

Boys and Girls Club receives \$1.2 million grant to boost student achievement

Ogechi Emechebe | The Capital Times | oemechebe@madison.com 20 hrs ago

On Tuesday, the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County was the recipient of a \$1.2 million grant from Great Lakes Higher Education, an effort to help prepare students in the Madison Metropolitan School District for college.

The announcement was made at East High School, where students involved with BG CDC also made an appearance. Three grants, totaling over \$1.2 million, were given in hopes of closing achievement gaps and making college a reality for low-income students, students of color and first generation college students.

Michael Johnson, CEO of the Boys and Girls Club, was called up to the podium to receive the honor.

“For an organization to step up and invest \$1.2 million in the lives of our kids is just absolutely phenomenal,” Johnson said to the roomful of students. “We have a commitment from this partnership that we will do college tours. We will make sure you have tutorial support. We will find paid internships for you all.

“In return, we ask that you get good grades, you listen to your teachers and at the end of the day, you invest in yourself and you graduate.”

A \$720,000 grant was awarded to the AVID/TOPS program to expand academic tutoring to help students improve their grades.

In addition, a \$100,000 grant gives BG CDC the ability to hire additional development staff to boost the organization’s fundraising efforts.

And a 2-year, \$447,000 College Ready Scholars Grant will provide 75 Verona High School students with tutoring assistance in English and math and a special course taught by qualified teachers.

“AVID/TOPS is an incredibly positive partnership that supports our students in consistently achieving academic results, graduating from high school and going on to college,” MMSD Superintendent Jennifer Cheatham said in a press release. “Thank you Great Lakes for so generously supporting this work and thank you to the Boys and Girls Club.”

Guadalupe Salmeron, a senior at East, has been in the AVID/TOPS program since her freshman year. Through the program, she was able to land an internship at the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art and has a mentor for college guidance.

“Thanks to AVID, it inspired me to run for class president and it’s had a great impact,” Salmeron said. “I started (school) congress my sophomore year, and then junior year I ran for social officer and I won that.”

Salmeron hopes to pursue political science in college, do volunteer work and tutor, and also work for a nonprofit in the future.

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