

CTE

THE MACOMB DAILY • MAKING THE CONNECTION

CAREER • TECHNICAL • EDUCATION



THURSDAY, MAY 26, 2005 / PAGE 18A

Duke Mulaj from Lutz School has maintenance responsibilities that help keep the Mount Clemens Ice Arena spruced up for visitors. One of his jobs on this day was to remove stickers from the benches that had been used to designate seating for a recent ice show.



Lutz student Maria Augustine assembles bag lunches for Meals on Wheels in the Martha T. Berry Kitchen in Clinton Township.

ON THE JOB

MISD makes special connections for students with special needs

Peter unpacks and tags clothes for a retail store. Courtney fills vases at a flower shop. Mike works at a school for students with disabilities. Thomas stocks shelves at a food market. Like their high school peers across the county, these students are learning skills that will help prepare them to join the workforce. However, what makes their job preparation different from other career training programs is that these students are in special education schools operated by the Macomb Intermediate School District.

Students in the MISD's programs at Lutz School for Work Experience and Neil Reid High School are placed into work environments best suited to the interests and abilities of the individual student. The greater the care taken aligning those connections, the more likely the success for these students with special needs.



Ryan Cox, above, works on a muffler in Neil Reid's Auto Tech Class. Adam Wall, below, applies what he learned about engines in class while working on site at Chesterfield Engines. This is a good example of how Neil Reid High School prepares students through classroom instruction, and then places them in community settings for real world work experience that can lead to careers.

Making life-long connections

Lutz School transitions students from school to work. Lutz School for Work Experience prepares young adults ages 18 to 26 with cognitive impairments to make the transition from school to work and community living. Training programs teach students the tasks needed for a variety of jobs, including custodial maintenance, fast foods, food prep, grounds and garden, hospital housekeeping, laundry, production and assembly, and greenhouse. What they learn in school is applied at job training sites throughout the community. Lutz School collaborates with about 50 local entities, including businesses, service organizations, churches, restaurants, nursing homes and recreation centers, to provide real world work experiences for students. Students also learn how to prepare for the workday — getting dressed, being on time and being ready to work. They also learn what a worker does —



staying on task, following the structure of the workday, building relationships and resolving conflicts with co-workers. Assistance to students at school and at the training site

varies. Some students need someone to be close at hand to offer guidance. Others are able to work with little supervision. When students are ready to get a job they can enter the

world of work in a number of ways. If the student has an idea of what he or she wants to do, Lutz staff work with the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth to find just

the right job. MDLEG also provides the student with training and transportation needs. If the student is ready to work but doesn't have a specific job in mind, MDLEG will conduct a work evaluation, providing an opportunity to try out several different types of jobs to see what the student likes and is able to do. Once the field is narrowed, MDLEG looks for a specific job for the student. Regardless of the way students enter the world of work, Lutz staff and MDLEG assist with helping students and families establish the long-term connections with community service agencies that will provide assistance to the student for the rest of their adult life.

Students connect to work step-by-step

Neil Reid students connect academics to career opportunities. The Neil Reid High School program approaches work training in a way that moves students progressively toward

Next Week's CTE Page will feature Lakeview High School

less supervision and greater independence. In the Pre-employment Program, high school students get hands-on work experience while learning work-related academics. PEP has been in place since 1981. Currently 40 to 50 businesses countywide provide job-training opportunities for students. Students "apply" for a job from 20 possible placements. Once they land a job, they spend 2 1/2 hours of their day at the job site for 15 weeks. They're visited daily by school staff, who help them solve both work and personal challenges. They concentrate heavily on how to cope appropriately with the social aspects of work: carrying on a conversation, fitting in and getting along with coworkers. This is critical to Neil Reid students who have emotional impairments that make it harder for them to cope in groups. From introductory PEP classes, students might then move on to a more intense vocational work experience, refining skills in areas of greatest student interest and aptitude. Evaluation by school staff is weekly, rather than daily, giving students greater independence. After these phases, a student can participate in a work-study program. While the school provides PEP and vocational training opportunities, the student can find his or her own job for work-study. Once the school has approved the placement, the student receives school credit for hours at the work site. At this stage, the student is totally independent, with the employer providing all direction and work evaluations. School staff members say these experiences are immensely valuable because they let students try their wings step-by-step in a safe environment with lots of support from school staff and employers. Students are able to be successful in ways other than in academics.

M A K I N G T H E

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For more information about CTE or to share your thoughts about the "Making the Connection" series, contact Karen Johnston at 586/228-3469 or email kjohnston@misd.net

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