Connecting School and Community: A Model for Rural School and Community Improvement

A Rural School Innovation Network Webinar
May 29, 2008

Presented by:
Doris Terry Williams
Jereann King Johnson
Anthony Clark
Welcome and Introductions – Rob Mahaffey, Marketing & Communications Director, Rural School & Community Trust (RSCT)

Presentation

Doris Terry Williams – Capacity Building Program Director, RSCT, Henderson, NC

Jereann King Johnson – CSC Project Coordinator, RSCT, Warrenton, NC

Anthony Clark – CEO, Uhuru Community Development Corporation, Rich Square, NC

Questions and Answers – Send to info@ruraledu.org during the call

RSIN Invitation and Closing Remarks
Our Mission

...to help rural schools and communities get better together.
Connecting School and Community
One National Example

Five-County Project Area in North Carolina

Warren
Northampton
      Halifax
      Pasquotank
      Perquimans
Economic Data

Percent of Children in Poverty
NC and CSC Counties Years 2000 and 2005

Source: Action for Children-NC
Economic Data

Percent Children Receiving Free and Reduced Lunch

- Warren: 77%
- Pasquotank: 60%
- Northampton: 83%
- North Carolina: 48%
- Source: Action for Children-NC
Child Health Data

Figure 1. Infant Mortality Rate (per 1000) NC and CSC Counties - Years 1997 and 2004

Source: Action for Children-NC
Child Health Data

Teen Pregnancy Rates per 1,000 Girls
Year 2005

North Carolina: 36
Hertford: 53
Northampton: 49
Pasquotank: 54
Perquimans: 43
Warren: 54

Source: Action for Children-NC
Education Data

Graduation Rates - Year 2006

- North Carolina: 68.10
- Halifax: 58.2
- Northampton: 61.9
- Pasquotank: 48.2
- Perquimans: 71.3
- Warren: 68.2

Source: NC Department of Public Instruction
Education Data

Percent Students Passing End of Grade Tests
Year 2006

- Warren: 36.4%
- Pasquotank: 31.7%
- Northampton: 38%
- North Carolina: 40%

Source: NC Department of Public Instruction
Connecting School & Community (CSC): The Purpose

...to move vulnerable youths and families out of poverty through education and asset building.
The Big Picture

A COMMUNITY THAT PREPARES EVERY CHILD TO SUCCEED

The Rural School and Community Trust
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Networking
- Resource Development
- Facilitation
- Research and Information
- Model Development

Lead Community Organizations
- Community Dialogue
- Community Action Plan for Child/Youth Success
- Alternative Out-of-School Time Programs for Children and Young Adults
- Economic Alternatives for Vulnerable Families
- Partnerships with Schools and Other Organizations and Agencies
- Local and State Advocacy

Caregivers, Schools, Policy Makers Other Groups & Individuals
- Community-Based Support for the Success of Vulnerable Children, Young Adults, and Families
- Social Capital
- Engaging and Rigorous Academic Programs
- Success Oriented Policies and Practices
- Adult Education

A COMMUNITY THAT PREPARES EVERY CHILD TO SUCCEED
Our Lead Partners

- River City Community Development Corporation
- Warren County Training School/North Warren High School Alumni and Friends Association
- Uhuru Community Development Corporation
River City CDC

Strengthen communities and improve quality of life through...
- Home Ownership
- Job Creation
- Business Development
- Cultural Awareness
- Focus on 16 to 25 year-old out-of-school youth
Preserve and continue the tradition of high achievement in education
Promote human relations and community leadership
Operate a community service and empowerment center
Implement a Saturday academy and a summer enrichment program for kids
Uhuru CDC

- Demonstrate the interconnectedness of economic, social, and educational development
- Increase capacity of fathers to mentor and support young boys
- Provide entrepreneurial skills and opportunities to high school-aged girls
CSC Goals

- Strengthen the capacity and intentionality of grassroots leaders and groups to lead and participate in local school reform for the success of all children
- Build strong out-of-school supports for vulnerable school-aged children and young adults
- Establish a network of activists to advocate for policies and practices that improve the climate for rural children and schools
## The Change We Want

### Transformational Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Looks Like…</th>
<th>Solutions Provided By…</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Kind of Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transform thought and behavior</td>
<td>Co-discovery knowledge and solutions; facilitators acknowledging they do not have the solution; &quot;messy&quot;</td>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
<td>Co-dependency</td>
<td>Transformation of thought and behavior; sustainable; systemic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community Dialogue and Visioning Process

Organizing
- Form Project Team
- Set Goals
- Develop Materials
- Build Relationships
- Train Facilitators
- Inform Public
- Pilot Circles
- Kick Off Initiative

Dialogues
- Study Circle
- Study Circle
- Study Circle
- Study Circle
- Study Circle
- Study Circle
- Project Team

Action
- ACTION FORUM
  - Community Action Teams
  - Community Action

Adapted from the National Study Circle Resource Center
Guiding Question

What does a community look like that prepares all of its children for success?
Key Underlying Questions

What strategies might be used to ensure success for all children?

