

Technology Committee Final Report FY18

Riverside-Brookfield, Leyden, OPRF, and Ridgewood have had regular representation at the meetings this year for the various areas of Technology and Engineering Education.

Our initial meeting was held at the Illinois Technology Education Conference in Bloomington where we discussed programs at the respective high schools and developing business advisory councils. Another portion of our discussion involved the need to continue efforts to diversify the reach of the Technology and Engineering fields to reach more women. There has been a longstanding effort to increase enrollment of females in the various programs offered at each school that has not yet resulted in the desired increase in numbers that we have been aiming for.

The second meeting with a manufacturing focus was held at Triton where every district had representation and information for building advisory councils was disbursed to individuals to be taken back to schools for review and discussion. The Triton Business Advisory Council meeting was held concurrently as a part of this meeting and discussion about our programs at the high school level took place. The largest part of the discussion pertained to our curriculum with regard to the needs and desires of the industry partners. There is concern from both businesses and teachers that information about career pathways is not being made readily available to students at the early high school level. Deltrol Fluid Products has been intentionally aiming at interactions with middle school students as an attempt to inform students about career opportunities before the influence of “high school to university for all” is counseled in high school. The discussion from there focused on concern of standardized testing influence on core academics at the detriment of career counseling.

The automotive focus meeting was held at OPRF. We had extensive discussion on the future of the automotive industry and its impact on the curriculum offered at the high school level. The impact of technology on the industry is likely to continue toward higher technology with regard to diagnostics and computer systems. The teachers are staying focused on current trends and technologies. There are definite changes to the industry ahead. The methods pertaining to automobile manufacture and maintenance will be incorporated in the near future as a deeper understanding of how our society will interact with transportation needs is better understood. This includes self-driving vehicles with more computer diagnostics and the continued evolution of electric vehicles coming to market.

Our final meeting regarding construction and woodworking was held at Ridgewood High School. The discussion involved the current technologies available to students involving Computer Aided Manufacturing (CAM) and the Geometry in Construction program at Ridgewood. The intersection of the core academic areas and our Technology and Engineering Education (TEE) programs is obvious when we are applying the content of math, science, communication (English) and historical relevance of the technologies as they impact our society. Our programs are uniquely situated to integrate this information for our students. While our districts have varying opportunities to connect with industries based on

demographics, local business influences, and intersections of economic structures, our courses have the ability to give students insight into technology and soft skill development. The concern that was held constant throughout this year was an understanding that we are attempting to offer students an opportunity to learn the expectations of proper communication with colleagues, superiors, and end users of a project in the classroom. These soft skills were the focus of all local business employers, and our TEE teachers recognize the importance of teaching these skills in the classroom that will translate to employable skills in the future.

Teachers from our member districts have attended many conferences and workshops this year in pursuit of strengthening our understanding of employment needs and current trends in career and technical education. These conferences include the Illinois Technology Education Conference, the Association of Career and Technical Education Career Tech VISION Conference, the Connections Conference in Tinley Park, the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association Conference, and the ICAIA Auto Conference. The development of the programs to suit the education needs of our students and the employment opportunities of our communities continues. There were five teachers who attended the Tech Trek in January which allowed teachers to visit three companies in our community and talk to employers and some employees about the careers and the various pathways that allow for gainful employment. Our programs continue to develop curriculum and implement new technologies for the benefit of our students and their potential employment in the years to come. Elmwood Park is currently considering implementation of a Project Lead the Way Program for the 2019-2020 school year and we look forward to hearing from more stakeholders for guidance on how to proceed to best serve our student populations.