
SUCCESS in the Middle

Tapping the magic of relationships to support middle schoolers as they develop the skills needed for high school, college and civic life

www.successinthemiddle.wetpaint.com

The Model

- On-site coordinator (volunteer or paid)
 - Meeting, greeting, support
 - Liaison to teachers, as needed
 - Target list of students based on objective data
 - Low scores (basic skills tutoring)
 - Low grades, attendance and/or behavior (mentoring)
 - Training and materials specific to middle school
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Volunteers

- Sign-up: website (online form) or call; orientation
 - Options
 - USD259 (one-on-one, small group tutoring, mentoring, small groups, short-term, long-term)
 - Big Brothers Big Sisters (one-on-one mentoring)
 - Communities in Schools (groups, tutoring)
 - Community sites (Dellrose Methodist Church, Tabernacle Bible Church, Fairmount GoZones, Atwater Community Center)
 - Wichita State University TRIO (college awareness, prep)
 - Mental Health Association – Pathways, Compeer
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Website

- www.successinthemiddle.wetpaint.com
 - Prospective Volunteers
 - Options regarding location, times, activities
 - Sign-up (link to google docs form that collects volunteer's contact info, preferences, availability, etc.)
 - Current Volunteers
 - Orientation powerpoint and videos
 - Continuing ed resources
 - Updates for each site
 - Coordinators
 - Info for program start-up and maintenance
 - Training and resources
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The Difference (2006-07)

Brooks MAP Gains Reading

National Average: 3.63
Brooks: 4.21
DMC Not Tutored: 3.49
DMC Tutored: 8.60

Math

National: 6.13
Brooks: 4.83
DMC Not Tutored: 3.12
DMC Tutored: 6.07

Coleman MAP Gains Reading

National Average: 3.63
Coleman: 2.6
DMC Not Tutored: 1.56
DMC Tutored: 5.7

Math

National: 6.13
Coleman: 6.96
DMC Not Tutored: 4.96
DMC Tutored: 7.3

The Turning Point

Early Adolescence (10-14) *Last Best Chance...*

- Time of transition, growth, change
 - Expanding horizons, self-discovery, emerging independence
 - Childhood to adulthood
 - Relationships with peers and family take on new meaning
 - Some children are hopeful, some unclear about future
 - Adopting behavior patterns – education, health
 - Risk-taking - tentative
 - Earlier intervention important
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The Turning Point

Early Adolescence (10-14) *Last Best Chance...*

“The events of this crucially formative phase can shape an individual's entire life course and thus the future of our society.”

“Adolescence, in fact, is the last phase of life in which society has reasonably ready access to virtually the entire population, so the potential for constructive influence is great.”

Turning Points 2000, Carnegie Corporation

Characteristics

- Able to think and reason through own problems
 - Need affection and patience
 - Like to make plans and execute them
 - Like active learning – reading aloud, doing projects
 - Self-conscious and sensitive – have desire to conform
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Needs

- Positive relationships
 - Nurturing and adult guidance
 - Education (content *plus...*) and a sense of its importance
 - Life skills (*self-regulation, etc.*)
 - Strong vision of their future
 - Hope
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How Can Mentors Help?

Support students as they prepare for **SUCCESS**

Students
Undertaking
Control of their
Character,
Effort,
Skills and
Support

Character

- **Caring** - Being kind, considerate, courteous, helpful, friendly and generous to others. Being compassionate by treating others as you would like to be treated.
 - **Respect** - Showing high regard for self, others, authority, property and country. Showing appreciation for cultural diversity by valuing all people as human beings.
 - **Responsibility** - Being accountable for one's actions. Being dependable in carrying out obligations and duties. Being reliable and consistent in word and action. Being committed to your community.
 - **Integrity** - Showing the inner strength and courage to be truthful, trustworthy, fair and honest in all things, acting justly and honorably.
 - **Self-discipline** - Being in proper control of one's words, actions, impulses, emotions and desires. Demonstrating hard work, perseverance and commitment to achieve goals.
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Effort

- **Work ethic** is a greater predictor of eventual success than IQ.
- **Grades** are a better predictor of graduation rates than test scores.

“We want somebody who shows up on time, somebody who works hard, and someone who’s trainable.”

“The lack of soft skills—defined as everyday social skills, such as work ethic, verbal and nonverbal communication, attendance, interview abilities, and attitude—dominated the complaints of business leaders.”

