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Achievement Awards 2010



Virginia Association of Counties

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Call for Entries



2010 VACo Achievement Awards

Deadline: June 1, 2010

Application Form

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. Deadline: June 1, 2010.

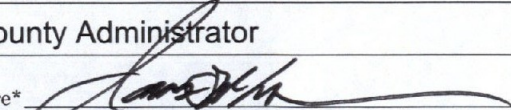
Program Information

Locality County of York
Program Title Virtual High School Partnership
Program Category Information Technology
Population Category (4) 50,001-100,000

Contact Information

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Signature of county administrator or chief administrative officer

Name James O. McReynolds
Title County Administrator
Signature* 

*Entries without this signature will not be accepted.

VACo Achievement Award 2010
Virtual High School
York County Public Library
and School Division Partnership



Overview

- Collaboration between York County Public Library and York County School Division.
- Goal: Foster equitable access to information technology and online learning for Virtual High School students who may not have access to a computer.
- Public Library provides computers, Internet access, and librarian assistance to Virtual High School Students.
- School Division provides learning management system and training to students and library staff.
- School Division provides teachers for online courses.
- Program enables students unable to attend traditional classes at school to keep up with their classmates.
- Partnership facilitates collaboration and cooperation between School Division, teachers, students and public library.
- Easily implemented in other jurisdictions.

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Virtual High School
York County Public Library & School Division Partnership

Challenge

The York County School Division was met with a challenge to provide equal access to technology for students participating in online courses. The school division provides online courses to meet student needs through their academic four-year plan. As a result, students may take a variety of online courses during the school day, after school or a combination of both. In addition the school division has students who are solely devoted to online learning outside of the traditional school day creating a unique opportunity for the school division to partner with the York County Public Library. The challenges of bridging of the digital divide between high school students who have computers and Internet access and those who do not has been addressed by the collaboration between the York County Public Library and the York County School Division. The fostering of equitable access to information technology and online learning is the primary goal of the association between these two entities.

Implementation

Since the inception of the York County School Division's Virtual High School in 2007, the York County Public Library has been a partner in providing this important educational service to the mutual students

we serve. Though York County is an affluent locality, there are many residents and families who do not have computers and Internet access at home. Over the last several years the library has seen an increased utilization of its Internet stations due to the fact that many citizens can not afford home computers or Internet service provider charges. In addition, home computers are not always reliable, especially when they crash right before an assignment is due or an exam must be taken. When this happens the public library is always there to provide students with a computer and Internet access.

The Virtual High School (VHS) students use the public library to access online courses using a “learning management system” (LMS) through the Internet which is available to students 24 hours a day. Using the LMS students are actively engaged in online discussions, tracking messages, submitting documents electronically, and meeting online with teachers and students through a “virtual classroom”. Student requirements include having an active email account, access to word processing and presentation software, Internet, and specific plug-ins.

The library provides the Virtual High School with a small classroom equipped with computers for student use. The library also has WiFi access connectivity if students have their own personal laptops. In order to access the Virtual High School coursework at the library on a regular basis, students are encouraged to set up a schedule with a

librarian to work in the “electronic classroom”. The School Division provides the web-based learning management system, teachers, and training for students and library staff.

The public library’s financial responsibility is minimal since the facilities are already equipped with computers, Internet access, and staff prepared to assist students. The School Division purchases the subscription to the learning management system and salaries of online instructors.

The partnership between the library and the School Division has allowed Virtual High School students who otherwise would not have had access to information technology the opportunity to perform equally with their classmates. Since its inception more than 350 students have been enrolled in the program utilizing the services as a result of the collaboration. Because of the collaboration between the York County Public Library and York County School Division, there are four students who graduated from high school who worked solely from library computers. Working in collaboration with the public library, Virtual High School has offered a secure online environment where students engage in interactive class discussions, discover content-rich activities, and complete valid assessments. Making this online access available is helping students to become more academically successful in a technologically-advanced society. Our goal is to help students realize that their commitment to hard work and taking advantage of this

collaboration will help them achieve the greatest rewards of their online learning experience. The program also enables students to continue their studies who are unable to attend a traditional classroom thus allowing them the availability of online coursework as well as the ability to keep up with their classmates and graduate on time. The Virtual High School and York County Public Library staffs are proud to facilitate the partnership.

Model for Other Localities

All ninety-one public library systems in Virginia provide public Internet access. The opportunities are great for other school divisions in the Commonwealth to partner with their local public libraries to increase their capacity in providing educational services to students. York County has demonstrated the success of a great partnership.





