

Makin' Graduation Happen

Academic Success through
Portage Prep Program & Freshmen Transition Program

Background

- Where Connie comes from ...
- Where Terry comes from ...

Why do we care about these students?

- SES
- Home life
- Educational history - moving, etc.
- Transition to high school
- What was the need in Portage?

What are the different programs we have?

- Freshmen Transition
- Learning Lab
 - Staffed by regular education teacher
 - 10 students max
 - Meet daily
- Online options for both credit recovery and initial credit for required classes
 - Inadvertent mentoring by teacher
- PPP (Portage Prep Program)
- PAA (Portage Academy Of Achievement)

What do you need to make it happen?

Administrative support and buy-in

Recognizing the needs of at-risk students

Qualified staff to carry it out

Good working relationships with teachers, counselors, etc. - also need the buy in!

Educational resources: computers, credit recovery program, own classroom

Older students model what needs to be done



What didn't work?

- When a structured study hall was all we had...
- Students decided to go for a GED
- Used to have waiting list to get into Portage Academy of Achievement



Student Profile - who gets in?

- One or more years behind their age group in the number of high school credits attained
 - I have 13 juniors with 4 credits, 7 credits, 7.75, 8.5, 9. They should have at least 10.
- Two or more years behind their age group in basic skill levels
 - 16 juniors that did not have at least 1 math credit. Last year I had seniors with 1 or 0 English credits. I currently have 2 sophomores that do not have high enough skills to pass Algebra 1. They probably wouldn't qualify for special education.
- Habitual truants
- Adjudicated delinquents
- Parents



Selection process

- Teacher recommendation
- Credit deficient list
- Credit list: those with low English or math credits
- Student request
- Transfer students: homeschooled, were in an at-risk program at previous school
- All new PPP students meet with the Assistant Principal
- Voluntary. Students need to show a "want" to improve in order to get in

Roster

2016/2017

2017/2018

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 20 seniors all year• 2 seniors for 1 semester• 18 juniors all year• 4 juniors 1 semester• 2 sophomores 1 semester• 4 students doing math with me that are not in PPP• 1 senior tutored at the jail every other week for 6 months. He earned diploma on 4/27 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 25 seniors• 11 juniors• 9 sophomores• 3 with severe anxiety |
|---|--|

Portage Prep Program

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Syllabus• Daily point sheet• Get to know me interest inventory• Final exam prompts• 1- full time teacher• 1- 5.75 hour aide• 10-18 students per class period | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In September, all PPP students meet with counselors to review credits• Campus visit to Madison College• Lots of help given to students applying to colleges, for scholarships, jobs, etc.• Several students use the room as a safe place when anxiety attacks occur.• Rather than staying home, students come to school and sometimes stay with me all day instead of getting a truancy when having a bad day.• Collaborate with counselors 2-3x a week |
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PPP - Program Data

	# students S1/Year	1st semester credits earned	GPA S1	GPA S2	Cumulative GPA change
13/14	19/19	3.568	2.028	1.975	.178
14/15	31/37	2.80	1.617	1.805	.121
15/16	37/45	2.939	1.496	1.643	.126
16/17	38/47	4.02	2.137	2.137	.297
17/18	38/45	3.36	1.872		.218

**** 16/17 Algebra/Geometry class. Earned 2.0 credits

Students in for full school year make the most gains

Credit Recovery Options

1. E2020
 - a. Core classes
 - b. Health, P.E.
 - c. Electives: Sociology, Psychology, Employability Skills
2. Book work- AGS series, From School to Work
3. Essential skills/summative assignments
 - a. English
 - b. Social Studies
 - c. Some electives
4. Summer School
 - a. Essential skills
 - b. E2020

Why does it work?

- Building relationships
- Buy in
- Visibility
- Safety - emotionally, academically, physically

Where do they go?

- Back to full time regular classes - push them out of the nest
- Study hall on their own
- Consult only
- PAA



Freshmen Transition

- ACP Conferences - students care, parents care, but what next?
- Coming from student mentality of "middle school doesn't count"
- Opportunity for a fresh start - different climate, different staff
- Students known to struggle but resources only for upperclassmen
- 8th grade team (core teachers, counselor) identified
 - Need for a "school mom"
 - Organizational issues
 - Don't qualify for special ed OR intervention before referring
 - Multiple failures in classes
 - Attitude of defeat
 - Must attend school regularly & have minimal discipline concerns



Freshmen Transition: Who?

Initially looked at risk factors:

- Poor attendance
- Failing grades - multiple D/F
- Family crisis
- Referred to but did not qualify for special education
- Social/emotional/medical issues
- Free/reduced lunch
- Below average performance on assessments
- Discipline problems
- Drug & alcohol issues
- Criminal behavior
- Poor peer relationships
- Retained or considered for retention
- Significant credit deficiency



Freshmen Transition: Group Format

Meet 2 days/week (MTh group, TF group) - 25 min during study hall

Focus on

- Building "community" between student and staff as well as each other
- Skill building: how to study, how to organize, how to advocate for self/help, how to deal with stress and/or anxiety, how to prepare for tests
- "Case management" - consult with teachers, work on discipline, run interference on needs, counseling needs/issues
- Quiet time - less distraction in smaller group
- Reading and math skill building
- Parent connection
- Academic success in high school!



Freshmen Transition: Data

36 students identified

Ended up being bottom 1/3 of 8th grade class, regular ed students

GPA: range of 0.465-2.428 cumulative for grades 6-8; all but one with multiple F's

At start of school year, 2 transferred out, 2 had significant behavior concerns that would be addressed 1:1 ... yield of 32 students, 16 per group (10 girls, 22 boys)



Freshmen Transition: Group Time

Started with a survey - 1st group

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Z0JyJEaxEhSN1nGwneH76f6TJk4-uFPndUZhlofa00/edit>

Planned to meet for just the first quarter BUT

Developing routine is key

Grade checks, help with assignments, connecting with resources, FOLLOW UP

One meeting was a "chat with the principal"

Have activities ready for the "impossible" days



Freshmen Transition: Data

Of the 32 ...

- 12 transferred out between 4 and 9 weeks due to all passing grades (9 finished semester that way)
- 2 ended up coming to both groups because they both needed and wanted support
- 4 had ongoing attendance concerns affecting both program and their grades
- 3 additional students joined in along the way with mixed results ...
- Of the remaining 16, 7 had still had multiple F's (only 3 worse than MS)

Where do we want to go next?

For Freshmen Transition:

- Use first 4 weeks for building foundational skills; PLAN ON meeting up until winter break
- Build in additional instruction and support for mathematics and English in particular
- More focused efforts on "how to be a strong student"
- Regular feedback to parents and teachers of students in the group

Questions?

THANK YOU!!

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