Beyond the Bell: Discovery@Night

Discovery High School, Widefield School District 3

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Discovery High School (DHS), part of Widefield School District 3 (WSD3), believes that student success is strengthened when schools partner with families to remove barriers to learning. To increase graduation opportunities and provide greater flexibility for students, DHS created Discovery@Night, an evening program that supported both credit recovery and credit advancement. The program was designed to meet the needs of students whose schedules, work responsibilities, family obligations, or previous educational experiences made success in a traditional school setting more challenging.

The program was developed through collaboration among school administrators, counselors, teachers, students, and families. Counselors and administrators worked closely with students and parents to identify academic needs, develop individualized graduation plans, and recommend courses that support each student's goals. Families were encouraged to participate in conversations about scheduling, academic progress, and graduation planning.

During its first year, students earned a combined total of 13 credits, demonstrating the need for additional learning opportunities. Building on that success, the second-year goal was to double the number of credits earned, and students exceeded expectations by earning 24 credits. During the most recent school year, students earned an impressive 56 credits through the program. Students enrolled in courses such as American Sign Language (ASL), Parenting, and Healthy Relationships, allowing them to earn graduation credits while developing practical life skills. Flexible scheduling allowed students to balance school with employment, family responsibilities, athletics, or other commitments, making it easier for families to support consistent attendance and academic progress.



One of the program's greatest strengths was its ability to reconnect students and families who became disengaged from school. Students who had previously dropped out or were at risk of not graduating returned to complete their graduation requirements. Teachers worked closely with students to provide individualized instruction, while counselors maintained regular communication with families to celebrate progress and address challenges.

The effectiveness of Discovery@Night was measured through student enrollment, credits earned, graduation outcomes, and family feedback. The growth from 13 to 24 to 56 credits reflected both the program's demand and its positive impact on student success. Moving forward, DHS plans to gather more formal feedback from students and families to evaluate how the program continues to strengthen family engagement and improve graduation outcomes.

For schools interested in replicating this practice, begin by recognizing that flexibility is most effective when families are active partners in the educational process. Frequent communication, individualized planning, and a shared commitment to student success create opportunities for students who might otherwise fall behind. As one parent shared, "Discovery@Night gave our family hope and provided a path for our child to earn a diploma."