

PORTER COUNTY CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

A Division of Porter County Educational Services

ANNUAL REPORT 2008

An Accountability Report to the Public

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FEATURED PROGRAMS



SOMETIMES THEY THINK I AM HARD ON THEM

"If you don't have the training, you aren't going anywhere," Fred Crowe flatly stated.

"Sometimes they think I am hard on them, but they need to be prepared." After 31 years in maintenance at US Steel's Gary Works, Mr. Crowe is in his second year as teacher in **Diesel Technology** located at Portage High School. In his morning class of 18 students, he has students from Chesterton, Morgan Township, Portage, Boone Grove, Hebron, and Hobart High Schools. "The class gives the kids a good background in diesel mechanics," he said. "Sometimes we work on trucks and sometimes it is farm tractors." First year students learn how to disassemble and re-assemble an engine; repair electrical and hydraulic problems; and use equipment for welding and burning. In the second year, students rebuild a drivetrain; learn to maintain air brakes; and repair suspensions. Last year, the class put a sleeper on a truck cab. "Some of the kids I get have had difficulty with book work," Mr. Crowe said. "They find success here." He went on to explain that maintenance work is often steadier work than production work. "The kids are great," he said. "We use a lot of English and math in here. I try to help them so they are successful in their other classes as well." Darren Grieger

and Brandon Sands are friends from Morgan Township High School (MTHS). Both are in Mr. Crowe's Diesel Tech class. They are proud that they re-assembled their diesel engine in about 5-6 weeks. "I liked working on engines before I took this class," said Brandon. "It sounded cool and I like it a lot." Josh Goldstine, another MTHS student, inherited his interest in diesel engines. "Both my grandpa and my dad are mechanics," his said. "I want to continue the tradition." Paul Hill from Hobart High School summed up the feelings of many of the students. "This class is a lot better than sitting behind a desk."



SEEING THE BUILDING GOING UP

There's snow on the ground and it is cold, but the house is still going up thanks in part to the 16 students in Marty Navarro's morning **Construction Technology** class based at Portage High School. "We got a late start this year due to getting building approvals," explained Mr. Navarro, who is in his third year as a PCCTE Construction Tech teacher. "But, the kids got us back on schedule by working hard." For second year Construction Tech student Diandre Green (Portage, Sr.), this is the future. "When I see the building

going up, I think 'This is what I want to do (with my life)'," he said emphatically. He met Chris Simmons (Portage, Sr.) in Construction Tech, and they both are on track for success. Diandre is looking forward to an apprenticeship while Chris thinks he will go to Ball State for a couple of years to get better at reading floor plans. They both agree that the #1 thing that they have learned in Construction Tech is patience. "Patience is the first thing," said Diandre, "but you really have to know math and how to use a tape measure." "You have to be quick with fractions," added Chris, "and stay away from drugs." Both students are part of a majority of the class who take their work seriously. After all, they are part of the construction team that is developing a whole subdivision of houses. Mr. Navarro loves working with both his classes after working construction and having his own construction company for twenty years. He was also accepted into the Valparaiso University Law School, but still chose to be a PCCTE teacher. "I love it," he exclaimed. "We impact people! We help people. When I explain to the students how to use the Pythagorean Theorem on the house and they say, 'So that's what it's for', it makes it perfect for me."

**The Porter County
Career & Technical Education
ANNUAL REPORT**

is a yearly communication tool to
area businesses and to the taxpayers.
We welcome comments and
questions about this report.

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Valparaiso
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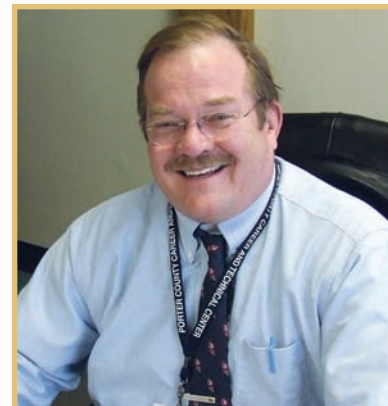
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DIRECTOR'S REPORT

*"Choose your career not on the
basis of what you know,
but on the basis of who you are."*

– Anonymous



Today, our community's economic success depends directly upon how our children reach a new level of literacy and develop high level skills. Literacy today is defined as strong academic preparation associated with skills in reasoning, teamwork, communication, and proficiency in using technology. We need to provide opportunities here for our Porter County graduates to become highly literate and skilled so that they may stay in our community to live, work, and learn.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) has always been linked to the evolving economy and the increased demands on the workforce. In Porter County, we are proud that our CTE programs are acknowledged as among the best in the state. In the past ten years, student participation has increased substantially, growing from 690 to 950 students from 10 high schools taught by 35 instructors in 12 different locations. Our county high schools do a wonderful job of preparing students with a good general education. Our CTE programs complement general education opportunities by providing these students with the means to go even deeper in their preparation for life after high school. Porter County residents are very fortunate to have outstanding schools and educational leadership.

