DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 462 562 CE 082 957

TITLE	Case Study: Hoke County High School, Raeford, North Carolina.
INSTITUTION	Southern Regional Education Board, Atlanta, GA.
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	18p.; Part of the High Schools That Work (HSTW) Initiative. For other case studies, see CE 082 956-964 and UD 034 827.
AVAILABLE FROM	Southern Regional Education Board, Publication Orders Department, 592 10th St. N.W., Atlanta, GA 30318-5790 (97V05; $1). Tel: 404-875-9211, ext. 236; Fax: 404-872-1477; Web site: http://www.sreb.org/. For full text: http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/case_studies/Hoke. asp.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; Academic Standards; Block Scheduling; Case Studies; Community Support; Economically Disadvantaged; *Education Work Relationship; *Educational Change; *Educational Improvement; English Instruction; Graduation Requirements; High Schools; Instructional Leadership; Integrated Curriculum; Mathematics Instruction; Professional Continuing Education; Program Improvement; School Business Relationship; School Community Relationship; School Guidance; School Holding Power; Science Instruction; Staff Development; Teacher Administrator Relationship; Teacher Collaboration; Teacher Exchange Programs; Teacher Expectations of Students; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	High Schools That Work; Southern Regional Education Board

ABSTRACT

A determined core of teachers and a dedicated vocational director at Hoke County High School, Raeford, North Carolina, made outstanding progress in raising student achievement despite economic, social, and demographic odds. The project was part of the Southern Regional Education Board's (SREB's) High Schools That Work initiative. The first barrier was building teacher support for change. The English and science departments were restructured to guide students into more challenging courses. Extra help was provided in mathematics. Vocational programs were refocused and redirected with national skill standards as guides. Strategies to make changes were a two-semester school year; block schedule; strengthened guidance; team teaching; staff development; and a teacher exchange program with business and industry. Academic and vocational studies were integrated. Improvement was shown by career-bound students' completion of SREB's recommended curriculum and more youth pursuing further education. Lessons learned were students will meet high expectations with access to new instructional methods and extra help; continuous staff development is necessary to involve staff in school improvement; students learn from community involvement; students who experience success and are interested in what they are learning are more apt to stay in school; and teachers must be actively involved in planning and developing school improvement. (YLB)

Case Study: Hoke County High School, Raeford, North Carolina.

Case Study

HOKE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL
Raeford, North Carolina

This case study is about a high school that is making outstanding progress in raising student achievement despite economic, social and demographic odds. The school's success originated with a dedicated core of teachers and a determined vocational director who worked with the administration to make far-reaching changes. As a result, this school has become a model for overcoming obstacles and producing successful students.

THE SETTING

Hoke County High School--a comprehensive high school of 1,350 students in grades 9 through 12--is located in Raeford, North Carolina, 20 miles south of Fayetteville and Fort Bragg. The school has a rich diversity of cultures and a fairly transient student population due to the military impact. The tri-racial student population includes 55 percent African Americans, 25 percent Native Americans and 20 percent whites. Most of the students come from middle to low income families. With a population of 25,000, Hoke County has the third lowest per capita income in the state.

A sprawling seven-acre campus is divided by a road that runs down the middle. Administrative offices and many academic classrooms are located on one side of the road, while vocational classrooms and labs, the main gym and some academic classrooms are found on the other.

THE CHALLENGES

The school has faced multiple challenges in preparing youth for work and further education:

- Designated as a "low wealth" school district, the system spent just $481 per pupil in 1993-94, compared to an average of $1,108 per pupil in other North Carolina districts. Hoke County ranked last among the state's 121 school districts in investing in its students.
- Over 73 percent of the district's students--compared to 40 percent state-wide--qualified for free or reduced lunches in 1993. The median income in the county was $22,770 in 1993, almost $4,000 below the state median.
- More than 200 juvenile arrests are made in the county each year.
- Seventeen percent of the county's births are to unwed teen-age mothers.

