



I think it's important to experience what we're asking kids to experience. A lot of times grown-ups ask kids to do things that they really don't understand what they're asking them to do, Welch said. ... I (operate) under the old adage, 'Lead by example.'



Leader takes test with students Work Readiness Exam

Athens Banner-Herald, September 18, 2008, by Crystal Owens

The school district leader decided to test his workforce skills alongside the high school's seniors Wednesday as a way to encourage them to take an exam that will make them more marketable to Georgia employers.

The exam, part of the Georgia Work Ready program, was released in August 2006 by Gov. Sonny Perdue and the state Chamber of Commerce as a way to improve the training and marketability of Georgia's workforce throughout the state.

The goal, according to the program's website, www.aworkready.org, is to have 25,000 Georgians earn "Work Ready" certificates each year.

Oglethorpe County students were encouraged to beat their superintendent's scores, but most looked at the exam as a way to get one more step ahead before leaving high school.

"They said it would kind of tell me what I would be good at. ... Hopefully, it will help me - if I do get a job - show them what some of my abilities are," said Marisa Coulter, 17, who will pursue a career in nursing after graduation.

The Work Ready test consists of three parts: Applied Math, Locating Information, and Reading (for Information).

Each part quizzes students on information they would see in the everyday work environment, such as simple calculations and how to read diagrams.

"(The questions) were all something you'd see on a job, something you'd be asked to do. There were a lot of forms and memos," said Carlin Harraway, 17, who plans to attend the Savannah College of Art and Design after graduation.

Test-takers are given a certificate that, depending on their score, classifies them as platinum, gold, silver or bronze, said Tom Sharp, Oglethorpe County High School assistant principal and vocational director.

That classification allows employers to determine which applicant is right for the job, Sharp said.

"The way the test was developed, they actually went out on real jobs and realized what basic skills are needed, and then tied that to what score would be needed on this test to succeed in that job," he said.

However, if students are not satisfied with their scores they can retake the test and receive online training to improve, **more...**

Good to Gold WorkKeys Conference 2008

On November 19 and 20 more than 35 dedicated representatives from Oakland County districts, campuses, and Oakland Schools staff participated, with many other statewide attendees, in the 2008 Michigan WorkKeys Conference.

The conference focus was the new statewide National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) initiative, including the new WorkKeys test, *Locating Information* within the new 2009 Michigan Merit Exam and its impact on our K-12 student's work readiness. KeyTrain an online curriculum support was also introduced as a mechanism to increase students WorkKeys tests scores.

The first day of the conference addressed the needs of employers and workforce development specialists and engaged educators in a meaningful and lively dialogue. The second day's focus was geared to the K-12 educator and community college personnel. Speakers included Jim Jacobs, President of Macomb Community College; David Hollister, President and CEO Prima Civitas Foundation; Luann Dunsford, CEO, Michigan Works Association; Jim Ballard, Executive Director, Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals; Greg Northup, President, West Michigan Strategic Alliance; and Andy Levin, Deputy Director of Department of Labor and Economic Growth. Business, government, workforce agencies converged to discuss issues and ways to partner effectively to create a common credential that demonstrates work readiness for our future workforce (K-12), the incumbent workforce as well as the unemployed, re-trainable workforce.

For more information about this exciting and meaningful project, **check out this 5 minute video** to get a small taste of the project and its impact on our students and our communities, <http://act.org/certificate/benefits.html>. For questions, contact Cathy Smith at 248-209-2119.