



"Before I was a tutor, I didn't care about my education and I had planned to drop out this year. Thanks to the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, I know that studying is worthwhile and my grades are getting better."

- middle school tutor

In 1984, the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) designed and developed the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, a model cross-age tutoring program in which secondary school students, particularly middle school students, who are considered at risk of dropping out of school tutor younger, elementary school students. The concept of youth tutoring youth is not new. It was extensively used in U.S. public schools during the teacher shortage of the 1960s. During that time, educators and researchers learned that peer and cross-age tutoring can create valuable shared learning experiences for both the tutors and those tutored. Learning, friendship and social growth are logical outcomes.

Unlike most cross-age tutoring programs that tap academically-successful students to be tutors, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program tutors are students who are considered at risk of dropping out of school. When students are placed in responsible roles and supported in their efforts, powerful benefits occur. Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program tutors stay in school, improve their literacy and thinking skills, develop self-esteem, feel they belong in school, and enhance their class attendance. Youngsters who are tutored experience learning in a comfortable and non-threatening climate, often developing strong bonds with their tutors. According to the Coca-Cola Valued Youth creed, *all students are valuable, none is expendable*.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has a sound theoretical and research base. The basic program model and the implementation strategies were refined and proven effective through a two-year, randomized, comparison-group research study conducted from 1987-89 through the support of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs.

For two decades, IDRA and The Coca-Cola Foundation have worked together in a unique partnership that is making a visible difference in the lives of more than 136,000 children, families and educators.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program's primary goal is to:

- ◆ reduce dropout rates.

Program benefits include:

- ◆ enhancing students' basic academic skills;
- ◆ strengthening students' perceptions of self and school;
- ◆ reducing student disciplinary action referrals and absenteeism; and
- ◆ strengthening school-home-community partnerships to increase the level of support available to students at risk of dropping out of school.





Because no two school organizations are exactly alike, implementation of a program or an approach requires some adjustments in either the school organization or the adopted project design. Research and experience have shown that projects implemented intact – with no attention given to the receptivity of potential users or to the alignment with the philosophy and characteristics of the school organization – can easily result in an unsuccessful attempt to implement the program.

On the other hand, if the program is modified too intensely in order to meet the school's situation, the implementation team may lose sight of the program's critical elements resulting in a school not getting the full benefit of the program. In such a case, the program may appear to be working, but without clear definition it will inevitably break down and eventually phase out without any noticeable effect on the students it was designed to serve.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is flexible, readily adaptable to individual schools. But careful design and assessment have shown that certain elements are critical, such as paying the tutors for the work they do and having experienced content area teachers serve as the program's teacher coordinators.

In your implementation of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, IDRA will work as a partner, providing the full range of training, technical assistance, evaluation and support materials to preserve the integrity of the program and ensure that students receive optimal benefits from this effort.

"I thought that I wasn't good because I had many problems. I thought I was a nobody, but when I started talking to my tutees and working with them, I felt different. Now I know that I can be somebody, and I can help others to do the same."

- middle school tutor

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has levels that incorporate all the major features of the model: the philosophical base, the instructional strategies and the support strategies. As you read on, you may wish to visualize this model as three cylindrical layers, with the philosophical underpinnings providing a wide base for the instructional and support strategies.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Philosophical Base

The Coca-Cola Valued Program is based on seven important tenets:

1. All students can learn.
2. The school values all students.
3. All students can actively contribute to their own education and to the education of others.
4. All students, parents and teachers have the right to participate fully in creating and maintaining excellent schools.
5. Excellence in schools contributes to individual and collective economic growth, stability and advancement.
6. Commitment to educational excellence is created by including students, parents and teachers in setting goals, making decisions, monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes.
7. Students, parents and teachers must be provided extensive, consistent support in ways that allow students to learn, teachers to teach and parents to be involved.



The Instructional Strategy

Classes for Tutors. Tutors meet their secondary school teacher coordinator once a week in order to: (1) develop tutoring skills that enable them to become successful student tutors; (2) reflect on and celebrate their successes and contributions, thus developing self-awareness and pride; and (3) improve literacy skills. This class, coupled with the actual tutoring sessions that occur four times a week during the same class period, is offered as an elective or as a state-credit course.

Classes are designed to develop critical and higher-order thinking skills. When students participate in this class and are supported in their role as tutors, they are guided in thinking about how a student learns, what strategies a tutor must use to help the younger student learn, and how to evaluate the results of the tutoring. These skills are on the level of analysis, synthesis and evaluation in Bloom's taxonomy. When tutors are acting on par with the teacher in determining student needs and selecting effective teaching strategies, they work at a level of sophistication that they have rarely, if ever, experienced in school before.

