

## TRANSFORMING TRADITION AT ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL

By Leicha Shaver, Principal and Broderick Maxwell, Project Development Specialist, Franklin D. Roosevelt High School, Dallas, TX

Once again **Franklin D. Roosevelt High School and Health Science Satellite Magnet** in Dallas ISD is raising the bar for its students.

The school, nestled in the wooded hills near downtown Dallas, Texas, is set to graduate two students with an Associate's Degree before they walk across the stage with their 2012 graduating class.

"These are the opportunities that we envisioned for our students when we started the program," Principal Dr. Leicha Shaver said. "We are dedicated to giving all of our students an opportunity to be academically successful. For some, that has meant pursuing their college studies while still enrolled at Roosevelt."

Roosevelt is in the third year of its Dual Credit program. Qualifying juniors and seniors leave the high school setting and take college-level courses in a college atmosphere at El Centro Community College. School officials said students not only are gaining the academic successes that come with taking college-level courses, but they are doing so at no cost to them.

Although dual credit is not new to high schools across the country, such programs are not abundant in comprehensive high schools with a socioeconomic status similar to Roosevelt. The 2009-2010 poverty rate of Roosevelt High School students was 83 percent.

"My family, we never really just had much," said Rhonda Boyce, a 2011 Roosevelt graduate who accumulated 33 hours toward a Bachelor's Degree in Radio/TV/Film. "I am always looking for opportunities to make sure my



### College and High School Communities Support Student Success

Mr. Howard Finney, Executive Dean, Business/Public Service & Information Technology, El Centro Community College; Mr. Antonio Pecina, College Director - School Alliances and Institutional Outreach; Jose Carranza, Student; Rosalinda Sanchez, Student; Mr. Marcus Scott, Director, Roosevelt's Dual Credit program; Dr. Leicha Shaver, Principal, Franklin D. Roosevelt High School and Health Science Satellite Magnet

family has a better life than they have right now. Dual Credit was not easy, but it was worth it."

Mr. Marcus Scott, director for Roosevelt's Dual Credit program, said the school covers the cost of tuition and books for each student participating in the program. This allows students to reap a financial benefit and reduce their overall cost of college while pursuing their college academic ambition while in high school.

Roosevelt students rave about the experiences they have encountered while taking courses at a local community college.

"It really helped me to focus on my studies and become more responsible," said Larry Green, a participant in the program during its inaugural year. "Going through the Dual Credit program helped me to prepare for life after high school." Larry is now a junior at Texas Southern University.

Similar success stories are becoming entrenched in the culture around Roosevelt.

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# CONSORTIUM MATTERS

By Cecilia Cunningham, Executive Director, Middle College National Consortium



**Cecilia Cunningham**  
Director, MCNC

## Early College and the Common Core

*My column in the last issue may have led the reader to think that I was not in agreement with the Common Core. The opposite is true. I think the Common Core can, if thoughtfully implemented, provide a very different educational experience for the high school students of this country that would lead to college readiness.*

**T**he Common Core with its emphasis on critical literacies, application and extension of knowledge, and the demand for multiple revisions will not be easily measured by a set of tests. England's development of multiple performance based assessments system in the 80's was cumbersome, expensive and ultimately not scalable. They abandoned it in 2005 for the high school level and reverted back to their original testing system. We could waste decades and a generation or two trying to find the perfect measurement. I am suggesting instead that we use an extensive college/high school curriculum alignment process that strengthens the pathway from one segment of learning to another. An alignment process has the advantage of tapping the expertise of existing teachers and providing them the time to engage in professional development activities. It also strengthens the local relationships between school districts and institutions of higher education, especially when teachers and professors who live in the community and will continue to live in the community jointly share responsibility for student success. Finally if there are any private or federal grant monies, they get poured into strengthening the existing system not creating a new testing business.

After a rigorous alignment process, all students should be required to pass a core set of college level courses before they graduate from high school. If there is local determination in the number and type of college courses, then students could have opportunities to strengthen academic or technical areas, aim for a certificate or degree, and demonstrate levels of preparation. Finally, requiring at least one college course for high school graduation can reduce the cost of public education by reducing overlap and eliminating wasted time and the need for remediation.

Starting college early has the added benefit of the possibility of breaking apart the age based progression used in our schools. As we have learned more about brain development, we have not integrated these learnings in any serious way into our educational system. Countless youth are failing unnecessarily because they do not meet arbitrary age grade progressions.

