

NDPS Certification Program Field Project Report

**Orangeburg Consolidated School District Five
Evening Middle and High School Program**

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Orangeburg Consolidated School District Five Evening Middle and High School Program

Funding Sources:

Funds are provided by Orangeburg Consolidated School District Five.

Project Cost and Budget Narrative

The OCSD5 Evening Program is managed primarily through funding from Orangeburg Consolidated School District Five. These funds provide the following:

- Odysseyware Online Software Program and training
- 4 content area teachers, 1 guidance counselor, 1 special education teacher and 1 teacher assistant
- laptop computers
- teacher instructional supplies
- student materials
- snacks for students
- funds for parent nights

Scope and Sequence

The Orangeburg Consolidated School District Five (OCSD5) Middle and High School Evening Program supports the district's mission in providing effective teaching and learning through equitable, high expectations and digital learning environments to ensure academic success for all students through collaborative partnerships. Students are given the opportunity to be successful in a conducive learning environment that meets their needs beyond what the traditional school setting offers.

The OCSD5 Evening Program serves 6th and 7th grade middle school students who have been retained one or more years in school and high school dropout students in the district. It is not alternative academic settings for students with chronic discipline problems. This program offers a unique learning environment that allows students to take online courses with support from certified instructors. The evening program fosters student success through personalized learning in a flexible learning environment. Students complete initial and credit recovery courses on the Odysseyware Online Software Program. These credits count toward fulfilling the requirements to obtain a South Carolina high school diploma.

The OCSD5 Evening Program is located at The Technology Center in Orangeburg, South Carolina. Classes are held Mondays through Thursdays from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Certified teachers provide individualized content-based assistance to students. A certified guidance counselor provides personal/social, academic and career guidance to students in the evening program. A special education teacher and teacher assistant also provide services to students who have individualized education plans (IEPs).

Staffing Pattern

The following are staff members of the OCSD5 Evening Middle and High School Programs:

Dropout Prevention Coordinator
Guidance Counselor
English Language Arts Teacher
Mathematics Teacher
Science Teacher
Social Studies Teacher
Special Education Teacher
Teacher Assistant

Population Served

OCSD5 Evening Middle School Program is for 6th and 7th grade over-age students who are interested in accelerating to their appropriate grade level. Students can take online courses in the evening program in addition to attending their home school during normal school hours. The evening program serves about 50 students each year.

OCSD5 Evening High School Program is for 15-20 year-old dropout students who are interested in a non-traditional educational setting and meet the enrollment criteria. Students may have extenuating circumstances that require them to have an alternative learning environment. Students can earn initial credits or recover credits.

All middle school students who are served in the OCSD5 Evening Program must be currently enrolled in Orangeburg Consolidated School Five. Also, this program serves high school students who have dropped out of OCSD5 within the current or previous academic school year.

Project Origination

Orangeburg Consolidated School District Five saw the need to address a population of high dropout students who needed an alternative setting to complete their high school requirements. This setting also gives middle school students an opportunity to advance to their appropriate grade level. There were students who had extenuating circumstances who needed the opportunity to be served, but the brick and mortar did not fit their academic needs. During the 2014-15 school year, the evening program started with its first group of students. These students were identified through the use of district data that included a list of dropout students and over-age middle school students.

Issues Addressed

- Need for smaller environment
- Social and emotional support
- Lack of motivation
- Academic support for teenage mothers
- Excessive absences and truancy
- Graduation rate
- Dropout rate

Desired Outcomes and Measurable Objectives

The desired outcome was to decrease the dropout rate in the OCSD5. It was also the district's desire to increase the graduation rate. The ultimate objective was to encourage dropout students to reenter school and attain their high school diploma. In addressing middle school students, the objective was to get them back on track to prevent them from becoming dropout students in the future.

Results (Outcomes and Achievements)

District Dropout Rate			
2012	2013	2014	2015
2.2%	1.8%	1.6%	1.9%

District Four-Year Graduation Rate			
2012	2013	2014	2015
73.5%	71.7%	72.0%	80.4%

District Five-Year Graduation Rate			
2012	2013	2014	2015
70.6%	74.6%	72.8%	72.7%

Strategies and/or Interventions

Students in the evening program were identified during the summer and at the beginning of each new academic school year. The high school students who did not re-enroll were identified in PowerSchool. In 2013 through 2016, the district annually hosted the "Reach Out for Dropouts Walk" to invite dropout students to return to school on a Saturday morning. The district's faculty and staff along with community members knocked on doors and gave students the opportunity to re-enroll on that day. Guidance counselors were at the high school to complete the registration process of re-enrollment. These students had the option of returning to the traditional school setting or enrolling in the OCSD5 Evening Program. This event was planned and executed by the OCSD5 Dropout Prevention Coordinator.

