

WEF SUPPORTS STEPS TO SUCCESS PROGRAM

Wakefield Educational Foundation (WEF) recently awarded Wakefield High School staff member Victor Branco a grant for \$1250 to fund 'Steps 2 Success – Behavior Education and Reinforcement Program' (S2S), a school-wide initiative to help students 'at-risk' of behavior difficulties and academic failure. Research suggests 10-15% of a student body can pose such difficulties despite universal supports. This can amount to 20 or more students in the program.

The S2S Program is a behavior and education reinforcement program designed to serve the at-risk population. Students referred for the program often present mild to moderate behaviors of concern and/or significant academic difficulties. These students get matched to a support staff and an individual teacher who will mentor the student and provide daily check-ins for emotional support and academic help. The students begin each day in the same homeroom with the support staff and review each day at the day's end with an assigned staff member. Open lines of communication are held with parents for wraparound support, an integral part of the program. Consultation with teachers also monitors student progress and interventions occur as needed. Other activities outside of school include luncheons, outings and activities for students and mentors allowing students to earn reinforcements.

WEF's funding will be used for expenses related to resources needed for the program including agenda books, tutor fees, expenses related to activities and workshop trainings for the program advisors. The hopeful results of the S2S program are a more positive school atmosphere with greater academic participation, performance and positive relationships in school. At-risk students will more likely to work toward a diploma at the high school in lieu of dropping out or taking a GED class.

Pictured (left to right) are mentors AJ Beebe, TJ Liberti, Jason Zervas, Kathy Lopez, Michael Bennet, Paula Guttadauro, Rachel Barron, advisor Emily Sinnot, advisor and S2S coordinator Victor Branco.

