

RESOURCES IN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

**Compiled by
Dr. Raymond E. Morley**

Iowa Association of Alternative Education Board

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RESOURCES IN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

NATIONAL CENTERS FOR INFORMATION

Northwest Education Association Tests/NWEA Tests: www.nwea.org

Testing bank allows schools and districts to develop criterion-referenced tests focused around the actual achievement level of the students. This type of testing allows schools to do pre-post testing each year, testing each year for longitudinal progress determination, and comparison of students to national norms if wanted. NWEA features computer and paper/pencil versions of tests. Computer versions can be leveled allowing testing at the student level. Tests are not timed allowing maximum determination of competency. Seventy schools in Iowa are involved through various consortiums. Costs vary but approximately \$4.50 per student per test or \$5.50 per year per student for computer versions. Computer versions offer quick feedback within 24 hours. Criterion-referenced testing allows the school to organize and focus support services more directly on student learning problems.

Some Iowa-Based Schools and Consortiums involved.

Mid-Iowa Achievement Tests: suebeers@roland-story.k12.ia.us or sbeers@netins.net

College Community School District: Dr. Al Rowe, Executive Director of Learning Services, 319-848-5201

Johnston Community School District

Sioux City Community School District

S.E. Polk Community School District

Boone Community School District

North-Linn Community School District

Alden Community School District

Alternative Education Resource Organization: <http://www.edrev.org>

AERO (Alternative Education Resource Organization)

Jerry Mintz, Director

417 Roslyn Rd.

Roslyn Heights, NY 11577

516-621-2195

jerryaero@aol.com

AERO is an organization dedicated to the development and improvement of education alternatives on an international scale. A broad range of activities are occurring via AERO including in-person or phone consultations (800-769-4171); linkages with alternative educators on a world-wide scale; educational videos, books and materials featuring major concepts and movements occurring in alternative education; a radio program on the TalkAmerica Network and Cable Radio Network, including tapes of past interviews with prominent alternative education advocates; a quarterly journal (magazine), "The Education Revolution", featuring information on alternative education world-wide in scope.

Examples of Information include: National Charter Schools Directory, The Beginners Guide To Homeschooling, The Almanac of Educational Choices, The Underground History of American Education, The Democratic Classroom, announcements of conferences, and book reviews.

Iowa Association of Alternative Education (IAAE): www.iaae.net

IAAE is an organization in Iowa dedicated to developing, maintaining, and improving alternative schools and programs throughout the state. The organization maintains a board of directors with elected offices from the membership representing all regions of the state to conduct business. Activities include legislative action, regional conferences, education improvement mini-grants, student career development workshops, student activities such as softball, development and maintenance of a directory of schools and programs, a consultation for school development and improvement, The Iowa Association of Alternative Education Journal, Sharing Student Success: Evaluation Practices Used in Alternative Schools in Iowa; an annual statewide conference, and recognition of outstanding educators and persons making outstanding contributions to alternative education. The Association also networks with other associations to build collaborative works and benefits for existing members. The Web page offers alternative educators a chat system allowing the posting of questions and sharing of information on alternative education.

IAAE Webmaster: Chris Hungerford. Phone: 641-752-4645. Webmaster@iaae.net

The Iowa Association of Alternative Education
Membership Registration
Steve Peters
Scavo High School
1800 Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309
515-242-7589
Fax 515-242-7591

National Educational Service (NES): www.nesonline.com

The NES is a resource organization dedicated to the development of support services and programs for all children with specific focus on at-risk children and youth. The organization offers individual consultation, training workshops, and education materials. Specialized curriculum materials and books common in alternative education remain a primary feature of NES. NES has and continues to conduct seminars on "Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement". The organization features a catalogue of presenters available for conducting training seminars. Some examples of materials available include:

- Designing and Implementing Integrated Curriculum
- School Free: The Home Schooling Handbook
- The Soul of Education
- What Every Great Teacher Knows
- Creating Learning Communities
- How To Create Alternative, Magnet, and Charter Schools That Work
- Power Struggles: Successful Techniques for Educators
- Developing Literacy and Workplace Skills
- Youth Suicide: A Comprehensive Manual for Prevention and Intervention
- Breaking the Cycle of Violence
- Teaching Self Control: A Curriculum for Responsible Behavior
- Safe Schools: A Handbook for Violence Prevention
- Discipline with Dignity: An 'As Tough as Necessary' Approach to Countering Aggression, Hostility, and Violence
- Adventure Education for the Classroom Community: Over 90 Activities for Developing Character, Responsibility, and Courage to Achieve.

National Educational Service
304 West Kirkwood Avenue, Suite 2
Bloomington, IN 47404-5132
(812) 336-7700
Fax 812-336-7790
jean.boukary@nesonline.com

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network: <http://www.dropoutprevention.org>

An organization dedicated to identifying, developing, organizing and disseminating information enabling schools to keep youth in school and establish a path of success in education and life. The organization features national and regional conferences, consultation in organizing staff development, identification of model programs, effective strategies for teaching and learning, resource materials, research information and reports, and search systems to locate specific information for major interest areas covering preschool through adult education. Alternative schools information is part of the search information. The center uses a bank of experts from around the nation to assist local schools requesting information. The Journal of At-Risk Issues is published through the Center and is made available to members. The journal features articles on issues related to educating at-risk populations.

Some examples of available information include: information on alternative education and specific alternative schools, individualized instruction, violence prevention plans, conflict resolution, early childhood education, out of school experiences, reading and writing programs, learning style/multiple intelligences, service learning, family involvement, keys to dropout prevention, and instructional technologies.

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network
209 Martin Street
Clemson, SC 29631-1555
Phone 864-656-0136
Fax 864-656-0136
Email: ndpc@clermson.edu

National Coalition for Alternative Community Schools (NCACS): www.ncacs.org

This organization was founded in 1978 as groups and individuals committed to creating an educational process to empower people to actively and collectively empower their lives. The organization supports active control of education by students, parents, teachers, and community members who are most directly affected. The organization sponsors an annual conference for teachers, parents, and students and is active in identifying resources and providing support through a variety of sources. They feature links to NCACS member schools, partner resource organizations, publications, a newsletter, leads on jobs in alternative education, etc.

Examples of publications include: The National Directory of Alternative Schools, The National Coalition News-quarterly newsletter, Paths of Learning, Growing Without Schooling, Home Education Magazine (reviews for homeschooling families).

National Coalition for Alternative Community Schools
1266 Rosewood Unit 1
Ann Arbor, MI 48104-6205
734-668-9171
Questions Line: 888-771-9171
E-mail: ncacs@earthlink.net
\$50 Membership

Charter School Research Project: <http://csr.syr.edu/>

The Charter Schools Research Project is one of the best resources on the World Wide Web for research pertaining to charter schools. It offers an enormous selection of research materials to choose from. The site is user friendly and easy to navigate. Its guiding principle is interactivity. In addition to the research area, there is a discussion area where you may join and participate in various on-line forums.

US Charter Schools: <http://www.uscharterschools.org/>

The U.S. Charter Schools web site is, without question, one of the best resources on the World Wide Web regarding charter schools. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the site is well laid out and easy to navigate. It provides well-written, in-depth, comprehensive information on charter schools nationwide.

**Charter Schools found on Pathways, NCREL web site: <http://www.ncrel.org>
<http://www.org/sdrs/pathwayg.htm>**

There is a wealth of information to be found on NCREL's Pathway to School Improvement web site regarding charter schools. From the home page select "Topics" from the side menu bar. Then, click on "Charter Schools." A page of "Contents" appears which covers links to: What's new, issues, publications and articles, internet resource, policy briefs and publications, an online discussion group and information on NCREL states which include Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

The Foundation for Educational Renewal, Inc.: <http://www.PathsOfLearning.net>

This foundation represents a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting diverse educational alternatives that nourish the fullest development of human potentials. The foundation publishes the quarterly magazine "Paths of Learning: Options for Families and Communities" and sponsors the Paths of Learning Resource Center, an online database at www.PathsOfLearning.net featuring hundreds of journals, monographs, and research studies supporting alternative models and methods of teaching and learning. Instructors may request review copies of any title published by the Foundation for Educational Renewal or Holistic Education Press by submitting the name of the course for which the books are being considered. Examples of publications include:

- A Free Range of Childhood: Summerhill and the Principle of Self-Regulation
- Creating Learning Communities
- Caring for New Life
- Unfolding Bodymind
- Holistic Education: Pedagogy of Universal Love
- What Are Schools For?
- New Directions in Education
- Designing and Implementing Integrated Curriculum
- What Every Great Teacher Knows
- The Soul of Education
- School Free
- Wholeness.

Foundation for Educational Renewal
PO ox 328
Brandon, VT 05733-0328
<http://www.PathsOfLearning.net>
Phone 1-800-639-4122
Voice and Fax 802-247-8312
paths@great-ideas.org

John Dewey Project on Progressive Education. www.uvm.edu/~dewey

The John Dewey Project represents a research institute promoting more widespread public discussion of the democratic mission of education. The institute holds conferences, gathers research and policy papers from progressive scholars around the country, and conducts research on service learning and school-community collaboration.

John Dewey Project on Progressive Education
411 Waterman Building
University of Vermont
Burlington, VT 05405
www.uvm.edu/~dewey
Phone: 802-656-1355

Center for Research on The Education of Students Placed At Risk-- Shared by Johns Hopkins and Howard University:

Robert Slavin
Johns Hopkins University
Center for Social Organization of Schools
3003 North Charles Street, Suite 200
Baltimore, Md 21218
410-516-8800; FAX 410-516-8890

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

Office of Educational Research and Improvement
United States Department of Education
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20208-5574
Phone 202-219-1754
<http://www.ed.gov/NCES/>

NCES collects and publishes information on the condition of education in the United States including dropout statistics. It issues a report entitled "Dropout Rates in the United States". The report presents data on high school dropout and retention rates and examines high school completion and graduation rates. It provides time series data (Event, Status and Cohort rates) and presents data on specific sub-populations that are at particular risk of dropping out of school: foreign-born persons attending U.S. schools, young adults who have been retained a grade or more while enrolled, and individuals who have some type of learning, physical, or other disability. The report is based on current survey data. Event rates describe the proportion of students who leave each year without completing a high school education. Status rates provide cumulative data on dropouts among all young adults within a specific age range. Cohort rates measure what happens to a cohort of students over a period of time. These rates reveal how many students starting in a specific grade dropout over time.

Center for Social Organization of Schools-Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.
www.law.harvard.edu/civilrights

This center has fourteen studies on-line commissioned by the Civil Rights Project at Harvard and Achieve Inc., a non-profit group founded by governors and business leaders to encourage school improvement. The studies identify attrition in city high schools across the United States. Conclusions include:

- The dropout problem is most severe in 34 cities in the United States where schools fail to graduate fewer than 50% of the 9th graders by the end of the 12th grade.
- Dropout data underestimate the numbers of dropouts and overestimate the numbers who earn a high school diploma.
- The national data masks pockets of the real problems.

