

## Tennessee Appalachian Center for Higher Education (TnACHE)

Program Year 2009-2010

### *Model Program*

#### Career and Post-Secondary Exploration and Experience

**The Purpose:** To provide a program for students that will help them plan, explore, and experience the various possibilities for selecting careers in order to promote the importance and opportunities of post-secondary education and increase the number of students participating in college.

**The Plan:** Schools will create or expand a program to promote and help students and parents through the processes of career exploration, post-secondary school selection, financial aid, and admission. The school will implement the program with funding from the Tennessee Appalachian Center for Higher Education, matching funds from the school, and assistance from the school's business alliance/advisory council. The program will include all middle and/or high-school-age students in the building. The career exploration and post-secondary school program will be infused into the high school curriculum, with each year providing further steps in the process.

Parents will participate in monthly meetings to have their questions and concerns about college answered. Topics addressed will include assistance in dealing with:

- ◆ application procedures;
- ◆ selection of a suitable college;
- ◆ timely completion of applications for admission and for financial aid, including grants, scholarships, and loans; and college entrance exams.

#### **The High School Process:**

- I. Freshman Year: Freshmen are introduced to the program by using career information software that provides simple career interest surveys, information on a wide variety of careers that match the students' interests, and data on all the post-secondary schools in the region. Students also participate in career fairs at the high school and vocational school, as well as 3 to 4 field trips to local businesses and corporations. This begins the career exploration process for students.
- II. Sophomore Year: Sophomores continue to use the career information software in English classes as part of a project in the career decision process to further their knowledge of the different careers available and their options. In addition to career fairs, students will participate in field trips to different businesses

and manufacturers to experience different jobs/occupations. A selection of career and college videotapes will be acquired to further enhance the exploration. Sophomores will take the ACT PLAN test as an aid in forming career plans and identifying opportunities.

III. Junior Year: Juniors will have access to all previously mentioned materials. They will be able participate in field trips to colleges, universities, technical schools, or other post-secondary training facilities, as well as different work sites in order to be exposed to as many career and post-secondary options as possible. In the spring, juniors will be assigned a research project pertaining to their career and post-secondary selections. Videotapes, computer software, and ACT/SAT prep classes will be available. Evening meetings will be offered to parents to answer their questions and provide other assistance as needed in the process.

IV. Senior Year: Seniors continue to use the resources available to the other classes. Scholarship information will be available online. Appointments, to which parents will be invited, will be made with each senior to discuss their opportunities and ideas during the fall semester. Deadlines will be set to help encourage students to stay on task and complete the process. Students will also have the opportunity to become part of a mentor program, working with a business or corporation in the community in an effort to begin training for a specific career and start earning money for post-secondary education.

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This model was developed by Mr. Patrick Cadle, a counselor at Newcomerstown High School, Newcomerstown Exempted Village Schools in Appalachian Ohio. As a result of this model program, Newcomerstown High School increased its college attendance rate from 28 percent to 80 percent of the senior class over a five-year period.

## Components of the TnACHE Model Program

1. Research and Explore Electronic Resources – Online and video resources for students **and** parents to research/explore careers, programs, post-secondary schools and scholarships. Examples include *Education and Career Opportunities (ECOS)*, *DISCOVER*, *CHOICES*, *Tennessee Scholars*, *TCIDS*.
2. Business Alliances - Organizations formed to connect community, area businesses, and corporations to provide seamless communication with schools. This organization is instrumental in creating career and job fairs for students to inform them of careers and post-secondary needs and options.
3. Monthly Newsletter - Written by students with staff assistance and mailed to each student's home to notify parents of calendar events, special meetings, and current activities and accomplishments at school.
4. Parent Meetings - Planned and prepared by the principal and staff to provide information on school policies, upcoming events, and post-secondary procedures, including financial aid, admissions, and college placement exams. Parents have the opportunity to ask questions as well as offer input on any procedure or controversy.
5. College Fairs - Funds are utilized to transport students to college fairs outside the local district and to establish contact with post-secondary institutions for future reference.
6. Career Fair - This program should be set up to include representatives from post-secondary schools, businesses, and corporations to speak to students in a professional manner. This works as an all-day event with scheduled speakers instead of regular class periods. Morning and afternoon periods should be scheduled to allow for reflection and evaluation. This event can also include senior interviews as part of a requirement in English classes.
7. Field Trips - Provide opportunities for student and staff members to visit and observe different post-secondary institutions, businesses, and career settings.
8. Staff Visits - Staff members are encouraged to visit and observe other colleges and businesses to become more informed of various career options for students. A series of visits should be scheduled so **every teacher** becomes involved.