

The Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement was created pursuant to HB 09-1243 (22-14-101) October 1, 2009. The authorizing legislation calls for the development of a best practice guide. This purpose of the guide is two- fold:

The primary purpose is for school districts; to assist them moving forward in the creation of a *Student Graduation and Completion Plan*. These plans will be developed in an effort to increase graduation rates and decrease dropout rates. According to the respondents who are currently participating in the *Prevention Network at the Colorado Department of Education*, school and district leaders stated that there was a need for “information on practical ways to implement dropout prevention and recovery strategies and best practices” into their schools. Therefore, the best practice guide intends to be a practical resource for schools and districts. As research evolves and additional information becomes available regarding dropout prevention and recovery, the guide will be updated annually to reflect those changes.

The secondary purpose of the best practice guide is to provide information about what is currently happening in the nation and in the state of Colorado regarding dropout prevention and student re-engagement to CDE Leadership and Legislators.

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## **Dropout Prevention and Student Re-Engagement**

### Tools and Resources

#### **[Guides and Toolkits](#)**

**Comprehensive dropout prevention program planning tools, and workbook style resources.**

#### **[CDE Grant Programs](#)**

**A list of dropout prevention focused grant programs available through the Colorado Department of Education.**

#### **[Research and Reports](#)**

**Colorado Department of Education recommended articles regarding dropout prevention and student re-engagement.**

#### **[Links to Organizations/Institutions](#)**

**Local and National Organizations and Institutions committed to ending the dropout crisis.**

### Guides and Toolkits

**The Alternative Pathways Project: A Framework for Dropout Reduction and Recovery**; Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, (2006).

This document by J. D. Hope (Keep the Change, Inc.) and Chris Sturgis (MetisNet) highlights policies and practices that push children out of school, suggests strategies for overcoming barriers to re-enrolling in school, and gives direction for expanding educational alternatives that are effective for vulnerable youth. ([www.ytfg.org/documents/AltPathv.7.7Julyfin.pdf](http://www.ytfg.org/documents/AltPathv.7.7Julyfin.pdf))

Approaches to Dropout Prevention: Heeding Early Warning Signs with Appropriate Interviews; National High School Center, (2007).

A resource by Louise Kennelly and Maggie Monad that discusses building an early warning system to identify students on a pathway to dropping out and features descriptions of dropout prevention programs and best practices.

([www.betterhighschools.org/docs/NHSC\\_ApproachesToDropoutPrevention.pdf](http://www.betterhighschools.org/docs/NHSC_ApproachesToDropoutPrevention.pdf))

**Dropout Prevention: A Practice Guide**; Washington, DC, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, (NCEE 2008-4025).

This guide is intended to be useful to educators in high schools and middle schools, superintendents, school boards and state policymakers interested in planning and executing dropout prevention strategies. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc>.

**Grad Nation: A Guidebook to Help Communities Tackle the Dropout Crisis**; America's Promise Alliance, (2008).

A tool for dropout prevention by R. Balfanz, J. Fox, J. Bridgeland, and M. McNaught. It includes four parts, which focus on community support to address the problem of high school dropout, ways to gain understanding of the nature of dropout, comprehensive solutions, and creating lasting change.

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[www.americaspromise.org/uploadedFiles/AmericasPromiseAlliance/Dropout Crisis/Graduation Nation/GradNation Guidebook 11-08.pdf](http://www.americaspromise.org/uploadedFiles/AmericasPromiseAlliance/Dropout%20Crisis/Graduation%20Nation/GradNation%20Guidebook%2011-08.pdf)

**Guide for Practice: Engaging and Re-engaging Students in Learning**; Center for Mental Health in Schools. (2008)

This guide from the School Mental Health Project (Dept. of Psychology, UCLA) focuses on school disengagement and re-engagement. It examines social control, intrinsic motivation, components of motivation and re-engaging students.

