

## UNION COUNTY DROPOUT PREVENTION PLAN

### 1. Introduction

#### A. District Philosophy

The Union County School Board Dropout Prevention Program is limited in its ability to provide specific programs which address specific target groups in many of the areas identified by the state due to factors related to total enrollment of approximately 2,200. It is recognized that the number of students who are discontinuing formal education prior to having received a high school diploma is far too great. Persons who do not complete their public school education are greatly limited in obtaining gainful employment, in achieving their full potential and in becoming productive members of our society. This programs intent is to keep students in school by providing an instructional method and an environment to master the skills needed for a high school diploma.

### 2. Program Categories

The Union County School District operates three dropout prevention programs, an Educational Alternative, Disciplinary program and a Teen Parent program.

The Union County School District contracts with the Eckerd Corporation to provide all services including education to the residents of the Department of Juvenile Justice facility located in Union County. A copy of these dropout prevention services is attached.

#### 3. (A) Educational Alternative Program

Union County High School operates an educational alternative program called Step-Up.

a. The following agencies provide periodic services to the educational alternative program: Union County Sheriff's Office, Union County Health Department, and local business partners.

b. Specific Outcome Objectives

By the end of the school year:

1. 75% of the students participating will have remained in school or graduate.
2. 75% of the students will improve their academic grade point average a minimum of .25 on a 4.0 scale.
3. 75% of the students will be promoted to the next grade level or earn a high school diploma.
4. 75% of the students will improve their attendance by 2 days as compared to attendance during the previous grading period, prior to placement in the educational alternative program.

c. Evaluation Procedures

1. Student report cards will be reviewed.
2. Report card grades and cumulative records to evaluate academic improvement by comparing the most recent grade prior to the program assignment with those after assignment.
3. Cumulative records will denote promotion or graduation.
4. The attendance of those students participating in the program will be compared against the previous completed grading period prior to their enrollment in the program.

d. Student Eligibility Criteria

1. Students will become eligible for the alternative program if they meet one or more of the following criteria, however, final placement will be determined by the guidance office and approved by the principal or their administrative designee, and subject to the approval of the parent:
  1. Any student who has been retained one or more years.

2. Students with a test score on the FCAT in Level 1 in Reading and/or Mathematics.
3. Students receiving grades in their academic areas consisting of 3 or more D's or F's in any grading period.
4. Students with 5 or more unexcused daily absences or 15 or more unexcused tardies across two or more classes within a nine week period.
5. Student has personal or social problems which interfere with school success. Student placement is recommended by a committee made up of a regular classroom teacher, program teacher, guidance counselor, and principal or his/her designee.
6. Any student who has previously been served in an educational alternative program and is need of continued services as documented by the principal or his/her designee.

e. Admission Procedures

1. Upon teacher recommendation, request of parent or examination of student's records; the guidance office shall examine the needs of the individual student.
2. Eligibility may be established by the Guidance Team, principal, or assistant principal through records.
3. If the student is eligible for the program, the guidance department notifies the parent and the student of the possibility of participation in the program.
4. An interview is set up with the student and parent. Parent signature is required prior to entry.
5. Upon approval by the parent, the student is placed in the program for one to two or more periods a day for not less than nine weeks. There may be extenuating circumstances which require more than two periods per day, as

recommended by the guidance office. Parent permission is not required for married students or who students 18 years of age.

6. The Guidance Team will review the student's progress after the first nine weeks. If the Team recommends continuation, that student will remain in the program until his/her needs are met, or the parent or Guidance Team decides to terminate the student's eligibility.

f. Operating Procedures

1. CURRICULUM. Eligible students will be enrolled in the Step Up Program for a minimum of nine weeks. The program shall include counseling and organizational skills which shall be woven into the instructional program. There shall also be included a heavy emphasis on the use of basic skills in all academic subjects. Students may be receiving their reading, mathematics and language arts in regular or remedial classes; but will receive basic skills as applied to a tutorial situation in content areas including social studies and science. The course code modification program will be utilized.
2. SPECIAL STRATEGIES. The instructional program shall place emphasis on maintaining positive behavioral and academic levels through smaller class size and individualized assistance. Performance based criteria will be used in the Step Up Program to allow students to earn credit in courses who progress through course standards in less than 135 hours.
3. Limited English Proficient (LEP) students who meet program eligibility criteria shall have equal access to the program. When a LEP student is served in the program, the curriculum and related services will be designed to appropriately address the needs of LEP students in order to ensure that the instruction is understandable.

Exceptional students who meet the program eligibility criteria will be considered for

placement. An LEP review will occur prior to this placement and dropout prevention staff will be present at the review.

