Overview of the MSD of Pike Township, Pike High School YCC Program

Through the Youth CareerConnect (YCC) Program at Pike High School (PHS), students are provided with education and training that combine rigorous academic and technical curricula focused on in-demand occupations and industries to increase participants’ employability in STEM industries. Four pathways of focus were created for grade 9-12 students: Advanced Manufacturing and Logistics, Biomedical/Health Sciences, Engineering, and Information Technology. Thirty plus courses are offered through these four pathways allowing students to take four years in their areas of concentration.

Over 2,000 students enrolled in these project-based courses provided on a digital platform. The online courses and learning management system enhanced curriculum and instruction in all pathways.

YCC students are provided with a laptop and technology access for home and school use, industry mentors, college and career counseling, work experience, academic support, opportunities for dual credit, industry-specific technology and software, and industry-wide certifications. Fifty plus business, higher ed, and community partners worked with the YCC program to offer mentoring, internships, field trips, guest speakers, support for Robotics Teams, and Career and Technical Education youth organizations. Pike faculty members are supported through workshops, training, certifications, national conferences, and other professional endeavors.

Program Highlight

Pike YCC Staff has done a superb job of developing systems within PHS that provide opportunities for all stakeholders (school, teachers, students, parents, business/higher ed/community partners) to explore the power of high-need STEM careers. The systems include:

- career pathways;
- courses and relevant curriculum;
- technology;
- and strong relationships with partners.
Driven by technology, the curriculum was enhanced to better engage students through online learning, authentic work-based experiences, and problem-based units of study. The focus on partner involvement through the efforts of a dedicated staff position was critical to providing the real-life work experiences that students had through field trips, job shadows, networking, mentorships, and internships.

These systems have now been institutionalized at PHS and will be sustained beyond the life of the grant. Intentional in their focus on career awareness, work readiness, college readiness, and employability skills, they have yielded students who are well equipped for STEM careers.

**Success Story**

Through valuable employer partnerships, a successful professional development event called “Teacher TechConnect” was created to increase awareness of the needs of the Information Technology (IT) industry. IT professionals shared their stories of how they got into the industry and explained the skills and attributes needed for careers in technology.

“Student TechConnect” events centered on careers in IT, including the varying levels of employment within a specific IT career. Themes for the workshops included: the availability of IT careers in every field, cyber security, and digital marketing. Twenty industry partners attended each event, making presentations and conducting round table discussions. Approximately 150 educators and 130 students attended at least one of the events.

These events increased awareness of business trends and applications for Pike YCC faculty while giving YCC students opportunities to network with local business leaders. Pike faculty were able to establish relationships with businesses, increase business participation in YCC classrooms, and expand opportunities for students to experience field trips, job shadows, mentorships, and internships with local employers.

**Community Impact**

Pike High School YCC provided an efficient means through which the school community interfaced and interacted with business, higher ed, and community partners. Pike YCC staff made it easy for mentorships, internships, collaborative professional development, and special STEM programming to take place.

One of the benefits of having partners in the school and having students in area businesses is that it has changed the perception of urban schools and students as potential interns and employees. These interactions have opened employers’ minds to what young adults, and especially minority students, can accomplish. They have demonstrated that YCC students are capable of more responsibility than many adults may realize. Our female YCC students also proved that women in tech fields can hold their own with male colleagues. Our partners have been continually impressed with our students’ abilities and conduct.

Pike YCC has positively impacted students, the community, and employers, and has expanded the talent pool for our local business community.

**Metropolitan School District of Pike Township, Pike High School**

Contact: Kathy Sharpe, kasharpe@pike.k12.in.us
Jeanne Burroughs, jmburrou@pike.k12.in.us

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