

CAC Report to the Westlake Board of Education

Westlake City Schools and Partnerships with the Business Community

Background / Summary

The CAC Committee chose to focus its efforts primarily on partnerships involving student development programs and internship programs, particularly for Westlake High School students. The committee looked at a variety of successful programs ranging from programs which require a very significant financial commitment on the part of a school / district (i.e. the Hathaway Brown "best in class" program) to programs which utilize a combination of existing school district and vocational district personnel and community volunteers (as is the case with programs in Westlake and most peer school districts).

The committee believes that the student development opportunities offered as a result of partnerships between the Westlake City Schools and area businesses are comparable to programs offered in other area public school districts. The committee does believe that there are opportunities to enhance the level of partnership with area businesses to provide programs that would "set Westlake City Schools apart" from its peer group in this area. The committee believes that development of a formalized student internship program could be managed primarily with existing resources and without substantial cost to the school district.

Existing Partnerships between Westlake City School and Area Businesses

For background purposes, following are existing areas in which the Westlake City Schools partners with the business community:

- WHS juniors are required to take the College & Career Connections course for one semester [Instructors David Titterington and Sarah Furey]. The purpose of the course is to help students develop a realistic understanding of the "working world" as well as comprehensive self-awareness to facilitate appropriate further education and career planning. In terms of partnering with the business community, the College & Career Connections team arranges periodic guest speakers but primarily relies upon the events sponsored by the West Shore Chamber of Commerce (outlined below). The College & Career Connections team is actively involved in the West Shore Chamber and on the Chamber's Education Committee.
- WHS Career Day (annual event): One-day program sponsored by the West Shore Chamber of Commerce for Westlake and Bay High School students. Area businesses provided speakers to cover a wide range of careers / topics. Annual Career Days are also held at Parkside Intermediate School and Lee Burneson Middle School to introduce students to a wide range of potential careers.

- WHS Business Professional Panel (annual event): One-day program sponsored by the West Shore Chamber of Commerce. Volunteers from the business community speak with students during their College & Career Connections class to share their background, career path and area of expertise.
- Job Shadowing: WHS does “offer” Career Shadowing. The program seems to be quite informal and reactive to student requests rather than a more formalized, proactive program. Debbie Slater of the West Shore Career Technical District (works 18 hours per week at WHS) manages this effort for WHS. If a student has interest in shadowing within a particular field, Debbie will attempt to find an area business willing to accommodate what is generally a one-day student experience. There is no database maintained of businesses that have participated or would be willing to participate.
- West Shore Career & Technical District: There is a wide range of programs available to Westlake students through the West Shore Career & Technical District (primary campus Lakewood High School). Per committee discussions with the College & Career Connections team and representatives of the West Shore Career & Technical district, there are approximately 10 – 15 WHS involved in these programs at any given time. These programs appear diverse and potentially valuable but the level of participation from our district appears low. This could be because many of our students are college bound and don’t want to take the time to participate in these offerings.
- WHBS-TV: WHBS has gained significant sponsorship and equipment contributions from the local business community.

Observations:

- There is not a formalized, proactive process within the Westlake City Schools for connecting with area businesses to develop student opportunities, particularly internships.
- One-day or short term shadowing programs do not generally provide meaningful benefit to students or participating businesses.
- As noted in the Highlights outlined below on programs offered by other schools, a successful internship program would require centralized “ownership” and structure / organization / formalized documentation, all of which mean some level of dedicated resources.

- An ongoing theme in discussions with staff member within WHS and the Career Technical district was the need for centralized information management (i.e. a database and ownership of managing it) to track the many opportunities for partnership with area businesses, including potential internship programs, shadowing programs, executives / managers available for career days and panel discussions, potential donations of technology equipment or other materials to benefit the school district.

Highlights on Discussions with Other Schools / Districts regarding Internship Programs

Hathaway-Brown (Best in Class program):

- Full Time Director of Research serves as internship liaison
- 90 – 100 students participate in a given year
- Participate in meaningful multi-year research projects
- 140 authorships / co-authorships on research projects with 60 Siemens finalist / semi-finalists
- Very intensive program from the standpoint of the school advisor.
- ___?___number of days.
- City-wide list of large industry supporters
- Meaningful impact on college admissions

Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School Program

- Principal is the Coordinator at School.
- Students find their own opportunities or pick from an existing list.
- Must be a program that allows student to pursue professional interest in a practical / educational way.
- School faculty volunteer as advisors, typically taking on one student.
- Advisors must approve or disapprove any requests by advisees(students) or community advisor.
- Seniors must fulfill certain requirements to participate, i.e. passing grade in all courses with a 3.0 g.p.a. for the 3rd quarter , no suspensions in or out of school, no outstanding fees or fines
- Well documented requirements for student participation.
- Internships approved by team including Principal and faculty advisors.
- Program lasts 15 days of May in senior year.
- Student has requirement for weekly communication with school advisor.
- Student keeps daily journal.
- Student is required to make a formal presentation in the senior internship symposium following experience.

Solon

- Solon schools have career days at all school levels.
- There is a shadowing program.
- The schools work through their local Chamber of Commerce in various ways. The PTA is also involved with the Chamber. The Chamber gives 4-6 scholarships per year.
- A quarterly Key Communicator meeting involving representatives of business, schools, etc.
- Their school newsletter is mailed to businesses as well as to homes.
- A senior project takes place in May. Seniors are finished with classes the 10th of May this year, for example. After that those electing to participate work 2 weeks on a senior project with an area business. Student must find their own site. A school advisor works with senior and with the business to smooth the process. No grade is given. At the end a symposium is held in which student make presentations in groups of 10. This year about 80% of seniors are participating. (This program appears to resemble the Brecksville-Broadview Hts. Program, but we do not have copies of their guidelines.)

