



**Education and Workforce Innovation Program
2014-2015 Commission Report**

Accelerating Innovation in North Carolina Schools

Report due: April 30, 2015

Education and Workforce Innovation Program

North Carolina General Statute, Article 6C

Article 6C.

§ 115C-64.15. North Carolina Education and Workforce Innovation Commission.

(a) There is created the North Carolina Education and Workforce Innovation Commission (Commission). The Commission shall be located administratively in the Office of the Governor but shall exercise all its prescribed powers independently of the Office of the Governor. Of the funds appropriated for the Education and Workforce Innovation Program established under G.S. 115C-64.16, up to two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) each fiscal year may be used by the Office of the Governor to provide technical assistance and administrative assistance, including staff, to the Commission and reimbursements and expenses for the Commission.

(b) The Commission shall consist of the following 14 members:

- (1) The Secretary of Commerce.
- (2) The State Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- (3) The Chair of the State Board of Education.
- (4) The President of The University of North Carolina.
- (5) The President of the North Carolina Community College System.
- (6) Three members appointed by the Governor who have experience in education.
- (7) Three members appointed by the General Assembly upon recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, as provided in G.S. 120-121, who have experience in businesses operating in North Carolina.
- (8) Three members appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, as provided in G.S. 120-121, who have experience in businesses operating in North Carolina.

(b1) Members appointed by the Governor or the General Assembly shall serve for three-year terms commencing July 1 of the year of appointment and may serve successive terms.

(c) The Commission members shall elect a chair from the membership of the Commission. The Commission shall meet at least three times annually on the call of the Chair or as additionally provided by the Commission. A quorum is six members of the Commission. Members may not send designees to Commission meetings nor may they vote by proxy.

(d) The Commission shall develop and administer the Education and Workforce Innovation Program, as established under G.S. 115C-64.16, and make awards of grants under the Program. The Commission shall work closely with the North Carolina New Schools in administering the program.

(e) The Commission shall publish a report on the Education and Workforce Innovation Program on or before April 30 of each year. The report shall be submitted to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the State Board of Education, the State Board of Community Colleges, and the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina. The report shall include at least all of the following information:

- (1) An accounting of how funds and personnel resources were utilized and their impact on student achievement, retention, and employability.
- (2) Recommended statutory and policy changes.
- (3) Recommendations for improvement of the program. (2013-360, s. 8.34(a); 2013-363, s. 3.10(a); 2014-100, s. 23.1(e).)

§ 115C-64.16. The Education and Workforce Innovation Program.

(a) Program Establishment. - There is established the Education and Workforce Innovation Program (Program) to foster innovation in education that will lead to more students graduating

career and college ready. Funds appropriated to the Program shall be used to award competitive grants to an individual school, a local school administrative unit, or a regional partnership of more than one local school administrative unit to advance comprehensive, high-quality education that equips teachers with the knowledge and skill required to succeed with all students. Before receiving a grant, applicants must meet all of the following conditions:

- (1) Form a partnership, for the purposes of the grant, with either a public or private university or a community college.
 - (2) Form a partnership, for the purposes of the grant, with regional businesses and business leaders.
 - (3) Demonstrate the ability to sustain innovation once grant funding ends.
- (b) Applicant Categories and Specific Requirements. -
- (1) Individual schools. - Individual public schools must demonstrate all of the following in their applications:
 - a. Partnerships with business and industry to determine the skills and competencies needed for students' transition into growth sectors of the regional economy.
 - b. Aligned pathways to employment, including students' acquisition of college credit or industry recognized credentials.
 - c. Development of systems, infrastructure, capacity, and culture to enable teachers and school leaders to continuously focus on improving individual student achievement.
 - (2) Local school administrative units. - Local school administrative units must demonstrate all of the following in their applications:
 - a. Implementation of comprehensive reform and innovation.
 - b. Appointment of a senior leader to manage and sustain the change process with a specific focus on providing parents with a portfolio of meaningful options among schools.
 - (3) Regional partnerships of two or more local school administrative units. - Partnerships of two or more local school administrative units must demonstrate all of the following in their applications:
 - a. Implementation of resources of partnered local school administrative units in creating a tailored workforce development system for the regional economy and fostering innovation in each of the partnered local school administrative units.
 - b. Promotion of the development of knowledge and skills in career clusters of critical importance to the region.
 - c. Benefits of the shared strengths of local businesses and higher education.
 - d. Usage of technology to deliver instruction over large geographic regions and build networks with industry.
 - e. Implementation of comprehensive reform and innovation that can be replicated in other local school administrative units.
- (c) Consideration of Factors in Awarding of Grants. - All applications must include information on at least the following in order to be considered for a grant:
- (1) Describe the aligned pathways from school to high-growth careers in regional economies.
 - (2) Leverage technology to efficiently and effectively drive teacher and principal development, connect students and teachers to online courses and resources, and foster virtual learning communities among faculty, higher education partners, and business partners.

- (3) Establish a comprehensive approach to enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers and administrators to successfully implement the proposed innovative program and to graduate all students ready for work and college.
 - (4) Link to a proven provider of professional development services for teachers and administrators capable of providing evidence-based training and tools aligned with the goals of the proposed innovative program.
 - (5) Form explicit partnerships with businesses and industry, which may include business advisory councils, internship programs, and other customized projects aligned with relevant workforce skills.
 - (6) Partner with community colleges or public or private universities to enable communities to challenge every student to graduate with workplace credentials or college credit.
 - (7) Align K-12 and postsecondary instruction and performance expectations to reduce the need for college remediation courses.
 - (8) Secure input from parents to foster broad ownership for school choice options and to foster greater understanding of the need for continued education beyond high school.
 - (9) Provide a description of the funds that will be used and a proposed budget for five years.
 - (10) Describe the source of matching funds required in subsection (d) of this section.
 - (11) Establish a strategy to achieve meaningful analysis of program outcomes due to the receipt of grant funds under this section.
- (d) Matching Private and Local Funds. - All grant applicants must match fifty percent (50%) of all State dollars. Matching funds shall not include other State funds. Matching funds may include in-kind contributions.
- (e) Grants. - Any grants awarded by the Commission may be spent over a five-year period from the initial award. Grants may be awarded for new or existing projects.
- (f) Reporting Requirements. - No later than September 1 of each year, a grant recipient shall submit to the Commission an annual report for the preceding grant year that describes the academic progress made by the students and the implementation of program initiatives. (2013-360, s. 8.34(a); 2014-100, ss. 23.1(b), (d); 2014-115, s. 48.)

Appropriations Act of 2014

PART XXIII. OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE INNOVATION PROGRAM SECTION 23.1.(a) Of the funds appropriated for the Education and Workforce Innovation Program, established under G.S. 115C-64.16, up to five percent (5%) each fiscal year may be used by the Office of the Governor to provide technical assistance and administrative assistance, including staff, to the Commission and reimbursement expenses for the Commission, and five percent (5%) each fiscal year shall be allocated to North Carolina New Schools Project. North Carolina New Schools Project shall use the funds to establish a peer learning network for all grantees to ensure high-quality implementation of grant programs that lead to strong results for students. The peer learning network shall (i) share effective practices and lessons learned among grantees; (ii) bring together grantee teachers and leaders for intensive development that sustains focus on instruction, academic rigor, and skills development; and (iii) benchmark grantee data against State and national standards. North Carolina New Schools Project shall also advise grantees in fund-raising.

Part I: Program Overview

The North Carolina Education and Workforce Innovation Program was established in the 2013 Legislative Session to support local education agencies undertaking innovative projects that would directly result in more students graduating college and career ready. The goals of the Education and Workforce Innovation Program include:

1. **Align public schools** with business and industry and colleges/universities;
2. **Provide greater choice** for parents/guardians among high-quality public education options;
3. Enhance teacher and principal **effectiveness**;
4. Ensure all students possess **job-ready skills**; and
5. Leverage **technology** to accelerate student and teacher learning.