In 1993-94 Hoke County High School was declared a "low performing" school. The state placed the school on "warning status" and threatened a takeover unless significant improvement took place. (The school never lost its accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.) In May 1997 Hoke County High School will be reviewed on the basis of a new state accountability model.

The problems at the school included:

- High dropout rates;
- Discipline problems;
- Complaints from employers that graduates were unprepared for the workplace;
- Reports from postsecondary institutions that graduates were unprepared for further education;
- A school curriculum loaded with low-level courses;
- Excessive course failures;
- Low verbal, mathematics and problem-solving skills;
- High teacher turnover rates;
- A series of administrative changes, including three superintendents and two principals in a period of five years.

FACULTY MEMBERS INITIATE CHANGE

In 1988 the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction advertised a grant for a project titled "Basic and Vocational Education." The project was part of the Southern Regional Education Board-State Vocational Education Consortium's *High Schools That Work* initiative to raise the achievement of career-bound high school students. In essence, SREB was working with states to identify pilot sites for an ambitious new effort.

At Hoke County High School, a pioneering group of five faculty members--including the director of vocational education--decided to apply for the grant. Their successful proposal called for revamping the curriculum to ensure more rigorous content and strengthening the teamwork of academic and vocational teachers in planning integrated studies. The philosophy statement written by this small nucleus of faculty members underlies all of Hoke County High School's improvement efforts. It says:

> *All students are capable of success if instructed in the learning style that suits them best, whether hands-on, theoretical or some combination.*

Persistence has been the outstanding feature of the high school's efforts to raise standards and achievement. The school has focused on one problem at a time, initiated actions to solve the problem, reviewed strategies to determine their effectiveness and refined approaches where needed.

"We started small, with a few teachers believing that the school could do it," Superintendent Don Steed said. " Now, the effort has mushroomed and the faculty is almost unanimous in supporting the ongoing change process."

TWO PRIORITIES ARE IDENTIFIED

Using the *High Schools That Work* key practices as a framework, Hoke County High School identified two priorities:

- Getting academic and vocational teachers to raise expectations in their classrooms and to work together to integrate learning;
- Replacing low-level courses--particularly mathematics, science and English courses--and enrolling students in courses with rigorous content.

BUILDING TEACHER SUPPORT FOR CHANGE

The first barrier was the attitude of teachers who, to a large extent, had been operating independently and possessed little knowledge or interest in what was going on beyond their own classrooms. This turned out to be a relatively long-term effort. Only eight of 93 teachers supported academic and vocational integration in the beginning. By 1991, fewer than 20 percent of the teachers had ventured into the curriculum integration arena.

In the summer of 1988, teachers from all departments met together in a two-week planning workshop. They received an overview of departmental courses, discussed instructional strategies and pinpointed the time of year that the instruction takes place. Then they matched competencies and identified potential areas for integrating the curriculum. The summer workshops continued until 1994.

The school also launched a contest to encourage teachers to develop integrated activities. Teachers were organized into eight teams of 10 to 12 academic and vocational teachers each. The teams were led by teachers who had attended *High Schools That Work* summer staff development conferences. Teams that designed the best integrated projects received funds to implement the projects in their classrooms. The contest turned out to be a tremendous motivator for teacher collaboration: Following the contest, the percentage of faculty members involved in ongoing integrated learning soared to the current 90 percent.

The advances at Hoke County High School are attributed primarily to the teachers and Jeff Moss, the school's former vocational director who is now Hoke County's Associate Superintendent for Instruction and Technology. "The teacher leadership role is the thread that has held everything together," Moss says. "The teachers didn't have the changes forced on them from the top down. They did their own research and developed their own plans," he said.

The Hoke County Board of Education has been fully supportive of the changes that have taken place. The superintendent, assistant superintendent and directors visit the high school weekly to ensure that the new instructional strategies continue to have a positive impact on students.

CHANGING THE CURRICULUM IN REPLACING THE GENERAL TRACK

North Carolina requires 21 units for high school graduation, including 4 units in English, 3 units in mathematics (Algebra I required), 3 units in science (biology required) and 2 units in social studies (U.S.History and Economic and Legal Studies required). In addition to the English and social studies requirements, Hoke County's tech prep students must complete 4 units in a career major; 2 units above the Algebra I requirement; and physics or chemistry, depending on the major.

