

Clarke Schools' Career Academy Focuses Students on Future Success

OSCEOLA, Iowa, Dec. 18, 2015 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – Clarke Community Schools in Osceola, Iowa is developing a Career Academy that will provide a specialized course pathway for career-minded students. Aligned with Governor Branstad's new Future Ready Iowa initiative, this program is the genesis of Clarke's new curriculum director Jean Bahls and Bill Trickey of Clarke County Development Corporation. In recent weeks, the team kicked off meetings with local industry leaders to get their input on this unique education program.

The Career Academy will collaborate with local businesses to help develop a resource pool of young people in our community who will have the skills and knowledge necessary to be career-ready right out of high school. By establishing a career pathway early on, the Career Academy hopes to help lay out a sequence of courses and real-world experiences for kids as early as 8th grade, to get them ready to begin a career and not just get a "job" right out of school.

Through a curriculum that combines classroom time with immersion on the job site, students can get a true feel of all the different factors that go into keeping a business thriving. Industry experiences can be gained through guest speakers, internships, job shadowing or simply touring the facility, giving students the opportunity to ask questions and see first-hand the skills needed to be successful in a variety of career paths.

"I think the idea is fantastic. This program will allow for real-life scenarios to demonstrate the importance of learning concepts that incorporate math, physics and even the arts," said Joe Greving of Countryside Tank Company in Osceola. "I look at a picture of one of our trailers and think about all the components that went into making it. I would use that as an example for real life application to show them why it's important they're learning what they're learning in school and I think they'll maybe become better students because of it."

During her recent town hall meeting, Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds spoke about the importance of Future Ready Iowa.

"An initiative that we just launched a few weeks ago is 'Future Ready Iowa,' and it's a collaborative effort with schools, community colleges and business and industry to create job-training programs," she said. "We really want to make it a seamless pipeline, that we can work with students so they can see the various jobs available in communities all across the state of Iowa, what each career pathway looks like, the skills needed for each, and then align them with the local businesses that are ready to hire them immediately."

Clarke Community Schools hopes to launch their Career Academy by the 2017-18 school year. They will shape the curriculum to ensure young people are able to integrate their core classes such as math and science with real-world

skills needed to be successful in a long-term career.

“A component, for sure, would be a class on leadership and other ‘soft’ skills such as communication, personal habits and interpersonal proficiencies that they may not necessarily know,” said Jean Bahls at her recent meeting with Countryside Tank Company. “We want to give them usable skills while they’re still in high school, help them earn training certificates, college credits, whatever is needed to take them down their particular pathway. We want to help them see that there are great opportunities available and they don’t automatically have to go to a four-year college to have a good career, although some pathways may require that. There are positive role models in their own community who can show them what is needed in the industry for they have an interest and an aptitude for, and we want to facilitate that partnership.”

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*PHOTO for media: Send2Press.com/wire/images/15-1218-career-acadamy-300dpi.jpg

*PHOTO Caption: Joe Greving of Countryside Tank Companies talks about the manufacturing processes students would be exposed to through the Career Academy.

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