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.

Alarmingly, 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
Success at Early College High School!

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