The Education and Workforce Innovation Program established by statute is a \$2 million annual fund to support schools, districts, and regions undertaking work in service of the goals listed above. Primary measurable outcomes of the program will include:

- Evidence of industry valued skills among students;
- Decreased time-to-degree;
- Increased rate at which students gain academic college credit and/or workforce credentials;
- Evidence of explicit partnerships with business and industry;
- Confirmation that every student leaves school with a job (continuing education or employment); and
- Evidence of alignment across K-12 and colleges and universities.

The Education and Workforce Innovation Program's competitive grant fund is administered by the Education and Workforce Innovation Commission (hereafter, "the Commission") and housed administratively in the Office of the Governor. Members appointed to the Commission include:

- John Skvarla, Secretary of Commerce
- June Atkinson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Bill Cobey, Chairman, State Board of Education
- Tom Ross, President, University of North Carolina System
- Scott Ralls, President, North Carolina Community College System
- Governor's Office appointees:
 - Billie Redmond, CEO, TradeMark Properties, Commission Chair
 - Rod Webb, Senior Vice President and Raleigh City Executive, NewBridge Bank
- House of Representatives appointees:
 - Judy Irwin, Vice President, Human Resources, Golden Corral
 - Clifton Vann, President, Livingston & Haven
- Senate appointees:
 - Robin Comer, County Commissioner, Carteret County
 - Michael Martini, HR Manager, Ball Corporation

Additional Commission members are being identified and appointed by the Governor and General Assembly based on legislative updates.

Governor's Office staff partners with staff of North Carolina New Schools to administer the Education and Workforce Innovation Program and enact the vision established by the General Assembly and the Commission. In 2014, North Carolina New Schools launched a Peer Learning Network for grantees, in order to ensure collaboration around and sharing of best practices throughout grantees' Program work, provide professional development to strengthen program implementation, and benchmark grantee performance data.

Part II: State Activities

In year one of the grant period, the Education and Workforce Innovation Commission awarded grants to eleven schools, districts, and regions representing the diverse constituencies of North Carolina. Grant awards included:

1. Beaufort County Schools - \$800,000
2. Buncombe County Schools - \$800,000
3. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools - \$800,000
4. Chatham, Harnett, and Lee County Schools - \$800,000
5. Davidson County, Lexington City, and Thomasville City Schools – Yadkin Valley Regional Career Academy - \$350,000
6. Duplin County Schools - \$800,000
7. Durham Public Schools - \$800,000
8. Granville, Franklin, Vance, and Warren Counties - \$800,000
9. Rutherford County Schools - \$800,000
10. Surry County Schools - \$800,000
11. Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools – Kennedy High School - \$350,000

Funds were distributed to grantees in May 2014 based on the recommendation of the Commission. In year two of the grant period, the Education and Workforce Innovation Commission convened twice:

- **July 14, 2014:** The Commission met to discuss changes to the Education and Workforce Innovation Program proposed in the 2014 legislative session. Changes included a modification to grantee fund matching requirements and the establishment of a Peer Learning Network led by North Carolina New Schools. Commission members also received updates on award distribution to grantees and the beginning of grantee planning work.
- **March 25, 2015:** The Commission met to review and approve budgetary updates submitted by grantees following legislative changes made in the 2014 legislative session. Commission members were joined by State Representative Linda Johnson, the sponsor of Education and Workforce Innovation Program legislation. Commissioners heard a presentation from Duplin County Schools on the implementation of STEM learning curriculum and enhanced STEM-focused professional development for educators in their schools as a part of their Education and Workforce Innovation Program grant. Commissioners also heard presentations by leaders of Granville, Franklin, Vance, and Warren County on the establishment of a Manufacturing Skills Training Alliance in their region and the beginning of aligned apprenticeships for students as a part of their Education and Workforce Innovation Program grant.

