



# Implementation Manual



## Introduction

In a knowledge economy, education beyond high school is essential. Whether students are going into college, the military, or an employer training program, a solid high school academic foundation is crucial to their success. Research indicates\* that students who complete courses in a rigorous core course of study are more successful in college and careers than those who simply meet minimum graduation requirements. The State Scholars Initiative is designed to dramatically increase the percentage of high school students completing this course of study.

This framework has been compiled with material drawn from the states participating in the State Scholars Initiative.

If you would like to borrow on the experience of other State Scholars programs as you implement your own, you may want to look at [www.wiche.edu/statescholars](http://www.wiche.edu/statescholars).

For information about WICHE, please log on to [www.wiche.edu](http://www.wiche.edu)

My colleagues and I look forward to working with you. Please let us know how we can be helpful.

Best Regards,

Terese Rainwater

Jere Mock  
*Director of Programs and Services, WICHE*  
303.541.0222  
[jmock@wiche.edu](mailto:jmock@wiche.edu)

Terese Rainwater  
*Program Director, State Scholars Initiative*  
303.541.0225  
[trainwater@wiche.edu](mailto:trainwater@wiche.edu)

Christian Martinez  
*Program Coordinator, State Scholars Initiative*  
303.541.0210  
[cmartinez@wiche.edu](mailto:cmartinez@wiche.edu)

Michelle Médal  
*Administrative Coordinator, State Scholars Initiative*  
303.541.0224  
[mmedal@wiche.edu](mailto:mmedal@wiche.edu)

---

\*Adelman, C. *The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion From High School Through College*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 2006.



## Table of Contents

<b>The State Scholars Overview</b> .....	5
Objective	
Who Benefits?	
The State Scholars Model	
Course Requirements	
<b>Bringing State Scholars to Your Community</b> .....	8
The steering committee	
Key Regional and Statewide Contacts	
Kick-off Event	
Invitation List	
Media Coverage	
Meeting Agenda	
Meeting Logistics	
Call to Action	
<b>Building Support</b> .....	14
Administrator and Staff Presentations	
Parent Presentations	
Subcommittees/Organizational Flowchart	
<b>The 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Presentation</b> .....	15
Presentation Overview	
Middle School Logistics	
Business Volunteer Recruitment	
Presentation Scheduling	
Business Volunteer Training	
Presentation Tips	
<b>High School Follow-Up &amp; Incentives</b> .....	20
Follow-Up Presentations	
Encouraging Kids to Persevere	
Student Incentives	
<b>Rewards &amp; Recognition for Graduating Seniors</b> .....	23
Medallions	
Newspapers	
Commencement Programs	
School Award Ceremonies	
Graduate Directory of Scholars	
Luncheons/Banquets	
State Scholars “with Distinction”	



**Measures of Success/Progress**..... 24

**Budget Considerations**..... 26

Essential Items Requiring Funding

Possible Funding Sources

**Sustainability**..... 27

Thanking Volunteers

Encouraging and Informing Volunteers

Quality Control

## **Appendices**

Appendix A - RFP



## A State Scholars Overview

### Objective

To encourage ALL high school students to take and complete a *defined, rigorous academic course of study* to prepare for success in career and technical education, military service, college or university coursework, or entry into today's competitive job market.

### Who Benefits?

#### Students

**Academic preparation.** Rigorous academic coursework prepares students for postsecondary education and training without remediation and provides them with greater lifelong flexibility to pursue education and careers.

#### Employers & Business Community

**Prepared workforce.** Employers need applicants who have a strong academic foundation upon which to build the technical and intellectual training for an entry-level position and, ultimately, a career. State Scholars Initiatives encourage students to complete courses that will provide them with a fundamentally sound background for the future, irrespective of the vocation they choose to pursue.

#### The Community

**Motivate students.** State Scholars Initiatives encourage students to set high standards and goals for themselves and then utilize community support to reward those efforts. Some students do not envision themselves being able to complete high school, much less attend college. The State Scholars Initiative defines an academic pathway for achieving future success.

**Teamwork.** Educating youth is everyone's responsibility. The State Scholars Initiative provides a simple, straightforward means of involving many different elements of a community, from the initial steering committee to the volunteer presenter to the sponsor of the rewards and recognition. There is a role for everyone.



## The State Scholars Model

The State Scholars Initiative is the collective name for a state’s and a community’s strategies and incentives to motivate all of its students to complete a defined, recommended course of study. This course of study, which includes math, science, social studies, language arts, and the study of languages other than English, will prepare high school students with the academic foundation necessary to succeed in whatever they choose to do.

The community-based State Scholars Initiative consists of **three essential components:**

- 1. Setting high expectations in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade** (See Appendix A - RFP 10 Core Requirements– Motivation/Incentives for Students to Enroll in a Rigorous Curriculum).

