

Hydroponics Lab Opens at Frank J. Gargiulo Campus



After working together to bring a new learning experience to students, the Hydroponics Lab at the Frank J. Gargiulo Campus officially opened in July. Instructors Shelly Witham, Cathy Yuhas, Stephanie Szymanski and Nick LaVolpe, along with student interns Nancy Do, Elena Gurczeski, Layaly Saleh, Alfonse Sessa III, Diane Zaragoz and Kate Neal dedicated their summer to ensure this new lab was up and running for the current school year.

The Hydroponics Lab uses the process of growing crops in water along with a soil substitute, such as clay pebbles, gravel, or rockwool with added nutrients to help the plants thrive. The lighting, temperature and humidity are all controlled to ensure the plants have the perfect environment for growth. To control the environmental aspects of the lab, a cooling wall serves as a medium for climate, moisture and ventilation control throughout the greenhouse. Warm air is pulled in through the vents and is then cooled by water flowing through pipes at the top of the system and pulled back out by the fans on the opposite edge of the room.

This lab will optimize the learning experience of students with a plethora of complex hydroponic and aquaponic systems that will serve as a learning tool in the Academy of Environmental Science and Sustainability, exposing students to hydroponic and aquaponic farming. The Hydroponics Lab currently grows a variety of plants including basil, lime basil, purple basil, kale and lettuce. They will be used within the facility and available for sale to faculty and students.



County Prep Students Win Gold Medals At FCCLA National Conference



Students from County Prep represented New Jersey in FCCLA's Annual National Leadership Conference, held in California this past July, thanks to funding from the HCST Foundation.

Esmeralda Garcia competed in the Fashion Design event, and earned a nearly perfect score for her four designs, portfolio and garments that were presented to a panel of judges. Nicole Lucero-Huerta and Eshita Jain competed in the Entrepreneurship event and received a score of 98 for their business portfolio.

All three students were awarded gold medals for their work. Roughly 8,000 students from all over the United States participated in this year's national competition, making Nicole, Esmeralda and Eshita's successes even more noteworthy.

A Message from the Superintendent

Dear HCST Community:

With our successful September start as a leading **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** district, various schools and departments contributed examples of the preparation that helps create a strong foundation for HCST's 2019/2020 School Year. We collectively look forward to supporting the educational experiences of all of our learners and hope you enjoy this edition of *HCST Connections*.

Superintendent

Amy Lin-Rodriguez

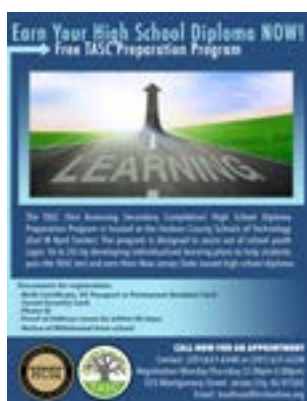
Career Development Center Delivering Real Results for Students

As a high school student, Zmhar Bleman felt unfulfilled in his studies and was often late or absent for class. He decided to drop out from the district he was enrolled in, but found his lack of work history or job skills was preventing him from becoming gainfully employed. That's when Zmhar learned about the Youth Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) Program at the Hudson County Schools of Technology.

Through the program, Zmhar achieved his high school diploma and completed an internship at the Greenville branch of the Jersey City Free Public Library where he learned business and government operations.

Today, Zmhar is working at a local restaurant while he waits for his classes to begin to study to become an electrician. The Hudson County One Stop, which works collaboratively with the HCST's Career Development Center, is helping Zmhar identify ways to offset tuition costs.

About HCST's Test Assessing Secondary Completion Program



The Hudson County Schools of Technology TASC Preparation Program has been developed with the cooperation of the Hudson County One Stop and the Hudson County TASC Testing Center. The program is designed to motivate and teach students who have traditionally not done well in classroom settings. It also develops individualized learning plans for each student to ensure everyone is successful. Upon completing and passing the TASC exam, students will be counseled by a career counselor from the Hudson County Career Development Center. HCST has job developers to assist students in securing paid internships.

What's New in HCST's Special Education Program

Last school year was an exciting time for HCST's Special Education program. The Parental Advisory Council had two great meetings with presenters from Hudson County CIACC Program and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Parents were educated on many issues including emotional skills, the national vaping issue affecting young adults and current programs offered by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. As a result of the SEPAC meetings, The Homework Club was introduced and moderated by Jennifer Tangeman to support our students in completing assignments.

The Social Skills club has expanded under the mentoring of Stephen Finn, SSW and Ann Gherardi, CST Coordinator. The students in this club worked together to develop and refine their social emotional skills and independent living skills. These students attended several Broadway plays, ice skated in Bryant Park and attended a field trip to Dorney Park.

