

**SCHOOL:** Taylor High School

**PRINCIPAL:** Dr. Richard Klee

**DATE:** 5/7/2021

**NAME OF PROJECT:** Freshman Academy-Making Sophomores

**PROPOSAL SPOKESPERSON/PEOPLE:** Chris Burnett, Victoria Mach

**S.S.C MEMBERS**

**Richard Klee  
Ricardia Lewis  
Ian Warren  
Victoria Mach  
Rachel Zaback  
Damien Butler  
Kayla Flatt  
Kelly McCausland**

**S.I.T. MEMBERS**

**Chris Burnett  
Jennifer Louwers  
Victoria Mach  
Ian Warren  
Christin Dukes  
Phil Somerville  
Amanda Wood  
Christin Dukes  
Damien Butler  
Denaca Stabnick  
Jeannie Sanchez  
Tracy Carroll  
Ricardia Lewis**

## **PROPOSAL COMPONENTS** (Write no more than one page per component.)\*

### **Description of Program (Abstract)**

Freshman Academy is designed to strengthen the transition from middle school to high school, strengthen the academic and social/emotional skills needed for success and to ensure that freshmen successfully graduate within four years with the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in post secondary endeavors.

Across the nation, high school freshmen have the highest rates of failures, discipline referrals and truancy. Often called the "make it or break it" year, ninth grade can be a very difficult time for teenagers learning to navigate new territory while developing skills for success in high school and beyond. In the last two years, many of the traditional support systems have been disrupted and the need for a vigorous and pervasive system of support is greatly needed.

Taylor High School's Freshman Academy will create a system of support for the freshman students. Incoming Freshmen will be scheduled into teams with a group of core teachers, a Freshman Teacher Advisor, a possible Freshman Assistant Principal, and a possible Freshman Counselor who are able to plan together, share common expectations, and help students acquire the skills necessary to successfully navigate through this transition year. Students will still experience mainstream high school: taking core classes, elective classes, and Freshman Seminar (Griffin Hour) class. Freshmen will also be supported by a peer group entitled, "Link Crew" and other support services and systems.

Research shows the small-school within a school model works well in a school with high poverty rates and produces improvement in attendance rates, graduation rates, and school satisfaction and engagement.

### **Purpose**

Ninth-grade students begin their educational experience in a Freshman Academy to promote a systemic, effective, and positive transition from middle school to high school. The academy is designed to help students adjust to high school expectations, routines, and standards in a supportive, nurturing environment. The ninth-grade instructional program also includes a Freshman Seminar course (Griffin Hour) designed to equip students with the academic and social skills they will need to succeed in high school, and to motivate them through exploration of their individual talents and college-and-career awareness activities. This hour also provides several support elements:

- Time for work in Exact Path in math and ELA

- Time for work with credit recovery, if needed
- A place for developing a strong relationship with a adult in the building
- Academic and attendance check-ups
- Chances for students to seek out additional educational choices, if desired
- Time for class meetings, clubs, building level presentations, etc
- Tutoring by Link Crew or NHS students
- Positivity Project

The following data chart supports the need for the Taylor High School Freshman Academy. Three glaring outcomes include the high number of failing classes, attendance rates, and In-School and Out-of-School Suspensions (This data set is from 2018-2019-the last two years of data will be significantly different due to school closures and other disruptions):

#### **Academic Data:**

Students with one or more E's on their first semester report card-- not receiving credit in that class: 212/457--46%

#### **Attendance data:**

Students who have 10 or more absences in one or more classes: 210/457

#### **Student Discipline:**

Suspension data by month September 2018 -- March 2019:

Month	Year	Grade	Suspension Type	Number of Suspension	Total By Month
September	2018-2019	9	IS	5	<i>September</i>
	2018-2019	9	OS	20	25
October	2018-2019	9	IS	24	<i>October</i>
	2018-2019	9	OS	88	112
November	2018-2019	9	IS	1	<i>November</i>
	2018-2019	9	OS	38	39
December	2018-2019	9	IS	9	<i>December</i>
	2018-2019	9	OS	26	35
January	2018-2019	9	IS	1	<i>January</i>
	2018-2019	9	OS	13	14
February	2018-2019	9	IS	6	<i>February</i>



	2018-2019	9	OS	14	20
March	2018-2019	9	IS	9	March
	2018-2019	9	OS	11	20
			Total IS	55	
			Total OS	210	
			Total Suspensions	265	

