Future Ready Iowa Summit

Notes of Interest

September 16, 2021

Opening Remarks:

* There are approximately 8 applicants for every open position right now.
* Less than 1/3 of all applicants identifies as female or as a person of color.
* Key skills identified by the hiring workforce include:
  + Problem solving
  + Collaboration skills
  + Ability to flex and meet needs
  + Adaptation to technology
  + Comfortable communicating with varying degrees of information
* Educators can do the following to support the future workforce:
  + Technology – use it, become comfortable with it, teach it
  + Encourage diversity – get your girls and students of color interested in a variety of fields
  + Use real-life scenarios to prepare youth for the workforce
  + Build your pipeline
* Two areas of growth that have the opportunities for individuals to make six figures of income:
  + Electricians
  + Cyber security
* What we as a state need to work on:
  + Bringing our kids HOME to work (so many leave for other states after college)
  + Grow the workforce, grow the state

School-Business Partnerships (with speakers from across the state, noting in particular that the Waterloo CSD has a School-Workplace Learning Program with over 18 opportunities for students)

Key takeaways:

* We need to do a better job of letting high school aged youth become exposed to what jobs are located in their communities. Start them young – expose them at the middle school level. While students leaving the state after graduation is a problem, also note that a high percentage of low income youth and youth of color do not leave their communities. We need to entice them into good paying jobs to break the cycle of poverty.
* When working with businesses be sure to:
  + Introduce projects as a benefit to them.
  + Ask the businesses what problems they have and let the youth work on solving them.
  + Be sure to reiterate that a true school-workplace learning program is mutually beneficial. This should not be a “free labor” situation. The student gains 21st Century skills and experience; the business gains a new perspective employee and insights.
  + Help businesses to identify and respect the ROI (Return on Investment) for homegrown talent.
  + Be honest about the how, when, where, and why of all aspects of programming. You may have to train your businesses on how to work with youth.
* Add a portfolio component to your program. Have students build out the “proof” of how they are building and demonstrating 21st Century skills. Use these skills as the standards for the documentation.

Resources:

<https://iowastem.org/STEMBEST>