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New state grant helps Butler Tech reach businesses

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By Michael D. Clark

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FAIRFIELD TWP. — More Butler Tech high school students will be helping area businesses, civic organizations and local governments under part of a new \$786,000 state grant starting this month.

Local organizations facing challenges that might be solved through a partnership with Butler Tech and qualified students will be researched and then the teens will provide a presentation of their ideas for solutions.

"This is a great opportunity for our students to engage in project-based learning where they can draw on their academic and career-technical education," said Mike Parry, executive director of secondary education at Butler Tech. "We offer such a wide array of career technical training that businesses could assemble some really impressive pools of talent to tackle problems."

The grant announcement comes in the wake of the Journal-News reporting last week that Butler Tech officials had recently employed a rare, pre-hiring survey of its staffers, leadership and local business leaders as to what areas of focus they want for the school's next superintendent.

The survey and report found that strengthening Butler Tech's private sector partnerships was a prime area of need.

The initial phase of the \$786,000 Together Assembling a Stronger Community (TASC) grant runs from January to May.

Participating businesses and organizations approved by Butler Tech will work with a team of high school juniors or seniors from a corresponding program at the career school, which offers more than two dozen career training programs ranging from auto collision to welding technology.

Students guided by a company-provided mentor will identify the business or organization's challenge, the organization will then host a company tour and provide judges for a final student presentation on their project and proposed solution to the business or organization's problem.

Megan Reed, career specialist for Butler Tech who will oversee the TASC program, said "ideally, we are looking for business challenges, such as a process improvement, that involve students from a variety of disciplines to resolve."

"This has a potential to be a big win for the community in helping to make businesses more efficient and also to grow the local workforce by introducing students to careers that might not yet be on their radar," said Reed.

Butler County businesses interested in participating in the new program are asked to contact Reed at 513-645-8261 or ReedM@ButlerTech.org.

Butler County high school sophomores and their families interested in the career school's more than two dozen career training programs are invited to open houses at one of Butler Tech's four high school campuses on Jan. 14. More information is available at ButlerTech.org.

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