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Report on Best Practices in Dropout Prevention released

AUSTIN –A new report on *Best Practices in Dropout Prevention* recently released by ICF International, in partnership with the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, found that three Texas programs had consistent, positive and meaningful effects on preventing dropouts. The three dropout programs with the most potential for success were Career Academies, Communities In Schools, and Project GRAD.

Career Academies operate as alternative schools within a larger high school and focus on making students career-ready by combining regular academic coursework with career centered curricula, having students focus on one career track, and giving them the opportunity to intern with local businesses.

Communities In Schools is a stay-in-school program utilizing a case management model to help students by providing services directly or linking students with other agencies and programs in the community to help them stay in school, attain better attendance rates, reduce behavior problems, improve academically and graduate or receive a GED.

Project GRAD works with high schools and their feeder schools to prevent dropouts and encourage college attendance by providing scholarships, while focusing on classroom management, student performance, parental involvement, graduation rates and college acceptance rates.

The *Best Practices in Dropout Prevention* study was a requirement of House Bill 2237, passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. The bill, which included a number of provisions and programs aimed at improving high school completion and success rates, required the Texas Education Agency to conduct a study on best practices in dropout prevention.

In addition to identifying the most effective dropout programs, the study provides an overview of dropout prevention efforts and research, both nationally and across Texas. The study found that the most effective dropout programs utilized the following dropout strategies:

- School-community collaboration;
- Safe learning environments;
- Family engagement;
- Mentoring/tutoring;
- Alternative schooling;
- Active learning; and
- Career and technology education

The report also provides legislative recommendations and identifies dropout prevention programs that have potential for success in Texas.

The report stated that “results indicate that dropout prevention programs are reporting successes in various settings and with different populations. The evidence demonstrates that it is possible to achieve positive results using a core set of effective strategies, even among the highest risk populations.”

To view the full report, go to
http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/comm/leg_reports/bdp_finalreport_20081219_toTEA.pdf

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