<http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engagingandre-engagingstudents.pdf>

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## CDE Grant Programs

The new work on dropout prevention and student engagement will expand efforts at state and district levels and will leverage existing resources to implement plans and recommendations. Following are examples of both state and federal funding to promote practices that address the needs of students who drop out of the public K-12 system before graduation. Additional resources are being sought to support specific dropout prevention efforts in school districts identified as high priority.

### Expelled and At-Risk Student Services Grant Program

This program is authorized by Colorado Revised State Statute 22-33-205. The grant provides state funding and technical assistance to school districts, charter, alternative and private, non-parochial schools, eligible facilities and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services to provide education for students who have been expelled. The grant program also provides technical assistance to prevent suspensions and expulsions. Grantees implement strategies to

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address re-engaging non-traditional and disenfranchised students who are involved in:

Truancy and low attendance

Student behavior issues tied to discipline referral, suspensions and expulsions

Lack of school engagement and connectedness

A requirement for family engagement leads to higher student achievement, better attendance and more homework completion.

Many of these strategies are also best practices for dropout prevention and closing the achievement gap. *Funding allocation for 2009-2010: \$7.3 million in state funding (Amendment 23), which includes funding awards to 59 sites.*

Colorado Connections for Healthy Schools

“Colorado Connections” is a statewide partnership between CDE and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. This effort is federally funded through the Centers for Disease Control. It is designed to create a state infrastructure and to fund local school districts for coordinated school health, including comprehensive health education. The health education conforms with the Colorado Comprehensive Health Education Act of 1990. Strategies address health issues which interfere with student academic success, attendance and school connectedness. Students with poor nutrition and low levels of physical activity are more likely to be absent and tardy. Students with unmet medical needs are less likely to achieve and attend school. Students engaging in high-risk behaviors are more likely to drop out of school due to teen pregnancy, teen parenting and/or health and mental health related issues. *Funding allocation from the state (Amendment 23) for comprehensive health education: \$300,000 annually.*

Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities, Title IV-A of No Child Left Behind

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This effort addresses school connectedness and safe, civil learning environments. This federally funded program is designed to prevent violence and to prevent alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. It seeks to create positive school environments and to provide mental health services and increase social and emotional skills, such as coping and problem solving. *Funding allocation for 2008-2009: \$2,568,374 in federal funding, which is distributed to approximately 144 school districts and BOCES.*

Title X, Part C of No Child Left Behind (McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth)

This is federally funded program that provides resources and training so that homeless children are enrolled in school and have accessible transportation and support services. The program was originally authorized in 1987 and, most recently, reauthorized as Title X, Part C of the Federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. In Colorado there are 12,302 identified homeless students who are at higher risk for dropping out. Students who remain at the same high school are more than twice as likely to graduate as students who change schools one or more times. *Funding allocation for 2009-2010: \$854,579 in federal funding to 17 sub-grantees, impacting 32 school districts and BOCES. In addition, \$924,815 from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was awarded to 42 districts and to BOCES.*

Dropout Prevention Activity Grant

Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute 22-27.5-103, this program is funded through a voluntary contributions check-off item on the Colorado Individual Income Tax Return. The program provides additional funding for schools to sponsor before-school, after-school and summer programs that encourage positive school attachment and provides greater incentives for some students to stay in school. *Funding allocation based on state income tax check off. In 2008-2009, funds were awarded to four sites.*

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## Learn and Serve Colorado

Learn and Serve Colorado provides federal funding and technical assistance for re-engaging students through service-learning. Service learning promotes positive youth development, citizenship, and academic achievement through active participation in meaningful service to their schools and communities. Opportunities for service learning increase connectedness to school and community and ensure that students have a safe and civil learning environment. Students report more engagement in and attachment to school when they participate in service-learning. *Funding allocation for 2008-2009: \$219,690 in federal funding distributed to six grantees (Denver, Lake, Boulder, Colorado Springs and Campo school districts and the Northwest Consortium (Wray, Haxtun and Holyoke.) Awards for the 2009-2010 school year have not yet been finalized.*