At our Winter Leadership Conference we will continue our conversation on Early College and the Common Core. For updates go to [www.mcnc.us](http://www.mcnc.us)

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## NUMBERS, NEWS & NOTES

**Challenge Early College High School** at Houston Community College SW (Texas), a MCNC Member school, is one of this year's winners of the prestigious **U.S. Blue Ribbon Award** which is eagerly sought by public and private schools across the country. To qualify, schools must be serving a population that has previously been underserved by their schools. The Blue Ribbon Award rewards schools that have increased student achievement and narrowed the achievement gap. This is aligned with President Obama's goal of making education the lynchpin to improving the U.S. economy and closing the achievement gap. Challenge joins previous MCNC Blue Ribbon award winners: Middle College HS at Santa Ana College, Middle College HS at San Joaquin Delta College, Greenville Technical Charter High School at Greenville Technical

College, Harbor Teacher Preparatory Academy at Los Angeles Harbor College and Middle College High School at Contra Costa College. Cecilia Cunningham, founder and director of MCNC, stated that Challenge ECHS has been successful because "The faculty and administration not only deeply care about their students, but they have immersed themselves in professional development to improve their practice. The results of this hard work can be seen in their college going rate. In the 2009-2010 school year 75% of Challenge's graduating class enrolled in a four year college and 20% in a two year college." Dr. Cunningham added that "Justin Fuentes, the former principal of Challenge, and his successor, Tonya Miller, are perfect examples of the difference good leadership can make."

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# GRADUATES PERSPECTIVES ON COLLEGE

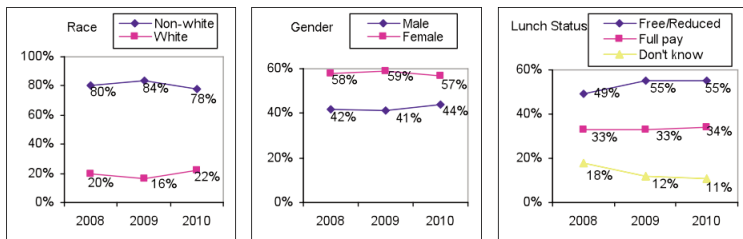
By Jennifer Kim, National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools and Teaching (NCREST)

As our school communities fine tune priorities for this school year, these student perspectives about colleges from the past three MCNC Early Colleges will motivate and challenge schools to continue and improve their student supports for college readiness.

As the goal of Early College is to provide high school students with an early start to enrolling in college classes, data over time have shown that MCNC Early College students earn a significant number of college credits and are successful in their coursework. Focus group interviews with more than 100 students across the MCNC Early College schools indicate that students and teachers alike are vested in related academic and social supports. However, it is the student that gives voice to student perspectives about high school and college.

The Middle College National Consortium Graduating Student Survey has been administered annually in April, to Early College students in their final year of high school. This article will highlight some key aspects tied to college readiness. Data will be shown for the past three graduating classes, showing the trends, more consistent than not, over time.

The demographic profile of graduating students at MCNC Early Colleges has been mostly consistent over the past three years. The set of figures below show that the overwhelming majority of students have been non-white, tended to be more female than male, and a little over half were on free/reduced lunch. Overall demographic data representing students from grade levels across the MCNC Early Colleges reflect similar patterns.

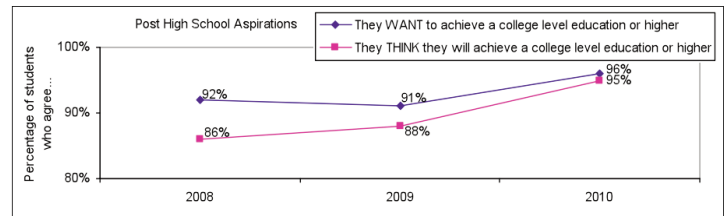


\* 2008 = 15 ECs (N=783), 2009 = 16 ECs (N=819), 2010 = 17 ECs (N=1098)

## College Aspirations

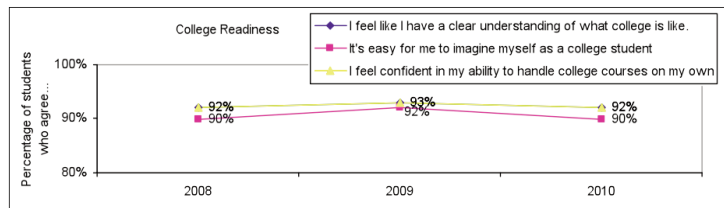
While almost all of the students want to complete college, not all of them think they can. More than 90% of the students over the past few years indicate “wanting” to achieve a college level education or higher, yet a slightly lower percentage of students “think” they will be able to do so. This is not necessarily surprising as many students,

particularly those from underrepresented groups, face various postsecondary education obstacles. However, this gap decreased over the past three years, so that for the most recent year, there was only a one percent difference.



## College Readiness

An overwhelming high percent of graduating students consistently report feeling college ready. On average, more than 90% of the students each year voiced that they had a clear understanding of what college would be like, and the same percent of students could also easily



imagine themselves as a college student. A similar high percent of students felt confident about handling their coursework on their own. Interestingly, in separate interviews with MCNC Early College teachers, some voiced the concern over whether students would feel independent enough once they left the school since they had been accustomed to high degree of support system during high school. This should quell the concern of “too much support.”

