



Board of Education Work Session:

Innovation Academy

January 27, 2025

Innovation Academy History



- Innovation Academy was intended as a place for underserved populations from the I-95 corridor* to receive the instruction needed to be successful at Early College Academy, CTLA, AVID, & the International Baccalaureate Program(IB).
- Innovation Academy was originally titled *Johnston County Lab School* and hoped to partner with universities to model/put into practice research based instruction. There was a plan to allow teachers and school leaders from across the state to visit and observe these instructional practices in action.

*I-95 Corridor Schools are: Four Oaks Elementary, West Smithfield Elementary, Benson Elementary, Micro Elementary, Glendale-Kenly Elementary, Selma Elementary, Wilson's Mills Elementary, South Smithfield Elementary, and Pine Level Elementary

Innovation Academy History



- There is a school number assignment request found [here](#) for the Johnston County Lab School.
- The assignment request states that the population of Innovation Academy will come from Four Oaks Elementary, West Smithfield Elementary, Benson Middle (5th grade), Micro Elementary, Glendale-Kenly Elementary, Selma Middle (5th grade), Wilson's Mills Elementary, South Smithfield Elementary, and Pine Level
 - There is no description of the school purpose in this document.

Current Innovation Students (6-8)



- 23 JCPS elementary schools are represented in the population of Innovation Academy. The top three schools are:
 - Thanksgiving Elementary: 10.9%
 - Four Oaks Elementary: 9.0%
 - Wilson's Mills: 7.1%

Source: Infinite Campus/PowerSchool

Application Process



- Application opens at the start of Quarter 3 (January 8, 2025) and closes at the end of Quarter 3 (March 13th, 2025).
- Innovation Academy does not conduct interviews as part of the application process.
- Test scores are used to place students into classes (advanced vs. standard), but not part of the application rubric used to admit students.

Application Process



- Innovation prioritizes students from the I-95 corridor and students who are potential first generation college students. Attendance rate is a factor in acceptance due to the distance some students must travel to attend Innovation Academy.
 - 4 points given to students who are on I-95 corridor to give them priority on the application rubric
 - [Application Rubric](#)
- There is no academic profile.
- Grade levels are capped at 100 students. This was determined by the district and is noted in the original school number request. At four teachers per grade level, this creates core class sizes of 22-31 students.

Demographics of 24-25 6th Grade Applicants



DEMOGRAPHIC	APPLIED	OFFERED	ACCEPTED
MALES	101	52 (51%)	45 (45%)
FEMALES	105	61 (58%)	52 (50%)
I-95 CORRIDOR	58	44 (76%)	36 (62%)
NOT I-95 CORRIDOR	148	69 (47%)	60 (41%)
WHITE	114	58 (51%)	48 (42%)
HISPANIC	33	24 (73%)	22 (67%)
BLACK	33	19 (58%)	15 (45%)
AMERICAN INDIAN	3	1 (33%)	1 (33%)
MULTI	18	10 (56%)	10 (56%)

- Source: All data found within this table was taken from Infinite Campus/PowerSchool.

Base School of 6-8 Students (July 2024)



School Name:	Student Count:
Archer Lodge Middle	29
Benson Middle	4
Clayton Middle	14
Cleveland Middle	20
Four Oaks Middle	24
McGee's Middle	16
Meadow	3
North Johnston Middle	29
Princeton Middle/High	4
Riverwood Middle	53
Selma Middle	10
Smithfield Middle	45
Swift Creek Middle	20
Out of County	6
Total	277

Source: PowerSchool/Executive Director Brian Jones

Recruitment Timeline



- Application opens January 8, 2025.
- Recruitment visits to elementary schools take place in January and February.
- Open House for interested families is February 13th, 2025.
- Application closes March 13th, 2025.

Class Size



- The current 8th grade class was recruited when the previous principal started late in the Spring Semester of 2022. They began at 80 students and have dropped to 67 over the course of two years. Some reasons for transferring include:
 - Athletics
 - Desire for a larger environment,
 - The 7th grade class has maintained 97 returning students and 4 new students for the 24-25 school year.

Source: Infinite Campus/PowerSchool

Class Size



- Some students leave Innovation Academy at times throughout the school year. This is primarily due to athletics, but has also happened due to parents moving and the desire for a larger school environment.
- The 6th & 7th grade student populations are at or near 100 students with 4 core teachers. This results in class sizes ranging from 22-31. The 8th grade student population is 67 with 4 core teachers. This results in class sizes ranging from 10-23. Students are sometimes pulled for separate settings or small group instruction during a class period.

Source: Infinite Campus/PowerSchool

Innovation Academy Schedule



- [Master Schedule](#)

Schedule Components:

- Connect - Targeted student instruction + student created/driven enrichment opportunities; high student choice = high student engagement. Includes Advisory (High School & Post Secondary planning and exploration); uses cafeteria, gym, outdoor space, and 19 classrooms
- Renewal - mid day brain break + building of self management skills; student choice increases from 6th - 8th grade; uses outdoor space, gym, & 2 classrooms
- Community - used to build intentional community in a “non-community” school, uses gym.