In addition to Commission meetings, the Education and Workforce Innovation Program Peer Learning Network was established in 2014. As a part of the Peer Learning Network, grantees engaged in three convenings:

- **November 19, 2014:** During this meeting led by North Carolina New Schools, grantees learned about the evolution of the Education and Workforce Innovation Program and the rationale for and design of the Peer Learning Network. Grantees created and shared logic models for their grant work and identified outcome data for benchmarking throughout the course of the grant.

- **February 12, 2015:** Grantees participated in a webinar to learn more about fundraising strategies to support Education and Workforce Innovation Program work. As a part of their projects, grantees are required to match 50% of state funds in their district. In several counties, fundraising efforts have been critical to establishing this match.
- **April 2015:** Peer Learning Network participants were invited to participate in North Carolina New Schools Scaling STEM professional development conference. After the close of this conference on April 15, grantees engaged in an additional day of development to learn about innovative practices in North Carolina schools and districts and share accomplishments and challenges of implementing their Education and Workforce Innovation Program projects. During this meeting, grantees also refined their logic models and brainstormed metrics for benchmarking outcome data.

In year two of their work, the Education and Workforce Innovation Program Commissioners and grantees have begun to realize the vision set forth by the North Carolina General Assembly in legislation. Necessary legislative changes have allowed grantees additional flexibility around how to best allocate matching funds to support grant work and have provided additional support to ensure the long-term success and sustainability of their efforts. Commissioners agree that the work that grantees have undertaken exactly matches their highest expectations for the Program, and should be replicated in schools, districts, and regions throughout North Carolina. As the Education and Workforce Innovation Program work continues over the next four years, Commissioners hope to further engage state leaders in grantees' work to promote college and career readiness and to spread the learning that has resulted from this work to citizens and leaders alike.

Part III: Grant Activities

Grantees received their funding to begin Education and Workforce Innovation Program work in May 2015, and will receive annual distributions of funding through 2019. Following legislative changes affecting the grantee matching requirements in the 2014 legislative session, grantees submitted modified budgets and scopes of work to align with new legislation. Legislative changes also modified grantee reporting timeline to align with the end of the academic year, with grant periods closing June 30th of each year and annual reports due September 1st of each year. Because of these changes, grantees have not yet submitted full reports detailing their first year of grant work.

The Commission is pleased to provide an update on grantee work at this time, and look forward to provide a more comprehensive update following the close of the grant period's first year.

Beaufort County Schools:

- *Award Amount:* \$800,000
- *Program Description:* Beaufort County Schools will use grant funds to establish Career Academies at all three of the district's traditional high schools. Career Academies will offer themed programs that operate as "smaller learning communities" within the larger school.
- *Accomplishments to Date:*

In 2014, Beaufort County Schools launched a Public Safety Academy at Southside High School. Ninety-four students participated in Academy classes during 2014-2015, with 141 credentials earned by students in academy classes during the fall semester. In the fall of 2015, Beaufort County Schools will launch Transportation and STEM Academies at Northside High School. Grant leaders are currently working on publicizing all three academies, as well as recruiting staff, developing curriculum, and purchasing equipment for the new academies.

During summer 2015, Beaufort County Schools will implement a professional development series to engage Career and Technical Education, counseling, and Investing in Innovation staff in order to seamlessly implement and integrate career pathways for all high school students in Beaufort County. By exposing students to higher education and workforce opportunities while in high school, Beaufort County Schools will produce workforce-ready learners that can contribute to a stronger North Carolina.

