

THE



ACHIEVER

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ED Releases Guidance on Parental Involvement

The U.S. Department of Education recently released guidance on parental involvement to help states, school districts and schools ensure that parents—as their child’s first teacher—have the information they need to help improve their child’s academic achievement.

The parental involvement provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as reauthorized by the *No Child Left Behind Act* address areas to increase parental options, including expanded public school choice and supplemental educational services for eligible children in low-performing

schools; local development of parental involvement plans with sufficient flexibility to address local needs; and building parents’ capacity for using effective practices to improve their own child’s academic achievement.

The guidance is designed to assist state education agencies, local school districts and schools in administering the parental involvement provisions of the law. It outlines their responsibilities and provides sample templates that might be used for the development of a district-wide parental involvement policy and for a school-parent compact. It clarifies aspects of the law that have been brought to the Department’s attention by local education leaders, parents and others.

For an online copy of the guidance, visit www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/parentinvguid.doc.

The Central Educational Center has 27 computer-equipped labs, including a pre-engineering lab built with a \$40,000 contribution from Yamaha. At right, Pawel Kochanowski works in the construction lab, while director Tom Barnett oversees.

Central Educational Center Charter High School in Georgia Prepares Future Leaders for Future Demands

By Maggie Riechers

In 1997, the manager of a manufacturing plant in Coweta County, Ga., told the superintendent of schools that he couldn’t hire the products of the district’s educational system. The plant manager complained that young employees exhibited little “work ethic.” They did not show up for the job on time, had poor attitudes and even had trouble reading simple instructions and calculating simple math problems. The superintendent took him seriously. He immediately set in motion a study group to outline the problems and develop solutions. One thing became clear: Standards needed to be raised.

Three years later, the Central Educational Center (CEC) was born. This school with an ordinary name started producing extraordinary students. They were talented enough to convince the area’s largest employer, Yamaha Motor Manufacturing Corporation, which was considering relocating, to stay in Coweta County.

CEC, a publicly funded charter school, draws students from the three county high schools and integrates an academic education with state-of-the-art technology and career classes. Students remain enrolled in the required academic classes at their “base” public high school while taking specialized courses

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Photography by Louis Sohn



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Department of Education (ED). Rod Paige, Secretary.

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at CEC, which are not offered at other schools in the county. A key element is that CEC is also a campus of West Central Technical College and offers college-level courses.

“CEC exists because a changing global economy demands a knowledge-based and skill-based workforce,” says Russ Moore, chief executive officer (CEO) of CEC. The school was recently named a national Model High School by a consortium of professional education organizations.

CEC’s student body represents a cross section of academic skills and performance, from high achievers to those with special needs. Ninety-eight percent of CEC graduates go on to two- or four-year colleges, many having already earned technical certificates, or enter the workforce already trained in specific jobs.

“The school seamlessly weaves together secondary and postsecondary education and training with the needs of business and industry,” says Moore.

From left, CEO Russ Moore and team members Rosvin Recinos, Jennifer Freeman and Jennifer Medeiros solve an algebraic equation with math director Randy Moore.

CEC is set up on a business model. As such, Moore is the CEO, not the principal; teachers are directors; and students are team members. There is strict enforcement of attendance and tardiness rules. Every student gets a course grade and a work-ethic grade. The school offers students a range of courses from welding to 3-D computer animation. Computer technology, whether learning to repair computers or set up a network, is a major field of study, as is health care with classes in medical technology and patient care.

Christina Diamond, 18, is a CEC senior taking college-level classes through West Central Technical College. She will attend Southern Polytechnical State University this fall, majoring in architecture. She says the classes she took at CEC—such as pre-engineering, information technology and computer-aided drafting (CAD)—will prepare her for next year.

“The environment here is so much more mature than in regular high school,” says Diamond. “Classes are smaller and you get more attention. And, the classes are real hands-on.”

Based on her experience as a CEC graduate and her second year as an architecture major at Georgia Tech, Jessica Jackson verifies what Diamond says. Jackson believes her drafting and CAD classes at CEC put her a step ahead of her peers. “It gave me the skills I needed,” she says.

Essential to CEC’s success are the nearly 200 local businesses that provide work-based opportunities for students. These include Yamaha, which also gave the school \$40,000 to build a pre-engineering lab; the William I. Bonnell Company, an aluminum extrusion plant; and Newnan Hospital.

The school relies on local businesses to help determine its courses. “We have advisory boards in each major field,” says CEO Moore. “Industry representatives come in, see what we’re teaching, then advise us.”

For example, in the construction field the advisory board consists of a member of Habitat for Humanity, a local manufacturer, the president of a local commercial construction company and a developer. In the health care field there are representatives from hospitals and nursing homes.

