



10 Best Practices of Cane Bay High School

As high schools in the tri-county area tackle low graduation rates, some schools have been more successful in helping all students in their community. One school has met the 10 pillars of a successful school, resulting in an environment where the school is the core of the student's life.

Cane Bay High School has implemented or addressed what the experts say is a holistic and comprehensive approach to education.

From the custodian to the principal, they have elements of 10 practices that make them a promising model for the tri county area.

1. Engage and Partner with Parents

It's an all-too-familiar story: Parent involvement declines as students get older and become more independent; although the role of parents changes in secondary school, their ongoing engagement – from regular communication with school staff to familiarity with their child's schedule, courses and progress toward graduation – remains central to students' success. At Cane Bay High School, staff members make appointments (even with home visits) with parents to discuss a child's academic/social concerns or successes and to keep parents engaged with their child's progress. This strategy is a critical transition point for many students to begin building a net of support and to connect parents to the school. Staffers also conduct home visits to students who are at risk of not graduating. Teams of teachers meet on a child's progress, or lack thereof, and phone conference with the parent at the same time. The goal is to keep students and parents engaged in the total education process.

2. Cultivate Relationships

A concerned teacher or trusted adult can make the difference between a student's staying in school and dropping out. That's why Cane Bay is implementing advisories, small groups of students that come together with a faculty member to create an in-school family of sorts. These advisories, which meet during the school day, provide a structured way of enabling those supporting relationships to grow and thrive. These advisories meet every month, and the same advisor keeps the same students for four years. The most effective advisories meet regularly and build lasting relationships.

3. Pay Attention to Warning Signs

Cane Bay spends a great deal of time with the high-risk students – that may, for example, be failing a math class their freshmen year – and immediately wraps services around them. Among ninth graders, poor attendance (defined as attending classes less than 70% of the time); earning fewer than two credits during 9th grade; and/or not being promoted to 10th grade are factors that put students at significantly higher risk of not graduating and are key predictors of dropping out. Armed with this information, staff members at the school, as well as community organizations, have been developing strategies and practices that give both dropouts and at-risk students a web of increased support and services.

4. Make Learning Relevant

Boredom and disengagement are two key reasons students stop attending class and wind up dropping out of school. At Cane Bay, instruction that takes students into the broader community provides opportunities for all students, especially experiential learners to connect to academics in a deeper, more powerful way. Examples include an EMS program and police officer internships; all students who graduated from these programs were placed into employment. Students stated that they graduated high school because they were positioned into internship programs of interest to them.

5. Raise the Academic Bar

Increased rigor doesn't have to mean increased dropout rates. Higher expectations and more challenging curriculum coupled with the support students need to be successful have proven to be effective strategies for increasing graduation rates and preparing students to graduate from high school. Cane Bay has created a culture of curiosity and a culture of "I can" and "I will" from the custodian to the principal.

6. Think Small

For too many students, large comprehensive high schools are a place to get lost rather than to thrive. That's why Cane Bay decided against trailers in the school. Like most high schools in the tri-county area, they are seeing marked growth. The administration chose to create open office space for teachers and rotate their classrooms as opposed to isolating students and teachers.

7. Rethink Schedule

Cane Bay is looking at how their schedule fits with student life. The school serves many in the rural community and a number of Hispanic children, some of which are expected to work and help with family obligations. Cane Bay is trying to find ways to accommodate those families, including scheduling meetings twice a day (before and after school meetings are available for the same topic). Cane Bay has also become creative with the master schedule to accommodate students who want to take advanced classes and more of them. The master schedule includes classes on a traditional block, 45 minutes skinny classes, and A/B classes. This creative plan has increased AP enrollment by more than 200%. Cane Bay even offers a class before school starts.

8. Develop a Community plan

Dr. Lee Westberry has reached out to the medical, police and EMS industrial community to help shape the lives of her students. They are in the process of incorporating internships and training programs to the already successful career academies. Other academy partners include the Natural Resource Management program with GIS Mapping, the new student-led Heritage Trust Federal Credit Union and the McElveen Buick GMC Academy of Business and Marketing. All of these partners offer internship and PBL opportunities.

9. Service Learning

Cane Bay students give back and are participating in a Reading Buddies program where students go to nearby lower schools to participate with younger students. Cane Bay has several service-learning courses in the school. Each club is responsible to include service learning as a component as well. Even football players and cheerleaders welcome elementary students every Friday morning to school, over an hour before these high school students have to be at school. One course is Youth Court. This program actually tries first-time misdemeanor non-violent crimes, which prevents the family court system from becoming back-logged. The punishment given, if any, always includes community service. Cane Bay is a community that gives back.

10. Adopt a Student-Centered Funding Model

Research shows that it costs more to educate some students, including students living in poverty, English-language learners and students with disabilities. Recognizing that need, the administration at Cane Bay has taken what resources they have and made their students the focus of their spending.

From the first time you walk into Cane Bay, you feel a sense of community – from the front desk to the principal – transparency and a welcoming environment. The administration has created a culture of expectations, where all students will succeed to their ability and strengths. The principal is not only a champion of her school but also for the community in which she lives and works.

It's not about students being taught by someone who looks like them but someone who truly cares about the community and culture those students are from. When we serve students in a holistic and nurturing way, families succeed.

For Dr. Westberry, it is evident that she loves the community she works in – from the pictures of all the students in her office to the conversations with drug dealers, doctors and lawyers who surround her community and made up her student body. These 10 best practices are why Cane Bay is at the front of progressive education in the tri-county area.

