



UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT INFORMATIONAL ITEM

TOPIC: Presentation of U F.I.R.S.T Program

SUBMITTED BY Annette Perez **OF:** Director of Discipline Management

APPROVED FOR TRANSMITTAL TO SCHOOL BOARD: _____

DATE ASSIGNED FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION: September 21, 2011

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“U”

F.I.R.S.T.

UNITED **F**AMILIES **I**NTERVENE
& **R**EDIRECT **S**TUDENTS
TOGETHER

1



Student Relations/Discipline Management Department

HISTORY - DAEP

- Since adoption of the Texas Safe Schools Act in 1995, all Texas public school districts have been required to provide disciplinary alternative education programs (DAEPs).
- Mandatory assignments result from conduct specified in TEC Chapter 37.
- Discretionary assignments result from violations of locally-adopted student codes of conduct.

GOAL

- The goal is for students to **quickly return to, and succeed in, their regularly assigned classrooms and schools** and to further enhance students' and parents' decision making skills.
- To encourage **collaboration and a strong partnership** between students and parents/guardians and with UISD personnel such as the Gang Intervention Facilitators, Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselors, Police Officers, and School Counselors. The partnership is further enhanced with other law enforcement agencies including the juvenile justice system and our many community partners.

OVERVIEW...

- The U FIRST Program gives a **new approach** to educating students placed at STEP Academy for a violation which is their **first offense**.
- Traditional discipline is replaced with an **opportunity to demonstrate improved behavior** through constructive action, i.e., community service assignments, student/parent retreat, parent & student awareness sessions, self reflection activities- "lessons learned."
- U FIRST allows the administrators and the student and parent to agree to an **alternative form of corrective action wherein the student attends 1/3 of their DAEP placement term and then returns to his home campus**. The student will **complete the rest of the DAEP term by attending a variety of U FIRST activities** which may include Uniting Families, ROPES-Challenge Program, Community Service Assignments, etc.

PROGRAM CRITERIA

1. Is there a Level II or higher discipline offense throughout all secondary school years (starting with the 2010-2011)? If yes, list dates & details of the offense: _____
2. Is the student's Attendance rate during the current or prior school year, **BELOW 96%** in any course? (Attendance rate is based on Unexcused absences and takes into consideration tardies: Four (4) tardies=1 absence)
3. Was there a victim? If yes, the degree of injuries will be considered.
4. Is the student's academic ability reflective in his/her performance (i.e. grades, incomplete/missing assignments, etc.)?
5. Is there any criminal history? (i.e. Prior arrests or citations) If yes, list dates & details of the offense: _____

PROGRAM CRITERIA

ADDITIONAL FACTORS which may be CONSIDERED:

- Did the student understand the wrongfulness of the offense (i.e. attitude, cooperative, age, etc.)?
- Was the offense premeditated or did the student knowingly act?
- Is the offense a mandatory expellable offense as listed in the SCoC?
- Was this a felony level offense as a result of the Drug Free Zone or Gang Free Zone?
- Does the school have “reasonable belief” the student may have or intended to distribute drugs to other students? (ex. quantity)
- Does the student pose a threat to students or staff?

UNITING FAMILIES

- Parent/guardians & students shall attend a 90 minute parenting session for 4 consecutive weeks.
- Each session will address a different topic:
 - 1. Gang Prevention/Intervention-Gang Facilitator;
 - 2. Drug Awareness/Intervention-LCDC;
 - 3. Law Awareness & Enforcement-UISD Police Dept.; and
 - 4. Behavior Management Strategies-STEP Academy CounselorAfter the 4 week cycle is completed the same sessions will be repeated.
- Transportation will not be provided.
- A student, who is placed more than once at STEP Academy during the same school year, has the option of participating in UNITING FAMILIES. However, the 4 or 6 day reduction can only be obtained once for each placement.

CHALLENGE PROGRAM

- R.O.P.E.S. (Recreation; Observation; Problem Solving; Experiential Education; Self Esteem)
- A **ropes course** is a challenging outdoor personal development and team building activity. Low elements take place on the ground or only a few feet above the ground. High elements are usually constructed in trees or made of utility poles and require a belay for safety.
- Students and parents will engage in problem solving activities that require physical ability as well as creative thinking which help students and parents develop in the areas of leadership, problem solving, communication, self-confidence, trust, decision making and teamwork.
- Some activities are individual challenges that require team members to spot and encourage. Other activities require extensive team effort to accomplish a task or find a solution.

