



NEWSLETTER

Leading the Way in Dropout Prevention

IT ALL BEGAN A QUARTER OF A CENTURY AGO. LED BY SOUTH CAROLINIAN ESTHER FERGUSON, A GROUP OF CONCERNED CITIZENS KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL DROPOUT PREVENTION FUND GATHERED IN NEW YORK CITY TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE OF SCHOOL DROPOUTS. THESE BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS SOON FOUND THAT THERE WAS NO PLACE TO TURN FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THIS GNAWING PROBLEM. AHEAD OF THEIR TIME, THEY HAD THE FORESIGHT TO RECOGNIZE THAT THERE NEEDED TO BE A PLACE FOR THEM AND OTHERS TO GO FOR INFORMATION, PREFERABLY AN ORGANIZATION AT A WELL-RESPECTED COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY. INFORMATION WAS NEEDED TO PROVIDE THEM WITH THE DATA ABOUT THE ISSUE, AND THEY WERE ESPECIALLY INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT WHAT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS WERE WORKING WITH THESE STUDENTS AT RISK OF DROPPING OUT.

The quest of the founders led them to Clemson University in South Carolina for a home for the new organization. As the National Dropout Prevention Center (NDPC) entered the world in 1986, some of its highest priorities were to gather relevant information, to find out what works in dropout prevention, and to find ways to disseminate that growing body of information to educational leaders and practitioners, policymakers, and community and business leaders all over the country.

During the earliest years of operation, the NDPC staff collected a great deal of information; established an on-site resource library; began creating publications with information on dropout issues, including a quarterly newsletter; and developed a computerized model program database. These were the days before the World Wide Web, so the original databases of resources and programs were not directly accessible to most distant users; nevertheless, the staff provided technical assistance in gathering appropriate referrals to its growing clientele.

From the very beginning, hosting conferences to bring together practitioners for the sharing of knowledge and ideas was considered an extremely important function of the Center. Taking

on this challenge has created a wide array of professional development opportunities over the years, from the annual national conference—the 23rd being in Chicago—to the annual At-Risk Youth National FORUM each February, to numerous regional Effective Strategies Institutes.

As the years progressed, the members of the National Dropout Prevention Network have become increasingly involved in promoting and disseminating new research in this growing field. Thus, eight years into the life of the Center, *The Journal of At-Risk Issues* was launched. This pioneer in the research arena brought to the forefront a growing body of work in the dropout prevention field, with more research-based approaches being highlighted.

Still, the focus on “What works?” has caused the NDPC, first in 1991 and again more recently, to promote recommendations of 15 Effective Strategies based on the research and experience with the Model Programs Database.

School districts found that in addition to gaining new insights through the Model Program Database and the 15 Effective Strategies, the publications, and attending conferences, they needed personalized attention to meet their growing dropout problem. With so many contacting the NPDC



for assistance, it became clear that a research-based initiative needed to be developed to meet this increased need. The PAR (Performance Assessment and Review) Program was begun, and since its initiation, individual schools, school districts, and statewide initiatives have all contracted with the Center as they seek the goal of school improvement. In addition, the needs for program evaluation, mandated by project funders, has been a more recent focus of the NDPC.

Building on the Center's broad foundation of resource development, service delivery, and leadership, in 2004 the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) selected the NDPC to be the home for the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities.

The work of the Center continues to flourish with expanding services and modernized versions of knowledge dissemination, such as the Web site, the online newsletter, professional development DVDs, and the monthly radio webcast, impacting our delivery of information about what works. Still, the purpose has not strayed that far from the original goal: to serve as a place to turn to for the best information on dropout prevention.

Celebrating 25 Years



The 15 Effective Strategies in Action

The National Dropout Prevention Center has advocated 15 Effective Strategies over the past 25 years, and these strategies work together to ensure good dropout prevention.

We continue to collect successful programs in our Model Program Database on our Web site, and here's a sampling of programs that reflect the excellence of this resource.

