

## **Success Stories: Santa Fe College**

The Walmart Brighter Futures (WBF) 2.0 Project has been most successful in concurrently enrolling GED students in certification coursework. Concurrent enrollment in GED and certification programs has proven to increase student commitment and academic progress as well as lead to a general increase in school and workplace professionalism and students' overall optimism about their lives. Concurrent enrollment reinforces basic academic skills while working with certification specific material. Instead of working to improve reading comprehension and analytical skills while reading a random article concerning a topic the student may or may not find engaging, the student is instead developing reading skills while working through information directly related to his or her chosen career field. This content specific reinforcement of certificate coursework through academic skills work escalates the rate and depth of students' learning. Connecting classroom knowledge to real world situations has been proven many times over to be beneficial to student learning. This project has also led to the coordinators of the Adult Education Program to make inroads into offering integrated certificate and adult education classes based on the IBEST Model from Washington State.

Our students regularly encounter roadblocks to success. The WBF 2.0 Project has been successful in creating an environment that is at once supportive and demanding; this combination of high expectations paired with understanding and assistance encourages students to bring forward issues that might normally result in the student dropping out of school. Students are aware that they can come to the WBF 2.0 Project staff with any problem they have that is hindering their success. If the issues involved are beyond the means or skills of the staff, referrals are made to campus counselors and other appropriate community resources.

In addition to creating an environment that lends itself to greater openness between students and staff, the WBF Project has developed a greater sense of connection and community among students and staff through the Brighter Futures Scholar button. Once students are accepted into the WBF 2.0 Project, they are awarded a Brighter Futures Scholar button. Students are encouraged to wear their button while on the SF campus and to all trainings and workshops associated with the project. When wearing their Brighter Futures Scholar buttons, students are made aware that they are expected to display proper classroom decorum as they act as a mentor to other students. The Brighter Futures Scholar students have proven repeatedly that they can rise to meet and exceed this extra level of expectation. This greater sense of belonging increases student desire to overcome obstacles and struggles both in and out of the classroom.