

TRACK 2 SUCCESS – AN ADVISORY PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION:

To succeed in the world today, students need more than just reading, writing, and arithmetic. They need to be **ready**, to have a **plan**. Just graduating from high school isn't enough anymore and tomorrow, just graduating from college may not be enough either. Students have a whole world in front of them filled with excitement and opportunities. But many of these opportunities will only be available to those who have planned ahead for what they hope to achieve after graduation, and what they need to accomplish while they're still in school.

RESEARCH:

South Carolina enacted the Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA) that affirms the importance of a comprehensive school counseling program to help students prepare for their futures. When we were researching different programs to help deliver to our students even more, we conducted a student survey on what were the “issues/concerns” that affected them succeeding in school? The results of that survey were eye opening to say the least. The number 1 concern that our students mentioned – **They did not feel that there was an adult at school who cared about them**; number 2 concern – **How do you get good grades**; number 3 – **Students need to have more school involvement and school pride**; and finally number 4 – **College information**. And that's why we, South Aiken High School, implemented Track 2 Success, a curriculum based advisory program. Student's planning for their futures must be approached like any other academic subject: as a fundamental skill that requires focus and practice, and must be organized around clearly stated goals, beliefs, and curriculum.

ANALYSIS:

Track 2 Success was derived from Navigation 101, a program implemented in the Washington State Public School System. It is an innovative way to help our students successfully prepare for life in the 21st Century. It reflects key aspects of the American School Counselor Association's National Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs (CSCP). It has allowed us to build a program that is targeted to our students' needs and their families' expectations and it can help us develop a full, systemic counseling and guidance effort that fits perfectly with the EEDA legislation.

Track 2 Success is built around five key goals; **Equalizing opportunities, Strengthening student engagement, Raising student achievement, Involving families and Building communities**.

Every student in our school deserves equal access to the information and skills that will prepare them for the opportunities of the future. We believe that this goal, which is fundamental to students' ability to excel academically, realize their dreams for the future, and become productive and participating members of our community, can and must be reached through access to a full and comprehensive school counseling program.

A comprehensive, developmental program of guidance and counseling is based on the assumption that all school staff is involved. At the same time, it is understood that professionally certified

school counselors are central to the program. School counselors not only provide direct services to students but also work in consultative and collaborative relations with other members of the guidance team, members of the school staff, parents, and members of the community. We faced a challenge: students with different backgrounds had very different experiences at school. Generally, students from higher income families knew what they had to do to prepare for opportunities after graduation; students from lower income families, particularly those who would be the first in their family to attend college, often didn't know what to do, or even how to ask for help. As a result, counseling and guidance services were often skewed in favor of those with families who had experience with postsecondary options.

Many of our students, at all income levels, don't make or take seriously, the connection between school and "real life." Too many students each year become discouraged or disengaged and either fail or drop out. Those that manage to graduate aren't prepared for life after high school. Many of our students don't have the skills they need to enroll in college-level classes and have to pay to take pre-college, remedial courses. Many haven't taken the right courses in high school to qualify for the postsecondary programs they want.

PROGRAM:

Our Track 2 Success program is curriculum based and grade specific. Although closely aligned between each grade, the curriculum is geared for students by specific grade. We are currently set up to meet once per week, every Wednesday for 35 minutes. This time is created by taking 5 minutes from each of the 7 regular periods that day. Each faculty member has been assigned as an advisor to a group of students (advisees), grade specific. The intent is that each faculty advisor will remain with the same students for their four years through graduation. Once their advisory class graduates, the following year they would then have 9th grade advisees.

The curriculum consists of 19 lessons for each grade. Each advisor has a binder with a copy of each lesson. Each lesson is set up in lesson plan format. For each grade there are also 2 faculty volunteers that serve as "lead" advisors. The "lead" advisors, in addition to serving as an advisor, make copies of the required materials for the other grade level advisors. They also have more detailed lesson information in order to help any teacher that needs it.

