

>>Democrat and Chronicle:

Program aims to reduce dropouts
MCC offers free shot at diploma, college credit

Matthew Daneman
Staff writer

(November 16, 2006) — Starting next fall, close to four dozen Rochester School District dropouts will enter Monroe Community College as college students.

The college and school district will spend nearly \$4 million over the next three years replicating a program started in Portland, Ore., to get dropouts back into the educational system and earning their high school diplomas, as well as college credits.

Under the Gateway to College program, the students will attend free of charge, taking courses at MCC's Damon City Campus that also count toward unfilled requirements for earning their high school diplomas. And each cluster of 20 students in the program will have a specialist who works as an adviser, mentor and social worker.

Roughly 800 students a year drop out of the City School District, said Superintendent Manuel Rivera.

"We have so many in our community who were dealt a hand they can't play," MCC President R. Thomas Flynn said Wednesday as the program was unveiled at Damon. "So they fold."

The total cost will be \$4.3 million over the next three years, with \$350,000 coming through Oregon's Portland Community College from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Kellogg Foundation and Carnegie Corp.

Portland Community College has received more than \$10 million from those backers to replicate across the nation the program it started more than six years ago. Thus far, similar Gateway efforts have started at community colleges in California, Maryland, Oregon, Texas, Georgia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and South Carolina. With MCC, there are now 13 Gateway programs.

The local Gateway program will focus on people ages 16 to 20 with at least an eighth-grade education who either have dropped out from the Rochester School District or are on the verge, said Barbara Connolly, dean of academic services at MCC's Damon City Campus. The students will come largely through referrals from the school district, she said.

"The students have to want to do it," said Linda Huddle, director of alternative programs at Portland Community College. "You think of somebody at an eighth-grade reading level who's never taken history ... and they're taking college U.S. history for high school credit."

The time it takes to earn the high school diploma will depend on how many credits the students take each semester and the students' level of education. And once they earn their high school diplomas, the students will be able to continue as regular students at MCC and roll their credits toward an associate's degree, Flynn said.

The money will pay for students' tuition, fees, textbooks and other costs, as well as for the staff that will be hired for the program, Connolly said.

The first cohort of 44 students will start in fall 2007, with a new group enrolling each subsequent semester, topping out at 367 students at any one time.

>>**Rochester Business Journal:**

MCC to work with high school dropouts

By JANICE BULLARD PIETERSE
Rochester Business Journal
November 14, 2006

Monroe Community College is set to unveil a \$4.3 million program aimed at high school dropouts.

The college has a press conference planned on Wednesday to discuss details of its Gateway to College program, to be rolled out over the next three years. An advisory issued on Tuesday said the program will give 350 Rochester City School District dropouts a chance to earn a high school diploma and college credits in the next three years.

MCC said it had received a \$350,000 planning and startup grant from Portland Community College in Portland, Ore., to replicate the Gateway to College program, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Carnegie Corp. of New York, the Ford Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

MCC is the first partner statewide in the Gateway to College program, the advisory states.

>>**WXXI:**

New Rochester Program Seeks to Get Dropouts Back Into School, College

Bud Lowell reporting

ROCHESTER, NY (2006-11-15) Monroe Community College and the Rochester City School District are partnering to give hundreds of City School dropouts a second chance to earn their high school diploma and college credits or a two-year degree.

"Gateway to College" is a four-point-three million dollar program. It starts in 2007 with 50 students between the ages of 16 and 20 who want a second chance at finishing their education. It will gradually expand up to 367 students a year.

MCC President Tom Flynn said it's vital to get dropouts back into school. He says 40 percent of dropouts end up in prison.

MCC is the first college in the State University system to start a Gateway program. The concept was developed at Portland Community College in Portland Oregon.

Portland gave MCC a 350-thousand dollar grant to start the program, and is training MCC staff to run it.

Linda Huddle is director of alternative education programs at Portland Community College. She says former dropouts who went through the program there have gone on to four year colleges and careers.

Huddle says each student is supported and tracked through the program to make sure they succeed.

Funding for the program in Portland came from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and other prominent foundations.

The Rochester School District has set up a network to look for dropouts who want to get back into school through the Gateway program.

MCC President Flynn says helping dropouts succeed helps the economy and helps fight a big cause of crime at the same time. He says putting someone through four years in a SUNY school costs about 17-thousand dollars, compared with 38-thousand dollars a year to keep someone in prison.

>>**R News:**

'Gateway' to Give Kids 2nd Chance

by Rocco Vertuccio

Published Nov 15, 2006

A college in Oregon is helping to forge an historic partnership between MCC and the Rochester City School District.

It's called the Gateway to College Program. Under the auspices of the program, more than 350 high school dropouts from the Rochester school district will get a second chance to receive a high school diploma. They will also earn college credits at the same time.

It's being made possible with a \$350,000 startup grant from Portland Community College in Oregon.

"We believe young people can be successful if you provide a strong support network around them," said Linda Huddle, spokesperson for Portland Community College. "You develop their skills, you unleash their self sufficiency, you unleash their potential to do great things."

Portland Community College started the program a few years ago after receiving money from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other foundations. PCC is now helping other colleges nationwide start the program.

MCC is the first in New York state and the 13th college in the country chosen. Rochester's Gateway Program will start next fall.

>>**WHAM radio:**

New Program Gives Second Chance For High School Dropouts

Some high school dropouts will get a second chance at receiving a high school diploma, and that's thanks in part to a program between Monroe Community College and the city school district.

Starting next fall some 44 students will enroll in a program known as Gateway to College. The initiative is funded in part by a \$350,000 dollar grant from Portland Community College and the Rochester City School District. MCC President Tom Flynn says this is an historic program.

This program is the first of its kind in New York State. In the fall of next year students will start classes at MCC's Damon City Campus. Up to 367 students are expected to enroll over the program's three year cycle.