

Press Release

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Oak Glen High School Achieves Program Success ***Local principal receives honorarium for innovative education-based programming***

New Cumberland, W.Va. – The Education Alliance is pleased to recognize a Hancock County assistant principal for his effort to increase academic achievement among at-risk students. Jeffery Woofter, assistant principal at Oak Glen High School, recently received an honorarium from The Education Alliance for implementing a peer-mentoring program that matched high-achieving students with those who were at-risk. His two-year effort was a part of The Education Alliance’s Student Educational and Economic Development Success (SEEDS) Program. In addition to the honorarium, Oak Glen was selected as a SEEDS School of the Year as a result of Woofter’s program.

SEEDS is an exclusive professional development experience for public school principals in West Virginia that links them with a seasoned business CEO and with a professional education consultant. Together, they develop and execute a business plan that targets key challenges at their schools. The benefits of SEEDS include enhanced principal leadership skills, increased student achievement and community involvement, and improvements in facilities and management processes. Dr. Mary Harris-John served as Oak Glen’s educational consultant and worked diligently to support Woofter and program activities.

To ensure student success at Oak Glen, Woofter paired at-risk freshmen with high school junior or senior peer mentors. In addition to mentoring, the upperclassmen provided academic support through daily tutoring. The SEEDS students were also introduced to Advanced Placement courses, and their families were given information about the West Virginia Virtual School’s advanced courses. As a result of their SEEDS experience, a significant number of students demonstrated improved grades, attendance and an overall attitude towards school.

Woofter is pleased with the progress of the program. "The SEEDS program has given us the opportunity to help ease the transition to high school for some bright, yet struggling, students. We intend to continue what we started and extend our reach to even more students in the future," he said.

Dr. Mary Harris-John said all students benefitted from participating in Oak Glen’s initiative. "The freshmen mentees became more confident and improved their grades, attendance and attitudes toward school," she said. "The junior and senior mentors also experienced significant growth as teachers, learners and leaders. I think this peer-mentoring program can easily be sustainable at Oak Glen High School and would be valuable for all incoming freshmen to experience," she continued.

"Peer mentoring is a valuable strategy that administrators can use in their schools to address a number of challenges they face," explained Dr. Patricia Kusimo, president/CEO of The Education Alliance. "Mr. Woofter used the data to create a strategy for a successful pilot. I am pleased that his efforts were a part of our SEEDS program," she said.

Oak Glen High School will receive a total of \$50,000 over two years to help meet its goals and objectives. Principals and assistant principals were selected for the SEEDS program through a competitive application process. Preference was given to those with three or fewer years of experience, and who were in the top 25 percent of their Principal Leadership Academy class.

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