

Looking At The ISSUES

Stark
Education
Partnership
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Looking At The
Week



How Important are Nonacademic Factors in Student Success?

Can academic success outweigh nonacademic factors that often influence a student's life and chances to go on to college? A policy brief¹ from ACT, Inc. explores what may well become a key issue for Ohio as the state moves to substantially increase college enrollment. Nonacademic factors can influence academic performance, but cannot substitute for it. Just what are nonacademic factors? The ACT brief identifies:

1. Individual psychosocial factors, such as motivation (e.g., academic self-discipline, commitment to school) and self-regulation (e.g., emotional control, academic self-confidence).
2. Family factors, such as attitude toward education, involvement in students' school activities, and geographic stability.
3. Career planning that identifies a good fit between students' interests and their postsecondary work.

ACT found that *(w)hile academic and nonacademic factors both play important roles in helping students achieve college and workforce success, the strongest predictors of college persistence and degree attainment are prior academic achievement and course selection.*

How does one achieve academically if life issues are a problem? ACT notes that schools who monitor relevant nonacademic characteristics of their students can use this information to design intervention programs that support students' academic progress. Stark County has made progress in this area across a variety of initiatives such as Canton's Early College High School and CARE Teams that now support several districts including Alliance, Canton City, Canton South, Fairless, Massillon, Osnaburg, and Sandy Valley.

ACT concludes that *(s)uccess in college means fulfilling academic requirements. There are no shortcuts to academic success. We should all be focused on helping our students become academically prepared, primarily through direct academic interventions, and secondarily through cultivation of the nonacademic factors that support academic achievement.*

¹ See: *The Role of Nonacademic Factors in College Readiness and Success* at: <http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/briefs.html>

11 Stark Districts Awarded Early College Grants

Eleven Stark County districts – Canton City, Canton Local, Fairless, Jackson, Lake, Massillon, North Canton, Osnaburg, Perry, Plain and Sandy Valley – have been awarded \$100,000 each to pilot the state's new *Seniors to Sophomores* early college program. See <http://universitysystem.ohio.gov/seniorstosophomores/index.php> for more information.

GlenOak Student is Presidential Scholars Semifinalist

Our congratulations to Lucas J. Wirth of Glen Oak High School on being named a Presidential Scholars Program Semifinalist by the U.S. Department of Education. Presidential Scholars are students who have demonstrated outstanding academic achievement, artistic excellence, leadership, citizenship and service to their schools and communities.