



ECPS EXPRESS

Monthly News and Notes about Essex County Public Schools

October 2018

Students “Start on Success” with a Hand from Riverside Hospital

When Denise* entered her senior year at Essex High School, she knew she wanted to be a registered nurse although she was not sure how to get started. Luckily, she was selected for an opportunity to work in the Emergency Department at Riverside Hospital where she became immersed in learning about its functions and services. She became an important part of the ER team while she prepped rooms for incoming patients, provided blankets for patients, and cared for family members of patients, such as children of sick parents. That experience launched her career path and today, she is enrolled at Rappahannock Community College where she is on her way to realizing her dream.

That is just one of the stories that is the result of the Start on Success (SOS) program, which prepares students with disabilities for the world

of work after graduation. Essex County Public Schools was the only school division in the state that was selected to participate in the program last year.

A key partnership with Riverside Hospital provides students who are in their final year of high school

with paid internships and opportunities to discover interests and abilities outside of the classroom. Students who participated in the program last year



received valuable experience in plant operations, materials management, radiology, food service, and environmental services.

“This program highlights what is possible when our state, local community, parents and businesses work together to go the extra mile for students who can really benefit from acquiring hands-on skills and practical experience to ready them for college and the workplace,” said Superintendent Dr. Scott A. Burckbuchler.

During their first semester of the school year, students receive classroom instruction that includes career readiness and self-determination skills training. Then, during the second semester, students work on-site three hours per week at the hospital for 16 weeks during school hours. Essex County Public Schools provides the transportation for students.

Under the leadership of Director Dr. Tara Roane, Teacher Alyssa Slater, and the Riverside Hospital Volunteer Coordinator Doris Lomis, students have flourished in the program and graduated from Essex High School with plans to enter the medical field with potential follow-up internships at Riverside upon graduating from college. This school year, three students have enrolled in the program with the hopes of continuing to find success in the medical field.

The Start on Success program is sponsored by the Center on Transition Innovations at Virginia Commonwealth University and funded by the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services.

**Student’s name has been changed to protect her privacy.*

A Laptop for Every Student Brings World to ECPS Classrooms

What’s it like to be a student today in Essex County Public Schools? If a visitor were to peek inside a classroom, they might be surprised to see students and teachers immersed in using the same high quality technology tools as larger school divisions.

“Even though we are a small community and budgets are tight, that shouldn’t mean our students are denied access to current technology which would put them at a disadvantage in today’s workforce,” said Superintendent Dr. Scott A. Burckbuchler. “In fact, we are very focused on making sure they receive everything they need to prepare them for success after graduation.”

A cornerstone of this commitment is the ECPS one-to-one laptop initiative, meaning every student has access to a laptop computer for learning. Starting this year, every student in grades 2 through 12 is able to use a Chromebook, which is a simplified laptop that provides internet access and applications for learning and collaborating. And in most classrooms, as part of the Division’s Technology Integration Package (TIP), teachers have their own laptop, document camera, a 70-inch monitor plus an interactive screen that can be written on.

“Providing Chromebooks for all our students in their classes is a valuable resource for teaching and learning. Technology increases student engagement and provides greater opportunities in the 5 Cs: critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration, and citizenship,” said Dr. Burckbuchler.

“We are very proud of the significant inroads we have made over the last few years in this and other areas and thank the community for its support. Without question, our students benefit from this partnership as they prepare for work in a technology-driven world,” said Dr. Burckbuchler. “It is our responsibility to make sure they are ready for it and through our technology initiatives, they are.”



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