The 2019-20 school year is bound to be just as fulfilling for students with the introduction of more clubs and tutoring opportunities for our students, SEPAC meetings and field trips. The Social Skills club is scheduled to see *Frozen* on Broadway this month and new after school programs will roll out that help students take the next steps in applying for college and post-secondary programs.

HCST Revamps Career Development Programs

Hudson County Schools of Technology is revamping its career development programs to better assist its diverse community of students. For both the high school and post-secondary level, the district will build new partnerships with local stakeholders to provide apprenticeships, internships and other various structured learning experiences. Previously known as School to Careers, the district will now prepare students to achieve their professional goals through the Department of Career Planning and Development.

This new department, overseen by Amy DeGise, looks to create a career development and exploration plan that can provide various levels of career engagements, such as occupational speakers, field trips to various businesses and industries, virtual and on-site job shadowing, in-school projects, community service activities, internships, part-time jobs, seasonal jobs, summer jobs, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeship experiences.

The goal of the Department of Career Planning and Development is to prepare students to meet the challenges of workplace demands by offering alternative pathways to success. College has become a costly option that doesn't always offer students the industry-valued skills sought by employers, so giving students the opportunity to participate in "Learn While You Earn" apprenticeships can make all the difference in career planning.

Earl W. Byrd Center Kicks Off School Year with Facility Upgrade

The Earl W. Byrd Center, which houses County Prep High School, is beginning the new school year with a number of facility upgrades. This past summer, crews completed retiling in the A-Wing hallways, renovated three old labs in the B-Wing and installed two new boiler systems.

Additionally, the old Tech Wing was renovated to be a new, state-of-the-art Performing Arts Dance Studio and plans are underway to construct a Music Audio Technology and Instrumental Performing Arts Center in the same area.

The facility is now equipped with a new pass through that connects the main building to the Science Wing and new flooring was installed in the transportation trailer.



Explore Middle School Prepping for a Successful School Year

This summer the Explore faculty collaborated to develop four new integrated thematic units for the 2019-2020 school year, piggybacking off the success of last year's thematic units.

Students will spend the first marking period focusing on the essential question -- "What defines who we are?" Students will explore a variety of texts, multimedia and experiences that will allow them to answer this question about themselves and others. All students will visit the Montclair Art Museum's exhibit on identity and the eighth grade class will be seeing *Dear Evan Hansen* on Broadway. Guest speakers will include performer and activist Harmonica Sunbeam and John Halligan sharing "Ryan's Story."

Students will then shift their focus to "Space - The Ultimate Frontier" in recognition of the 50 year anniversary of the moon landing. The entire school will visit the Meadowlands Environmental Center, where sixth graders will participate in the "Solar Energy" program and the seventh and eighth grade classes will participate in the "Studying Stars" program. To conclude the unit, students will showcase what they have learned through various STEAM-based projects and experiments based on space exploration, planets, and stars.

In the third marking period, students will learn about the importance of cultural diversity and how it shapes our world, those around us and ourselves. Students will identify common elements of cultures from countries around the world as well as the United States, including social organizations, customs and traditions, languages, arts and literature, religion, forms of government, economic systems, food, clothing, music and dance. At the end of the unit, students will create a Cultures and Diversity Fair showcasing their research and host an International Food Night for the Explore community.

To end the year, students will learn financial responsibility and how to apply these skills into their personal lives. Students will be able to distinguish the difference between credit and debit, identify the meaning of deposit and withdrawal, research options when it comes to shopping comparisons and describe vocabulary terms such as interest, tax rates, debt and budget. This unit ties into the new state standards of financial literacy in the middle school math curriculum. Sixth graders will be attending the JA BizTown field trip, while seventh and eighth graders attend the JA Finance Park field trip. At the end of the unit, students will be given a Project Tic-Tac-Toe board in which they are to choose three projects to complete for the marking period.



Food Service Team Participates in Team Building Exercise

This summer, the Food Service Team had an opportunity to visit the Unilever Campus in Englewood Cliffs. In an effort to stay current in food trends, the department teamed up with Unilever to explore new products out on the market. This was a great and informative team building experience that will allow our kitchen professionals to introduce new, healthy and tasty options to our menus.



About the Food Services Department

With Mr. Gerald Lyons' retirement, Chef Mario M. Rodriguez III is stepping into a new role this school year as the district's Food Service Coordinator. He will be working closely with all the Food Service Managers: Chef Justin Josiah at County Prep High School, Chef Byron Avila at High Tech High School and Chef Daniel Ward, who joined the Explore Middle School community this year.

Each food center strives to exceed the student's and faculty's expectations and looks to give a variety of options to choose from for breakfast and lunch. The salad bars at County Prep and High Tech provide numerous healthy options that the majority of the student body take part in. The district offers vegan and vegetarian options every day at all three campuses.

