



**San Antonio Independent School District
Secondary Initiatives**

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July 20, 2012

Doubtless you are aware of the good work of the GAMER program – “Giving Americans Motivational Education for the Real World” – the centerpiece of Motivate Our Students Texas, Inc., an IRS 501(c)3 started by noted local cardiologist, Edwin J. (“Eli”) Whitney, M.D.

Dr. Whitney started MOST and the GAMER program in 2008, as a successor to his basketball program, “Slam Dunk for Life.” The GAMER program focuses on rewarding students for staying in school, with educational trips to various venues to show them that “the fun jobs pay more money, but they require good behavior and staying in school.”

In school year 2009/10, Dr. Whitney and the GAMER program focused an intervention at **Fox Technical High School**, with multiple educational expeditions to venues of higher learning, military installations and business/industry locally. (See attached for summary of **Fox Tech** intervention.)

As a former school principal, and most recently as Director of Student Initiatives for SAISD, I know how important it can be to make a difference at a pivotal time in a student’s life.

What I see from the work the GAMER program did with Fox Technical is that it improved student participation enormously (1,000% increase) in being interested in going to college, and substantially in every metric they measured before and after the year-long intervention, from having a plan for their lives and careers to saying “no” to teenage pregnancy, drugs and alcohol.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,

Keith Garinger

Director of Student Initiatives
San Antonio Independent School District

Enclosures

FOX TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL, SAISD:

In the 2009/2010 school year, we focused an intervention on Fox Technical High School in the SAISD, which included the following educational expeditions by grade:

9th Grade/Freshmen (Class of 2013): Institutions of Higher Learning: St. Phillips; Military Installations: Fort Sam Houston and Randolph Air Force Base; and Business/Industry/Vocational: Clear Channel Communications, Pape Dawson, Cox Manufacturing;

10th Grade/Sophomores (Class of 2012): Institutions of Higher Learning: UTSA Downtown Campus; Military Installations: Randolph Air Force Base; and Business/Industry/Vocational: CPS; Vintage Air; Coca-Cola; San Antonio Aerospace; Emivest Aerospace; Texsan Heart Hospital.

Questionnaires were given to the students before and after the entire program (for the year), and the results showed substantial improvement in key areas. For example, among:

9th Graders: Of the 75 ninth graders who took the questionnaires before and after, 60% more said they were interested in going to college; 50% more said they knew that "staying in school was important"; 46% more said they "had a plan" for their future and a career; 41% more completed their homework regularly; 38% more said they were saying 'no' to alcohol; 36% more said they appreciated their teachers' help; 33% said that pregnancy prevention was important to them; 26% more said they had a good attitude about doing homework; and 25% more said they were saying 'no' to drugs.

10th Graders: Of the 84 tenth graders who took the questionnaires before and after, 63% more said that they knew that "staying in school was important"; 60% more said they were interested in going to college; 50% said they "had a plan" for their future and a career; 45% said that pregnancy prevention was important to them; 41% more appreciated their teachers' help; 40% more completed their homework regularly; 36% more said they had a good attitude about doing homework; 33% more said they were saying 'no' to drugs; and 19% more said they were saying 'no' to alcohol.

Perhaps most important of all, the following year, school year 2010/2011, where the 9th graders were now sophomores in high school, and the 10th graders were now juniors in high school, there was a college night fair, where reportedly "100 students attended, the previous year only ten(!) had, and all the counselors showed up as well."

Equally significant, the absenteeism rate reduced from roughly 30% to 10%, according to the principal.

LANIER HIGH SCHOOL:

Lanier H.S. Average Daily Attendance ("ADA") went up, following GAMER's intervention, 4.23% in May, the hardest month to keep kids in school, 2010/11 over the previous May, 2009/2010. ADA at Lanier had been on a climb every month prior to that, following GAMER intervention, reversing a previous downward trend that had existed for every prior month in the school year.

It also resulted in significant increases in perfect attendance by month. In September of 2010/11, only 12 students at Lanier had perfect attendance. That figure rose to 183(!) in February, 212 in March, 209 in April, and a remarkable 275(!) in May. The increase from September to May of students exhibiting perfect attendance is an overwhelming 2,291% increase.

PAGE MIDDLE SCHOOL:

The GAMER program began its intervention with Page Middle School on February 1, 2011, during the 2010/11 school year. Average Daily Attendance ("ADA") figures went up 2.13% in May over the previous year, having been on an upward climb every month since GAMER's intervention.

Page Middle School's perfect attendance figures also show the impact of the GAMER program. In February of 2010/11, when GAMER started its intervention, there were 174 students with perfect attendance. In March, subsequent to the GAMER intervention, that number climbed to 233, in April 236, and in May – the hardest month for kids to be in school – a full 251 students were there every day. That represents an increase from February to May of 144%.

Additionally, perfect attendance by month went up across ALL the grade levels surveyed. Sixth graders improved from 65 to 86 in numbers of students who attended every day of the month from February to May; seventh graders climbed from 53 to 73; and eight graders climbed from 56 to 92. This data represents percentage increases by grade of 132% for the sixth graders; 138% for the seventh graders; and 164% for the eighth graders – bucking expectations because dropout rates (and relatedly, attendance) worsens not improves with each school grade.

TAFOLLA MIDDLE SCHOOL:

Tafolla Middle School also experienced an improvement in its Average Daily Attendance ("ADA") figures after GAMER's intervention. The data from Tafolla is very incomplete, but does like the other schools show a positive trend after intervention.

LONGFELLOW MIDDLE SCHOOL:

The Average Daily Attendance ("ADA") shot up after the intervention of the GAMER program in February, 2011, part of the 2010/11 school year. In February, slightly over 91% of students were in school every day. By May, that figure had climbed to almost 95% - more than a 3% increase over the previous year. (By comparison, previous improvements by month over the prior school year had never reached two percent.)