What relationships are necessary to ensure success for all children?

What policies and practices are needed to ensure that all children and communities thrive?
A National Example: The Uhuru Story

- Northampton and Halifax counties in NC
  - Study Circles
  - Ujamaa Entrepreneurial Program
  - Fatherhood Program
  - Policy and Advocacy Agenda
  - Families Supporting Families partnership
Study Circles

- Conversation in Halifax and Northampton Counties
  - 151 participants in 7 circles
  - In-school and out-of-school youth
  - Educators
  - Elected Officials
  - Community Leaders
Ujamaa Entrepreneurial Program

- Why Ujamaa?
- What are the Underlying Principles?
  - Economic and social justice
  - Environmental stewardship
  - Global markets for local growth
Ujamaa Entrepreneurial Program

- 2007-2008 Program
  - 21 participants in summer and after-school programs
  - 100% African American
  - 60% in families in poverty
  - 30% behind 2 or more grade levels

- 2008-2009
  - Expand to community college campus
  - Refine and package curriculum for dissemination (with River City CDC)
Fatherhood Program

- Why a Fatherhood Program?
- What does the program do?
  - Serves males who are experiencing challenges related to poverty, incarceration, educational barriers, low job skills
  - Provides job skills training, job placement assistance, individual and group counseling
Fatherhood Program

- 2007-2008 Program
  - More 200 participants ages 14-44
  - 98 have been placed in jobs
  - 85% have shown positive changes in behavior, skills levels, and employment status
The Eastern North Carolina Rural Education Working Group

- Statewide agenda focused on local rural issues
- Advocates from 20 counties named in the 10-year running school finance case known as Leandro
- Bi-monthly meetings for training, data analysis, legislative updates, issues review
Policy and Advocacy

- Key Issues
  - Disadvantaged Student Supplement Fund
  - School Dropout and Push Out
  - Suspension and Expulsion
  - Recruitment and Retention of Quality Educators
  - Academic Achievement and Opportunity Gap
Communication as an Organizing Tool

- Communication Plan
  - Jointly selected themes
    - Start with Me
    - Stand Up – Speak Up
    - Schools Can’t Do It Alone
  - Carefully placed news articles
  - Web page
  - Public Forums

Imagine

A community that prepares all of its children to succeed

“Start with me.”

Contact a Connecting School and Community partner in your area.

River City CDC
252-331-2929
www.rivercitycdc.org
thurucdc@hotmail.com

Rural School & Community Trust
502-561-8832
www.ruraledu.org

WCHS/NWHS Alumni Association
252-433-8844
www.wchsnwhs.org

UHURU CDC
252-539-8832
757-856-0835
uhurucdc@hotmail.com
www.ruraledu.org
Replicability: How can your Community be successful?

- Community dialogue and visioning process
- Co-existence of policy and practice work
  - Scaffolding of strategies
  - Relationship building
- Community development corporations/Community-based organizations
- Community-based alternative and out-of-school time programs for children and young adults
Project Evaluation

Selected Findings

- Demand for programs outreached program capacity
- Warren County students enrolled in programs for academic reasons all passed to the next grade
- 86% of students in the Perquimans after-school program passed both reading and math end of grade exams (49% of non-participants passed)
- Nearly half of Pasquotank’s YouthBuild Entrepreneur Program participants completed GED requirements
- Nearly half of Uhuru’s “fathers” gained employment
Project Evaluation

- National Center for Rural Education Research Support at UNC-Chapel Hill
- Full report available on our website at www.ruraledu.org
Join the Rural School Innovation Network

The Rural School and Innovation Network (RSIN) is...

• A Rural School and Community Trust managed network of schools and school districts striving for excellence in challenging circumstances;
• A mutual self-help network sharing innovations that improve rural education, especially in the poorest rural communities; and
• An alliance of rural education advocates working to improve policy for rural places.

For more information and to join, go to www.ruraledu.org and click on “RSIN.”
Connecting School and Community: A Model for Rural School and Community Improvement

The Rural School Innovation Network
1530 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22209
703-243-1487
www.ruraledu.org

Send questions to info@ruraledu.org