The Academic Core

In the past, Hoke County High School offered a broad range of academic courses, many of them fitting the "watered-down" description. Prior to 1993-94 the school offered seven levels of English, physical science and biology courses--ranging from remedial to advanced. Two levels of instruction were offered in chemistry and physics.

In 1993, the English and science departments were restructured to guide students into more challenging courses. Now, the schedule includes standard English (for students performing at grade level), honors English and Advanced Placement English (for 12th-graders).

Restructuring the mathematics department was a major project during the early years. Instructors were teaching addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to some students in all four grades. To meet the school requirement of taking two units above the state-mandated Algebra I, students may select geometry, Algebra II, pre-calculus, Advanced Placement Mathematics or calculus.

As academic standards rose, teachers developed a program for students who were not well prepared for Algebra I. (Fifty to 60 percent of students failed Algebra I when it was first required for graduation.) The Short Term Achievement and Reward (STAR) program divides the Algebra I curriculum into four nine-week grading periods and a 20-day summer school. The intent is to help students successfully complete the material just covered before they move forward in the curriculum.

Students who score less than 70 on a weekly test are required to attend a "second chance" class that meets for an hour after school on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Regular Algebra teachers, each of whom conducts one STAR class per week, handle the reteaching and retesting. STAR students receive weekly grades that are averaged with a cumulative nine-weeks test score to determine a final nine-weeks grade. Students who do not earn an average grade of

70 or more in a nine-week period are required to repeat the material in a subsequent nine weeks. A summer program (referred to as the fourth quarter of STAR) is available for students who do not pass the required algebra content during the regular school year.

A "third chance" class meets five times a week for students who score below the minimum in the first two nine-week periods. This class uses computer software to give students immediate feedback on their skills.

STAR geometry is also available for students who need extra help in that course. The intent in both STAR courses is to identify students' weaknesses and help them understand the concepts.

The Vocational Program

Although Hoke County High School is a comprehensive high school offering college prep as well as tech prep programs of study, all but 100 students take at least one vocational course. The 34 courses currently offered are grouped in eight areas: Agriculture, Career Development, Business, Home Economics, Health Occupations, Marketing, Technology and Trade and Industrial. Related courses such as computer operation and graphics are required in many majors.

Hoke County uses national skills standards as a guide for refocusing and redirecting vocational programs. "We have eliminated some courses and added others," Jeff Moss said. Most of the programs the school dropped were in the trade and industrial area. "They were not living up to industry standards," Moss said. The school added technology courses, placed additional emphasis on the field of engineering and upgraded the drafting and welding programs. "We want to make sure our graduates will have no trouble finding jobs or continuing their education," Moss said.

Work-based learning opportunities are provided for students through internships and job shadowing. With limited industry in the Hoke County area, the school encourages work-based learning done in cooperation with classroom assignments rather than as paid employment. Local government agencies and day care centers help students experience a variety of jobs.

STRATEGIES FOR MAKING CHANGES

By focusing on higher expectations, standards and requirements, Hoke County High School began to make curriculum and instructional changes. The strategies included:

- Converting to a two-semester school year. The first semester begins in early August and ends in December; the second semester lasts from January through May. Teachers and students like being able to complete a term before the end-of-year holiday break.

- Adopting a 4 x 4 block schedule. Students take four 90-minute courses each semester for a total of eight courses per year. The block schedule gives teachers 90 minutes a day to plan integrated projects, visit other classrooms and assemble equipment and materials. It also allows time for mathematics and science labs and more student projects.

- Strengthening the system of education and career guidance and advisement. Counselors from the high school visit the two feeder middle schools each spring to help eighth-graders develop a four-year program of study. Parents get a chance to ask questions about the high school curriculum at special open house events. Before entering the 10th grade, students select a career major and identify the courses needed to complete it. Parents must be in agreement with students' choices.

