



“Civic engagement in public education.”

Read to Succeed SIC Goals and Project Ideas for High Schools

High school students may act as if adults don't know a thing, but parents must stick with involvement in school assignments and continue an emphasis on reading. Students at this age are faced with a dizzying array of demands, so it's important that they have the literacy skills to handle the various academic and post high school requirements. For parents who are rusty regarding the structure of a story or types of poetry rhymes, the key is helping their teen find sources for assistance through the school, in reference books, or on the Web.

Goal I. Build Parent Knowledge, Skills, and Confidence to Support Their Teen's Reading and Writing Skills

Parents need to understand their involvement is vital for success in high school. Many parents, however, need help in building the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to support their teen's literacy development. Parents need information and support so they can help at home.

Project ideas for this goal:

1. Organize parent workshops or distribute parent-friendly brochures or flyers addressing one or more of the following suggested topics (feel free to brainstorm additional ideas):

- Sources for parent refreshers on high school skills so they can help at home (Public librarians can recommend books and other materials that can help parents "get up to speed").
- Information on the skills high school students are expected to master at each grade level in reading and writing (For an easy to understand explanation of the skills and why they are needed as well as activities and information sources to help parents work with their teens see: scfriendlystandards.org)
- Literacy strategies that parents can use with their teen at home (See scfamilyfriendlystandards.org for some suggestions)
- Sources of learning games and "tutoring" help on-line for teens with reading difficulties.
- Other resources and assistance available through the school or in the community.
- Reminders, for example, of the continued importance of sufficient sleep at this age, the need for a quiet homework spot, and checking to see that assignments are done.

2. Organize or provide support for parent "universities" at school or other location.

There are many ways that SICs can contribute, such as providing volunteers, finding community resources, helping with publicity, and making phone calls and personal invitations to individual parents to ensure a good turnout. Conduct a formal or informal survey of parents to find out what topics are of most interest to them. Think beyond the school. More parents might attend if their church or the VFW supports the university, for example.

3. Create a "sources" library at the school for parents (and a virtual equivalent on the school's website) that contains books, videos, audiotapes, and other materials explaining how parents can support their teen's literacy development and research needs.

Goal II. Maintain Student Interest in Reading a Wide Variety of Books and other Texts

High school students need to read, read, and read some more. The more they read, the easier it is to read and the better their writing skills. Of course, they need to keep up with the school's required reading, but reading for fun is important also.

Projects ideas for this goal:

1. Place books and magazines around the school and include a wide variety of engaging books for different reading levels.

Place many different types of reading materials for different reading levels around the school - in the cafeteria, at the end of a hall, wherever students congregate. Whether it is motorcycles, fashion, teen troubles, or adventure, use their interests to get them reading. The goal is to address a wide variety of interests by including mysteries, historical fiction, biography, autobiography, poetry, nonfiction, graphic novels, multicultural resources, magazines and comics.

2. Bring the books to where the high school students are, use donated books, graphic novels, and magazines to create small informal libraries throughout the community.

Think beyond the school and home. Place donated books and magazines in locations such as the laundromat, barbershop, community center, apartment complex, doctor's office, and social services offices. Put them anywhere parents or their teen can pick up a book and read while waiting. Don't be surprised if the materials disappear as teens take them home to enjoy and share. Another way to get teens and the community reading is to establish "Little Free Libraries," mailbox-sized library boxes, in locations that are convenient for teens and families. For more information about this movement and to find existing locations in South Carolina, visit <http://littlefreelibrary.org>.

3. Work with the public library to get teens and their families to regularly visit and borrow books.

Access to the library is important at any age, but for high school students it's crucial. Transportation can be a barrier in getting to the library. Explore the possibility of your SIC working with a local library and community groups to create a library bus that takes books to neighborhoods or that provides regular trips to the library. Does the public library need help with funding for sufficient computers for student use? Work with a business to see if the owner

will provide Wi-Fi access to the neighborhood. Or see if a business will help with the cost of outfitting school buses into Wi-Fi hot spots so that students with long commutes can access digital books and other online resources while they ride. See how one school district in Arizona adopted this approach at <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/04/13/wi-fi-hubs-on-buses-connect-students-in.html>.

Goal III: Lessen Summer Reading Loss, Especially for Struggling and Low Income Readers

Even high school students who do not read at all over the summer months will likely experience summer reading loss and more difficulty with writing. This achievement loss can have an especially significant impact on teens with reading difficulties, as summer reading loss accumulates over time. Low income students are especially at risk of experiencing summer reading loss because it's more difficult for them to access books and reading activities during the summer months.

Project ideas for this goal:

1. Organize and support a contest to reward students for reading over the summer or talk with teachers about giving extra credit for additional reading.

So many activities compete for high school students' time that an added bonus or boost can help get them interested in reading. Motivating teens is tricky, so work with student groups to learn what gets them interested. Keep in mind that these projects need to work for all the students, even those with more limited access to books and magazines.

2. Organize or provide support for a summer book club or tutoring program.

Check with local organizations that may already be providing reading enrichment activities and see what your SIC can do to increase the number of students served during the summer months. If there aren't any organizations providing these kinds of opportunities, check to see if there is a nonprofit or local government agency that can help you bring this kind of activity to your community. If your school attendance zone includes densely populated areas like apartment buildings, consider asking the apartment manager if you can use their community room for book clubs or tutoring sessions that are staffed by volunteer teachers, parents, and community members.

Finding Partners

Your SIC will likely not have all of the expertise and resources it needs to implement these project ideas by itself. That's when it's time to look for partners who can bring the missing pieces to the table.

The Read to Succeed law encourages schools to develop partnerships with a variety of different community partners. These include public libraries, local arts organizations, community nonprofits, social service agencies, businesses, faith-based institutions, pediatric and family practice personnel, and SCETV. Professors and graduate students at local colleges of education are also good resources. Every SIC will have unique needs -- let those needs drive your search for potential partners.

Don't forget to check the resources available within your school and district. Partnerships between SICs and PTAs/PTOs can be very effective. District personnel as well as school administrators, media specialists, reading coaches, and other teachers can often provide

valuable advice and expertise. In any case, your SIC should always consult with the principal and school literacy instructors early on to ensure that your SIC's goals and activities are aligned with -- and do not duplicate -- other ongoing efforts to support improved student literacy.

Finally, there are a multitude of resources on the Web with many great ideas for literacy goals and projects. One site that our office has found particularly useful in addressing the needs of high school readers and their families is "All About Adolescent Literacy" (www.adlit.org).

Have Questions? Contact the SC-SIC office at 803-777-7658 or sic@mailbox.sc.edu and a member of our staff will be happy to help.