

TALLWOOD HIGH SCHOOL
GLOBAL STUDIES AND WORLD
LANGUAGES ACADEMY

YEAR-TWO EVALUATION

VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**TALLWOOD HIGH SCHOOL
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YEAR-TWO EVALUATION**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This year-two evaluation provides the School Board and superintendent information related to the continued implementation of the Global Studies and World Languages (GSLW) Academy at Tallwood High School during the 2006-07 school year. On January 11, 2005, the School Board approved the proposal for the GSLW Academy to be implemented in September 2005. The academy is a specialized school-within-a-school designed to provide students with intensive training in global issues and world languages and to prepare them for postsecondary advanced studies or for entry into international occupations. During the 2006-07 school year, the academy enrolled 84 ninth-grade students and 69 tenth-grade students, for a total enrollment of 153 students.

FINDINGS

- Several actions were taken to address the recommendations from the year-one evaluation. These included efforts to recruit qualified students, continue to develop and revise the curriculum to ensure challenging opportunities for students, investigate ways to further diversify the instructional staff, and to develop partnerships with local universities.
- A large percentage of parents agreed that the application process was clear, the forms were easy to complete, their child had time to complete the application requirements, and the orientation process was helpful in understanding the academy program. The percentage of parents stating that they had received enough information prior to deciding to enroll their child increased by 12 percentage points compared to year one.
- A total of 167 applications were received for admittance into either the ninth or the tenth grade of the academy. Of the applicants, 145 (87%) were qualified and offered admission to the academy. Of those, 88 (61%) enrolled in the academy, which consisted of 84 ninth graders and 4 tenth graders. Eighty percent of the staff agreed that the selection process identified promising students. Program capacity was at 77 percent during the 2006-2007 school year.
- Applications were received from each middle school. The largest number of students applying for, offered a position in, and enrolling in the academy came from Brandon Middle

School. Global Studies and World Languages Academy students represented each high school attendance zone. More than 31 percent of the students attending the academy were zoned for Tallwood High School.

- The academy had a higher percentage of female students compared to Tallwood High School or the division. The academy had relatively similar racial/ethnic percentages compared to the division's students. When compared to Tallwood High School, the academy had a lower percentage of African Americans and a higher percentage of Caucasians. The percentage of Asian/Pacific Islanders in the academy mirrored the percentage at Tallwood High School.
- Of the students enrolled in the academy as of September 29, 2006, 14 percent received free or reduced lunch, which was lower than both the school and division levels, 1 percent received special education services, which was below both the school and division levels, and 21 percent of the students were identified as gifted, which was higher than both the school and the division.
- The most often cited reasons for why new academy students decided to enroll in the academy included learning about other cultures, learning languages, and planning for careers and/or college.
- As of the fall of 2006, the retention rate for all students in the academy during the second year was 99 percent with two students withdrawing because they were leaving the area. When asked on the end-of-year survey, nearly 78 percent of the students stated they would be returning to the academy. The percentage of students stating that they would not be returning decreased from more than 16 percent in 2005-06 to less than 8 percent in 2006-07.
- Over the two-year period, from the start of the academy to the end of the academy's second year, the overall retention rate for the initial cohort of academy students was 76 percent. There were 88 total new enrollments as of the fall of 2006, 4 of whom were tenth graders. Of those 88 students, 87 completed the year as academy students, for a retention rate of 99 percent.
- The average years of teaching experience of academy teachers was 13.5 years. Nine of the ten teachers held advanced degrees, and all ten held the necessary endorsements. Nine of the ten teachers at the GSWL academy were female. This is higher than the percentage for Tallwood High School and the division. The percentage of Caucasian teachers in the academy was also higher than the percentage for Tallwood and all Virginia Beach high schools (83%). In addition, the academy had a higher percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander teachers compared to the school or the division.
- Several staff development opportunities were provided throughout the second year of the academy implementation. Feedback from these sessions indicated that the staff enjoyed the training and felt the training was applicable to their teaching. On the end-of-year survey, staff members indicated they had received enough training, the training enhanced their ability to integrate academy content into the curriculum, and the training helped them to meet their students' needs.

