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Tide water TEACHER

A MAGAZINE FOR EDUCATORS ACROSS HAMPTON ROADS

PLANTING SEEDS FOR SUCCESS

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Keeping Your Classroom
Bully Free

Early Intervention with
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**Relive
Jamestown
Settlement**



Contributors



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With over 33 years' experience in school administration and teaching, Denise currently serves as project director for a Smaller Learning Communities grant at Maury High School. Prior to this position, her career included serving as a teacher of language arts at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, teacher specialist, coordinator of instruction and curriculum management, grants writer, director of operations and grants, chief operations officer, chief of staff and interim superintendent for Norfolk Public Schools. She has published numerous articles in professional journals and made presentations at the local, state and national levels. She received her doctorate in educational administration from Vanderbilt University in 1989.



Michael J. Caprio

Michael J. Caprio has over 40 years experience in public school teaching and administration in Norfolk Public Schools. He taught at the elementary level for three years and spent an additional three years as a project supervisor for federal programs. School administrative experience includes 15 years as an elementary principal, eight years as a middle school principal and 12 years as a high school principal. He was the former principal of Granby High School and currently serves as principal of Maury High School. Under his tenures, Granby High School was named one of the "Top 100 Wired High Schools" in the United States by Family PC magazine and Maury was recognized on Newsweek's annual list of "America's Best High Schools" for the past three years.



Mervyn J. Wighting, Ph.D.

Mervyn, originally from the south of England, is an associate professor in Regent University's School of Education. He holds a Ph.D. from Old Dominion University, and has taught in a variety of institutions in the United Kingdom and in Europe. Dr. Wighting has lived in the United States for the past 12 years, where he has worked in public and independent k-12 schools as well as in higher education. At Regent he teaches in the Ed.D, Ed.S. and M.Ed. programs using both face to face instruction and distance education. He also directs the university's award-winning Career Switcher program.

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Planting Seeds for Success

By: Mervyn J. Wighting, Ph.D.

Co-Contributors: Shauna Tonkins, Ph.D. and Denise Schnitzer, Ph.D.



Shalorne Peters & Dennisha Clark
(Norview High School Students)

Readily available money! That is what a grant offers. Each year, the U.S. government along with private foundations and public corporations offer billions of dollars in funding to individuals and organizations to be used for specific projects. This funding requires no repayment as long as it is used to fund the project for which it was allocated. So what is the down side? Applying for a grant is often challenging and very time consuming. Furthermore, there is no guarantee of approval. Yet, when awarded, a grant's resources can enable new and exciting programs to be introduced in our schools.

It was a federal grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in 2006 that facilitated the start of a partnership between Regent University and Norview High School in Norfolk. The goal of the partnership is to help strengthen students' connection to their school and their feelings of belonging to a community in hopes of averting dropout and minimizing delinquent behaviors. A separate grant in 2006 enabled a project to be initiated in Norfolk's Maury High School with a focus on stemming the tide of freshman failure.

Norview High School: The Success Academy

Norview enrolls some 800 students in grade nine each fall. Unfortunately, about one third of these students are repeating the freshman year. According to research literature, students who repeat grade nine are at a greater risk of dropping out and possible delinquency.

Thanks to a grant partnership with Regent University, Norview was able to increase the activities of The Success Academy. The academy was established in 2005 to assist ninth grade students' transition from middle to high school.

When students become a part of The Success Academy, they are enrolled in four core subjects taught by teachers experienced in working with at-risk students. Additionally, the students enroll in an elective called Teen Leadership. The purpose of this course is to enhance social skills, conflict resolution, and community awareness.

One project at Norview that derived from the Teen Leadership course was the Edible Schoolyard. The project was originated by Shauna Tonkin, a professor in Regent

University's School of Education. Her inspiration came from a similar project at Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School in Berkeley, California (www.edibleschoolyard.org). The goal of the program is to give students experiences in the kitchen and the garden that foster a better understanding of how the natural world sustains us. In doing so, students develop a better sense of environmental and social well being.

The success of the program relied heavily on the collaboration of students, teachers and community volunteers. Individuals who donated their time and hard work included organic farmer John Wilson, Bev Sell, manager of the Five Point Community Farm Market, Norview teachers Tommy Smigel and Katie Arroyo, and Regent University's Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) organization.

