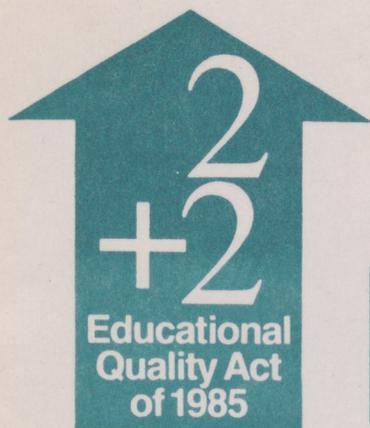


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DROPOUT PREVENTION

Program for Educational Quality

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INTRODUCTION

Nine school districts in Colorado participated in the 2+2 Dropout Prevention Project, funded in part by the Educational Quality Act of 1985. Innovative dropout prevention projects were initiated at each site and were specifically adapted keeping the local communities' needs in mind. Efforts were aimed at various grade levels, K-12, and included early identification and intervention strategies, as well as prevention and retention efforts. Short-term and long-term goals were set at each school site. The present report includes the outcome of the short-term goals and at times reveals the groundwork for the eventual outcome of the long-term goals.

The diversity of projects conducted at each school site is striking. School districts attempted to identify the needs of the community at-large, that included the children, teachers and parents. Depending on the outcome of identified resources and needs, school sites typically revamped existing dropout prevention efforts on a larger, more comprehensive scale.

The unique endeavors at each school site are highlighted in the present report. Included in each school district summary is a review of project objectives, key activities conducted at each site, as well as the impact and effectiveness of these activities on the children, parents, teachers and business communities.

Due to space restrictions, the summaries are brief. For a more detailed description of the individual programs, please feel free to contact the individual identified at each particular site.

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INDEX OF KEY DROPOUT PREVENTION ACTIVITIES:

PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS

o Early Identification (Student Analysis System, Referrals)

- Adams County School District No. 1
- Montrose County School District RE-1J
- Pueblo School District No. 60
- Weld County School District 6

o Preschool Program for At-Risk Children

- Adams County School District No. 1
- Huerfano School District RE-1
- Pueblo School District No. 60

o Home-School Liaisons

- Denver County School District No. 1
- Huerfano School District RE-1
- Pueblo School District No. 60
- Rocky Ford School District No. R2

o Parenting Component

- Adams County School District No. 1
- Denver County School District No. 1
- Durango School District 9R
- Huerfano School District RE-1
- Mesa County Valley School District No. 51
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- Pueblo School District No. 60
- Rocky Ford School District No. R2
- Weld County School District 6

o Staff Development

- Adams County School District No. 1
- Huerfano School District RE-1
- Mesa County Valley School District No. 51
- Montrose County School District RE-1J
- Pueblo School District No. 60

o School-to-Work Action Program (SWAP)

Adams County School District No. 1
Weld County School District 6

o Alternative Educational Plans/Settings

Adams County School District No. 1
Durango School District 9R
Montrose County School District RE-1J
Weld County School District 6

o Public Service Announcements/Community Awareness

Denver County School District No. 1
Mesa County Valley School District No. 51
Montrose County School District RE-1J

o Summer School Program

Montrose County School District RE-1J
Rocky Ford School District No. R2

o Mentorship/Tutoring Programs

Mesa County Valley School District No. 51
Montrose County School District RE-1J
Pueblo School District No. 60
Rocky Ford School District No. R2
Weld County School District 6

INDEX OF KEY DROPS (SWAP) School-to-Work Action Program

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Weid County School District 6

o Alternative Educational Plans/Settings (Early Identification)

Adams County School District No. 1
Durango School District 88
Montrose County School District RE-1J
Pueblo School District No. 60
Weid County School District 6

o Public Service Announcements/Community Awareness Preschool Program

Denver County School District No. 1
Mesa County Valley School District No. 51
Montrose County School District RE-1J

o Summer School Program Home-School Liaison

Montrose County School District RE-1J
Rocky Ford School District No. R2
Durango School District No. 88
Mentorship/Tutoring Programs

o Parenting Component Mesa County Valley School District No. 51

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o Staff Development

Adams County School District No. 1
Huerfano School District RE-1
Mesa County Valley School District No. 51
Montrose County School District RE-1J
Pueblo School District No. 60

ADAMS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1

"Is This Desk Taken?"