Buncombe County Schools:

- *Award Amount:* \$800,000
 - *Program Description:* Buncombe County Schools' project will provide enriched science curriculum for all fifth grade students, and will support the educator professional development and community engagement strategies necessary to building a true STEM culture in Buncombe Schools.
 - *Accomplishments to Date:*
- In the first year of the grant cycle, Buncombe County Schools focused on empowering fourth and fifth grade materials with the resources and professional development necessary to implement strong science curriculum. Teachers received resources and professional development to enable instruction around energy and electromagnetism, weather, and force and motion. Grant leaders engaged teachers through district-level professional development, school-site workshops, attending and collaborating with school teams during their Professional Learning Community time, and leading model lessons and coaching in

individual classrooms. Though initial grant proposals focused on fifth grade, Buncombe has expanded its efforts to encompass the fourth grade as well in order to promote greater vertical alignment between grades and stronger student performance on fifth grade science End of Grade assessments.

Buncombe has also used grant funds to implement a strategic STEM focus throughout the district. As a part of their Education and Workforce Innovation Program work, the district has hired a district elementary STEM coach, who works individually with teachers at grantee schools to strengthen instruction. Buncombe has also sent teams of teachers to state-level STEM-focused professional development, hosted a STEM conference for students, and is planning a STEM Celebration at the end of April.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools:

- *Award Amount:* \$800,000
- *Program Description:* Charlotte-Mecklenburg's grant will increase the effectiveness of two existing career academy programs and expand the number of STEM career academies in Information Technology and Health Sciences, building a model for high-quality career education districtwide.
- *Accomplishments to Date:*

In 2014-2015, Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools focused on building leadership capacity to implement change over the five year life of their grant. This was accomplished through implementation of the North Carolina New Schools Coach University and Blended Model. Each of the four CMS schools participating in the Education and Workforce Innovation Program engaged school leaders in a suite of professional development activities, including the Industry Innovation Council, the Innovative Leaders Institute, and the Leadership Innovation Network, among others. Together, this series will enhance school leaders' capacity to implement innovative practices in their school context.

CMS's Education and Workforce Innovation Program teachers also participated in the Scaling STEM Conference. Through this development opportunity, teachers strengthened their knowledge of career-aligned STEM skills and assemble and evaluated ideas to improve classroom instruction around STEM.

Chatham, Harnett, and Lee Counties:

- *Award Amount:* \$800,000
- *Program Description:* This project will increase dual enrollment participation in the tri-county area by employing full-time Career and College Advisors in each of the area's nine public high schools in order to build faculty, administrative, and curricular capacity for guiding students and families through the full range of educational career pathways. The Central Carolina Community College will collaborate with each LEA to employ, train, and supervise advisors as they direct student counseling, professional development, and curriculum enhancement.
- *Accomplishments to Date:*

In year one of the grant period, Chatham, Lee, and Harnett Counties hired College and Career Advisors for each of their nine high schools. Advisors began providing outreach and advising services soon thereafter, establishing opportunities for students, faculty and administrators to learn about the needs of local businesses and industry. These activities include individual advisory meetings with students, classroom lectures, faculty and staff meetings, parent meetings, and Career and College Promise (CCP) information sessions. Advisors have also led site visits of local businesses and industries, as well as the Central

Carolina Community College campuses, for students and teachers. Faculty participated in National Manufacturing Day activities and scheduled visits to industries and businesses unique to each county in the service area. Advisors have participated in professional development opportunities including the College Foundation of North Carolina Training and participating in the North Carolina Community College Conference. Planning is underway for the first annual Central Carolina Works (CCW) Summer Symposium on June 23 and 24, which will introduce the CCW Occupational Themester program and bring together faculty, local industry, and business representatives with a goal of integrating content from the world of work into classroom instruction.

As of January 1, 2015, advisors have had contact with over 56% of the target student population, resulting in 592 students enrolling in CCP classes for the spring 2015 semester. This is an increase from 429 students in the fall 2014 semester, and from 200-250 per semester prior to the start of the CCW program. This translates to 11% of juniors and seniors being enrolled in CCP programs, up from 5% prior to the start of the program.

