

BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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2006 Broad Prize Finalist “Expect Great Things!”

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To Whom It May Concern,

The Bridgeport Public Schools for the past two school years has been engaged in developing “Opportunity School” programs for the students that for multiple reasons are not making it in the traditional instructional setting. The idea of alternative education has been around for many years. A variety of approaches have been tried, often times finding limited success. The challenge in these “Opportunity School” programs has been to create a learning environment that provides a meaningful academic experience while causing a change in the behavior that leads the student to the program.

Using technology is not a unique way to deliver curriculum. What is unique is the way the “Breakthrough Education Strategies” system provides an instructional structure that is supported by a relationship building facilitator and a behavior changing process. All of the lessons are developed by the program teachers, aligned with district and state expectations, and reviewed for acceptable rigor. The classroom activities provide simple but clear expectations for the students that are reinforced during a designated community dialogue time. The dialogue time is used as a learning experience for the students to engage in developing skills that promote helping each other.

Over time students have demonstrated modified behaviors by regularly attending school, completing work that meets acceptable rubric standards, increased participation in community dialogue time, and most importantly moving on to other learning “Opportunities” in more traditional settings.

The group that supports “Breakthrough Education Strategies” is dedicated to helping find solutions that become life altering experiences for this population of students. Building the “Opportunity School” programs presented many challenges. No matter what the challenge the group was on site to help find solutions. In many cases it was training, re-training, and modeling for staff the various aspects of the process.

After looking for an alternative education solution for many years I believe that “Breakthrough Education Strategies” provides the brightest future for students that are challenged by a traditional education. Please feel free to contact me for additional information about our “Opportunity School” program and the use of “Breakthrough Education Strategies.”

Sincerely

Douglas T. Hiscox
Assistant Superintendent
Bridgeport Public Schools