

## Final Report on Governor's Youth Development Academy

October 25, 2013

### Introduction

Three Governor's Youth Development Academies, sponsored by the Virginia General Assembly and the Department of Education, were piloted during the summer of 2013. The Academies were designed to prepare students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in school, at home, and in the workplace, as well as to build personal strengths and foster school engagement.

Five school divisions in Region VIII applied and were approved to host one of the Academies. The school divisions involved in the planning and implementing the Governor's Youth Development Academy included Amelia, Buckingham, Cumberland, Lunenburg, and Prince Edward. School divisions were responsible for the selection of the student participants, identification of academy location, and hiring staff. The school divisions were also responsible for supporting and mentoring the students who attended the program throughout the school year. Demographics for the participating school divisions are listed in the chart below.

### Division Demographics

School	Enrollment PK-12	African American	Caucasian	% Latino	% Other	Free/Reduced Lunch
Amelia	1,804	27%	67%	4%	2%	39%
Buckingham	2,140	37%	53%	4%	6%	64%
Cumberland	1,438	39.5%	51%	3.9%	4.8%	65.3%
Lunenburg	1,578	39.9%	49%	8%	3%	78%
Prince Edward	2,284	57%	38%	2.8%	2.2%	70%

## **Purpose and Theme of Academy**

The 2013 academy's theme was "Soaring to New Heights." The program met Monday through Thursday from 8:30 A. M to 2:45 P. M. for eight days. Its focus was on providing students with leadership and other necessary life skills. The schedule of activities focused on civics education, financial literacy, community service, leadership, teen driving and responsibilities, health and wellness, college and career preparation, and leadership. Local community members were invited to share their resources with the students attending the academy. Students learned from community leaders and professionals from varying sectors through active participatory experiences.

## **Organization and Planning**

The planning committees for the Academy were comprised of Central Office personnel, including, Melvin Rose, Assistant Superintendent, Amelia Public Schools; Chip Jones, Assistant Superintendent, Cumberland Public Schools; Thelma Llewellyn, Director of Student Services, Buckingham County Schools; Sidney Long, Director of Personnel/Instruction/Federal Programs, Lunenburg Public Schools; and Wanda Walker, Improvement Specialist, Prince Edward Schools. These initial committee members met to discuss the objectives of the Youth Development Academy and to hire a Coordinator and five Counselors to staff the Academy.

Once hired, the Coordinator worked daily during the time period leading to the program start date. The Coordinator developed daily schedules and activities, created curriculum lesson plans, and scheduled speakers and field trips. Communication with community partners and speakers to support the Academy took place via emails, telephone calls, and personal visits to

businesses. Parents were invited to attend an introductory meeting to discuss the planned activities for the two-week program. [See Appendix A.]

The Coordinator was the facilitator for the program. The five Counselors were assigned 10 students to supervise throughout the daily activities. Academy staff members were selected through an interview process and represented all partnering school divisions. The Coordinator and Counselors met twice prior to the Academy to discuss themes, plan activities, and develop a plan of action to reach out to involve the community in the program's activities. [See Appendix B.]

The students who participated in the Academy completed a student application. The applications were screened by each school division and the students who attended were chosen by their school's guidance counselor and principal. Each division was allowed to invite up to 10 students to attend the Academy. The criteria for being selected varied at each school division. However, the initial committee members recommended that participants be representative of the characteristics and diversity of student bodies, including being identified through early warning indicators (e.g., at risk of losing academic progress, becoming disengaged from school). The Governor's Youth Development Academy grant set the grade levels of participants to include rising ninth and tenth graders for the 2013-2014 academic school year.

### **Budget**

The grant funds received to assist with the operation of the Governor's Youth Development Academy were utilized to support the personnel, food, travel, curriculum, materials/supplies, cultural/recreational experiences, and motivational speakers. The planning committee determined

the areas where the funds were to be allocated. A breakdown of the initial program budget is listed below:

- \$18,032.14 was budgeted to cover the salary cost and fixed charges associated with the six staff members.
- \$8,772.04 was budgeted to cover the cost of building rentals and other costs associated with the operation of the program.
- \$34,659.47 was budgeted to cover the cost of travel associated with the program.
- \$6,433.35 was budgeted to cover the cost of materials and supplies associated with the program.

The planning committee worked in coordination with the Coordinator to develop a schedule of events for the students. The Coordinator worked diligently to secure resources to aid in making the program a meaningful and educational experience for the students. All purchases were pre-approved by both the Coordinator and the fiscal agent.

### **Administration and Logistics**

Longwood University was chosen as the site of the Academy because of the central location of the campus for the five participating school divisions. In addition, the location provided an excellent opportunity for student participants to be exposed to a post-secondary campus setting. Longwood is convenient to many local attractions such as the YMCA, ropes course, historical museums, and many facets of local government.

Each school division provided transportation for the students to and from Longwood University. Longwood provided a daily breakfast and lunch meal plan for the participants and staff.

