



Graduating Students, One Community at a Time

Program Description:

The purpose of P.E.C.E.S.'s and AT&T's Aspire Local High School Impact Initiative is to support & strengthen P.E.C.E.S. High School's evidenced-based academic and social support programs for students who have recently dropped out of traditional HS, and to prepare the school to enroll and graduate an additional 150 students in 2014 - increasing graduation rates in southeastern Puerto Rico. P.E.C.E.S. Inc.'s High School is an accredited educational institution that provides recent dropouts an alternate route to graduation by providing tailored academic and psycho-social support. All students who study at P.E.C.E.S. are Hispanics living in rural, low-income communities that have a negative attitude towards school. All applicants abandoned school between 9th and 12th grade, 77 percent did not complete 10th grade and 83 percent are on Welfare. Primary at-risk characteristics in our region include academic failure, low attendance rates and abandoning high school. However most students also struggle with poverty, substance abuse, violence, alcoholism and/or a broken home. P.E.C.E.S. HS works with the "toughest" students in the city, but its 94 percent graduation rates beat the city's overall 82.6 percent graduation rate (US Census). The activities to be implemented through this proposal are:

- Improve communication and data sharing between the school and administration through the use of enhanced data management systems that monitor academic progress.
- Improve protocols for substance abuse prevention and treatment in partnership with community based service providers that give support beyond school.
- Improve technology offerings and infrastructure to enrich the curriculum.
- Develop a standardized testing strategy to assess and monitor academic progress.



- Expand career pathway program using the career academies model.
- Systematic post-graduation follow-up of students.

Project P.E.C.E.S., Inc. is an award winning 501-C-3 nonprofit community organization impacting southeastern Puerto Rico. Achievements include:

- 28 years of economic, educational and social development programs.
- Establishing a licensed and accredited high school designed for school dropouts.
- Extraordinary development of community leadership.

"This school has totally changed my life. They helped me with my studies, in building my professional portfolio and even how I think - to the point that now instead of wanting to drop out, I don't want to leave school after graduation."

Divanna Guzman Montes, P.E.C.E.S. student



Students:
150



Funding:
\$100,000