



William J. Ostiguy

RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOL

ANNUAL REPORT **SCHOOL YEAR 2012-2013**

An alternative high school operating in partnership
with the **Gavin Foundation**, **Boston Public Schools**
and the **MA Department of Public Health**

abcd a program of Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.

www.ostiguyhigh.org



@OstiguyHigh



“ WHEN I WAS AT MY OLD SCHOOL IT FELT LIKE MOST PEOPLE WERE USING. EVERYONE KNEW WHO AND WHERE YOU COULD GET DRUGS AT SCHOOL. A LOT OF TIMES ME AND MY FRIENDS WOULD BE HIGH IN SCHOOL. ONCE I GOT SOBER, I WANTED TO GET MY DIPLOMA AND I KNEW IF I WENT BACK TO MY OLD SCHOOL I WOULD HANG OUT WITH THE SAME PEOPLE AND DO THE SAME NEGATIVE THINGS AS BEFORE. AT OSTIGUY I FEEL SAFE AND SUPPORTED. THE COMMUNITY SUPPORTS MY RECOVERY AND ALLOWED ME TO EXCEL ACADEMICALLY AND GRADUATE. ANY YOUNG PERSON WHO IS SERIOUS ABOUT SOBRIETY AND RECOVERY SHOULD CONSIDER GOING TO A RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOL. ”

- MELANIE LEAVITT

HISTORY

With funding from the MA Department of Public Health and in partnership with the Gavin Foundation and Boston Public Schools, Action for Boston Community Development opened **William J. Ostiguy High School** in September 2006 with an initial enrollment of 10 students. One of only four Recovery High Schools in the state, enrollment continues to expand and during the 2012-2013 school year Ostiguy served 81 students.

NEED

The recent CASA survey on adolescent attitudes towards substance abuse (August 2012) indicates that teens report that their high schools are drug infected meaning that drugs are used, kept or sold at the schools. Nine out of 10 high school students reported that classmates are drugging, drinking and smoking during the school day. The high school students who participated in the study estimated that nearly one in five (17 percent) of their classmates are using during the school day. More than half of high school students (52 percent) say that there is a place on or near school grounds where students go to use drugs, drink and smoke during the school day.

The consequences of the teens attitude and perceptions related to substance abuse are dire. The CASA Adolescent Substance Use: America's #1 Public Health Problem (June 2011) reported the following findings:

- 90 percent of Americans who meet the medical criteria for addiction started smoking, drinking, or using other drugs before age 18.
- 1 in 4 Americans who began using any addictive substance before age 18 developed an addiction, compared to 1 in 25 Americans who started using at age 21 or older.
- 75 percent of all high school students have used addictive substances including tobacco, alcohol, marijuana or cocaine; 1 in 5 of them meets the medical criteria for addiction.
- 46 percent of all high school students currently use addictive substances; 1 in 3 of them meets the medical criteria for addiction.

The state of Massachusetts mirrors these national trends with a particularly alarming increase in the rate of marijuana use by teens in the state.

MISSION

The **William J. Ostiguy High School** provides a safe, sober and supportive school environment in which youth in recovery can develop the skills and strengths needed for personal, academic, vocational and community success.

STUDENTS

Ostiguy High School serves youth age 14-21 whose capacity to succeed in a conventional public school has been negatively impacted by a pattern of substance use. To enroll, students must express a motivation for sobriety and commit to participating in an outside plan of recovery.

RECOVERY

Each student works with a Recovery Counselor, who engages the student in the critical process of identifying steps to an individualized recovery plan and monitors progress toward goals. Enrichment and supportive services include teaching avoidance behaviors, promoting resiliency, clinical group activities and linkage with community treatment resources. Ostiguy partners with the Gavin Foundation, which has offered substance abuse treatment services since 1982, to provide a full time on-site substance abuse counselor. Parental engagement and education in support of student recovery are also provided.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	4
Testimonials.	5
School Model	6
Academic Excellence.	7
Recovery Services	8
Community Partners	10
Ostiguy by the Numbers	11
Changing Tracks	12
Outcomes	14
What's Next at OHS	15

The **William J. Ostiguy Recovery High School** is an alternative high school operating in partnership with the **Gavin Foundation, Boston Public Schools** and the **MA Department of Public Health**.

