

EGS Research & Consulting

ONLINE MANUAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES FOR SCHOOL REENTRY PROGRAMS

LITERATURE REVIEW REPORT

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I. Executive Summary

In preparation for the development of an online resource manual and technical assistance plan addressing dropout recovery and reentry needs and practice in Texas, EGS Research & Consulting implemented a thorough review of research on dropout recovery. For the purpose of this literature review report dropout recovery refers both recovery and reentry strategies. The purpose of this literature review was twofold. First, it provides a framework and context for project design, such as manual organization, topics to be addressed in the manual, format of delivery, and best practice evaluation criteria. The literature review was also intended to provide specific examples of best practices, best practice evaluation methodologies and forms that can be tailored and used for this project.

EGS Research & Consulting compiled a detailed bibliography culled from a variety of sources and reviewed the most targeted research, summarized each source (summaries are included in the Appendix to this document), and analyzed trends and issues that surfaced across multiple studies and were relevant to the development and implementation of the project.

While we identified hundreds of studies for possible inclusion in the literature review, we maintained a clear focus on dropout *recovery* resources. Because dropout recovery focuses on a specific segment within the dropout population—that is, students that have already dropped out of school—the issues faced by these students and thus the strategies used to recover them are somewhat different from strategies used to *prevent* students from dropping out in the first place. Additionally, there is a much greater body of work on dropout prevention strategies than dropout recovery strategies, including many literature reviews and research analyses. Our goal was not to “reinvent the wheel” with respect to dropout prevention, but to shed light on the project’s particular area of concern—dropout recovery.

During the course of the literature review, we came to several important conclusions about the state of “best practice” in dropout recovery:

1. Most of the research available focuses on dropout prevention—not recovery. Efforts specific to dropout recovery are often impossible to extract from the description of an overall program.
2. Resources addressing dropout recovery seldom have even a modest research base to back up claims of success. Typically, the research used to validate program outcomes is anecdotal, has faulty methodologies or data, or both.
3. Even when quantitative data is used to validate program outcomes, it is typically not tied to specific strategies used. That is, it is usually impossible to tell from the data provided which specific strategies within a complete dropout prevention/recovery program may have been effective or ineffective.

4. Longitudinal data on dropouts recovered by a specific program is almost never available. Few programs follow students in an organized way after they have completed the program.

We anticipate the need to incorporate significant flexibility into the best practice identification methodology and tools to accommodate extremely varied availability and quality of supporting program data.

The literature review did reveal trends in the kinds of strategies implemented by effective recovery programs. We anticipate using these strategies as a starting point for identifying best practice in Texas—although we do not intend to limit our investigation of best practice only to these strategies. Strategies can be grouped under a few broad headings:

- Administrative Strategies
- Collaboration Strategies
- Identification and Recruitment Strategies
- Program Organization Strategies
- Post-Secondary and Career Advancement Strategies
- Staffing Strategies
- Curriculum/Instructional Strategies
- Coaching/Mentoring Strategies
- Social Support Strategies
- Ineffective Practices

We anticipate that these strategies will form the core content of the manual (of course, best practice submissions may require that we add, alter, or delete some of these topics).

The literature review also shed light on effective strategies for groups of students of particularly high risk of dropping out:

- Pregnant Teens
- Over-Age, Under-Credited Youth
- Incarcerated Youth/Youth Offenders
- Youth in Foster Care
- Homeless Youth
- Youth with Substance Abuse Issues
- Migrant Youth

We anticipate providing targeted information about strategies that tend to work well for each of these groups of students, enabling users of the manual to focus on their greatest areas of need.

Finally, in the course of analyzing research reports, journal articles, and other resources, we identified several forms and procedures used by programs around the nation that are well-thought-out and comprehensive. We recommend establishing a “forms bank” as part

of the manual. This bank will include high-quality, useful forms (such as intake forms, evaluation forms, data analysis forms, etc.) used by the staff of programs identified for inclusion in the manual. Users of the manual will be able to download and overwrite the forms to allow for customization. The goal of developing the form bank will be to provide concrete tools to users in addition to ideas and methodologies. During the process of soliciting and evaluating best practice, we will ask districts for copies of specific forms they have used successfully. We will reference these forms in the appropriate section of the manual and include each form in an appendix to the manual.

II. Methodology

The analysis of research studies was conducted over a four-week period. EGS Research & Consulting began by developing a comprehensive bibliography of potential resources based on three key areas:

- Background Research on the Dropout Issue
- Dropout Recovery Efforts—Both in Texas and Nationally
- Methodologies for Evaluating Best Practice in Dropout Recovery

Research studies were gathered from a variety of sources, including:

- The U.S. Department of Education School Dropout Prevention Program Web Site
- The Texas School Dropout Prevention and Reentry Web Site
- The National Dropout Prevention Center/Network
- American Youth Policy Forum
- National Center for School Engagement
- The Center for Law and Social Policy
- National League of Cities
- Regional Educational Laboratories

Initial efforts demonstrated a paucity of resources on dropout recovery. To augment the bibliography, EGS Research & Consulting added a comprehensive search of educational research journal articles.

EGS Research & Consulting scanned each of the identified resources to identify the most pertinent—those that appeared to be based in research, those that focused on a particular population of students apropos to Texas (e.g., migrant and LEP students), and those that

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focused on a particular type of strategy for dropout recovery (e.g., funding, administration, academics, vocational/career, etc.). We developed a detailed literature review form to organize information into key areas:

- Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)
- Summary of Key Points:
 - *Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information*
 - *Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs*
 - *Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)*
 - *Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.*
- Implications for Project
 - *School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?*
 - *Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?*
 - *Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...*
 - *Potential Best Practice Program Models—Name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well*
 - *Additional Resources to Examine—Additional reports or resources that might provide more information about dropout recovery.*

Any additional resources identified during the literature review were screened for relevance and added to the bibliography, if appropriate.

As resources were reviewed, results were used to inform the questionnaire of dropout recovery programs, which was being developed simultaneously. The literature review helped to identify questions for the statewide survey of school districts and suggested ways to organize these questions to ensure that the most critical information about dropout recovery efforts in Texas was included.

The following sections describe the key findings of the literature review, tied to implications for the project.

III. Background Research on the Dropout Issue

III.1 Students Most At-Risk of Dropping Out

Recent research has countered the notion that the dropout “problem” is restricted to poor, minority urban and rural youth. Using data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS), one study (Almeida, Johnson & Steinberg 2006) determined that:

- Dropping out is not just an issue for poor urban or rural schools. 20 percent of all students drop out—40 percent of students in the nation’s lowest socioeconomic group, but also 10 percent of youth from families in the highest two socioeconomic groups.
- Socioeconomic status, not ethnicity, is the key indicator for dropping out. The dropout problem affects African-American and Hispanic students more than others simply because they are more represented in the lower socio-economic groups.
- Nearly 60 percent of dropouts eventually earn a high school credential (usually a GED)—43 percent of dropouts from the lowest socioeconomic group and 85 percent from the highest two groups. The GED credential, however, is associated with a much lower rate of college achievement.
- Many dropouts pursue postsecondary education, but few attain a degree.

Further, no two students may drop out for exactly the same reasons. Rather, a complex web of overlapping personal, school, and family/community factors tends to push students out of schools (NLC 2007, Stern 1986, PYN 2006, Lee & Burkam 2003). These include:

- Personal risk factors—substance abuse, pregnancy, legal problems, working more than 14-20 hours per week.
- School risk factors—truancy, absenteeism, tardiness, suspension, and disciplinary infractions.
- Family factors—unstable home life, socioeconomic status, siblings’ completion of high school, single-parent households, parental education background, primary language spoken in the home. (Woods 1995)

According to the 2006 study *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Drop-Outs*, the top five reasons out-of-school youth gave for dropping out were:

- Classes were not interesting (47 percent)
- Missed too many days and could not catch up (43 percent)

- Spent time with people who were not interested in school (42 percent)
- Had too much freedom and not enough rules (38 percent)
- Was failing in school (35 percent)
(Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morrison 2006)

III.2 Impact of Dropping Out

Many programs and studies emphasize the economic impact that a large dropout population can have on a community, state, or the nation as a whole (Steinberg & Almeida 2004, PYN 2006, Rumberger 1987, Martin & Halperin 2006). This emphasis has even been cited as an excellent strategy for marshalling support from various stakeholders around the issue of dropout prevention and recovery.

Specific impacts include:

- As more students drop out, their employment prospects become more limited because of the necessity of literacy and technology skills to get a good job.
- High-risk behavior (e.g., pregnancy, delinquency, crime, violence, substance abuse) is significantly higher in dropouts.
- Dropouts are more likely to rely on social programs such as welfare throughout their lives.
- There is a huge income gap between dropouts and non-dropouts, and that gap will widen.
- Increased dropout rates will create a large group of unskilled laborers in low-wage jobs—creating a large underclass that will have a significant impact on the American economy as a whole.
(Woods 1995)

In addition, a significant number of high school dropouts become prison inmates. It is estimated that 75 percent of state prison inmates and 59 percent of federal prison inmates are high school dropouts. Dropouts are 3.5 times more likely than their peers to end up in prison (Martin & Halperin 2006).

IV. Effective Dropout Recovery Programs/Strategies

As previously stated, scientific research on dropout recovery strategies is essentially nonexistent. Researchers rely more often on self-reported data and anecdotal data gathered through case studies and surveys in identifying and describing successful programs than on analysis of “hard” data, such as achievement data, dropout/graduation

data, and other measures. The use of comparison groups is virtually nonexistent in program evaluation. With these limitations in mind, the analysis of literature does point to strategies with the potential to be “best practice” in a variety of areas.

IV.1 Administrative Strategies

Administrative strategies encompass a wide range of categories, from the use of data to guide programmatic decisions, to program management responsibility, funding, and location of program. Program administration strategies “set the stage” for successful program development and implementation. While many program evaluations focus on the content of programs or effectiveness of instruction, the administrative factors which, taken together, represent the context in which a program is implemented are nonetheless very important.

Data-Driven Decision-Making

The ability and commitment to access and analyze youth data from a variety of sources (including school data as well as data from other social services agencies) is the cornerstone of many effective programs. These programs use data both to develop targeted programs and to evaluate progress. For example, Philadelphia uses reduced dropout rates as well as reduced teen pregnancy rates, reduced criminal and negative behavior, and increased college enrollment to evaluate its dropout prevention and recovery efforts (AYPF 2006, NLC 2007, PYN 2006).

Data coordination also helps to streamline efforts across agencies. For example, San Diego’s multiple agencies use a single-page “Risk and Resiliency Tool” that tracks individual youth on a variety of risk factors. This minimizes duplication of effort and gives staff at each agency a better “whole picture” of the child and his/her circumstances (NLC 2007).

Site-Based Management

Site-based management is identified as an important characteristic of program administration (Woods 1995). That is, allowing individual school and program sites make administrative decisions results in programs more finely-tuned to the students who use them (Steinberg & Almeida 2004). Taking this one step further, some studies advocate that students be allowed to take an active role in making administrative and management decisions about programs (Steinberg & Almeida 2004, Harris 2006, Woods 1995). Site based management is not without its challenges, however. One study noted that a program designed to serve schools across an entire community experienced logistical challenges in dealing with multiple schools, each with a different “way of doing things” (Harris 2006).

Funding

Consistent, long-term funding is a critical factor in creating effective, sustained programs. Several of the specific recovery programs studied were discontinued or scaled back, despite indications of success, because of funding cutbacks and the inability to replace funding (Weiler 1994, Harris 2006, Knepper 1988). Some programs have learned to seek sustained funding through other social agencies (e.g., juvenile justice and social welfare) or by establishing a charter school (Martin & Halperin 2006).

New York City's Multiple Pathways program notes as one of its most effective strategies the coordination of projects such as the New Small Schools Initiative, Small Learning Communities Demonstration Projects, Charter School Initiative, and other professional development and instructional initiatives. Funding from the Gates Foundation and analytical support from the Parthenon Group also allowed the NYC DOE to evaluate the student experience within the school system (NYCDOE 2006).

Location of Program

Location of the program is also an important factor in recovering students who have dropped out. A variety of factors may be at play when deciding where a program should be located. For example, programs housed within regular high schools sometimes become beneficial to the school as a whole. It may also make better economic sense to house the program at the regular school. Locating the program at another self-contained school facility creates a "small and cozy" feel, and for students who left school because of violence or bullying, this location provides a safe choice.

Programs may also be located at a non-school facility—a strategy particularly appealing for students who have already dropped out because it removes the stigma of being a dropout, can be more convenient to the students' everyday lives (e.g., located near work or home), and enables students to break negative associations with schools (Stern 1986). One dropout recovery program located a digital campus in a shopping mall. The program became so popular with students looking to recoup lost credits that the district decided to open its use to all students and add a second location (Hoyle & Collier 2006).

As part of the national Youth Opportunity program, communities receiving funding were required to create a "Youth Opportunity Center" that offered a safe haven for youth (14-21 year-olds) and as a "focal point for case management." These centers were required to provide educational support, workplace and career support, youth development activities, and case management support. Students were to be served by these centers until they completed academic programs and successfully transitioned into career or higher education opportunities. Typically, these centers were "youth friendly and technology rich." Frequently, satellite centers were added with the goal of reaching students "where they lived" (Harris 2006).

In discussing location of services, Charter Schools should not be overlooked. Many charter schools that are now being formed specifically focus on recovering out-of-school

youth, and the development of a charter school has become a viable alternative for securing sustained funding for dropout recovery programs. (Martin & Halperin 2006). E-schools and correspondence courses have also gained popularity, allowing students to access program resources any-time, any-where (Chmelynski 2006).

School Climate

School climate is also an important ingredient in successful programs. Developing an effective school climate may include addressing safety issues, ensuring a clean and orderly environment, and training staff on cultural sensitivity (Woods 1995, PYN 2006, Aron 2006). In some cases, programs engage in activities to help students build pride in their schools (Brush & Jones 2002). In other cases, programs create and strictly enforce fair and consistent codes of discipline (Steinberg & Almeida 2004; Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morrison 2006).

IV.2 Collaboration Strategies

Collaboration is a broad-based term that encompasses many specific practices, including collaboration within governmental systems to create and sustain programs, collaboration with other public and private entities to provide specific services to dropouts, and even collaboration between students and community organizations. Community collaboration as a general practice is widely identified in the literature as a key factor in successful dropout recovery programs (Steinberg & Almeida 2004, Woods 1995).

Cross-System Collaboration

Cross-system collaboration has also been identified as a key factor in successful dropout recovery programs—albeit difficult to achieve (Hoye & Sturgis 2005, NLC 2007, Harris 2006, PYN 2006). More typically, small programs operate in isolated “pockets of success,” and even within a single community, programs and options for out-of-school youth may not be aligned or easily accessed from a single entry point (Hoye & Sturgis 2005).

Yet, the approach carries key benefits. First, collaboration changes individual systems in addition to creating an effective “superstructure” and enables scarce resources to be used more efficiently and effectively. Cross-system collaboration also benefits the youth served by each organization, providing a consistent message and easy access to multiple supports as well as spotlighting any gaps in service that exist (NLC 2007).

A critical challenge to achieving this cross-system collaboration is the inertia of the systems themselves. Some programs reported particularly low levels of involvement from child welfare and mental health agencies, despite the fact that these agencies were probably among the most critical partners (Harris 2006). Without a strong leader (such as a mayor) or particular impetus (such as a significant federal grant program) for initiating collaboration, it will not happen (Hoye & Sturgis 2005; NLC 2007, Harris 2006).

It is also critical for a single agency that has consistent, sustained capacity to act as a coordinating body for dropout recovery efforts. It can be any agency—as long as it makes sense given the population of students at risk of dropping out (NLC 2007, Harris 2006).

For example, Philadelphia has focused on coordinating youth data across multiple city-wide agencies and establishing a collaborative planning team that includes multiple-agency staff, private businesspersons, school staff, and community members (AYPF 2006). Corpus Christi is working with the National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education, and Families to build strong municipal leadership for a cross-system focus on out-of-school youth (Steinberg & Almeida 2004).

Community College/University Collaboration

Collaboration with community colleges and universities can also have a positive impact on recovery programs in a variety of ways. Of course, college and universities are important partners in designing pathways to post-secondary education. But there are other ways these collaborations can positively impact programs, most notably in the high-need area of data collection and analysis. For example, the Corpus Christi Independent School District collaborates with the Social Science Research Center of Texas A&M University to collect and analyze student data. Post-secondary institutions are in a unique position to assist with this persistent program challenge (NLC 2007, PYN 2006).

Community Service

Many programs also engage students in community service projects as a way of demonstrating tangible results from their efforts, building self-esteem, and connecting students to their communities (Cranston-Gingras 2003, Martin & Halperin 2006).

Private Industry Collaboration

Effective programs also engage private industry. Typically, businesses are tapped to either hire students or to provide specific program guidance on what workforce skills students will need to possess to pursue particular careers. This collaboration is described more in depth in the section entitled “Career/Job Services.”

IV.3 Student Identification and Recruitment Strategies

Of course, one of the most important aspects of successful programs is how they find their dropouts and get them back on track. There are a variety of methods for identifying and recruiting students described in the literature

Profiling Students

In order to develop effective programs that respond to individual student needs, many schools, cities, and states use data to create “profiles” of school dropouts. These profiles may be created in a variety of ways. For example, Philadelphia and New York use robust,

inter-agency data to correlate student dropout with a variety of school and social factors. Oregon, which has collected student-level information on dropouts since the early 1990s, asks students why they dropped out and uses this data to structure its prevention and recovery programs (Brush & Jones 2002, NYCDOE 2006, PYN 2006). Profiles of typical dropouts enable program staff to focus recruitment efforts in the most appropriate location.

Recruitment Through Multiple Channels

Programs funded under the federal Youth Opportunities grants reported success in recruiting youth using a “saturation” approach, reaching approximately 42 percent of all youth eligible to be involved in the program and 62 percent of out-of-school youth. This approach included events geared to young people; peer-to-peer outreach; involvement of youth in the design of facilities and in management/decision-making; including activities in the arts, culture, sports and recreation; and use of youth in community mapping and survey activities (Harris 2006). Other programs engage civic and cultural organizations to which dropouts typically belong, such as migrant farm labor organizations (Cranston-Gingras 2003).

