



# University of Arkansas System Criminal Justice Institute

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## The Criminal Justice Institute and Forrest City High School Work Together to Implement A New Dropout Prevention Program

**Little Rock, Arkansas, December 18, 2008**— The Criminal Justice Institute’s (CJI) Safe School Initiative Division (SSID) is partnering with Forrest City High School to implement the **“Talk About It®”** program, a dropout prevention tool designed to bridge the communication gap between students and faculty.

Developed by AnComm, **“Talk About It®”** is an encrypted web-based messaging service that allows students to communicate anonymously with school officials to report problems or address personal issues that otherwise may go unresolved. For students, **‘Talk About It®’** serves as an ‘icebreaker’ giving teens a familiar form—the Internet—to reach out to counselors and communicate their own problems or the troubles of other schoolmates and peers, breaking the prevalent ‘code of silence’ through anonymous communication. For school administrators, **‘Talk About It®’** empowers faculty with an ‘early warning system’ so that they may proactively communicate, intervene and resolve school violence *before* it can occur.

Today, thousands of students in more than 230 elementary, middle and high schools across the United States rely on AnComm’s **‘Talk About It®’** to report problems and incidents ranging from bullying, gangs, threats of violence, suicide and cheating to drug and alcohol abuse, pregnancy, depression, stress, physical abuse, self-mutilation, sexual harassment and date rape.

The **“Talk About It®”** program is one of 81 programs featured in SSID’s Dropout Prevention Database and Toolkit, an online resource developed for Arkansas schools through grant funding awarded by the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. This database features a national selection of evidence-based model dropout prevention programs and contains comprehensive information about each program, including program descriptions, key outcomes, key

strategies, risk factors, targeted grades, resources needed, time required, and cost. The programs selected for the database offer many strategies for dropout prevention, such as mentoring/tutoring, creating a safe learning environment, providing after-school activities, systemic renewal, and family engagement.

As part of SSID's effort to pilot these programs in Arkansas schools, a \$2,000 check was presented to the Forrest City High School to assist with costs associated with the "Talk About It®" program.

The Criminal Justice Institute (CJI) is a non-profit educational entity that provides programs and services designed to enhance the performance of Arkansas law enforcement professionals. As a division of the University of Arkansas System, the Institute delivers advanced education and training across the State in progressive areas of criminal justice, including law enforcement management, forensic sciences and computer technologies. CJI's Safe School Initiative Division provides programs and resources that assist in reducing violence and violence-related behaviors in Arkansas schools. Formerly known as the School Violence Resource Center, this Division continues to take a pro-active approach to responding to crime and violence, both on the school campus and within the community.

For more information about the Dropout Prevention Database and Toolkit, visit the Safe Schools Initiative Divisions' website at **[www.arsafeschools.com](http://www.arsafeschools.com)**.

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