

# College for Every Student (CFES)

## *“Closing the Gap Award”*

### Eastside Memorial High School

#### Student Training and Enrichment Project (STEP) Up Challenge

##### *Introduction*

The **Student Training and Enrichment Project (STEP) Up Challenge** project involves three basic components: 1) *Mentoring*, 2) *Leadership through Service*, and 3) *Pathways to College*. In order to address these objectives and reach desired outcomes, the following concept is proposed. This will be a project focused on high school students, faculty and community partnerships. The overall goal is to assist students and faculty in the possibility of pursuing college readiness and career preparation in a variety of fields. The project will include academic counseling, worksite experiences and college readiness workshops. The overall desire of this project is to motivate high school students to step up and accept the challenges associated with college readiness.

Eastside Memorial High School proposes a collaborative project concept aimed at increasing awareness of community resources, industry partners and academic researchers to assist students in learning more about college readiness. The impact of this concept will be among the students from the immediate area of East Austin. This concept is aimed at furthering the education of students in high school beyond initial presentations and exposure to only one specifically related career. There will be a continuation of the program and focus on providing high school students with extensive academic enhancement through a well-structured high school awareness program, combined with mentoring relationships. This development will also encompass articulated agreements between academic partners at both two (2) year and four (4) year institutions that can provide support for students and professional development for teachers. A key component will be the development of inclusion of industry partners and workforce development. Faculty of Eastside Memorial High School will have an opportunity to engage with other educational professionals to share best practices, design culturally relevant curriculum and devise more pertinent support mechanisms for their student population.

A key strategy in this project will be the utilization of existing community agencies, and industry partners who will work with **STEP Up Challenge** participants to aid in the development of more focused attention for these participants to successfully become prepared to pursue majors and careers that are under-represented by minority populations. This can be done with internships and apprenticeship opportunities.

### 1. *What will be gained with the Closing the Gap Award?*

The **Closing the Gap Award** will provide a substantial structure to enhance the educational experiences of our students. This will also enable teachers and staff to develop more structurally relevant curricula to provide necessary instructions to help students compete beyond high school graduation. This award will give our administration and staff with additional training and skills to develop mentoring techniques for research in the classroom, and provide the type of venue for community partners to hone their skills in mentoring younger students from diverse backgrounds.

The anticipated outcomes for this project will be an increased number of students of color who are able to enter educational and career pathways more competitively. These potential participants will become more enriched with knowledge and educational support systems to ensure their successes upon entering either community college settings and through their development; further matriculation to 4 year institutions. The **Eastside Memorial STEP Up challenge** will also assist in the mission and goal of many communities which look to build solid relationships in the educational community to assist students and faculty on the high school level. A significant outcome of this project and program will be strengthening of articulated agreements between local community colleges, universities, and industry partners that provide career development initiatives. Teachers will gain from the **Closing the Gap Award** with opportunities for professional development and instructional camps that coincide with their desire for educational experiences.

### 2. *Describe your school culture*

Eastside Memorial High School is a Title I school and enrolls 80% Hispanic students, and most of the students are considered economically disadvantaged. The school currently faces some challenges with low graduation rates, under-performing tests scores and attendance issues. Some 8% are eligible for free lunch and another 6% receive reduced lunch.

### 3. *Why apply for the Closing the Gap Award?*

There are many examples of mentoring programs that support the theories that mentoring programs do much to increase the numbers of students who reach for careers beyond their neighborhoods and immediate surroundings. There is much more evidence about the roles of community based education models that have successfully integrated behavior modification among certain populations. Organizations such as Boys and Girls Club of America, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and YMCA have utilized mentoring programs for years to alter behaviors of teens, and provide educational support mechanisms.

A significant difference in this approach resides in the location of the relationships and the purposes of these relationships. While these previous examples are aimed at increasing the numbers of teens who have relationships with grown-ups, this projects' intention is rather different. The overall purpose of the establishment of these relationships is to increase and improve awareness of educational tracks and career pathways to improve students' abilities to pursue these careers after college. Our strategy will be different because our outcomes measures will be different.