Prepared for the Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative

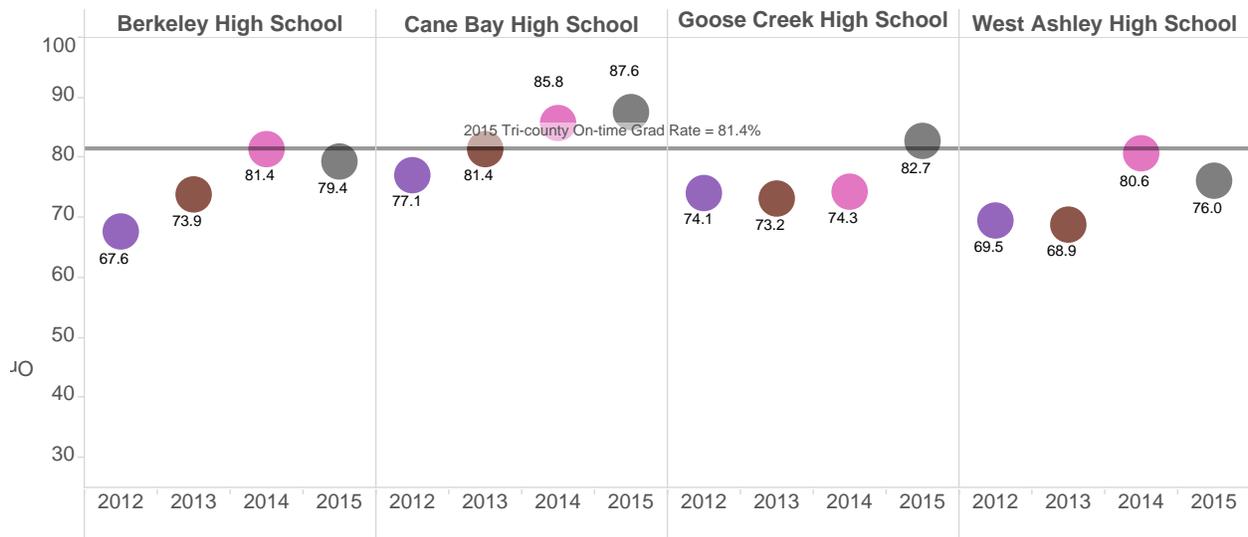
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Comparing Student Outcomes: Cane Bay High School

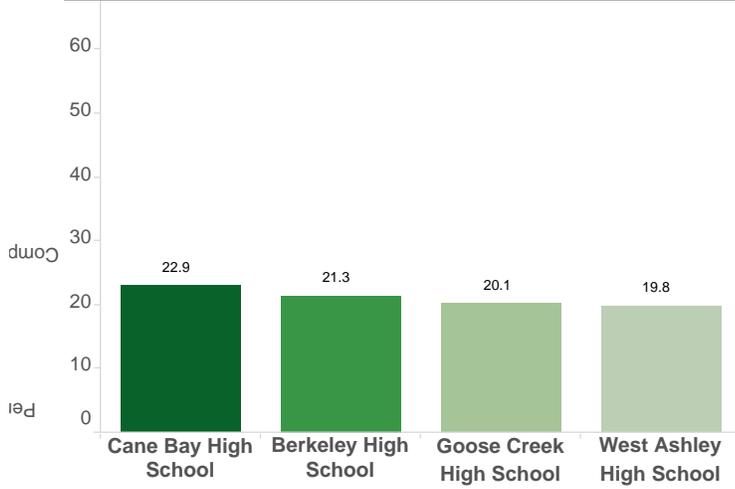
The practices that are evident at Cane Bay High School seem to lead to positive student performance outcomes. The following compares the performance of students who attend Cane Bay with three other tri-county high schools that have similar populations, especially as it pertains to poverty rates.

Poverty Index by High School	
Cane Bay High School	60.5
Berkeley High School	64.5
Goose Creek High School	68.9
West Ashley High School	66.0

On-time Graduation Rates 2012-2015



% ACT Composite Score over 21 (College Ready)



Cane Bay students graduate at a higher rate than their peers.

More 11th graders at Cane Bay were college ready on the ACT College Readiness Exam, with **23% achieving a composite score of 21 or over.**

% Proficient (Silver or higher) by Work Keys Subtest

	Applied Math	Locating Information	Reading for Information
Cane Bay High School	76.3	90.8	95.8
Berkeley High School	71.3	87.7	94.4
West Ashley High School	65.8	84.0	92.7
Goose Creek High School	58.6	87.8	92.1

Juniors at Cane Bay outperformed their peers on the ACT Work Keys (work readiness) assessment.

- **75% of students who graduated from Cane Bay in 2014 enrolled in a 2- or 4-year college immediately following graduation.** This is significant because the data show that Cane Bay students are more likely to be prepared for both college and careers than their peers at similar schools.
- **Although we cannot definitively link student outcomes to the 10 practices discussed in this document,** these data show that students at Cane Bay are outperforming students at other high schools in the region that serve a similar demographic population.

References:

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2. Haynes, K. T. (2014, April 3). *Understand Practices of Effective High Schools*. Retrieved August 15, 2016, from My.Vanderbilt.edu/MarisaConnata/files/2013/10/Understanding_Practice_of_EffectiveHighSchools.PDF