

June 30, 2011

Welcome to INNOVATOR, a bimonthly update on secondary school change from the North Carolina New Schools Project. Our newsletter is designed to inform practitioners, policymakers, and friends of public education on innovation, research and success stories from secondary schools. Please feel free to [contact us](#), provide feedback and suggest article ideas.

High school students yearn for relevance



Jimmy Chancey
Charlotte-
Mecklenburg
Schools' director of
Career and Technical
Education

Our high school students are telling us something important about what they want and feel they need by the time they graduate. Interestingly, it's not so different from what employers say they want from graduates.

Students want concrete applications for what they're learning. They want to know how to solve problems. They're naturally drawn to activities in which they work and learn together on projects. Employers want to hire young people who can think critically, communicate clearly, take initiative and work effectively with others.

Now it's up to us, as educators, to do the hard work involved with creating the kind of schools and instruction that truly will produce graduates with those types of 21st Century skills that students want and need and employers and post-secondary institutions demand. And as we transform teaching and learning within traditional academic disciplines, we must also realign Career and Technical Education (CTE) so that classes from carpentry to automotive technologies become part of a seamless whole unified around a common goal of college and career readiness.

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Bertie STEM High Wins 2011 Innovator Award



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College pays off whatever the job

A report this week from Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce, [The Undereducated American](#), shows that college graduates earn more, even in jobs where college degrees aren't required.

Dental hygenist



Glenwood Mitchell, principal of Bertie STEM High, accept the award.

Bertie STEM High School, one of North Carolina's pioneering secondary schools with a focus on science, technology, engineering and math, was honored last week with the Innovator Award, presented annually by the North Carolina New Schools Project to a pace-setting high school within its network that is demonstrating strong results in preparing all students for college, careers and life.

The award was presented to the school during NCNSP's Summer Institute, a three-day conference attended by 500 educators from its network schools across the state.

In the four years since Bertie STEM opened its doors, the school has helped raise expectations not only for its students but for all high school students in the county with a model that helps all students succeed. The pioneering school this year graduated 94 percent of the freshmen who started four years ago as the inaugural class. More than half of them have been accepted by and plan to attend a four-year college or university.

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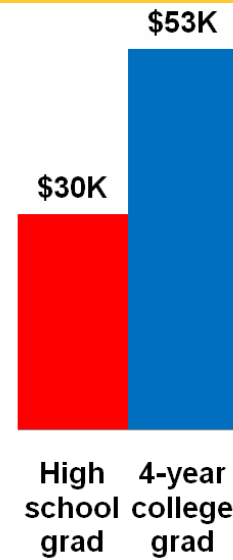
Educators plan, collaborate at Summer Institute



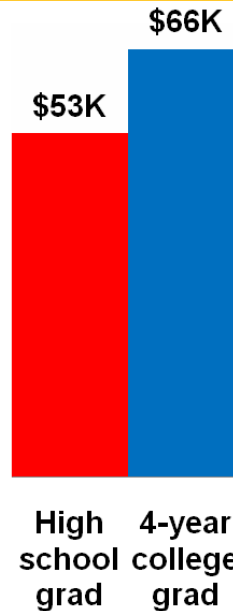
More than 500 educators from innovative secondary schools across North Carolina spent three days last week hearing from state and national education leaders and learning from each other about the keys to ensuring that all students graduate ready for college and career.

With a conference theme of "acting on our beliefs," the North Carolina New School Project's 2011 Summer Institute featured both practical, nuts-and-bolts lessons from inventive teachers and big-picture inspiration from visionary leaders like Tim King, the Chicago-based social entrepreneur whose Urban Prep charter schools has won national attention for the strong success of its inner-city, all-male enrollment. Former Chief Justice Burley Mitchell and Superior Court Judge Howard Manning Jr. shared the stage to discuss the history and impact of the landmark Leandro court ruling that both have helped shape.

In the end, though, educators returned to their communities and schools with renewed purpose and a clearer roadmap for reaching the common



Firefighter



Plumber

goal of graduating all students ready for success.

[See and hear highlights, discussion and more from Summer Institute...](#)

STEM schools show strength with first grads



Graduation Day, Durham's
Southern School of
Engineering

A group of 10 start-up high schools was launched four years ago with an ambitious goal: boost the achievement of students who would have otherwise attended high schools that a state judge had threatened to close because of low performance. Test scores were far below average; graduation rates were rock bottom.

This spring, those new schools are proving that a clear focus on teaching and learning, matched by high expectations for every student, can open opportunities for students who might have failed and dropped out under the kind of circumstances born of low expectations.

Nearly every one of those small "turnaround" schools - which all share a common focus on science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM - graduated at least 90 percent of the students who entered as the inaugural freshman class four years ago.

[Read more ...](#)

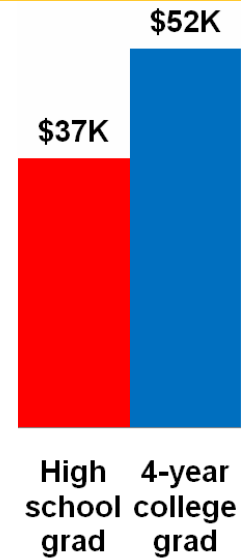
More news about secondary school innovation ...

[Get Schooled Foundation recruiting schools for messages meant to engage students in school](#)

Check out how the 2011-12 Get Schooled Challenges use pop culture and media to keep students focused on attendance, achievement, financial aid and college applications.

[College is a better investment for most graduates than in the past, this Pulitzer Prize winner argues](#)

New York Times economics columnist David Leonhardt examines the case against "college for all" and reports on new research showing that college continues to make a difference for individuals and the nation.



Meet an Innovator



Eric Hines, principal of Early/Middle College at N.C. A&T State University, sees himself as coach and father figure at the all-male Greensboro school. "I work hard to truly build relationships with these young men, to teach them and keep them in school," Hines says.

The school's location on a university campus also has a big impact on the students. "It's hard for a kid to come here with the electric atmosphere of this university and not want to go to college," Hines says.

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