

GEAR UP Counselor Newsletter

Volume 1/Number 4

February 7, 2006

Highlight on Best Practices

Willie Addison has initiated a program at Lee County Middle School where he meets with 6th and 7th grade students who have accumulated a number of demerits or have missed a significant number of school days in order to build a positive relationship with these “at risk” students.

Willie sets goals with each student to significantly decrease the number of infractions, demerits, days they are absent from school or tardies. Each morning, Willie issues each student a “passport” that they carry with them throughout the day. Teachers initial the passport and make comments on the student’s classroom behavior. At the end of the day, the students bring their completed passports to Willie and are given a small reward. At the end of the month students who have shown significant progress in meeting their individual goals are rewarded with a trip to Galaxy Bowling or the Lee County Recreation Center.

Be sure and send me program ideas you have that could be useful to other GEAR UP field staff.

Remember.....

GEAR UP Counselor Meeting – February 16 – Scaffold Cane Road offices - 9:00 a.m. -- noon

Action items:

- Spring Break trip itinerary and guidelines for student selection
- Summer camp information - necessary forms for students (applications, permission to treat, medical information, emergency contact, etc)
- College Bound updates
- Information about upcoming conference in Louisville

EXPLORE training – February 21 – 8:00 am – 3:00 pm. Change in location to the Activities Room in the Alumni Building at Berea College.

Agenda for the day:

8-8:30 – Coffee/continental breakfast

8:30 – Noon – Morning session

Noon -1:00 – Lunch

1:00 – 3:00 Afternoon session

Please bring with you:

- Copy of your EXPLORE School Summary Report

- Do not bring the report entitled “Presentation Packet” - GU will receive this report when the test results are mailed to us
- Do bring the “Intervention Roster”
- A copy of your high school’s 20005 ACT High School Profile Report (This report arrives at each school in August. It’s mailed to the principal, but usually ends up in the counselor’s office.)

**EXPLORE results along with your school reports will be sent directly to your school from ACT in the next few days.

Good Reads:

Hello Counselors,

Even though this downloadable guide is aimed at after-school programs, many of the practices discussed in this guide can be used to engage parents in their child's school ~ Michelle

Harvard Family Research Project, in partnership with BOSTnet and United Way of Massachusetts Bay, announces the release of a new comprehensive, easy-to-read guide to understanding how to engage families in after school programs.

"Focus on Families! How to Build and Support Family-Centered Practices in After School" is a critical resource for after school providers looking to create or expand an existing family engagement program. Program leaders, local decision makers, funders, and others interested in promoting good family involvement practice will also find the guide vital to their work. The guide provides a research base for why family engagement matters, concrete program strategies for engaging families, case studies of promising family engagement efforts, and an evaluation tool for improving family engagement practices.

You can read the guide online or print it as a PDF at:

<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/resources/families>

CYBERBULLYING

A look at the high-stakes issues of high-tech bullying. Includes tips for parents and lesson plans for educators.

<http://newsletter.tolerance.org/cgi-bin4/DM/y/etRL0FN7G40Ekk0D7L60ER>

RECURTURING SCHOOLS

Although no one factor -- not even one as pervasive and consequential as organizational culture -- can account for the success of a system as complex and multifaceted as a public school district, a strong case can be made for culture as the primary factor determining successful improvement of K-12 public education. It seems a no-brainer to say that a politicized, fear-based, top-down, excuse-prone, bureaucratic culture is antithetical to sustainable high performance in public education; whereas a culture of trust, openness, collaboration, and results orientation that is built on shared ownership of a compelling vision of the future

is essential for sustaining high performance in public schools. Culture not only matters, it is a sine qua non of educational improvement. But what exactly is organizational culture? In essence, it is the underlying shared beliefs, history, assumptions, norms, and values that manifest themselves in patterns of behavior, or, in other words, "the way we do things around here." A brief from the Panasonic Foundation, edited by Scott Thompson, outlines several strategies for reculturing schools to increase student achievement and improve school climate. <http://aasa.files.cms-plus.com/images/Publications/Strategies/Fall%2005%20Final.pdf>

GETTING ALIENATED YOUNG MEN BACK TO SCHOOL OR JOBS

Because the United States "can ill afford to have so many of its young people and adults be unskilled, unemployed, and thus unproductive," a new book tackles the thorny challenge of getting "disconnected" young men back in school or the workforce. By several recent counts, the United States is home to 2 to 3 million youth age 16 through 24 who are out of school and out of work. Much has been written on disadvantaged youth, and government policy has gone through many incarnations, yet questions remain unanswered. Why are so many young people "disconnected," and what can public policy do about it? And why has disconnection become more common for young men--particularly African-American men and low-income men--than for young women? Field programs and research studies recommend specific strategies to enhance education, training, and employment opportunities for disadvantaged youth; to improve the incentives of less-skilled young workers to accept employment; and to address the severe barriers and disincentives faced by some youth, such as ex-offenders and non-custodial fathers. The authors suggest that initiatives to improve educational attainment should be accompanied by efforts boosting occupational skills, early work experience, and labor market contacts among high school students who are unlikely to attend college.

<http://www.urban.org/pubs/reconnecting/chapter1.html>

"Cowardice asks the question, 'Is it safe?' Expediency asks the question, 'Is it politic?' But conscience asks the question, 'Is it right?' And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular but because conscience tells one it is right."

-Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. (Baptist minister/civil rights leader)