Duplin County Schools:

- *Award Amount:* \$800,000
- *Program Description:* Duplin County Schools will use their grant to expand the district's current STEM focus to elementary schools. Specifically, the grant will support placing STEM labs in each school and employing a lead STEM teacher in order to allow DCS to incorporate STEM into all grade levels and create a seamless journey with rigorous STEM emphases for students from Pre-Kindergarten to 13th grade.
- *Accomplishments to Date:*

During the 2014-2015 school year, Duplin County Schools has employed a District STEM Coordinator to oversee the implementation of the EWIF grant, provide professional development for teachers, and coordinate the implementation of STEM curriculum and resources in grades kindergarten through five. Since August 2014, the District STEM Coordinator has provided three formal professional development sessions for teachers, facilitated STEM meetings with teachers and administrators at eight elementary schools, and created a three-year plan for opening STEM Missions Labs for students in grades three through five. Facilities updates for the first STEM Missions Lab will begin in June 2015, and the lab will open when students return to school in August 2015. Curriculum materials and equipment for STEM in grades kindergarten through two, as well as STEM in the Gym, have been ordered from the vendor. District-wide professional development sessions for teachers and administrators have been scheduled for June 2015 and August 2015. As a result of professional development activities and increased awareness of STEM, surveyed district principals have reported increased understanding of STEM education, stronger implementation of STEM education in their school, improved supports for school administrators implementing STEM, and increased capacity to evaluate effective STEM instruction.

Fifteen Duplin County administrators in grades kindergarten through twelve have received leadership coaching services from North Carolina New Schools during the 2014-2015 school year. Each principal has received nine one-on-one site visits from their leadership coach. Additionally, the leadership coaches have provided three district-wide professional learning sessions for school and district leaders, addressing such topics as use of data, lesson plan tuning, and instructional rounds. All principals will also participate in two virtual (online or telephone) coaching sessions with their leadership coach before the end of the school year. According to a survey of principals, 100% of respondents indicated that leadership coaching has helped build their understanding of the NC New Schools Design Principles. The vast majority of principals indicated that their work with their leadership

coach has helped them move forward toward accomplishing the goals of their School Improvement Plan through the use of ongoing data analysis, build capacity as an instructional leader, and align the professional learning activities within their school to district expectations.

Davidson County, Lexington City, and Thomasville City Schools – Yadkin Valley Regional Career Academy

- *Award Amount:* \$350,000
- *Program Description:* This grant will support Yadkin Valley Regional Career Academy, an economic development initiative to re-invent high school around students' career interests, using a rigorous STEM curriculum integrated with relevant work and community experiences, and innovative uses of technology. The objective of the academy is to help students to be competitive in the global workforce in order to supply the growth industries of the area and become an economic driver for Davidson County and the region.
- *Accomplishments to Date:*

In the first year of their grant, the Davidson County, Lexington City, and Thomasville City Schools regional consortium has focused on implementing strong project-based learning and digital instruction at Yadkin Valley Regional Career Academy (hereafter YVCA). Through these instructional practices, YVCA hopes to provide a more personalized, career-focused education to its students, thus promoting stronger academic achievement and educational attainment.

In year one, YVCA has brought on a Project Based Learning leader and a Blended Resource Learning leader to direct implementation of these practices at Yadkin Valley Regional Career Academy. YVCA has also funded intensive leadership and instructional coaching for teachers and school leadership through North Carolina New Schools. Moving forward, YVCA will implement comprehensive Project Based Learning curriculum and additional digital learning opportunities in order to provide students with the flexibility to enroll in college courses, participate in field trips, and engage in lunch and learns activities while pursuing a high school diploma.