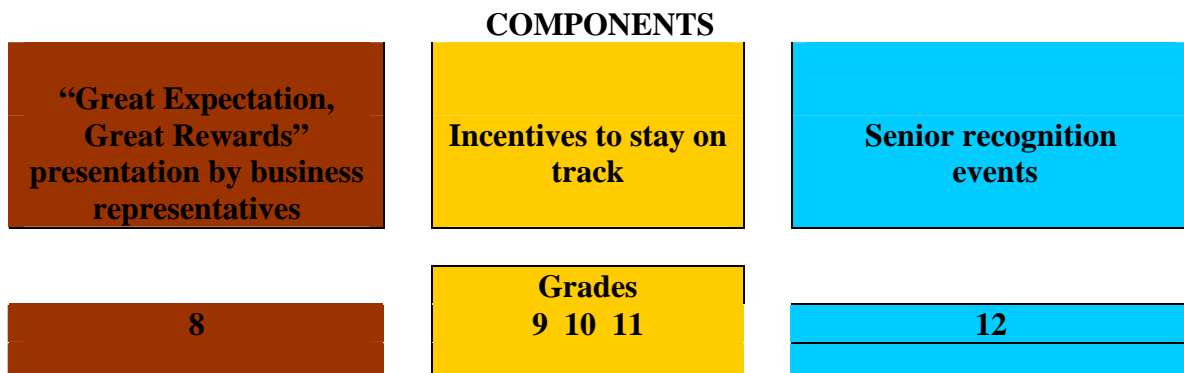
A presentation entitled “Great Expectations, Great Rewards” is made in all 8<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms by local business volunteers and drives home the point that good, well-paying jobs go to those who have prepared themselves by completing the solid academic foundation of the Scholars Core Course of Study.

- 2. Recognizing and supporting students who make the effort to be State Scholars** (See Appendix A - RFP 10 Core Requirements– Student Support/Recognition).

The State Scholars message is continuously reinforced throughout high school through additional, optional presentations and by providing incentives to students who stay on course to complete the state’s Scholars Core Course of Study.

- 3. Honoring each high school senior who completes the Scholars Core Course of Study** (See Appendix A - RFP 10 Core Requirements– Student Support/Recognition).

Each community celebrates the success of their graduating students with an event at the end of the school year. Events vary from picnics to banquets to formal award ceremonies. Students typically receive State Scholars medallions that can then be worn with their graduation regalia.





**4. Course Requirements** (See Appendix A - RFP 10 Core Requirements– Course of Study).

To be a State Scholar, students are encouraged to complete, at a minimum, a core academic plan, as detailed below. Each state will work with WICHE to define specific courses, if any, beyond those listed below, that will compose its recommended plan.

CORE COURSES	YEARS
English English 1-4	4.0
Mathematics Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2*	3.0
Science Biology or AP Biology or IB Biology (1.0) Chemistry, AP Chemistry or IB Chemistry (1.0) Physics, AP Physics, IB Physics (1.0)	3.0
Social Studies U.S. History (1.0), World History (1.0), World Geography (1.0), U.S. Government (.5) or Economics (.5)	3.5
Languages Other Than English Two years of the same language	2.0
Total	15.5
<b><u>PLUS</u></b>	
The individual state’s requirements in courses such as health and physical education, fine arts, technology, speech-communications, etc., along with a sanctioned array of electives including career and technical education classes.	
	8.0**
Total	23.5**

NOTES:  
\* See information regarding 4<sup>th</sup> year math in Adelman, C. *The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion From High School Through College*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 2006. Appendix F - Gradations of Academic Intensity of High School Curriculum.  
\*\* Total may vary from state to state.



## **Bringing State Scholars to Your Community**

(See Appendix A - RFP 10 Core Requirements– Engagement of Key Stakeholders and Visibility/Ownership within Community)

State Scholars is a high-impact, low-cost program, and dramatic results can be achieved in a relatively short period of time.

### **The Steering Committee**

The first step in implementing a State Scholars program is identifying the key individuals who are critical to the success of the program and forming a steering committee. This committee will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the program, from the initial student presentation, to the follow-up activities in high school, and finally, the celebration for graduates. Though not required, a 50/50 split between education and business representatives is recommended. Cochairs are recommended for the steering committee, with one chair coming from the business community and one chair coming from the education community.

Below is a list of important individuals to include from both the education and business arenas:

### **Education**

- A senior district administrator, preferably the superintendent(s), who can lead/influence successful program implementation.
- At least one principal from a middle school.
- At least one principal from a high school.
- A school counselor who can coordinate schedules and logistics (for the student grade presentations) within the school. NOTE: In larger districts, it is beneficial for this to be a lead counselor or administrator at the district level who can share information with all peer school counselors.
- A high school counselor who can provide continuity as the program moves into the high school. NOTE: In larger districts, it is beneficial for this to be a counselor at the administrative level who can share information with all high school counselors.
- A district communications or community relations representative who can provide assistance.