- Reviewing data and formulating staff development and school improvement plans based on the findings. School leaders study local, state and *HSTW* test data in making plans for the coming year. These data include end-of-course tests; ASSET--the community college admissions exam taken by 11th-graders; SAT and PSAT results; and teacher-developed pre-, interim and post-assessments. Vocational teachers administer pre-, interim and post-assessments to determine student achievement levels and gains throughout the school year. By identifying specific objectives that need to be taught or re-taught, teachers can modify their teaching plans to accommodate student needs.

- Expanding faculty involvement by instituting a team teaching program. In 1992-93 each team had from six to eight academic and vocational teachers with equal representation. Participation was voluntary. During the 1993-94 school year, the administration reduced the number of teams, increased membership to 15 teachers per team and made participation mandatory. This approach did not work very well and the school returned to the original concept of allowing teachers to choose whether they want to join a team. Now, teams are composed of at least five academic and vocational teachers from areas with common competencies.

- Offering staff development to support school improvement. The two-week summer workshop for teachers from all disciplines resulted in strong collaborative efforts and a variety of integrated approaches. Each summer, Hoke County High School sends a dozen teachers--two-thirds of them first-timers--to the annual *High Schools That Work* Staff Development Conference. (At the past five conferences, Hoke teachers have conducted workshops on topics such as STAR mathematics and integrated learning.) Teachers also participate in state and local workshops and specialized regional staff development sessions.

  Educational technology was selected as the major focus of professional development in 1996-97. To acquaint teachers with new instructional methods, the school scheduled 30 technology workshops for the first semester and 43 for the second semester. This emphasis is based on a needs assessment conducted among teachers in the district. Because many of the workshops are conducted by Hoke County teachers, the school has benefitted by finding new school leadership among its faculty.

- Working jointly with postsecondary educators. The planning for--and implementation of--Tech Prep brought together teachers from the high school and Sandhills Community College, located in an adjoining county. The two groups met during the summer of 1995 to discuss student deficiencies in reading and mathematics and to devise strategies to help youth make a successful transition from high school to college.

- Conducting a teacher exchange program with business and industry. In the spring of 1996, 25 Hoke County teachers visited the local Chesebrough-Pond's manufacturing site to view the assembly line, the office and the waste treatment facilities. The day-long event gave teachers a much better understanding of the skills needed by workers in high-tech manufacturing settings. In exchange, company employees came to the school to make classroom presentations and answer questions about workplace requirements. In another collaborative effort, Chesebrough-Pond's donated video production equipment to the school for students and teachers to produce in-house video presentations. The general manager of Raeford Oil Company visited classes at the high school to teach writing techniques and to share information from an employer's point of view.

- Hosting teams of teachers and administrators from other high schools. As a *High Schools That Work* demonstration site, Hoke County High School welcomes representatives of many schools and school systems who come to see outstanding programs in action and to talk with teachers and students about ways to implement changes.

INTEGRATING ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL STUDIES

Integrated learning is a "way of life" at Hoke County High School--but it hasn't always been that way. When teachers started discussing integrated learning, very few of them were willing to team-teach or support each other in improving instruction. Many of them were satisfied to close the classroom door and teach what and how they wished. In 1995-96 over 85 percent of teachers were involved in at least one integration activity.

The answer came in the form of staff development and the school's team structure. At first, teachers were charged with developing and implementing at least two integrated activities per year. Later, the school increased the number to three per year. Teachers now work together without enforcement from the administration.

Academic and vocational integration began before the school joined *High Schools That Work* and has accelerated since then. The first instance involved the collaboration of an agriculture teacher (who saw the need for geometry in his classes and had been teaching it) and a mathematics teacher. The two teachers brought their classes together for several projects to solidify students' comprehension of related concepts. In another early project, students built a mist system for the school greenhouse. Students worked together to calculate the length of PVC pipe and the volume of liquid needed and the cost of building the system.

