



Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, North Carolina ONE Access, a ConnectED Experience

This is the full Q&A with Dana Eure, Associate Director of Lifelong Learning, and Martha Yesowitch, Educational Partnerships Manager, from [Charlotte Mecklenburg Library](#) referenced in the article [Library Access for All Students: Stories from Five ConnectED Libraries](#).

1. Can you briefly describe the nature and scope of your program and how you established the partnership and program in your community?

ONE Access, or “One Number Equals Access,” uses all 150,000 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools students’ school identification numbers instead of separate library cards to create a Charlotte Mecklenburg Library account. With their ONE Access account, students can:

- Access Library research databases
- Borrow digital materials such as e-books, e-audiobooks, magazines, music and video
- Borrow up to 10 print or audio books (no DVDs or music CDs)

There are no overdue fines for ONE Access accounts, but users are responsible for fees on lost or damaged books.

This effort is part of an ongoing commitment by the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) to benefit the community by increasing literacy and educational success.

2. Where were points of push back (internally? schools? parents?) and how did you overcome them?

The biggest challenge was getting the library’s IT department to overcome the technical issues. It took quite a few conversations with them to get them on-board, but once on-board they have been enthusiastic supporters of the program.

The circulation policies and procedures for the ONE Access accounts were developed by a team of staff, including front line staff. These staff also did presentations for staff in our 20 locations so that they were aware of the programs and allowed to ask questions. This method went a long way toward garnering staff buy-in.

We have a long-standing partnership with CMS, so push back wasn’t a factor. We had piloted a few library card campaigns with them the previous year that laid the groundwork. One campaign was a drive for all 51,000 pre-K to 3rd graders. We sent library card applications home on the first day of school (fall 2014) and ended up processing over 17,000 new cards and waiving fines from another 10,000+ accounts. We also provided eCards (accounts that only accessed our online resources) for the 4,000 middle and high school students in one of our high-need learning communities (early 2015). The ONE

Access program was a more efficient and effective method of getting library accounts for all 150,000 students.

We sent a letter home with all students informing parents and caregivers about the ONE Access program. For those who did not want their students to participate in the program we offered them a way to opt out. We had only a handful of opt out forms completed.

3. Was there immediate interest with the schools you worked with or did that take some nurturing?

The program was developed based on conversations with school administrators and the lessons learned from the prior two library card campaigns with them. Interest in ONE Access was immediate.

4. Were there many surprises as you planned and executed the initiative, good or bad?

We have not had any bad surprises!

Good surprises include the CMS Superintendent's support. She fully backs the program and has issued several challenges to her staff to have students utilize the accounts. Her first challenge was 100,000 accounts activated by winter break. The goal was achieved.

Another surprise was the wide range of staff at CMS who embraced the program, including media specialists, teachers and literacy coordinators.

The best surprise was that our annual Memorandum of Understanding with CMS was expanded to a five year MOU that ensures continuation of the program through 2021. This was especially important as a new superintendent is in the process of being hired.

5. What was the response to the cards? Have you had increased usage/visits?

The program kicked off September 1, 2015. At the end of the school year (June 2016) over 124,000 of the 150,000 accounts had been used.

We have experienced an increase in usage across the board, with notable increases in online resources such as Hoopla and Tumble books.

6. Has this program led to any other school partnerships or programs?

We have had interest from other charter and private schools in the community. We have not created a ONE Access type program with any of them but have varying levels of partnership with them.

We met with administrators from Central Piedmont Community College to see if it was possible to create a ONE Access program for their 75,000+ students, but their ability to share student information with us was too limiting and a public library awareness campaign is being planned for students.

We issued accounts to all 5,000 staff with Mecklenburg County Government (our primary funding partner) granting access to all of our online resources.

We are expanding the ONE Access program with CMS in fall 2016 by allowing all 18,000 staff members to access our online resources using their CMS staff identification numbers.

7. If you had to do it all over again, what would you do differently?

We would had done it years ago!

8. Any advice for libraries thinking about doing something like this? Any resources you would point them to?

[Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Mecklenburg County to Speak at ConnectED Library Challenge Summit in Washington DC](#)

[Supporting Student Success at Charlotte Mecklenburg Library](#)

[More on the ONE Access program](#)

[Webinar Recording of a presentation by library staff about the ONE Access program](#)