Intake—the Caseworker Approach

The “caseworker” approach to student intake was also used in several programs (Weiler 1994, Harris 2006). A team approach to intake and follow-up can also be successful (Woods 1995). For example, at Austin ISD, an Impact Team is assigned to tailor intervention programs at each of Austin’s 107 campuses. 80 percent of these interventions resulted in improvements in student discipline, attendance, and grades (Chmelynski 2006). A key benefit to this approach is that ensures follow-up after initial identification (Woods 1995).

Use of Program Applications/Contracts

Some programs require students to submit applications or to meet other criteria to attend an alternative program. For example, Gonzalo Garza Independence High School in Austin was created as an alternative school for students already enrolled in another Austin high school, and for those who had already dropped out. Students must submit a written application and must have at least 10 credits to attend (Chmelynski 2006). In some cases, students must sign contracts ensuring that they will meet specific achievement and attendance benchmarks. Having to sign a contract solidifies students’ commitment to the program (Martin & Halperin 2006).

IV.4 Program Organization Strategies

Program Organization strategies describe the ways in which individual program features are identified and are synthesized into a “whole program.”

Portfolio of Options

Most of the research analyzed emphasizes that a variety of options tailored to the individual reasons students have for dropping out must be provided in order for an overall recovery effort to be successful. Rather than replicating an entire program model that appears to be successful in one school, district, or state, segmenting features of successful programs and identifying their specific benefits can help a school or district create its own unique, successful program that truly meets the needs of its dropout population (Stern 1986). However, it is also important to create balance and consistency within and across dropout recovery strategies to avoid a “hodge-podge” approach, which tends to be ineffective (Hoye & Sturgis 2005).

Program options should be carefully selected based on the number of students needing a particular type of program, and synthesized to create a “seamless service package” (Hoye & Sturgis 2005, NYCDOE 2006, Woods 1995, Brush & Jones 2002). Two cities that have effectively implemented this model are Philadelphia and New York City. The unifying feature of these two programs is that careful data analysis of *who comprised the dropout population* guided program development.

Philadelphia’s approach incorporates two key programs—one focused on career and post-secondary preparation and one focused on serving over-age, under-credited youth.

Philadelphia’s E³ Power Centers offer intensive career preparation for out-of-school youth through four pathways: education, employment, occupational skills training, and life skills. The Education pathway includes GED preparation at different levels of instruction: individualized tutoring, test preparation, and links to external programs and support services. E³ also collaborates with community colleges, allowing students to earn credits towards an associate degree while still in high school. The Job Readiness Training shows students how to prepare a resume, interview for a job, and build a positive relationship with co-workers. The E³ Power Centers pair students with employment specialists who match them with employers. Students can learn skills such as computer programming and maintenance or work with local businesses. Students choose from a range of life skills activities such as parenting.

Philadelphia’s Career and Academic Development Institute is considered an exemplary accelerated high school targeted at over age dropouts with few credits. The school is operated by the Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America. The school offers year-round, non-traditional hours; assigns a case manager to each student; offers computer-assisted instruction and an online subscription to Internet lessons. Students who complete the program receive a high school diploma.

New York City’s Multiple Pathways project consists of four key programs:

Transfer High Schools are small, academic-based, and focus on students who have been enrolled in NYC public high school for at least one year and are far from being promoted on schedule in their current high school. These schools focus on personalized learning environments, rigorous academic standards, student-centered pedagogy, support to meet instructional and developmental goals, and a focus on college preparation. Over-age under-credited students have an average graduation rate of 56 percent from these schools versus 19 percent for their peers in regular high schools. These schools nearly doubled attendance rates and credit accumulation for the group. All Transfer School Students showed an increase in academic performance, with the most challenged students seeing the biggest increases.

Young Adult Borough Centers, housed within “host” high schools, are small learning groups that help students earn a diploma and create a post-graduation plan. They are full-time evening academic programs for students who have been in high school for at least four years and have attained a minimum of 17 credits. A non-traditional block schedule allows students to progress rapidly to earn only the credits they lack for graduation. Every Center has a community-based organization associated with it. The partner provides youth development support, career and college counseling, and job placement assistance. Students who complete the program receive a diploma from their high school of origin upon completion of credits and the Regents exams. The Young Adult Borough Center Model converts 44 percent of eligible students into high school graduates within one year.

New York City Schools also offers full-time and part-time GED Programs, all of which also incorporate Learning to Work (below). The Access GED model is a full-time program for over-age under-credited youth that incorporates youth development, integrated thematic units, developmental portfolios, student engagement system, assessment, progression, and connections to post-secondary training and career exploration. The part-time model uses a research-based workshop instructional model with high-quality curriculum materials. The programs’ part-time staff are routinely coached in research-based instructional strategies throughout the school year.

Finally, the Learning to Work program focuses on high school completion and connection to work and post-secondary education. Services are provided by community-based organizations and are integrated into the above programs. The program focuses on employability skills development, subsidized internships, college and career counseling, and job placement. The program also implements attendance outreach, individual and group counseling, academic tutoring, and youth development strategies.

Flexible Scheduling

Programs must also offer flexible scheduling to help school fit into students’ (typically complicated) lives. Such strategies may include self-paced curricula, shorter school “semesters” and breaks, early and late classes, and night/summer programming (Brush & Jones 2002; Woods 1995; Martin & Halperin 2006).

Several studies have also advocated the idea of providing ways for students to catch up on coursework or accumulate credits on a “fast track” (Steinberg & Almeida 2004, Hoye & Sturgis 2005, Aron 2006; Martin & Halperin 2006). Rather than require students to repeat entire semesters or grades—a seemingly insurmountable obstacle to some students—programs can create ways for students to work at their own pace and, through demonstrated proficiency, complete credits faster than they would in a regular school. This strategy is particularly critical in recovering dropouts who are “over-age and under-credited” (Hoye & Sturgis 2005, Chmelynski 2006).

IV.5 Career and Post-Secondary Advancement Strategies

Traditionally, alternative education programs have focused on GED preparation and vocational training. However, some researchers argue that these approaches, alone, are ineffective (Steinberg & Almeida 2004, Woods 1995). One study of GED preparation programs in the Austin Independent School District, for example, determined that GED preparation alone was not an acceptable alternative to high school graduation. The district contracted with two GED preparation organizations to offer services to primarily minority students living in neighborhoods where 80 percent of adults over the age of 25 have no GED or high school diploma. Of the 216 students participating in the first program, 0 percent received their diploma, 29.3 percent received their GED, 0.5 percent went back to school, 25.9 percent were still in the program, and 46.3 percent dropped from the program. Of the 59 students participating in the second GED program, 0 percent received their diploma, 13.6 percent received their GED, 0 percent returned to school, 37.3 percent were still in the program, and 46.9 percent dropped from the program. (Wilkinson 1994).

Long-Term Career Planning

In terms of career/vocational preparation, effective programs focus on long-term goals and developing skills that will allow students to participate meaningfully in the business economy. This may include the development of “life plans” that incorporate both educational and career-related goals.

Local Business Engagement

Another effective strategy identified is to engage local businesses in defining critical workforce skills and setting appropriate proficiency levels (Hoye & Sturgis 2005; Almeida, Johnson & Steinberg 2006, Harris 2006). This approach ensures that career preparation program components address both short-term and long-term career goals/needs. One report specifically challenged business leaders to develop “industry pipelines” that clearly delineate knowledge and skills needed to advance at each level of job within a particular industry (PYN 2006).

Multi-tiered School-to-Work Models

Some programs have focused on methodically transitioning students from unpaid internships to gradually more advanced levels of work. For example, dropout recovery programs in Boston, MA and Pima, AZ used a tiered model where students gradually moved from basic employability training with short-term community service projects, to paid community internships, to coached private or public sector paid work, and finally to long-term private-sector employment or employment training programs (Harris 2006). Other programs require a one-to-one correspondence between academic and work credits in order for work credits to “count” (Stern 1986).

Career Specialists

Many programs also employ career specialists to assist with career/job-related issues. For example, Austin ISD’s Gonzalo Garza Independence High School employs a school-to-career specialist who provides job-search assistance; and arranges college visits, internships, job shadowing, career field trips, and company tours. The school gives workshops on college preparation, life skills, and financial aid, and helps students access online job listings and finding employment (Chmelynski 2006).

School-To-College Transition

Dropout recovery programs are also focusing on getting students who have dropped out not only on track for a high school diploma, but for enrollment in college (Almeida, Johnson & Steinberg 2006). Particular strategies associated with this feature include engaging local colleges and universities, dual enrollment, etc. For example, Portland (Oregon) Community College’s successful Gateway to College program enrolls students in combined high school and college courses after one semester of intensive academics. 83 percent of the students reached college level reading proficiency and 70 percent completed college preparatory courses, ready to enroll in regular college courses (Steinberg & Almeida 2004).

IV.6 Staffing Strategies

Quality of Staff

Several studies emphasize the need for high-quality, motivated staff (Steinberg & Almeida 2004). In particular, staff assigned to work with at-risk youth, including teachers, administrators, counselors, and others, should demonstrate a keen interest in working with this population (as opposed to having these students “foisted” upon them) (Woods 1995, Aron 2006). They must also honestly believe that they can make an impact and help students (Martin & Halperin 2006). Some research suggests that volunteers may be more invested in programs (as opposed to paid staff) (Stern 1986).

One survey of dropout prevention and recovery programs noted that when contacting superintendents’ offices to identify the person responsible for dropout prevention and

recovery, if that person was quickly identified, he/she was much more clear and knowledgeable about the programs than if it took several referrals and phone calls to reach the person. The implication is that when the programs are well-planned and organized, with visible structure, they will be more clear and accessible by the community (Hoyle & Collier 2006).

Effective Professional Development

An emphasis on professional development for “youth workers” (staff from any of multiple agencies who work with out-of-school youth) can also improve overall program results by creating an overall higher level of professionalism and increasing the quality of youth workers (Harris 2006, Woods 1995, Aron 2006).

Using a train-the-trainer model to augment program staff and enable students to access services in a variety of places can also be an effective strategy. For example, a program in New York City trained healthcare workers at clinics and hospitals to recruit and assist pregnant teens in accessing programs designed to keep them from dropping out (Weiler 1994).

Principal Development

Some studies also emphasize that the principal’s role as instructional and emotional leader of the school is critical. The principal must actively support dropout recovery efforts in order for them to be successful (Woods 1995, PYN 2006).

IV.7 Curriculum/Instructional Strategies

Real-World Learning Environments

While academic rigor is critical to reengaging students and building up their self worth, curricula must also be relevant to what students are doing and will be doing with their lives (Brush & Jones 2002; Hoye & Sturgis 2005; Woods 1995; PYN 2006, Fashola & Slavin 1997; Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morrison 2006; Martin & Halperin 2006). One strategy to create effective, engaging curricula is to form a cross-disciplinary curriculum development team consisting of academic teachers, vocational teachers, and counselors (Woods 1995). One report suggested that local business leaders invite teachers to the workplace so that they can get a sense of the context in which students will need to apply academic knowledge in order to be successful (PYN 2006).

Literacy Support

Several reports identified literacy as both a significant dropout risk factor and a potentially successful dropout recovery program strategy (Steinberg & Almeida 2004, PYN 2006, Martin & Halperin 2006). In particular, limited English proficiency significantly increases the chances of students dropping out—effective programs should

provide specific bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL) support for these students (Woods 1995).

Small Learning Environments

Creating small learning environments—either within or outside of a regular school—and maintaining low student-to-teacher ratios are strategies frequently cited in exemplary programs. (Steinberg & Almeida 2004; Woods 1995; Aron 2006, Lee & Burkam 2003; Lehr et al 2004; Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morrison 2006; Martin & Halperin 2006).

Technology

Many alternative programs also heavily emphasized technology. This may include providing access to computers outside the school day (Woods 1995) or providing specific coursework in high-demand technology fields such as graphic design, business computer systems, etc. (Chmelynski 2006).

Student-Centered Instruction

As important as what is taught is *how* it is taught. Effective programs tended to feature student-centered inquiry and instruction as opposed to teacher lecture or passive methods of learning (Woods 1995, Stern 1986). Some programs use journaling as a way to move students from “passive victim” to responsible party in their school experiences (Stern 1986).

Frequent, Multi-Level Assessment

Careful and frequent monitoring of progress is also important (Woods 1995). While academic achievement measures are critical, other demonstrations of student proficiency, including portfolio assessment, exhibition of student work, and other alternative assessments can provide an even greater picture of specific program successes (Martin & Halperin 2006).

IV.8 Coaching/Mentoring Strategies

Most programs indicate that in order for a program to be successful, the student must feel that some adult cares about their academic and personal success. Many programs focus on grooming parents as mentors (Steinberg & Almeida 2004; Hoyer & Sturgis 2005; Woods 1995; Lehr et al 2004; Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morrison 2006). Specifically, these programs teach parents how to talk with their children about school and show that they care about their children’s progress, be proactive in seeking help for their children if they exhibit dropout risk factors, reach out to all at-risk children in the community, learn more about what programs are available and how to access them, and emphasize the importance of dropout recovery programs to elected officials (PYN 2006). Of note, strong parental involvement may be particularly effective in motivating Latino dropouts to stay in or return to school (Fashola & Slavin 1997).

However, for many reasons parents simply may not be able to provide the social and academic support at-risk students need (Hoye & Sturgis 2005). Adult mentors should be available to students as part of their recovery “service package.” These mentors may fill a variety of functions, including acting as advocates to get needed services for students, helping to create individual learning plans, and facilitating group counseling (Hoye & Sturgis 2005, Chmelynski 2006, Woods 1995).

IV.9 Social Support Strategies

While schools certainly cannot hope to solve every societal and familial factor that leads students to drop out, there are some key strategies that can be implemented at the program level to mitigate these problems.

Fostering Respect

First, creating an atmosphere of respect for and among students and school staff is critical (Brush & Jones 2002; Steinberg & Almeida 2004; Lee & Burkam 2003; Lehr et al 2004; Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morrison 2006; Martin & Halperin 2006). Significant and sustained social guidance, either in the form of mentoring, one-on-one counseling, or the establishment of peer groups, can have a significant impact in this area (Brush & Jones 2002, Hoye & Sturgis 2005, Stern 1986). In some successful programs, students who transferred to alternative programs were still allowed to participate in sports and extracurricular activities at their high school of origin, helping the students maintain strong ties to the school community (Hoye & Sturgis 2005).

Setting High Expectations

Teachers and staff need to have the same high expectations of dropouts and at-risk students as they have of other high school students. While formal tracking may be a thing of the past, holding at-risk students to a lower standard than other students is a de facto “push out” strategy that does nothing to improve their chances of educational achievement or their feelings of self worth (Brush & Jones 2002; Steinberg & Almeida 2004; Woods 1995; Aron 2006; Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morrison 2006). Apart from holding students to high academic standards, many programs reported setting attendance requirements, discipline policies, and other requirements. These requirements are emphasized through positive reinforcement rather than punitive actions (Chmelynski 2006, Lehr et al 2004, Brush & Jones 2002).

Creating a Life Plan

Another key aspect of some successful programs is helping students develop a life or career plan (Brush & Jones 2002). This strategy may include helping students envision a positive future for themselves (Woods 1995), but it also must include developing a realistic, attainable set of goals with smaller intermediary objectives they can attain (PYN 2006).

Facilitating Access to Social Services

Many programs also help students access a variety of social services, such as healthcare, childcare Medicaid, food stamps, housing, birth control, and legal aid, recognizing that academic issues are not the sole reasons students drop out (Chmelynski 2006, Woods 1995, Knepper 1988, Aron 2006, Lehr et al 2004, Martin & Halperin 2006).

V. Dropout Recovery Techniques For Specific At-Risk Populations

Some groups of students are at extremely high risk for dropping out. Analysis of programs described in the literature reveals several potential key strategies for addressing the needs of these students.

V.1 Pregnant Teens

Several programs focus on recruiting potential dropouts from healthcare centers shortly before or after they have had their babies (Weiler 1994, PYN 2006). Other strategies include expanding teen parenting programs, extending district parental leave policies for students, providing technology to facilitate in-home study during parental leave, allowing pregnant teens to apply for childcare subsidies before their babies are born, and expanding the subsidized childcare program to include parents who have not graduated and are under 25 years of age (PYN).

V.2 Over-Age, Under-Credited Youth

After an exhaustive analysis of dropout factors, New York City determined that the most critical characteristic of dropouts was that they were over-age and under-credited (this is also the case in Philadelphia). The district focused most of its recruitment efforts on recovering these students. (See previous section titled “Portfolio of Options” for a complete description of these activities). Some programs also recruited the parents of elementary school students who may never have completed high school, offering GED preparation programs, ESL instruction, and parenting workshops at their children’s school (Weiler 1994).

V.3 Incarcerated Youth/Youth Offenders

Cross-system collaboration is particularly critical in dealing with incarcerated youth. For example, Youth Opportunity Boston focuses on workforce development/criminal justice/education system-wide collaboration to support “court-involved” youth. The program uses educational liaisons in the State Department of Youth Services to refer juvenile offenders who will be released within three months to social workers who help the youth develop education plans. Similarly, Philadelphia has launched a new juvenile “reintegration” system with Courts & Probation, Workforce Development, and Social Services (NLC 2007). Programs developed under the Youth Opportunity grants reported working with the juvenile justice system to access youth at many different points, e.g.,

through police, prosecutors, courts, and prisons. These programs also established formal agreements with juvenile justice system entities to receive students as part of release programming (Harris 2006). Other strategies to address the needs of this group include ensuring curricula at juvenile placement sites are of high quality to maximize credit transfer, strengthening career resources at placement facilities, and providing extra transitional support when juvenile offenders return to schools (PYN 2006).

V.4 Youth in Foster Care

Youth in foster care face unique challenges, particularly related to the frequency with which they may need to change schools. Coordination and collaboration between schools and foster care systems is critical in helping to identify and recruit these students. For example, San Francisco's joint city-county Human Services Agency and Transitional Youth Task Force focuses on improving outcomes for youth transitioning from foster care. In San Diego, the reunification rate for foster care tripled from 20 to 60 percent and the number of children entering the system dropped by a third because of collaboration among probation officers, public schools, and employment and training services offered by the city (NLC 2007). Other strategies include strengthening follow-up for foster children who age out of the system, minimizing time out of school when children change foster placements, and emphasizing dual enrollment programs for student within two years of graduation (PYF 2006).