### Data from 2020-2021:

1140 classes failed by freshmen in first semester of 2020-2021

Freshmen absent rate is 40% higher than any other class in the fall of 2020-2021

121 9th grade students with 10 or more absences fall of 2020-2021

### Plan of Implementation

- Schedule students in teams if possible—four core teachers and a Freshman Seminar (Griffin Hour) teacher. Place 30 LINK Crew Student Leaders with each team or appropriate ratio; Link crew will mentor or tutor at least once a week or as needed.
- The team consists of at least four core teachers/Freshman Seminar Teachers, and one Special Education Teacher, one Freshman Counselor (possible assignment), one Freshman Assistant Principal (possible assignment), and one Freshman Advisor if they are available. (Add a behavior interventionist to work with the Responsibility Room, if possible (formerly known as ISS).
- 9th grade team teachers may meet in teams, outside of school hours-at stipend rate- for one hour per week. Teachers may pick the day of the week and may choose virtual or in-person meetings. Records will have to be kept of meeting; stipend roster, similar to Title 1 tracker. Meetings may focus on lessons, behavior, student growth, or other student and teacher needs.
- Freshmen will have at least one college/work place visit during the school year.
- Parent involvement plan to include and inform Freshman Academy parents.
- Bi-weekly attendance check and grade check
- Student worksheet to be completed each week
- Possible Attendance incentive- 5 or fewer days and a C or better in class=option final exam
- Small milestone victories (PBIS): 10 days in a row no absence, no tardy; passing all classes each month; prizes for collecting trophies in Exact Patch, etc.

- Parent/student/teacher/administrator compact
- PD for staff: teaming, Griffin Hour, seminar curriculum, etc.

### **Educational Merit (Research/Best Practices)**

#### **Research Studies:**

Fulco, Christopher M. "The impact of a freshman academy small learning community on student achievement and engagement." (2009).

Mells, Brian J. *THE IMPACT OF A FRESHMAN ACADEMY IN AN URBAN HIGH SCHOOL SETTING*. Diss. Carson-Newman University, 2017.

Patterson, Nancy C., et al. "The making of sophomores: Student, parent, and teacher reactions in the context of systemic urban high school reform." *Urban Education* 42.2 (2007): 124-144.

Srofe, Tracy. "Freshman academy: Making the high school transition." (2009).

#### **Benefits of the Freshman Academy (and Griffin Hour) include:**

- Creating sophomores that are ready to succeed and grow
- Dedicated, caring teachers on a collaborative team
- Embedded professional peer support for students and staff
- Common planning that contributes to the success of students and staff
- Student interventions/incentives—MTSS model with Tiered supports-focused and planned time to implement interventions and support.
- Common expectations
- Engaging and relevant instructional lessons, moving towards Project-Based Learning and integrated curriculum
- Pure 9th grade cohort
- Griffin Hour-preserves classroom instruction and supports academic success.
- Early interventions to adjust small issues before they become major complications.
- Students recovering lost learning with Exact Path-improvement of grade level performance and actual grade level.
- Focused time for social/emotional support

## Evaluation Plan

The Freshman Academy will be evaluated based on the following:

- Student Achievement—GPA raising the average GPA
- Student Attendance-fewer students with more than 10 days and an absent rate that matches their peers-upperclassmen.
- Student Discipline-fewer long term suspensions, fewer numbers of suspensions, fewer repeat offenses.
- Improved graduation rate
- Improved student retention
- Number of students with reading and math scores at grade level
- Student Efficacy Survey
- Teacher Efficacy Survey
- Parent Survey



## **Staff Commitment**

- Weekly common Freshman Academy Core Team Meetings to discuss student progress—MTSS model—each team may meet on different days.
- Griffin Hour teacher will help coordinate MTSS, PBIS, and team needs.
- Admin, 9th grade advisor, teacher support for attendance and grade checks
- Working toward common expectations, grading, and lessons.
- Instructional coaches will support as needed.

## **Certification**

- To be determined by DSSC

## **Community Implications**

Needs for resources for college, career, work experiences; speakers, field trips, tours, presentations.

