

KSBA PEAK Award Nomination (Fall 2019)

Program Overview

“Time to make the donuts.”

What do you think of when you hear this phrase? A clever marketing ad from the 1980s? A business owner getting up before dawn to make fresh pastries for his loyal customers? Consistency? Commitment? Drive? Accountability?

It means all of this and much more for approximately 30 Metcalfe County High School students. These students are the literal definition of this pop-culture catchphrase. These students operate the Old School Café, and they arrive to work at 3:30am every day to “make the donuts.” It’s all a part of our *UNIQUE*, one-of-a-kind work-ready program.

The Old School Café opened to the public in the fall of 2016. The former Metcalfe County Schools cafeteria served breakfast and lunch to students from 1958-2013. Most of the old school building was torn down to make way for the new elementary school. The cafeteria and gym were both saved from demolition to be rented by the public for special events. The cafeteria was renamed the Old School Café, and in February 2017, the school district opened a donut shop inside. Why donuts? There was no other place in the entire county to buy fresh pastries every morning. As a new member of the Kentucky Department of Education’s Districts of Innovation program, Superintendent Benny Lile saw an opportunity for students to learn valuable on-the-job, work-ready skills, as part of their education at Metcalfe County Schools. The district found additional support from Real World Scholars, a non-profit that helps educators bring real-world business ideas to the classroom. The big question: could we find enough workers in our small school of just 500 students who are motivated enough to wake up at 3am to make the donuts? The answer: yes, absolutely, yes!

The student-run donut shop at the Old School Café is now in its 6th semester of operation. The 30 students are paid minimum wage and work on a rotating basis Monday-Saturday. They make the dough from scratch every morning: measuring, stirring, rolling, cutting, frying, glazing, and serving. Since baking requires precise measurements, the students must put their math skills to work to ensure they are

producing a quality product. The doors of the café open at 6am with a steady stream of customers, including teachers, staff, students, parents, corporate employers, factory workers, and city employees. That's when the student-workers put their soft skills to work by greeting customers, problem-solving, and providing professional service. Then they combine more math skills with computer skills to operate the register and iPad; i.e. handling cash and credit cards, calculating discounts, coupons, and taxes, running reports, and printing receipts.

The donut shop was a success! So in the fall of 2017, the school district expanded the Old School Café; it now serves lunch Monday-Friday. The lunch menu includes a fully-stocked salad bar with fresh ingredients and made-to-order sandwiches. On Tuesdays we offer a taco bar which is a huge hit; and in the fall and winter, we add homemade soups and chili. In addition, the Café partners with our Farm to School program to offer produce grown by our *own* students on our *own* campus.

When it's "not" time to make the donuts, the Old School Café and the Old School Gym can still be rented by the public for birthday parties, anniversaries, showers, fundraisers, and reunions. Metcalfe County High School reunions are free. Our student workers are often hired at these events. All of the money goes back into the program.

The success of the Old School Café can be measured in many ways. Financially, the business is self-sustaining through food sales and rental fees. But the bigger impact is the effect on our student workers. So far, more than 100 students have worked for the Old School Café; that's 46% of our high school population! Nearly half all of our high school students are getting real-world experience at the Old School Café.

Goals of our program include:

1. Providing a real-world learning experience,
2. Instilling a sense of responsibility and work ethic,
3. Teaching time and money management skills,
4. Learning how to problem-solve, and;
5. Successful marketing and advertising.

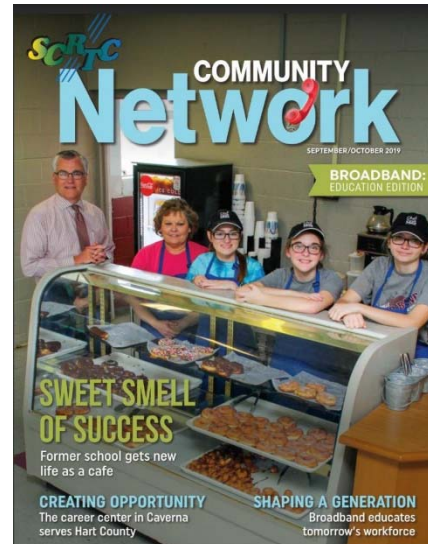
In addition to these goals, we have the following measurable objectives:

- a. Increase by 20% the average daily attendance of participating students by the end of one semester.

- b. Decrease by 10% the number of behavior reports among participating students by the end of one year.
- c. Increase by 10% classroom grades of participating students by the end of one year.
- d. Increase student knowledge of business operations and soft skills from the beginning of the semester to the end of the semester.
- e. Increase by 10% Café sales from the beginning of the semester to the end of the semester.

These objectives are measured by attendance records, behavioral reports, classroom grades, surveys, and sales receipts. In addition to these *PROVEN RESULTS*, the success of the Old School Café has been documented in a variety of media reports since it opened 2 ½ years ago.

Television segments and newspaper articles have been written about our program and the impact that it has had on our students. Most recently, the Old School Café made the cover of the SCRTC Sept./Oct. 2019 Community Network publication. As you can see from the insert, the title of the article was “Sweet Smell of Success.” Inside, author Jen Calhoun documents how the “student-run restaurant wins a gold star from the community.”



One thing that can't be measured is the pride these students have after a day of work at the Old School Café. The sense of accomplishment. The feeling of importance. The joy of success. And, you might think about their story the next time you hear “Time to Make the Donuts.”

9/23/18

KSBA Peak Award

To Whom It May Concern:

As a fourteen-year-old student in Kentucky, I didn't really think that I needed a job. To me, jobs were a thing you got in high school if you didn't have a chance at getting As. I laugh when I look back on that Julie, an unsure, self-centered girl. Pre-Donut Shop Julie, if you will. To me, the Donut Shop represents a change in my life, a vital shift from a know-it-all to a girl with a true work ethic and much better chance at succeeding in life.

