

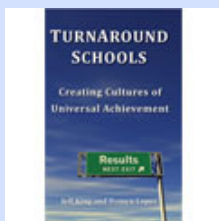


# School Connections

A quarterly publication from New York State Parental Information and Resource Centers

The New York State Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs) are funded by the U.S. Department of Education and sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension Jefferson County, Watertown, NY in partnership with Jefferson/Lewis BOCES and EPIC-Every Person Influences Children, Buffalo, NY. PIRC's provide technical assistance to schools related to family engagement. Visit our website at [www.nyspirc.org](http://www.nyspirc.org).

## Professional Resources



### **TurnAround Schools**

Authors: Jeff King & Damen Lopez

In **TurnAround Schools**, Jeff King and Damen Lopez share six exceptional systems that can assist schools in helping disadvantaged children beat the odds and successfully be prepared to attend college. The book provides many examples of how your school can create a culture of universal achievement for all students.

In **No Excuses University**, Damen Lopez shares examples of ways your school can work with students, parents, and staff to promote a comprehensive college readiness model starting in kindergarten. This book utilizes the six exceptional systems shared in **TurnAround Schools** to help schools learn how they can create academic success for even the most challenging student population.

These books offer strategies that can provide a strong foundation for college readiness for all students and will be an invaluable resource for superintendents, teachers, parents, as well as the entire school community.



### **No Excuses University**

Author: Damen Lopez



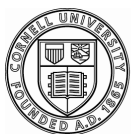
## Damen Lopez Visits Northern NY

On June 8, 2010, the New York State PIRC, sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension, was honored to have Damen Lopez as our guest for a conference on Creating a Culture of Universal Achievement. This conference was a partnership between Syracuse University, Jefferson Community College, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County and Jefferson-Lewis BOCES.

Damen Lopez's message throughout the conference was that all students deserve the opportunity to be educated in a way that prepares them for college, if they so choose to attend. Educators learned practical ways to help students, parents, and the community help to create a culture of universal achievement for all students.

We were also privileged to have staff from Genesee Elementary School in Auburn, NY join us. Genesee Elementary is the first school in New York State to become a No Excuses School. In fact, EPIC PIRC is providing the family involvement component for this project. To learn more visit

[www.turnaroundschools.org](http://www.turnaroundschools.org)



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension  
Jefferson County



**Families and Communities Together with Schools (FACTS)**, sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County, provides services throughout Upstate New York.

**EPIC (Every Person Influences Children)** operates PIRC centers in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse Fallsburg/Monticello, Yonkers, Bronx, and Queens.

## College Readiness from Cradle to Career

When we talk about college readiness from cradle to career, many may wonder what this might mean for schools. It is important for educators to understand that we can not wait until children are in high school to start working with students and their families to plan for college and/or the workforce. We must engage families and the community in student learning as soon as the child is born and continue until the student completes college. We can not predict the future for a preschooler or kindergartner, so we have no choice but to prepare **ALL** students for a life that includes attending college. This might include home visiting parenting programs for new parents, offering Universal Pre-Kindergarten in the school, introducing college vocabulary words beginning in kindergarten, and promoting college readiness for all students in the school. Effective family and community engagement is a shared responsibility and reinforces learning that takes place in all settings. So, it is essential that we begin working with families early.



As educators, we must ensure all families have access to the information they need to effectively support their children's education. We must also help students and families understand the difference between a job and a career. A job is something you must do to earn money for basic needs, however, a career is when a person is paid for doing something they love to do. It must be our goal as educators to help each and every student reach his full potential, so he has the ability to attend college, if he chooses. We must create a systematic approach to college readiness to help make every child's dream become a reality.

## Syracuse University Offers College Access for First Generation Students

Syracuse University (SU), through its Office of Supportive Services in the School of Education, partnered with the Jefferson-Lewis Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and the New York State PIRC to conduct a pilot program and related study designed to increase the number of students engaging in the college application process, completing applications and financial aid forms, and attending and completing college programs.



Students and families from north country school districts were provided with a full-day program at Syracuse University during the time of freshman entry to the university on August 27, 2009 and another visit on the day of SU Showcase on April 19, 2010. A conference was also held for students and parents on April 30, 2010 at Jefferson Community College to learn about various options for college. During the past year, students have participated in distance learning meetings with Syracuse University to discuss questions and concerns regarding post secondary education and/or career opportunities. Two students who participated in these events have recently been awarded scholarships to attend a two week program at Syracuse University during this summer.

The New York State PIRC would like to thank Syracuse University for providing our students and their families with these once in a lifetime experiences. As a result of your generosity, many of the participating students will now be the first in their families to fulfill their dreams of attending college and having a career.