



Next Step to Success Weekly Update



A Message from our Executive Director



Week 1: We're Off and Running!

What a joy it was to open our doors on August 31 and welcome our students back! The building came alive this week with laughter in the hallways, full tables at dinner time, and scholars from grades 7–12 diving into their first days. Week 1 is any sign of what's ahead; we're in for a wonderful year.

As we get started, I want to share the single most important ingredient in a student's success: *attendance*. Students who show up consistently make the greatest gains academically, socially, and personally. Every day with us means

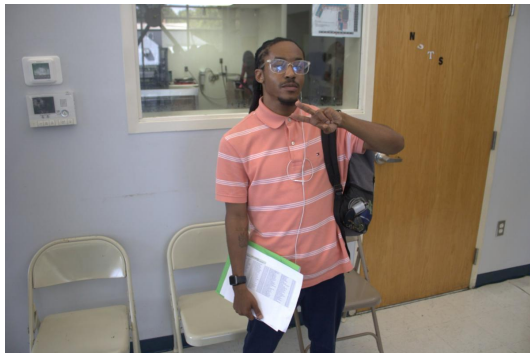
tutoring, mentorship, enrichment, and a hot meal in a safe, supportive environment. Every absence is an opportunity that's hard to get back.

Parents and guardians, you are our most important partners. Please make afterschool attendance a family priority and if transportation or scheduling ever becomes a barrier, reach out. We'll work with you to solve it.

Thank you for trusting Next Step to Success with your students. Week 1 was a strong start. Let's keep showing up together.

James Harris, Executive Director

Welcome Back, NSTS Family!



Welcome Back, NSTS Family!

We are so excited to kick off another year at Next Step to Success! Whether you're a brand-new face just joining the NSTS family or a familiar one returning for another year, we're glad you're here.

Our staff and volunteers have been hard at work getting ready — from prepping supplies and activities to reconnecting with our partner schools — and it shows in the energy already filling our program spaces. There's nothing quite like seeing our youth walk back through the doors ready to learn, grow, and take their next step.

Here's to a year full of new opportunities, renewed friendships, and even more success stories in the making. Welcome back, NSTS!

NSTS Leadership Insights

A Note from Muhanma Garcia, Director of Director of Strategic Growth, Partnerships, and Youth Engagement

NSTS Is Off to a Strong Start!

The 2026–2027 Next Step To Success After-School Program is officially underway, and we're excited about the energy, engagement, and momentum we're already seeing across our NSTS community!

Welcoming Youth Back to NSTS

As we launched the new session, our team hit the road and visited our partner schools to personally welcome students back and introduce new youth to the NSTS experience. These visits are an important part of how we build strong relationships with students, families, and school partners — and how we make sure our youth know NSTS is ready to support them all year.

We're grateful to the principals, administrators, and staff at each of our partner schools who took the time to meet with our team and welcome us into this collaborative year. These conversations are more than introductions — they're a chance to listen, identify student needs, and strengthen the connections between schools, families, and NSTS. Together, we're building a stronger support system around our youth, one relationship, one school, and one next step at a time.

Attendance Matters!

We're continuing to place a strong emphasis on consistent attendance and engagement. Every day a young person walks through our doors is another opportunity to build relationships, strengthen academic and life skills, explore career pathways, and take another step toward their future.

Our goal this year isn't just to enroll youth — it's to make sure they're actively engaged, consistently present, and fully benefiting from what NSTS provides. We encourage families to make attendance a priority and to stay in touch with our team whenever something may affect their child's participation.

A Note from Carly Gelles, Director of Education

Partnering With Norfolk Public Schools for Student Success

As we settle into the school year, we want to thank our partner schools at Norfolk Public Schools for working with us to support our students' success.

One quick but important ask: if you haven't turned in your child's Academic Release form yet, please send it our way. It lets our team check in on grades, talk with schools when needed, and catch early signs that a student needs extra support — so we can be proactive instead of playing catch-up.

