

TIPS & TRICKS

For Keeping Students Motivated



As a Penn Foster High School Completion Program Coordinator, you serve as a mentor and a coach to students who struggled in a traditional learning environment for various reasons. Keeping them motivated and engaged is the key to their success and yours. Here are some tips shared by other program coordinators to help drive continued student success in the classroom.



Leverage Former Students as Motivators

Once or twice a month, have a graduate of the High School Completion program come in and do a Q&A session with current students. During the session, graduates can discuss why they succeeded, how they stayed motivated, and what it means to them to be working towards their career goals. This is also a great opportunity for students to get introduced to the career programs your school offers and helps encourage students to continue to work towards earning their diploma and stay focused on their future. Students will identify with those graduates, and it helps them see themselves as a student in your school.

Have an open-door policy in the classroom so graduates know they are always welcome in the Penn Foster program class to check in, ask for help, or just sit at a computer to do their post-secondary school work. Current students will feel inspired seeing former Penn Foster program graduates furthering their education and will have the opportunity to develop friendships, further connecting them to the campus.

Also, seek Penn Foster graduates who can serve as student mentors for individual students in the class. Those struggling the most with the workload will find inspiration from mentors who come from a similar background and achieved similar dreams.

“ We have student ambassadors – former High School Completion students who graduated and went on to enroll in college – come in and share their stories. It tells current students that, ‘I was in a similar situation, and now I’m having success in college, just like you can.’ ”

– Program Coordinator
Bryant & Stratton College



Celebrate Achievements

MILESTONES: To keep students motivated throughout the program, establish small goals along the way. Make sure the student is acknowledged for their progress to not only encourage the student to keep working hard, but to also inspire his or her peers to stay on track and to keep their goals in mind.

GRADUATION: There’s nothing like a celebration to get students excited about the future. A great way to celebrate is by hosting a graduation ceremony for Penn Foster program graduates every few months. Encourage current Penn Foster High School students to attend graduation ceremonies to catch a glimpse of what’s in store for them. Admissions teams and other faculty should be encouraged to attend as well. If you have a culinary program, have them cater the occasion. Many schools find that scheduling graduation ceremonies creates an additional incentive for students to push through the program. If you’ve never setup a graduation ceremony, we’ve created a [handy checklist](#) to help you plan.

REUNION: Celebrate the bonds created through the program by hosting reunions for Penn Foster graduates. By including existing students, this creates the perfect opportunity for former students to discuss their achievements and for current students to learn more about their options for the future.

IN-CLASS GATHERINGS:

- Host a classroom potluck where each student contributes to an afternoon lunch. Make this a time for open discussions about anything going on in their lives.
- Schedule one-on-one meetings once per week to discuss the student’s progress and goals, and to make sure individual needs are being met. Use this time to discuss any concerns students have in their personal lives if they are slowing down or struggling with the program.
- Encourage open communication with future planning exercises. For example, hand out index cards and have students write down why they are attending the program. Share them periodically as motivators. This helps students remember their reasons for being part of the program and keeps future goals top of mind.

“The students enjoy social gatherings. It helps establish rapport within the class and creates a positive environment where everyone feels comfortable.”

– Program Coordinator
Dorsey Schools





Small Rewards, Big Benefits

Friendly competition among classmates encourages students to up their efforts. Have fun with weekly contests for punctuality. For example, put up a chart in your classroom to track when students come to class to see who has the longest streak of arriving on time. This promotes time management skills and fosters pride in good work ethic.

Because the Penn Foster Program runs year-round, regular campus breaks don't apply. An empty campus can be an attendance deterrent. Encourage students to show up while other students are on break with tasty incentives. For example, bring donuts or bagels to class as a bonus for working hard over spring break.

Use motivational books, quotes and poems as classroom tools to inspire students. Decorate your classroom with [motivational posters](#) or photos of successful individuals who your students look up to (including Penn Foster graduates). When students are losing motivation, take a break from learning and watch an inspirational video instead. This helps channel any negative thoughts into positive actions.



“Students come to me with their frustrations and I give them an inspirational book to read. It helps build their confidence and enhances critical thinking skills.”

– Program Coordinator
Dorsey Schools

Look for [additional resources in the LPP](#), and don't forget to read the monthly Partner Success Newsletter for more best practices and useful tools to manage the classroom.

To Contact a Client Support Specialist Call: **888.427.0200**