- Smaller schools, individualized attention and strong academic intervention improve the odds that students will finish high school.

At The Table: A project of the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development.
www.atthetable.org

At The Ttable aims to promote youth governance. The web site includes an advocate's page, discussions page, surveys and polls, resources, and information about the initiative. An innovation center is part of the web site. The center strives to help leaders find, experience, create, and understand the newest and best thinking in the youth development field.

BOOKS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

Kohn, Alfie. (2000). The Case Against Standardized Testing: Raising The Scores, Ruining The Schools. Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Heinemann. Heineman, A division of Reed Elsevier Inc., 361 Hanover Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801-3912. www.heinemann.com

This book draws from current research to explain how little tests really tell us and just how harmful a test-driven curriculum can be. The content is in question-and-answer format to help readers respond to common questions and challenges such as:

- high scores often signify relatively superficial thinking
- many leading tests were never intended to measure teaching or learning
- a school that improves its test results may well have lowered its standards to do so
- far from helping to "close the gap" the use of standardized testing is most damaging for low-income and minority students
- as much as 90% of the variation in test scores among schools or states have nothing to do with the quality of instruction
- far more meaningful measures of student learning or school quality are available.

Kohn identifies the force of politics pushing standardized testing as something that can be changed. He identifies some actions that students, parents and others can implement to create classrooms that focus on learning. Explore www.alfiekohn.org.

Lake, Stephen E., Esq. (2000). Alternative Schools: Legal Guidance for Serving Special Education Students. Horsham, Pennsylvania: LRP Publications. Ph 215-784-0860, 474 Dresher Road, Horsham, PA 19044. \$28.50 +\$4.50 shipping.

- Disciplinary Referrals to Alternative Schools
 - Disciplinary exclusions of students with disabilities
 - Referrals of properly removed students with disabilities to alternative schools
 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) obligations for alternative schools
 - Transitioning properly removed students back to school
- The Alternative School Solution
 - Laws that govern placement
 - Judicial decisions
- Interim alternative education settings (IAES)
 - Referrals
 - Selection of alternative school as IAES
 - Timing issues
 - IDEA obligations for alternative schools
- Individualized Education Plan (IEP) referrals to alternative schools
 - The IEP team decision
 - Case studies

Veale, James & Morley, Raymond E. (1990). The Costs of Dropping Out of School and The Productivity Benefits of Returning and Graduating. Des Moines. Iowa Department of Education.

This publication identifies the costs of dropping out in terms of loss of personal income, loss to the state treasury and increases welfare burdens, increased risk of incarceration, deceleration in human growth, and reduced sense of control over one's life. The productivity of alternative school graduates is identified via employment, post-secondary education, volunteer work, participation in the political process, homemaking and child rearing, talents and skills not used on the job, public assistance involvement, and penal system involvement. Fourteen behaviors defining productivity of alternative school graduates are identified and rated by employers and the graduates. Moreover, the feelings graduates have about their alternative education experience are identified. The information indicates that alternative schools are helping students to gain control over their lives, which increase their potential for social and human development.

Chalker, Christopher S. (1999). Effective Alternative Education Programs: Best Practices from Planning Through Evaluating. Lancaster, PA. Technomic Publishing Company, Inc. 851 New Holland Avenue, Box 3535, Lancaster, PA. 17604. <http://www.techpub.com>

This handbook provides a step by step method for planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating the type of alternative learning environments desired based on local needs and resources. Sample reproducible documents and forms are provided to reinforce concepts discussed in the text. The text provides a classification system entitled "Institute of Effective Practices" including strategies for planning, development, implementation, and evaluation domains. The classification system makes it easy to reference any one of these areas without having to read prerequisite material. The classification system includes practices found effective through implementation and testing in alternative education settings.

The "Institute of Effective Practices" includes:

- **Planning Domain:** Establishing a Planning Committee, Assessing Needs, Developing a Mission Statement, Setting Goals and Objectives, Planning Facilities, Planning a Tentative Budget, Writing a Program Proposal.
- **Development Domain:** Collaborative Team Development, Human Resources Development, Developing a Funding Proposal.
- **Implementation Domain:**
 - **Curricular Practices** (basic skills education, leisure education, affective education, career education, life skills education, academic enrichment)
 - **Instructional Practices**, (student placement, classroom management, teaching and learning, student evaluation)
 - **Student Services** (school-to-work transition, service learning and citizenship, guidance and counseling, student organization, business and community partnership, managing the chronically disruptive/rebellious student).
- **Evaluation Domain:** Staff Evaluation, Program Evaluation, and Student Evaluation.

Barr, Robert & Parrett, William H. (1997). How to Create Alternative, Magnet, and Charter Schools That Work. Bloomington, Indiana. National Educational Service. P.O. Box 8, Bloomington, Indiana. 47402. www.nesonline.com Phone 812-336-7700. Fax 812-336-7790.

This book offers a thorough review of the history, research, and successes of alternative, magnet, and charter schools. Personal vignettes, experiences, and quotes from field interviews with educators are used to vividly illustrate the world of alternative, magnet, and charter schools. Some specific topics covered include:

- why alternative schools are so effective
- established alternative models
- starting alternative schools, magnet schools, charter schools
- frequently asked questions about alternative schools
- alternative schools research-based evaluation
- alternative school support organizations
- sample alternative schools and programs,
- sample charter schools
- charter school support contracts.

"Three decades of research have documented that alternative public schools are among the most successful educational innovations ever tried." -- (1997) Barr, R. & Parrett, W.H.

Kellmayer, John. *How To Establish an Alternative School*. Mays Landing, New Jersey.

Key characteristics of alternative schools are presented in this book along with descriptions of alternative models. It focuses on how to set up and effectively manage an alternative program that fits the needs of your students. Strategies to empower teachers, involve students, and evaluate programs are also presented. Specific topics covered include:

- Alternative education: what is it?
- Dealing with political opposition
- How to set up an alternative program
- Exploring Curriculum Options
- Administering and organizing alternative schools
- Empowering teachers
- Involving students in their own education
- Evaluation of alternative programs.

Young, Timothy W. (1990). *Public Alternative Education: Options and Choice for Today's Schools*. New York, NY. Teachers College Press, 1234 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10027 ISBN; 0-8077-3023-8.

This resource represents a complete picture of the rationale for alternative education--alternative programs and alternative schools in public education. The case for why alternatives are needed, what alternatives are, early educational reforms and our future characterize the primary message of this book. It serves as a primer for anyone entering the arena of improving public education through the development of options or alternatives for students and families. Examples of information covered include:

- Early Alternatives in American Education
- Types of Public Alternatives
- The Case for Public Alternative Education
- Early Research on Public Alternative Schools
- Exemplary Public Alternative School Programs
- The School for the Twenty-first Century

Barr, Robert D., & Parrett, William H. (2001). *Hope fulfilled for at-risk and violent youth*. Allyn and Bacon. Needham Heights, MA. 160 Gould Street, Needham Heights, MA 02494-2310 www.abacon.com

This is an essential guide which offers a wealth of information on successful strategies for reaching and teaching all children in the year 2001. It is a comprehensive resource that brings together research on many effective education

models, schools, and programs and explains exactly why these models, schools, and programs have worked. All the tools and resources necessary for creating successful programs are included. Elementary, middle and high school are included. Moreover, the book identifies "Where to Find Help" and includes major resource agencies, organizations and institutes devoted to various aspects of teaching and learning. Some examples of information covered include:

- how schools fail at-risk youth
- what we know about effective programs
- programs that work-early childhood and elementary schools, middle schools and high schools
- restructuring public education for at-risk youth: three approaches that work
- creating the will to educate all students.

Chalker, Christopher S. & Brown, Kimila S. (1999). Effective Alternative Education Programs: Solutions for K-8 Students At Risk. Lancaster, PA. Technomic Publishing Company Inc., 851 New Holland Avenue, Box 3535, Lancaster, PA. 17604. <http://www.techpub.com>

This book provides solutions to problems associated with the planning, development, and implementation of alternative education programs for K-8 students. The material is divided into four parts differentiating K-5, 6-8, and combined K-8 efforts at prevention and early intervention prior to the onset of high school. An emphasis on K-5 programming places a positive spin on the widely controversial concept of placing elementary school students in alternative education programs. Individualized instruction, self-paced mastery learning, life skill courses, low pupil/staff ratio, enrichment opportunities, and flexible scheduling are identified as effective practices in the examples provided for serving at risk students. A primary message within the book is that a need for educational alternatives to traditional schooling for students will continue to emerge because schools are too large, pupil/teacher ratios too high, traditions too strong, and money too short to institute change on a broad-based scale. Some examples of material covered include:

- What research says about grades K-5/6-8
- Programs for grades K-5/6-8
- Curricular solutions, Instructional Solutions, Support Solutions
- The common threads of K-5 and 6-8 alternative education programs
- Planning & developing effective alternative education programs
- Reintegration and transition solutions
- Cooperative partnerships between Grades K-5 and 6-8
- Parents as Partners
- Reflections: the renaissance school-a new beginning

Kohn, Alfie. (2000). The Schools our Children Deserve: Moving Beyond Traditional Classrooms and "Tougher Standards". New York, NY. Houghton Mifflin. Houghton Mifflin Company, 215 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10003. www.hmco.com/trade

This book identifies our school improvement initiatives as simplified attempts to "back to basics" philosophy of teaching using children as passive receptacles into which facts can be poured. Our so-called tougher standards are squeezing the intellectual life out of classrooms in favor of preparing students for standardized testing. Instead of helping our students to think critically and be creative thinkers, our classrooms are helping them to do better on tests, leaning teachers away from understanding how and why kids learn. Examples are provided to help parents and others move away from the "bunch of facts" model of teaching.

Some of the topics covered include:

- getting motivation wrong
- getting teaching and learning wrong
- getting school reform wrong
- getting improvement wrong
- starting from scratch
- getting the 3 R's right

- the way out
- the hard evidence
- what to look for in a classroom.

Kohn draws on the research of Dewey, Bruner, Piaget, Holt and others to provide a different look at what our schools might better look like. The recommendations are consistent with existing beliefs about learning identified by practicing alternative educators.

Skromme, Arnold B. The Cause and Cure of Dropouts: Seven Bell Curves for Each Student. (1998). Moline, Illinois. The Self-Confidence Press. The Self-Confidence Press, P.O. Box 11199, Moline, Illinois.

