Dreams Help Students Achieve

Most parents know the importance of being active in their children's education. But along with school involvement, parents can play a key role in inspiring students to greatness. Advice on how to do this is offered by Charlotte Ijei, director of Pupil Personnel and Diversity in the Parkway school district.

A key factor in fueling students' success is their ability to dream of what they would like to become, according to Ijei. She says that beginning when children are young, parents should guide them in creating a plan for themselves. This requires ongoing conversations about what they see themselves doing, plus communicating what you expect of them. "If we don't expect great things of our children, who will?" Ijei asks. "We need to let them know they can do anything they set their minds to."

She advises parents to support their children's dreams no matter how lofty or unrealistic they might seem. "If children talk about being a doctor or lawyer, allow them to dream that, regardless if you think they are academically capable or if you question whether your family can afford the level of education it requires," insists Ijei. "It should be the student's dream, not the parents', she points out, adding that what they ultimately choose could be a career that falls within the medical or legal field.

If children have no idea of what they would like to become, help them to formulate dreams that are in line with their interests or skill set, advises Ijei. Educators help students to develop plans that utilize the child's strengths by using books, videos, mentors and field trips to companies. "Some children need to find out what excites them; others discover that early on, but regardless, they can all benefit from knowing as much as possible about particular occupations and what is required for them."

No matter the child's age, "Speak to them as if they are grown-ups," says Ijei. "Talk to them about the dreams they have for themselves and also what you have in mind for their future. Be encouraging but also honest in terms of the preparation required. For example, let them know that professional football players have to do well in school, or that to be the best writer, they have to be the best reader."

Discussions and plans should touch on the bigger picture of life itself, Ijei believes. "Share with your children that everything surrounding them was once someone's idea which, through hard work and determination, evolved into a product people use. Let them know that life is hard, there will be bumps in the road, but that attitude and focus are paramount to success in life."

Finally, Ijei advises parents to talk to school staff about their children's strengths and challenges. "The educators have insight about your children that can be helpful to you in guiding them toward their dreams. When you partner with the school, your children will see that you serious about the high expectations you hold for them and the staff will see that you want your children to realize their dreams."

Parents' Strategies Model Educator's Advice:

Communication, High Expectations, Support/Encouragement of Dreams

Charlotte Ijei, Parkway's director of Pupil Personnel and Diversity, conducts workshops for parents and teachers on how to inspire students to greatness. Students need to possess dreams about what they would like to become and parents should also make suggestions based on the child's interests and skill set, she balances. "If we don't expect great things of our children, who will?"

Follow VICC on Twitter and win great prizes.
twitter.com/VICC_StLouis

- Be follower #100 and win a $25 gift card to Best Buy.
- Be follower #500 and win an I-Pod Shuffle.
- Be follower #1,000 and win an I-Pod Shuffle and an I-Tunes gift card.

Photos/henry/gallo
This issue of the Parent Link is dedicated to those transfer students who are members of the Class of 2011 -- hardworking students who have left behind an enviable record of accomplishments. For each student who is mentioned, there are scores of others also deserving of recognition. Our congratulations go not only to the students, but their parents and teachers as well. You are at the heart of this program and an important part of the students’ successes.
AFFTON
Affton High School
Successful in multiple arenas including academics, athletics, music and leadership, Matt Arnold earned a community point average of 3.27 while challenging himself in honors classes. Ranked in the top 25 percent of his class, he plans to use his skills in math and science pursuing a career in chemical engineering. He intends to attend St. Louis University for chemical engineering. Among his associates, he plans to envolve at the University of Missouri-Columbia to complete a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. At Affton, Matt was a four-year member of the wrestling team, and was selected to the Missouri All-State football team. Matt earned the title of district champion. He also competed at the state level and served as captain of the Affton High School's football team. Matt participated in orchestra for four years and served as a mentor to a group of incoming freshmen.

BAYLESS
Bayless High School
Keegan Kelly plans to attend St. Louis Community College at Meramec and concentrate in a field of criminal law and language pathology. A Special School District Foundation scholarship will help him with those plans. At Bayless, he was a member of the Diversity Club, and earned a Rosemary Zander Award, which recognizes Special School District students who show remarkable achievements and outstanding attributes through their work and behavior.

