



## ***FWCS-Youth Life Skills 2015 -2016 Year of Reflection***



Fort Wayne Community Schools (FWCS), **Youth Life Skills (YLS)**, the alternative program of choice, has embraced the opportunity to educate all students to high standards, enabling them to become productive, responsible citizens. We are committed to working cooperatively with parents and the community to prepare our students for success in the endeavors of their choice.

In 2015-16 approximately 416 students completed an application for enrollment in the **Youth Life Skills** program. Of the 416 students who applied for entry 341 (82%) students were able to gain entry. The 18% of students that did not gain entry into the **Youth Life Skills** program, they were referred back to their home school. There are various reasons why students did not gain entry into **Youth Life Skills** but the main reason was the lack of space and teaching staff.

Students, who were successful in enrolling in **Youth Life Skills (YLS)**, quickly learned that their life mattered. From the onset, the teachers and other educators began establishing relationships with each student. Evidence has proven that teachers who foster positive relationships with their students create classroom environments that are more conducive to learning and meet students' developmental, emotional and academic needs. A concrete example of closeness between a teacher and a student occurred when a student made the teacher aware of an altercation that had been planned at the end of the school day. The student entrusted the teacher with the information and because of that relationship the student felt comfortable in stepping up. The school was able to place preventive measures in place that defused the situation. Students empower teachers.

From the outset, effective instruction requires teachers to believe children can be successful. History, again, has shown that all students possess positive attributes and characteristics, but sometimes they are overlooked and undervalued.

The 2015-16 school year brought about a summation of the implementation of PBIS/CR-PBIS within the FWCS district. However, it was an eye opener. It produced strategies that confirmed, as educators and parents, we must, periodically, refocus and sharpen our lenses to recognize talent, potential talent, intellect, skills, excellence, and ability in every student especially when we have known the student only in a negative light. To reach our maximum potential, we must be willing to accept the challenges of today.

A **Youth Life Skills** education, which is a FWCS education, supports behavioral, social and emotional competencies as well as academic performance while contributing to the preparation of each student for the 21st century. We believe, for the most part, the staff of **Youth Life Skills** helped students to built integrity and develop social-emotional competencies while addressing important and relevant issues to the students such as bullying, classes that were not interesting, frequent absenteeism, a lack of academic preparation, a lack of motivation, academic failure, employment, teen parenting, and/or extended family responsibilities. Each student's individualized service plan, designed to support the student was implemented to promote thought-provoking discussion and follow-up activities that allowed self-evaluation, personal growth, and goal accomplishment.

Throughout the 2015 – 16 academic school year the **YLS** staff encouraged students to reflect upon the meaning of community and personal values and the application of those ethics in their daily lives. Data collected during this school year indicate reductions in discipline, decreased incidents of students teasing and/or bullying, a more positive school climate, and an increase in students' self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible-decision making. Even though there still appears to be some resistance within our school climate, current evidence suggests moderate improvements in teacher morale, school climate, students' achievement, community perception and increased high school graduations.

In summary the 2015 – 2016 academic school year was a year of student achievement, student/parent/ staff engagement and discovery. As aforementioned, the attached data, in this report, will provide you with a comprehensive view of **Youth Life Skills** and its accomplishments.

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