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William J. Ostiguy Recovery High School Principal

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

JOHN J. DREW, ABCD PRESIDENT AND CEO



Since its inception in 1962 ABCD has remained focused on its unwavering mission of “helping people out of poverty,” providing disadvantaged members of the community with the tools to live with dignity and achieve their full potential. ABCD pursues this mission through a neighborhood-based network and

innovative, practical, timely programs that emphasize education, skilled job-training at all levels and offer a significant return on investment for our city, state and nation.

Providing quality education to underserved youth populations through ABCD operated schools such as William J. Ostiguy High (WJOHS) is a key piece of this strategy. Students learn in a safe, sober, and supportive school environment in which youth in recovery from substance abuse can develop the skills and strengths needed for personal, academic, vocational and community success.

Research indicates the risk of addiction is worse the younger a person starts using, but the prognosis for recovery improves the younger a person stops using. The key to a positive outcome is intervening earlier in the process. (Hardin and Ernst, 2009; NIDA, 2010.) Recovery high schools, such as WJOHS are offering hope and opportunity to youth with substance use issues that did not previously exist.

As WJOHS enters its eighth year of operation, school enrollment continues to grow with the school now serving

over eighty students a year. WJOHS has been recognized as a leader both locally and nationally for the quality of its educational and recovery services. WJOHS was the first recovery school in the country to successfully complete the Association for Recovery Schools (ARS) national accreditation process. The continued growth and development of the WJOHS model ensures that the youth and families of Boston will continue to have an invaluable resource to address the issues related to drugs and alcohol in their communities.

ABCD President/CEO,
John J. Drew

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John J. Drew', written in a cursive style.



KENEILA GRESHAM, 21

At my old school I got high with everyone there. It was impossible for me to be sober. Ostiguy High provided me the opportunity to be in an environment where everyone is trying to stay sober. Without Ostiguy I would not have been able to graduate. Now not only have I graduated but I have already been earning credits at Bunker Hill Community College while participating on a national youth advisory group on recovery for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health administration.



SHANNON ROBERTSON, 18

I appreciate the fact that I was able to be in a positive sober environment that has taught me so much. I was able to come to Ostiguy with a clean slate and start over. Now, I have graduated and been accepted to UMASS Lowell and I don't think I would be prepared for college if it wasn't for this experience.



ZACHERY PECHETTE, 19

Here at this school, everyone is in this together. The Peer support is great. Without this school I would probably be back doing the same things with my old friends and not moving forward with my life. All the doors that were closed are opening because I am sober and doing the right thing on a daily basis.

SCHOOL MODEL

William J. Ostiguy High School incorporates seven distinct though highly integrated components. While the objectives of academic competency and progress toward high school graduation are a primary focus, there is an equal commitment to a comprehensive recovery program that includes an individualized contract with the youth, commitment to their recovery, linkage with a behavioral health clinician when necessary, family support, and comprehensive care management and resource coordination.



SEVEN DISTINCT COMPONENTS OF THE SCHOOL MODEL

SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

- Risk assessment
- Self-regulation
- Use of community resources
- Use of recreational resources

ACADEMIC COMPETENCY

- MCAS completion
- HS graduation
- MA curriculum frameworks compliance
- Continuing education compliance
- Vocational planning

COMPREHENSIVE CARE MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE COORDINATION

- Promotion of health, safety, and well being
- Coordination of multiple resources and agency contact
- Behavioral health linkage

RECOVERY SUPPORT

- Individual contacts
- Mandatory drug screenings
- 12 step program
- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Motivational interviews
- Peer relationships and networks

SCHOOL COLLABORATION

- School health/adjustment counselor linkage
- Facilitating transfer of credits
- Annual transition plan
- Planning for school reintegration when appropriate

FAMILY SUPPORT

- Understanding use/abuse
- Participation in recovery
- Information/referral support

CONTINUING CARE

- Routine follow-up
- Relapse support
- Resource linkage



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Ostiguy teachers deliver a curriculum that combines concepts of both proficiency and project based learning. Students are required to strive for a greater depth of understanding of concepts, a broader knowledge base, improved communication and interpersonal/social skills, enhanced leadership skills, increased creativity, and improved writing skills. There is an emphasis on student being able to show mastery of concepts through the completion of multiple assessments.

FOUNDATION ELEMENTS OF OHS ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

- Small class sizes and quality special education services that ensure students receive the necessary instructional supports.
- Certified, high quality Boston Public School teachers with expertise in both their subject area and working with adolescents in recovery.
- After-school and summer resources for credit recovery, tutoring, and standardized test and college preparation.
- Individualized MCAS preparation targeting each student's skill gaps.
- Credit recovery and digital curriculum options for off-track students to facilitate on-time graduation.

