



Harrisburg High School of **B**usiness and **I**ndustry *Prep Program* of the Harrisburg School District

ATTN.: Superintendent's Office, 2101 N. Front St., Bldg. #2, Harrisburg, PA 17110 - (717) 703-4166 - www.sbi.pa.net

About

Twenty years ago a partnership between Harrisburg High School (HHS) and Florida A&M University - a premiere Business College for minority students - was formed with the mission of "*lifting the veil of ignorance to the real world of business and industry*" for inner city youth. The HHS School of Business and Industry (SBI) Prep Program set out to fulfill this mission in 1991. By exposing 10th-12th grade students to the world of business, and empowering them to apply its concepts, students learn the importance, benefit, and power of hard work, commitment, intellectual growth, creativity, networking, public speaking, community involvement, and entrepreneurship.

In addition to its strong curriculum, the SBI Prep Program offers its students an opportunity to apply the business concepts they have learned by running their own business. One option is management of a school store within HHS. Another is the operation and management of an inline retail store at the Harrisburg Mall.

Accomplishments

In the program's 20 year history, over 200 students have matriculated, attending 130 colleges and universities across the nation. From Harvard and Princeton to Howard University & the University of Pittsburgh, SBI graduates attend some of the top ranking colleges and universities. Additionally, Florida A& M University School of Business & Industry has also provided more than \$200,000 in scholarships to SBI graduates.

Graduating scholars from the SBI Prep Program not only go on to receive higher education in unprecedented numbers, but many are contributors to the local Harrisburg community. From business owners and executives to managers and community leaders, many SBI alumni have chosen to settle in their home community of Harrisburg and support its development and infrastructure.

Below is a snapshot of the many SBI recognitions and achievements:

- The Harrisburg High School SBI Prep Program has become the national model program for the Florida A&M University SBI Prep Program.
- The SBI Prep Program has received international recognition at the International Entrepreneur Conference in Palm Springs, CA as a result of the director's induction into The International Entrepreneur Hall of Fame.
- Of the 17 graduating classes from the SBI Prep Program, ninety-nine percent (99%) of students have attended undergraduate college.
- **25** or more alumni have **Masters** Degrees.
- **4** or more alumni have **Doctoral** Degrees.
- **3** or more alumni are **PhD** Candidates
- **1** alumnus has a **Law** Degree.
- Since 1992, with the support of local business, the SBI Prep Program has awarded over \$204,000 in scholarships, along with laptops, to scholars in the SBI graduating classes.

Challenges & Ramifications

While the SBI Prep Program has accomplished the abovementioned and further notable achievements with modest funding during the past 20 years, the Harrisburg School District has been forced to make painful cuts in its faculty and programs. These cuts, coupled with the retirement of the SBI Prep Program Director and pioneer, Mrs. Clenistine N. Dunson, have resulted in a temporary shutdown of the SBI Prep Program. The dissolution of the program although temporary, has brought about the closing of both student owned and operated retail outlets; both of which have been profitable for years.

In addition, the unfortunate interruption of the SBI Prep Program has left hundreds of parents, community members, politicians, and alumni appalled, confused, and disheartened by the closure of such a successful honors program for youth who need it most. More importantly, the programs interruption has left the HHS students at a disadvantage. The termination of the SBI Prep Program would abolish the opportunity for hundreds of Harrisburg city students to learn the principles of the American Free Enterprise System; knowledge necessary for success. This in turn would eliminate one of the very few opportunities HHS youth have for becoming productive, responsible, successful, educated citizens.

Bluntly stated, if the SBI Prep Program was to come to a complete end, the Harrisburg community would lose its staunchest honors entrepreneurial education program.

Future

Given the unquestionable success rate of the program, an advisory board consisting of the SBI alumni, parents, and business and community leaders has accepted the challenge to re-structure and expand the program so that it can re-emerge in the fall of 2012 stronger than ever. With full backing from the newly-appointed school superintendent Dr. Sybil Knight-Burney and her Administration, coupled with advisement from William Alexander of the Wharton School, Michael Brenner of Brenner Motors, and others who are volunteering their time, the "new" SBI Prep Program will be strengthened and expanded so that more youth can be given the opportunity to have the veil of ignorance to the real world of business and industry lifted. Mrs. Clenistine N. Dunson, the program's pioneer and retired Director has agreed to serve as a consultant. Additionally, with re-emergence of the SBI Prep Program, it is our hope to reopen both student owned and operated retail outlets; as they are essential to the teaching and application of the entrepreneurial concepts upon which the SBI Prep Program has been built.

Need

The SBI Prep Program seeks funding in the amount of \$100,000 per year for two years. Following this two-year startup, it is anticipated that the program will become largely self-funding from the school district budget and retail ventures. The principle purposes of the requested funding are for classroom computers, equipment and supplies, inventory for entrepreneurial ventures, field trips and workshops, and consultant services.

Pledges or payments should be made to Harrisburg Schools Foundation; c/o Harrisburg School District; Attention: Ms. Karen Snider; 2101 N. Front St., Bldg. #4; Harrisburg, PA 17110. All donations are tax deductible, and the SBI Program qualifies for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Program. Businesses who are taxpayers can receive 75 percent credit for one-year contributions and 90 percent credit for two-year contributions.

The Advisory Committee co-chairs: Superintendent Knight-Burney, Mrs. Tonia Anderson (Anderson Insurance Services, Principal Owner), Ms. Roxane Hearn (SBI Alumna and local business owner), and Ms. Karen Snider of the Harrisburg Public Schools Foundation would be happy to respond to questions about the program.

CONTACT: Ms. Karen Snider; (717) 230-8566; ksnider.scfg@comcast.net