

School-to-Career Program Helps Students Gain Experience

Students from Vernonia High School are getting some real life work experience at local businesses while also earning some school credit.

Six students are currently participating in the School-To-Career program, coordinated by Dana Hyde, who also serves as the Graduation Coach and Scholarship Facilitator for Vernonia's High School students.

"Our School-To-Career program is basically a partnership between the School District and our community merchants," explains Hyde. "It takes place in the community and allows students, juniors and seniors, to leave the school campus."

Hyde says the program takes the place of an elective for students, who spend one or two periods each day at the business. "As you know, we currently lack elective options for our students, so this provides an opportunity."

Businesses participating in the program this semester include West Oregon Electric Cooperative, Meyer's Auto Body, Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District, Vernonia True Value, Martin Arms, and Vernonia Subway.



Left: Gunnar Harral at WOEC; center: Jackson Fletcher at Meyer's Auto Body; right: Whitley Tolonen at Vernonia True Value

Students do not get paid for the time then spend on their career work, but do earn school credits.

"West Oregon has just been an amazing partner in this program over the years," says Hyde. "They now have two employees who participated in this program and spent time working for them, Billi Kohler and Eric Budge."

Students go through an application process to participate in the program, sign an agreement, and are required to keep weekly time sheets to log their hours

worked. Hyde makes surprise visits to the worksites to evaluate students' progress.

Students do many different tasks while at work, including filing, customer service, use of equipment, retail sales, inventory, stocking, and clean up duties.

"I just want to really thank the businesses in the community for their many years of partnering with us in these programs. They've been really fantastic," said Hyde.

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