RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOLS

Sasha McLean, LMFT, LPC
Archway Academy

John Cates, LCDC
Cates Academy/Lifeway International
WHY DOES OUR COUNTRY NEED RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOLS?

98% of adolescents returning from residential treatment to their old school reported being offered drugs on their first day back (Spear & Skala, 1995).

87% of students in their first 60 days of sobriety report school as being one of the most influential factors in the success OR failure of their recovery (Moberg & Finch, 2007)

Students with a history of substance abuse have:

- Greater resistance to school/authority
- Lower grades
- More absences
- Higher drop out rates
- Poor reputations with teachers/administrators
- More mental health symptoms presenting at school

(SAMHSA 2014)
EVERY PART OF THE CONTINUUM IS NECESSARY AND VALUABLE

National Youth Recovery Alliance
Continuum of Care

- Education & Support
  - Assessment
  - Individual/Family Therapy
  - Youth Meetings
  - Churches
  - School-based
  - Outpatient Program

- Treatment Centers
  - Residential
  - Partial Hospitalization
  - Intensive Outpatient Programs
  - Wilderness Programs

- Alternative Peer Groups
  - Long-term Peer Recovery Social, Behavioral, Mental Health Support
  - Treatment Aftercare Support

- Recovery High Schools
  - Long-term Peer Recovery Academic Support

- Sober Living
  - Long-term Peer Recovery Independent Living Support

- Collegiate Recovery
  - Long-term Peer Recovery Collegiate Support
OVERVIEW AND HISTORY

- Founding RHSs: The PDAP School in Texas (1976); The Phoenix School in Maryland (Est. 1979)
- Longest running school is P.E.A.S.E Academy (Minnesota) operating for 29 years
- Association of Recovery Schools founded in 2002
- Approximately 1,200 students enrolled in RHS each year
- 42 Recovery High Schools operating in 16 states
- 13 new school efforts
RHS: SECONDARY SCHOOLS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR STUDENTS IN RECOVERY FROM SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

- Educate students in recovery from substance use disorders and co-occurring disorders
- Meet state requirements for awarding a secondary school diploma
- All students enrolled must be in recovery and working a program of recovery as determined by the student and the school
- Available to any student in recovery who meets state and district eligibility requirements for attendance
RECOVERY SCHOOLS: UNIQUE NEEDS AND CREATIVE PROGRAMMING

- Peer Support
- Community/Fellowship
- Service Work
- Accountability and Consistency
- Therapeutic support/contracts
- Small classes
- Individualized educational plans (credit recovery)
- Academic flexibility
- Sensitivity to “knowledge gaps”
- Transitions/Post Secondary Education
Cost Benefit of RHS’s to Taxpayers

Whereas the cost of educating a student in a recovery high school is nearly twice as much as educating a student in a traditional public school, it is less than a quarter of the cost of incarcerating a juvenile. First-year post-treatment relapse rates for adolescents range from 60-70%.

Mission

The Association of Recovery Schools advocates for the promotion, strengthening, and expansion of secondary and post-secondary programs designed for students and families committed to achieving success in both education and recovery.

ARS exists to support such schools which, as components of the recovery continuum of care, enroll students committed to being abstinent from alcohol and other drugs and working a program of recovery.

Key Elements

Strengths of peer influence

Value on community

Holistic school programming
John Cates, LCDC
Lifeway2@aol.com
713-459-9427

Sasha McLean, LMFT, LPC
Sasha.mclean@archwayacademy.org
713-328-0780