

West Alabama Ready to Work Initiative

Daniel Community Scholars: Team 6 Project Proposal

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Part I: The Issue

Postsecondary success has become an important factor in determining the type of life that people will create in order to support themselves and their families. The twelfth grade is when students make the life altering decision about which route they will take in order to reach post-secondary success. Whether it is college, vocational training, or even the armed forces, it is important that students receive proper understanding and education on all of the options that are available. Not only does lack of knowledge of post-graduation options lead to little success after high school, the absences of required planning inhibit graduates' success after high school. Implementing a program dedicated to college and career readiness that provides students with the proper knowledge and planning course gives them the understanding and a form of intent to plan toward post-secondary success.

The American Institute for Research notes that, "College and Career readiness is rapidly supplanting high school graduation as a key priority of the K-12 education system," indicating the importance of college and career readiness to post-graduate success^[1]. College and Career readiness may include advanced coursework, work-based learning, and other opportunities that explore interest, aptitudes, and goals so that students may create pathways to employment/education after high school.^[2] The most significant factor of college and career readiness could possibly be the chance to explore interest, options, and goals for post graduate success. The College and Career Readiness and Success Center, at the American Institute for Research, found that an indicator for postsecondary success among High School and Career and Technical Education is college knowledge target outreach programs that include, but not limited to, multi-year college readiness programs that educate students on post-secondary options and help create plans to reach those options. Designing a course that first explores all options after college and creating a method to understanding students' interest and goals can be considered a college/career readiness program. The program must also include a form of intent and planning in order for it to be successful for students. YES Prep Public Schools in Houston, which serves 12,000 students, with 84 percent coming from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, requires that students have proposed plans for post-graduation. Because of this requirement, YES Prep has received national recognition from US News & World Report and The Washington Post for their apparent college and career readiness. Though the requirement of planning may not be the leading factor to post-secondary success for their students,

research from the University of Munich indicates that the requirement of planning post-graduation plans improves their chances of success. ^[3]

[1]Sambolt, Megan, and David Blumenthal. "Promoting College and Career Readiness A Pocket Guide for State and District Leaders." American Institute for Research, Mar. 2013, www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/CCR_Pocket_Guide_0.pdf. In-text Citation

[2]"College and Career Readiness." Achieve, 29 Mar. 2017, www.achieve.org/college-and-career-readiness.I

[3]Brandstatter, Veronika, and Peter M Gollwitzer. "Implementation Intentions and Effective Goal Pursuit." University of Konstanz, 1997, kops.uni-konstanz.de/bitstream/handle/123456789/10253/97GollBrand_ImpIntGoalPurs.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

Part II: Historical Context

Currently in Alabama, the college and career readiness standards only include the education requirements but no form requirements for plans after high school. There is data that measures college/career readiness using seven indicators that are not graduation requirements. The college and career readiness index indicates that a student has meet at least one of the following conditions: earning a benchmark score in any subject area on the ACT college entrance exam, earning a qualifying score of 3 or higher on an Advanced Placement (AP) exam, earning a qualifying score of 4 or higher on an International Baccalaureate (IB) exam, earning college credit while in high school, earning a silver or gold level on the ACT WorkKeys exam, earning a career technical industry credential, or being accepted into the military^[1]. Based on these seven indicators, High Schools in Tuscaloosa City Schools do not perform so well. Specifically looking at earning a career technical industry credential, in the graduating class of 2017, Northridge High School scored 26% and both Paul W Bryant High School and Central High School scored less than 20%. Following the college credit indicator, only Central High and Northridge High School had students to receive college credit in the graduating class of 2017, and both schools had less than 20% of their students doing so. These two statistics shed a little light on how devoted students are to college and career readiness. The small percentages of students that are receiving career technical industry credential may reflect that though the option of vocational training may be available, students may not have enough knowledge about the different options available in the Tuscaloosa area besides the

training provided through the class courses. The percentage revolving overall college and career readiness also reveals the limited amount of planning that students do in order to prepare for post-graduation. Planning should be a part of the college career readiness index, but that would be difficult to measure.

There are programs in Tuscaloosa currently in place to try to address college and career readiness in Tuscaloosa City high schools. The University of Alabama's Honors College has the program Engage Tuscaloosa who has an initiative called DRIVE. They approach the issue of college and career readiness by sending mentors to get personal with the students at Central High School and discuss the importance of post-graduation plans. Also at Central High School, students help to start the "Ready to Work" program to discuss the industries in the surrounding Tuscaloosa area. Both the "Drive" and "Ready to Work" initiatives are a great start to addressing college and career readiness, but there should be a combination of the two ideas and a course for students to follow. Our group wants to ensure that students in Tuscaloosa are given the chance to explore both vocational training and college choices. By creating a course that requires that students learn about all of the post-graduation options, including college, vocational training, and any other options that spark their interest. This course will allow for them to understand, and then actually plan a course of action that they must turn in before they graduate. Ignoring the importance of college readiness in Alabama high schools further impedes wealth and education gaps among the economically disadvantaged. Enforcing a course to introduce the students to the postsecondary opportunities allows students to make their own decisions based on their interest to be college and career ready.