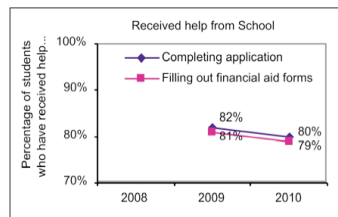
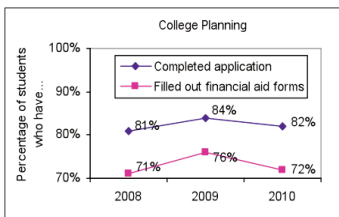
## College Planning

While students may want to achieve a college education and also feel college ready, they must do some planning and required steps ahead of time in order to continue with college after high school. Over 80% of the graduating students consistently reported completing a college application, while over 70% indicated they had filled out financial aid forms for college. While these percentages are for the most part high, there is about a 10% gap between students completing a college application and financial aid forms. In addition, a similar high percent of students

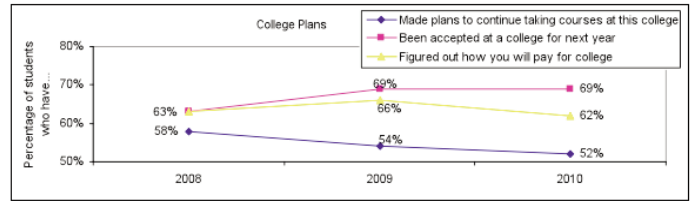
## PERSPECTIVES *(Continued from page 3)*

indicated they had received help with these things from their school.

Many of the students make plans to continue enrolling in classes at the partnering college and report being accepted at a college for the upcoming school year. A majority of the Early College students have enrolled in many college classes during high school and earned a significant number of college credits at the partnering college. Several students have also earned their Associate's Degree upon high school graduation.



However, while many students have been accepted at a college or made plans to continue on at the partnering institutions, they had yet to figure out how they would pay for this.



### Conclusion

The overwhelming majority of MCNC Early College students aspire to complete a college level education and express being ready for college. Financing college continues to be a concern for students, but the majority of graduating students have taken the necessary steps to be in a strong position to continue their college coursework already begun in high school, on into college. Reviewing the Consortium-wide data, in conjunction with schools' individual reports, can serve as a discussion starting point about college readiness and student support priorities for this school year.

*NOTE: Participation in the MCNC Graduating Student Survey is optional. Schools interested in participating and receiving school level and trend data for their past graduating classes, please contact NCREST.*

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## NUMBERS, NEWS, NOTES *(Continued from page 2)*

The 2010 high school reports released by the **South Carolina State Department of Education** revealed that **Greenville Tech Charter High** was tops in the county and number 3 in the state on the graduation rate, at 99%. **Brashier Middle College** ranked second in the county and seventh in the state, graduating 94.4 percent of its students in four years. Brashier had the highest absolute rating in the county and third-highest in the state. Brashier Principal, Mike Sinclair wrote, "To be recognized as second behind GTCHS in graduation rate is great. To receive the highest rating in the county and third highest in the state is amazing for us. The absolute rating includes End of Course scores for our freshmen (Algebra I, English I, and Physical Science), End of Course scores for our juniors (US History), our Exit Exam Pass Rate (sophomores), and our Graduation Rate (seniors). No one can hide in this measure of success. Each member of our school community played a part in our success. The goals and support from the Middle College Consortium were invaluable. The support from Greenville Technical College has allowed our students to push into college courses and attend classes in a state of the art facility. The planning group that founded the school fought tirelessly to

provide this opportunity for us all when it appeared the school would never open".

In addition, *U.S. News & World Report* has ranked Greenville Technical Charter HS as having the No. 4 "Most Connected Classroom" in the nation. According to Principal Fred Crawford, "every teacher has an iPad, and every room is equipped with Smartboard and interactive technology. Students can take college courses online and link to a blackboard interface with college professors. The teens can even check out laptops from Greenville Technical College. Our kids are all digital natives. This is what they've grown up with."

The schools were rated on various indicators of connectivity, including Internet speed and wireless access, computer access, connectivity to school from home, and additional technological resources. "Internet connection and computer technologies are shaping the future classroom for students and teachers," said *U.S. News & World Report* editor and chief content officer Brian Kelly.

***The Consortium congratulates all these schools on their outstanding achievements.***

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## ROOSEVELT *(Continued from page 1)*

Zachery Miles graduated from Roosevelt with 12 hours toward Bachelor's Degree in Music Education. "It definitely makes you grow up," said Zachery, the youngest of eight siblings. "You can't be acting childish when you step foot in a college classroom. You have to mature."

Students undergo a recruitment process that includes a review of their standardized test scores, interests, and teacher recommendations. At Roosevelt, it is now commonplace to see students enrolling in accelerated programs during the summer. By taking economics and government classes, students are able to lighten their course load during the school year to take the college courses. Dr. Shaver said the consistently rising number of students enrolling in summer school at Roosevelt is a clear indication that students are interested in "taking care of their business".

"We have students who see the benefits of our Dual Credit program," Dr. Shaver said. "I have students coming to me all the time asking 'How can I be a part of it?' The excitement centered around this program has helped spur a renewed vigor for academic excellence around the entire school."

