

# Hoke County High School: North Carolina

## A Summary of:

**HOKE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL, RAEFORD, NORTH CAROLINA: A Case Study of High Schools That Work**, 1996, Prepared by Southern Regional Education Board (Atlanta, GA)

## Overview

Hoke County has the third lowest per capita income in North Carolina. In 1993-94, the school ranked last among the state's 121 school districts in per pupil expenditures. That year, Hoke County High School was declared a "low performing" school and the state threatened to take over the district if it did not make significant improvements. At about the same time, the school was selected to participate in the *High Schools that Work (HSTW)* program of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). In their application to SREB, teachers proposed to revise the curriculum to ensure more rigorous content and to strengthen the teamwork of academic and vocational teachers. As a result of the efforts of faculty and staff, student learning improved

## POPULATION

Hoke County High School is a comprehensive high school serving 1,350 students in grades 9 through 12. The student body is 55 percent African American, 25 percent Native American, and 20 percent Caucasian. Because of the school's proximity to a military base, many of the students are transient. Seventy-three percent of Hoke County students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches compared to 40 percent statewide.

substantially. After its 1996 assessment of student achievement in reading, mathematics and science, SREB named Hoke County High School one of the most improved sites in the 22-state *HSTW* network.

## Evidence of Effectiveness

A comparison of student records between 1993 and 1996 showed that:

- ◆ at least 90 percent of career-bound students had taken Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II in 1996, while in the 1993 class only 37 percent had taken Algebra I, 57 percent Geometry and 42 percent Algebra II
- ◆ 85 percent of the 1996 class took college prep biology compared with 37 percent in 1993
- ◆ students who completed SREB's recommended academic core increased from 33 percent to 80 percent in English, from 64 percent to 98

percent in mathematics, and from 39 percent to 93 percent in science

In addition, in 1996:

- ◆ 53 percent of the students reported being college-bound compared to 20 percent in 1990
- ◆ 120 students took the SAT and achieved an average score of 841 compared to 94 students in 1994, with an average score of 773
- ◆ students used mathematics as it is applied in the workplace and prepared more written reports on science projects

## Key Components

Using the *HSTW* key practices as a framework, Hoke County High School teachers and staff identified the following priorities:

- ◆ getting academic and vocational teachers to raise expectations and work together to integrate learning
- ◆ replacing low level courses, particularly in the areas of mathematics, science and English, with more rigorous courses and increasing the range of academic courses offered
- ◆ strengthening vocational courses through the use of internships and job shadowing and dropping courses that do not meet industry standards, while adding technology courses, upgrading the welding and drafting programs, and placing additional emphasis on engineering-related courses
- ◆ assisting and encouraging students who are not prepared for the more rigorous courses by adopting the STAR (Short Term Achievement and Reward) program, a nine-week program supplemented, if necessary, by after-school classes and summer school
- ◆ revamping the school schedule with a block schedule designed to provide more time for integrated projects and labs
- ◆ strengthening career guidance through visits of high school counselors to the middle schools to work with students and their parents in designing a program of study
- ◆ enhancing staff development, with particular emphasis on educational technology

*The philosophical statement that underlies Hoke County improvement efforts is: "All students are capable of success if instructed in the learning style that suits them best, whether hands-on, theoretical or some combination."*

*Southern Regional Education Board*

## Contributing Factors

### *Financial Support from the State*

Both incentive grants and Tech-Prep funding from the state enabled the district to provide training and resources for staff development.

### *Teacher Collaboration*

School staff worked toward building teacher support for the integrated learning program. The teachers were organized into teams consisting of academic

and vocational teachers and competed with each other to design integrated projects. The winning teams received support to implement the projects.

### *Employer Involvement*

The teachers visited work sites to become more familiar with the skills needed by employers. Employers visited the school to discuss workplace requirements with students.

**STUDY METHODOLOGY**

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) uses data from student and faculty surveys, course enrollment data and follow-up studies of high school graduates. Scores on achievement tests in reading, mathematics and science are compared over time. For more information on *High Schools that Work*, see pages 26 - 29 of *Some Things DO Make a Difference for Youth*.

**GEOGRAPHIC AREAS**

Raeford, Hoke County, North Carolina.

**CONTACT INFORMATION****Research Contact**

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Additional Resource: *Bottoms, Gene (1999). Update: Experienced HSTW Sites Show Improvement on the 1998 Assessment: More Work Needed. Atlanta, Georgia: Southern Regional Education Board. This article provides information on the academic achievement gains of 24,000 students at 444 experienced HSTW sites (of about 850 total schools in 22 states) between 1996 and 1998. The percentage of students who met HSTW performance goals went up from 43 to 51 percent in reading, from 44 to 58 percent in mathematics and from 38 to 53 percent in science. Percentages of students at these sites completing the HSTW-recommended rigorous academic curriculum areas rose from 1996 to 1998: from 38 to 58 percent in science, 33 to 39 percent in English and 66 to 79 percent in mathematics. However, Bottoms was discouraged that only 28 percent of students took the recommended academic core in all subjects.*