This book emphasizes six hidden abilities not tested in most public schools--dexterity, creativity, personality, empathy, judgement, and motivation. A seventh ability (academic) is included to round out seven areas of individual talent. It offers an explanation of the 7-ability plan bell curves and explanations of the first use of the 7-ability plan in schools including J.B. Young Junior High School, Davenport, IA; John Deere Middle School, Moline, Illinois; and John Glenn Elementary School, Donahue, IA. It also identifies a suggested schedule of seven ability tests and benefits of the 7-ability plan to public schools. The content of this book is highly related to present day efforts in Iowa to implement a school improvement initiative entitled "Success4." The challenge remains in how to address the whole child in education to maximize their success--a major goal of alternative education/schools. Some of the information includes:

- Estimated bell curves of William Gates III, Henry Ford, Albert Einstein, Winston Churchill and other famous persons
- definitions of our seven abilities
- the seven ability career selection exercise
- summary of 1320 student humiliations
- why do grades fail to predict success
- 31% of top teens mull suicide
- the history of multiple ability measures
- the importance of having hope
- how to use the CPQ Test Profile to detect bad habits
- the Lunski-Domain discoveries
- vocational education and entrepreneurs
- the Minnesota Business Partnership
- what causes students to have low motivation
- tomorrow's grade card
- stimulating your brain; and more.

Parson, Steve R. (1999). Transforming Schools into Community Learning Centers. Larchmont, NY. Eye on Education, 6 Depot Way West, Suite 106, Larchmont, NY 10538. Phone 914-833-0551, Fax 914-833-0761.

This book provides a strategy for communities that want to redesign their schools from the bottom up. The strategy identifies how community members can work together to redesign their schools to meet community needs and maximize potential. The strategy will work where communities want to make change and establish collaborative efforts. Two identified characteristics set community learning centers apart. They are:

- Service is rendered to the entire community, not just to children of school age.
- The discovery, development, and use of community resources become an integral part of the school's instructional facilities and programs.

Some examples of ideas covered in the text include:

- Assumptions about change
- Establishing study groups
- The vision of community learning centers
- Sharing power

- Partnerships with families
- Community technology centers
- Developing community
- Year-round scheduling
- Family literacy and life-long learning

Steinberg, Laurence. (1996). *Beyond The Classroom: Why School Reform Has Failed and What Parents Need to Do*. Touchstone. New York, NY. TOUCHSTONE, Rockefeller Center, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020. <http://www.SimonSays.com>.

This book addresses the powerful influences of students outside the classroom. It represents research conducted from 1986 to 1996 representing over 20,000 teenagers from high schools, hundreds of parents, and dozens of teachers. Research teams from three universities combined efforts to compile the information. Poor student achievement is looked at from outside the classroom to better understand the causes of differences in student interest (engagement vs. disengagement in learning) and why some students succeed and others do not. Engagement in school is identified as an indicator of engagement in the community and is identified as an indicator of the messages and priorities they are learning from their elders. American parents are just as disengaged from schooling as their children are. As well, disengagement is an indicator of psychological difficulties of adolescence--dealing with the experiences of adolescence--a time of making choices, prioritizing time and interests, and changing behavior. Some examples of information covered include:

- Disengaged students
- Ethnicity and adolescent achievement
- The power of authoritative parenting
- The home environment of academically successful students
- The power of peers

Mendler, Allen N. (1997). *Power Struggles: Successful Techniques for Educators*. Rochester, NY. Discipline Associates. National Education Service, 304 West Kirkwood Ave., Suite 2, Bloomington, Indiana 47404-5132 (812-336-7790) jeanboukary@netline.com

This very short handbook provides specific strategies of prevention so power struggles occur less often. It also includes easy-to-learn methods of effective intervention that work preserving student and personal dignity. The strategies grew from the work of Curwin and Mendler's "Discipline With Dignity." The strategies are intended to reduce instructional time currently lost because of minor disruptions that quickly escalate into classroom battles eroding relationships and respect. Some examples of information covered include:

- Prevention strategies
- The hostility cycle
- Basic defusing skills
- The private three-step technique
- Dealing with the rest of the class
- Reframing
- Classroom counter aggression
- Intervention strategies

Nathan, Joe. (1996). *Charter Schools: Creating Hope and Opportunity for American Education*. San Francisco, California. Jossey-Bass Inc. Jossey- Bass Inc., Publishers, 350 Sansome Street, San Francisco, California 94104 Phone 415-433-1740 Fax 800-605-2665.

Based on nationwide surveys, research, and visits to dozens of charter schools, Joe Nathan addresses the key issues surrounding these revolutionary schools. Who starts charter schools? What kind of students attend? Are charter schools using the ideas and techniques other schools can and should learn from? Are these schools actually helping students? Are charter schools having an impact on the larger system?

Nathan's book also explains why liberals and conservatives, including people who oppose vouchers, support the charter schools approach. He explains the key elements of the charter idea and explains how it differs from strategies like magnet schools, vouchers, and site management. He also explains how school boards and unions are learning how the charter idea can help them accomplish their goals. Resources and ideas on how to start or convert an existing school are identified. Example topics include:

- A tour of charter schools
- Getting started
- Building support
- Staying in business
- Key early lessons
- Charting the future
- State-by-state activity contacts
- Model charter school law

Palmer, Parker. (1998). The Courage To Teach. San Francisco. Jossey-Bass Publishers. Jossey-Bass Publishers, 350 Sansome Street, California. 94104.

Buckingham, Marcus & Curt Coffman. (1999). FIRST, Break All the Rules: What The World's Greatest Managers Do Differently. New York, NY. Simon & Schuster, Rockefeller Center, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY. 10020

This is a book on improving organizational performance based on extensive empirical evidence. It focuses on what managers can do to make their organization (schools in this case) better/best by engaging the people (teachers) of the organization. The person/s first!!! It defines what makes the workplace a great workplace. Good people are the identity--crucial to productivity. As the authors put it, "a great deal of the value of a company lies between the ears of its employees. The key to success is growing that value by listening to and understanding what lies in their hearts." The ideas of this book are highly applicable to schools.

The keys to attracting and keeping the most talented (teachers/support staff /administrators) are identified in this book. The keys are:

- Do I know what is expected of me at work?
- Do I have the materials and equipment to do my work right?
- At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best everyday?
- In the past seven days have I received recognition or praise for doing good work?
- Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?
- Is there someone at work who encourages my development?
- At work, do my opinions seem to count?
- Does the mission/purpose of my company (school) make me feel my job is important?
- Are my coworkers committed to doing quality work?
- Do I have a best friend at work?
- In the last six months, has someone talked to me about my progress?
- This last year, have I had opportunities at work to learn and grow?

Schargel, Franklin P. & Smink, Jay. (2001). Strategies To Help Solve Our School Dropout Problem. Larchmont, NY. Eye on Education. Eye On Education, 6 Depot Way West, Larchmont, NY. 10538. Fax 914-833-0761 Phone 914-833-0551.

This book offers insights and suggestions to help you apply 15 strategies for dropout prevention. It examines each of the strategies in detail offering a definition of the strategy, guidelines for planning and implementation, and identifies programs at schools and districts across the country. The strategies include:

- Early Interventions--family involvement, early childhood education, reading and writing programs

- The Basic Core Strategies-mentoring/tutoring, service learning, alternative schooling, out-of-school enhancement
- Making the most of instruction-professional development, learning styles and multiple intelligences, instructional technologies, individualized instruction
- Making the most of the wider community-systematic renewal, community collaboration, career and workforce readiness, conflict resolution and violence prevention.

This work is consistent with "The 21 Keys to Dropout Prevention" published through the Iowa Association of Alternative Education for educators in Iowa.

Williams, Thomas L. (2001). The Directory of Programs for Students At Risk. Larchmont, NY. Eye On Education. Eye on Education, 6 Depot Way West, Larchmont, NY. 10538. Phone 914-833-0551 Fax 914-833-0761.

This resource book presents easy-to-read summaries of a wide variety of programs for students at risk. After you read each program's goals and strategies, you will be able to determine which ones best suit the specific needs of your school and community. The book summarizes over 40 programs including the names and addresses of key people available to answer questions about their strategies. Some of the topics covered include:

- The purpose of school
- Strategies for reclaiming black and Hispanic youth
- Parental engagement of students
- Equity 2000
- Help One Student Succeed (HOSTS)
- Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)
- Success for All (SFA)
- Parent Expectations Support Achievement (PESA)
- the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES)
- Foxfire
- Teach for America (TFA), and more.

Pucel, David J. Beyond Vocational Education: Career Majors, Tech Prep, Schools Within Schools, Magnet Schools, and Academies. Larchmont, NY. Eye on Education. Eye on Education, 6 Depot Way West, Larchmont, NY. 10538, Phone 914-833-0551 Fax 914-833-0761.

This book is for educators at all high schools who wish to deliver integrated career and academic instruction as well as those at career and technical schools. Its many examples of worksheets, and assessment guides make it practical and easy-to-use. Some examples of topics covered include:

- why applied, context-based, and community-based high school reform
- school formats and high school reform innovations---career major programs
- tech prep programs, academies, magnet schools, reform strategies checklist
- integrating and articulating the curriculum
- planning community-based experiences
- evaluating program effectiveness

Jensen, Eric P. (1994). Super-Teaching: Master Strategies for Building Student Success. Del Mar, CA. Turning Point for Teachers. The Brain Store, Turning Point for teachers, P.O. Box 2551, Del Mar, CA 92014, Phone 800-325-4769 or 619-755-6670 or fax 619-792-2858.

Many learning strategies exist in a variety of publications making it seem fruitless to try to learn and implement them all. This book combines the complex of learning strategies into a solid classroom approach (multi-dimensional, multi-sensory mode to learning) making it seem easier than what you might have expected.

In this book you will discover how to build a foundation for success, how to prepare, secrets to a successful delivery and presentation, student communications, the discovery process and taking care of yourself. You will discover the 15 key attitudes that make up a winning teacher, what's new in brain research and what you can be doing differently,

how to set up a learning environment that does at least 25% of the teaching, 5 things to do before the last five minutes of class, 28 secrets to opening your class perfectly every time, 35 things to do to make your presentations more powerful, 3 parts that absolutely need to be there to end up on a high note, the secrets of rapport, ways to build positive attitudes, how to have successful dialogues, 4 keys to active learning, and everything you need to know about tests and quizzes.

Nathan, Joe. (1989). Public Schools By Choice: Expanding Opportunities for Parents, Students, and Teachers. The Institute for Learning and Teaching 1852 Pinehurst, St. Paul, Minnesota 55116. Library of Congress No. 89-80266. This book may be out of print and access through libraries may be your best source.

This book captures research and information regarding the power of "choice" in education. A rationale for public schools of choice is documented in research, policy statements for legislators are identified, and projections for educational productivity for students are indicated. Experiences in public schools of choice are documented in different parts of the country. The future of "choice" as a factor in shaping our public schools is discussed. The content of the book is highly relevant to alternative educators and true advocates of education for all.

