

## Spotlight Strategy: Strengthen Relationships with Education Partners

### *Forbes Road Career and Technology Center*

At Forbes Road Career and Technology Center (Forbes Road), the leadership team knows the importance of developing strong partnerships with the sending schools. Through these connections, Forbes Road is able to “spread the CTE (career and technical education) gospel” so that stakeholders realize CTE provides students with meaningful and rigorous learning experiences.

To strengthen these connections and to increase awareness of what Forbes Road students accomplish in the classroom, the leadership team began a pilot program in the 2009-2010 school year through which counselors, transition coordinators, special education instructors, academic instructors and special education coordinators from the sending schools were invited to participate in a day-long program at Forbes Road. During these “Discovery Days” programs, which were held three times during the school year, participants tour the building, sit in on classroom lessons, converse with instructors and participate in lessons. They observe first-hand the type of rigorous and engaging learning activities Forbes Road students participate in on a daily basis, which may improve their understanding of and appreciation for CTE. They also have the opportunity to ask questions of instructors and administrators to gain greater insight into the CTE programs and the curricula. Approximately 15 participants attend each “Discovery Day.”

According to the leadership team, before the implementation of “Discovery Days,” faculty from the sending schools did not pay as much attention to the learning taking place at Forbes Road. However, after spending a day interacting with faculty and students, “Discovery Days” participants walk away with a new impression of what CTE is all about at Forbes Road. The leadership team received positive feedback from participants about the value of the program in educating them about CTE and about the expectations held of Forbes Road students.

Due to the success of “Discovery Days” during the program’s pilot year, the leadership team plans on hosting the program one day a month during each school year. The leadership team stressed that the program provides an inexpensive and relatively easy way to promote the benefits of CTE at Forbes Road and to strengthen the connection and communication with sending schools.

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Forbes Road Career and Technology Center is located in Monroeville, Pennsylvania. As a part-time career and technology center, it enrolls approximately 800 students in grades 9 through 12 and provides 17 career and technical education programs. Forbes Road serves nine school districts. It offers a full-time youth apprenticeship program in which seniors, as well as some juniors, may participate.