

NEU in Secondary Schools: Addressing the Entire Community

Doug Curry

Coordinator for No Excuses Schools and Neighborhoods-Amarillo ISD

Director for No Excuses Neighborhoods-NEU Network

doug@noexcusesu.com

Blog: <http://blogs.amaisd.org/noexcuses/amarillonoexcuses>

Available this fall: Exceptional Classroom Management-Llama Training

No Excuses University is for elementary schools only, right? What if you could build a chain of No Excuses beliefs from elementary all the way through high school? What if your local businesses, civic organizations, places of worship, and your entire community adopted No Excuses beliefs and exceptional systems? Come see how to make NEU work in practical terms in middle school and high school. Come see how success in these areas can lead to a community-wide focus on college, post-secondary, and career success for ALL children! Learn real and practical ways to make this happen!

The Power of "Getting in their Space"

It's become almost a bit of a game with us, albeit the kind of game that has the power to change lives for the better. My educator friends and I are always looking for potential candidates. What kind of candidates? We look for kids who are still in high school, or kids who are out of high school. We even look for young adults or sometimes even older ones. We find them in the most ordinary day to day locations: serving as wait staff in a restaurant, working the window in a fast food location, carrying out our groceries, etc.

Once we learn their names and establish a relationship with them through asking them questions about themselves, enjoying some playful banter, and utilizing the usual types of ways people interact, we prepare to go in for the "big questions." It starts with these: "What's your plan?" "What do you want to be?" "What are your goals?" "How will you get there?" "How can I help?"

This endeavor truly comes from having worked with students of all ages for so many years and seeing so many of them succeed, but too many of them fail. You get to where you can't stand to see one more student not reach his/her full

potential. You can't stand to see that bright young boy you had in 4th grade end up in poverty the rest of his life. You know he could have been more. What about that bright-eyed 8th grade girl you knew when you were at middle school? You see her four or five years later, and she is aimless. She has no plan for the future that she can articulate. You know that if she has no plan, the world will give her a plan very quickly, and it probably won't be good.

So you take a chance by getting involved in other persons' lives. It truly is taking a chance. They may let you down. They may break your heart. You take the chance of "getting in their space." You determine that you are going to do everything within your power to encourage, support, prod, and insist that they go after their dreams and goals. You take it a step further, and you are willing to walk with them as they enroll in whatever post-secondary training is necessary to better their lives.

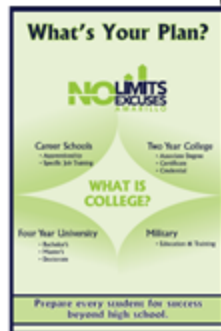
If you think you don't have any power or influence in their lives, think again. When you truly love them unconditionally, and you refuse to give up on them, they will know it. Take a chance.

Or stand on the sidelines as a middle school or high school teacher. Don't get involved. You KNOW they won't make it. There is NOTHING you can do to influence their lives. They will ALWAYS let you down.

Here's the cool thing about playing the game of "getting in their space." We are seeing it work every single day with so many different kids and adults. It is working because more and more adults in our schools and community are realizing their power to influence others, and they are "getting in the space" of these candidates. Then you get to experience the joy of watching and hearing of the stories of success.

No Excuses is for elementary schools. No Excuses is for middle schools. No Excuses is for high schools. No Excuses is for alternative schools. No Excuses is for preschools. No Excuses is for colleges and universities. No Excuses is for churches. No Excuses is for neighborhoods, community organizations, and countless other gatherings of people. Let's find out what the beliefs of No Excuses mean and what these beliefs and actions can do in the lives of our kids and adults.

Prepare every student for success beyond high school!



The poster and pamphlet above are now in your school. Every student must graduate from high school with a plan in mind. In order to achieve a living wage career, every student must go on to some kind of post-secondary training. Our goal is to see that this occurs for 100% of our students!

We are asking that **all adults** recognize their power to **"get in the space"** of students and discuss college, post-secondary, and career **every single day**. Don't leave it to chance. Isn't that the counselor's job? Don't we have one day a year for "Career Day?" **What if the student is absent on those days?** Is one person or one day enough to overcome the barriers that some of these kids face? Think of the power of caring adults lovingly and insistently "bugging" kids from elementary to high school regarding their post-secondary and career choices.

No matter your role, find every opportunity to ask students of all ages, "What is your plan?" Use the pamphlet to discuss what training is involved to reach this goal. Will this plan lead to a living wage income? What does the student need to do now in order to be ready? Don't take no for an answer. You may be the one person to whom this student will listen. Think of the power you have to help this one student to have a successful life! Don't lose this opportunity!