The classes also support the work of the tutor as an internship experience. Tutors focus on the act of tutoring and are treated as if they were professional tutors. The student tutors learn some key elements of the teaching career, including the skill of developing lessons, selecting appropriate teaching activities and evaluating tutee progress.

Attendance is monitored, and absences are checked on immediately. When Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program tutors are absent, the teacher coordinator follows up with phone calls and home visits. If absenteeism seems to be student truancy, counseling and encouragement are given. If the reasons are health or economics, then support services can be requested through the school counselor.

Tutoring Sessions. After a one- to two-week observation period in the elementary school classroom - during which tutors make note of discipline, classroom management systems and use of material - tutors begin tutoring a minimum of four hours per week (one class period per day).

Tutoring relationships are established between students at least four grade levels apart. Tutoring younger children forces the tutors to draw on their own experiences and apply them to the difficult task of teaching. Tutors are most often assigned to elementary school students who are having problems learning. Tutors have to use critical and higher-order thinking skills, try a variety of techniques, and be creative in developing their own teaching tools - just the opposite of the passive role many students in at-risk situations play in remedial classes with oversimplified concepts and a slower pace of instruction. Tutoring keeps the students alert and challenged, and the teacher coordinator makes sure the experience is not a frustration or a failure for the tutors.

*"I'm the youngest of four kids, and I will be the first to graduate from high school. I would not be graduating if I wasn't a tutor."
- middle school tutor*

The tutoring assignment is akin to a job internship that creates career awareness and preparedness. The student tutors receive a stipend for their work as teachers and are expected to adhere to the guidelines of their host school with their primary responsibility being their three tutees. Each tutor is treated as an adult, with adult responsibilities, but is also provided teacher supervision and support. With the help of their teacher coordinator, they are expected to perform as workers in real work situations and are responsible for results, (e.g., the tutee learns specific skills as a result of the tutoring).

Important work habits are also learned and reinforced: being prompt; behaving appropriately with one's supervisor (elementary classroom teacher); filling out time cards; and working for results. The tutors soon connect their work with getting paid and enjoy being called "Mr." or "Ms." by their young charges.

Tutoring encourages school attendance. When students are absent, they do not tutor their younger charges and they do not get a stipend for the time missed. The elementary school teacher and the young children miss their presence and inquire as to their whereabouts. It is normal for the tutees to ask the tutor, "Where were you?" For many tutors, the experience of being genuinely missed in school is a new one and one that encourages them to attend school regularly.

"I refuse to miss school because I do not want to disappoint my students."
- middle school tutor

Educational Field Trips. Students explore economic, career and cultural opportunities in the community at least three times during the school year through field trips.

These opportunities allow the tutors to develop career awareness through concrete insights in a variety of professional environments. By seeing professional settings up close, tutors get specific ideas of what is done and what skills are required, allowing them to make connections between what they are learning in school and what they will need to know for particular careers.

Parents are encouraged to attend field trips to have a common learning experience with their children and to assist as chaperons. Some of the trips highlight cultural contributions of the family's ethnic group and enhance their sense of self.

Field trips are also opportunities for linkages within the educational pipeline (K-16), between elementary and secondary schools and higher education institutions. Secondary school tutors may assist as chaperons for elementary school field trips. Also, a field trip to the high school can help smooth the transition to high school for eighth-grade tutors. Field trips to colleges and universities give tutors a broader perspective of their educational opportunities and access.

Role Models. Role models are an important part of the program. Adults who are considered successful in their fields and who came from students' ethnic backgrounds are invited to participate.

Five guest speakers per year model a variety of professions and experiences. Care is taken to highlight professions in which minority groups are underrepresented, including science, engineering, law, medicine, journalism and business. Parents of Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program participants are invited as role models to recognize the contributions they make to the community and to emphasize the dignity of families. A powerful kind of modeling can be provided by a person who has overcome serious barriers to his or her personal survival and professional success.



Student Recognition. Students are acknowledged for their efforts and contributions they make as tutors. Throughout the year, students receive certificates of merit and personal expressions of appreciation. They are invited on field trips with their tutees, receive media attention and are honored at an end-of-year event.

Through these events, Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program tutors experience the importance of their tutoring to the students they tutor, the elementary and middle school teachers, the school and the school district. Student recognition events include information about post-secondary options and college career choices to help tutors find ways to make their success continue.

Support Structure

The instructional strategy components require a parallel set of activities and functions in support of the program. These include the following.

