THE EXCEL CENTER PROVIDES UNIQUE OPTIONS, FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES FOR NON-TRADITIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Newest Mayor-sponsored charter school offers opportunity to earn high school diploma while obtaining post-secondary credits

INDIANAPOLIS - Mayor Greg Ballard joined Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Tony Bennett and leadership from Goodwill Industries, Ivy Tech Community College and other community leaders to outline the nationally unique educational model and expectations for The Excel Center.

The Excel Center, which was recently granted charter approval by the City-County Council, will provide students ages 18 to 22 the opportunity and support to earn a high school diploma and begin post-secondary education tuition free, while developing career paths that offer better than average employment and growth opportunities.

“We are committed, through our Office of Education Innovation, to finding original and inventive ways of addressing our most critical education and community needs,” said Mayor Ballard. “The collection of unique and thoughtful elements that make up The Excel Center serves as a national model for how to serve students who are or are thinking about becoming high school dropouts. I am confident this program will become yet another example of the innovative and creative thinking that is common in Mayor-sponsored charter schools.”

The Excel Center, which will target 18-22 year old high school dropouts or students at-risk of dropping out, will offer customized and traditional high school courses and students will be required to meet all Indiana academic standards in order to earn a high school diploma. In addition, The Excel Center will pay tuition costs for students to take the first steps toward earning industry-recognized certificates or undergraduate degrees at Ivy Tech Community College. These credentials will facilitate opportunities for students to earn employment with higher wages and career prospects.

“I have every confidence The Excel Center will serve as a model for districts and communities hoping to encourage high school graduation and post-secondary training,” Dr. Bennett said. “The Center provides adult learners non-traditional and flexible opportunities to be successful in college or the workforce. I’m excited to see both the positive results The Excel Center can generate for Hoosier students and the positive impact those students will make on their communities.”

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Students who take advantage of The Excel Center will have control over when, where and how they learn. The Center is an educational option designed with the student in mind so that they can learn any time, any place and at a pace that meets their needs. Students will work with staff to create personalized learning plans that will include a combination of customized instructional techniques including traditional classroom, online, and small group learning, and one-on-one tutoring.

In addition, each student will be teamed with a small group of his/her peers with similar life circumstances or interests. Each team will be facilitated by a Coach who will be responsible for identifying and mitigating life barriers that may prevent students from being successful and to facilitate 21st Century life skill development such as critical thinking and teamwork. The Center’s organizational structure is intentionally developed to meet the needs of working and non-working students. It will be open year round, with flexible morning and evening hours Monday through Saturday. Depending on student need, the Center may also open satellite locations in Indianapolis beginning in its second year of operation.

“In these economic times, employment options are severely limited for young adults who do not have a high school diploma,” said Scott Bess, CEO Goodwill Education Initiatives, Inc. “The mission of The Excel Center is to not only increase the high school graduation rate in Marion County, but to increase the number of adults who are ready to fill the skilled jobs that businesses seeking to relocate tell us they need. This approach, coupled with the strong social supports, makes The Excel Center unique.”

The Excel Center is open to any Indiana resident who does not have a high school diploma or GED and is structured to best meet the needs of students aged 18-22. Classes start Sept. 7, 2010. Space is limited.

The Excel Center is located at 1635 W. Michigan St. For more information visit www.theexcelcenter.org; email: enroll@theexcelcenter.org; or call (317) 524-4141.

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