

Mock Interview Day



Georgia Employability Skills Task Force Recommendation No. 1 School Goal 3

- ▶ Formalize relationships and partnerships with postsecondary institutions, advisory boards, and local businesses to coordinate employability skills initiatives and support systems.
- ▶ Implement a public relations campaign to promote employability skills for all students.

Overview

Ware County's Career, Technology, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) Professional Learning Community developed a goal of improving end of pathway assessment scores as well as improving students' employability skills. Several strategies were identified to improve employability skills, including software programs such as Georgia BEST and Career Solutions Publishing. The group also planned to provide employability training through a mock interview process for 12th grade students at Ware County High School. The target audience was all 340 senior students.

This project for improving students' employability skills development was a part of a larger emphasis on improving the workforce potential of the Waycross and Ware area, Ware WORX. The workforce development group included the CTAE director, work-based learning (WBL) coordinator, Ware County STEM coordinator, Waycross/Ware Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce representatives, Georgia Department of Labor representatives, and representatives from two area postsecondary institutions.

CTAE staff took the lead on developing the process and activities that students completed for the event. The bulk of the student work leading up to the interviews would be under the guidance of teacher advisors in the 12th-grade homerooms. Ware County High School utilizes the Teacher as Advisor (TAA) system, and this has worked well. Activities began in January 2019 when TAA advisors were given packets to prepare students for their mock interviews. An assembly for all 12th graders was held to begin the process, and a spokesman from the Georgia Department of Labor spoke at this "kick-off" event.

For the next 3 weeks after the assembly, students worked on the required pre-interview assignments, including the following:

- ▶ Standard 1.1: Developing a resume, completing a mock job application, and developing a cover letter for the job of their choice.
- ▶ Standard 1.3: Utilizing online resources such as Google Classroom and Georgia Department of Labor resources to develop and organize their portfolios.
- ▶ Standard 1.4 and 1.6: Engaging in a week of employability skills training activities before the mock interview that included making eye contact and introductions, interview tips, dressing for success, and practicing responding to interview questions.

As students began their assignments, the CTAE committee began reaching out to local stakeholders for help with the interview day, including the following:

- ▶ The CTAE director spoke at local Exchange Club and Rotary Club meetings.
- ▶ The Work-Based Learning Coordinator contacted all WBL contacts with a save-the-date flyer.
- ▶ A promotional save-the-date email was sent to all members of the Chamber of Commerce.
- ▶ The event was promoted through school system events.

Audience & Initiative Impact

The Mock Interview Day concluded with over 55 community and business volunteers and over 240 students completing the process. Students had been given interview times the previous day, and they gathered in the auditorium 30 minutes prior to their assigned time, where the principal and counselors handed them their TAA class packets (i.e., resume, cover letter, and job application). The student then went to the table for the assigned community and business partner for a 20-minute interview.

After the interview was completed, students went to a station where teachers guided them through creating a follow-up communication with the person who had conducted their interview. For students who completed the entire process, a t-shirt from the Ware WORX committee was presented. Surveys were developed and administered for both students and employers to measure the effectiveness and areas for improvement. There were 24 adult respondents and 153 student responses. Results were positive for both groups.

School/District: Ware County School District

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Georgia Employability Skills Task Force Recommendations

1. Integrate employability skills into curriculum and learning experiences from prekindergarten through postsecondary education.
2. Support educators and other stakeholders in developing employability skills instruction.
3. Develop deeper and stronger relationships between industry and education to enhance teacher and mentor roles in quality work-based learning and career development opportunities.

To learn more about college- and career-readiness work in the southeast states, please contact Beth Howard-Brown (bhoward-brown@air.org), Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) director, or visit the SECC website (southeast-cc.org).

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