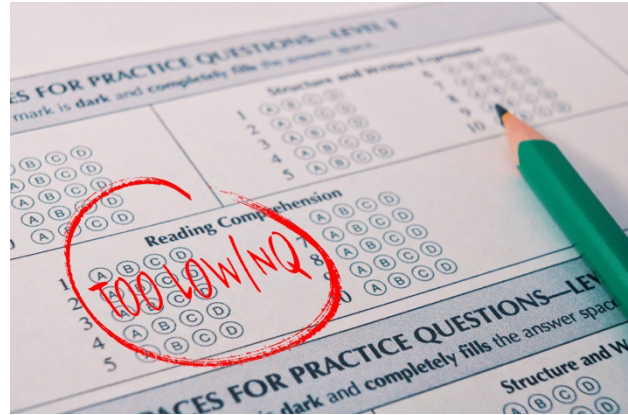


New Possibilities Youth Program

Program Summary

The Problem We Address

The situation of youth in Selma and rural Alabama is particularly precarious. Half of children live in poverty. The Selma High School ACT average score is 14 out of a possible 36. The average score needed for college admission is 20.8. Fewer than 5% of students are math proficient and only 15%-19% of boys and 35%-39% of girls are reading proficiently. A quarter of youth are obese at age 18; nearly half do not eat fruit or vegetables regularly. The diabetes rate has increased by 24% in the last five years, rooted in learned behaviors of eating. Yet, at the same time, the robotics club is one of the fastest growing activities, students in the robotics program at R.B. Hudson Middle School were winners in a national competition, and student interest in the five-year program between Selma High and Wallace Community College is at an all-time high. The potential to grow and thrive is clearly alive and well.



What We Do

The goal of the New Possibilities Youth Program (NPYP) is to transform the vicious cycle of poverty into a virtuous circle of youth responsibility and leadership. There are four targets:

- Improve academic performance
- Build individual self-confidence
- Encourage leadership and self-responsibility
- Support health and nutrition and encourage active, life-long healthy lifestyles

Single initiatives, single experiences cannot make a material difference in the educational achievements of our youth. The problem is much too complex. Therefore, the Missions has developed a continuous approach to education in the New Possibilities Youth Program, with academic and leadership units that extend from grade one through grade 12, with different approaches and options along that pathway. Acceptance at any point along the pathway extends throughout the educational lifetime of the student. The one requirement is that families



be involved every step of the way. Parents and grandparents are part of the learning process, engaged in the progress of the children and involved in field site visits periodic family events.



The NPYP education program pathway includes

- **Beginnings** is an academic support program for elementary grades with an emphasis on enhancing basic skills in reading and math and expanding experiences in the arts and in science with experiential learning and site visits to museums, galleries, libraries, bookstores and the like., all of which are new to the children of Selma.
- **Reach** focuses on middle school (grades 6 and 8) combining STEM experiential learning with community advocacy through poster campaigns, presentations, etc. The object is to provide both science and math enhancement in subject areas of importance to the community, and to build communications skills.
- **The Edmundite Missions Academy**, seed funded by the Catholic Sisters Initiative of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, provides students in grades 7 through 10 with four-years of intense academic support targeted at ACT test improvement for college admissions. To press home the potential that academic performance promises, The Missions Academy includes exposure to a variety of careers and professions through outside speakers and site visits, as well as college visits and a Summer Experiential Earnings program of 2-week paid internships. With regular participation, admitted students are part of the program through 10th grade.
- **Tutoring** is focused on high school grades during the school year, but available to all grades in the summer.



In addition to this pathway of academic support, the NPYP includes

- **Social/Emotional Learning Support**, at all ages, bringing the psychoeducation expertise of the Missions Catholic Social Ministries into the NPYP education program

- **Summer Camp**, that combines morning academics with afternoon sports and experiential learning
- **Weekend Breakfast Bags** during the school year for three nearby public schools in which 100% of students qualify for Federal school breakfast and lunch programs. Every Friday of the school year, the Missions delivers to each school a weekend shelf-stable breakfast bag for each student containing two breakfasts to enable nutrition when school programs are not available. In addition, the Missions provides school supplies and other academic support during the school year.



Our Vision for the Future

The problems of academic achievement in Selma and rural areas are deep. Academic performance at all levels is significantly below that of Alabama and tremendously below that of the nation, at all ages and for all grades. Selma's impoverished children have few opportunities for new and broadening experiences, compromising ambitions for the future. The vision of the New Possibilities Youth Program is to provide hundreds of youth in Selma and surrounding rural areas, and their families, with both continuous academic support and access to the kinds of knowledge and experiences that will lift their expectations about what the future should and could hold for them. Our vision is for a vibrant knowledge program that infuses the Missions campus hundreds of children and families, learning, growing, and moving onward into a future of economic and personal self-reliance.

