

Near Peer Mentor Model

Overview

The purpose of the Near Peer Mentor model is to increase the number of high school graduates who enroll in and complete postsecondary education. This includes two and four-year degree programs as well as career technical certificate programs. Through the advising and mentoring program, Near Peer Mentors (recent college graduates) are placed in high schools to directly assist students with the financial aid and college application process. Working collaboratively with guidance counselors and other school staff, the mentors motivate students to make appropriate curricular choices and increase the level of college participation among students in grades 8-12. This model has been proven effective in a variety of schools around the state and reaches a wide-range of students.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

Following are key responsibilities of Near Peers, and typical activities which may occur during the year.

Collaborate with high school counseling staff to directly advise and assist high school students with career exploration, curricular choices, college application and admission, and financial aid options.

- Assist students in locating and applying for federal financial aid and available scholarships.
- Assist students in understanding grant funds and scholarships which have been awarded, along with the requirements of each.
- Assist students in completing college applications, including help with application fee waivers.
- Assist students in using web-based resources, including NextSteps.idaho.gov and Idaho Career Information System (CIS).
- Host multiple FAFSA Completion Events to assist students and parents in completing and submitting the FAFSA.
- Conduct college entrance exam (ACT/SAT) preparation sessions.

Coordinate postsecondary publicity and outreach at the high school, making students and families aware of college and career opportunities through presentations, classroom visits, parent-mentor nights, campus field trips, brochures, websites, and other forms of communication.

- Classroom presentations to all seniors to provide a basic overview, and establish the purpose of program.
- Campus visits are held throughout the year to allow students to visit nearby postsecondary institutions. Students who actually visit a campus are likely to enroll.
- Near Peers assist school staff during college IACRAO tours.
- Texting, and social media outreach is set up for students, including an event reminder system, as well as e-mails and power announcements to parents.

- Throughout the school year, Near Peers conduct student activities to create and promote a college going culture. These events may include:
 - Creating a college acceptance map where students pin their post high school acceptance and plans.
 - FAFSA incentives to encourage students to complete FAFSA.
 - Springtime College Culture Day which includes activities to promote college going culture - teachers wear college gear, door decoration competitions.
 - College acceptance assemblies, held to recognize those students who have been accepted to college.

Develop and conduct college and career surveys for students in conjunction with high school's counseling and career staff in order to gauge the increased level of postsecondary awareness and participation.

- Senior surveys are completed to determine student plans and readiness for postsecondary education.
- Near Peers check student progress throughout the year and collect data to evaluate program effectiveness.

Schools

Currently, Near Peer Mentors are located at the following locations:

Bonneville High School
Rigby High School
Buhl High School
Jerome High School
Lakeland High School
Post Falls High School

Sandpoint High School
Sugar-Salem High School
Timberlake High School
Vallivue High School
Weiser High School

Performance Measures

School districts and charter schools using funds provided through the college and career advising allocation will be required to report on the effectiveness of their program. Performance measures must align to the requirements pursuant to Idaho Code, §33-1212A. Measures may vary depending on students served and could include the following:

- Students Advised
- Group Presentations
- FASFA Completion Rates
- College Application Completion Rates
- College Scholarship Completion Rates
- Postsecondary Enrollment Rates

Who to Contact

For additional information, contact Byron Yankey, College Access Challenge Grant Project Manager at:
P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0037 (208)332-1596 byron.yankey@osbe.idaho.gov