

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 399 Getting Schools and Businesses Better Connected

Could the private sector take a larger role in helping prepare students to enter the workforce? I'm Jerry Roberts and let's throw some ideas around today, to mix business with education, next on The Extra Point.

I caught an article that highlighted ways businesses and schools have been working together for the last four years in the state of Kansas. It's about blending the interests of both employers and students in ways aimed to help both.

Here's an example. Car dealers send mechanics to show students how to diagnose a car in the school parking lot. Others visit manufacturing facilities. Students get exposure to hotels, hospitals, and many other types of businesses. Schools hope their students benefit from the trips to look behind the scenes at several different kinds of enterprises. What businesses get is a head start on recruiting.

Most school systems sponsor a career day and Guam has had those for many years. However, in Kansas they've taken things a step farther. These activities are no longer limited to one day, and it's much more hands-on than just shadowing a manager of an organization for a day.

In example, the Wichita school district brings in businesses for several days of lessons. An auto dealer taught middle school students how to tint windows. A construction firm had students build miniature dams and test soil samples.

A key aspect of this is the Kansas State Department of Education uses career days to expose students to overlooked jobs, to show off industries short on needed talent. This is not going to solve an immediate labor shortage, but by giving more students information on various industries, more of them may enter

into the employment pipeline and be available. For about six years, a group of students in Hutchinson visited a different local business every month. The schools added in classes that highlighted these specific industries.

For medical science, students take each other's vital signs at a technical education academy, as well as talk with the head of each department at a hospital. About 72% of schools are taking part in such a program, and that's up from 65% last year.

Let's take it a big step forward. About 30% of Kansas school districts have students taking an internship in 2019, and that's 40% more than 2018.

Apprenticeships are also on the rise. State officials say jobs in construction and electricians have been more traditionally associated with apprenticeships, but now they see increased interest in the health care and education fields.

Entrepreneurial projects are also a part of it. About 14% of Kansas schools had kids looking to learn about a business and even start one. A museum launched a pizzeria and made it a completely student-led operation. Each year the current group of students leaves the project and a new group comes in to learn the business.

How can we, in Guam, look to expand the ways businesses can work with our schools to bring more programs like these to our kids?

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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