Community Connections Career Partnership – Ohio

OVERVIEW

July 30, 2015

The Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA), in collaboration with the Ohio Alliance of Direct Support Professionals (OADSP) have developed a plan that will provide at-risk students an opportunity to learn about the field of direct support through in-class training, on-site internships, and the opportunity to earn the Certificate of Initial Proficiency (CIP) and the Certificate of Advance Proficiency (CAP) through the Ohio Alliance of Direct Support Professionals. The outcome of this program is to reduce the high school drop-out rate by giving each student an opportunity to learn about a career that is in need of qualified workers, provides flex credits, and educates through mentorship. Following graduation, students will be encouraged to apply for jobs as direct support professionals. These full-time jobs are in demand and come with full benefits, as well as opportunities for advancement. By having earned the CIP and CAP credentials, the students will have an excellent advantage of being hired by any I/DD direct service provider in the State of Ohio.

At South Western City Schools, the first program will start at Franklin Heights High School. Sophomore students who were enrolled in the Career Based Intervention (CBI) class were encouraged to apply. Of the students interviewed, a total of 13 students will participate in the first class. The program will begin in the 2015-16 school year. This class will begin in their junior year of high school and will be completed by the end of the school year with the students earning their CIP credential. While working on the coursework, students will also participate in a four-day per week internship at area providers who serve a diverse population, which will ensure a well-rounded career experience. Students can then continue during their senior year to earn their CAP credential. Stipends for completion of both the CIP and CAP will be awarded at a graduation ceremony.

It is estimated that 20,000+ students currently in their sophomore year of high school are in Career Based Intervention classes throughout Ohio. When these students enter their junior year there is no other structured option for them to build skills and gain experience that will lead to a career. Currently, the direct support workforce is in need of qualified workers throughout Ohio. According to US Department of Labor statistics, direct care is the #1 job in demand. Involvement in the C3P(O) program will provide specialized training and work experience, but also will ensure the continuation of providing an empowering learning environment.

C3P(O) works to reduce the amount of students who drop-out of high school. Currently, it is estimated that the average cost for Ohio public school districts to educate a student for four years in high school is $44,891.28 or $11,222.82 per student; per year[[1]](#endnote-1). In 2013, the average yearly graduation rate in Ohio was approximately 81%[[2]](#endnote-2). This project has the potential to improve the educational return on investment for students by introducing them to an alternative pathway for a career choice early so they understand the full benefit of an education. While South Western City Schools have agreed to fund 100% of the program the first year because overall costs are extremely reasonable for what the program provides compared to other career-based education opportunities.

Aligning this project with provider agencies in Ohio creates a win-win environment. Provider agencies will have access to a pool of qualified candidates who have already been trained and certified to fill currently vacant positions. This will help reduce the direct support vacancy gap and reduce turnover.

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[www.opra.org](http://www.opra.org)

1. *Governing the States and Localities.* Education spending per student by state (2011 data). 2013 Report [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Bridgeland, John *Ohio’s challenge: no more high-school drop outs.* (May, 2014). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)