



with out this  
Plogram I  
wouldnt have  
made it  
Thank you



Mission  
WEST VIRGINIA

# The Bridge: 2022 Outcome Report

2021 – 2022 School Year



# The Bridge

A Program of Mission West Virginia, Inc.

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## About The Bridge Program:

The Bridge program guides students in foster/kinship care towards their education goals. When students stay in school, they can envision a positive future. The Bridge supports students each year on their respective journey with educational advocacy, mentoring, student enrichment, college funding support, and post-secondary education planning. This mentoring relationship has resulted in continuous improvements in student's **academic performance, attendance, behavior, and grades.**

*most encouraging!*  
**100%** of every high school senior has gone on to pursue a post-secondary education plan!

## Expansion of The Bridge:

From 2016 to 2021 the Bridge operated at a single site in Clay County High School. The Lead Mentor worked diligently with a caseload of 33 students each year to ensure that they improved in the areas of attendance, behavior, and course completion. These three areas of focus led to a trusting environment, allowing the students to build confidence over time.

These humble beginnings yielded astounding results. The Lead Mentor worked with the school staff at Clay County High School to ensure that every one of her high school seniors graduated with a post-secondary plan in place.

Mission West Virginia shared Bridge results with stakeholders and community partners who have committed to supporting the Bridge program. This support has led to expansion to further serve students in foster and kinship care across the state.

**With funds from the Department of Diversion and Transition, Milan Puskar Foundation, and Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation,** 5 new staff members were hired to join the Bridge team.

### This includes:

- The Manager of the program
- 4 additional Mentors stationed in Boone County at Scott and Sherman High School, Kanawha County at Herbert Hoover High School, and an additional Mentor joined the Lead Mentor in Clay County High School.

# Swift & Effective Implementation at a Glance:

## Number of Mentors:

2020-2021: ONE



2021-2022: FIVE



## Individuals in Program:

2020-2021: 33 STUDENTS



2021-2022: 95 STUDENTS



**187% increase!**

**With only 5 months out of the 9-month school year to work with students, the following results were yielded:**



**93% decrease** in absences!



**81%** of students in the Bridge had an increase in their overall GPA!



**60% decrease** in suspensions!



"My colleagues and I must sing the praises of the program. The mentor in our school is doing an excellent job meeting with the students and helping them with a variety of personal, social / emotional, future planning and academic needs. My colleagues and I agree that the program is a great benefit to our students in kinship and foster care."

Kanawha County High School Counselor

# 2022 Graduation Outcomes

**100%** of students in the program have successfully graduated high school with a post-secondary plan in place for their future for the **7th consecutive year in a row**. The Bridge team holds the belief that one student dropping out of school is one too many which is why we are proud to report that to date, a student has not entered the Bridge program without graduating high school – which includes a **0%** dropout rate.

These statistics include the most recent 2021/2022 school year which shows the swift implementation that the 4 new Mentors achieved in a short amount of time, most of them only having approximately 5 months to work with students as opposed to the full 9-month school year.

This Spring the Bridge had the privilege of seeing **25 high school seniors** walk across the stage at graduation to receive their diplomas. Throughout the school year, Mentors worked with Seniors to help them with completing the FAFSA, applying to grants/scholarships, and connecting them to appropriate resources based on their post-secondary plans.

## The following results were yielded:



15 of the 25 graduating Seniors are attending college



6 students are entering the work force



1 student has committed to becoming a United States Marine



3 students are attending Job Corps

# Interventions Used

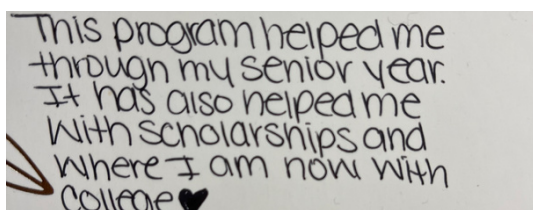
The Bridge is implemented and modeled after Check and Connect, a Nationally recognized intervention-based program created by the University of Minnesota for students who show warning signs of disengagement in school and who are at risk of dropping out. It is through Check and Connect that Bridge Mentors track and monitor the attendance, behavior, and course completion of students on their caseload.

Additionally, Check and Connect provides training to Mentors where they develop an understanding of how to successfully –

- Build strong relationships with students based on mutual trust and open communication.
- Conduct systematic 'checks' on students to assess their engagement in school.
- Accomplish 'connects' with students, by offering individualized intervention in partnership with school personnel, families, and community service providers.
- Partner with guardians and families to function as a liaison between home and school to work towards the common goal of supporting the student.

## Consistency

Check and connect allows us to track just how often we are interacting with the students that we work with. During the 2021-2022 school year our 6 mentors made a grand total of **14,738 connections** across **95 students** in the Bridge Program. These frequent, consistent interactions are key in maintaining a trusting relationship between Mentors and students. As a result of this level of intervention, permanent change takes place that would not otherwise be possible.



# Looking Ahead

With a highly successful expansion, the Bridge looks on to continue growth. A new Mentor will be hired, trained, and ready to implement services in Sissonville High School for the 2022/2023 school year. The Bridge Manager is also prepared to take on a small caseload at Hurricane High School in Putnam County.

## With these advances the program will be operating in:

### 4 counties

Boone, Clay,  
Kanawha, & Putnam



### 6 schools

Sherman, Scott, Clay County,  
Herbert Hoover, Sissonville,  
& Hurricane High Schools

## With a projection to grow and serve 200+ students by the end of the 2022-2023 school year!

In less than a year the Bridge Program grew more than 2x in size all while upholding the strong foundation of ensuring success for and with students. This is a testament to Bridge Mentors, incredible faculty, and students. We feel optimistic that success will continue to be ever present for the kids in the Bridge program.



"I wish there was a program like this for the masses for other students. As a young adult sometimes, you get lost in all your classes and you feel like there's no hope. When you have someone to encourage you and help you to complete things one at a time, you get further. I don't think I would graduate this year if it wasn't for the program because life gets so stressful sometimes."

-Senior Student in The Bridge Program, Class of 2022



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