

Horry County Schools Conway, South Carolina



EOS Program Tools

Significant tools and resources provided through this work have been both the Insight card and the identification of a Trusted Adult. Adults in the building have truly embraced this awareness of their ability to individually influence and guide students. Our guidance department and faculty have grown closer and gained new respect for each other as we all work toward equity for our students in determining the correct path to each student's success as/he overcomes obstacles and accepts the challenge of higher level classes.

Success and Vision

Students have benefited greatly from the work we are doing with EOS. Teachers and administrators are embracing this work and have buy-in. They believe in students and are making efforts to not only recruit students for advanced courses, but also to sustain these students in these courses by providing additional supports. We have several students who have moved from Special Ed Learning Strategies classes to CP, Honors, or AP® level classes within the last two years as we do not see boundaries but opportunities within our student body. District leadership is supportive in these efforts and has committed to closing the achievement gap, making the work we are doing with EOS a perfect fit with the District vision.



Our Reason for Tackling AP/IB Equity Work

As a district, HCS is committed to increasing equity and accessibility to advanced coursework for all students. Students who are exposed to rigorous courses such as Advanced Placement® are more likely to graduate high school, attend college and ultimately persevere in their college courses. HCS is devoted to this effort and has taken responsibility for the success of all students. Carolina Forest High has also been committed to its concept of "Each One, Add One," which encourages students who are in college preparatory (CP) classes to determine their strengths and choose one honors class for the next year, and for all honors students to select at least one AP class to add to their schedules. After a successful experience with Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS), we hope more underrepresented (UR) students may choose to "Add One." We know that we have many students who can tackle higher level courses and we want them to accept the challenge. Our collaboration with EOS is impacting the college and career readiness of students and providing opportunities for reaching the most diverse population of learners.

The Most Inspiring Aspect of the Work

Reading the Insight cards and having them on the desktop screen as we talk to students in private conversations as their Trusted Adult, advisory teacher, classroom teacher, or counselor has been an eye-opening, "all cards on the table" experience, bringing all of us closer to our students. Students see that we actually read their surveys and take their words seriously. Then, they open up to us as we talk about their feelings and allay their fears as we discuss their barriers and refer to their assets to decide which AP® classes would best fit their interests and abilities. This second year has been even more rewarding as we see the positive changes within student attitudes and help students add another AP® class to their schedules.

Who Benefits Most

Carolina Forest High School is a front runner in this work. The building leadership, faculty and staff are committed to students and their long-term successes. For these reasons, they are working hard to encourage and support students in always striving for more rigorous course selections. One of our UR students, a senior first-time AP® student says of her class, "I feel great that I am in the class because it challenges me to do better and I get to know my strengths and my weaknesses as a student." First time and longtime AP® students and our AP® faculty both benefit from a renewal of study time within our one lunch period of 45 minutes. AP® classrooms are study rooms during lunch with several layers of work going on: students working together with peer tutoring, teachers reviewing and then retesting students who are struggling with certain skills or content, and students creating study groups before a test in their next class. Carolina Forest has two rooms designated as study halls/lounge areas for our AP® Academy students and they are much in use as well.

Advice

Believe in the perseverance of students and be committed to an open-door policy for Advanced Placement® courses and other advanced course offerings. Additionally, ensure plans are in place to not only recruit students, but also to support students after they are recruited into these advanced courses so that they can experience success and want to continue taking higher level courses. Teachers need to remember that they are a resource on all levels for their students - in establishing mindset, in setting goals, in carving out appropriate support systems before and after school and at lunchtime, in opening up and creating relationships with students beyond that of teacher/student and becoming cheerleader/mentor/advisor to all students.



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY SCHOOLS