

FREEPORT HIGH SCHOOL
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To Whom It May Concern:

For the last couple of months, we have worked to start an intervention program with Carl and Dianna Cole to serve our students who need a Tier III support for academics, discipline or attendance. Our weekly at-risk report culls for students with three or more failing grades, three or more unexcused period absences, or three or more discipline referrals.

We've discovered that many of our students are in multiple categories and the lacking coping skills and social emotional awareness plays a huge role in their continued status on the at-risk report without hope for change. We've had every other service provider available in our high school setting work with these students, but have seen little impact. We went looking for someone like Carl and Dianna Cole at the same time that they were looking to expand their YES Club programming.

While the Coles have tended in the past to work in community settings or with elementary students, the inclusion of the YES Club at Freeport High School is the first high school setting in which they have held regular intervention meetings. We have three groups, of about 15 students each, meeting every three weeks with the Coles for one period.

During that time we have witnessed some of our more "hardened" students soak up the candid and thought provoking message the Cole's present. In fact, after this last session, I have decided that Carl and Dianna are masters at bamboozling students for their own good. While teaching lessons and suggesting a different path, they don't tell students what they have to do to change. Instead they ask them if they want to help others make changes in their lives. They suggest that maybe they could make a Youtube video together to teach others. In order to help others, our students would first need to know the YES Club path in and out so that they could advise others. Students eat it up, not totally realizing that they are actually the student more than the teacher of other students.

The interplay of Mr. Cole's sense of humor, his affinity for music, and his ability to poke fun at himself keeps students on their toes. He is unexpected and approaches students different than likely any other adult has ever talked to them. Dianna plays along in some of his messages and watches students carefully to help anticipate their next need. The combination of the two Coles keeps students hanging on to their every word...a huge accomplishment for teens who tell us they "are grown" and don't need help.

We have not yet had the YES Club in our building long enough to produce data, however, students in the treatment groups have asked when they are next coming back and have told us they feel special that they were selected to be in the YES Club. I would recommend considering an opportunity to bring the YES Club into a school setting. In just a few meetings, we have already seen an impact on our students.

Please contact me if you have any questions, beth.summers@fsd145.org or 815-232-0405.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Beth Summers'.

Beth Summers, Ed.D.
Freeport High School Principal