

Companies Open Their Doors to SDNB Students, Expand Knowledge of Southeastern Wisconsin

New Berlin, Wis. – More than 150 School District of New Berlin students and staff visited a variety of organizations throughout Waukesha and Milwaukee counties Tuesday, April 11, in support of the District's College and Career Readiness event series.

The district annually coordinates a series of events throughout the school year intended to inform the academic and career plans students develop and maintain throughout grades 6-12. "Careers In Action" Industry Tours are held annually as the final event in the series and are specifically designed to expose students to the types of challenges organizations are tasked with solving, potential work environments, and guidance on the types of learning experiences that will help inform their plans for their future. Students are able to select one of three tours: healthcare, computing, and manufacturing.

"The industry tours are specifically designed to expand the exposure students have to the world around them and the kinds of future opportunities available in southeastern Wisconsin," said Laura Schmidt, Strategic Advisor to the Superintendent. "These three tours were intentionally selected because these industries are so ubiquitous. Students should be able to apply what they have learned on these tours regardless of what path they choose after high school. We are sincerely appreciative of all of the organizations willing to open their doors to students each year."

The healthcare tour started at Community Memorial Hospital where students learned about healthcare culture, work environment, and the industry along with how to prepare for related careers. Students then met with department leaders in small groups based on their interests to learn a little more about what happens in their departments and get guidance on learning experiences that might help them dig deeper into their area of interest.

"Events like this are really about investing in the future of healthcare," said Teri Lux, president of Community Memorial Hospital. "Our hospital and health network are committed to the growth and development of our next generation of healthcare workers. Educating, engaging and enlightening students now will have a positive impact on the communities we serve in the future."

The healthcare tour continued at the Medical College of Wisconsin for a campus tour and small group discussions with graduate students and staff to get a sense of what it is like to prepare for and attend medical school. Students were provided with information on undergraduate programs that act as pipeline programs for the Medical College of Wisconsin as well as extra-curricular opportunities to gain exposure to related professions while evaluating future plans.

The computing tour started at Centare, a consulting company that focuses in custom software development. Students heard about what agile software development is and how companies can be more responsive and deliver value more quickly by implementing agile methodologies. They then went to the Ward 4 building in Milwaukee to visit the Commons, where they learned about innovation and entrepreneurship and were introduced to some of the start-up companies that operate out of Ward 4. The last leg of the tour was held at PKWare, the creator of ZIP Reader and now currently revolutionizing enterprise data protection. Students learned about how the company got started and the role its products play in cybersecurity.

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Information Studies helped coordinate the computing tour. UWM representatives talked to the students about post-secondary planning, and engaged past alumni throughout the day who are now employed by Centare, PKWare, and/or were involved in the Commons.

“This event exposed high school students to the many IT jobs of today that did not exist 5 to 10 years ago, and allows us to highlight the ever-evolving roles of IT professionals, roles that we prepare our students for as they meet the IT needs and changing preferences of our society and culture,” said Tomas A. Lipinski, Dean of the UWM School of Information Studies.

The manufacturing tour, sponsored by the Waukesha County Business Alliance, included a total of four stops:

- Husco Automotive, a global leader in engineering auto efficiency through manufacturing of hydraulic and electro-hydraulic controls;
- Pentair's water filtration and control systems plant, one of more than 100 facilities worldwide;
- EmbedTek, a company specializing in the design and manufacturing of computers and software;
- and a tour of UWM's industrial engineering labs.

“Our member companies are constantly thinking about their future workforce,” said Suzanne Kelley, president and CEO of the Waukesha County Business Alliance. “The Alliance values our close relationships with local school districts. We are working to facilitate relationships between those schools and our member companies so students can take full advantage of all the opportunities we have available in Waukesha County.”

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