

AT&T Aspire: Project GRAD of Houston

Graduating Students, One Community at a Time



Program Description:

For more than 20 years, Project GRAD's mission has been to support a quality public education for students in economically disadvantaged communities, so that high school and college graduation rates increase. What began in Houston's Davis High School, Project GRAD now serves five low-income communities where 44,000 students are enrolled in public schools. Today Davis High School leads the entire district in having the lowest drop-out rate of comprehensive high schools, graduation rates have doubled, and college enrollments have increased 425 percent. The expectations of the entire community have changed.

AT&T's Aspire funding will support the Freshman Success Initiative (FSI), which will operate in the Project GRAD partnering Houston ISD (HISD) campuses and allow GRAD both to serve more students and to expand strategies to promote high school success for low-income, at-risk freshmen. The goal of this program is to provide support for 3,600 ninth graders to stay in school, complete necessary graduation requirements, and to propel them onto a successful college and career trajectory, with an added emphasis on high demand STEM careers.



Students:
3,600



Funding:
\$300,000

GRAD's comprehensive college access programming employs research-based strategies proven to prevent at-risk students from dropping out of high school and to impact students' college and career success. Davis High School was known as a dropout factory when GRAD began in 1994, but now has the lowest dropout rate of any comprehensive high school in HISD – lower even than campuses with less than half at-risk and low-income students. College enrollment rates at all five campuses have increased by 300 percent overall. Focused on the community, GRAD works collaboratively to increase the numbers of students who graduate from high school each year, enroll in college, and complete college.

- Reaches **five low-income communities** (44,000 students, 74 percent Hispanic, 22 percent African-American).
- High school success: **500 more students graduating high school annually**; rates increased 65 percent; number of graduates 42 percent.
- College success: with GRAD's scholarship **6,000+ students enrolled in college**; 300 percent increase; 40 percent continuing or have graduated.

"Project GRAD helped me develop strong, proactive college bound expectations that have helped me reach my current level of academic achievement at Cornell University."

Francisco Rodriguez, Project GRAD Scholar