Durham Public Schools:

- *Award Amount:* \$800,000
- *Program Description:* Durham Public Schools will partner with Durham Technical Community College and local businesses to build an ambitious education-to-career system called Made in Durham that prepares all young people for careers. Their Education and Workforce Innovation program grant will support Durham Public Schools in building the system's first full education-to-career pathway that will serve as a prototype for future pathways.
- *Accomplishments to Date:*

In year one of the grant period, Durham Public Schools has further refocused and refined the vision for Made in Durham through additional partner alignment activities, school engagement, and relationship development. Based on these efforts, Made in Durham has evolved from an ideological concept to an independent nonprofit organization with its own staff, and the Durham partnership has fleshed out a vision for a comprehensive career-focused, market-driven pathway that begins in elementary school and ends in the workplace. This pathway will launch in the 2015-2016 school year at Merrick-Moore Elementary School and Neal Middle School. Merrick-Moore will implement Engineering is Elementary curricula in second and fifth grade classrooms throughout the school year, with professional development provided by the Engineering Place at NC State University, as well

as engaging staff members in professional development around cultural competency and effective teaching practices for young boys of color provided by UNC's Bridges 2 Success. Neal Middle School will provide a two-week engineering summer camp for 72 middle school students across three grade levels in July 2015, with follow-up activities throughout the school year.

Additionally, Durham Technical Community College is in the process of hiring a College Liaison to support high school students at Southern School of Energy and Sustainability in their transition to higher education and the workforce. Finally, faculty and leaders from Durham Tech and the Southern School of Energy and Sustainability faculty are partnering to strengthen curriculum alignment and identify post-secondary opportunities throughout this planning period.

Granville, Franklin, Vance, and Warren Counties:

- *Award Amount:* \$800,000
- *Program Description:* Grant funds will support the development of a "Manufacturing Skills Training Alliance" between Granville County Schools, Franklin County Schools, Vance County Schools, Warren County Schools, and Vance-Granville Community College. This will allow them to prepare students for careers in manufacturing and related industries and will help develop a regional workforce that can operate, troubleshoot and maintain modern industrial equipment.
- *Accomplishments to Date:*

During the 2014-2015 academic year, the Granville, Franklin, Vance, and Warren County region has focused on cultivating partnerships with local business and industry in order to create engagement opportunities for students. As a result of this work, local companies have established internship opportunities, plant tours, and ongoing partnerships to increase student interest in advance manufacturing related careers. The region has also established additional professional development opportunities for educators around advanced manufacturing, including trainings around photovoltaics, motor controls, and STEM instruction.

The region's efforts around the Advanced Manufacturing Skills Training Alliance have already demonstrated strong results. In its first eight months: 18 students have completed associate's degrees, diplomas, or certificates in Vance-Granville Community College (VGCC) programs; 111 students have received a career readiness credential in high school or VGCC programs; 17 students have received a Certified Performance Technologist credential in high school or VGCC programs; and 375 students have successfully completed two or more manufacturing skills CTE classes.

Rutherford County Schools:

- *Award Amount:* \$800,000
- *Program Description:* Rutherford County Schools will use grant funds to create engaging, innovative high school career concentration pathways and scale up evidence-based design principles already in place in Rutherford Early College High School. RCS will leverage agency partnerships with the Robert and Janice McNair Educational Foundation, Isothermal Community College, and 450 constituent members of the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce to ensure the seamless, strategic integration of mutual interests, capacities, and services to benefit the students, community, workforce, and economy of Rutherford County.
- *Accomplishments to Date:*

During the project's first year, Rutherford's activities have been focused in three areas, including (1) enhancing academic rigor within the instructional core; (2) engaging business, industry, and community leaders in the identification of course pathways leading to

stackable credentials aligned to current and emerging workplace needs; and, (3) beginning development and articulation of five-year high school-to-college course sequences in collaboration with postsecondary partner Isothermal Community College.

Rutherford County Schools contracted with North Carolina New Schools to provide leadership coaching to principals in the target schools and subject-specific content coaching to teachers in the target schools and academic areas this year. Together, these activities served to expand early college design principles within local schools, ground leadership and teaching activities in research-based practices, and enhance students' access to rigorous instruction that better prepares them for college and career.

