

Volunteers share how and why of career center for BHS students

The power of volunteers was illustrated at the Banks school board meeting April 14 with a presentation to the board about the high school career center.

High school guidance counselor Tim Hardie introduced Kathy Douglas and Renee Mills with profuse praise for their efforts. He told the board that it was an honor to work with volunteers so enthusiastic and dedicated that he just "gets out of their way". He reminded the board of the well-deserved recognition the two women received from the Business Education Compact, a metropolitan area business and education

consortium in October 2002.

Hardie told the board that Douglas and Mills had capitalized on previous work done to begin developing a career center in the high school. They have been able to inspire other adults and share their vision. This dedicated group of fifteen adults keeps the career center open to students every day. In addition to the career center, Mills and Douglas have made connections between the workplace and the curriculum for all grade levels.

Adult mentors assist

As part of the career center each high school senior is as-

signed an adult volunteer mentor. Each mentor has up to nine students to meet with on an individual basis, to discuss post high school plans. Mentors begin working with students in the spring of the junior year. Each student is given a booklet includes extensive information about internships and career days, detailed admissions requirements for community and four-year colleges, as well as a variety of trade schools and private institutions, tips for deciding which test to take and how to take them, financial aid, job application skills and miscellaneous information. Mentors follow-up by contacting students throughout the year to make sure they stay on track to meet the goals they have set.

Guests speak to students

The mentoring program, alone, would be a significant accomplishment but it is only one piece of a career center that serves the entire student body. Speakers from a variety of industries give talks to students at all grade levels. Mills and Douglas, reviewing career center accomplishments for this year, told the board that six parents and one teacher have been trained on the Oregon Career Information System (CIS online). This online resource, developed by the University of Oregon, has extensive information students can access about occupations and employment, education and training, and exploration tools that allow students to get information about jobs, school, and themselves.

Another critical piece of the

career center is the LINKS system, a school-to-work program that connects students to internships. Six parents were also trained to use this system this year. Seniors complete a career exploration program as part of the social studies curriculum. This program replaces the senior project previously in place. Career exploration is composed of five required activities. The first activity is a series of three short papers that students write after researching three career choices. Second, students must interview an individual working in two of the career choices. Students are given a list of nine questions they must include as part of the interview, including what the person's job duties are on a daily basis, what kind of training was needed and where did they get it, etc.

The third portion of the career exploration is a job shadowing opportunity. Volunteers from the career center assist students in finding job shadow experiences, using the LINKS system. Students are required to turn in a resumé, interview for the job, complete a packet and send a thank you letter to get full credit for this portion of the project.

The final two portions of the career exploration are a reflection paper and speech. These are similar to the paper and speech required for a senior project, but relate far more directly to a student's future employment plans and work experience. Hardie told the board that some of the most valuable learning comes when students

discover, by completing the program, that a selected career is really not for them.

Board thanked for funds

Mills and Douglas concluded their remarks to the board by thanking them for providing the funding needed for access to LINKS and CIS. A \$500 donation from the BHS Parent Association also provides for a subscription to Vocational Biographies. Superintendent Marilyn McGlasson told the board that another example of why Banks is a great community, is that volunteers can, and will, step up to the plate to develop and maintain a program like the career center that enhances education. Mills and Douglas wanted to make sure that the board recognized that the 75 - 90 volunteer hours per week are spread over a large group of volunteers. Board member Willis Meeuwse said that the great thing about the whole system was that it supported all students, not just the college bound.

High School Fees

Banks High School Principal Jim Foster told the board that changes proposed were to split the towel fee and add a lab fee for science classes. Foster said that new students and freshman will be charged \$15 for physical education uniforms. In addition, all students will pay a \$5 towel fee (for laundry services and towel replacement). However, students will have to pay \$20 for a replacement uniform if their uniform is lost. The other change is the addition of a five dollar fee for science classes to facilitate the replacement of lab materials. The board unanimously approved the fee changes.

Budget Calendar

McGlasson told the board that discussion of the budget should not begin until the middle of May. She said that by that time funding levels should be more firmly set at the state level.



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