

Fern Creek High School Ivy Plus Academy Case Statement



Mission:

Our brightest and most talented students are our best hope for an innovative, compassionate, and just future. When myriad and diverse perspectives are included in creating the vision for that future, we all benefit. However, many of those diverse voices do not get a seat at the table because they miss out on the post-secondary preparation necessary to be competitive in the workforce. Undermatching is a national phenomenon in which high-achieving students do not apply to, or attend the most selective colleges and universities and, as a result, have lower graduation rates, higher student loans, and fewer educational advantages than their equally qualified peers. Undermatching most profoundly affects students from less-affluent backgrounds, first generation college-going students, and minority students.

These students are traditionally underrepresented on many college campuses, but nationwide efforts to diversify student enrollment have put them in high demand. Our students need these schools, but these schools also need them- and are willing to provide significant financial resources to our students to ensure they are able to attend.

When highly-qualified students are provided with intensive coaching, mentoring, and support, they attend and graduate from selective colleges and post-secondary institutions. A comprehensive approach including rigorous course work, individual coaching, financial support, and exposure will help solve the problem of undermatching, creating the conditions where students are able to take advantage of opportunities commensurate with their ability level.

Fern Creek High School's Ivy Plus Program begins freshmen year with a diverse cohort of students and provides these students with an enhanced vision for their future. Throughout their four years at Fern Creek, our Ivy Plus teachers and personnel work intensely with students and their families to prepare them for this future.

Ivy Plus Academy Goals:

Ivy Plus students will be selected on the basis of their academic capacity, talents, and ambitions. The composition of the Ivy Plus Academy should mirror the demographics of our community and city of Louisville.

The Ivy Plus Academy will provide opportunities and access- including exposure to college campuses and college admission counselors- to historically underrepresented groups of students.

The Ivy Plus Academy will provide support, mentoring, and resources to ensure “best-fit” college options that meet students’ financial and academic capacities.

The Ivy Plus Academy will connect our students with leaders in the community and strengthen their community ties so that these gifted students return to Louisville after college to enrich our workforce.

Objectives:

Fern Creek’s Ivy Plus Academy will be recognized as an Option/ Magnet by JCPS for the 2018-2019 school year, allowing students in our cluster and throughout JCPS to select Fern Creek as their high school choice.

Fern Creek’s Ivy Plus teachers and personnel will expand communication and connection with our primary feeder middle schools to increase awareness and to recruit potential Academy candidates.

Fern Creek High School will develop an Ivy Plus Advisory Council made up of teachers, administration, parents, and alumni for the 2018-2019 school year.

Fern Creek High School will expand the capacity of the program to 400 students by the 2021-2022 school year.

Fern Creek will expand staffing for the Ivy Plus Academy to include additional teachers and support personnel so that we can serve increasing program enrollment for the 2018-2019 school year.

The Fern Creek Academy will pledge to host or visit fifty Tier 1 colleges and universities by the 2019-2020 school year.

The Fern Creek Academy Dean will continue to develop and foster relationships with regional admissions directors to ensure applicant best-fit and individualized consideration.

Ivy Plus Academy graduates will maintain a 75% college admission rate and 90% persistence rate (students enrolling for the second year at an Ivy Plus institution).

Programs:

Rigorous curriculum: We strive to provide a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum, including a variety of Advanced Placement classes (17 in the 2017-2018 school year) for the duration of a student's enrollment at Fern Creek.

Cohort scheduling: Ivy Plus Academy students are scheduled as a cohort for core classes, ensuring wrap-around support services and cross-curricular deeper learning opportunities.

Individual counseling for students and parents: Students and their families will receive individual college admissions counseling tailored to their student's academic ability level, extra-curricular interests and expected tuition financial contribution.

Financial support for the college admission experience: Ivy Plus Program students demonstrating financial need will receive funding for college visits, application fees, and other exigencies.

Leadership and civic development: Through our Ivy Plus mentoring opportunities, students will gain experience in community and volunteer service, pursue passion projects, and create conditions for change.

ACT / Writing Labs: Fern Creek Academy students will receive opportunities for additional tutoring in ACT preparation, as well as scholarship and application essay tutoring and feedback.

Governance:

The Ivy Plus Academy Admissions Committee consists of the Principal, Assistant Principal, Ivy Plus Dean, Freshmen Guidance Counselor, and Cohort teachers.

