

NSHS offers free college for qualified students

By *Lés Pierres Streater*
Sentinel-Voice

Parents struggling with the cost of providing their children a higher education now have the opportunity to save money while ensuring that their children have access to attending college. Nevada State High School (NSHS), a small public charter school with an enrollment of 140 students, provides a dual-credit, high school and simultaneous college curriculum for motivated students.

This allows them to gain valuable college experience and graduate from high school with two years of college credits.

Founded one year ago, NSHS is one of the many so-called Early College High Schools being created across the country to help maximize student potential and minimize financial costs for parents of students pursuing a higher education.

The program is located on the campus of Nevada State College in Henderson, Nevada. It receives funds through the public school system.

NSHS developers sought to establish a charter through the Clark County School District. After receiving an initial okay for formation, the CCSD rescinded its approval indicating that the school's curriculum was more in line with college requirements rather than that of a high school. NSHS promoters then approached the State Board of Education, who granted them a license to become the first of four schools licensed by their authority.

This unique aspect of the program allows NSHS to work on a four-year goal of assisting students with a better opportunity to graduate from college within the state university system instead of a two-year program which exists at the community college level.

The savings for the student and his or her family result from the fact that the first two years of actual college training and credits earned is publicly funded with no fee assessed to the student's family — a savings of approximately \$10,000 over a two-year period based on average college costs.

The NSHS has four goals: (1) To make higher education more accessible, affordable and attractive by bridging the divide between high school and college in a physical

place, (2) To reduce time spent at the high school level during the junior and senior years and facilitate the transition of motivated students to a higher education, (3) To provide students with guidance and support from adults through the first two years of college, and (4) To demonstrate new ways of integrating varied levels of schooling to better serve the intellectual and developmental needs of young people.

Dr. Wendy Hawk, principal of NSHS, and co-founder along with her husband John, spoke about why they decided to create this program.

She said, "We've been in existence for about one year and are getting ready to enter our second year. We began with 40 students last year and we have about 120 students signed up for this year. The school is designed to accommodate 11th and 12th grade students who attend Nevada State High School as full-time college students receiving high school credits towards their high school graduation."

She continued, "Dual-credit programs are occurring across the state. Most schools are offering classes at the student's high school along with classes at a community college. We are the only program in the state offering a full-time program on a college campus where our students are 100 percent assimilated and learn how to transition into the college while being there with support."

Students are eligible to apply if they meet any of the eligibility requirements: entering the 11th or 12th grade of high school with an acceptable grade point average (2.0 G.P.A. or higher); received a passing score on all Nevada high school proficiency exams; present five letters of recommendations written by high school teachers in the student's major core subject areas; or have a minimum acceptable score or better on one of the standardized tests — SAT score of 900 or higher or and ACT score of 22 or higher.

Addressing the question why African-American parents and students should consider enrolling in the program, Hawk indicated, "During the first year of enrollment, African-American's represented 5 out of the 40 students. Now approaching the second year, there are over 100 students presently

enrolled, with a total of nine African-American students."

She added, "What we want to do is to better represent students that aren't traditionally attending college. It's real important that we do so because public dollars are paying for this program. This will be a big advantage for those students and their parents who might be struggling to pay for college, or students feeling that they aren't prepared to go to college."

Also according to Hawk, the community college, state college and university sys-

tems are in the process of aligning their course numbering so that credits can transfer easily from one institution to another. Students planning to attend college outside the state of Nevada are encouraged to obtain the core requirements of the school they are transferring to and align their courses to ensure that the credits are transferable to the next college or university.

One drawback to attending NSHS is that the students or their parents need to provide transportation to the school. Bus transportation is

available for those students who are able to combine classes together on a two-day Tuesday-Thursday schedule, or have classes grouped on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday schedule to accommodate the bus system. Another option suggested by the school is carpooling with other students. Some classes are offered on-line reducing the need to travel to the school.

One of the popular classes offered at NSHS is digital media. Other classes include biology, sociology, math, en-

vironmental science, business, English, applied sciences and a variety of classes designed to assist students in obtaining a Bachelor's degree. The average class size is 18 students and some classes have only 6 students in comparison to over 40 students attending high school.

Students attending the college for the first time attend a two-week orientation process where students are taught how to transition from a high school environment to that of a college atmosphere.

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A healthy start for a healthy school year!

Children entering the Nevada school system for the first time require appropriate immunizations. Newer requirements include: hepatitis A, hepatitis B and chicken pox vaccination (if they have never had the chicken pox disease).

**Back-to-school immunization extended clinic hours:
Ravenholt Public Health Center • 625 Shadow Lane
Monday, Aug. 22-Friday, Sept. 9 • 8 a.m.-6 p.m.***

**Other clinic locations:
East Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Henderson
Monday-Friday • 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.**

An administrative fee of \$16 for one shot or \$20 for two or more per patient will be charged. Medicaid and Nevada Check Up are accepted. Please bring your insurance card, along with shot records.

All necessary paperwork is located on the health district's website (www.cchd.org). Bring completed forms to expedite your visit.

*No other health district services will be available after 4:30 p.m.

For clinic locations, hours and dates, call 383-1351.

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