4. STUDENT SERVICES. Counseling shall concentrate on the areas of interpersonal skills, self-concept, peer involvement, adult-student skills and peer pressure in the areas of substance abuse and social problems.
  5. GRADE LEVEL OF STUDENTS. Academic advisor/counselor will provide services to students in the dropout prevention program. Union County High School will serve grade level 9-12 students who will attend daily classes in the educational alternative program.
  6. LIST OF IMPLEMENTATION SITES. Union County High School.
  7. NUMBER AND DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM STAFF. One academic teacher serves the Step-Up program students. A guidance counselor is available at the school site. An academic advisor will provide services to dropout prevention students. Services may be provided through contact with the student, teacher, and/or parents of participating students. The principal of the high school serves as the building administrator.
- g. Total dropout prevention FTE student membership in the educational alternative program based on the following information:
1. NUMBER OF CLASS PERIODS AND LENGTH OF PERIOD IN MINUTES. One to four fifty (50) minute classes.
  2. AVERAGE CLASS SIZE. 10-25 students
  3. LENGTH OF STAY. It is recommended that students remain in the program a minimum of nine weeks.
  4. TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS. 10-40 students at Union County High School.

h. TOTAL QUALIFICATION OF PERSONNEL

1. Personnel working in this program should have experience working with students experiencing difficulties.
2. Program teachers should demonstrate a special understanding and ability to work with the at risk student.
3. Program teachers shall hold a valid Florida Educators Certificate.
4. The guidance counselor participating in the program should have experience working with at risk children and may hold a valid Florida Educators Certificate in Guidance and Counseling.
5. Administrative and curriculum personnel shall hold a valid Florida Educators Certificate.

i. Staff Development

1. Staff development is a vital part of the success of this program. In order to ensure that the entire staff is fully trained to participate in this kind of endeavor; inservice work may include: counseling in the classroom techniques, individualized instructional techniques, assertive discipline, promoting a positive attitude techniques, and teaching problem solving techniques. Other important activities may include: classroom management, working with reluctant learners, competency based instruction, designing of alternative school curricula, substance abuse education, and computer instruction. This inservice may be offered in pre or post-planning or throughout the year as appropriate.

### 3. (B) Teenage Parent Program

The Teenage Parent Program is designed to serve the specific needs of pregnant teens, teen parents and their children. This voluntary program provides academic instruction as well as instruction in childbirth, child development and proper care.

- a. The following agencies may provide services to the teen parent program: Union County Public Health Unit, Dept. of Children and Families, Florida Crown Workforce Development Board and/or business partners.

- b. Outcome Objectives

By the end of the school year:

- 1. 80% of the students will increase their knowledge of parenting skills, which may be evidenced by a pre/post survey, grades, and/or a parenting portfolio.
- 2. 100% of the students will receive a continuation of their basic academic program.
- 3. 80% of the students will not have a repeat pregnancy during the current school year.
- 4. Of the students who enroll within the 1st trimester, 90% will have babies whose birth weight is 5.5 or higher.
- 5. 75% of the students will remain in school or graduate.

- c. Evaluation Procedures

- 1. The Teenage Parent Program (TAP) is evaluated on an ongoing basis. Specific objectives will be evaluated as indicated in the evaluation statements.
  - a. 80% of the students will increase their knowledge of parenting skills through a survey which may include a portfolio.

Evaluation Statement: Teen parent personnel will do a comparative study to determine the percentage of students with increased knowledge of parenting skills

by way of pre/posts surveys, report cards, and/or portfolios. Teen parent personnel will observe class participation of the TAP participants.

- b. 100% of the students will receive a continuation of their basic academic program.

Evaluation Statement: Teacher roll and grade books will demonstrate that 100% of the students received a continuation of their academic program.

- c. 80% of the students will not have a repeat pregnancy before receiving their high school diploma.

Evaluation Statement: Records will be reviewed.

- d. 90% of the students will have babies whose birth weight is 5.5 or higher.

Evaluation Statement: Medical records will be reviewed.

- e. At least 80% of the students will remain in school or graduate.

Evaluation Statement: A tracking system of exiting students will provide data regarding the student's educational status and attendance.

d. Student Eligibility Criteria

To be considered eligible for the program, one of the following must be met:

1. Female students medically diagnosed as pregnant.
2. Teenage parent(s) and their children presenting appropriate paperwork, which may include birth certificates of the children.



e. Student Admission Procedures

1. Participants may be referred by school, parent, or community agency. Students may refer themselves.
2. Referrals are received by the high school counselor or Teen Parent instructor.
3. A parent conference is scheduled to explain the program and obtain parent permission. Married students or students 18 years of age, need not have parent signature.
4. Necessary paperwork and documentation is completed. If babies are enrolled, a Florida student identification number is assigned and appropriate paperwork is completed.
5. A student schedule will be developed and participant will report to the program.

f. Program Operating Procedures

1. CURRICULUM. The academic program provided students in TAP meet the requirements prescribed in the curriculum frameworks. Additional curricula components include: prenatal and postnatal care, benefits of sexual abstinence, consequences of subsequent pregnancies, parenting skills (i.e. stages of child growth and development, methods aiding intellectual, language, physical and social development, guidance on constructive play).

