

DOINGWHATWORKS



PRESENTATION

4:18 min



Students Want to Come to School

Jefferson Davis High School, Texas

April 2011

Topic DROPOUT PREVENTION

Practice LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Highlights

- » Davis High School has developed a culture of high expectations, and the graduation coach believes that this is related to creating an atmosphere where students want to come to school and learn.
- » A large team of staff members hold weekly dropout meetings to determine which students to focus on for dropout prevention and to make sure that recovered students are appropriately supported.
- » There are two online programs for students to recover the credits they need to graduate.
- » Davis High School embodies a culture of celebration, which contributes to students' sense of belonging at school.

About the Site Jefferson Davis High School
Houston, TX

Demographics

- » 89% Hispanic
- » 10 % Black
- » 1% White
- » 92% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

- » 15% Special Education
(Houston Independent School District, District and School Profiles, 2009-10)

Jefferson Davis High School implements multiple strategies to ensure that all students graduate fully prepared to pursue their postsecondary goals:

- » Staff use middle school student achievement and nonacademic outcome data to monitor students' progress toward graduation and postsecondary readiness, providing interventions for struggling students and those at risk
- » A ninth-grade mentoring program provides students with supportive adult relationships
- » Students can enroll in programs that provide tutoring, family support, college workshops, counseling, and dropout recovery success
- » To foster a sense of community among students, the school sets high expectations, holding students accountable, and celebrates their successes

Full Transcript



Slide 1: Welcome

Welcome to Students Want to Come to School.



Slide 2: Changing school culture

I am Duane Clark. I am the graduation coach here at Davis High School in Houston, Texas. The culture at Davis has changed over time strictly by the expectations that have changed in our students, our faculty, and our staff. Recently the culture has geared more towards accomplishment of high expectations. Not only do students want to come to school now, now they actually want to learn. By result, the graduation rate has just naturally increased.



Slide 3: Weekly dropout meetings

One thing we have is our weekly dropout meetings. The official meetings happen once a week. It is comprised of every administrator on campus along with their clerk. It is comprised of the counselors. It is also comprised of the dropout specialist, our truancy officer, graduation coach, parents from off campus, and our head principal. At these meetings basically what we do, every week we have a different agenda and we go through kids' files, determine who it is that we really need to focus on this week.



Slide 4: Returning students

And also we look at kids that we looked at the previous week that we got back in—what are we doing for them once they are here? We find those kids the first two or three weeks that they are back, talk to them, make them feel like not only do we want you to be back for numbers but we also want you to be back for yourself. Because we put so much effort into making sure when a student comes back they have a program in place for them, the student sees that there is a certain level that they are going to have to reach. When a student comes back, it is expected of them to do well.



Slide 5: Program systems

Currently we have two different program systems that we use for credit recovery here. Both are hybrids; they are online and written assignment programs that we have. The online process allows students to learn and gain credits in a nontraditional manner. They can do it both here at the school, they can do it at home. They can do most of those anywhere they have a computer with Internet access. It has things in there that's going to allow the student to catch up a lot faster, but also it's going to be able to make sure that they get the rigor and they get the content that is necessary. A student can possibly

make up a full year along with the courses that they are taking if they put in the work and effort for it.



Slide 6: Credit recovery programs

We tailor the credit recovery programs to each individual student that comes in, especially our dropouts, according to where their strengths are and where their weaknesses are. So every time a student comes into credit recovery, myself and the counselors sit down, look at the child's academic history, look at the child's current schedule, where they are on their path to graduation, and individualize exactly what courses will be taken. The credit recovery programs have raised expectations of the students more than anything because now they know they have another opportunity to graduate. So now they feel that if I am not automatically good in a class or maybe this process is not working out for me, I don't have to give up. I have other options.



Slide 7: Celebrations

At Davis High School we celebrate everything, and those celebrations have raised everybody's expectations to the maximum. Our principal, Jaime Castaneda, celebrates everything from our soccer team making it to the regional finals to one of our students winning the dessert round in a cooking competition. We have ceremonies to give jackets out to students simply because they make good grades. And that all in itself has afforded the students a different look on high school. Because the students can be celebrated, they can be cherished, they can be recognized at any point in time, it gives them all the reason to be here. When students feel like everybody knows their name, the teachers know who they are, and they feel congratulated on things, they want to come to school a lot more. Everybody is invested. The teachers care, so the students care.



Slide 8: Learn more

To learn more about learning environments, please explore the additional resources on the Doing What Works website.