Foundation boosts college-bound

Nine of the students who graduated from Pottstown High School last week have a head start on college, paid in part or in full by the Foundation for Pottstown Education.

The students earned college credits from the Montgomery County Community College at the same time they were juniors and seniors at Pottstown High School. Depending on students' financial need and their grade point average, the Foundation paid for either half or all of their tuition.

The credits are accepted by state colleges and many private colleges. Some students had already finished a full year of college (30 credits) by the time they received their diploma last week.

Operating out of a rent-free office in the Pottstown School District administration building, the Foundation is otherwise self-sustaining, with donated funds.

Full-time Director Joe Rusiewicz, a part-time assistant, and a board of 18 raised nearly $400,000 last year, of which $180,000 went for scholarships and other programs, $130,000 for administration, and $110,000 to build up an endowment of about $1 million.

Not all students who enroll in both Pottstown High School and the Community College receive a subsidy. Only those who are accepted in the Early College program, demonstrating financial need, a 90 percent or above grade point average at the high school, and a good attendance record qualify.

All graduates in the program are in college or soon will be. The first cohort graduates from college this year.

In the six years the Foundation has offered the program, 54 students have had all or part of their dual enrollment college credits paid for at a total cost of more than $300,000.

The college tuition program is just one way the Foundation enhances education in Pottstown.

(Complete Thursday)

Commentary by Tom Hylton

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Cohort</th>
<th>Number Enrolled</th>
<th>Start date</th>
<th>Graduate PHS</th>
<th>Completed Early College program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohort I</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td>2015</td>
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<td>Cohort II</td>
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<td>Cohort III</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>2016</td>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort VI</td>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Cohort VII</td>
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<td>2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Colleges/ universities attended by Foundation-funded graduates

- Albright
- Lebanon Valley
- Susquehanna
- Alvernia
- Lynchburg
- Temple
- Cairn
- Montgomery County CC
- U. of San Diego
- Cheney
- Millersville
- University of the Sciences
- Drexel
- Moravian
- University of Virginia
- East Carolina
- Penn State (Main)
- Ursinus
- Gwynedd Mercy
- Penn State (Berks)
- Villanova
- Indiana U of PA
- Shenandoah
- York

www.pottstowncitizens.org