

FY08 New Look Final Report Format

Title of your New Look Project: **Partners, Parents, and Possibilities (also, Careers, Candle Light, and College)**

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Special Populations Targeted:

Although Nontraditional Training and Employment was specifically targeted, parents of all special populations' students were invited to the activity.

X Nontraditional (for gender) Training and Employment

Implementation Date(s): January 15 & 24, 2008, plus May 2008

Self Study:

How did you use the conclusions drawn from the self-assessment exercise in your project?

Danville Area Community College (DACC) has strong ties not only with the local educational institutions, but also with industry and the area's workforce. Because of these ties and the partnerships that have developed, we have been able to provide what seemed like seamless delivery of career and labor market information to area schools and their students. It was only after DACC Career and Employment Services, DACC Tech Prep, Vermilion Vocational Education Delivery System (VVEDS), and Vermilion Advantage (Economic Development / Chamber of Commerce) joined together and collectively gathered data that it became evident that there was a missing piece of the career puzzle . . . and that piece was the parents.

Parents play a very important part in the career decision process, and yet we had left them out of our many attempts to educate the students. We have held meetings where we have included college deans, Career & Employment Services Director, Tech Prep Director, DACC counselors, high school faculty and counselors, and even Vermilion Advantage, but we have failed to include the parents. In light of that, the conclusion was to invite them to the table and provide a special event just for the parents and guidance counselors. We would share with them the information that is often shared at the high schools with the students; very important career information about high school career programs, nontraditional careers, and labor market data, but information that sometimes gets lost between school and home!

Goals:

A. List long and short-term goals for your New Look Project.

Long term goals: A 3% nontraditional enrollment increase in career programs for both males and females by 2010. Vocational skill attainment and program completion will increase 5% by 2012, and retention in employment will increase in Vermilion County 3% by 2014.

Short term goal: Increased career awareness in parents, students, and guidance counselors about the career planning process, including traditional and nontraditional careers, careers in general, and labor market trends.

B. Explain how those particular goals were aligned with your New Look Project.

We realize that in today's fast-paced world, high school guidance counselors are bombarded with a multitude of tasks from giving tests to crisis after crisis. Little time is left to stay abreast of labor market trends, let alone devote to actual career counseling. With this being the case, parents are going to have to take a more active role in facilitating the career planning process with their child. Between the information provided by the school guidance counselor and the parent, the student is more apt to have a successful start on a budding career.

In order to equip the parents and guidance counselors with the latest career information concerning nontraditional careers, labor market trends, and growth opportunities, parents and guidance counselors of secondary sophomore students were invited to a dinner/informational meeting. Besides a candle light dinner, the agenda for the evening included 1) the Career Planning Process; 2) Vermilion County Highlights; 3) Project Lead the Way; 4) Manufacturing Opportunities; 5) College Express; 6) Dual Enrollment; and 7) a Nontraditional Panel. "Tech Savvy," a DVD highlighting technology used in Vermilion County businesses was also shown. Parents and guidance counselors were asked to share the information gleaned from the evening with their children.

Short-term goal: Accomplished. Parent feedback was exceptional! They were unaware of many of the opportunities available to their children right here in Vermilion County, including educational and employment opportunities. In recent months, parents have told us that their students are currently signed up for some of the programs at their high school only because the parents heard about it at this event.

Long-term goal goal: Data will be collected annually, and if we can continue with this project, we are hopeful that we will see increased nontraditional enrollments.

C. How did you plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the project in meeting the stated goals?

Each year we will compare the data gathered from ISIS and our local College Express program, i.e., number of students participating in and completing nontraditional programs. As a reference, we will also chart the data in vocational skill attainment and program completion in areas other than nontraditional programs. This will show us whether the event is successfully reaching the students. In addition, follow up letters will be sent to students 6 months, 18 months, and 5 years after they graduate to verify further education and/or retention in nontraditional employment.

D. Describe plans for sustainability and for accomplishment of the long-term project goals.

There were three partners when we initially started this year: DACC Career & Employment Services, DACC Tech Prep, and Vermilion Vocational Education Delivery System (VVEDS). Shortly after we started, we recruited Vermilion Advantage (Economic Development/Chamber of Commerce). Each of the partners involved in this project felt the event was highly successful. As soon as it ended, we were already talking about how to get more participation and more funding next year. We want this to be an event that sophomore parents are talking about and look forward to every year!

This year, funding not only came from the ICSPS grant, but also from Career Services, Tech Prep, and VVEDS. Upon completion of this year's program, our Vermilion Advantage partner went back and spoke to her business clusters about the program. They bought into the idea and have promised to set aside a few dollars to assist with next year's event. When VVEDS wrote their grant for the upcoming year, they also programmed dollars into their budget.

In our eyes, this is an event we want to continue for many years. We will make every attempt to follow and accomplish our goals.

Activities:

Describe activities implemented and/or products developed. Submit samples if applicable.