- To be discussed by DSSC

## **Budget**

Things to discuss:

- Cost for Freshman Seminar class—one-time fee of \$15,000 for blended curriculum (paid for through Title IV)
- Exact Path-district provided
- Xello-district provided
- Smaller class sizes, if possible (Lost Learning-COVID funds)

## **D.S.S.C. EVALUATION FORM**

**To be completed by the B.L.T./S.S.C. based on their approved proposal to the D.S.S.C.  
Due to the Director of State and Federal Programs no later than June 1<sup>st</sup>.**

1. How has the proposal/plan been aligned to the district/building missions?
2. What was the proposals' approach to improving student achievement?
3. Show evidence that the goals were based on data and aligned with the School Improvement Plan.
4. How was the proposal evaluated and method of data collection?
5. What were the results of the proposal in improving student achievement? (Long Term/Short Term)



## **D.S.S.C. RUBRIC FOR ACCEPTING PROPOSALS**

### **APPROVED:**

4.
  - \*Clear workable approach to improving student achievement.
  - \*Clear alignment with district/building mission statement.
  - \*Precise goals based on data, student academic outcomes, and aligned with the School Improvement Plan.
  - \*Clear indication of instruments used to measure progress/results.
  - \*Clear measurable process that will determine progress/results of the plan.
3.
  - \*Some workable approach to improving student achievement.
  - \*Some alignment with the district/building mission statement.
  - \*Set goals based on student academic outcomes and evidence that there is alignment to the School Improvement Plan.
  - \*Some indication of the instruments used to measure progress/results.
  - \*Some measurable process that will determine progress/results of the plan.

### **NOT APPROVED:**

2.
  - \*Lacks a workable approach to student achievement.
  - \*Little evidence of alignment to district/building mission statement.
  - \*Goals are vague and are not expressed in student academic outcomes and little alignment to the School Improvement Plan.
  - \*Little indication of instruments used to measure progress/results.
  - \*Little measurable process that will determine progress/results of the plan.
1.
  - \*No workable approach to student achievement evident.
  - \*No evidence of alignment to district/building mission statement.
  - \*Goals are vague and are not expressed in student academic outcomes and no alignment to the school improvement plan.
  - \*No indication of instruments used to measure progress/results.
  - \*No measurable process that will determine progress/results of the plan.

## **STAFF COMMITMENT**

Proposals will be reviewed to determine that the applicant is committed to and capable of the successful implementation and continuation of the project. (No more than one page.)

Demonstration of significant support within the staff and the community.

(50% plus one or more staff/department commitment is required)  
The S.S.C. will use any process they choose to arrive at plan  
Component decisions.)

The certified staff, including principal and assistant principal(s), but excluding Academic Assistants and substitutes, will conduct a secret ballot to establish staff commitment for the program.

**CERTIFICATION**

The building Site Steering Committee verifies that this building proposal has the support of 50% plus one of the certified staff as determined by a secret ballot.

S.S.C. Members' Signatures:

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## WAIVER(S)

**Specific contract and/or policy language that is to be waived along with specific change requests. List the specific policy and/or contract language to be waived. Please refer to the page, article, section and paragraph or appropriate Board policy from which you are seeking waivers.**

The contract waiver is for Article XVI section T, part 1b, page 65

**After school stipend is for only one hour and not 1.5 hours for this proposal only.**

T. Hourly Compensation for Work Outside School Day and/or School Year

b. School Improvement meetings shall be scheduled for a minimum of one hour and thirty minutes. Compensation for said meeting shall not be less than one and one-half (1 ½) times the designated rate.

There are no TSD Board of Education Policies in need of waivers; however, the following TSD Board Policies will be considered for TSD Board approval in light of the Freshman Academy:

2120	School Improvement
2210	Curriculum Development
2220	Adoption of Courses
2230	Course Guidelines
3130	Assignment and Transfer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Griff Mills, Superintendent Taylor School District

Linda Moore, President Taylor School District Taylor Federation of Teachers

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cynthia Nickel, Asst. Superintendent

Terrence Devlin, Executive Secretary Taylor School District Taylor Federation of Teachers

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## BUDGET SUMMARY

SCHOOL: Taylor High School DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

### BUDGET

#### GENERAL EDUCATION MONEY

OTHER\*

(identify please)

TRANSPORTATION

0

STAFFING

Cost Neutral based on state funding and enrollment

PROGRAM COSTS

\$15,000 budgeted in Title IV (For Fr. seminar course only taught in Freshman Academy)

STIPENDS

0

CONSULTANT SERVICES

CONFERENCE/WORKSHOP FEES

PD for Academy curriculum, as needed

PRINTING/DUPLICATING

0

REFERENCE MATERIALS

0

MISCELLANEOUS

OTHER

(SUBTOTALS) General Funds

0

TOTAL

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\*Other funding may include business partners, competitive grants, special education, Title I, 31a, etc.