Student/participant assessments should be go beyond just academic progress because there are many students who underperform in high school due to their lack of awareness of relevancy of academic performances and their future intentions to enter college. Alternative guidance may come from sports coaches, church groups and community organizations such as performing arts clubs.

Retention and graduation is always significant for many high school students, especially those of color due to their lack of commitment to many educational programming. The development of internships and mentoring opportunities should provide an incentive for many to continue to participate in the program. The target population for this proposal will be students at Eastside Memorial High School between the ages of 15 and 18; and consisting of African American (Black), Latino, Asian (under-represented) and African (refugee population) but have to be high school sophomores, juniors and seniors.

**4. *Describe any current or planned partnerships with colleges, businesses, and/or other organizations***

In order to address the current challenges of many high school students from economically disadvantaged areas, partnerships have been formed to support the goals and desires of school administration and teachers. The most notable partners to support Eastside Memorial High School are as follows:

- Austin Voices
- Communities in Schools (CIS)
- Texas Blazers
- Raise your Hand Texas
- Johns Hopkins Talent Development Secondary
- Sylvan Learning Center
- International Leadership for Education

Additional partners have been established with Austin Community College (ACC) to provide opportunities for students to earn dual credit for specific courses. This articulated agreement with the Career Technical Education (CTE) department at Eastside Memorial has enabled many students to earn national certification while still attending high school. These types of experiences provides many students with enhanced learning opportunities and places them in a professional work environment.

### *Alternative Outcomes from the Closing the Gap Award*

Eastside Memorial High School will use its connections to college partners in immediate area to offer support for college readiness and academic advising. Working within the existing high school, higher education institutions and community partnerships, this concept will involve high school students taking an Individual College Development Plan (ICDP) and utilizing it to reach out to faculty and industry professionals related to the student area of interest. With assistance from student support services at the community college level and other institutions, teachers, counselors and students of **Eastside STEP Up Challenge** will begin the process of affecting and improving student placement testing, financial aid preparation, counseling and mentoring for entry into a variety of careers. There are various phases of the annual ICDP plan which will require collaboration with teachers and staff from high schools, community college, and 4 year institutional levels. This will require community college staff personnel, industry partners and four (4) year institution partners (undergraduate and graduate students) to visit **STEP Up Challenge** participants and assist in afterschool tutoring sessions. Another feature of the program could be the use of Saturday Academy workshops for high school students if the opportunity presents itself. These types of relationships establish mentoring opportunities with a focus on academic preparation and career development plans.

**Time line of Eastside Memorial STEP Up Challenge Project – this time line will be used to establish a foundation and structure to create the relationships needed for sustainability and desired outcomes. The key personnel to accomplish this project include the following descriptive positions—**

- **Project Manager**; responsible for day to day operation of this project include contact with industry partners to develop relationships to acquire mentors and integration of internships opportunities for participants in STEP Up Challenge program. Major responsibilities also include possibilities of articulated agreements for community college graduates to be considered strongly for transfer to 4 year institutions. This role will require oversight and management of these collaborative partnerships of Eastside Memorial, ACC, 4 year institutions, and industry partners.
- **Education Coordinator**; responsible for curriculum evaluation and alignment to improve success of Eastside Memorial graduates. Students of color need to remain competitive and confident in their ability to attend higher education institutions without remedial coursework. This role would also encompass student mentoring, guidance and counseling workshops.