- The Office of Transportation Services supplemented the express bus transportation system at the academy with a hub design where buses were shared with the Visual and Performing Arts Academy at Salem High School. In 2006-07, 13 buses were used to provide transportation for out-of-zone academy students to and from Salem and Tallwood high schools.
- The academy made further progress toward meeting all of the objectives and the overall goal. Overall, students made progress toward successful completion of a sequential program of study focused on critical skills, knowledge, and technology in the fields of global studies and world languages, and plans are in place to secure dual enrollment agreements.
- Overall, progress was also made during year two toward meeting the academy objective that states students will meet or exceed the Standards of Learning (SOL) based on SOL test performance. In addition, efforts indicate that GSWL Academy leaders are developing collaborative partnerships and agreements, thus making progress on the fourth objective. Through job shadowing, field trips, community partnerships, guest speakers, mock interviews, Partial Immersion Cafés, and other activities, the academy has made substantial progress in the objective of offering active learning experiences. Finally, several actions demonstrate that progress was made toward meeting the objective of completing a long-term project with a culminating presentation during the second year of academy operations.
- Nearly 67 percent of the students, more than 83 percent of the parents, and 90 percent of the academy staff agreed that the transportation system allowed students to participate fully in the academy. Each of these percentages has increased from the first year.
- Following a similar pattern as reported in the year-one evaluation report, the grade averages of academy students during year two were higher than the grade averages of the Tallwood High School students for each quarter and the final marking period.
- Preliminary SOL results revealed that academy students outperformed nonacademy Tallwood High School students on applicable SOL tests and performed similarly to the division's ninth- and tenth-grade high school students on applicable SOL tests with the exception of Earth Science and World Geography, where academy students surpassed the division pass rate.
- Students had potential to earn postsecondary credit through two advanced placement courses. No dual enrollment agreements have been established to date. The academy leadership has indicated plans will be made during 2007-08 to ensure that seniors in 2008-09 have access to dual enrollment courses. Norfolk State University (NSU), Old Dominion University (ODU), and Tidewater Community College (TCC) have indicated interest in developing dual enrollment courses.
- All academy students job shadowed as part of the International Careers course. Job shadowing took place with 68 community businesses or educational institutions. The largest areas of job shadowing involved education and medicine; however, other offerings included event planning, public relations, chemistry, Web design, law, carpentry, fashion design,

journalism, politics, photography, real estate, entrepreneurship, architecture, and forensic science.

- Field trips included local universities, cultural events, habitats, and historic sites. Several students indicated on the end-of-year survey that they had gained a great deal from the field trips. However, when asked to suggest improvements for the academy, more than 35 percent of the students mentioned the need for additional field trips.
- Sixty-one percent of the new students indicated the academy provided a challenging curriculum, which was an increase of nearly 19 percentage points from last year. New academy students had the highest levels of agreement on the academy's ability to offer opportunities to gain intellectual and critical-thinking skills and also had high levels of awareness regarding their responsibilities as academy students.
- While students' level of agreement regarding the use of technology within the academy tended to be at a lower percentage than parents or staff, their level of agreement increased by 29 percentage points from the previous year. Although one of the lowest levels of agreement for students was dealing with the opportunities to learn leadership skills, there was a 14 percentage-point increase on this item compared to the previous year.
- Students, parents, instructional staff, academy leadership, and partners indicated that the largest gain from enrolling in the academy was obtaining a global perspective and a better understanding of global issues. Other items mentioned by stakeholder groups were content knowledge, job or career opportunities, the extracurricular activities, and the development of skills such as leadership, teamwork, communication, critical thinking, analysis, and information evaluation.
- When asked what they would improve about the academy, students focused on having additional field trips, making changes to course content or instruction, and changing the course selection process. Over half of the parents indicated no improvements were needed. Teachers indicated that they would improve collaboration among teachers.
- Parents had levels of agreement of 90 percent or higher on items pertaining to the academy requiring the students to think critically, providing a challenging curriculum, offering opportunities to gain intellectual skills, requiring their child to solve problems creatively, and the responsibilities being clear to their child. The lowest rated items concern the academy's ability to provide technology skills (80%) and offering more advanced course work than a regular high school (82%), although these percentages were relatively high.
- In year two, all teachers agreed with the statements concerning the academy offering a flexible learning environment; providing opportunities for students to gain intellectual, technological, and leadership skills; and encouraging students to think critically and solve problems in creative ways.

- For the staff, the lowest levels of agreement concerned the academy students and parents being aware of the program's expectations. This item had the lowest level of agreement among the staff during the previous year as well.
- Academy leadership and partners provided positive feedback in general about the strengthening and the progress of the academy, in particular mentioning the coordinator. When asked about the challenges, respondents focused on increasing enrollment numbers, ongoing curriculum development, possible budgetary issues, and increasing parental involvement.
- The total start-up and operating costs of the academy during the second year of implementation was \$487,698, with \$36,264 for start-up costs and \$451,434 for annual operating expenses. The annual operating expenses were more than projected due to personnel cost, but the start-up costs in year two were less than projected due to nonconsumable instructional materials. The proposed cost for year two was \$479,990, and the actual total cost for the academy for year two was \$487,698. The difference in proposed cost from actual cost was (\$7,708). The total cost for the GSWL Academy to date has been \$1,484,203, which was \$56,645 higher than the projected cost of \$1,427,558. Transportation was less than projected because of the implementation of the hub system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase enrollment of qualified students through varied marketing methods in an effort to reach full capacity. Ensure marketing activities include clear program expectations for potential students and their parents. (Office of Academy Programs, Tallwood High School)
- Secure dual enrollment agreements with colleges and university partners before course enrollment for 2008-09 in order to provide rising seniors with an opportunity to earn postsecondary credit. (Office of Academy Programs, Tallwood High School)
- Create opportunities for greater collaboration among academy teachers within and among disciplines in an effort to further integrate the academy themes throughout curriculum and instruction. (Office of Academy Programs, Tallwood High School)
- Continue the academy program through June 2010 and conduct a full implementation evaluation to be presented to the School Board in the fall of 2009. The evaluation will include information related to student enrollment, achievement of the academy goal and objectives, and recommendations regarding the continuation of the academy beyond June 2010. (Department of Accountability, School Administration)