News of the success of these integrated projects spread to other faculty members as teachers and students talked about what was happening. Now, examples of the school's integrated projects are used as models for activities at other *HSTW* sites. Some examples include:

- A production of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* involving home economics and English students. The production, which included a wedding reception, served as a final project for many 12th-graders.

- A newsletter shared with the chamber of commerce and community leaders. In this thematic project, students from government and economics, English, business and office, and Algebra I interviewed a panel of community leaders and wrote articles for the newsletter.

- A map of local historic sites. For this long-term project, students selected the sites, wrote descriptions of them, developed a directory and designed and produced the map. The chamber of commerce gives the map to tourists who visit the county.

- A study of the nutrition content of breakfast foods. Students in chemistry and home economics compared the sugar, salt and vitamin content of five commercial breakfast foods as well as bacon, eggs, pancakes and french toast. The students prepared graphs of their findings and transferred them to computers.

- A project for auto technology and physics students on the reactions of liquid under pressure. Students figured the pressure applied to a brake pedal and how it multiplies through the brake system to stop a passenger vehicle.

- An examination of the connection between welding and chemistry. Students identified gases used for welding projects and observed changes that occur when heat is applied.

- An investigation of how genetic disorders and infectious diseases affect special needs children. In this combined health occupations and biology project, students organized a health fair and got business leaders to donate scientific equipment to complete the project.

Hoke County High School teachers have developed a seven-step approach to integrating academic and vocational education. The steps include:

- Conduct orientation and awareness activities for administrators, school board members, teachers and staff, parents and the community.
- Gain support from the administration;
- Identify a core group of teachers who will meet regularly and keep the effort going;
- Identify similarities in the curriculum, instructional strategies, teachers and students;
- Outline the implementation strategies;
- Restructure the school schedule to provide time for teachers to meet together and for students to conduct integrated activities.

The school has also developed guidelines for team teaching, an essential element in integrating academic and vocational studies. The guidelines include:

- Work with people and subjects with which you are most comfortable and then branch out.
- Start small and simple--but start.
- Correlate the competencies to be taught.
- Focus on planning; avoid interruptions and distractions.
- Identify weak areas, difficult concepts or conflicting ideas in the curriculum.
- Be flexible with schedules and time frames.
- Meet at least weekly and select a team secretary to keep minutes of meetings.
- Make team teaching interesting and enjoyable for teachers and students.
- Involve students in planning projects whenever possible.
- Make learning meaningful and relevant.

In 1994 the Southern Regional Education Board received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to promote integrated learning. SREB selected Hoke County High School to serve as one of 18 *High Schools That Work* sites participating in the program. These schools were charged with developing systematic ways to integrate academic and vocational studies. SREB disseminated descriptions of the schools' integrated projects to high schools in the *HSTW* network and nationwide.

PROGRESS REPORTED IN RAISING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Hoke County High School's one-step-at-a-time approach has resulted in steady gains in solving the many problems that plagued the school in 1988. Progress in student achievement, the number of students entering postsecondary education and other indicators is tangible proof that student learning is improving.

One area of improvement is in the course-taking patterns of career-bound students. Youth participating in the 1996 *High Schools That Work* assessment of reading, mathematics and science reported taking higher-level mathematics and science courses than youth who took part in the assessment in 1993. For example, more of them in 1996 had taken Algebra I, geometry and Algebra II.

Mathematics Course-Taking Patterns and Average Mathematics Scores of Career-Bound Students at Hoke County High School

	1996		1993	
	Percentage Taking	Average Score	Percentage Taking	Average Score
Algebra I	90%	298	37%	299
Geometry	100%	301	57%	296
Algebra II	90%	298	42%	305

The same holds true for science. Larger proportions of career-bound students in 1996 than in 1993 took college prep biology, chemistry and physics. These students scored higher than students three years earlier.

