

Dropouts: *What Should We Do?*



APPROACH ONE Emphasize Achievement

EXAMPLES OF WHAT MIGHT BE DONE	CONSEQUENCES TO CONSIDER
Set high standards that can be measured to reward high achievement.	Lessens attention to desired qualities that cannot be easily measured; fosters "teaching to the test."
Emphasize that education is an individual privilege, not a right.	Appears to contradict mandatory attendance requirements for community purposes of public schools.
Emphasize that hard work is expected in school.	By emphasizing hard work and achievement on standardized tests, other softer skills may be neglected.
Tailor education to job opportunities for global competition, particularly in math and science and their applications to technological advancements.	Some needs of businesses and industries are not globally competitive but are important to the local community.
Emphasize going to college to prepare our young people for even further achievement.	Neglects numerous jobs that need to be filled that do not require a college education.
Keep young people who are not willing to compete for achievement from distracting those who are.	Places burdens on community resources to deal with those who are not kept in schools and become even greater problems for local employees, social services, and law enforcement.

APPROACH TWO Emphasize Preventive & Corrective School Programs

EXAMPLES OF WHAT MIGHT BE DONE	CONSEQUENCES TO CONSIDER
Implement school-based early childhood education programs and pre-K initiatives to help young people prepare for success in school.	Lessens attention to desired -Not everyone agrees early childhood education programs are effective, and they cost money and personnel resources.
Emphasize special literacy education where needed prior to fourth grade and remedial reading programs after fourth grade.	Schools may not have the funds and personnel to offer such programs.
Do not assume that everyone should go to college; offer career tech options, credit for work experience, and student informed education plans.	May put artificial limits on what individuals can achieve through competition, harder to standardize reports of results, takes time to make qualitative assessments.
Institute positive discipline and truancy diversion programs, including resource and discipline education for parents.	Intrudes on responsibilities that families should bear and takes teachers away from teaching.
Broaden sports programs and other extracurricular activities to keep young people engaged in their school and schoolwork.	Not all students may be attracted to what programs the school emphasizes, and expanding programs costs money and other resources.
Develop additional pathways to graduation such as drop-back-in academies and other programs to make it easier to come back to school.	The public may not accept major changes to the way schools operate, leading to public backlash against schools.

APPROACH THREE Emphasize Community Responsibility

EXAMPLES OF WHAT MIGHT BE DONE	CONSEQUENCES TO CONSIDER
Institute early childhood education programs and pre-K programs outside the schools.	Results in unequal opportunities for all children; may be uneven in quality and cost.
Develop privately delivered literacy and remedial programs.	Again, results in unequal opportunities depending upon who conducts such programs and who has access.
Involve more parents, grandparents, and other adults in delivering school programs and serving as role models.	Increases administrative burdens and takes teachers away from preparing students for standardized achievement tests.
Make more use of libraries, museums, and community programs for arts, music, hobbies, recreational pursuits and other activities not offered by the schools.	Community may have to take time, effort, and resources to expand these opportunities, and some community members may feel underserved by such programming.
Provide more governmental and volunteer social services to address problems with substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, and dysfunctional families.	Expanding social services may result in significant tax increases and/or further community resource investment.
Provide more individual and community mentoring of young people who need hope and encouragement.	Takes time and energy and may lead to stressful interpersonal situations and relationships.