Norview students, who had never before wielded a spade, dug a garden in the school grounds. Using natural methods, they planted and tended collards, kale, lettuce and a variety of other vegetables and then sold the produce at Norfolk's Farm Markets located at Five Points and MacArthur Center. Students also

volunteered at the Farm Market, helping to unload produce and prepare stores for customers.

Sophomore Stephanie Sandoval, the project's marketing director, voiced what several students have discovered: "We have put a lot of work into this. But we had a lot of fun too!" Now in the second growing season, freshman and sophomore students continue "Pilot Produce" activities, and are exploring other opportunities for entrepreneurship and community service.



Front Row: Shane'Qua Pulley (Norview student); Katie Arroyo (Norview teacher); Stephanie Sandoval (Norview student); Dennisha Clark (Norview student); Shalorne Peters (Norview student); Tommy Smigel (Norview teacher).
Back Row: Chaunta Foster (Regent SIFE student); Diane Wiater (Pilot Produce's business development consultant); John Wilson (owner of New Earth Farm in Virginia Beach); Roddrick Hood (Norview student); Julian Parker (Norview student); Shauna Tonkin (Regent professor).

Maury High School: Freshman Academy

At Maury High School concern about a freshman failure rate in excess of 40% and low attendance rates prompted a group of teachers to use grant money to design a new project. Working in four-teacher teams with groups of approximately 150 first-time ninth grade students they formed the inaugural Freshman Academy. Several components make the

Freshman Academy unique. As a new freshman transitions from the middle school to high school, he/she is assigned to a learning community. These learning communities consist of 125-150 students, each with its own English, social studies, mathematics, and science teacher. The teachers have a common planning time where they examine data, change instructional practice based on the data and introduce research-based best practices such as differentiated instruction. They plan interdisciplinary instruction, brainstorm ways that students will be successful, make parent contacts, and plan tutorial/remedial instruction.

"Collaboration with teachers and administrative personnel as well as parents benefits students by expanding the 'safety net' for those students who have academic, disciplinary, or attendance issues. Working together increases the possibility and the probability that all students will succeed," said English teacher, Cynthia Kurtz.

The mantra of each freshman community is, "failure will not be tolerated at Maury High School." In support of this strong conviction, other teachers work in Freshman Scholars classes. The purpose of the Freshman Scholars class is to further develop areas such as test taking and study skills, career planning, and community service. Although student opinion of the Freshman Scholars class was mixed, one student summed up the intent of the class when he remarked, "Freshman Scholars is a great class and gives knowledge that is very useful to succeed." Another student stated about the class, "It is a very good class to start out with as a freshman and I would recommend the class to anyone, even seniors." The community teams are completed by two guidance counselors dedicated solely to working with freshmen.

The Freshman Academy is proving effective with first-time ninth graders

Grant Writing Tips

Applying for a government grant can be difficult and time consuming with no guarantee of approval. The following are some grant writing tips to help ensure success.

- Read the grantor's guidelines and instructions carefully. Make sure your program is a good match with the agency's priorities.
- Ideas should be innovative, creative and educational. Grantors usually invest in supplemental programs or projects that put a fresh spin on an existing idea.
- Keep your goals realistic and make sure you have an evaluation plan. Grantors want to know if the projects they fund are successful.
- Have a reasonable, detailed budget.
- If possible, cite research that supports the program for which you are requesting funding.
- Be clear in communicating your ideas. Have someone who is not involved in the project review your application.
- Proofread! Spelling and grammar errors do not convey a positive image.
- Follow the grantor's instructions to the letter. Applications are turned away when they do not exactly meet the funding agency's requirements.
- If your project is rejected, ask the grantor for reviewer comments. The comments can offer invaluable tips for improving your future grant applications.
- Write thank-you notes - even if your project is not funded initially!

Source: Grant Writing Tips (www.schoolgrants.org)

Regent SIFE



Chaunta Foster and Ivan Portes, Regent SIFE students who volunteered their time to help with Pilot Produce. They graduated with MBAs from Regent in May 2007.