School has always been easy for me. I don't have to really try to get good grades. Working at the Old School Café is something I had to really try at. It sounds counterintuitive, I know. But I had never had a job like this before, one where I was consistently interacting with people I didn't know, not to mention waking up at three AM to go to work, which did nothing to improve my attitude. I was apprehensive, at best, and anxious, at worst. I can't imagine the difficulty I would've had with a less understanding job in the future if I had not taken this position at the Old School Café. I truly believe I would've been fired if I had worked anywhere except for the Donut Shop. A real advantage of the Café is that all the people there understand how green the workers are and accommodate accordingly. They teach you, sometimes the same things multiple times, even though it would be much easier to hire workers who actually have an idea what they're doing. When I first heard the phrase "Learning Lab" applied to my workplace, I thought it was the most fitting title that I had ever heard for the Old School Café.

More than just teaching me valuable life and job skills, the Donut Shop has given me a better work ethic than I've ever had. College-bound, I know that college is much harder than high school, but had no idea how to prepare for it. Now, I can go into college confident that I have at least one advantage: an unwavering ability to work and work and work for what I want; or, work for what must be done. I've pulled a few ten-hour shifts at the Donut Shop before, and while I didn't necessarily want to do that, it needed to be done, and I'm glad that I could help.

The Old School Café, while not perfect, does its very best to be helpful to both students and the community. As a worker there, I can definitely say it achieves both of those goals; Moreover, the shop provides a safe learning environment for students of all levels. In preparing to leave high school, Post-Donut Shop Julie has a much better chance than Pre-Donut Shop Julie ever had.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie Barlow". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Julie Barlow

9/24/2018

KSBA Peak Award

To Whom It May Concern:

Serving as a liaison between the Old School Café and Metcalfe County High School, I've seen ordinary students do extraordinary things! As the Dual Credit and Work Ready Advisor at the high school, my job entails monitoring, interviewing, and coordinating the details of college classes and work experience. I spend the biggest part of my day making sure students are present at their jobs and classes; performing at a level of success, whether it be grades, attendance, or completing job objectives. I keep close contact with the businesses, making sure the students are gaining all they can and holding them accountable for their performance.

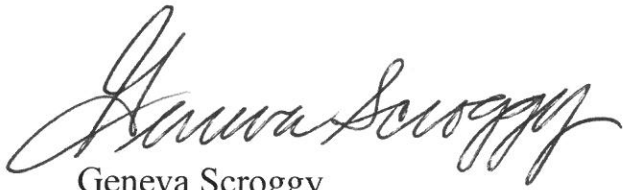
The addition of the Old School Café to our district has made a resounding impact, not only on our community and county but on our students and their families as well!

It is deemed an honor and a privilege to work at the café. With that, students are held to a higher standard academically and in other areas as well. We have a mixed dynamic in the type of students employed there. Some are AP/Dual Credit with a 4.0, and others who struggle academically. All are held to the same standard. If a student experiences an academic low, I will meet with the student and their teachers to resolve the issue. Sometimes, the student is dismissed from the work schedule until their grades are satisfactory. This process has created a mindset that academics come first and those students do everything they can to get back on track and return to the work schedule! The Café has brought about a strong example in the importance of work and a hope for many of these families. The students who work at the café take pride in what they do and are beginning to understand they can do well at something. Not all students are academically sound, but with this opportunity, they will have gained a sense of purpose and valuable preparation for the workforce that they would have not had otherwise. This has made a positive, lasting impact on many of our students that we hope, lasts a lifetime!

Many of our students hail from a low income household. They have parents who are out of work with no means of income. The main objective for the café was to

offer these students a source of income and to prepare them for the future, but it has catapulted into so much more!

To some of you a doughnut is just a delicate mass of doughy goodness with a smidge of sugary glaze on top, or Taco Tuesday is just another day of the week but for the 100+ students who have darkened its doors, it has been nothing short of a life-changer!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Geneva Scroggy". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first letter of each word being significantly larger and more decorative than the others.

Geneva Scroggy

Dual Credit & Work Ready Advisor

Robin McMurtrey
Metcalf County Board of Education
709 West Stockton Street
Edmonton, KY 42129

September 16, 2019

KSBA PEAK Award
260 Democrat Drive
Frankfort, KY 40601

Dear Sir or Madam:

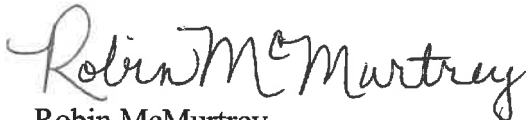
It is with great pleasure that I recommend the Old School Café work-ready program for the KSBA PEAK Award. As a lifelong educator and resident of Metcalfe County, I can honestly say this is one of the most unique and rewarding work-ready programs that I have ever witnessed.

All of the school board members, including myself, have been big supporters of this program since it was brought to our attention by Superintendent Benny Lile more than three years ago. He saw a vision of a real-life learning lab for our students. The Donut Shop and the Old School Café would be run and operated solely by Metcalfe County High School students. And that is exactly what has happened.

Over the past three years, our students have taken ownership of this extraordinary opportunity. I can't image as a student at MCHS in the 1980s getting up at 3am to make donuts and then go to class. But these students do just that. Since the Café this is essentially *their* own business, they are motivated to make it a success. In addition, these students are learning important skills they will need in almost any future job or career path from financial management to customer service.

Not only is the Old School Café having a GREAT impact on our *current* students and serving our *current* community, its ability to sustain itself will no doubt serve *future* students and *future* community members. Thank you for your consideration of this most-deserving nomination.

Sincerely,



Robin McMurtrey
Metcalf County School Board Member