^[1]Powell Crain, Trisha. "Are Alabama's High School Graduates Ready for the next Step?" AL.com, AL.com, 22 July 2018, www.al.com/expo/news/erry-2018/07/5f0bc919842189/are-alabamas-high-school-gradu.html. In-text Citation

Part III. Community Partners

Identifying a community partner was a challenging experience for our group. We first attempted to reach out to leadership at local high schools. We thought that due to its proximity to the university, Central High School would be a convenient school with which to partner. However, our calls were not returned, so we began to look for other options.

Luckily, Jerran Hill, one of our faculty advisors, stumbled across an article on AL.com detailing action that had taken place here in Tuscaloosa in the area of workforce development at Central High School. We were then able to connect with Heath Hendrix from the Onin Group and Russell Dubose with Phifer Incorporated by reaching out to the author of the article. After communication via email and phone, we quickly realized that a partnership with them would be extremely beneficial for both sides. After a face to face meeting, our group was given an incredible amount of insight and direction for our project by providing us with the broader scope of workforce development efforts throughout our state, and explaining to us how these programs came about and are utilized.

Part IV: Proposed Action

For the Daniel Community Scholars Project, we will help the Onin group to develop lesson plans for their Ready to Work courses that are taught in West Alabama high schools. These lesson plans will be delivered through Onin Group's online technical education learning software, Onin Apps. Onin Apps is an easy-to-use software similar to Blackboard that allows educators to create online courses which include powerpoints, quizzes, and reading materials. Each of the lesson plans in the Ready to Work curriculum will be based off of already-developed curricula created by each of the six distinct Industry "clusters" (groups) prevalent in West Alabama, which include automotive, healthcare, construction, manufacturing, business services, and professional services.

The lesson plans created by our project will be used in high school "Ready to Work" classes across West Alabama, and once completed, provide students with the skills and technical knowledge necessary to begin the pathway towards their career. Completion of the Ready to Work Curriculum awards students an "Alabama Certified Worker" Certificate from AIDT as well as an National Career Readiness Certificate from ACT WorkKeys. Additionally, Onin Groups intends to expand these curricula beyond just K-12 education to include both adult populations as well as prisoners preparing to re-enter civilian life. For more information about Ready to Work, visit: <http://westalabamaworks.com/readytowork/>

In order to complete this project, we will divide the 2018-2019 Blackburn Class into five groups of approximately 8-10 students. Groups will be divided based on individual availability and interests through a survey we plan to send out at the end of fall semester which is to be completed before we return to campus in the spring. Each group will have at least one Team 6 member to help guide the group.

Each group will be assigned a cluster (automotive, healthcare, construction, business services, and professional services) for which they will help to create 12 hours of content and lesson plans for the online “Ready to Work” curriculum. Each group will be given access to information (powerpoints, documents, videos, text, industry updates, authentic texts) regarding its specific Industry Cluster, provided by the industry leader from West Alabama Works responsible for approving the curriculum. The students will use the materials to create, through the Onin Apps software, lesson plans for one week (12 hours) of instruction. Through modeling their lessons off the Manufacturing Cluster curriculum that has already been created and approved by West Alabama Works, each group will be able to effectively and accurately create these lesson plans.

We will provide a class-wide training meeting and workshop at the beginning of the semester to re-familiarize each group with the project goals and provide insight on how to develop effective, engaging, and educational lesson plans. At this short meeting, which we hope to hold during our project presentation (January 27th), we will also provide each group with an individualized information packet that includes basic information (such as expectations) as well as specific information related to their industry cluster. Due to the self-paced nature of this project, each student group will be required to have a bi-weekly written check in (update on progress to be sent via google form) and monthly in-person check in with Jacob or Courtney (two total check ins). These check-ins will have snacks provided in order to incentive attendance.

We aim to have the first draft of these lesson plans completed by spring break. After each group has completed its first draft of lesson plans for its Industry Cluster and submitted them for approval by the West AL Ready to Work Committee, they will revise and edit the lesson plans based off of the feedback from industry experts from their Industry Cluster and the Committee. Students will have the remainder of the semester to finish revising and editing the lesson plans, and are encouraged to do

so with guidance of the West AL Ready to Work Committee. This connection will be facilitated by our DCS group. Our objective is for each student group to have completed their lesson plans by April 1st, so that the lesson plans can be adopted and incorporated into the Ready to Work curriculum for the upcoming 2019-2020 school year. Our student groups will *not* be the ones teaching these lesson plans; rather, the plans will be passed on to local educators trained by Onin Group who will work full/part-time in local schools.