### **Business**

- One or more prominent business leaders (CEO, etc.) plus key leaders of civic organizations (Rotary, Kiwanis, Civitan, a local Chamber of Commerce, Junior League, PTA, etc.) who have access to and influence with a large pool of potential business/community volunteers.

It is suggested that the steering committee begin meeting as soon as possible and plan community kick-off events, as well as student presentation dates (dependent on the district's coursework selection calendar). In most communities, it is helpful to begin planning in late spring or early summer for the following school year. The steering



committee can then reconvene at the beginning of the fall semester to officially kick off the program and focus on a program implementation.

Steering committee responsibilities:

- Create a vision for the State Scholars Initiative.
- Set goals based on this vision.
- Coordinate implementation of the program.
- Ensure student performance and program perception data are collected.
- Present program to administrators, staff, business leaders, and parents.
- Secure administrative support.
- Serves as champions of the State Scholars Initiative within local communities.

### **Kick-off Event**

The purpose of the kick-off event is to launch your State Scholars program. This can be done at the state level or at the local school district level or both. Depending on your state, the timing of this event may be different. For example, you may need to have a kick off event before you are able to appoint your steering committee. Similarly, you may need to garner the support of teachers and counselors first and then have a school district kick-off event.

Once a community/school district decides to implement the program, the SSI state director should host a meeting to introduce the program to all key leaders in the community. In order to gain a clear understanding of the effectiveness of State Scholars and the associated “Great Expectations, Great Rewards” presentation, this meeting typically includes a live presentation to a group of 8th grade students (normally about 25, which is the typical class size).

In an effort to obtain maximum impact from the meeting, we offer suggestions in four primary areas to the individual(s) responsible for setting up and coordinating the event in each city.

#### **1. Attendees (Invitation List)**

It is important to get key individuals from the **education sector** and the **business sector** – people who hold positions of influence and are opinion leaders in the community – to attend. These are the movers and shakers found in virtually every community. These should be people whom you believe stand a good chance of becoming committed to the State Scholars program over the long term. A list of suggested attendees includes:

##### **Education sector**

- School superintendent(s).



- School principals (at least one from each high school and one from each middle school).
- High school counselor(s).
- High school English, math, science, social studies, and foreign language teachers.
- School district public relations officer/coordinator.
- Local college(s) representative (president, if possible).
- Regional education service center representatives (as appropriate in a given state).
- Representative(s) from local PTA/PTO organizations.

### Business Sector

- CEOs or plant managers from the major industrial firms in the area.
- CEOs or local managers from the major utility firms (gas, electric, telephone, etc.).
- Local chamber of commerce members.
- Key individuals serving on the chamber's education committee (if such exists).
- Owners/managers of local retail establishments (must be those having a genuine interest in, and commitment to, the improvement of education).
- Publisher/editor of local newspaper.
- Television station program managers/owners/general managers.
- Radio station program managers/owners/general managers.

### Community Sector

- Local volunteer organizations, such as Junior League, Literacy Council, Volunteer Action Center, etc. Organizations should be well respected; representatives should have influence in the community.
- Citizens with high visibility and strong public speaking skills who would be logical candidates to make the “Great Expectations, Great Rewards” presentation to 8th grade students in your area.

### The Invitation

A sample invitation letter is included below, which you may tailor to fit your own local situation. **Two important points to bear in mind to successfully invite someone:**

- 1) Have the letter signed by at least one school superintendent and at least one key individual from the business sector.
- 2) Organize a small committee of influential citizens who will follow up effectively on the letter via personal contact or telephone calls to encourage attendance.



### **SAMPLE Invitation Letter**

Business, Community and Education Leaders of [community/district]:

You are invited to attend the launch of the State Scholars program in [community/district] on [date], [time] at the [location]. At this time, [name] will ask the [community/district] business and volunteer community to support and endorse the State Scholars program. At this kick-off, [name] will not only review goals, benefits, and the progress of this program but will deliver the presentation that will be given by trained volunteers to [eighth graders]. Volunteers will deliver the same presentation to students in [middle schools] in [month].

The interactive presentation encourages students to complete the recommended Scholars Core Course of Study to prepare for the highly competitive workplace or college.

The benefits of the program are many and extend to all. Businesses will get prepared entry level employees and colleges will get better-prepared students (who will require fewer remedial classes). Students will get better jobs and feel better about themselves, and ultimately [community/district name] will get citizens better prepared to make decisions, solve problems, and contribute more fully to the quality of life.

The Scholars Core Course of Study is endorsed by both the [business organization] and [educator group/s].