V.5 Homeless Youth

No programs studied addressed the issue of serving homeless youth, except to note that serving these students represents a significant challenge due to lack of adequate housing (Harris 2006).

V.6 Youth with Substance Abuse Issues

No programs studied offered specific successful strategies for meeting the needs of students out of school due to substance abuse. One study cited assisting high-risk youth, included youth with substance abuse problems, as a particular challenge, chiefly because of a lack of resources/knowledge in this area. The researchers posited that greater participation from "health and mental systems" may have helped program staff better serve these youth (Harris 2006).

V.7 Migrant Youth

There is little information on effective strategies to re-engage migrant youth. One promising program from the University of South Florida serves migrant students who are overage (serving 16 – 54 year-olds). The program is funded through the Higher Education Act, which funds High School Equivalency Programs (HEPs) at post-secondary institutions. The program employs a full-time outreach specialist who identifies students and determines whether they are most in need of services and likely to

complete the program. Recruiters work with farm labor organizations, migrant advocacy programs, churches, and health agencies, as well as formal K-12 and higher education programs focused on migrants, to find students.

The academic program is individualized and focused on changing students' past negative perceptions of school. Instruction is provided using the Internet, email, and in person. There are two primary components to the academic program—GED curriculum and Learning Resource instruction (training in academic learning strategies). LEP support and tutoring are also provided. Each student has an Individualized Achievement Plan with appropriate formative and summative assessments.

There is a Community Living component of the program that includes classes on life skills, socio-cultural development (with assistance from university organizations for Latin American students), and community service projects.

The program also employs a full-time “Transition Specialist” who provides services based on student aptitude and interest, including vocational evaluation and counseling, career exploration and shadowing, “employability skill training” (how to find a job, how to interview, resume writing, interpersonal skills, etc.), and post-secondary placement. Program staff follows up with former students to ensure they stay on track with their school/work plans. The center maintains a toll free number to assist follow-up, and keeps resumes on file. Former students receive a program newsletter and are invited to attend the yearly graduation ceremony

VI. Program Evaluation

Typically, alternative education programs use measures of success that are different from those of regular schools. In some cases, multiple alternative programs operating within a single district may use measures of success that are different from each other. For example, a charter school focusing on out-of-school youth may be evaluated using different measures of effectiveness than a vocational/GED program operating within the same district. Both programs serve at-risk use, but their success may be measured differently. Academic gains need to be incorporated into *all* these programs' measures of success in a meaningful way, among other standardized measures (Hoye & Sturgis 2005).

However, many of the dropout recovery programs studied simply did not have good enough data for specific, valid conclusions to be drawn. Typically, evidence of success was anecdotal (Weiler 1994). In several cases, researchers included recommendations to shore up evaluation efforts or put them in place *before* programs began placing students (Weiler 1994, Aron).

New York City, through a partnership with the Parthenon Group, backs up its claims of success of its transition high schools and Adult Borough Centers using disaggregated data along multiple measures. Comparing over-age, under-credited youth in both transition schools and regular high schools, the program found that transition school students had an average graduation rate of 56 percent versus 19 percent for their peers in regular high

schools. These schools nearly doubled attendance rates and credit accumulation for the group vs. regular high schools. All Transfer School Students showed an increase in academic performance, with the most challenged students seeing the biggest increases. Because such detailed analysis of data is time consuming and thus costly, partnerships with private organizations and post-secondary institutions may be an effective strategy for improving evaluation efforts.

A few programs do follow students past graduation, gathering statistics on college enrollment, work status, vocational school enrollment, and military enrollment (Chmelynski 2006, Cranston-Gingras 2003).

The greatest challenge in determining the impact of a multi-feature dropout recovery program is that it is very difficult to isolate which component of the program is particularly effective (Stern 1986).

VII. Ineffective Strategies

Equally as important as identifying successful dropout recovery strategies is identifying ineffective practices. In general terms, dropout recovery programs that are too small, under-funded, and of low priority are ineffective (Steinberg & Almeida 2004).

Researchers warn that there are also some real dangers in proliferating alternative programs. For examples, as regular schools grow more academically rigorous and alternative programs proliferate, schools' "pushout" policies and practices may increase. It is therefore critical for schools to think about the unintended consequences of their reform efforts and to ensure that students are the drivers of their educational pathways (Hoye & Sturgis 2005, Woods 1995).

Another concern with respect to dropout recovery and alternative education programs is that there is a tendency for at-risk students to be put on an alternative "track" that makes it challenging for them to get back into a regular school (or, into college if they attain a GED instead of a diploma). Having an easy-to-navigate re-entry process is critical, particularly for children in foster care or those in and out of detainment facilities (Martin & Halperin 2006), as is making students the "planners" of their own education pathways (Hoye & Sturgis 2005).

In terms of funding, programs developed based solely on one or a few unstable (or potentially unstable) funding sources are in danger of shutting down if and when that funding source disappears (Hoye & Sturgis 2005, Weiler 1994, Harris 2006, Knepper 1988).

Additional ineffective practices include early intervention without follow-up of student progress, teaching basic skills in isolation, providing work experience with no other social or academic intervention, increasing the number of attendance officers, and adding staff or programs to structures that are not functioning correctly to begin with (e.g.,

adding more of the same kinds of courses students are failing, making the school day longer) (Woods 1995).

VIII. Implications for Project Methodology

VIII.1 Methodologies Used To Identify Best Practice

Most of the studies reviewed did not require “rigorous” data to back up claims of best practice—likely because few programs actually implement full-blown, research-based program evaluations. Typically, studies used a case study or survey to identify best practice. Some programs examined achievement data, dropout data, retention data, graduation data, and other student data. One study identified programs as “best practice” if they included evidence of effectiveness using a “research or evaluation design” and if they were published in a journal between 1998 and 2003 (Lehr, et al 2004).

Few programs were able to point to specific improvement in graduation rates or reduction in dropout rates as evidence of effectiveness (NYC 2006, AYPF 2006). One program cited in multiple publications had a rigorous base of data that included not only school-related data but social services data such as teen pregnancy, gang activity, youth incarceration, and other statistics.

It is highly likely that in soliciting best practice we will not find scientific evidence of program effectiveness. It may be more appropriate to determine what kind of evidence each program should provide, then identify specific levels of best practice. For example, we may want to identify possible measures of effectiveness such as graduation rate, dropout rate, retention rate, achievement test scores, disciplinary infractions, college entrance, college attendance, work placements, and other social services data and set levels of “best practice” according to how many of the measures the program uses to demonstrate its effectiveness. Or, we may want to set “cut scores” for the most critical measures (graduation rate, dropout rate, retention rate, achievement test scores) to determine levels of effectiveness.

VIII.2 Organizational Structure of the Manual

The specific strategies listed in the “Effective Dropout Programs” section should be used as the organizing framework for the manual. As practices are identified and analyzed, the framework will likely shift and grow, but at a minimum, we will want to identify and describe best practice in:

Administrative Strategies

- Data-Driven Decision-Making
- Site-Based Management
- Funding
- Location of Program
- School Climate

Staffing Strategies

- Quality of Staff
- Professional Development
- Principal Leadership

Collaboration Strategies

- Cross-System Collaboration
- Post-Secondary Learning Institution Collaboration
- Community Service
- Private Industry Collaboration

Identification and Recruitment Strategies

- Creating and Using Student Profiles
- Recruiting through Multiple Channels
- Caseworker Approach
- Program Applications and Contracts

Program Organization Strategies

- Creating a “Portfolio of Options”
- Flexible Scheduling

Career and Post-Secondary Advancement Strategies

- Long-Term Career Planning
- Local Business Engagement
- Multi-Tiered School to Work Models
- Career Specialists
- School-to-College Transition

Curriculum and Instructional Practices

- Real-World Learning Environments
- Literacy Support
- Small Learning Environments
- Technology
- Student-Centered Instruction
- Monitoring and Assessment

Coaching and Mentoring

- Parental Involvement
- Formal Coaching
- Volunteer Mentoring

Social Supports

- Fostering Respect
- Setting High Expectations
- Life Plans
- Access to Social Services

Ineffective Practices

- To be determined based on needs assessment and submissions.

Resources should also be accessible to users based on specific groups of students. For example, we may choose to “tag” each of the above features/practices as particularly appropriate for one or more high-risk groups. We may also want to include in “case study” format a description of programs that were designed with one or more high-risk groups in mind.

We also anticipate the need to highlight best practice in program evaluation. For example, we may opt to “tag” certain programs as having particularly strong program evaluations. However, it should be noted that based on the literature review, it may not be realistic to expect many—if any—programs to meet the level of rigor necessary to truly be a “best practice.”

Finally, we recommend collecting specific forms that have been used effectively with various programs. For example, we might include:

- Needs Assessment Tools
- Intake Forms
- Career Plans
- Program Applications/Contracts
- Parent Communications

Individual forms would be “tagged” to specific strategies and programs, but would also be accessible in a separate appendix of helpful forms.

We may also want to develop a district-wide needs assessment that districts use to see what their specific student needs are, what recovery programs they currently have to address those needs, and what features or programs may need to be added to fill gaps. The model used by New York City Schools, which profiles high-risk students, matches different types of students to different program configurations, and funds programs according to the number of slots students will fill in each program, may be a good resource for replication.

VIII.3 Specific Programs in Texas to Be Evaluated for Best Practice

Three Texas School Districts were identified through the literature review as having “best practice” in dropout recovery:

- Youth Opportunities United, Corpus Christi ISD
- Houston Independent School District (multiple programs)
- Gonzalo Garza Independence High School, Austin ISD

These districts will be investigated thoroughly during the best practice review and evaluation phase of the project. Of note, exemplary programs identified nationally are clearly delineated in the appendix to this report, facilitating their addition to the manual, if required.

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Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropout
Author(s): J Bridgeland, J DiIulio, and Karen B Morison
Publisher: Civic Enterprises
Pub. Date: March 2006
URL: <http://www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/thesilentepidemic3-06.pdf>

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

This report analyzes data taken from high school dropouts aged 16-25 from 25 varied geographic locations. The report offers suggestions for changes in the type and structure of public education as well as measures that could be implemented at the school district (see structure notes below), state (higher compulsory attendance ages and better reporting and management of dropout data), and national levels (more accurate census collection and reporting, creating incentives to keep students in school rather than pushing out lower performers, and conducting longitudinal studies and disseminating this information associated with best practice programs).

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

The top five reasons given for dropping out of school are: classes were not interesting (47percent), missed too many days and could not catch up (43percent), spent time with people who were not interested in school (42percent), had too much freedom and not enough rules (38percent), and was failing in school (35percent).

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

The suggestions offered in this report are directed at prevention, but would likely hold true for recovery programs as well. The suggested revisions include restructuring the curricula and improving teaching by making the content more relevant to the students, teachers keeping the classes more interesting, more one-on-one instruction, feedback, and interaction, and providing opportunities for real-world learning. Other suggestions include providing more accessible support for struggling students, provide an environment that focuses on high expectations academically with low tolerance for violence and rule infractions, ensure strong relationships between teachers and students, improve parental support through better communication between the school and parents.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

This report describes the dropout population as being mostly low-income, urban, minority, single-parent children in large high schools located in the inner city.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: An Introductory Packet on Dropout Prevention
Publisher: Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA
URL: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/DropoutPrev/dropout.pdf>
Author(s):
Pub. Date: July 2004

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

This handbook serves as a basic primer on dropping out and is a profuse compilation of outside sources. It includes excerpted quotes and statistics on demographics of at-risk and disengaged youth as well as entire previously-published articles or links to articles focusing on various aspects of the dropout prevention issue. Several brief synopses of programs are also listed.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

This handbook includes a fact sheet on gay and lesbian students and their risk of disengagement at school and in society as a whole. This population of student has not received much attention in most of the other publications reviewed.

Implications for Project

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Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

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Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Dropout Recovery Tracking—project of AISD that tracks incoming 9th grade students through the next four years and documents their status in order to compile data for dropout statistics as well as to aid in creating prevention and recovery programs. (Ralph Smith, Evaluation Supervisor)

The Extended Day School Program—opportunity for out-of-school youth, ages 16-21, to continue their education through an evening program that offers low student/teacher ratio, vocational training, opportunities for extracurricular activities, and access to classes at the community college. (McDowell County Schools in Marion, NC)

WAVE In Communities—one component of a national program, this element focuses specifically on out-of-school youth, ages 16-21 in a holistic approach to reconnecting youth. www.waveinc.org

New Ways to Work—this organization collaborates with schools and community-based organizations to provide opportunities for in-school and out-of-school youth through school-based and work-based learning. www.nww.org

Harriett D. Romo (1998) *Latina High School Leaving: Some Practical Solutions*.
<http://www.ericdigests.org/1999-2/latina.htm>

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title:	Effective Dropout Prevention and College Attendance Programs for Latino Students	Author(s):	Olatokunbo S. Fashola and Robert E. Slavin
Publisher:	Hispanic Dropout Project	Pub. Date:	February 1997
URL:	http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/hdp/4/		

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

In light of the largely increasing dropout rate of Latino students in comparison with other ethnic groups, this paper suggests strategies for assisting these youth to complete high school and transition to postsecondary education or the work force. The article uses programs that have a demonstrated positive effect on the dropout prevention/reengagement of Latino youth as a basis of the recommendations.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

This report examines six programs: two dropout prevention programs (The Coca Cola Valued Youth Program and Achievement for Latinos through Academic Success) and four dropout prevention/college attendance programs (Upward Bound, SCORE, Project AVID, and Project GRAD).

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

The criteria for these programs rely on the effectiveness (based on comparison of equivalent experimental and control groups), replicability (especially if done across a variety of schools, not just in specialized settings), and were evaluated in a school serving many Latino students.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

While reading this and other studies on dropout prevention programs, it appears that there is much more research-based proof of success among the prevention programs than

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

among the recovery programs. It is worth noting, however, that the effective prevention programs mentioned in this paper appear to comprise the same basic elements of focusing on strong academics, building self-esteem, and establishing strong family support of the youths' academic success that are prevalent in the successful recovery programs.

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

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Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

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Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

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Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title:	Dropping Out of High School: The Role of School Organization and Structure	Author(s):	Valerie E. Lee and David T. Burkam
Publisher:	American Educational Research Journal	Pub. Date:	Summer 2003
URL:	http://www.jstor.org/view/00028312/sp060002/06x0140j/0?currentResult=00028312%2bsp060002%2b06x0140j%2b0%2cFFFFFFFFF03&searchUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.jstor.org%2Fsearch%2FBasicResults%3Fhp%3D25%26si%3D1%26gw%3Djtx%26jtxsi%3D1%26jepsi%3D1%26artsi%3D1%26Query%3Ddropping%2Bout%2Bof%2Bhigh%2Bschool%26wc%3Don		

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

This article shifts focus from the youth’s responsibility for dropping out and looks at the role schools play in the process. School structure (public/private, size), academic structure (courses offered are mostly academic and very few are low-level), and social structure (student-teacher and peer relationships form the social structures that guide the student to adulthood) are the three areas of focus for this article, with the greatest importance given to social structure.

This paper is a research-based analysis that includes all relevant data compilation and evaluation.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

The theory promoted suggests that schools with smaller class size, high quality academic-based curricula, and strong social support (especially exceptional teacher/student relationships) provide an atmosphere conducive to student retention. The inference for recovery programs is that programs with these same qualities could be expected to create the best results.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

Implications for Project

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School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

This study proposes that a few indicators such as socioeconomic status or academic background cannot be used in isolation when approaching the reengagement of youth. A more holistic approach incorporating a strong social connection for the youth is vital.

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title:	High School Dropouts: A Review of Issues and Evidence	Author(s):	Russell W. Rumberger
Publisher:	Review of Educational Research	Pub. Date:	Summer 1987
URL:	http://www.jstor.org/view/00346543/ap040270/04a00020/0?currentResult=00346543%2bap040270%2b04a00020%2b0%2cFFFF3F&searchUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.jstor.org%2Fsearch%2FBasicResults%3Fhp%3D25%26si%3D1%26gw%3Djtx%26jtxsi%3D1%26jcpsi%3D1%26artsi%3D1%26Query%3DHigh%2BSchool%2BDropouts%26wc%3Don		

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

This journal article examines the incidence, trends, causes, and consequences of dropping out of school. It also makes recommendations on possible changes to address the dropout problem at the local level and advocating systemic changes at higher levels.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

This article places emphasis on the longer-term concerns of the high-school dropout problem as it affects the U.S. economics and politics and urges others to expend time and effort at more in-depth studies of the longitudinal effects of dropping out on society.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

The proposed elements of prevention/recovery programs include programs designed with the reason for dropping out in mind, a mix of educational and non-educational services, accurate and timely identification for students at risk of dropping out, and programs designed for early prevention, late prevention, and recovery.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

An interesting idea this article promotes is that different types of teens drop out for different reasons. For example, a poor minority student attending an urban school with ineffective teachers who sees little chance for economic success in his future has very different motives for dropping out than does a suburban, middle-class student bored with

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

school who would rather have fun with his friends who are no longer in school. Perhaps recovery strategies need to take into consideration the motivation for the disconnection when trying to reconnect the youth.

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

This article advocates studying the processes that lead to disengagement from school rather than focusing on only the characteristics of disengagement. Classifying recovery programs by the system that they wish to change (i.e.: poor family support in a low-income district) might offer a helpful method of organization.

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title:	Essential Tools: Increasing Rates of School Completion	Author(s):	Camilla A. Lehr, et. al.
Publisher:	National Center on Secondary Education and Transition	Pub. Date:	May 2004
URL:	http://www.ncset.org/publications/essentialtools/dropout/dropout.pdf		

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

This handbook is designed as a resource for state and district level education agencies to assist in designing and implementing programs to help raise graduation rates. Several programs are examined. NOTE: The focus of this is specifically on prevention, not recovery.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

This handbook advocates small class sizes, strong teacher-student relationships, accessible social service programs for the students, connecting parents with their child's education, vocational training, life-skill training, structured environment with clear behavioral expectations, and forming links with the community.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

The best practice programs were included if they met the following criteria: focused on dropout prevention/intervention, included evidence of effectiveness using a research or evaluation tool, and the results were published in a journal between 1988 and 2003.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

The prevention strategies referenced in this handbook include personal/affective (designed to boost self-esteem), academic, family outreach, school structure (redefining the traditional school structure), and work related (vocational or volunteer/community service). Overlap between these strategies among programs is acknowledged.

