

Education Update



NC DJJDP A Newsletter for Parents and Guardians of Students at Chatham Youth Development Center

Message from the Superintendent

Most of us are full of hopes and aspirations at the beginning of a New Year. We make resolutions, go on diets, and promise ourselves that we will correct things that have been mistakes for us in the past. I hope that we all work this year to consider every moment as the beginning of a New Year. The old saying, "today is the first day of the rest of your life," can help remind us that we can always start anew.

We have many opportunities in this new year . . .

- to begin a brand new year with amazing possibilities
- to leave the failures of last year behind
- to correct past faults of character, word, and action
- to repair broken relationships
- to seek to establish other meaningful relationships
- to be a responsible father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, and friend
- to work to help others and to ask for help when we need it



We all have the opportunity to grow and to excel in the coming year. Please know that the school and center staff are available to work

and talk with you about your child. We welcome your visits to the school and encourage you to contact us to make an appointment to talk about your wishes and hopes for your child in this new year. Please let us know how we can assist you in realizing your hopes for your child in the coming year.

Students Plan for the Future

Students at Chatham Youth Development Center are learning interesting things in their Financial Literacy class. Each day, they look forward to exploring different aspects of future employment, as well as planning for housing and transportation needs.

Most recently, the students have been working with a monthly budget that is based on jobs each student selected. Students learned that qualifications and credentials were components used in determining the salary that they would earn. Students were encouraged to select occupations in growth industries that are resistant to an economic recession. The information will be compiled and displayed in a Power Point presentation to the class.



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How Do We Measure Student Achievement?

End of Course Tests are administered twice yearly beginning with the 2008-2009 school year. Because the school day has changed to Block Scheduling, End of Course tests are administered in December 2008 and again in May 2009. At Dobbs and Lenoir Youth Development Centers in Kinston, NC, End of Course test for the first semester are: English I, Biology, Algebra I and Civics & Economics. Teachers pace lessons throughout a five month period to cover all academic content subjects.

How do teachers know if students are retaining concepts for successful performance on End of Course tests? Teachers create quizzes, projects, and other assessments to measure student progress. Nine-week benchmark exams are another method used to assess student comprehension. Using data from all assessments provide teachers with information to re-direct instruction day to day. Of course, students are taught strategies to use as they read and apply skills while taking tests. Students highlight passages, number paragraphs, underline words, and re-read literature to select the best answers to each question.

It is important that students use strategies learned to perform at proficiency levels on End of Course test. Grade level promotion standards are tied to how well students score on EOC tests. Students are encouraged to use time allotted for testing, to check answers, and read carefully to choose as many right answers as possible.

Parents/guardians are given reports on each child's performance on the state tests. Student performance is reported by achievement levels. Level I performance indicates insufficient mastery. Level II is inconsistent mastery. Level III is consistent mastery, showing that the student is performing at grade level. Level IV is superior mastery. Students performing at or above Level III are considered at or above grade level.

For additional information on the tests that students are required to take, contact your student's school or the testing director in our central office.

New Labs for student learning set to open

Students at all of our schools will have a new way to explore and learn while earning high school credit. Synergistic Systems has now been installed at all schools. This curriculum shifts the responsibility for learning to the student, encouraging each learner to be responsible for his or her own academic success. The teacher becomes a facilitator of student learning and interacts with students in a positive, powerful way. With this system, teachers are afforded more one-on-one time with each student.

The curriculum is divided into modules that are aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Each module has seven lessons that explore the module topic. After the completion of the seven session module, students change partners and workstations and explore another module.

Modules at our schools include:

Physical Science	Agriculture
Health	Engineering
Math Enrichment	Careers
Business	Earth Science

Students work in cooperative pairs to complete the curriculum and activities. In the business module, for example, students must tackle the nuts and bolts of running a business, including the legal and ethical ramifications of decisions. Students then demonstrate their expertise through the proper handling of several different business transactions.

Students will be scheduled to enroll in the Synergistic lab for one semester per year. Ask us if you would like to learn more!