

# High-Demand Occupation Rally and Company Visits



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

- Formalize relationships and partnerships with postsecondary institutions, advisory boards, and local businesses to coordinate employability skills initiatives and support systems.

### Overview

The Richmond County School System partnered with the Augusta Economic Development Authority and local companies to expose high school students to careers in healthcare, information technology, and manufacturing. The main event, called the High-Demand Occupation (HDO) Day, was held in October 2017 and was collaboratively planned and executed amongst members of the local chamber of commerce; school administrators; the Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) District Team; and work-based learning (WBL) coordinators.

THE HDO Day began with a rally at T.W. Josey Comprehensive High School, with more than 200 students from 10 high schools participating. At this rally, students networked with each other, members of the chamber of commerce, and representatives from participating businesses. Students prepared for this event beforehand in the classroom, where teachers spent an average of 10 to 15 hours of classroom time covering dress attire, business conversation, and professional behavior in the workplace.

After the networking rally, students traveled to pre-identified on-site locations to learn about working in healthcare, information technology, and manufacturing. Participating companies included University Healthcare, Doctors Hospital, Booz Allen, RBW Logistics, and Textron. At these companies, students observed employees and participated in discussions on various jobs, education requirements, wages, and other relevant topics.

### Skills Development

All six elements of Standard 1 were covered during this event. Students were able to get firsthand experience about the business, but more specifically what it takes to have a sustainable career. During this day, students and businesses discussed effective communication, the importance of team work, being able to problem solve, and what's required during the application and interview process. Students identified work readiness traits, the necessary skillset that leads to workplace success. Students were exposed to each of these elements while networking and building relationships with the business partners. The most rewarding aspect of this experience for the students was deciding whether to pursue a career they were exploring. The employability skills they were exposed to can be applied to any career.

## Audience and Initiative Impact

More than 200 students from 10 of Richmond County's high schools participated in the HDO Day. Staff at Richmond County report that students were well received at the various work sites and, as a result of their participation, students developed a deep understanding of the job expectations, employability skills, and necessary education for the specified industries.

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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](mailto:bhoward-brown@air.org)), Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) director, or visit the SECC website ([southeast-cc.org](http://southeast-cc.org)).

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