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

What Works Clearinghouse www.w-w-c.org database of what works in education

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Urban CEO Superintendent’s Alternative Strategies in Reducing School Dropouts **Author(s):** John R. Hoyle & Virginia Collier (Texas A&M University)
Publisher: Education and Urban Society **Pub. Date:** 11-2006
URL: <http://eus.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/39/1/69>

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

This review examines the who and why of dropout, the toll it takes on the economy, and highlights ten urban districts actively working to prevent dropout. (Only two of the districts are also working specifically to recover out-of-school youth.)

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

NCLB mandates, and one-size-fits-all approaches in general, are targeted as a major hindrance to a rise in graduation rates. Coming from the belief that most dropout problems are focused in urban areas among minority, low-income youth, the authors of this article advocate changing the current approach of punitive methods to one that requires an innovative connection of public schools and communities to work toward graduating youth.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

The programs examined relied mostly on four of the 15 strategies recommended by the National Dropout Prevention Center: systemic renewal (changing the system, staff development, district-level involvement, and specific individuals in charge of the programs), alternative schooling, community collaboration (although a heavy emphasis remained on the legal system), and mentoring and tutoring.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

Effectiveness was not evaluated in this study.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

Urban, African-American, Latino, low-income, children from single parent homes, teen parents, youth involved in the juvenile justice system, and children with disabilities are the focus of this study.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

An interesting trend noted when collecting data from the 30 districts in this study was that when the researchers contacted the superintendent’s office and asked about who was in charge of dropout prevention and recovery, if the person was quickly identified, they were much more clear and knowledgeable about the programs than the person contacted after several referrals and phone calls to reach. The implication here is that when the programs are well-planned and organized, with visible structure, they will be more clear and accessible by the community—further implying a measure of their success.

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

The strategies in this study focused on the 15 strategies proposed by the National Dropout Prevention Center.

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Colorado Springs’ digital campus in the mall—originally intended to recover dropouts, but became so popular with students wanting to recoup lost credits, the district had to reconfigure the structure and a second mall campus is in the works.

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: To GED or Not to GED: AISD Dropout Recovery Programs, 1993-94

Publisher: Austin Independent School District Office of Research and Evaluation

URL: http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/13/bc/1

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

This review reports the results of two recovery programs implemented in AISD for two semesters. The success of the recovery programs was measured by the percentage of students who stayed in school, remained in the program, earned a diploma, obtained a GED, or did not complete the programs. The study reviews current literature to determine if a GED is an appropriate substitute for a high school diploma, which it concludes is not an acceptable substitute.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

AISD contracted with two community-based organizations to provide recovery services targeted to youth in a specific geographic location within the district in an attempt to reduce drop-out rates.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

Creative Rapid Learning Center:

Students could choose to attend one of three four-hour blocks each day (morning, afternoon, and evening) five days a week where they received instruction designed to prepare them for the GED exam. Counseling, support services, and personal development classes were also offered.

78702 RAYS:

Evening classes provided preparation for the potential of earning either a diploma or GED in this program.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

Of the 216 students participating in the CRLC program, 0 percent received their diploma, 29.3 percent received their GED, 0.5 percent went back to school, 25.9 percent were still in the program, and 46.3 percent dropped from the program.

Of the 59 students participating in the 78702 RAYS program, 0 percent received their diploma, 13.6% received their GED, 0 percent returned to school, 37.3 percent were still in the program, and 46.9 percent dropped from the program.

An estimated impact of the recovery program to AISD's dropout rate was nominal. Additionally, based on the AISD decision that a GED was not an acceptable

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

determination of success in the recovery program, the suggestion of this review is that AISD focus their efforts on dropout prevention rather than recovery.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

The primary focus of these programs was minority students living in a neighborhood where 80% of adults over age 25 have no diploma or GED.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

This project focused almost exclusively on GED preparation with few additional supporting services for the students. There was no evidence of the quality of instructors or the quality of the curriculum. (In fact, the curriculum used in one program did not allow the students to apply toward high school credits.)

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

This study used current literature that compared results of youth with GEDs to those of youth with high-school diplomas in the working world (obtaining employment, promotion, and salary). The criteria and determination relied mostly on subjective data; therefore, the conclusion was also a subjective one that may invite argument to its reliability.

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

The focus of this review relied on community-based strategies.

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

N/A

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

N/A

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: An Overview of Alternative Education **Author(s):** Laudan Y. Aron
Publisher: The Urban Institute **Pub. Date:** January 2006
URL: http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411283_alternative_education.pdf

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

This report reviews the elements that compose alternative education, including methods of categorizing alternative education, demographics of at-risk and out-of-school youth, and noteworthy attributes of current alternative education programs. Aron also considers the effects of employment programs, achievement programs, and programs for older youth on alternative education. Finally, the report advocates the need for more hard data on outcomes of alternative education, while suggesting these target outcomes, and providing current legislation and funding information that affect alternative education. Included with the report is an appendix that lists promising models of alternative education.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

Suggested methods of approaching alternative education are by type:

- Student-optional types such as charter schools, magnet schools, drop-out recovery programs, schools within schools, etc.
- Discipline-based schools such as in-school suspension
- Therapeutic programs for children with social and emotional problems) or by the students' educational needs:
- Students who have gotten into trouble
- Students who have "prematurely transitioned to adulthood" through pregnancy, caretaking responsibilities of other family members, or coming out of the juvenile justice system
- Older students who have been away from school and are returning for a fast track in order to transition to community college or other programs
- Students who have fallen substantially behind in their education—many of whom have been involved in special education

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

The extensive description of suggested attributes for successful alternative education programs includes high quality academic standards and expectations—creatively executed—of which both the students and teachers are aware and proactively maintain; creative, quality instructors who participate by choice in a curriculum and program with which they play a role in designing; ongoing professional development for instructors; low student/teacher ratio; clean, well-maintained facility; links to community organizations and businesses; autonomous administration and cooperative leadership

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

within the program; and strong student support with both educational and social needs being met.

Funding for these programs has typically come from grants, charitable contributions, fees for services, and state and local education funds. A suggested alternative to these “unreliable” sources of funding for out-of-school youth is to think about “‘non-traditional’ educational funding.”

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

This report suggests that there is a dearth of hard evidence measuring the success of alternative education programs and advocates for more research.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

This overview considered immigrant children, minorities (especially boys), young unwed mothers, students involved in the juvenile justice system or struggling with substance abuse, and adolescences in the child welfare system.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

One area of concern lies in the lack of hard data to support the results of alternative education and to identify which services work best.

Challenges for servicing out-of-school youth include reengaging the youth with institutions of learning; maintaining enrollment due to the student’s need for income or challenges such as substance abuse, family needs, or involvement with the juvenile justice system; compacting the necessary education and preparation to fit the typical short-term nature of these programs (usually less than one year); and providing the extensive remediation frequently needed to prepare out-of-school youth for entry into the work world. (From Karka (2004). *Strategies for Serving Out-of-School Youth*. Columbus, OH: Ohio Learning Work Connection.)

The focus for the alternative programs discussed in this report include obtaining a high school diploma or GED, receiving job-readiness skills or OJT, and providing social services such as day care, drug rehab, shelter, case management, or counseling. The programs with the most success incorporate a combination of these services.

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

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Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

- Academic instruction
- Instructional staff and their professional development
- Community involvement
- Leadership, governance, administration, and oversight
- Student support services
- Funding
- Integration of special education services

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Portland, OR—Portland Public Schools: Community-based organization alternatives that provide several programs and specialized services that serve to reengage out-of-school youth. Portland Youth Builders and Portland Community College Gateway are two of the city's programs that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is replicating nationally.

The National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families is developing a brief case study of promising collaborative efforts in Corpus Christie, TX.

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

See attached list.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth (Trenton) **Author(s):** Nancy Martin & Samuel Halperin
Publisher: American youth Policy Forum **Pub. Date:** 3-2006
URL: <http://www.aypf.org/publications/WhateverItTakes/WITfull.pdf>

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

Trenton Public Schools was facing an almost 70% dropout rate among students in this inner-city school district. Trenton’s solution was to transform their traditional high school into one composed of several small communities. Additionally, they created a separate high school specifically designed to reconnect out-of-school youth.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

Trenton Central High School consists of two main campuses and five satellite campuses. Each offers school days of four-hour blocks (morning, afternoon, or evening) where the students focus solely and intensely on education. Sports, a library, and even lunchrooms are not a part of this school where academics are the spotlight.

In addition to core courses and electives, students are required to take two technology courses and sit for the International Computer Driving License. Students can also receive credits for community service and work experience. The district has recently begun working with the local community college to provide students with college credits and further enhance their employment training.

Funding is primarily through state and district money. Because of the bare-bones approach to their program, very little money is needed to support the schools.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

Evidence of Trenton’s effectiveness is found through high attendance (94 percent), high student success (85 percent of graduates are working, in the military, or in college), the fact that the district increased high school enrollment by 40 percent in the first three years of the program. Additionally, the incredible shift in attitude of the students from extremely negative to that of respectful, successful students evidenced in their treatment of staff and facilities and the complete lack of student fights or suspension speaks loudly for the success of the program.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

Most of the youth targeted in Trenton are low-income, inner-city, African-American youth. Many deal with behavior, educational, and social problems (such as teen parenting) and most have been out of school for some time.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

Trenton focuses on teaching the students structure and respect through small academic groups with high standards and zero tolerance for negative behaviors. In addition to academics, students are given the opportunity to prepare for employment or college, but these are secondary in focus to education.

An interesting note to this program is that both the district superintendent and principal of the high school came from Philadelphia where they attempted to implement this same program. Due to the lack of political and community backing, the program that has enjoyed such success in New Jersey failed in Philadelphia.

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

Academic strategies are utilized in Trenton.

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth (Pima County-Tuscan) **Author(s):** Nancy Martin & Samuel Halperin
Publisher: American youth Policy Forum **Pub. Date:** 3-2006
URL: <http://www.aypf.org/publications/WhateverItTakes/WITfull.pdf>

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

Faced with incredibly high dropout rates, county officials initiated partnerships with several community leaders to create programs to address the dropout crisis in Pima County. With heavy marketing and community involvement, the prevention and recovery programs enjoy both high visibility and success.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

Pima County's programs combine academics (earning a diploma or GED), community service, and vocational training. One of the programs works with a local community college to allow student to earn credits for college while completing their high school work. Two of the programs focus specifically on horticulture and art (murals). These two programs work with the community so that the students' works become a part of the area in and around Tuscan. All of the programs work in close conjunction with community and political organizations.

Funding comes from city, county, and federal funds.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

Pima County relies on percentages of student obtaining their academic goals (diploma or GED) as well as the percentage of students that go on to employment or postsecondary education after completion of the programs.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

Pima County programs contain mostly low-income Latino or Native American youth, who come from an economically depressed area. Many of the students are residents of Native American reservations, teen parents, involved with the juvenile justice system, homeless, or have disabilities.

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Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

Many of the dropouts in Pima County left school in order to help support their families. As a result, many of the programs offer stipends to the students to offset the loss of money they may face while participating in the programs. Additionally, creating the programs with a heavy emphasis on vocation training addresses the needs of a county with low employment rates. The ability for those creating the programs to identify specific needs of the community and to address them in the development of the programs results in success for all involved.

Another important message to take from Pima’s experience is that building the self-esteem of the youth can be as important as the academic and job skill training they receive. These students perform better when they are empowered.

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

An interesting strategy that works well in Pima County is to rely on specific vocational training. Pima County has two programs with a specific vocation as its focus as well as most of the programs looking toward employment as a goal as important as academic achievement.

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth (Milwaukee) **Author(s):** Nancy Martin & Samuel Halperin

Publisher: American youth Policy Forum **Pub. Date:** 3-2006

URL: <http://www.aypf.org/publications/WhateverItTakes/WITfull.pdf>

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

Milwaukee reaps the benefits of Wisconsin state law which mandates that school boards identify and serve at-risk youth and also allow additional funding for the programs to retain these youth. As a result, the charter school system in Milwaukee is ample and complex. In addition to the strong prevention programs, Milwaukee has also developed one program to address the needs of out-of-school youth.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

TransCenter is a non-profit group with a long history in Milwaukee that has created a charter high school with three partnership schools and a Technical Assistance & Leadership Center (which is the recipient of a five-year grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to create 50 small high schools). All of the programs implement a hands-on approach to education with small class sizes and involved staff members. One of the programs works in conjunction with a local community college to provide dual credits or the ability to work toward an associate's degree. Funding for classes at the community college is provided via fundraising. Most of these programs service at-risk youth with only one of them actually providing assistance to out-of-school youth.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

Milwaukee does not have a unified method of evaluating their programs and this issue is under assessment at this time.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

The target population in Milwaukee is predominantly African-American and low-income. Some of the students are teen parents, involved with the juvenile justice system,

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Milwaukee focuses most of their attention on prevention programs, offering little for recovery programs. It is not clear if the small amount of effort expended is due to lack of need or whether the need exists and this area has not yet been developed. It may be important to determine if a lack of programs in a given area falls in one of these two situations.

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth (Camden, NJ) **Author(s):** Nancy Martin & Samuel Halperin
Publisher: American youth Policy Forum **Pub. Date:** 3-2006
URL: <http://www.aypf.org/publications/WhateverItTakes/WITfull.pdf>

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

In 2004, Camden was rated “America’s Most Dangerous City.” To address high dropout rates in this urban area plagued with high unemployment and poverty, several local social service agencies came together to create The Work Group, which in turn became affiliated with Youth Corps. This program is small (due to funding constraints), yet is making a powerful impact on the community.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

Work Group’s New Jersey Youth Corps focuses on teaching students how to be positive contributors to their community while preparing them for a career. What is unique about this program is the approach. Youth who are accepted into the program begin in a small group of 28, and this group stays together for five weeks. During this initial phase, the youth focus solely on relationship building. After the initial phase, the students move on to a curriculum that includes GED preparation, career development, community service, and cultural exploration. Upon graduation, the students are provided with strong support during their transition to the working world, including hard services, such as eyeglasses or clothing for an interview.

Funding sources are almost entirely state and federal with some small private funding donations.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

Success of the program is measured by the high percentage of students who earn their diploma or GED and who are employed after the program. Additionally, the students involved in the juvenile justice system have less than a 16% recidivism rate.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

The Camden program is half Latino/half African-American and all are low-income. Some are teen parents, involved with the juvenile justice system, homeless, and/or

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Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

transitioning from foster care. Over 30% dropped out of school prior to entering high school.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

The unique focus of the Camden program lies in the expectation of the youth not only to achieve their academic and vocational goals, but to gain self-respect, family-oriented, responsible members of their community.

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

One measure of best practice for Camden is the national recognition they have received for their work (by the US Department of Labor and the National Youth Employment Coalition [twice] and by the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps).

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth (Baltimore) **Author(s):** Nancy Martin & Samuel Halperin
Publisher: American youth Policy Forum **Pub. Date:** 3-2006
URL: <http://www.aypf.org/publications/WhateverItTakes/WITfull.pdf>

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

City leaders in Baltimore developed several programs as a result of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development and many community organizations. While the focus was primarily on addressing employment needs of the disconnected youth in Baltimore, it became evident that education was an integral part of the recovery programs.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

The programs in Baltimore focus on education through experiential learning, life-skills, job-readiness, and civic works in small, specialized classes. Some of the programs work in conjunction with local community colleges where students can earn either their high school diploma and college credits or work towards a GED. Most of the programs also focus on job skill training for high-demand professions in the Baltimore area.

All of the programs also meet social needs of the students. While the care of these needs may not be the highlight of the programs, the needs are acknowledged and address as necessary (such as providing bus fare, low cost meals, or access to child care to students).

Funding has come through a combination of public school funds, local and state funds, foundation grants, federal grants, and in-kind donations.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

Effectiveness of the Baltimore programs is based on the high percentage of students who transition from the programs to employment or postsecondary education and on the number of students who remain employed or in school. The Fresh Start program, which teaches carpentry skills to youth involved in the juvenile justice system, notes that their students maintain a 74 percent rate of employment or postsecondary education and only a 14 percent recidivism rate.

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A more specific determination is seen in the Civic Works program. They hired an outside consultant to measure the success of the program and found that for every one dollar spent on the program, another two dollars was generated for the community.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

The most of the students participating in the Baltimore programs are low-income, African-American youth who may be pregnant or parenting, involved with the juvenile justice system, homeless, involved with gangs, or in foster care.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

Baltimore utilizes the multi-faceted resources available as the result of a cooperative relationship between political, business, and community leaders to provide both education and employment skills for out-of-school youth. As with so many programs, focusing on building up the youth (as opposed to a more punitive approach) through community involvement, small class size, and dedicated staff members yield the best results for the youth.

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

While some programs can base their results on an improvement in the community as a whole, the inner-city Baltimore area remains a dangerous place to live due to the drugs and crime; therefore best practice, as far as Baltimore is concerned, is based on the individual success of the students and the programs themselves.

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

A combination of community-based and career-based strategies is used in Baltimore. Some of the programs focus on specific employment training (allied health or technology careers).

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth (Baltimore) **Author(s):** Nancy Martin & Samuel Halperin
Publisher: American youth Policy Forum **Pub. Date:** 3-2006
URL: <http://www.aypf.org/publications/WhateverItTakes/WITfull.pdf>

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

City leaders in Baltimore developed several programs as a result of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development and many community organizations. While the focus was primarily on addressing employment needs of the disconnected youth in Baltimore, it became evident that education was an integral part of the recovery programs.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

The programs in Baltimore focus on education through experiential learning, life-skills, job-readiness, and civic works in small, specialized classes. Some of the programs work in conjunction with local community colleges where students can earn either their high school diploma and college credits or work towards a GED. Most of the programs also focus on job skill training for high-demand professions in the Baltimore area.

All of the programs also meet social needs of the students. While the care of these needs may not be the highlight of the programs, the needs are acknowledged and address as necessary (such as providing bus fare, low cost meals, or access to child care to students).

