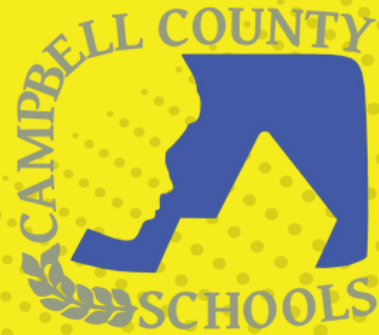


Supporting Students' Future Planning in Campbell County, Virginia



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Campbell County Public Schools

Located in central Virginia, includes 13 schools and one technical center. Two high schools, two combined schools, two middle schools, and seven elementary schools serve the district's 7,800 students. Stephanie Tyree is Director of the Future Center at Altavista Combined School. The mission of the Future Center is to

“connect with students to help them in discovering their passions and their dreams, help them create a plan of action to achieve those dreams, and help them carry out that plan.”

In her role, she serves students in 6th-12th grade and supports them in preparing for their postsecondary future. According to Tyree, “whether that’s work, or college, or military...my goal is to help them figure that out and figure out the plan to get there.” For Tyree and the students at Altavista, SchoolLinks has been instrumental in ensuring that students have access to the tools and resources needed to explore colleges and careers, participate in work-based learning, and make thoughtful, informed decisions about the future.

Facilitating Career Exploration

Altavista has prioritized creating a college and career readiness (CCR) culture and begins career-centered exploration and conversations with students as early as 6th grade. Tyree explained that using SchoolLinks has transformed their ability to make this career exploration accessible and interactive for students, especially those who are unsure about what they might want to do with their future. Altavista utilizes the SchoolLinks career interest assessments to help students identify fields of interest or job characteristics they might enjoy and then connect with SchoolLinks resources to give students tangible, real-world examples of those kinds of roles. Tyree described that students can

“watch videos, see people who are currently working in those fields talk about what they actually do on a day-to-day basis.”

Tyree noted that students having access to resources that actually bring these careers to life engages them in ways typical career exploration cannot.

As students identify areas of interest, Altavista students at all levels can utilize SchoolLinks to dig even deeper, learning more about career clusters—including different jobs that share similar features and the variety of roles that exist within a certain field. Tyree shared that her students use SchoolLinks to learn about the job market, specific to areas of interest, the required level of education, along with other requirements and characteristics of specific roles. Tyree also noted the benefits of SchoolLinks' intuitive and engaging design that naturally encourages students to explore—truly empowering students to take ownership of their college and career planning. Because all of the information is seamlessly linked and embedded across the SchoolLinks platform, students can simply click to keep learning more, connecting them to tools and resources that deepen their knowledge about careers of interest. With this more developed understanding of a field or career, students can begin to make thoughtful plans about how to utilize their time in middle and high school to prepare for their future.

Personalizing Student Planning

At Altavista, Tyree serves around 700 students. And while many steps of career exploration and college planning are consistent for students, Altavista recognizes how important it is to consider each student's unique profile of background, experiences, goals, and interests as they plan for the future. Tyree explained that SchoolLinks has significantly improved her ability to personalize the support she is able to provide.

Within SchoolLinks, students note goals and careers of interest, create personalized plans, track work-based learning and volunteer hours, document extracurricular activities, and mark colleges or types of colleges they may be interested in. This allows Tyree to use her time with students to offer information, resources, and support that is specifically tailored to their specific experiences and plans.

Tyree explained that when she meets with students individually she can see this rich set of data in their profile and be ready with “information that's locally based, or figure out what they might want to pursue in college, or what kind of workforce they might go into.” In other words, SchoolLinks allows counselors to know the right questions to ask each student, the types of opportunities that will likely serve them best, and how to move their exploration into an actionable plan.

Key Takeaways

- SchoolLinks provides a comprehensive set of tools and resources for students to deeply explore career clusters. Starting in 6th grade and continuing through high school, Altavista students complete career interest inventories, watch videos to learn about various fields, and engage with professionals to learn more about specific careers.
- Personalized student planning for Altavista students is supported by the SchoolLinks suite of tools and resources—allowing educators to tailor guidance based on students' backgrounds, interests, and goals.
- SchoolLinks streamlines the college application process for seniors and offers actionable insights for those assisting students with college applications—helping to provide students with meaningful feedback, fact-based insights into college fit, and application support.
- Improving the efficiency and organization of important CCR processes—including work-based learning tracking, event coordination, and senior exit surveys—makes it easier for students to participate and stay informed, increasing engagement and motivation.

