

Direct Supply Hosts SDNB Students to Connect Coursework to Futures in IT

New Berlin, Wis. - Direct Supply hosted nearly 50 School District of New Berlin students and staff April 7 for an all-day workshop to help interested students connect their coursework to a potential future in Information Technology. The event is part of the School District of New Berlin's annual "College and Career Readiness Event Series" developed, in part, with the support of Junior Achievement of Wisconsin.

"We are sincerely grateful for strong community partnerships to help connect what students are learning in school to the wide variety of opportunities available to them in their future," said Superintendent Joe Garza. "This is a critical part of Academic and Career Planning. Students cannot effectively prepare for something they haven't been exposed to."

Wade Krogwold, Direct Supply Campus and Community Recruiting Manager, kicked off the event with an overview of the company and its collaborative culture. "The days of IT talent being stuck in the back room coding all day are long gone," Krogwold said. "They are a key part of the software design and development process so they need to be able to interact with the business. In addition to technical skills, careers of this nature also require problem-solving, communication and collaboration skills. We worked closely with SDNB and Junior Achievement to reinforce this with the students."

Student teams were guided through a Lego "Scrum" simulation mentored by Direct Supply employees. The exercise is designed to introduce students to Scrum software development, an approach to developing software that accounts for changing requirements by defining an incremental and iterative process in a collaborative environment.

Direct Supply representatives in field of software engineering, database engineering, infrastructure engineering, and test engineering also met with students to discuss how they developed an interest in their discipline, how they prepared for their current job, and what they would recommend for students with an interest in their profession.

Students were also provided instruction in the "Art of Conversation" and given the opportunity to test their new skills during a networking activity with company representatives. Students were encouraged to think about what type of impression they might leave with others and how that might impact their future opportunities.

Students and staff also toured Direct Supply's facilities, which feature collaborative spaces to support cross-functional teams and amenities to ensure employees feel at home while at work. Current employees provided testimonials about their experiences working for Direct Supply which helped students start thinking about what they might look for in a future employer.

"This event was a great way to connect what my students are learning in their computer science and software engineering coursework to the knowledge, skills and dispositions they will need to be successful in their chosen profession," said SDNB computer science teacher Manal Roumani. "It really helped them start thinking and connecting their personal, academic and career goals with the next steps that will be necessary to achieve them."

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of computer and information technology occupations is projected to grow 12 percent by 2024, faster than the average for all occupations. This is in part due to a greater emphasis on cloud computing, the collection and storage of big data, more everyday items becoming connected to the Internet, and the continued demand for mobile computing. The median annual wage for computer and information technology occupations was \$79,390 in May 2014, which was higher than the median annual wage for all occupations of \$35,540.

*The **School District of New Berlin** provides a comprehensive program for students interested in Computer Science, Programming, Software Engineering, and IT Support. Students enrolled in these programs are eligible for work-based learning opportunities at area employers. The School District also provides project-based learning opportunities, such as Advanced Innovation and Design, where students form cross-functional teams to solve problems and develop the skills and dispositions needed for success in the 21st Century Innovation Economy.*

***Direct Supply's** mission is to enhance the lives of America's seniors through a commitment to Senior Living. As the industry's leading provider of equipment, eCommerce and service solutions, they help Build, Equip and Run better Senior Living communities. Direct Supply employs approximately 1,300 people and is employee owned which creates a unique corporate culture.*

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