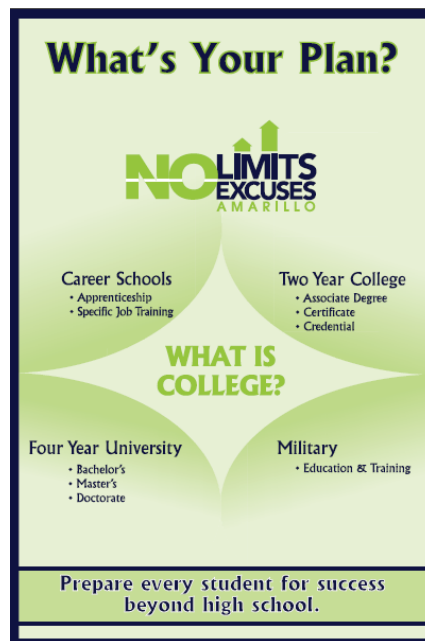
No Excuses in Middle School and High School

Ten Practical Steps to Make NEU Come Alive

1. In elementary school we say college. Many middle and high school teachers have a problem with this, as they realize that not all students will attend a four-year university. However, it is undeniable that in our society, with very few exceptions, any student who graduates and immediately enters the workforce is destined to struggle. Students must be able to earn a **LIVING WAGE**. And these types of jobs, whether they are technical or professional, require **SPECIFIC TRAINING AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**.

Therefore, in middle school and high school, let's define what college is. Create your own poster such as the one below. Put it in the hands of every staff member. All students should now be able to articulate when asked, "What is your Plan?"

It is therefore reasonable to expect that 100% of your graduating seniors will be enrolled in some form of post-secondary training after high school. This includes even the most severe and profound special education student. Each student's plan is as valuable and purposeful as any other person's! Build this culture!



2. Provide every staff member with the information needed for every plan! This should include what specific training is needed and what compensation the student can expect.

NEU Connect is partnering with Acceleron Learning, which is a website full of these kinds of resources. Equip your entire staff with this kind of information!

	TIME TO COMPLETION		* MEDIAN WAGE
Auto Collision Technology	CERT	1 year	\$16.15/hr \$33,592/yr
Automotive Technology	AAS	2 years	\$14.57/hr \$30,306/yr
Automotive Technology Power Train	CERT	18 months	\$14.57/hr \$30,306/yr
Automotive Technology Chassis and Body	CERT	12 months	\$16.15/hr \$33,592/yr
Aviation Maintenance Technology	AAS	2 years	\$26.97/hr \$56,098/yr
Aviation Maintenance Technician Airframe Mechanic	CERT	1 year	\$26.97/hr \$56,098/yr
Aviation Maintenance Technician Powerplant Mechanic	CERT	1 year	\$26.97/hr \$56,098/yr
Aviation Maintenance Technician Aerospace Manufacturing	AAS	2 years	\$29.63/hr \$61,630/yr
Aviation Maintenance Technician Aerospace Manufacturing	CERT	1 year	\$29.63/hr \$61,630/yr
Diesel Technician	CERT	18 months	\$17.59/hr \$36,587/yr
Electronics Systems Technician	AAS	2 years	\$19.90/hr \$41,392/yr
Electromechanical Technician - Basic	CERT	18 months	\$23.40/hr \$48,672/yr

3. Now, make every adult in your building and community realize that it is the responsibility of the "adults" to create exceptional systems in order to make success for all students a reality.

As stated above in the poster explanation:

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of students and discuss college, post-secondary, and career **every single day**. Don't leave it to chance. Isn't that the counselor's job? Don't we have one day a year for "Career Day?" **What if the student is absent on those days?** Is one person or one day enough to overcome the barriers that some of these kids face? Think of the power of caring adults lovingly and insistently "bugging" kids from elementary to high school regarding their post-secondary and career choices.

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When all adults in our secondary school will commit to doing this, watch out!

4. Powerful Symbolism

Elementary schools understand the value of powerful symbolism with their banners, flags, bulletin boards, and cute decorations. *Kids are still kids even when they enter middle school and high school! They appreciate all of our efforts to make school fun and interesting!*

- Be proud in displaying your NEU symbol! Find creative ways!
- Be sure every staff member displays your NEU symbol and what you stand for on their outgoing emails.
- Get t-shirts for staff and students proudly displaying who you are!
- Put up college banners everywhere!
- Put up military banners!
- Put up banners for trades and vocations!
- Decorate your doors, bulletin boards, hallways, etc.
- Put up every student in the school with picture, plan, and career dreams. Display these proudly!
- Start a wall showing every graduate-where they went to college or training, what career, etc.

