

SPOTLIGHT ON

BUSINESS SUPPORT FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS IN THE MOHAWK VALLEY

The 2013-14 school year marked the launch of the Greater Mohawk Valley STEM Hub, an educational collaborative of education, community organizations, government agencies, and business and industry partners Exelis, the Griffiss Institute, Indium, King & King Architects, and Siemens Corporation. The STEM Hub aims to motivate and prepare students to pursue higher education in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields, with the goal of addressing regional workforce shortages in clean technology, biomedical, nanotechnology, information technologies, cyber security, healthcare, agriculture. New York's new education standards will give students a stronger foundation in mathematics and science literacy, boosting their chances of success in the program.

"A creative workforce is the key to making our industry and commerce stronger," said Rick Short, director of marketing communications at Indium Corporation. "Indium is very committed to the Greater Mohawk Valley STEM Hub to help drive the region's creative workforce." STEM Hub initiatives include providing project-based instruction to elementary and middle school students, enabling high school students to earn college credit in STEM courses, and providing professional learning opportunities for educators to extend their STEM knowledge and experience.



National Grid supports college and career readiness in the Mohawk Valley through its funding of SEMI High Tech U (Teacher Edition), an industry-driven math and science-based professional development program for teachers that focuses on the STEM skills needed by local high-growth employers. In the program, industry professionals train local teachers to integrate industry-based science and technology into their classrooms. In addition, teachers gain a better understanding of the region's STEM employment opportunities. Due to the success of the program, which has trained more than 80 local educators in 2012 and 2013, Oneida County and its partners have greatly expanded the program for 2014.



The Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES School and Business Alliance assists students in making successful transitions from school to careers and supports the development of a qualified workforce in the Mohawk Valley. Business partners speak at career days in the classroom, host workplace visits, and provide career shadowing opportunities to help students understand the world of work, decide on a career, plan their post-secondary studies, and transition to the workplace. Many local businesses support and steward the Alliance through their

representation on its board of directors, such as Gilroy, Kernan & Gilroy, CADimensions Inc., Catholic Charities of Oneida/Madison Counties, Faxton-St.Luke's Healthcare, First Source Federal Credit Union, IBEW, Observer-Dispatch, Mental Hygiene Legal Service, St. Elizabeth Medical Center, and Stewart Associates, LLC.

“There appears to be a disconnect between education and business that is just beginning to be addressed. We have jobs, but we don't have people educated to work. Many high-tech jobs are going to be created, plus many jobs are being 'aged out.' We no longer train electricians, plumbers and carpenters. Ask any car dealership how hard it is to find mechanics. Then there is an industry like mine ... sewing machines. Yes, people still sew, but the industry has changed. Sewing machines cost as much as a car (\$14,999 MSRP), and have touch screens, micro-processors, and cameras. Servicing this product is no easy task and training is a long process.

As a board member of the Fulton-Montgomery Regional Chamber, I asked to chair a committee on education. The committee has been meeting for almost three years, and we are very active. All we had to do was listen to the needs of our members, and listen to the goals of Hamilton Fulton Montgomery BOCES, and we knew we had a match made in heaven.

The superintendent saw an opportunity to create an apprenticeship program that would match businesses with students, to prepare them to step into a local job after graduation. This program morphed into the HFM P-TECH Early College High School, which is opening in summer 2014 for incoming 9th graders. With more than a dozen business partners in collaboration with HFM BOCES and Fulton Montgomery Community College, I hope this will prove to be a perfect synergy between education, business and technology.”

Diana Marshall

Gloversville Sewing Center