

ARMADA AREA SCHOOLS #ACCEPTED

Six years ago, Armada High School embarked on a journey to change their community's mindset about college. Many students had never visited a college and had little exposure to the options available to them. For most, they would be the first in their family to attend college. The #ACCEPTED program was developed to increase student achievement and the number of students pursuing a college education while changing the culture in the community to promote college readiness.

The program has provided opportunities for college tours and scholarships, an organized college admissions fair, expanded college credit options, additional Advanced Placement courses and partnerships with local universities to provide dual enrollment opportunities. The program is promoted within the school district and community by creating a buzz on social media using the hashtag "#ACCEPTED" and by providing t-shirts to students participating in the program.

The results have been remarkable. Since the inception of #ACCEPTED in 2010, Armada has seen an increase in composite ACT scores, a decrease in the dropout rate from 5.63 percent to just .65 percent and an increase in college enrollment from 70 percent in 2010 to more than 96 percent in 2015. Because of #ACCEPTED, students have gained a sense of pride and a feeling of achievement when planning their

future. Parents are more knowledgeable about the college application process, and the community is able to better support students in their pursuit of higher education.

Counselor Tiffany Bastianelli has been the program's coordinator for six years and explains, "The #ACCEPTED program has helped to make a college education within reach for our students and their families. By increasing college credit opportunities, campus visits and student readiness, Armada has harnessed the notion that it takes a village to raise a child and help students make their dreams a reality."

The #ACCEPTED program will use their Education Excellence grant to expand services for students, including providing transportation for additional



college tours, hosting more events to educate parents, and students on the application process and providing transitional support to students once they enter college.