Supporting the College Search and Application Process

Tyree also described that SchoolLinks has had major benefits in helping students who aspire to go to college find schools that are truly the right fit for them. The SchoolLinks platform tracks data and metrics on college applications and acceptances from year-to-year for Altavista students. This allows Tyree and her colleagues to know how many students have applied to a school and how many students are getting into each school—and breaks down this data by GPA, test scores, extracurriculars, and other factors.

Equipped with this data, Tyree feels better prepared to help guide students on identifying which colleges are “reach” schools or those that they are likely to get into based on their transcript, test scores, and experiences. Tyree also uses the admission percentages and graduation rates for specific colleges, which SchoolLinks includes within their college search features, to talk to students about acceptance rates, guiding students to submit some applications to schools with higher rates of acceptance. She explained that this has changed the dynamic of these conversations with students; the college-application process can be very emotional for students and SchoolLinks has allowed her support to be fact- and data-based.

Beyond the college exploration and search process, Tyree noted that the SchoolLinks platform dramatically streamlines the application process—for students and counselors. She noted that one of her favorite features is the seamless way SchoolLinks links to the Common App—calling it “the best thing ever!”

**“the best
thing ever!”**

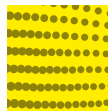
She explained that

“It gives us one location where we're putting in the information.”

This replaced their previous cumbersome practice of having to go through students' lists in the Common App, with separate logins for each, to input the information. Now, she explained that, “We're putting it in once, and it's done.”

Adding Efficiency to Important CCR Processes

Supporting students in their CCR journey requires systems that seamlessly track data, record information, allow for the coordination of events, and create channels of communication to students and alumni. Tyree uses the tools within SchoolLinks to add efficiency and cohesion to her work and to ensure that students feel connected and supported.



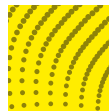
Tracking Work-Based Learning: Prior to SchoolLinks, the district didn't have an effective way to keep track of students' work-based learning information, hours, or evaluations. Utilizing SchoolLinks' program management tools has had a large impact on this process in Campbell County, streamlining the workflow across all of the high schools within the district. Tyree shared that there is no longer

“any guessing as to who is doing what, when, where, and why”

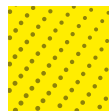
—a significant improvement that has freed up time for those who were previously trying to manage this process, creating a smoother path for work-based learning participation. Tyree shared that the process has been simplified for all involved—students, employers, and school-based personnel—and that SchoolLinks

“makes it super simple to keep all that documentation in one place.”

Having an efficient and effective process for tracking work-based learning means that the focus of these efforts can be on what's most important—helping students to access opportunities to learn more about potential career paths.



Coordinating CCR Events: Tyree's efforts at Altavista to ensure students are ready for their postsecondary futures also include facilitating visits with college admissions representatives, setting up career fairs, and planning field trips to local colleges and area businesses. With SchoolLinks' Event Scheduler, Tyree has one place to enter information, send invitations to relevant cohorts of students and educators, manage the details of the event, and coordinate with others. Students can click a button to let her know if they will be there, and Tyree can quickly see the number of students to expect—allowing her to communicate with teachers, get passes to students, and keep all CCR events organized.



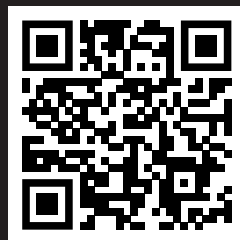
Connecting with Graduates: Tyree also utilizes SchoolLinks for end-of-year senior surveys so that she is able to record contact information as students graduate, allowing for continued communication and connection as students begin their postsecondary paths. An alumni survey is in the works at Altavista, and Tyree looks forward to having that information available within SchoolLinks so she can add information about college persistence and transfers to further inform student support and program development.

Preparing Students for the Future

By integrating SchoolLinks into nearly every aspect of CCR at Altavista, Tyree has streamlined processes and amplified the impact of CCR efforts and initiatives. With the tools and resources available through SchoolLinks, Altavista students have access to a personalized, data-driven, engaging approach to college and career readiness. Students have opportunities to explore careers, learn about colleges, clarify their plans, build confidence, and take meaningful steps toward their future goals.

In Campbell County, students are not just dreaming about what comes after high school, they are actively preparing for it.

Request a Demo



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