Funding has come through a combination of public school funds, local and state funds, foundation grants, federal grants, and in-kind donations.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

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Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

A more specific determination is seen in the Civic Works program. They hired an outside consultant to measure the success of the program and found that for every one dollar spent on the program, another two dollars was generated for the community.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

The most of the students participating in the Baltimore programs are low-income, African-American youth who may be pregnant or parenting, involved with the juvenile justice system, homeless, involved with gangs, or in foster care.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

Baltimore utilizes the multi-faceted resources available as the result of a cooperative relationship between political, business, and community leaders to provide both education and employment skills for out-of-school youth. As with so many programs, focusing on building up the youth (as opposed to a more punitive approach) through community involvement, small class size, and dedicated staff members yield the best results for the youth.

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

While some programs can base their results on an improvement in the community as a whole, the inner-city Baltimore area remains a dangerous place to live due to the drugs and crime; therefore best practice, as far as Baltimore is concerned, is based on the individual success of the students and the programs themselves.

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

A combination of community-based and career-based strategies is used in Baltimore. Some of the programs focus on specific employment training (allied health or technology careers).

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth (Salt Lake City) **Author(s):** Nancy Martin & Samuel Halperin
Publisher: American youth Policy Forum **Pub. Date:** 3-2006
URL: <http://www.aypf.org/publications/WhateverItTakes/WITfull.pdf>

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

Salt Lake School District serves the large number of immigrants through a variety of educational opportunities including a high school serving teens, an adult only high school focused specifically on recovery, an ESL program, and a young parent program. Salt Lake's programs are a combination of both recovery and prevention.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

One interesting approach used in Salt Lake is the extensive network of satellite sites that are a part of the program. In addition to the main site, there are 29 additional sites located throughout the community. Classes are year-round at the main site are available from 7:30 am to 9:30 pm and from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm on Saturdays. Classes for the adult program are year-round, open entry/exit, evening courses. Through the community food bank, dinner is served to the students and their families each evening and students receive monthly food drops.

Classes are a combination of hands-on experience, vocational training, community projects, parenting and child development, and have a strong emphasis on reading. There are no student or teacher desks—just community tables at which to work in highly interactive classrooms. Any resource available for staff is also available for students, such as telephones or computers. There is a strong belief that the students are all equal, not just to each other, but to the staff as well, despite their varied backgrounds.

Funding is from a combination of public school, state, and federal funding and several grants.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

In measuring the success of the high school, a combination of empirical data generated by the school and the district and disaggregated data from the Utah Basic Skills Competency Test show significant improvement in test scores, sometime outperforming traditional schools in the district. Reading and writing scores were higher than those serving similar populations in more affluent schools. Additionally, follow-up of the

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Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

graduates revealed 76 percent of the graduates were working and 21 percent were in postsecondary education.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.
Immigrants, low income, young mothers, and adults

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

Salt Lake’s focus is on setting high standards for students in a cooperative, respectful environment while providing the necessary support services to ensure the success of the students (such as food and child care).

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

This program is unique in that they actually have strong data measuring the success of the program. Additionally, the community’s strong, positive response to the school (i.e.: parents requesting that their children are placed in the school).

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

Salt Lake includes an adult-only program that provides structure and services specific to adults returning to school and their special circumstances.

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth (Portland) **Author(s):** Nancy Martin & Samuel Halperin

Publisher: American Youth Policy Forum **Pub. Date:** 3-2006

URL: <http://www.aypf.org/publications/WhateverItTakes/WITfull.pdf>

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

Portland Public Schools is required by a state statute to attempt recovery of out-of-school students. The districts are allowed to contract with private institutions, using district money, if it's in the best interest of the student. The state requires that the districts notify students of the availability of alternative educational programs if they have poor attendance, leave school (either voluntarily or involuntarily), or fail to meet the state standards at Grades 3, 5, 8, and 10.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

In addition to three evening high schools within the district, Portland created 19 programs that focus on the needs of students first, and then prepare them for their appropriate educational tract (GED or diploma, employment, or transitioning to public school). Most of the programs focus on teaching personal responsibility through community involvement in small class sizes and close working relationships with staff. PPS's strong working relationship with Portland Community College is also important, specifically for their Gateway to College program which offers high school completion and substantial credits applied toward an associate's degree to out-of-school youth.

While PPS funds many of the programs through State School Funds, each of those dollars is matched by funds from private foundations and contributions and other public funds.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

Portland structured formal evaluation as a part of their community-based programs. Each year, the programs contracting with PPS are evaluated by the federally-funded Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. NREL reports 86 percent attendance with 80 percent succeeding in receiving a GED or diploma, moving on to a career, or attending postsecondary education. Additionally, NREL found that these community based programs increased the total number of high school students being served in PPS by 14 percent.

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Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

Portland focuses on at-risk youth, homeless youth, teen parents, drug and alcohol abusers, teens involved in the juvenile justice system, recent immigrants, and English Language Learners.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

Most recovery efforts in Portland focus on teens up to age 21 who have left school or are at risk of leaving school. Many of these students have extenuating social circumstances that make completion of high school in a traditional setting difficult.

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

Portland developed formal evaluation as an important element of their programs. By contracting with a federal organization, not only do they have hard data, but the continual oversight has served as an incentive to achieve higher standards.

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

Most of Portland’s programs focus on the social needs of the students in conjunction with their educational needs. Many of their programs are broken down by the type of social services needed by the student such as drug and alcohol rehabilitation, teen parenting needs, or homelessness.

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth (Oakland) **Author(s):** Nancy Martin & Samuel Halperin
Publisher: American Youth Policy Forum **Pub. Date:** 3-2006
URL: <http://www.aypf.org/publications/WhateverItTakes/WITfull.pdf>

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

Oakland has a history of incredibly low graduation rate of 66.2 percent, and in 2002 the Oakland Unified School District filed bankruptcy. Two established non-profit agencies stepped in to help recover the many students leaving school in Oakland. Both agencies agree that students need both academics and preparation for employment; however, of the two agencies, one focuses primarily on education and the other focuses on job-readiness.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

The East Bay Conservation Corps program focuses on five skills: academics, communication, citizenship, employability, and life skills. Students work in the field M-Th 7:00 am to 3:30 pm (earning money for their work on conservation projects for the community) and are in the classroom from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm and all day on Fridays. The academics include small classes with engaging curriculum that directly relate to their experiences preparing the students for employment.

The Youth Employment Partnership prepares students for employment through academics, providing workplace skills, and teaching the students to avoid self-destructive behaviors. In addition to a strong emphasis on job-readiness, this program teaches out-of-school youth such skills as doing laundry since many do not know how to take care of themselves. This program is designed as a place of stabilization with the goal being that students move on to more traditional educational facilities while providing them with strong employment skills.

Both programs rely on involved staff, strong student support and involvement, high standards for the students, and a sense of community involvement.

Funding is through state and charter school funds, donations, foundation grants, fee-for-service contracts, and the state's recycling program which refunds deposits on bottle recycling.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

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Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Evidence of student attendance and the number of students receiving either a diploma or GED are the measure of success in Oakland.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

Most of the students are low-income African-American males, many of whom face issues such as criminal records, parenthood, homelessness, learning disabilities, and leaving foster care.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

Due to the unusual circumstances in Oakland, most of the focus lies on providing an almost equal combination of education and employment. The programs in Oakland both pay their students for the community work they do in conjunction with their education. These programs also have an unusually heavy emphasis on life-skill training as many of these youth do not have basic self-care knowledge. This study is an important reminder that the focus of the recovery efforts must be strongly aligned with the needs of the youth population being served.

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

Oakland bases their best practices criteria on the overall improvement of the community and reconnection of out-of-school youth. Considering the crisis state of Oakland, this subjective factor is easily measured.

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

Oakland focuses on community-based strategies.

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth (Dayton) **Author(s):** Nancy Martin & Samuel Halperin

Publisher: American Youth Policy Forum **Pub. Date:** 3-2006

URL: <http://www.aypf.org/publications/WhateverItTakes/WITfull.pdf>

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

As Dayton’s out-of-school youth population rose, city leaders began working on a task force in conjunction with Sinclair Community College to create a recovery program that focuses on academics and preparation for careers. Through ten programs that offer a variety of academic and career options, out-of-school youth successfully complete their education and move on to self-sufficient lives.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

Funding:

Monies filter through community college, county money (five-year pledge), private funding, state charter funding, grants, and business in-kind support.

Goal of the recovery programs:

In addition to a GED or diploma, students work towards earning a certificate or training in high-demand career fields.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

Success is measured by comparison of prior rates of graduation with rates of graduation incorporated in the recovery programs and job placement success of graduates.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

This geographic area is part of an economically depressed location. Many of the students are from low-income families. Some are young mothers, students with learning or physical disabilities, and foster youth.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

The Dayton recovery projects combine academics with career training with small teacher/student ratios, in cooperative settings where students are encouraged to succeed, yet are expected to meet high standards of behavior and performance. Reports from graduates of these programs credit the close-knit atmosphere and the support and belief in their abilities from staff and other students to their success.

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

Dayton looks at their extraordinarily high graduation and career placement rates (90-100%) as evidence of success in their recovery programs.

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

A community-based strategy is the model used in the Dayton programs. They incorporate political leaders, business leaders, the local community college to participate not only in funding, but also the working success of the programs.

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth (Austin) **Author(s):** Nancy Martin & Samuel Halperin
Publisher: American Youth Policy Forum **Pub. Date:** 3-2006
URL: <http://www.aypf.org/publications/WhateverItTakes/WITfull.pdf>

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

Despite Austin’s lack of a cohesive, city-wide recovery “plan,” the strong education and community-service orientation of the city has encouraged several recovery programs to develop and thrive in the city.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

While the programs vary from school to community-based settings, they have many common elements that contribute to their success including flexible schedules; high-tech educational tools with a focus on career preparation; cooperation with local businesses not only for funding, but for participation in the programs; high standards and expectations; low student/teacher ratio; elimination of teachers as authority figures; and strong support services in place for students.

Funding for these programs is an eclectic mix of federal and state money, private donations, and grants.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

While no criteria were provided, the basis of success appears to rely on the number of students recovered and their ultimately advancing to either secondary education or self-sufficient, career-based lives.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

The Austin students are mostly inner-city, urban youth.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Recovery efforts focus on encouraging student achievement through strong staff/student relationships, high standards of educational and behavioral expectations, and providing the students with social and emotional support.

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

Austin’s recovery programs focus on community-based strategies.

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Gonzalo Garza Independence High School, American Youth Works, and Austin Can! were the highlighted programs in this review.

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title:	Reducing the Dropout Rate	Author(s):	Woods, E. Gregory
Publisher:	Northwest Regional Education Laboratory	Pub. Date:	March 1995
URL:	http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/9/c017.html		

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

This summary report discusses the dropout problem in general terms. While not specifically focused on recovery, some of the classification schemes used in the report may prove useful for the development of the manual.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

Consequences of dropping out:

- As more students dropout, their employment prospects become more limited because of the necessity of literacy and technology skills to get a good job.
- High-risk behavior (e.g., pregnancy, delinquency, crime, violence, substance abuse) is significantly higher in dropouts.
- Dropouts are more likely to rely on social programs such as welfare throughout their lives.
- There is a huge income gap between dropouts and non-dropouts, and that gap will widen.
- Increased dropout rates will create a large group of unskilled laborers in low-wage jobs—creating a large underclass that will have a significant impact on the American economy as a whole.

Risk Factors

- Poor academic performance
- Personal risk factors—substance abuse, pregnancy, legal problems, working more than 14-20 hours per week.
- School risk factors—truancy, absenteeism, tardiness, suspension, disciplinary infractions.
- Family factors—unstable home life, socioeconomic status, siblings' completion of high school, single-parent households, parental education background, primary language spoken in the home.
- Of the community-related factors, poverty is the single strongest predictor of dropping out.

Recommendations

(By group)

Nations/Cities/States

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Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

- Implement a consistent recordkeeping system to allow for comparable high school completion and dropout data.
- Research and promulgate information about what, specific to different communities, impacts dropout rate, including school and non-school factors. Focus programs on the specific needs identified.
- Require all school districts to have a standardized student data system
- Require schools to examine dropout risk factors.
- Encourage the decentralization of large school systems—focus on site-based management.
- Encourage the development of new curricula focused on at-risk students.
- Hold schools accountable for dropout rates.
- Develop community partnerships to serve at-risk youth.

School Districts

- Make school dropouts a district-wide concern.
- Intervene early, but continue effort.
- Set and communicate high student expectations.
- Select teacher who are interested in at-risk students to staff dropout prevention efforts.
- Provide many options for student who drops out for diverse reasons.
- Encourage a community-wide effort to address the dropout problem.
- Encourage parental involvement.
- Establish “strong, permanent” alternatives that receive resources commensurate with their status as important parts of the education system.
- Develop and use a system to track dropouts.
- Train staff in methods for identifying at-risk students.
- Use a team approach to work with at-risk students.
- Develop model programs that include the contributions of a variety of stakeholders.
- Upgrade workplace training to focus on technology and other high-level skills—prepare them for more than entry-level jobs.
- Provide a curriculum that is process-oriented as well as content-oriented.
- Add a summer component to programs for disadvantaged youth.
- Conduct a broad-based needs assessment to inform resources and programs for at-risk youth.
- Emphasize early intervention but provide resources for at-risk youth at all levels of school.
- Examine barriers (school policies, organization, student-to-teacher ratio, etc.) to serving at-risk youth.
- Network within the community.
- Consider staff’s desire and ability to create a caring and respectful environment to students—not just subject area competency.
- Provide ongoing staff development, evaluation, and feedback to school staff with respect to serving at-risk students.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Schools

- Monitor at-risk youth closely and frequently.
- Establish high expectations for potential dropouts.
- Enroll potential dropouts in a planned program of academic and vocational study.
- Teach basic competencies using real-world examples and contexts.
- Help students envision a bright future.
- Create curricula for at-risk students using an interdisciplinary team (vocational, academic, counseling)
- Focus personal attention on at-risk students.
- Involve businesses and the community.
- Involve parents.
- Periodically assess the educational programs you offer to ensure they reflect your students' current and longer-term social and economic interests.
- Improve the school climate and emphasize positive relationships within the school.
- Recognize and reward at-risk students' successes.
- Address conditions outside of the school as much as possible.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

This report synthesizes the findings of other research. In general:

Organization/Administration

- Schools-within-schools
- Small program size/low student-teacher ratio
- Alternative Schools
- Programs located outside of schools
- Administration of programs by entities outside of the school.
- School-based management of programs.
- Focus on instructional leadership (principal)
- Fair but strict discipline programs
- Flexible scheduling
- Community and business collaboration
- Staff selection and development
- Transition programs
- Careful tracking (data) for at-risk and out-of-school youth
- Community role models/mentors
- Business partnerships
- High school/college collaboration

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Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

School Climate

- Safety
- Orderliness
- Staff inservice on cultural sensitivity
- Parental involvement
- Student involvement in program design

Service Delivery/Instruction

- Student-centered instruction
- Early identification
- Intensive intervention
- Family involvement
- Intensive/individualized tutoring
- Mentoring
- Instructional technology
- Clear instructional objectives with closely-tied activities
- Careful monitoring of student progress.
- Support services—daycare, summer an nigh school, correspondence

Instructional Content/Curriculum

- Early childhood education/preschool
- ESL/Bilingual Education
- Good mix of academic and experiential learning
- Reading and writing focus
- Basic skills remediation
- Test-taking skills
- Self-esteem building
- Social skills training
- Parenting skills training
- Real-world focus
- Goal setting (career)
- Vocational skills/job training
- Work habits training
- Career counseling
- Summer enhancement activities

Staff/Teacher/Culture

- Committed staff
- High expectations of staff for students
- Caring adult interested in “whole child”
- Collegial atmosphere among staff

The report also highlights some ineffective practices:

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

- State-mandated promotion policies and “pushout” policies (e.g., raising standards without adding resources for at-risk students)
- Ability grouping
- Early intervention without follow-up
- Basic skills teaching alone
- Work experience with no other intervention
- Adding additional staff or programs to existing dysfunctional structures (e.g., adding more courses, extending the school day)
- Increasing number of attendance officers.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

N/A

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

N/A

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

The categories of best and ineffective practice described above, while not specific to dropout recovery, lend a sound organizational structure to the manual (e.g., segmenting by reason for dropping out, segmenting individual practices)

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Most of the programs referenced in the studies are old/defunct.

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Turning It Around: A Collective Effort to Understand and Resolve Philadelphia’s Dropout Crisis **Author(s):**
Publisher: Philadelphia Youth Network **Pub. Date:** 2006
URL: http://www.projectturn.net/downloads/pdf/Turning_it_around_Project_U-Turn.pdf

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

This paper is a call to action for local stakeholders to recover out-of-school youth. It blends economic statistics (e.g., yearly 8,200 students drop out; over their lifetimes they represent a loss of more than two billion dollars income for the community and a loss of 500 million in tax revenue) with information about who is dropping out and why to create an action plan for each of X stakeholders.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

- Dropouts are not a single, homogeneous group—they have multiple reasons for dropping out.
- Most dropouts want to learn and care about their futures. Many have specific aspirations for the future. 88 of 100 dropouts who were asked if they wanted to return to some type of school said “yes.”
- Of note, The University of PA hosts the KIDS database to which multiple agencies submit data. This data is made available to advance research in the area of child welfare and well-being.
- The Philadelphia Youth Transitions Collaborative partnered with U of PA to create a data-driven profile of potential dropouts and out-of-school youth.
- Reasons for PA’s dropouts included: lack of credits, feeling that no one in school really cared about them, being bored by coursework, school safety and climate.
- Non school-related factors included staying at a delinquent placement facility (nearly 90 percent of students who stayed at such a facility ultimately dropped out of school); foster care placement or abuse/neglect (70 percent dropped out); pregnancy (70 percent dropped out).
- Dropping out is more of a process than an event—their research shows that most students will drop out and re-enroll multiple times before leaving for good. PA researchers used data to create three categories of students who are at risk for dropping out: 8th graders who miss at least five weeks of school and/or failed math and/or English (75 percent chance of dropping out); At-risk 9th graders who were not at risk in 8th grade but missed more than 7 weeks of school and/or earned fewer than 2 credits during 9th grade and/or were not promoted to 10th grade on time (75 percent chance of dropping out); students who were not at risk in 9th grade but fell off track (20 percent of youth—very varied reasons for dropping out).