CASASTART (Striving to Achieve Rewarding Tomorrows)

CASASTART brings together three important institutions—a social service or health agency, the local law enforcement department and local schools—in order to foster healthy development among high-risk, 8-13-year-old youth and their families, and to help reduce the sale of illegal drugs and related crime in target

neighborhoods. It uses an intensive case management approach (1:15), a strength-based youth development approach, a comprehensive mix of eight services, and a communication strategy designed to keep all partners informed and to involve the broader community. Young people can participate in the program for up to two years.

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse

Columbia University
633 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10017
<http://www.casastart.org>

Career Academy

A Career Academy is a school within a school that links students with peers, teachers, and community partners in a disciplined environment, fostering academic success and mental and emotional health. Originally created to help inner-city students stay in school and obtain meaningful occupational experience, academies and similar programs have evolved into a multifaceted, integrated approach to reducing delinquent behavior and enhancing protective factors among at-risk youths. These academies enable youths who may have trouble fitting into the larger school environment to belong to a smaller educational community and connect what they learn in school with their career aspirations and goals.

High School Initiatives Office

California Department of Education
1430 N. Street, Suite 4503
Sacramento, CA 95814
<http://www.casn.berkeley.edu>

Communities and Schools For Success (CS-Squared)

Communities and Schools for Success (CS²) is a Massachusetts-based educational initiative that seeks to transform the educational experience for those young people who are most underserved and disconnected from traditional educational and career paths. Started in 1993, CS² is managed by Commonwealth

Corporation. CS² develops innovative collaborations between communities and school districts through small teams of change agents at CS² sites, known as "CS² Entrepreneurs." Twice designated by the U.S. Department of Labor as a national model, CS²'s activities are grounded in research and promising practices from the education, workforce development, and youth development fields. In response to alarming graduation rates and teen labor market data, CS² Entrepreneurs develop dynamic educational and career-focused programming and systemic initiatives. These supports and services engage the specific needs and assets of young people most "placed at risk," so they emerge as inspired learners and skillful innovators in their vocations and the civic arena.

Communities and Schools for Success

529 Main Street
Suite 110
Boston, MA 02129
<http://www.commcorp.org/cs2>



National
Dropout Prevention
Center/Network

NEWSLETTER

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Fifteen Effective Strategies

School and Community Perspective

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

Early Interventions

- Family Engagement
- Early Childhood Education
- Early Literacy Development

Basic Core Strategies

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

Making the Most of Instruction

- Professional Development
- Active Learning
- Educational Technology
- Individualized Instruction
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Technology Changes 1986-2011

by Marty Duckenfield

There are many ways to do a retrospective of the 25 years of the National Dropout Prevention Center. One lens through which to view the work of the Center is through the perspective of how technology has been integrated into our mission over the years, and also the role it may play in the future.

Information Resources

Twenty-five years ago the challenge brought to Clemson University and the new Center was to create a database of model programs. How many of you even remember that first database, FOCUS? It was available on the university's mainframe computer on this new thing called the Internet, and by the time of its debut in 1989 the only access to this was through other colleges and universities and some large libraries and their Internet connections. Think how *that* world has changed!

And requests for information about these model programs by those with no access—which was most people—meant Center staff did the searches, printed out the results, and then put them in the mail or faxed them to these educators.

Another area of information requests was always statistics. How many dropped out in my state, or nationwide? Back then, we had the resources from the U.S. Department of Education—*Condition of Education*—and again, found the information, photocopied it, mailed it, or faxed it.

With the arrival of the World Wide Web, delivery of information went in a new direction. Instead of meeting the needs of hundreds of educators each month, it jumped to thousands each week. With a Model Program Database easy to access and search, with links to all the statistics needed to make the needs case for dropout prevention efforts, the NDPC role as a true clearinghouse was solidified.