Curriculum. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program provides a tutor workbook and a curriculum framework for teachers to use in selecting lessons designed to prepare secondary school students, particularly middle school students, to tutor elementary school students while improving the students' tutoring skills, literacy skills, and self-concept. The curriculum offers an opportunity for *praxis*, an ongoing interplay between the action and reflection. The curriculum framework encourages student-initiated questions and problem-solving. The pace is driven by the daily challenges students face in their tutoring relationships. Rather than being controlled or limited by a rigid curriculum, teachers can adapt to the students' needs. The tutors' desire to succeed with the tutees and their corresponding need to learn keeps the pace lively and the content flexible.

The curriculum framework's focus on student self-concept has a strong relationship to students' future successes. Most students have limited experience in goal-setting. Many of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program activities strengthen self-concept and focus on exploring possibilities, helping students develop a positive vision of themselves and plan for an exciting future. The aim is to connect present activities and academic classes with goals for exciting and productive careers.

In using the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program curriculum framework, the teacher assists the tutors in solving problems. As a relationship is built and strengthened, the teacher counsels and advocates the tutor. Each student's situation is approached holistically; that is, rather than being concerned about the student's ability in a particular subject, the teacher coordinator sees the tutor as a young person with many assets, challenges, and goals – one of which is to succeed academically.

Coordination. Coordination is formalized through the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program implementation team: the program administrator, the principals of the elementary and secondary schools, the teacher coordinator at the secondary school, an elementary school receiving teacher representative, the family liaison and the evaluation liaison. The team's major responsibility is to coordinate and monitor project activities at the campus level. In addition, the team assesses project success and seeks ways of adapting the organization and the project characteristics to create an environment that supports valuing youth. The team coordinates activities through planned implementation and periodic review. A minimum of three meetings of the full implementation team are conducted each year, building effective inter- and intra-campus linkages to create a support network for each student

Staff Enrichment. The goal of staff enrichment is to create a cohesive group dedicated and committed to success, with high expectations for both the students and adults. Staff enrichment is achieved through technical assistance and training. During each school year, technical assistance and training days focus on:

- ◆ assessing the status;
- ◆ understanding the philosophy and the strategies of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program;
- ◆ creating a climate for successful implementation;
- ◆ planning the logistics of program operation including student selection and placement;
- ◆ using the curriculum framework and pedagogically appropriate instruction;
- ◆ coordinating student support and advocacy efforts; and
- ◆ using formative and summative evaluation results.

Training and technical assistance is provided by IDRA based on continuous assessments of assets, challenges and academic progress and is designed to include all implementation team members in different phases of the staff enrichment plan.

Family Involvement. Empowering families requires vigorous linguistically and culturally appropriate outreach and meaningful school activities. These activities include visits to parents' homes, a particularly important outreach for parents without telephones and those who have not previously participated in school activities. A minimum of three parent meetings and sessions are conducted bilingually or in the language of the parents each year, focusing on needs expressed by the parents.

"The program helped me become more responsible at home. I help my mother, and our relationship has gotten a lot better."

– middle school tutor

The family of each Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program tutor receives regular written and verbal notices. This communication is positive, reflecting student progress and success. In this context, the school can open a nonthreatening dialogue with parents about specific concerns, such as attendance.



Individual family sessions with the teacher coordinator or parent liaison are arranged in order to provide information the parents deem important to help them support their children in school. Ample opportunity is provided to discuss their issues and concerns and celebrate their student's contributions.

Youth Leadership Days. Leadership days are held by the school district or regionally. They provide tutors with opportunities to meet each other and recognize there are many different students in the program contributing to their communities and schools by being tutors. Tutors participate in personal awareness activities, teambuilding activities, and leadership activities that enhance their presentation, communication and decision-making skills.

Technology Awareness and Utilization. Students in the program use technology – Internet, e-mail and video conferencing – and benefit greatly from this opportunity. They have an opportunity to experience communication through e-mailing “key pals” and participating in a video conference. Tutors learn how to plan and perform their presentations and how to use the most advanced technology in video conferencing. They learn about the cameras and microphones and how to use the keyboard to zoom in and out. They go behind the scenes and speak with technology staff. Tutors also learn about new careers created through the advent of advanced technology.

Developing Literacy. The use of video conferencing is a great opportunity to build tutors' literacy skills. Through their participation, tutors develop their oral and written skills. Each tutor prepares a script, practices orally, and edits the script. After reading orally, they notice and correct wrong verb tenses and add adjectives that make their presentations more interesting. They develop their oral skills through their presentations and work hard to enunciate words correctly. Tutors conduct several practice sessions and improve their presentations. Because they are preparing for a real audience of peers, the tutors work hard to improve their presentations.

