

CREATING AND REPLICATING HIGH-QUALITY EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

A GUIDE FOR BUSINESSES AND SCHOOLS

CASE STUDY

Central Educational Center

Providing Dental Assisting Students with Real Patient Care Experiences

Newnan, GA



Carl Vinson Institute of Government
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Central Educational Center

Providing Dental Assisting Students with Real Patient Care Experiences

Imagine helping underserved members of your community while learning a real-world skill. The Central Educational Center (CEC), a college and career academy in Newnan, Georgia, is doing just that. CEC provides dual enrolled high school dental assisting students and adult dental assisting students with the opportunity for hands-on training with real patients while offering a service to uninsured and underserved individuals in the community. Through a partnership with the Coweta Samaritan Clinic, which provides a range of free health care services to qualifying local residents, students in the dental assisting program offered by West Georgia Technical College work with volunteer dentists to assist with the provision of free cleanings and other dental services up to and including dentures. Coweta Samaritan Clinic patients are able to access free dental care, and students get real-world experience and build relationships with local dentists. High school students are able to access the classes for free via dual enrollment and participate in the hands-on experience with the Coweta Samaritan Clinic.

“The Coweta Samaritan Dental Clinic gives students clinical experience, adding scale, scope, breadth, and intensity to their education,” said Mark Whitlock, the CEC CEO. The Coweta Samaritan Clinic manages all operational functions, such as recruiting and screening patients, arranging for local volunteer dentists, and purchasing supplies, and the CEC provides the clinic space, equipment, and dental assistants. This Coweta Samaritan Dental Clinic experience is in addition to required hours for the program and provides students with deeper learning experiences. Participating in the Coweta Samaritan Dental Clinic experience may also help students work toward their Expanded Duties Certification, which allows dental assistants to perform additional dental functions. Whitlock noted that the Coweta Samaritan Dental Clinic is as close as possible to a real-world workplace inside of a school.

