



DESOTO COUNTY  
SCHOOL DISTRICT



HERNANDO,  
MISSISSIPPI



34,000+  
STUDENTS

## *A Team Approach Is the Key to CCR Success for DeSoto County Schools*

**Mrs. Shannon Fleming, School Counselor at  
Lewisburg Middle School**

### **At a glance**

Located in the top, left corner of Mississippi and bordered by both Arkansas and Tennessee, DeSoto County School District is home to 2 primary, 17 elementary, 3 intermediate, 8 middle, and 8 high schools plus 2 CTE centers. With over 34,000 pupils, DeSoto is not only the largest but also the fastest growing public school district in Mississippi, yet they have continued to earn the Mississippi Department of Education's district report card A rating for the last 4 consecutive years, making them among only 9 districts in the state to achieve this honor. What's the key to maintaining this level of excellence while the district burgeons? Simple. It's their team approach.

### **Parent connections**

Shannon Fleming, one of Lewisburg Middle School's two school counselors, highlights this team approach as she shares their college and career readiness strategies. Long before the state mandated that every student have an official Individual Student Plan or ISP, the Lewisburg team was already doing this. But, admittedly, the recently added requirement to secure parental signatures on 7th & 8th graders' ISPs was a time consuming challenge. "We used to get parents to come in and sit down, and it took up 3 months of our time to meet with every single 8th grader and parent... I would go into the summer trying to finalize that," Fleming explains. "MajorClarity has streamlined the entire process. Now, getting parents is easy." And this is great news since the state now mandates that this process be completed for 7th graders as well.

### **Making the Transition**

Amidst the challenges of the pandemic, DeSoto County Schools embraced MajorClarity as their answer to not only meet but exceed the state ISP and CCR requirements. Knowing that paper-based ISPs were inefficient and finding the fillable pdf version of the ISPs almost as frustrating, counselors in DeSoto had hoped for a web-based option for the ISP but they were excited that MajorClarity delivered far beyond just this tool and includes assessment, career and college exploration tools, career prep tools, and significant additional content. "It very much streamlines the process for the kids. And for us, it's truly a one-stop shop, and we've never had that before. It's all right there... right there on the tabs," Shannon explains.

**Roll-out successes**

DeSoto is in its first year of its team roll-out of MajorClarity. With a full quarter of the school year left to go, already 88% of LMS's 7th & 8th Graders have fully activated their MajorClarity portfolios and 83% have selected a career-aligned path of study, planning their middle and high school courses accordingly. Counselors built the framework for this progress in the fall by working through 7th & 8th grade Technology classes using computer labs prior to device rollouts.

The focus of the fall sessions was two-fold: career assessment and exploration. "The things that are the favorites with the kids are the interviews. They go back to the interviews more than anything else. They like the quick access and being able to skip to the segments with the questions asked." Shannon was pleased that the platform was intuitive and easy for both the students and staff, which fostered students' independent exploration and allowed counselors to circulate and answer individual questions.

**Synchronized strategies**

Shannon emphasized that the success of this rollout has been a result of a team approach, which begins with the partnership between the district and MajorClarity. In a district as large as theirs, Shannon emphasized how much she appreciates the responsive support that she and all users receive from their Customer Success Account Manager, Brandon Williams.

Shannon sang the praises of the Technology teachers who have shared time with counselors for group lessons and who follow up by regularly encouraging students to use spare minutes in the classroom to continue their exploration and portfolio tasks. During a period of inclement weather, Shannon reached out to these teachers, offering lesson plans from MajorClarity's Resource Library to leverage and continue their CCR efforts despite the weather.

**Getting results**

As this quarter progresses, counselors and Technology teachers will once again collaborate to ensure that every 7th and 8th grade student has a fully developed 5 year academic plan. Then, counselors will capitalize on the ability to email parents and secure electronic signatures, setting students up for a smooth transition to high school with significant forethought invested in their planned course pathways, leading to more students being aware of and considering the many accelerated class options. With her son a junior at one of the district's high school, Shannon sees first hand as both a counselor and a mother how the CCR experience is more intentionally tiered with MajorClarity. He has completed the resume build and practiced interviewing skills this year. "I like the fact that it's so comprehensive... they start with us but the whole thing gets finished later."

***"MajorClarity's program is probably my favorite thing in years as in it has put it all together under one umbrella."***

**LEWISBURG  
MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**934**

6TH-8TH GRADE  
STUDENTS

**88%**

PORTFOLIO  
ACTIVATION  
RATE

**83%**

OF 7TH & 8TH  
GRADERS HAVE  
SELECTED  
PATHWAYS OF  
STUDY