CEC has caught the eye of educators around the county. In March 2004, on a visit to CEC, Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education Susan Sclafani toured the school and said its model is one that should be replicated around the country. “We believe very strongly in what you’re doing,” she told Coweta County school officials. “We’re thinking others could benefit from the model you’ve created here.”

For more information about CEC, visit www.gacec.com or call 678-423-2000.



"The more choices parents have, the better they will be able to pick the right environment for their child."

Remarks by U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, as stated in the Department's press release of May 3, 2004, on the celebration of National Charter Schools Week.

Close-Up:



No Child Left Behind Charter Schools

Last month senior officials at the U.S. Department of Education visited charter schools around the country to mark National Charter Schools Week, May 3-7. U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige kicked off the celebration with a visit to the School for Arts in Learning, a charter school in Washington, D.C., on May 3. On May 5, the Department announced the awarding of a \$4 million grant to the state of Massachusetts to enhance the credit of its charter schools to help meet their facility needs.

The Department's Credit Enhancement for Charter Schools Facilities grant program provides funds on a competitive basis to help public and nonprofit entities with loan guarantees, insuring debt and other means of leveraging funds to help charter schools obtain school facilities through such means as purchase, lease and donation. The funds may also be used to help charter schools construct and renovate school facilities.

Charter schools are public schools under contract or charter from a public agency that is seeking to create alternatives within the public school system. Free and open to all students, these schools expand options for parents.

This year marks the 12th anniversary of the opening of the first charter school. Since then, almost 3,000 charter schools have opened in 38 states and the District of Columbia, educating more than 700,000 children.

The creation and support of charter schools are key elements of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. President Bush's fiscal year 2005 budget proposes almost \$320 million for charter schools, including \$100 million for the Credit Enhancement for Charter School Facilities grant program.

For more information about the Credit Enhancement for Charter School Facilities program, visit www.ed.gov/programs/charterfacilities, and for the State Charter School Facilities Incentive program, www.ed.gov/programs/statecharter.

Technology Toolkit

The State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) recently unveiled its 2003 SETDA National Leadership Institute Toolkit: States Helping States Implement No Child Left Behind. Developed with input from state and national experts, the kit offers resources and best practices on improving learning for all students through the use of technology. It addresses five content areas:

- building partnerships and

- leveraging resources;
 - technology leadership skills for the 21st century;
 - data collection and data-driven decision making;
 - building high-quality professional development programs; and
 - virtual schools and distance learning.
- The toolkit contains the outcomes of five corresponding work groups that



June 15

8:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. E.T.

Education News Parents Can Use monthly broadcast will focus on keeping children healthy, physically fit and learning during the summer months. Visit www.ed.gov/news/av/video/edtv or call 1-800-USA-LEARN for details.

June 16-18
Miami, Fla.

National Charter Schools Conference, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. Visit www.uscharterschools.org.

Did You Know?

Charter schools are being founded and supported by well-known individuals such as Bill and Melinda Gates, tennis legend Andre Agassi, actress Laura San Giacomo, gospel musician Marvin Winans and countless highly successful educators and community leaders who say charter schools give them the ability to focus solely on what children need.

Source: www.uscharterschools.org.

met at SETDA's second annual National Leadership Institute held in December 2003. The institute was attended by over 100 education technology leaders from 46 states, along with U.S. Department of Education representatives and other interested parties.

SETDA has also compiled for its Web site a profile report outlining each state's technology plans. For more information, visit www.setda.org.

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FIRST CLASS



**“When it comes to
the education of our
children ... failure is
not an option.”**

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH



NEW WEB SITE! **Online Resource Provides National Network of Free Tutoring Services**

The Supplemental Educational Services Quality (SESQ) Center last month launched a new Web site—www.tutorsforkids.org—to help parents of eligible children take advantage of free tutoring and other supplemental academic enrichment services required under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. Under the law, supplemental educational services (SES) must be offered to low-income children who attend a Title I school that has been designated as needing improvement for two years or longer. After finding that many eligible families are receiving confusing or limited information about their options, the SESQ Center created a network of organizations nationwide to coordinate and improve research and assistance on supplemental educational services. SESQ turns the lessons learned from its activities into resources that will help ensure eligible children get the extra academic support they need.

- The site includes—
- An overview of the law's SES provision, including eligibility criteria;
 - Charts outlining the roles of families, educators, states and school districts, policymakers, and providers in the SES process;
 - A state-by-state listing of SES providers;
 - Links to other online resources, such as organizations doing related work, news articles and research; and
 - A calendar of SES-focused events;

The SESQ Center was established in late 2003 through a grant to the American Institutes for Research from the Office of Innovation and Improvement at the U.S. Department of Education. For more information, visit www.tutorsforkids.org or call 1-866-544-8686.