

Spotlight Strategy: Deliver Personalized Student Support and Guidance

Bedford County Technical Center

At Bedford County Technical Center (BCTC), the leadership team and faculty value the importance of “making parents/guardians partners in their child’s education” so that students experience success. To encourage parent collaboration and to improve communication among the technical center, the students and parents, the leadership team decided to pilot two career guidance programs: New Student and Parent Orientation program and Career Counseling Sessions. These programs are key components of a “comprehensive career planning process” that emphasizes strong parental involvement. They are designed to help each student create an individual Career Action Plan based on his or her interests and strengths and with strong parent and instructor input.

To improve the communication and relationship among the technical center, students and parents, the leadership team first looked at BCTC’s overall student services and career counseling services to determine where improvements could be made. It realized that the type and amount of program information presented to parents and students varied greatly across career and technical education programs. To bring more consistency across programs and to encourage parents to be involved in their child's education, the leadership team created a standardized program guide template for each instructor to use. Instructors developed these new student and parent orientation guides which describe the key expectations in each career and technical education program. The guides include the following information:

- Course curriculum;
- Required tools and materials;
- Grading system and
- Post-graduation opportunities in the trade area.

The guides will be distributed at a parent orientation session to be held prior to the 2010-2011 school year. During the orientation session, parents will have the opportunity to tour programs, observe the tools and materials students will use, and ask questions of the instructors. The leadership team expects the orientation program to serve as a catalyst in opening the lines of communication with parents.

To sustain communication with parents and further encourage their involvement in their child's learning success, the leadership team is piloting an individual, student focused, career counseling session attended by the student, the parent/guardian and the instructor. (This program is based on a program developed by Dr. Susan Mamett, a counselor at Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School.) These sessions will be conducted for every tenth grade student. During these sessions, participants will discuss student performance, learning and career goals for the student, and the postsecondary options based on these two factors. After the session is completed, the career counselor will use the information discussed to help develop an individualized Career Action Plan for the student.

Administrative Director David DiPasquale highlighted two factors as the keys to the success of the counseling sessions. First, instructors must be effective facilitators so that the goals of the meeting are met. To help develop facilitation skills among faculty, the career counselor and Mr. DiPasquale will provide training to instructors. The other key to success is to make sure the Career Action Plan is fully reflective of the information gathered and discussed during the meeting and is flexible enough to change as needed based on the student's and parent's goals.

Contact Information:

Bedford County Technical Center

195 Pennknoll Road

Everett, PA 15537

Ph: 814.623.2760

Website: www.bedfordctc.org

Mr. David DiPasquale, Administrative Director

Email: ddipasquale@bedfordctc.org

Bedford County Technical Center (BCTC) is located in Everett, Pennsylvania, As a part-time career and technical center, it enrolls approximately 300 students in grades 10 through 12 and provides seven career and technical education programs. In 2009-2010, it served 500 adult education students. BCTC serves six school districts.