Innovation Academy Schedule



- The master schedule shows how the classrooms are used
- 18 classrooms (including gym) are used daily
- One classroom serves as ISS, EL Support, and AIG support and is used as needed

Innovation Academy Staffing



- 1 Principal
 - 1 Assistant Principal
 - 19.2 teachers, .2 is ESL
 - 1 Counselor
 - 1 DOP Assistant (works ISS and reception)
 - 1 Treasurer
 - .5 Data manager
 - 2 Custodians
-
- 4 teachers per grade level
-
- Each grade level teacher is the only one who teaches their grade level and subject. PLCs are facilitated as grade level one week and vertical on alternating weeks. They are used to discuss pacing, instructional strategies, and assessment data.

Project Based Learning



- Innovation Academy formerly implemented Project Based Learning (PBL), and standards based grading
- School performance was not showing the desired improvement under that model
- With new administration in Spring of 2022, the school shifted to following district guidelines including both pacing and curriculum
- The uniqueness of Innovation Academy shifted to the schedule with Renewal and Connect being added to the master schedule

Change of Focus



- In 2024-2025, the School Improvement Team voted to shift to a focus on high school, post secondary, and career planning
- Year one of implementation focused on adding advisory
- Students meet with their Advisory every other Friday
- The time is used for goal setting, data reflection, high school exploration (choice and traditional schools), application practice, interview practice, etc

Building Usage and Capacity



- Capacity: 390*
- 6-8 Enrollment as of July 2024: 277**
- Each core class is empty during one planning period and one lunch period per day.
- Each enhancement classroom is empty during two periods per day with the exception of the gym which is empty during one period per day.
- One classroom is empty if no students have ISS and it is not being used by the ESL teacher or AIG specialist.

*Source: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Standards

**Source: Infinite Campus/PowerSchool

Transportation Costs



- Students from various areas of the county rely on JCPS transportation for safe travel to and from Innovation Academy.
- Transportation services costs totaled **\$957,377** for the 2023-2024 school year.
- The projected cost for the 2024-2025 school year is **\$946,707**.

Source: Johnston County Public Schools Finance Department (Stephen Britt, JCPS CFO)

Additional Information



- Part of the draw of Innovation Academy is the fact that it is a choice program.
- Families and students who are seeking a different environment than that of their base school have an option that retains their child within our public school system.
- Innovation Academy has a flexible environment that focuses on building students' ability to make mature decisions that aid them in reaching their goals.
- Goals are set at the beginning of sixth grade related to grades, attendance, behavior and high school.
- There is a focus on goal reflection, which entails having students regularly check in with whether their daily decisions are helping or hindering them from reaching their desires.

Additional Information



Ways Innovation Academy builds self management:

- Increased freedom in transition - 6th graders are in one building for all core classes, by 7th & 8th grade, students transition between halls and buildings to get to class.
- Renewal - student choice increases from 6th - 8th grade; 6th graders are often assigned by teachers to the appropriate setting, 8th graders are allowed more freedom to make the choice that best meets their needs
- Daily choice is built into Connect- outside of remediation and intervention, students choose daily which Connect best meets their needs.

Additional Information



- High school preparation is a major focus:
 - Beginning in 6th grade, students start to explore all high school options.
 - This begins with learning about their base high schools (athletics, clubs, arts, CTE, academies (if applicable)). Students then learn about the seven high school choice programs in the district.
 - Over the course of three years, students work to build an academic resume that supports them in any high school they choose.
 - The aim is to ensure all students can speak and advocate on behalf of their interests when they enter high school and fully understand the weight of their daily decisions (attending class, selecting the right classes, maintaining a high GPA, etc).

Additional Information



- Moving forward, Innovation Academy hopes to increase the career aspect of goal setting
- Right now, parents present to students about their careers during Connect, and it is a goal to increase the scope and structure of this aspect

Achievement Data



Performance of Students on End-of-Grade and End-of-Course						
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Reading	66.3%	COVID 19	60.3%	72.2%	78.0%	76.4%
Math	60.2%		47.2%	67.4%	74.9%	72.0%
Science	N/A		78.0%	91.6%	91.7%	91.1%
Math 1	N/A		52.0%	95.5%	100.0%	100.0%
Performance Composite	63.3%		57.1%	72.8%	78.5%	76.5%
EVAAS Growth	Not Met		WAIVED	Met	Met	Met
EVAAS Growth Composite	-4.51			0.53	1.68	0.38
School Performance Grade	62			75	80	77
	C			B	B	B

Source: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction via Kristy Stephenson, Assistant Superintendent of Accountability and School Performance

Thanks!

Any questions?