Ivy Plus Academy Advisory Council consists of Fern Creek personnel, parents, alumni and community members to provide feedback and direction for the expansion of the Academy's goals.

Staff:

Principal: Provides vision and directs funding from the school's general budget to ensure that financial needs of the Academy are met.

Assistant Principal: Manages administrative tasks, staffing, parent, and student issues.

Ivy Plus Dean: Hosts college counselors, arranges and chaperones college visits, meets with parents and students in large groups and individually, provides support for cohort teachers, matches and monitors student mentors, monitors and supports the application and scholarship process.

Ivy Plus Assistant: Manages additional Ivy Plus administrative tasks, monitors student progress and eligibility, manages student mentoring and leadership programs.

Counselor: Schedules students into cohort and pathway classes, provides support and feedback regarding student progress.

Location:

Fern Creek High School's Ivy Plus Academy serves JCPS students in our resides area, our cluster through Options/ Magnet Programs, and students outside our cluster through transfer opportunities.

Finances:

Fern Creek's Ivy Plus Academy currently operates with no specifically designated federal, state, or district funding. Current funding comes from Fern Creek High School's general budget and Fern Creek Alumni Association's generous support.

All of the money that is donated to the Fern Creek Alumni Association earmarked for Ivy Plus goes directly to our students with no overhead cost. This fund is used to pay for personal effects for students as they travel to college: travel costs, luggage, outerwear, and technology.

We are asking for a funding amount per student of \$500. This amount would cover the following experiences and materials:

- Freshmen Orientation and Retreat
- Summer 2 day College Experience
- Summer 3 day College Experience
- College Application Fees
- College Visits
- ACT Score Fees
- Outfitting seniors for college -- supplies, luggage, travel expenses, etc.

Our enrollment goal for 2022 is 400 students. We would need \$200, 000 in outside funding to meet the needs of our Ivy Plus students beginning with our current freshmen class.

Development:

Fern Creek's Ivy Plus Academy is currently trademarked in the state of Kentucky. We hope to serve as national model for Title I public schools striving to combat undermatching amongst their highly qualified students.

The future of the Ivy Plus Academy will create the Fern Creek Alumni network of Ivy Plus graduates who support current students with opportunities, internships, and employment in the Greater Louisville area.

History:

Ivy Plus Academy students have been accepted to the following highly-selective colleges/universities in the past three years:

Carleton
Carnegie Mellon

Lafayette
Lehigh

U Penn
U Rochester

Case Western Reserve
Centre
Dartmouth
Davidson
DePauw
Denison
Earlham
Emory

Middlebury
Oberlin
Rhodes
Richmond
Rose-Hulman
Scripps
Sewanee
St. John's College

U Virginia
Wake Forest
Wesleyan
Wofford
Wooster

Ivy Plus Academy students have a 96% retention rate at these highly-selective college/universities.

Scholarship Amounts and Enrollment

2016

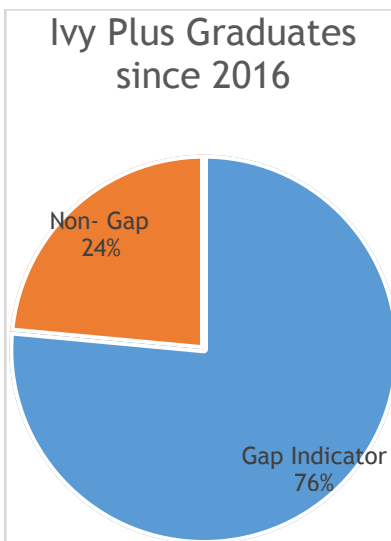
- Scholarships: \$2.6 million (11 seniors)
- Total program enrollment: (11 students)

2017

- Scholarships: \$6.1 million (16 seniors)
- Total program enrollment: (120 students)

2018

- Scholarships: \$10 million (26 seniors) - projected final amount: \$10.5 million
- Total program enrollment: (145 students)



Our Ivy Plus Gap Population includes:

- First Generation College-Going students
- Minority students
- Students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch

Portraits of Ivy Plus- Beau Baker's perspective

Thomas Tatum - St. John's College

Three summers ago, the running joke between me, my principal, and one of our assistant principals was, "What are we going to do about Thomas?" Thomas is by far the most intelligent student I have ever taught. In fact, he is probably one of the smartest people I have ever met. Sadly, he failed two of the three trimesters in my English class and had a mediocre 3.1 GPA to go along with his extraordinary 34 ACT score. The reason for this disparity was that Thomas was not used to being challenged academically. He was the smart kid who merely did enough to get by out of sheer boredom. Moreover, he did not function well in a rigidly constrained, traditional academic setting.