Science Course-Taking Patterns and Average Science Scores of Career-Bound Students at Hoke County High School

	1996		1993	
	Percentage Taking	Average Score	Percentage Taking	Average Score
College prep biology	85%	290	37%	287
Lab chemistry	100%	289	52%	282
Lab physics	58%	286	24%	279

Instructional strategies seem to play a role in mathematics and science achievement at Hoke County High School. More Hoke County students in 1996 than in 1993 said they had been actively engaged in their mathematics and science courses; they also scored substantially higher on the *HSTW* mathematics and science tests. These students reported that more than twice a year they:

- Completed a mathematics project using mathematics as it is used in the workplace;
- Made a presentation concerning a science project;
- Read an assigned book or article on science;
- Prepared a written report on a science subject;
- Completed a science lab assignment focusing on a community or work site problem.

Fifty-eight percent of career-bound students participating in the 1996 *HSTW* Assessment completed Advanced Placement or Academic English, compared to 40 percent in 1993. These students also outscored their 1993 counterparts on the *HSTW* reading assessment.

Completing the SREB Recommended Curriculum

The most dramatic evidence of Hoke County High School's improvement is found in the achievement of career-bound students who complete SREB's recommended curriculum. The curriculum consists of four English credits in courses with content equal to college preparatory English; three mathematics credits, including two credits in courses with content equal to college preparatory mathematics; and three science credits, including two credits in courses with content equal to college preparatory science. Compared to all *High Schools That Work* sites that participated in the *HSTW* Assessment in 1996, Hoke County had a much greater percentage of students completing an upgraded academic core. These students also scored higher than students at all other sites in reading and mathematics and equaled them in science.

Percentage of Students Who Completed SREB's Recommended Academic Core and Their Scores on the 1996 *HSTW* Assessment at Hoke County High School and at All *HSTW* Sites

	Hoke County		All *HSTW* Sites	
	Percentage Completing	Score	Percentage Completing	Score
English	80%	290	33%	281
Mathematics	98%	301	64%	294
Science	93%	289	39%	289

Thirty-two percent of Hoke County career-bound students qualified for the 1996 SREB Certificate of Educational Achievement--an honor based on meeting the SREB goals in reading, mathematics and science and completing three of SREB's four recommended curriculum areas. The percentage at Hoke County High School was almost twice the average 17 percent of students who qualified for the certificate at all *HSTW* sites.

Hoke County students who participated in the 1996 *High Schools That Work* Assessment scored significantly higher in reading, mathematics and science than a similar group of students did in 1993. The 1996 students scored considerably higher than career-bound students nationally in reading, mathematics and science and exceeded the SREB goals in reading and mathematics.

1996 Performance of Hoke County High School Students in Reading, Mathematics and Science

	Hoke County 1996	Hoke County 1993	All Sites 1996	National Vocational	National Academic	All Students	SREB Goal
Reading	289	275	273	267	302	287	279
Mathematics	301	285	285	277	317	299	295
Science	289	273	283	267	307	293	292

Note: The difference between Hoke County's 1996 scores and all other scores is statistically significant.

More Youth Pursuing Further Education

More Hoke County students now than in the past are planning to pursue further education. For example, in 1990 only 20 percent of students said they were college-bound; in 1996, the total had grown to 53 percent.

The number of Hoke County students taking the SAT has increased and scores have risen. In 1994, the 94 students who took the SAT received an average score of 773. In 1996, 120 students took the SAT; their average score was 841.

Students' Perceptions of Their High School Studies

The *High Schools That Work* Assessment includes a section in which students give their perceptions of the job their school is doing in preparing youth for life after high school. In the student survey section of the 1996 assessment, more than 60 percent of Hoke County High School career-bound students reported that their vocational teachers often stressed reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Hoke County High School Students' Scores in Academic Areas and Students' Perceptions of Emphasis Vocational Teachers Placed on Academic Skills

Students Who Said Vocational Teachers Often Stressed:	1996 Percentage	1996 Score	1994 Percentage	1994 Score
Reading	67%	290	55%	279
Writing	62%	289	52%	278
Mathematics	67%	304	58%	291
Science	60%	295	37%	275

More than 70 percent of career-bound students at Hoke County High School agreed that most courses were challenging and exciting, while 85 percent said they were encouraged to take more mathematics and science courses. Only five percent indicated that their teachers did not expect or encourage them to do well.