This project consisted of two career planning dinners/informational meetings for parents and guidance counselors of high school sophomore students. At the beginning of each evening, a candle light dinner was served, followed by "Tech Savvy," a DVD about technology changes in local industry. In this video, some of the presenters are people employed in nontraditional careers. Information was then shared on the following topics: the Career Planning Process, workforce trends, and highlights of Vermilion County, Project Lead the Way classes and activities, local and national manufacturing opportunities, College Express (vocational classes for high school students), and dual enrollment.

A nontraditional panel rounded out the evening. Female participants on the panel included an IBEW Training Specialist, electronics technician, engineering supervisor, and police department commander. Male participants included an elementary teacher, OB nurse, and hair stylist. The panel shared a wealth of information with the parents on their experiences in nontraditional careers.

An additional part of the project was the design of a career planning publication for parents entitled "Parent Guide for Career Planning." Each family went home with this publication, plus a binder full of career planning information, including Kids and Careers: How Families Can Help Youth Succeed (IDES), Preparing Your Teen for a Successful Career: 10 Tips for Parents (ACTE), Learning & Earning Power: A Student Guide to Education Beyond High School (ACTE), Guides to Career Choices (IDES), career web resources, local and national employment projections, dual enrollment options, financial aid and scholarship information, and American Careers: A Parent Resource Guide.

Evaluation:

A. What evaluation methods and tools were used in assessing your New Look Project? Please submit a copy of your evaluation tool, if applicable.

The parents were asked to complete a pre-assessment upon arrival to the dinner/meeting regarding how often they speak with their child about career issues, how knowledgeable they feel regarding the career planning process, and whether they encourage nontraditional careers. At the end of the evening, the parents were also asked to fill out a generic evaluation on the event concerning knowledge of workforce needs, appropriate amount of resources provided, and if there was a need for additional information. A post-assessment (same as pre-assessment) was mailed to the participants in May, with a follow up call to them two weeks later.

On the generic evaluation, 50% of the participants said they did not understand the value of nontraditional careers, but on the post-assessment, all of the participants who responded, said they would be supportive of their child if he or she wanted to pursue a nontraditional career.

At the conclusion of the meetings, 71 participants (out of 80) responded that they had a better understanding of Vermilion County's workforce needs. All of them said we need more events for parents!

B. What conclusions were drawn during your assessment? Did you meet your short-term goals? Did you make progress toward meeting your long-term goals?

The conclusion that we came to after conducting our two dinner/informational meetings was that parents are hungry for this type of information, and although guidance counselors are giving the students lots of information on a variety of topics, including programs available to the students, the information does not filter back to the parents.

We definitely met our short-term goal of increasing career awareness in parents, students, and guidance counselors. They were amazed at the amount of information we provided them on the career planning process, traditional and nontraditional careers, and labor market trends. We feel that we made progress on our long-term goals, but that will not definitely be determined until we have time to track the data, with our first 3% increase in nontraditional programs scheduled in 2010.

C. What plans do you have for utilizing evaluation feedback in planning for similar activities?

Our hope is to continue to offer this event annually. It is obvious parents want more activities and are searching for current career information. We will use the information gained from the evaluations to encourage other sources to provide funding for the event. This has already been presented to the local business clusters through Vermilion Advantage, and they have promised to contribute \$1000 for next year. The information gained will also be helpful as we continue to tweak the event each year. We feel some parents did not attend this year due to transportation issues. Because the event location (the college) is a distance from the majority of the high schools, we want to provide some transportation to the event next year. Hopefully this will improve attendance.

D. What outcomes or changes occurred to your program as a result of the project?

I think the most obvious outcome is that we have set the foundation for educating parents about the value of the career planning process and the value/opportunity of nontraditional careers. Our nontraditional panel provided an excellent introduction to the parents about the pros of nontraditional careers. The parents might all know someone in a nontraditional career, but to have five experienced nontraditional employees on a panel right in front of you makes a definite impact.

E. Which of the following Illinois Core Performance Indicators did your project assist your program in reaching?

Although this is a joint venture between postsecondary and secondary, we will not see postsecondary results immediately . . . but we hope that the increases at the secondary level with carry over to postsecondary .

Postsecondary

- X 1P1 Technical Skill Attainment
- X 5P1 Nontraditional Participation
- X 5P2 Nontraditional Completion

Secondary

- X 2S1 Technical Skill Attainment
- X 6S1 Nontraditional Participation
- X 6S2 Nontraditional Completion

F. Please provide information regarding the impact of your project, including: collaborating agencies, total number of students served, total number of educators served, materials distributed, and other pertinent quantitative information.

Partnerships: Danville Area Community College Career & Employment Services, Danville Area Community College Tech Prep, Vermilion Vocational Education Delivery System (VVEDS), and Vermilion Advantage

Statistics: 1121 invitations were mailed to sophomore parents; 123 parents registered to attend; 80 parents/grandparents attended; 45 family units were served; and 2 guidance counselors attended.

Conditions beyond our control: 20 below wind chill the second scheduled evening; 68 were scheduled to attend that evening, only 38 attended. Also, a third guidance counselor registered to attend, but she died very unexpectedly. Her visitation was the evening of our first event. This obviously affected the number of parents from her school who attended that evening.