BRENTWOOD
Brentwood High School
Her outstanding commitment to academics, her maturity and involvement in activities on and off campus has resulted in Endia Thomas being accepted to several colleges and universities in the Midwest. Her kind and giving nature lends itself to her role of being a social worker as she explains “to help kids with their problems and to help families live better”. At Brentwood, Endia participated in cheerleading, volleyball, basketball, and as a member of the South County Technical School for early childhood education training while balancing in the classroom efforts with a rigorous college preparatory course load and a part-time job. She volunteered to help after school with cheerleading clinics for younger girls.

CLAYTON
Clayton High School
This fall Alexis Atkinson will attend Cornell University in Ithaca, New York where she plans to study psychology and Italian. Alexis was the Managing Editor of the Clayton High School newspaper and was an important participant on the swimming team, which allowed her to showcase her individual talent and also blend her natural leadership abilities. Her expertise in the pool, as a leader, and her St. Louis Youth Leadership was among the most meaningful of her high school career.

KAMERON STEWART balanced both academics and athletics, playing football and participating in the track team. His dedication to his school is exemplified by his participation on the Varsity Football and the Printers’ Advisory Committee. He also supported his school as a member of several school committees and was selected to receive the Paulie’s Ride scholarship. Kameron Stewart was a member of the Missouri All-State football team, also twice.

HANCOCK PLACE
Hancock Place High School
Recognized for her outstanding academic record, her talents, her leadership and dedication to service, Lakesha Walker will be attending the University of Missouri-Columbia this fall to major in the medical field. She hopes to continue her involvement in music and other areas of interest at the university. As a senior, Lakesha was selected to receive the Jefferson City as one of this year’s Gold Award recipients. She also served on the VFFC advisory board, heading up the student segment and also led the fall parent meeting. Lakesha played basketball and was selected to participate for the last two years of high school band, playing the trumpet for four years, is a high point of her hobbies that she hopes to expand upon as a member of Marching Mizzou.

KIRKWOOD
Kirkwood High School
The recipient of a partial scholarship to the University of Arkansas, Christopher Johnson has chosen to major in music. An accomplished musician, she trekked with the Kirkwood choir to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City. Christyna graduated with higher than a 3.5 grade point average and is a member of the National Honor Society. She was also elected to receive the KHS Academic scholarship and was honored by the Sky’s the Limit program.

LINDBERG
Lindbergh High School
Darian Smith enrolled at the hills at Lindbergh High School with impeccable hair and make-up, and that was no accident. This bright, hard-worker student, who enjoyed giving her friends makeovers, before high school dances, aspires to attend Paul Mitchell cosmetology school in St. Louis. Darian participated in the Odyssey of the Mind program, earning a 3.3 grade point average. Darian participated in the Madrigal Singers show choir and a capella choir, and is a Renaissance recipient for academic, attendance and achievement awards. Away from school, she is involved in her church youth group and works part-time.

MEHLVILLE
Mehlville High School
The recipient of four scholarships from every college he applied to attend, Angelo Jones hopes to attend Southeast Missouri State University where he plans to participate with majors in history and economics. He is also planning to become a diplomat. At Mehville, he demonstrated a commitment to both academic and extracurricular excellence, with a 3.2 grade point average and a rigorous course schedule. He was a member of both the junior and the senior executive council, DECA, the drama club, German club, student council and the student newspaper and broadcast journalism. Angelo volunteered with the Special Olympics, Top Teens of America and was a teen health counselor. He was also an intern for Eastern Missouri University at St. Louis.

Oakville High School
Nate Ireland, recipient of the school’s scholar-athlete award, Christopher Webb will be attending the University of Missouri-Kansas City with plans to major in political science, with a minor in Spanish or economics. He is considering a career in the law. An academic achievement award member and winner of the honor roll, Christopher graduated with magna cum laude honors. He was involved with the student executive council, served as editor-in-chief for the yearbook, was president of the Spanish Club and a Tiger mentor.

