

Q&A with Sly Boskovich, CTE Director, Franklin Pierce School District

Why JWG? JWG is an amazing program because there is the flexibility for teachers to support the students in many ways. For the most part teachers have a prescribed academic curriculum that they use to teach a class. With JWG a variety of curriculum is provided, but teachers are also able to use their creativity in designing lessons that will support the needs of their students.

What is it about JWG that distinguishes it from other classes; student interventions? As stated in the above question specialists are allowed and encouraged to really spend time getting to know their students and design curriculum that will support the individual needs of the students. Students frequently tell me **“I wish they had the same relationship with my other teachers that I have with my JWG specialist.”** Research shows that healthy adult relationships and positive role-models are vital in the lives of at-risk youth and in JWG those relationships are encouraged and required. The JWG specialists value the opportunity to work with students “outside the box” and the progress that these students make inspires the specialist to stay positive and involved with the students they are charged with. Many interventions in schools are perceived as punishment and students are required to attend. With JWG, students are invited to be a part of the program and they have a choice in participating. For some of these students this is the first time they have a voice in their interventions and I believe that they feel like they have been given the right to advocate for themselves. They have a say in their future and they own that proudly!

Is it more effective in helping get kids to graduation and on to productive next steps? How does it accomplish this? I think that there are other great programs that help students prepare for graduation. Many of those programs have parameters that are very difficult to work with in a classroom where you have traditional teaching happening. With JWG you can spend all of your teaching time focusing on academics, social skills, leadership, problem solving, decision making, employability, etc. **JWG specialists are addressing the whole child not just a piece of the child and I personally feel that is what makes JWG a successful program.** Another positive note about JWG is the specialist chooses to be a specialist. In many programs teachers are assigned to intervention programs that they have not committed too. **JWG specialists have a heart for kids and are specifically recruited because of their passion to work as a specialist.** If for some reason it is not a good fit we make changes. Unfortunately for other programs that flexibility is not always possible.

And what is your perspective on the Foundation's role in supporting JWG students in Franklin Pierce? **The foundation's role has been instrumental in helping with funding for things that the traditional school funding cannot supply.** To name a few we have been able to purchase bus passes, food handlers cards, caps and gowns for graduation, food when a child is hungry, transportation to job interviews, clothes for interviews. School funding is very limited because many things JWG students need are considered “gifts of public funds” therefore educational dollars cannot be used for those purchases where the JWG grants are able to fund those necessary items. **JWG students know that this funding is coming from caring community members and their sense of worth is positively impacted in knowing that folks who do not know them personally still care about their success.**