

Grand River Academy Student Re-Engagement Program

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Funding Sources:

The SRP (Student Re-Engagement Program) is funded by the Student Re-Engagement Grant (SRG) from the state of Colorado.

Project Cost and Budget Narrative:

The cost includes a fully funded teacher (Success Coach) and paraprofessional including computers and tools for online tutoring like headphones, headphones with mics, wireless touchpads, and stylizes.

Project Description:

The SRP is a program created to help with Grand River Academy's attendance issues which at the time was over 50% of the population. Because of attendance issues, GRA received funding through the Student Re-engagement Grant (SRG) which provided a Success Coach and a Learning Lab with a Learning Lab Tutor. The Success Coach attempts to re-engage students that teachers, progress monitors, counselors, administration, and truancy were unable to engage after extensive interventions. The Success Coach removes barriers for students and families by doing one-on-one interventions. Interventions include:

- Success Plans
- goal setting
- SEL lessons
- anti-anxiety lessons with steps
- modifying class loads
- tutoring, check-ins
- home visits
- onsite daycare for young parents
- onsite mentoring of elementary students
- helping the families with resources with community connections.

The Learning Lab provides a safe place for students when being home alone is not. The lab has reliable internet and functioning Chromebooks, and students can get away from home distractions like Netflix, video games, and siblings. It is a place where students can get help with classwork, learn notetaking and study skills. The Learning Lab Tutor has a SPED license which makes her very effective at breaking concepts down for students, creating goals and helping students meet those goals. She also has a science degree and often students come to her for extra help in math and science along with other subjects. The Learning Lab functions as the school's library and is a place that students can come to work on group projects or meet friends to work and socialize. Many students at GRA are dealing with anxiety and depression and having a safe place to learn and socialize with peers is important to not only their academic achievement, but their mental health.

Staffing Patterns:

The program includes the Success Coach (FTE) and a Learning Lab Tutor or paraprofessional. The program requires support and collaboration from the Student Support Team that includes the principal, counselors, progress monitors, and the Key Performance Teacher. The program also requires collaboration with the elementary teachers to run the Mentor Program.

Population Served:

6th-12th grade students that have major attendance issues. They are often at-risk youth that have many struggles including mental health.

Project Origination:

The SRP is a program created to help with GRA's attendance issues. Often students in an online school, even with a blended model of one day a week, become disengaged from schooling due to many different issues including mental health. At the time, over 50% of the students were behind 5 or more lessons in Odysseyware, (online platform), and the Progress Monitor struggled to help all the students. Because of these issues, GRA received funding through the Student Re-engagement Grant (SRG) which provided a Success Coach and a Learning Lab, and the SRP was created.

Issues Addressed:

Low or no attendance is addressed by helping the student with whatever the barrier may be to their education. These issues may include everything from needing tutoring, community resources, a quiet space to work, a different graduation path, health issues, mental illness, anxiety and depression, transportation, young parents, helping with younger siblings, or lack of motivation.

Desired Outcomes and Measurable Objectives:

- Goal 1: Students participating in the SRP will demonstrate improvement in academic achievement. Objective: By 2021-22 60 percent of students served with a Re-engagement Coordinator or Success Coach will go from not being on track to being on track to graduate high school or complete their high school credential.
- Goal 2: Students participating in the SRP will show gains in school engagement. Objective: By 2021-22, 40 percent of students served with a Re-engagement Coordinator or Success Coach will increase their school attendance.
- Goal 3: Students participating in the SRP will be re-engaged successfully. By 2021-22, 40% of students served with a Re-engagement Coordinator who were out-of-school or disengaged, will re-enroll, or re-engage and remain enrolled and/or engaged through the end of the year.

Strategies and/or Interventions of the Project:

The strategies that are used intensively are Family Engagement, Mentoring and Tutoring, Personalized Learning, and Safe Learning Environment.

The Family Engagement strategies are used in the forms of creating Success Plans with families, sending weekly progress reports, communicating weekly or every other week (depending on need), doing home visits, and helping families with resources. The Success Coach reaches out to the community or finds resources in D51 to remove barriers that prevent the student from being successful in school. Examples of this include working with FAP to get students mental health services or having a guitar and lessons donated to a student that struggles with mental health and is low income. Whatever the need, the Success Coach finds a solution.

