Jacksboro High School Collegiate Preparation Program



The Jacksboro ISD motto is "Small School, Big Opportunities", and the success of our Collegiate Prep Program at Jacksboro High School exemplifies this belief. This past year was particularly impressive. Two of our Collegiate Prep seniors were selected as Questbridge Recipients, earning full-ride scholarships to Stanford and Wellesley. Another senior was selected for the Odyssey Scholars Program at the University of Chicago. In-state scholarships included a Texas Leadership Scholar Program recipient, a Dell Scholars Program recipient to UT, a Hagan Scholars Program recipient, and four students selected as Priddy Scholars Program recipients. These students are intelligent, talented, and ambitious.

All students in the JHS Collegiate Prep Program are encouraged to dream big, take chances, and put their name in every hat. This philosophy has paid off, and their interest in prestigious schools is contagious. They have accomplished what few students can and have changed the expectations for our program. There were 24 seniors in the program this year, and they received over $2 million in scholarships – an impressive feat for students from a class of less than 70 students.

The Collegiate Prep Program was designed for students who are the first in their families to attend college and are capable but need guidance. We started this program over ten years ago to help first-generation students navigate the college admissions process and prepare them for the rigors of college. Students enter the program at the beginning of their sophomore year, where they develop their communication, organizational, and study skills before they attempt their first college class during the spring of their sophomore year. Many students take their first college class before they can drive. This gives them the confidence to take more dual credit classes throughout their high school years. Several seniors this year were full-time college students while completing their high school curriculum with dual enrollment. We have expanded our program to include ACT and SAT preparation for any junior interested in taking their college entrance exams. Over the years, we have seen tremendous improvement in our students' abilities to take the national standardized test, which has enabled them to be competitive for admission to prestigious colleges and many scholarships.

The key to this program's success is the instructor, Hillary Deffebach (Coach D to her students). Coach D has been instrumental in developing the vision, purpose, and curriculum for the Collegiate Prep program. She is passionate about supporting students with their post-secondary goals. Coach D sets high standards for student achievement, pushes them out of their comfort zones, and encourages them to dream BIG about their college opportunities. This approach has definitely paid huge dividends for our first-generation, university-bound graduates. Coach D organizes at least two university tours for each of her classes. Over the past 10 years, our students have toured every major university campus in Texas. Often, this experience is the first time students have ever set foot on a college campus. These experiences are truly transformative for first-generation college students.

Jacksboro ISD's commitment to empowering first-generation, university-bound graduates is definitely succeeding through the JHS Collegiate Prep Program. Through targeted initiatives, the program successfully inspires students from our small community to dream big and achieve remarkable academic success. These dedicated efforts are breaking down generational barriers and expanding student opportunities to realize their post-secondary goals and dreams. ■

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