The PEP Project
Partner, Engage, Prepare
Texas A&M University-Texarkana

The PEP Project

Overview of Grant

• What is PEP?
• Texas Pioneer Foundation

Project Goals

• Closing the Gaps by 2015
• Assist economically-disadvantaged students attend institutions of higher education
• Create the link insuring these students have EVERY opportunity to go to college
• Partnership with Texas High School, Arkansas High School, Pleasant Grove High School, and Liberty Eylau High School

Expected Outcomes

• Identify “at risk” and “economically-disadvantaged” students
• Establish university students as mentors
• PEP students will be invited to participate in university events
• Establish sustainable model that will recruit high school sophomores, juniors and seniors to enter college and become mentors to future high school students
• Graduate college and become productive citizens

High School Students

• 120 “at risk” and “economically-disadvantaged” students
• Based on approximate total of all class sizes 2012-2013 (1006)
  ➢ Texas High School [384] (38.2% x 120=46) 45 Students
  ➢ Arkansas High School [286] (28.4% x 120=34) 35 Students
  ➢ Pleasant Grove High School [163] (16.2% x 120=19) 20 Students
  ➢ Liberty Eylau High School [173] (17.2% x 120=21) 20 Students
• Upon Completion of PEP Program
  ➢ 20 Students will be selected through prescribed criteria and awarded $1000 Scholarships
  ➢ Must apply and be admitted to TAMUT by Fall Semester after HS graduation

Measuring Success

• Project Administrator develops, manages, and oversees project
• Advisory Council provides oversight to PEP Project
• Establish Memorandum of Understanding with HS to identify applicants for the PEP Project
• Create Marketing Plan
• Identify 24 university mentors
  ➢ Each mentor will have 5 high school students
• Develop specific activities for participants
Texas A&M University-Texarkana and its staff are committed to college success. Ensuring area high school students have every opportunity and access to higher education is part of our mission. PEP Project funds will enable the university to commit time and resources to at-risk individuals who might not otherwise think college is an option. The university will commit in-kind resources of space, equipment and materials as they apply to the activities of PEP Project.
Texas A&M University-Texarkana

The PEP Project

Detailed Summary and Expected Outcomes

April 2013

Summary

The PEP (Partner, Engage, Prepare) Project is a program sponsored by Texas A&M University-Texarkana that establishes a partnership with area high schools to identify sophomores, juniors and seniors and encourage them through an engagement and college preparation program to insure their successful transition to an institution of higher education. The PEP program is based on the Kids at Hope basic principle that ALL children are capable of success, NO EXCEPTIONS. In order to achieve this success, children must have meaningful and sustainable relationships with caring adults and must be able to articulate a vision for their future. The PEP program is designed to identify those students who need additional support to define their vision. These students want to attend college, but they lack the resources and tools to get there on their own. With support of the Pioneer Foundation Grant, the PEP program at Texas High School, Arkansas High School, Pleasant Grove High School and Liberty Eylau High School will have the ability to help these children achieve their goals and impact the lives of the these students for many years to come.

Mission

Students who complete the program will enroll in a higher education institution. Students who enroll at A&M Texarkana will continue to be a part of the PEP Program and mentor other sophomores, juniors and seniors in area high schools to complete the cycle. These students will graduate college and become productive citizens.

History

Approximately only 15.9% of economically-disadvantaged Texas students attend an institution of higher education. Northeast Texas has one of the highest high school graduation rates and one of the lowest college graduation rates in the state. Public schools, community colleges, universities, and non-profit agencies must work together to assist individuals in this region to increase the number of college-bound students and reduce this statistic. Texas A&M University-Texarkana, through the PEP Leadership Project, will create a link to insure these students have every opportunity to go to college.

Student Profile

The PEP Program is designed for students in grades 10, 11 & 12 in area high schools with initial enrollment of 120 students. The students are from diverse background and socioeconomic status. All PEP students are required to maintain good attendance and behavioral records and at least a 2.5 GPA. All PEP students should be enrolled in rigorous classes (Pre-AP, AP, DC). If they are not currently, they goal is to have them enrolled in rigorous classes the next school year. Also, they must achieve passing or
borderline passing State Assessment scores. Most PEP students will qualify for free or reduced lunch programs and may be the first person in their family to attend college.

