commentators advise school districts to do nothing and await action from the General Assembly. Others advise Boards to adopt a board policy that includes a comprehensive bargaining framework for teachers.

When it comes to Board policies regarding bargaining with teachers, no single approach fits all districts. Each district must decide for itself the best approach to establishment of a bargaining framework for teachers based on a variety of factors specific to the district. Perhaps the most important factor is whether a majority of teachers in the district have requested the recognition of a specific bargaining representative. Doing nothing may expose the district to legal risks, do irreparable harm to the district's relationship with its teachers, and catalyze political opposition to current leadership. On the other hand, adopting a comprehensive bargaining framework may create burdensome obligations that are unnecessary in some districts, may prompt organization by employees, and may create systems that will be supplanted by subsequent legislation or court rulings. Furthermore, adopting a bargaining policy that does not arguably honor your staff right to bargain collectively may lead to claims like those raised in the Bayless litigation referenced above.

At this point, districts are exposed to risks if they fail to act. Districts also face risks if they take action that is legally inappropriate for their particular district. Districts must therefore carefully consider whether adopting a bargaining framework for teachers for next school year is the best approach for their district. Consultation with counsel with experience in this complicated area of the law is essential in this endeavor. If you determine to move forward with such a policy, the district should carefully consider the nature of the bargaining framework that will work best in your specific district taking into account your staff, your past practices, the risks of legal challenge and your community.

## 15 Effective Strategies for Dropout Prevention

Franklin P. Schargel, Educator, Author, Trainer, Consultant, Motivational Speaker of the Schargel Consulting Group

The strategies were developed by Dr. Jay Smink, Executive Director of the National Dropout Prevention Center at Clemson University in association with Franklin D. 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.”

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 rates by meeting 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 – 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 from 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 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.

*(Continued on page 11)*

(Continued from page 10)

### 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 resolutions, 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.

### New Report About Children Living in Poverty

According to a new Child Trends research brief, *Children of Poverty: Trends, Consequences, and Policy Options*, using 2007 Census data to present a statistical portrait of children poverty in the U.S., updating similar briefs Child Trends produced in 1999 and 2002.

Nearly one out of five children in the United States was living in poverty in 2007, and this percentage has been increasing since 2000.

Among the trends:

- The poverty rate for children younger than 18 increased from 17.4 percent in 2006 to 18 percent in 2007, the highest rates since 1998. This 18 percent translates into 13.3 million children living in poverty in the U.S., an increase of 497,000 children between 2006 and 2007.
- Children are almost twice as likely to be poor as older adults. In 2007, the poverty rate was 9.7 percent for people 65 and older, compared with 18 percent for children younger than 18.
- Substantial racial disparities persist: black and Hispanic children were more than twice as likely to live in poverty in 2007 as non-Hispanic white and Asian children. 34.5 percent of black children and 28.6 percent of Hispanic children lived in poverty in 2007, compared with 10.1 percent of non-Hispanic white children and 12.5 percent Asian children.
- A large body of research exists which links poverty with lower levels of child well-being. Poor children are more likely than children from more affluent families to have low academic achievement, to drop out of school, and to have health, behavioral, and emotional problems.

It is interesting to note that this data was reported prior to the economic decline in the country.

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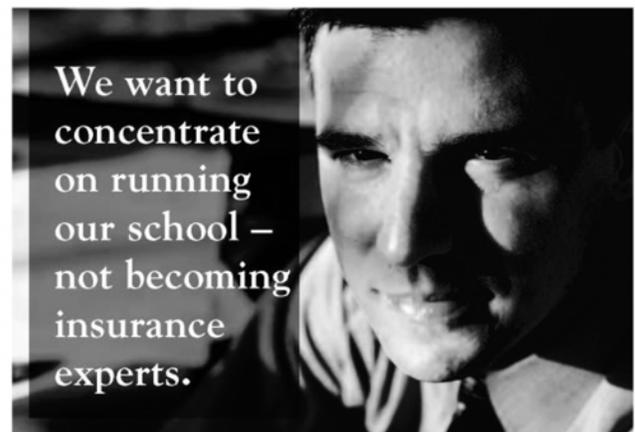


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