National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (NDPC/N)

This is the time of year when we start to notice kids who seemed to have disappeared or are contemplating dropping out of school. Below are a list of 15 effective strategies that have a positive impact on the dropout rate taken from the NDPC/N at http://www.dropoutprevention.org/effstrat/effstrat.htm. There are ideas for every age level.

School and Community Perspective
- Systematic renewal-process of evaluating goals and objectives related to school policies, practices & organizational structures
- School-Community Collaboration
- Safe Learning Environments

Early Interventions
- Family Engagement- research shows the most accurate predictor of a student’s success in school
- Early Childhood Education
- Early Literacy Development

Basic Core Strategies
- Mentoring/Tutoring
- Service-Learning-connect meaningful community service experience with academic learning; promotes personal & social growth, career development & civic responsibility
- Alternative Schooling
- After-School Opportunities-important for students at risk of school failure because these programs fill the afternoon “gap time” with constructive & engaging activities

Making the Most of Instruction
- Professional Development
- Active Learning
- Educational Technology
- Individualized Instruction
- Career and Technical Education

Does your school want to get in on Oprah’s Random Acts of Kindness campaign? If so go to: http://www.actsofkindness.org/file_uploads/graphics/47_pdf.pdf For more ideas related to teaching kindness from lesson plans to lists of books and movies addressing kindness go to http://www.actsofkindness.org/classroom/

Ideas from Schools
Promoting Social Emotional Competence Video from csefel.uiuc.edu:
- Idea for teaching expectations for Pre-K and Kindergarten. Each student gets a popsicle stick with a green construction paper circle for “go” and glued to the backside a red construction paper circle for “stop”. The teacher then shows a picture of an example or non-example. Then students respond by showing the correct side of their popsicle stick. Repeat for other pictures of examples and non-example.

Carol City Middle School, Miami-Dade County
- Learning for Life is not only providing the school with a social skills curriculum but is also sponsoring 300 of their students to go the Children’s Playground Theater to attend the play “Brooklyn Bridge”. The students can relate to this play about a latchkey kid. Also, for faculty buy-in they had their teachers sign a pledge.

Memorial Middle School, Orange County
- Need a way for students to know what is in the school store prior to a visit to speed up the process. Try using a glass case placed in the media center to showcase the items and the prices. Then as things are sold out remove them from the case.

Parkway Middle School, Osceola County
- Here is a creative way to combine a reward system and academics. At this middle school students have the opportunity to purchase an opportunity to cook with the Dean’s. Prior to the actual cooking the students practice FCAT math skills using the recipes they will be cooking.

Robert Renick Education Center, Miami-Dade County
- This school has an activity room that students can use as part of their reward system. When teachers are not utilizing this room the teacher is sent a we missed you card as a prompt.

University High School, Orange County
- To earn PBS money they teamed up with the cafeteria to sell snacks during the day. The profits are split with the cafeteria. The best part is the PBS team does not have to put any money upfront and the cafeteria knows all the guidelines regarding food.

If you want to learn more about dropout prevention go to http://www.dropoutprevention.org/ or read the report “The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts” at http://www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/thesilentepidemic3-06.pdf

If you have any ideas or lesson plans that you would like to share with other schools please pass them along to smartinez@fmhi.usf.edu