

# Minnesota Principals Academy - Action Learning Project

## Craig Schlichting

### 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Transition Class:

Support for at-risk students.

#### Abstract

This Action Learning Project is designed to support students in skills and behaviors needed to attain credit during their high school experience. Students that have a successful start in their ninth grade year are more likely to continue that success. Freshman students that fall behind in credits also continue on the trend of failure and become further behind in being on track for graduation. The Triton High School does not currently have a credit recovery system for students other than taking summer school courses at another location. Most of these students have difficulty with transportation and end up trying to double up on courses during the next school year. Many students end up taking a double course load in a subject that they have had trouble with in the previous school year. Student that have difficulty earning credit in their core classes during their ninth grade year have an increased risk of credit attainment in the following course years; because they are doubling up on a subject in which they struggle.

Students need to accumulate 28 credits from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade in order to graduate. The most credit a student can earn each school year is 8. Once a student falls behind in credits, they do not have the opportunity to take a study hall or other electives in high school that may help them be successful.

The students that have failed freshman coursework have a difficult time staying on track to graduate as they progress in high school. Students reach a point in which they cannot make up the credit deficiency needed in order to graduate. This requires a placement in an alternative learning center. These students also have a high risk of not graduating on time or dropping out.

#### How Students Were Identified:

The students were selected for the ninth grade Transitions class based on their academic performance during middle school. This was determined by looking at homework completion data, failing grades, poor attendance and low achievement test scores.

#### Interventions:

The interventions that were used with the Transitions Class were based the STICK TO IT Framework that is outlined in (Pekel, Kent. The Perseverance Process Guidebook: A Resource for Understanding and Implementing The Strategies Suggested in the Perseverance Process Workshops. October. 2014) The Stick To It Framework was the model that was used to develop the intervention strategies.

**S**park **T**asks **I**ntelligence **C**ommunity **K**indness **T**hinking **O**bstacles **I**ncentives **T**ransitions

- Student Profile – Goals, objectives, academic awareness.
- Student Speeches
- Reading
- Student Involvement in activities
- Self Advocating
- Helping in Elementary Classrooms
- Student/Teacher Ratio
- Mindset Activity
- How to get good grades instruction

#### Questions to be Answered:

- A. Does the ninth grade Transition Class increase academic engagement?
  - a. We had a significant reduction in the number of semester failures in the first year of the Transitions class.
- B. Does the ninth grade Transition Class support at-risk students toward full credit completion , or academic success?

## Failure Data:

	Sem 1	Sem 2	Total
2014-2015	2	10	12*
2013-2014	17	19	36
2012-2013	15	17	32
2011-2012	27	9**	36
2010-2011	9	12	21

\*The total number of F's for the school year is broken down as follows...

- Transition students = 10 semester F's (6 from one student).
- Non-transition students = 2 semester F's.

\*\*The pattern is to have more failure in semester 2 of each school year. The school year that does not follow that pattern in 2011-2012 was due to the interventionist that was working with the students in the high school during semester 2.

## Adjustments for 2015-2016:

- Visit Northfield 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy – Summer 2015
  - Add 3 ring binder concept for students to help with organization
- Team members added to classroom
  - Principal
  - Counselor
  - School Resource Officer
  - Special Education Teacher
  - Algebra Instructor
- Academic Interventions
  - Khan Academy
  - Edgenuity –credit recovery system, or use for concept recovery
- Assessment of Lagging Skills and Unsolved Problems –(ALSUP) Checklist used to identify student needs.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Team Meeting – Student Assistance Team referrals
- Summer student meetings with new Transition students
- Look at Check and Connect type program for 10<sup>th</sup> grade students to maintain some type of follow through with the students that were in the Transitions Class.

## Future Data Review:

Look at the data to observe the trends with the number of students that need to be transferred to the alternative learning center due to credit deficiency and/or drop out rate. The graduating class of 2015 is represented in the 2011-2012 category when they were in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

	DNG	ALC	GR
2014-2015	NA	1	NA
2013-2014	NA	2	3
2012-2013	NA	2	2
2011-2012	3	4	5
2010-2011	4	5	NA

**DNG** = Did not graduate/or graduate on time; **ALC** = Ended up in an ALC; **GR** = Graduation Risk (struggling at the end of the year to have enough credit to graduate on time and had failures in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.