Hope-----Hopelessness



Many secondary folks can actually be found in the "middle" of this spectrum. One way to pull them to the side of hope is to be very intentional and deliberate about the use of powerful symbolism. When I wear my NEU t-shirt, I am declaring to the world that I stand for something!

5. Sell your Message!

- Make your announcements come alive! Have students on announcements every day telling their plans and how they will achieve them. Remember: Your mantra now is "What's your Plan?"
- Have a different teacher each day share how he/she went to college and achieved career goals.
- Have a day once a month in which teachers share these plans in their classrooms.
- Make sure teachers know that their job is to daily be asking students to discuss their plans. Don't leave this to chance!
- Make a video of each student articulating his/her plan. Show these on your video announcements, or loop them on your video bulletin board. It is powerfully effective to get students to articulate this plan!
- Make videos of recent graduates telling what it is like to be in college, training, or the job world. Play these videos for your students, or bring these young adults to your school to speak.

6. Ensure that your systems are truly exceptional.

- Interventions
- Data Management
- Assessment
- Standards Alignment
- Collaboration
- Culture of Universal Achievement

Let's take it one step further: Many secondary teachers take on the "Pontius Pilate" style of teaching.

"I taught it. They didn't learn it. It's not my job to make sure they learn it. I am a disseminator of information. Their job is to get it. In the real world, no one is going to hold their hand or give them a second chance."

Can you imagine a Kindergarten teacher saying, "I taught the little guy his A, B, Cs, but he didn't get it. Not my problem."

Why do we suddenly think it is okay to wash our hands of our responsibility to help our secondary students to learn?

"He didn't do his homework. Our policy is that he gets a zero. Not my problem."

No one is suggesting that we lower the standards. However, let's continue to raise the support and watch these students succeed!

7. Which leads to the next issue facing some secondary schools: Poor classroom and school systems for behavior. Ensure that your school and your classrooms have exceptional systems for management of behavior. Expect more from your students! They are still kids!

They will do whatever you expect them to do if you love them and treat them with dignity and respect, but it will take courage and confidence.

Your school will be whatever the adults of the school want it to be. If your school is out of control, the adults must come together and collectively create and maintain better systems for what you wish of the students. No Excuses!

8. Be intentional and deliberate about making all students feel a part of your school culture.

- Find ways to recognize all students beyond sports or the obvious measures.
- Have your teachers go in groups to welcome incoming 6th graders or freshmen to your campus.
- Reach out with cards, texts, or calls.

9. Utilize mentors who have true relationships with your students.
- If you are a middle school, encourage the elementary teachers to periodically come and check on your students. Communicate with them by email to keep them up to date on the progress of their former students. This same process can take place with high school students receiving visits from their middle school teachers. Keeps the support going!
 - Use community organizations, including faith-based, to establish relationships with your students.
10. Gain the support of your community.



La Fiesta Grande of Amarillo is an official No Limits/No Excuses Partner.

La Fiesta is committed to seeing that all students and adults will continue their education beyond high school and attain a career with a living wage income.



Manager, La Fiesta

No Limits/No Excuses Director



No Limits/No Excuses Partner Commitment

Instructions

- Identify in your organization all current students, high school, college, trade school, etc.
- Identify any "potential" students. These could be adults or young adults who could benefit from going back to school and pursuing a living-wage career.
- Begin collectively to encourage these folks to articulate their career goal. Help them to examine what education is needed to achieve that goal.
- Once they commit to pursuing the education needed to reach their goals, create a "refrigerator magnet" for each student. These are the cards provided for each student's picture and career goal.
- Have members of your organization to sign each student's card. Display this! These guys need your encouragement and support!



No Limits/No Excuses Partner Commitment

As a No Limits/No Excuses Partner,

- We commit to seeking out our employees, (students and adults), being willing to "get in their space," and encouraging, supporting, prodding, and insisting that our students and adults can articulate their career goal and what steps must be taken to gain the education needed to attain their goals.
- We commit to seeking out the family members of our employees and community members as well.
- We commit to tracking the progress of our students and regularly celebrating their successes as they progress toward their career goals.
- We commit to regularly checking on each of our students to ensure that they continue to progress toward their career goals.
- We commit to connecting our students with community resources to ensure that any barrier that occurs will be overcome.

Prepare every student for success past high school! No Excuses!