Our Homework Hub is up and running, with volunteers and interns sitting down with youth to work through assignments, understand what's expected, and build the confidence to ask questions and speak up for themselves when they need help.

We're also connecting students with enrichment opportunities outside the classroom to help them explore their interests, strengths, and goals for the future. With continued support from Old Dominion University, Norfolk State University, and our incredible volunteers and interns, our youth are getting extra academic guidance, mentorship, and chances to grow.

We're grateful for our families' partnership. Stay engaged, reach out if academic concerns come up, and help us keep the paperwork and permissions current so we can support your child every step of the way.

A Note from Kaelyn Hundley, Director of Programming

A Strong First Week Back!

Thank you to everyone who helped make our first week of programming such a success! It was a short week, but our halls were buzzing with energy, excitement, and joy from the moment doors opened.

We were thrilled to welcome three new interns, a returning intern, a great group of new volunteers, and so many familiar faces back in the building. Seeing returning youth reconnect with staff and new team members jump right in reminded us why this work matters — and gave us a real sense of the momentum we're building for the year ahead.

Next week, we're excited to kick off our community partnerships, opening the door to even more opportunities, resources, and support for our youth. There's a lot to look forward to!

Thank you for being part of the NSTS community — we couldn't do this without you. Have a wonderful holiday weekend!



CONFIDENCE Café

— GOOD FOOD. GOOD MOOD • GREAT DAY. —

*Fuel Your
— Day. —
Elevate Your
Future.*

• SEPTEMBER 7-11 •

≡ DAY ≡	≡ PLANNED MENU ≡
 MONDAY <i>No Programming – Holiday</i>	 NO PROGRAMMING – HOLIDAY
 TUESDAY	CHICKEN ELOTE BOWLS <i>Churro Sticks</i> 
 WEDNESDAY	CRISPY CHICKEN SANDWICHES <i>with Seasoned French Fries</i> 
 THURSDAY	CHICKEN ALFREDO <i>(Regular or Rasta)</i> <i>Garlic Bread and Salad</i> <i>Cheesecake</i> 
 FRIDAY	KOREAN BBQ CHICKEN BOWLS <i>with Rice, Broccoli, and Cucumber Salad</i> <i>Pineapple Upside-down Dump Cake</i> 



EAT WELL. BE CONFIDENT. SHINE BRIGHT.

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF THE CONFIDENCE CAFÉ COMMUNITY!



Next week at the Confidence Café, we're serving up something delicious each day! After Monday's holiday, youth can look forward to Chicken Elote Bowls, Crispy Chicken Sandwiches, Chicken Alfredo, and Korean BBQ Chicken Bowls—plus plenty of tasty sides and desserts. Good food, good mood, and a great week ahead!

From DePaul's Legacy to the Next Generation's Future

WERE YOU BORN AT DEPAUL HOSPITAL?

Your story started here. Now, help write the next chapter.

Then



Our Future



From a Legacy of *care...* To where *futures* are built.

 **HONOR THE PAST.
INVEST IN THE FUTURE.**

Purchase a commemorative brick
and be part of transforming the historic
DePaul Hospital site into the future home
of Next Step to Success.

 Leave a Lasting Legacy

 Honor a Loved One or Family

 Support Norfolk's Youth



SCAN TO
**BUY YOUR
BRICK**
Today!



**NEXT
STEP**  **TO
SUCCESS**



St. Vincent de Paul House
Future Home of Next Step to Success

Were You Born at the Historic DePaul Hospital?

For generations, DePaul Hospital was more than a building. It was where families began, where first breaths were taken, and where lifelong stories started.

If you or someone you love has a connection to DePaul, this is your opportunity to honor that legacy in a meaningful and lasting way.

Next Step to Success is proud to carry that history forward as we transform this historic space into a place where young people can grow, learn, and build their futures. By purchasing a commemorative brick, you become a permanent part of this next chapter — celebrating the past while investing in the future of Norfolk's youth.

Each brick tells a story. Each name becomes part of the foundation.

**Honor your DePaul story. Invest in their future. Purchase your
commemorative brick today.**

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