Harmin, Merrill. (1994). Inspiring Active Learning: A Handbook for Teachers. Alexandria, Virginia. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). ASCD, 1250 N. Pitt St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Phone 703-549-9110 Fax 703-549-3891

The power of one teacher is demonstrated in this material. This book represents a collection of strategies culled from practicing teachers in various schools and in different stages of their professional careers. The strategies make it easier to get students to buckle down to their daily work reducing the need to push and pull at students. The strategies center on mutual respect, not bossiness; collaboration, not isolation; worker commitment to the job, not fear of failure; and dignity for all, not praise and rewards for a few. A fully inspirational classroom is presented and defined as DESCAs (Dignity, Energy, Self-management, Community, Awareness) and can be used by you as the full target of your efforts. Student evaluation of your classroom is included. However, you can start using this material by selecting and choosing strategies to try in your classroom one by one. Some examples of strategies included are:

- Strategies for Instruction
- Raising student motivation
- Strategies for organizing the classroom
- Strategies for handling homework, testing and grading
- Producing meaningful learning
- Stimulating thinking
- Teaching beyond facts and details

A DESCA QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Student:

How was class today? Please check one item in each category.

Energy

- I was comfortable, active and energetic all the time
- I was comfortable, active and energetic most of the time
- Unsure
- I didn't put much energy into my work
- I felt inactive and low, or anxious and stressed

Dignity

I had strong, good feelings about myself.

- I felt pretty positive and secure.
- Unsure
- I didn't feel very good about myself.
- I thought I was hopeless, bad, or stupid.

Self-management

- I made many choices, managed myself, always felt self-responsible.
- I was rather self-managing, somewhat self-responsible.
- Unsure.
- I drifted along, not using much of my own willpower.
- I was only controlled or bossed. I was not at all self-responsible.

Community

- I felt I belonged in the group. I felt fully accepted.
- I had generally positive feelings about others.
- Unsure.
- I did not feel fully accepted.
- I felt only selfishness and rejection from others.

Awareness

- I was aware and alert all the time.
- I was aware and alert most of the time.
- Unsure.
- I was often bored and unresponsive.
- I paid little attention. I was extremely bored.

Kessler, Rachael. (2000). The Soul of Education: Helping Students Find Connection, Compassion, and Character at School. Alexandria, VA. Association for Supervision and Curriculum development (ASCD). ASCD, 1703 N. Beaueregard St., Alexandria, Virginia 22311-1714, Phone 1-800-933-2723 or 703-578-9600 Fax 703-575-5400. <http://www.ascd.org> E-mail: member@ascd.org

The inner life of students is intimately bound up with matters of meaning, purpose, and connection, with creative expression and moments of joy and transcendence. Students bring this to school. All of these qualities are central to both emotional intelligence and to constructively filling the spiritual void. Classroom environments that acknowledge and invite such experiences help students break down stereotypes, improve discipline, increase academic motivation, foster creativity, keep more kids in school and contribute to preventing violence and other pathologies. It is generally recognized that there is no single right way to do it. This book offers the seven gateways to the soul in education to demonstrate how school can address the inner life of students. The seven gateways are:

- The yearning for deep connection
- The longing for silence and solitude
- The search for meaning and purpose
- The hunger for joy and delight
- The creative desire
- The urge for transcendence
- The need for initiation

Payne, Ruby. (1999). A Framework for Understanding Poverty. RFT Publishing Co. 1-800-424-9484

Poverty remains a primary influence on the educational progress and attainment of our children. Ruby Payne provides a framework for educators to understand poverty in a way allowing hope for helping children and youth to leave it behind or reduce its influence on education. She identifies resources that explain why people leave poverty and why some stay in poverty. If we understand poverty as "the extent to which an individual does without resources", we can make a difference--a big difference!

The resources identified by Ruby Payne include EMOTIONAL, MENTAL, SPIRITUAL, PHYSICAL, SUPPORT SYSTEMS, RELATIONSHIPS/ROLE MODELS, KNOWLEDGE OF HIDDEN RULES AND FINANCIAL. All are defined in a way to allow educators and others to see a pathway to change. Educators have tremendous opportunities to influence some of the non-financial resources that make such a difference in students' lives. For example, it costs nothing to be an appropriate role model.

Mrs. Payne differentiates between situational and generational poverty and allows the reader to self-review to determine if survival in poverty is possible or survival in wealth is possible. The self-review process challenges existing thoughts you might have about poverty and wealth.

Scenarios, case Studies, coping strategies, support systems, discipline, metaphor stories, learning structures, character maps, support systems for creating relationships, and more are found in the framework by Ruby Payne. Primary insight into the hidden rules of poverty and wealth creates a pathway/hope for addressing the seemingly awesome condition so common in all communities.

If you are bothered by poverty and want to do something significant to reverse its grip on children and youth, Ruby Payne's book will give you some ideas-perhaps, ideas that will change education for the good in your school and community.

White, Ann T. (1999). Twelve Commandments for People Who Work With People. Cowens, S.C. Threadgill Press. Threadgill Press, Drawer 1019, Cowpens, S.C. 29330. Phone 864-463-9909.

This book presents twelve commandments for people who work with people. Its about teamwork, learning to interact, to share the load, to encourage when discouragement threatens, to know when to talk and when to be quiet, when to laugh and when to be serious, and when to lead and follow. A great lesson of the book and for alternative

educators is "life's battles do not always go to the stronger or faster man, but sooner or later the man who wins is the fellow who thinks he can". Alternative educators truly think they can!!!!

The twelve commandments presented in this book with incredible humor include:

1. Though shalt love people
2. SMILE
3. File the buckets of others
4. Exhibit a spirit of caring
5. Display a "can do" attitude
6. Beware! The "Chicken Little Syndrome" is contagious
7. Strive for Quality in all that you do
8. Help people more; hassle people less
9. Never be afraid to try to make things better
10. Train your ears and tame your tongue
11. Tell the truth. It is a lot easier to remember
12. Practice the Golden Rule

Clark, Edward T., Jr. (1997). Designing and Implementing Curriculum: A Student Centered Approach. Brandon, VT. Holistic Education Press. Holistic Education Press, PO Box 328, Brandon, VT 05733-0328. Phone 1-800-639-4122. <http://www. Dover.net/~holistic> holistic@Dover.net

This book takes major concepts in educational thinking to design a framework for designing and implementing curriculum. The primary concern for curriculum organization is that it reflects the natural process of intelligence/thinking and learning to demonstrate the interrelationships among subjects and to allow students to construct their own meaning. Learning how to learn is the integral key to future education--education for the 21st century. Topics covered in the text include:

- Creating new educational vision
- Questions worth arguing about
- Concepts as organizing frameworks
- Implementing an integrated curriculum
- Designing schools as learning communities.

Priesnitz, Wendy. (1995). School Free: The Homeschooling Handbook. St. George, Ontario, Canada. The Alternate Press. The Alternate Press, RR1, St. George, Ontario, Canada NOEE 1N0

This handbook is an introduction to life-based learning. It defines home schooling and identifies a premise that one does not have to be taught to learn. It offers advice to families who want to facilitate an independent, academically and socially sound education for their children. People educated at home that have become world recognized and renowned are identified to clarify the position that home schooling has been and continues to be a successful approach to learning. Process of learning is identified as more important than content--ability to think more important than pieces of information. In order to cope with the unknown future there is a place for education being treated as a self-generated ongoing process throughout life vs. a narrowly defined activity, which is imposed between the ages of 5-20. Topics covered in the handbook include:

- Why home-based education?
- What do you do all day?
- How do we know they are learning?
- What are the problems?
- Socialization
- The teenaged learner
- A word to educators
- Towards freedom for the child

Miller, Ron. (2000). *Creating Learning Communities: Models, Resources, and New Ways of Thinking About Teaching and Learning*. Brandon, VT. The Foundation for Educational Renewal, Inc. The Foudation for Educational Renewal, P.O. Box 328, Brandon, VT 05733, Phone 1-800-639-4122 <http://www.PathsOfLearning.net>

This book explores the collaborative life-long learning center as the model to modestly rebuild society's educational system on a post-modern cultural foundation that is democratic and person-centered rather than mechanical, as well as ecological and life centered rather than driven simply by economic forces. The connection made between learning and community in this book is the very heart of its argument. The book describes a vision of society in which mutual encouragement, support, and love take their rightful place above competition. There is no exact presentation of one prescription of learning centers for the future here. Instead, there is encouragement for experimentation with various models, innovation, and flexibility.

In 1980 there were 12,000 homeschoolers. In 1990 there were 300,000 homeschoolers. In 1998, there were 1,500,000 homeschoolers. At this rate of growth (20%), one quarter of all children will be home-schooled by the end of another decade. The phenomenon developed without leaders, without planning, without design. It represents one spontaneous self-organization on the edge of chaos. There is more to come!

Some topics covered in this text include:

- Which way: top down or bottom-up?
- The community school: developing the approach of relational education
- Community learning centers: tomorrows schools, today
- Experimenting with futuristic systems of learning: a snapshot of the St. Paul Open School
- Bayside children's college
- Supported open learning and emergence
- Future learning environments
- Rewiring a community's brain for the 21st century

Resources are included in this text that are on the way to mapping our future. Some of the pioneers exploring new ways of teaching, learning and building community are identified. They show what is possible. Perhaps the stories will help you and others to follow.

Stronge, James H. & Reed-Victor, Evelyn. (2000). *Educating Homeless Students: Promising Practices*. Larchmont, N.Y.: Eye on Education.

This book represents a compilation of information identified by eighteen authors from many different positions spanning universities and colleges; legal concerns; federal, state and local government; homeless coalitions; institutes on poverty; housing services; technology; special education; early preschool through secondary education; sociology; planning and leadership. A generic view of problems and concerns related to educating homeless students is provided in addition to promising practices that may serve as potential ideas to maximize success of homeless children and youth in many communities. Students, families, schools, and communities are the focus of the book. It contains developmental perspectives on the needs of homeless infants, children and youth; strategies and perspectives on the protective roles of adults; strategies for schools to increase awareness and overcome barriers and develop comprehensive services; strategies to increase community service collaboration; and advocacy and partnerships with colleges. A variety of resources are identified to complement the suggested strategies and areas of concern including web sites for quick Internet accesses. This compilation of information spans research and best practices providing an up-to-date broad scope of what is occurring to increase the potential of homeless children and families. It provides a solid foundation for new exploration and for complex planning.

McGuinness, Diane. (1997). *Why Our Children Can't Read and What We Can Do About It*. New York, NY. The Free Press. The Free Press, A division of Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020

This book provides an overview of our efforts to improve reading and offers critiques of the most prominent approaches such as whole language, phonics, and the eclectic balance between phonics and whole language and

several other sacred cows in reading instruction. The complex task of reading acquisition is described as well as a successful teaching program to help all children to read. Topics include:

- Readers reading: How do we do it?
- The child's mind and reading
- The proof of the pudding: reading programs that work
- Helping those that did not make it

What's a parent to do.

