

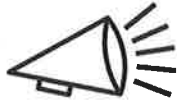
“It takes a village to raise a child,” the old proverb says. And getting a child to college takes just that—everyone.

The Village is the families, the educators, the counselors, the youth workers, and the other community members within and beyond our schools—everybody who comprise the potential support system in a student’s life.

The Village is the external force that reflects or rejects what students think about themselves and their prospects for college and life well beyond it.

At its best, the Village reminds students that college is a crucial and collective venture; one that they do not have to navigate alone.

The Parent
Dylan



*“We need parents involved, and we need to
get them comfortable in school buildings—
not just parents, guardians too.”*

First of all, you have to be able to define college readiness for each student, and that can be very challenging, so then you try to generalize, and then when you generalize, you leave people behind. We need parents involved, and we need to get them comfortable in school buildings—not just parents, guardians too.

I work for the city. I'm a building inspector, and I make sure it's all under code. For example, no broken windows, and if a building is abandoned, I have it boarded up, and just different things. The students go in these abandoned buildings, and they party and they drink. So now I get to go shut these buildings down and force them to participate in other ways.

In our school, we had over two-hundred students identified as homeless, and we know what that means. Their parents were removed, and they had to go live with their uncle or aunt. So we have those kind of dynamics.

The transient students are what's changed here. When I went to school here, we were able to have pride. Like, for example someone older than us, a family member, went to the same school we did. Whereas nowadays, you'll have a kid that got kicked out of another school and comes here. Their parents didn't go here. They don't care about the community or the school the way we would have. So there's a lack of pride there, so you know that's very heavy in the school. Very heavy. I know a lot of the students, and just having that dynamic makes it tough.

So there are a lot of variables to that definition of college readiness. And I found that dealing with these students is that you'll have some students that are the typical college ready student. They do well in school—3.5 GPA, twenty-two on their ACT—they have the family background. You know, for some students though, it just means getting over

the high school hump, maybe taking a break, getting a job, and then matching that up later with a college schedule where they can work and go to school. So we have to broaden the meaning of college readiness.

I have four in high school, two that graduated. I have one that graduated in 2011, my daughter. She was a Governor's Scholar by the way. My son was a 2013 grad. He's at Thomas More College playing football. I have two twin boys who are seniors.

I would describe my seniors as not prepared. I look at it 'em based on how I grew up. See, I had to look after myself, but see, they have parents. Me and my wife have been married for twenty-six years. Together since eighth grade. They look, and dad got a college degree, and mom's a nurse. So they come from a background where their parents are educated. They can slack where I couldn't, and it's frustrating as a parent. I think like, *Wow, y'all don't get it. Y'all don't know what it means to take care of yourself because you had parents.* And for my kids, that has been their handicap.

One thing I want to give is one thing we're fighting, which is "social construction." Take this word with you. No matter what you do as a parent, the kids your kids hang around, those people shape them whether they like it or not, or know it or not. So it's important we know that word, "social construction," because who they be around—their peers, their teachers that are involved in their life—in one way or another, in one shape or another, for positive or negative. It's not just about what's at home. If a lot of parents are not aware of social construction, they are at a handicap at protecting their kids.

One of my kids did well on the ACT; one didn't do so well. There is not necessarily a correlation between scores and college performance because with my kids, it'll come down to growin' up—maturity. It comes down to how well you can manage your time in college. I got a lot of time. What am I going to do with my time—that sort of thing. How they use the time. Oh, they're gonna go to college. Things work out.

I think college is for training. Training to deal with the outside world as you become an adult. Training as you become that age. Training—it gives you a wealth of knowl-

edge. Biology, chemistry, English. All of that gives you a well-rounded perspective on how to deal with the world. But to be honest, it's not even education. Because to be honest, some of that information is outdated.

College ready, university ready, trade ready—all of those are a factor now 'cause some students aren't gonna go to a traditional college, you know. But to be ready means to be well-rounded and ready to survive in the society that you live in. Being able to know where you need to go to find the information you need to be successful. So being college ready just means being prepared for the college world and the outside world.

I see my kids being productive citizens the way me and my wife have taught them. Then, whatever they have picked up, you know how to drop off the negative, pick up the positive things. I would say there's a difference between being smart and intelligent. I would say my boys are going to be intelligent men. Because being smart just means you can recall information. You have the ability to see information and retain it. Intelligent means you can retain that information and use that information to make your life better. So I see them as being intelligent men when they get older.

COLLEGE TRIPWIRES

READY OR NOT

Stories from the Students Behind the Statistics



PRICHARD COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

With a Foreword from

Dr. Vicki Phillips

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