- **Career Development Manager**; responsible for assisting Eastside faculty in resume building, interview skills and other soft skills necessities that prohibit students of color from being competitive in the application process for admission to 4 year institutions as well as internships opportunities. Other responsibilities including working with students to expand their knowledge of STEM careers and how to enter these professions.
- **Outreach Coordinator**; responsible for awareness campaigns to Eastside Memorial High students to improve their knowledge and awareness of course selection to approach college education tracks and careers. Will also be responsible for locating existing community resources and supportive agencies to assist in the dissemination of information. The outreach activities also include working with project manager to locate role models for the purpose as serving as mentors during internship phase. The outreach coordinator will serve as key contact for ACC to ensure appropriate personnel are aware of resources/partners that support the Eastside Memorial mission of increasing numbers of students who are college ready and career oriented.
- **Program Evaluator**; responsible for the development of effective outcomes measurement tools to evaluate success of programs. This maybe in the form of pre and post surveys to gain knowledge of student/participants assessment of program and their experiences. This would also include an assessment of current methods and strategies used to recruit students and faculty into CFES programs. Other measurements taken on whether newer and innovative methods may impact teachers, students and community partners who support Eastside Memorial High School.

### **Phase I**

- Visit with higher education partners; community college and 4 year institution faculty and staff to discuss existing relationships of college with industry partners
- Identify potential industry partners that can provide mentoring opportunities and support the initiative with internship and awareness opportunities for participants
- Arrangements and set up of collaborative conversations with 4 year colleges and industry partners
- Identify and collaborate with former graduates of Eastside Memorial to ascertain their preparedness for college

### **Phase II**

- Development and evaluation of Individualized Academic Development Plan (IADP) for participants
- Recruitment and awareness sessions to potential participants
- Outreach campaign to professional organizations that encompass internships and apprenticeship opportunities (minority based groups)

### **Phase III**

- Workshops on course selection in high school (Math, Science, and English)
- Workshops on resume building, interview skills and dressing for success
- Creation of Community Action Plan (CAP) to establish formal relationships among partners
- Integration of Youth Advisory Panel into CAP; Peer to Peer Relationships

### **Phase IV**

- Visits to university areas (Engineering; special project demonstration)
- Discussion and arrangements of internship locations (beyond current and existing locations)
- Student leaders participate in leadership development institute; with assistance from community partners

### **Phase V**

- Visits to university areas (Science and computer science; special project demonstration)
- Arrangements of counseling and support services for ACC students upon transfer to 4 year institutions
- Continued articulation workshops on campus at Eastside Memorial to facilitate further comprehension of college readiness process

## **Description of the Eastside Memorial High School CFES Plan**

### **Objective:**

The objective of this collaborative project is to develop extensive research interest and awareness programs in minority populations, primarily aimed at students. The project would involve the use of college students to serve as education representatives for students of Eastside Memorial High School. These undergraduate students may serve as mentors to high school students and work with university faculty and researchers to increase interest in college readiness, workforce development and career preparation. A secondary objective of this project would be for high school students to gain experience in leadership development, peer coaching, and create an atmosphere of competitiveness for college readiness.

The premise of using college students builds upon previous Community Action Plans (CAP) designed to infuse more communication and discussion on college readiness among minority and underserved communities. A key element of the use of students is to build capacity, empowerment, and future community leaders who will advocate for social changes within their own community settings. This project will also increase the numbers of students (preferably minorities) who become community leaders, educators and social action agents in the community setting.

### **Suggestions for student involvement**

- High school students could serve as observers of the college attendance regimen. Students may write up descriptions of what they see during college admission process, entrance interview processes and the preparation for college class.
- Undergraduate students will be engaged in mentoring activities, tutoring and observations of their assigned students at Eastside Memorial. This would involve ethnographic observations of school site, grocery stores, public park facilities, location of employment (if applicable) and door to door interviews.
- High school students will be transported to high education institutions as well as worksite locations of industry partners. The off campus experiences will present an opportunity for students to learn more holistic viewpoint of how education and career development coincides.
- Following the student observation, a report or project will be presented as poster presentations or as written papers.

### **Teacher Involvement**

- High school teachers could participate in the projects by instructing students on the subject of choice and have students research on the topic.
- High school teachers will be responsible for coordinating the academic portion with students, with the formation of a conference or presentation at end of summer. The reports will show some results.
- High school teachers will collaborate with professionals from other CFES schools during professional development opportunities