New Tech High School is preparing today's students for tomorrow's future in the workforce

Written by Marcus Amos
Tuesday, 19 October 2010 00:00 - Last Updated Tuesday, 19 October 2010 11:07

Students entering Scottsburg High School as freshmen in the 2010-2011 school year had the opportunity to enroll in Scottsburg New Tech High School.

The New Tech concept was started in Napa, CA., in 1986 to create an educational environment that would produce successful students for the real world. There are currently eight in Indiana and a great number nation-wide. Next year, 10 other Indiana schools will be joining the New Tech network.

New Tech stresses a student-centered learning environment. In New Tech, students help create an environment of trust, respect and responsibility. They share a role in governing the school and are expected to take ownership of their school and their learning.

Project based learning uses technology and investigation as students explore issues and questions relevant to their lives. The often asked question "Why do I need to learn this?" is diminished as students apply what they are learning to the real world. The learning environment, which often combines content from more than one class, is based on students working in teams to solve problems and create projects. Projects are designed to cover state standards taught in a traditional classroom. Students gain not only subject-matter knowledge, but also the skills they need to thrive in college, career and life.

New Tech takes the skills required by perspective employers such as: oral communications, professional work ethic, written communication, critical thinking and teamwork/collaboration and puts them into practice on a regular basis in the classroom. Students are not just graded on whether they can remember content for a test, but whether or not they can actually use, apply,

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explain and expand upon the content. The student learner in New Tech is an active learner. They learn to handle long, complex tasks and manage their time.

Students in New Tech High School complete a rigorous curriculum geared toward preparing students for the 21st Century skills they will need to successfully compete in today's changing job market. The one-to-one student computer ratio, emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, collaboration with classmates, and use of technology truly makes it a school for tomorrow available to students today.

The concept for New Tech began about two years for Scottsburg, as Mayor Bill Graham came and asked several key people including Scott County Economic Development Director Robert Peacock, then Scott County School District 2 Superintendent Robert Hooker, Scottsburg High School Principal Derek Marshall along with several other members of the community to explore the concept of New Tech.

The Scottsburg City Council, Scottsburg Board of Works, Scott County Economic and Development Corporation, Scott County School District 2 School Board, along with other state officials were instrumental in seeing this project through.

A two million dollar renovation was needed for the project to take place at Scottsburg, which would start with the renovation of the former Ag building at the high school. The Ag program is still in place at the school and still thriving at the main school complex. Now it was time to move into the next stage of where the future is leading the students in an everchanging world.

The school board approved the renovation with the help of a grant received through the state.

There were several teachers to come forward and agreed to teach in this new 21st Century format.

The building principal for the New Tech High School is Debora Yost. She served as the assistant principal at Scottsburg High School under Principal Derek Marshall. Marshall serves as the Campus Principal over all high school campus.

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Yost has been at Scottsburg High School for five years. She is very glad to come to a smaller community after being in the big city, where the environment there was very violent.

Yost said when she first heard of the New Tech project, she had watched a video on Youtube. The video describe how schools were not learning technology like other schools, as well as colleges and universities. The video relayed the idea that students needed to be prepared for careers that may not be in existence today, but will be in the very near future. The video also emphasized that many of today's jobs didn't exist a few years ago, and the job market will be changing drastically in the years to come with advancement of technology, so that is why the New Tech High School is such a valuable need and asset for the students to be able to compete in a global market.

When students finish New Tech they should have a minimum of 12 hours of college credits when they graduate high school. The students will be able to take college-credited classes at the school or even take classes at area colleges, while still in high school. Students will also take part in 125 hours of community service, such as helping with senior citizens, recycling and taking on a social responsibility to their community. They will learn and exercise the three pillars of trust, respect and responsibility. They will also follow rules and school norms that they select. The students take part in an advisory class after lunch, a student body mentoring program to learn more on work projects, cyber bullying and learning a more healthier way to live. During the four years in the New Tech High School, they will have a teacher/mentor to help them along the way to make sure no one falls through the cracks of this educational process.

In a special dedication ceremony in September, Scottsburg Mayor Bill Graham stated that history was now taking place in Scottsburg, with the opening of the New Tech High School at District 2.

"The worst economic times is sometimes the best time to do something for the best of times," Graham stated.

The New Tech High School complements and will work nicely with the new Tie Center, which is now a science park in the City of Scottsburg. This is another step to keep Scottsburg and Scott County on the cutting edge of today's job market, and training the next generation of workers for the 21st Century and to be able to attract more jobs for this community. The knowledge and

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skills taught at New Tech High School will benefit today's students and tomorrow's workers and families.

