

Smith Vocational & Agricultural High School Northampton, Massachusetts

Entrepreneurs: Marta Montleon
and Dena Roy (not pictured)

In 2006, CS² funded a mini-grant allowing faculty and staff to create a school-wide Wellness Plan focusing on topics including student nutrition, student support programs, and faculty and staff wellness. CS² Entrepreneurs were successful in not only leading the school wide planning process but also securing a competitive Department of Public Health “Wellness in Communities, Schools and Workplace Settings” grant this year. The grant will provide new fitness, nutrition, and health opportunities for students, faculty and staff for the next three school years. As a result of these efforts, wellness will be one of three strategic priorities in the upcoming five-year plan for the school.

SUPPORTING EDUCATION, INSPIRING CAREERS

Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School (SVAHS) has two dedicated CS² Entrepreneurs who worked separately and collaboratively this year to promote the goals of the CS² initiative and the school’s mission of continuous improvement. The Administrative Capacity Building Entrepreneur focused on public awareness for the school by working with area businesses, organizations, and media, and was also active in recruitment, admissions, community outreach, and special projects. The Instructional Capacity Building Entrepreneur focused on program development and evaluation, data analysis, and grant writing; and was also involved with teacher training and strategic planning.

Over the course of nine years, CS² has played an important role in promoting programs that have a positive impact on school climate, professional development, and high student achievement. Highlights from 2006-07 include:

MCAS Remediation

CS² introduced distance learning for six students who either failed or were at risk of 10th grade MCAS failure. This was a pilot program in summer 2006 to determine the effectiveness of providing individualized student services via the Internet. In the fall, the Entrepreneurs coordinated an after-school study program for 45 students, providing targeted assistance to 11th and 12th graders preparing for re-test of either the math or English portions of the 10th grade MCAS. All students improved their scores, and six out of ten passed one or both tests. During winter and spring, a CS² Entrepreneur coordinated programs that provided remediation to thirty-five 9th and 10th graders to prepare them for the 10th grade MCAS.

Summer Programs

Five programs were developed for summer 2007:

- Vocationally based Middle School Enrichment for students in grades 5-7
- 9th grade Jump Start for students identified as at risk of 10th grade MCAS failure
- 10th grade Student Success for students identified as at risk for MCAS failure
- Blended distance-learning Credit Recovery for students employed during the summer and otherwise unable to take a summer school class in order to maintain grade placement and/or graduate with their class
- Second Chance, a pilot program providing MCAS tutoring and credit recovery for students who left school without attaining their diploma

Green Campus Initiative

CS² Entrepreneurs secured funding, coordinated graduate-level curriculum integration courses for teachers, and facilitated the development of the Sustainable and Renewable Resources Program at the high school, as well as participated in the Massachusetts DOE Clean Energy Taskforce.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Cooperative Employment

Eligible 12th graders were placed into jobs where they continued to learn their vocational program under the supervision of an employer. The program gave students a practical way to apply employability training through real work experience in the work setting, learning workplace communication skills and etiquette, and having work-related responsibilities such as paperwork, time management, and customer relations.

Public/Community Relations

A CS² Entrepreneur placed newspaper and radio advertisements throughout the year to promote programs and events and to build more community connections that would inform potential students, parents, and the surrounding region about activities at the high school.

LEVERAGING RESOURCES

Grants

Selected grants this year included:

- MA DOE – Academic Support Services
- Perkins – Curriculum Renewal
- Perkins – Vocational Technical Education Program Alignment Project
- MTC – Sustainable and Renewable Resources Project

The Entrepreneurs increased revenues through competitive grants totaling \$89,550 and non-competitive grants totaling \$90,643 to provide programs during the school year and in summer. In addition, approximately \$2,500 of in-kind materials and services was secured for student use and teacher professional development.

LEADING SYSTEM-WIDE INITIATIVES FOR CHANGE

Both Entrepreneurs were participants in the district-wide administrative team and Massachusetts DOE High Schools That Work planning teams. Their work this year included:

Small Group Training – Using MCAS Data

In conjunction with school-wide professional development and curriculum sharing, CS² provided training to 17 teachers and administrators in the interpretation and use of individual and group MCAS data using TestWiz. CS² anticipates that all teachers will be using the data analysis for curriculum development by the end of next year.

Vocational Program Evaluation

CS² developed a vocational program evaluation instrument focusing on standards, services, and student outcome data. Included in the evaluation are items related to high-risk students, dropout rates, and program completion rates. In addition, CS² coordinated a Math Institute where a plan to address low student achievement levels was developed.

Wellness Plan

A comprehensive plan was developed for the high school this year that will provide services to vulnerable youth. Its goal is for students to experience healthy development and academic success.

Site Chair and Liaison to High Schools That Work

A CS² Entrepreneur chaired the overall SVAHS site committee and served as SVAHS liaison to the High Schools That Work organization, helping the high school to continue to meet its commitment to the key practices for improvement.

Results Data (2006-07)

- Member of CS² network since 1997
- 1 school involved in CS²: Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School
- 2 Entrepreneurs
- 732 students participated in CS² programming
- \$114,401 public and private funds secured
- \$2,385+ in-kind donations secured