

Business Education Roundtable
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The Norwin School District has established a Business Education Roundtable which connects students and teachers with business and industry in an effort to produce a highly educated and skilled workforce. The roundtable encourages business education partnerships and fosters professional working relationships.

The global economy dictates that school districts take the necessary steps to provide educators with a more in-depth understanding and working knowledge of 21st Century skills needed in the workplace and to provide students with a better understanding of opportunities through college and career planning with connections to the high-demand occupations of the future.

The high-demand occupations of the future include, but are not limited to: energy, manufacturing technology, information technology, homeland security, environmental safety, health care, and education. Innovation, research and entrepreneurship – with a strong work ethic and a personal commitment to excellence – serve as the catalyst for creating the jobs of the future and for growing and sustaining the regional economy.

Towards this end, envisioning the future of the School District and its continued success requires us to expand our partnerships and focus on the connections between education, business, and industry. Everyone has a vested interest in the 21st Century economy; therefore, key stakeholders should build on the strengths of the School District, moving forward from great to extraordinary by offering a world-class education to all students.

Globalization and emerging technologies are transforming the high school experience and are inescapable realities for our high school students as graduates and life-long learners. Therefore, a need exists for better access to college and career education pathways for all students based on interests, abilities, and needs. The School District must continually improve its educational offerings and set high academic standards with relevance to real-world experiences so that students can compete for jobs in a national and international economy.

Providing expanded learning opportunities consistent with the new economy is a “works in progress” and continuous school improvement is an integral part of that process.

The implementation of a K-12 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Education program, which is recognized as a means to increase student achievement and build a stronger workforce in the technical fields, began in the 2010-2011 school year and is continuing during the 2011-2012 school term at Norwin School District. There is a nationwide effort to develop STEM education networks in states and regions; therefore, the School District must engage the community to raise the profile of STEM and create partnerships across government, industry, education, and institutions of higher learning to promote STEM studies and careers.

Further, learning opportunities will be expanded through the District's Center for 21st Century Learners, which uses on-line curriculum to individualize educational plans that empower each student to succeed by blending virtual courses and traditional classroom learning. Interactive and engaging experiences for students through on-line courses will be provided to meet the individual needs of students through flexibility in scheduling, a variety of course content, and regular feedback from highly effective teachers. The School District continues to enhance secondary education honors classes, electives, world languages, College in High School, dual enrollment, and advanced placement courses to better prepare our students for success in the future.

All students, as life-long learners, need to acquire strong academics and sophisticated technical and problem-solving skills to thrive in a highly competitive world. Preparing students for the future requires 21st Century learning environments which engage learners through innovative technologies and encourage collaboration, creativity, and communication.

Effective communication, including open dialogue among key stakeholders, is pivotal to improving the quality of education for preparing the next generation of learners for college, post-secondary education / training and employment.

The Norwin Campus of the future:

- will be a place where students are presented with increased educational opportunities in mathematics, science and technology, dual enrollment, on-line learning, internships, job shadowing, apprenticeships, and work-study programs.

- will include small learning communities within the school to support advanced technologies for the development of functional skills such as team-building, problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking, and collaboration across disciplines.
- will resemble the workplace and connect to real-world experiences through the integration of academics, career education, and technology. Students will have the opportunity to follow a college or career pathway that offers traditional or technical academics, based on their individual curriculum choices.

The greater community is encouraged to embrace the concept of the “Three R’s of Education”: Ready to Learn, Ready for College, and Ready for Work. Preparing high school graduates to be responsible and productive young citizens with the knowledge and skills to succeed in college and the workplace will help grow and sustain the regional economy with a highly skilled workforce.

The Norwin School District is committed to enhancing the workforce development of the greater community and region. During the 2010-2011 school term, the Superintendent of Schools convened a forum of educators to participate in a series of roundtable discussions that will connect education and business / industry representatives. Beginning with the 2011-2012 school term, guidance counselors will join the roundtable to promote an “Educator in the Workplace” initiative.

The priority goal is to develop a strategy to enhance workforce development through collaboration with educators, employers, government, and other members of the community as key stakeholders. Fostering business education partnerships for open dialogue will provide a focus on the future, develop meaningful partnerships, and create an action plan to fulfill the mission and priority goal for developing and sustaining workforce excellence.