A Plan to Retain and Expand the Student Population

2+2 Project Objectives:

- o Develop and implement a model for the prevention of school dropouts by identifying existing programs and developing new ones that will maintain and expand the student population.

Key Activities:

- o Preschool Program provided an integrated program for three and four-year olds with developmentally appropriate educational experiences promoting self-esteem and self-directed problem solving.
- o Student Analysis System identified at-risk students, grades 3 to 10.
- o School-to-Work Action Program (SWAP) assisted students in improving their attendance, academic skills, and obtain specific job skills.
- o Project Plus implemented to ease the transition into high school, improve attendance patterns, raise achievement levels, and promote career exploration.
- o Senate House designed to increase participation in school activities and promote school bonding.

Project Impact on Adams County School District No. 1:

SWAP

- o 50% improvement in attendance for 71 SWAP students, from 16.9 absences (pre-SWAP) to 8.7 absences (in SWAP).
- o 92% improvement in grade point average for 71 SWAP students, from 1.29 GPA (pre-SWAP) to 2.47 GPA (in SWAP).
- o 47% of SWAP students indicated via self-report that they would be dropouts were it not for SWAP.

Project Plus

- o All ninth graders are participating in the CORE Project Plus program, along with all special education students, 9-12.
- o 14% improvement in grade point average for 129 students in Project Plus, from 1.85 to 2.1.
- o 30% decrease in ninth grade discipline referrals.
- o 19% fewer ninth graders failing one or more classes, as compared to last year's Freshman class.
- o Reduced average days missed by Freshmen by 3.2 days. Freshmen now average 7.1 absences/semester.

Integrative Preschool Program:

- o 145 children, 3 and 4 year olds, are currently enrolled, 1987-1988; 58 children are handicapped; and 37 children are minority.
- o 4 teachers have been trained in the High/Scope Curriculum; all teachers are observed and evaluated according to the High/Scope Guidelines.
- o Monthly newsletter is distributed to encourage and support parent involvement.

Adult High School Diploma Program:

- o 30 adults, ages 18 to 44, have met the district's requirements and have been granted an adult high school diploma, since 7/85.
- o 35% of adult applicants who have completed the transcript evaluation process have met the program requirements for a high school diploma.

Computer-Assisted Academic Study Program:

- o 48% of Prescriptive Learning program participants taking courses in English, math, science and/or social studies satisfactorily complete their coursework and graduate from high school.

Senate House:

- o All 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students participating in a modified form of student government, interacting with students from the other two grade levels and 2 sponsors.

Student Analysis System:

- o Students scoring 1 Standard Deviation below their peers are identified as at-risk. Students scoring 1 Standard Deviation above their peers are also identified as at-risk for low teacher recognition and student participation.

Summary: Mapleton Public School's dropout prevention efforts initially focused on developing a dropout prevention model. Dropout prevention efforts focused on early identification, early childhood education, junior high activity participation and high school retention/retrieval. Creating greater involvement for youth at-risk in curricular and extracurricular activities is aimed at decreasing student alienation, while increasing positive school bonding.

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DENVER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1
NORTHWEST COALITION FOR BETTER SCHOOLS

"Student Success Is Everybody's Business"

2+2 Project Objectives:

- o Reinforce the value of education in the north Denver community by enlisting the participation of ministers, school personnel, businesses, community and governmental agencies, and parents.
- o Encourage parental involvement at the individual schools.
- o Increase student, parent and community awareness of the dropout issue.

Key Activities: School Community Liaison hired to link resources between five clusters: school principals, merchants, churches, parents and community leaders.

- o Speaking engagements at school faculty meetings, parent groups and community groups.
- o Media promotion via radio stations and newspapers.
- o Attendance campaign, Fall 1987 to notify parents about the first day of school and to stress the importance of attendance on the first day.
- o Northwest Schools Fair to share successful activities for parents and students from each school, "celebrating excellence."
- o Open Forum for the community to share information on Northwest School concerns.

