A History of the Josephine Dobbs Clement Early College High School

**History:** The Josephine Dobbs Clement Early College High School opened its doors to students in the fall of 2004 in the classroom wing of the H.M. Michaux School of Education building. Ninety-two students were selected for the initial class; however, as school began, its inaugural class listed eighty-four (84) ninth graders. The school took the lead for high schools in North Carolina with its innovative approach of starting a small high school program and rigorously aligning its high school curriculum to allow students to earn nearly two years of college credit within four years. Throughout the course of the four years of high school matriculation, the school lost about twenty students in this first class who either transferred to other local schools or who moved away.

In May 2008, sixty students graduated from Clement Early College High School as members of the first class. Clement Early College is unique because it was the first in the State to start at a University. Most of these innovative schools are located at community college campuses and are still in search of a campus space to call their own. The school, which now occupies the former Robinson-Science building on the campus of North Carolina Central University, runs as an autonomous operation with its own principal, administrators, teachers, support staff and budget. Eighty-three percent of the faculty holds advanced degrees. Accolades are extended to many supporters like Bill and Melinda Gates, the SECME Foundation, New Schools Project, and the NC Learn and Earn Early College High School Initiative launched by Governor Mike Easley who believed in school redesign and reform. The school has been recognized by Governor Michael Easley as a model school of great promise and progress. Student ambassadors have participated in a number of special meetings, forums, and competitions. The school, also featured on a CBS Special which discussed school redesign and reform, has been constant in showing success in its accountability, attendance, growth, and low drop-out rate. The partnership between North Carolina Central University and Durham Public Schools (DPS) has maintained steady support with a focus on retooling some of the local high schools by introducing programs of rigor, relevancy, and positive relationships.

The Clement Early College High School held its first graduation in May 2008 with 100 percent of the graduates applying to college to complete their education. Sixty percent (60%) of the seniors made the choice to remain at North Carolina Central University while the other 40 percent made decisions to enroll in other NC universities or in colleges outside of the State. Many successes are connected to the high school as it continues to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status and remains one of fewer than 10 schools in the District with that status. The drop-out rate for the school continues to be the lowest among the DPS as well. Nearly 40 percent of the graduating seniors, taking college level courses, earned a 3.0 or better. The School of Education is proud of its commitment to share a major role in efforts to help shape the lives of young people and in preparing students for diverse cultural experiences. The current student population at Josephine Dobbs Clement Early College High School is 330 students with a total of 19 faculty, staff and administrators. All students are required to take fifteen (15) high school courses, which are taught at the honors academic level, and complete a minimum of nineteen (19) college level courses. Students at Josephine Dobbs Clement Early College High School are soaring high and will continue this educational experience of rigor and challenge while reaping the rewards the program offers.

**Target Group**

High school students who are at risk of dropping out of school before attaining a high school diploma; high school students who would benefit from accelerated academic instruction; first-time college students; English language learners; and, economically disadvantaged students. The maximum enrollment is 400 students.

**Goals & Program Benefits**

- Provide expanded learning opportunities for students within the public schools;
- Offer students a rigorous curriculum including college courses leading up to two years of college credit;
- Provide in-depth support for students enrolled in rigorous academic classes;
- Provide experiences that will lead to greater interests, abilities and a major in the sciences, technology, or mathematics;
- Encourage the cooperative or shared use of resources, personnel and facilities between public schools and higher education institutions;
• Integrate and emphasize both academic and technical skills necessary for students to be successful in a more demanding and changing workplace;
• Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
• Reduce the percentage of students needing remedial courses upon their initial entry from high school into a community college or university; and,
• Develop the belief in each student that he/she can and will go to college.

Benefits

• Eliminate time wasted during the junior and senior years of high school and facilitate the transition of motivated students to higher education.
• Make higher education more accessible, affordable, and attractive through bridging the divide between high school and college students by having them in the same physical place.
• Provide students with needed guidance and support from adults through the first two years of college.
• Demonstrate new ways of integrating levels of schooling to better serve the intellectual and developmental needs of young people.
• Build interest in science, math, and technology through early involvement with such programs as Students Making Another Science Success Story (SMASSS) and Project SEED.

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Sources: University Records
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