We encourage you to learn more about the State Scholars program and how you can influence the academic achievement of all our students. **Please RSVP on the enclosed form.** Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

---

School Superintendent

---

Business Leader



**2. Media Coverage** (See Appendix A - RFP 10 Core Requirements– Communication and Outreach).

Good media coverage (local newspaper, TV, and radio) can be of tremendous help in getting the momentum going and sustaining it, assuming your community decides to implement the program. You may want to consider **1) pre-event coverage; 2) coverage on the day of the event; and 3) post-event coverage.**

**3. Sample Agenda - Introductory Presentation to the Community**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Presenter/Moderator</b>
9:00- 9:15 a.m.*	Introductions	Local individual(s) spearheading effort
9:15 – 9:45 a.m.	State Scholars program	SSI state director
9:45 – 10:00 a.m.	Brief synopsis of the student presentation <b><i>TO THE BUSINESS/EDUCATION ATTENDEES (i.e., ADULTS ONLY)</i></b>	SSI state director
10:00 - 10:15 a.m.	Break	
10:15 - 10:20 a.m.	Bring in 8th graders	
10:20 - 11:10 a.m.	Presentation of “Great Expectations, Great Rewards” to 8th graders (preferably no more than 20 to 25 students). NOTE: Students will be seated at front of room and adults will move toward back of room.	SSI state director
11:10 – 11:20 a.m.	Questions and answers with local business/education leaders and call-to-action	SSI state director
11:20 - 1:00 p.m.	Luncheon (optional)	Local business/education leaders

\*Agenda starting time may vary, depending on the local situation; i.e., late afternoon or early evening might be more productive in terms of getting good attendance from businesspeople and educators.

**4. Equipment List**

List of potential equipment requirements for presentations:

- LCD projector (or overhead projector)
- Laptop computer
- Projector screen
- Microphone



## 5. Call to Action

At the end of the meeting have business and education leaders complete a “call to action” form. The purpose of this form is two-fold. First, it provides state programs with a means by which to record meeting attendance, which will be necessary for performance reports. Second, it provides state programs a means by which to record interested companies, organizations, and school systems. A sample “call to action” form is provided below for future reference.

### **SAMPLE Scholars Program CALL TO ACTION form**

- YES      My company/organization/school system would be interested in becoming involved.
- NO      My company/organization/school system is not interested in becoming involved. If “no,” why not? \_\_\_\_\_

Company/Organization/School System: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I/we would like to be involved in the following capacity(ies):

- Steering Committee
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Presenter
- High School Presentation Committee
- High School Presenter
- Communications/Recognition Committee
- Funds/Incentives Committee
- Student Advisory Committee
- Publication Committee

---

Signature

Date



## **Building Support**

### **Administrator and Staff Presentations**

The previous section addressed the initial introduction of State Scholars to a community or school district. Once the key officials understand and support the program, it is important to make sure that ALL administrators and teachers are familiar with the program as well. If possible, a formal presentation by one or more representatives of the steering committee is most effective. It is not necessary to repeat the live presentation in front of students. However, do be sure to cover the details of the planned implementation, as well as expectations for everyone involved.

If a formal presentation is not possible, send a joint letter from the superintendent and key business leader(s) explaining the State Scholars program and details on how it will be implemented in the school district.

NOTE: In larger districts, it is essential to make formal presentations to the principals and counselors. Letters alone will not create the awareness and buy-in necessary to implement the program smoothly. The principals and counselors should then take the information and share it with the staff on their individual campuses.

### **Parent Presentations**

Another critical element of the long-term success of the State Scholars program is to make sure parents clearly understand the commitment their children are making and the benefits that await students upon graduation. When coursework gets tough and the student's determination begins to waiver, parents are the first line of defense. Therefore, their support must be enlisted from the very beginning.

There are several options for informing parents. Again, the best way is to formally present the program in much the same way as the administrators and staff were informed. PTA meetings, college nights, and open houses provide excellent opportunities for these presentations. Sending printed information directly to the home (such as a brochure including bilingual materials, if necessary and a letter from the principal or superintendent) can also be effective, though normally not as effective as face-to-face presentations by key business and school leaders.



## The 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Presentation

### Presentation Overview

The student presentation – typically for 8<sup>th</sup> graders – is a 50-minute employer-delivered presentation designed to show the advantages of completing the Scholars Core Course of Study, regardless of student plans beyond high school. The small, intimate setting of the classroom is crucial for engaging students in discussion.

The initial section is a discussion of the global economy.

- Employees' skills directly affect a company's ability to compete globally.
- Companies need employees who can evaluate and solve problems, think analytically, and contribute to a team environment.
- Completing academically rigorous courses in high school will prepare students to succeed in higher education and the workplace.

The next section introduces an example of a family budget.

- Students are asked to assume that they have completed their formal education (for the time being) and that they are "out on their own" without any financial help from their parents.
- Students are told that they are being given a job that pays them \$27,000 a year.
- They are then asked to volunteer those items for which they must be prepared to spend money on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis (e.g., taxes, food, shelter, clothing, transportation, insurance, utilities, etc.).
- The presenter then demonstrates how fast that amount dwindles as the bills are paid for basic necessities and several discretionary items identified by the students in the previous step.
- The \$2,250 monthly paycheck is then converted to an annual amount of \$27,000.
- The presentation stresses that students who take the minimum and easier courses to graduate will be, in all likelihood, unprepared to start college or have the academic foundation needed to succeed in a technical program. In short, these students may well be destined to get no better than a minimum wage job.
- Finally, the presenter calculates the salary for a minimum wage rate (\$5.15/hr) job – \$10,712 – and shocks the students by drawing a comparison between it and the \$27,000 per year hypothetical job.

