

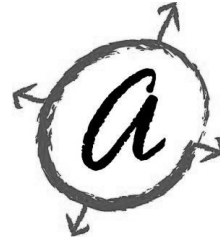
## 2009 NDPN CRYSTAL STAR AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM WINNER

### CONGRATULATIONS!

*The National Dropout Prevention Center/Network salutes the individual and program winners of the National Dropout Prevention Network's Crystal Star Awards of Excellence in Dropout Recovery, Intervention, and Prevention.*

#### **BUTLER TECH'S OPTIONS ACADEMY – WOKINI**

West Chester, OH



**Options Academy**

*Accepted by: Ms. Laura Sage, Supervisor for  
Options Academy - Wokini*

Options Academy – Wokini is the alternative high school that is operated by Butler Tech and serves students in the Lakota School District. Wokini is a nontraditional options program that serves at-risk students who are in ninth through twelfth grades. At risk is defined as being behind in school credits and/or having barriers to learning, such as mental health issues, behavior issues, substance abuse issues, and low socioeconomic status. Last year, Wokini students earned an average of 6.24 credits, compared to 1.83 credits from their traditional school the year before. In addition, average attendance was 97% (as compared with 76% from the year before). Wokini had 100% of students without expulsions and 97% of students without suspensions.

Wokini focuses their efforts on three areas: Personalized Education Program (PEP), COMPASS Program, and service learning. The PEP cultivates and designs a specific program and educational path for each student. PEP is put together with input from the teacher, student, parent, and social worker. The COMPASS Program is a mandatory social-emotional learning program that ALL students are required to complete each year. The COMPASS Program teaches and reinforces the common values and culture of the Wokini school environment. COMPASS covers areas such as anger management, anti-bullying, group skills, and interpersonal skills. Service learning involves all areas of Wokini. Students are expected to be involved in service learning at Wokini. Service learning projects are investigated and initiated by students, with the guidance of staff. Past service learning projects have included sponsoring a school in Kasunga, Malawi (Africa), being “Big Buddies” to first graders, and volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House. Emphasis is put on service to others, COMPASS values, and reinforcing educational concepts.

#### Lessons Learned

- ★ At-risk students often are no longer “at risk” when they attend an alternative school which is flexible enough to allow for alternative methods in the educational delivery system.
- ★ If an alternative school keeps on developing and changing, then it means it is continually evolving to meet the ever changing needs of at-risk students.

## 2009 NDPN CRYSTAL STAR AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM WINNER

### GROSSMONT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT'S DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAM

El Cajon, CA



*Accepted by: Mr. Robert Collins, Superintendent of  
the Grossmont Union High School District*

The Grossmont Union High School District's Dropout Prevention Program began in the spring of 2004 with a multipronged approach to addressing the district's dropout problem. We looked carefully at the things that were early indicators of dropout risk. These included school attendance/truancy, course completion, and alternative education options. Since that time there have been numerous overarching programs put in place. These include a more extensive School Attendance Review Board (SARB) process where students who are considered habitually truant are brought through a series of interventions. The district also hired five dropout prevention specialists whose sole purpose is to work with students who have stopped coming to school or who are at risk of stopping. They act as the liaison between the family, the juvenile justice system, and the school and provide the families with educational options, referrals to counseling support, bus passes, etc. in order for the students to continue attending school.

As we have worked with students who have demonstrated risk factors for dropping out our need for more educational options has increased. The demand for these programs continues to increase as we intervene with students early and attempt to provide individualized educational options. As a result we have begun opening learning centers that offer online curriculum under the supervision and support of highly qualified teachers. With the concerted, combined efforts of many staff in the Grossmont Union High School District and the interventions that have been put into place, our dropout rate was shown to be 2.6%, with the county and state's rate being 6%.

#### Lessons Learned

- ★ Ongoing evaluation of the program is important to determine if the interventions are continuing to be effective.
- ★ Commitment to the program from district administration, the Governing Board, and school leadership contributes to the success of the program.
- ★ Communicating effectively and often to school site staff as to how their efforts have paid off promotes support for the program.
- ★ Communication to the school board and local media keep parents and community members aware of the efforts used to keep students in school and promote support for the program. Having a "Go To" person who can answer questions and provide direction to interventions is important for the staff at all of the school sites.
- ★ Writing protocols for what to do when a student drops out or doesn't show up to enroll has proven to be successful in maintaining accurate data.
- ★ Designating a district liaison with community collaborative, law enforcement, and the courts has made providing interventions easier for students' and their parents' follow up on the court's recommendations.