Academic work is put to real world use through student internships or paid, part time employment facilitated through ABCD's Career Explorations program. Access to higher education is also promoted by the Ostiguy guidance staff who assist the students in making college linkages, participating in college tours and fairs, and guiding students through the application process.

RECOVERY SERVICES

Ostiguy High is built upon a foundation of recovery culture. Gavin Foundation serves as the school's lead substance abuse partner and provides a full time certified drug and alcohol counselor to oversee the recovery program at Ostiguy. All students at Ostiguy develop their own individualized plans that document the activities they will participate in to support their recovery. In addition to receiving individual counseling, recovery based groups facilitated by licensed Gavin Foundation counselors are incorporated into the classroom curriculum. During these groups students receive information on various psycho-educational aspects of addiction as well as exposure to the concepts of the 12 Step Program. Finally, recovery high schools incorporate a strong peer culture in which all students identify as having issues related to drugs and alcohol and commit to supporting their fellow students as they face the challenges associated with being in early recovery.

FOR STUDENTS

CLINICAL SERVICES: A substance abuse counselor provides individualized recovery services and connections to community-based clinical resources. Regular drug and alcohol use testing is administered throughout the year.

SUPPORTS: Psycho-social evaluations and treatment plans are integrated into individualized recovery plans and additional behavioral health services are provided on-site through the Gavin Foundation.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS: Instruction based on a curriculum developed by the Institute for Health and Recovery and implemented into Ostiguy's course structure. An exercise component includes weekly on-site yoga classes, Cambridge YMCA membership, and more.

FOR PARENTS

ENGAGEMENT: At Ostiguy, parents are partners in the recovery, participating in the development of their child's recovery plan, which they then must authorize and update monthly.

EDUCATION: Monthly "Parent Nights" enable information about programming and student progress to be shared, and feature trainings and information sessions on participating in and aiding the substance abuse recovery process.

SUPPORT: Ostiguy parents organize and hold monthly Families Anonymous meetings where they discuss and address the unique challenges of parenting a teen in recovery.

FOLLOW-UP SERVICES

Ostiguy staff conduct post-graduation follow-up with former students on a regularly scheduled basis through meetings and phone calls. Follow-up activities collect information on students' sobriety, work and educational progress, and ongoing service or support needs.

"My family is involved in recovery and schooling, and in the combination of the two. When I go home at night, I don't leave the supportive community that is helping me to stay sober and finish high school."

- Tessie Kelleher-Palmarin



WILLIAM J. OSTIGUY RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION 2013

ABCD CEO/President John J. Drew congratulates the 2013 William J. Ostiguy graduates as they embark on a new chapter in their lives.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Ostiguy works with many local agencies, organizations, and foundations to provide critical academic, clinical, and supportive services to its students. These partners offer resources that enable recovery and graduation for OHS students and expand the network of resources available to at-risk youth.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS WE WORK WITH:

Community partnerships with organizations like **Vertex Pharmaceuticals** allows Ostiguy to provide the best possible services and learning opportunities for our students. This past school year Ostiguy High entered into a new partnership with Vertex Pharmaceuticals to implement our **Science Out of School (SOS) initiative**.

This program is designed to provide support for the math and science remediation programs at University High School and Ostiguy High School, with a goal of introducing interesting science applications that helped students learn, while sparking an interest in science that translates to future classroom and career success. The program's activities, delivered in partnership with the scientists from the Vertex Pharmaceutical Company, engaged students with hands-on lab exercises and learning opportunities, supplemented by in-class lessons. In addition, Vertex's scientists mentored ABCD science teachers, helping to improve teacher effectiveness.

FOLLOWING OUTCOMES:

- Students show an increase in knowledge of science content area as a result of lab experiences.
- Students show an increase in knowledge, interest, and attitude in science careers.
- Science teachers improve their knowledge and teaching skills.



