



**SHARE YOUR STORY  
EQUITY AND ACCESS FOR HIGH QUALITY CAREER PATHWAYS**

**Oklahoma State Department of Education New Skills for Youth Academic Affairs and Planning**

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| <p><b>Best Practice</b><br/>Comprehensive career discovery opportunities for 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students for all students in Pontotoc County. Started with 8<sup>th</sup> grade component in 2011-2012 school year and have added a grade every year since. Thus, last year's 8<sup>th</sup> graders were the first to have completed all five years in the program.</p>   |
| <p><b>Purpose</b><br/>Career Sampling/Career Action Plan. This program seeks to close the gap that exists between K-12 education programs and the need businesses have for an educated workforce. High school counselors have a lack of time and training to help students explore or connect with future careers and educational requirements needed. Thus, the community must be part of the solution by partnering with the schools to achieve our goal of better preparing our students for their future.</p>  |
| <p><b>Grade Level(s)</b><br/>8<sup>th</sup> grade – Students attend a one day session and hear presentations by 3 speakers from their top career interest areas as well as attend a session on soft skills.<br/>9<sup>th</sup> grade – Students attend a day long hands-on session in their top career interest area such as participating in a mock trial, building robots, or operating heavy machinery.<br/>10<sup>th</sup> grade – Students hear a motivational speaker discussing career choices and how to take advantage of current educational opportunities. 11<sup>th</sup> grade – Students prepare resumes and participate in mock interview with local business and community leaders who use a rubric to score their interview.<br/>12<sup>th</sup> grade – Students complete 5-7 lesson plans on career development in their English IV</p> |

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| <p>classes. These lesson plans are based on state standards and the final lesson plan requires the student to develop a Career Action Plan. All material to complete these lesson plans are provided to the teachers.</p>   |
| <p><b>Expected Results</b><br/> By the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade, the student will have had the opportunity to explore and evaluate many career opportunities in the local community and to create a Career Action Plan for themselves based on these experiences.</p>   |
| <p><b>Evidence of Success</b><br/> We receive written and anecdotal feedback from students, teachers, volunteers, speakers, and community members.<br/> Students create a Career Action Plan.<br/> We ask the 12th graders to complete a capstone assessment which also provides feedback on the program.</p>   |
| <p><b>Training</b><br/> There are planning meetings for all events and debriefings after events. An in-service to train all English IV teachers was done prior to the addition of the 12th grade component.</p>   |
| <p><b>Staff Needed</b><br/> An additional part-time staff is needed for continuity and long-term sustainability.<br/> The key to success for this program is that you must have a dynamic relationship with school counselors, teachers, and administrators. Everyone must understand the purpose and goals of the program to run this volunteer driven program successfully. Also needed are a continuing supply of volunteers and community buy-in.</p> |
| <p><b>Resources Needed</b><br/> The program operates on approximately \$6000 per year for all grades. We have received a grant of \$20K in the past and have done fundraising from local businesses.<br/> This program is volunteer-driven with minimal cost per year but with maximum in-kind donations of time and resources.</p>   |
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| <p><b>Research</b><br/> It is our goal to implement a tracking system of our students in the future to see the correlation of how their career planning resulted in career success.</p>   |