

# Middle College High School: A Meaningful Option

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**Solutions**  
*to the Dropout Crisis*

# History and Purpose of Middle College Program

- Began in 1974 at LaGuardia Community College of the City University of New York.
- Designed to create a learning environment, on a college campus, that provides disengaged high school students a fresh start.



# History and Purpose (cont.)

- Disengaged students are creative nonconformists who have trouble fitting into a traditional high school setting.
- Because of their dress or lack of interest in school activities, their peers often reject them.



# History and Purpose (cont.)

- While most are bright, many drop out of school.
- The model pulls disengaged high school students back into the education process.



# History and Purpose (cont.)

- Program provides the host college with a new pool of potential students.
- Grade level varies;
  - 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders
  - 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders
  - 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> graders



# History and Purpose (cont.)

- Small enrollment of no more than 125 – 150 students per site is one key to the program's success.
- Approximately 200 programs exist across the nation.



# Middle College Governance and Operational Logistics

- The program is governed by the local district's Board of Education.
- The district and the host college collaboratively manage the program.
- The host college provides space for the program.
  - Principal's office
  - Teacher's workroom
  - One dedicated classroom per 25 students
  - Access to "floating" classrooms, laboratories, library, etc.



# Governance and Operational Logistics (cont.)

- The district provides:
  - Telephones
  - Computers
  - Copying machines
  - Office furniture, etc.
  - Student high school textbooks and material
  - Tuition and textbooks for college courses taken by Middle College students.



# Governance and Operational Logistics (cont.)

- The district selects, employs, and trains all teaching and administrative staff.
- Middle College students abide by all college rules and regulations.
- However, the school district makes decisions pertaining to student discipline.



# Governance and Operational Logistics (cont.)

- The Middle College Principal reports to the Chief Academic Officer.
- Relationship with college faculty is very important.
- The Middle College Principal should attend all college faculty meetings.



# Governance and Operational Logistics (cont.)

- Most successful Middle College programs have a college faculty member who serves as a liaison between college faculty and Middle College program.
- Suggest including college administration and faculty and student leaders when visiting existing Middle College high school sites around the country.



# Middle College Staff Selection

- The principal should be the first staff member selected.
  - Position much like a symphony conductor.
  - Must possess a clear sense of purpose.
  - Be able to confront irresponsible behavior.
  - Must remain firm in pressing for a positive direction.
  - Must be able to work with the college staff.



# Staff Selection (cont.)

- Selecting highly talented staff members is essential to program's success.
- Must select staff who are empathetic listeners, have high expectations for students and adults, and are facilitators of student learning.



# Staff Selection (cont.)

- Use a uniform interview technique that ask the same questions to all teachers.
- Provide a Middle College program of 125 students with a principal, one secretary, a counselor, and seven high school teachers.



# Middle College High School Student Selection

- The college-based program is for students who have become disengaged from the learning process in their high school.
- These students' grades and interest in schools remained strong until the early adolescence, and then begin declining rapidly.



# Student Selection (cont.)

- While very bright, some do not attend school regularly, will not participate in classes they find uninteresting, and do not participate in any extracurricular activity.
- The program is not for everyone.
- Middle College students must be interested in turning their academic careers around.



# Student Selection (cont.)

- The Graduate Equivalent Degree Program might better serve high school seniors who need a significant number of credits to graduate.
- Middle College Students must be willing to accept responsibility for their social as well as their academic behavior on the college campus.



# Student Selection (cont.)

- Students that will not abide by college rules will be sent back to their home schools.
- Students must apply for and meet admission requirements of the program.
- Teachers, counselors, or high school principals may nominate students.



# Student Selection (cont.)

- Acceptance is not automatic.
- The student's past academic and social performance, personal references, and interview data are all considered.
- We look for dropping grades, falling attendance, and nonparticipation in school activities.



# Student Selection (cont.)

- An interview is held with each student and his or her parent or guardian.
- Questions are asked to determine what factors created the largest amount of stress in the student's academic and personal life.
- Students accepted into the program and their parents must sign contracts agreeing to expected levels of effort and compliance with rules and regulations.



# The Power of The College Campus

- A local college campus is more than the physical location of a Middle College program.
- The Power of the Campus is the “magical bridge” that reconnects disengaged high school students to learning.
- The college campus creates a sense of community to help Middle College students feel like they belong.



# Power of the Campus (cont.)

- Middle College students feel like college students while they complete their high school education.
- Core high school courses are taught by carefully selected “second chance” high school teachers.
- Middle College students have access to all college facilities.



# Power of the Campus (cont.)

- Eligible Middle College students can take dual enrollment college courses for both high school and college credit.
- The district pays for the tuition.
- Older college students exert a great deal of moral pressure on Middle College students to fit in and become responsible members of the college family.



# Power of the Campus (cont.)

- College students are usually more accepting than traditional high school students of students who dress or look differently.
- Middle College students cannot go into college dormitories.



# Power of the Campus (cont.)

- The Power of the Campus helps Middle College students see the relationship between schooling and their future.
- Attending a local college motivates students to complete their high school degree and enter college.
- Many Middle College students will continue their education at the host college.



# Q&A

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