

Project Summary

The vast majority of Hackett Middle School students come from low-income families (79% are eligible for free/reduced-price lunch), many of which consist of a single-mother with a high school diploma or GED as head of the household. Without their family's experience regarding preparing for, enrolling in, and completing college, these concepts are foreign and overwhelming to many of these students.

The City School District of Albany proposes to supplement the extended learning day program at Hackett Middle School, an identified Persistently Lowest-Achieving school in need of transformation. Through collaboration with its partners, including Siena College, University of New York at Albany (UAlbany), Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (cIcu), the Lark Street Business Improvement District (BID), and SEFCU, the district will expand its direct services to approximately 380 students in grades 7-8 and their families.

More specifically, the district proposes to utilize CACG funds to offer Hackett students daily afterschool Academic Support, College to Career Connections, Exploration and Apprenticeship experiences, with partner workshops to raise awareness around planning for college, visits to college campuses, and hands-on internships with local businesses. Students will have the opportunity to participate in weekly Saturday Seminars, as well as Summer Seminars, on partner college campuses. Families will attend evening workshops with their children to learn strategies for budgeting and saving for college while they are still in middle school. Students will apply for and receive CACG scholarships each quarter and at the end of the school year as a way to start saving for college. Hackett's Guidance Counselors and Home School Coordinator will participate in all family workshops, as well as professional development trainings, to build their capacity to assist students and families.

The overarching goal of the program is to promote a culture of achievement at the targeted school via the proposed activities, which will increase the percentage of Hackett students and families who have begun planning for post-secondary education and careers by the time they transition into Albany High school. CSDA will achieve this goal by providing students and parents with **a**) information about post-secondary education opportunities and benefits, and how to plan for college and a career; **b**) information on financing options for college and on financial literacy and debt management; **c**) outreach to students who may be at risk of not enrolling in or completing post-secondary education; and **d**) providing professional development for Guidance Counselors to improve their capacity to assist students and families in preparing for entrance into institutions of higher education.

The proposed project will enable students and their families the opportunity to learn about college in an inviting, hands-on way in order to help them understand that they, too, have the opportunity to improve the quality of their lives through education; that college is not just something for the wealthy, but rather a tool that anyone can use with the proper support; and that this support is available to them now.