

**Success High School**

**Jerome Thompson  
Attendance Officer  
1003 West Cannon  
Fort Worth, Texas.  
817-815-8561**

**[Jerome.thompson@fwisd.org](mailto:Jerome.thompson@fwisd.org)**

**<https://www.fwisd.org/SuccessHighSchool>**

***Key words:*** Alternative program, accelerated program, attendance recovery

**Funding Sources:**

Success High School is part of the Texas public school district, therefore, it gets a certain amount of funding for each student, like other public schools. Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD) receives money from two primary sources: their local property taxes and the state. Also, Success High School receives School Improvement Grants (SIG) and Title 1 funds.

**Project Cost and Budget Narrative:**

Success High School is funded as part of the FWISD public system and receives an estimated \$135,000 from Title 1 and SIG, collectively. Success High School employs 19 full-time teachers and professional staff and five part-time employees. The school is located inside a large FWISD traditional high school and currently requires little to no additional cost for building maintenance.

**Project Description:**

Most students enrolling in the Success High School equivalency program are from traditional high schools and identified as overaged and under-credited. Success High School provides an accelerated program that is customized to meet each student's needs and typically includes credit recovery and attendance recovery. The students' classes are set up similar to traditional schools, but the number of students per class is much smaller and includes computer-based courses.

Eligible students must be at least 16 years old, at risk of dropping out, two years elapsed since they enrolled in the ninth grade, and deficient in the number of credits attained. The program offers four 9-week quarters. Students who enroll can attend until the age of 21. Upon completion of their graduation requirements, students participate in the graduation ceremony.

**Staffing Pattern:**

Success High School has 19 full-time professional positions that include one principal, one assistant principal, and two-parent outreach workers. There are also five part-time teachers that include one intervention worker. There is a social worker available from the district on an as needed basis. Classes are offered as required by the state of Texas to meet graduation requirements.

**Population Served:**

There are 230 students enrolled at Success High School. 121 attend the day program and 109 are enrolled in the night program. The students in the day program are identified as intermediate-level English speakers and are between the ages of 17 and 21. The students enrolled in the night program come from traditional high schools and must be at least 16 years of age and have been two years removed from their first year of high school and behind in credit. The program offers four 9-week quarters; the requirement for graduation is according to state requirements mirroring that of traditional schools. The day program has students from all countries of the world. Among the 109 female and 121 male students, demographics for the night program are as follows:

- 25% African American,
- 65% Hispanic,
- 3% White,
- 7% Other

**Project Origination:**

The school was created in the mid-1990s by the FWISD board to address the city's need to deal with students dropping out of high school because their traditional school hours and setting were not meeting their needs. The committee identified staff to create a night program that would prevent and recover dropout prone students. Full and part-time teachers from the traditional school setting were used to staff the program. Success program is a High School Equivalency Program established through the application process developed by the Texas Education Agency. The school at that time was offering a GED program and high school diploma.

**Issues Addressed:**

The concern was that students who had to work, had children, and were not succeeding in the traditional setting had limited choices if they wanted to remain in the FWISD. Also, the FWISD was losing students who were not successful in the conventional school environment and other FWISD options were limited.

**Desired Outcomes and Measurable Objectives:**

- Getting students to know precisely when they will graduate
- Getting students to concentrate on completing each 9-week quarter
- Enrolling dropout prone students from the traditional school
- Have students prioritize good attendance and work towards their long-term goal of graduation
- Improved coursework completion and attendance
- Long-term, provide a program in which students can graduate sooner than they would having remained enrolled in traditional setting

**Strategies and/or Interventions of the Project:**

- Students are responsible for keeping up with their credits and graduation dates.
- Students should contact staff members for attendance and grade issues.
- Incentives used for good attendance
- Conduct meetings with students and parent regarding grade and attendance
- Recalculate progress as needed.

**Results (Outcomes and Achievements):**

Success High School graduates between 50 to 100 students yearly that would have otherwise drop out of school or not return to finish. That is how they measure success.

**Project Timeline:**

Success HS operates on 9-week quarters allowing students to see results of their efforts faster and assuring a quicker feeling of accomplishment. Campus staff meet weekly to discuss student attendance and any other related issues. Quarterly meetings are held with seniors to ensure graduation credits are understood and to revisit anticipated graduation dates. Students who finish at the end of a quarter meet with the counselor and principal for credit review and final signature of forms. The graduation ceremony is held during the first week of June.

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

Every quarter there are students that complete graduation requirements and are eligible to attend the graduation ceremony in June, but the school yearly dropout rate remains higher than the traditional school average. Getting students to attend classes regularly remains challenging. But considering these students are either dropout prone or recovered dropout, the outcome is encouraging. The students that enroll in the program are second and third chance students, and the chance of graduation from their traditional setting was meager.

**Special Conditions, Expertise, and/or Skills Required to Carry Out Project:**

- Administrative staff (principal and assistant principal) to oversee the program
- Parent outreach workers to serve at-risk students and families
- Teachers knowledgeable of the needs of at-risk students
- Intervention worker to provide needs specific to at-risk students

**Current Status of Project:**

The program is on-going and enrolling students every nine weeks, which includes an orientation introducing

staff and going over expectations.

**Role in Project as a NDPS Certification Program Participant:**

I am an Attendance Officer for the FWISD, and Success High School is one of the schools to which I provide support. Before accepting the position in 2002, I worked at the Success Program as an Outreach Worker responsible for recovering dropout students and preventing dropout prone students from dropping out again. I held that position for three years.

**Lessons Learned:**

I learned from the project that relationships, flexibility, student background knowledge, staff training, clearly defined student and teacher expectation, untraditional culture, and patience are key to keeping students engaged.

**Advice for Dropout Prevention Practitioners about the Project:**

Remember the importance of building positive relationships with students while understanding their backgrounds and maintaining clear expectations. Always remain patient in your work.