

U-N-I TEACHING YOUTH PROJECT ACHIEVE-STAY IN SCHOOL

Students to be served: Middle and High School Age Students

Summary of Proposed Program/Initiative: Project Achieve is a holistic approach that seeks to address Attendance, Attitude, and Academics, three primary factors that affect a youth's decision to complete his or her secondary education and obtaining a vocation and or education beyond high school. Young people whose self-concept has undergone a fundamental change must be given concrete opportunities to change their actual conditions of life. Otherwise, they can only exhaust and demoralize themselves in isolated acts of adventurism or in symbolic acts of defiance or escapism. (school drop outs, teen pregnancy, drugs, etc.) Programs need to be developed that will educate young people with:

- (a) the principles, conceptual ability, knowledge and experiences necessary to make socially responsible decisions;
- (b) technical skills needed to carry out these decisions.

The Achieve Program will provide students with knowledge and skills to become successful, self-reliant, and community oriented adults. The program will have Four Primary Components: Attendance and Academics, Socialization, Parental Involvement and Higher Education Counseling. Project Achieve is a blend of Academe and Social Development that will help bridge the disconnect between educators and students and inspire students interest and ownership of the learning process. Strategies will be used to nurture success of difficult to reach students, to relate curricula to students world and bring instructions to life.

Strategies used to address Attendance and Academic issues will be assessments of report cards and end of year test scores to assist students in formulating a tutoring plan; the development of an academic goals contract student, parent, and staff to ensure student commitment and parental involvement; and monitoring to ensure that the needs of the students and parents are being met.

Socialization will be addressed through a variety of strategies including gender specific social skills training, programs and workshops which allow students to discuss positive and negative life decisions led by professional consultants. Socialization programs and activities will provide youth with knowledge of basic social skills in order to Reach, Master, Expand and Transition though the maturation process . We address self esteem issues, anger management, because they will need those skills to succeed in school in this very competitive world.

Career Co-Ops which will introduce youth to the professional world and potential careers; to learn about civic responsibility, develop organizational skills and to learn how one can impact the lives of another through the development of a community enrichment project.

In addition to the academic goals contract Parental Involvement will be supplemented by means of a Surrogate/Mentoring Program. Surrogate Mentors will work with parents to analyze monthly report reports detailing the child's progress, mentor parents of children in the program, inform and discuss issues that affect youth in the region. They will step in on behalf of children only in emergency situations whenever a parent is not available.

Finally, in order to make post secondary education a reality for students and parents, five strategies will be implemented: assisting youth to identify career goals and post secondary education programs and opportunities; access to post education preparation courses for taking post secondary exams; visits to Colleges and Universities, Trade Schools, Two Year Colleges; mentoring programs with students currently enrolled in post secondary schools; and higher education workshops for parents which address admissions process, financial aid options, how to prepare children for higher education, and issues that affect undergraduates.

Project Achieve has Three Main goals:

●Goal 1: Decrease dropout rates and increase high school graduation rates of Achieve Youth at or above the level in the Public Schools Drop Out Prevention

Strategic Plan. In order to address this goal, Achieve will:

- a. Provide supplementary services, including academic case management and tutoring, to enhance academic performance, school attendance, and supplement necessary instructional time.
- b. Increase parental involvement through mentoring, individual student monthly progress reports, workshops, and newsletters that address issues that affect urban teens.
- c. Increase Student commitment by requiring youth to work with staff to identify areas of academic concern and develop a plan to address their issues.

●Goal 2: Provide Achieve will help develop the social and life skills necessary for youth to become successful community oriented adults. In order to address this goal Achieve will:

- a. Increase healthy living skills to help youth cope with their community's distracting social issues.
- b. Increase youth community involvement through mentoring of other students and developing an annual neighborhood enrichment project.

●Goal 3: Ensure that Achieve youth develop a plan to enroll in some form of High School Career Track.. In order to address this goal Achieve will:

- a. Increase youth and parents knowledge regarding aspects of college and trade school enrollment to include admissions process, financial aid opportunities, campus life through campus visits and workshops designed for parents and youth.

These goals and objectives were selected based on analysis of past drop-out prevention center events and workshops, supportive literature related to drop-out prevention as well as informal surveying of parents and students.

Current literature states that both school and personal problems factor in a youth's decision to dropout of school. Some specific reasons include: poor or failing grades; having to repeat a grade, sporadic school attendance, disciplinary problems including suspensions and expulsions, lack of family support, pregnancy and teen parenthood; drug and alcohol problems. In addition

to those reasons there were other concerns to include lack of parental support and involvement, lack of knowledge of a variety of topics ranging from attendance laws and graduation requirements to the college admissions process, and influence of gangs.

Research has shown that no single factor is responsible for a youth's decision to complete high school and post secondary school education, Project Achieve seeks to provide a Holistic approach to keeping youth in school and take it a step further by seeing them develop a "road map" for some form of higher education whether it is college or trade school. Components of the program will provide youth with a comprehensive program that gives them the additional skills and training to be successful and productive members of society.

Contact Person

William Dickerson-Waheed

601.594.6792

wwaheed16@hotmail.com