### **Communication**

Initial communication about the program was provided through the participating school divisions through meetings with the students. Further information concerning GYDA was provided by the Coordinator via emails, mailings, phone calls, and a face to face meeting. Staff members met two days prior to the start of the Academy to discuss the theme, collaborate about possible resources, and develop a schedule for the operation of the Academy.

Communications to the public and community stakeholders were provided by the GYDA Coordinator through the use of emails, phone calls, and newspaper interviews. The local newspaper featured the Governor's Youth Development Academy in a segment of the paper. The article focused on the student presentations regarding the program, student interviews, and the article emphasized the visit by Deputy Secretary of Education, Javaid Siddiqi.

### **Curriculum and Community Partners**

The curriculum of the Academy followed the topics presented in the Governor's initiative description. Main content themes for the Academy were Youth as Engaged Citizens, Laws and You, Responsibility and Accountability, College and Career Preparation, and Financial and Personal Well-being. Additional areas of emphasis included cultural awareness, teamwork and communication, goal setting, public speaking, overcoming obstacles, and leadership. Content

delivery involved preparation of lesson plans, service learning in the community, interactive activities, and field trips.

The Academy staff represented the five counties involved in the grant. The Coordinator worked with community professionals to plan and implement daily presentations, activities, and field trips. For example, the students traveled to a local ropes course facility and participated in activities aimed towards leadership skills and team building. The students visited the historical Moton Museum, where they learned about the involvement of Prince Edward County in the Brown vs. The Board of Education case and the segregation of schools. In an effort to address overall health and wellness, the students also traveled to the local YMCA and were able to participate in Zumba, Yoga, and other classes that the facility had to offer. An overnight trip to Washington, D.C. was planned. On this trip the students visited the Holocaust Museum, the Lincoln Memorial, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, the Capitol Building and the White House. In addition, the trip allowed the students to visit the Capital of the United States and get a first-hand opportunity to see the area in which the majority of the leadership activities take place for the United States. The overnight field trip provided an opportunity for many of the students in the program to visit a city for the first time and experience life outside of Southside Virginia. Program committee members and staff felt the trip was a vital part of the program because of the exposure it would afford the students. [See Appendix C.]

The Academy concluded with student presentations. The PowerPoint presentations were a culmination of the events that took place during the duration of the program. Parents, school division committee members, school division superintendents, school board members, and local newspaper representatives were invited to attend this celebration. A final speaker, Dr. Javaid Siddiqi, Deputy Secretary of Education for Virginia, discussed the goal of the Governor's Youth

Development Academy grant and explained how the Governor developed the concept of the Academy. At the end of the program, students were given backpacks filled with resources to utilize throughout the school year. [See Appendix D.]

### **Evaluation**

The Academy was evaluated using a final questionnaire for the students to complete on their last day. Survey results suggested the students thought favorably of the Academy and their experience. The survey results indicated the students enjoyed the trip to Washington, D.C. Students noted that they increased their knowledge regarding cooperation with others, presentation skills, community resources, communication, government, and the importance of giving back to their community while attending the Academy, and that the knowledge they received would help them in their future. The students reported they would recommend the Academy to their friends and many would like the opportunity to participate again. [See Appendix E.]

### **Support for Students in School Year 2013-14**

The staff from each division will remain in contact and support the students throughout the 2013-2014 school year. Staff will monitor the participating students' grades, attendance, and discuss how the program increased their desire to become a student leader within their school division.

The students turned in personal and academic goals for the upcoming school year. The staff members have the goals and will check in with the participants throughout the year to see how they are doing in meeting their goals and will determine what the staff or school can do to assist students in achieving their goals.

The school divisions felt that the Governor's Youth Development Academy offered students a wonderful experience. The recommendation is to offer this opportunity next year for other students in rural school divisions.

## Appendix A

### GYDA Parent Meeting - July 11, 2013

- Introductions
- Information about the grant- 5 counties
- Discipline
- Dress Code (dress for mock interviews and final day for presentations)
- Themes
- Daily Schedule
- D.C trip- dress attire (dinner cruise/Capital tour)
- Final day- presentations
- Parent survey
- Forms to complete
  - Medical release
  - Field Trip
  - Discipline
  - Sandy River
- Verify emergency contact numbers

## **Appendix B**

### Staff Meeting Agenda

June 26, 2013

Introductions – Tell us about you!

Discussion of topics to cover- what do you see yourself being able to share? What do you think students should be exposed to? What types of leadership activities? Importance of being a good citizen.

Calendar of events – Community Resources – Local Attractions – Local Government

Changes to calendar

Discuss DC trip

Discuss student rolls

Call students for shirt size

Brochure

Sandy River

# Appendix C



## What is the GYDA?

GYDA is a grant program that focuses on providing 50 students in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades leadership and other necessary life skills. Students will receive information on the following:

- Community Service
- Financial Management
- Laws and Responsibility
- Civics
- Etiquette
- Health and Wellness
- College and Career Planning
- Goal Setting

## Governor's Youth Development Academy 2013

"Soaring to New Heights!"



