THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

CICEP | INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY UNIVERSITIES AWARDS PROGRAM

CASE STUDY 2013

The Metro School

METRO OVERVIEW

The Metro School is a state of Ohio public STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) high school open to students from around the state, although admission is completed through a lottery system. Students complete all academic coursework at Metro while remaining eligible to participate in sports and extra-curricular activities in their district of residence. Metro serves students who want a personalized learning experience that prepares them for a connected world where math, science, and technology are vitally important.

BUSINESS SITUATION

In order for Metro to succeed, it needed to find partners that could not only provide governance to the school but also help architect a curriculum that can prepare students for today's higher education institutions through college coursework completed prior to Metro graduation.

SOLUTION

Leadership of Metro has been through a public-private partnership led by Ohio State. Ohio State's leadership includes three members of Metro's governing board, and their contribution has brought a distinctive higher ed perspective to the table, designing an environment that will prepares these students for the next level in their education. By bringing and insisting upon a university-facing environment, Metro provides the setting for the students to accept responsibility for individualized learning, while also providing a social classroom atmosphere that delivers the high school growth experience. The university board members provide university resources to bridge the gap between high school and college learning.

An original goal from the university was to make sure each student graduated from Metro with a certain level of college coursework completed. This would not only motivate these students to apply for college but also bring a high quality academic experience during their time at Metro. The university's representation at Metro helped navigate through various courses and programs at the university to identify those courses that would appeal to and accelerate Metro students. These courses and experiential learning internships range from chemistry to statistics to physics to scientific leadership. By providing a robust curriculum to Metro students, the university is building a new breed of students who are college–and life–ready.

In addition to guiding the curriculum design, Ohio State has contributed many elements to the day-to-day operations and finances of The Metro School. For example, the university houses the school on its research campus. In addition, Ohio State helped design the mastery learning philosophy that Metro uses. This school-wide philosophy ensures that a student receives a passing grade of an "A" before they move to the next course based on reasoning that students who cannot master a course will most likely do worse in the next related course because they

still haven't managed the basics. After a student receives an "A" grade in a course, the student then moves immediately into the next level in that discipline. This philosophical distinction faced initial skepticism, but the credibility and sponsorship of university leadership allowed time for the philosophy to take hold and become a hallmark of Metro's success.

BENEFITS

As we think about the impact a university has on its community, we cannot overlook its broader role in education outside of its own institution. As universities today try to build more partnerships and programs they are integrating K–12 and other educational institutions at an accelerated pace. Some of this has to do with these universities wanting to help fix lingering problems in public schools, and it is usually more than just a financial commitment. Other opportunities focus around collaborated research and innovation. We are starting to see more hybrid or co-op primary schools, as well as investments in non-traditional institutions.

Metro is growing and continues to rely on its university partner in these efforts. Through grants and sponsorship, Metro has been able to take on more students and more courses, and has recently announced the expansion of Metro to include middle school. However, these types of expansion require resources, and the university has become much more involved in bringing its partners—companies as well as regional economic and community development organizations - as new sponsors who share in Metro's vision.

Metro has many metrics that measure success, and most of them are in comparison to other schools in the state. These metrics are continually growing but have already proven that the school is indeed successful in preparing students (from all backgrounds) for the colleges and universities of today, reducing any gaps in the academic preparedness of students going from high school to college. Here are some of those metrics:

Average Composite ACT Score for Metro: **24.5** (Average in Ohio is 21.8, Average in U.S. is 21.1)

Average College Credits Per Student Upon Metro Graduation: **35** credit hours

Percentage of Student Graduation from Metro: **100%**

Percentage of Metro Students Accepted To College: **100%**

Leaders from the community, private sector, higher education, and more have praised The Metro School:

Metro High School affords us wonderful opportunities for our young people and for our economy. It will help us keep our best and brightest, our smart capital, here in Columbus and boost the growth and potential of the 315 Research and Technology Corridor.
—Matthew Habash, Former City Council President, City of Columbus

As others follow the Metro model, we ought to be creating new and different approaches that would further enhance the qualitative growth of public education. So this demonstration school should continue to be on the cutting edge of opportunity.
—Gordon Gee, Former President, The Ohio State University

Recently, the fourth class of students made it through four years of The Metro School, with virtually all attending college. Continuing discussions are focused on long-term funding, capacity, growth into middle school, and innovative physical environments. However, external validation of Metro's success has been the replication of the STEM school model to over a dozen new, similar schools in the state of Ohio, and new STEM schools modeled after Metro in over a dozen other states.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

2012 Metro School Profile: http://www.themetroschool.org/assets/documents/Metro%20Profile%202012.pdf

Local story on Metro's expansion: http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2013/04/10/metro-opens-doors-to- middle-school-students.html

A video on What Makes Metro Special: http://www.themetroschool.org/videos/why-is-metro-special.php