SURVIVAL SKILLS ACTIVITY DAY

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Funding Sources:
Title 1 school, National Endowment for Financial Education, general/discretionary funds and donations: House of Hope, City of Stuart, Martin County School District, Educational Foundation

Project Cost and Budget Narrative:
Depending on the program, there was little to no cost due to finding either free or donated resources**.**

Project Description:
**Explained in Project Origination below

Staffing Pattern:
Staff members, including paraprofessionals and custodians, chose groups to lead/assist, based on their own experience and talents.

- Rob Adriel (ESE teacher, self-contained unit) & Joselyn Rohrscheib (Social Studies teacher)--Financial Literacy
- Larry Sweazey (Science teacher) & Brian Quinn (IPS Coach)--Automotive Inspection
- Sara Dwyer (Intensive Reading specialist) & Liz Wrocklage (English teacher)--Literacy Activism
- Kris Neller (Guidance Counselor) & Glenn Talbott (Math teacher)--Entrepreneur/Career
- Rebecca Conti (ESE teacher), Jill Figgiani (ESE support), Sonia Frehafer (ELL Paraprofessional), and Bonnie Cooke (Head Custodian)--Green Initiative
- Elaine Kaufman (Dean of Students & Middle School Math teacher) & Kim Parenteau (Paraprofessional) maintained the student list of interest and group members and support for students who needed or wanted an alternative work space instead of participating with the group.

Population Served:

NUMBER OF STUDENTS	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	ELL	ESE	Mental Health Support
Approx 100+/- Enrolled (Served 250+ over the year)	50%	10%	40%	21%	20%	35%

Project Origination: On a traditional middle or high school campus, there are a variety of activities students may participate in to make connections with their peers, staff, and the surrounding communities. Since we are a non-traditional online campus and our population is in a near-constant state of transition for a variety of factors, we have been unable to support any sports, clubs, or other extracurricular to provide those much-needed personal bonds.

We have new students enroll every week; we have students leave because they have completed their academic and/or behavioral requirements to go back to their "home" school, graduate, enroll in other programs, or move out of the county; we also serve students from the entire

county (consisting of five middle schools, three high schools, and several other programs), grades 6-12. The majority of our students come to us with a history of multiple barriers including, but not limited to, the areas of: academic; socioeconomic; language; attendance; lack of family and/or community support.

However, we have seen a growing need for connecting with our students beyond the traditional/online classroom structure, as well as for them to forge positive relationships with the local community. Making the necessary changes on our campus to address this need was reinforced for us after attending the NDPC conference in June and our on-site training in August. We decided that this would be the year to lay the foundation for a program we believe can sustain and grow, with minimal added work for staff.
We brainstormed ways we could form (and then build upon) these types of bonds, despite our population fluctuation. We first looked at what we were already doing that was working:

- working with organizations such as Project Lift, Career Source, and/or Job Corps to place students locally
- Sara Dwyer and Rob Adriel resurrected a previous service learning project where our students read and play with the children attending daycare at the Gertrude Walden Center, which sits on a corner adjacent to our school.
- After observing what a positive impact these experiences were having on our students, the staff brainstormed how we could create a similar positive learning experience for all students, starting with the resources we already had on hand: ourselves.

We found in our discussion that when students saw us as not just instructors but as "real people" who are willing to share useful life experiences and strategies, they were obviously more willing to engage.

Issues Addressed:
Initially, it was an attempt to boost poor attendance on district-mandated early release days, as well as the weeks prior to extended breaks (Thanksgiving, Winter, and Spring). Eventually, we broadened it to make it at least once a month in order to provide a day for community building from within

Desired Outcomes and Measurable Objectives:
Build rapport with students, reduce behavior incidents, and increase attendance on early release days. After reviewing our discipline reports in RTIB – our monthly average number of students began to drop in September (2.65%) versus August (3.27%), October through February remained below 3%. Classroom referrals for 2019 were 76.56% versus 2020 were 74.35% for the same period. Hall transitions for periods – 2019: 1.62% and 2020: .36%; cafeteria – 2019: 5.36% and 2020: 4.22%. Even though these were not significant decreases, it shows that our transition periods where all students are participating is showing discipline incident reductions.

