

College Prep Essentials: A Partnership Between the Regional Alternative School and Heartland Community College



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Problem Statement

- All levels of education are facing reform due to the accountability movement, federal expectations, and a changing society. High school students in the United States need to have educational opportunities available to them in order to compete in a global market. And while a variety of educational opportunities are available for most students, at-risk students are often left out. At-risk students need more supports in order to become productive adults and help solve society's problems as opposed to becoming a drain on resources.
- For every 100 low-income students who start high school, only 65 will get a high school diploma and only 45 will enroll in college. Only 11 will complete a postsecondary degree.

(Source: JFF analysis of data from the National Education Longitudinal Study for students from the lowest-income SES quintile.)

- With the increase in minimum drop out age of 17 (from 16) in 2005, more students are being retained in high school through the senior year but many are still not completing requirements for graduation, leading to a population of high school students untraditional in age and uncomfortable (disengaged) in the traditional high school environment.

Barriers to College as Perceived by Regional Alternative School Students

- Money concerns-58%
- Feeling unprepared-29%
- Feeling unprepared academically-24%
- Fear of the unknown-11%
- Shame in asking for financial aid-4%
- Afraid of getting lost on campus-2%
- Other answers included pregnancy, laziness, jail, working, and not knowing what to study
- Other barriers to college for many students include poverty and citizenship issues.



Collaborations

- Heartland Community College and the Regional Alternative School have worked in collaboration since November of 2008. This partnership has provided the stepping stones to build a program called College Prep Essentials that has greatly benefitted the students of the Regional Alternative School.



Goals for College Prep Essentials

- Provide an additional option to students not succeeding in traditional schools
 - Allow for the completion of the requirements for attaining a high school diploma
 - Gain “college knowledge” through the rigors of formal education through coursework at Heartland Community College
 - Environmentally align with the age and interests of the older student
- Support the student in defining life and career goals
- View education as a P-20 collaboration
- Change a youthful attitude of being at the “end of learning” into one of engagement in “lifelong learning”

College Prep Essentials

- Piggyback on current Essentials Certificate Programs offered through HCC
 - 16 credit hour
 - Unemployed/underemployed/non-traditional students
- Supports it offers
 - All of the traditional support
 - Closed community classroom
 - Instructors that understand our population



Essentials Supports

- SPOC
- Daily Attendance
- Lab Assistants
- Tutoring - College and RAS
- Advisement
- Bus Passes/Student ID
- Gas Cards
- Books
- Tuition Pre-paid
- Success Seminars
 - Meet and Greet
 - COLORS
 - Volunteer Day
 - Mock Interviews
 - Business Panel
 - Myers Briggs Test
 - Job Shadow Day

Criteria for Program

- Express a desire to go to college
- 17 years old
- Able to maintain positive interactions with peers and staff
- Require 3 credits or less to graduate from high school
- Originate from a school that is served by RAS and HCC district
- Maintain and acceptable attendance rate
- Participate in college enrollment testing
- Interviewed by Essentials Coordinator



Four Semesters Outcomes

- Fall 2009- 2 out of 2 students received a Business Certificate as well as their high school diploma, and both continued their education at HCC part time and worked full-time
- Spring 2010 - 5 of 5 students received a Business or Manufacturing Certificate as well as their high school diploma. 2 are continuing their education at HCC and working part-time, and 3 are employed full time
- Fall 2010-1 out of 1 student received a Business Certificate as well as a high school diploma. This student is continuing at HCC
- Spring 2011-2 students from RAS are currently enrolled in Business Essentials
- There have been no failing grades or withdrawals for the students in the current CPE format

Quotes



- “I like coming here because it is my choice”
- “Look at me; I used to want to drop out of high school. Now I am graduating and I have done a whole semester of college!!!!”
- “I am learning so much in this program. I am actually helping my father to write his resume”

Similar Programs

- **The School Without Walls, Washington, D.C.**
 - This is a public high school that is on the campus of George Washington University.
 - Students are able to take college courses during their junior and senior years of high school.
- **The Early College High School Initiative**
 - Currently in Georgia, Ohio, North Carolina, Texas, California, Utah, and Michigan
 - 92% percent graduate
 - 89% of graduates go on to postsecondary education

(Source: The New York Times, "For Students at Risk, Early College Proves a Draw".)

Jasmine

- Home School: Bloomington High School
- Age: 17
- Came to the RAS in November 2008
- Reason for referral:

Future

- We know the program works
- Need to increase numbers
- Going into committee with HCC staff and high school representatives to look at offerings that are able to help more students rather than just the ones that fit the piggybacked programs



Closing Comments

- We have a positive effect on students
- We have a positive effect on families
- This is how people can have access to the American Dream



Any questions?