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

Philadelphia outlines seven “research-based effective practices” for keeping students from dropping out and recovering those who have:

- Building community-wide approaches (cross-agency systems)
- Identifying risk factors early and tailoring interventions to the student
- Balancing academic rigor with real-world experiences to create a motivational academic program
- Focusing on literacy deficits
- Improving safety in schools
- Reaching out to dropouts to identify what they need to come back to school
- Encouraging students to envision a successful future and pairing that with a realistic plan for achieving their vision.

Further, the report outlines specific action items for stakeholders:

The Public Sector

- Develop cross-system collaboration to provide a support system for youth, placing social workers in schools with persistent drop-out problems, establishing an Office of Educational Support within the social service system, encouraging specific collaboration between schools and Human Services, upgrading the truancy system to allow for better follow-up on the part of school staff, identifying resources and people to reach out to dropouts and encourage them to return to school, finding adult mentors, developing incentives to encourage these activities.
- Provide support to juvenile offenders returning to their communities: assessing curricula at juvenile placement sites to promote a standards-based approach (maximizing credit transfer); strengthening job skills;/placement offering at delinquent placement facilities, increasing academic and social supports in schools to ensure a smoother transition back to school, finding ways to expedite completion of missed coursework (instead of requiring repetition of entire semesters or grades).
- Provide support to pregnant teens: creating outreach by synthesizing resources at schools, health care facilities, and community organizations; expanding teen parenting programs; change district teen parental leave policy to extend it from 1 month to 6 weeks; use technology to provide in-home study while students are on parental leave; allow pregnant teens to apply for childcare subsidies before their children are born; expand the subsidized childcare program to include parents who have not graduated and are under 25.
- Support foster care youth: using/expanding model programs for students aging out of foster care (Achieving Independence Center); shore up follow up for youth leaving foster care; tracking data for students in and out of foster care; minimizing time out of school when children change dependent placements/schools; develop programming in dual enrollment for students within 2 years of graduation;

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

simplifying the re-enrollment process; provide better social supports; establishing protocols to place returning youth in appropriate programs; standardize quality assurance indicators for educational programming offered by a variety of providers.

Public Officials

- Use the “bully pulpit” to draw attention to the dropout problem.
- Support education reform and ensure that it matches the city’s growth.
- Support the establishment of a unique student identifier and expand data collection and sharing capacity.
- Remove barriers to re-enrollment and develop incentives for re-enrollment.
- Support high school reform and dual enrollment.
- Support community-based, cross-sector approaches to re-engaging struggling and out-of-school youth.

Business

- Articulate the skills and knowledge required in the workplace to help guide workplace training.
- Become advocates within their sectors and elected officials.
- Hire youth people through school-to-work initiatives.
- Use influence with elected officials to lobby for reform.
- Provide fiscal and human resources focused on *proven* strategies for reducing and recovering dropouts.
- Help develop “industry pipeline” models for youth.
- Invite teachers to the workplace and motivate workers to demonstrate what students will need to know and be able to do to work successfully.

Parents

- Talk about school.
- Emphasize concern for school performance.
- Look for dropout risk factors and seek out support from school officials and social agencies.
- Volunteer to call at-risk students in the community.
- Learn more about available district programs and how to access them.
- Access the Project U-Turn web site or toll-free number for referrals.
- Let elected officials know how important dropout prevention and recovery is.

Educators

- Recognize the warning signs of student failure.
- Learn to address literacy and other learning problems.
- Become familiar with social supports and networks available to at risk youth.
- Incorporate career/job awareness and training into classroom activities

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Youth

- Tell us what you need to stay in school.
- Reach out to your peers and encourage them to stay in school.
- Tell each other about programs that worked for you.
- Participate in citywide events.

Other

- Faith leaders need to speak from the pulpit about the drop-out problem and the moral obligation to address it.
- Community leaders (coaches, youth pastors) need to learn about the dropout warning signs and how to connect at-risk youth to services.
- Philanthropists need to provide funding and other supports.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

N/A

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

Pregnant Teens, Youth Offenders, Foster Care Youth

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

Pregnant Teens, Youth Offenders, Foster Care Youth

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

N/A

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

- Like NYC, Philadelphia has used data to create a profile of students who dropout. This report bases its recommendations on these students’ needs.
- Another category we might want to add—how do you make people aware of the specific supports available to students (e.g., this report seems to suggest that anyone living in the community needs to know the warning signs of potential dropout and what services are available). An awareness-building campaign?

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

N/A

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

N/A

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Multiple Pathways Research & Development: Summary Findings and Strategic Solutions for Overage, Under-Credited Youth
Author(s):
Publisher: New York City Department of Education
Pub. Date: October, 2006
URL: <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/BB8FE392-4B44-44D7-B893-242C87E1BE8A/15814/FindingsoftheOfficeofMultiplePathwaystoGraduation.pdf>

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

This report evaluates strategies implemented in NYC schools to address the needs of over-age, under-credited youth. In particular, it describes the data-driven process NYC schools used to identify the specific needs of its target population and the programs most likely to address those needs.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

- NYC Schools serves 1.1 million students, typically a diverse and disadvantaged population.
- Over-age, under-credited students are typically two years “off track” relative to age and expected credit accumulation. Nearly all high school dropouts in NYC have a history of being over-age and under-credited.
- 138,000 students in NYC between the ages of 16 and 21 are over-age and under-credited—slightly more than half are in school, and the rest have already dropped out.
- The total of in- and out-of-school over-age under-credited youth in NYC would create the country’s second largest school district.
- Most over-age under-credited youth have completed less than a fourth of the credits needed to graduate.
- One in two high school freshmen become over-age and under-credited, *regardless of incoming proficiency levels*.
- 84 percent of students who are 16 years old with fewer than eight credits leave the education system.
- Only 19 percent of over-age under-credited students receive a high school diploma or GED if they stay in regular high schools.
- 78 percent of over-age under-credited students are in regular high schools and 16 percent are enrolled in Multiple Pathways programs.

Literature Review Source Summary Form

Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

The Multiple Pathways initiative builds on projects such as the New Small Schools Initiative, Small Learning Communities Demonstration Projects, Charter School Initiative, and other professional development and instructional initiatives. Funding from the Gates Foundation and analytical support from the Parthenon Group allowed the NYC DOE to evaluate the student experience within the school system.

The “portfolio” of options available to youth include:

Transfer High Schools: These small academic-based high schools take students who have been enrolled in NYC public high school for at least one year and are far from being promoted on schedule in their current high school. These schools focus on personalized learning environments, rigorous academic standards, student-centered pedagogy, support to meet instructional and developmental goals, and a focus on college preparation.

Young Adult Borough Centers: Within “host” high schools, the centers are small learning groups that help students earn a diploma and create a post-graduation plan. They are full-time evening academic programs for students who have been in high school for at least four years and have attained a minimum of 17 credits. A non-traditional block schedule allows students to progress rapidly to earn only the credits they lack for graduation. Every Center has a community-based organization associated with it. The partner provides youth development support, career and college counseling, and job placement assistance. Students who complete the program receive a diploma from their high school of origin upon completion of credits and the Regents exams.

Full-time and Part-Time GED Programs: All GED programs incorporate Learning to Work (below). The Access GED model is a full-time program for over-age under-credited youth that incorporates youth development, integrated thematic units, developmental portfolios, student engagement system, assessment, progression, and connections to post-secondary training and career exploration. The part-time model uses a research-based workshop instructional model with high-quality curriculum materials. The part-time staff of the programs are routinely coached in research-based instructional strategies throughout the school year.

Learning to Work: This program focuses on high school completion and connection to work and post-secondary education. Services are provided by community-based organizations and are integrated into the above programs. The program focuses on employability skills development, subsidized internships, college and career counseling, and job placement. The program also implements attendance outreach, individual and group counseling, academic tutoring, and youth development strategies.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

The Transfer High School model appears to be the most successful program. Over-age under-credited students have an average graduation rate of 56 percent from these schools

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

versus 19 percent for their peers in regular high schools. These schools nearly doubled attendance rates and credit accumulation for the group. All Transfer School Students showed an increase in academic performance, with the most challenged students seeing the biggest increases.

The Young Adult Borough Center Model converts 44 percent of eligible students into high school graduates within one year.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

Over-age, Under-Credited

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

How do you determine what kinds of programs your youth need?

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

All decisions made with respect to this program are tied to a variety of achievement and attendance data.

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

This is an excellent example of how knowing your dropout population well can help you craft the appropriate options for attaining a diploma. Specifically, the initiative engaged in a four-step planning process:

1. Sizing the Challenge:
 - A. Assess the overlap of overage and under-credited students with the dropout population
 - B. Identify the size of the overage and under-credited population:
 - *In a snapshot view:* How many students are there at a point in time?
 - *In a cohort view:* What percent of students becomes OA-UC during high school?
 - C. Measure the size of major demographic categories (race and gender) within the overall OA-UC population
 - D. Segment the population by age and number of credits earned toward graduation

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Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

2. Profiling the Target Population
 - A. Determine relationship between incoming skill levels and becoming overage and under-credited
 - Quantify the proportion of students who enter HS “on-track” but become OA-UC
 - B. Calculate overlap between OA-UC population and ELL and SPED students
 - Analyze progression of OA-UC students throughout their HS career
 - Timing of when in high school students fall off-track
 - Patterns and outcomes once students have become OA-UC
 - C. Measure graduation rate for OA-UC students
 - Capture timing of graduation and the type of degree earned

3. Identifying Effective Options
 - A. Focus on identifying options with *recuperative power* –the ability to graduate students who have become overage and under-credited
 - B. Determine current enrollment patterns of OA-UC students
 - C. Assess population served by alternative options (Multiple Pathways programs)
 - D. Calculate graduation rates of OA-UC students by program type
 - Control for differences in population between various options
 - Identify proof points of success with OA-UC students, as well as invention challenges

4. Evaluating Strategic Options
 - Looking at new schools, programs, seats

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

This is absolutely a program that should be analyzed for best practice.

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Making Good on a Promise: What Policymakers Can Do To Support the Educational Persistence of Dropouts
Publisher: Jobs for the Future
URL: <http://www.jff.org/~jff/Documents/MkingGoodProm.pdf>

Author(s): Almeida, Cheryl, Johnson, Cassius, and Steinberg, Adria
Pub. Date: April, 2006

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

This report evaluates whether or not there are appropriate pathways in place for dropouts to pursue education and workplace training. It challenges the notion that the dropout problem is relatively small and confined to certain groups of students who simply do not want to get an education. It looks at data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study, which tracked 25,000 eighth-grade students from 1988 to 2000 as the basis for its conclusions. It frames three key recommendations for policymakers.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

Dropping out is not just an issue for poor urban or rural schools. 20 percent of all students drop out—40 percent of students in the nation’s lowest socioeconomic group, but also 10 percent of youth from families in the highest two socioeconomic groups.

Socioeconomic status, not ethnicity, is the key indicator for dropping out. The dropout problem hurts African-American and Hispanic students more than others simply because they are more represented in the lower socio-economic groups.

Nearly 60 percent of dropouts eventually earn a high school credential (usually a GED)—43 percent of dropouts from the lowest socioeconomic group and 85 percent from the highest two groups. The GED credential, however, is associated with a much lower rate of college achievement.

Many dropouts pursue postsecondary education, but few attain a degree.

Policymakers should shift to a “dual agenda” for school reform—organize accountability systems to emphasize both higher academic standards and higher graduation rates. The author suggests that this will pressure schools and states to move toward a uniform 4-year cohort graduation rate.

Policymakers should focus on providing a pathway to college for low-income youth.

Policymakers should refocus dropout recovery programs to emphasize skills required for success in the workplace.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: The Alternative Pathways Project: A Framework for Dropout Reduction and Recovery **Author(s):** Hoye, J.D. and Sturgis, Chris
Publisher: Keep the Change, Inc. & MetisNet **Pub. Date:** June 2005
URL: http://www.nlc.org/ASSETS/D7CC5886FD65414D96BC07A9AE0C8B75/IYEF_Alt_Pathways_Project.pdf

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

The purpose of this report is to lay out an effective framework for implementing alternative education pathways. Anecdotes from various schools, districts, and states are included, but the report does not include a description of particular successes.

While innovative new school models have emerged in an effort to get more students to graduate from high school, national dropout trends are still troubling. More students are falling through the cracks, and schools are not reacting to get them back into school. This report discusses one of three groups of students: those experiencing “interrupted education.”

The report indicates that there are successful alternative pathways for youth, but they often operate in isolated “pockets” of success. There is little coordination. Even within a community, multiple opportunities for out-of-school youth may not be aligned. The report outlines a framework for effective preparation of out-of-school youth for college and work.

Of note—the report warns against two risks of alternative pathways. First, if schools become more academically rigorous and alternative programs proliferate, schools’ “pushout” policies and practices may increase. It is therefore critical for schools to think about the unintended consequences of their reform efforts and to ensure that students are the drivers of their educational pathways. Second, there is a concern that alternative pathways become a “track” on which some students are set—once they are in the alternative system, there’s no way back out into regular school (or, into college if they have a GED instead of a diploma). Again, student choice is key, including having re-enrollment options

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

Prerequisites to Implementing the Framework: Balanced School Reform, Early Intervention.

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- School reform can and should focus on academic rigor, but it needs to be flexible to meet the needs of all students. When school reform simply focuses on strengthening standards without considering additional supports needed by struggling students, scores rise but so do dropout rates. In addition, while making education relevant to students has become a priority of reform, more needs to be done in this regard for at-risk students. Schools need to tap into individual passions to motivate students to come to school and succeed. In addition, reform must focus on building relationships within the school. For example, in some schools students who have transferred to alternative programs are still allowed to participate in regular school sports and extracurricular activities.
- Early intervention should be based on a variety of indicators, including academic, but also behavioral. Students need to be immediately channeled to appropriate supports when they are identified as at risk. Strengthening school-family ties is also an important early intervention strategy.

The report suggests a framework for alternative pathways, noting that “hodge-podge” approaches don’t work. The best approaches are well-planned and well coordinated. Following are the basic framework elements:

Framework Element 1: Shared responsibility and systemic coordination.

- Look at all children in the community—not just “my kids in my school.”
- Share data on youth across agencies. This can shed light on misleading dropout reports. Sharing data also results in a much clearer picture of the individual child and thus the services she/he needs.
- Agencies need to create a “seamless” service packages for youth in need.
- The inertia of systems will prevent collaboration from happening unless there is a strong leader or impetus for collaboration.

Framework Element 2: Adequate supply of choice-based, high-quality alternatives

- Think of educational options as a portfolio to offer to students.
- Choice (student choice) has to be the primary determining factor in student placement—it creates more student buy-in and guards against inappropriate tracking.
- Capacity needs to be built up in alternative programs. Communities need to identify numbers of students needing different kinds of opportunities and build programs from there. (NYC schools have done a good job of this.)
- Each pathway needs to be of high quality. Sometimes, alternative schools are not adequately monitored to ensure quality. Academic gains must be incorporated into the schools’ measures of success in some meaningful way.

Framework Element 3: Ability to refer, transition, and re-enroll.

- The door must swing both ways—easily.
- The referral system becomes key during students’ transition period (when they are in the process of dropping out).

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- Some youth will need to be able to re-enroll repeatedly (e.g., foster kids, migrant youth, disciplinary school youth). Schools need to make the re-enrollment process easy and “enticing.”
- Recovery efforts need to focus on the 8th-9th grade drop out problem.

Framework Element 4: Guidance and Advocacy

- Parents and primary caregivers may not be able to provide social and academic support for a variety of reasons.
- Out of school youth need adult advocates to help them access services. (The report refers to HISD as particularly successful in “guiding youth.”)
- Group advising can also be successful (connect 12-15 students with one advisor and have them meet twice a week).
- Individual Learning Plans are also effective tools

Framework Element 5: Flexible demonstrations of proficiency

- Students need to be able to accrue credits and advance through school using different ways of demonstrating mastery.
- This is especially important for the population of students who are “over-age and under-credit.”
- A good example is Oregon’s proficiency-based credit option.
- This element also incorporates business partners to identify and set workplace skill proficiency levels.

Framework Element 6: Policy Incentives

- Funding needs to be consistently and easily-accessible to schools (fewer hoops, fewer chances of funding ending after one or two years).
- No fiscal model exists that truly shows the actual cost of educating all students—traditional and alternative.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

N/A

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Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

N/A

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

- A way for schools to assess what their kids need in terms of programs—and how many (e.g., X percent of our students need night-time classes, X percent of our students need to do correspondence work). Make sure the resources match the needs.
- How do programs facilitate easy access both in and out of regular and alternative high schools?
- How is quality of alternative programs measured?

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

- Houston ISD, in terms of youth advocacy
- NYC Schools, in terms of multiple high-quality pathways

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

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Title: Beyond City Limits: Cross-System Collaboration to Reengage Disconnected Youth
Publisher: National League of Cities
URL: http://www.nlc.org/ASSETS/986F4B75DF524770A398BF1459940D57/07_YEF_CaseStudies.pdf

Author(s):
Pub. Date: 2007

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

The report uses case studies of several programs serving disconnected youth to promulgate the practice of cross-system collaboration.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

Overall benefits of cross-system collaboration include:

- Improvement in youth experience dealing with disconnection;
- Changes each individual system and how systems work together;
- Gaps are filled and assistance to youth becomes more comprehensive;
- Scarce resources are used more effectively/efficiently;
- Facilitates critical information sharing;

Mayoral leadership is critical in making these cross-system collaborations work. Mayors are in a unique position to “proclaim a vision;” bring together groups that typically do not work together; get in front of lots of different organizations and systems to ask for help; commissioning (research, agencies, task forces, etc.); directing fiscal resources; promoting (high profile). Compelling reasons for local leaders (mayors) to encourage cross-system collaboration include threat (perceived or actual) to public safety; moral responsibility and fairness; strengthening of families; shoring up future workforce/citizenry.