Roosevelt recently opened a Health Science Satellite Magnet, which allows students to focus on health education careers. These students greatly benefit from the partnerships Roosevelt has already established with higher learning institutions in the Dallas area with its Dual Credit program. "I think it has been phenomenal," said Antonio Pecina, El Centro Community College Director of School Alliances and Institutional Outreach. "The students gain confidence and strive to be successful. They are able to demonstrate to us and themselves that they can do college work."

Students' increased confidence has become contagious around the high school campus. Barbara Clemons, a Roosevelt teacher assistant, said students enrolled in the Dual Credit program hold their heads high when leaving the building for their college courses. "They feel better about themselves," Mrs. Clemons said. "They are more encouraged to go to college because they are doing it now."



A traditional building with a new culture

Roosevelt is poised to continue its success with the current Dual Credit model it has established. The school's students have earned more than 1,000 college-credit hours since the inception of the program. These hours translate into an overall cost savings for each student who is a part of the program.

"We are excited about the program and its future," Dr. Shaver said. "We want all our students to have the opportunity to achieve academically at the next level, and this program prepares them for that."

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## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

By Dr. Chery Wagonlander, Principal, and Amy Cox, English Teacher and GAPS Coordinator,  
Mott Middle Early College High School, at Mott Community College, Flint, MI

*It's a jigsaw puzzle. How do our schools merge the Design Principles of a Middle College, the philosophy of an Early College, Conley's College Readiness Indicators, local and national curriculum requirements and sustain the affective, cultural, and community components necessary to create a successful middle early college student? Like all MCNC schools, this is the challenge facing Mott Middle Early College (MMEC).*

To this end, MMEC has re-envisioned its GAPS curriculum, a week-long intensive summer orientation/transition program. At MMEC, students are provisionally accepted into the school with the requirement of successful completion of the GAPS program. MMEC generally offers two sessions of GAPS during the summer and one session after the start of the new school year, using school time, time after school and two Saturdays. In total, over 160 new students this academic year have fulfilled their GAPS commitment.



The Full Value Contract is the first major curriculum component of the GAPS program. As a whole learning community, the students answer the question “What kind of school do you want?” We tell them to dream big, to include everything. We instruct them to think about what they don’t want as well. Students totally get that this is what they are creating—it gives power to the student who is essentially at the center of the circle. We refer back to the social contract often. We also use things like “Let’s keep it in the circle” as quick reminders of what we “do” or how we act at MMEC.

The main purpose of the GAPS Transition Program is to help new students transition smoothly into their new learning community, which is an early college high school and very different from what they have previously experienced. Four faculty members work intensively with clusters of 40 – 60 students to proactively address affective, academic, procedural, and cultural issues. Typically, the admissions process clusters the new students in groups ranging in numbers from 40-60. To this mix is added six to eight returning students who

function as peer mentors to the new students. Designed to help new students adjust to and internalize the Mott culture, the GAPS curriculum deliberately and immediately immerses students in procedures, rituals, and activities typical of MMEC, which may be, at first, unsettling to newcomers. Right from the beginning, students quickly begin to see how different MMEC really is from other schools. Gentle reminders are given from the outset to “be open-minded,” “go with the flow,” “play along.” Students soon learn MMEC is a safe learning community, so it is okay to take responsible risks. Our first major curriculum component of GAPS is to write our own social contract. This we do by asking students what they want in a school. Through dialogue and consensus building, students declare what it is they want and don’t want in a school. This is a foundational element to the creation and maintenance of the MMEC culture.

Language is another key element of school culture, and students participate in several activities that help them quickly grasp vocabulary and concepts that are crucial to MMEC. For example, MMEC is made up of scholars and so understanding what a scholar is and how a scholar thinks is crucial to learning how to become a scholar. Using the work developed by Art Costa and Bena Kallick, students learn the “16 Habits of Mind,” which are considered to be inherent characteristics or habits present in “scholars.” Students learn these by joining forces with a partner to develop a solid understanding of two of the habits in order to effectively teach them to the rest of the group. Not only do students develop a working understanding of these 16 habits, but they also realize rather quickly that peer learning and formal presentations to other students is a cultural, as well as scholarly expectation at MMEC. Likewise, students quickly learn what is expected in a safe and scholarly audience.

In another activity, students are asked to assess their operational use of over 70 specific words or concepts deemed crucial for success at MMEC. These words, such as meta-cognition, consensus, David Conley, Choice Theory, mastery learning, the individual versus the collective, were selected by MMEC administration, faculty, staff and students. The activity begins with a quick assessment of current knowledge, which usually reveals a lack understanding of more than half of the words. Students are then put into small groups and asked to come to consensus on all the unknown words

to the group. Through this process of peer learning and consensus building, students realize that between them, there are only about 5-10 words unknown. This simple activity yields a rich harvest. It reveals the power of collective knowledge and peer learning, demonstrates that learning can be fun, provides students with greater familiarity and comfort with MMEC by making sure all are included in the language of the culture, and creates curiosity about the common concepts that are unknown and still to be learned.

