



## **CSF TO OPEN TACOMA COLLEGE SUCCESS FOUNDATION OFFICE IN THE FALL OF 2009**

**Background.** Since 2000 the College Success Foundation (CSF) has helped nearly 5,000 Washington State low-income, high-potential students enroll in college. CSF provides scholarship assistance to students as well as a variety of support services in middle school, high school and college. Thirteen hundred (1,300) of our students have already received their bachelors' degrees.

Through the Washington State Achievers Scholarship Program, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and managed by CSF, 1,500 students from Lincoln, Mount Tahoma and Foss high schools in Tacoma have benefited from the opportunity to go to college. They receive college scholarships over four to five years averaging \$22,000 and a series of support services, including volunteer mentors while in high school and mentors provided for the students for their first two years of college. CSF estimates that 1500 Tacoma Achievers Scholars will receive about \$38 million in scholarship and support services. Achievers Scholars attending Pierce County colleges will also receive about \$25 million in scholarship assistance from CSF.

The CSF Board, as part of a comprehensive strategic plan that calls for working intensively with several Washington school districts, has identified Tacoma as the first district where CSF will provide expanded services. This will be accomplished by establishing a Tacoma CSF office that will work with low-income students in all of the Tacoma middle schools and high schools. CSF has worked closely with Art Jarvis, Tacoma Superintendent of Schools and with his staff to help address the many needs that low-income students in Tacoma face. CSF expects to have College Preparatory Advisors (CPAs) working with students in all five of the comprehensive Tacoma high schools – Foss, Lincoln, Mount Tahoma, Stadium and Wilson – by this fall. The CPAs and HERO staff will also work with students in all ten Tacoma public middle schools. In addition information on postsecondary education financial aid and scholarship opportunities will be provided to students attending the several Tacoma alternative schools

The Tacoma CSF will work collaboratively with the Tacoma Public Schools and other partners to "double the numbers" of low-income students who remain in high school, do well academically, go to college and earn their college degrees. This will require improving systems in schools as well as providing direct academic and social development support services to middle and high school students through CSF programs such as the following:

- **College Bound Scholarship** – This is the Washington State-funded scholarship program for all eligible low-income youth who sign up by grades 7 and 8.
- **HERO Program** -- The HERO Program (Higher Education Readiness Opportunity) is designed to increase college readiness for under-represented youth, especially young men of color, who have the desire to go to college and the willingness to work hard but are falling short of their potential (grades 7 – 10).
- **ACE -- the Achievers College Experience** -- The purpose of ACE is to provide newly-selected Achievers Scholarship Candidates (ASC) with the information and resources that they will need to be successful seniors in high school, SAT and ACT preparation, an introduction to the college preparation, and an opportunity to experience campus life.
- **Hometown Mentor Program** -- Hometown Mentors (HTMs) are community members who value higher education and helping youth to be successful in their lives. They come with a variety of career and community service experience. Mentors meet with Achievers monthly working with them to support their college application process, researching colleges and scholarships, assisting with scholarship applications and helping to support their college planning process.

CSF will administer college placement tests at the high school level to determine students' academic readiness for college-level work. Based on this assessment, CSF will also work with high school teachers, counselors and academic support providers to ensure students below grade level will receive additional academic support to boost their preparation. CSF will assist students with the transition to college, will coordinate college-level supports and provide college alumni services. Less prepared students will be guided to colleges that offer remedial supports. By providing a continuum of college awareness and readiness support from middle school through college graduation, CSF increases the likelihood that these students will enroll in and persevere through college. CSF will also provide an intrusive student monitoring system to enhance our ability to provide differentiated supports that get students on the right post-secondary path and also work with our students in colleges. With all of these efforts from middle school through college, CSF expects that 70% of CSF Scholars will earn post secondary degrees within six years of their initial enrollment. This will also require providing students with as much scholarship assistance as possible and also making sure that all students take full advantage of the many programs that are now available (e.g. Pell, Washington State Need Grant, college scholarships, Work-Study employment and other private scholarship programs).

Through the variety of CSF programs, Tacoma CSF College Preparatory Advisors (CPAs) and HERO staff will work directly with at least 1000 Tacoma low-income students each year. In addition, by working closely with other programs, such as the College Bound Scholarship program, CSF will provide workshops, parent meetings and information sessions that will help at least another 1000 students per year. This work in the schools will be delivered primarily by CSF College Preparatory Advisers and HERO staff. In addition, the Tacoma CSF will work closely with the Tacoma Public Schools staff in the superintendent's office, with school principals, and with other college access and scholarship providers to accomplish systemic changes and create additional scholarship funding sources. Included will be special work with area two and four-year public and independent partner colleges to make these transitions to college as seamless as possible and to provide remedial support as necessary. With hundreds of additional Tacoma low-income students completing college degrees each year, this will help create conditions for Tacoma to become a safer, more vibrant and livable city and will encourage more local economic development by having a better educated local workforce. Tacoma alumni will also receive strong encouragement and support by CSF to "give back" to Tacoma.