Evaluation. The evaluation design for the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is one of the most rigorous and comprehensive in the country. Evaluation of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, conducted by IDRA, serves to monitor program operations, develop corrective action as needed and document results of program implementation. Quantitative and qualitative measures are used to gauge student progress.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has been identified as a promising program in the book, *Show Me the Evidence! Proven and Promising Programs for America's Schools*, by Dr. Robert E. Slavin and Dr. Olatokunbo S. Fashola. The authors report that the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is one of only two programs – the other being Upward Bound – designed to increase the high school graduation rates of students in at-risk situations that showed evidence of success. Our evaluation holds IDRA and our partner schools accountable to student success – a less than 2 percent dropout rate and improved academic achievement.

“I think my teacher coordinator helped me become a better person. He helped me see myself from a different point of view, where I could be more respectful.”
– middle school tutor

On the basis of IDRA's 1987 longitudinal research study, program elements – also known as core components and support components – were reviewed and categorized to represent their relative importance to the success of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program. The categories include:

Critical Vital and non-negotiable elements necessary to produce positive results.

Important Strongly recommended elements that help produce better results.

Desirable Non-required elements that enhance the program.



Core Component 1: Tutoring

Critical

- Students tutor a minimum of four and a maximum of eight hours per week
- Tutors are assigned particular tutees with few changes
- Tutors work with three tutees each
- Tutors work on planned instructional tasks
- A minimum of four grade levels difference exists between tutors and tutees
- Adults accompany and supervise tutors between campuses at all times
- Tutors do not lose academic credit hours for tutoring
- Tutors earn stipends and are paid regularly
- Tutors communicate in tutees' language of instruction
- Adequate space in the elementary school classroom is provided
- Receiving teachers want the tutors, understand their own role and the role of the tutors, provide positive feedback, and monitor tutoring activities

Important

- Tutors get school credit for tutoring
- Tutors sign in at the elementary school
- Tutors wear badges at the elementary school
- Inclusion of special education tutees is limited
- Teacher coordinator observes tutoring sessions
- Tutors are paid on time, as in any other job

Desirable

- Elementary school is a short distance from the secondary school
- Tutors are paid wages comparable to a minimum wage
- Receiving teachers serve as mentors and counselors for tutors
- Tutoring work areas are provided in the receiving classroom

“Being a Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program tutor is much more than just sitting there and talking to the elementary students. You are able to *teach* another person.”

– middle school tutor

Core Component 2: Classes for Tutors

Critical

- Thirty to 35 once-a-week sessions are conducted during the school year
- Preparatory sessions for tutors are planned and conducted (one to two weeks)
- Tutors observe elementary school classrooms prior to tutoring (one to two weeks)
- Timely and flexible responses are given to immediate needs identified by students
- Classes focus on
 - ❖ tutoring skills
 - ❖ literacy skills
 - ❖ self-concept
- Oral and written communication skills are encouraged and developed
- Instruction is student-centered
- Positive feedback is given at all times

Important

- Cooperative learning approach is used
- Comprehensive and balanced literacy approach is used
- Student-initiated activities are included

Desirable

- Teachers of tutors collectively plan quality instruction and support activities that are specifically designed to complement the tutoring and leadership activities
- All teachers value and acknowledge the contributions of tutors

Core Component 3: Field Trips

Critical

- Three trips are conducted per school year
- Trips are structured and tied to classes for tutors
- Adequate adult supervision is always provided

Important

- Trips incur minimal expense for tutors and teachers
- Educational sites (e.g., colleges or universities) are targeted
- All tutors are allowed to participate regardless of academic grades
- Trips are funded through school or private sector rather than by tutors themselves

Desirable

- Trip supervision is provided by volunteer parents of tutors
- Tutors evaluate field trips
- Tutors accompany tutees on joint field trips

Core Component 4: Role Models

Critical

- Five guest speakers visit per school year
- Role models that tutors can relate to are selected
- Speakers from backgrounds similar to students are selected
- Mentor relationships are built through significant and extended contact between tutors, teacher coordinators, other school personnel, or community members

Important

- Speakers represent various professional and occupational backgrounds
- Speakers are successful people who have overcome serious obstacles or barriers