Down to Earth Books, P.O. Box 163, Goshen, MA 01032. www.crocker.com/~maryl

NATIONAL HISTORICAL CONTRIBUTIONS SUPPORTING THE GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT OF ALTERNATIVES IN EDUCATION

Boyer, Ernest L. (1983). High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America. New York NY. Harper and Row.

This report was sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Atlantic Richfield Foundation and featured studies of high schools across the country to stimulate discussion and offer recommendations for improvement. The report proposed four essential goals for high schools:

1. The high school should help **all** students develop the capacity to think critically and communicate effectively through mastery of language.
2. The high school should help **all** students learn about themselves, the human heritage, and the independent world in which they live through a core curriculum based upon consequential human experiences common to all people.
3. The high school should prepare **all** students for work and further education through a program of electives that develop individual aptitudes and interests.
4. The high school should help all students fulfill their social and civic obligations through school and community service

Sizer, Theodore. (1984). Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School. Boston, MA. Houghton Mifflin Co.

This book offers a composite picture of the components of schools as Theodore Sizer framed them. He offers five imperatives to better our schools. The imperatives are:

1. Give room to teachers and students to work and learn in their own appropriate ways.
2. Insist that students clearly exhibit mastery of their schoolwork.
3. Get the incentives right, for students and for teachers.
4. Focus the students' work on the use of their minds.
5. Keep the structure simple and thus flexible.

Sizer stressed the importance of simplifying the school day and reducing the teacher load to address student differences. In response to this, the Coalition of Essential Schools was supported by five private foundations to implement reforms using a set of nine principles: focus, simple goals, universal goals, personalization, student-as-worker, diploma by exhibition, attitude, staff, and budget. Putting all of these together is new to education and the concepts do not lend themselves well to assessment and evaluation as now framed in standardization.

Goodlad, John, I. A Place Called School-Prospects for the future. New York. McGraw-Hill.

This book was based on observations of over a thousand classrooms in thirteen different communities throughout the country and interviews with educators. Recommendations emerged including individual choice provided by the school and resources outside the school via a voucher system. Goodlad emphasized carefully providing for individual differences in the student population.

Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy. (1983). Making The grade. New York: Twentieth Century Fund.

This report entitled " Action for Excellence" developed an action plan to improve our nation's schools. Eight areas of action were identified.

1. Put into effect state plans for improving education K-12.
2. Create partnerships for improving education including business leaders and other professionals.

3. Marshall the resources essential for improving education in the public schools.
4. Express new and higher regard for teachers.
5. Make the academic experience more intense and more productive.
6. Provide quality assurance in education.
7. Improve leadership and management in the schools.
8. Serve better those students who are unserved and under served.

JOURNALS:

Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice, (ISSN 1094-3838) A professional Journal. P.O. Box 328, Brandon, VT 05733-0328 Phone 1-800-639-4122 Fax 802-247-8312 encounter@great-ideas.org

The journal focuses on the implications of holistic education within the classroom. Focuses education on personal growth and meaning for both students and teachers in environments that insure social equality and justice. <http://www.great-ideas.org>

Alternative Network Journal. Published by the At-risk Programs Network, Inc. Published by-monthly during the academic year, five issues per year. Alternative Network Journal, PO Box 461, Ithaca, NY 14851-0461 altnet@clarityconnect.com altnetjnl.org

The Alternative Network Journal is for teachers, counselors, and administrators interested in alternative education. It features programs and upcoming events for professionals, students and parents. If you like to network and find out about what other teachers and counselors in alternative education settings are doing, this journal is for you.

KAPPAN. (April 2001). Published by Phi Delta Kappa International, Inc. 408 N. Union, P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, Indiana 47402. <http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kappan.htm> Phone 908-233-6075.

The April (2001) issue of the KAPPAN features articles entitled “Fear of Success? Ten Ways Alternative Schools Pull Their Punches”, “What To Do With Students Not Succeeding”, “Changing the Odds for Young People: Next Steps for Alternative Education”, “Reflections of an Alternative School Administrator”, “A Concern with Disadvantaged Students: An Interview with Henry Levin—founding director of the Accelerated Schools Project”.

Iowa Educational Leadership. (September 1999). A publication of the Iowa Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (IASCD).

This issue featured an article by Scott McNabb entitled “The Personal Approach in Alternative Schools: Roles, Realities, and Relationships.” Mr. McNabb’s article drives home the contribution alternative educators are providing to education in Iowa.

McNabb has also provided a report on his personal tour of alternative schools in Iowa on the IAAE website entitled “Reflections on Iowa’s Alternative School Teachers: Multiple Roles, Relationships and Resilience.” This work is a complete report detailing the contributions alternative educators are making to education in Iowa. It represents the most comprehensive recent look at the value of personalized education occurring in alternative schools, which is creating new possibilities for our students.

NEA Today: The Magazine of the National Education Association. www.nea.org/neatoday National Education Association, 1201 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-3290.

This magazine is published eight times a year, monthly from September to November and January to May. Nonmembers of NEA may subscribe to the magazine. The magazine covers news that often involves controversies occurring in education centering on the struggles of children, families, teachers, support staff, communities, and administrators. Learning and teaching remain the main focus of the magazine, identifying major methods and strategies being used by teachers, counselors, support staff, and others. High school, middle school, elementary and preschool personnel are all featured. The magazine offers opportunity for any educator to share their story of the classroom or their personal issues regarding

education. It offers educators and students in alternative learning environments at all levels opportunity to learn from others and forward their stories of education today.

Example topics in NEA Today April 2001 issue include:

- How do you get good publicity for your school?
- Students design their own future using modern-day technology
- Florida local creates true Education Support Personnel staff development
- Courts define student's free speech rights
- Reaching at-risk kids with hope
- Jailed mothers read to kids
- Student cheating and plagiarism in the internet era: a wake up call (book review)
- How to organize your classroom (book review)
- Online learning (www.OnlineLearning.net/NEA4).

Paths of Learning, Options for Families & Communities, P.O. Box 328, Brandon, VT 05733-0328. Phone 1-800-639-4122 Fax 802-247-8312 paths@great-ideas.org

A guide for families and children and communities to diverse ways of learning. Explores the roots of , and practices and issues within democratic schools, home education, multiage classrooms, Montessori schools, developmental education, wilderness and adventure education, lifelong learning, etc. Published quarterly. www.great-ideas.org

HIGH SCHOOL

Research and Reports Supporting Small Learning Environments

"While research over the years has emphasized the power and importance of small schools, recent findings have helped educators to understand the crucial relationship of small school size to effective learning. This is particularly true for at-risk and violent youth."

"Small size alone often encourages a more personal, humanistic educational program that is violence free."

Barr, Robert D., & Parrett, William H. (2001). *Hope fulfilled for at-risk and violent youth*. Allyn and Bacon. Needham Heights, MA.

Six important transformations of the teaching role can occur with a reduction in size and the establishment of commonly shared values:

1. Teachers (and students) gain a heightened sense of their own efficacy.
2. The principal can become a head teacher and, as a result, remove the authority barrier with the rest of the faculty.
3. A functional support system for the teachers can develop.
4. A truly democratic governance model can evolve.
5. The primacy of control issues can come to an end.
6. Teachers (and students) can more easily identify with the school.

Five transformations in student relationships that small schools permit are:

1. They encourage expansion of the student roles.
2. They heighten student's sense of responsibility and accountability.
3. They stimulate a collegiality between students and teachers.
4. They increase students access to adults.
5. They develop a sense of belonging to the community.

Small size is considered 200 to 250 students. Approximately 12 (an upper limit) teachers make up a family--a point at which all teachers can sit down and plan the course of the school as a group.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Barr, Robert D., & Parrett, William H. (1997a). *How to create alternative, magnet, and charter schools that work*. Bloomington, IN: National Education Service.

Barr, Robert D., & Parrett, William D. (1997b, Spring). *Reading/alternative schools keys to safer communities*. School Safety, 20-24.

Cushman, Kathleen. (June 1999). Essential school structures and design: Boldest moves get the best results. *Horace*, 15 (5), 1-7.

Fager, J. & Boss, S. (1998). *Peaceful Schools*. Portland, OR: Northwest Educational Laboratory.

Gregory, Thomas B., & Smith, Gerald R. (1987). *High schools as communities: The small school reconsidered*. Bloomington, Indiana. Phi Delta Kappa.

Gregory, Thomas. (1993). *Making high school work: Lessons from the Open School*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Muncey, Donna E., & McQuillan, Patrick J. (1993). Preliminary findings from a five-year study of the Coalition of Essential Schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 74(6), 486-89.

Nathan, Joe. (1996). *Charter schools: Creating hope and opportunity for American Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

National Association of Secondary School Principals (1996). *Breaking the ranks: Changing an American institution*. Reston, VA: Author.

Phi Delta Kappa International. (12 August 1998). The 30th annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the public's attitudes toward the public schools. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kp9809-3.htm>.

Raywid, Mary Ann. (1999). Central Park East Secondary School: The anatomy of success. *Journal of education for students placed at-risk*, 4(2), 131-51.

Wehlage, Gary G., Rutter, Robert A., Smith, Gregory A., Lesko, Nancy, & Fernandez, Ricardo, R. (1989). *Reducing the risk: Schools as communities of support*. Philadelphia, PA: The Falmer Press.

READING IN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS:

A Summary of Reading Strategies Applicable in Secondary Level Education

**By
Raymond E. Morley
(2000)**

Strategies:

Accept every student as special and precious; use unique student talents

Build trust; accept what the students bring/s to the school; follow through; hold regular personal conferences with each student; respect all cultures

Use personal learning plans; student-directed goals; establish goal setting sessions and review for reflection and improvements; guide students to compare personal goals with performance

Time devoted to reading every day, every semester, with student-chosen content

Provide materials for students and libraries - personal materials

Capitalize on curiosity. Use it to create a learning atmosphere of curiosity

Students report progress plans to parents, faculty, and community groups

Vary instructional methods

Use the community for applied learning projects; use writing to reinforce reading; create products and services

Use of newspapers and periodicals building awareness through reading

Use surroundings awareness exercises such as color, plants, student diversity, air quality, etc.

Student-created displays: photos, posters, ads, adventures, events, and governance

Utilization of current personal interests and experiences to select reading material

Immersed reading (situations established which require reading to solve problems)

Self-monitoring of reading and learning skills used in applied projects (Expeditionary Learning); make criteria for assessing explicit

Peer assisted reading: Team assignments; Book clubs; Book Buddies; Student tutors and mentors

Use technology; empower learners with technology to accommodate and strengthen reading (NOVA-Net, CCC, PLATO, Internet, E-mail, audio amplification systems, telephones, computers/software)

Teacher modeling of reading; use of reading

Flow charting; webs and Venn diagramming to build graphic organization

Personal identification and use of learning styles-visual, auditory, kinesthetic, auditory

Reciprocal teaching and learning; student takes on the role of teacher

Recorded books: listening and reading

Language imprinting: reading out loud in tandem

Utilization of exercises to build; apply reading skills in all subjects

Recognize many types of reading achievement; books read, comprehension, project completion, graphics, research skills, etc.

