

Pilot Name: PREP – Passages Responsive Education Project

School/District Name: Wayfinder Schools

Contact: Martha Kempe, Head of Schools

Overview:

The Passages Responsive Education Project (PREP) is a pilot project of Wayfinder Schools. PREP is designed to meet the needs Maine youth who have struggled in traditional school settings and are off-track to graduate. PREP will serve court-involved youth in nine Maine Counties (York, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Knox, Waldo, Hancock, Washington, and Androscoggin) as well as youth in Hancock County who are not involved in the justice system but who need a second chance at high school graduation. PREP will serve students aged 14-22, including those who are pregnant or parenting and have faced significant challenges on their road toward high school completion.

Youth in the justice system must overcome major hurdles upon reentry to school, resulting in completion rates that lag significantly behind their peers. Obstacles to school retention and completion among this population include complicated reentry plans, frequent moves between districts, school climate, safety implications, and lack of resources. Having a consistent in-person support and community network can help these students progress in addressing the educational attainment gaps and improving long-term outcomes.

PREP will collaborate with Department of Corrections-designated community partners in support of court-involved youth and will work with those partners toward identifying and removing barriers through responsive policy changes, improved system collaboration, and student-centered programming.

PREP will provide individualized weekly instruction to students in their own homes as they work toward completion of 24 core requirements in academics and practical life skills. By providing the presence of a caring/invested adult throughout their enrollment and a consistent “school-to-go” plan wherever they live within the new nine-county catchment area, PREP will help ensure increased retention and graduation rates for Maine youth. PREP will also offer students increased access to arts education, outdoor education, and career exploration opportunities, all of which have been identified by The National Dropout Prevention Center and others as being significant protective factors for youth at-risk of high school non-completion.

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