

Business & Education Council

Council Update
May 2009

2008 Business & Education Summit Attendees: PSD is updating you on career education and workforce related programs as a result of your participation last April. Please read on! To learn more about ways your business can get involved with career education for students, call 490-3652, or email info@psdschools.org.

Job shadowing gives students exposure to wide variety of career opportunities

Nearly 1,800 PSD sophomores experienced job shadowing in 2008-09, resulting in a win-win situation for all involved! Shadowing lets students learn first-hand what it takes to make it in their fields of interest from the people who know best—working professionals. Employers benefit by helping prepare the future workforce and showing students career possibilities in different industries.

Participating in a job shadow is a culminating activity of each PSD 10th grader's Critical Skills course. Students conduct research and take a career interests and abilities inventory before choosing a professional to shadow for 3-5 hours.

One PSD student gained awareness about the electrical engineering field **by shadowing an engineer for four hours at In-Situ Inc.**, a Fort Collins manufacturer of monitoring instruments. The student observed how circuit boards are built, how to problem solve and fix broken boards, and how boards are sealed using sonic sound waves.

Another student **shadowed a marketing and advertising professional at Tenfold Collective**, a graphic design firm in Loveland. The student was able to sit in a meeting with a team of designers and observe the creative process. The advertising executive illustrated marketing concepts by comparing two brands of sparkling water.

"Shadow opportunities give our students a view into all aspects of a job, and help our students answer the questions 'Why do I have to learn this?' and 'Would I want to make this job a career?'" explains Kathy Hanson, PSD Career & Technical Education coordinator.

[Contact PSD](#) to get involved!

400 PSD students explore career options through internship opportunities

Nearly 400 PSD juniors and seniors took advantage of career exploration and networking opportunities by taking part in business internships or work-based learning activities during 2008-09. Students worked, volunteered or interned at businesses, earning class credit and gaining work skills and job experience through PSD's Professional & Community Experience (PaCE) and Alternative Cooperative Education (ACE) programs.

A 2009 CSU graduate and former PaCE student said she believes the skills she learned helped her obtain scholarships for college. "Wow, did you guys ever make my high school years an experience! Just through the requirements of your course I learned the meaning of community service and work ethic."

"My internship gave me a lot of practice conducting research and analyzing data," said a student who interned at the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a biological science aide last summer. "It was a great experience for me because I had to manage my time well and follow directions while also creating tasks to complete myself."

Future Web site will allow businesses to sign up for career education opportunities

PSD, the Larimer County BOCES (educational services agency), and the Northern Colorado Economic Development Corp. are discussing ways to work together to develop a business and teacher friendly Web site that will allow business persons to enter the type of activity options to volunteer, such as internships, job shadowing, hosting on-site field trips or classroom volunteers. Then, teachers could access the Web site to **match their students' needs to businesses**. Watch for more information on this Web site this fall.



Students take software design problem to manufacturing company for solutions

High school students struggling to understand a specific mold making technique for 3-D modeling software were **treated to real-life applications and solutions by a practicing engineer at Value Plastics**, a local company that designs and manufactures more than 3,100 plastic tubing components.

Bruce Williams, Value Plastics CEO, hosted a tour for Poudre High School technical education architectural/drafting students to tour his company, showing the students the “soup to nuts” operation. Students toured and learned about raw materials (handling, warehousing, high-tech process), finished goods, tool room operations (molds, plastic injection, CNC), manufacturing practices (clean room), and office/administration operations.

The tour ended in a conference room with a mechanical engineer speaking with students and a demonstration on 3-D design software called SolidWorks students use in the classroom. Students had been struggling in the classroom with a specific tool in the software. During the demo the **engineer showed the students a shortcut solution to their problem—students were thrilled with the solution** and amazed that “real” engineers had encountered similar issues. “Being able to see the application of using the software to produce the final product impressed students. It made their learning relevant,” said PHS Tech Ed teacher Gordon Smith.

Students learn 21st Century workforce skills through tech innovation classes

Students learned job interview skills as they answered questions posed by local employers recently during two unique classes designed to create internships and employment opportunities as well as equip students with 21st century skills.

The classes, **Clean Energy Manufacturing, and Mapping Technologies, are part of an ongoing series of classes called “Get Wired!” that teach students about new and emerging technologies.** The classes will continue to be offered fall 2009 at Rocky Mountain and Fort Collins High Schools, and enrollment is open to high school students throughout the district.

Paid for by a Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grant, the **classes will cover specific technologies as well as more general skills that employers are also re-**

questing, such as a strong work ethic; teamwork; excellent written and oral communication; problem-solving; and critical thinking. This combination of new technology skills and essential “soft skills” make up what are commonly called “21st Century Skills.”

A request from local businesses inspired PSD’s Career & Technical Education Coordinator Kathy Hanson to apply for the grant. Executives from TechniGraphics and Woodward Governor Company approached Hanson suggesting a partnership between industry and PSD to develop a “workforce for the future.” [More...](#)

PSD Graduation Requirements Committee using Board policy, 21st Century skills

PSD’s [Preparing Children for the 21st Century](#) committee is studying graduation requirements as part of district and state efforts to establish new requirements to be implemented for the PSD freshman class of 2010. **The goal is a seamless pathway from preschool into college or the workplace.** A key resource being used to help focus the committee’s work is the [Board of Education’s expanded “Ends” policy](#), which the Board is finalizing after conducting expert panels in the 5 student achievement areas—academics, civic participation, career preparation, creative skills, and thinking skills.

The national [21st Century Framework](#) is providing the committee with an online resource dedicated to 21st Century skills teaching and learning; Gov. Ritter’s [Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids](#), or CAP 4K, launched by Senate Bill 08-212, requires that the State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education adopt a description of “postsecondary and workforce readiness” by Dec. 15, 2009.

Business Tuesday Tours offer teachers a chance to strengthen education pipeline

PSD teachers took part in *Tuesday Tours* at businesses during the school year to learn more about local businesses and take that information back to their students. The statewide [BETR project](#) stands for Building the Prepared Workforce of Tomorrow. The county program is coordinated by the Larimer County Workforce Center, and offers teachers the opportunity to visit local businesses so educators can understand the diverse tasks employees are expected to perform and skills they need to be successful in various occupations. *Tuesday Tours* will continue this summer, from 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., June 15-19. [Click here](#) for more information.