In total, this project will require Blackburn students to commit to (1) hour-long training session, (2) hour-long team meetings with our implementation specialists, and (3) the creation of 12 content hours of lesson plans, which is an estimated 25 hours of work, to be divided equitably among the 10 group members. In total, the project should require around 5 hours of total commitment from each Blackburn student member.

Part V: Tentative Timeline

Winter break 2018-2019: create student groups, match students to industry clusters

January 27th: Hold “training day” (1 hr) for project during presentation of project to class.

January 27th- March 1st, 2019: student groups develop first draft of their lesson plans based on guidelines given to us by the Ready to Work Committee and industry cluster leaders as well as materials provided. During this time, students will be required to meet with one of our implementation specialists in-person at least once, and will be required to send a bi-weekly progress update.

March 1st, 2019: first-draft of all lesson plans are turned into the Ready to Work Committee for review. Feedback is collected and relayed to student groups.

March 1st-March 30th: Using feedback from the Ready to Work Committee and through contact with industry cluster leaders, student groups will revise their lesson plans. Again, students will be required to meet with our implementation specialists at least once and submit bi-weekly progress reports.

April 1st, 2019: All lesson plans are finalized and turned in for final approval. If any groups fail to meet approval, they will have until the end of the semester to meet standards and turn in their finalized lesson plans through the guidance and supervision of our group members.

April 1st-April 15th: Address any unforeseen issues.

Summer 2019: Lesson plans are passed on to the Department of Commerce and community college system for final approval and incorporation into the Ready to Work Curriculum. Instructors are trained and all preparations for the 2019-2020 school year are made. We are not involved in this step.

September 2019: Our lesson plans are put in place and will begin being taught in schools across West Alabama. We are not involved in this step.

Part VI: Budget

The expenses for our proposed project lie in two main areas: printing costs and supplies for the training and workshop day. Each group would receive a personalized information packet in order to prepare lesson plans for their specific cluster. We anticipate that printing and binding these packets would cost about \$210. This is based on copies being \$0.10/page and binding being \$5.00/packet. We created the estimate based off of each group's packet being 250 pages.

We have also included expenses for highlighters and pens for use during the training and workshop day, as well as snacks and drinks, consisting of variety packs of chips and bottled water.

Part VII: Sustainability

This project is unique due to its ease of sustainability. After each group has created the curriculum for its Industry cluster, it will be automatically implemented into the Onin Apps learning system. The curriculum will then be used during Fall 2019 Ready To Work courses all across West Alabama high schools. Looking further into the future, these same curricula will be used for Ready To Work courses for adult GED students and other target groups all across West Alabama and even across the state of Alabama without any additional maintenance by our group. While some minor additions may be added in future years depending on growing industries, the base curriculum for each industry that we have created will be used. This project, with a timeline of less than one year, will affect and educate hundreds of people across west Alabama by Fall 2019, and then spread in future years, through the work of Onin Group, to the entire state of Alabama. Its self-sustainability and its visible impact render this project simple and necessary to our community and to our state.

Group Number:	Group 6				
Project Name:	Career Readiness Modules				
	Quantity	Revenue per Unit	Total	Running Total	Notes / Details
Revenue:					
<i>Daniel Foundation Funds</i>	1	\$ 405.17	\$ 405.17	\$ 405.17	Requesting from DCS
TOTAL REVENUE				\$ 405.17	
	Quantity	Expense per Unit	Total	Running Total	Notes / Details
Expenses:					
<i>Binding</i>	6	\$ 5.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	Coil Binding
<i>Printing</i>	1500	\$ 0.10	\$ 150.00	\$ 180.00	Printing Packets (if each group's packet needed 250 copies)
<i>Highlighters</i>	6	\$ 2.99	\$ 17.94	\$ 197.94	Pack for each group, Staples Item: 2072216
<i>Pens</i>	1	\$ 7.49	\$ 7.49	\$ 205.43	36 Ballpoint Pens, Staples Item: 219244
<i>Snacks</i>	10	\$ 6.99	\$ 69.90	\$ 275.33	Frito-Lay Variety Pack, 18 count
<i>Drinks</i>	10	\$ 4.99	\$ 49.90	\$ 325.23	Dasani Bottled Water, 24 count
<i>Expenses</i>	2	\$ 13.99	\$ 27.98	\$ 353.21	Welch's Fruit Snacks, 80 count
<i>Expenses</i>	4	\$ 12.99	\$ 51.96	\$ 405.17	Nabisco Cookies Variety Pack, 40 count
TOTAL EXPENSES				\$ 405.17	
DIFFERENCE				\$ -	Balanced or Budget Surplus