

**PROGRAM:**

*The Wolf Pack Peer Mentor Program*

**OBJECTIVES:**

Help freshman students successfully transition, academically and socially, to Wapato High School by assigning peer mentors to guide them.

**LOCATION:**

Wapato High School, Wapato, WA

**DESCRIPTION:**

The program had an application process in which the site coordinator and program participants selected fifty junior and senior mentors. Each peer mentor was assigned five or six freshman mentees. The mentors received community service for portfolio development and senior project credits.

The peer mentors were guided and trained by college student mentors from the CWU Bridges program. Bridges college students worked with high school students who were at risk of failing a class, dropping out of school, not passing a grade level, or not graduating high school. Bridges also gave students the chance to socialize with real college students who might come from the same background as they did. Many realized that anything is possible if you put your mind to it. The Bridges program was used to “mentor the mentors.” They assisted with training on mentorship and college preparation.

The peer mentors assisted freshman mentees in their personal, academic, social and cultural adjustment to studying at the high school level. They provided mentees with information about services available to them throughout the campus and the community, and encouraged their use of those services as well as participation in non-classroom educational opportunities (i.e., student organizations, athletics, and volunteerism, community and campus events). They also assisted mentees in developing relationships with their peers, faculty/staff, and community, and promoted a nurturing atmosphere and sufficient cultural information to enable students to make reasoned and well-informed choices. They encouraged mentees toward high school graduation and enrollment in post-secondary programs.

Once a month peer mentors taught lessons to mentees during the advisory period (Connection Time). Connection lesson topics included the following:

- Fulfilling potential
- Stress Management
- Leadership/ teambuilding
- Graduation Requirements
- High School dilemmas
- Study skills
- Tests and importance

The program also consists of:

- Once a month the program had after school mentor/mentee enrichment activities.
- Once or twice a month there were mentor-training sessions.
- There was on-going mentor/mentee involvement.
- There was a year-end celebration of successes.

Peer Mentors supported and contributed their knowledge and experience to assist new students, and they provided information about Wapato High school and GEAR UP services. Additionally, they were leaders in a cross-cultural context, and participated in a training program that explored the skills needed to become a successful mentor.

A particular success story involved a group of freshman boys who were failing all classes and treating school as a joke. These students were assigned to a male peer mentor. By the second time they met, the mentees seemed more settled down. Another student in the same class requested that he also be provided a male mentor, and the switch was made. The student who requested the mentor had also been coming to the after school program for tutoring. Eventually the mentee stated, "I really like my mentor and he has made me realize that I need to take school more seriously." A month later, the mentees and the mentor signed up for a college visit. During the trip it was remarkable to see their constructive interaction and change in attitude. The mentee went from all F's to As, Bs, & Cs in class. The mentor was successful in getting his mentees to join the school baseball team, and they are all taking school seriously.

GEAR UP offered several educational trips that the mentors and mentees participated in together. Some of the trips included the bowling and college fairs, the East State College Tour, the West state College Tours, and the LEAP Conference. These trips gave the mentors the opportunity to interact with their mentees outside of school, and gave freshmen an opportunity to interact with upperclassmen. Because of these trips, the culture and climate of the school changed in positive way. Especially notable was the positive interaction between mentors and mentees.

Since the Bridges college mentor-to-mentor structure was put into place, Wapato High School has celebrated many seniors being accepted to the University of Washington, CWU, WSU and CBC. For many freshman students it was an eye-opening experience.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE:

### PREPARATION ACTIVITIES:

- The site coordinator participated in mentor workshops from different programs.
- The coordinator used the summer to brainstorm and come up with a layout for the program.
- She met with the Principal and the Freshman Advisor, to discuss the Program and implementation in late September.

- The Freshman Advisor and the GEAR UP coordinator worked on the program curriculum and implementation layout during the month of October.
- A work-study student assisted the coordinator with the program and they began recruiting mentors in October.
- An informational session was held the first week of October
- The entire month of October was reserved for the recruitment of students into the program.
- The second to the last week of October was set aside for selecting mentors by the mentoring committee. The committee went through applications and helped select the mentors.
- In early October, the site coordinator met with 21<sup>st</sup> Century community outreach in order to gain their participation and cooperation for the program.
- *Ignite* program staff met with the site coordinator in mid-October to discuss lesson layout.
- During the first week of November the site coordinator and staff met with the 9<sup>th</sup> grade teaching staff.
- The first week of November there was an orientation training session for the mentors.
- The Friday of the first week of November, staff took mentors to Central Washington University for a full day mentor training by the Bridges Program college students:
  - Mentors were taught the role of mentor.
  - They learned how to connect with 9<sup>th</sup> graders.
  - They gained insights on how to help 9<sup>th</sup> graders prepare for college.
  - They learned leadership skills.
- Mentors met with their mentees for the first time during the second week of October.
- Mentors were trained once a month for the remainder of the year.

**FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES:**

- The Site Coordinator and Freshman Advisor met regularly to review the program success and make recommendations for improvements.
- Mentors were surveyed regarding future training needs.
- Teachers and staff were asked to provide feedback on program success.
- Recommendation was made for a teacher to receive stipend for training to promote sustainability of program when GEAR UP funds are no longer available.

**COSTS OR COST CONSIDERATIONS:**

Who's Responsible	Item	Costs
<b>GEAR UP</b> <b>21<sup>st</sup> Century</b>	Mentor/mentee Training – Ignite	\$6,000.00
	CWU Bridges mentor program	5,000.00
	Assistant Coordinator- work study	1,000.00
<b>GEAR UP</b> <b>21<sup>st</sup> Century</b>	Mentor/Mentee activities	4,000.00
	Supplies	1,000.00
		<b><u>\$17,000.00</u></b>

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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**RESOURCES:**

Copy of student evaluations  
Diagram of Mentor Program