



## **Waterford School District Receives \$75,000 To Help Students Who Have Been Suspended Or Expelled**

**October 15, 2003 Waterford, Mich.** - The Waterford School District is the proud recipient of a \$75,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Education Office of School Excellence, Curriculum Leadership Unit. The District received the grant for its STARS Program (Students Temporarily Away From Regular School), which is an off-site educational service for middle school or high school students who have been long term suspended or expelled.

The grant will provide an opportunity for students who have been expelled or long term suspended to participate in community service activities that are relevant to their career goals and interests while encouraging them to make behavioral changes necessary for re-entry into school. The program will be implemented as a component of the existing STARS program. The students' Educational Development Plans will be used to identify primary career interests in considering community service placement, which will enhance the relevance of the community service experience, increase students' behavioral assets, and maximize the potential for successful placement.

Prior to beginning community service, all students will participate in pre-placement seminars, where they will assess and explore their individual career interests and aptitudes, discuss the value of performing community service, and identify what is needed to be successful in placement. Once student placements have been determined, project staff, parents, and students will meet bi weekly to monitor the success of the placement, discuss any problems, and make changes as needed. Ultimately, the program will be used as a model for implementing a suspension and expulsion prevention program.

Without programs to help suspended or expelled students successfully re-enter school, they are at a high risk of dropping out. The Waterford School District believes that in addition to providing basic instruction, providing supportive mentoring and a connection to the larger community will help these students see the value of setting goals for behavior changes and for developing individual plans for a return to school. Waterford School District plans to reconnect these students as quickly and effectively as possible to the community and to

school, through community service activities that are selected by the students and are relevant to the students' career goals.

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