Professional Development

Another activity the early leaders of the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network sought was a national



conference where like-minded practitioners and researchers could gather to learn from each other what was working in this new field of dropout prevention. And so began the annual conferences, the regional institutes, the summer institutes at Clemson University on focused topics, and the annual At-Risk Youth National FORUM at Myrtle Beach. Professional development (PD) opportunities were available to those who had access to travel and time for such excellent events. This is still true today.

But what is changing because of technology?

Everything! Not only does technology play a larger role at our conferences—instead of overhead transparencies, the wonder of PowerPoint and Internet delivery for example, has changed what presenters do in their sessions. But now we can deliver professional development over the Web.

The *Solutions to the Dropout Crisis* monthly radio webcast has been a hugely successful foray into providing anyone with an Internet connection a workshop and accompanying resources provided by a national expert. This technological approach has been perfect for in-service sessions in schools and community organizations, either live or through archives. An outgrowth of the webcasts is the development of the Professional Development Series of DVDs, with 10-session inservice programs provided at low cost based on specific Effective Strategies in Dropout Prevention.

And this is just the start of what will be happening in the next few years as we maximize the use of the Internet to deliver high quality professional development, with resources and additional materials to meet the highest standards of quality PD.

Newsletter

From the start, the Center has produced a printed quarterly newsletter, and still does, although PDF copies are also available on the Web site. But what is new because of technology's capacity to be current and dynamic, is the monthly e-newsletter, *Dropout Prevention Update*. Delivered at the beginning of each month to your email box, a wealth of information and resources is shared in a timely manner.

Evaluation

The Center has worked with local school districts and individual schools to evaluate their efforts in dropout prevention. In addition to the qualitative data collected during site visits, the NDPC staff also reviewed quantitative district and school data to help identify specific needs relevant to that location. With pages and pages of data to absorb, this was no small task.

Again, technology is beginning to make this necessary component of PAR (Performance Assessment and Review) not only more accurate, but also so much faster. As we work with a variety of partners to develop a Dropout Early Warning System (DEWS), we can now identify youth at risk at an earlier stage, and then facilitate the matching of appropriate interventions through the Model Program Database. Data assessment of the dropout problem will only help focus on risk factors and the greatest needs, thus maximizing the use of scarce resources by targeting specific problems with the right solutions.

The National Dropout Prevention Center/Network can continue to build on technology's ability to connect us all in meaningful ways as well as provide us with the most current and accurate information about all our dropout prevention needs. The decades to come will indeed change not only this Center and its work, but education everywhere.

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25 Years of Research and Support

by Terry Cash

The National Dropout Prevention Center has built a solid reputation as the nation's foremost authority on issues pertaining to student risk and research-based interventions to reduce dropout. The reputation came about as a result of over 25 years conducting qualitative and quantitative research and evaluation activities in state and local school districts across the nation. A sample of the most recent research and evaluation projects are listed in the sidebar.

While there is not enough space reserved in this article for an in-depth discussion of all the research projects and evaluation activities conducted over the past 25 years, there are a few I would like to highlight that produced significant positive results pertaining to dropout prevention and increased graduation rates.

Dropout Prevention Initiative in NH and MN

Both New Hampshire and Minnesota received major grants to help reduce dropout in 10 of their most challenged high schools across each state. The State Department of Education for both states asked the NDPC to help construct a dropout prevention plan and to provide technical assistance to each of the schools involved in the project. The schools ranged in size from less than 200 students to over 4,000 students and were located in very rural areas of each state as well as in major metropolitan areas and cities. The NDPC project team visited each of the project schools multiple times over the three years of the project to provide guidance and technical assistance to administrators and teachers. The NDPC

team also helped develop and conduct an annual dropout prevention conference in each state. The overall goal was to reduce dropout in the project schools by at least 20% during the three years of the project. At the end of the project, every school that implemented the recommended dropout prevention strategies with fidelity met or surpassed the expected outcome goal of reducing dropout by 20%.