CHALLENGE PROGRAM

- **Cooperative Game, Socialization Activity, Ice-Breaker:** a fun activity designed to reduce inhibitions and break down barriers. Examples include: name games, people to people, raccoon circle..
- **Group Initiative:** Success is achieved only when all members have contributed to the outcome. Examples include: The Muese, Spider's Web, Carpet Maze, Crocodile Pit, Whale Watch, **Peanut Butter River**, Ragging River, T.P. Shuffle, Nitro Crossing, and Group Wall
- **Trust-building games:** activities designed to provide members the opportunity to demonstrate their trust in other members of the group through a series of sequenced actions. Examples include: Willows in the Wind or Trust Circle and **Trust Fall**.
- **Low/High Ropes Elements** invite participants to confront such emotional issues as the fear of falling, the fear of failure, and the fear of losing control. Risk is managed by group members who assume critical spotting roles. Examples include: Swinging Balance Beam, Triangle Traverse, Tire Swings, and **Mohawk Walk**.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Parent/Guardian or other **adult** designated by the parent **must be in attendance**.
- The adult must be an **Approved UISD Volunteer** before starting the community service work assignment.
- Community Service will be completed in **4 hour blocks**-typically on Saturdays.
- UISD employee will monitor the Community Service.
- Student and parent will agree to complete all service projects by the **designated completion date**.
- No other children allowed.
- Transportation will not be provided.
- Student must adhere to all guidelines set forth in the United ISD Student Code of Conduct.
- For every 1 hour of Community Service, the student will be credited 1 day towards the STEP Academy placement term.
- **Specific date/time for Community Service Work Assignments will be designated from the following approved list:**
 - ___ Wash school busses or district vehicles
 - ___ **Animal Shelter** (younger than 15 yrs of age- must be with adult)
 - ___ Clean/collect trash at the SAC
 - ___ **South Texas Food Bank**
 - ___ **Habitat for Humanity**
 - ___ Community Beautification projects

REHABILITATION CENTER (DRUG)

- Drug Rehabilitation Center documentation is provided to the Student Relations/Discipline Management Dept.
- Days of attendance count towards DAEP placement term if:
 - 1. Instructional services following a TEKS based curriculum were provided each school day.
 - 2. The student completes assignment “successfully”.

YOUTH VILLAGE – WEBB CO.

- Days detained at the Youth Village with instructional services provided count towards DAEP placement term.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS & RESPONSIBILITIES @ HOME CAMPUS

- Failure to comply with UISD's SCoC rules, Requirements and Restrictions as outlined in this Agreement will invalidate any days earned towards the placement; thus the student will be required to complete the entire placement term at STEP Academy.
- The student must comply with the following additional requirements and restrictions:
 - * 1. **Weekly Drug Test upon the student's return to home campus.**
 - 2. **Daily session/visit with LCDC, GIF, or School Counselor.**
 - 3. Parent/Guardian must be in attendance at the Community Service Work site, Challenge Program, and Uniting Families. Not a drop-off program and other children may not be present.
 - 4. Supervised restroom visits.
 - 5. **Lunch Detention.**
 - 6. **Revocation of parking permit.**
 - 7. Daily sign in/out by the parent/guardian at the Attendance Office.
 - 8. **Student may not possess a cell phone/telecommunication device.**
 - 9. Parent/Guardian shadowing of the student (Date(s):_____ Time:_____)
 - 10. **96% Attendance Rate (Includes Tardies & Excludes Excused Absences).**
 - 11. **No disciplinary referrals** while at STEP Academy and the home campus – during the complete and original placement which includes the remaining days of the placement term).
 - 12. Other:_____

REFLECTION ACTIVITY:

- Sample Lesson: Advantage Press Inc.
- The **Response form** asks questions .. **attitude, positive choices, and setting goals.**
 1. What kind of **attitude** does a person need in order to learn from mistakes and improve? Explain your answer.
 2. Imagine that your friend is in the same situation that resulted in your placement at STEP Academy. **Write a letter to your friend suggesting positive ways to avoid getting into trouble.**
 3. **Write three goals** that will **help you** learn from your mistakes.

EXAMPLE #1:

- 45 Days Placement Term
- -15 Days of attendance at STEP Academy. Student must attend 1/3 of the Placement Term days before returning to Home Campus.
- **=30** Days Pending to Completed with U FIRST activities. Approximate time needed to complete the pending 30 days at STEP Academy = 6 weeks.
 - - 6 Days=Hours Uniting Families-90 minutes each session (4 consecutive Wednesdays)
 - - 8 Days=Hours Challenge Program (R.O.P.E.S.: 2 consecutive Saturdays)
 - -16 Days=Hours Community Service Assignment (4 Saturdays)

30
days

EXAMPLE #2:

- 30 Days Placement Term
- -10 days of attendance at STEP Academy. Student must attend 1/3 of the Placement Term days before returning to Home Campus.
- **=20** Days Pending to Complete with U FIRST activities. Approximate time needed to complete the pending 20 days at STEP Academy = 4 weeks.
 - -4 Days=Hours Uniting Families-90 minutes each session (3 consecutive Wednesdays)
 - -8 Days=Hours Challenge Program (R.O.P.E.S.: 2 consecutive Saturdays)
 - -8 Days=Hours Community Service Assignment (2 Saturdays)

20
days

UISD strongly
believes U FIRST
is a **win/win**
situation for all
concerned.