It is also critical for a single agency that has consistent, sustained capacity to act as a coordinating body. It can be any agency—as long as it makes sense. Some collaborations were led by the police department, some by the parks & rec department, some by workforce development—whoever had the most consistent and frequent contact with youth.

The report also discusses the importance of gathering data and using it to be accountable. Data sources may include management information systems within various city department that track trends in service levels—for example, youth employment, earnings, education, pregnancy, crime, work readiness. In some cases, programs have collaborated with research organizations (e.g., The Social Science Research Center of Texas A&M University). Data coordination also helps to streamline efforts. For example, San Diego’s multiple agencies use a single-page “Risk and Resiliency Tool” that tracks individual

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youth on a variety of risk factors. This minimizes duplication of effort and gives staff at each agency a better “whole picture” of the child and his/her circumstances.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

- Programs designed to reconnect youth must address multiple, overlapping social, emotional, and academic needs.
- Public agencies who have struggled to help reconnect youth quickly realize the systemic problem and recognize the need for efforts to be coordinated across multiple agencies.
- Opening a dialogue among agencies is the critical first step, even before long-term goals are identified.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

- Youth Opportunity Boston focuses on workforce development/criminal justice/education system-wide collaboration. It focuses on “court-involved” youth. The program uses educational liaisons in the State Department of Youth Services to refer juvenile offenders who will be released within 3 months to social workers who help the youth develop education plans.
- Albany focuses on multi-system gang prevention and truancy reduction efforts. Its program uses a personalized “service navigation system” that allows for a single point of access for multiple services.
- Youth Opportunities United in Corpus Christi brings together the local United Way chapter along with government and regional organizations.
- Philadelphia has launched a new juvenile “reintegration” system with courts & probation, workforce development, and social services.
- San Francisco’s joint city-county Human Services Agency and Transitional Youth Task Force focuses on improving outcomes for youth transitioning from foster care.
- In San Diego, the reunification rate for foster care tripled from 20 to 60 percent and the number of children entering the system dropped by a third because of collaboration among probation officers, public schools, and employment and training services offered by the city.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

- Cross-system collaboration
- Juvenile Justice System Collaboration

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Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

- The evidence used in this report, is anecdotal—gathered from case studies.

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

- Cross-system collaboration—particularly as it relates to juvenile justice.
- The use of data outside academic records (see San Diego’s Risk and Resiliency Tool).

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

- Youth Opportunities United in Corpus Christi—particularly with respect to research & evaluation partnership with A&M.

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

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Title: Learning from the Youth Opportunity Experience: Building Delivery Capacity in Distressed Communities
Author(s): Harris, Linda
Publisher: Center for Law and Social Policy
Pub. Date: January, 2006
URL: http://www.clasp.org/publications/youthopportunity_report.pdf

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

The purpose of this report was to analyze the implementation of federal Youth Opportunity Grants that were awarded to 36 high-needs communities in 2000. The communities selected were diverse—urban, rural, and Native American—but were connected by their severe economic distress. The goal of the grants was to begin building capacity within these communities to improve opportunities for economically-disadvantaged youth, and the grants were made with the assumption that funding would be continued and even expanded. However, funding for the grants has been discontinued federally.

At the heart of each community’s program was a “Youth Opportunity Center” created to offer a safe haven for youth (14-21 year-olds) and as a “focal point for case management.” These centers were required to provide educational support, workplace and career support, youth development activities, and case management support. Students were to be served by these centers until they completed academic programs and successfully transitioned into career or higher education opportunities. Typically, these centers were “youth friendly and technology rich.” Frequently, satellite centers were added with the goal of reaching students “where they lived.”

Academic supports varied. Ranked in order of most students participating, they included:

- Academic Remediation
- SAT Preparation
- GED Preparation
- Enrollment in 2-year college
- Enrollment in 4-year college
- Enrollment in Alternative School

According to the study, by the end of the fifth year of the programs more than 90,000 students (mostly minority) were enrolled in the programs. The outcomes described in the study were based on a survey administered to program sites. The survey identified challenges and successes in four categories: Mobilizing and Engaging Leadership, Connecting Systems, Implementing Comprehensive Program Strategies, and Engaging the Business Sector. In addition, four focus groups were conducted with program sites at the beginning and at the end of the final grant year.

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Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

- Ultimately, the report indicated that enrollment numbers exceeding the goals set by the Department of Labor showed that the programs were effective. However, the report relied on anecdotal evidence to determine whether particular strategies were successful or unsuccessful.
- Successes reported by communities included short-term accomplishments:
- As estimated by the Department of Labor, programs reached approximately 42% of all youth eligible to be involved in the program and 62% of out-of-school youth. Schools used a “saturation approach” to identifying and attracting students.
- Successful strategies used to get youth involved in the programs included communications strategies and events geared to young people, peer-to-peer outreach, involvement of youth in the design of facilities and in management decision-making, including activities in the arts, culture, sports and recreation, use of youth in community mapping and survey activities.
- Overall, the grant’s focus on professional development and training for staff working with youth resulted in a higher level of professionalism. The quality of youth workers increased.
- A significant result of the program was increased youth participation in academic support and educational re-engagement. Many of these programs implemented post-secondary education preparation programs, and there was a particularly high level of enrollment in post-secondary education institutions. The study indicates that programs’ success in collaborating with secondary and post-secondary education systems likely was key to their success in getting youth to participate in academic activities. Participation by schools included dedicating staff, providing special academic programs, and providing funding. Barriers to accessing school resources included limited access to the school site, confidentiality requirements, decentralized school-based decision-making (e.g., each school had a different way of doing things), and shortfalls in school funding. When schools were given the lions-share of responsibility for the academic portion of the program, more youth tended to access these opportunities.
- The sites were also particularly successful in getting youth into internships and jobs. Noted programs in Boston and Pima used a tiered model where students gradually moved from basic employability training with short-term community service projects, to paid community internships, to coached private or public sector paid work, and finally to long-term private-sector employment or employment training programs.
- Because the program required communities to add 40-70 new paid jobs (professional positions), most sites reported that the program itself had an

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- important economic impact on the community as a whole (particularly in rural areas).
- Overall, sites reported the greatest success in engaging multiple agencies in collaborative efforts (78 percent reported blending staffing and resources from at least three youth-oriented agencies; 62 percent had formal referral relationships with the juvenile justice system).; creating outreach strategies and networks; developing or accessing alternative education programs, and creating work opportunities for youth. Of note, when there was a strong mayoral presence, programs tended to run more effectively.
 - In terms of working with the juvenile justice system, successful sites reported accessing the system at a variety of points (e.g., police, prosecutors, courts, prisons). Some programs had formal agreements with juvenile justice system entities to receive students as part of release programming.
 - The greatest challenges reported by sites were recruiting adults to serve as mentors, developing interventions for harder-to-serve groups of students (in particular, homeless students, students returning from incarceration, students with substance abuse problems, and LEP students); engaging the media; reorganizing local funding to support programs and services for high-risk youth; “closing the gap” between what employers expect students to be able to do and what they actually can do.
 - Other important findings include: programs are most effective when there is a “convening entity,” such as a strategic planning team or council comprised of various community organizations and agencies.
 - The ability to serve youth well depended greatly on the quality of the case management staff. Successful programs invested in training and professional development. However, when federal funding ended, in most cases these well-trained staff members left because the community could no longer sustain their salaries.
 - Child welfare and mental health systems tended to have the lowest level of engagement in programs, yet were probably among the most critical.
 - There is simply no way for economically-disadvantaged communities to continue such ambitious programs in the wake of losing millions in federal funds. Foundation and private funds can help replace federal funding—as long as programs know how to access them.
 - Participation of local businesses is critical, particularly in helping programs identify the skills students would need to have to be able to access local jobs.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

All

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Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

High Risk Youth—homeless, drug-addicted, LEP

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

Anecdotal evidence/self-evaluation. Little hard data.

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

- Peer-to-Peer Interaction
- Social Service Organizations—child welfare, juvenile justice, etc.
- Youth involvement in planning and decision making (programmatic)

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

- Pima is again cited here.
- Houston
- Futures program in Baltimore
- Rheedlan Foundation efforts
- Quantum Opportunity Program
- Community in Schools
- LA’s Best After-School Program
- Job Corp

There is a great chart showing the communities that reported the greatest success with students in high-risk categories:

Special Group Communities indicating having Considerable Success

- Incarcerated youth: Pima, Boston, Brockton, San Francisco, Tampa, Los Angeles, Hartford
- Limited English Ability: Washington, DC, San Francisco, Buffalo
- Parenting teens Pima: Washington, DC, Brockton, Seattle
- Homeless youth Boston: Pima, Washington, DC, Seattle, Denver
- Substance impaired youth: Brockton, Denver, Seattle, San Diego

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- | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth with disabilities: Pima, Lumber River, Kansas City, Philadelphia, Detroit |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

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Title: Dropout Prevention and Recovery in California **Author(s):** Stern, David
Publisher: California University, Berkeley School of Education **Pub. Date:** February, 1986
URL: http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/colntent_storage_01/0000019b/80/1c/41/b7.pdf

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

This paper examines reasons why dropout prevention and recovery programs in California were unsuccessful. Two major reasons cited are:

- Students don't know about the programs;
- If no suitable program is available for a student, there is no one "in charge" of creating one.

The author suggests that those responsible for dropout prevention create a system for identifying the reason for a student's dropping out of school and referring him/her to the appropriate program based on the student's needs. Stern describes the various programs available to students at risk of dropping out or who have already dropped out and suggests that a comprehensive assessment system be developed to match students to the available program.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

- There needs to be a central repository of information about local programs already available to students at risk of dropping out or who have already dropped out.
- Dropout risk factors are often intertwined—one leads to another. For example, a teenager who does poorly in school stops going, falls in with the "wrong crowd," and becomes pregnant. Or, a student becomes pregnant and that causes frequent absenteeism and decline in grades. The options that will help each student will be quite different, though both technically fall under the category of "dropout due to pregnancy." Thus, says Stern, knowing *when the problem began* is critically important.
- Also, according to Stern, many researchers and practitioners have misinterpreted dropout data to conclude that the most significant predictor of high school completion is academic success. That is not necessarily so, says Stern, and many programs use predictive models to create their programs, when, in most cases, the predictive model is no more accurate than using no model at all.
- Stern also says that data can actually hinder the development of effective programs because they do not take into account the "practical know-how" of

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practitioners. Instead, says Stern, when deciding what kind of program is in order, practitioners must look closely at each dropout—is their a community-wide problem that needs to be addressed? Is there a collection of individual problems?

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

- Dropout programs can focus on rigorous academic standards or can focus on academics but in an environment that is significantly different than the traditional high school.
- Academic challenge must be balanced with student support.
- Stern describes the universe of individual features of CA programs and suggests considering whether each feature would be useful for a given population, instead of simply trying to replicate successful programs. He lists a variety of possible program features, organized along six tracks:

Curriculum and Objective

- Regular Academic Curriculum Leading to HS Diploma
- Remedial Academic Curriculum Leading to Equivalent
- Specialized Vocational Curriculum Leading to Job Placement
- Combination of Vocational with Academic or Remedial Curriculum

Location/Auspices

- Regular High School—program may become valuable to the school as a whole, may make better economic sense to house the program at the regular school
- Another School Facility—continuation high schools, adult schools, ROC/Ps, community colleges—continuation high schools may be “small and cozy,” other options treat students like grown-ups; some students simply want to avoid certain people who attend their high school.
- A Non-School Facility—especially important for students who have already dropped out. Appeals to those who refuse to set foot inside a school for whatever reason. Usually offer paid jobs

Instructional Process

- Transforming Social Relationships In the Classroom—building trust and mutual respect in the classroom; changing the way teachers and students interact; increasing student-led inquiry; transforming student from victim to responsible party
- Complete Individualization—for students who either cannot or will not participate in regular classes.
- Individual Learning Contracts Combined with Group Instruction and Social Support—allows for self-paced instruction but also provides opportunity for group academic and/or social support.

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Staff

- Paid vs. Voluntary—voluntary staff may be more invested in programs, as their values closely match those of the program.
- Background Preparation—Stern mentions that the State of California does not regulate the credentials of staff, but offers no judgment as to whether this is appropriate or inappropriate.
- Parents, other volunteers

Related Activities (other than academics)

- Counseling—individual, group, family; mostly informal (formal counseling is expensive); group counseling may strengthen students' attachment to the program
- Work—for pay, course credit, both, or neither; in some cases, students must show a one-to-one correspondence between academic and work credits for the work credits to “count;”

Schedule (“constrains its activities and influences the composition of its students”)

- Full Time—the amount of time is the same as a regular school, but hours may be differently configured to allow for work or other student activities; may be short term (e.g., in-school suspension) or long-term (e.g., alternative school)
- Part Time—self contained (e.g., continuation schools) or combined with regular school;
- Matching students to the above features is not done very systematically. Stern suggests creating a comprehensive assessment to match students to programs, which can also be used to evaluate which particular feature of a program resulted in a particular success (or failed to produce success). There are lots of individual assessments out there, but not a streamlined way of using them to efficiently and effectively match students to services (look at Project New Start in San Juan USD).

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

- One key problem Stern identifies is that in a multi-featured program, it is usually not possible to isolate which feature(s) may have been most instrumental in students' success.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

- Stern mentions that for urban, low socio-economic status children, reasons for dropping out probably impact them from birth. In rural areas, he notes that a

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primary reason for dropping out is “culture shock” as students learn about the “big world” beyond their small towns.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

- Look at the services described by Stern.
- Ask about how students are matched with services—what is the “intake process.” Is evaluation tied to the needs identified and the services matched to those needs.

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

N/A

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

- Need to have an “Intake” section. The intake procedures and evaluation procedures should be closely linked.
- The “features” described by Stern, along with others, create a nice framework for the manual.

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

- Peninsula Academies—combination vocational/academic curriculum, <http://www.seq.org/~pacad/about/curriculum.htm>
Teachers plan curricula across subject areas so that each lesson relates to the same overall career-related topic.
- Project HOLD, Pajaro Valley USD—NO LONGER IN EXISTENCE
- Oakland Street Academy—regular academic curriculum, <http://www.oaklandstreetacademy.org/>
- Educational Clinics Incorporated—remedial academic curriculum; provides assessment for high school students at risk of dropping out (Peabody Individual Achievement Test)—have been incorporated into Washington DOE

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- CA Regional Occupational Centers & Programs (ROC/Ps)—specialized vocational training
- Project FOCUS, Hastings MN—NO LONGER IN EXISTENCE
- Early Prevention of School Failure—comprehensive assessment, but only for younger students
- Project New Start—San Juan USD—NO LONGER IN EXISTENCE

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

N/A

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Title: Project ARJO--"Academic Recovery through Job Opportunity." Report on Second Year of Operation
Author(s): Knepper, Gary
Publisher: Department of Education, Washington DC
Pub. Date: 1988
URL: http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/1e/89/ad.pdf

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

This is a Year 2 report on a recovery program offered in Sandy Union School District in Oregon. The outcomes of the program were not scientifically measured, and the program ended after two years of operation because of funding problems.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

- This is a Year 2 report on a recovery program offered in Sandy Union School District in Oregon. The program serves potential and actual dropouts ages 15-21. The program funded an off-campus office to assist with job search and placement, used on-campus career placement staff, and coordinated with social service organizations. The students served by the program are generally performing below grade level in reading, math, or writing, are “unwilling or unable to adapt to the traditional classroom environment,” lack motivation, and/or have attendance problems. Although any student is able to join the program, it is focused primarily on students who have developed no career or vocational skills and would have trouble getting a job without intervention.
- “Clients” of the program are offered three alternatives: re-enrollment at a regular high school, enrollment in a GED program offered through a local college, or enrollment in an alternative high school.
- Sandy point is in a rural part of Oregon, and some students must travel more than 40 miles to attend school. 34% of incoming freshmen in 1986 did not graduate with their class and did not request to have their records transferred to another school.
- The off-campus center, the “job club” was intentionally located in downtown Sandy to be convenient to students and to overcome their unwillingness/reluctance to attend workshops in a high school setting.
- The job club helped clients secure social services such as food stamps, social security payments, emergency housing, etc.

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- After its first year of operation, the project began having funding challenges (the original grant was 1 year in duration). The City of Sandy was unable to come up with funds because of its economic woes, and the district was under a severe budget crunch. Project organizers sought outside funds but said that because of cuts in social services at the federal, state, and local levels, they were unable to secure any. They were also unable to secure any private funding. The Job Club closed during its second year of operation. Elements of the Job Club were adopted by the high school, including “prescriptive learning” (essentially, testing and remediation for students at risk of failing), and “survival skills” classes that focus on academic skills, job skills, and self-esteem building.
- The program exceeded all quarterly goals for number of students served and job placements, and also reports to aiding friends of students and other adults as well. Students were placed mainly in minimum-wage jobs, which, reports the project director, are essentially the only jobs available in the rural area.
- An analysis of GPA and letter grades indicated that 61 of the 93 participants in the Job Club raised their GPAs by .4 or more. Students enrolled in the program had a 5.4 percent dropout rate, as opposed to the overall high school population’s 8.5 percent dropout rate.
- *Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)*
- The program appeared to be effective in the short-term in terms of raising GPA and placing students in jobs. However, there is simply not enough information available about the data collection methodology to draw significant conclusions, and no particular strategy of the program can be credited with any particular success. Because the program ended prematurely, long-term impact has not been assessed.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

- The program operated in a very isolated, rural part of Oregon.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

- Like several other programs, this program had a significant job counseling/job placement service.
- Location of service (e.g., inside school, outside of school) and coordination with other needed social services should be considered.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

N/A

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

- We need to really look at funding sources and continuation strategies.
- Like so many other programs, very little evidence of success is available for this program. Program evaluation strategies (especially identifying appropriate measures of effectiveness and planning for evaluation) need to be included in the manual.

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

- Due to its early termination and lack of evidence of effectiveness, this program would not qualify for best practice.

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

N/A

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Project Return and Babygram Hospital Outreach, 1993-94 **Author(s):** Weiler, Jeanne
Publisher: New York City Board of Education Office of Educational Research **Pub. Date:** 1994
URL: http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/16/5f/5e.pdf.

