

JUVENILE LITERACY CENTER EXPANSION

PROPOSAL

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The Triangle Literacy Council formerly known as Literacy Council of Wake County, has established a Juvenile Literacy Center in the Wake County Courthouse which has been extremely successful in preventing recidivism of court involved youth and increasing participants' educational levels so they can successfully reintegrate into school. This model has proven effective in preventing criminal behavior, improving academic skills, and increasing emotional and social awareness for better behavior in schools, at home, and in the community. The Triangle Literacy Council proposes to establish new Juvenile Literacy Centers in neighboring counties of the Triangle starting with Durham, Harnett and Person Counties the first year and adding Granville, Franklin and Vance the second year.

The Juvenile Literacy Center (JLC) provides individual and small group tutoring for youth who are court-involved or at risk of court involvement. Weekly tutoring sessions are two or more hours and focus on developing basic literacy skills, life skills and improving academic performance. Students meet at the Wake County court house and other partner sites within the county. Expected length of stay is a minimum of five months. Successful participants will have 40 or more contact days.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One student's lack of high school completion may have a dire impact on the community. That individual is more likely to be poor, use drugs, join a gang or become a parent at a young age. The statistics are alarming. High school dropouts are three times more likely to be unemployed than those who graduate. The rate for economically disadvantaged students who did not graduate is 35%. African American students represent a disproportionately high percentage of these dropouts. Incarceration rates for high school dropouts (ages 16 -24) are also 63 times higher than for those with a college degree. (2011-2012 dropout report Public Schools of North Carolina, State Board of Education) With the high risk of incarceration, poverty and substance abuse, a high school dropout could cost tax payers more than \$200,000 over the course of their lifetime. (Breslow, Jason. By the Numbers: Dropping Out of High School. Frontline.) Another subset of those at risk of not completing high school are students with multiple school suspensions. There is a positive correlation between crime and short term suspensions which creates negative outcomes for our youth. Many of these juveniles have experienced consistent failure in traditional academic settings, which leads to apathy, misbehavior and ultimately crime. The majority of these students lack the support, resources and motivation needed to succeed in school. The Juvenile Literacy Center aims to prevent such outcomes by equipping students with tools for academic success; increasing their likelihood of graduating from high school or earning their GED and becoming productive citizens within their communities. Scholarly work has continued to strongly link academic self-efficacy with school motivation and performance. Such students "have better learning strategies, such as personal goal setting or time monitoring; and are less likely to engage in risky behaviors (for example, delinquency and substance use)" (National Association of Social Workers, 2005). Academic success will enable them to secure a better education, better jobs and a brighter future.

TARGET POPULATION

The program targets youth ages 10 to 17 who are court-involved or at risk of court involvement. Most participants are 12 to 15 years old. Some referred youth may be younger if they are court-involved or have other identified risk factors.

Court-involvement refers to young people on probation or diversion or Teen Court referred. Individuals at-risk of court-involvement are defined as those who have multiple school suspensions, attend an alternative school, identified school misbehavior, diagnosed learning disability, negative peer association or poor school attendance. Often, program participants meet two or more of these risk factors. Other at-risk youth may be Teen Court referred or receiving services from other youth agencies such as behavioral health or gang intervention. Youth may also reside temporarily in therapeutic foster care or a group home setting. The majority of youth served have been identified as having household incomes at less than 50% of the median income. The number of youth served each year is at least 150 at each site.

PROGRAM GOALS

The program's intent is twofold: to provide at-risk juveniles in the court system with direct one-on-one tutoring and/or small group classes that address basic literacy deficiencies and align with North Carolina standards; and, to prepare participants with skills necessary to be prepared for both college and/or productive jobs. The program incorporates individualized plans and seminars focused on improving study habits, test preparedness, computer skills, adult/peer interaction, organization and time management. The program also involves families by providing tutoring for siblings or other youth within the household who qualify for service and engaging parents or guardians. Equipped with the tools for academic and job success, program participants experience a lower recidivism rate into the justice system as minors and as adults. The measurable objectives used result from evidence based protocols and procedures which ensures a high success rate of students.