Project Impact on North Denver Community:

ATTENDANCE CAMPAIGN

- o Distributed 500 posters in local businesses/agencies; 10 churches promoting school attendance in sermons/bulletins; media luncheon resulted in newspaper and radio coverage.
- o Kaiser Elementary had an attendance rate of 96% the first week of school in 1987, as compared to 60% in 1986.
- o North High School had an attendance rate of 91% in 1987, compared to 82% in 1986.

MEDIA CAMPAIGN

- o 25,000 copies of the Northwest Coalition for Better Schools Newspaper were distributed each semester to parents and community members reporting a myriad of school activities for the 19 schools in the Northwest quadrant.
- o Speaking engagements have involved over 1,000 people, have promoted community awareness, and have been used to encourage parent and business involvement in Northwest schools' activities.

PRINCIPAL'S CLUSTER

o Nineteen principals from the Northwest quadrant meet once a month to share resources regarding dropout prevention efforts. Schools in the Northwest quadrant have begun working collaboratively as a result of principals' participation.

NORTHWEST SCHOOLS FAIR

o 5,000 parents and children attended the Northwest Schools Fair on April 9th. Each of the 19 schools hosted booths.

Summary: The Northwest Coalition for Better Schools focuses on improving the image of schools and students in northwest Denver, eliciting collaborative work from members of the five clusters (principals, merchants, churches, parents, and community leaders). The media has been used widely and effectively to promote awareness of dropout issues and to support activities such as the Attendance Campaign in northwest Denver.

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DURANGO SCHOOL DISTRICT 9R

"Suspension Alternative Program"

2+2 Project Objectives:

- o Implement a suspension alternative program designed to provide suspended students with a place to continue doing school work, as well as with counseling and supportive services involving community agencies and the student's parents.
- o Enhance positive attitudes toward school and restore academic success, thus reducing the incidence of suspensions for at-risk students.

Key Activities:

- o Developed the Alternative to Suspension Program for junior high students at an alternative school site.
- o Developed interagency support and direct involvement with Mental Health, Social Services and Probation.

Project Impact on Durango Community:

- o 25 students were placed at the center in 1986-1987. These students met the criteria for suspension and were at-risk for academic failure as identified by the placement committee.
- o Individual educational plans were developed for each student referred to the alternative center.
- o 60% of the students (N=12) were involved in counseling with Mental Health officials. Counseling fees were absorbed by the school district and not by individual students.
- o 53% of the students were promoted to the next grade level. Without the Alternative to Suspension Program, school officials report that the failure rate would have been much higher for this group of students.
- o Average length of stay at the alternative center is now a minimum of nine weeks.

Summary: Durango School District's dropout prevention efforts focused on establishing an Alternative to Suspension Program in order to allow junior high students to continue their academic work while suspended. Placement at the alternative level allowed academically at-risk students to work in small groups, thus allowing students to make academic gains. A minimum nine-week placement at the center appeared to be most beneficial for making gains, as compared to shorter-term placements.

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HUERFANO SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-1

"Positive Early Intervention"

2+2 Project Objectives:

- o Increase the quality and quantity of parent involvement
- o Improve home-school communication
- o Increase student bonding with the school
- o Improve the instructional program for all students
- o Inservice staff on effectively working with parents as partners
- o Utilize Cooperative Team Learning as a teaching strategy at the Gardner School

Key Activities:

- o Two Home-School Liaisons, one each in Gardner and Walsenburg served to increase teachers', parents' and students' commitment to school, strengthen the bond between these three groups, function as a resource person and advocate for parents and children.
- o Teaching staff trained in Cooperative Team Learning, as well as how to work effectively with parents and home-school liaisons.
- o Implementation of a Preschool Program at Washington school, modeled after the Gardner preschool.
- o Preschool/Senior Citizen Partnership involved having a senior citizen/grandparent in the preschool class as a volunteer/aide. Currently there are 12 senior volunteers.