### Dates:

- Monday, July 15 – Thursday, July 18
- Monday, July 22- Thursday, July 25

### Times:

8:30 a.m. – 2:45 p.m.

GYDA does not meet on Friday, July 19<sup>th</sup> or Friday, July 26<sup>th</sup>

Anneta  
Buckingham  
Cumberland  
Lunenburg  
Prince Edward

## ITINERARY

July 11 – **Parent Informational Meeting 7:00 p.m.** (See flyer attached.)

July 15 – Team building- visit to Sandy River Retreat

Goal Setting

July 16 – Motivational Speaker, David Garcia 10:30-11:30. **Parents are invited to attend.**

Budgeting and Banking

July 17-- Presentations from local community members  
Etiquette  
Teenage Driving

July 18 – Visit to YMCA - Longwood presentation- College and career preparation.

July 22 - Trip to Washington, D.C  
Leave Longwood at 7:30a.m

July 23 - Return to Longwood at 7:30p.m

July 24 - Prepare presentations

- Mock Interviews

July 25 - Presentations and lunch with parents and school officials.

Presentations begin at 10:00. Lunch provided by Longwood Dining Hall @ 11:30. Incentive ceremony begins at 12:30.



## MEET OUR COUNSELORS

Lisha Robinson- Teacher for 18 years. Currently, special education teacher in Buckingham County.

Tera Sharpe- Middle school counselor for 2 years in Prince Edward County.

Marsha Rutledge- School counselor for 13 years. Currently a middle school counselor in Amelia County.

Carolyn Jones- Teacher for 17 years. Currently the Coordinator for Exceptional Programs in Prince Edward County.

Dr. Sharon Stanislas- 21 years in education; 8 as a middle school teacher and 13 as a counselor. Currently a counselor in Lunenburg County.

Anna Wieder- Teacher for 5 years. Currently a 6th grade teacher in Cumberland County.

Drop off and pick up times:

- Amelia- Drop off at Amelia High @ 7:30 a.m. Pick up by 3:30 p.m.
- Buckingham- Drop off @ 7:45a.m. at Buckingham County Middle School. Pick up at 3:15p.m.
- Cumberland- Drop off by 7:45a.m. Cumberland Middle School. Pick up at 3:00 p.m.
- Lunenburg- Drop off at Central High @ 7:45a.m. Picked up @ 3:45p.m.

Times may be subject to change. Updated information will be provided at parent meeting.

We hope your child will enjoy their experiences with the GYDA program. Please be sure to complete the survey at the end of the program so that we can make the program the best it can be.

## Appendix D

### *Preliminary*

## WASHINGTON D.C. PROGRAM

### 2 Day Tour July 22-23, 2013

#### Day One

**A.M.** – Group meets at Longwood University, Farmville, VA

- Group boards **Deluxe Motor Coach** and departs for Washington, D.C.
  - Approximately 3 hour bus ride
- Arrival into **Washington D.C.**
- Meet your **Full-time guide** and visit the **National Zoo** to see the infamous Red Pandas, Elephants and more
- Visit the **National Archives** (based upon availability)
- Enjoy **Lunch** at **World's Largest McDonald's via voucher** (or similar)
- Visit the **Smithsonian's National Air & Space Museum, Museum of American History**, and the **Museum of Natural History**
- **Visit the Holocaust Memorial, choice of \*Daniel's Story or Full Exhibit** (based upon availability)
- Walk to Subway Station to ride the train to Pentagon City Mall for **Dinner** via voucher
- Walk to **Pentagon Memorial**
- Visit **Iwo Jima Memorial**

**P.M.** – Check in to **hotel** (Holiday Inn, Hampton Inn or similar)

#### Day Two

**A.M.** - Enjoy **breakfast at hotel**

**9:00 A.M.** - Visit the **U.S. Capitol Hill (VIP tour needs to be arranged through school by local congress representative)** which includes:

- **the United States Library of Congress and**
- **the U.S. Supreme Court**
- Walk to Union Station for **Lunch** and some shopping time
- Visit Memorials:
  - Lincoln Memorial
  - White House Photo Opportunity
  - MLK- Martin Luther King Memorial
- Group boards **Deluxe Motor Coach** and departs for School
  - Approximately 3 hour bus ride

**P.M.** – Arrive at School for parent pick up

## Appendix E

### Governor's Youth Academy Participant Survey

1. What tools from the Academy will you use during the 2013-2014 school year?
2. What are some topics you would have wanted to include in the Youth Development Academy?
3. Which activity/presentation gave you information you felt was most valuable?
4. What presentation did you like best and why?
5. Did the information from Longwood inspire you to further your education?
6. What do you remember most about the field trip to D.C.?
7. Would you recommend this program to your friends?
8. What is your overall opinion of your experience at the Youth Development Academy?