

## EDUCATION

# Destiny bus visits KMHS Planning underway for Early College High School

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Chemistry and Biology students at Kings Mountain High School met with Destiny on Tuesday in the parking lot. Destiny: Science.

Mercedes Humphries' eight o'clock Biology class came aboard the hi-tech laboratory on wheels, the Destiny bus, first. Their case to solve in the lab was the Mystery of the Crooked Cell. In their hour-and-a-half long lab exercise students discovered "the molecular basis of sickle cell disease by using gel electrophoresis" to crack the case. With gel electrophoresis, a DNA separation technique, students are able to distinguish normal hemoglobin, a part of red blood cells, from those with sickle cell disease.

With the day's special biology lesson completed, it was time for Kelly Grier's Chemistry classes. Her students tackled the task of the Crucial Concentration. With pipets in hand, they extracted and transported chemicals to test three unknown sports drinks in an effort to find the one with the highest protein levels. Destiny educators Jane Wright and Lisa Pierce and Ms. Grier walked the young laboratory investigators through their investigations.

Students were able to use instruments and equipment not found in the labs of their everyday high school. They used a spectrophotometer, a \$4,000 piece of equipment used to measure the characteristics of light reflected from or transmitted through an object. The pipets they held in their hands are also on the pricey side. "A lot of schools don't have this kind of equipment because they can't afford it," Pierce said. "But this kind of thing is on their EOCs so they need to know this information...This workshop is directly related to the state's standard course of study. So, for the teachers, it slides right into their curriculum."

She added that the traveling



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Left to right, Tasha Messick and Alex Plonk clean their test tubes in the Destiny traveling laboratory, while Wesley Bell and Jake Allen discuss their lab with KMHS Chemistry teacher Kelly Grier.

science learning program started through an "equity of access." From grants funded through Glaxo Smith & Kline and their equipment sponsor Bio-Rad, the Morehead Planetarium and Science Center (MPSC) at UNC-Chapel Hill was able to hit the road in 2000, bringing the gift of modern science to yesterday's classrooms. The Destiny Bus has traveled all over the state of NC, providing programs for the teachers who attend their workshops. Before students can climb aboard Destiny, teachers have to become familiar with the program and lessons through

(MPSC's) workshops.

"This is a great opportunity for students and for teachers, both. We love coming to Kings Mountain because they are all just wonderful teachers," Pierce said, adding that Humphries and Grier are regulars to their workshops. "These are our favorite teachers."

Humphries and Grier do not stay in their classrooms and use the Destiny bus visits as a day off. They are right there alongside the students in the bus helping them with their experiments. "I enjoy it," Ms. Grier said, "and the kids really like it."

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A local committee of about 30 members, most from the school district and Cleveland Community College (CCC), are putting their heads together to plan Cleveland County's first Learn and Earn Early College High School.

Cleveland County Schools (CCS) and CCC recently received a \$40,000 grant to begin the planning process. This new age approach to education, would allow a select number of students the chance to receive their high school diploma and two-year associate's degree in five years, without ever having to pay for a college class.

Initial plans detail that the high school would be housed on the CCC campus. "One of the expectations with the Learn and Earn Programs offered by the state of North Carolina is that the program be on a college campus," said Superintendent Dr. Bruce Boyles. "It makes the transition from the high school requirements into the community college experience seamless. By locating the program on campus, the students have a better focus on the objective of completing the diploma and the college degree."

If all goes well, CCS' spokeswoman Donna Carpenter said the school "is to open with about 50 students next August. Ultimately, some 200 students may be enrolled in the five-year program."

"It is always exciting being involved with the development of a new program to help students," Boyles said. "The (30-member) team working on this new program includes our colleagues from the community college, community members and school personnel. We have people who work directly with students and the administration of the college all involved. Having everyone at the table from the beginning ensures that we will have a quality program for the students who will participate."

"The local planning team has divided into smaller committees to address issues such as curriculum, transportation, extracurricular activities, publicity and recruiting," Carpenter said. "They plan to visit early college high schools in Rutherford, Caldwell, Stanly and Buncombe counties in the next few weeks."

What will a Learn and Earn Early College High School mean to students in Cleveland County? "It will mean some students who may not be interested

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## SCHOOL BRIEFS

### East Elementary to have "McTeachers Night"

East Elementary School staff members will be working at the McDonalds on York Road at I-85 from 5-8 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 16.

A portion of the proceeds during that time will go to the school.

### Fall festival is Friday at Bethware School

Bethware Elementary School will have its traditional fall festival Friday, October 12 from 5-7 p.m.

Parents and children are invited. There will be fun, food and games.



## October Sale

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