District leaders have met regularly with leaders at Isothermal Community College to begin the development and articulation of five-year high school-to-college course sequences reflecting current and emerging workplace needs identified through their mutual engagement with business, industry, and community leaders. Project activities will turn next toward building capacity to deliver college courses within those sequences to high school students in conjunction with their traditional course work so that greater numbers of students graduate from high school with entry level workforce credentials that they may upgrade through only one additional year of community college study. An overarching goal of Rutherford's project is to make that opportunity and experience pervasive throughout the district's high schools so that every student concurrently earns a high school diploma and stackable postsecondary credential that prepares them well to engage in the local workforce.

Surry County Schools

- *Award Amount:* \$800,000
- *Program Description:* Surry County Schools will use grant funds to create a "Career and College Culture" with emphasis on STEM skills throughout middle schools in their district. Grant funds will allow SCS to transform an existing middle school to a STEM magnet school and create a district Science Institute, each of which will serve as laboratories for piloting innovative teaching practices for replication throughout the district.
- *Accomplishments to Date:*

In the first year of the grant period, Surry County Schools designed and launched a STEM magnet school at Meadowview Middle School. Through this effort, Surry County Schools has provided all students at the school with access to accelerated coursework with the potential of earning high school credit and given all teachers at the school have access to instructional coaching and professional development as related to the Common Instructional Framework. In Summer 2015, and all school science teachers will be trained in project-based learning. Surry has also partnered with NC New Schools to provide professional development at the magnet school, including instructional coaching, leadership coaching, two instructional coaches trained through Coach University, and one coach trained through NC New Schools in Project-Based Learning.

Surry County also designed and launched the Surry County Schools Science Institute in August 2014, and hired a Science Institute Director and Assistant to oversee this work. This effort provides all teachers access to professional development related to science instruction and science labs at the SCS Science Institute.

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County – Kennedy High School:

- *Award Amount:* \$350,000
- *Program Description:* Grant funds will support the development of a college-going, career-ready culture at Kennedy Middle and High School, through partnerships with Forsyth Tech and local business and industry that will allow all students will receive a viable and

meaningful workplace experiences. Kennedy will also employ a Career Coach to provide relevant professional development to teachers around college and career preparation.

- *Accomplishments to Date:*

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools has focused its first year on establishing a culture of innovation at Kennedy High School. They've done this by rethinking traditional teaching and learning structures to provide additional personalized and technology-enhanced instruction, smooth the transition between middle and high school career-focused learning, and enhance literacy instruction for all learners.

Specifically, in 2014-2015, the district has: provided comprehensive NC New Schools professional development for Kennedy High School leaders; developed a structure and strategy and recruited leadership for a Business Advisory Council; and hired a career coach to focus on developing the middle to high school transition plan. Winston-Salem/Forsyth has also focused on strengthening and expanding its career academies by adding eight additional courses within their four existing academies, enhancing the focus of an existing academy to incorporate Entrepreneurship education, and creating workplace learning opportunities for middle school students around the careers supported by the academies. They have personalized education for their students by creating digital learning portfolios and Individualized Learning Plans for each student at Kennedy High School, implementing interest inventories and learning preference indicators for students in 6th through 9th grade, and piloting a digital learning conversion using adaptive software. As a result of these efforts, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools has increased student interest in remaining at Kennedy following middle school and increased magnet applications for high school from 30 applications to 90 applications.

Part III: Recommendations for Improvement

The Education and Workforce Innovation Program has been remarkably successful in its first year, spurring improved collaboration and workforce-driven instruction in schools throughout North Carolina. The Commission looks forward to continuing to track the successes of Education and Workforce Innovation Program grantees throughout their five-year grant period.

Moving forward, we encourage the General Assembly to continue to appropriate a minimum of \$2 million annual to the Education and Workforce Innovation Program to ensure our current grantees continue to receive funding throughout the grant period. In order to award additional grants to other worthy applicants and expand the impact of the Education and Workforce Innovation Program, the Commission will require additional funding. We hope that, based on our first year's efforts, the leaders in our General Assembly would continue increasing the annual appropriation to the Education and Workforce Innovation Program.