In addition to these two major GAPS components, students learn the indicators of college readiness, take a math module placement test, read a scholarly article, understand the tools of effective communication, learn about the financial implications of a college education, develop media literacy, engage in group building activities, recognize the relationship between the early college, the college and its larger community, and demonstrate the interconnectedness of these components to what it means to be a MMEC scholar and learning community member. Throughout the week, students are deliberately guided through the curriculum so that each day they can peel away a new layer and go deeper into what a Mott Middle Early College experience will require. Granted, many, if not all, students are less than enthused to give up an entire week during the summer or Saturdays during the summer. Rather than resist this sentiment, the faculty and student mentors embrace it by acknowledging that it is a big commitment to give up precious free time and it is also acknowledged that MMEC is worth the commitment. Usually, it is the student mentors who make the most convincing arguments.

One activity, in particular, embraces students' disenchantment with school by asking them to list all the reasons they can think of as to why kids don't like school. We use this "survey" and ensuing lively



The human knot is one of many group building initiatives we do with students. The GAPS curriculum is so intense, serious and scholarly, but we also want it to be fun, so we are constantly interspersing the scholarly stuff with initiatives or with fun methods of presenting new ideas.

discussion to bridge to reading an excerpt from a scholarly research article by Daniel Willingham entitled, "Why Don't Students Like School." The main answer to the question, students learn from the article, is that the brain is not meant for thinking and therefore, humans, if they are to be scholars, must develop strategies to help the brain think. This carefully constructed lesson coaxes students toward a more serious and scholarly conversation centered on college readiness and the role of the individual in community committed to scholarship. The scholarly reading method, "Accountable Talk" is introduced as well as other college readiness indicators: i.e., cognitive strategies, academic skills and behaviors, content knowledge and contextual awareness.

Not only do students make a commitment of time to the Mott Middle Early College learning community, parents do so as well. A recent addition to the GAPS transition program was the inspired decision to require that all parents take an MMEC Parents' GAPS workshop. The two-hour workshop is packed with vital information for parents and is divided into the following sections: Introductions and rationale; Rules, regulations, and procedures (e.g. parentweb, where parents can have access to student grades and attendance and can be empowered); Office procedures; College readiness; Teaching methods; Focus Groups and a mini version of the "Full Value Contract." The workshop is concluded by showing parents a video about MMEC that was entirely recorded, edited, and produced by MMEC students in a Video Production class taught by Matt Osmon, MMEC Art Teacher. Six such workshops have been presented and parents responded favorably.

Although there is a deliberately designed curriculum in place so that students are able to experience the school culture, there is always room for the teachable moment and for learning opportunities to unfold organically throughout the week. Instructors constantly assess students' levels of energy and enthusiasm, giving multiple breaks through out the day when needed and interspersing challenging, academic sections with quick initiatives that get students up and moving. The overall objective is to provide incoming students with an authentic sampling of what life will be like for them once the semester begins rolling, so it is important to offer students rigorous academic activities that give them the opportunity to practice the scholarly behavior that will be expected of them. At the end of the intensive week, transformations are evident. For the most part, a week that began with audible, sighs of "Why do we have to be here?" concludes with a public declaration of individual strengths, a personal commitment to succeed, a celebration of what it means to be a maverick and public exclamations of "I can't wait to start school here."

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## MINORITY MALES: A SYSTEM FOR SUCCESS

By Howard Finney, Executive Dean, Division of Business and Public Service, Manasseh Lee, Faculty Advisor, El Centro Community College, Dallas, TX and Myra Silverman, MCNC

**A**t the July 2011 MCNC Summer Conference, Dean Howard Finney, facilitated a workshop on Minority Males – Challenges, Opportunities, and Response. This session acknowledged the fact that minority males have had a historically lower rate of college completion than their female counterparts or white and Asian males.

One reference used was *The Trouble with Black Boys*, by Pedro Noguera. Dean Finney pointed out some of the issues the author asserts are facing these students, particularly in adolescence. “Many are trapped by stereotypes and they let these pull them down. Society considers Black or Brown to be less than. Racial identity takes on significance with respect to friendships groups and dating. High achieving students may be ostracized from their friends. The assumption in school is that if you’re white or Asian you’ll do better than if you’re Black or Latino.”

Marsha Jackson, Associate Vice President at Erie Community College, Buffalo NY and McKinley Williams, President Contra Costa College, San Pablo, CA: shared similar experiences on their campuses. Minority males often have the lowest rates of literacy and therefore graduation. They feel misunderstood and want people to know they take education seriously, but they don’t really know what you have to do to be taken seriously. What are the rules for becoming a success? Students come to the college

*“The Brother to Brother program has become one of my irreplaceable resources. I am a first generation college student and I didn’t know the first thing about coping or dealing with issues associated with pursuing my college diploma.”*

- Leon Lewis

who don’t understand the issues they are bringing with them. Minority males need some affirmation. They realize education is important but there are many stumbling blocks.