Use of brain-compatible learning strategies:

- Active meaningful learning
- Rich stimulating environment: much input
- Accurate, timely, helpful feedback
- Safe, non-threatening environment
- Accommodating reading problems to learn other subject matter

Reference for research-based information on reading:

Kamil, Michael. Mosenthal, Peter. Pearson, P. David. Barr, Rebecca. (2000) Handbook of Reading Research. Volume III, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 10 Industrial Avenue, Mahwah, N.J. 07430-2262.

**Legal References
in
Alternative Education
in Iowa
2001**

Chapter 11.5(3)—Iowa School Rules—Educational Program-form and content—The educational program shall set forth the administrative measures and the sequence of learning situations through which attempts are made to provide pupils with well-articulated developmental learning experiences from the date of school entrance until high school graduation.

282.18 Open enrollment—Iowa Code—It is the goal of the general assembly to permit a wide range of educational choices for children enrolled in schools in this state and to maximize ability to use those choices. It is therefore the intent that this section be construed broadly to maximize parental choice and access to educational opportunities which are not available to children because of where they live. For the school year commencing July 1, 1989, and each succeeding school year, a parent or guardian residing in a school district may enroll the parent's or guardian's child in a public school in another school district in the manner provided in this section.

Chapter 12.5(13)—Iowa School Rules—Provisions for at-risk students- Each school district shall include in its comprehensive school improvement plan the following provisions for meeting the needs of at-risk students:

- Valid and systematic procedures and criteria to identify at-risk students throughout the school district's school-age population
- Determination of appropriate on-going educational strategies for alternative options education programs as required in Iowa Code Section 280.19A and
- Review and Evaluation of the effectiveness of provisions for at-risk students.

280.12 (2) To meet the requirements of Iowa Code Section 280.12 (2), the board shall appoint and charge a school improvement advisory committee to make recommendations to the board. Based on the committee members' analysis of the needs assessment data, they shall make recommendations to the board about the following components:

- a. Major educational needs
- b. Student learning goals
- c. Long-range goals that include, but are not limited to, state indicators that address reading, mathematics and science achievement.

280.19A—Iowa Code—By January 15, 1995, each school district shall adopt a plan to provide alternative options education programs to students who are either at-risk of dropping out or have dropped out. An alternative options education program may be provided in a district, through a sharing agreement with a school in a contiguous district, or through an area-wide program available at the community college serving the merged area where the school district is located. when a plan is developed, the district shall be responsible for the operation of the program...

282.1—Iowa Code—School age—A board may establish and maintain evening schools or an educational program under section 282.1A (Extended school programs) for residents of the corporation regardless of age and for which no tuition need be charged.

282.1A—Iowa Code—A board of directors may, subject to approval of the department of education, provide an extended school program for residents of the district who are over the maximum school age established in section 282.1, who do not possess a high school diploma or a high school equivalency diploma under chapter 259A, and who are currently enrolled in the educational program in the district. The educational program may be separate from or integrated into the regular school program. Residents attending the programshall attend on a tuition-free basis.

299A.1—Iowa Code—Private Instruction-home schooling—The parent, guardian, or legal custodian of a child of compulsory attendance age who places a child under private instruction... (Instruction using a plan and course of

study in a setting other than a public or organized accredited nonpublic school)...must comply with Chapter 299A. Competent private instruction may include, but is not limited to, a home school assistance program which provides instruction or instructional supervision offered through an accredited nonpublic or public school district by a teacher...who assists and supervises a parent, guardian, or legal custodian in providing instruction to a child.

256.20—Iowa Code—Year Around schools...the board of directors of a school district may request approval from the state board of education for a pilot project for a year around three semester school year.

282.8—Iowa Code—Attending school outside state—The board of directors of school districts located near the state boundaries may designate schools of equivalent standing across the state line for attendance of both elementary and high school pupils when the public school in the adjoining state is nearer than any appropriate public school in a pupils district of residence or in Iowa. A person attending school in another state shall continue to be treated as a pupil of the district of residence in the apportionment of the current school fund and the payment of state aid.

282.10 —Iowa Code—Whole grade sharing—Whole grade sharing is a procedure used by school districts whereby all or a substantial portion of the pupils in any grade in two or more school districts share an education program for all or a substantial portion of a school day under written agreement pursuant to section 256.13, 280.15, or 282.7, subsection 1 or subsections 1 and 3. Whole grade sharing may either be one-way or two-way sharing.

282.19 —Iowa Code—Child living in foster care facility—A child who is living in a licensed child foster care facility as defined in 237.1, or in a facility that provides residential treatment as “facility” is defined in section 125.2, which is located in a school district in which the child resided before receiving foster care may enroll in and attend an accredited school in the school district in which the child is living. The instructional costs for students who do not require special education shall be paid as provided in section 282.31.....

28E—Iowa Code—Joint Exercise of Governmental Powers—The purpose of this chapter is to permit state and local governments in Iowa to make use of their powers by enabling them to provide joint services and facilities with other agencies and to cooperate in other ways of mutual advantage.

257.38-41—Iowa Code—Programs for Returning Dropouts and Dropout Prevention—Generate additional funds via modified allowable growth for schools and programs for potential dropouts and dropouts.

257.11—Supplementary Weighting Plan—In order to provide additional funding to school districts for programs serving at-risk pupils and alternative school pupils in secondary schools, a supplementary weighting formula is adopted. Amounts received as supplementary weighting for at-risk pupils shall be utilized by a school district to develop or maintain at-risk programs, which may include alternative schools programs.

Chapter 12 (12.2(256) General Accreditation Standards--Provides definitions for:

Alternative Options Education, Alternative Program, At-risk Student, Dropout, Potential dropout, Returning dropout.

IOWA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
POSITION STATEMENT ON CHARTER SCHOOLS
MARCH 22, 2000

The Iowa State Board of Education is supportive of innovative educational practice that results in improved student performance. In order to achieve this, the State Board encourages schools and school districts to pursue the flexibility that is already a part of Iowa law and to utilize research in determining the best instructional and organizational practices.

At this point, however, the Iowa State Board of Education does not feel that it is either prudent or necessary for the State of Iowa to incorporate charter schools as part of Iowa’s system of public education. While a number of states have authorized charter schools, the research and evaluation of this practice has yet to clarify the effectiveness of charter schools on student performance. It is not clear which particular policy designs are most effective or under

what conditions they might be effective in improving student learning. The State Board believes that broad policy changes should not be introduced without reasonable evidence of potential success.

While there is a continuing need to improve student performance at both the elementary and secondary levels, establishing independent attendance centers might as easily drain energy and resources from the primary district effort to improve learning for all of its students. This is particularly true when resources are limited and, in many cases, school districts may need to decrease the number of attendance centers rather than support additional ones.

In contrast to other states, the Iowa Department of Education already has options in place for regulatory flexibility which would allow a school in an accredited school district to achieve nearly the same level of autonomy as charter schools in other states. Section 256.9(48) of the Iowa Code (attached) provides the Director of the Department of Education broad authority to grant exemptions from all of the educational standards contained in section 256.11 and rules. In addition, Iowa is one of 12 Ed-Flex states granted the authority to waive federal education program requirements; a waiver designed to give increased flexibility while stressing accountability for improving student academic achievement.

We believe that any policies that structure local innovation, including charter schools, should demand that new local efforts:

- emphasize first and foremost clearly defined goals to improve student achievement;
- proceed with involvement and commitment of parents, neighborhood or community leaders, and staff;
- assure quality teaching for all students;
- assure equity in financial resources with other schools within the district or with other school districts;
- provide access to all resident students on the same basis as public schools;
- comply with basic state and federal laws including health and safety, civil rights and open access to school meetings; and
- assure the continuity of successful learning experiences as students enter or leave a charter school or in the event the charter school does not continue.

The Iowa State Board of Education will continue to monitor the emerging practice of charter schools in other states and remains open to the potential merit of this concept.

Code of Iowa, 256.9(48) (1999)

Grant annual exemptions from one or more of the minimum education standards contained in section 256.11 and rules adopted by the state board of education to nonpublic schools or public school districts who are engaging in comprehensive school transformation efforts that are broadly consistent with the current standards, but require exemption from one or more standards in order to implement the comprehensive school transformation effort within the nonpublic school or school district. Nonpublic schools or public school districts wishing to be exempted from one or more of the minimum standards contained in section 256.11 and rules adopted by the state board of education shall file a request for an exemption with the department. Requests for exemption shall include all of the following:

- a. A description of the nonpublic school or public school district's school transformation plan, including but not limited to new structures, methodologies, and creative approaches designed to help students achieve at higher levels.
- b. Identification of the standard or standards for which the exemption is being sought, including a statement of the reasons for requesting the exemption from the standard or standards.
- c. Identification of a method for periodic demonstration that student achievement will not be lessened by the granting of the exemption.

The director shall develop a procedure for application for exemption and receipt, review, and evaluation of nonpublic school and public school district requests, including but not limited to development of criteria for the granting or denying of requests for exemptions and a time line for the submission, review, and granting or denying of requests for exemption from one or more standards.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

Facts and Projections March 2001

280.19A, Iowa Code requires Iowa school districts to provide alternatives to assist dropouts to succeed in completing a high school education. Ninety-seven (97) alternative schools have been developed to assist over 9500 dropouts to stay in school and complete a high school education. School districts (316) have formed consortiums to provide alternative schools because they cannot afford to provide them on their own. Some have formed linkages with community colleges in many instances to complement high school education with career planning, vocational training, work placement, and post secondary planning. These consortiums are concerned whether they can continue without the level of resource support and program planning flexibility once provided under Chapter 257.11, Supplementary Weighting. The existing formula (257.11 (4)) providing funding for at-risk programs and services for all school districts in Iowa has weakened the potential of school districts to provide education alternatives as was provided under supplementary weighting.

The ninety-seven alternative schools in Iowa have been identified and recorded by the Iowa Association of Alternative Education in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Education. The Iowa Association of Alternative Education serves as a support network for staff development, student assistance, program improvement, advocacy, and information for Iowans. The IAAE has identified the need for continued support of alternative schools, has been represented on financial advisory groups studying the support of the schools and has available national and state information regarding the effectiveness of alternative schools and what alternative schools contribute to the educational system of Iowa.

