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from the office of Superintendent Robert Collins

## "Gateways" to a Future for Students

Students Excel in a Nurturing  
Environment



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& Lucia Washburn

Last week we had the opportunity to visit to our two Gateway Community Day School programs. Our visit clearly explained how our options programs are a critical aspect of our entire educational program.

Serving approximately 60 - 100 "at-risk" students, a staff of dedicated teachers provides a strong academic program and counseling to students who have been in danger of dropping out of school, who no longer can attend a traditional high school or who were unable to adjust to the regular high school. Many of these students have been referred by probation or the School Attendance Review Board (SARB) or have been expelled.

The program offers smaller class sizes to meet the needs of these students. At the same time, both programs provide instructional technology for students, and the opportunity to take electives and a "self-paced" instructional program. As I spoke with the students at Gateway, they talked about connections with teachers, the ability to work at their own pace and being successful for the first time.

The real evidence of how successful the program is lies in the fact that when many students are given the option of returning to their regular school, they opt to stay at Gateway.



School Board Trustees and Superintendent Collins Recognized the Accomplishments of our Dropout Prevention Specialists, Director Of Alternative Education, Probation Officer, and Coordinators of Child Welfare and Attendance for the District and County at the February 21 Board Meeting

## Grossmont Union High School District Recognized in Top Ten in the State of California as a 2008 Model Dropout Prevention Program

Two weeks ago the Grossmont Union High School District (GUHSD) was recognized as one of the **top 7 programs in the State of California in Dropout Prevention**. It's with a great deal of pride that we recognize the efforts of our administrators and staff who have made our program a model for California.

"Implementing programs to ensure regular attendance and high school graduation of our highest-risk students is one of the most daunting challenges we face in public education. These school districts and GUHSD have taken on that challenge by **creating a safety net for students with persistent school attendance or behavioral problems**. They are to be congratulated and recognized for their **outstanding commitment to their students by keeping them in school and on track**," said Jack O'Connell, State Schools Superintendent.

The Alternative and Options programs, under the guidance and supervision of Lucia Washburn, comprise a network of opportunities for our students including Chaparral Continuation High School, Gateway East and Gateway West, Home Choice, Grossmont Middle College, Phoenix Independent Study Program and Homestead School.

In addition to these options, our program was recognized for the model School Attendance Review Board (SARB). The main purpose of the Board is to make sure students are attending school. When all school efforts are not enough to ensure regular attendance by students, the Review Board will meet with the student and parent and place the student on an attendance contract in lieu of referral to juvenile court.

While the above efforts of staff in our District have earned tremendous recognition, **we still need additional options and opportunities for students and a plan to get there**. We have seen the tremendous success students have as a result of their enrollment at Chaparral and the Gateway schools. But these schools have waiting lists and are often not located in communities close to student's homes. We need to expand to the southern section of our District and add CDS programs. In addition, we need to provide options within each high school. The "Learning Center" model addresses that need for an in-school intervention opportunity. Congratulations for an outstanding effort that lays the foundation for even greater progress in the coming years.