

Pathways Parent/Student Handbook for Academic Year 2014-2015

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Introduction to 21st Century Pathways After School Programs

Mission Statement

Our mission, in partnership with schools, parents and the community, is to provide students with academic enrichment opportunities as well as additional tutoring and activities to complement their regular academic programs.

Program Overview

This 21st Century Pathways project emphasizes homework support for participants to complete more of their assignments and complete them correctly developing greater self-confidence and positive attitudes about school.

In addition, we emphasize educational enrichment (focused on STEM subjects) on subject fluency, writing skills, and reading comprehension, which supports their skills across content areas.

Furthermore, this project emphasizes cooperative learning, both through team-building and through educational enrichment, to increase student's ability to work effectively in groups.

Parents of participants are engaged in literacy activities, enabling them to better support their children in completing school assignments, and modeling educational engagement.

The use of arts and culture enables students to apply their own cultural resources to success in a school environment.

In addition, 21st Century Pathways must comply with all schools' district policies and procedures as outlined in designated district handbooks. Both schools in the Berwyn community outlined in the grant are public schools; hence the policy of the public school is followed.

After School Program Site/School Directory

Freedom Middle School
3016 Ridgeland Avenue
Berwyn, IL 60402
(708) 795-5800

Heritage Middle School
6850 W 31st Street Ridgeland Avenue
Berwyn, IL 60402
(708) 749-6110

21st Century Pathways Program
770 N Halsted Street
Chicago, IL 60640
(312) 569-0288

Community Collaborators

Berwyn South School District 100
3401 South Gunderson Avenue
Berwyn, IL 60402
(708) 795-2300

Scientists for Tomorrow
Department of Science and Mathematics
Columbia College Chicago
600 S Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60605
(312) 369-7989

Admission/Recruitment

Registration

21st Century Pathways programs are open to any student who is willing to participate and has a parent/guardian approval. A registration form is given to the parents before the student may attend the program.

Recruitment Policy

All students at Freedom and Heritage middle schools are invited to join the program. The general recruitment procedure is as follows:

1. September & October: Flyers highlighting the program are emailed to all teachers and administration. In addition, hard copies are distributed to all mailboxes, handed out in homerooms. Parents are also sent flyers via mail or by announcement in parent groups.
2. Early October: Personnel from Pathways Staff are present at school's Open House. Site coordinators, tutors, and parent advocates/mentors sit at program table passing out flyers and applications. Site coordinator speaks to all attendees, showcasing program materials. Parents & students sign form indicating interest. Applications/Registration Forms are also distributed to Excel Room teachers.
3. Late October: Staff follows up on interest forms or completed applications via telephone calls and/or emails to parents. Staff sends emails to all teachers with flyers. Applications/Registration Forms are brought to classrooms.
4. Early November: Staff visits all classrooms and lunchroom, reminding teachers and students of start date.

Recruitment, Attendance, Retention, Incentives

Recruitment

1. 21st Century Programs will serve student in schools with a high concentration of students from low-income families (defined as not less that 40% of the students being eligible for free or reduced-priced meals). This will assure that students recruited are high need.
2. Whenever possible, staff will consult with school personnel to assure that, if more students apply to the program than can be served, students in need of academic support will be given preference. Factors that will be considered will include limited English proficiency, low test scores, and low income.

Attendance / Retention Policy

1. Students are expected to maintain consistent attendance once they start in the program, and staff will take attendance daily at each event. Staff maintains written attendance records, as well as digital attendance records that are shared with school administration. Excused school day absences will be

excused program absences. Students that are present during the school day, but are not excused from program sessions will be given an unexcused absence, unless arranged by a parent/guardian

2. Program Staff call parent/guardian every time a student has an unexcused absence, recording the frequency and reason for the absences. After numerous absences, the student may elect, with parent's permission, to discontinue participation in the program. Additionally, students that have more than three unexcused absences may be asked to discontinue participation if there are students on a waiting list for program participation.
3. Both parents and students are frequently reminded that this is a commitment made by both the parent and the student.
4. Students, parents, teachers and administrators are all encouraged to participate in strategies for retention.
5. Students will not be permitted to enter the sessions late without prior arrangements and approval by program staff. This is to ensure that student report straight to the program after arriving to school, or after school hours. In the mornings, arrival should be no later than 7:10am. In the afternoons, students are expected to always be on time at 3:30pm.

Incentive Plan

1. Field trips are used as incentives for our programs. Students with consistent attendance during the school year are given priority for enrollment in the summer sessions.
2. Students are told that field trips are an earned privilege based on attendance, participation and attitude. Program staff and school staff are primarily the final arbitrators for allowing or disallowing students to attend field trips.
3. Mid-Year and End-of-Year culminating events are often held, with parents participating, luncheon provided, and/or raffle of books, school supplies, and/or donated prizes

Criminal Background Checks

Criminal Background Checks shall be conducted for all program staff who have direct contact with children and youth.

Procedure for Conducting Criminal Background Checks

1. A candidate must complete an application for employment or volunteer form as provided by Northeastern Illinois University in order to authorize a criminal background check

2. Once the candidate is determined by the Hiring Manager, the Program Coordinator will provide authorization to conduct a Criminal Background check, and provide the candidate with a Fingerprinting /Background Investigation Authorization & Release Form.
4. The candidate shall then take this form to the designated fingerprinting for criminal background check location to undergo the process.
5. Upon completion, the candidate shall return the confirmation (pink form) to Tricia Rosado at Center for College Access and Success.
6. Once clearance is provided by the fingerprinting service provider; the candidate may begin working in the designated school.