I am frequently asked, "What can Porter County businesses do to help the young people of our community?" There are several things that businesses can do:

1. Share the career options available in your organization with our students.
2. Make job-shadowing and internship experiences available to our students.
3. **Hire our high school graduates for meaningful employment!**
4. Allow your young employees to have flexible work schedules so they can continue their education at one of our superb regional colleges.
5. Contribute to college and technical school scholarship programs.
6. Encourage students to attend regional campuses. These are less expensive and keep our best and brightest living and working in our community.
7. Encourage life-long learning with educational reimbursement programs for your employees.

Today's students are serious and justifiably concerned about their futures. College entrance requirements are demanding, and the cost of post-secondary education is frightening. An early career selection may help reduce college costs. It shortens the time to complete college, decreases college debt, and hastens the time for a student to become a successful income generator. CTE can help students make earlier career choices by investigating occupations and providing a basis for setting career related goals.

Today's youth are the future of our community. PCCTE remains committed to helping build our county through shaping our youth.

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STRIVING TO BE THE BEST

PCCTE teachers annually nominate their top students for consideration in the Indiana Awards for Excellence program. A local advisory board along with PCCTE Director Jon Groth reviews these nominations and selects the very best students to represent the PCCTE in the state competition.

Congratulations to the following Award for Excellence nominees.



Megan Graykowski is a Valparaiso High School (VHS) senior in Bob Phelps' **Video Production & Media Studies** class. She has done outstanding work for two years in Video Production as evidenced by her music video being nominated for best music video in state competition. Even though Megan is excellent in her vocational class, she thinks her career will take a different direction. "I always liked technology and I have had the chance to work with editing and production," Megan said. "I think it will become more of a hobby, and I will go into something in the medical line like emergency room nursing." Mr. Phelps believes that she is the ideal student, who will turn into a great employee. "She is independent and sees how she can work on her own," Mr. Phelps observed. "She is here, punctual, respectful, and makes those around her better." Megan enjoyed being treated more as an adult in class. "It is up to you whether you pass or fail," she said. "I do not regret taking this class. I am glad it helped me realize now that perhaps I wanted to go into a different career. It taught me a great deal of responsibility and the confidence to figure things out for myself."

Mr. Jarvis, the Computer Assisted Design (CAD) teacher at Hobart High School (HHS), recom-

mended to **Andre Ford** that he go into **CAD** at the Porter County Career Center (PCCC) after taking classes at HHS. "I really love it," said Andre. "This is more college based and more difficult (than my high school class)." He is learning to become a graphic designer and has done so well that he earned a job interview for an internship at Gortrac in Washington Township.



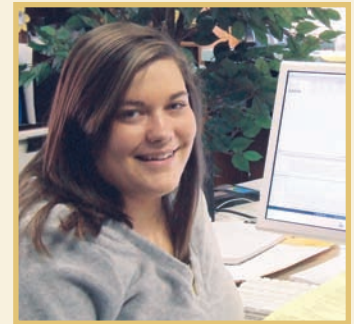
Andre is an honor roll student who is on the football team at HHS and Team LEAD, an anti-bullying program which uses good high school role models to talk to elementary and middle school students. "I would tell others to come here (PCCC) to **work**," he said thoughtfully. "This stuff is hard and you have to get things done first if you want to have some time to play later. This class has taught me to schedule my jobs and prioritize tasks. Mr. (Bill) Guinee knows so much but he does not overwhelm you with it." PCCTE Director Jon Groth has high praise for Andre. "Andre is mature, self-reliant, a student leader, and a heck of a lot of fun," said Mr. Groth.

Four years of math, science, and volleyball in high school are beginning to have an effect on **Ashley Thompson's** ideas about her career. As a senior at Portage High School (PHS), she is in Rhonda Doane's **Dental Health** class. "I really do not

know what I want to do yet," said Ashley, "but I will probably be an orthopedic surgeon or a dentist." "Sports is a huge part of my life," Ashley acknowledges, which is where she got the idea of being an orthopedic surgeon. She is in line for some scholarship offers for several colleges because of her ability in volleyball, but her current schedule does not leave much time for hobbies. "Besides studying and practices, I go from 7 am to 9 pm and then call it a typical day for a student athlete," she laughed. "I have learned to manage my time." She is focused on getting A's and B's ("I try not to have B's") and is excited by the hands-on clinical experience she will get in the second semester in a dentist's office. "This class has been a huge help to me," Ashley said.



"It changes your whole outlook on your career. You find that you can do so much more than you know. It gives you an edge over others." She has no idea why she was nominated for an Award of Excellence ("It beats me!"), but Mrs. Doane knows. "She is conscientious, hard working, and helps others," said Mrs. Doane. "She is like the 'class mom' taking care of everybody's needs."