Project Impact on Gardner Community:

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- o 100% of all 3 to 5 year olds visited and welcomed to the school district; each child was provided with school readiness materials.
- o 100% of the families with children at Gardner School were visited (N = 100).
- o 95% parent participation in school activities, kindergarten through third grade.
- o 100% of the households received monthly school newsletters informing parents of ongoing classroom activities and an agenda of upcoming school events.
- o 24% of the parents (N = 18) participated in Systematic Training for Effective Parenting workshops.
 - 100% of participating parents demonstrated improved parenting skills
 - 100% of participating parents attended at least one of two parent/teacher conferences.
 - 33% of participating parents formed an ongoing parent support group.

- o 50% of Gardner school parents participated in school programs.
- o 50% of preschool through third grade parents volunteered in the classroom.

The parenting component may have contributed to the following two outcomes:

- o 45% decrease in discipline referrals from 1986 to 1987 for students in fourth to eighth grade, from 31 down to 17 referrals.
- o 40% increase in student (6th, 7th, 8th graders) frequency informing parents that something useful was learned in school from 1986 to 1987.

TEACHER INVOLVEMENT

- o 90% of the Gardner School Staff (N = 17) obtained professional training in cooperative student team learning.
- o 100% of the participating staff stated their teaching techniques improved.
- o 82% of participating (N = 8) teachers adapted their present curriculum to involve students in activities relating school work to various careers.

Summary: Huerfano School District's dropout prevention efforts focused on positive early interventions. Early childhood education, positive parent involvement and team learning teaching strategies are dropout prevention strategies that can make a critical difference in enhancing the educational experience of children at-risk for academic failure. In Gardner and Walsenburg parents were enabled to actively contribute to their children's education, teachers actively applied new teaching strategies, and students were more attentive in school as evidenced by the 45% decrease in discipline referrals.

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HUERFANO SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-1

MESA COUNTY VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 51

"Ounce of Prevention:

2+2 Project Objectives:

- o Develop the concept of parent/staff partnerships and joint problem-solving in the education of children.
- o Empower parents to serve as advocates for their children and other families.
- o Inservice school staff on effectively working with high-risk students.
- o Develop a mentorship program involving community members.

Key Activities:

- o Training a Parent Advocate Team to serve as a centralized parent group able to provide resources, information and support to other parents and school staff.
- o Ten Hispanic adult Mentors trained and paired with ten elementary school aged students.
- o Six teaching staff trained in Cooperative Team Learning.
- o Five bilingual Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to be aired this spring, 1988.

Initial Projects and Future Developments:

MEDIA CAMPAIGN

- o PSA aired in December featuring Hispanic role model promoting dropout preventing efforts.
- o Four more bilingual PSAs to be aired this spring on prime-time local television and radio stations informing the public of the dropout problem.
- o Every school child's household will begin receiving a newsletter once a month encouraging school readiness skills and helpful educational tips.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- o Thirty-two teachers attended inservice on working with high-risk youth; staff development component will continue to address the need to raise the level of consciousness and provide state of the art intervention techniques for staff to effectuate attitudinal changes.
- o Budget for the Dropout Prevention Program has been assumed by the school district.
- o Reduction in dropout rate from 14% to 8%, as a result of retrieval and retention efforts.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- o Ten parents trained in developing communication skills to negotiate with people in authority positions and assist other parents in working with the school system. This Parent Advocacy Team will begin receiving referrals in the fall of 1988 and ten more parents will be trained in 1988-89.
- o One hundred twelve parents and staff members attended the Joint Parent/Professional Conference in the fall, 1987.
- o Thirty-six percent of the schools (N=11) in the district involved parents in developing action plans aimed at reducing the dropout rate. Action plans will be evaluated in April and participating schools will receive an additional \$150.00 from the school district to support the school's dropout prevention efforts.

MENTOR PROGRAM

- o Ten mentors trained and matched this year with ten more to be trained for the coming year. Placements with area businesses for apprenticeships and shadowing programs to begin in the fall, 1988. Also developing in-school teacher mentors, peer tutoring and peer mentoring programs.

Summary: Mesa County Valley School District's dropout prevention efforts focused on developing community and school staff awareness about the dropout problem via PSA's and conferences, empowering a core group of parents to serve as parent advocates, and initiating a mentorship program. These initial efforts will be expanded this coming year.