## Pilot Program to Close the Achievement Gap

This pilot program provides three-year grants to six school districts to provide the opportunity to conduct comprehensive appraisals of district improvement needs, identify resources to meet these needs and develop comprehensive plans to improve student achievement. Pilot districts are required to meet certain program objectives in order to receive continuation funding. *Funding allocation for 2008-2009: \$1.8 million, which funds pilot grants to Eagle County School District 50J, Greeley-Evans School District 6, Roaring Fork School District, St. Vrain Valley School District, Summit School District and Yuma School District-1.*

## School Counselor Grant Program

This program provides state funding to increase the number of school counselors. Grants will support increasing the percentage of students who appropriately prepare for, apply to and continue into postsecondary education. *Funding allocation for 2008-2009:*

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*\$5,000,000, which funds 37 districts, serving 92 schools and 76 new counseling positions.*

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## Research and Reports

**Achieving Graduation for All: A Governor's Guide to Dropout Prevention and Recovery;** Report from the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, (2009).

This is a guide offered to states in an effort to curb the dropout rate. This report offers step-by-step instructions on how a state can support a successful dropout and recovery program and what districts can do to implement a successful program within the school setting.

**Family Involvement in Schools: Engaging Parents of At-Risk Youth;** Colorado Department of Education/Prevention Initiatives, (2008).

This study by Heather MacGillivray and Gretchen Mann provides insight on how to increase family involvement and is based on focus groups and interviews with parents and educators involved in programs funded by the Expelled and At-Risk Student Services grant program administered by the Colorado Department of Education.

[http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/download/pdf/FamilyInvolvementReport\\_2008.pdf](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/download/pdf/FamilyInvolvementReport_2008.pdf)

**Making Good on the Promise;** Double the Numbers: A Jobs for the Future Initiative, (2006).

Report by Cheryl Almeida, Cassius Johnson, and Adria Steinberg that assesses how far our society is from "making good" on the

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promise of a second chance for dropouts and offers a starting point for improving the record. It takes a detailed look at who dropped out and how much education they completed by their early adulthood. ([www.jff.org/Documents/MkingGood\\_Sum.pdf](http://www.jff.org/Documents/MkingGood_Sum.pdf) )

**Out-of-School Immigrant Youth**; Public Policy Institute of California, (2007).

This report by Laura E. Hill and Joseph M. Hayes describes the population of out-of-school immigrant youth in California. Analysis of census data leads to suggestions on re-engaging out-of-school immigrant youth, such as ways to target services, improve future data collection, and enhance program organization. ([www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org))

**The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts**; Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, (2006).

The purpose of the study was to gain a better understanding of the lives and circumstances of students who drop out of high school. The findings are based on a series of focus groups and a survey that were conducted with young people aged 16-25, who identified themselves as high school dropouts in 25 different locations throughout the United States. These interviews took place in large cities, suburbs and small towns with high dropout rates.

(<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/united-states/Documents/TheSilentEpidemic3-06FINAL.pdf>)

**Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities Are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth**; American Youth Policy Forum, (2006).

Report by Nancy Martin and Samuel Halperin that documents what committed educators, policymakers, and community leaders across the country are doing to reconnect out-of-school youth to the social and economic mainstream. It provides background on the serious high school dropout problem and describes in-depth what twelve communities are doing to reconnect dropouts to education and

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employment training. It also includes descriptions of major national program models serving out-of-school youth.

([www.aypf.org/publications/WhateverItTakes.htm](http://www.aypf.org/publications/WhateverItTakes.htm))

**Saving Money, Saving Youth;** National Center for School Engagement, (2003).

This report analyzes three truancy reduction programs in Colorado. Tables illustrate the costs of the programs, versus the long term saving and benefits when students remain in and complete high school. ([www.schoolengagement.org](http://www.schoolengagement.org))

**The Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for All of America's Children;** Teachers College, Columbia University, (2007).

Authors Henry Levin, Clive Belfield, Peter Muennig and Cecilia Rouse identify five leading interventions that have been shown to raise high school graduation rates; and calculate their costs and their effectiveness. Document also features the lifetime public benefits of high school graduation, such as higher tax revenues as well as lower government spending on health, crime, and welfare.

