Career and Technical Education Advisor

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Top Legal Cases

USE OF FORCE

Due process: An Appeals Court put the brakes on the claim of a mother of a 14-year-old who alleged that when a Georgia teacher grabbed her son by the back of the neck to prevent him from leaving the classroom, she violated his rights. The court found the nontraditional method permissible. **Page 11**

FMLA

Eligibility: A District Court allowed a teacher to proceed with her Family and Medical Leave Act claim against a school board after it denied her request for time off to recover from a serious illness. The district claimed the teacher had not worked enough hours in the past year to qualify for the additional time. **Page 11**

TITLE VII

Harassment: An Appeals Court reinstated a former technology instructor's gender discrimination claim, finding that a trial was necessary to determine whether the school district took appropriate remedial action to put a stop to a coworker's sexual harassment. **Page 12**

Cover Story

Not your parents' robots: Preparing students for today's workplace

Robots of all shapes and sizes are becoming a staple in workplaces across the country, tackling tasks from assembly to inspection. These machines can attach car doors or attend to the most minute tasks. Because robots are becoming ubiquitous, employers will expect your students to have a comprehensive grasp of how to operate them efficiently. That may seem like an insurmountable problem for cash-strapped CTE programs, because large-scale robots are pricey. But you can give your students all of the expertise they need — and employers expect — using smaller, affordable robots. *Career and Technical Education Advisor* sat down with two experts to find out how you can create a meaningful robotics program on the cheap. **Full story, page 3.**

Learn more

Find additional resources for robotics programming. **See page 3.**

Highlights

Health academy's strong partnerships bolster learning

A Michigan career academy has combined rigorous academics with clinical rotations in an effort to "grow" health care workers for the community. **Page 4**

NGA officials look for ways to add CTE into HS reform

The National Governors Association said that without career education, the value of a high school diploma will fall. Learn what the group told parents and policymakers to gain support for career education in high school reform. **Page 5**

Embedded math could change face of CTE

New research confirms student gains when CTE instructors emphasize math embedded in their content-area curriculum. Find powerful strategies for accomplishing academic integration and Perkins compliance. **Page 6**

Make relevant writing assignments a CTE staple

Students need to be able to compose polished, professional documents. You can get them ready with assignments that mirror their future responsibilities. **Page 7**

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Health careers academy's strong partnerships bolster learning

Imagine giving your students the opportunity to spend weeks immersed in the day-to-day details of their chosen profession, with rigorous coursework that ties together their field experiences and academics. At one health occupations academy, instructors are no longer simply imagining this scenario; they have made it a reality.

The Professional Health Careers Academy, a collaborative effort of Berrien County (Mich.) Intermediate School District, Niles (Mich.) Community Schools, Benton Harbor (Mich.) Area Schools, and Lake Michigan College, takes students beyond a cursory glimpse at health care. Instead, the program, which thrives because of a close partnership with Lakeland Regional Health Care System, starts preparing high school juniors and seniors for the rigors of the field, with clinical rotations in several therapeutic settings and coursework that will be the foundation of their technical training.

"When they leave, they have a tremendous idea of what it takes to be successful in the profession," said Paul Bergan, CTE director for Berrien County Intermediate School District.

The program, which allows students to earn 13.5 college credits, has been so successful that it has earned the Michigan Association of School Boards' Education Excellence Award and the state's Excellence in Practice Award. It has also been replicated inside and outside of Michigan.

How PHCA works

At PHCA, students visit seven clinical sites for three weeks each. Each student's sites are based on his interests and encompass a multitude of areas, including surgery, veterinary science, dentistry, dermatology, research, podiatry, sports medicine and ophthalmology. The students spend a week between sites learning new skills in preparation for the next rotation.

Bergan emphasized that the students aren't simply passive observers. Supervisors oversee students' work with patients as well as their execution of professional tasks, he said. It is this hands-on experience that allows students to decide which setting suits them best.

Students spend half the day taking regular classes and the other half participating in the academy. In addition to clinical rotations, PHCA requires that students take both technical and academic classes — for example, human anatomy, medical terminology, first aid, interdisciplinary cross-practices, and holistic health care.

One of the biggest factors in PHCA's success is its partnership with Lakeland. The health care system was concerned about the shortage of health care professionals and approached the school district about setting up a program to "grow" some of its own workers. Lakeland recently hired its first employees — registered nurses — from the initial PHCA class. The regional health care system likely can expect to see more familiar faces soon. Bergan noted a survey showed 97 percent of PHCA graduates are pursuing postsecondary education for health sciences.

Key points

- Build effective academies by fostering strong partnerships.
- Look for areas of need in workforce.
- Provide ample time in work settings. ■

Making it work for you

Here are some tips from Bergan for making a program similar to PHCA a reality for your students:

■ **Find the right partners.** Lakeland has been instrumental to PHCA's success by providing access to heath care facilities and clinical site supervisors with expertise. Students get the opportunity to work beside professionals and handle cutting-edge equipment that is out of reach to a school district. Once PHCA partnered with Lakeland, it also began working with Lake Michigan College, Western Michigan University, and Berrien County PA56 Career and Technical Consortium.

To find your ideal partners, consider which organizations might benefit from collaboration.

■ **Make it competitive.** PHCA takes about 48 students per year, and its waiting list is long. Eligible students must have a 3.0 GPA, with a B or better in biology; fill out applications; meet with a panel of interviewers; provide letters of reference; and pass community college entrance exams. High interest for such few slots ensures that the students selected to participate are top-notch.

For more information, e-mail Paul Bergan at pbergan@remc11.k12.mi.us. ■

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