A Most-Improved Site

On the basis of the 1996 *High Schools That Work* Assessment, SREB has identified Hoke County High School as one of the most-improved sites in the 21-state *HSTW* network. The distinction is based on the school's progress in raising students' reading, mathematics and science achievement between 1993 and 1996. Hoke County High School was also named one of seven most-improved *HSTW* sites following the 1993 assessment.

STATE SUPPORTS REPLACING THE GENERAL TRACK

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has conducted regional meetings on replacing the general track and integrating academic and vocational studies. The state also sponsors an annual workshop on programs of study, rigorous courses and integrated learning.

Hoke County High School's efforts have been aided by incentive grants and Tech Prep funding from the state. The school has invested the money in staff development, materials and supplies. A school improvement grant provides funding for the school's teacher exchange program, technology training, new staff development resources and a training center. In the fall of 1996, the school set up a computer network for conducting software workshops, testing software and providing a central location for test-making software.

LESSONS LEARNED

In making a series of changes in school and classroom practices over a period of almost a decade, Hoke County High School leaders and teachers learned that:

- Students will meet high expectations if they have access to new instructional methods and extra help. When Hoke County eliminated low-level courses, students had to enroll in courses with high standards. The increased academic achievement of many of these students is evidence that career-bound students can excel in tougher courses.

- Continuous staff development is necessary to involve the entire staff in school improvement. Professional development must be directed to areas in which teachers say they are having difficulty. Hoke County High School found that teachers often make the best instructors for staff development sessions.

- Students learn from community involvement. Strong partnerships between business and education help students see the benefits of doing well in high school.

- Students who experience success and are interested in what they are learning are more apt to stay in school. One way to engage students in their studies is to provide opportunities for them to demonstrate what they have learned to audiences of students, teachers, parents and community leaders.

- Teachers must be actively involved in planning and developing activities that support school improvement. This means providing opportunities for teachers to get together in pairs, in small groups, as a department and as an entire faculty. Teachers must be able to express their opinions and to "brainstorm" ideas they think will work. They must be encouraged to turn away from "turf guarding" and be willing to share materials and equipment that will improve learning for all students.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Hoke County High School plans to continue its journey toward high achievement by:

- Using applied instruction in more academic courses.

- Scheduling extra help sessions for students throughout the curriculum.

- Launching a senior project. Encouraged by the positive effects of senior projects at other *HSTW* sites, teachers are working together to develop plans and establish guidelines. A capstone activity such as a senior project ensures that every 12th-grader has been directly involved in a long-term project related to his or her career major and is able to conduct research, analyze findings, solve problems, contribute as part of a team and express ideas clearly through written and oral reports.

- Requiring student portfolios. This approach has proven effective in helping students gauge their own progress and complete their program of study.

- Restructuring and upgrading the science department. Through funding from school bonds, the school will build a new science facility with adequate labs. In addition, a curriculum audit will determine changes needed to improve students' science achievement.

- Organizing teachers into teams to identify courses with similar objectives and competency requirements. This activity will be coupled with expansion of short- and long-term integration activities.

- Increasing opportunities for students to participate in work-based learning through internships and job shadowing. Aggressive efforts will be made to find employers who will work with the school in providing these opportunities.

- Offering professional development "packages." A menu of two- to four-hour workshops enables teachers to build on their knowledge and skills and earn credit for certificate renewal.

"We are seeing a steady increase in student performance," Jeff Moss said. "Our intent is to have every student perform at a proficient level within the next few years."

Contact: Jeff Moss
Associate Superintendent
for Instruction and Technology
Hoke County Schools
P.O. Box 370
Raeford, NC 28376-0000
910/875-4106

Southern Regional Education Board
High Schools That Work
592 Tenth St., NW
Atlanta, GA 30318-5790
Phone 404/875-9211
Fax 404/872-1477

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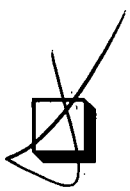

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