PARKWAY
Parkway High School
Graduating at the top tier of his class, with more than 16 college credit hours, Hubert Prospere earned a full ride scholarship to Saint Louis University where he plans to study biomedical engineering with an emphasis in pre-medicine. He was involved in a range of extracurricular activities at Parkway Central, including science honor society, the National Honor Society, recognized by the district for his academic achievements, including the prestigious St. Star, Spirit of Excellence and departmental awards. An Islander of Haitian descent, Hubert understands the obstacles faced by people in poorer parts of the world and wants to be able to provide much needed healthcare to people in the third world country of Haiti.

The recipient of an academic and achievement scholarship to the University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff, Tamir Davis plans to major in early childhood education and psychology. The recipient of several academic awards, including both the academic and championship honor rolls, the South State Fischer, and the Spirit of Excellence award, Tamir served on the staff of the㸟son on the student council and for the diversity club. She also participated in Marching Band with the 100 Black Men of St. Louis, Special Olympics and the blood drive.

PATTONVILLE
Pattonville High School
Having developed a love of learning in the Pattonville school district since kindergarten, Candace Perkins has chosen to major in elementary education to help children, including those not eager to learn, realize the value of a good education. She will enroll in Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville to reach this goal. While maintaining a 3.6 grade point average, Candace has been involved in the A+ program, the Stepper with Style dance team, the minority achievement/diversity clubs, Key Club, the future educators’ association and the University of Missouri at Edwardsville Band Program.

ROCKWOOD
Eureka High School
Honored by her fellow classmates by being selected to present the closing speech at the graduation ceremony, Altha Palmer earned a $1,000 scholarship to the University of Missouri-Columbia’s pre-law track. Her goal is to become a practicing lawyer, judge and ultimately, may run for public office as a member of the House of Representatives or Senate. In addition to academics, Tia was also selected to receive the Eureka Lakesha Eucalios and Winterguard placing first in state championships.

Lafayette High School
Indasha Faulkner attended the Chamberlain College of Nursing in St. Louis this fall. She plans to become an emergency room nurse. During high school, she focused her studies on higher level math courses to prepare for college and her career. An active member of Outdoor Skills Education Program (OSBP), Indasha participated in a wilderness survival training camp and worked to apply specialized technical skills and facilitation techniques. Indasha proved to be a valuable leadership skills as a member of SAGES where she mentored other students in academics and citizenship.

Marquette High School
D’Autrail Branch has been a student leader, maintaining a high grade point average, earning recognition in the Winner’s Circle and was selected to receive the Marquette Parent Organization Scholarship. As a student-athlete, D’Autrail participated in basketball, football and track and field. He was an active member of the Marquette Academic and Cultural Club. His plans include attending Southeast Missouri State University where he will pursue a degree in mechanical engineering.

Rockwood Summit High School
Recognized for his outstanding academic record, he chose to attend Rockwood Summit High School. Monique Williams is considering scholarship offers from various local colleges. She plans to prepare for a career in the computer science field and Rockwood, she filled her course schedule with advanced placement classes and challenge courses. Monique’s extracurricular activities included instrumental music as part of the Rockwood Summit Marching Band.

ST. LOUIS
Naval Junior ROTC Academy
Adam Malone was named a Midshipman at the Naval Junior ROTC Academy, graduating with a 4.0 grade point average. He accepted a full four-year scholarship to the University of Missouri-St. Louis to prepare for a career in science. He was also accepted to, and received valuable scholarships to the University of Tennessee, Truman State University, the University of Illinois, Washington University, Missouri State University and the University of Minnesota. He was a member of his high school’s football team and also played basketball. He selected to be appointed the Student Body President.

Valley Park
Valley Park High School
Darrion Williams is a member of the Valley Park cross country team for four years, helping the team place second in district competition in 2010. His academic achievements go beyond his dedicated work in honors classes. He was a member of the National Honor Society, Future Business Leaders of America and Teen Health Consultants. Darrion plans to pursue a degree in education at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Among the awards he received are the Valley Park Mason Lodge McGehee Memorial Scholarship, the Valley Park Mason Cocne Circle of Emma Scholarship and the Ponder Minority scholarship from the College of Business at Mizzou.

