



Entrepreneurs: Katie Gray and Thomas Hughes

The Fitchburg CS<sup>2</sup> team collaborates with community stakeholders, parents, administrators, and teachers to serve students and address the school's emphasis on dropout prevention, dropout intervention, and workforce development. Through continued collaboration with the community and business stakeholders, we increased our internship placements by 75%, exposing more youth to valuable work experiences.

## SUPPORTING EDUCATION, INSPIRING CAREERS

The Fitchburg CS<sup>2</sup> initiative began in April 2006 as a result of a district-level planning team. A central focus is to promote dropout prevention and retention strategies at the high school. One Entrepreneur developed ways to fill program gaps and coordinated programs and services for disengaged youth. Here are highlights of achievements this year:

### Outreach to Parents

The High School's CS<sup>2</sup> Entrepreneur and Resource Officer made more than 70 home visits related to truancy. As a result, over 60 percent of the high school students in question improved their attendance at school. Another 10 percent were assigned to Job Corps.

### Credit Recovery School

The High School Entrepreneur planned and implemented a Saturday Tutorial Credit Recovery program, designed to help failing Fitchburg High School students recover academic credits and move forward to the next grade level. 132 students were served, and six teachers and administrators participated.

### Work-based Learning

CS<sup>2</sup> staff utilized and completed work-based learning plans (a workforce development skills assessment tool designed by the Department of Education), for seniors at the high school. Sixty-four students were successfully employed in internships.

## ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

This year CS<sup>2</sup> partnered with several local organizations to help students in the Fitchburg school system develop employability skills and strong character skills.

- North Central Chamber of Commerce
- Private employers
- The Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce
- Community-based groups

In addition, CS<sup>2</sup> collaborated with a number of area colleges and groups to foster the academic, career, and college planning needs of Fitchburg High School students:

### College Fair

The CS<sup>2</sup> office worked with the Guidance department and College Access department of Mount Wachusett Community College to recruit high school students to attend the annual College Fair held at the community college. One hundred students attended.

### Healthcare Community Service

One Entrepreneur partnered with the Montachusett Opportunity Council to implement a Community Service Learning grant program. Several students interested in healthcare were recruited and trained; they were then able to provide community service to local elderly at retirement homes.

### Student Mentors Training

One Entrepreneur coordinated tutoring and mentoring skills training through Fitchburg State College to Fitchburg High School student mentors.

## LEVERAGING RESOURCES

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Funding secured in 2006-07 included:

### Grants

- Department of Education Community Service Learning grant

## LEADING SYSTEM-WIDE INITIATIVES FOR CHANGE

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During 2006-07, the Fitchburg school district hired a second CS<sup>2</sup> Entrepreneur to provide team coaching and professional development, as well as research and design support for the Principal and Commonwealth Pilot School Design Team, at Academy Middle School. This Entrepreneur focused on best practices and structures needed to promote a positive school culture and developed a comprehensive, prevention-focused student support model for at-risk students, which will be used in the 2007-08 school year.

Spearheaded by CS<sup>2</sup>, focus groups with teachers, individual interviews with support staff, and a staff survey identified the Academy's key areas of concern. Discipline and attendance data for the 2006-07 school year were analyzed. Data revealed that achievement, motivation, and responsibility were among the top priorities for student development. Data analysis performed by the second CS<sup>2</sup> Entrepreneur provided helpful information for classroom management to teachers and staff.

The same Entrepreneur worked on a "scope and sequence" for the Advisory curriculum, as well as a structure for the Pilot School Student Support Office. She participated in outside agency service provider meetings and developed a proposal – which was accepted by the superintendent – for a staff-wide, team-building event at the Academy.

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β Member of CS<sup>2</sup> network since 2006

β 2 schools involved in CS<sup>2</sup>: Fitchburg High School and Academy Middle School

β 2 Entrepreneurs

β 662 students participated in CS<sup>2</sup> programming

β \$ 20,000 public and private funds secured

β \$ 167,650 in-kind donations secured