COLLEGE READINESS
FOR ALL STUDENTS

Proven Strategies to Increase Minority Enrollment in AP
NORTHSIDE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
BRENNAN HIGH SCHOOL
SAN ANTONIO, TX

Gerardo Marquez
Principal

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Changing a School Culture

John Jay HS / Science & Engineering Academy
San Antonio, TX

Title 1 School

83% Hispanic
6% African American
10% White
1% Asian
Why change the culture?

- 2003 – end of TAAS and start of TAKS (State Testing) – only 75% participation; 30% pass rate for TAKS
- Skeletal Pre-AP / AP Program with no expectations for taking exams or passing exams
- AP teachers were tenured and felt it was their right to teach their courses
- Very closed AP Program; Teachers were gatekeepers and very selective – only for a few
- State and District focus was to shift all resources to passing TAKS - 'Fix TAKS'
Adopting a New Philosophy

Students

Teachers

Administration / Counselors

Parents
Adopting a New Philosophy

Students

Recruiting students to take Pre-AP / AP classes

Retaining students in Pre-AP / AP classes

Realizing success in classes
Recruiting Students for Pre-AP/AP Classes

- Open Door Policy
- Pre - AP for all
- TAKS Data
- PSAT - grades 9-11
- My College Quick Start
- AP Potential-identify students
- 6 - week preview of class
Retaining students in AP classes

- Academic Support
- 3 day AP Summer Camp – Focus on Pre-AP / AP English and History; Study Skills
- Mandatory study groups – Study Buddies
- Lunch time tutoring
- Other Activities
  - Pep Rally – Assembly for Pre-AP / AP Students
  - AP Seminar – Off campus
  - AP Breakfast and Exam Registration
  - AP Night for Parents and Students- 1st week of school
Students - Realizing Success

- Practice Tests
- Recognitions from previous year
- Interpreting results individually
- AP Scholars
- AP – the first Scholarship
Adopting a New Philosophy

Teachers

- Right people on and off the bus
- Developing AP Teachers: 3-5 years
- Build a strong AP Teacher pool
- Open Door Policy
- Training
- Collaboration - PLC
- Recognitions / Luncheon
- Summary of Answers and Skills
- Interventions
- Vertical alignment with feeder middle schools
Adopting a New Philosophy
Administration / Counselor

- Personnel tug-of-war
- Acceleration vs. remediation
- Master Schedule
- Counselors had to follow procedures before allowing a student to drop
  - Parent conferences with teachers
  - Meet with Department Coordinators
  - Conference with Director
Adopting a New Philosophy
Parents

- Pre-AP / AP Night
- College Nights
- Information – newsletter, College Board Resources; AP Brochure
- Parent Conferences for students having difficulty
- 6 week try-it-out
Results
Number of Students Taking Exams
Number of AP Exams Taken
Number of 3’s, 4’s, & 5’s

$15,000
Recognitions

Newsweek Magazine –
America's Best High Schools

Boeing Grant - $30,000

College Board's Greenhouse Grant  $10,000
William J. Brennan High School
Establishing a School Culture

Safe and Secure School

Extra Curricular Activities for All

A College Going Culture
Establishing a College-Going Culture

Faculty and Staff

- New School – New Administration – New faculty
- Displaced Teachers, New teachers, teachers new to district
- Get everyone on the bus: faculty, custodians, cafeteria workers and secretaries
- Make it personal – what do we want for our own children; why would we expect less for our students
- Faculty Retreat:
  - What should your child look like after 4 years of HS?
  - What type of teachers do you want for your children?
  - How do we interact with each other(school culture)?
Establishing a College-Going Culture
Faculty and Staff

- All teachers have a “College Story” – how they decided to go to college; how they made it through; who encouraged them

- Teachers encouraged to share their stories with students

- Teachers began to identify students for Pre-AP

- Teachers began to change entire classes into Pre-AP
Establishing a College-Going Culture Community

• New Community – Fastest growing area in San Antonio
• Professionals; college educated
• Expect the best for their children
• Large Military population – high mobility – have seen the good and the bad of public education
Establishing a College-Going Culture Community

- Community Night
- AP Night – First week of school
- College Night
- School Dedication
- AP Breakfast
- Meetings with feeder Middle Schools – Principals and Counselors
Establishing a College-Going Culture

William J. Brennan High School

Grades 9-11
57% - Hispanic
13% - African American
24% - White
5% - Multi, Not Hispanic
1% - Asian
Establishing a College-Going Culture
Student

- New Students (from 3 High Schools and 1 middle school and 320 military students)
- Myth Busting about the AP Program
- Students are encouraged to advocate for themselves to take the challenge of Pre-AP and AP classes
Results
61% of Junior class taking 1 or more AP class(es)

98% of students accepted the challenge of taking the AP Exam(s)

Incoming 9th grade students have selected more Pre-AP classes than regular classes: English, World Geography, and Science
We Believe:

- Brennan High School is a College Prep High School

- Pre-AP and AP courses are the foundation for college readiness

- in an Open-Door policy for any student willing to take the challenge

- every teacher should attend staff development each year and belong to a Professional Learning Community

- the majority of our students will take at least one Pre-AP and or AP class per year

- teachers will continue to advocate for and identify students to be placed in Pre-AP and AP classes
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