

Allen Jay Preparatory Academy: Education Innovation

Phillips Foundation seeds innovative models to bring high-quality education and training for lifelong success to students in Guilford County, North Carolina.

In October 2013, Phillips Foundation committed \$500,000 to Guilford County Schools in support of the launch of a pilot magnet school, Allen Jay Preparatory Academy. The goal of Allen Jay Prep was to bring innovative education models proven by the Ron Clark Academy, KIPP Schools, and others into the Guilford County Schools system. Our seed funding helped to prove this unique education model, contributed to an increase in student achievement, and spurred additional public funding to ensure the school's sustainability.

WHY WE ARE INVOLVED

Allen Jay Prep is designed to accelerate Guilford County students on the pathway to college while providing a supportive and engaging environment where middle school students can thrive. The program operates on the basis of five pillars: character and service; academic challenge; innovative instruction; leadership development; and effort and commitment. Its high-energy teaching style utilizes music and movement to keep scholars engaged in the classroom and motivated to achieve their fullest potential.

At Allen Jay Prep, all students are referred to as "scholars." The pilot school launched with an initial class of 110 fifth grade scholars. Phillips Foundation's grant supported the launch of the school, providing for critical needs such as salaries during extended-day and expanded-year periods, professional development for teachers, and tutoring and enrichment activities for scholars. Allen Jay Prep has since expanded from one grade to a full middle school with four grade levels.

110



5th graders
initially enrolled

400



5th – 8th graders
enrolled in Year 4



WHAT WE'RE DOING

Primary functions of Phillips Foundation's grant:



Our grant effectively helped expand and strengthen Allen Jay Prep programming to serve hundreds more scholars and allowed for new developments in curriculum and support services. A significant portion of our funding went toward implementing Allen Jay Prep's extended schedule. Scholars attend school for an additional hour each day and 20 additional days per year, allowing for more critical development and improved academic performance. Our funding also supported an intensive remediation and tutoring program and enrichment activities such as college visits and educational field trips. For example, scholars recently visited the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and explored the Discovery Place science museum.

To honor Phillips Foundation for its critical founding support, Allen Jay Prep established an annual award to recognize one female scholar in each grade level who exemplifies outstanding character and academic excellence with the "Phillips Achievement Award."

WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED AND WHAT COMES NEXT

The early results of this innovative education pilot are impressive. Allen Jay Preparatory Academy is currently at capacity, with waiting lists for every grade. In Allen Jay's first three years, student achievement and test scores improved significantly: reading proficiency among the first cohort of scholars nearly doubled, rising from 33 percent to 65 percent; math proficiency increased from 32 percent to 58 percent; and science scores improved from 35 percent to 63 percent. In spring 2016, the school held its first induction ceremony for the National Junior Honor Society to recognize 33 students.



Math, reading and science scores nearly doubled



School now offers 5th-8th grade levels



Public funding increased to cover extended schedule

The success of the Allen Jay Prep model led the Guilford County School Board to increase funding for teacher salaries and fully support expenses for the Academy's extended schedule beginning in the 2016-2017 academic year. We are proud to have provided support to launch this innovative public magnet school, which is now on its way to sustainability through recurring public funding and potential future replication.