During the session, those in attendance shared some successful strategies. They stressed the importance of consistency. In working with students, it is important to be aware of, understand, and debunk racial stereotypes by assigning students to work with students of different races and ethnicities. Empower those with the problems to work toward solutions. Place students in settings that they might not commonly be: debate teams, journalism, service learning. Incorporate elements of their culture into the curriculum and have conversations that push them beyond their own comfort zone. Map out time management, showing students how much time they have.



Brother to Brother participants at El Centro

Dean Finney recalled a City Council member talking about the small ways that he noticed that people react to young African American men. One was the issue of dress. He suggested that one day a week students could meet with mentors. They could show students how to tie a tie, dress up, and sharpen their image. He suggested that students talk to faculty members until they felt comfortable. He asked the faculty to try to make themselves more visible.

### Brother to Brother

El Centro Community College has developed Brother to Brother, a program that has begun to turn around negative results. During the spring of 2005, the college Vice President of Instruction and the Executive Dean of Business and Public Service noticed that about 70 percent of our African American population was female and only about 30 percent male. Of that 30 percent, only about 10 percent were completing their certificates and graduating. Several members of our staff, including the



president of the college, faculty and staff members (all of whom were African American men) put their heads and hearts together and started a very successful outreach program to our registered young men.

*"I turned to Brother to Brother for moral support and positive motivation as well as a feeling of welcome and belonging."*

- Charles Sims

First, we had our research office send us a list of all of the men who identified themselves as African American students. We then sent a letter, signed by the President of the college, inviting them to come and to meet some of the African American men on staff who wanted to serve as mentors for them and to assist them with any problems that they might have in completing their goals. The college provided nice surroundings for meetings. In order to get them to come, we had food, door prizes, and a very informal agenda planned. At the initial meeting, we had about 75 students attend. The staff members included the campus police, financial aid officers, human resources, health center and facilities staff, faculty, and administrators.

Out of that meeting the following goals were established:

- To provide African American male students with an immediate support system to complete their educational goals
- To provide African American male students with opportunities and experiences that will build esteem and competence
- To increase communication between and among African American male students and staff at the College
- To create a community of scholars and practitioners among African American Administrators, Faculty and Staff who are willing to support and guide students at El Centro College
- To increase the number of African American male graduates and certificate completers

The mission of this group was to encourage academic excellence and success among the African American male students. We further sought to create lasting relationships and support networks among African American men students by bringing students, staff, faculty, and administrators together in a variety of

programs and activities. After one semester of meetings, we had a 5% increase in students completing their graduation. We have seen an increase each semester since the program started.

After we started the African American Male mentoring program, we soon saw the need to create one for Latino males. We began our efforts by inviting all of the Latino male staff to come together to offer suggestions on how to remedy problems that Latino male students were facing. There was a good group of students who showed up for the first few meetings, but attendance began to drop off. So, we decided



Dr. Tyrone Bledsoe, Founder, Student African American Brotherhood, with student Alan Garcia

to merge the two groups and call our program the **"Brother to Brother Minority Male Mentoring Program."**

During the spring of 2009, the Dallas County Community College received a grant to assist with minority male mentoring. El Centro was one of the recipients. In the revamped program, student leaders were in charge of the activities and they elected officers and established weekly meetings. Eventually the students took over, decided on when to meet, identified issues, congratulated each other on accomplishments, elected their own officers and counseled each other as to which teachers to take.

The school year 2010-2011 was very successful for the group. They had consistent meetings and encouraged each other to complete their education. We have seen a huge increase in the number of male graduates and completers of programs. One of the things that we plan to do better is to track the number of students who take advantage of the program and to have the men to mentor the new students coming into El Centro.

For more information about the El Centro program, please contact administrative advisor, Howard Finney at 214-860-2201 or faculty advisor Manasseh Lee at 214-860-2638.

An additional recommended resource is the October 2010, a *Call for Change*, published by the Council of Great City Schools.

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## MCNC - YOUTH VOICES

By Megan Lee, 2011 Graduate R. F. Wagner High School, MCNC Youth Liaison

Upon reminiscing about their high school years, many people recall first a defining moment or time that epitomizes their entire experience.

They think back to all those jokes that lost their immature humor, the moment summer vacation began at the end of senior year; the mindset that told them the world existed, condensed and pressed into hallways, classrooms, and offices.

In a sense, we are lucky to be able to think back to high school and question what exactly we were thinking in the time. I know I am lucky. Attending Robert F. Wagner Jr., Secondary School for Arts and Technology was an experience in itself both irreplaceable and impossible to recreate anywhere else. This is greatly due to the people who made the time go by so fast, but it is also due to my participation in Middle College National Consortium projects.

I participated in MCNC's student conferences for two consecutive years with each year unique to its own theme and project. In my first year, we focused on water conservation and sustainability. My school group met on Fridays until nine o'clock at night, Saturdays from ten in the morning until the sunset. I can never forget those dinners we had together so regularly that we became a family as we ate pizza off of cardboard or toasted to MCNC with glasses of cold tap water, symbolic of our project.. That year, we were targeting the privatization and pollution of the availability of water.

