

Business Partnership Breakfast

*Bridgeton High School
Bridgeton, New Jersey*

Students at Bridgeton High School got a taste of the business world last year during a boardroom-style meeting complete with PowerPoint presentations and power-breakfast fair. The Business Partnership Breakfast brought 20 community leaders into the school to listen to students pitch their career placement programs and internships. The presenters hoped to entice more local businesses to partner with the school.

Two years ago, members of the school's Action Team for Partnership (ATP) decided to target postsecondary planning as a goal in their One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships. Bridgeton recently adopted a reform model that placed a strong emphasis on career academies. The goal of this model was to open career pathways for students in grades 10-12. ATP members felt additional activities could support the reform model. They decided to bring local business leaders to the school for a meeting designed to showcase the real world skills of Bridgeton students.

ATP members held a very successful breakfast for teachers and local business leaders in 2007. For 2008, they decided to dazzle the guests by letting students deliver most of the presentations.

The school's career coordinator took the lead in organizing the event this year, sending out dozens of e-mails to area businesses, community organizations, and the local chamber of commerce. ATP members followed up the e-mails with personal phone calls. School administrators also announced the breakfast in the local newspaper.

All of the effort paid off. In May, 20 business leaders sat in the school's media center. Students and teachers worked together to give impressive PowerPoint presentations on several career-oriented programs. Speakers described the major projects and accomplishments of their marketing and entrepreneur club, their computer-assisted design program for budding

architects and engineers, and their Microsoft Office Systems Certification. They displayed sample work completed by students in each of these programs.

Guests enjoyed a breakfast of bagels, fruit, coffee, and juice while listening to the students. At the end of the presentations, business leaders asked the students and teachers questions and provided feedback on the programs. Administrators made sure that every guest received informational handouts about the school's career fair, internship program, and job placement center for graduating seniors.

After the meeting, business leaders complimented the student presenters on their oratory skills. One local bank owner offered to visit the school's finance class and provided several students with internship opportunities. Another local employment agency offered to conduct a mini job fair for graduating seniors.

The breakfast cost the school \$140. Bridgeton used School, Family, and Community Partnership funds from the district to cover the expenses.

ATP members plan to make the Business Partnership Breakfast an annual event. Next year, they will invite the local media to report on the event.

*Karen Horwitz
TDHS Organizational Facilitator
(856) 455-8030 ext. 2364
khorwitz@bridgeton.k1i.nj.us*