What do you get when you combine the enthusiasm of university students, the expertise of faculty members, the commitment of business and community leaders, and the passion to make a difference? Regent SIFE, of course! The Regent University Students in Free Enterprise team is a local chapter of a global, non-profit organization active in over 40 countries. Working in partnership with educators, business people, and government leaders, SIFE members take what they learn in the classroom to create innovative solutions for real-world problems.

Regent SIFE faculty advisors, Dr. Greg Stone and Dr. Shauna Tonkin, work with SIFE team members to provide educational outreach programs that promote personal and economic success. These programs range from Main Street to Wall Street, profit to non-profit, and local to global, allowing SIFE members to hone their entrepreneurial skills, gain professional experience, and develop greater confidence to serve as leaders who can change their world.

For more information on Regent SIFE and their educational outreach projects in the Hampton Roads area visit <http://sife.regent.edu>.

at Maury. While final data for the initial year are not yet available, the indications are that the goal of decreasing the failure rate is being realized. Plans are underway to revise the Freshman Scholars curriculum and to have core content teachers teach the classes in 2007-08. This will allow more of an advisory-type atmosphere in the class where students are with the same teacher at

students to see everyone succeed because it was 'their' community."

Who Holds the Key to Success?

The preventative outreach that is taking place in these schools to help at-risk students from becoming dropouts and perhaps sliding into delinquency is invaluable. At the beginning of the 2006-2007 school

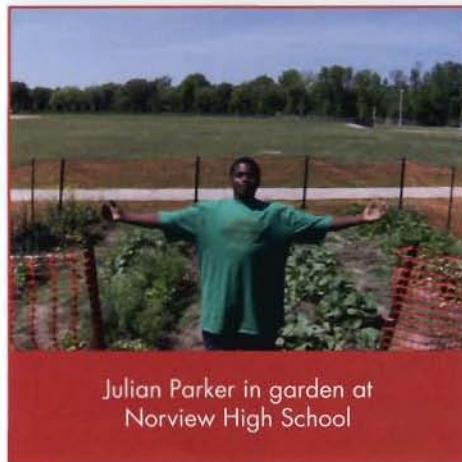
year, the students in Norview's Success Academy were measured to assess their sense of school community using an easily-administered 10-question survey.¹ At the end of the school year they were measured again using the same instrument. Although there was no statistically significant increase in overall sense of school community, there was a significant increase in the two questions that queried how much the students perceived themselves to be learning. In other words,

there was hard evidence that the students feel they are learning a lot! More importantly, the school reports that not one student had dropped out of the Success Academy and 75% of the 9th graders in the program have passed to the 10th grade. Those




Maury Freshman Academy teacher, Colleen Ujii (fifth from the right), and students display a community service project completed to meet the requirements of the Freshman Scholars class. Many Maury students participated after school to make a lei that adorned the USS Eisenhower when it returned from deployment in late spring 2007.

least two blocks. High expectations coupled with high support have been the keys to success, and Maury has set a benchmark of no more than 12% failure for the next freshman class. While much work remains to be done, the school believes that the project has made inroads into solving the problem of students making a successful transition from middle to high school without failure and disillusionment. Social studies teacher, Jessica Huntoon, summed up the purpose of the Maury Freshman Academy as follows, "Teachers and students within the community created a cooperative learning environment. Students at all levels worked together to help everyone become successful. There was clearly a desire among



Julian Parker in garden at Norview High School

statistics far exceeds the average across the entire freshman class!

With such encouraging results, there are plans for on-going and additional activities in the upcoming school years at both schools. In each case grants were the catalyst to get each program started, providing swift access to any necessary resources. But grant money alone can't make a successful program. In the end, it is the hard work and dedication of caring individuals that unlocked potential, helping student achieve way beyond their expectations! 

T. Rovai, A. P., Wighting, M. J., & Lucking, R. (2004). The Classroom and School Community Inventory: Development, refinement, and validation of a self-report measure for educational research. *Internet and Higher Education*, 7 (4), 263-280.



Ivan Portes (Regent SIFE student) and Dennisha Clark (Norview High School student)



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Doreatha White
Regent University Graduate
Principal of Dreamkeepers Academy
Milken Educator Award, 2002

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