MEASUREABLE OBJECTIVES

75% of Participants successfully/satisfactorily completing the program will have no new adjudications in the 12 months following completion.

60% of Parents of participants will demonstrate active involvement in the program

75% of Participants who complete the program will show academic achievement and demonstrate educational gains.

75% of Participants completing the program will demonstrate a reduction in problem behaviors for which they were referred.

Through tutoring, remedial education, and supplemental activities, there will be a decrease in school behavior problems and school suspensions. The Juvenile Literacy Center will increase participants' abilities to comprehend material and participate in class while improving academic performance. Serious school behavior problems and school suspensions are directly correlated with a student's lack of academic self-efficacy and social disengagement. These factors negatively influence their behavior in school and lead to school suspensions. The Juvenile Literacy Center provides a safe space for youth to learn without the fear of failure. The program promotes school connectedness by maintaining communication with students' schools in order to clarify academic needs and by encouraging youth to be productive within the classroom. The program's school-family liaison will schedule meetings with teachers and/or school counselors and develop a plan to address those concerns. Opportunities for positive family involvement include regular contact with families, parent access to services, scheduled site visits and volunteer opportunities. The school-family liaison will schedule home visits for all court-referred youth and other program participants identified as needing additional retention support*. Other school-aged youth within the household are also eligible to participate in the program. Referral sources receive updates regarding the youths' academic progress. One of the primary goals is to promote a change of attitude towards learning. Tutors help students set positive expectations and experience success on a regular basis. To promote pro-social behavior, students will have an opportunity to explore personal interests, participate in monthly activities and seasonal service projects. Upon completion of the program, successful students will demonstrate more positive school behavior and reduced school suspensions.

^{*}Participants needing additional retention support include all court-involved youth and those who have had poor program attendance and limited parental involvement.

OPERATIONS

Students participate in individual tutoring sessions twice a week and small group sessions one to two days a week for up to two hours per session during the school year. Frequency and duration of lessons vary by program site and are based on site accommodations, youth schedule and availability for staff oversight. Youth focus on skill building for core subjects including reading, writing and math. Tutors plan lessons according to the students' individual service plan and progress at a pace that is comfortable for their student. JLC also assists participants with homework and study skills. Special emphasis is placed on preparing for End of Grade / End of Course tests. Computer literacy, time management and work readiness are other key components of the program. In the spring of 2015, we were chosen by Google Fiber and NTEN: The Nonprofit Technology Network to be a nonprofit partner in the Digital Inclusion Project. Through this initiative, students in JLC work with our Digital Inclusion Project Director James Butts, through the use of our mobile computer lab, to learn fundamental computer skills such as how to effectively navigate the Internet for research and educational purposes, email and file sharing, and basic skills for office programs. As an incentive, students attend monthly activities including field trips and participate in seasonal service projects. During the summer, programming is offered for high school and middle school youth. Programs have a STEM focus, emphasizing skill building in Science, Math and Technology. Students meet twice weekly for a total of four hours and participate in engaging, relevant lessons. The program stresses real-world application of skills and may include field trips for youth. Throughout the year, the school-family Liaison will stay involved with family members, school personnel, and court counselors to ensure a macro approach to improving services for juveniles and their outcomes.

STAFFING

Laura Walters, the President and CEO of the Triangle Literacy Council since July 2003, has over 20 years of nonprofit management experience. She has a degree in Public Administration and holds a Certificate in Non-Profit Management from Duke University. She recently stepped down as the President of the North Carolina Literacy Association after a tenure of 10 years. Laura regularly attends national conferences on literacy training including those by the Commission on Adult Basic Education, the National Center for Family Literacy, NC Basic Skills and Family Literacy, ProLiteracy and others. Her training and experience make her an excellent administrator of basic skills literacy programs, as well as other complementary programs at the Triangle Literacy Council. The President and CEO will oversee the program and ensure grant compliance.