High school dropouts have been declining over the past ten years despite increased social problems over the same period. Alternative schools have been expanding over the same period. Information collected through year-end reporting indicates that alternative schools are helping to keep students in school, complete a high school education, and prepare them for entry into work and a post secondary education. Thirty seven percent of the alternative school students have been reported to go on to post secondary training. This is incredible progress considering the students were failing in the traditional system. Without adequate support for alternative schools, our dropout populations are expected to increase.

Nearly one third (thirty-three) of our alternative schools are **partially** supported via provisions under Chapter 257.38-41. Schools are limited to five percent of their enrollment being identified as potential dropouts and dropouts under this provision. Since schools are required to provide support services for all at-risk children (k-12), the five percent provision does not generate enough support for all schools to provide alternative schools and k-12 support for all at-risk students (required in Chapter 12, General Accreditation Standards). Requests from school districts to exceed the five- percent can not be honored by the Department of Education because of the legal limitations. Some schools report over forty percent of their student body as at-risk of school failure and potential dropouts based on year-end reports from the districts and applications for support for programs.

Dropouts who do not return and graduate are three to nine times more likely to be incarcerated. About two thirds (66%) of those who do return and graduate are employed, three to four percent are college students, three to four percent are in the military, and unemployment is no different than graduates of traditional high schools. Twenty four percent of alternative schools graduates are involved in volunteer organizations and nearly the same percentage is involved in the voting process. This is compared to 14 percent of their peer group of the same age in Iowa.

Graduates of alternative schools report that alternative school experiences made all the difference in helping them to become productive citizens. It is not uncommon in alternative schools now to find that students must reach an eighty percent excellence level on assignments to be considered as adequate for credit. Those that have not graduated experience: a lack of employment and low employment level resulting in a loss of personal income no less than \$340,000 over their lifetime, a loss to the state treasury in lost tax revenues of over two million dollars per year and increased welfare burdens of 2.4 million dollars per year; increased incarceration; and deceleration in human growth resulting from lowering of cognitive skills, reduced options to economic progress and restricted social net-working.

Iowa is experiencing and will continue to experience a diversification of its population. Over five percent of our population is now African-American, Hispanic, Native American, Asian, or Other/Mixed. Dropout rates from our schools in 1999-2000 represented a rate of 3.82% African American, 6.12% Hispanic, 5.41% Native American, 1.65% Asian-American, and 1.55 Caucasian. The diversification represented in dropout statistics indicates higher levels of dropouts among minority populations compared to their representation in the total population of Iowa. The trend has been very apparent for the past ten years. We are experiencing the same trend common across the United States. As we continue to diversify poverty, cultural differences, and ability to learn will represent huge challenges to our schools requiring the need for options, alternatives, and the resources to provide them.

Representatives of alternative schools partially supported by increased allowable growth under Chapter 257.38-41, Iowa Code report that **one third of our dropouts are not now being served**. Expanding and improving our alternative schools will take focused and coordinated efforts at all levels.

"Alternative schools are the single most effective way to reform and improve public education that has ever been tried. In an era when almost every attempt to reform, restructure, and improve public education has been met with disappointment, alternative schools stand alone in stark, positive contrast. Alternative schools work." Comment taken from: **How to Create Alternative, Magnet, and Charter Schools That Work** by Robert Barr and William Parrett, National Education Service, Bloomington, Ind.

Smallness is better. National research indicates that smaller-size schools among other factors are a consideration for restructuring our schools across the board. Tom Gregory and Gerald Smith (1990), in "High Schools as Communities: The Small School Reconsidered," indicate the necessity of developing and maintaining a sense of family and belonging to boost achievement. This sense of family is made significantly more difficult and lost as the numbers in a school grow larger. When high schools go beyond 250 students the process begins becoming increasingly more difficult and having more damaging effect. This pattern is demonstrated in Iowa statistics on dropouts. The larger the school the greater the dropout rate. Alternative schools remain the single most effective way to establish smallness and the opportunity to establish a paradigm emphasizing attention to individual student needs to create motivation to learn.

Research references:

Smith, Gerald R. Gregory, Thomas B. & Pugh, Richard C. (1981). Meeting student needs: Evidence for the superiority of Alternative schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 62(8), 561-64

Veale, James. (1990). The Costs of Dropping Out of School and The Productivity Benefits of Returning and Graduating. Office of Educational Services for Children, Families and Communities, Department of Education, Iowa.

Iowa Department of Education. (2000). The Annual Condition of Education report. Des Moines, Iowa.

General Assembly of Iowa. (2001). Code of Iowa. Des Moines, Iowa.

**How Can We Help?
(Policy Brief)**

**Lessons from Federal Dropout Prevention Programs
September 1999**

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The Statements below represent a summary of the policy brief entitled "*How Can We Help?*" The summary was drafted by Dr. Ray Morley and should not be interpreted as a summary from Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. The Statements represent comments taken from the research brief which encourages readers to access the full research report. Nevertheless, the statements capture the major points of the research studies conducted nationally on the US Department of Education's School Dropout Demonstration Assistance Program (SDDAP) which operated from 1991-1996 and was the longest and largest of three dropout prevention programs funded by the federal government. More than twenty programs and 10,000 students were involved in the research initiative (experimental design using statistically equivalent control groups over a two-to-three-year period). School restructuring and separate learning environments were featured as the two primary approaches to dropout prevention and services for dropouts. All of the funded programs had to adopt a comprehensive approach to serving at-risk students: counseling and support services, attendance monitoring, challenging curricula, accelerated learning strategies, culturally sensitive parental outreach, enhanced links between middle and high schools, and career-awareness activities. More than regular schools, students were assisted to overcome personal, family and social barriers and the schools also created smaller learning environments for significant social interaction and creating a feeling of security to learn effectively. Teaching strategies used in alternative schools included: Teaching students in the usual way only in smaller classes, picking up the pace and pushing students to learn more faster, developing challenging curricula, often by creating thematic and interdisciplinary units, and using competency-based curricula that let students work independently and at their own pace.

Lessons:

- Some dropouts have no risk factors and some students who have many risk factors stay in school. No one factor is highly predictive of dropping out.
- An alternative school on a community college campus reduced dropout rates.
- School restructuring efforts that **focus on the classroom** (improving curriculum and instruction through staff development, classroom implementation, and summer training sessions) improved student performance and assisted teachers to view school more positively.
- Programs preparing dropouts for GED certificates improve GED completion rates.
- Partnerships between schools and community-based organizations worked best when a close working relationship was established early in setting up programs.
- The choice of teachers (those comfortable teaching a student with a history of failure) in alternative schools is more important than choice of curriculum. Students work harder and succeed when pushed hard to learn in a caring way.
- Enthusiasm for restructuring schools (school-based governance, outcomes-based education, block scheduling, mini-schools, interdisciplinary instruction, school councils, counseling and attendance monitoring) on the part of grant writers does not always translate into enthusiasm of teachers and principals responsible for carrying it out!
- Intensive programs (smaller classrooms with intensive counseling) and accelerated (catch up) programs at the middle school level tend to produce better results than supplemental help programs in affecting student performance and moving students on to higher grade levels.

- Offering both GED training programs and high school diploma programs helps the varied dropout population to complete a high school education. Both programs are needed to accommodate student differences.
- If we do not really know why students are dropping out, setting up dropout prevention programs will almost surely yield weak results. Individualized planning for students can help! (Does staff talk to students on the verge of dropping out to mitigate problems? Is adherence to student plans monitored and adjusted? Do schools have access to services for families and students to deal with problems? Does someone mediate arguments and disagreements between students and staff? Are parents actively involved with teachers and staff to solve problems and address issues with their own children?)

Suggestions for the Future

Suggestions for the future include:

- An individualized approach to helping students that focuses on the problems of the student
- Alternative middle schools
- Alternative high schools
- GED training programs for older students
- Restructuring built on **classroom change**.

Summary paragraph taken from "How Can We Help?"

How can we help? For some students, the promising directions found in the evaluations may help. We also can go further. We can ask what it would take for schools to keep their students and do away with their dropout-prevention programs. This is an ambitious goal, but the benefits of striving for it are huge. Perhaps dropout prevention should be only one part of a larger goal of creating schools where all students are given the assistance and opportunities they need to learn and develop into successful adults.

Copies of the original research brief and full study can be ordered via Publications Dept.-Library, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., P.O. Box 2393, Princeton, NJ 08543-2393.

APPENDIX A

The Keys to Success

A checklist for Local School Administrators

The 21 Most Effective Dropout Prevention Strategies

Use the definitions on the front page to build a profile for your schools

District School Sites	Systemic Renewal	Community Collaboration	Professional Development	Family Involvement	Early Childhood Education	Reading/Writing Programs	Alternative Schooling	Individualized Instruction	Instructional Technologies	Mentoring/Tutoring	Service Learning	Learning Styles/Multiple Intelligences	Specialized Curriculum	Violence Prevention/ Conflict Resolution	Career Education/ Workforce Readiness	Out-of-School Experiences	Personalized Planning	Student Leadership	Systematic Identification	In-School Support Services	Review and Evaluation	

Sources: The Keys to Success in Dropout Prevention, Students Serving Students, National Dropout Prevention Center, Clemson University, 1999 and Iowa Association of Alternative Education

The Keys to Success in Dropout Prevention **The 21 Most Effective Strategies Defined**

Since 1986, the National Dropout Prevention Center has been testing, researching, and identifying the most effective strategies for helping all young people graduate and start on the road to a successful life. Fifteen strategies have emerged over time as the most proven and effective means for achieving these goals. Iowa has identified six additional strategies resulting in 21 total strategies in this compilation. Annotations from the national center have been modified for Iowa.

- **Systemic Renewal** — A continuing process of evaluating goals and objectives related to school policies, practices, and organizational structures as they impact a diverse group of learners. *“Policies and Practices Related to Student Failure and Dropping Out”* is a resource of the Iowa Department of Education.
- **Community Collaboration** — When all groups/agencies in a community/region provide collective support to the schools, an infrastructure is created that provides a caring, supportive environment where youth can thrive and achieve. Services of public and private agencies need to be engaged.
- **Professional Development** — Teachers who work with youth at high risk of academic failure need to feel supported and need to have an avenue by which they continue to develop skills, techniques, and learn about innovative strategies.
- **Family Involvement** — Research consistently finds that family involvement has a direct, positive effect on children’s achievement and is the most accurate predictor of a student’s success in school. Family involvement from all socio-economic circumstances is crucial from birth through adolescence.
- **Early Childhood Education** — Birth-to-three intervention demonstrate that providing a child additional enrichment can modify IQ. The most effective way to reduce the number of children who will ultimately drop out is to provide the best possible instruction before their school experience.
- **Reading/Writing Programs** — Early interventions to help low-achieving students recognize that focusing on reading and writing skills is the foundation for effective learning in all other subjects.
- **Alternative Schooling** — Alternative schooling provides potential dropouts a variety of options which can lead to graduation with special attention to the student’s individual career and social needs and academic requirements for a high school diploma.
- **Individualized Instruction** — Connecting the learning of each student to the real world stimulates motivation. A customized individual program for each student places the student first and allows teachers flexibility with the instructional program and extracurricular activities.
- **Instructional Technologies** — Technology offers some of the best opportunities for delivering instruction which engages students in authentic learning, addresses multiple intelligences, and adapts to students’ learning styles.
- **Mentoring/Tutoring** — Mentoring is a one-to-one caring, supportive relationship between a mentor and a mentee that is based on trust. Tutoring is also a one-to-one activity but focuses on academics and is an effective practice when addressing specific needs such as reading, writing, or math competencies.
- **Service Learning** — This teaching and learning method connects meaningful community service experiences with academic learning. It also promotes personal and social growth, career development, and civic responsibility and can be a powerful vehicle for effective school reform at all grade levels.
- **Learning Styles/Multiple Intelligences** — When educators utilize and show students that there are different ways to learn, students find new and creative ways to solve problems, achieve success, and become lifelong learners.