In my second year, we dreamed of rooftop gardens all over New York City, a trend that would spread to cities all over the country and then the world. I would spend five hours after school arguing with one of my friends in the group over a speech we would have to make in front of the entire school the next morning. I would say that a semicolon belonged somewhere, and he would argue that semicolons are too technical, and that a comma was more suitable for the occasion. The custodian would come into the room and tell us he was closing the school in the midst of our speech rehearsal.

With both projects, we dreamt big, convinced ourselves that our vision was the inevitable future, and then somehow forgot our promises to the cause once our plane touched down upon our arrival back home, either from Greenville or Rocky Mountain.

I realize that so many people view what we students do in MCNC as just projects – that they are things we create that reach the end of their shelf life once they are bagged into a two minute video and displayed in a gallery walk. But they're not. Anybody who has ever spent five days at an MCNC conference will tell you that their experience there was life-changing. The phrase will sound like a cliché, but participating in the MCNC does change a student's life.



Megan Lee (far right) with 2010 MCNC school group in Greenville, SC

My two years as part of the student conference opened my eyes to a world greater than I am, because never before had I, as a thirteen year old kid, thought that maybe somebody in a third world country would give up anything for a glass of clean drinking water, or that I can do something about this. The preparation, alone, for an MCNC conference has the potential to fuel a student with confidence, ambition, and hope as they travel around their city feeling like they can inform their public about something, instead of it always being them, the kid, learning. The conference, traveling to a different state for a cause bigger than themselves, and for an original project made for this cause, is an entirely different story on its own, empowering beyond words.

To treat this experience with an expiration date – well, it breaks my heart to realize that my high school MCNC group decided that an effort for our world was possible only between February and May of 2010 and that I will have to start the cause again all by myself.

Now as a freshman in college, I am studying Psychology and working part-time at the MCNC. Having so much independence and freedom, I am involved in world issues. People are occupying Wall Street, and I want to know why. I'm not the same high school kid who was

*(Continued next page)*

# STUDENT LEADERSHIP THROUGH STUDENT ACTION

By Terry Born, MCNC Coach

**M**CNC embarks on its twentieth year of promoting student leadership through student action! This year's conference is being hosted by a Southern California triumvirate: Harbor Teacher Preparation Academy, Mattie Adams, Principal, Los Angeles SW Early College, Wanda Moats, Principal and Nova Academy, founded by Natalie Battersbee.

The theme, selected by students from the three hosting institutions is **Reach Out: Exploring and Experiencing the Diversity of our World**. Students who participate in the April 18-22, 2012 event, will spend a day on Catalina Island, visit The Museum of Tolerance, Museum of Latin American Art, African American Museum, and Griffith Observatory and spend a day at the beach in Orange County. Besides sharing videos about projects targeting diversity issues in their local communities, students will engage in art happenings and group discussions on how to promote tolerance and improve understanding among communities with different beliefs, heritage, and lifestyles.

Last year five schools (LaGuardia MC, International HS, R.F. Wagner Jr., Greenville Tech, and Brashier) joined to form the first Student Leadership Initiative Innovation Lab network. These schools found ways to up the ante on student engagement, award high school and community service credit to participants, and even, in one case, to

offer six college credits. This year everyone has returned and 5 new schools (El Centro, CEC Denver, Brooklyn College Academy, Harbor Teacher Prep Academy and LA Southwest) have joined the group, expanding the opportunities to link leadership training, social media, and academic advancement. With this added capacity and the experience of the pilot schools, new features have been developed to provide support and increase communication. MCNC has hired a Youth Liaison, Megan Lee, a former Wagner student who participated in two conferences, to create and facilitate a **Youth Voices Facebook Group**, and create a series of events that will propel the students to greater collaboration. There has also been a website created for Advisors from the MCNC Student Leadership Initiative Innovation Lab <https://sites.google.com/a/mcnc.us/sli/>, where educational leadership is honed by social media. This provides weekly updates, shared templates, unit plans, resources, and student work. It's a place for advisors to share great materials and great ideas. No one needs to reinvent the wheel and 10 schools are breaking ground each day, using the tools and technology in the classroom and in our digital universe to connect, collaborate, and create a wider and more wonderful world for our youth. Advisors use this site to explore what's being done, what's possible and to share creative solutions with colleagues in order to turn Education to Innovation.

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## YOUTH VOICES *(Continued from page 10)*

uninterested because it was occurring somewhere out of sight. I also look towards the future. Everything I do today, tomorrow, one week from now, will contribute to the future, so that one day this world will be a place exactly as the one that today, exists in our dreams. One day, I will become a successful psychologist, or a writer, or an artist, or a teacher, and in my profession, I will change the world by helping other people change it too.