Fairview

- It is part of the Polaris District.
- The high school gets free and discounted tickets, meals, etc. donated from local businesses which are used as incentives to kids who exceed a 3.0 gpa.
- There are various senior projects.
- There is shadowing for seniors in which 1/2 to 2/3 of students participate.
- The Youth in Govt. program is sponsored by the Fairview Park Chapter of the League of Women Voters-CA in conjunction with city hall and the high school history classes. They students vote for various offices and positions, and kids selected spend a certain time period with specific civil servants and elected-the mayor, fire chief, police chief, etc.

Rocky River

- River has shadowing through the business program in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce.
- The schools work on Junior Achievement in conjunction with the chamber and are sending a team to national.
- Students attend chamber meetings and are mentored by chamber members.
- Students involved in some internships or projects with NASA, Cleveland Clinic, and law enforcement organizations.
- They have instituted a career day at the middle school level.
- The last 9 weeks of the school year students can be excused to work on business programs. 15-20 students are typically involved.
- The schools offer a program for distant learning with interactive interviews by computer involving business and career exploration.

Bay Village

- Bay works with the West Shore Chamber of Commerce and is involved in the same Chamber-related opportunities as are the Westlake Schools.
- They have had students on various special projects with, for example, the Army Corps of Engineers, Dennis Kucinich, NASA.
- They have a senior project of 16-18 hours.
- Bay is also part of the Lakewood Vocational program so I assume their shadowing program is through that as is ours.

Church on the Rise

The Church on the Rise started a new youth internship program called "Launch" during this school year. Most of the supervisory work and locating of internship opportunities is done by volunteers. The program has two components.

Training for six weeks including the following:

- Work ethic
- Resume writing
- Finances
- Leadership in the workplace
- Students must complete this training to participate in an internship opportunity.

Internships Aspects:

- A volunteer visits business and find willing partners.
- Students work 1-2 days per week after school for 8 weeks.
- Students are not paid for the work.
- Presently 7 students are completing the first year of the program.
- Students are currently placed in medical, printing, and professional sports team internships for example.

Lorain County Joint Vocational Board

This program was modeled after a German vocation program and has been in place for 12 years. Currently 120-130 students are in programs. Many of the students go on to higher education (about 70%). They have 200 employers who are willing to sponsor kids.

Students are paid employees. This is important, as they want kids covered by workers-compensation (in case of potential worksite injuries). (Students do not have to be covered by unemployment.)

The director said that generally students have specific job skills but are lacking in soft skills such as communication. They also offering shadowing, company visits, and work interviews.

This appears to be an excellent program. At least 2 staff members are involved year round in oversight, researching of industry partners, and general administration in addition to the teachers who do the summer supervision and receive a modest stipend.

Features

- Students work at a job site 225 hours and receive 1.5 credits. Teachers serve as mentors for students and do 3 site visits. They interview students and on-site mgr. regarding student performance, try to head off problems, etc.
- Kids do not fail if they complete the program. If things are not working, a student may be pulled out during the internship.
- There are also some seminars during the summer at which attendance is required. Teachers receive a stipend per diem for their mentoring, completing the on-site visitations, and for attendance at student seminars. (We have materials on this program.)

Recommendations of CAC Committee

- Westlake High School should consider organizing an elective Senior Internship Program to begin in the second half of the 2006-2007 school year or the 2007-2008 depending upon when a decision was made and how quickly a program could be organized.
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- Establish primary "owner" or position of Director of Senior Internships, perhaps using current College & Career, Guidance and / or Gifted Program personnel (responsible parties vary from school to school). Also establish primary "owner" of database of involved and potential businesses which clearly needs to be maintained. The staff members who work in these areas feel that they need a structured database of potential business contacts. They also feel that there would be benefit in having a database of alumni. Alumni could, for example, be contacted to speak about careers and educational and training experiences. Students would relate to younger workers and college students who came from WHS. (Some of this work could be done by volunteers- at least the setting up of a database from which to begin collecting business partner data.)
- Define role and solicit faculty volunteers to serve as internship advisors (sample descriptions available from schools currently offering programs).
- Develop basic policies and procedures to govern the program as well and required documentation for students and participating businesses (this would not be terribly onerous given examples available from schools currently offering programs).

- Along with the program Director and other involved faculty members, the CAC could be assigned a role of continually seeking and submitting names of businesses willing to participate and points of contact.
- Participating businesses would need to be validated by the Director / advisors with regard to meaningful educational opportunity and safe work environment.
- Take applications from qualified students in early 2007 for May 2007 program or a year later, if 2007 is too short of an implementation goal.

List of Interested Industries in the Immediate Westlake Area

Medical

-St. John & Westshore Hospital (Westlake, Ohio)

- multiple departments
 - multiple opportunities
- Premier Medical Group
- Multiple health care opportunities

-EMH Avon Emergency Care Center (Avon, Ohio)

- X-ray (including CT Scan, MRI)
- Laboratory
- ER (nursing, physician)

Other Industries:

-EMH Health and Fitness Center Avon, Ohio

- Sports Training
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy

-Waldheger Coyne

- Law

-Furrer & Assoc.

- Accounting

-Kidzart

- Elementary art education