



News Release

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Area High Schools Eager to Work with Century on College Preparation, Report Says

After visiting administrators from 24 area high schools on assignment from Century College this fall, retired White Bear Superintendent Dr. Ted Blaesing reports that there is great interest in partnering with Century to improve students' readiness for college.

"I was apprehensive to begin with," Blaesing told a group at Century on Nov. 12 following his August-to-October visits. "I thought there would be a lot of conversation about who is to blame for kids not being prepared for college. But I was pleasantly surprised. Instead of lobbing grenades, I found high school administrators want to work with Century. They are looking for some new strategies."

Blaesing said administrators from 12 high schools are particularly interested in exploring dual enrollment, College-In-the-Schools courses that allow students to earn college credit while they work toward their high school degree. Ten high schools are also eager to set up College-In-a-Day opportunities that allow

students at their home high schools to assess, apply, register and apply for financial aid. North High School in North St. Paul pioneered this program last spring with great success.

“High school seniors often say that they are going on to college, but when it comes to actually doing the research and filling out the paperwork, they don’t do it,” said Blaesing. “Saying they are undecided about which college to choose really is code for ‘I haven’t done a thing.’ These students need help with the college application process, particularly if their parents have not gone to college.”

Blaesing reported that the next level of partnership interest revolves around ascertaining the college readiness of high school students. Six schools were interested in a program called “Ready or Not Writing” which analyzes students’ writing and gives them useful feedback about where they need to improve.

Five high schools were interested in exploring preparation and remediation for students taking the Accuplacer, the Century entrance exam. Blaesing said high schools are frustrated that students often fail to test at the college level in math and reading, but they are not given the opportunity to work on the specific skills they need to pass the tests.

High school principals also want more information about college programs that lead to careers in the trades, Blaesing said. Administrators realize that many students are more suited to hands-on careers, but there is a dearth of knowledge about how to guide students into those areas. He noted a growing frustration with students, especially boys, who are not doing well in conventional high school settings.

Blaesing noted that historically, high schools have done a fine job of sending their top students on to college. But students in the middle two quartiles – the so-called “maybe” students – are often not given the assistance they need to adequately prepare for the academic rigors of college.

“The truth is, the appetite out there to address these concerns far exceeds your resources,” said Blaesing. “But high schools appreciate Century’s willingness to work together to improve college readiness for students.