I want other students to take away from their MCNC experience exactly the same or more than I did. They will gain an unforgettable five day trip, but the hope, the confidence, the dream, and determination: that is all variable. And so the MCNC Youth Voices group on Facebook will make this a key element. MCNC Youth Voices will provide students access to communicating with other MCNC students from different states in a way that is quick and convenient to them. Through this

network, students will be able to constantly update each other about their experience. What do they think about the theme? What are their stories pertaining to it? Students will be able to realize together how world issues influence their lives; that they are part of a vast global community beyond high school that they need to participate in for themselves and for everybody else.

They will be able to tell each other what they are doing in their class, what they are learning that really has them thinking, what they are planning for their projects and what do their peers from across the country think about this, how they can make their project more effective. If there is an event about diversity in California, a New York student can save \$700 by telling a Californian student to attend it. That student can then tell the MCNC Youth Voices community what happened there and what was valuable there to take away.

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### THE MIDDLE COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL NATIONAL CONSORTIUM

was founded in 1993 to foster cooperation among member schools, disseminate information about the MCHS concept, create a forum for professional growth and promote dialogue about effective education.

**The Consortium** gratefully acknowledges the support and funding of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the DeWitt Wallace Readers' Digest Fund and the Pew Charitable Trust.



### THE CONSORTIUM SCHOOLS

The Academy of the Canyons at College of the Canyons, Santa Clarita CA  
 Academy of Health Services at Prince George's Community College, Largo MD  
 Brashier Middle College Charter High School at Greenville Technical College, Greenville SC\*  
 Brooklyn College Academy at Brooklyn College, Brooklyn NY\*  
 Career Education Center Middle College, Denver CO  
 Challenge Early College High School at Houston Community College, Houston TX\*  
 The Charles School at Ohio Dominican University, Columbus, OH\*  
 Edgecombe Early College High School at Edgecombe Community College, Tarboro NC  
 Franklin D. Roosevelt High School, Dallas TX  
 Genesee Early College High School at University of Michigan, Flint, MI  
 Great Path Academy at Manchester Community College, Manchester, CT\*  
 Greenville Technical Charter High School at Greenville Technical College, Greenville SC\*  
 Greer Middle College Charter High School at Greenville Technical College, Greenville SC  
 Harbor Teacher Preparation Academy at Los Angeles Harbor College, Wilmington CA\*

Henry Ford Early College at Henry Ford Community College, Dearborn Heights, MI\*  
 Hollis F. Price Early College High School at LeMoyné-Owen College, Memphis TN\*  
 International High School at LaGuardia Community College, Queens NY\*  
 Middle College High School at Christian Brothers University, Memphis TN\*  
 Middle College High School at Contra Costa College, San Pablo CA\*  
 Middle College High School at El Centro Community College, Dallas TX\*  
 Middle College High School at LaGuardia Community College, Queens NY\*  
 Middle College High School at Los Angeles Southwest College, Los Angeles CA\*  
 Middle College High School at Olive-Harvey City College, Chicago IL  
 Middle College High School at San Joaquin Delta College, Stockton CA\*  
 Middle College High School at Santa Ana College, Santa Ana CA\*  
 Middle Early College High School at Buffalo NY\*  
 Mott Middle College High School at Mott Community College, Flint MI\*  
 Robert F. Wagner, Jr. Secondary School for Arts and Technology at LaGuardia Community College, Queens NY  
 San Mateo Middle College High School at College of San Mateo, San Mateo CA  
 Southwest Early College High School at Denver Community College, Denver CO\*  
 Thurgood Marshall Early College High School at the University of New Orleans, New Orleans LA  
 Truckee Meadows Community College High School, Reno NV  
 Truman Middle College High School at Truman City College, Chicago IL  
 Williamson County Middle College High School at Nashville State Technical Institute, Nashville TN

\* Early College grantee

## Conferences

**Technical Assistance Conference**  
 February 15, 2012  
 Newport Beach, CA

**Winter Principals' Leadership Conference**  
 February 16 - 18, 2012  
 Newport Beach, CA

**Student Leadership Initiative**  
 April 18 - 22, 2012  
 Los Angeles, CA

**Summer Professional Development Institute**  
 June 28 - July 2, 2012  
 Jersey City, NJ

### MCNC Offices

Middle College National Consortium  
 27-28 Thomson Avenue, Suite 331  
 Long Island City, NY 11101  
 Phone: (718) 361-1981 Fax: (718) 361-1993  
 email: [info@mcnc.us](mailto:info@mcnc.us) web: [www.mcnc.us](http://www.mcnc.us)  
 Read the online version at: [www.mcnc.us/resources](http://www.mcnc.us/resources)

### STAFF

Editor in Chief.....Myra Silverman  
 Designer.....Edward Hollins  
 MCNC Research Associate.....Kathy Moran



Send inquiries and submissions to the editor:

Myra Silverman  
 11 Crestview Terrace  
 Orinda, CA 94563  
 FAX (603) 719-2940  
[Myrasilver@aol.com](mailto:Myrasilver@aol.com)