A great deal of work for this project was undertaken by former superintendent Robert Hooker up until his retirement this past spring. But the reins of this project transferred smoothly to new Superintendent Dr. Phil Dierdorff.

Also available to speak at the dedication ceremony was Superintendent of Public Instruction from Indianapolis, Tony Bennett, who spent eight years in the Scott County School District 2 school system. Bennett stated that he was proud to call Scottsburg his home and he was proud to say "Thank you Scottsburg for being the example to others by stepping up and taking part in the New Tech High School."

"We have to compete on a global stage in the university system and striving for the future of our children. We are in the digital age, where students are using computers instead of textbooks. With this new school we think about our children who will be our leaders of our community in the future," noted Bennett.

According to District 2 School Board member Cory Lytle, "This will open doors for us, which was once closed for our students. We will lead the way with a new model for education. We believe in our students and staff. We want to put our kids first."

According to New Tech Principal Debora Yost, "The first class of students and parents are amazing. They have taken a leap of faith and that really shows their belief in the program, it really shows the character of the parents."

Each student that attends New Tech rent a Mac Book, which are valued between $1,200 and $1,400 to use in their classrooms. After a specific amount of time students will earn the right to be able to take the computers home with them. The students who have chosen to become a part of New Tech still have the opportunity to take part in other extra-curricular activities such as band, sports and other programs.

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The students are graded in a much more detailed manner using the Rubric style, which allows parents and students to see the areas inwhich the excel in, maintain or need more work in a specific area.

New tech is:

* For college bound students looking for a challenging environment.

* Where real world issues and problems take center stage.

* Students actively participating in their education.

* A school where students create high quality products and performances which are presented to a public audience.

* A learning environment where students collaborate with community leaders on real world projects.

* A place students use various technology tools to demonstrate their learning.

New Tech is Not:

* A vocational school.

* A substitute for Prosser.

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* Sitting Passively listening to a teacher lecture.

* Playing on a computer all day.

* Projects are not end of unit activities or fun activities, but rather central to the instruction.

New Tech Mentoring Provides:

* Daily advisory meetings.

* Exploration of career interests.

* Internship placement.

* Academic Advisory.

* Community Service projects.

New Tech Focuses on:

21st Century Skills:

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* Collaboration.

* Oral Communication

* Written Communication

*Citizenship and Ethics.

* Career Preparation.

* Critical Thinking

* Technology Literacy

* Content Standards.

New Tech Students

Are Expected to:

* Earn 12 hours of college credit before graduation.

* Perform 125 hours of community service.

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* Serve in an internship.

* Create a digital portfolio.

* Earn an Honors Diploma or Core 40 Diploma.

The Scottsburg New Tech High School school wide learning outcomes are to be:

* Professionalism - Students will display a high degree of honor and integrity, citizenship and responsibility. These qualities may be evidenced by proper dress, work ethic, promptness, attendance, respect and leadership.

* Technology Literacy - Student will be able to use digital technology, communication tools, and/or networks appropriately to solve information problems in order to function in an information society.

* Collaborative Skills - Students will be able to work with staff, faculty, community members and peers. Team members should discuss and work toward what they hope to accomplish to meet individual and group goals.

* Critical and Inventive Thinking - Students will display flexible, creative, and critical thinking in order to produce innovative works. Thinking must demonstrate resourcefulness, persistence, curiosity and risk taking.

*Content Knowledge and Application-Students will be able to demonstrate proper use of the content as directed by Indiana State Standards to apply the knowledge gained from the class and the projects assigned.

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* Communications - Students will be able to speak and write with an awareness of audience and purpose.

Looking over the 2010-2011 course description list, students will be learning such course works as in the following:

* Aeronautical Engineering - which provides students with the fundamental knowledge and experience to apply mathematical, scientific and engineering principles to the design, development and evaluation of aircraft, space vehicles and other operating systems. Emphasis should include investigation and research on flight characteristics, analysis of aeronautical design and the impact of this technology on the environment. Classroom instruction should provide creative thinking and problem-solving activities involved in designing, testing and evaluating a variety of air and space vehicles and their systems.

* Algebra Honors - will be a more extensive version of Algebra 1. They will cover all the same material and standards in alegbra, but will take a deeper look they cover more material that revolves around geometry ideas as well. It will be an advanced algebra and pre-geometry all in once course.

* BioLit Course - is a collaborative course based on laboratory investigations and a study of language, literature, composition and oral communication with a focus on exploring a wide-variety of genres and their elements. This will include a study of the structures and functions of living organisms and their interactions with the environment. Student will use literary interpretation, analysis, comparisons, and evaluation to read and respond to representative works of historical, cultural, and scientific significance. They will explore the structure and function of populations, communities, ecosystems, and the biosphere. Students write short stories, responses to literature, expository and persuasive compositions, research reports, business letters and technical documents. Student will deliver grade-appropriate oral presentations and access, analyze and evaluate online information that will touch on various careers, personal needs and societal issues.