When the Gates Achievers Scholarship Program sunsets in the high schools in 2010, hundreds of Tacoma students will have completed their bachelor's degrees and hundreds more will be working to complete their degrees through 2015. It is also important to note that \$25 million in Achievers Scholarships are expected to go to Achievers Scholars enrolled in Pierce County colleges and universities, thereby supporting faculty and staff salaries and university operations.

**Outlook for Tacoma.** Although many Tacoma students have benefited from this program, there are thousands of additional Tacoma students who will need similar help if they are to be successful in school, in college and in life. The realities today in the Tacoma school environment are disheartening:

- Tacoma students score below the state average on the WASL.
- Tacoma has a higher than average high school dropout rate.
- Tacoma has lower than average high school graduation rates.
- More than half (55%) of Tacoma high school graduates do not meet college entrance requirements.
- Tacoma has lower college enrollment rates than the state average.
- Tacoma has lower college persistence rates than the state average.
- Ten percent fewer Tacoma residents earn bachelor's degrees than the overall state average.
- Nearly 60% of Tacoma high school students qualify for federal free or reduced lunch programs.

**Tacoma Public Schools Commitment.** Tacoma Public School District and Board have demonstrated their commitment to all of their students to graduate from high school ready and able to participate in the post-secondary path through the goals that were approved by the Tacoma School Board:

1. Increase achievement for all students each year by 10% (based on the difference between the 2007 WASL scores and 100% of students meeting state standard);
2. Decrease the gap between underperforming subgroups and the district average performance on the WASL by 10% annually;
3. Decrease the dropout rate by 10% annually; and
4. Reduce the number of students not graduating by 10% annually.

Superintendent Jarvis further committed to partner with the College Success Foundation and other community organizations to create much greater equity for our students who have greater challenges to succeed. Historical and current data show that the achievement gap is an everyday reality within our schools, and despite years of very well intentioned efforts, the gap persists, especially for poor and minority students.

**CSF Partners with the Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board to Promote the College Bound Scholarship.** CSF has received significant federal funding from the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) and additional funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to support recruitment efforts statewide. Approximately, 90,000 students are eligible, grades 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, to sign up for the scholarship. Eligible students are guaranteed to receive state funding at least the equivalent of full tuition, fees and books when they attend a public Washington state college or university.

CSF has partnered with Tacoma Public Schools and the Metropolitan Development Council (MDC) to sign up all eligible Tacoma students. Sixty percent of all Tacoma Public School students are eligible for this program. Recently, Superintendent Jarvis pledged a goal of signing up 100% of eligible students this

year. To date, approximately 47,500 students state-wide have signed up for the College Bound Scholarship, including 2200 students in Tacoma.

**Tacoma Community Support.** Partners and supporters of Tacoma CSF include the Mayor and Tacoma City Council, Tacoma Public Schools and School Board, GET Smart Tacoma, Tacoma Chamber of Commerce, Executive Council for a Greater Tacoma, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Tacoma College Support Network, and, numerous local community organizations.

To date Tacoma CSF has received \$2 million from local philanthropic foundations. These funds, along with other funding expected to be committed in the months to come, will provide the initial four year funding for the Tacoma CSF.

In addition, CSF has a strong relationship with Communities in Schools which is active in Tacoma and is seen as a vital partner in this work.

**State Support.** The Washington State legislature and the Governor have provided major funding support for the College Preparatory Advisors in the high schools. CSF and the Tacoma CSF will continue working with the legislature to assure continued support in the years to come.

**Federal Support.** Congressman Norm Dicks and other Washington State Legislators are seeking funding in federal legislation to support Tacoma's commitment to doubling the numbers of low-income, underrepresented students completing college. Potential funding from this source is \$400,000. These funds will be used to enable Tacoma CSF to provide the unique support services that ensure students are college-ready. These programs include the Achievers Hometown Mentor program, the HERO (Higher Education Readiness) program designed to serve young men of color, the Achievers College Experience program - a summer residence college program; and the Summer Academic Enrichment program.

Time is of the essence. Until more is done to "jump start" the educational success levels of Tacoma students, the future remains bleak. With federal support, combined with state and private dollars, Tacoma's promising low-income students will be able to succeed in school, attend college, and graduate with degrees that will enable them to realize the future of their dreams.

**Opening of the Tacoma CSF Office in the Fall of 2009.** With the sunset of the Achievers Scholarship, additional funding sources are needed to establish a Tacoma College Success Foundation staff to work closely with students in all five comprehensive public high schools – Foss, Lincoln, Mount Tahoma, Stadium and Wilson - and all ten public middle schools in Tacoma. State funding through the College Bound Scholarship program will be combined with private sector support to provide additional scholarship support to hundreds of Tacoma students each year to support their college enrollment.

As a result, CSF will open a Tacoma College Success Foundation office with the primary goal of doubling the number of Tacoma low-income 7<sup>th</sup> graders graduating from high school, enrolling in college and completing their college degrees. The opening for the Tacoma office is planned for the fall of 2009.

**For Additional Questions.** Please contact Sue Byers, Chief Academic Officer. Ms Byers can be contacted by emailing [sbyers@collegesuccessfoundation.org](mailto:sbyers@collegesuccessfoundation.org) or by calling 425-416-2020.