Desirable

- Tutors evaluate speakers
- Tutors send letters of appreciation to speakers

Core Component 5: Student Recognition

Critical

- End-of-year event recognizes tutors for their contributions and marks a year of achievement
- All tutors, teachers and administrators attend events; attendance is facilitated in any way necessary
- Students are recognized individually, as well as part of a group, on an ongoing basis
- Publicity is sought via newspapers, newsletters, television, school or district bulletins
- Tutors select *Tutor of the Year* for special honor
- Tutors have symbols of positive identification with Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program (e.g., T-shirt, certificate)



Support Component 1: Curriculum

Critical

- Curriculum is grounded in students' tutoring and academic needs
- Content areas targeted include:
 - ❖ self-concept
 - ❖ tutoring skills
 - ❖ literacy skills

Important

- Instructional materials are adapted to promote a student-centered and student-driven curriculum
- Accurate records are kept of content taught and discussed

Desirable

- Tutors are "tutored" before and during the school year
- Focus is on child growth and development

Support Component 2: Coordination

Critical

- Coordination and communication is planned and structured
- Teacher coordinators and other implementors are involved in designing coordination activities
- Roles and responsibilities of all participants are clearly defined

Important

- Participant feedback is elicited throughout the program for trouble-shooting, program changes, etc.
- Teacher coordinators and receiving teachers meet every six weeks

Desirable

- Program personnel exchange lesson plans
- Stipends are provided for receiving teachers to participate in coordination sessions

Support Component 3: Professional Development

Critical

- Project staff are dedicated and committed to the program's success
- Project staff have high expectations of students
- Training is conducted before and during program
- Training topics include:
 - ❖ orientation
 - ❖ implementation procedures
 - ❖ English as a second language (ESL) techniques and methods

Important

- All school staff are aware of and support project goals and activities
- Training topics include:
 - ❖ assessment of staff and school needs, issues and concerns
 - ❖ data collection and record keeping
 - ❖ balanced and comprehensive literacy techniques
 - ❖ cooperative learning

Desirable

- Training topics include:
 - ❖ classroom management
 - ❖ testing and evaluation

Support Component 4: Family Involvement

Critical

- Parents are provided with critical program information including goals and program requirements
- Parent consent is obtained for program participation

Important

- Parenting sessions are scheduled at parents' convenience
- Tutors and parents are involved in recognition events, holiday parties, etc.
- Designated outreach worker visits parents at home and provides information, support, guidance, or referral to support personnel
- Parents complete a survey on Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program's effects on students

Desirable

- Transportation to meetings and special events is provided for parents
- Parents attending training sessions receive stipends
- Child care for parent-attended school functions is provided

Support Component 5: Evaluation

Critical

- Tutors are monitored throughout school year and provided support and guidance as needed
- Counselors, teachers and parents are interviewed on the program's successes and areas needing improvement
- Qualitative and quantitative diagnostic and performance measures are used to gauge student progress

Important

- Tutors' performance is evaluated before and after the program using attendance, achievement and self-concept measures

Desirable

- Tutor performance is measured against a comparison group



"The most important thing I want to do as a tutor is explain to the kids that learning is the way to success."

- middle school tutor



Schools implementing the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program become part of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program network. The program forms part of their school district's dropout prevention effort. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is funded through school districts' own initiatives. As such, districts and schools have used a variety of methods to fund the program, such as federal funds (Title I, III and IV, Migrant and State Compensatory) and school-business partnerships (local Coca-Cola Bottlers and other corporations).

In preparing to implement the program, the following costs should be considered.

Tutor stipends. Normally, wages comparable to minimum wage for about 100 hours per year for 20 to 25 tutors.

Substitute teacher pay. Teacher release time for one teacher coordinator and one elementary school representative to attend three implementation team meetings. Participating in these meetings is imperative for these teachers' efforts to improve their students' success.

Bussing cost. Necessary only if schools are not within walking distance.

Field trips. Cost of transportation, meals and admittance fees (when necessary) for three field trips.

Recognition event. A banquet or luncheon to recognize and acknowledge tutors' success and leadership (could include parents).

National teacher coordinator institute. Institute held annually in San Antonio for teacher coordinators. Other staff involved with the program are encouraged to attend, but this is optional.

Training and technical assistance, evaluation and materials. This cost is paid to IDRA and includes: training and technical assistance, district video conference, district leadership day, evaluation, implementation guides, elementary school receiving teacher guides, and tutor workbooks. Costs for IDRA services range from \$10,000 to \$18,000 based on the range of services provided*.

**in 2004 dollars*

Neither IDRA nor The Coca-Cola Foundation provides funds to implement the program. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is a process of creating or strengthening commitment to youth and their families. It is also a process of acting on that commitment in a collaborative way that produces results.