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MONTROSE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-1J

Dropout Prevention Project

2+2 Project Objectives:

- o Substantially decrease the dropout rate for Montrose schools.
- o Develop new approaches to teaching and learning.
- o Develop children's positive self concept.
- o Early identification and intervention with potential dropouts.
- o improve developmental readiness at the elementary level.
- o Involve the entire community in the dropout reduction process.

Key Activities:

- o Intensive staff development program through teacher recognition and inservices.
- o Summer school program for at-risk children to prevent loss of academic skills and promote a positive self-esteem.
- o Mentorship and tutorial program involving both adult tutors and high school student tutors.
- o Parent training program will develop parenting skills and a parenting support group.
- o Every child identified as at-risk for academic failure is referred to the Dropout Prevention Outreach Director and an individual plan for intervention is designed and implemented, involving both the teacher, family, child, and support staff.

Project Impact on Montrose Community:

- o 28 dropouts were recruited back to school as a result of retrieval efforts during the summer.
- o 93% summer school attendance for children at-risk.
- o 16% average summer school achievement gains (grade equivalent gain 1 year, 3 months) grades 5-8.
- o 24 parent-training presentations in 12 basic skills.
- o 20 parents participating regularly in the parent support group.
- o 80 children receiving tutoring services from adult tutors and cross-age tutors.
- o Budget for the Dropout Prevention Program has been assumed by the school district.
- o Reduction in dropout rate from 14% to 8%, as a result of retrieval and retention efforts.

Summary: Montrose County School District's (RE-1J) dropout prevention efforts have succeeded in lowering the dropout rate via retrieval and retention efforts. Community involvement includes providing students with mentors and tutors. Intervention at the elementary school level has succeeded in maintaining and/or enhancing achievement levels of at-risk children via their summer school program. Parent involvement has been encouraged through the summer school program and through the parenting group classes.

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PUEBLO SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 60

"Early Identification and Prevention of Potential Discontinuers"

2+2 Project Objectives:

- o Implement a screening and assessment program for four year olds in four Pueblo communities to identify strengths and weaknesses as related to readiness for kindergarten entry.
- o Provide a support system for four year olds identified as deficient in kindergarten readiness skills.
- o Implement a mentorship component involving school district personnel, parents and community members.
- o Identify and provide support to Hispanic students who are considered potential dropouts.
- o Establish a program by which Hispanic parents can become familiar with and make better use of the public education system.

Key Activities:

- o Development of Mentorship Program, identifying school-aged mentors, college student mentors, and adult mentors from the community.
- o Early identification of at-risk four year olds and implementation of school readiness program for children and their parents.
- o Identification of at-risk school-aged students and support services provided to students and their parents.

Project Impact on Pueblo Community:

EARLY INTERVENTION WITH 4 YEAR OLDS

- o 400 four year olds screened during the past two years (1986-1988)
- o 91 at-risk four year olds and their parent(s) involved in supportive kindergarten readiness school program in 1987-1988. Families meet at an activity center at seven local elementary schools and work with a parent liaison on school readiness skills.
- o 90% of the participating children are Hispanic.
- o 100% of the children screened received kindergarten readiness support kits.

SCHOOL-AGED STUDENTS

- o 200 elementary and middle school at-risk students receiving additional weekly support from teaching staff in the areas of attendance, disciplinary infractions, academic achievement, social skills, emotional skills, and family issues.
- o 6 college mentors providing tutorial services to six at-risk middle school students.
- o One fourth-grade class working as Peer Tutors for one kindergarten class, one day a week.
- o 16 high school student mentors meeting on a weekly basis with approximately 56 at-risk peers to provide supportive services based on a "Buddy" system.
- o 7 adult mentors working with 13 elementary school students.
- o Pupils and Partners, a program developed by business representatives, plan to implement a joint mentorship/summer job program for 40 students from the two high schools.
- o 200 at-risk eighth-grade students participated in a conference focusing on Self Development, Educational Awareness and Career Exploration.

PARENT COMPONENT

- o Parenting classes and G.E.D. classes offered to parents at Bradford School twice a week throughout the school year.
- o Parents of at-risk four year olds participating in weekly activities with their children.
- o 414 participants at the Good Beginnings Conference aimed at heightening awareness of early childhood development.