Lesson 1 - *Getting Acquainted.* This opening lesson is covered over two Track 2 Success sessions. The advisor introduces themselves to the class, discusses the purpose of Track 2 Success, what it is about and that students will be creating a portfolio this year and would need to bring in a binder. There are different "get acquainted" exercises that can be used to help the students get to know each other and their advisor. The second meeting is spent starting the portfolios. Each advisor receives the contents of their advisee's Career Folders, if they were available. The students will then place the information from these folders into their portfolio. They also start to decorate their portfolios, so that students will feel a personal sense of ownership. Students will be filing work in their portfolios throughout the year.

Lesson 2 - *Building Community.* The focus here is getting students involved in the school and learning to become good citizens and leaders. There is a variation for each grade. For example, the 9th grade classes have 11th graders assigned to discuss getting involved and how it can help them in school. The 11th graders then discuss what they are involved in and how it has influenced them in school. The advisor then distributes a handout that lists all the clubs, organizations and sports teams that are available for the 9th graders. The focus for 10th, 11th and 12th grade is focused more on continuing involvement. All students then have to begin developing a Community/Citizenship goal they want to accomplish this year.

Lesson 3 - *Academic Success.* This lesson is very grade specific and will be covered over two Track 2 Success sessions. All grades will begin with a discussion of their recent interim grades and their importance to academic success. Students will also be developing at least one academic goal they want to accomplish this year. Additionally, 9th grade will have a lesson devoted to the different learning styles (visual learner, auditory learner, and kinesthetic learner). They will get insight into how each of them learns best and why. They will also understand how to apply this information to help them improve academically in school. 10th grade will review the different post-secondary assessments that will be offered or taken in 10th grade. They will get an understanding of what each assessment is used for as well as the importance of being able to take these assessments. 11th grade will review the important post-secondary milestones that they should be concentrating on during junior year. For those that might be behind, a review of the post-secondary assessments will be available providing them another opportunity to take advantage of them if they haven't already done so. 12th grade will review the important post-secondary milestones that seniors should be concentrating on during senior year. They will also discuss the importance of finishing senior year with a strong effort academically and not slacking off.

Lesson 4 - *Exploring Careers.* This lesson is grade specific and will be covered over two Track 2 Success sessions. All grades will be developing at least one career goal for the year. To help them in creating their goal, they will take a Career Assessment to help them continue to see where their interests lie (9th grade take the SDS, 10th thru 12th grade will take O'NET). Additionally, 9th grade will concentrate more on career areas of interest or on career clusters of interest (what do I want to be?). Emphasis will also be placed on what courses they should take in their remaining years of high school to prepare them for different career fields. They will explore what type of post-secondary education might be required for different career fields that they may be interested in. 10th grade will be expected to take a more focused approach to career exploration and select a career major. They will continue to explore that career and make sure that they are registering for the types of courses in high school that will better prepare them for their chosen career path. Job shadowing, or internships should also be looked at now as well. 11th grade should be focusing on a chosen career and education path. This is the time when they should know what education is required, to be what they want to be, and make sure that they are ready, with a plan to fulfill those requirements. 12th grade should be putting the finishing touches on their final plan. Making sure they have done everything necessary to maximize their choices upon graduation based on their chosen plans.

Lesson 5 - *Setting Goals.* This lesson is designed for each student to now commit to at least one goal for each area, Citizenship, Academic, and Career, and write them down (studies have shown that students tend to accomplish their goals when they are written down). They can simply copy the goals that they began in the previous three lessons or create new ones. It is very important that each student create and write down their goals. Advisors will periodically check with each student to see if they are progressing toward their goals.

Lesson 6 - *Building Community.* This lesson is designed for each student as a follow up and review of their citizenship goal and where they stand. Advisors can suggest a class project that all students can take advantage of to help students that are struggling. It is important to get students involved.