Director of Juvenile Literacy Programs: Regina Basnight, has been working with youth for more than ten years. Regina oversees the daily functions of the Wake County based program and will be a key player in the expansion to other counties. Her primary roles are to manage students' development, monitor progress, work with parents, interact with court personnel and other partners, and recruit new volunteers. She also facilitates tutor training and small group classes and provides direct tutoring services.

Director of Educational and Career Initiatives: Rachel Porter holds a Ph.D. in Education and works with the President and CEO and the Director of Juvenile Literacy Programs to ensure that JLC follows best practice teaching methods and child development practices. Rachel evaluates and tracks students' progress while the student is enrolled in the program and schedules follow up appointments to ensure that the student is maintaining a healthy and positive lifestyle beyond their time with JLC.

Program Manager and Instructor: A Program Manager and an Instructor will be installed at each site to teach small group classes at program sites. Both will compile resources to develop the program curriculum to target individual student needs and align with North Carolina Common Core Standards. They will maintain an online resource site for tutors. The Program Instructor compiles existing academic materials and develops new resources for students.

Instructor and School-Family Liaison: A full-time school-family liaison will schedule home visits for court-involved youth and those at risk youth identified as needing additional retention support. This staff person will meet with school staff to develop an improvement plan for youth referred due to school behavior issues and develops monthly incentive activities for participants, facilitates seasonal service projects and parental engagement programs, and provides additional

administrative support for the program. The school family liaison will have a four-year degree and a background in social work or similar field. Staff members regularly attend appropriate training workshops and conferences over the course of the year to meet standards for best practice.

JLC Volunteers: Volunteers serve as literacy mentors to the youth who participate in the program. Each volunteer submits an application and references. Volunteers are also interviewed by program staff and undergo a criminal background check. Once volunteers have met the requirements of the application process, they attend a 12 hour mandatory orientation and training. Experienced consultants and trainers work with the JLC staff to provide quality inservice opportunities.

ADMISSION PROCESS

Student Referral: Students are referred to the program by juvenile court, teen court, County Public Schools, law enforcement and other youth-serving agencies. The program manager is responsible for deciding if a referral should or should not be accepted. A referral may not be accepted if the student is not court-involved or at risk of court involvement.

Interview Process: Students and legal guardians attend an intake meeting during which time they are made aware of the program guidelines, develop an individualized service plan and complete additional intake forms. Students complete a brief interview focused on school experience, interests and goals.

Intake Assessment and Scoring: Once students complete the first part of the intake process, they complete a TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) assessment that determines their proficiency in reading, writing and math. Once assessments are scored, the staff develops an individualized service plan for each student. This service plan will guide the lesson planning process.

Referral sources are notified when a referred student completes intake and starts tutoring. To ensure that the program of study is of sufficient intensity for the students to progress and achieve, tutors and students are required to do the following on a monthly basis:

- 1. Evaluate the student's working portfolio in order to recognize and celebrate significant achievements in learning.
- 2. Complete a monthly tutor report which documents individual student/tutor needs and concerns, instruction and preparation, and goals that are in progress or have been completed.

Referral sources will be made privy to these data collection tools. Regular meetings with these individuals will be scheduled as needed. Referral sources also receive monthly updates on student progress and are contacted regarding any concern with student behavior, attendance, etc. Referring agencies receive most student updates electronically following all confidentiality laws, but they also have access to hard copies of student reports.

INTERVENTION/TREATMENT

Each Juvenile Literacy Center's efforts will lead to improvement in participants' academic performance and pro-social behavior. As students experience success and personal growth, energies directed toward inappropriate youth behavior will be channeled into constructive and more rewarding endeavors -- both academic and character-building. Tutors will plan sessions to address inappropriate school behavior with guidance from the school-family liaison. Behavioral issues within the program will be addressed by the case worker and school-family liaison. Further, the school-family liaison will provide resources to parents/guardians of participants to support participants' academic and personal growth and create an environment conducive to academic enrichment in the home.

