



Next Step to Success Weekly Update

Message from our Executive Director



James Harris

As we enter Week 15, I'm proud to share the remarkable progress our program continues to make. Each day, our students are growing in confidence, discipline, and leadership demonstrating just how powerful a supportive community can be in shaping young lives. Their enthusiasm and commitment remind us why this work matters so deeply.

We are especially grateful for the generosity of our community. Your donations - whether financial, food, supplies, or volunteer time have created meaningful opportunities for our students. Because of your support, we've been able to expand programming, strengthen enrichment activities, and give our youth access to experiences that inspire hope and possibility. This progress belongs to all of us.

As we move into the holiday season, it's a time to pause and give thanks. Thank you for believing in our mission, for showing up for our families, and for investing in the potential of every young person we serve. We are grateful for all that has occurred this year and even more excited for what lies ahead.

Together, we are building a future filled with opportunity, growth, and promise.

James Harris, Executive Director



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NSTS Leadership Insights



Education Update

Hi families, I hope you're all doing well. I wanted to share a quick update as we head into next week. SOL testing will continue for students in our 4x4 classes, so please help your child feel their best by making sure they get a good night's sleep, eat a solid breakfast, and arrive on time. We're also approaching the end of the grading period, which is an important time to check in with teachers and make sure students are on track academically. If you have any questions, concerns, or if your child needs specific academic support, please let me know—I'm here to help them finish the grading period strong and feel proud of their progress.



Programming Update

Here's a quick recap of what our youth accomplished this week!

- Our youth continued to enjoy basketball with Coach Whitley.
- They also participated in Chess with the Hampton Roads Chess Association, sharpening their strategic thinking and problem-solving skills.
- A group of youth began a Furniture Restoration Project with Andie Paints. They started by stripping down wooden stools and will be refinishing them over the next week. Andie is walking them through the full step-by-step process, and the youth are loving the hands-on experience.
- Our karate participants received their karate uniforms this week, and they were so excited to suit up and continue their training.

We are officially one week away from winter break! Let's finish strong!



Operations Update

Renovations on the parking lot have resumed! Once we receive the confirmed closure date, we will notify families and share updated pick-up procedures for that period.

Save the Date

- 12/18/2025: NSTS Holiday Dinner (Please remember to RSVP)
- 12/22/2025 – 12/26/2025: NPS Winter Break (NSTS Closed)
- 12/29/2025 – 12/31/2025: No Youth Days
- 01/05/2026: NSTS reopens for regularly scheduled programming

Reminder: Youth Pick-Up Locations for Afternoon Dismissal

- Granby HS: Teacher parking lot outside the gym exit
- Norview HS: Main parking lot — youth pick-up at the front of the line outside the gym exit
- Maury HS: Front of the school
- Lake Taylor HS: Main parking lot for youth pick-up
- Blair MS: Outside the gym exit behind the school buses
- Ruffner MS: Outside and to the left of the main entrance behind the school buses
- Northside MS: Outside and to the right of the main entrance near the crossing guard
- Norview MS: Main parking lot behind the school buses
- Norfolk Christian: End of the football field
- SECEP: Bus pick-up area

Please remind your youth to exit the school promptly at dismissal and go directly to the

vans to ensure timely transportation from school to program and to avoid delays.



Alumni Spotlight



This week, we're celebrating one of our own—an NSTS alum whose journey reminds us exactly why this program matters. Nyasia spent four years growing, laughing, and grinding right here with us, and now she's a freshman at Norfolk State charting her path toward a Biology degree. She's still the same curious, bubbly leader we watched blossom—only now she's volunteering, exploring the city, setting

big goals, and stacking wins (hello, B+ in math!). Her story captures the grit, heart, and ambition we hope to inspire in every young person who walks through our doors.

1. What is your name, School and grade? **Norfolk State - Freshman**
2. How long were you part of Next Step to Success? **4 years**
3. What did you like most about coming to NSTS? **Seeing my friends**
4. What is one goal you're working on right now? **Getting my bachelor's degree - Biology**
5. Who inspires you the most, and why? **Mr. Muhanma – Always very encouraging to be better**
6. What was your favorite subject in school? **Biology**
7. What activities or hobbies do you enjoy outside of school? **Volunteering at NSTS and exploring the City with friends**
8. What's your favorite book, movie, or song right now? **Favorite book: On Blood Road**
9. If you could give advice to another student, what would it be? **Give yourself grace however still be diligent and step up small goals to achieve big.**
10. What do you see yourself doing in the future (career, dreams, or big goals)? **Becoming an officer in the military and botanist.**
11. Share a fun fact about yourself most people don't know! **I am Afro-Latina**
12. Is there someone at NSTS (staff or peer) who has made a big difference for you? **Mr. Muhanma**
13. If you could describe yourself in three words, what would they be? **Bubbly, Curious and Assertive**
14. What makes you proud of yourself this week? **Getting a B+ in math.**

Student Spotlight



This week we're celebrating Ramone —a Maury ninth-grader, two-year NSTS standout, and the creative spark helping coordinate our new NSTS Step & Cheer Team. Ramone brings style, positivity, and leadership everywhere he goes, whether he's baking, decorating, or hyping up his teammates. With big goals of becoming a criminal attorney and a proud report card this week, he's proof that when you chase your dreams and surround yourself with the right people, great things follow.

