

2024 Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas Teacher Externship

The fourth annual Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas Teacher Externship took place June 10-14, 2024, following orientation on June 6, 2024. Thirteen businesses and 15 teachers from 11 school districts (10 ISDs and 1 charter school) collaborated to better prepare today's students for tomorrow's workforce. The Externship's focus was on high-demand occupations in Deep East Texas industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, professional and technical services, and construction. Each teacher spent five days at a local business to highlight the necessary skills for their students to obtain successful careers in high-demand industries within Deep East Texas.

"There is currently a skills gap within our region," said Mark Durand, Executive Director of Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas. "Building the relationship between educators and local businesses can increase awareness of the skills and credentials needed to obtain high-paying jobs. The employer feedback from the Externship can better equip students to make intentional career choices within the local labor market."

The 15 middle and high school teachers were each paired with one of the 13 businesses for a week of learning, observing, and job shadowing. During that time, the teachers gained industry strategies for the classroom to help them inform, educate, guide, and connect students to high-demand occupations that match their skill sets. Upon completion, the teachers receive \$1,000 stipends. The project is funded 100% through a \$55,683 grant from the Texas Workforce Commission.

Following the Externship, each teacher will provide their students with specific classroom instruction in the fall relating to their observations gained during their employment at the different local businesses. These skills will include work readiness and employability skills such as communication, attendance, a positive attitude, critical thinking, active listening, teamwork, adaptability and desire to learn.

The collaboration does not stop after this experience ends. Many teachers are planning to partner with their respective employer on next steps including internship and job opportunities, job shadowing, mock interviews, employer presentations in the classrooms, and facility tours during the upcoming school year. "I think this experience is fantastic because we are able to build relationships with those who are impacting students at a younger age in order to mold them into what will help them be more successful in their life and get a job of their own in the future." said Jared Rowe with McWilliams Heating, Cooling & Plumbing. Collaboration between businesses and

educators is crucial to ensure that academic curriculum aligns with real-world skills demanded by industries. This partnership encourages a seamless transition from education to employment.

Participating Business Partners

- ETech Global Services
- Lee TranServices, Inc.
- Lufkin Gears
- McWilliams Heating, Cooling, & Plumbing
- NacSpace
- NIBCO INC.
- Nucor Vulcraft
- PineCrest Retirement Community
- Portacool
- RoyOMartin
- St. Luke's Health Memorial Livingston
- St. Luke's Health Memorial Lufkin
- West Fraser Angelina Lumber

Participating School Districts and Teachers

- Center ISD - Stephanie Cassey
- Corrigan-Camden ISD - Amy Little
- Corrigan-Camden ISD - Judy Thompson
- Corrigan-Camden ISD - Rayford Sweats
- Corrigan-Camden ISD – Tammy Farr
- Diboll ISD – Jeanette Luna
- Grapeland ISD - Clay Goolsby
- Hudson ISD – Meredith Young
- Latexo ISD – Krystal Patterson
- Lovelady ISD – Cody Kyle
- Nacogdoches ISD – Charles Avornyo
- Nacogdoches ISD – Mark Ampofo
- Pineywoods Community Academy – Kerri Sanderson
- San Augustine ISD – LaCresia Giles
- Timpson ISD – Robert Harrison