

# Kansas DropINs Quarterly Newsletter

Winter 2012

Issue 1



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## What's New At [www.kansasdropsins.org](http://www.kansasdropsins.org)

Search for alternative education opportunities by region (under the Resources tab)

Watch the Kansas Inmate Video (under the Our Work tab)

Find resources, websites and webinars for each of the 15 Effective Strategies (under the Resources tab)



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## Welcome from Kansas DropINs

Happy New Year and welcome to the first issue of the Kansas DropINs Newsletter! Kansas DropINs is a dropout prevention initiative within the Kansas State Department of Education. We are committed to seeing all children in Kansas graduate from high school ready for the next phase of life. The purpose of this newsletter is to share information, tools and resources that schools and communities can use in their own dropout prevention programs. Kansas DropINs also maintains a website, [www.kansasdropsins.org](http://www.kansasdropsins.org), that serves as a clearinghouse for dropout prevention information and a Facebook page, that highlights the most current information and resources. Lastly, Kansas DropINs staff is available to provide technical assistance to schools and communities.

Sincerely

Jessica Noble, Kansas DropINs Director



# 15 Effective Dropout Prevention Strategies

Developed by the National Dropout Prevention Center in conjunction with the Schargel Consulting Group

## School and Community Perspective:

Students are part of a school community, but they are also part of the community outside the school grounds. Effective schools are integral parts of their communities and, as a result, have strong business and community support. Attendance and truancy issues are community problems, not just school problems. Therefore to set the stage for a comprehensive dropout prevention initiative, and concurrently improve student attendance and reduce truancy, there are three critical strategies that serve as a baseline for the other strategies:

- **Systemic Renewal**
- **School-Community Collaboration**
- **Safe Learning Environments**

## Early Interventions:

Research has shown that early identification of poor attendance patterns of children and the ensuing truancy issue are vital to ensuring a successful school experience. When identified early, attitudes and behaviors can often be changed before they are deeply entrenched. These strategies are most effective when implemented at birth, but continue throughout a child's school years.

- **Family Engagement**
- **Early Childhood Education**
- **Early Literacy Development**

-from 15 Effective Strategies for Improving Student Attendance and Truancy Prevention (2005) by Dr. Jay Smink and Dr. Mary Reimer

## The Basic Core Strategies:

Many school districts and communities are seeking effective interventions that target middle and high school students in at-risk situations. The following four interventions have had an impact at all school levels, but seem to be more easily managed in middle and high school. These student-centered strategies provide dynamic and meaningful learning opportunities in alternative, traditional, and community settings, all designed to keep students in school and on a path toward graduation.

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

## Making the Most of Instruction:

What happens in the classroom is at the heart of keeping students in school. Strategies that address the different learning styles of students, increase the knowledge and skills of teachers, and harness the power of technology can increase learning and attendance. These school-based interventions are particularly effective with students in at-risk situations.

- **Professional Development**
- **Active Learning**
- **Educational Technology**
- **Individualized Instruction**
- **Career and Technical Education**



## House Substitute for Senate Bill No. 23

During the 2011 Kansas legislative session, Governor Sam Brownback signed into law House Substitute for Senate Bill No. 23. This law requires school districts to issue a diploma to youth in state custody if the youth has requested the diploma and has met the minimum Kansas State Board of Education requirements. Currently, the Kansas State Board of Education requires 21 credits, which includes certain core classes, in order to graduate. This new law affects youth in the custody of the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) and the Kansas Juvenile Justice Authority (JJA). The intent of this law is to make it easier for these youth, who may have had to move several times, to earn a high school diploma.

To help schools understand the new law, KSDE has prepared a fact sheet which is available on the KSDE Graduation webpage: <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4606> .



## Strategy Spotlight: Family Engagement

“When it comes to a breakfast of ham and eggs, the chicken is involved but the pig is committed “

This humorous quote captures the differences between parent involvement (the chicken) and family engagement (the pig). It can also serve to describe the struggles facing schools working to build strong family partnerships.

When you "involve" parents, ideas and suggestions come primarily from the school. The school typically identifies priority areas and recruits parents to assist, based on these priority areas. Parents who are involved serve the school's agenda by- volunteering, parenting in positive ways and supporting student learning at home.

When schools "engage" parents and families, ideas come primarily from the conversations between families and communities based on their needs and priorities that are reflected in the data. The parent is considered a leader who is a critical player in identifying a shared vision and goal. When we engage families, we have the potential to create a shared community, where families and educators work as partners to support and increase student learning.

Suggestions for Engaging Families:

- Actively solicit family participation on decision making committees
- Conduct an annual survey or form focus groups for family input on current or proposed school programs and policies
- Have a suggestion box in the front office or on the website, encouraging families to share concerns and ideas
- Provide leadership development opportunities for families
- Publicize successful changes resulting from family initiation and engagement

-from Clayton Early Learning

<http://www.claytonearlylearning.org/>

## Family Engagement Online Events

Nine-part webinar series on Achieving Excellence and Innovation in Family, School and Community Engagement:

[http://www.nationalpirc.org/engagement\\_webinars/](http://www.nationalpirc.org/engagement_webinars/)

Beyond the Bake Sale: Family-School Partnerships (webinar):

<http://forum-network.org/lecture/beyond-bake-sale-family-school-partnerships>

Family Involvement Makes a Difference (webinar):

<http://www.dropoutprevention.org/webcast/26-family-involvement-makes-difference>

Six online modules for preparing teachers to work with families, based on the National PTA Standards:

<http://www.tcet.unt.edu/home/ptece21.html?itemid=425>

## Funding Opportunities

ING: Unsung Heroes Awards for effective projects that improve student learning at an accredited K-12 public or private school (deadline April 30).

<http://ing.us/about-ing/citizenship/childrens-education/ing-unsung-heroes>

Learning Forward Professional Development Grants (deadline March 1)

[http://www.learningforward.org/getinvolved/scholarships\\_grants.cfm](http://www.learningforward.org/getinvolved/scholarships_grants.cfm)

Target Foundation Early Childhood Reading, Arts & Culture in Schools and Field Trip Grants (opens March 1).

<http://sites.target.com/site/en/company/page.jsp?contentId=WCMP04-031767>



## Kansas Graduation Rates Increase in 2010-2011

Student Group	2009-2010	2010-2011
All Students	80.7%	83.0%
Students with Disabilities	68.7%	73.6%
Free/Reduced Lunch	70.1%	73.2%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	68.5%	72.4%
Asian	86.7%	88.3%
Black or African American	66.2%	72.4%
Hispanic	70.3%	73.2%
Multi-Racial	72.2%	80.8%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	72.0%	78.6%
White	84.5%	86.1%

\*09-10 and 10-11 rates calculated using the four-year adjusted cohort formula:

# of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma

#of students who entered high school four years earlier (adjusting for transfers in and out)

## Digital Learning Day

The Alliance for Excellent Education will host their first ever Digital Learning Day on **Wednesday, February 1, 2012.**

As part of the celebration, the Kansas education community will highlight and explore digital learning practices that improve students' education and save money for schools.

Alliance Resources: <http://www.digitallearningday.org/>

Kansas Resources: <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=5076>

**“We must view young people not as empty bottles to be filled, but as candles to be lit”**

**-Robert H Shaffer**

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