The presentation wraps up with a discussion of students' future options.

- The presenter discusses average starting salaries for graduates with bachelor's and associate's degrees in disciplines such as engineering, chemistry, health care, accounting, and computer science.
- Many well-paying, challenging, and meaningful jobs in the marketplace do not require a four-year college degree but do require a sound high school education and normally a two-year degree from a community college or technical school.



- Formal learning does not stop after high school or college; to graduate to the top pay rate of some technician classifications, adults must successfully complete many hours of instruction and testing over several years.
- Finally, the student is encouraged to enroll in and complete the Scholars Core Course of Study.

## **Timing**

Timing of the student presentation is critical. “Great Expectations, Great Rewards” is designed to be presented within two weeks prior to students registering for high school to heighten their awareness that their choices now affect their ability to secure a fulfilling, high-wage position. At that point they are introduced to the concept of transcripts and course credits. They learn that their performance will be tracked for the next four years and that their transcripts will play a vital role in determining their postsecondary options.

## **Middle School Logistics**

The middle school counselor or counseling administrator typically heads up these responsibilities. A suggested timeline of events is included on page 12.

1. Set the presentation dates. If possible, try to schedule all of the presentations in one or two consecutive days so that there is a real awareness and enthusiasm created when the business/community volunteers are on the campus.

NOTE: Larger districts may require several additional days, often spreading the presentations over a two-week period.

2. Identify a point person at every middle school campus to coordinate logistics. This is often a counselor or assistant principal.

NOTE: In larger districts, it is extremely helpful if the overall counseling coordinator will personally meet with each middle school principal and explain how the State Scholars program will unfold on his/her campus. This is especially important if they were unable to attend the information session designed specifically for principals and administrators. This ensures that there is support for the program from the top down and that the disruption to class schedules will be met with cooperation.

3. To ensure that every student has the opportunity to hear the presentation, it is best to select a required course during which all presentations will be given. For example, *“On Thursday, February 12, all American History classes will feature a State Scholars presentation by business representatives.”*
4. Distribute a schedule template to every middle school point person. These need to be completed and returned to the school district coordinator early in the fall semester in order to get an accurate count of the presentations needed. This number will be important when recruiting volunteer presenters. It is a good idea to



- have the principal of each middle school campus sign off on the schedule as well to ensure that everyone is comfortable with presentation plans.
5. Determine how the presentations will be made, either by PowerPoint or overhead projection (using transparencies). Reserve the necessary equipment and have a plan for setting things up so the presenter can hit the ground running.
  6. Have State Scholars brochures printed for distribution to each student following the presentations. Most districts have custom brochures printed that include the district logo and any additional graduation requirements.
  7. Have enough copies of student perception forms to hand-out after the presentations.
  8. Have posters printed for placement throughout the schools prior to the presentations. This will pique student curiosity and create increased awareness of the State Scholars program.
  9. Several days prior to the presentations, send the completed schedule, including presenter names, back to each school coordinator. Have him/her prepare nametags for each volunteer who will be coming to the campus.
  10. School coordinators should also prepare a welcoming committee for the day(s) of the presentations. Most schools utilize student leaders as greeters and escorts throughout the day. Many schools also provide simple refreshments in a lounge area or library. This is certainly not necessary, but always appreciated.
  11. On the day of the presentations, if parking is limited around the campus, school coordinators may need to have their building security personnel assist volunteers in finding places to park. It is a good idea to print and distribute in advance State Scholars parking permits to the volunteers for placement on their auto dashboards. The school may even want to cordon off a specific parking area for the volunteers.
  12. On the day of the presentations, make sure that each school office is informed that there will be a large number of visitors on campus and that they are clear on the desired sign-in procedure. The presentation materials should be kept in the office and handed to the presenters upon arrival. Have the volunteer return the materials as they sign out to leave. If PowerPoint presentations are being used, it is essential to have the presentation preloaded on the computers.

**IMPORTANT:** It is vital to have the assistance and support of the counseling staff on each campus. Unfortunately, these are the individuals who tend to find most miscellaneous projects landing on their desks. In an effort to keep them from feeling overwhelmed with yet another project, it is important to do as much groundwork ahead of time as possible. Rather than simply asking the counselors to coordinate presentation



schedules among the teachers, go the extra step and provide them with a simple template to use. Provide them with a clear, concise checklist for the day of the presentations and all forms necessary to implement the program successfully so that they are not left to do these things on their own.

### **Business Volunteer Recruitment**

Because the presentation is intended to be interactive, it is recommended that groups be limited to normal classroom size. Once the school district determines the number of presentations needed, the business or civic organization can recruit presenters. The number of volunteer presenters needed depends on the number of presentations each is willing to make.

