

Director's Report December 2005

Business and Industry

The work five superintendents are undertaking with the Manufacturer's Association of Northwest Pennsylvania has evolved into a curriculum project. A similar group of businesses and educators in York County has developed a "soft skills" curriculum to enhance the capabilities of prospective employees.

The program is called *Your Employability Skills*. It involves 120 hours of instruction in various topics (communications, teamwork, safety and health, technology, quality and mathematics). Students can acquire a certificate by completing the program and meeting other criteria, which include a drug screen, high school diploma, or GED, good attendance and passing scores on standardized tests.

The certificate should lead to preferred employment prospects. The Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, Builder's Association of Northwest Pennsylvania and the Northwest Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center have also joined the project.

Welding Program Starts

After some quick and diligent work, the customized welding program started at 7:00 a.m. on Monday, December 5. Twelve students from three different companies were the first to attend the class. A second shift class also operates from 3:30 p.m. to 12:00 midnight. As committee members may recall, this is a 160-hour training program paid for through company contributions and Department of Labor & Industry grants.

I would like to recognize:

- Mark Cyphert and the students in our Metal Fabrication program who fabricated six welding tables and cut nearly 4,000 coupons (pieces of metal used to practice welding).
- Tracy Massello and students from our Facilities Engineering program who installed safety curtains on all of the booths.
- Steve Sceiford, Bill Donnell, Roy Drake and Dan Lasher (maintenance department) for working relentlessly to "re-equip" the laboratory with air handlers, a compressor, power supplies and various other items.

The high point for ECTS, as noted by David Tullio, president of Custom Engineering, was "the program came together very quickly."

Special Education

At the December faculty meeting, faculty members and administrative staff discussed providing special education services on a "prescriptive" basis. Much as the medical field provides rehabilitative and therapeutic services after a diagnosis, our special education services need to be

planned for and provided "by our teachers" in a manner consistent with a prescription (treatment, dose, frequency, duration). As the faculty completed an exercise to illustrate the prescriptive approach, numerous concerns became apparent. They included:

1. An inconsistent understanding of the instructional assistants' role by faculty members
2. Weak communication between administrators, faculty and instructional assistants regarding the services
3. Limited background information on first-year students
4. A limited number of services and resources
5. Difficulty with providing services in the environments of technical education and the workplace
6. Inadequate or inconvenient scheduling of instructional assistants and other services
7. Limited capabilities of instructional assistants to provide services in a contextual manner
8. Students who need services but are disinterested in receiving them

The administration will continue to review and assess the services provided to special education students. It seems appropriate to continue discussing our philosophical approach on how we provide services. We also need to discuss how much emphasis we should place on remedial and compensatory approaches.

Thanks and Welcome!

The ECTS has always been favored with dedicated joint operating committee members. We extend our thanks to four members as they finish their service to the technical school community:

Marilyn Vargulich	Girard School District
Jim Sonney	Harbor Creek School District
Alice Neibauer	Millcreek Township School District
Jim Mitchell	Northwestern School District

We welcome the following individuals to the committee:

Bob Heath	Girard School District
Jack Wood	Harbor Creek School District
Susan Sullivan	Millcreek Township School District
Unknown at report time	Northwestern School District

Season's Greetings

Please accept our warmest wishes for this holiday season!