Thankfully, I recognized this early on and worked to find the right college for him. This young man wants to be either a philosophy or anthropology major with the goal of being a college professor. For that reason, I actively lobbied on his behalf with St. John's College in Maryland and got them to award this young man over \$190,000 in scholarships because I knew he was the perfect candidate for this school.

St. John's sees 81% of its graduates finish doctoral degrees in their field and produces more humanities professors than all but four schools. Not too bad for a school with only 600 undergraduate students. I have no doubt that Thomas would have failed out of most colleges he would have enrolled in out of sheer boredom or a lack of suitable environment. Thankfully, that is not going to happen because we, in short, found the perfect school for Thomas.

What is more rewarding is the fact that his parents were so elated with the outcome. His mom called me from St. John's when they took their first visit to campus and told me that, for the first time in years, Thomas seemed genuinely excited about school and education in general. She said she could not believe that she was, "in a sea of Thomases" and that Thomas was "happier than she had seen him in a long time." Moreover, when Thomas got his acceptance letter and financial aid package, she came into school in tears to share the news with myself and our principal.

Jennifer Sixtos - Centre

Jennifer entered my English class junior year telling me she was not planning on going to college because her parents could not afford to send her. She is one of three children of immigrant parents who live in a trailer park in Fern Creek. When I asked her what her dream job would be, she told me she loved math and economics.

After setting her up with numerous interviews with colleges, taking her on visits, and introducing her admission officers, she decided to attend Centre College. What sealed the deal was the meeting I set up with her and the Economics Department Chair. He was as equally impressed with her as she was with the college. As a result, Centre awarded her over \$180,000 in scholarships and grants over four years. She went from not going to college to enrolling in one of the top fifty liberal arts schools in the nation.

Josef Casas - Dartmouth

Iosef is a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) student whose parents' combined household income is around \$35,000 a year. Because of this, Iosef's college options were largely constrained by both financial concerns and concerns for his protection due to his citizenship status. Moreover, Iosef has unique academic interests—his main passion is computer science, but he is also interested in philosophy. His dream is to work in theoretical computer science with a focus on artificial intelligence, specifically researching what makes humans truly self-aware and how to “program” that awareness into artificial intelligence.

Our challenge was to find a college that would 1) meet 100% of his financial need, regardless of his parents' citizenship status 2) vigilantly guard his immigration status and provide him with the first-generation resources needed to succeed in college, and 3) have a computer science department that was focused on theoretical computer science with an eye toward artificial intelligence. There were only a few colleges in the nation that fit these three criteria.

Thankfully, after setting Iosef up with numerous in-person and distance interviews with Dartmouth's admissions representative, he was admitted and received \$256,000 in scholarships and grants. Because of this, he is attending an Ivy League school for just under \$3,000 per year. Comparatively, it would have cost him at least \$10,000 per year to go to any of Kentucky's public universities.

Amaya Bradford - Davidson

Amaya is a first-generation college student whose family's expected financial contribution for college is \$0 due to their household income being less than \$20,000 per year. When I met her after her freshman year, she told me that she was planning on going to community college, due to her family's financial situation, and then transfer over to an in-town school when it was affordable. After meeting with her family and taking her on numerous college visits, it became apparent that Amaya was destined for far greater opportunities.

Through the Ivy Plus Academy, she has visited over 15 colleges over the past three years and has met with over 45 different colleges when they came to Fern Creek High School. During one of these visits to Fern Creek High School, Davidson College was so impressed with her that they offered to fly her to Davidson for a Minority Visitation Program (MVP) - a highly competitive 4-day program that only accepts around 40 students from across the nation. Amaya called me from Davidson after her first day on campus and told me she was “in love with this place.”

Amaya was accepted into Davidson this past winter - one of only 1,100 out of nearly 6,000 applicants offered admission to this top 10 liberal arts college. Moreover, she will be attending Davidson for free due to her over \$265,000 in scholarships and grants.