

Looking At The ISSUES

July 21, 2006

College Credit in High School – Part Two: Eradicating Poverty

It's not a ranking we're proud of. At 19.2%, Stark is 78th in the nation among 236 counties of 250,000 or more people in the poverty rate for children.¹ Yet, studies are conclusively showing² that the effects of poverty, particularly generational poverty, can be eradicated with a college degree. The differential is well over \$1 million in lifetime earnings.

Alarming, the consequences of failing to educate all our citizens may, in fact, be far more drastic than many realize. That was the finding of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education late last year.

"If current population trends continue and states do not improve the education of all racial/ethnic groups, the skills of the workforce and the incomes of U.S. residents are projected to decline over the next two decades."³ This means everybody.

For all communities, the solution then would seem to be simple; the will to do something is far more difficult. Stark is rapidly demonstrating that collective will.

Yet, states have been drastically cutting back on higher education subsidies. In Ohio, the Higher Education Funding Study Council recently noted that "due to constraints on the state budget...Ohio's resources have become limited." In fact the capital debt of Ohio's state colleges and universities has tripled in the last five years and now approaches \$3 billion.⁴ The council called on educators at all levels to look for creative ways to provide more opportunities for all students.⁵ Despite what the council said, for many, this still means cutting costs and introducing efficiencies at the higher education level to make college more affordable. This ignores the simple point that high education attainment for all is a P-16 issue.

Educators in Stark County know this and have answered the call for creativity through two new examples of students taking college courses while still in high school-Early College and Summer Scholars-both P-16 approaches. Further, these programs are targeted at first generation college goers and low income students, directly attacking the issue of poverty.

One hundred and eighty-five students currently attend Early College High School on the Downtown Campus of Stark State College of Technology on the Timken Campus of the Canton City Schools (ECHS). The school will grow to an enrollment of 400. The goal is to graduate four years later with a high school

"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

— William Butler Yeats

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diploma and associate degree from Stark State, positioning the students for the workforce, and additional associate or bachelor's degree. One of six such existing schools in Ohio and about 60 nationally, ECHS partners Stark State College of Technology, the Canton City Schools, the Bill and Melinda Gates and KnowledgeWorks Foundations, as well as Jobs for the Future, the Stark Education Partnership and the City of Canton. Ohio and national leaders hope that these schools will demonstrate new approaches to college access and success. In Canton, 42% of ECHS students are African-American, 8% multi-racial, and 50% white; poverty levels were 77% in 2005 and 70% in 2006. Over 90% are first generation college goers. Nearly 1,000 hours in college credits were earned by ECHS students during the last school year.

Summer Scholars is a new program partnering the Stark County Educational Service Center, Stark State College of Technology, the Ohio College Access Network, cities of Canton and Alliance, and the Stark Education Partnership. Starting this summer, the program is an opportunity for 65 first generation and low income students from districts other than Canton to earn 12 college credits while still in high school.

Both these programs partner high school teachers and college professors in offering quality instruction. Both combine district facilities and college resources. In a state with diminishing educational resources, they are true P-16 solutions.

¹ *Percent of Children Under 18 Years Below Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months (For Whom Poverty Status is Determined): 2004.* United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey.

² See (2002) *The Big Payoff: Educational Attainment and Synthetic Estimates of Work-Life Earnings.* United States Census Bureau.

³ (2005) *Income of U.S. Workforce Projected to Decline If Education Doesn't Improve.* National Center for Public Policy and Education. <http://www.highereducation.org/>

⁴ Memorandum, FY 2007-2008 Regents Supplemental Capital Recommendation from Timothy S. Keen, Director of the Office of Budget and Management from Richard L. Petrick, Vice Chancellor for Finance, Ohio Board of Regents, dated June 26, 2006

⁵ (2006) Higher Education Funding Study Council Report. State of Ohio Board of Regents.

Looking At The Week

Dr. Rochford is now a member of the What Works Network (WWN) an informal network of experts across the country advising the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC). The WWC was established by the US Department of Education to provide a central source of scientific research on education in 2002.

Success at Early College High School!

97 students earned 1,056 credit hours or an average of nearly 11 credits per student!



- Student Data 2005-2006