Phase I: Getting the Program Started

The first task in initiating the program is to identify the **program administrator**. This person needs to be in the district central office, with the administrative and budgetary authority to initiate the program and the experience and skills to guide its progress. While several people in the school district may be enthusiastic about the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program and their support will help the program succeed, shared directorship has not proved workable. One person needs to understand the big picture; one person needs to have ultimate responsibility. The program administrator is appointed by the district superintendent.

The program administrator, in collaboration with your superintendent, will select the **secondary school campus** – preferably a middle school – and an **elementary school campus** to participate in the program. Typically, the elementary school campus is within easy walking distance of the secondary school campus. The most important criterion governing selection, however, should be the presence of willing, enthusiastic principals and staff. These implementation collaborators, particularly the secondary school principal, are crucial to the success of the program.

Another early task is to designate the **evaluation liaison**. Evaluation of the program has two important aspects: it helps monitor and document how the program is progressing, and provides the means for assessing the program's outcomes. The data collected and analyzed during the evaluation provide an unbiased picture of what is happening throughout the program, a means to identify concerns on an ongoing basis and make necessary corrections, and a clear outline of any changes that need to be made during the next program year.

A very important task is to select the **teacher coordinator**. The teacher coordinator is the front-line manager of the program. It is vitally important that the teacher coordinator understand the program's goals and advocate the program's philosophy of valuing youth. The teacher coordinator must:

- ◆ be a core area teacher,
- ◆ have at least three years teaching experience,
- ◆ volunteer for participation, and
- ◆ accept the program's philosophy of valuing youth.

The teacher coordinator represents the program to fellow educators, parents, the community, news media, and others. This person should have some standing as a teacher, in terms of experience and ability, as well as understanding, tact and warmth. The right teacher coordinator can:

- ◆ help tutors succeed;
- ◆ become a role model and mentor to the tutors;
- ◆ communicate and generate enthusiasm and support for the program;
- ◆ accustom tutors to improved teacher-student interactions; and
- ◆ promote improvement in student relations among teaching peers.

The next task is to select the **family liaison**. This important member of the implementation team extends the program into the homes of the tutors, and unites school and home in supporting the tutors' successes. The family liaison also promotes the program in the community and with businesses and other organizations. The family liaison is key in bringing parents together for parent meetings.

The program administrator should then convene the implementation team. This team, with representation from both campuses, the central district office and IDRA meets periodically to monitor the program's progress, discuss major problems or concerns, and agree on actions to be taken while providing the system of checks and balances necessary to keep the program on course.

The implementation team must be actively committed to the program success. No matter how successful the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has been elsewhere, and even if all the critical elements of the program are adopted, it is still vitally important that the key players participate in the planning and making of decisions as the program is adapted to local conditions, resources, needs, and other particularities.

To accomplish this, the team first assesses the magnitude of need and analyzes positive and negative forces in the implementation of the program. Team members then review key players and authority provided them and take steps to ensure the allocation of adequate time and resources.

Part of the program planning is to prepare the **program budget**. Most importantly, the budget must be reasonable, describe and justify line-item costs. The budget should include: tutor stipends, substitute teacher pay, bus cost for tutors, field trips, recognition event, training and technical assistance, evaluation, implementation guides, video conference, elementary school receiving teacher guides, and tutor workbooks.

Support from the community strengthens the program. If schools have business partners, these partners should know about the program; if not, schools need to establish partnerships with businesses and other organizations. These partners can work with the program in many ways by making contributions for student recognition and rewards; providing internships, role models, and informal mentoring;

and giving students a sense of success of their futures. These partnerships can:

- ◆ Bridge the gap between the academic and working worlds;
- ◆ Help more people in the community learn about the program;
- ◆ Allow businesses and other organizations to make significant contributions to an important program;
- ◆ Expand program resources;
- ◆ Increase extracurricular activities; and
- ◆ Promote further investment in school-business partnerships.

Phase II: Getting the Campus Started

In Phase II, attention is directed to getting the campuses started. Time must be set aside early to introduce program goals, objectives and activities to all staff members on the campus. Information provides a base for building support for the tutors' successes. If teachers at the secondary campus are unaware or minimally informed about a program that seems to be rewarding students who were having problems, they tend to become resentful, working against the program or the students in it. By explaining the program and communicating its importance, principals can:

- ◆ Create a supportive environment,
- ◆ Neutralize opposition,
- ◆ Recruit more help,
- ◆ Encourage all staff to think positively about students, and
- ◆ Expand program elements into other areas of the curriculum.