([http://www.cbcse.org/media/download\\_gallery/Leeds\\_Report\\_Final\\_Jan2007.pdf](http://www.cbcse.org/media/download_gallery/Leeds_Report_Final_Jan2007.pdf))

**The High Cost of High School Dropouts: What the Nation Pays for Inadequate High Schools;** Alliance for Excellent Education Issue Brief, (Updated June 2008).

If all of the U.S. high school dropouts from the Class of 2008 had instead earned diplomas along with their classmates, the U.S. economy could have benefited from an additional \$319 billion in wages over these students' lifetimes. This brief examines the benefits of increasing the graduation rates.

(<http://www.all4ed.org/files/HighCost.pdf>)

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## Organizations/Institutions

The following groups provide material and information on dropout prevention and recovery and related topics:

Achieve Inc. ([www.achieve.org/](http://www.achieve.org/) )

Alliance for Excellent Education (<http://www.all4ed.org/>)

America's Promise ([www.americaspromise.org](http://www.americaspromise.org) )

American Youth Forum ([www.aypf.org/projects](http://www.aypf.org/projects) )

Center on Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence  
(<http://crede.berkeley.edu/> )

Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA  
(<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/> )

Children's Defense Fund – State of America's Children  
([www.childrensdefense.org/](http://www.childrensdefense.org/) )

Colorado Department of Education – Education Reform in Colorado  
([www.cde.state.co.us/scripts/reforms/index.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/scripts/reforms/index.asp) )

Colorado Department of Education – Benefits of Coordinated School Health  
([www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/results.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/results.htm))

Colorado Department of Education – Parent/School Partnerships  
([http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/pi\\_parent\\_school\\_partnerships.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/pi_parent_school_partnerships.htm))

Colorado Children's Campaign ([www.coloradokids.org](http://www.coloradokids.org) )

Colorado Youth for a Change ([www.cycinfo.com/site](http://www.cycinfo.com/site) )

Communities in Schools ([www.cisnet.org](http://www.cisnet.org))

Culturally Responsive Urban Education Center (CRUE) at University of Colorado, Denver  
(<http://www.crucecenter.org/index.php> )

Donnell Kay Foundation (<http://www.dkfoundation.org/reports.asp> )

Education Trust ([www2.edtrust.org/edtrust/](http://www2.edtrust.org/edtrust/) )

Everyone Graduates Center/Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University  
([www.every1graduates.org](http://www.every1graduates.org) )

IES: The What Works Clearinghouse  
(<http://www.whatworks.ed.gov/> )

Jobs for the Future (<http://www.jff.org/>)

MRDC ([www.mdrc.org](http://www.mdrc.org) )

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National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)  
(<http://nces.ed.gov/NATIONSREPORTCARD/> )  
National Center for Education Statistics (<http://nces.ed.gov>)  
National Center for School Engagement ([www.schoolengagement.org](http://www.schoolengagement.org) )  
National Dropout Prevention Centers ([www.dropoutprevention.org](http://www.dropoutprevention.org) )  
National Dropout Prevention Center For Students With Disabilities  
([www.ndpc-sd.org/](http://www.ndpc-sd.org/))  
National Governor’s Association Center for Best Practices -  
Education (<http://www.nga.org>)  
National Institute on the Education of At Risk Students  
([www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/At-Risk/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/At-Risk/index.html) )  
RAND – Education research  
([www.rand.org/research\\_areas/education/](http://www.rand.org/research_areas/education/))  
SERVE Center at University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
([www.serve.org](http://www.serve.org) )  
Talent Development High Schools and Talent Development Middle  
Schools/Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins  
University ([www.csos.jhu.edu](http://www.csos.jhu.edu))  
U.S. Department of Education ([www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov))  
WestEd ([www.wested.org](http://www.wested.org) )  
Youth in Transitions Funder’s Group (<http://www.ytfg.org/> )

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