

Description of the School

CEO Leadership Academy

CEO Leadership Academy is in its sixth year of providing academically challenging, college preparatory education for students in the ninth through twelfth grades. Established by a former Superintendent of Schools and eight local leaders in religious and civic organizations, its mission is to nurture scholars capable of transforming their world, by sending them to and through college.

Achievement of Mission

CEO Leadership Academy is a Professional Learning Community, one which combines high academic standards, high character expectations and an emphasis on giving back to the communities. CEO's founder and Board of Directors believe that preparation for colleges goes far beyond academics. Student leadership is cultivated through academic mastery, community – focused education and the fostering of lifelong learning in any environment.

Nurture scholars...

CEO students are part of a learning community that is kept intentionally small. With enrollment capped at just 200 students, class sizes are often as small as fifteen students. Students receive the one – on – one and small group time that is necessary to help them grasp and apply challenging concepts in the classroom. They also receive assistance through individual assessments performed by staff, which highlights areas of strength or growth for each student. Students who qualify for special assistance in mathematics or English, for example, can be connected with these resources in early ninth grade.

... Capable of transforming their world ...

CEO's community – focused perspective on the educational process means that all students are required to complete community service activities that enable them to give back to their communities. This expectation is lowest while students are youngest; it increases with each year as student maturity and academic preparation increase. It is a vital method by which students learn about the world around them. Students may find their own community service activities or they may work with CEO family and staff to identify activities that will qualify. Staff follows up at the site of the community service activity to ensure that the process has been a positive one for all involved.

...By sending them to and through college.

CEO students receive college preparatory coursework and testing preparation beginning in the ninth grade. All students are screened for areas of strength and areas of potential growth as they prepare for college. Students are given access to academic supports if they need them, and this often consists of establishing one – on – one or small group sessions with students. While assuring that each student is at or above grade level in core academic areas, a tandem path of college preparation

is also established. Students begin taking practice college entrance examinations as early as the 9th grade. With each successive year, this preparation becomes more focused and by their junior year, they begin taking real college entrance examinations, such as ACT.

Academics, however, are only part of the college preparation experience. Students begin visiting college and university campuses in the ninth grade, familiarizing themselves with what campuses look like, what the classrooms are like, and by writing and asking their own questions of student or staff guides at each campus. CEO has been fortunate for the last two years to receive funding support to bring 35 eleventh and twelfth graders on college tours to the southeastern, eastern and southern states. On each tour, students visited 7 – 8 colleges and universities, then came back to conduct a panel presentation designed to enlighten students who did not go about what college might really be like. These tours have been truly transformative for the students who have attended.

Preparation for college, particularly for CEO students, must involve the whole family. Almost all CEO students will be the first in their families to attend college. This creates a learning experience for the entire family unit, and CEO hosts frequent parent/student information nights to discuss Financial Aid Forms, the college application process, and college decision making. Online services help each student keep track of his or her college preparation process, guiding them to the next step in concert with supportive CEO staff.

For the third school year, CEO was fortunate to also have a full – time College Coach whose job it has been to set up and maintain:

- The college tour: Seven Colleges in Seven Days, which brought 35 CEO students on college and university visits around the United States.
- Career Speaker Series: professionals from the community, all of whom have a four - year degree or greater, come in to speak to CEO students about their educational backgrounds and their current professional duties.
- Family Preparation Nights: Special information nights often supported by CEO's partners, in which financial aid, scholarships, or other helpful topics were covered for parents and students.
- College Fairs: Colleges and universities from the city, state and region come to present information to students and, possibly, recruit them.
- Summer employment opportunities: the College Coach has assisted students with the application for summer employment opportunities on and off site.

A dedicated staff and a full – time College Coach have been significant contributing factors to these accomplishments to date:

- Each year by April, over 90% of CEO students have had letters of acceptance to colleges or universities.
- In 2008, the CEO graduation rate was nearly 100%.
- In 2009, the CEO graduation rate was 100%.
- College acceptance rates were nearly 100%.
- Students have been accepted to colleges all over the United States, and have successfully attracted hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarship offers each year.

CEO is proud of its accomplishments in getting its students accepted and “to college” and recognizes the hard work it will take to continue to build its program for a strong reputation with the “through college.” To date CEO has graduated 67 students. 66.7% of those students are attending colleges and universities across the country, some of those colleges include: Pepperdine University (California), University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, Rust College (Mississippi), University of Wisconsin – Whitewater, Kansas Technical College, Marian College, Central State University (Ohio), and Milwaukee Area Technical College.

CEO could not accomplish these things without the significant contributions of generous donors and strong partnerships.

Generous donors or donor organizations have included, but are not limited to:

The Challenge Foundation
Mrs. Christine Walton and the Walton Foundation
WE Energies Corporation Foundation
M&I Bank Foundation
Northwestern Mutual Foundation
The Harry & Lynde Bradley Foundation
The Elizabeth A. Brinn Foundation

Our partnerships with local and national organizations to date include, but are not limited to:

Black Alliance for Educational Options
Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation
Milwaukee Area Workforce Development Investment Board
Usher New Look, Inc.
Unity in Motion, Inc.
Make a Difference Wisconsin Organization