WESBERG Groves
Webster Groves High School
Jason Meehan is a scholar and an athlete, having graduated with honors. He received a full football scholarship to Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois, where he plans to major in management information. During his four years at Webster Groves High School, Jason was a stand-out basketball and football wide receiver. He had the opportunity to play in three state championship games – once in basketball and twice in football. Jason has received several prestigious football awards including Defensive Player of the Year for Missouri, which he earned twice; St. Louis Post Dispatch defensive player of the year, also twice; and a member of the Missouri All-State football team, also twice.
Contact Persons for Voluntary Student Transfer Program Families

Each of the districts accepting transfer students has a designated contact person. Contact persons are often the fiscal or administrative associate responsible for the transfer program, and are listed on the line between the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC) and the district.

Contact persons or responsible persons include enrolled transfer students, contacts or orientations for new students and parents, processing applications and submitting transportation requests.

Contact persons are often the first point of contact the district that a new transfer family meets, and they are a valuable resource for families that have questions or concerns. They can answer specific questions about district policies and procedures and can refer parents to the proper school administrator if necessary.

Starting Dates for County Schools

Classes will begin soon in your county school. Make plans now to be at school every day, beginning on the very first day. Watch your mailbox for your bus card about one week prior to the beginning of classes. The first day of school for each county district is listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affton</th>
<th>Bayless</th>
<th>Brentwood</th>
<th>Clayton</th>
<th>Hancock Place</th>
<th>Kirkwood</th>
<th>Lindbergh</th>
<th>Mehlville</th>
<th>Pattonville</th>
<th>Rockwood</th>
<th>Special/Tech</th>
<th>Valley Park</th>
<th>Webster Groves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC) complies fully with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA is a law that affords parents and students 17 years of age and older with certain rights with respect to the student’s educational records. A copy of VICC’s FERPA statement is included in the student handbook, which can be requested by calling 314.721.8422, ext. 3012. The handbooks are also available on the VICC website at www.choicecorp.org. Click on the link for “City Residents Currently Enrolled in County Schools” and then click on “Voluntary Transfer Program Handbook.”

The full policy will be published in the next issue of the Parent Link.

Emergency Communication System

To improve communication with parents regarding transportation issues, the child’s school district participates in the St. Louis Student Transfer Program, the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation uses a telephone broadcast system, similar to ones used in many participating school districts.

This system, provided by School Reach, allows VICC to quickly send all households and parents a pre-recorded message by phone within minutes of a transportation concern or an unplanned event that could significantly delay a child’s pick-up or drop-off from school. These concerns may include traffic jams, bus breakdowns, inclement weather, accidents, etc. The service may also be used from time-to-time to communicate general program announcements or reminders.

This system will simultaneously call a home and one additional emergency number for each student’s family who needs to be contacted and will deliver a message from Tammy Webb, transportation operations manager, or another official with the transfer program. Calls will be delivered to both live (in person) responders and answering machines. Calls not answered and busy signals will be automatically retried by the system two additional times in 15 minute intervals after the initial call.

Your child’s school will also continue to separately announce school closings due to snow or weather, via the media or their own phone system. However, in the event your school’s district is open but road conditions are such that VICC’s transportation department feels it is not safe to transport school students to school, VICC would use this separate system to notify families attending the designated districts in advance of making the transportation announcements.

For this notification system to best operate, it is imperative that you keep your school aware of any future changes in your home and/or emergency phone numbers. Your school then updates VICC’s parent contact record so a separate notification to VICC is not necessary.

Transportation Information

Transportation to and from school is provided by the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC). Parents should notify the VICC office if you have any plans to transfer to a school in the correct attendance area. The phone number for the transportation staff is 314.721.8657.

Transportation cards with the bus stop location and time are mailed to families before school begins in the fall. If you do not receive your card by one week before the start of school, contact the principal at the school your child will attend. Please do not call the transportation staff. After the regular school year begins, new cards will be mailed only if it is necessary to make a change to the bus/cab route. Please review each new card carefully, including the effective date, stop location and times and phone number.

Any day-to-day transportation problems or concerns you may have should be addressed by first calling the bus (or cab) contractor.

