

Grand Prairie Case Study

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CHRIS COXON: As one of the Innovative Academies, the Grand Prairie Early College High School Nursing Academy is a partnership with Baylor Scott & White. Students train on donated equipment in a nursing simulation lab. These students have the opportunity to not only earn their high school diploma, but also get an associate's of nursing and transition seamlessly to a baccalaureate nursing degree at the University of Texas Arlington.

SUSAN SIMPSON HULL: We know that right now we have thousands of students who are being turned away from nursing colleges at the university level. Not because they aren't qualified, but because there simply isn't space.

SARI MCCOY: The Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that there will be a 1.2 million registered nurse shortage in the country by 2024. We have a baby boomer generation that is aging and will need an increased amount of nursing care. We have nurses that are also aging.

So the experience gap is very significant. Right now, you have nurses with 40 years of experience being replaced by those with three or five years. And with the shortage being as significant as it is, this opportunity to have a nursing academy will really contribute to softening that shortage and getting nurses into the workforce quickly.

SUSAN SIMPSON HULL: The excitement in this building about the nursing program and in this community about the nursing program is very, very evident.

ANTHONY: I'm really interested in the healthcare field. And I love helping people and children. This program has given me many opportunities to go beyond what I expect, to go beyond my imagination. What I used to think was a big step, it can now be a small step. It's given me experiences I couldn't get in a regular high school and a regular healthcare field.

CIEL FLORES: The Grand Prairie Independent School District program, the Nursing Academy, is doing an excellent job preparing students for the stressors of nursing school, being emotionally prepared to take care of patients when they're the most vulnerable. And really, what Grand Prairie is doing is really innovative and forward thinking.

SARI MCCOY: Through the generosity of the tri-agency grant, we're able to build a simulation lab for our nursing students. This is an incredible opportunity for them to experience nursing education in a real world like environment.

SUSAN SIMPSON HULL: So this isn't just about helping a young person have a certification or a degree or a job. It's about changing families, changing communities, changing the entire trajectory of a small city like Grand Prairie.

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