**Timing.** If possible, begin recruiting volunteers 8-12 weeks in advance. Block time on their calendars for a two-hour training session, as well as for presentations to students.

**Special circumstances.** Determine ahead of time if you will need bilingual presenters. Check with school district officials on how they want to handle special education classes.

### **Presentation Scheduling**

Provide businesses with the class presentation schedule for each school and then have volunteers sign up for the available times. Explain that if one of their employees has to cancel at the last minute, their company will be responsible for filling in for that presenter.

Make sure that all scheduling is finalized prior to the volunteer training sessions. This enables school district coordinators to distribute final confirmation forms to every volunteer at the training. If there is a conflict or inaccuracy, it can be caught and fixed early. This also enables the coordinator to announce any remaining vacancies to the entire group. Invariably, volunteers will come forward, and those holes will be plugged in no time!

### **Business Volunteer Training**

Every volunteer presenter must participate in a training session in order to learn the “Great Expectations, Great Rewards” presentation. The training typically lasts two hours and is conducted by the state director or a State Scholars-approved trainer. It includes an overview of the State Scholars program, a review of the material to be presented (including tips for an effective presentation), and a live demonstration of the State Scholars presentation to a class of 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

### **Presentation Tips**

- Actively engage students in the discussion.



- Make it relevant and interesting from the students' point of view. Incorporate real world examples.
- Carefully practice the presentation to ensure minimal use of a script or notes.
- Feel free to be animated in your delivery. A high level of energy, exuberance, and enthusiasm commands students' attention from beginning to end.
- Maintain constant eye contact.
- Distribute business cards (or other business paraphernalia such as pens, badges, etc.) to the students as they arrive in the classroom. This is a good personal touch, and students at this age are impressed by an individual who has his/her own card.
- Collect documentation and evidence, including headcount and evaluation forms from students (perception data).



## High School Follow-Up & Incentives

### Follow-up presentations

Introducing 8<sup>th</sup> graders to the State Scholars program is only the beginning. Once students are registered for the more rigorous courses, the REAL work truly begins. It's one thing for an incoming freshman to commit to seeing the program through to the end, but when he or she is confronted with rigorous courses such as Algebra 2, chemistry, or physics, that dedication may tend to waver. Therefore, it is vital that the message "Prepare for future success," be repeated again and again throughout high school. Students must understand and believe that their hard work will be worth it in the end.

There are a number of ways to give the State Scholars message a fresh look throughout high school.

- **The Scholars high school presentation.** Some groups reinforce the themes established in "Great Expectations, Great Rewards" at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade with the high school presentation. This is the point at which many students may want to avoid taking the more rigorous courses in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Unlike "Great Expectations, Great Rewards," which is designed for groups of 25 or less, the 10<sup>th</sup> grade presentation can be delivered effectively to a large group and therefore requires fewer volunteers.
- **Industry presentations.** Keep students focused on the future by coordinating presentations based on a particular industry. For instance, a panel on health care might include a doctor, a nurse, a medical researcher, a lab technician, and an administrator. Presentations should include what each individual does on a daily basis, their educational background, and the subjects/courses that are relevant to his/her career today. Provide salary ranges for each career as well. Ensure that students hear a consistent message about the importance of completing the Scholars Core Course of Study.
- **College staff presentations.** Invite college recruiters to tell Scholars how successful completion of the State Scholars program influences their decisions on admission or financial aid. Also include college graduation rates for those who were academically prepared when entering college.

### Encouraging Students to Persevere

Inevitably, when things get tough, many students are going to be tempted to drop back to a given state's minimum graduation plan. While not every student is prepared for or capable of completing a state's more rigorous Scholars Core Course of Study, the majority of students **are** capable and simply need to be encouraged and held to a higher standard. Therefore, during high school, particularly the final two years, the education and business communities must work together in providing incentives to encourage students through to the end. Academic Competitiveness grants are another way to



encourage participation in the SSI program. Information regarding these grants is available in your SSI Resource Manual.

- **Commitment certificates**

A school district may opt to recognize each 8<sup>th</sup> grade student's commitment to becoming a State Scholar with a personalized commitment certificate signed by the superintendent. Similar certificates could be used at the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade when students choose between remaining in the State Scholars program and opting for a minimum graduation plan.

- **Summer algebra academy**

One of the primary stumbling blocks students encounter while completing the State Scholars curriculum is algebra. Rather than have these students give up and drop back into a less challenging high school curriculum, district and community leaders can establish a summer algebra academy.

The academy assists students in strengthening algebra skills prior to entering the first year of algebra. Students spend four hours daily for one week involved in high interest, hands-on problem-solving activities designed to develop critical thinking skills necessary for success in algebra and subsequent math classes.

- **Job opportunities**

The local business community can provide another valuable incentive for State Scholars by conducting an on-campus interview day at each high school. Only State Scholar seniors and rising sophomores and juniors who are on track to graduate as State Scholars may participate in the interviews. Students sign up for interviews and complete applications ahead of time. During the 15- to 20-minute interviews, business representatives complete evaluation forms on each student, which are then returned to school staff. The business representatives then retain the employment applications for future use.