Program Design
The PEP Program is designed to equip students with the tools and talents necessary to compete and succeed in the 21st century. Post-secondary education is key to this successful future. Therefore the PEP program has identified and implemented the following key elements at four area high schools to prepare students for a 21st century world: Mentoring, Staff training, College Readiness, Community service, Student recognition, and Parental involvement.

A. Mentoring – Texas A&M University – Texarkana will establish partnerships with area high schools in which PEP students will be paired with college graduates or current university students to develop positive and meaningful mentoring relationships. The mentors will meet with the students weekly during PEP class times and/or after school to monitor academic progress and help the student develop their goals and vision for the future. Mentors will be trained to become familiar with State assessment objectives and SAT/ACT strategies. To encourage sustaining relationships mentors will be paid on an hourly basis for their time.

B. Staff training – Equipping highly motivated staff with the superior training is an important piece of the PEP program. Staff must participate in continuous learning to ensure that the students are engaged and receive the most effective teaching practices. Teachers must be allowed to collaborate with colleagues in the field to learn and establish best teaching practices.

C. College readiness – Graphic of student weighted GPA and correlation to ACT scores (Graphic B) – College readiness is critical to the success of the PEP program. PEP students must be prepared in high school to the demand and rigor of a college program. Therefore, all PEP students are encouraged to enroll in Pre-Advanced Placement, Advanced Placement or Dual Credit courses in order to prepare for college level academics. PEP students are taught to develop communication, practical writing, and research skills. With the rigor of the course load and the skills taught, students are also given numerous opportunities to practice test taking strategies for the ACT/SAT.

D. Community service – PEP students must be taught and encouraged to be responsible citizens of the community in which they live. Community reinvestment is a key component of the PEP program. Sophomores, Juniors and seniors are required to participate in at least 20 hours of community service per year.

E. Student Recognition – At least twice per year, students and parents are invited to learn more about the PEP components and celebrate the accomplishments of PEP students.

F. Parental Involvement – At the beginning of every school year, parents and students sign the PEP contract itemizing their responsibilities to support the PEP program and initiatives. Parents are encouraged to be a part of their students’ learning and have several
opportunities to meet with PEP teachers and celebrate student success during the school year.

G. Students will be selected based on approximate total of combined class sizes 2012-2013 from the four area high schools participating in the program. The number of students was taken from recent transcripts indicating class size for the school year 2012-2013 totaling approximately 1006 students. Numbers in brackets are the class sizes on current transcripts.

- **Texas High School** [384] (38.2% x 120=46) **45 Students**
- **Arkansas High School** [286] (28.4% x 120=34) **35 Students**
- **Pleasant Grove High School** [163] (16.2% x 120=19) **20 Students**
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H. In addition to the mentorship relationship, high school students will be invited to participate in college events sponsored by Student Engagement and by the Student Success Center to help them acclimate to the college environment and to expose them to the myriad of activities and free services that are available to college students.

**Outcomes**

Texas A&M University-Texarkana will successfully partner with the four local area high schools of Texas High School, Arkansas High School, Pleasant Grove High School, and Liberty Eylau High School to provide a mentoring program to “at risk” and “economically-disadvantaged” students to “break the cycle.” This partnership will increase the number of college-bound students through mentoring and college readiness programs. Statistical data will be collected from this model and will provide seed money to apply for additional monies through TRIO programs and other private, state and federal funding sources. The goal will be to establish a sustainable model that will recruit sophomores, juniors and seniors who will enter college, become mentors for future sophomores, juniors and seniors, graduate from college and become productive citizens.

Texas A&M University-Texarkana is a higher education institution of learning with the mission to provide excellence in education for all students – today and tomorrow. Texas A&M University-Texarkana and its staff are committed to college success. Ensuring area high school students have every opportunity and access to higher education is part of our mission. We believe in our students’ futures, and with your help, we can guide our students to not only dream of what success looks like but actually become a successful student with a bright future. The PEP initiative can make a difference in the lives of our students and with a highly motivated staff, resources, opportunities, and support system, we can help our students achieve and be college and career ready for the 21st century.
PEP Mentors Governing Values

• **Integrity**: We are consistent, dependable, and honest about who we are and what we do.

• **Innovation**: We implement dynamic, creative and innovative techniques that facilitate the growth and development of our students and the community.

• **Collaboration**: We create a culture of mutual trust, open dialogue, and positive results.

• **Respect**: We respect and value others and promote their success.

• **Hope**: We focus on strengths and opportunities rather than obstacles. All of our students are “at hope” and none are “at risk”.
