To: NYS P-TECH School Leaders

From: Robin Willner

Subject: Employer Recognition & Recruitment Events

Date: October 25, 2017

Now that the 2017-18 school year is underway, there are 431 companies and local businesses actively partnering with NYS P-TECH across the state. This is a 48% increase over the previous year and is limited to those partners who are currently participating. Congratulations to everyone who has worked so hard to develop these robust collaborations and to ensure that all of our students are exploring career opportunities, mastering professional skills, and addressing workplace challenges. This only happens with leadership at the school and district level, persistence from work-based learning coordinators and guidance counselors, enthusiasm from employer partners, and amazing accomplishments from our students.

In 2017, we conducted 5 regional employer recognition and recruitment events across the state. These were very effective opportunities to celebrate current partners, engage with business organizations and associations, and identify and recruit potential employer partners. This model can be easily adapted by any individual P-TECH program or group of schools as you continue to grow your work-based learning activities. Many NYS P-TECH schools already have similar events underway and we hope the materials and guidance attached will help you to refine your activities. For those schools that have not yet ventured into this arena, we hope these resources will help you get started.

The recommendations below outline the most effective practices we developed over the course of the first 5 events. Attached are a number of sample documents (invite email, agenda, signup sheets, certificates, etc.) for you to adapt and improve. Please let me know if you host a similar event and keep me updated on the results. And please direct any and all questions, ideas, etc., to me. Let’s get started.

**GOAL**

* To celebrate and honor current employer partners
* To raise the visibility of P-TECH in the local business community
* To identify and recruit new employer partners

**SUCCESS FACTORS: PLANNING**

* Consider whether this is best-designed as an event focusing on a single school/program or whether it will be more effective to create an event for a larger cachement area, including two or more schools, particularly if they offer different career pathways.
* Identify at least one co-host in the business community. This may be a current partner, particularly if a local chamber of commerce or trade association is already engaged with P-TECH. Factors to consider for a co-host include:
  + Visibility and credibility in the local business community
  + Access to membership and/or a broad distribution list
  + Experience convening and executing similar events
  + Access to online registration functionality
  + Contacts with media and elected officials
  + Calendar of events for local businesses
* Consider other local events that may offer an opportunity to “piggy back” rather than starting from scratch.
* Confirm a date that does not compete with other events and a location, preferably one that is well-known and has convenient access and parking.

**SUCCESS FACTORS: PREPARATION**

* Create and distribute invitations (see sample provided) to the largest possible list. If possible, have the invitation come from an individual’s email address to avoid spam filters. Regardless, make sure the sender or subject line reference a well-known individual. Include a “Click here to Register” icon upfront and again at the end of the email to allow participants to click through to register on line. Send initial invitation 7 weeks in advance and then send reminders one month and 2 weeks prior to the event. Also, send confirmation emails at time of registration and then 5 days before event and 1 day before event.
* Send a personal invitation to all current partners and let them know they will be recognized at the event.
* Reach out to local elected officials to participate and offer a speaking role.
* Confirm speakers (see sample agenda attached), including welcome from co-sponsors, any local elected officials, students from each participating school, and someone to provide NYS P-TECH overview (see sample presentation to localize).
* Determine the selection process for students (see sample questions attached), prepare them in advance and confirm permission slips, transportation, etc.
* Identify names of companies or individuals for special recognition at the event, e.g. lead partner, companies with the highest number of career mentors/volunteers, companies that helped design a workplace challenge, etc.
* Identify 3-4 current employers to participate in panel (see attached questions) and collect biographies.
* Identify an MC to move the agenda along.
* Finalize handouts, including:
  + I’m Ready to be a Partner, Sign-up sheet (see attached),
  + Overview of NYS P-TECH (see attached),
  + Marketing materials for your school
  + Work-Based Learning Toolkit (<https://www.dropbox.com/home/NYS%20P-TECH%20WBL%20TOOLIT/2.%20P-TECH%20EMPLOYER%20GUIDE>) and
  + Certificates (see sample attached).
* Confirm food order, room layout, dais, A/V equipment, etc.
* Develop communications/media plan.
* Identify someone to take photo’s at the event.
* Confirm staffing for registration table, logistics, etc.
* Prepare sign-in sheet, name tags, etc.
* Announce the event at all sponsor activities the previous month.
* Send final registration confirmations.
* Confirm cell phone numbers/contact information for all speakers and key staff.

**SUCCESS FACTORS: DAY OF THE EVENT**

* Arrive early to confirm room setup, food delivery, signage, etc.
* Identify one person to greet and seat speakers and local VIPs when they register.
* Prepare a table for students and make sure they have breakfast before the proceedings begin.
* Give everyone a 5 minute warning to finish networking and be seated.
* Start promptly.
* Make sure everyone completes the sign-up sheet and collect them.
* Thank all venue staff before leaving.

**SUCCESS FACTORS: FOLLOW-UP**

* Send thank you emails to all speakers and sponsors.
* Reach out to all current partners to confirm their ongoing engagement.
* Confirm who will contact each employer who submitted a sign-up sheet.
* Debrief with sponsors and planning team for future events.
* Post photo’s to social media, create a blog post or article for school and sponsor web sites and newsletters.

And finally, begin to plan the next work-based learning activity!