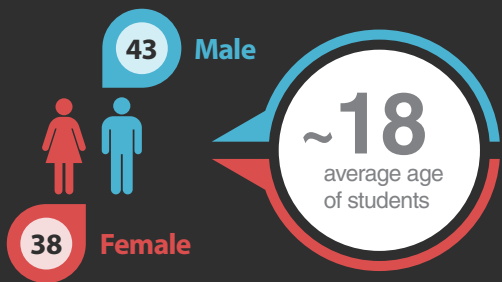
By the numbers:

Statistics for school year 2012-2013

OSTIGUY BY THE NUMBERS

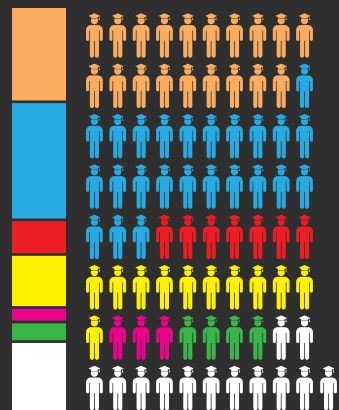
Student Population

81 total # of students enrolled in 2012-2013



Total Enrollment: 81

- Graduates: 19
- Advanced to next grade level/returning to Ostiguy: 23
- Retained but did not advance grade level: 7
- Advance to next grade level/returning to home school: 11
- No longer enrolled/pursuing GED: 3
- No longer enrolled/earned GED: 4
- No longer enrolled: 14



William J. Ostiguy

RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOL
WORKED WITH 40 SCHOOL DISTRICTS
OUTSIDE OF BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Specialized Ostiguy High Programs:

CHANGING TRACKS

Changing Tracks seeks to significantly improve the life chances of youth of color in Boston affected by substance abuse.

Changing Tracks responds to deep-seated disparities in access to treatment and criminalization of substance abuse, which channel young people of color toward expulsion from school and incarceration in prison rather than treatment.

Changing Tracks creates a unified system of supports for recovery.

Ostiguy is committed to creating a diverse staff and student population while targeting for enrollment those youth who have completed initial 30-day treatment. In 2010, the Boston Public Health Commission reported that although rates of drug and alcohol use among black, latino, and white teens in Suffolk County are very similar, the number of minority youth entering treatment programs is significantly lower than white teens. Statewide, 82% of youth entering treatment are white. Much like the “achievement gap” of academic performance, the “treatment gap” for urban minority youth creates serious disparities in access. This disparity is reflected in the higher percentage of white students enrolling at Ostiguy.

THE SIGNIFICANCE

YOUTH OF COLOR INVOLVED WITH DRUGS OR ALCOHOL ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO BE TREATED PUNITIVELY THAN TO BE SUPPORTED THROUGH ACCESS TO COUNSELING AND TREATMENT.

Research shows that most school-based interventions for drug and alcohol abuse—in Boston and across the country—approach the issue of substance abuse as a discipline or safety concern rather than a public health issue. Moreover, in 2010, the Boston Public Health Commission reported that while rates of drug and alcohol abuse are similar across groups, Black and Latino youth enter treatment at significantly lower rates than their white peers (statewide, 82% of youth entering treatment are white). As a result, their rates of substance-abuse related morbidity and mortality are higher, and their chances of building productive lives may be further hindered by a criminal record. This combination of factors can have devastating impacts on students’ education and career success.

ABCD OPERATES OSTIGUY RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOL, A PUBLIC SCHOOL ADAPTED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ADOLESCENTS IN RECOVERY AND A NATIONAL MODEL OF TREATMENT SERVICES.

ABCD’s Ostiguy High School provides a safe, sober, and supportive learning environment for high school students in recovery. In 2011, 75% of students maintained sobriety and 80% of graduates entered college. Substance abuse counseling and treatment are provided under a contract with the Gavin Foundation, a leader in evidence-based substance abuse treatment services for young people.

CHANGING TRACKS WILL LEVERAGE THE SUCCESS OF OSTIGUY RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOL TO INCREASE THE ACCESS OF YOUTH OF COLOR TO EFFECTIVE SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT.

Changing Tracks is rooted in the success of Ostiguy and the Gavin Foundation in their work with local police and juvenile courts in diverting substance-abusing youth from incarceration to community treatment. The successful Ostiguy model is now poised to be replicated in partnership with the Boston Public Schools Counseling and Intervention Center so that the disparities in substance abuse treatment can eventually be reduced throughout the Boston Public School system. Changing Tracks will establish a diversionary and preventive alternative to the current punitive disciplinary response of public school and juvenile court systems. The long-range impacts of the project will make a difference to additional hundreds of young people in Boston each year.

CHANGING TRACKS OUTCOMES

POLICY CHANGE

One of the main causes of the inequity in substance treatment is the policies in place in schools, which favor suspension and expulsion over treatment. ABCD is working with the Boston Public Schools to revise its Code of Conduct to make it mandatory for students to be evaluated by a substance abuse therapist if they are found using or possessing drugs or alcohol. Outcome 1: A new Code of Conduct in the Boston Public Schools will help schools differentiate among levels of substance abuse and refer students to the most appropriate counseling or treatment.

