



Outside the Box Dropout Prevention

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(512) 300-5514

Mission, Purpose, Narrative and History

Outside the Box Dropout Prevention, a charitable 501(c)(3), was formed in 2013 to expand the number of students from Montopolis graduating high school, pursuing college, equipped for Austin's high-tech job market. Our eSTEMos, SUCCESS, Million Second Reading and Learning Projects have provided hundreds of students in grades, K-12, thousands of tutoring hours and mentoring visits. We integrate service-learning, an effective dropout prevention strategy, to increase the ability of at-risk youth to develop basic analytical, problem solving, critical thinking skills and exceed academic performance standards. We proudly support students, families and volunteers in their quest to gain insightful, learning experiences. We team up with professors, instructors, volunteers and student organizations from the University of Texas to enhance the number of teaching opportunities beyond the classroom. We are a preferred site-option for field-study volunteers needing to fulfill service-learning requirements. Since 2014, we've overseen a high-quality, after school, evening and weekend dropout prevention resource center at the Montopolis Parks and Recreation Center.

Scaling Up

As additional students, families, volunteers and organizations request Outside the Box Dropout Prevention, we can no longer, on our own, meet the out-of-school, tutoring and mentoring demands of our constituency. We plan to scale up from a 20-student limit to a 100-student capacity.

Funding

As more academically underprepared, English language learners enter public schools zoned for Montopolis, the dropout rate among these groups is expected to rise. Project CODE 41, a "shovel ready" program, will expand underserved student participation, secure additional volunteers, increase the number of tutoring and mentoring sessions to help close the achievement gap between low and middle-income students.

Total Amount Requested for CODE 41: \$45,000.

Total Cost of the Project: \$192,600.



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Supporters

Glimmer of Hope-Austin
Cory Redding Foundation
City of Austin, Parks and Recreation Department
University of Texas, Department of Education

Concept, Goals and Objectives, Target Demographics

Project CODE 41, a new initiative modeled after our successful eSTEMos Project, will recruit 100 students in grades, K-12, 90% qualify for free or reduced lunch, 90% academically underprepared, 90% first time code learners and 80% English language learners. Project CODE 41 will integrate service learning, an effective dropout prevention strategy, and administer 4,800 hours of one-to-one code tutoring and mentoring to increase the ability of underserved students to develop basic analytical, problem solving, critical thinking skills and apply code concepts to solve complex problems. Project CODE 41 will partner with 30 professors requiring a field-study course component, conduct 21 volunteer recruitment presentations, secure, train and supervise 360 service learning volunteers. One-to-one tutoring is the most effective form of instruction, resulting in student mastery of coding concepts at a much greater level. In Montopolis, our targeted service area, students attend low performing schools from Austin and Del Valle districts. According to the non-profit, Children at Risk, Allison Elementary received a 2017 Greater Austin Area Elementary School Ranking of C+ and Baty Elementary received a letter grade of D-. School-aged children living and growing up in Montopolis, continue to struggle academically impeding their ability to compete in a future economy driven by technology-based jobs. Insufficient, disproportionate access to out-of-school, academic resources, support and services perpetrate a never-ending cycle of dropouts, poverty and juvenile delinquency. Residents are an extreme mixture of young and old, minority and English language learners. According to City-Data.com, the ethnic breakdown is 82% Hispanic/Latino, 10% black, 7% white and 1% other. The percentage of people that speak English not well or not at all is 20.3% compared to Austin at 7.7%. The percentage of households led by a single-mother is 14.3% compared to Austin at 9.5%, the median household income is \$31,077 compared to Austin at \$56,351 and the percentage of the population below the poverty level is 38% compared to Austin at 17.8%. Forty-two percent of residents have less than a high school degree compared to Austin at 12.5% and 10.3% have a Bachelor's degree compared to Austin at 29.8%. The percentage of people 3 years and older in K-12 schools is 23.4% compared to Austin at 15.4%.



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Project Implementation

Project CODE 41 will collaborate with the Montopolis Parks and Recreation Center's after school, summer camp and Boredom Busters Programs. Every student will receive at least 48 hours of code tutoring and mentoring, English language learners are matched with a bilingual tutor. The on-site supervisor confirms all student, parent, volunteer cancellations and/or rescheduling requests via text, email and/or telephone. Readies the learning environment, tables and chairs are positioned strategically to maximize a student's academic potential and minimize learning distractions. Tutoring supplies and materials are set out and made easily accessible. Assigns student specific study area, welcomes students, parents and tutors and secures sign-in signatures. The student and tutor work cooperatively, cover and complete large areas of code learning, concentrate on weak objectives and reinforce strong objectives, connecting the two to make a whole. The student and tutor will use a student specific, Individual Learning Plan, to increase every student's ability to understand and apply code concepts to solve complex problems. Tutors provide oral and written directions, increase wait time for student responses and assess the student's understanding of the answer. The student is asked frequent questions, repeats directions to the tutor to ensure understanding and collaboratively improve the quality of answers. The greatest increase in tutoring effectiveness arises from the number of deep questions raised by the student or tutor in the one to one tutoring environment. Students are taught to use strategies including drawing a picture, looking for a pattern, guessing and checking, working with a simpler problem, working backwards, check that the answer is reasonable or makes sense, working the problem using a different strategy to confirm logic. The on-site supervisor manages, monitors and evaluates the code tutoring and mentoring sessions, notes and steers discussions with students, parents and tutors and immediately responds to questions, concerns and challenges. Students, tutors and parents review goals and objectives and discuss creative ways to maximize code learning to increase basic analytical, problem solving and critical thinking skills. Parents are provided weekly student academic progress notes. The on-site supervisor confirms all students are signed out and picked up by an authorized parent and/or guardian. Individually discusses session successes, challenges and concerns with all tutors, confirms volunteers are signed out, answers project inquires. Breaks down and cleans up meeting space, returning room to original layout and secures all material and supplies. Makes the appropriate changes and adjustments to ensure ongoing success. Project Code 41 will use code.org lessons and assessments to measure a student's ability to understand and apply code concepts.