



## **CHARTING FOR SUCCESS®**

*A curriculum for providing multiple pathways to college for middle and high school students*

### **Our Work**

Every nine seconds a student drops out of school. So long as there is a crisis in American public education that causes young people to drop out at an alarming rate, Communities In Schools will lead the charge to transform our educational system and create a nation without dropouts. We work within the school system to address underlying factors that impede student success.

Our network of nearly 5,000 passionate professionals coordinates or provides resources that enable all students, regardless of race or class, to succeed. We serve the most vulnerable students in the most dropout-prone school districts. We are actively engaged with policy makers, school staff, parents and business partners to ensure that Communities In Schools' services are extended to as many K-12 students as possible and that those students have access to college.

All students will need to graduate from high school ready to compete in a global economy. In this complex world, students must be primed for college and career readiness. Through our work with ThinkCOLLEGE®, the Performance Learning Centers®, and our local affiliates in Georgia and North Carolina, the Charting for Success curriculum was designed by the Communities In Schools national office to address and positively influence career and college readiness.

### **Our College-Access Curriculum**

The Charting for Success (CFS) curriculum modules were developed to provide a streamlined, comprehensive approach to college and career information for the students served. The curriculum creates and models a college-going culture for the high schools students at Communities In Schools partner schools.

The manuals' lessons are intended to guide students through the information and steps necessary to move toward a post-high-school plan of action. The curriculum engages both students and parents in planning for post-secondary education and/or training. Through lessons, activities and events, the manual addresses the key steps for future academic and career success: academic preparation, college/career exploration, college financing and financial literacy.

The goals of the CFS curriculum are:

- 1) Engage Communities In Schools students in planning and preparing for post-secondary training and education, by providing career-awareness and career-exploration activities;
- 2) Increase the number of high school graduates ready for college and post-secondary success through a variety of college-access activities;
- 3) Help students transition to post-secondary education by teaching parents and students about the valuable link between high school and college success, providing information on college requirements and the preparation process, and exploring the financial aid options that make college more affordable.

Lessons are designed with the facilitator in mind, leading him or her through the material in a concise, easy-to-follow manner. Modules walk students through the process of determining what post-secondary plan of action is right for them. Each lesson provides the facilitator with a brief overview. The objective of and desired outcomes for each lesson let students know what they should take away from that lesson in the form of knowledge gained or

tasks performed. Extensions and modifications offer ideas for creative input on the part of the facilitator, as different groups of students participating in a given lesson will not all need the same level or intensity of instruction. Additional resources are provided to allow for more in-depth research by the facilitator as needed.

## Implementing Charting for Success

The CFS curriculum has been developed with a typical 36-week school year in mind. The curriculum has two core modules, CFS 101 and CFS 102. Each module has 24 lessons. It is expected that the facilitator will lead students through lessons 1-12 (of CFS 101 and CFS 102) during the first semester. Lessons 13-24 of CFS 101 and CFS 102 should take place during the second semester. In short, this means that a mentor or staff member has 18 weeks to complete 12 lessons each semester, leaving flexibility for testing, unexpected events, etc.

Most lessons can be completed in a 45-minute block of time and require 15 minutes of planning by each CFS facilitator. CFS 101 can support 7<sup>th</sup>- and 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students and CFS 102 can support 9<sup>th</sup>- through 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students. If implementing CFS in a high school setting, freshmen and sophomores complete CFS 101, and juniors and seniors complete CFS 102.

Engagement of students actively planning for college and career success is most beneficial when a parent or guardian reinforces the CFS curriculum. "Parent Events" are woven into the curriculum to build the support of students and parents to navigate post-secondary success. An example of an event, the "Dress for Success Lunch and Learn," takes place outside the traditional classroom in conjunction with a luncheon. Community members, volunteers and mentors are all invited to participate as luncheon speakers to talk about their careers and answer student questions.

## Importance of College and Career Readiness

As stated earlier, the goal of the Charting for Success curriculum is to influence and guide students' post-secondary choices and pursuits. The curriculum is a starting point, a portal through which the individual volunteers, mentors and/or college coaches will begin their delivery of college-access information and services, as they attempt to guide each student in his or her transition to post-high-school success.

Key findings from two reports, *Reclaiming the American Dream* (October 2006) and *Getting There and Beyond* (January 2007), have also been incorporated into the content and structure of Charting for Success. These findings include:

- 1) Providing college access entails building a "college culture" through academic momentum; high expectations for college-going; a clear mission statement; comprehensive college services; and coordinated involvement of teachers, parents, the community and colleges in delivering college readiness activities.
- 2) Linking students' expectations to the fact that a college degree will be essential to pursue desired careers is vital. Students making this connection are six times more likely to receive a college degree than those who do not.
- 3) Having a group of peers who are also planning to attend college has more influence than parental encouragement alone.
- 4) Offering activities that address college affordability are important for all students, especially for economically disadvantaged students who need reliable information and assistance with the financial aid process.

Through personal relationships and direct interventions that encourage student success, Communities In Schools helps students achieve their potential, explore their interests and pursue their dreams. Charting for Success can be utilized as a tool to prepare students for career and college achievement in our complex world.