## 2009 NDPN CRYSTAL STAR AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM WINNER

### SUCCESS PROGRAM, DES MOINES PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Des Moines, IA



*Accepted by: Ms. Margaret Connet, SUCCESS Program Manager*

The SUCCESS Program of the Des Moines Public Schools connects schools with families and the community to expand opportunities for students to graduate. SUCCESS is a year-round, school-based youth and family services program that serves children and families from prenatal through age 21. The goal of the program is to ensure that children are born healthy and receive supports necessary to prepare them to begin school ready to learn, achieve success in the classroom, and graduate from high school. Research and results-based accountability strategies include intensive case management, drug and violence prevention, positive youth and family development, parenting education, and after-school and summer programs to address barriers to learning and reengage disconnected students. The SUCCESS Program builds on the assets and strengths of children, youth, and families and treats all with dignity and respect.

Forty-two case managers in 30 schools provide long-term coordination of support services to meet social, emotional, and behavioral needs so that students succeed academically. Case management includes building trusting and caring relationships, assessment of need, identification of personal goals, collaboration with community agencies, advocacy in accessing services, and follow-up with the entire family. Support for families includes the areas of education, employment, mental health, health, substance abuse, mentoring, and recreation. Home-visiting; skill building groups; transition between pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school; support services for pregnant and parenting teens; assistance to new immigrants; and on-site connection in school buildings are a few of the strategies provided for families who may not otherwise access resources. In 2007-08, 3,843 individuals were served, 95% of high school students stayed in school, and 99% of parents reported that the program was helpful to their child and family.

#### Lessons Learned

- ★ Implement a positive youth development approach which meets basic personal and social needs and builds character, skills, and competencies that permit functioning and contribution to daily life.
- ★ Hire staff who believe that all students can succeed and see the innocence behind all student behavior, guarding against negative thinking about behavior.
- ★ Communicate with staff about the value in the purpose of the program so that all are working within the context of the school and effectively delivering human services in the educational environment.
- ★ Put the right people in the right job so that personnel have skills to adequately address the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of children and families and have knowledge in available community resources.
- ★ Create a healthy school climate in which to learn.
- ★ Operate as a school within a school.

## 2009 NDPN CRYSTAL STAR AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAM WINNER

### BARBARA GOLEMAN SENIOR HIGH, M-DCPS RESIDENTIAL ELECTRICAL WIRING PROGRAM Miami Lakes, FL



*Accepted by: Dr. Alex Azan, Director, Residential Electrical Wiring Program*

Since 2006, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has collaborated with the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD) to improve school completion rates and outcomes for students with disabilities. The Center has trained 24 high schools and 22 schools implementing Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support on evidence-based dropout prevention interventions, practices, and programs. The Center also assists M-DCPS in developing strategies and interventions to ensure performance targets are met as reported in SPP/APRs, for Part B Indicator 2 (Dropout). As an NDPC-SD model demonstration site, the district continues to leverage their resources and improve the implementation of their evidence-based practices to reduce dropout rates for students with disabilities as evidenced by the Residential Electrical Wiring Program at Barbara Goleman Senior High.

The Residential Electrical Wiring Program for students with emotional/behavioral disabilities (EBD) was created in 2002 at Barbara Goleman Senior High, M-DCPS. This program is the result of a contractual agreement between M-DCPS and Florida International University (FIU). FIU provides an instructor to deliver the curriculum while students participate in over 360 hours of quality, individualized instructional time utilizing a curriculum infused with hands-on pedagogy. The program's primary goal is to address the needs of targeted students with severe emotional problems while preparing students with the tools needed to achieve the requirements for graduation and employability skills in a specialized field. Program objectives are: to improve student attendance, improve student self-esteem, improve student graduation rate, and reduce the dropout rate for students with EBD.

#### Lessons Learned

Problem behaviors coupled with academic difficulties or prior academic failure are key risk factors predictive of school dropout. Exclusion from class due to disciplinary action leads to lost instructional time and increased academic difficulties. Given the high number of EBD students who leave school as a result of deficits in prosocial behaviors that often result in excessive suspensions, the district's focus on dropout prevention has proven beneficial in improving the quality of in-school experiences and increasing the positive post-school outcomes for youth with EBD. These lessons learned have been and continue to be supported by the Residential Electrical Wiring Program's outcomes:

- ★ Increased student attendance.
- ★ Increased student grade point averages.
- ★ Increased the number of students passing the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test.
- ★ Increased the amount of time students spend in inclusive settings.
- ★ Increased positive post-school outcomes for students (e.g., entering community colleges, vocational schools, and securing employment).