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

This report focuses on a very specific recovery program aimed at identifying teens at risk of dropping out because of pregnancy and transitioning them back into the school system. Of note, the findings of the evaluation, which was requested by Project Return staff, were somewhat inconclusive in part because of the spotty record-keeping of program staff and partners.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

The study focused on parents of elementary school children who never completed high school and teen parents in danger of dropping out.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

- Project Return operated in 19 NYC schools in 1993-1994 and consisted of two approaches. Project Return operated in elementary schools and focused on recovering parents of elementary school students who had not completed school, using programs such as GED coursework, ESL instruction, parenting workshops, etc. Return schools also hosted a 10-week parent training course conducted by City University of NY (CUNY), and a 10-week hands-on science program. Each site was staffed by a caseworker who was a former teacher.
- Babygram Hospital Outreach operated in 12 health facilities and hospitals, and focused on identifying new teen mothers at risk of dropping out. Of note, most of the participants were in 11th or 12th grade upon intake, so the OER felt that the outreach program was particularly valuable in preventing dropout of women so close to graduation. The Babygram program intended to implement a “train the trainer” model by providing professional training to hospital/health center staff on parenting skills, who would then train Babygram participants. However, due to funding cuts this activity was dropped.
- Both programs used a “case management” approach, in which a case manager was assigned to each dropout or potential dropout from recruitment, through planning and follow up.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

- Evaluators examined a sample of caseworkers’ files; looked at aggregated monthly statistics on program activities; looked at pre- and post-test data on self-

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

- esteem and parenting skills; and did a longitudinal study of Babygram clients who were referred to public high schools.
- Case managers “successfully” identified students in need of services. The recruitment rate did not change over the years studied, but the number of students placed in educational settings did increase.
 - Of babygram cohorts studied, 59 percent either graduated from high school or were still regularly attending high school.
 - The study could not conclusively prove that participants had higher levels of self-esteem or better parenting skills, but through comparisons it appeared to be so.
 - The study looked at the academic achievement of the children of Project Return parents against those of non-Project Return parents and found a “significant impact” of the program on the achievement of the children of Project Return parents.
 - The study recommended taking a look at recruitment processes to try to increase the number of new recruits each year; investing in more formal training for case managers; look at better ways of planning, implementing, and evaluating program activities such as staff training and participant workshops; and strengthening ties with schools to better ease students’ transition.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

Teen parents

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

- Need to ask about evaluation strategies, particularly, how do you plan for evaluation before your begin your activities? How to do you ensure good record keeping throughout the project?

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

- This program evaluation really suffered from a lack of consistently collected data.
- Of note, the study attempted to use an independent measure of self-confidence and parenting skills in addition to academic data.

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

- Obviously, teen pregnancy is a significant reason for students dropping out. It is interesting that this program used two channels to recruit dropouts—identifying pregnant teens at hospitals and also identifying parents of elementary school children who had not completed high school.
- While not a great deal was said about the issue, the study implied that program staff needed to strengthen their relationship with regular school staff to ease transition for students back into regular high schools.

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

- While this study provides some interesting background information on dropouts and teen pregnancy, there simply is not enough hard data to really consider it a “best practice.”

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Project Return and Babygram Hospital Outreach, 1993-94 **Author(s):** Weiler, Jeanne
Publisher: New York City Board of Education Office of Educational Research **Pub. Date:** 1994
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Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

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Teen parents

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Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

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Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Reconnecting Youth from Migrant Farmworker Families
Author(s): Cranston-Gingras, Ann
Publisher: Reclaiming Children & Youth, Vol. 11 Issue 4, p 242.
Pub. Date: Winter, 2003
URL: <http://www.austinlibrary.com:2391/ehost/pdf?vid=6&hid=106&sid=b4e07d23-0dad-497e-bcc0-21a5a2eff258%40sessionmgr107>

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

Summarizes plight of migrant youth. Looks at a dropout recovery program that has been successful.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

- Migrant youth face myriad challenges, specifically cultural and linguistic barriers, poverty (need to support families), and high mobility.
- From National Commission on Migrant Education (1992): 84 percent-94 percent of migrant students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, 1/3 are one or more grades behind in terms of age-appropriate grade level, over 40 percent achieve below the 35th percentile in reading. Many are at high risk for disabilities, but few are identified for special education services. Only 15 percent of migrant workers completed 12 years of school or more.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

University of South Florida HEP

- Focuses on academic and life skills
- Most students served are overage for grade, averaging between 17 and 19 years old. The program serves students 16-54 years old.
- Recruitment and selection of students is “critical.” The program has a full-time outreach specialist who identifies students and determines whether they are (a) most in need of services; and (b) likely to complete the program. Recruiters work with farm labor organizations, migrant advocacy programs, churches, and health agencies, as well as formal K-12 and higher education programs focused on migrants, to find students.
- The academic program is individualized and focused on changing students’ past negative perceptions of school. Instruction is provided using the Internet, email, and in person. Computer instruction is provided to students. There are two primary components to the academic program—GED curriculum and Learning Resource instruction (training in academic learning strategies). LEP support and tutoring are also provided. Each student has an Individualized Achievement Plan with appropriate formative and summative assessments.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

- There is a Community Living component of the program that includes classes on life skills, socio-cultural development (with assistance from university organizations for Latin American students), and community service components.
- The program also employs a full-time “Transition Specialist.” Transition services vary based on student aptitude and interest, and include: vocational evaluation and counseling, career exploration and shadowing, “employability skill training” (how to find a job, how to interview, resume writing, interpersonal skills, etc.), post-secondary placement. Program staff follow up with former students to ensure they stay on track with their school/work plans. The center maintains a toll free number to assist follow-up, and keeps resumes on file. Former students receive a HEP newsletter. Former students are invited to attend the yearly graduation ceremony.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

- 70% of HEP participants receive a high school diploma.
- “Most” graduates pursue academic or career placement away from migrant work.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

- This paper focuses on migrant/LEP students.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

- Not all schools will have migrant students, but for those that do...
- How do schools/districts find these students? Where do they look? What community or other resources do you reach out to? What happens when a migrant student move? Is there an effort to figure out where that student has gone?
- How does a school or district coordinate activities and/or funds (if at all) with the migrant education department?
- Are schools/districts aware of/work with HEP programs at local universities and colleges?
- And, in general, for any population, what long-term follow-up strategies are in place to see if, once students successfully complete a recovery program, they successfully transition to college or career?

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

- The evidence in this report was mostly anecdotal.
- Looking at long-term transition statistics would be great, if anyone does it.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

- Need to address a key area—migrant students. For example, are migrant students included in dropout recovery efforts? How do staff work with other agencies/organizations focused on migrant students? How do they address the “moving” problem?

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

- University of S. Florida would be a good program to look at more in depth.

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

n/a

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Getting High-School Dropouts Back in School

Author(s):

Publisher: [Education Digest](#); Vol. 72 Issue 2.

**Pub.
Date:**

URL: <http://www.austinlibrary.com:2391/ehost/detail?vid=6&hid=106&sid=b4e07d23-0dad-497e-bcc0-21a5a2eff258%40sessionmgr107>
(Requires APL membership)

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

This brief article summarizes the findings of *Whatever It Takes* by the American Youth Policy Forum, describing the Trenton program (which is summarized in another document, Austin's Gonzalo High school, and adding a few points from a program in Louisville, KY.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information
n/a

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

Austin

- An “Impact Team” is assigned to tailor intervention programs at each of Austin’s 107 campuses. 80 percent of these interventions resulted in improvements in student discipline, attendance, and grades.
- Gonzalo Garza Independence High School was created as an alternative for students already enrolled in another Austin high school, and for those who had already dropped out. Students must submit a written application and must have at least 10 credits to attend.
- Students must maintain a 90 percent attendance rate.
- The curriculum is delivered in “course packets” students complete at their own pace.
- Career/work is a major focus of the school. The school employs a school-to-career specialist who provides job-search assistance; and arranges college visits, internships, job shadowing, career field trips, and company tours. The school gives workshops on college preparation, life skills, and financial aid, and helps students access online job listings and finding employment.
- The school also focuses on IT, with real-world coursework in areas such as graphic design, business computer systems, etc.
- Communities in Schools provides individual and group counseling; crisis intervention; tutoring and mentoring; health referrals; help with Medicaid, food stamps, housing, birth control, and legal aid; custody advice; community service options; and referrals to outside agencies.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

- Students are asked to leave if they don't meet attendance requirements or "fail to make progress in a way that indicates they are not committed to graduating."

Jefferson County/Louisville

- This program features partnerships with social service and community organizations to remove "external barriers" to attendance (examples include clothes, no alarm clock, a drug problem).
- Jefferson County provides several different alternative schooling options, including:
 - An eSchool (credits earned online)
 - Independent Study High School (credits earned through correspondence courses)
 - Liberty High School, a nontraditional "safety net" school for students struggling academically;
 - Other programs for homeless students, migrant students, and teenage parents.
- Jefferson County High, school designed to appeal to young working adults aged 21 or older, youths aged 16-20 who dropped out of school, and students at the ninth grade level or above who meet certain academic criteria and promise to attend classes at least 15 hours a week. JCH is a year-round school. Students can attend academic classes and participate in online studies at five locations around the county at times convenient for them: 8-11 a.m., 11 a.m.-2 p.m., or 6-9 p.m.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

- Austin/ Garza has a 2.7 percent dropout rate.
- Measures of success for Jefferson County High: "Among the class of 2005, 61 percent are in college, 23 percent are working, 6 percent are in vocational or technical school, 7 percent are in both school and working, and 2 percent are in the military. Just 2 percent are neither in school nor working."

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

- Both schools/districts focus on multiple populations but tailor interventions to the specific needs of the population.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the "trouble areas" with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

- The needs assessment should not only inquire about the specific needs dropouts have in the school (e.g., specifically why they dropped out), but also what activities are undertaken to ensure dropout programs are tailored (such as an intervention team, a needs assessments, etc.)
- Specific dropout recovery options to ask about: technology-based learning, special places for working/older students.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

- Looking at multiple measures—for example, not just change in dropout or attendance figures, but does anyone follow students over time to see how many are in college, vocational/technical school, working, military, etc. over time.

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

- Intervention team under administrative strategies.
- eSchool, correspondence courses under academic programs

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

- Garza and Jefferson would both be good programs to look at more in depth.

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Serving Older Youth Through A Comprehensive Out-Of-School Time Systems; Lessons From the AYPF Philadelphia Field Trip
Author(s):
Publisher: American Youth Policy Forum
Pub. Date: 5-2006
URL: www.aypf.org/publications/PhiladelphiaAfterSchoolSystem.pdf

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

The article describes the cross systems, city-wide approach that Philadelphia has developed using a network of public and private partnerships to offer after school time programs to high risk youth, including dropouts. The system has become more institutionalized with the passage of time.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

See below.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

The initiative regards data collection and evaluation as its cornerstone. It evaluates its activities to assess and demonstrate its effectiveness.

Effectiveness criteria include: reduced pregnancy rates; reduced criminal and negative behavior; reduced dropout rates; increased college enrollment.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

The system targets high risk students both near dropout or who have already dropped out.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

The article identifies structural, instructional, and operational features of a city-wide network.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

See below.

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

The manual should address the creation of a district-wide (or larger) dropout recovery system involving public and private entities, community colleges, and local employers. The system needs to involve high-level leadership in planning, decision making, and coordinating services across agencies.

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

The **E3 Power Centers** offer intensive career preparation for out-of-school youth through 4 pathways: education, employment, occupational skills training, and life skills.

- The Education pathway includes GED preparation at different levels of instruction: individualized tutoring, test preparation, and links to external programs and support services. E3 also collaborates with community colleges, allowing students to earn credits towards an associate degree while still in high school.
- The Job Readiness Training shows students how to prepare a resume, interview for a job, and build a positive relationship with co-workers.
- The E3 Power Centers pair students with employment specialists who match them with employers.
- Students can learn skills such as computer programming and maintenance or work with local businesses.
- Students choose from a range of life skills activities such a parenting.

The Career and Academic Development institute is considered an exemplary accelerated high school targeted at over age dropouts with few credits. The school is operated by the Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America. The school offers year-round, non-traditional hours; assigns a case manager to each student; offers computer-assisted instruction and an online subscription to Internet lessons. Students who complete the program receive a high school diploma.

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: The Dropout Crisis: Promising Approaches in Prevention and Recovery
Author(s): Adria Steinberg & Cheryl Almeida
Publisher: Jobs for the Future
Pub. Date: 6-2004
URL:

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

The report looks at both dropout prevention and recovery and identifies effective strategies and structures based on recent research and actual examples. The report focuses on the program organization, structure, and administration.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

The growing dropout crisis poses a national challenge because the dropout problem is likely to have serious ramifications for the U.S. economy. While the U.S. economy by 2010 will require at least some post-secondary education, about 30 percent of students fail to get a high school diploma in 4 years and only 50 percent of African American and Hispanic students graduate from high school. Also, less than 2 percent of GED holders compared with 36 percent of high school graduates complete 4 years of college. The dropout crisis is especially acute in large high schools in the largest 35 cities, which lose 50 percent of their students between grades 9 and 12.

Addressing the dropout crisis requires a dual approach addressing both dropout prevention and dropout recovery.

Typically, dropout prevention programs are small, lack attention and priority, and are usually under-funded. They typically are not effective in reducing the dropout rate. The report suggests, based on recent reformers' efforts, that programs take a more systemic approach to prevention, either through focusing on adolescent literacy (dropouts have low literacy skills, reading several years below grade level) or creating small learning environments inside or outside the school (research has shown that intentionally smaller schools have higher achievement, higher graduation rates, and fewer dropouts and make the most difference for minority students).

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

Typically, disconnected youth (dropouts) are the most neglected group. The "second chance" system offered three approaches: (1) alternative high schools to earn a high school diploma; (2) youth employment programs such as Job Corps, Conservation Corp, Youth Build; and (3) community-based adult basic education and community colleges to earn a GED. The "second chance" system has not been effective: historically it has been

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

plagued by fragmentation, under-funding, and low priority. Instead, the report suggests more innovative approaches that show promise. These approaches shift from GED and job training to pathways to technical certificates and advancement to community college career pathways. For example, Portland (Oregon) Community College’s successful Gateway to College program enrolls students in combined high school and college courses after one semester of intensive academics. 83 percent of the students reached college level reading proficiency and 70 percent completed college preparatory courses, ready to enroll in regular college courses.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

The report identifies, based on recent studies, the following key attributes of effective recovery programs:

- High academic standards linked to future learning and work opportunities.
- Small caring environment with low teacher/student ratios.
- Individualized flexible programs with high expectation and clear rules of behavior.
- Opportunities to catch up and accelerate knowledge and skills.
- Innovative staff in multiple roles.
- Operational flexibility/autonomy.
- Opportunities for youth to participate and have a voice in school matters.
- Shared sense of community and mutual trust.
- Parental involvement.
- Links to community organizations.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

The report focuses on approaches targeted at students who are at risk and at dropouts overall, minorities, and urban, inner-city students.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

The report emphasizes the need for the appropriate infrastructure. See below. It also emphasizes proper financing and connections to post-secondary education, especially to community colleges.

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

The report lists key attributes of effective recovery programs. See above.

The report also stresses the need for appropriate infrastructure and mentions, as examples, Portland and Chicago. The Department of Education Options in Portland, Oregon coordinates and monitors the district's alternative education schools as well as schools operated under contract with community organizations and a community college.

Chicago created a Dropout Prevention and Recovery Department housed in the Office of High School Programs. The Department is establishing a Reenrollment Center linking dropouts and near dropouts to quality educational programs operated by the district or under contract by community organizations.

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

The manual should address infrastructure, connections to community colleges and community organizations, and funding.

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

Corpus Christi is working with the National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education, and Families to build strong municipal leadership for a cross-system focus on out-of-school youth. The report also mentions Portland, Oregon and Chicago as having a rich set of alternative education options.

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

Title: Student Voices: Why School Works For Alternative High School Students
Author(s): Cliff Brush and Bob Jones
Publisher: Oregon Department of Education
Pub. Date: 10-2002
URL:

Source Overview (purpose, methodology, etc.)

Personal interviews were conducted with recovered dropouts and students on the verge of dropping out enrolled in seven alternative high schools to find out what kept them in school.

Summary of Key Points (Not all studies will include notations in all sections)

Dropout Prevention/Recovery General Background Information

Oregon collects student level data on dropouts since 1991-92, asking students why they drop out and uses the data to structure its dropout prevention and recovery programs.

Structure of Dropout Recovery Programs

The recovery program (alternative high school) has the characteristics described below.

Effectiveness of Dropout Recovery Programs (criteria and evidence)

The article addresses the dropout prevention and recovery program effectiveness issue from a student's perspective. According to these students, an effective program has the following attributes:

- Students are respected and accepted by their class/school mates. Previously, these students did not feel accepted and respected.
- The program provides guidance to students and helps to address non-academic problems that affect academic performance.
- The program shows flexibility, allowing students to fit school into their daily life.
- The program connects instruction with what students will do after they complete the program; it helps students to plan for their future.
- Students learn at their own pace and teachers have patience and accommodate that pace.
- Teachers have high expectations and treat these students like any regular high school student.
- Teachers help students build self-confidence in their future.
- The program has a positive spirit and aspires students to have pride in the school.

Special Populations—Migrant, LEP, Rural, Substance Abuse, etc.

Literature Review Source Summary Form
Texas Education Agency Dropout Recovery Online Manual

The article addresses all near-dropouts and recovered dropouts.

Implications for Project

School Dropout Recovery Needs Assessment—What appear to be the “trouble areas” with respect to dropout recovery for schools? Where do most recovery efforts seem to focus?

The expectations of students from their alternative program relate mostly to school climate issues and can be explored in the site visits to best practice programs.

Criteria for Selecting Best Practice in Dropout Recovery—How do other reports and documents evaluate best practice in this area? What evidence do they use? How many “best practices” are really out there?

N/A

Structure of Online Manual—What specific areas of dropout recovery does the resource cover that might help us organize the manual? For example, administrative strategies, academic strategies, community-based strategies, financial strategies...

The manual should address school/program climate issues and students’ expectations.

Potential Best Practice Program Models—Note name and school district of any specific programs that appear to represent best practice, particularly in Texas but nationally as well

N/A

Additional Resources to Examine—Note any additional reports or resources that might give us more information about dropout recovery.

N/A