

Education & Manufacturers Council (EMC)

What skills do students need to succeed in the real world? Good question for students as they prepare for a career after their high school education. At Hononegah Community High School, many needed skills and career goal setting things are happening. The administration is focused on career development and programs are in place to set requirements for all students to achieve. The collaborative effort between staff members and local business representative resulted in the establishment of criteria for a certification program which will benefit students in college and career preparation.

The program that leads the way is Workplace Readiness. Headed by Jason Brunke, Department Head for Career and Technical Education, the Workplace Readiness Program sets goals, standards, and career development requirements to achieve certification in the program. Career Development Requirements are:

1. A complete resume
2. Reflection of two separate volunteer experiences
3. Verification of extracurricular involvement in four total semesters
4. Proof of attendance at a career development workshop
5. Attainment of applicable certification for career preparation
6. Job shadowing experience and reflection.

Work ethic and attitude assessment is provided to each student by all teachers rating each semester for workplace behavior displayed in the classroom. These “soft skills” are evaluated on a five-point rating platform during each student’s junior and senior year.

Community and business leaders volunteer their time to serve on the board to continually improve the program for students to gain valuable in and out of class experiences to achieve certification. Each student who gains certification in the Workplace Readiness Program receives a \$500 scholarship to continue their chosen career education. Local businesses donate the scholarship money and participate in an end of school year recognition breakfast along with parents, teachers, administration, and board members.

Employers who seek certified students can expect the student to have consistency with regard to attendance and work habits, as well as, an understanding of their career goals through experience and reflection.

The Workplace Readiness Program served as the foundation for the establishment of the fast-growing Education & Manufacturers Council. The community and business board members felt it was critical to align local manufacturers with educating students and parents with the career opportunities in the Stateline area.

The vision of the Education & Manufacturers Council (EMC) is to provide a steady stream of graduating students who have the interest, drive, and knowledge to work in a manufacturing

environment. The Hononegah EMC has over 40 council members which includes administration, teachers, school board, area manufacturers, businesses, technical colleges, hiring professionals, city government and state labor representatives, and WOTM.

The ECM has three committees that focus on career pathways for student and classroom development.

1. Curriculum Committee. Manufacturers contribute to classes offered in the Career & Technical Education Department. Skills needed in today's manufacturing, volunteer teaching, and donation of equipment for classroom learning and future employment.
2. Communication, Community and Parent Awareness Committee. Work with the administration, school board and council to inform and educate the students, parents and the community on the council's goals and events to promote career opportunities in local manufacturing and business.
3. Apprenticeships, Internships and Job Shadowing Committee. Provide students the career opportunities to work with local manufacturers and businesses and experience the learning possibilities with experts in their education and job responsibilities.

Goals have been established by the EMC. Some of the key ones are:

- * Alter the perceptions about the manufacturing industry and spark student interest as a viable alternative to four-year post-secondary college education, a costly investment that has yielded disappointing results and high student debt.
- * Provide manufacturers with access to potential employees through career exploration events: Meet & Greet, Lunch & Learns, Job Fairs, Internships, and Job Shadowing.
- * Collaborate to develop effective ways to allow students under 18 years of age opportunities to work or intern to gain exposure to manufacturing careers.
- * Develop a list of regional manufacturers and what they have to offer by producing short videos and other social media outlets for students to use as a reference.
- * Introduce the Manufacturers Expo in the new Hononegah Field House.

The Education & Manufacturers Council meets every month to grow our membership and continue to achieve our goals. We encourage local manufacturers to join our Council to gain qualified employees and give students and parents the opportunity to learn about your business. We want to provide an alternative to the expense and student debt of four-year colleges by offering careers with local manufacturers and learning the opportunities for advancement.

If you are interested, contact Jaclyn Kolodziej or Beth Mead at WOTM, both who serve on the ECM. You can also contact Chuck Gilbert or Dennis Weiland with the Education & Manufacturers Council.

We hope this information helps answer the opening question. Top skills most valuable are communication and presentation skills, confidence, time management, critical thinking, self-driven learning to fail and recover. Join the EMC to find out more.

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