Accelerate Excellence MSAP Project

The "Accelerate Excellence MSAP Project" is a K-14 model that focuses on giving approximately 2,000 city and suburban students assured career and college experiences countering the current disadvantages of delayed exposure in our city schools. The Accelerate Excellence MSAP Project will impact three school sites located in racially isolated and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, which are currently under-enrolled, have large percentages of minority isolated groups, economically disadvantaged students, Students with Disabilities (SWD), Multi-Language Learners (MLL) and low student achievement rates. This project involves three schools: Kendall Elementary College and Career Academy (K-5), Ponus Ridge STEAM Academy (6-8) and P-TECH Norwalk (9-14). This vertically-aligned, scaffolded plan will provide all K-5 students with a rich, career-exploration curriculum aimed at leveraging students' curiosities for learning and will provide personalized instruction aligned to their interests in order to establish a trajectory for their future successes. STEM and Computer Science standards will be infused in daily learning opportunities. Each thematically focused marking period, in grades 6 through 8, will include instruction and classroom experiences aligned to the thematic pathways that will provide exposure to the pathway offerings at the high school level: Network Systems, Programming & Software Development and Web and Digital Communications. At the conclusion of 8th grade, students will already have established career and high school pathway goals fueled by the exposure and skills obtained during their K-8 journey. To bolster STEM specific proficiency in high school, in grades 9 through 14, teachers will focus on enriching all courses with the unfunded CT requirements of a computer science skills and all students will take computer science courses aligned to work-force needs. Grade 12 students will maximize their exposure and experiences to produce a Thematic Capstone Project outcome. High School students may opt to further their education at Norwalk Community College where they can earn an associate's degree in some of the most sought after areas in computer science: Software Engineering, Web Development, and Mobile Programming. With a solid partnership between the City of Norwalk and the Accelerate Excellence MSAP Project Schools, we will foster wholistic community improvement and solidify the future for our students by producing graduates prepared for employment in STEM careers.

The Accelerate Excellence MSAP project is grounded in five main priorities: 1. Increase academic achievement performance of all demographic groups in the Accelerate Excellence Magnet Schools through innovative, evidence-based instructional strategies. 2. Promote student knowledge of and interest in the areas of computer-science and technology by implementing innovative project-based curricula specific to the magnet theme in each Accelerate Excellence Magnet School. 3. Reduce minority and socioeconomic isolation, increase integration, and promote a climate of cultural competency and educational equity in each of the Accelerate Excellence Schools 4. Promote an inclusive culture for all students and 5. Foster participation of all stakeholders in supporting the program objectives and ensuring that the program is implemented with fidelity with the capacity for sustainability beyond the life of the funding provided through the MSAP grant.

Norwalk Public Schools, coupled with our supporting university and community partners, is committed to providing students with three new K-14 whole-school magnet programs across the district creating a K-14 STEM continuum that will not only prepare students for the competitive work-force but will also offer them the opportunity to receive an Associate's Degree from a previously articulated agreement with Norwalk's Community College in the areas of Computer Science and Technology.