

News Release:

Mayland Community College: Mayland Early College High School

Completion of *Romeo and Juliet* ends with Masquerade Ball

On Friday, October 13, the Mayland Early College High School (MECHS) held its first afterhour's activity: a masquerade ball signifying the end of their English I study of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

According to MECHS Principal Angie Bureson, the young adults and teachers were very excited about the completing their study of *Romeo and Juliet* with a masquerade ball. "For many of these kids, this was their first ever school related social event," said Bureson. "This event is just an example of one of the core values adopted by our Early College High School...*our school's primary role will be to personalize learning and instruction.*"

Mayland Early College High School is part of a high school reform initiative called Learn and Earn launched by Gov. Mike Easley last September. It was developed through a partnership between Mayland and the Mitchell, Avery and Yancey public school systems. It is part of the New Schools Project established in part with a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The curriculum design allows current ninth-graders to earn a high school diploma and an associate's degree in five years. According to Bureson, "The students have been contained in two classrooms on the ground floor of the Phillips building. During their first semester, they have taken English I, Algebra I and Biology, plus a student success block to prepare them for college."

However, this will not be the case next semester. All thirty-three students will be enrolled in two college classes, CIS 110 Introduction to Computers and ACA 111, College Student Success, along with their high school blocks. Liz Silvers, the new Mayland Early College Liaison, will be teaching two sessions of College Student Success, "I am so thrilled to be part of this wonderful program designed for students to succeed, not only in high school but at the college level," said Silvers. "The opportunity to watch the students grow, change and mature into a successful college graduate is one I embrace!"

After five years, the students will have the opportunity to graduate with both their high school diploma as well as an Associate in Arts.

Mayland Early College High school currently has 33 students enrolled this year, keeping the student to teacher ratio low. "Low enrollment helps the kids to be successful," said Early College Principal Bureson.

MECHS has three full-time instructors, a guidance counselor and a school secretary / data manager.

"So far things are going great and we are learning and adapting as we go. Teachers have targeted the students are academic levels and are forging new territories. While the transition from middle school to high school is a big one, the small setting eases some of that typical high school anxiety," said Bureson.

For more information concerning Mayland Early College High School, call (828) 765-7351, ext. 301.