* Building Technology - includes classroom and laboratory experiences concerned with the erection, installation, maintenance and repair of buildings, home, and other structures using assorted materials such as metal, wood, stone, brick, glass, concrete, or composite materials. It

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will include cost estimating, cutting, fitting, fastening and finishing various materials in which various tools will be used along with blueprint reading. Students will develop skills related to building technology, math, measuring, written and oral communication to insure the student can interpret instructions and provide information to customers and colleagues.

* Business Technology Lab - is a business course that provides a framework for business related topics, personal finance, and career planning. The course familiarizes students with management, marketing, law, banking and career options. Students will have the opportunity to explore various segments of possible career choices. They will also address the knowledge, skills and behaviors students will need to live, plan and work successfully in today's society.

* Creative Writing Course Description - will increase the study and application of effective strategies for different types of writing. Using the writing process, students will demonstrate a command of vocabulary, the nuances of language and vocabulary, English language conventions, an awareness of the audience, the purpose for writing and the style of their own writing.

* Commercial Art and Graphic Design - is a combination of studio art and graphic design using various materials and techniques such as InDesign, Photoshop and Illustrator. Students will draw illustrative matter for commercial applications with an emphasis on sketching of concepts, while preparing for an end of term art show which includes postcards and flyers displaying student art work.

* Digital Communication Tools - is a business course that prepares student to use computerized devices and software programs to effectively handle communication-related school assignments and to develop communication competencies needed for personal and professional activities after graduation. Students will learn the capabilities and operation of high-tech hardware and software and will develop proficiency using a variety of computer input and output devices. The knowledge and skills of using these devices will be implemented through communication, problem solving and critical thinking.

* Engineering Design - is a three trimester introductory course which uses a communication system to explore the basic language of industry. Students will investigate the design, planning, and use of the communication system. Students will work from sketching simple geometric shapes to applying a solid modeling computer program. They will learn a problem solving design process and how it is used in industry to manufacture a product. The Computer Aided

Design System (CAD) will also be used to analyze and evaluate the product design.

* French 1 - student will be introduced to the French language and culture through speaking, reading, writing and researching. Student will learn basic skill such as introducing one another, participating in conversations, reading small passages, writing to other students in the French-speaking world, and researching weather patterns in Frances. They will be introduced to the TPRS method of learning a world language. TPRS stands for Teaching Proficiency thorugh Reading and Storytelling, and is a method whereby students are expected to demonstrate knowledge that is acquired, not simply learned. Students will also learn many ways to use technology in a world language classroom, including how to Skype students from across the globe so that they will be able to not only converse with French students, but see them in real time as French students are viewing them.

* Journalism/photojournalism1 - is the study of communications history, the legal boundaries, and the ethical principles that guide journalistic writing. Students use writing styles and visual design for a variety of media formats. Students express themselves with meaning and clarity to inform, entertain, and persuade so that future work on high school publications or media staffs will prepare them to take a career path in journalism. Students will complete projects such as photo essays, newspaper feature, page design, and yearbook layouts which demonstrate knowledge, application and progress in Journalism course content.

* World Studies (World Languages and Art) - students will study a world language through the use of a computer program called Rosetta Stone. Self-motivated students will work on listening, speaking and writing skills as they build their vocabulary of the language of their choice: German, Italian, Spanish or Chinese. In order to incorporate the cultural aspect of the language, students will work in groups and participate in a project based style of studying the art of the language chosen. This may include ceramics, painting or drawing.

Funds for this project have been made available through grants from the state, money from the Economic Stimulus Package and support from the City of Scottsburg.

The new school is supported by the Scottsburg New Tech Advisory Board. Members on the board are: Mayor Bill Graham, Robert Peacock, President of Scott County Economic Development Corp.; Keith Colbert, President of the Chamber of Commerce; Syd Whitlock, President of the Scott County Bank; Alan Richey, Agriculture Advisory Board Member, current high school parent and IT Director for Cylicron in Louisville, Ky., Arleen Schulze, SCSD2

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Curriculum Director; Lynda Phillips, Soil and Water Conservation and New Tech Parent; Ric Manns, SCSD2 CTA President and middle school teacher; Tammy Staser, Scottsburg Elementary Teacher; and Tim Johnston, SHS and SMS band director.

More information about Scottsburg New Tech can be found at the high school website at www.scsd2.k12.in.us.

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