Because educational deficiencies can be inter-generational, the Triangle Literacy Council will refer adult literacy programs to the parents/caregivers of participants. Home and site visits by the school-family liaison, seminars and educational resources will be offered to parents/caregivers and program participants and other youth within the home

to reinforce the need for an intergenerational approach to fostering a home culture of learning and appreciation of school success. Life skills seminars on topics such as study habits, health and nutrition, computer literacy and public safety will be offered to participants and caregivers to provide information on important subjects for the healthy development of the child and to provide an opportunity for caregivers and participants to interact in an educational environment. Students and parents will have opportunities to participate in joint service projects and specific monthly activities.

BEST PRACTICES USED

The Juvenile Literacy Center adheres to a best practice model with evidence based outcomes which includes assessments of program effectiveness, individual juvenile planning, multi-sensory instruction, skills based interventions and family involvement. The program also meets Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP) standards for a remedial academic program by addressing the individual risk factors of academic failure and school behavioral problems. Assessments of program effectiveness are integral to the success of the JLC and aid in the development of clear, well defined educational goals for students. The program incorporates data-based decision making through frequent progress measures, monthly reports and exit surveys. Students are also pretested and post-tested using the TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education). All students are held to high performance standards. Individual juvenile planning is also very important. Students work in a small, supportive learning environment. They receive guidance and assistance in meeting personal goals for success in the program. Lesson plans are modified as needed and tutors work at the student's pace. Multi-sensory Instruction appeals to the learning needs and styles of our students. The program's primary emphasis is on developing reading skills through phonics instruction (as needed), fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Students also focus on math and writing skills. Hands-on materials, computer-based resources and interactive exercises keep students engaged and make the learning process more enjoyable. JLC's Skills-Based Interventions extend beyond typical classroom instruction to aid students in developing positive and healthy social skills, and help them learn essential life skills as they prepare for the future. Youth will participate in monthly activities including educational seminars, social activities and service projects. Thanks to the generosity of the community, participating youth and their families have attended Carolina Hurricanes games, where they had private box seats, as well as the circus and other community programs.

BUDGET SUMMARY

The Juvenile Literacy Centers receive donations of office space so overhead is very low. There are no costs associated with utilities or rent. Most program costs are needed for instructors and the purchase of educational materials. Many local agencies and corporations provide other needed program supplies such as computers, nutrition, and age appropriate books and supplies. Using high quality volunteer tutors ensures staffing costs are kept low and they can focus on instruction and improvement of each student.

With the proposed establishment of three new Juvenile Literacy Centers in Harnett, Durham and Person counties the first year, the budget reflects the cost to operate those three centers. The second year will add three more Juvenile Literacy Centers in Granville, Franklin and Vance counties. The first year budget will double the second year since 6 sites will be operating at the same cost rate as the first year

Budget - 1st Year 2016/2017

Juvenile Literacy Center Cost Per Site	\$115,000
Expansion into Durham, Person and Harnett Counties Total Cost	\$345,000

Budget - 2nd Year 2017/2018

Juvenile Literacy Center Cost Per Site	\$115,000
Continuing operations in Durham, Person and Harnett Counties	\$345,000
2nd Year Expansion into Franklin, Granville and Vance Counties	\$345,000
Total for Year Two Operations Serving 6 Counties	\$690,000

BUDGET PER SITE

GRAND TOTAL		\$115,	000
Educational Materials and Supplies Textbooks, Dictionaries, Practice Tests and Fees, Curriculum and other necessary supplies High School Equivalency Diploma tests in colocal community colleges.	lies. Provision of	Total:	\$5,000
 Back up services including purchasing, bookkeeping, and staff administration. 	\$18,000		45.000
Administrative Support			
 Follow up of program participants, preparation of instructional materials and supplies, information resources for participants, referrals. 	\$19,000		
 Preparation of lesson plans, curriculums, providing appropriate support for students and parents/caregivers. 			
Instructor and School/Family Liaison	\$34,000		
 Full time program manager and instructor to provide program management, recruit students and volunteers, ensure appropriate academic services, and act as liaison to court, school and law enforcement personnel. 	\$39,000		
Program Manager/Instructor		Total:	\$110,000