During the school year, the school district will provide classes pertaining to parenting, first aid, child development, and family relations to our parenting teens. Students will be enrolled in daily classes taught by a registered nurse under the direction of the Dropout Prevention Coordinator and the medical supervision of the Union County Health Department. Pregnancy/parenting instruction and to provide case management service to teen parent students throughout the school day. In this model, the student will attend instruction on a periodic basis for a minimum of one semester with instruction concentrating on the essentials of good parenting skills, infant nutrition, and good health practices for the teen parent. Instruction may be delivered by a certified health nurse or parenting specialist contracted with the district to provide this information. After the initial semester, the teen parent will be

encouraged to continue their parenting education by taking as many of the courses related to parenting, health, and nutrition in the mainstream of the school. A program completer is defined as a teen parent participant who has attended the pregnancy/parenting instruction for a minimum of one semester and has satisfactorily completed a parenting skills portfolio.

2. SPECIAL STRATEGIES. Individualized instruction as well as computer assisted instruction (if available) are strategies used in this program.
3. Limited English Proficient (LEP) students who meet program eligibility criteria shall have equal access to the program, the curriculum and related services will be designed to appropriately address the needs of LEP students in order to ensure that the instruction is understandable.

Exceptional students who meet the program eligibility criteria will be considered for placement. An IEP review will occur prior to this placement and dropout prevention staff will be present at the review.

4. STUDENT SERVICES. Guidance counselors interact with students through individual and group counseling and home visits. The following ancillary services are provided to the participants in TAP:
  - a. Child Care - Children ages 0 to five years are provided with care in Dept. of Children and Families licensed day care on the school campus. Children who meet the requirements for public school based programs will be served by the Union County School Board in their programs.
  - b. Health Care - Pre and post natal health care are provided for the TAP students and their children. Transportation may be provided for regular medical check ups for the mothers and children. This medical care is provided by the Union County Health Department as well as local private physicians. Instruction and counseling as to proper nutritional needs of mother and child are cooperatively provided through the county health department and school health services personnel. Counseling is also provided for pregnancy prevention.

c. Social Services - Counseling is provided to all TAP students by school personnel, and support personnel including the school registered nurse. School personnel works cooperatively with all local social services to coordinate referrals for TAP students and children. Dept. of Children and Families, Mental Health Services, and the County Health Department combine to offer a full network of services to TAP families.

d. Transportation - The School Board's transportation department provides service for all eligible students throughout the county.

5. GRADE LEVEL OF STUDENTS. Variable.

6. LIST OF IMPLEMENTATION SITES. Teenage Parent Program has been implemented at one site. Space is provided at the Union County High School and students are provided transportation. A district operated child care facility is located on school site.

7. NUMBER AND DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM STAFF.

A parenting specialist or nurse under the direction of the project coordinator who is a certified teacher will deliver pregnancy/parenting information. Medical supervision will be under the direction of the Union County Health Department. The principal of Union County High School serves as the building administrator.

8. DESCRIPTION OF FACILITIES. TAP is located on the campus of Union County High School and is accessible to eligible Lake Butler Middle School students.

g. The Dropout Prevention FTE student membership in the teen parent program based on the following information.

1. NUMBER OF CLASS PERIODS AND LENGTH OF PERIOD IN MINUTES. Students will take a regular schedule during the time they are in school. Pregnancy/Parenting instruction will occur on a daily basis, case management services will be on-going.

2. AVERAGE CLASS SIZE. 1-10 students
3. LENGTH OF STAY. Teen mothers and their child stay in TAP program as long as is appropriate. It is hoped that the teen fathers will participate in the program for at least a semester. Children may remain in the program as long as the parent is enrolled in courses meeting graduation requirements, or they are served in a pre-kindergarten program.
4. TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS. TAP will serve 1 to 15 students during the year and 1 - 8 babies.

h. Qualifications of Program Personnel

- a. In addition to the state mandated credentials, including a valid Florida Educators Certificate, Nursing Certificate, or Counseling Certificate, instructional personnel will:
  1. have an expressed interest in the position.
  2. be knowledgeable of current curriculum trends, learning styles and the developmental stages of growth and learning.
  3. exhibit a positive attitude and ability to motivate disinterested and unsuccessful students.

i. Staff Development Activities

- a. The School Board of Union County through the Department of Staff Development will provide an ongoing program of inservice and professional development. Programs to be offered, beginning with the Summer Institute Program throughout the academic year at times specifically scheduled for inservice/staff development days.

