

## **Mineola Learning Center**

The Mineola Learning Center was established in August 2001 and was housed in the old gym at the top of the hill. The MLC was, at first, a secondary part of the DAEP, with Ms. Clark handling both groups of kids in the same building. A partition was used to meet federal law and most of the kids that were in the MLC were those who had served their time in DAEP but wanted to stay and finish their education in that kind of alternative environment.

During the early days, MLS used PLATO software in the subjects that PLATO covered and used modules from various other sources to fill in the holes. The law only required, at that time, that core courses be offered so our student choices were very limited.

The DAEP/MLC setup became very beneficial for MHS, as it provided for the students who couldn't function in the regular classroom, and created strife at the MHS campus, an option to progress at their own pace towards graduation. There have been dozens of students through the early 2000's that would not have a diploma now if not for this unique learning environment.

Graduation numbers of Mineola MLC:

2002-03	8 graduates
2003-04	3 graduates
2004-05	4 graduates
2005-06	7 graduates
2006-07	5 graduates
2007-08	6 graduates
2008-09	9 graduates
2009-10	16 graduates
2010-11	15 graduates
2011-12	14 graduates

Around 2008, we began to turn more attention to the learning center side of alternative education and started providing a route for those students who, not as a result of their behavior, but of their personal circumstances, a chance to complete their graduation requirements and move toward pursuing their futures. This opened the door to the AEP to students who were 4<sup>th</sup> year students but had not acquired enough credits to graduate if they were only able to take 8 classes. It opened the door to students who already had or were expecting children and wanted a quicker way to graduate and take care of their responsibilities. It also allowed for those students who didn't fit into the traditional structure of school. It gave these students hope more than anything

else. Many tearful parents have been at a board meeting and commented how they never dreamed they would see the day that their child graduated.

It wasn't long after we opened the doors wider at the MLC that we ran into a quandary. Just how long should it take a student to go over to MLC and receive credit for a high school course? Like everything, there is no cut and dried answer. If students were going to MLC to recover credit, then they had already had seat time and just needed to master content. They would take a pretest through the software and then be placed at the point in the curriculum where they missed academic information. This allowed some students to progress very quickly through MLC. If a student was going into MLC for acceleration, then they needed to do all of curriculum that was provided for the class. This usually slowed the process down tremendously.

Another issue we have struggled with is the possibility of some students getting a high school diploma without really having to earn it. What do we do with those students who need 14 credits, are in special education, but are about to drop out? There have been a few in the past that were able to do modified curriculum and get through fairly quickly without having to really learn much. This has been addressed in the last two years with the addition of a separate MLC teacher.

In the fall of 2010, after the coop moved into the new Quitman building, we were blessed to be able to move our DAEP and MLC to the newly renovated building next to the elementary school. This allowed us space to separate the two programs and also, the following year, to add a full time certified teacher to run the MLC. Petra Dixon moved from MHS to the MLC and teaches the MLC students full time. Also starting in 2011, we began Dec./April/July graduation ceremonies for our graduates. This is a heavily attended event every time, which often needs to be moved to the MHS multi-purpose building in order to accommodate our guests.

The advent of the 4X4 curriculum and EOC testing has had its affects on all of education. It has taken a large toll on the number of students in MLC that are trying to graduate early. Students, for the most part, do not have the option anymore of going to MLC with 7 credits and trying to finish in a year and a half because of the enormity of the EOC test. We are seeing a slow change where students are going to the MLC for a couple of periods in order to double up on credits and catch up with their class. We have some students that came from homeschooling and have severe social issues, that go to auto mechanics and algebra and spend the rest of the day in the alternative setting.

MLC is still available for accelerated graduation because there are still students who will drop out if they have to do school in the traditional, cookie-cutter fashion. But it is morphing into so much more.

In order to enroll in the MLC, a student must:

- Be in their 5<sup>th</sup> + year of high school, or
- Be in their 4<sup>th</sup> year of HS and not have the ability to earn enough credits by the end of the year to graduate, or
- Show a real circumstantial need that must be approved by a committee consisting of HS principal, HS assistant principal, and HS counselor

**All students attending classes in MLC must meet all State of Texas requirements for graduation**

Attached you will find a detailed report of our last few years of MLC graduates and any information that I may have on why they chose the MLC avenue and what they are doing now. I have deleted the names and id #'s due to confidentiality. Also you will see a chart of the amount of seat time required minimally to receive credit for a class in which students were not previously enrolled.

**Stats for 09-13 Mineola Learning Center Graduates**

63 Graduates

- 1 Military
- 1 married while in school
- 1 homeless
- 3 moved in needing only 1-2 credits
- 3 were drop out recoveries
- 4 discipline issues that prevented them from graduating
- 6 legal issues that required expedited graduation
- 9 early enrolled in college/trade school
- 9 were in their 5<sup>th</sup> year of high school
- 13 family situations they needed to change
- 13 pregnant