Chesterton High School (CHS) senior **Tristen Comegys** wants to work in television "in a big city", but she will be happy to work in television wherever she can. That is the reason that she is currently taking **Video Production & Media Studies**. She is already accepted at Ball State University into telecommunications and political science for next year. "You need to know about all aspects of the business in the future," said Tristen. "There is a lot of convergence of jobs and areas in Internet and television. I will probably have to keep going back to school to keep up-to-date. I want to be well-rounded in all areas of media work." She wants to be a news director, who will make decisions on what is reported. She has been a member of the highly successful CHS Debate Team, which will compete for top state honors for the second time in two years in February. She has done volunteer work at Chesterton Montessori School and was named the Assistant Park Director at Lakeland Park in Burns Harbor even though she was only 17 years old. "I do not think that I am any better than anyone else," she explained. "However, I am determined to get the job done to the best of my ability." She credits her parents for supporting her in her career aspirations. "The opportunities are there," she advised younger students. "In (PCCTE classes), you can be anybody you are striving to be."

SUCCESS STORIES

The articles below represent just a few of the hundreds of successful graduates from PCCTE.
Please read and enjoy the success our graduates are having.



Realizing Her Dream

By any measure, **Sarah Garcia** is a unique individual. The 2007 Hebron High School graduate is a sophomore at Valparaiso University (VU), her top college choice. "I chose to come to VU because of its great nursing program," said Sarah. "Everyone was telling me that Valpo was out of my league . . . but Mr. Bailey (Hebron biology and chemistry teacher) encouraged me to follow my dreams." Admittedly, she was "never ever" good at math, but she was determined to "follow my dreams" because she knew success would follow. She worked hard and prepared herself for her chosen field by taking PCCTE's Health Occupations class taught by Marion Dick. She was able to become a Certified Nurse's Assistant in Indiana by taking the class. Sarah's drive and determination has resulted in her being second in her family to graduate from high school; being first in her family to attend college; being inducted into Alpha Lambda Delta, the national freshman honor society; and being selected this fall as VU's representative for the **Realizing the Dream Award**. The award was sponsored by the Independent Colleges of Indiana. Her involvement at VU includes being a representative on the College of Nursing's Faculty Concerns Committee and being active in the Student Mentoring And Retention Team Scholars Program, where she mentors incoming students to VU. "(PCCTE's) Health Occupations (class) solidified what I wanted to do in my mind," Sarah explained. "When we did clinicals (where students from class work in actual medical offices), I knew this was for me. I cannot imagine doing anything else." She thought that college might be intimidating until she found out that "the professors were there to help me". She has gone from being an average high school student to getting all A's in college. Sarah Garcia is a unique individual, and her parents are extremely proud.

Being Flexible

His sweatshirt says "Lapis Construction", but that is only part of **Jake Lapis'** story. Jake is a 2003 graduate of Valparaiso High School and PCCTE. During high school, Jake owned his own lawn care business, employing many of his friends. "I learned a lot from having my own business from 16 to 20 years old," said Jake. "I learned to manage payroll and taxes and how to deal with people. Looking back, I am thankful for how hard my friends worked for the business."

Jake chose to go into the two-year PCCTE Construction Technology class taught by Brian Doane. Jake's dad owned duplexes and liked to remodel them, so the Construction Tech class was immediately practical for him. "Construction Tech was a great class to learn in," he said. "Mr. Doane made it fun and pointed us toward a career." Jake started his own construction company at age 19 and does residential re-modeling work in Porter and LaPorte Counties. However, he did not rely on only his company to earn a living. Jake got the training to become a locomotive engineer for Arcelor-Mittal Steel. He has advice for students thinking about taking PCCTE classes. **"Don't just concentrate on swinging a hammer,"** he advises. "Further your education. Take classes that give you options." As an employer, Jake is looking for the following: "#1 – Show up for work and dedicate yourself to your job. If you want to be on your own, you can't still be taken care of by Mom. #2 – Get the knowledge to do the job right. #3 – Get your head on straight. In construction, you need to worry about safety. You can't be silly." Jake has opened the doors for many options in his career, starting with the door to a PCCTE class.



Opening My Eyes

After **Katie Kawiecki**, 1999 Portage graduate took the PCCTE Law Enforcement class at Wheeler High School; she knew that she wanted to be in federal law enforcement at some level. In high school, she was a varsity softball player and also played a couple of years of volleyball. Now, she is one of four deputy prosecutors in Indianapolis handling class D felony level cases. Her case load ranges from fraud to theft to escape to failure to register as a sex offender. She has also worked in family law and consumer law. She received her Bachelor of Science in Criminal Law Enforcement from Tri-State University and her law degree from Valparaiso University. "I was really well set up for my work from my (PCCTE) Law Enforcement class," said Katie. "It really opened my eyes to the range of law enforcement opportunities." The hands-on experience in the class, like lifting fingerprints and working with canine units, helped her sort out what she wanted to do in her career. "It grabbed my attention and put me ahead of others in college who did not have the PCCTE experience," she said. Her advice for students thinking of taking a PCCTE class is "prepare for your future. **It is never too early or too late to think about your future.** If you love a particular area, go after it." If she had not chosen to take Law Enforcement in high school, she believes that college would have been more difficult for her and her transition from high school to college would not have been as smooth. However, now she is "happy with getting paid to do what I like to do". Her final piece of advice for students thinking about PCCTE classes is, "Students who have not had the opportunity for PCCTE courses do not know what they are missing".