Nash Community College

Developing an Effective K-20+ Pipeline

Nash Community College’s best practice is built on the relationship the college has with its K-12 partner, the Nash-Rocky Mount Public Schools (NRMPS). President Obama stated that although there are three million jobs available in the U.S., there are not enough skilled workers to fill them. Nash Community College worked with NRMPS and Cummins Rocky Mount Engine Plant to develop the IAM (Industrial & Advanced Manufacturing) Academy, a Career and Technical Education pathway that laid out a specific and detailed educational plan for students to follow from the 9th grade through college graduation and onto a successful career in manufacturing.

DETAILS

Problem: There is a shortage of skilled workers in Eastern NC, specifically related to manufacturing. Nash Community College’s industry partners indicate that there are jobs available now, and many more skilled employees will be needed within the next few years.

Development of a solution: Working with Cummins Rocky Mount Engine Plant (RMEP), Nash Community College (NCC) needed to be able to communicate clearly with students and parents with regard to the types of jobs and careers available in today’s manufacturing industry. More importantly, NCC had to be able to demonstrate how Career and College Promise classes and an associate degree could lead to successful, and in most cases, lucrative careers in manufacturing.

Roles: NCC outlined six manufacturing pathway programs that were directly related to the career cluster specified as highly rated with regard to job/careers in advanced manufacturing. In addition, the college built a program mapping sheet that took the guesswork out of course selection at both the high school and college level. The program became the Industrial and Advanced Manufacturing Academy or IAM Academy. Cummins RMEP supports IAM by connecting the industry with the students. They conduct plant tours for middle school students, are part of parent information nights, and provide student internships as part of the academy. Nash Rocky Mount Public Schools put the information into the hands of the counselors and helped promote the IAM Academy through their career and technical education department. They actively recruit students to be part of the academy and ensure that the students are scheduled properly.

Implementation began in spring 2013.

Partner Type(s):
- Business/Industry (direct involvement)
- Economic Development
- Public Schools

Impact/Outcomes
- 72 high school students are currently part of the IAM academy pathway.
• 2 additional classes have been added to the Career and College Promise pathway options, including 9th graders.
• In excess of 500 middle school students have toured Nash Community College’s campus and advanced manufacturing labs.
• All partner middle schools and their students have been provided information with regard to careers in advanced manufacturing.
• 1,000 Nash-Rocky Mount Public Schools students and parents participated in Nash Community College’s annual Career and Technical Education Showcase.
• Nash Community College has been selected to present at the annual League of Innovations STEMTech Conference in Denver, Colorado.

Funding Source(s)
Multiple funding sources have been used to develop this practice. More recently, funds from a Golden Leaf grant, Project NC301, was received in partnership with Wilson Community College and the Nash-Rocky Mount Public Schools.

REFLECTIONS

Innovation or Best Practice
The ability of Nash County education partners to build an effective pipeline of workers for its area’s advanced manufacturers has relied on the creation of a clear career/educational pathway, an easy-to-follow and understand program of study, with an equally clear communication plan. The communication plan focuses on parents with a five-step plan and shows that students can choose to pursue a related bachelor’s degree after they earn an associate’s degree. The communications plan also gives students and parents career information about jobs available in the area, including identification of local employers, specific job titles and typical entry-level wages. The use of a high-energy video adds excitement as well.

Lessons Learned
• Parents have to be given an easy to understand pathway and educational plan.
• To fill the skills gap and be able to build a large enough pipeline, it is important to reach down to start work at the K-12 level.
• As partners, “never say no.”

Scalability
The partnerships that exist between Nash Community College, Nash-Rocky Mount Public Schools, and local industry have been carefully developed over a number of years. More recently, however, these three entities have worked closely to target specific careers, educational plans, and students/parents to actually work towards developing a seamless pipeline of highly-skilled and well-educated employees. Regardless of the relationship that exists (or doesn’t), the development of a plan to develop a similar pipeline can do a lot to improve the talent pool for businesses and career options for students. On a larger scale, several colleges could work together to develop a more regional pipeline should the opportunity/willingness or need arise.

RESOURCES

Workforce Learning Summit Presenters
Bill Carver, President, Nash Community College
Trent Mohrbutter, Vice President of Instruction and Chief Academic Officer, Nash Community College
Wendy Marlowe, Associate Vice President, Corporate and Economic Development, Nash Community College
Pam Lewis, Career and Technical Education Director, IAM Academy
Mark Striemer, Director of Machining, Cummins RMEP

Website and Video Link

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