Lesson 7 - *Improving Academically.* This lesson is grade specific and will be covered over two Track 2 Success sessions. All grades will complete an Academic Inventory of their present classes and how they are doing in them. 9th, 10th and 11th grade students will also identify the factors that are contributing to their current performance, where they are doing well

academically and where they need improvement. These students will then develop a plan for how they will do better academically in those classes where they are not doing as well. In addition, 9th graders will learn various study skills that can help them improve academically. They will also have a **Lesson 7E - *Wise Choices/Smart Decision***. This lesson is designed to help students make good decisions. It provides them with a strategy, called IDEAL, that they can use when faced with decisions in their lives or at school. 10th graders will be introduced, via a handout and discussion, to the CTE and Dual credit course options that are available to them within SAHS and the Aiken County Career Center/Aiken Tech or USC-Aiken. 11th graders will review a general handout on College Requirements. They will also receive a handout for the CTE/Dual credit course options that are available to them. 12th graders will record their progress toward graduation. They will identify the courses and credits they have taken and achieved in their previous three years. They will also record what courses/credits they need to complete, this year, in order to graduate, and what, if anything, needs improvement. They will then complete a Post-Secondary Checklist to make sure that they have everything they need to fulfill their post-secondary plans.

Lesson 8 - *Exploring Careers*. This lesson is grade specific. All students will have access to their career assessments that they completed in an earlier lesson. With this information, 9th graders will explore in detail the 16 different Career Clusters. They will review a list of the 16 career clusters, a brief description of that cluster, a focus area identifying what is included in that cluster, and a few sample jobs/careers that would be found within that cluster framework. 10th graders will also receive the 16 Career Clusters handout as a review. They will also receive a Career Majors handout. This handout lists all of the majors that are available to them at SAHS and the individual courses that can be taken to complete each major. This allows students to begin taking classes in their junior and senior years that would be of interest to them and would help prepare them for their selected post-secondary path. 11th graders will receive a job shadowing package. Although open to all students over the age of 15, junior year is when we strongly encourage our students to job shadow in their chosen major. Job shadowing is an excellent way for students to learn and observe first hand what a possible career might be like. 12th graders will receive a Financial Plan Worksheet. Seniors will take their post-secondary plans and begin to build a financial plan around it. The intent here is for seniors to get an idea of the costs associated with their choices and how they can pay for or cover those costs.

Lesson 9 - *Exploring Careers*. This lesson is grade specific and some of the work may need to be completed outside of the normal Track 2 Success class time. 9th graders, using the information and knowledge from lesson 8, will complete a Career Clusters Worksheet. As additional support they will receive a document that outlines the CTE/Dual Credit options that are available to them for the next three years. 10th graders will be expected to do some independent study to complete their Career Information Interview Reflection. They can either apply to do a job shadow and gather this information or they can use a computer to participate in a virtual job shadow. In either case the information will have to be gathered outside of Track 2 Success. 11th graders will complete the Post-Secondary Comparisons worksheet. What will they do after high school? What type of post-secondary education will be required? Since almost all careers today require some amount of post-secondary education, you will select at least three post-secondary institutions that offer their selected “major”. Then they will complete the Post-Secondary Comparisons Chart. 12th graders complete the Career Exploration Reflection Worksheet.

Lesson 10 - *Planning for Life After High School*. This lesson is grade specific and some of the work may need to be completed outside of the normal Track 2 Success class time. 9th graders conduct an interview or listen to a virtual job shadow with someone in a career of interest to them. Try and answer as many questions as possible from the list provided to you on the Career Information Interview Form. 10th graders will complete the Post-Secondary Worksheet.

Based on their potential career interests, what types of post-secondary education may be required? 11th graders will explore how to pay for college (post-secondary education). Students need to review the documentation provided and become familiar with the SC scholarships and how to conduct scholarship searches using other database websites. 12th graders should be encouraged to work on and complete post-secondary applications and finalize plans. Advisors should review their student's plans and make sure that they are keeping up with all of the documentation.

This is also a good time for all students to make sure that their portfolios are organized and up-to-date. They can also continue to personalize them if time permits.

Lesson 11 - *Planning for Life After High School.* This lesson provides an opportunity for advisors to have students complete anything that was not completed, or needed to be completed outside of normal Track 2 Success time. If you were having a guest speaker, they could be scheduled for this meeting. You can also use this time to review individual portfolios for completeness.