Of greater concern to employers than academic skills was “demonstrating personal accountability and effective work habits, such as punctuality, working productively with others, time and workload management.”

Skills

- **Academic**
 - Reading – vocabulary, reading comprehension
 - Math – math facts, math vocabulary, number sense, fractions, decimals, percent
 - Study Skills – learning facts, memorizing, test prep, etc.
 - **Organization and Systems** - Agenda/planner/calendar use, time management, note-taking, etc.
 - **Job-related skills** – showing up on time, following directions, etc.
 - **Life skills** – Resilience, decision-making, problem-solving (*identify problem, identify possible solutions, pick one, try it, evaluate*), goal setting
 - **Social skills** – communication (all forms), listening
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Support

We all need support

Students need to develop a support system and ask for help when needed.

- Family (immediate & extended)
 - Friends (peers & older)
 - Teachers (school, religious, music, sports, etc.)
 - Neighbors
 - Pastors/Youth Leaders
 - Coaches
 - Counselors (school, camp)
 - Tutors
 - Mentors
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How to Support Students

- Be positive and non-judgmental
 - Encourage
 - Be a friend (not teacher, counselor, therapist, parent, police officer)
 - **Show you care and are interested**
 - Broaden knowledge of future education, lifestyle and career options
 - LISTEN
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How to Support Students

- Help students set and achieve goals
 - Practice problem-solving
 - Practice decision-making
 - Encourage good choices in influences
 - Practice verbal and written skills
 - Share your experience
 - LISTEN
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Tutoring

- Goal: independent (not isolated) learners
 - Mastery more important than completion
 - Encourage and praise for effort
 - Pull it out rather than put it in
 - Give time to think and respond
 - Encourage any response, including “I don’t know,” “would you please repeat that?” etc.
 - Check understanding by asking to be taught
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Math

- Homework, past homework/tests
 - Number sense and computation (add, sub, mult, div)
 - Math Vocabulary
 - Basic skills (Prentice Hall Intervention Skills Kit)
 - Fractions
 - Decimals
 - Percent, ratios, probability
 - Test prep for March/April assessments
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Reading

Goal: Reading Comprehension

- Make transition from learning to read to “reading to learn”
- Build fund of knowledge, vocabulary
- Interact with text - questions, main idea, summary

Tools:

- Reading Attainment
 - SRA Reading Lab 2b
 - SRA Specific Skills (main idea, sequence, following directions, etc.)
 - Social Studies/Science Book, chapter books, etc.
 - Vocabulary game (Apples to Apples, Vocabulary Vivacity, etc.)
 - Test prep (Kan-Ed website)
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Mentoring

- Individual or Small Groups
 - Six sessions or more (BBBS - school year)
 - One or more leaders (for groups)
 - Focus - Academic, career, arts and crafts, music, painting & drawing, sports, technology, chess & board games, sewing, crochet, needlework, language, service
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Small Group/Mentoring Ideas

- Book discussion
 - Up from Underachievement by Diane Heacox (esp. School Game Survey and interview)
 - What Do You Stand For, A Kids Guide to Character by Barbara Lewis
 - “How to Succeed in Middle School” – Woodburn Press
 - “Ten Tips for Getting Better Grades” – Woodburn Press
 - Life’s Greatest Lessons: 20 Things that Matter by Hal Urban
 - 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens by Sean Covey
 - Start Something (Tiger Woods/Target) – community service curriculum
 - Games (Chess, Blockus, Set, Rush Hour, Labyrinth, Cranium)
 - Sports, walk
 - Lunch and chat
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Career Focus

- Volunteers are matched with students based on Kuder results (7th grade interest survey)
 - Goal: student "gets" importance of education
 - Session activities:
 - Review of Kuder survey
 - Exploration of career pipeline website
 - Volunteer description of daily job activities, why field was chosen, what about his/her personality makes the job a good fit, etc.
 - www.careerpipeline.org
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Session Activities

- First session – get acquainted (homework?)
 - Ongoing
 - Chat, catch up, check planner, goals, org – 5 mins
 - School game survey, learning styles, etc. – 5 mins
 - Tutoring, mentoring, group - 30
 - Critical thinking – if time allows
 - Game, etc. – if time
 - Log (if group, students can complete)
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