

Program Guiding More to College

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A high school pilot program designed to ready seniors for college has been successful beyond the expectations of schools officials, who plan to expand the program throughout Prince George's high schools in coming years.

College Summit, a nonprofit program that began at Crossland, Flowers and Laurel high schools in the 2005-2006 school year, gave a sharp boost to college attendance, officials said at a news conference last week. The program will be extended to Suitland, Oxon Hill and DuVal high schools in the next school year.

Venture Philanthropy Partners has pledged an additional \$2.1 million to fund College Summit's expansion in the Washington area over the next three years. Three thousand Prince George's students are expected to participate in that time.

Crossland High in Temple Hills, whose students graduated Friday, was a model of how the program worked. *Charles Thomas*, the principal, said that more than 90 percent of his graduating seniors were going to college. Last year, it was 75 percent.

Although the program was not solely responsible for the improvement -- Thomas has also aggressively promoted Advanced Placement courses at his school -- he nevertheless gave plenty of credit to College Summit; 76 students participated in the program. The participating students wore medals at their graduation.

Latisha M. Johnson, a graduating senior who wants to study telecommunications at Morgan State or Bowie State, said her grade-point average jumped from 2.88 to 3.63 after she got involved with the program. *Emmanuel Carter*, another new graduate who plans to study culinary arts, said he learned how to write essays through the program, which sent him to Goucher College last summer for training. It was tough, Carter said, but worthwhile.

"When it came down to the end, nobody wanted to leave," he said. "We were like a family."

Compiled by NELSON HERNANDEZ and MICHELLE BETTON