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Reviving Realistic Dreams …..What a High School Diploma Does for Youth At Risk

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Realizing Realistic Dreams

….What a High School Diploma Means to Youth–At–Risk!
Objectives for this Session

- Share the process by which students earn a high school diploma from this non-traditional high school.
- Share how students' dreams are revived as they discover how to pursue their next step in achieving their dreams.
- Share success stories of graduates from the Wilson County Adult High School in Lebanon, TN.

Goal for this Session

- Participants will learn about the tools and strategies implemented at the Wilson County Adult High School that can be employed within their own disciplines.
Demographics of Wilson County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>Wilson, Tennessee</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some High School Educ.</td>
<td>7.20%</td>
<td>7.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Educ.</td>
<td>88.74%</td>
<td>86.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College Educ.</td>
<td>20.83%</td>
<td>21.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 yr College Grad.</td>
<td>8.07%</td>
<td>7.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 yr College Grad.</td>
<td>26.72%</td>
<td>29.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Grad.</td>
<td>6.04%</td>
<td>7.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Degree</td>
<td>1.19%</td>
<td>1.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate Degree</td>
<td>0.92%</td>
<td>1.29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

86.76% of people are White, 6.61% are African American, 1.35% are Asian, 0.29% are Native American, 0.12% claim 'Other'

2nd Fastest Growing County in TN
Demographics of Wilson County Schools

Some Countries Represented:
- Egypt
- El Salvador
- India
- Mexico
- United States of America
- Uzbekistan

First Languages
- Amharic
- Arabic
- Chinese/Mandarin
- English
- Russian
- Gujaranti/Hindi
- Spanish

Poverty Rate 30.66%
Homelessness 2.3%
Comprised of:
4 traditional High Schools

2017–18 Enrollment

- Lebanon High School 1830
- Mt. Juliet High School 2116
- Watertown High School 517
- Wilson Central High School 1574

Adult High School – AHS – Wilson County Adult High School
Alternative School – MAP – Modified Academic Program
Online High School – TVOLS – TN Virtual Online School
HiSET Program – Adult Learning Center

Wilson County Schools’ Motto: 
Excellence in All We Do
The History of AHS

- AHS launched in 1992 with two objectives:
  1. Allow adults who exited HS without diploma to complete necessary graduation requirements
  2. Help improve the county’s graduation rate of 70%

The first AHS graduate was 67 years old!

- Since 2010 the population of the Adult High School changed due to the State of Tennessee’s focus on improving graduation rates.
The History of AHS

Number of Graduates:

- 1993–2011  540
- 2012–2017  725

Over 1200 diplomas earned.....

PRICELESS
The History of AHS

- 2017 County Graduation Rate: 96.2%
- 2017 State of TN Grad Rate: 89.1%

In 2017, 9.6% of the Wilson County graduates
..... graduated from AHS!
Who We Are

Staff

Mary Ashby  Principal
Vikki Adkins  Secretary
Kristi Galligan  Teacher
Blake Hall  Teacher
Patti Huffman  School Counselor
Brad Major  Part Time Teacher
Joy Shaw  Teacher
AHS Fabulous Facts

- Academic Integrity
- High School Diploma
- Age requirement
- Credit Requirements
- Highly qualified teachers
- Extended school hours
  Monday – Thursday
- Mandatory Attendance

- No red “Easy” button
- No Crystal Ball
AHS Enrollment Process

Referrals are submitted to AHS by:

- Graduation Coaches
- Principals
- School Counselors
- Attendance Director
- 18 year olds can contact AHS directly

AHS secretary schedules an orientation date for each prospective student.

Individualized plan developed from current transcript by AHS Counselor and Principal.
A Day in the Life...

Secured Entrance – Buzz for entrance
Monitored hours – Students sign in/out
Focused classrooms – Self-paced

Students work independently

Teachers provide individual instruction and monitor student progress
The Adult High School shares the belief:

“Every Student Every Day”

Mona Dixon
Risk Factors

Poor school attendance

Foster care

Poor parenting skills

Legal issues

Stress, excessive work load, long hours

Parenting skills

Depression, lack of social support

Peer influence, family discord, negative role models

Lack of structure and rules

Anxiety, Health issues, mental illness

Homelessness

Bullying, abuse, neglect

Minor parent, sibling grades
A Culture of Caring

- Remember, they meet your attitude before they meet you!
- “I may be kind, but I am not weak!”
- They don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care!
- Peoplework is more important than paperwork!
- See a need, fill a need!
Realizing/Reviving Realistic Dreams

- Match their aptitudes and interests with options for their future. They know their obstacles, but often they do not know their opportunities!
- Provide solutions while modeling problem solving.
- Foster independence, yet be a resource to help them forge their path.
- Assist them in developing plans, offering “hope and a future.”
- Revive or reveal their dreams, and shine the light on the path leading to them!
Realistic Dreams Realized!
REALISTIC DREAMS REALIZED!
A Culture of Caring

- Remember, they meet your attitude before they meet you!
- “I may be kind, but I am not weak!”
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Celebrate Success!
Moving the marble
Adult High School Graduation
Friday the eighth of June
Two Thousand Eighteen at Six O’clock
Wilson County Fair Expo Center
Lebanon, Tennessee
One day, an old man was walking along a beach that was littered with thousands of starfish that had been washed ashore by the high tide. As he walked he came upon a young boy who was eagerly throwing the starfish back into the ocean, one by one. Puzzled, the man looked at the boy and asked what he was doing. Without looking up from his task, the boy simply replied, “I’m saving these starfish, Sir”.

The old man chuckled aloud, “Son, there are thousands of starfish and only one of you. What difference can you make?”

The boy picked up a starfish, gently tossed it into the water and turning to the man, said, “I made a difference to that one!”