To support the district with an upward trend.
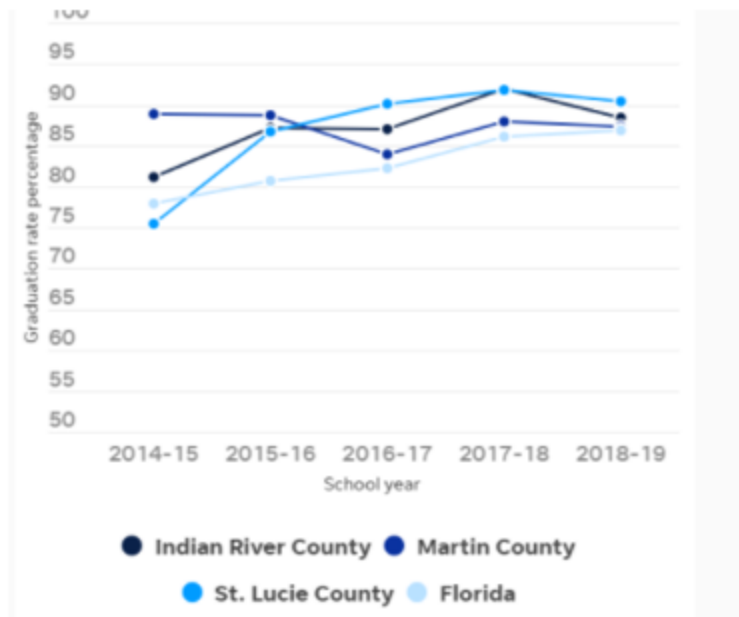
Strategies and/or Interventions of the Project:
- Provide students with valuable experiences and information beyond the standard curriculum.
- All students are eligible to participate, even students who recently had a discipline issue. During our survival skill day, there are no in-school suspensions or detentions served.

Results (Outcomes and Achievements):
After reviewing our discipline reports in RTIB – our monthly average number of students began to drop in September (2.65%) versus August (3.27%), October through February remained below 3%. Classroom referrals for 2019 were 76.56% versus 2020 were 74.35% for the same period. Hall transitions for periods – 2019: 1.62% and 2020: .36%; cafeteria – 2019: 5.36% and 2020: 4.22%. Even though these were not significant decreases, it shows that our transition periods where all students are participating is showing discipline incident reductions.

Project Timeline:

 5 Early Release days (9.25.19; 10.31.19; 1.29.20; 2.26.20; 5.6.20) as well as the week before Thanksgiving Break, Winter Break, Spring Break and/or a day in April.

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

Year	Potential graduates enrolled	Early Grads	Grads	Positive data for cohort	Negative data for cohort	Percentage
2018-2019	39	4	25	30	9	77%
2019-2020	47	7	28	39	8	83%

Special Conditions, Expertise, and/or Skills Required to Carry Out Project:
We utilized the skills and passions of staff members to form interest groups.

Current Status of Project:
In process—we will be in collaboration for revising, expanding, and improving the program for next year.

Role in Project as a NDPS Certification Program Participant:
Maintained the student list of interest and group members, support for students who wanted or needed an alternative workspace instead of participating with the group.

Lessons Learned:
Keep the lessons relevant and inclusive to the students, if not there won't be much excitement toward the goal of keeping them in school. Include them in the process of building a project from the beginning, helps them to take ownership and keeps them motivated. We included the application/permission slips for our service learning projects in our registration packet, so we didn't miss any new incoming students.

Advice for Dropout Prevention Practitioners about the Project:
Document and record so you have lots of evidence (pictures, videos, interview notes, etc.). It will make it a lot easier for completing project reports. Have one/two people responsible for giving a brief outline of the types of projects the student can engage in. The more engaged the students are in the projects the better your results.