- **Specialized Curriculum** — The special needs of students can successfully be addressed through courses, curriculum, and special study groups. Leadership training, study skills, conflict resolution, housing acquisition, self care, career search, etc., represent examples of specialized curriculum for personal development.
- **Violence Prevention/Conflict Resolution** — A comprehensive violence prevention plan, including conflict resolution, deals with potential violence as well as crisis management. Violence prevention provides experiences that continue to enhance all students with positive social attitudes and effective interpersonal skills.
- **Career Education/Workforce Readiness** — A quality guidance program is essential for all students. School-To-Work programs recognize that youth need specific skills to prepare them to measure up to the larger demands of today's workplace.
- **Out-of-School Experience** — Many schools provide after-school and summer enhancement programs that eliminate information loss and inspire interest in a variety of areas — especially important for students at risk of school failure.
- **Personalized Planning** — The practice of personalized planning beyond curriculum achieves a focus on the student and personal motivation and ownership for behavior. When multiple barriers to learning exist, case management/personalized plans guide service, timelines, and changes to plans. The personal plan is the key for achieving success.
- **Student Leadership** — Leadership skills come through experience. Training and experience produce these skills. Leadership is achieved by providing experiences and training. Leadership skills can be achieved in tandem with or apart from academic experience.
- **Systematic Identification** — Students who need additional help to succeed have the best chance to overcome challenges if identified before school age, before severe problems arise during the school years, and are comprehensively addressed (involving the family members as well as the child and encompass academic, personal/social and career/vocational development).
- **In-School Support Services** — Support services commonly offered in school (such as psychological services, social worker, special education, nurse, audiology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, food services, and tutoring) can change student lives if accommodations are made in school to connect students to the services and allow the services to be provided consistently and at the magnitude necessary. Student success is more probable when other family members are involved who need and receive the services necessary to complement the progress of the student.
- **Review and Evaluation** — Monitoring systems are necessary to establish indicators of student success. Indicators are necessary to guide instruction and all other support. Successful programs have monitoring systems to guide instruction and program implementation. The staff involved plan for getting feedback to guide their action. Computer technology is advancing the practices monitoring and evaluation. Multiple assessments and evaluation systems are necessary to accommodate differentiated programming, multiple levels of learning, disaggregation of information to achieve equity and focus initiatives, and establish quick and informed local reporting commonly needed across service agencies beyond school.

Highlights of the Iowa Youth Risk Behavior Surveys and National Surveys For Alternative and Regular Schools

The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System is an epidemiologic system established by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help monitor the prevalence of behaviors that put youth at risk for the most serious health and social problems that can occur during adolescence and adulthood. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is the measurement instrument of this system. This survey is used by the State of Iowa to monitor these behaviors among its young people. Specifically, this survey focuses on students who were attending *regular* (non-alternative) and *alternative* high schools (Grades 9 through 12) in Iowa during 1998-99. The total numbers represent those returning usable questionnaires.

Since the overall response rate was less than 60%, *the results may not be generalized to all students in the population.* The data may be used to make statements regarding the health risk behavior of **only** the high school students in Iowa who participated in the surveys—1,111 regular high school students and 709 alternative high school students.

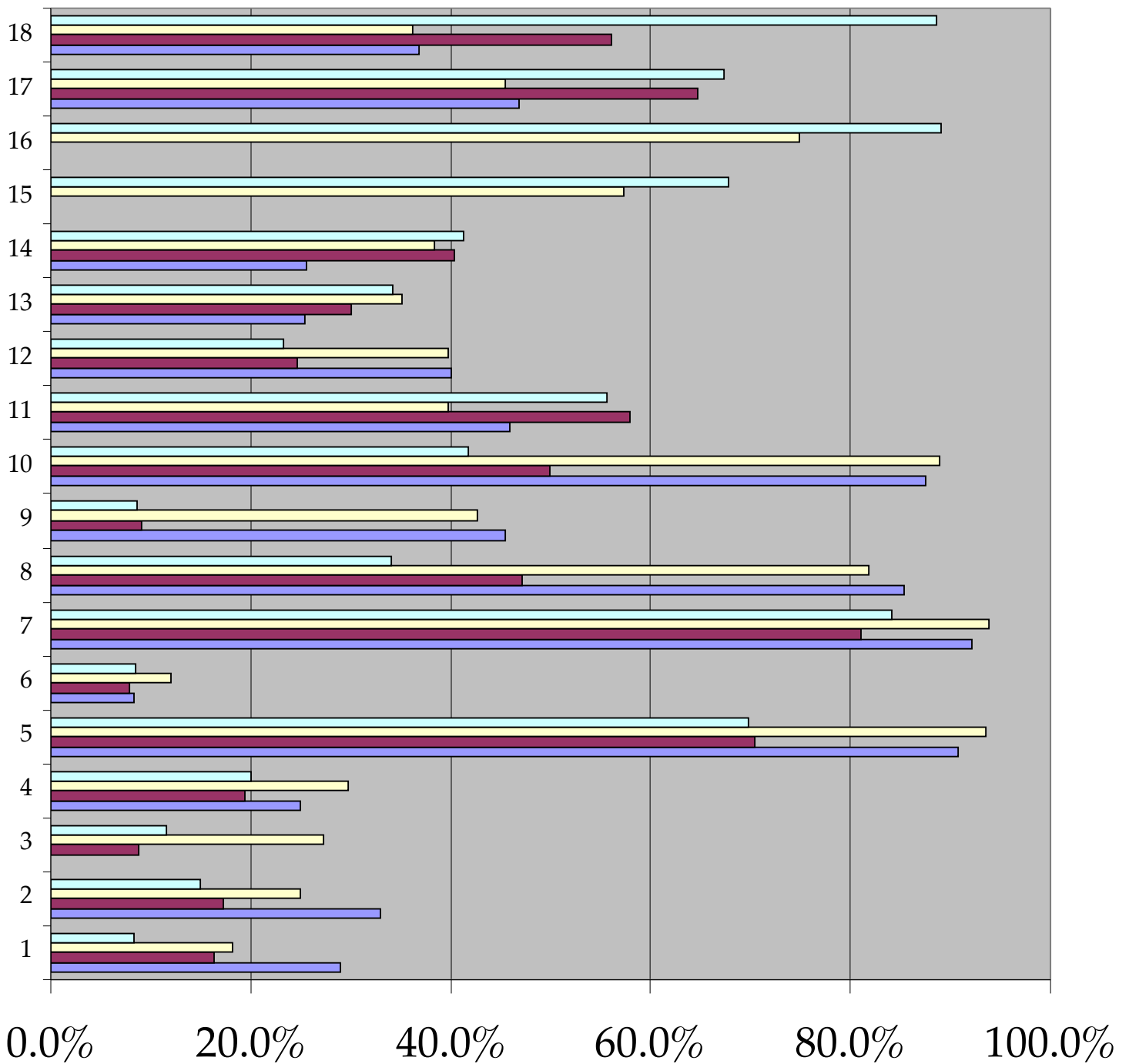
Summary highlights of the 1999 Iowa Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) for alternative and regular high schools are presented below, with the abbreviated outcome statement on the left and percentages for each survey on the right. The selection of highlights was somewhat subjective, based in part on the seriousness of the consequences of the unhealthy activities, the benefits of the healthy activities, and the magnitude of the response to each. The results of the 1998 national alternative school survey and the 1999 national regular high school survey are presented with the Iowa survey results.

Note that some of these outcomes are stated negatively (presence of risk factor), while others are stated positively (absence of risk factor). An example of a negative outcome is *“Ever tried cigarette smoking.”* An example of a positive outcome is *“Attended physical education class at least once per school week.”*

Percentages for Alternative and Regular High School Students

	1999 National Alt. Ed.	1998 Iowa Alt. Ed.	1999 National High School	1999 Regular High School
1. Never or rarely wore seat belt when riding in car driven by someone else	18.2%	29.0%	8.3%	16.4%
2. Carried weapon during the past 30 days	24.9%	32.9%	15.0%	17.3%
3. Physically hurt on purpose by boy/girlfriend during the past 12 months	27.2%	NA	11.6%	8.8%
4. Thought seriously about attempting suicide during the past 12 months	29.7%	25.0%	20.1%	19.4%
5. Ever tried cigarette smoking	93.6%	90.8%	69.8%	70.4%
6. Used smokeless tobacco during the past 30 days	12.0%	8.3%	8.5%	7.8%
7. Ever drank alcohol	93.9%	92.2%	84.1%	81.0%
8. Ever tried marijuana	81.8%	85.4%	34.0%	47.2%
9. Ever used methamphetamines	42.7%	*45.5%	8.6%	9.1%
10. Ever had sexual intercourse	88.9%	87.5%	41.8%	49.9%
11. Used a condom during last sexual intercourse (among sexually active)	39.7%	45.9%	55.7%	58.0%
12. Drank alcohol or used drugs before last sexual intercourse (among sexually active)	39.7%	40.1%	23.3%	24.7%
13. Described themselves as slightly or very overweight	35.1%	25.5%	34.2%	30.0%
14. Ate less food, fewer calories, or low fat foods to lose weight	38.4%	*25.6%	41.3%	40.4%
15. Ate green salad at least once in past week	57.3%	NA	67.8%	NA
16. Ate fruit at least once yesterday	74.9%	NA	89.0%	NA
17. Participated in activities that made them seat/breathe hard	45.4%	46.8%	67.4%	64.7%
18. Attended physical education class at least once per week	36.2%	36.9%	88.6%	*56.1%

The bar graph of Iowa and national information can be found on the following page.



Light Blue=Regular High School Students
 Burgundy=National High School Students
 Yellow=Iowa Alternative Students
 Dark Blue=National Alternative Students

**Highlights of the 1999 Iowa YRSB
 and the 1999 National Survey**

The numbers to the left refer to the outcome statements on the opposite side of the page.