Summary: Pueblo School District's dropout prevention efforts focused on early identification and intervention of at-risk children. Large numbers of four year olds are being screened for kindergarten readiness skills. At-risk children, pre-kindergarten through middle school, are receiving individualized assistance from parent-liaisons and teacher advisors. Mentors are complementing these dropout prevention efforts via a broad-based mentorship program being established at all grade levels, K-12.

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ROCKY FORD SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. R2

"Dropout Prevention Project"

2+2 Project Objectives:

- o Improve communication with parents regarding their child's academic progress, available supporting resources, and increased parental involvement.
- o Develop and operate a summer school program for young children at-risk in basic primary reading and math skills, whose academic success at the next grade level is questionable.
- o Establish a tutoring program for at-risk freshmen and sophomore students to enable these students to pass required coursework.

Key Activities:

- o Home-school liaisons hired to work with parents and school staff at the elementary and middle school levels.
- o Elementary summer school program established for at-risk students.
- o Tutoring program developed at the high school for freshmen and sophomores to assist with coursework.
- o Operating Project Skillbooster as an academic support service for K-2 students identified as at-risk for academic failure.

Project Impact on Rocky Ford Community:

- o 40 at-risk students, grades 1-3, involved in the six-week summer school program.
- o Kindergarten summer school children averaged a one-year gain as evidenced by pre- and post-summer school testing.
- o First grade summer school children averaged a one-year gain as evidenced by pre- and post-summer school testing.
- o 3 home-school liaisons have worked with approximately 95 students, grades 1-8, problem shooting poor attendance and academic problems.
- o 36 students were provided tutorial assistance during study hall. Over 50% successfully passed coursework.

WELD COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT SIX

"Alternative Education"

2+2 Project Objectives:

- o Develop a consistent K-12 attendance policy to include prevention and intervention strategies.
- o Develop a computer system for identifying students at-risk for dropping out.
- o Develop intervention strategies that will be utilized for providing high-risk students a support system.
- o Develop an awareness of the dropout problem to school personnel, parents and the community.

Key Activities:

- o Early Identification and Intervention Program (EIPP) for elementary school students (K-5). Referrals are being made to two elementary school counselors. These two counselors are providing crisis intervention, classroom guidance activities, as well as individual and group counseling. Individualized educational plans will also be developed.
- o Mentorship program being developed at the middle school level with assistance of community groups such as Dream Team and Partners, as well as funding from local businessmen.
- o School to Work Action Program (SWAP) established at two junior highs serving a total of 66 students. A SWAP program will be established at the high school next year.
- o Night School Program developed for students, grades 9-12.
- o School Attendance Review Board (SARB) continued for a second year to handle attendance problems.
- o Talent Search Program devised a plan for contacting 110 dropouts from the previous semester year and initiated contact to offer services and support.

Project Impact on Greeley Community:

MENTOR PROGRAM and DREAM TEAM SCHOLARS

- o 2.4 million dollars are being raised by local businessmen in Greeley to fund the Dream Team Scholars.
- o 200 sixth-graders are being recruited for the Dream Team Scholar program beginning in the fall of 1988, and will be assigned mentors.
- o \$2,000 college scholarship will be awarded to each student in the Dream Team Scholar program upon graduation from high school and enrollment in a post-secondary program.
- o 200 sixth-graders will be identified each year as Dream Team Scholars, for the next six years.

SWAP

- o 37% attendance improvement for students participating in SWAP at one junior high (50.5% to 87.4%); 15% improvement at the second junior high (71.1% to 86.1%).
- o 42% improvement in grade point average for SWAP students at one school (1.57 to 2.23); 133% improvement at the second school (.89 to 2.08).

NIGHT SCHOOL

- o 82% of all Night School students (N = 41) successfully completed courses required for graduation.
- o 3 students this year in Night School have already completed all the graduation requirements.
- o 80% enrollment increase from first to second semester (1st = 50, 2nd = 90).

