Preventing Students for In-Demand Jobs

The American Welding Society recently projected a shortage of 250,000 skilled welders over the next decade. At Windber, two new welding simulators are giving students the opportunity to learn more about this in-demand profession.

The state-of-the-art teachWELD units were funded in part through a grant from the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies. The virtual welding training has been incorporated into the technology curriculum beginning in grade 8 and will double the number of high schoolers who can enroll in elective welding classes.

“The simulators give our middle school students a realistic glimpse of STEAM applications in action, sooner rather than later,” said Tim Saylor, Technology and Engineering instructor. “Exposing students to STEM-related fields at this age helps ensure that they take the proper courses in high school to prepare for additional training after graduation.”

At the high school level, the simulators create more hands-on learning in basic welding techniques for students who may be considering a welding or manufacturing career.

A New Approach to SAT Prep

A new program at Windber Area High School is giving students added levels of support to help them prepare for the SAT.

Beginning this year, all students in Academic or honors level math classes will spend a few minutes of class time each week working on sample SAT math questions. In addition, they will take abbreviated SAT math tests in those classes.

The program, including all supporting materials, was developed over the summer by Lance McGough and Scott McClain, two math instructors at Windber Area High School.

“If college is a student’s post-secondary career choice, we want to support him or her as much as possible,” said Mr. McGough. “This program is a great way to give students additional opportunities and tools to strengthen their performance on the SAT.”

The program also recognizes students who achieve high SAT scores. Beginning this year, students who score at least 1,800 on the SAT (out of a possible 2,400 points) will be recognized as Distinguished SAT Scholars; those who score at least 2,000 will be recognized as Exemplary SAT Scholars. They will also be treated to lunch at Rizzo’s and have their names engraved on new plaques that will be prominently displayed at the high school.

Based on the early success of the SAT prep program, administrators hope to offer similar support in English classes to students who may be interested in studying abroad or another post-secondary career path.

A Round of Applause

At Windber, students have the opportunity to succeed in the classroom, the performing arts, sports and many other areas. Here’s a sample of some recent student achievements:

• Senior Annalee Tomasky has been awarded a full Naval ROTC scholarship to the college of her choice. She joins 2013 Windber graduate David Beith in her scholarship success. In August, David was awarded a $100,000 national scholarship by Buick Achievers for his studies at West Virginia University.

• The boys’ Varsity Tennis team repeated as the District 5 AA tennis champions.

• Senior Cato McClain and junior Cassie Wentz (pictured here) also captured the District 5 AA doubles tournament title.

• The Varsity Football, girls’ Varsity Volleyball and boys’ Varsity Soccer teams all had successful seasons and made it to district playoffs.

• The Windber Area High School Band won the district title at the recent Band Showcase at IUP, including the Showmanship Award.

Social Studies Alive!

This year, Windber Area Elementary School teachers are taking their students on train rides, preparing them for 200-mph winds on top of New Hampshire’s Mount Washington and putting them to work in chocolate factories in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

The virtual activities, part of the school’s new and highly interactive Social Studies Alive! curriculum, provide hands-on lessons that are helping Windber’s grade school students better understand the link between geography, politics, economics and history.

“This program is all about creative thinking and problem-solving,” said Mrs. Ronda McCreary, a 4th grade teacher with more than 30 years of experience at Windber. “It has really energized our students. Their excitement and enthusiasm is contagious, and it gets me excited to see where the next lesson will take us. It’s been a great addition to our curriculum.”

The district is piloting Social Studies Alive! and History Alive! in grades 4, 5 and 6. Plans are underway to expand it district-wide over the next few years.

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