



Work Study Program Feasibility Study for St. Francis de Sales High school

As many of you may have heard, St. Francis de Sales High School is working with our partners, the Big Shoulders Fund and the Archdiocese to conduct a feasibility study to determine the benefits of and potential for the addition of a Work Study model to our college preparatory/academic curriculum. The Work Study model was pioneered 20 years ago in Chicago by the Cristo Rey Jesuit HS.

We invite you to a parent/community meeting on Tuesday February 6th at 6pm in the Library to hear more about the Work Study model, to ask questions and to discuss the model with staff from St. Francis de Sales, the Archdiocese and Big Shoulders Fund.

Here are some highlights about the Work Study Model we are investigating:

- In this model students go to school for four days a week, and on the fifth day participate in an administrative job sharing program at an area employer.
- The reason we're doing this is primarily because we continually ask ourselves "*how can we best serve the community, even better than we have done for decades and do now?*" And the answer came back that we can best serve the community by giving students a fundamentally different academic, work and life experience than they'd ever get at a traditional high school – an experience like the one enjoyed by the Pilsen students at Cristo Rey for twenty years now.
- We want to give that kind of experience to the students and families from the southeast side, the south suburbs, and from northwest Indiana.
- Our students will learn job skills from day one of their high school career. They will learn life skills as they interact with adults in working situations. And they will continue to be students in a rigorous college prep program that helps them prepare for and attend great universities – universities who compete for these students because they bring such a different and valuable experience.
- One last thing before we get into the feasibility study – there's another subtle benefit that the Cristo Rey students have experienced. In many cases, employers have kept students on during breaks and the summer period – where employers pay the students directly and the students can bank funds towards their college education. Imagine that for our local students?

Attached find more information about the feasibility study.



Work Study Program Summary Overview of Process for St. Francis de Sales High school

St. Francis de Sales High School is undertaking a feasibility study to investigate the potential for a Work Study Program at our school.

In a Work Study Program, students are put into job-sharing teams where they work once every four days at a local business from 8:30-4:30pm. The students' academic schedules are modified so that four students share one full-time entry-level job without missing academic class time – the students attend the same number of instructional hours as in a traditional school setting.

A Work Study Program provides students a tremendous access to opportunity – not only the opportunity to attend a private/Catholic high school that prepares them to attend and succeed at great universities, but also the opportunity to gain valuable life and work experiences in a professional setting. Students take ownership of a quality, college prep education while developing real world job skills. These experiences have been shown to help student achievement, and universities have shown great interest in this experience as a differentiator in admissions decisions.

Work Study Programs began in 1996 with Cristo Rey Jesuit High School on the Southwest Side of Chicago and now serve more than 30 other schools around the country. Payment from employers for the effort of the job sharing team offsets a portion of the cost to educate the students. There are hundreds of work-study students working in and around downtown Chicago each weekday.

The benefits of a Work Study Program are many, including:

- Student scholars receive professional, real-world experience to enhance a student's college and career readiness,
- Student scholars are provided job skills training and ongoing support,
- Graduates are more likely to go on to successful college careers and
- Students are motivated to excel in school and pursue professional careers.

The feasibility study seeks to understand the needs of stakeholders – including families, staff, community members, businesses and other partners. A decision to implement a work-study program will only be made if our stakeholders believe in and support this model. We are looking to finish the study in the fall of 2018 with a potential start date for the program to begin at the earliest date during the 2019-2020 school year.