Materials distributed: Every family left the event with a binder full of career information, including the "Parent Guide for Career Planning." Other information in the binder included career planning information, including Kids and Careers: How Families Can Help Youth Succeed (IDES), Preparing Your Teen for a Successful Career: 10 Tips for Parents (ACTE), Learning & Earning Power: A Student Guide to Education Beyond High School (ACTE), Guides to Career Choices (IDES), career web resources, nontraditional careers, local and national employment projections, dual enrollment options, financial aid and scholarship information, and the magazine, American Careers: A Parent Resource Guide.

G. Provide feedback received from organizers, participants, and/or observers on the effectiveness of your program or product.

The following comments from the parent participants really sum up the effectiveness of our entire event:

- “The mailing was great, follow-up was professional, and the candlelight meal was a fantastic idea.”
- “This is our 5th child to enter the job/career environment. I wish this program was available for our first. I like this method!”
- “This event was a wonderful idea --- hold a college career day for parents.”
- “Excellent resources, very informative.”
- “Yes, great materials!”
- “Information notebook is wonderful.”
- “Panel was very interesting.”

One guidance counselor felt that the event was very worthwhile, but suggested that we take the event on the road, and offer it to the parents and students at all schools. Although this sounds like a great idea, there are only 5 major players conducting the event, and there are 11 public and 3 private high schools in the college district. Staff wise we are spread too thin, and we do not feel we can ask the volunteer panelists to travel around the county with us on that many evenings. We also want the parents to come to the Danville Area Community College campus so that they can see that it is not only a beautiful campus, but a safe environment for their children. In addition, we feel that DACC provides a much better facility with the appropriate and necessary audio-visual equipment to pull off an event of this nature; much better than a high school cafeteria or gymnasium.

The following comments from our organizers sum up our feelings about the event:

- “There is a value to getting the parents on the DACC campus.”
- “Transportation issues --- possibly provide bus service.”
- “January was a good month to host events.”
- “Tech Savvy video --- excellent place to use video.”
- “Vermilion County Awareness Survey --- excellent discussion-starter around the table during dinner.”

H. Based on the results of your evaluation, feedback, and personal reflection, what modifications could be made to improve your New Look Project?

This is the second year for this project, and the adjustments that we made this year definitely improved the project’s outcomes. Last year we only invited parents of the College Express students (~300). This year we invited the parents of all high school sophomore students (1121), and our attendance improved greatly. We think the following modifications would improve our event for next year:

- Provide transportation to and from the event, either with shuttle buses or limousine service;
- Advertise in Vermilion Advantage Newsletter;
- See if local newspaper would be a sponsor;
- Advertise on local cable channel;
- Advertise on high school websites;
- Ask local businesses to announce event in their newsletters;
- Offer drawing for guidance counselors in attendance;
- Offer prize for guidance counselor who gets more parents to attend;
- Advertise with flyer to Section 8 housing;
- Send “gimmicky” postcard to parents.

Dissemination:

- A. Describe plans for dissemination of the project accomplishments, including record of or plans for statewide conference display/presentation. Please provide copies of your activity(s)/product(s) (e.g. promotional materials, educational products, and program descriptions). Electronic samples are preferred.**

One binder, including the career materials stated above in Question F. and the “Parent Guide for Career Planning” was disseminated to all participants (one per family unit) at each event. In addition, calls were received from parents who could not attend, asking if there was any extra information available for them to pick up. Approximately 10 sets of materials / binders were handed out through DACC’s Career & Employment Services office to those parents. Additional handouts of the “Parent Guide for Career Planning” has been given to DACC’s guidance counselors for when they work with parents, and the handouts have also been placed in kiosks around campus. Each high school guidance counselor in the DACC college district received 3 binders for use in their high school and as they work with parents.

The information was also presented to the DACC Board of Trustees and at this year’s New Look Awareness event in Pekin in April. In addition, a link to the “Parent Guide for Career Planning” has been placed on DACC’s Career & Employment Services website so that parents can peruse this publication at their leisure.

Technical Assistance Feedback:

A. In general, your experience with the FY08 New Look Project was ...

Excellent

B. The most valuable aspect(s) of the FY08 New Look Project was...

The financial support

The technical assistance and resources provided by ICSPS

The professional development, goal setting and networking opportunities

C. Did you request any technical assistance for your FY08 New Look Project?

Yes

D. Overall, how was your experience with your Technical Assistance Liaison?

Excellent

E. If anyone were to ask you if the money devoted to the New Look Project has made a difference in your institution’s ability to serve special populations, what would you say?

Definitely! I believe this event opened the eyes of high school sophomore parents as to what kind of careers (traditional and nontraditional) are available for their children locally and nationally, what the labor market is for those and all careers, and what kind of programs are available now for their children while they are in high school.

F. Will you consider applying for another New Look Project in the future?

Yes

<u>FY08 New Look Final Budget</u>	<u>FY08 Final Budget</u>
Beginning Balance	<u>\$1500.00</u>
Contractual Services	<u>\$950.71</u>
General Supplies and Materials	<u>\$417.59</u>
Travel Expenses	<u>\$131.70</u>
Other Expenditures* (See Below)	\$
<u>Total Award Expended</u>	<u>\$1500.00</u>