



# YouScience® data used to recruit and engage students in CTE program

## INTRO

An educator in South Carolina boosts enrollment in her Biomedical Science career and technical education (CTE) program by using insights gleaned from YouScience® Aptitude & Career Discovery to recruit engaged students with an aptitude for health sciences.

## ORGANIZATION AT A GLANCE

Aiken County Public Schools  
Aiken, South Carolina

- ~22,500 students
- 42 schools

## Overcoming recruitment challenges for CTE programs

The Aiken County Career and Technology Center offers CTE programs and qualifications in nine fields. It's part of the Aiken County Public School District, located in Aiken, South Carolina, which includes 42 schools with a student population of approximately 22,500.

Dr. Christie Palladino is a teacher in the Biomedical Science Program at the Aiken County Career and Technology Center. This program, like others at the center, relies on high school students all across the district to apply for enrollment but has struggled recently with recruitment.

In the past, teachers from the center would go out and host hands-on activities with prospective students, but changes in the recruitment protocol ended that strategy. Like many CTE programs elsewhere, it lacked an effective way to recruit the *right* students for the *right* CTE courses. In addition, teachers at students' home high schools are the ones who talk to students most often, but they may not have the training or knowledge about a CTE course to talk to students about their career pathways.

That all changed after Dr. Palladino attended a presentation hosted by Ivey Harrison, a Senior Territory Manager at YouScience. The presentation focused on how to use data from the Aptitude & Career Discovery assessment to talk to students about their aptitudes and help them find best-fit careers. Dr. Palladino decided to implement this data to recruit students for her Biomedical Science program.

“Even though we’re a career center, career-oriented guidance is a piece that we’ve been missing,” said Dr. Palladino. “I think most of us as instructors feel a little lost when it comes to career development.

“That’s the thing that got us together with YouScience—we identified a need to use its data for recruitment purposes.” Dr. Palladino continued. “It’s very easy to pull data from, and it’s personalized to each student. Anyone can pick it up and start using it.”

## SOLUTION

# Identifying students with the right aptitudes

Along with Suman Marks-Johnson, Assistant Principal at the Aiken County Career and Technology Center, and fellow teachers in the Health Sciences cluster, Dr. Palladino designed a recruitment strategy for the center’s first-ever Health Science Night.



To target students for the event, Dr. Palladino leveraged Aptitude & Career Discovery data to identify students who had Health Science as one of their top three career clusters and personally invited them to attend. She also targeted students who had Biomedical Science as a top 10 career to receive a further personalized invitation from her to learn about laboratory-based careers. Doing so helped Dr. Palladino generate buzz and excitement for the program and ensured she reached the right students who had previously identified aptitudes and interests in the health sciences and particularly in Biomedical Science.

“We had students coming up to us that night saying, ‘I didn’t even know this was even a job; that there were careers in this area,’” Dr. Palladino recalled. “Being able to show students this possibility—that they can take their skills and apply them to a career is really important to us.”

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—Dr. Christie Palladino, Teacher, Biomedical Science Program, Aiken County Career and Technology Center



## IMPACTS

# Boosting enrollment and student engagement

The Health Science Night was a smashing success. Typically at an open house, attendance is sparse, and there's little participation, but not at this event. More than 30% of Health Science Night attendees applied to at least one of the center's health science programs (Biomedical Science, EMS/Fire, Health Science, and Sports Medicine). Students excitedly responded to Dr. Palladino's (or Dr. P, as they call her) personal invitation and were fully engaged.

Even parents were getting in on the fun by putting on gloves and doing lab work themselves. As a result, the Biomedical Science program experienced its biggest spike in student applications, with 57.8% of student applicants responding to at least one of the email invitations, resulting in a **73.3% increase in applications**.

"I've had more applications from this event than I ever had from recruitment visits to high schools," Dr. Palladino noted. "It's a really important piece of our recruitment strategy."

# Entertaining additional career possibilities

Aptitude & Career Discovery also helps students identify additional career options that they may not have considered before. Dr. Palladino got approval from the district to launch a pilot program in 2022 to implement a YouScience-supported career development curriculum with her second-year students. She discovered that the district had access to Aptitude & Career Discovery, but it had been underutilized. Fortunately, a majority of students had already taken an assessment and had created a YouScience profile. Using data during career development lessons allowed students to dive deeper into their aptitudes and career fits. For example, one biomedical science student who plans to pursue a clinical career in nursing discovered that she has strong reasoning aptitudes, particularly with sequential reasoning. As a result, the student signed up to take a research course in the program, which Dr. Palladino believes it will help her become a better clinician because she thinks like a researcher, evidence-based.

"At first, I think students are surprised, but once they dive deeper, it identifies options they might not have considered," Dr. Palladino said. "When students see that, it validates the feeling of 'hey, I've been interested in this.'"

# Helping students find the words to express their aptitudes

YouScience makes the career search process more personal for students by providing them with the language they need to create a resume or write cover letters. Students can pull words and phrases from their profiles that match their aptitudes to attach to their portfolios or complete job applications to better describe their abilities. Dr. Palladino's students utilized specific, aptitude-based language on their portfolio profile pages, resumes, and even in their mock interviews.

"YouScience helps students move from aptitudes directly into a career search," Dr. Palladino said. "They can use the actual phrases from their profiles and match them with careers and their aptitudes. That's one of the most helpful things, just being able to identify the language to use."



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The open house event worked so well for the center’s recruitment that it plans to hold another one next year, but earlier in the semester. Ms. Marks-Johnson, Assistant Principal, has also replicated the process for a Manufacturing Night. Data from Aptitude & Career Discovery will continue to play a critical role in targeting the right students to invite to the center’s events.

## STATS

# Challenges

- Increasing enrollment in Health Sciences CTE programs
- Generating awareness about Health Sciences courses and careers
- Identifying students with aptitudes for health sciences and related fields
- Helping teachers better provide career guidance

# Solution

YouScience® Aptitude & Career Discovery

# Results

- **30.7%** of students attending Health Science Night applied to at least one of four programs the center offers within the Health Science cluster
- **13.8%** of program applications occurred during the event or right after
- **73.3%** increase in the number of applications after the open house

## About YouScience®

YouScience® is the leading technology provider in solving the skills-gap crisis for students and employers. YouScience® Brightpath is the first-of-its-kind aptitude-based guidance platform that leverages data and artificial intelligence to help individuals identify their aptitudes, validate their skills, and get matched with educational and career pathways.

To learn how YouScience can help your program, schedule a demo at [youscience.com/demo-request/](https://youscience.com/demo-request/)



or contact our sales team at [sales@youscience.com](mailto:sales@youscience.com).