



# Promising Business Education Practice

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Northern Tier Business Education Partnership

## ***AT A GLANCE***

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As a result of a Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry Business Education Grant, the Northern Tier Region Workforce Development Board hired three part-time career counselors to expand career education with students in the region's high schools and career and technical centers.

## ***ORIGIN/IMPLEMENTATION***

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The Northern Tier Workforce Development Board and Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission (NTRPDC) applied for a Business-Education Partnership (BEP) grant through the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry in 2015 to provide increased career counseling in 11 high schools and two career and technical centers during the 2015-2016 school year. Recognizing that guidance counselors are spending increasing amounts of time on students' emotional and behavioral concerns, the three part-time career counselors, who were provided through the grant, could dedicate time to developing students' career awareness and development, leading to improved student achievement and a positive impact on the region's workforce. Each career counselor was assigned to several schools where they would also support implementation of the schools' K-12 School Counseling Plan, a state requirement under Chapter 339, which includes career development components. NTRPDC hired and employed the counselors. While they do not hold Pennsylvania counseling certifications, each brought relevant and extensive experience to the role.

Working primarily with students in grades eight, ten, and twelve in multiple school districts, the career counselors coordinated and facilitated a variety of activities:

- presented classroom lessons and workshops, met with small groups, and worked one-on-one with students (a required curriculum was not mandated by the grant)
- assisted students with completing personal inventories that evaluate aptitudes, interests, and aspirations
- worked with employers to organize career fairs, job shadowing opportunities, workplace and apprenticeship visits
- provided students with labor market information and employer expectations
- presented workplace soft skills and organized mock interviews for seniors
- facilitated career activities with elementary school students

The project was also designed to increase students' connections with employers, career and technical centers, and higher education institutions. The career counselors presented students with information about a wide range of postsecondary options including four-year and two-year education, technical training, and direct entry into the workplace.

## **RESULTS / IMPACT**

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Hiring three career counselors for regional schools exceeded NTRPDC and NTWDB expectations in several regards.

Eight career fairs were organized across the Northern Tier during the 2015-2016 school year, five more than originally anticipated. As a result, students had the opportunity to engage with over 230 local employers and businesses, exceeding a goal to involve 75 employers and businesses. These career fairs, combined with other presentations and events, reached 3,042 students.

The career counselors were expected to engage with 600 students either individually or in small groups. Instead, nearly 1,800 students participated in one-on-one career counseling, soft skills workshops, apprenticeship programs, field trips, and/or other career exploration activities.

Perhaps a significant marker of success is that each of the 11 high schools and both career and technical centers asked to participate in future Business Education Partnership programs.

### **Participating Schools**

Athens Area High School  
Canton Area Junior/Senior High School  
Susquehanna County Career and  
Technology Center  
Montrose Area Junior/Senior High School  
Northeast Bradford High School  
North Penn-Liberty High School  
North Penn-Mansfield  
Sullivan County High School  
Susquehanna Community High School  
Towanda Area Junior/Senior High School  
Northern Tier Career Center  
Troy Area Junior/Senior High School  
Wyalusing Valley Junior/Senior High School

## **NEXT STEPS/SUSTAINABILITY**

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NTRPDC and NTWDB has applied for and received funding to continue the project during the 2016-2017 school year through the Appalachian Regional Commission. New goals have been established for the second year of the program including outreach to additional schools, students, and businesses in the Northern Tier region.

## **CONTACTS**

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