Mentoring and Tutoring is utilized by the Success Coach, Learning Lab Tutor, and the Mentor an Elementary Student program. The Success Coach schedules weekly one-to-one meetings with her students to create goals, receive tutoring, check-ins, and receive help with other SEL strategies like dealing with anxiety, help with executive functions, goal setting, and dealing with procrastination. The Learning Lab Tutor provides tutoring for all GRA's students in all subjects, and she specializes in Math and Science which many students struggle with learning. The Mentor an Elementary Student is a program started by the Success Coach where SRP students help in the elementary classroom. Students become more engaged with their own learning when they can help younger students with their learning.

For Personalized Learning, all the SRP students have a Success Plan. In this plan, the family, student, and Success Coach create a plan for the student to re-engage with his or her schoolwork. This plan can also include preparing the student to switch into KPP (Key Performance Program) which is a proficiency-based program and diploma with a lot of choice or modifying the amount of work, so students can earn credit and see some success. It may include tutoring or job shadowing for students to experience a future career or a transition plan to get their GED in coordination with the Mesa County Workforce Center. The Success Plan depends on individual student wants and needs.

The Safe Learning Environment strategy is necessary for the success of GRA. GRA has many high anxiety students. Many of the students that come to GRA have had issues with being a target to a bully, or they have suffered some other form of trauma. GRA has a very positive and inclusive value system that is posted on many of the walls for all to see, but some students have such high anxiety that other interventions need to be utilized. The Success Coach will do anti-anxiety education and create plans where the student has a safe space and is slowly integrated back into the classroom.

Results (Outcomes and Achievements):

- Goal 1- 61 students out of 132 (46%) that remained in the program and have data are on-track to graduate before the age of 21, have graduated or are in the process of earning a GED. This is considered partially proficient as it does not meet the 60% goal listed above.
- Goal 2- 63 students out of 132 (48%) that remained in the program and have data have increased attendance. This is considered proficient or exceeded the goal as it is above the 40% goal listed above.
- Goal 3- 57 students out of 132 (43%) that remained in the program and have data and were previously dropped or had not progressed or attended school in over a month, re-engaged with school. This is considered proficient or exceeded the goal as it is above the 40% goal listed above.

Project Timeline:

The SRP lasted 3 years but would have been ongoing if funding existed. The program has 1-year cycles where students transition out at the end of the year, and into the program as they are referred by the Progress Monitors throughout the year.

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

The Success Coach has helped 185 students in 2 ½ years. Of those 185 students, 45 transferred to other programs, 8 are new with little data, and 63 increased attendance, earned credits, or have graduated or earned a GED. 61 are on-track to graduate before they turn 21 or have graduated, and 57 students previously dropped or had not progressed or attended school in over a month, re-engaged with school.

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

To tutor in all the different subjects, it requires at least two people or one that has a background in math and English. The program was created from nothing, so the ability to learn about different methods of re-engagement and local programs is necessary. People running this program must value strong relationships with families and students and must be flexible to meet the needs of those families.

Current Status of Project:

The SRP is currently in its last year of a 3-year grant. GRA reapplied for funding, but the grant renewal was denied. The students are transitioning out of the program, and the Learning Lab will have a 1 day a week option operated by teachers.

Role in Project as a NDPS Certification Program Participant:

As the SRP coordinator and Success Coach, I was able to create the program into what it is. I do everything in the program, but only cover the Learning Lab when the Learning Lab tutor is gone. Please refer to the Project Description.

Lessons Learned:

A program takes about 2-3 years to become established, and stakeholders must know what the goals, interventions, and outcomes are. A program cannot be successful if the administration is not supporting it, either. Community involvement is important, but COVID put many restrictions on bringing in volunteers. If SRP had 3 more years, community involvement would be a large part of the program.

Advice for Dropout Prevention Practitioners about the Project:

The most important impact on attendance is building relationships with students and their families. It is important to be consistent and continue to try to build relationships even when there is little or no response. The biggest impact our program had was with the students that had the most contact from me or help with their classes via tutoring through me or the Learning Lab Tutor.