These include normal operating issues, such as the following:
• Looking for lost items left on the bus
• Checking on activity bus
• Questions or cancellations when VICC Transportation office is closed

To refer to your child’s bus card for the appropriate bus/cab company.

If the contractor is unable to answer your concern, you can request a copy of the following issues, please call the VICC transportation staff at 314.721.8657:
• Overall route issues or concerns
• Pick-up or drop-off location concerns
• Concerns with driver or contractor
• Requesting cab or alternative transportation service in the event you regular bus does not show.

Student Responsibilities

Students are to board their bus/cab only at their assigned stop.

• Must arrive at their designated pick-up location 10 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time, and remain at least 15 minutes after the pick-up time

If the contractor is unable to find your child, the contractor will contact person immediately. All districts have central office personnel who make the transportation to the school on time. Please make sure your child knows exactly what to do if his or her bus does not arrive. This includes knowing where to go and whom to call. Also make sure your child knows what is expected when he or she is dropped off at the end of the school day. If you normally meet your child at the bus stop, be sure your child understands that you do not meet at your regular bus stop.

If the transportation route to which your child is assigned does not operate in a timely manner, or other problems arise, please communicate with the VICC transportation office.

It is important for parents to keep the school as well as the district contact person informed of any changes in either the home phone number or the emergency phone number for your child. Also, be sure to request that this information be forwarded to the transportation staff.

If You Move

If you move during the summer, the principal at the county school that your child has been attending will make the appropriate contact person immediately. All districts have central office personnel who make the transportation to the school on time. Please make sure your child knows exactly what to do if his or her bus does not arrive. This includes knowing where to go and whom to call. Also make sure your child knows what is expected when he or she is dropped off at the end of the school day. If you normally meet your child at the bus stop, be sure your child understands that you do not meet at your regular bus stop.

If the transportation route to which your child is assigned does not operate in a timely manner, or other problems arise, please communicate with the VICC transportation office.

General Safety Rules

Please review all general safety rules with your students. These rules are published in your transfer program handbook. Please refer to the box below if you need a copy of the handbook.

Student Safety

It is up to protect your children as they travel to and from school.

Certain types of children’s clothing can create a hazard as your child exits the bus. Especially dangerous are baggy pants, masks, long backpack straps, long scarfs or any other loose clothing. Such clothing could become caught in the bus handrail, door or other student’s clothing, which could seriously entangle the child. Please take the time to check your children’s clothing. Also talk with your child about the behavior and safety rules.

Transport Policy

To bolster the safety of students riding buses to school, the VICC Board adopted the following trespass policy:

• Trespass occurs when any school bus without prior approval from VICC. Any VICC-designated person (including stu-

dents), contractor or school staff whose job responsibilities require handling students on the school property or being on the school’s premises and not be consid-

ered trespassing. Only with prior approval from VICC or a contractor may any parent, guardian or member of the general public be allowed on a bus.

Be sure to review the transportation section in the Voluntary Transfer Program Handbook (pages 9-21) with your child before the start of school.

If you need a handbook, please call 314.721.8422, ext. 3072,

A-D: Vickie Williams ext. 3011
www.choicecorp.org
EM: Laurren Mitcham ext. 3020
www.choicecorp.org
I-M: Jennifer Christy ext. 3007
www.choicecorp.org
N-R: Mildred Scott ext. 3007
www.choicecorp.org
S-Z: Mary Schafer Meehan ext. 3076
www.choicecorp.org

The counselors will begin a parent help column, “Ask the Counselor,” which will be included in regular VICC parent publications. Please call or email any questions that you would like to have answered to any of the counselors. If you are emailing, please include “Ask the Counselor” as your subject line.

VICC Staff Ready to Assist Transferring Families

The Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC) staff includes five full-time counselors/social workers who can assist families with issues related to their school transfer.

Counselors are happy to respond to concerns and/or questions from parents or students regarding any issue that would interfere with the success of a child in the school setting, such as attendance, discipline or other matters. They can also provide counseling assistance for students and help parents understand their educational rights.

Counselors generally are assigned according to the first letter of the student’s last name. They can be reached by calling 314.721.8422, and dialing the extension number below, or via email.