Fargo (ND) Dropout Prevention Initiative

For several decades, the Fargo School District had one of the highest graduation rates in the nation. However, a major influx of refugees from all across the globe, particularly Somalia, Bosnia, and Viet Nam, resulted in a significant demographic shift within the Fargo community. The children of these immigrants and refugees were thrust into a school system that was simply not prepared to serve them, resulting in a major decline in achievement scores and graduation rates. Consequently, the Fargo School District Superintendent sought the support of the NDPC to conduct an in-depth analysis of the district's operations. A team of six senior NDPC staff spent several weeks in the school district interviewing all key stakeholders to include students, teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, and key community leaders. A final report was submitted that included some major recommendations that were controversial in nature, such as personnel changes and school redesign suggestions. The school district senior staff and school board studied the findings and recommendations carefully and methodically implemented strategies to address the areas found to be serving as a weak link in the district's educational program. As a result, the Fargo School District has increased its graduation rate by over 15 percentage points and has helped to develop a community-wide approach to addressing the needs of the diverse population it serves.



CTE Study Team

CTE Study Through National Research Center for Career and Technical Education

Researchers at the NDPC are currently collaborating with colleagues at the University of Louisville on a five-year study, "A Longitudinal Study of the South Carolina Personal Pathways to Success Initiative." The project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education and administered through the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education (NRCCTE). The NDPC project is one of three NRCCTE studies that are intended to increase knowledge about Perkins IV-defined Programs of Study (POS). NDPC researchers are examining South Carolina's Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA), a statewide career-focused school reform model intended to improve student achievement and preparedness for postsecondary education and high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand jobs through a focus on career awareness and exploration and through the creation of locally relevant career pathways and programs of study. Project researchers are studying how eight high schools are implementing EEDA and EEDA's influence on students and POS development. Schools were selected for diversity in the degree of initial levels of policy implementation, local economic conditions, and levels of school and community resources, as well as in size, location, and demographic characteristics of students. Data are being collected from three cohorts of students across the eight schools with different levels of exposure to the EEDA reforms.



Raymond High School, New Hampshire

- *OVAE-funded assessment of dropout prevention and graduation initiative in 10 of the most challenged high schools in New Hampshire and Minnesota.*
- *Assessment and evaluation of dropout prevention initiatives in the most challenged middle schools in the State of NY. In addition, the project included NDPC technical assistance to each of the schools and districts involved in the project, three regional topic-specific seminars, a dropout prevention symposium, and a learning exchange initiative designed for project leaders to share the success of new and/or revised policies and practices.*
- *Three-year project to assess and provide technical support to three school districts in Alaska (Juneau, Sitka, and Ketchikan) that primarily focused on reducing the dropout rate for Alaska Native students.*
- *Four-year project to assess and provide technical support to Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio that operates a program entitled Fast Forward whose primary focus is to recover students who have already dropped out of school and provide interventions to help them return and graduate.*
- *Two-year assessment and technical assistance project in rural Mississippi serving three school districts.*
- *Assessment of all alternative school projects operated by Clark County Public Schools in Las Vegas, NV.*
- *Assessment of all alternative school projects operated by the Seattle Public School District.*
- *Assessment of the Buffalo (NY) Public Schools alternative program.*
- *Assessment and technical support to the Fargo (ND) School District to address dropout within the district.*
- *Five-year project to investigate the influence of SC's Education and Economic Development Act on the development of programs of study.*
- *Three-year research project in 22 remote Yup'ik Eskimo villages in Alaska to assess the efficacy of e-mentoring versus face-to-face mentoring.*

Fast Forward Out-of-School Youth Initiative in Dayton, OH

The National Dropout Prevention Center was contracted to conduct a review of the Fast Forward Out-of-School Youth Initiative in Dayton, Ohio. The purpose of the review was to determine the effectiveness of the Fast Forward Center in relation to its stated goals and objectives, as well as an understanding of the process of activity implementation to include: program context/infrastructure, staff training, collaboration initiatives, data support systems, and participant satisfaction.