Concurrently, in accordance with the implementation team's plan, the elementary principal will identify **receiving teachers** and a **teacher representative**. Teachers who receive a tutor in their classrooms should understand the program and be willing to make adequate preparations for tutoring activities and to monitor tutoring sessions. They must also agree with the goals of the program and be aware of the need to value the student tutor.

The secondary school principal should initiate decisions about the **tutor selection process** in collaboration with the teacher coordinator, school counselor(s), and others as appropriate. The key concepts guiding these decisions are guidelines for determining which students are at risk of dropping out, the group's development of selection criteria, and prudent use of information about students. After the tutors are selected, parent consent is obtained.

"The program has made me more confident. I have new confidence and have more pride in myself and people can see that in the way I dress and act around others. "

- middle school tutor

The program administrator provides impetus by meeting with participating campus staff members: principals of the secondary and elementary schools, teacher coordinator, receiving elementary teachers, family liaison, and evaluation liaison.

Goals for this meeting are to review roles and responsibilities and first steps for implementation.

At this point, the implementation team is ready to **match tutors with tutees** to enable a strong relationship to develop between tutor and tutee, supported by the receiving teacher. In order to create bonds and a sense of responsibility, the ratio of tutor to tutee needs to be small, with each tutor working with just three tutees. Fewer than three tutees per tutor can create logistical problems. Consideration should be given to the appropriateness (for example, language of instruction for the tutee) and helpfulness (matching needs to skills) of the tutoring sessions.

Matching students for the program can be used to set the standard for cooperation among the participating school personnel, bringing receiving teachers together with their representative, and the representative together with the teacher coordinator in the secondary school. Care must be given to establishing open and honest lines of communication.

The final task in getting the tutors started is to plan and conduct the **preparation of tutors**. For the secondary campus, the key concepts guiding this period are to:

- ◆ Provide reason, purpose, and structure to the preparatory and observation period and subsequent tutoring;
- ◆ Communicate a sense of importance and responsibility; and
- ◆ Take care of necessary business matters and paperwork early and diligently in order to avert later problems.

The elementary campus prepares to receive the tutors during this period and two weeks of observation by the tutors in the elementary school allow everyone involved to become familiar with the setting, with what the younger students are learning, and with one another.

Phase III: Operating the Program

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has 10 mutually reinforcing components. Due to the importance of each and their shared dependence, management of the ongoing program is organized in this phase by components.

Many of the tasks and steps of different components are carried out concurrently, and some need to be sequenced and cross-checked with key participants for scheduling. This emphasizes the importance of the first component, *coordination*, particularly the first year.

Five components comprise the instructional strategy:

- ◆ **Tutoring** sessions occur four times each week, for one period during the school day. These are overseen by the receiving teacher and other adult volunteers.
- ◆ The teacher coordinator conducts once-a-week **classes for tutors**, offering guidance and practice in tutoring skills and tutoring content, as well as providing opportunities for tutors to improve their skills to become better tutors.
- ◆ **Field trips** enable students to explore cultural and economic opportunities in the broader community. The important pre-visit discussions, preparatory inquiry, and post-visit activities are usually handled by the teacher coordinator.
- ◆ **Role model** sessions occur during the once-weekly class and are also facilitated by the teacher coordinator. These sessions encourage tutors to widen their scope of interest and possibilities and to begin thinking about their own futures, including job and career opportunities.
- ◆ Organized **student recognition** opportunities allow the campus, the students' families, and the community to affirm the value of these young people and to encourage them to feel a sense of pride. Such opportunities may be coordinated by any of the implementation team members and outside volunteers.

Five components comprise the support structures:

- ◆ The **curriculum** for tutors needs to be dynamic, flexible, and most important, responsive to the needs of the tutors.
- ◆ **Coordination meetings** to coordinate all activities invite communication among personnel and provide first-hand information for monitoring the program. Meetings between the teacher coordinator and the receiving elementary school teachers can be useful in reaching agreement about objectives for tutoring sessions and in addressing expressed needs.
- ◆ **Staff enrichment** includes training and other instructive or enriching experiences to strengthen the individual program components. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program includes training by IDRA in response to the participants' assessments of what they need and want.
- ◆ Research confirms that **family involvement** in the student's education raises student achievement. Efforts must be made by the implementation team to inform and involve families in the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program and to communicate to the tutors' families that the school takes their children's education seriously and values the families' contributions.
- ◆ **Evaluation** has been developed and tested by IDRA. Program staff administer surveys and collect other data, which are analyzed by IDRA.