1. What is your name, School and grade? **Maury HS and 9th**

2. How long have you been a part of Next Step to Success? **2 years**
3. What do you like most about coming to NSTS? **The Activities and my friends**
4. What is one goal you're working on right now? **Passing 9th grade**
5. Who inspires you the most, and why? **My Mom and Dad – Mom pushes me to be the best me. And my Dad picks me up when I am down.**
6. What is your favorite subject in school? **Art**
7. What activities or hobbies do you enjoy outside of school? **Baking, doing hair and decorating.**
8. What's your favorite book, movie, or song right now? **Favorite song: Kehlani – Folded.**
9. If you could give advice to another student, what would it be? **If they have dreams – go for it and surround yourself with positive people**
10. What do you see yourself doing in the future (career, dreams, or big goals)? **Being a criminal attorney.**
11. Share a fun fact about yourself most people don't know! **I have a bunch of brothers!**
12. Is there someone at NSTS (staff or peer) who has made a big difference for you? **Coach Brittany**
13. If you could describe yourself in three words, what would they be? **Fun, Artistic, and Stylish**
14. What makes you proud of yourself this week? **Having good grades!**

Culinary Corner



From the Coordinator of Culinary Arts

Good Afternoon NSTS Family & Team!

Can you believe we've made it to the FINAL menu of 2025?! 🙄🎉 From Growth Mindset in the classroom to big flavor in the kitchen, this year has been FULL — full of love, full of lessons, and full of plates served with heart. So let's close out the year the **NSTS way...** with GREAT FOOD, BIG SMILES, and ALL the vibes. Here's what's cooking this week:

🍷 **THE LAST MENU OF 2025:**

🔥 **Chicken & Broccoli Alfredo**

Creamy, comforting, and a classic NSTS favorite — kicking off the week RIGHT!

Rolled Chicken Tacos

Crispy, golden, and *gone in 60 seconds* 😊 Youth-approved every time!

Isaiah's Jambalaya

By popular demand! Our youth chef ISAIHAH is closing out the year with a bang. Big flavor, big pride, big pot energy! 🙌

Holiday Gathering

A time to celebrate community, connection, and gratitude — plus all the deliciousness that comes with it!

Chili Dogs & Fries

Ending 2025 with a fun, comforting classic! The perfect Friday mood.

Thank you to every staff member, youth, and family who's shown up, supported, and poured into NSTS all year long. 💙💛

We've fed hearts, minds, AND stomachs — and 2026 is only going to get bigger and better!

Wishing everyone peace, joy, rest, and a whole lot of love as we wrap up this year.

See you in the kitchen and around the building!

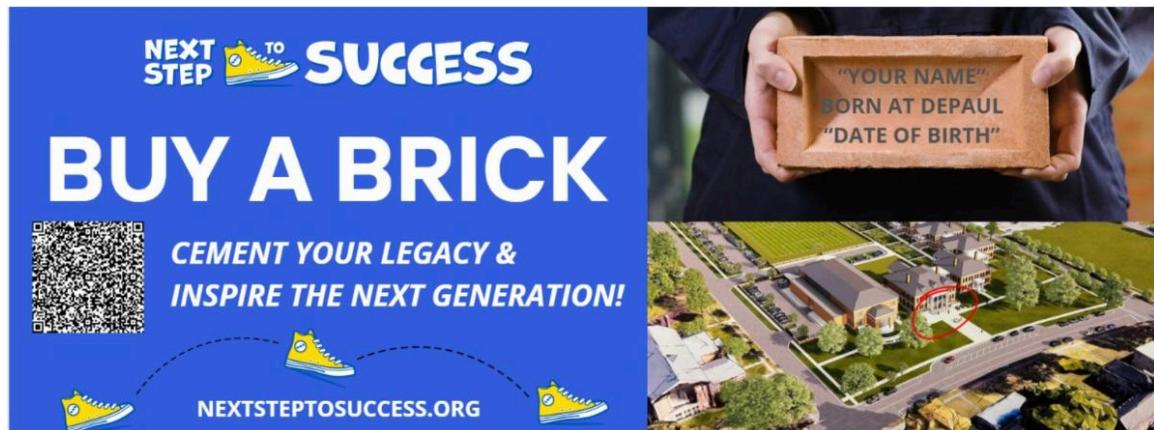
With flavor & gratitude,

Brittany "Chef B" Brown 🍴💛✨

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Buy a Legacy Brick for the St. Vincent de Paul House.

Your brick isn't just engraved—it becomes part of a story. A story of hope, community, and the belief that every young person deserves a strong foundation. Whether you're honoring someone special, celebrating your family name, or spotlighting your business, your personalized brick will live permanently on the new St. Vincent de Paul House campus.

Every brick supports the growth of Next Step to Success youth programs, turning your contribution into real opportunities for Norfolk's young people. It's a simple way to leave a legacy—and an unforgettable impact.



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