

NDPS Certification Program Field Project

**Bridges to Success-Transformation, Transition and Motivation
AMI Infinity-Marlboro
Bennettsville, SC**

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Bridges to Success- Transformation, Transitioning and Motivation

Funding Sources

Marlboro County School District
Marlboro County Herald-Advocate
AMI-Infinity Marlboro Business Partners

Project Cost and Budget Narrative

\$1,500 per year - funding from the Kinney-Foundation
Expenses: Classroom materials, project supplies and incentives
Fundraising activities through AMI-Infinity and Business Partners

Scope and Setting

The on-site classroom setting allows students the opportunity to embrace skills that will be best practices in learning vocabulary, literacy, social and coping skills, using Hotep's Hustle University Curriculum, "Everything You Need to Know Before You Graduate."

In collaboration with AMI-Infinity Marlboro, mentors and volunteers will receive professional development through the Flippen Groups Model of "Capturing Kids Hearts," that will offer best practices on building relationships and trust among adults and students, resulting in student continued academic success.

Staffing Pattern:

- One full-time Director, administrative assistant-AMI Infinity employees (as called upon) for group activities, or project-based items
- Community volunteers to come in as mentors, career specialists, diverse adult and student population sharing values and success stories

Population Served

- 20-25 students and participants
- Description of project participants (ages, grades, demographics, etc.):
6th -12th grade
- Referred by school district's hearing boards, director referrals for students who have met the criteria to return to their home schools

Project Origination

AMI Infinity-Marlboro is a private, non-profit alternative school program benefiting the Bennettsville and surrounding areas. This program works with local school districts to increase academic functioning and achievement, while improving student citizenship. Youth who are unable to perform within the public school system, may have displayed disruptive behavior, and are facing expulsion are referred to this campus. In addition, students may exhibit developmental or learning disabilities.

The approach to helping kids is the use of its organization's AMIKids Personal Growth Model. This guiding principle provides kids with tools for success. Based on empirical evidence, the Personal Growth Model is designed to reduce recidivism, improve program completion rate, facilitate educational gains, and cultivate an environment of achievement and improvement.

Risk and need are identified through assessment, and individualized plans are developed combining behavior modification, education, and treatment for each child. This comprehensive approach addresses family issues, academic failure, addiction, mental health diagnoses and legal consequences.

One of the business partners in the community, Mrs. Elizabeth McNeil, owner of Pee Dee Promotions, publisher of the Marlboro Herald Advocate, saw the need for students to have someone who was transparent, caring, nurturing and holding students accountable for their academic success. Thus, the idea of having a transition support and services aftercare program to improve the success rate of 20-25 student residents of AMIKids programs, and those who are returning to a public school within Marlboro County, was entertained and plans of implementation were discussed. Recruitment efforts, screening, training of volunteers and mentors for Infinity students returning to traditional public schools evolved and are still ongoing.

Issues Addressed

Student intervention by giving support to enhance coping skills and developing relationships for the security of themselves and each other

Developing self-respect and respect for adults and authoritative figures in the home as well as community

Integrity and self-worth to enhance efforts for obtaining graduation credentials

Desired Outcomes and Measurable Objectives

- Academic success
- Perfect Attendance
- Love for school culture
- Respect for themselves and others
- Becoming role models for their peers who may be making bad choices

Strategies and Interventions

Adult volunteers and mentors will participate in ongoing professional development enhancing and learning strategies to continue supporting the academic successes of returning students.

Researched-based best practices that will begin conversations among adults and students will be ongoing efforts of the AMIKids Infinity and school district partners.

Bridges to Success –Transformation, Transition, Motivating mentors and volunteers will continue to provide approaches to implement the Personal Growth Model of AMI and implement strategies to support teamwork and relationship building among themselves and the community stake holders.

Project Timeline and Special Conditions and/or Expertise Required to Implement Project

Volunteers and mentors will process the necessary application packet provided by the school district's volunteer protocol and receive the appropriate professional development throughout the school year. The school district's process does include background checks.

After clearance and given to opportunity to proceed with volunteering, mentors and volunteers will be assigned to work with individual students on-site, monitoring the continued personal growth of students. (September-May)

Outcomes and Achievements

Bridges to Success-Transformation, Transition and Motivation has been designed to enhance student's feeling of security, ability to form trusting relationships among their peers and adults, and improve student's desires personal growth.

Volunteer's role modeling and reminding students of the importance of education, goal setting and survival skills in this global economy is necessary for the success of our endeavors.

Projected Outcomes Related to School Completion and Graduation Rates

- Increased percentages of student with perfect attendance
- An avid interest and love for school and student success for meeting the criteria for passing required courses and graduation
- Demonstration of effort and appreciation of the arts as well as sports and extra curricula activities
- Nurturing, sustainable and life-changing relationships developed among mentors and students that will follow in career and life long experiences

Current Status of Project

The transformation, transition and motivation component of Bridges to Success is an enhancing effort to sustain the interest of student integrity, assist in providing the tools to students as well as adults to be successful and will implemented during the 2nd Semester of the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years.

Role in Project as a NDPS Certification Program Participant

I have been an advocate for student success for more than 25 years in the district. I have transitioned from bus driver, teacher assistant, secretary, long-term sub, individual school parent coordinator, District Parent Coordinator and now District At-risk Student Interventionist. I am a prime example that your zip code does not determine your destiny.

As a National Dropout Prevention Specialist, I am in the process of researching best practices and implementing strategies and interventions for at risk student's grades PreK-through 12th grade that were referred to our office because of previous retention or discipline, attendance and truancy.

Having the distinguished opportunity to complete professional development in recognizing, grasping and embracing the interventions and mindset of combatting dropout prevention, I feel more equipped to begin impacting the reduction of students dropping out of school.

I am certain that assisting with the developing of school improvement plans will serve as encompasses for each or most of the 15 effective strategies for dropout prevention.

My continued support and transparency on the campus of our alternative school setting has allowed me the opportunity to serve as a role model and board member. My goal is for the continued success of the school's sustainability and academic successes with its personal growth model.

Lessons Learned

- Every student needs to have a caring adult in their lives and one who is able to meet them where they are and are not judgmental
- Bridges to Success- Transformation, Transitioning and Motivation is positive approach to assisting troubled youth with another tool for academic success

Advice for Dropout Prevention Practitioners about the Project

I am a firm believer in the saying, “It takes a village to raise a child...” I feel that we, as educators and ambassadors for education, have an obligation to every young person that we encounter, to invest our gifts and talents to help them the best that they can be.

Informing students of all the skills and tools needed before graduating and providing them with the proper means of setting goals to be successful in their careers after graduation, is what we can give to help them continue to be competitive in this every changing global society.

The continued support of school-community partnerships with alternative schools demonstrates the concern for the well-being of students. It also gives them hope to dream and continue moving forward to obtaining their goals in life and being well respected citizens, life-long learners, in this 21st century.