

CREATING AND REPLICATING HIGH-QUALITY EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

A GUIDE FOR BUSINESSES AND SCHOOLS

CASE STUDY

Brookwood Integrated Entrepreneurship

Snellville, GA



Carl Vinson Institute of Government
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Brookwood Integrated Entrepreneurship

How can a school system combine English education with teaching students about entrepreneurship? Brookwood High School, located in Snellville, Georgia, has developed a program that does just that. The Brookwood High School Integrated Entrepreneurship Program is a series of classes that combines traditional language arts with the career, technical, and agricultural education (CTAE) Marketing and Management pathway classes using an entrepreneurial lens. These elective courses allow students to earn three class credits in two class periods and complete the CTAE pathway in two years. The program begins in ninth grade with traditional fiction language arts that explores books like Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* and various Shakespeare plays. These then become the backdrop for projects like creating a business and designing a website for Pip, the main character in *Great Expectations*, or rebranding the Globe Theatre for a unique customer base. In 10th grade, students use a combination of language arts and public speaking to launch their own businesses and pitch them to local business owners in a Shark Tank-like atmosphere. The winners receive up to \$2,500 annually from a partnership with the City of Snellville Economic Developer to continue their business.

At this point in the curriculum, students have completed the CTAE Marketing and Management pathway and would usually go back to traditional core classes, but these integrated classes have been so impactful that Cindy Quinlan, the entrepreneurship pathway lead for Brookwood High School, along with the help of Angie McLane, the language arts department chair, found a way to expand them into 11th and 12th grade language arts classes. Juniors can opt to take an American literature class focused on social entrepreneurship and citizenship. Students create a public relations manual for a local business or nonprofit to enter competition sponsored by DECA, the career and technical student organization focused on marketing. The theme during senior year is leadership. Students are encouraged to either continue operating their business through work-based learning or to practice business operations through one of the school-based enterprises at Brookwood.

This sort of integrated learning has also expanded into the elementary and middle schools in the district and into other areas of learning like the sciences through aquaponics, which combines CTAE Natural Resource Management and Science pathways. Students as young as kindergarten are designing and interviewing for classroom jobs and selling ice cream. Quinlan said that it is important for students to learn early and for entrepreneurship to be integrated vertically across all school levels. For the Brookwood cluster of schools, the whole entrepreneurship team meets twice a year to collaborate and share ideas. The program is supported through grants and awards; however, even without this financial support, dedicated and creative teachers can accomplish class integration between core classes and CTAE, allowing students to learn job-readiness skills along the way.