### 3.(C) Disciplinary Program

The Union County School District will operate a disciplinary alternative school for students in 6-12 grades. The Outpost will provide educational services to meet the needs of disruptive or violent students and students who are referred due to pending felony charges or in lieu of expulsion to eligible students who have been adjudicated delinquent of a felony.

The GED Exit Option program may be used for eligible students who wish to earn GED, rather than earn credits for a high school diploma. Attached is a copy of the application and approval letter from the Department of Education for the implementation of the GED Exit Option Model.

#### a. Agency Coordination

Students who are involved in the court system will be provided access to their DJJ case manager on school campus. Services for eligible students will be provided by the Family Action Counselor/Case Manager, through the Corner Drug Store. Services may include families as well as students assigned to the alternative school.

#### b. Specific Outcome Objectives

By the end of the school year:

1. 60% of the students will remain in school.
2. 60% of the students will improve their grades.
3. 60% of the students will improve attendance as compared to attendance prior to placement.
4. 100% of the students will continue their academic program while enrolled in the alternative school.

#### c. Evaluation Procedures

1. The number of participants remaining in school will be monitored and the rate calculated including those who graduate.

2. Academic history will be reviewed to determine increase/decrease of grade point average.
3. The attendance of those students participating in the program will be compared to previous attendance records prior to placement.
4. Records will show that 100% of the students received a continuation of their basic academic program.

d. Student Eligibility Criteria

1. Students may become eligible for The Outpost program after previous interventions have proven unsuccessful, if they meet one or more of the following criteria, however, final placement will be determined by the review committee and approved by the principal or their administrative designee, subject to the approval of the parent:

- a. Any student who has committed a felony, or other serious offenses, which warrants suspension or expulsion from school according to the district code of student conduct. For the purpose of this program, "serious offense" is behavior that:

1. Threatens the general welfare of students or others with whom the student comes in contact.
2. Includes violence
3. Includes possession of weapons or drugs
4. Involves harassment or verbal abuse of school personnel or other students.
5. The 2001 Florida Legislation created Section 232.265 to state that an offender shall not attend

the school or ride the bus of his/her victim or victim's siblings; however, the offender shall be permitted by the school district to attend another school in the district. The offender, or his/her parent or legal guardian, shall be responsible for arranging and paying for transportation to the other school, however, they shall not be charged for existing modes of transportation that can be used by the offender at no additional cost to the district.

e. Admission Procedures

The procedure for admission into this program will be referred to the review committee. The review committee will be comprised of the respective school building administrator, a guidance counselor, the district dropout prevention coordinator, ESE Director (if applicable), the alternative school director, as well as the student and parent or guardian.

f. Program Operating Procedures

1. Curriculum

A. Courses required for graduation or promotion.

2. Special Strategies

A. Regular curriculum instruction

B. Enrichment activities

C. Small group facilitating

D. Behavioral modifications

E. Comprehensive social services

F. Performance-based instruction

3. Limited English Proficient (LEP) students who meet program eligibility criteria shall have equal access to the program. When a LEP student is served in the program, the curriculum and related services will be designed to appropriately address the needs of LEP students in order to ensure that the instruction is understandable.

4. Student Services

A. Counseling

- B. Occupational Specialist
- C. Attendance personnel

5. Grade Level of Students  
The alternative school program will serve students in grades 6-12.
  6. Implementation Sites  
The alternative school will be located on school district property in a separate building, adjacent to Lake Butler Middle School and Union County High School.
- g. Total dropout prevention FTE student membership in the alternative program based on the following information:
1. FTE: Students enrolled in the alternative school are eligible for the FEFP funds they would generate in any service delivery model for which they are eligible.
  2. Number of class periods and length of period in minutes: Students assigned to The Outpost will remain for the regular school day.
  3. Average Class Size: 10-30 students per semester
  4. Length of Stay: It is recommended that a student remain in the program for a minimum of one semester. Students who are referred in lieu of expulsion will stay the time recommended by the school board. Students who are involved in the court system may be required to stay the duration of their probation, according to the disposition. At the end of the student's initial placement, the review committee will determine whether continuation of placement is necessary.
  5. Total Number of Students Served: The program will serve approximately 10-30 students from Lake Butler Middle School and Union County High School.