Workforce Learning Summit Innovation or Best Practice

James Sprunt Community College

Pre-K to College, A District-Wide Early College Approach to Seamless Education (James Sprunt Community College and Duplin County Schools)

Duplin County Schools and James Sprunt Community College are committed to insuring that every student is successful in their college and career goals by raising the expectation and motivation for academic excellence, providing relevant challenging learning environments and distinct career pathways. The early college concept is a key component to achieving success for all students at all levels. The concept is woven into the seamless education system and supported by a technology infrastructure.

All partners are engaged in providing a support network for students and the seamless education process and include, parents, community leaders, teachers, administrators, community college faculty, counselors, the business community and others.

DETAILS

Problems/Opportunities:

James Sprunt Community College (JSCC), Duplin County Schools (DCS) and local employers face the following challenges: one-third of the residents in Duplin County earn a yearly median income of $16,679 or less; 32% of the population does not have a high school diploma; and 64% of the population has a high school diploma or less.

Development:

JSCC along with DCS developed a framework for collaboration to address the educational and workforce challenges of Duplin County. We developed Pre-K to College as a collaborative partnership to transform the educational system in response to the needs of the Duplin County. The framework for collaboration included JSCC, DCS and other community, state and national partners joining together to implement an innovative Pre-K to College and Career Readiness transformation of the educational system.

The College and School District developed a shared vision: All students in Duplin County will be prepared for college, career, and life success in a global world. The rationale for implementing a bold strategy included the following assumptions:

- More than 50% of jobs in the next decade would require degrees and skills beyond high school;
- Early College high schools have proven successful for public school students at other NC Community Colleges and throughout the nation;
- Duplin Early College High School is a great success for our community and state;
- Our graduation rate for students in our traditional high schools is unacceptable;
- DCS and JSCC have a strong partnership that was developed over a 30 year period;
- NC New Schools Project was willing to support innovation in Duplin County Schools.
The following goals were developed:

- Employ Early College High School principles and strategies;
- Create a culture of academic excellence;
- Establish college-going expectations for all students as early as Pre-K;
- Partner with multiple businesses and organizations to provide career options for all students;
- Utilize 21st-Century technology to aid instruction and provide technology access to all students; and
- Continue to support and expand career “strands” or “academies” within each Duplin County High School.

Planning/Roles/Implementation:

In February of 2011, Dr. Lawrence L Rouse and Dr. Austin Obasohan wrote a concept paper entitled “Success for all Students: a Seamless Education Model”. The paper outlined the initial framework for the District-Wide Early College Approach to Seamless Education. JSCC, DCS, NC New Schools, the NC Community College System Office, the NC Department of Public Instruction, the Office of Former Lt. Governor Walter Dalton, and the Duplin County Board of Commissioners established a team to travel to Hidalgo, Texas on a study visit of a comprehensive early college school district. The Team visited Hidalgo School District in March of 2011.

The administrative leadership of DCS and JSCC formed a steering committee which met on a regular basis to discuss and implement the necessary components of the Seamless Education Model. The team met and developed a plan for 5 years of implementation beginning in the fall of 2011.

The steering committee began to engage various internal and external constituents to include the Duplin County Board of Education, JSCC Board of Trustees, Duplin County Board of Commissioners, parent organizations, local legislators, and businesses and industry leaders as a means of build community support for the initiative.

Dr. Rouse and Dr. Obasohan collaborated with The Kenan Foundation, NC Community College System Office, SAS Institute, New Schools Projects, DPI, Jobs for the Future, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other organizations to gain additional support for the initiative.

The steering committee created and revised a unified implementation agenda. JSCC and DCS applied for and received a grant from the USDA in the amount of $192,000 to purchase and install two-way interactive video capability at all five high schools in Duplin County. The technology will be used to deliver college courses to high school students from the the campus of JSCC as well as foster professional development opportunities.

The steering committee held community meetings to present to the concept of Pre-K to College to the Duplin County community.

DCS provided professional development for all principals, teachers and staff to support academic excellence within the school district.

Challenges:

- Flexibility to be able to offer college classes for all qualified students as early as 9th grade;
- Flexibility to receive a calendar waiver for Duplin County Schools.

Timeline:

3 to 5 years in phases with the start of phase 1 in the 2011/2012 school year

Participants:

All Stakeholders
Implementation began in February 2011.

**Partner Type(s):**
- Business/Industry (direct involvement)
- Economic Development
- Nonprofit Organization(s)
- Public Schools
- University
- Other: Duplin County Commissioners, NC Community College System Office, Department of Public Instruction, NC New Schools, the University of NC System, Local Legislators, Former Lt. Governor Walter Dalton, and Jobs for the Future,

**Impact/Outcomes**
- Increase in college awareness, enrollment, and performance in college classes
- Scaled college-going culture to cover the entire educational community in Duplin County (to include Pre-K)
- Alignment of college and career preparation throughout the school system
- Better informed parents
- Hope and excitement

Other positive impacts include improved communication and collaboration between JSCC, DCS, and all stakeholders. Pre-K to College has further solidified the relationship between JSCC and DCS. It has also expanded county-wide conversations to include partners such as Economic Development. Furthermore graduation rates have increased and the drop-out rate is decreasing.

**Funding Source(s)**
- JSCC used state dollars for salaries for instruction for additional course sections needed to accommodate CCP students, state and institutional funds for summer camps for the career academies, and College Access grant for $6,525 in 2012-13 for Health Sciences Boot Camp. It used institutional funds for the Crayons On Campus visits.
- Duplin County Schools used ‘Race to the Top’ funding and realigned other Duplin County Schools funding to meet Pre-K to College needs. A USDA grant for $192,000 was used for installation of two-way interactive TV at all five high schools.

**REFLECTIONS**

**Innovation or Best Practice**
Pre-K to College is an innovation and best practice because it is an educational transformation modeled upon research-based practices and principles that have proven beneficial to all students. As one of three school systems from across the nation to embrace the transformation, JSCC and DCS are working together and seeing change.

Another way that the model is innovative is the promotion of college going, with a reach down to students as young as four years of age through the "Crayons on Campus" initiative.

**Lessons Learned**
In order to make this work you have to have good working relationship between the college and the public school system. Communication is key. Persistence and commitment are critical for true transformation to take place.
Scalability
Together we’ve taken the model we observed first-hand in Hidalgo, Texas and decided to scale that model to incorporate even our youngest of students – our Pre-Kindergarteners. The college-going culture and climate have been easily scalable and quite frankly, contagious. Ensuring the district-wide rigor and commitment to the Common Instructional Framework and Design Principles and all that is entailed in Pre-K to College has been easy to scale as well; however, the professional development and mindshift have, by nature, taken longer to achieve. One critical factor beyond this for scalability has been manpower as provided by DCS in the form of College and Career Liaisons at each comprehensive high school.

RESOURCES

Workforce Learning Summit Presenters
Dr. Lawrence L. Rouse, President, James Sprunt Community College
Dr. Austin Obasohan, Superintendent, Duplin County Schools
June Davis, Vice President of Curriculum Services, James Sprunt Community College
Kevin Smith, Chief Officer for District-Wide Early College and Professional Development, Duplin County Schools
Tarla Smith, Executive Director of Career & Technical Education, JROTC, and Innovative Programs, Duplin County Schools
Dawn Craft, Executive Director of Public Relations and Grant Writing, Duplin County Schools

Links
The “Crayons On Campus” video that was part of the presentation can be accessed from the homepage of the JSCC website at www.jamessprunt.edu and also at www.duplinschools.net

For Further Information
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