

Education Update



NC DJJDP

A Newsletter for Parents and Guardians of Students at Lenoir Youth Development Center

Lenoir Youth Development Center Admits Students

New students were admitted to the Lenoir Youth Development Center in the late fall of 2008. The construction of this facility, and others like it, provides youth with smaller, community-connected facilities. There are currently three teachers at the Center, with more in the hiring process. Classes will be a maximum of eight students, and students have access to all courses needed to return to their communities with course credits.

What is Study Island?

Study Island is a web based assessment tool teachers use to check students' comprehension during and after studying subject content information. Study Island presents students with practice followed by immediate feedback and instruction. By focusing specifically on the skills outlined in the state standards, Study Island reinforces and enhances student skills, increases student comfort with a high-stakes testing environment, and collects valuable data for diagnostic reports.

Teachers begin the assessment by using the Study Island pre-test to determine course information that needs reinforcing. The teachers then assign topics for students to study. A test at the end of each topic gives the teacher feedback about how well students are responding to lessons being taught. The expectation is that students will be prepared to score at proficiency on End of Grade and End of Course tests. Study Island will become a valuable resource for our staff and students to use.

Because the program is web based teachers have accessibility to log on at home. Teachers can assign topics, check student progress, and enroll new students without using valuable instructional time. Students can use their user name and password to work on topics after school hours. Teachers assign topics to study days ahead; therefore, lessons are generated automatically for students' use. Students can monitor their progress by clicking lists that display completed results. We are optimistic that this program will help students focus on what is essential to know to improve their grades and achievement.

How Do We Measure Student Achievement?

End of Course Tests are administered twice yearly beginning with the 2008-2009 school year. Because the school day has changed to Block Scheduling, End of Course tests were administrated in December 2008 and will be again in May 2009. *(Over)*

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At Lenoir Youth Development Centers in Kinston, NC, End of Course test for the first semester are: English I, Biology, Algebra I and Civics & Economics. Teachers pace lessons throughout a five month period to cover all academic content subjects.

How do teachers know if students are retaining concepts for successful performance on End of Course tests? Teachers create quizzes, projects, and other assessments to measure student progress. Nine-week benchmark exams are another method used to assess student comprehension. Using data from all assessments provide teachers with information to re-direct instruction day to day. Of course, students are taught strategies to use as they read and apply skills while taking tests. Students highlight passages, number paragraphs, underline words, and re-read literature to select the best answers to each question.

It is important that students use strategies learned to perform at proficiency levels on End of Course test. Grade level promotion standards are tied to how well students score on EOC tests. Students are encouraged to use time allotted for testing, to check answers, and read carefully to choose as many right answers as possible.

Student performance is reported by achievement levels. Level I performance indicates insufficient mastery. Level II is inconsistent mastery. Level III is consistent mastery, showing that the student is performing at grade level. Level IV is superior mastery. Students performing at or above Level III are considered at or above grade level.

For additional information on the tests that students are required to take, contact your student's school or the testing director in our central office.

New Labs Set to Open

Students at all of our schools will have a new way to explore and learn while earning high school credit. Synergistic Systems has now been installed at all schools. This curriculum shifts the responsibility for learning to the student, encouraging each learner to be responsible for his or her own academic success. The teacher becomes a facilitator of student learning and interacts with students in a positive, powerful way. With this system, teachers are afforded more one-on-one time with each student.

The curriculum is divided into modules that are aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Each module has seven lessons that explore the module topic. After the completion of the seven session module, students change partners and work-stations and explore another module.

Modules at our schools include:

- Physical Science
- Health
- Math Enrichment
- Business
- Agriculture
- Engineering
- Careers
- Earth Science

Students work in cooperative pairs to complete the curriculum and activities. In the business module, for example, students must tackle the nuts and bolts of running a business, including the legal and ethical ramifications of decisions. Students then demonstrate their expertise through the proper handling of several different business transactions.

Students will be scheduled to enroll in the Synergistic lab for one semester per year. Ask us if you would like to learn more!