## 2009 NDPN CRYSTAL STAR AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE INDIVIDUAL WINNERS

### KATHY EDWARDS BELL

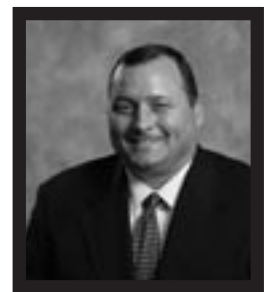


Kathy Edwards Bell began her career as a secondary language arts teacher at the Individualized Learning Center, an early prototype of the Spartanburg School District Number Seven's alternative program. She later moved to Spartanburg High School where she continued teaching. After four years, Mrs. Bell was promoted to lead the district's school and community relations department where she developed national award-winning marketing initiatives and plans to implement the district's first alternative program. She was instrumental in educating the public on the need to address the challenges of student retention and dropout prevention. Afterwards, she went in to private business which was located in an area which has long struggled with high dropout and poverty rates. She began to see firsthand the challenges faced by men and women who dropped out of school. As a result, her company took a new direction and became a community training center. By securing grants, she was able to offer GED, work readiness, parenting, and job-specific training to the people in her community. This eventually led her back to a public alternative school classroom. Inspired by the students she served, Mrs. Bell developed Alternatives in Motions (AIM) for Success, a research-based program for at-risk students. AIM is now recognized by the South Carolina Department of Education as a model program. She is the Director of the AIM Program at Viking Academy, a smaller learning community within Spartanburg High School. The Academy serves almost 150 students with innovative academic practices, smart classrooms, paid work experience, counseling services, transportation to work and after-school programs, extended day and Saturday options, and transition to postsecondary education. Since its inception, Mrs. Bell has authored grants resulting in approximately three million dollars funding for the AIM Program.

Mrs. Bell holds degrees in secondary English education and educational administration from South Carolina State University and Converse College. She is a member of numerous local, state, and national organizations and committees that focus on excellence in education for all students. She and her husband Tony have one daughter, Kristen, who is a college freshman.

### WAYNE RODOLFICH

Mr. Wayne Rodolfich was named superintendent of the Pascagoula School District 28 days before Hurricane Katrina hit the Mississippi Gulf Coast causing \$26 million in damage to 11 of the district's 19 schools. He led the district through the recovery efforts, and despite the odds, reopened the school district to teachers and students in only 27 days. Four weeks later, he was awarded the National Terrell Bell Award at the No Child Left Behind National Conference in Washington, DC. where both of the district's high schools, Gautier High and Pascagoula High, were named National Blue Ribbon High Schools.

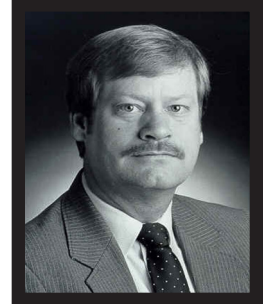


Rodolfich is the creator of the STAR bus, a Students' Technology and Reading Bus; was named Mississippi's Technology Administrator of the Year; created the state's "Teach Mississippi" commercial; and created the Pascagoula School District's Destination Graduation" dropout prevention program which has won two national awards, a regional award, and the Golden Medallion, the highest award in the state of Mississippi. His most recent creation, the district's Family Interactive Center, features a planetarium, a wetlands room, TV studio, science and engineering room, a block room, a recording studio, 3 IMac and Apple computer labs with Wii gaming systems and surround sound stereo, and air-conditioned gymnasium, not only for the students of the school district and local daycares as a field trip destination, but as a place where families in the community can come to learn and play together. The superintendent used the district's maintenance workers to refurbish an old school building used for storage and enlisted the business community to furnish the center with resources so there was no cost to the taxpayers.

## 2009 NDPN CRYSTAL STAR AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE AWARD

### PATRICK J. O'CONNOR

Patrick J. O'Connor is on the graduate faculty in the College of Education, Health and Human Services at Kent State University. Dr. O'Connor coordinates the teacher education programs in Career-Technical Education, and teaches at the graduate level. His research and scholarly interests focus on economic and workforce development including preparation of disadvantaged youth for the high-performance workforce. The important role of reading in preparation for lifelong learning is also a scholarly emphasis.



Dr. O'Connor has also held faculty positions at New River Community College in Virginia, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Georgia. He is the author of two collegiate textbooks, three reading books to motivate struggling readers, and numerous professional journal articles. In addition, Dr. O'Connor has authored two monographs published by the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network—*The High Performance Workforce and the At-Risk Student* (2006), and *Improving Reading for Academic Success: Strategies for Enhancing Adolescent Literacy* (O'Connor, Bintz, & Murray, 2009).

He completed bachelor's and master's degrees at Bowling Green State University and his doctoral studies were completed at Virginia Tech. He and his wife Susan have four adult children.

### CRYSTAL STAR OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS: REQUESTS FOR NOMINATIONS FOR 2010

A program or individual from your state could be a prestigious Crystal Star of Excellence Award winner in 2010, but only if you make a nomination. The forms will be available on the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network Web site, [www.dropoutprevention.org](http://www.dropoutprevention.org), in February 2010.

The award categories are Excellence in Dropout Recovery, Intervention, and Prevention for Individuals and Programs; Excellence in Dropout Recovery, Intervention, and Prevention for Individuals and Programs for Students with Disabilities; and Distinguished Leadership and Service to the National Dropout Prevention Network.

All award winners will be honored at the 22nd Annual National Dropout Prevention Network Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 14-17, 2010, at the Loews Philadelphia Hotel. Winners receive an elegant, engraved Crystal Star Award; a waiver of registration fees for the conference; and a one-night complimentary room at the Loews Philadelphia Hotel.