

SDNB Students Learn How to Prepare for the 21st Century Innovation Economy

New Berlin, Wis. - SDNB high school students joined others from select schools throughout southeastern Wisconsin at a "Practice Pitch" night on April 12th hosted by the Innovation in Milwaukee (MiKE) Commons program located in Milwaukee's Ward 4. This event was designed to reinforce and support the value for the skills and dispositions that can help students compete in a 21st century innovation economy.

The MiKE Commons program acts as a collegiate level entrepreneurial skills accelerator serving students from 23 post-secondary institutions across Southeastern Wisconsin. The Commons helps students develop an 'entrepreneurial mindset' using a curriculum leveraged by MIT.

"We are thankful for the collaborative partnership between participating public and private schools, as well as with regional resources like the Commons program, to advance this important work across Southeastern Wisconsin" said Joe Garza, Superintendent.

Students were provided a tour of Ward 4 which is home to a number of start up companies in Milwaukee. They then worked in small groups on an ideation activity which resulted in some amazing ideas for new products and services. The event concluded with an opportunity for Commons collegiate teams to practice their Shark Tank-like 'pitch' and get feedback from their mentors as well as the high school students in attendance. This feedback was used to improve their final 'pitch' before presenting to their corporate mentors at the Spring Demo day held at the Commons on Tuesday, April 19th.

By and large, entrepreneurs take action to develop innovative solutions to problems in the world around them. This can result in a product, a business or just an improved way of doing things. Entrepreneurs collaborate and think critically and creatively. They take risks and see their mistakes as part of an important process of continuous improvement.

"These dispositions for success are important to most future endeavors and consequently represent a key aspect of the SDNB Vision of a College and Career Ready Graduate. In the SDNB, we are working to develop these same skills through project/work based learning, digital learning, business and entrepreneurship coursework, and co-curricular offerings like robotics and DECA." said Garza. "In an effort to better communicate with parents, key dispositions for success have also been added to K12 student report cards to help communicate what teachers are observing as they monitor their student's performance in the classroom".

There are some students who need and want to take this even further. These students are referred to as our future 'change makers'. In March, representatives from the MiKE Commons program came to the SDNB to encourage them to get involved in learning opportunities like the Commons to continue to develop valuable skills.

The School District of New Berlin offers a similar program at both high schools called Advanced Innovation and Design. This program assembles interdisciplinary teams to solve challenges across a wide range of topics provided by industry partners. Advanced Innovation and Design leverages components of the MIT curriculum used by the MiKE Commons program as well as the Lean Launch Pad curriculum leveraged by Stanford and the UWM Center for Entrepreneurship. This allows students to connect what they have learned in their prior

coursework to their personal, academic, social and career goals in a rigorous and relevant manner. The SDNB's industry and post-secondary partners have indicated that students enrolled in this type of programming will have a competitive advantage.

“Advanced Innovation and Design is one of many capstone learning opportunities provided by the School District of New Berlin to allow students to apply what they are learning in a real-world setting and get feedback from industry and post-secondary mentors to help them better prepare for their future. Advanced Innovation and Design has been developed intentionally to appeal to students who have strengths in technology, design, project management, marketing and/or AP content knowledge,” said Garza.

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Related links:

[MIKE Commons Program](#)

[Vision of the SDNB Graduate](#)