The contract stipulated that the program evaluation should accomplish three primary tasks:

1. Fulfill external evaluation requirements of the various funding sources that provide funds to the Fast Forward program.
2. Assess program effectiveness in relation to the program's goals and objectives to include: various program outcome measures and research-based indicators of alternative school effectiveness.
3. Develop recommendations for program improvements.

The evaluation process included on-site visits to each program, including classroom walk-throughs; interviews with the Principal, Director, CEO, etc. of each program; focus group interviews with staff members and students; and the compilation and analysis of available quantitative data. Interviews and follow-up questions were conducted via the telephone and by email. Efforts were made to triangulate data sources where possible.

The NDPC provided a comprehensive report with recommendations for program improvements and also provided technical support to implement the suggested program improvement strategies. The results have been phenomenal. After five years, Dayton went from having the highest dropout rate in Ohio to having the second highest graduation rate in the state.

Alaska Native Dropout Prevention Initiative

The State of Alaska received a major grant to reduce dropout among Alaska Native students in the school districts of Juneau, Sitka, and Ketchikan, which are located in the southeastern section of Alaska. The project was led by the Central Council of Tlingit Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska and the Alaska Staff Development Network. The NDPC was asked to conduct a Performance Assessment and Review (PAR) of each of the school districts, provide recommendations for improvement, and help develop a model for dropout prevention that focused on Alaska Native students. The model program that was developed to prevent Alaska Native student dropouts was research-based, data-informed, and included evidence-based strategies. The model was different than previous dropout programs because it took the time to put together an accurate inventory of the risk factors that Native dropouts have, calculated how influential these risk factors are in predicting who drops out, and developed plans based on incorporating strategies that research says will keep students in school. At the end of the three-year project, the graduation rate among Alaska Native students increased by an average of 15% across the three targeted school districts.

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With contributions from
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Elementary boys in a remote Alaskan village.

New Report From NDPC for Students with Disabilities

By Loujeania Bost

The National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities is pleased to announce the publication of a three part series of reports, “*Reentry Programs for Out-of-School Youth with Disabilities*”: 1) *The Need for a Broad Range of Options*; 2) *Strategies for Locating and Enrolling Out of School Youth*; and 3) *Characteristics of Reentry Programs*. The information contained in these synthesis reports is designed to assist state departments of education, school districts, and community-based organizations interested in redesigning or initiating efforts to help out-of-school youth, particularly those with disabilities, return to the education system and become successful school completers.

A Case for Reentry

The difficulties that youth who drop out of school face in trying to obtain work without a high school diploma force many former dropouts to seek reentry into education. In 2007, the rate at which out-of-school 18- through 24-year olds who received a high school diploma or GED was the highest it had been in the past three decades (Cataldi, Laird, & Kewal Ramani, 2009). However, the situation is not quite so promising for dropouts with disabilities, with only 18% nationwide seeking a credential from

a postsecondary school after dropping out of high school up to four years earlier and only 15% attending vocational, business, or technical schools (Newman, Wagner, Cameto, Knokey, A. M. & Shaver, 2010, Table 4). Clearly, there is a need for a focus of school reentry for youth with disabilities.

It can be assumed that there is an increasing desire among our nation’s out-of-school youth to gain credentials that will help them access meaningful employment and economic independence. However, students who drop out of school are often reluctant to return to the same situations that caused them to drop out in the first place, and many individuals face additional barriers that prevent them from returning to school, such as parenting, holding down a job, or being overage.

In addition, while there is general consensus among educators and policymakers that a “one size fits all” approach is not successful for youth with disabilities at the high school level, the same is also true of reentry programs. Students drop out of school for a variety of reasons, and as young adults, they typically have multiple needs that must be addressed in order for them to succeed upon their return to school. If students are to be given a real “second chance” at obtaining a high school credential, they must be given a *different* chance, not merely *another* chance.