Mandated Reporter

Pursuant to the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act [325 ILCS 5], all adults working with children and youth under the age of 18 years old are required to be mandated reporters for suspected child abuse and neglect.

1. All employees must be trained to be mandated reporters before entering the schools and working with children.
2. All university employees must sign an Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status Form upon completion of training. This form outlines proper course action to be taken if an incident shall occur.
3. If a child abuse or neglect incident is suspected, all Northeastern Illinois University employees and thus 21st Century Pathways program employees, must follow state law and the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act [325 ILCS 5] for reporting the suspected incident. In addition, a Northeastern Illinois University Incident Report Form shall be completed and submitted to the site Coordinator for proper record keeping.

Safety

All after school programs must take place in a safe and easily accessible facility. Buildings must meet local standards and codes for public facilities. Indoor and outdoor facilities must be safe and in good repair. All 21st Century Pathways Programs must follow school district safety policies as per the district parent/student handbooks. This includes but is not limited to building security, emergency exit information, student health needs, emergency contacts, and student use of equipment.

In addition, all 21st Century Pathways participants are required to provide parent guardian contact information as well as an emergency contact in the registration forms.

Transportation Policy

Field Trip Procedures

All employees must follow the following procedures for all trips including community trips, walking trips, and trips involving transportation.

- Only registered 21st Century Pathways participants may attend field trips.
- All field trips taken must be related the grant goals and/or after school program curriculum.
- A proposal of field trips must be submitted to the Director at least 2 weeks prior to the trip with the following information included (proposal can be in the form of an email):
 - Purpose of field trip
 - Date
 - Times for pickup and drop-off
 - Location of place to be visited
 - Number of students
- Notify the school principal of the field trip to be taken.
- If the field trip is during school hours, proper permission from the school principal is required.
- Secure an appropriate number of chaperones. The ratio for chaperones is 1:10. Chaperones must be at least 18 years old and have a criminal background check on file.
- Student must sign-in to attendance sheet when entering the bus.
- The coordinator is responsible for securing and retaining a signed Field Trip Parent/Guardian Permission form. No student will be allowed to participate in a field trip without one. Signed permission forms must be accessible on the day of the field trip in case of an emergency.
- Before leaving location of place visited; coordinator or designee must take attendance with attendance sheet completed at the beginning of the trip to ensure ALL students who initially boarded are accounted for.
- The Coordinator or designee shall conduct a post-trip inspection procedure to ensure that the school bus driver is the last person leaving the bus and that no passenger is left behind or remains on the vehicle at the end of a route.
- Coordinator shall ensure all students are picked up by a parent or guardian, or for students who usually walk, ensure they walk home immediately upon exiting the bus.

No employee of the school or any collaborating organization may transport students in school or private vehicles. This includes, but is not limited to, *NEIU, CTC, 21st Century Pathways and any collaborating CBO or FBO employees.

Every vehicle regularly used for the transportation of students must pass safety inspections in accordance with State law and Illinois Department of Transportation regulations. The strobe light on a school bus may be illuminated any time a bus is bearing one or more students.

After School Program Dismissal

Upon dismissal of students participating in the afterschool program, the following is protocol:

- Students who walk home are identified at the beginning of the year upon parent's approval.
- At sites in which bus transportation is utilized, parents give permission when they sign the registration.
- Ensure that students who walk home go home immediately after dismissal
- Ensure that students who are typically picked up are done so by legal parent and/or guardian.
- Coordinator and staff must remain on site until ALL students are properly dismissed.
- Staff does not allow student participants in the personal vehicle to protect against program liability.

Student Conduct

All students must follow the District's Behavior Policy and Guidelines. Additionally, students are expected to follow the instructions of Pathways staff while attending the before or after school activities. For behavior that is disruptive, staff will give a verbal warning to the student. If conduct continues to be a problem, the student will be sent to the office and a call will be made to the parent. The student will wait there until they are picked up. A follow-up phone call will be made by staff to discuss the student's behavior, and the student will be asked to stay home from the next activity. If behavior problems persist, the student may be asked to leave the program.

Bus conduct

All students must follow the District's School Bus Safety Guidelines. The Superintendent, or any designee as permitted in The School Code, is authorized to suspend a student from riding the school bus for up to 10 consecutive school days for engaging in gross disobedience or misconduct, including but not limited to, the following:

- Prohibited student conduct as defined in School Board policy, 7:190, *Student Discipline*.
- Willful injury or threat of injury to a bus driver or to another rider.
- Willful and/or repeated defacement of the bus.
- Repeated use of profanity.
- Repeated willful disobedience of a directive from a bus driver or other supervisor.
- Such other behavior as the Superintendent or designee deems to threaten the safe operation of the bus and/or its occupants.
- Any misconduct shall be reported to the Director.

If a student is suspended from riding the bus for gross disobedience or misconduct on a bus, the School Board may suspend the student from riding the school bus for a period in excess of 10 days for safety reasons. The District's regular suspension procedures shall be used to suspend a student's privilege to ride a school bus.

Disclosures

Religious Practices

There shall be no mention of religious practices in any activities pertaining to 21st Century Pathways participating schools as outlined in the grant. In addition, there shall be no mention of religious activities in any reading 21st Century Pathways reading materials such as registration forms, parents consent forms, etc No funds provided pursuant to the 21st Century Pathways program shall be expended to support religious practices, such as religious instruction, worship or prayer.

Equal Opportunity

Equal educational and extracurricular opportunities shall be available for all students without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, ancestry, age, religious beliefs, physical or mental disability, status as homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy.