

# CREATING AND REPLICATING HIGH-QUALITY EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

A GUIDE FOR BUSINESSES AND SCHOOLS

## CASE STUDY

# Entrepreneurial Business Incubator

## Building Small Businesses Within the School Walls

Newton County, GA



Carl Vinson Institute of Government  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

# Entrepreneurial Business Incubator

## Building Small Businesses Within the School Walls

Students in Newton County, Georgia, are designing, building, and operating small businesses from within the school walls. The Entrepreneurial Business Incubator (EBI), a program at the Newton College and Career Academy, provides students with space, resources, and support to build small businesses while still in high school.

“The EBI program came about because we had so many phenomenal students. We wanted to create as many internship opportunities as possible, but transportation challenges make it hard for some students to participate in work-based learning,” said Chad Walker, principal and CEO of the Newton College and Career Academy. EBI is not a traditional career, technical, and agricultural education (CTAE) class. Students work on their businesses before school, during lunch, and after school. They may also be pulled from other classes on occasion to meet with mentors and participate in targeted programming. Teachers nominate students who have a business idea to participate in EBI.

Students are able to start businesses in areas that interest them. Many of the EBI businesses have grown out of CTAE classes. For example, students in the Cosmetology pathway started a natural hair products business. Other students have taken the skills developed in the Audio-Visual Television and Film pathway to create a digital marketing agency that produces content for local businesses. The Home Grown Digital Team created a video highlighting the opening of the Farmview Market in Madison, Georgia.

The Newton College and Career Academy hosts several showcase events throughout the year to highlight the work and offerings of the EBI businesses to fellow students, community leaders, and local chamber of commerce members. Each EBI business sets up a booth to share its goods or services. Additionally, the EBI program hosts a mock Shark Tank event, with local business leaders serving as the panelists. Students pitch their businesses and the panel decides which EBI business could be the most likely to take off after high school graduation.

The EBI facility provides students with dedicated workspace. It includes cubicles, computers, printers, phones, and a conference room where EBI students can meet with their customers. Through a partnership with the Covington/Newton County Chamber of Commerce, EBI students are provided with a mentor from the business community and a complimentary junior chamber membership, which allows them to participate in all chamber events. The EBI coordinator, who also assists with the work-based learning program, provides mentoring, support, and supervision.