Middle school 6th and 7th grade students who had been retained one or more years were identified by the district data coordinator at the beginning of each school year. Students were also referred by their middle school guidance counselors. These students had the opportunity to attend the OCSD5 Evening Program to complete courses to help them accelerate to their appropriate grade level.

The OCSD5 Evening Program uses Odysseyware Online Learning Program, which is aligned with South Carolina Standards. This platform allows students to have access to their courses 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It gives students the flexibility to complete their online courses independently and at their own pace. During evening program hours, the teachers serve as facilitators and provide direct instruction when students need individual assistance with their coursework. Odysseyware provides students with the capability to receive assistance from their teachers within the online program as well.

Tutors are available to assist students with their coursework in the evening program. Local universities require their students to complete volunteer hours in the Orangeburg community. South Carolina State University and Claflin University students offer one-on-one assistance to our middle and high school students in the evening program. This benefits our students in two ways. Students can be served by their peers. Students can also see the tutors as role models to encourage them to finish high school and continue their education by going to college.

Guest speakers are invited to the evening program to encourage students in a myriad of ways. Some speakers share their stories of adversity and how they persevered. Others offer their expertise about their careers or educational background experiences.

Parent nights are held to offer support to parents in helping to meet the educational needs of their children. Activities are also planned for parents and students, such as information sessions with community organizations, vision board night, and guest speakers for parents. Parents are given updates on student progress and can communicate with teachers about it.

A summer blitz is held during the month of June to allow students the opportunity to continue courses during the summer. Students can attend classes from 9 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Students always have access to their classes on Odysseyware beyond the hours on school campus.

The evening program has additional support from the following organizations in the Orangeburg community:

- Orangeburg County Mental Health
- Department of Juvenile Justice
- South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department
- OCSD5 Volunteers in Public Schools Program
- Tutors/Mentors from South Carolina State University and Claflin University
- Go to High School, Go to College Group by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated
- OCSD5 MAPPS
- Speakers from local businesses, colleges, and faith-based organizations

Project Timeline

The OCSD5 Evening Program began in 2013 and is presently ongoing.

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

- Odysseyware training is required for all evening program teachers.
- Students must have access to the internet as well as an electronic device to be able to work outside of school beyond the evening class hours.
- Parents or students must provide their own transportation to The Technology Center for the evening program.

Outcomes Related to School Completion, Dropout Prevention, and/or Graduation Rates

Middle school students, who participate in the program and complete the evening program requirements, benefit by advancing to their appropriate grade level. Upon completion of the

program, sixth grade students are promoted to 8th grade and 7th grade students are promoted to 9th grade.

High school students who complete their courses in the evening program and meet all graduation requirements are able to graduate. These students have the option of participating in the graduation ceremony at their home high school.

Current Status of Project

The program is currently in progress and will conclude for the year at the end of the summer blitz in June. The evening program will resume in August for the new academic year.

Role in Project as a NDPS Certification Program Participant

As the OCSD5 Dropout Prevention Coordinator, it is my responsibility to coordinate the operation of the evening program. I hire and supervise the teachers for the program. I provide professional development training on Odysseyware for the teachers as well. I collaborate with the district data coordinator, school principals, guidance counselors, and the college access coordinator for referrals of middle and high school students whose academic needs may be met in the evening program. I also collaborate with community organizations and stakeholders to provide wrap-around and other services for our students. I am responsible for managing the evening program budget. I plan all meetings with the evening program staff, parents and students. I also attend meetings throughout the district to help address the needs of at-risk students who may become dropout students.

Lessons Learned

The OCSD5 Evening program provides unique opportunities for students in the district. There will always be barriers that may prevent some students from being successful. One barrier is that students must provide their own transportation to the evening program. Also, some students may not have internet at home or devices to work online at home. Some of these barriers are out of our control. In the meantime, we must find creative ways to meet the needs of all of our dropouts and potential dropout students. The ultimate goal is for them to graduate from high school.

Advice for Dropout Prevention Practitioners about the Project

- Hire teachers who are passionate about helping at-risk students and are willing to assist students beyond the normal school hours.
- It is important to build a relationship with students and consistently provide them with positive feedback.
- Although students are provided an alternative to the traditional education, high expectations are still necessary.
- Create partnerships with local colleges/universities, community organizations and businesses offer additional support for students in the program.
- Establishing a culture for student success within the program is vital, even when negative outside factors exist that are beyond control.