The grab and go station offers made to order pizza, prepared salads and sandwiches for those who need a quick meal. After the success of the Explore Middle School Green Initiative, where they use reusable silverware and plates, we have started a pilot program at High Tech to replace plastic utensils.

County Prep Medical Sciences

County Prep High School works in conjunction with the Rutgers School of Health Professionals to give students the opportunity to explore and learn the basic knowledge of careers in the healthcare industry. Students who take courses are taught by County Prep instructors, who are also Rutgers SHP Adjunct Professors.

The program offers nine courses: Health Career Exploration, Healthcare Occupations Comprehensive, Anatomy & Physiology 1 and 2, Pharmacology with Medical Math, Emergency Medical Technician, Fundamentals of Health & Wellness and Foundations of Nutrition. Students who successfully complete all courses and testing can earn 25 credits from Rutgers in addition to their high school credits. Students are able to complete competitive internship programs at Jersey City Medical Center and become certified EMTs, among other certification programs. Currently, there are 388 students enrolled in our program, 102 of them freshmen.

Hudson County Community College Opens at Frank J. Gargiulo Campus



Beginning this school year, Hudson County Community College will now offer post secondary courses at the Frank J. Gargiulo Campus. As part of the program, students will be able to obtain an Associate's Degree in Liberal Arts and Businesses Administration directly from the new Secaucus Center.

"The partnership between Hudson County Schools of Technology and Hudson County Community College aligns with our district's mission to provide students of all ages with diverse learning opportunities," said Superintendent Amy Lin-Rodriguez. "By working collaboratively, our current high school students are able to earn an associate degree from HCCC upon graduation, and we are able to expand our post-secondary offerings. I thank County

Executive Tom DeGise for continuing to invest in public education, allowing everyone to further their studies and prepare for future career opportunities."

Last month, the HCST administration welcomed County and College officials to the Frank J. Gargiulo Campus for an opening reception. Hudson County Executive Thomas A. DeGise, HCCC President Dr. Chris Reber, HCCC Board of Trustees Chair William J. Netchert, Esq., and HCCC Executive Director of the Secaucus Center Dr. Christopher Conzen were all in attendance.



"Our thanks to County Executive DeGise, the Board of Chosen Freeholders, and the Board and administrators of Hudson County Schools of Technology for their support in establishing the HCCC Secaucus Center," said Dr. Chris Reber. "Our Middle States-approved Secaucus Center focuses on expanding opportunities. It will serve all of Hudson County - especially those who live or work in Secaucus, Kearny, Harrison, and East Newark - with full-credit, college-degree programs offered in the evening. In addition, we are also providing High Tech High School students interested in STEM education with the opportunity to complete an HCCC associate degree upon high school graduation."



In the Spotlight: HCST Educated, Now Educators

Over the years, thousands of students have walked the halls at Hudson County Schools of Technology. For many, HCST made such a positive impact on their lives that they chose to return as educators. In this issue of HCST Connections, we would like to highlight the successes of these men and women who are inspiring the next generation of leaders in our community.



Justin Nathaniel Josiah is a Culinary Instructor and Food Service Manager at County Prep High School. Justin graduated from CPHS in 1995 as part of the school's inaugural class. After high school, he went on to study at Hudson County Community College, psychology and special education at Bloomfield College, the curriculum and instruction at American Intercontinental University, administration at Saint Peter's Peter's University and is currently enrolled in educational leadership courses at Walden University. Justin has always felt right at home at HCST and is proud to be instructing students at his alma mater. Four members of his team are his former students.

Vanessa Batista is an Architectural Instructor at High Tech High School, her alma mater. She attended the New Jersey Institute of Technology where she earned a Bachelor's Degree in Architecture and a Master's Degree in Civil Engineering. As a student at HCST, Vanessa found her passion for architecture in Mr. Simon's classroom. She feels incredibly fortunate to be giving back to the community that developed her career and be able to play an instrumental role in her students' accomplishments.



Norrey Benito is the Health Teacher at Explore Middle School, her alma mater. She went on to attend County Prep High School, studied health sciences at Saint Peter's University and furthered her education at New Jersey City University where she obtained a master's degree in special education. Norrey has found project-based learning and field experience to be the most engaging methods and wanted to give similar opportunities to her students. Teaching at times can be a tough profession, but her students make it all worth it.



Thurman F. Carey IV is a Psychology teacher at County Prep High School, serves as the advisor for the Rainbow Alliance and Multicultural Club and is the co-moderator of Student Council. He graduated from County Prep High School in 1999 from the Allied Health program and went on to study psychology, criminology and women's studies at Rutgers University and education administration from St. Peter's University. The most rewarding part for Thurman about returning to HCST has been the opportunity to inspire students in the same way he was inspired by his former educators, Mrs. Mendolla and Ms. Fedele.



Read more about these educators online at hcstonline.org

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