CREATION OF A SCHOOL-BASED DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Changing Tracks mobile intervention teams will provide screening and referral services to select Boston Public Schools. Students will be linked to on-site and off-site services ranging from short-term counseling and group participation to more intensive treatment. Outcome 2: Each year, 750 youth of color per year will be screened for substance abuse issues and, when indicated, referred for counseling or treatment.

REENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOL

ABCD will work with the Boston Public Schools' Counseling and Intervention Center to reach out to students who have left school and are looking to come back, screen them, and refer them to treatment. Outcome 3: Each year, 100% of youth of color (approximately 400 students per year) who are referred to Boston Public Schools' Counseling and Intervention Center will be screened for substance abuse.



OUTCOMES

The aim of Ostiguy's academic, clinical, and supportive services is to enable students' recovery from substance abuse and addiction, graduation, college enrollment, and job obtainment.

Ostiguy strives to make graduation a reality for each student, and dedicates resources to ensuring that off-track students get the support they need to graduate with their class. For many students, recovery services and specialized academic support programs are the difference between a diploma and dropping out.

THOSE WITHOUT A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA EXPERIENCE A JOBLESSNESS RATE OF

13%

POINTS HIGHER THAN THOSE WITH A DIPLOMA

EMPLOYMENT RATE

NO HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA



High school graduates will earn

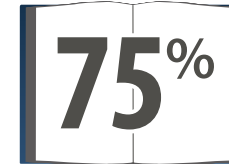
\$292,200

more over their lifetime than those that do not graduate from high school.

WITH A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA



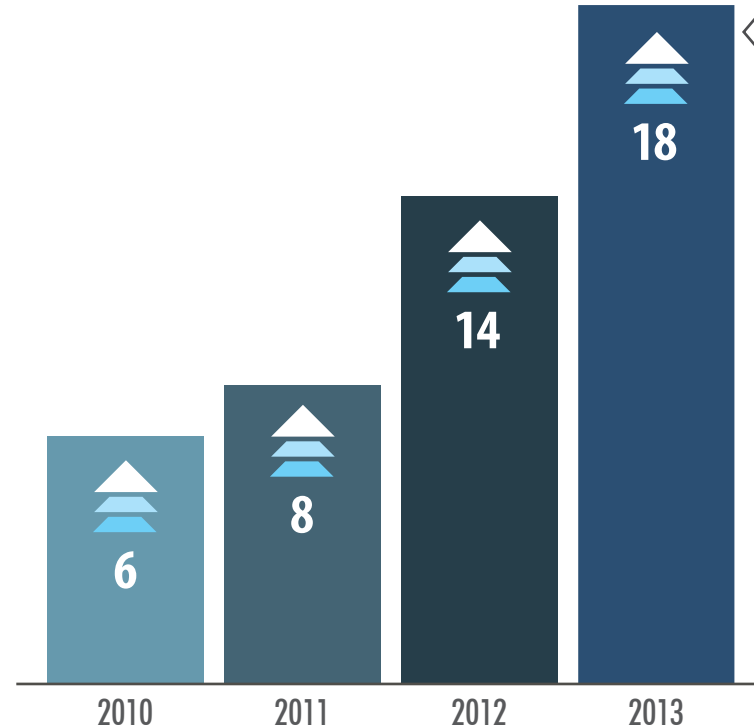
of students scored at or above grade level



of students maintained sobriety for the entire school year



of graduates enrolled in college



GRADUATION

300%

increase in the number of students that graduated with a high school diploma from 2010 - 2013 from Ostiguy High School

GOALS FOR THE 2013-2014 SCHOOL YEAR INCLUDE:

OUTREACH, enroll, and retain at least 80 students in recovery from substance abuse during the school year;

DELIVER a comprehensive high school curriculum for 80 students annually that meets Massachusetts secondary curriculum frameworks in all domains;

EXPAND student population diversity from 20% to 35%;

IMPROVE academic performance and attendance among 90% of students;

INCREASE graduation rate from 75% of engaged students to 85%;

DECREASE relapse episodes/increase student commitment to recovery;

ENGAGE 90% of student family members into groups and other structured activities in support of student recovery.

WHAT'S NEXT AT OSTIGUY HIGH?

As staff and community partners work to develop more advanced and effective resource networks for youth in recovery, Ostiguy will continue to improve its academic, clinical, and supportive services to enable healthy lifestyles and graduation for teens in need.



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