This program is a win-win for both the students and the employers. Students gain valuable interview experience, peer recognition, and an opportunity for a job (e.g., summer employment), while businesses have access to well-educated, goal-oriented job candidates throughout the community.

## **Student Incentives**

Giving simple, inexpensive recognition throughout the school year can be an effective student incentive. State programs are encouraged to talk to students about what effective incentives could be. Here are some ideas:



- State Scholars folders, book covers, bumper stickers, and pens and pencils can keep the program highly visible among students and offer a means of peer recognition.
- Schools can post a “wall of fame” that lists the names of all students who become State Scholars.
- Special assemblies can be designed to encourage students on track to become a Scholar and praise them for their efforts.
- In suburban and rural districts, setting aside prime parking spaces can be a popular motivator. If there are more State Scholar students than spaces, a drawing can be held each six weeks to determine which students get the spaces.
- Students can be designated as State Scholars in the school yearbook.
- A high school may offer discounted or free admission to school events for all State Scholars.
- The business community can be involved by asking them to write short notes of encouragement to students who may be struggling.
- Students can be shown as State Scholars on their school ID badges.
- State Scholars can be given a jump-start on pep rallies and assemblies by releasing them a few minutes before everyone else.

In short, the possibilities are endless and don’t have to be expensive. Be creative. Interview a focus group of students to determine what would really motivate them to stay committed. Involve the business community wherever possible so that students are routinely reminded that their hard work today will pay dividends in the not-so-distant future.



## Rewards & Recognition for Graduating Seniors

Students who persevere and complete the State Scholars Core Course of Study will deserve recognition. Not only will they have accomplished a significant academic achievement, they will be more likely to succeed in life after high school. The following are examples of ways to celebrate the success of graduating seniors.

**Medallions.** Olympic-style medallions bearing the State Scholars logo have been the primary means of recognition. Students place great value on these medallions.

**Newspapers.** Partner with local newspapers to recognize graduating State Scholars.

**Luncheons/banquets/picnics.** Honor graduating seniors with a luncheon or banquet. This can take many forms, depending upon the size of a school or community, the total number of eligible students, and the overall budget. Again, business/community volunteers are invited to participate and generally are involved in actually presenting each student with their award.

Set aside an afternoon at the end of the school year and host a picnic in the park, complete with D.J., pizza, games, and decorations. State Scholars students look forward to an afternoon away from campus, and the business/community volunteers enjoy the opportunity to congratulate students on reaching their goal.

Host formal banquets for either students only or for students and their parents. Again, the size and scope of these events vary depending on the number of students involved and the available budget. Some are hosted in local civic halls and sponsored by the business community. Others are sponsored by the school district and are hosted on campus with catered meals and decorations added to create a celebratory atmosphere.

**Commencement programs.** Award Scholars medallions during commencement ceremonies at the same time diplomas are awarded.

**School award ceremonies.** Award ceremonies are another option for schools or districts that need to be budget conscious. Since larger districts often have to limit attendance at graduation ceremonies, separate award ceremonies allow students to invite additional friends and family to the event. Annual ceremonies can also be open to freshmen, sophomores, and juniors who are on track to become State Scholars.

**Graduate directory of Scholars.** Publish an annual directory of graduating State Scholars and distribute it in the business community in hopes that employers will give these students special consideration for employment opportunities.

**State Scholars “with distinction.”** School districts in a given state may opt to establish a two-tier system that recognizes students’ achievements beyond the Scholars Core Course of Study. Typically, these districts require an additional math or science credit. Students who have exceeded expectations in these subjects may be recognized as “State Scholars with Distinction in math (or science).”



## **Measures of Success/Progress**

(See Appendix A - RFP 10 Core Requirements– Data Systems and Accountability)

Because today's 8<sup>th</sup> graders are several years from graduation, it takes time to measure the full impact of the State Scholars Initiative. In the meantime, recording participation data and tracking a few key statistics – disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status – can help State Scholars committees gauge the effectiveness of their activities. If someone knew nothing about your state's SSI project, what data or information would convince them to support it with resources (money, time, effort)?

Provide data to answer evaluation questions (all data must be disaggregated by class level (grades 9-12), race/ethnicity, family income, limited English proficiency, gender, and disability). Questions may include:

- a. What progress was made in:
  - i. Course enrollments plans, including number and percentage of students in participating schools and districts who have four-year high school course enrollment plans that include the rigorous State Scholars Core Course of Study (if four-year high school course enrollment plans do not exist in a participating school, then look at the number and percentage of students who have one- or two-year high school course enrollment plans that includes components of the Scholars Core Course of Study).
  - ii. Number and percentage of students completing each class that is a component of the Scholars Core Course of Study.
  - iii. Number and percentage of students in participating schools and districts completing the entire rigorous Scholars Core Course of Study.
  - iv. The availability of classes that compose the Scholars Core Course of Study in participating schools and districts.
- b. What impact has SSI had on attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs of key stakeholders (parents, teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, community groups, policymakers, and business leaders) about the importance of rigorous course-taking and its effect on postsecondary and occupational outcomes?
- c. What promising practices for implementing SSI activities have been tried and proven to work in state partnership projects?
- d. What progress has been made in expanding the availability of classes that compose the Scholars Core Course of Study in participating schools, districts, and states?