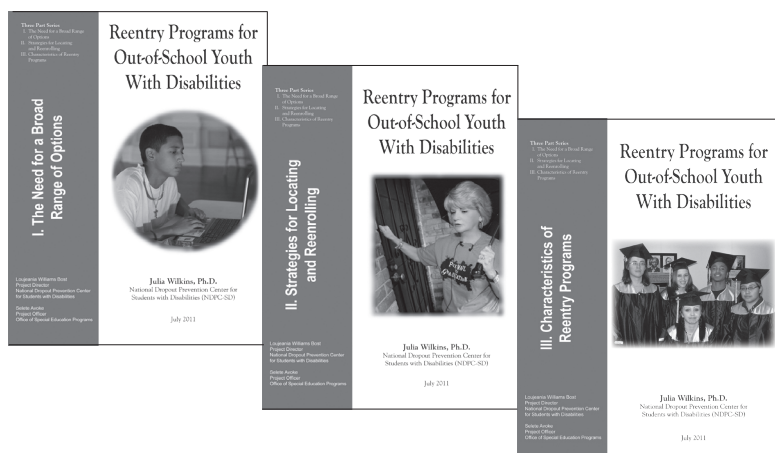


The NDPC-SD staff with OSEP Project Officer Selete Avoke.

As state departments of education, school districts, and community-based organizations begin to create these different chances for youth with disabilities who wish to return to school and receive completion credentials, many questions arise. For example, what program options exist or can be developed? What are common characteristics among the most promising programs? What strategies have proven successful in locating out-of-school youth? What barriers exist, and what successful solutions have emerged? While the literature and research on effective school reentry is just emerging, thus limiting our scope, we believe that these briefs will provide useful information that will provide some answers to these questions.

Members of the National Dropout Prevention Network will receive these publications in the quarterly mailing. Additional copies can be downloaded free of charge on our Web site, http://www.ndpc-sd.org/knowledge/reentry_programs.php.

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Strategic Partnerships—Growing the Network

Over the past 25 years, NDPC/N has partnered with hundreds of organizations—including public, private, and nonprofit. We have selected a sample variety of these partnerships, mainly to illustrate the diversity of the work we have shared with so many valuable partners over the years.

National Youth Leadership Council

The NDPC/N has partnered with NYLC for nearly 20 years on service-learning activities, including developing and coordinating a technical assistance network in 10 southern states. *For more than 25 years, NYLC has led a movement that links youth, educators, and communities to redefine the roles of young people in society. That movement is service-learning, and it empowers youth to transform themselves from recipients of information and resources into valuable, contributing members of a democracy.*

NBA Team Up Challenge

The National Basketball Association began their outreach with a Stay In School campaign. In consultation with NDPC/N, Team Up was developed as the next step. *The Team Up Challenge is a service-learning program that allows children to apply what they are learning in the classroom in real ways that benefit their communities.*

UMass Dartmouth Urban Initiative

As the first satellite center affiliated with the NDPC/N, the Urban Initiative helped the NDPC/N bring the role of elected officials to the forefront. *The Urban Initiative has as its mission the performance of research, project development and implementation, program assessments and evaluations, community outreach, technical assistance, and policy analysis to benefit municipalities, state and local agencies, private/non-profit entities, or any other organization or association whose work relates to leadership, education and policy issues in urban settings.*

National Research Center for Career and Technical Education

For the past five years, a NDPC/N research team has been evaluating Programs of Study in South Carolina as a partner of the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education (NRCCTE). *NRCCTE is the primary agent for generating scientifically based knowledge, dissemination, professional development, and technical assistance to improve career and technical education in the United States. The NRCCTE works to improve the engagement, achievement, and transition of high school and postsecondary CTE students through technical assistance to states, professional development for CTE practitioners, and dissemination of knowledge derived from scientifically based research.*

