April 2010
Issue 4

IN-demand career beat

highlighting careers in manufacturing and logistics

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Helping Your Child Get into College

Preparing for the Future While Still in High School

By Tamara Stump. Senior Workforce Associate, the Center of Workforce Innovations

High School students are faced with tough decisions as they think about their future. The one question a student hears over and over again is "What are you going to do when you graduate?" Most students are pressured to decide their future by the end of their junior year and often make a decision without knowing all the opportunities available. As a result, the youth may feel trapped into a career path. In order to avoid the pressure during the junior year, it is important that youth prepare for the future beginning their freshman year. Below are some tips for youth as they think about their career path:

Focus on Strengths and Interests – Begin by thinking about what you're good at, what you like doing, what environments you prefer to work in. Then begin looking for careers that play to those strengths.

Career Exploration - Research careers now. Talking with employers, visiting colleges, attending career fairs, and using the internet are all ways to explore careers that can assist with deciding on a career path.

College Visits – Once you have chosen a career, the next step is finding a school that offers the right training. Most high schools allow students to visit college campuses during their junior or senior year. Take advantage and visit those schools.

Useful websites – There are a lot of websites that provide information on career preparation. Those websites include www.learnmoreindiana.com, www.careeronestop.org, and www.mappingyourfuture.org.

For more information on careers in general visit www.get-in-careers.com

The Importance of Math in High School

In their seminal book *Math Matters: the Links Between High School Curriculum, College Graduation, and Earnings*, Heather Rose and Julian Betts proved the link between higher level mathematics and success after graduation. They found that high school students that took more advanced levels of math, including algebra and calculus, were more likely to graduate college than students that stopped taking math halfway through their high school. Not only did these students graduate college, they also earned as much as 6% higher salaries 10 years after they graduated from high school. Clearly, math can help you graduate from college and earn more money during your lifetime.

Still, many students simply do not like numbers. Math can seem so esoteric, and the constant refrain of many parents is "when am I ever going to use this in the *real* world." Fortunately, there are many resources popping up to help make math more engaging. A few of our favorites are below:

Mathalicious (www.mathalicious.com) Using real world applications, the developers of Mathalicious have created a free-to-use website that walks young learners through Fractions, Decimals, Probability, Statistics, and many other disciplines and tools. Modules include "Is Wheel of Fortune Rigged?," "Are the Olympics Fair?," and "iPad, iPhone, rSimilar?"

Ask Rose (www.askrose.org) Ask Rose is an award-winning website run by students at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, one of the leading schools of engineering and science, located right here in Indiana. Students from grades 6-12 can contact the Homework Hotline from 6-9 pm (Central) September through May toll free or seek online tutoring and tutorials.

Khan Academy (www.khanacademy.com; also on YouTube) Salman Khan was a successful investment fund manager living in San Fransisco when he agreed to remotely tutor his middle school-aged niece on topics in math. The sessions were so successful, Khan established a non-profit, launched a channel on YouTube, and currently offers more than 1,200 short tutorials on practically every math subject. Sessions are free to view, and cover Math, Economics, Chemistry, Biology, and even History. This venture has been so successful; it has garnered national media coverage from PBS Newshour, CNN, and National Public Radio, among others.

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IN-demand career beat is a publication of the Center of Workforce Innovations of Valparaiso, Indiana and supported by the Porter County Economic Development Alliance. It is designed to encourage youth, parents, and educators to learn about careers in the leading industries of Northwest Indiana. Research is conclusive; the more youth know about careers and industries, the more likely they are to make informed decisions. Our goal is to provide the knowledge, understanding, and resources that parents, educators, and youth need in order to make informed career decisions. With these tools, we believe that we can stem the brain drain and improve the economy of Northwest Indiana.

For more information or to join the e-mail distribution list, contact David Blumenthal at 219-462-2940, ext. 40 or dblumenthal@innovativeworkforce.com.

Local Industry Experts Provide Insight – Q & A

Q. What are some of the simplest steps that parents and teachers can take to help their students get ready for that big transition from high school to college or the workforce?

A. It's never too early to start planning and thinking about life after high school. I am a big advocate of job shadowing and interviewing people in careers that interest a student (also known as informational interviews). I think that is one of the best ways to decide which direction a student may want to go in. There are so many careers out there that the students never hear about.

Q. Some experts say that as many as 80% of jobs are filled through networking and referrals, yet most high school students' networks do not extend beyond their parents and group of friends. Have you seen any students build effective networks while still school?

A. Volunteering, church youth groups, jobs, sports, school clubs, etc., are all good ways to develop skills. These opportunities help with responsibility, time management, ethics, money management, as well as various adult roles.

Q. When we speak with business executives, they often tell us that they like to hire someone that some interests and skills developed outside the classroom. What are ways that students can develop their skills, either at school or on their own?

A. Volunteering, church youth groups, jobs, sports, school clubs, etc., are all good ways to develop skills. These opportunities help with responsibility, time management, ethics, money management, as well as various adult roles.

Q. What are some traits or characteristics of successful students you have noticed in your time as a guidance counselor?

A. Those who make their education their "job" tend to be more successful. They're proactive and seek out help when needed. Students who can manage their time well are also successful and less stressed.

This Month's Industry Expert
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Roberta Garcia's recommended sites for parents and students:

Fastweb.com
Meritaid.com
Cappex.com
Fafsa.ed.gov

Want to Help Your Child Get Into College? Take Action Today!

Making that leap from high school to college can seem like a daunting challenge. Any big transition in life can be challenging, and it often seems like the first step is the hardest. Fortunately, we at **IN-demand career beat** have found a great resource for you parents and teachers out there looking for a way to get started: an Action Plan! The College Board, the not-for-profit association that puts together the SAT, PSAT, and AP exams have created a handy interactive action plan for students, parents, and professionals. The College Bound Action Plan walks through each year of high school, providing concrete steps and actions that students should be making in fall, winter, spring, and over the summer. The Action Plan provides simple steps and links to more in-depth sections of the College Bound website. Check it out:

www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/action/index.html

We're on the Web!
www.get-in-careers.com