- e. Partnerships must also commit to helping WICHE assess promising practices for implementing the State Scholars project and to participate in a third-party evaluation that will evaluate WICHE's effectiveness as a technical assistance provider to the funded business/education partnerships. Additionally, state-level business/education partnerships will also be asked to provide information so that WICHE can conduct an implementation study comparing the manner in which the Initiative was carried out in all the business/education partnerships selected by the Center for State Scholars (the SSI grantee prior to WICHE) and by WICHE.



## Budget Considerations

The State Scholars program is designed in such a way that it is adaptable to states and school district budgets of any size. The key element is involving the business/civic community at every level. Not only do students benefit from seeing how education impacts their future career choices, but businesses leaders and volunteers can provide a resource of financial and in-kind assistance that positively supports the State Scholars message to students and parents. *State Scholars emphasizes that the giving of time is just as essential as the giving of money.*

### Essential Items Requiring Funding

- Staff time
- Brochures
- Posters
- Data collection
- Computer equipment
- Web site maintenance
- Medallions and other incentives
- General duplicating costs (fliers, schedules, evaluation forms, etc.)
- General office support (rent, telephone, mail, etc.)

### Possible Funding Sources

It is not necessary to add all of the above-listed items to an already tight district budget. There are a number of alternative funding sources.

- **Corporate cash donations.** When you approach corporations for volunteers, give them the opportunity to make a financial contribution for specific components of Scholars.
- **In-kind donations.** A local corporation, printer or office supply store may agree to provide necessary supplies or printing. This is also a great way to secure incentive items for students. Check with the local pizza shop and ask for donations to the senior recognition picnic. Will a local baker provide a large cake? Be creative and don't be afraid to ask!
- **Grants and foundations.** Check with local civic organizations or corporations to see if your needs match any of their funding priorities. A number of communities have organized local education foundations that administer the development effort.

**IMPORTANT:** If you secure outside funding, recognize these sponsors in as many ways as possible. This will also enhance awareness that State Scholars is a **community effort** to support and encourage students. Everyone has a role to play!



## **Sustainability**

(See Appendix A - RFP 10 Core Requirements– Sustainability Post Grant)

The process of establishing a State Scholars program can initially appear daunting, especially in large, urban communities. However, once the blueprint is drawn and the first year is completed, it becomes much easier to fine tune the process in subsequent years. But what happens three, four or five years down the road when the newness of the initiative has worn away and/or the key business or education leader moves out of the area?

There are several elements to assuring long-term sustainability of a State Scholars program:

- **Thanking the business volunteers**

State Scholars depends on volunteer participation from the business community. Thanks in the form of a letter, certificate, or plaque – from the school district or civic organization responsible for recruiting volunteers – will predispose volunteers to help again. Send thank-you notes from the students themselves, and you’ve got volunteers for life!

- **Documenting success with evidence**

This information is useful to send to your employer partners in a progress report. For example, explain that due to their partnership, your high school saw an X% increase in completion of geometry. Because businesspeople must quantify the impact of their participation, this information will help strengthen their understanding of and commitment to your schools. Include information about headcounts, perception data, and other areas that answers the question, “If someone knew nothing about the SSI project, what data or information would convince them to support it with resources (money, time, effort)?”

- **Keeping volunteers encouraged and informed**

Reports and statistics listed in “Measures of Success/Progress” are valued by school and administrative personnel. Don’t forget to share those results with volunteers as well. Everyone who had a part in the process will be interested in the impact of their efforts.

Update business and community volunteers with a formal letter from the superintendent or a newsletter designed by students in a technology or computer science class. These communiqués can also be used to make volunteers aware of additional State Scholars volunteer opportunities and to express additional public gratitude to sponsors.



## **Quality Control**

### **Maintain quality control through annual presentation updates and re-training of volunteers.**

- Accuracy and relevance are important to credibility. WICHE reviews and modifies presentations regularly to keep them current and relevant. Download them from the State Scholars Initiative website at [www.wiche.edu/statescholars](http://www.wiche.edu/statescholars).
- *All* volunteer presenters must undergo training annually. Conduct a refresher course to point out modifications in the slides or overheads, advise volunteers of any changes in logistical procedures, and encourage presenters to share their tips for a successful presentation. Use the refresher session to reinforce how much you value volunteers. Retraining has been done successfully electronically.



**The work reported herein was supported under State Scholars Initiative, PR/Award Number V051U050006, as administered by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education or the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.**