Teaching For Jobs

Teaching For Jobs is a collaboration among Mitchell Community College, Statesville Regional Development, Iredell Statesville Schools, Centralina Workforce Development Board and the Statesville Chamber of Commerce. The purpose of Teaching For Jobs is “to promote a brighter future for Iredell County Students” by introducing them to advanced manufacturing careers.

This initiative consists of three integrated components:
1. Student/ parent outreach and information
2. Teacher/ counselor outreach and information
3. General public relations

DETAILS

The local “jobs disconnect” served as the impetus for the Teaching for Jobs initiative. This became defined at the local level as “a disconnect between our emerging workforce and the inventory of available manufacturing jobs.” Local business and industry had a need for high skilled manufacturing employees but local high school students had no interest in pursuing manufacturing careers. No matter how responsive our academic institutions are to the training needs of modern manufacturing companies, no matter how good the programming is or how much new equipment we acquire, it will make no difference until we create a pipeline of manufacturing–minded students interested in careers in advanced manufacturing.

Barriers to students choosing manufacturing as a career pathway were identified:
• parental influence
• middle/high school teacher/counselor influence
• media and popular culture devaluation of manufacturing

The Teaching For Jobs strategy was the result of a close collaboration between Mitchell Community College, the Statesville Regional Development Organization and the Iredell Statesville School System. The problem was identified by all three partners, each hearing the same message from the local manufacturing community. Manufacturers are very concerned that the much needed pipeline of future workers simply does not exist. The purpose of Teaching For Jobs is to promote a brighter future for Iredell County students through advanced manufacturing jobs. This includes both public school and community college students.

The initiative consists of three integrated components:
• student/ parent outreach and information
• teacher/ counselor outreach and information
• general public relations

Several strategies have been implemented to help attain the goals of Teaching For Jobs:
- a website [www.TeachingForJobs.org](http://www.TeachingForJobs.org) was developed that provides a variety of tools to promote advanced manufacturing as a legitimate career choice
- printed materials were developed that promote advanced manufacturing and demonstrate the educational and skills tracks needed to maximize opportunities in manufacturing (and materials continue to be distributed)
- manufacturing-focused programs were developed and presented at area middle schools
- a 45-minute “show and tell” presentation highlighting the various products manufactured in the region was developed and presented locally
- tours for teachers and counselors were conducted at advanced manufacturing facilities throughout the region

Implementation began in October 2013.

**Partner Type(s):**
- Economic Development
- Workforce Development Board
- Public Schools
- Other (Statesville Chamber of Commerce)

**Impact/Outcomes**
While the ultimate success of this project can only be determined in the long-term, there are certainly many short-term, measurable positive outcomes to report. The increased collaboration among Iredell Statesville Schools, Statesville Regional Development and Mitchell Community College is significant. Presentations have been made to 900 middle school students. More than 60 Career and Technical Education teachers and counselors have participated in the advanced manufacturing plant tours. Connections have been made between the community college technical faculty and the high school level Career and Technical Educators.

**Funding Source(s)**
Teaching For Jobs is a self-funded grassroots initiative administered by the partner organizations through Mitchell Community College.

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**REFLECTIONS**

**Innovation or Best Practice**
The collaboration among economic development, the public school system and the community college is a best practice. In fact the Business Retention and Expansion position of Statesville Regional Development is a shared position between the community college and the local economic development entity.

**Lessons Learned**
Collaboration is critical to the success of the program. The ability to meet the needs of our local community is increased geometrically as the number of appropriate partners engaged in the problem solving activity increases. The integral involvement of local business and industry is essential to the successful implementation of this strategy.

**Scalability**
This strategy is dependent upon relationships and collaboration; therefore, its replication is not dependent upon funds, but rather having willing partners who share the same vision.
RESOURCES

Workforce Learning Summit Presenters
Dr. James T. Brewer, President, Mitchell Community College
Mr. John Marek, Business Retention and Expansion, Statesville Regional Development

Website Link
www.TeachingForJobs.org

For Further Information
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