

NC ACCESS BEST PRACTICES



Office of Charter Schools
NC ACCESS PROGRAM
NC Department of Public Instruction

Marketing and Recruitment

Removing Barriers

The Late Bus

Implementation Description

Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy (TJCA) is located in rural Mooresboro, NC and serves K-12 students from Rutherford and surrounding counties. Many of these students have been unable to participate in after school tutoring and/or club opportunities simply because they do not have transportation home. School leaders utilized NC ACCESS funds to purchase two new buses offering more reliable transportation to meet families' needs.

During the 2021-22 school year, TJCA offered tutoring on Mondays and Wednesdays after school and launched a late bus route on those days. While tutoring is available to any student who wants to attend, teachers invited high risk students to attend tutoring and access the late bus service. The bus arrives at 3:45 pm at



the grammar school and then picks up students at the upper school campus a few miles away. Students were dropped off by 5:00 pm at three community stops convenient to families. The Grammar school served up to ten students on the bus. Based on this year's success, the school hopes to share the opportunity more broadly and to include more students in its second year of operation.

At the middle and high school, clubs typically met after school, and a lack of transportation for some students meant that they were unable to participate. While students had limited opportunities to participate in clubs during COVID, the school plans to return to a full schedule of clubs in 2022-23. In order to ensure all students have an opportunity to participate, school leaders considered several options. The high school made a decision to include club time in the regular school day, and each staff member is required to sponsor at least one club. This scheduling change eliminates any conflict with receiving tutoring, participating on a sports team, or maintaining an after school job. As a result, student

About This School

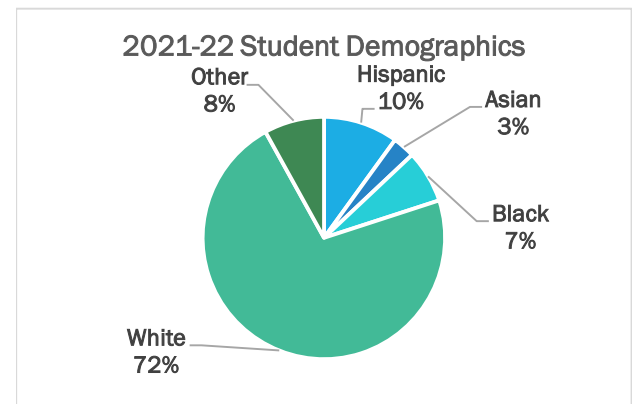
Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy

Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy partners with families and utilized a classical curriculum to educate students in grades K-12, thus graduating thoughtful, articulate young adults who are prepared for college and for a lifetime of citizenship and active intellectual inquiry.

Year School Opened: 1999-2000

Grant Awarded: 2021-22

Initial Grade Levels Served: K-12



% ED Student Population: 23%

Urbanicity: Rural / Mooresboro, NC

Persons in Poverty (Rutherford County)⁵ 19.1%

participation has significantly increased. At the middle school, clubs meet after school, and a late bus route ensures transportation is not a barrier to participation for these students. The late bus option for club members has been successful thus far as one-third of middle school late bus riders participate in clubs.

In addition to offering late bus routes, the buses are also used during the school day to transport students for quarterly field trips, which are an essential aspect of school culture. The field trips provide students the opportunity to engage in valuable cultural experiences directly aligned with their curriculum. The addition of the two buses has helped TJCA maintain their commitment to learning experiences outside of the school building.

Results

Overall participation in after school tutoring and clubs increased, and more than 50% of participants have used the late bus at some point in the year. Students who traditionally were unable to attend after school tutoring or clubs because they did not have transportation home are now able to participate. Participation in extracurricular activities has been shown to increase engagement with the school, lower dropout rates, and improve academic performance (Holloway, 1999).

Challenges

The rising cost of fuel and maintenance as well as a decrease in the number of available drivers are the biggest challenges to the continued success of this program.

Future Modifications

The school continues to map the location of all students to ensure that community stops are serving current families and to make adjustments as needed by adding or relocating stops.

In order to measure the impact of after school transportation, school leaders will collect data on the achievement gains of students who historically would not be able to attend tutoring due to a lack of transportation. Based on the success of year one, the school plans to expand the program offering the late bus as an option for more students.

Critical Components

Getting Started

Having a sufficient number of reliable drivers is essential to implementation.

Ongoing Supports

In order to recruit and retain drivers, the school will continue to offer a competitive driver compensation package and modify it as necessary.

Equity Connections

In general, students in poverty have lower participation rates in extracurricular activities (Knop, 2020). Their inability to participate reaches farther than just the one hour a week that a club meets; it impacts their school career as a whole. Studies show that extracurricular activities lower dropout rates as students have an increased sense of belonging (Holloway, 1999). Likewise, after-school tutoring positively impacts a students' academics, leading to higher graduation rates (Rheinheimer, 2010). Providing transportation for extracurricular activities and tutoring removes a common barrier to participation, especially for low income students.

Research

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2. Holloway, J. (December 1, 1999). Research Link / "*Extracurricular Activities: The Path to Academic Success?*". ASCD. Accessed June 13, 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/-extracurricular-activities-the-path-to-academic-success>
3. Knop, B. (September 23, 2020). "*Even Short-Term Spells of Poverty Lower School-Aged Children's Involvement in Extracurricular Activities*". United States Census Bureau. Accessed June 30, 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/09/children-in-poverty-less-likely-to-participate-in-sports-gifted-programs.html>
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