SC ATE

For years, NDPC/N has provided technical assistance and professional development for an Advanced Technological Education (ATE) initiative funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). *Founded in 1996, SC ATE is dedicated to expanding excellence in technician education and increasing the quantity, quality, and diversity of Engineering Technology graduates to support business and industry and to encourage continued economic development.*

The At-Risk Student Committee (ARSC) and the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE)

The NDPC/N partnered with the ARSC and SCDE to provide turn-around assistance to nine South Carolina low-performing schools. *ARSC, one of six statewide committees charged with implementation oversight of the Education and Economic Development Act, is responsible for constructing and implementing dropout prevention programs in all South Carolina schools.*

Intercultural Development Research Association

The NDPC/N has always found partnerships with Intercultural Development Research Association an important part of its work, most recently through the NDPC-Students with Disabilities Center. *IDRA is an independent, private nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening public schools to work for all children. We are committed to the IDRA valuing philosophy, respecting the knowledge and skills of the individuals we work with and build on the strengths of the students and parents in their schools.*

Penn Foster

With a mutual interest in distance learning through the Internet, partnering with Penn Foster for the monthly Solutions radio webcasts, which is high tech professional development for teachers, seemed a natural partnership. *Penn Foster Career School is one of the oldest and largest distance learning institutions in the world and its mission is to empower adult learners to advance or change their careers, learn a new skill, or gain personal satisfaction.* More recently, **Catapult Learning**, with a focus on improving student performance and professional development, has become an additional partner and also provided major support for these broadcasts.

As we move forward into the future, the vision of our Network will include a greater emphasis on developing strategic partnerships with allies who support our mission: to increase high school graduation rates through research and evidence-based solutions. Our mutual interests in dropout prevention will open up an increasing array of opportunities to make a deeper impact on an issue that must be addressed with greater intensity and vigor. With this broader vision of the Network through significant partnerships, NDPC/N is poised to do just that.

With contributions from David Windham, NDPC

Viewpoint

Twenty-five years! Much to celebrate with 25 years of a Center and a Network that together have done so much to change the landscape of dropout prevention. And so we do celebrate! We have made a difference in countless lives.

And yet today the challenges are as daunting as they were when the National Dropout Prevention Center was established back in 1986 after the *Nation at Risk* report shocked our reality. This certainly is not a time to rest on our laurels.

Today, young people not only need to graduate from high school, but also to further their education or work training through postsecondary experiences. If we are to be competitive in a more global economy and in a nation and world stuttering through a major economic downturn, our schools need to improve—dramatically—to provide students with what they need to succeed. And schools will have fewer resources to accomplish the job. The National Dropout

Prevention Center/Network will help schools meet these challenges.

At the NDPC/N, we are rethinking our work and exploring ways to expand our reach with fewer resources. Strategic partnering, research and research-to-practices tools and products, and technology will play key roles in our efforts. Getting information and solutions out to the field to solve the dropout issue has been and will continue to be a central part of our mission.

Strategic partnerships, aligning ourselves with others working toward the same end, will provide the synergy to garner the scarce resources needed toward having a greater impact on the dropout issue nationwide. Collaboration that focuses on the best each partner offers toward improving schools is our objective.

Research on the dropout issue today is plentiful. We know why young people drop out of school. More research is needed on the effectiveness of solutions, policies that make a difference, and on how to apply research

successfully to build interventions that work. NDPC plans to take a larger role in this domain.

We can do more and in a more cost-effective way through technology. Technology is a tool that will allow us to deliver high quality resources and professional development in ways our schools can afford. More importantly, the tools we develop can help schools do more with less toward planning and shaping programs that assure student success.

Research and technology should not replace the human touch. Join with us as we face a continuing challenge for the future—to help all our children succeed academically and with marketable skills to become productive citizens.

So, celebrate with us for the past 25 productive years. And help us find new ways forward to assist schools to provide all of our children a more promising future.

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