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Battle Ground Public Schools' River HomeLink introduces coaching to help homeschool families succeed

Battle Ground, WA (Jan. 24, 2020): More than 60 staff who work at Battle Ground Public Schools' [River HomeLink](#) alternative school, plus 20 parents, for the first time have been trained to provide executive-style one-on-one coaching to homeschool families. They received coaching training through the non-profit [Edge Foundation](#), which has proven that providing personalized coaching to at-risk, struggling students helps them succeed in school and in life.

Some 1,000 kids in the BGPS district attend the K-12 River HomeLink, a parent-partnered program that provides supports to homeschooling families. Some students are taught part-time at the school by teachers in a traditional classroom and then part-time at home by parents. Students in River HomeLink's PrimeLink program do most of their learning at home with their parents. These families are paired with a teacher at the school who provides advising and coaching on a weekly basis.

River HomeLink Principal Mark Clements said the coach training received high reviews from school staff and parents. "We surveyed the people who attended the Edge training and the feedback we got went from 'great' to 'it was the most practical and beneficial professional development they'd ever experienced,'" he said.

Every staff person works with at least one student, allowing each student to benefit, Clements said. "Coaching is an additional skillset that we can use. We want to be able to train and provide the capacity for the staff person with the best relationship to be able to coach the kids. Because we have advising with every kid, being able to help them help themselves come up with strategies for success and to hold them accountable fits like a glove for what we're already doing."

Social entrepreneur Neil Peterson, who ran transit agencies in Seattle, Oakland and Los Angeles and started America's first carsharing company, Flexcar, now known as Zipcar, founded the Edge Foundation after seeing how executives benefit from coaching. "There is a reason that most business leaders have individual coaches. It helps them be successful," he said. "Our feeling at the Edge Foundation is that if an executive coach is available for a CEO in this country, then why not make it available for all students – whether they be 8, 11, 14, 17 or 20 years old."

Edge Foundation typically provides the training to educators who work with struggling students. "Many of these kids have given up on school. Nearly all fail to reach their full potential. These are the kids we're focused on. We train school staff to help youth whose poor executive function skills inhibit their social and emotional learning. We can help each student reach his or her full potential," Peterson said.

It's no secret which kids can benefit from Edge coaching. They often:

- Make bad decisions
- Lack the skills needed to succeed in school – the ability to plan, prioritize, initiate, stay on task, focus, follow up, and adjust to change
- Are bright, but underachieve
- Work hard, but forget to turn in their homework
- Try to fit in, but are impulsive and disruptive
- Want to do their best, but don't possess the right executive function tools
- Struggle at school, yet know that a diploma is critical to breaking the poverty cycle
- Are chronically absent or are at risk of dropping out of school and unlikely to go to college

Many of the students have faced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), which include abuse, neglect, and family/household challenges. ACEs are common with nearly two-thirds of participants in a landmark study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Kaiser Permanente. The CDC also estimates that 5.2 million children in the United States have formal diagnoses of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), one of the best-known barriers to social and emotional Learning. The National Health Interview Survey estimates that nearly 10 percent of school-aged children have ADHD. These numbers do not include those who are undiagnosed.

The Edge Foundation helps students succeed at school by training school personnel – teachers, paraprofessionals, security personnel, counselors and administrators - to provide one-on-one, weekly, 20- to 25-minute coaching to individual students.

"Edge coaches help students succeed by helping them develop agency – the ability to successfully act on their own behalf to solve problems and make good decisions in school and in life," Peterson said.

Edge Foundation coaches currently work in more than 50 schools and organizations in Washington State, Oregon, California and New York.

Why have these new schools signed on with the Edge Foundation? Because Edge Foundation coaching works. A study by Wayne State University looked at Edge Foundation coaching methods involving students from 10 universities and community colleges. The study was the largest and most comprehensive study of ADHD coaching conducted to date. The research team determined that the Edge Coaching model was four times more effective than any other educational intervention in helping students improve executive functioning and related skills as measured by the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory. (LASSI; Weinstein and Palmer, 2002).

Schools and individual teachers are required to produce results, close performance gaps, boost achievement and reduce drop-out rates. Edge coaching can help them achieve success with all students.

About the Edge Foundation: The Edge Foundation aims to give each student a coach so they can complete their education, realize their full potential and pursue their passion. The foundation focuses on children, teens and young adults at risk of dropping out of school - non-traditional learners with executive function challenges that can come from ADHD and adverse childhood experiences. Learn more at www.edgefoundation.org.

About River HomeLink: River HomeLink, an alternative K-12 school in the Battle Ground Public Schools district in southwest Washington, is committed to inspiring students with an enthusiasm for learning. The school supports homeschool families by providing a unique variety of quality educational opportunities. Learn more at <https://riv.battlegroundps.org>.