

NDPS Certification Program Field Project Report

Parent and Community Outreach Program
“Tiger Tours” McLaurin High School
130 Tiger Drive
Florence, MS

J. Scott Rimes, PhD
Principal
(601) 845-4137
srimes@rcsd.ms

Key words: parent engagement, community involvement, building relationships

Student Advocate/Administrative Specialist Project

Funding Source

Local Funds and Private Donations

Project Cost and Budget Narrative

The project costs were very minimal. Refreshments and door prizes were provided by our local school budget or private donors. I would estimate \$2,500.00 covered the entire program.s

Scope and Setting

“Tiger Tours” has grown out of the struggle we have in getting our parents and community to come into our school. We understand that family engagement has a huge effect on dropout rate. In an effort to better connect to our community, the leadership teams at McLaurin High School and McLaurin Elementary have decided to provide a road show called “Tiger Tours.” The purpose of this project is to give our school teams the ability to put eyes on our community and tell our story. We will give our parent and community members an opportunity to see the great things we have to offer without them necessarily having to come to our campus. Additionally, we want to be able to meet our community, build personal relationships, and, in turn, make a positive impact on their attitudes and beliefs in our school. We feel strongly that if we can meet them personally and build a relationship with them, we will begin to strengthen our message that an education is important and with their help we can ensure our children’s success.

We began by choosing six areas around our school zone that allow us to reach our entire school community. We set dates and times of our events based on availability of the venues and convenience for the target group. We do not have a town setting so we are limited to church reception halls and possibly local area fire stations.

We will keep the meeting times short and be very intentional with our delivery. We will focus our message on four components with relationships, attendance, retention, student performance, and support embedded in our presentation. First, we want to share data points about our school and our students. Second, we want to share our course offering choices such as our AP and dual college credit options along with scholarship availability. In addition, we want to share the sports, activities and clubs we have to offer at McLaurin High and McLaurin Elementary. We believe keeping our students involved will vastly improve their success. Finally, we want to share strategies we feel the parents and community could use to help their students in school and, most importantly, graduate ready for college or a career.

We are trying to rebuild our school’s reputation and trust within the community. At the same time, we will give some pointers on how the community can help us build a success from grades Pre-K to 12. We want to tell our story and let the good people in our school community know what it means to “Live Green and Love Gold”!

Staffing Pattern

The program staff will include the principal, counselors, instructional staff, athletic director, coaches, and any other teachers or staff that would like to be a part of the tour. Most staff members will not be on contract, and the meetings will be held in the evening hours. We will include members from both our elementary and high school staff. We have set up the meetings and coordinated accommodations with the host sites. We will count on the local churches and the few businesses in our school zone to communicate the dates and times to their parishioners and customers.

Population Served

We will serve the local school community including parents, community members, and business leaders. Our hope is to get those members of our community, which may be disconnected from our school, back on board. We know it takes a village to raise a child and we would like to reconnect with that population as well as the current parent group.

Project Origination

“Tiger Tours” is in its initial stages but our goal is to make this an annual event.

Issues Addressed

- Retention of students
- Parent and community relationship
- Community trust in school
- Importance of completing the educational process and graduating
- Improved literacy

Desired Outcomes and Measurable Objectives

- Decreased retention/increased promotion from Pre-K to 12 grades
- Improved academic success of all students
- Improved graduation rates
- Decrease in discipline referrals
- Increase in Daily Attendance

Strategies and/or Interventions

- Utilization of community resources/building community support
- Professional development for teachers and staff on how to handle wounded students and recognize those behaviors
- Professional development for teachers and staff on “Speaking with Parents”
- School District Family Resource Center
- Partnership with churches for possible donated supplies
- Renewed partnership between the elementary school and our high school
- Access to the school counselor
- Exceptional parenting support group atmosphere
- Participant growth among students in our academic, athletic, and school activity offerings
- Rebuild trust and positive perception of our school within the community
- Build membership within our PTSO

Project Timeline

The program will begin in July and be completed in August. It will consist of six sessions. We will make it an annual event.

Special Conditions and/or Expertise Required to Carry Out the Project

There is no specific expertise or certification needed to complete the project.

Outcomes and Achievements

With the success of this program, we are expecting to improve our overall school culture and climate. We are anticipating a much better parent-teacher relationship and a stronger community presence at our school. This will ensure our students overall success.

Outcomes Related to School Completion and Graduation Rates

Same as above.

Current Status of Project

Ongoing

Role in Project as a NDPS Certification Program Participant

I am the building principal for McLaurin High School. We house approximately 560 students from 7-12 grades.

Lessons Learned

I know that we cannot ensure the success of our students without the support of our parents and community. We are expecting this project to be a difference maker for our school zone.

Advice for Dropout Prevention Practitioners About the Project

This project is doing the opposite of “what is not working”. We are having trouble getting parents and community members to our campus so we will bring our campus to them. We need better behavior, more graduates, and better student performance. We are going after a potential cause, family engagement. I would challenge you to look past the behavior or the symptom and look more toward the problem or the cause.

Get a platform and TELL YOUR STORY! We are all in the business of helping other people. This experience will help engage our community so that they can help each other and contribute to making their school the very BEST.