EARLY IDENTIFICATION

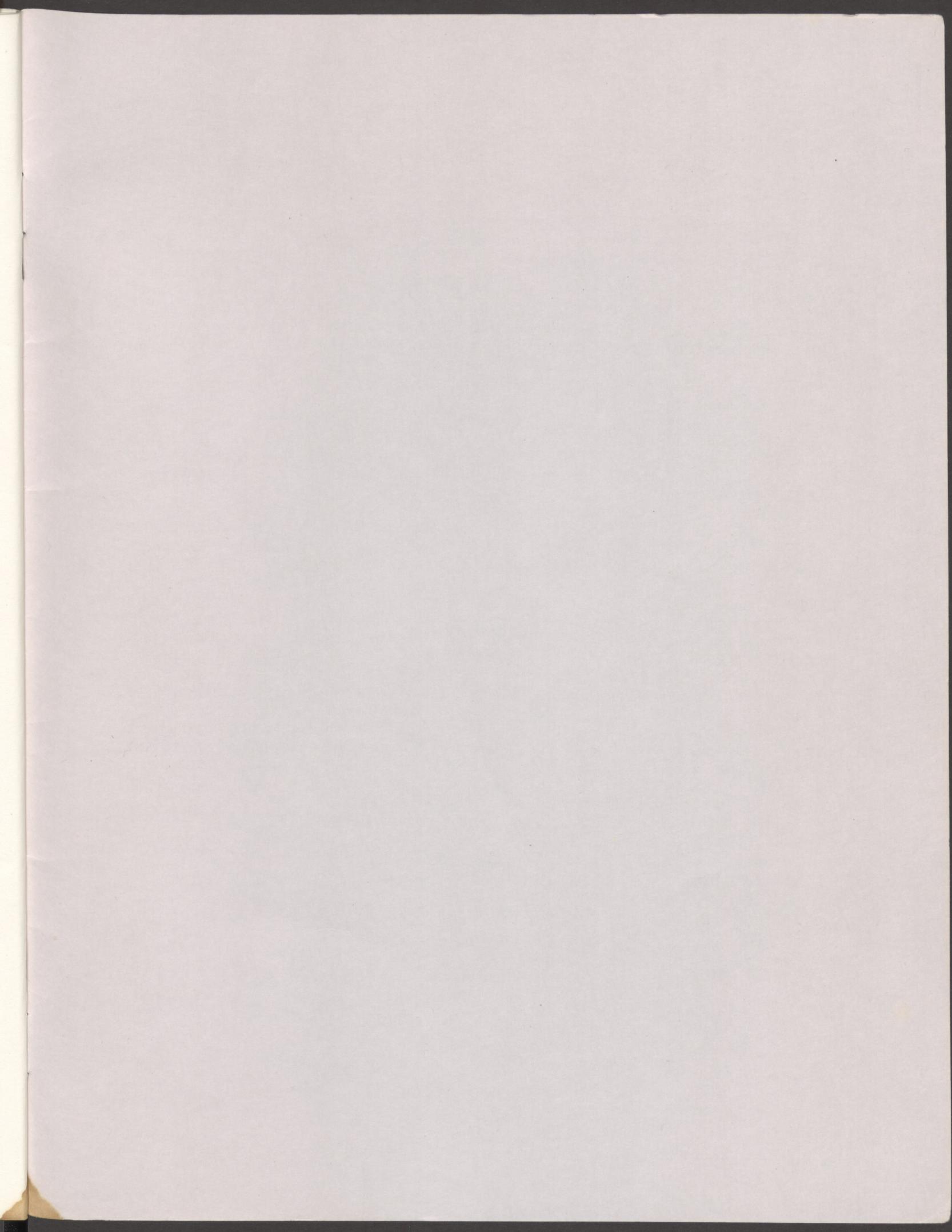
- o 150 individualized educational plans will be developed for at-risk students, to be implemented in the fall, 1988.

SARB

- o 84% decrease in court referrals since SARB was initiated (from 30 down to 5).
- o 16 students, approximately, are staffed monthly by SARB.

Summary: Weld County School District's dropout prevention efforts at the elementary level focused on developing an early identification/intervention program and providing educational support to children identified as at-risk, as well as developing a mentorship program. At the high school level, two SWAP programs and a Night School were implemented, while retrieval of dropouts was the focus of the Talent Search Program. Interventions had a positive impact on attendance and academic achievement; plus the business community committed significant funding for a mentorship program.

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