## RCHS Ensures Student Success With Multi-Tiered Extra Help Program

Rockcastle County High School wants to be, and is a place where students succeed. To help make sure they do, staff members coordinate and blend resources and services from a variety of programs to create a multi-tiered system of extra help for students.

Our Freshmen ESS Tutoring Program is a prime example of this system and how it works. Now in its second year, this Innovative ESS Grant Program, formerly called Bridges, was funded last year by a \$25,000 grant for up to 50 RCHS freshmen. Program evaluation results following implementation in 2000-2001 showed dramatic improvements in grades, attendance and discipline records for our school. In 2001-2002 by collaborating with our 21st Century and Gear up partners, we are now able to include all RCHS freshmen.



Freshmen tutoring sessions are held on Wednesdays from 3:00 to 5:00 with transportation provided. Regular RCHS freshmen teachers provide tutoring in Math, Science, Language Arts, Social Studies and Study Skills. Field trips that help students make career and social connections are included. For example, one to our own Area Technology Center is planned and students who attend Wednesday tutoring sessions regularly are eligible for a trip to King's Island to encourage participation and improvement of overall performance. Teachers offer additional incentives, such as a graphing calculator, posters, flyers, pizza and other favorites daily.

At an October 17th after school session for freshmen, students and teachers engaged in a game of Conversation Ball. Teachers asked students to use "loud voices, to be heard outside." As students caught and tossed a ball among a circle of participants, each took his or her turn to discuss the biggest change experienced in going from middle school to high school and what he or she liked best. Popular answers were "90 minute classes", "more freedom", "more responsibility", and "the size of the school". Teachers encour-

aged students to find among these friends, "a group of people you can count on."

Even though tutoring is an important part of this extra help effort, the program actually provides much more than just tutoring. The Freshmen Program engages students, parents and Middle and High School staff in a Step-Up Night in the spring to prepare 8th graders for entry into high school. Classes, programs, rule, regulations, and extra curricular opportunities are explained at this event, and students' questions about high school are answered. Freshmen Registration Day also takes place in the spring. Then counselors work directly with 8th graders at the high school site to plan schedules for the fall. In a third activity designed to ease the transition to high school, 8th graders visit and shadow a high school student as he or she goes through a normal day.

When summer rolls around, still more transition events are available for new freshmen. A weeklong summer orientation program takes place in July. This year's theme was "survival." Students joined in competitions, scavenger hunts, and council meetings modeled after the

popular TV show.

Our system of extra help for student includes but does not stop with a strong component for freshmen. More support for students comes as:

Our regular ESS program provides tutoring with transportation on Wednesdays from 3:00 - 5:00 for all RCHS students.

The 21st Century Program provides tutoring with transportation on Mondays and Tuesdays from 3:00 to 5:00 for all RCHS students.

 Youth Services Center trains students as mentors and in providing positive role models and support for other students in the Teen Leadership Council Program.

Counselors Janice Miller and Dale Whitaker work with students on an individual basis, as needed and requested.

 Our In School Suspension Program provides a place and an opportunity for some students to complete assignments in a neutral \*environment when conflicts

have occurred.

A wide range of extra curricular organizations and opportunities are available as additional and parallel learning experiences

Successful coordination of programs requires on-going joint planning. For starters, RCHS staff members and Special Program staff meet and work formally as a Collaborative Transition Team to identify, prioritize, plan and deliver services most needed beyond the regular school day for RCHS freshmen. This year's CTT members are teachers Nancy Bussell, J.D. Bussell, Judy Bradley, Travis Brenda, Debbie Coleman, Chris Frith, Darlene Martin, Linda Parsons and David Vorbeck. Special Programs & other staff members are Trina Bustle, 21st Century CLC; Linda Stone, Gear-Up; John Hale, Principal; Janice Miller, Counselor; Jill Ponder, Youth Service Center and Kathy Bobo, Community Education.

CTT members also communicate and collaborate informally to cast a fail proof safety net of extra help for at-risk students. For example, the last lines of an e-mail from CIT member Debbie Coleman to all RCHS Staff on the subject of Freshmen Tutoring reads, "Just for your reference, I have included ALL of the tutoring...programs that are available right now for our students. MONDAYS: 21st Century Tutoring, 3-5; TUESDAYS: 21st Century Tutoring, 3-5; WEDNESDAYS: ESS tutoring 3-5; Freshmen Tutoring, 3-5.

Another example is in Trina Bustle's October 15th to RCHS Certified Staff. She lists and requests that staff announce freshmen tutoring dates, activities and teachers names to students. Trina is RCHS' Academic Specialist for the 21st Century Community Learning Center, yet in her message she provides information about and draws attention to both ESS and Gear-Up. She explains that this is "In addition to David Riddle's regular ESS tutoring."

Such easy flow of information and overlapping of programs exemplifies the spirit of cooperation and coordination (as opposed to competition) that has developed among people and programs at RCHS. In addition to the variety of services provided, it is this spirit that makes our system of extra help a system rather than just a collection of parts. It is this spirit that causes a wide safety net for students at risk of failing or dropping out of school.