Lesson 12 - *Planning for Next Year.* For 9th, 10th, and 11th graders this lesson is about reviewing the course and credit requirements to graduate from high school in South Carolina, reviewing the course and credit requirements to attend college, and reviewing the Career and Technology programs available in Aiken County. Based on those various requirements and the students documented plans for their future, these students will then complete their Four Year Plan showing the courses they have and/or are taking for any previous years as well as the courses that they want to take for their remaining years. 12th graders will complete their High School & Beyond Plan Worksheet and their IGP Worksheet (writing in courses on their IGP is optional).

Lesson 13 - *Planning for Next Year.* For 9th, 10th, and 11th graders this lesson is about beginning the registration process for next years classes. Students will be given their course registration form, and given the information and deadline as to when the form must be completed and turned in. The course selections should be guided by their Four Year Plan, post-secondary plans, career choices for your future, and South Carolina graduation requirements. 12th graders will begin reviewing the requirements for and working on their final High School & Beyond Plan.

Lesson 14 - *Building Community.* For 9th, 10th, and 11th graders this lesson is simply a review of what they are doing to become more involved in their school community. This is a good time to plan another group activity for advisees if they need one. 12th graders will be working on their High School & Beyond essay.

Lesson 15 - *Planning For Life After High School.* This lesson is grade specific. 9th graders will use what they learned in previous lessons to complete a basic High School & Beyond Plan worksheet. They will use this same information to complete an IGP (listing their current courses and planned courses for next year is optional based on them completing their four year plan previously). 10th graders will use what they learned in previous lessons to complete a more detailed High School & Beyond Plan worksheet. They will use the same information to complete an IGP (listing their current courses and planned courses for next year is optional based on them completing their four year plan previously). 11th graders will use what they learned in previous lessons and what their plans for the future are to complete a High School & Beyond Plan Checklist. They will also use the same information to complete an IGP (listing their current courses and planned courses for next year is optional based on them completing their four year plan previously). 12th graders will continue to prepare their High School & Beyond Plan.

Lesson 16 - *Preparing for Student-Led Conferences.* For 9th, 10th, and 11th graders this lesson is about getting the student to understand what the student-led conference is about. This is

like the previous IGP meetings except we are asking the student to run this meeting. The student invites their parent(s) and presents to them their future plans by demonstrating what they have accomplished this year. The students will be presenting information which they have filed in their portfolio. It is describing the classes that they will be taking next year, what plans they have made for themselves after high school and how they plan on making these plans reality. Presentations will become more precise as they progress in grade. 12th graders will be making their final presentations. Therefore these presentations are called *Senior Projects*.

Lesson 17 - *Using Money*. This lesson is grade specific. 9th graders will learn the importance of budgeting; what is a budget? , why create a budget? how to create a budget? These are questions that are answered during this lesson. Students will also be given an opportunity to create a sample budget and learn the impact of different wages on the budget. 10th graders will learn about banking. The lesson covers using banks to save money. It goes into more detail regarding the various savings tools that are available along with a brief description of them. It also goes into some detail about borrowing money from banks. It culminates with how to manage a checking account. There is an exercise around how to keep track of and balance a checking account. 11th graders will begin to develop a financial plan by completing the Financial Plan Worksheet. This will allow them to get a better handle on the cost of their education after high school and get them thinking about how to pay for it. For 12th graders the lesson centers around credit reports. It begins by describing the questions; what are credit report?, what does a credit report mean?, and how do I keep a good credit report?

Lesson 18 - *Planning for Life After High School*. Some of this lesson may be done outside of class. Judgment should be used here concerning jobs and resumes and the Financial Credit Worksheet. All grades will talk about summer jobs. The lesson can then get into detail about creating a resume. Each student should create a resume that can be used for helping them get a job. If students already have a good resume the same lesson can also be used to help these students update their resume. If students would be better served with good credit information, the emphasis can be placed here. All students need to be aware of the benefits and dangers of using credit. At the same time resumes are also an important tool for students to have.

Lesson 19 - *Making the Transition*. This is the end of the year wrap up lesson. Ask the students in all grades what was good and what was not so good for them this year. Take time to celebrate yours and their accomplishments. Have fun!