How do schools move from having a dropout rate that raises concern to having a successful dropout prevention and youth leadership program? The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program offers one possibility. The program can be readily replicated, it has been tested and proven, and IDRA offers training, technical assistance, and evaluation to support its accomplishment. The role of the schools, however, is irreplaceable. For the program to succeed, the schools must make the program their own, accepting it as part of the system, giving it the weight of their approval and support, and stamping it with their own unique identity.

Support from the Top

The schools' recognition of the need for change and adoption of a new program can be prompted and accelerated by the school district. Business as usual has its own momentum, and small-scale efforts initiated within the school to stem the tide of dropping out will soon encounter the limits of other demands on staff time, resources, and school facilities. The role of the district central office is to coordinate efforts among campuses, to earmark resources, and to represent and advocate the need for dropout prevention and youth leadership to the broader community. Involvement at this level is essential.

It is also the role of the principals of the participating campuses to provide direction and support for the program within their campuses and advocacy in the community.

Advocating the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Philosophy

In considering the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, your district has probably already identified the need for dropout prevention in its schools, as well as identified the students at greatest risk, those it is most critical to reach in elementary and early secondary school. The district may be working with the state or other definitions of students who are in at-risk situations. Generally, the students will share one or more characteristics, such as:

- ◆ Reading below grade level;
- ◆ Low socio-economic level;
- ◆ Non-participation in curricular and extracurricular activities;
- ◆ Higher than average rates of absenteeism, disciplinary referrals, or both; and
- ◆ No specific goals for a career or further training.

The district has likely reviewed alternative strategies for dropout prevention. Many strategies that incorrectly assume deficiencies in the students, their homes and communities – deficiencies that need to be “fixed” before students can succeed in school. These strategies will have only limited success. More likely, they will fail. Unfortunately, such assumptions are commonplace.

Initiators of change in schools must communicate and promote the philosophy of Valued Youth among school staff. Every success in this program depends on reversing negative thinking about students at risk of dropping out and acting on positive expectations.

Phases of Change

Research indicates that change is accepted in three stages: mobilization, implementation, and institutionalization. Mobilization for the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program consists of presenting the philosophy and components to school staff and the community, assessing the schools' readiness to take roles, gaining an idea of the human and material resources available, and recruiting the initial core of committed people who need to be involved.

The primary means for progressing through succeeding phases of change is the implementation team. This team and its members – the program administrator, the secondary and elementary school principals, the teacher coordinator, the elementary school teacher representative, and the family and evaluation liaisons – plan the program's initiation and play key roles in its implementation, institutionalization and sustainability.

Institutionalization and sustainability refers to the integration of an effective program into the regular curriculum of the school. Key indicators define the integration of an effective program: (1) it is not dependent on external funding or an advocate to exist, and the program will be part of the regular course offerings from now on; (2) the "valuing principle" has been adopted schoolwide as evidenced through increased student achievement; and (3) the program is acknowledged and recognized by local education stakeholders as essential to increase school holding power.

Goals

The over-all goal of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is to keep students in school who are considered at risk of dropping out and to help them succeed. The implementation team needs to set goals for the program, and the principal of each school needs to clarify goals for the school with campus staff. Besides serving as measures for the program, goals guide the organization and direction of the school's efforts. Campus staff know the program is purposive, that its goals are consistent with the school's mission and that all staff bear some responsibility for the program's success.

Summary

In broadest terms, the role of the schools in the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program includes:

- ◆ Supporting the program at the district level;
- ◆ Accepting the program's philosophy as consistent with the school's mission;
- ◆ Setting goals for the school in terms of keeping at-risk students and helping them succeed;
- ◆ Resolving to meet these goals through planning and action;
- ◆ Committing time, effort and other resources to implementing the program's critical elements;
- ◆ Collecting evaluation information to assess program implementation and program success; and
- ◆ Valuing all youth.

As the program becomes woven into the life of the school, these broad terms are translated into activities and assessments of the program's 10 components, and the school's role becomes the constellation of roles and responsibilities taken by the implementation team and the program's key participants. Descriptions of specific participants' roles and responsibilities are provided in the implementation guides, carefully designed by IDRA for each implementation team member.

Let the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program touch the lives of students, parents and educators in your district.

To get started on your Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program implementation today, contact IDRA at:

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IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization, directed by María Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., dedicated to creating schools that work for all children. As a vanguard leadership development and research team for three decades, IDRA has worked with people to create self-renewing schools that value and empower all children, families and communities. IDRA conducts research and development activities, creates, implements and administers innovative education programs and provides teacher, administrator, and parent training and technical assistance.

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