

Developing the Soft and Hard Skills for 21st Century Success

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The Problem

Hamblen County (Morristown, Tennessee) is located in the foothills of Appalachia. The community of 64,000 has a strong industrial base with more than 100 advanced manufacturers using robotics in production, seven (7) Fortune 500 Companies, and 14 international companies. This community serves as an employment hub for a region of more than 300,000 workers. Providing a prepared and career-ready workforce is critical to the economic welfare of the business and industry, the community, and educational institutions. Business and industry expressed dissatisfaction with the pool of qualified applicants with more than 1000 jobs available each day in the community.

Partnerships

Walters State Community College (TN) and Tennessee College of Applied Technology at Morristown (TN) serve a ten-county region in mid-east Tennessee. With three local school districts (Hamblen, Hawkins, and Grainger), a partnership was formed to strengthen linkages in the region and address the career and postsecondary readiness of students.

Roundtable-Focus Group

The educational partners invited stakeholders to share their perspectives of the most critical needs for employee readiness and retention. Roundtable participants included:

- Industry and business leaders
- Local and state government leaders
- Chamber of Commerce
- City and County Mayors
- State Economic Development Council
- Industrial Board
- Workforce (WIOA)
- Walters State Community College (TN)
- Tennessee College of Applied Technology (Morristown, TN)
- School Systems Leaders

Needs Identified by Industry and Business

Primary Need:

- Soft-skills that include drug and substance free

Secondary Needs:

- Understanding of job opportunities available and the skills needed

- Basic knowledge of the 21st century workplace
- Basic technical skills and tool knowledge

Results-A Community Works Together

Soft Skills Training

- ✓ All 8th grade students receive soft skills training, US Department of Labor program Soft Skills to Pay the Bills-Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success

Mirrored Programs

- ✓ All high schools added a three (3)-course sequence in Industrial Electricity teaching the Tennessee College of Applied Technology's curriculum and the same equipment. Robotics was added to the Advanced Machining courses of all high schools.

Early Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSOs)

- ✓ Dual enrollment with the community college and technical college
- ✓ Dual credit with the technical college
- ✓ Industry certifications
- ✓ ACT National Career Readiness Certificates

Internships

- ✓ Paid summer and school-year internships in advanced manufacturing workplaces

Externships

- ✓ Paid summer externships for science and mathematics teachers, school counselors, and Career and Technical Education teachers in advanced manufacturing worksites.

Tours

- ✓ All junior and senior students are invited to school day tours of advanced manufacturing workplaces, the technical college, and technical programs in the community college.

Work Ethic Diploma

- ✓ The Work Ethic Diploma is a distinction added to a regular high school diploma developed from the soft and technical skills identified from industry and business leaders.

Standards of the Work Ethic Diploma

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| *Attendance , Absence, and Tardiness | *Career and Technical Student |
| *Discipline | Organization Competitions |
| *Grade-point-average | *Enrollment in Tennessee Promise |
| *Substance Free (<i>determined by voluntary drug testing</i>) | *College Credit |
| *Career and Technical Education Coursework | *Industry certification |
| | *ACT National Career Readiness |
| | *Industry Awareness |



Tennessee

Work Ethic Diploma Standards



- 1. Attendance Standard**
 - (1 pt.) Student has no more than 5 absences from school during the senior year.
 - (2 pts.) Student has no more than 3 absences from school during the senior year.
 - (3 pts.) Student has no more than 1 absence from school during the senior year.
- 2. Absence Standard**
 - (1 pt.) Student has no more than one unexcused absence from school during the senior year.
 - (2 pts.) Student has no unexcused absences from school during the senior year.
- 3. Tardiness Standard**
 - (1 pt.) Student has no more than two unexcused tardies to school during the senior year.
 - (2 pts.) Student has no more than one unexcused tardy to school during the senior year.
- 4. Discipline Standard**
 - (1 pt.) Student has no more than one discipline referral during the senior year.
 - (2 pts.) Student has no discipline referrals during the senior year.
- 5. Overall Grade Point Average Standard**
 - (1 pt.) Student has an overall GPA of 2.0 to 2.9
 - (2 pts.) Student has an overall GPA of 3.0 to 3.4
 - (3 pts.) Student has an overall GPA of 3.5 or above
- 6. Drug Free Standard**
 - (5 pts.) Student voluntarily presents written proof as being drug free.
- 7. CTE Coursework Standard**
 - (1 pt.) Student has successfully completed at least one CTE course by the end of the senior year.
 - (2 pts.) Student has successfully completed two CTE courses by the end of the senior year.
 - (3 pts.) Student has successfully completed three or more CTE courses by the end of the senior year.
- 8. CTE Competition Standard**
 - (1 pt.) Student has competed in an approved regional level CTE competition during the senior year.
 - (2 pts.) Student has competed in an approved state level CTE competition during the senior year.
 - (3 pts.) Student has competed in an approved national level CTE competition during the senior year.
- 9. TN Promise Standard**
 - (2 pts.) Student is in good standing with TN Promise and has completed the required 8 hours of community service.
- 10. Dual Enrollment/Credit Standard**
 - (2 pts.) Student has successfully completed a Dual Enrollment, Dual Credit, or Advanced Placement course and has been granted credit by any post-secondary institution during or before the senior year.
- 11. Industry Certification Standard**
 - (2 pts.) Student has received a national industry certification during or before the senior year. (i.e., Snap-on Metering Certificate, NCCER Certificate, etc.)
- 12. Enrollment in Post-Secondary Standard**
 - (2 pts.) Student is registered or has applied at a post-secondary institution for the fall of the graduating year.
- 13. Career Readiness Certificate Standard**
 - (2 pts.) Student has achieved a Bronze Level Career Readiness Certificate.
 - (4 pts.) Student has achieved a Silver Level Career Readiness Certificate.
 - (6 pts.) Student has achieved a Gold or Platinum Level Career Readiness Certificate.
- 14. Industry Awareness Standard**
 - (1 pt.) Student has participated in one industry awareness event during the senior year.
 - (2 pts.) Student has participated in more than one industry awareness event during the senior year.
 - (3 pts.) Student has participated in an internship or work based learning activity.

To receive the Work Ethic Diploma distinction a student must earn a minimum of 20 points and a regular high school diploma

Benefits to Students

- The program is designed for ALL students regardless of career choice.
- Students see the nexus between academics, soft skills, and employability.
- Students receive special recognition at graduation and receive a Tennessee Distinction Diploma if they have earned a national industrial certification.
- Students are able to see the opportunities available in industrial manufacturing and observe the modern workplace.
- Students understanding of available careers is expanded and careers available through a two-year degree is enhanced.
- Over 40 local employers guarantee an interview to any recipient of a Work Ethic Diploma if the candidate meets the other posting qualifications. Whether an entry-level line position, chemist, engineer, accountant, nursing assistant, registered nurse, or pharmacist, the candidate with a Work Ethic Diploma is guaranteed an interview.

Other Adopters

Communities across Tennessee have adopted the Work Ethic Diploma as a centerpiece of workforce development efforts.

Companies Supporting the Work Ethic Diploma Initiative

Earning a Work Ethic Diploma and meeting the job-related qualifications will guarantee an interview with participating companies!

